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*Current use of marketing communication in TECO's and Sandvik's
online branding*

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Abstract

Title: Current use of marketing communication in TECO and Sandvik's online branding.

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Aim: To understand the current use of marketing communications, which is the core of the company's online branding.

Method: This study uses a qualitative approach and the data is collected with a face-to-face interview with Sandvik, telephonic interview with TECO and other resources, such as websites and the press.

Result & Conclusions: TECO and Sandvik both admit the importance of the online marketing communication and try to put much effort into it. TECO must improve the interactivity and provide a unique service for its customers. Sandvik performs well but it is also better to target customer. Social networking is a new online interactivity for them and still in the early stage. Additionally, cultural differences are another factor that an international company should care about.

Suggestions for future research: Social networks could be investigated more deeply in B2B and B2C perspectives. However, cultural impact is one of the influences and people interested in the impact of online branding can investigate further.

Contribution of the thesis: Social networking is a popular means of online communication between the company and the customer. The theory about social networks could be considered by TECO and Sandvik as a reference to improve their online communication. Other personal suggestions can also be helpful, such as TECO can have systematic management approach to its websites.

Key words: Domain name, online branding, communication strategies, websites

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1. Introduction

In this chapter, the background to the branding and use of the Internet is discussed, and the use of branding on the Internet. The aim of the study and the research questions are presented in this chapter.

1.1 Background of branding and online branding

A brand is not just a name, nor a positioning statement, nor a marketing message, but rather it is a promise given by the company to customers (Sterne, 1999). A brand is not only a name shown on the product, but is used to express a certain value to customers, such as quality, design, personality and more. There are numerous sophisticated elements within it. Kotler & Armstrong (1994) define a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of a seller or group and to differentiate them from those of its' competitors. A brand is a mixture of values, both tangible and intangible, which always considers the customer (Hart & Murphy, 1998). A successful brand will possess a number of values, such as good design, high-tech, high quality, fashion, and more, in order to meet the customers' needs and wants. A brand could be regarded as a media tool or a delivery tool for the company to show its values to customers.

Brand management attracts many people's attentions. With the entrance of e-marketing or e-business, online branding (e-branding) has been discussed in recent years. It cannot be denied that the Internet has had a transformational impact for businesses. In the electronic environment, the physical interaction has decreased and the qualities and benefits of the product have to be advanced and improved in new ways which are able to be communicated to customers over the wire. Online branding has become increasingly important as a consequence (Rowley, 2004). The marketing communication, services, and strategies are able to be implemented digitally. For the online branding strategies, the Internet has advanced with complicated and dynamic elements, so a substantial number of online companies are looking for new online branding strategies that have the capability of creating competitive advantages and engaging the customers (Kenney and Curry, 1999). The strategies below might be used by a number of companies:

1. Quickly set up an online brand in order to take first-mover advantages (Doely, 1998)

2. Delivering a quality product or service through strong and suitable communication programs (Ibeh *et al.*, 2005).
3. Building and managing relationships well with target customers (Ibeh *et al.*, 2005).
4. Appealing, understanding, retaining, and learning the target customers via systematic strategies (Kierzkowski *et al.*, 1996).

In the online market, the power is transferred from companies to customers by the unique characteristics of the Internet and its ability to change old rules (Ibeh *et al.*, 2005). A number of differences between offline and online branding are discussed by researchers. The speed is increased (Epstein, 2005). The company has to redefine the importance of customer relationships and trust (Ratnasingham, 1998) due to the transaction existing in the intangible marketplace without national laws, body signals, or physical contacts. In addition to the customer relationships and trust, online customer loyalty is facing the challenges (Dayal, et al., 2001). The online business is built on an intangible platform, so the company hardly traces and knows customers' behaviors and thoughts. Online branding creates the Internet businesses in terms of new positioning, advertising, logos, slogans, and promotions that differentiate from traditional branding.

The character of access around the world is seen as important for international or global brands, such as Amazon.com and Yahoo, and these international brands might be able to transfer their own worldwide web presence into successful international online brands (Cronin, 1996). Cronin suggests that because of the differences of languages, symbols, preferences, and colours across various countries and cultures, these companies could adopt adaptation or localisation as businesses do in physical international environments. For an international online brand, they are required to possess common values, such as security, service and style in many communities, but those values have to be represented in different ways in different nations (Cronin, 1996).

1.2 Online marketing communication

Online transactions, like selling, buying, delivery, and marketing communications are all able to be digitally implemented. Firstly the customer possesses higher power and control over online marketing communication. The customer is active in his/her attitude for information instead of passive and even becomes a proactive customer who asks for the information from companies. The power of the customer is

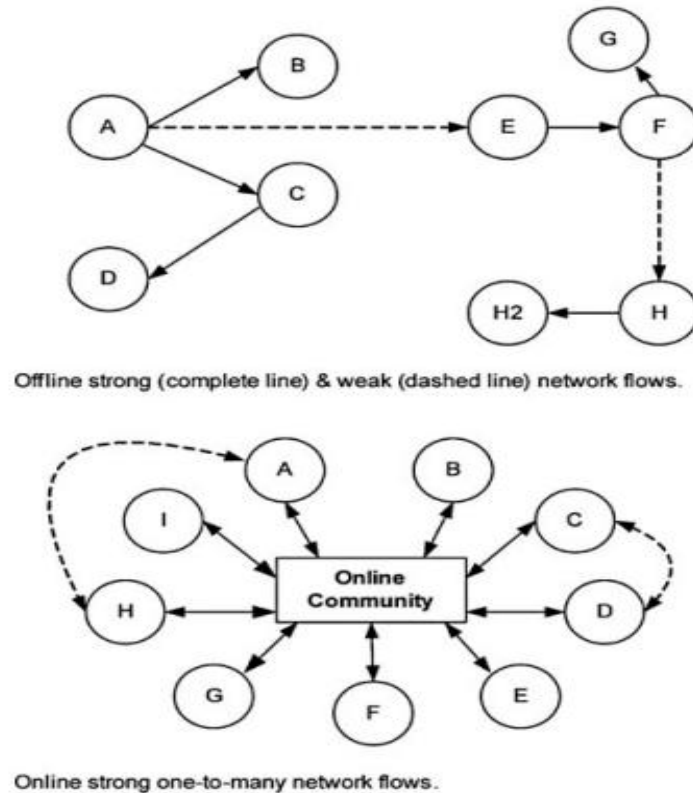
demonstrated and customers have greater control in the relationship with companies.

The impact caused by online communication is different from other communication channels because of three special attributes: interactivity, transparency, and memory (Calin, 2008). For the interactivity, the Internet not only plays as an interface, which provides possible interactive communication, but also as a communication agent. The online information can also be accessed by all users. Moreover, the online information can be stored on the Internet unless it is deleted.

With the rise of online business, both companies and customers ought to know the new changes, such as how information is used and retrieved (Calin, 2008). The user and the company are connected to each other. The traditional channel was a one-way communication and all information and communication were delivered in one direction. Now, the online communication channel is a network and the gap between the company and customer has disappeared. Additionally, the new and easy communication with the amount of messages is on a one-to-one basis (Holtz, 1999). The users are also connected to one another. Today, the activities offered by the company can be discussed over the Internet and everyone can communicate and the company is just a part of it (Shankar and Malhotra, 2007). The user has access to other information. The users can get information online from multiple sources with speed and ease. The users do not want to accept the information pushed on to them by the company and they tend to pull information to fit their needs and interests. Rowley (2004) further states that information must be available for users in the online networks, and must also be customised and customisable.

According to Jo *et al.* (2007), the online users receive and contribute their information in the online community rather than the traditional way, where the information is more individual and personal as indicated in Figure 1 below

Figure 1. Online social network flows



Source: Jo et al. (2007)

In the offline information flow, the information is delivered in one direction and the scope only exists from one to another. But in the online network, the information flow is passed in two directions, and even influences other online customers as well.

The online communication creates many opportunities, but it comes up with challenges as well. Hart *et al.* (1998) mentions that the transparency of the web reinforces the need for consistency in the planning, design, implementation and control of online marketing communication, and makes online information available to all users.

1.3 Websites

Websites are one of the online communication channels and have been widely spread throughout the education, business, organization, and everyone's life. According to Jakobsson (1995), individual web pages are capable of combining video, voice, pictures, or flash, as well as hypertext links. Furthermore all the websites have their own address and when users are browsing the Internet, it's also the name which the users are using. The public is allowed to get the information and documents from the

websites owned by the individuals, governments, or schools. Owning a website becomes a competitive advantage for a company, and nowadays all companies do have a website in order to compete (Porter, 2001).

In general, the domain name of the website could be categorized into two types, the global domain name .com and the local domain name such as .se for Sweden or .tw for Taiwan. Domain names are useful for Internet users to identify the primary entities and resources on the Internet. Especially, a brand which is easy to remember can be helpful for customers to find that website such as asus.com for Asus computers (Coyle and Gould, 2002; Robert and Ko, 2001). The multinational corporations use both global and local domain names in their approach to their online identity (Murphy *et al.*, 2003; Tan *et al.*, 2003). According to Murphy *et al.* (2003), although top brands, such as Fortune Global 500, register both global and local domain names, these companies may prefer to use a .com identity rather than a local domain name, but .com fails to acknowledge the corporation's local presence or heritage.

A global domain name, such as .com, .org, and .net, are representations of the commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, and network providers and it is available for those companies to register global domain names in any nation on a first come first serve basis. According to Jamie and Arno (2007), nearly 70% of international companies prefer a global domain name “.com” as their host website. The authors also conclude that Japan's .jp is the most popular country domain name for the international companies. However, the global domain name .com is establishing the online community for generating worldwide buzz and using local domain name .uk or .fr to extend the main brand recognitions (Cronin, 1996). The companies should not only look forward to the opportunities of online branding but also need to incorporate their branded domain names into traditional marketing, like television (TV) programs, radio, or newspapers (Hanson, 2000; Ilfeld and Winter, 2002). Therefore, the domain names play a crucial role in online brand management.

1.4 Purpose and research questions and limitations

Marketing communication is the core of online branding and the website is just one of the available communication media. Many international companies have their own websites as the main channel or media to communicate with customers and the information and opinions can be shared on it. Additionally, new online communications have been created that have changed the way communication occurs between the company and customer, such as social networks. International companies

doing business in different countries with different cultures and people often underestimate the impact of cultural differences. Even the decision of a global or local domain name is affected by different cultures. However, this study also concentrates on two companies, TECO and Sandvik. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the current use of the marketing communications, which is the core of the company's online branding. The research questions extend beyond the main purpose as listed below:

1. What are the main online communications with customers in TECO's and Sandvik's online branding? How do they communicate with customers?
2. Have TECO and Sandvik tried other new channels to improve the business, such as social networks?
3. Have TECO and Sandvik paid attention to the importance of culture in the management of the website?

1.5 The outline of this study

The structure of the study will be conducted in six chapters. The content of the first chapter provides the background on branding and online branding, websites, and online marketing communication. The main purpose and research questions are also presented in Chapter one. Chapter two presents the literature review, where the relevant theories are outlined such as the four pillars of online marketing communications, social networks, and cultural impact. Meanwhile, the research methodology is mentioned in Chapter three and Chapter four shows the background of TECO, Sandvik, and interviewees as well as the findings from the interviews. Chapter five is the analysis section, where all empirical data is analysed with the theories mentioned in Chapter two. The last chapter, Chapter six, concludes the whole study and discusses further research and possible implications for the marketer and practitioners in the relevant areas.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, a discussion is presented concerning online branding, global and local domain names, communication strategies, and cultures.

2.1 Four pillars of marketing communication in online branding

In order to achieve successful online branding, Kierzkowski *et al.* (1996) suggested that the company should understand online customers. There are various online approaches for companies to know the potential and actual customers, such as Server-side data capture, Client-side data capture, online surveys, or databases (Geoffrey J. Simmons, 2007).

In the past, marketing communication focused on promotions, a one way channel. Traditional media for communication includes TV, newspaper, magazines, and other push strategies (Rowley, 2004). However, according to Hoffman *et al.* (1995), the communication via the Internet offers a platform with free flow and information exchange, and two-way communication between the corporations and customers. For instance, the online communication tools are company websites, email marketing, and other online techniques.

The online interactivity is considered as the central pillar of online branding Parson *et al.* (1998). However, the online interactivity is very different from the past. The customer will feel a more personal control when they use information flows with a high level of interactivity (Klein, 2003; Peterman *et al.*, 1999). The power is shifted from the company to the customer in the marketing communication (Rowley, 2004). The available tools are blogs, RSS feeds, or online communities.

However, according to Ibeh *et al* (2005), e-branding relies on targeting customers with unique services, such as content, messages and functions. The company can provide website searching, information searching or customized services. The concept of the four pillars of online marketing communication is indicated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2. Four pillars of online marketing communication



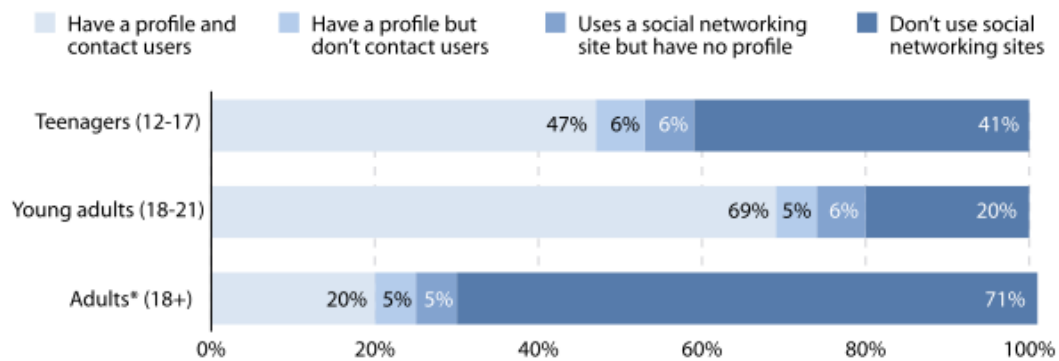
Source: Geoffrey J. Simmons (2007)

Figure 2 indicates that successful online branding ought to consist of four pillars: understanding the customer, marketing communication, online interactivity, and unique content. To understand the customer is the first and most necessary and basic step for online branding, and could be achieved in many ways, like surveys and databases. Then, once the online marketer knows their customers, they are able to communicate with them through websites, email and similar tools. This marketing communication represents an information exchange between the company and customer. Online activity is a new and different tool. The customer possesses a higher power level in these tools, such as the blog and online community, because all companies want to gather information released by the customer. The online environment has plenty of choices for the customer and the company has thought about how to provide what customers want all the time. Therefore, offering a unique service for each customer becomes a challenging work and important for the company.

2.2 New online channel: Social networks

The social networks, such as YouTube and Facebook, have dramatically grown in recent years and no matter whether young or old, people are attracted. Many marketers try to understand how customers use social networks and how to do business in it. According to Charlene *et al* (2007) this survey (Figure 3) shows how customers use social networks in The United States:

Figure 3. The percentage of online users who use social networks

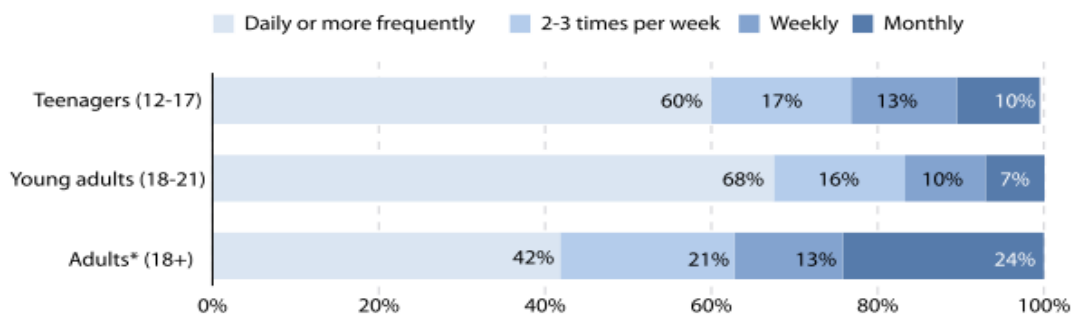


Based on US online users

Source: Charlene et al (2007), pp. 3

In Figure 3, we can observe that most young people use social networks, 59% of teenagers (12 to 17-year-old) and 80% of young adults (18 to 21-year-old), but there are only 30% of adults (over 18-year-old) who use social networks.

Figure 4. The frequency they use social networks

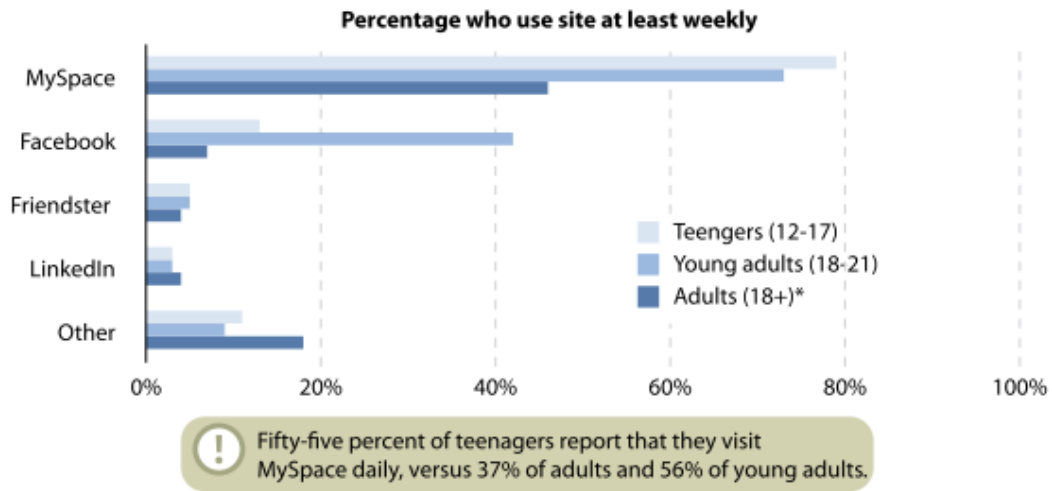


Based on US online users

Source: Charlene et al (2007), pp.3

In Figure 4, it's indicated that young people use social networks more frequently compared to adult users. 60% of the teenagers and 68% of young adults use social networks every day and even more frequently.

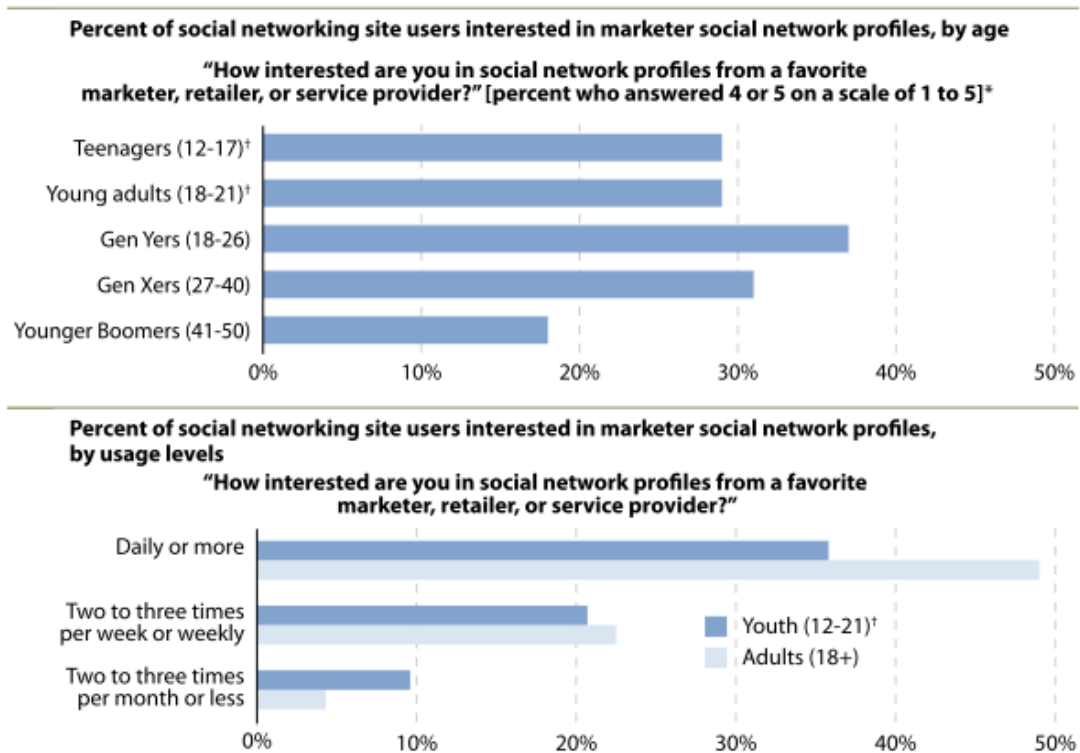
Figure 5. Percentage who use social networks at least weekly



Based on US online users
 Source: Charlene et al (2007), pp. 4

In Figure 5, it is obvious that MySpace is dominant among teenagers, young adults, and adults. Additionally, the majority of users in Facebook are young adults (over 40%).

Figure 6. Percentage who are interested in marketer profiles



Based on US online users
 Source: Charlene et al (2007), pp. 8.

Gen Y'ers means Generation Y (18 to 26-year-old) and Gen X'ers means Generation X (27 to 40-year-old). With respect to Figure 6, Gen Y'ers shows their greatest interest in marketer's profiles, which is about 37%, and Gen X'ers show 31%. Generally, younger users show more interest in marketer's profiles. Additionally, the daily users are more interested in marketer's profiles.

However, how do the marketers reach their online customer and attract customers to their services and products? Charlene et al (2007) states three opinions:

- New marketing tactics: The marketers upload their innovative and attractive elements to their websites. Nonetheless, in the social networks, the online users want to participate in a conversation and establish a relationship with others instead of looking at those graphics or videos of the product.
- Friendship: The friendship exists between person to person, not a person and a company. Therefore, the page of the marketer's profile should be designed like a platform where customers can develop a friendship with the brand.
- Regularly refresh the content: The promotions, products and graphics must be updated in order to keep the customers.

2.3 Possible impact: Culture difference

In the online environment, the company must interface with customers from all over the world with different backgrounds. Cultural differences are one of the obstacles for the company which intends to start an online business. The cultural influences would make online communication strategies different (Callahan, 2005). However, culture is composed of many components (Wild, 2006) and some of them may influence the online communication. Aesthetics could be regarded as good taste in the arts. The colours, symbols, and photos are able to evoke certain emotions, such as for advertising, product packaging, and architecture. Language is part of a culture's communication which contains spoken and written vocabulary.

Hofstede (2005) categorises four dimensions for examining culture being Individualism/Collectivism, Power distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity/Femininity. Nevertheless, different dimensions have differences in online business and the Internet. In a collectivism and masculine environment, the international business manager should use a local domain name as the website (Jamie M., Arno S., 2007). In a collectivist culture, such as in East or Southeast Asia, they are more resistant to the Internet (Yuka et al, 2007).

Figure 7 presents the concept of this study. The Internet becomes a popular business market for the firm, and the majority of firms want to do online branding on the Internet. However, the core of online branding is marketing communication. Many social networks, such as Facebook and Myspace, could improve the communication of these companies with their customers. The marketing communication is also affected by other factors, such as culture.

Figure 7. The concept of this study. The core of the online branding is marketing communication and it is affected by other factors, such as culture.



Source: The author of this study

3. Method

Chapter 3 discusses the methodologies concerning this study, and introduces how this study chose the main case study and also how data was gathered. The qualitative method is used in the study.

3.1 Qualitative approach

A qualitative approach is able to reach a deeper understanding of subjects by participant observation or narrative analysis, or may strive for in-depth understanding of texts by exegesis or deconstruction (Garson, 2002). This study is conducted by a face-to-face interview for the main case study using a well-designed questionnaire in order to gather in-depth knowledge of how they use and implement the global and local domain names. Through the qualitative approach, there are several advantages and disadvantages which become apparent. According to Svensson (2003), a qualitative approach is the best method to discover motivations, feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions of the context and problem. However, because a qualitative approach does not have many cases or samples, it is hard to completely represent and small sample sizes are the limitation of this study as well.

3.2 Research strategy

The research strategy is a general plan which explains how this study answers the research questions. In this study most of the data will be gathered from the main case study. According to Saunder et al. (2001), the case study could be the way to provide data sources and is seen as a valuable way of exploring current theories. The basic advantage of the case study is that the whole unit can be deeply investigated and the researcher can focus on the order of events as they occur (Zikmund, 2000). This study utilises methods such as a face-to-face and phone interviews and a questionnaire to collect data.

3.2.1 Case study

A case study was defined by Yin (1994) as an enquiry that is used to find out a current condition in the real life context, especially when the boundaries exist between the

real phenomenon and unclear context. Denscombe (2000) also states that when the interesting events are investigated in detail and in depth, the case study is a good method for considering analysis and describing a few numbers of units.

Adopting the case study gives several benefits (Yin, 1994). Using a case study may aid the study to get a holistic and detailed overview of both the situation and the context. Secondly, because of the detailed and rich information, it can give better understanding of some aspects of person, group, event, or situation.

3.3 Data collection

The data for a case study can be collected from six different sources. These include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 1994). However, the data for this study is collected mainly by face-to-face and phone interviews with a well-designed questionnaire. Additionally, the data collection also depends on the researcher's competencies and he or she should play an active role within the entire process.

3.3.1 Case selection

Through the case study approach, the possible events, people, and organisations for the research can be chosen from the amount of choices (Denscombe, 2000, p. 33). In this study, TECO and Sandvik are chosen because of their international business and transactions and both of them have put effort into website management and know the importance of the Internet. Therefore, TECO and Sandvik are qualified for this study and we expect to be able to acquire the necessary data.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

According to Saunders et al. (2003), the question could be an open question for why and how questions, probing questions that ask for the hidden information behind the answers and specific and closed questions intended to obtain specific information or confirm a fact or opinion. Thus, in this study, the questionnaire for the interview was structured in three categories with different types of questions.

First of all, the outline of the questionnaire was constructed in terms of the use of the Internet, global and local domain names, and communication strategies with

customers. For the use of the Internet, the content provided a short paragraph about the importance of the Internet and its advantages as well. The first part is intended to understand the use of the Internet in TECO and Sandvik and also understand the impact on the company's branding. The second part defined a domain name for the interviewee and further stated the importance of an effective online presence. The purpose of the second part is to know the differences between global and local domain names and how global and local domain names are positioned in the design of website.

However, how does the company communicate with customers through the websites or the Internet? Therefore, the last part of the questionnaire is to be aware of the communication strategies with customers. According to the theory published by Groffrey (2007), online branding has four pillars which were explained to the interviewee. The quantity of online users is substantial and even innumerable. TECO and Sandvik should know the targeted customers and focus on them first. Nowadays, because of the advance of new information technologies, how TECO and Sandvik utilise these technologies to know their customers, communicate, interact, and provide a unique service to customers needs to be constantly updated. Thus, via these three parts, the questionnaire could determine the use and implementation of the Internet and websites in TECO's and Sandvik's online strategies.

3.3.3 Interview process

The data was collected by a phone interview with TECO and a face-to-face interview with Sandvik. For TECO, the phone interview took around 30 minutes with each interviewee. The questions are asked according to the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and translated into Chinese to avoid misunderstanding and language errors. Two phone interviews were conducted in the same day.

The face-to-face interview was also conducted on the same day with Sandvik. The two interviews in total took around two hours and the process was recorded in order to ensure the accuracy of the data during interpretation. The questionnaire was written in English and I explained every question for the interviewees in order to avoid misunderstanding.

3.4 Analysis of data

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the case analysis should compare the data with relative theories. Moreover, the researcher also has to decide what meanings could be attributed and what the future implications are, and how it relates to the investigated topic (Denscombe 2000, p.134). In this study, the data is discussed and compared with the relevant theories.

In this study, the performance of online marketing communication in TECO and Sandvik can be analysed in the context of the theory, which states that there are four pillars of marketing communication with customers. The theory about the social networks is able to be used to know the percentage of online users, which social networks are popular, and which online users are interested in marketer's profiles. The last theory is about the impact of culture that the company will encounter. The language, colours, how customers feel about the Internet use, are relative and vary with differences in each culture.

3.5 Validity

According to Yin (1994), the validity is used to set up the right operational assessment for the concepts of the study. In order to maintain the validity of this study, the purposes and aims of this research were comprehensively interpreted and the approaches were adopted. Additionally, the data collection consisted of various methods, such as companies' websites, face-to-face interviews, and different kinds of information.

Denscombe (2000) suggests the validity of a research study is also dependent on whether the researcher been objective or has introduced personal bias into the study, whether the topic chosen is relevant as far as the purposes and aims of the study are concerned, and the conclusion not being too simplistic.

In order to be objective, the information from the interviewees is presented without any personal opinions, and the information is analysed in the context of the theories presented. Online branding is a new topic and getting popular, so the topic can be considered reasonable and worth discussing. All research questions are relevant to the aim of this study. Moreover, the conclusion answers the research questions, personal reflections, and future research as well as keeping consistency in this study.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability means that during the study the procedure can be repeated and get the same results, such as the data collection procedure. Descombe (2000) states that reliability is whether the research methods are neutral in their results and whether the methods and measures used in another case, will achieve the same results. Furthermore, the researcher must be confident in the measurements and not be influenced by other reading instruments (ibid).

In this study the methods used such as the case study and face-to-face and phone interviews, could also be used in other research. In order to maintain accuracy of the respondent data, the interviews were recorded and researcher opinions are not presented in the empirical findings and are only discussed in the analysis/discussion and conclusion chapters.

4. Empirical findings

The methodology chapter explained how data collection was done and this chapter presents all the information resulting from the data collected in this study. TECO and Sandvik are the main case study of this work. The information extracted from the data collected from the interviews is presented below with the background of the interviewees as well.

4.1 TECO Electric & Machinery Co. Ltd.

TECO started as a motor manufacturer 45 years ago. However, TECO is not only successful in motor production but is also involved in other fields, such as IT systems, telecommunication equipment, home alliance, and other sectors. Nowadays, TECO has transformed from a traditional motor industry company to a global high-tech corporate. Its businesses have spread over 30 countries and many remarkable international companies including Ericsson, Sony, NEC are clients. TECO consists of businesses across six sectors including industrial products and systems, consumer applications and related services, IT and optronic products, telecommunications and related services, information systems and related services and investment. In order to be a high quality, high-tech, and outstanding global brand, TECO has aggressively put much effort into the extension of technology development and produce goods with a high quality and high added value component. TECO utilizes a strategy called Glocalisation, which is a combination of globalisation and localisation because it provides a local service in a global perspective in order to create innovative products and train qualified employees. TECO also pays much attention to e-business putting much effort into maintaining the management of customer relationships and data management, and maintaining the ERP business solutions.

Source: www.teco.com.tw

In relation to the implementation of IT systems, TECO established a sector called Information system and service sector, which focuses on IT transactions. Information Technology Total Service (ITTS) is a department which was established in 1990 under the Information system and service sector. ITTS is responsible for all the IT transactions mentioned above and the Internet service. However, ITTS not only provides IT services for its own company, but also offers a business process outsourcing service to other industries. So far, ITTS has cooperated with companies in various fields like logistics, pharmaceuticals, insurance, finance companies and others.

The head office of ITTS is located in Taiwan and has built many branches in China as well as extended services outside Taiwan. ITTS is extending its IT services to other countries in order to reach the global markets.

Source: www.itts.com.tw

TECO is consequently not only the leader in its original area of expertise as a heavy electrical manufacturer, but has also achieved outstanding performances in other fields such as IT systems, telecommunications, and home appliances. Furthermore, it is one of the Top 50 companies in Taiwan and also an international company. The establishment of ITTS really advances TECO's e-business strategy and the application of the Internet. TECO is expected to be a good case study. The core of TECO is based upon the three main objectives of this study, Internet, websites and customers. With the support of ITTS, the performance and implementation of TECO in these objectives might be good.

4.1.1 Background of the interviewees

In total, there were two interviewees, Paul Liu and Tom Tsai, who contributed to this study and who work in different sectors. The detailed background is introduced below.

Paul Liu

Liu is the managing director in TECO and has worked for over 20 years with substantial experience in the industrial product and systems sector. One of his jobs focuses on customer relationship management and sales service, and he also has expatriate working experience on sales, product development and customer relations. Therefore, the broad experience he has will be valuable for this study. His suggestions concentrated mainly on communication strategies with customers in the questionnaire and of course helpful for other questions.

The department that he works in has the best sales performance in TECO. During recent decades, wind-generation technology has become popular and earns many invitations to speak to companies, especially in Germany, Netherland, and other countries in Europe. The technologies, manufacturing, and product resource departments need to collaborate with industries in different countries. In order to satisfy the customers' needs and wants, the main selling strategy is high quality products at a low price and compliant with international industrial standards such as JIS, CNS, and UL.

Paul Liu is a managing director with abundant experiences in expatriate and customer relations issues. In addition, the Industrial product and system sector has also done business in multi nations. It is believable that the interview with him could bring new ideas for this study.

Tom Tsai

He is a general manager in ITTS, has worked there for around 5 years. His main duties are to offer e-business services for TECO and outsourcing services. Most e-business services include IT framework, e-value-added, and security protection. Tom Tsai worked as an engineer and got promotion due to his good performance. Even though Tom Tsai does not have expatriate experience like Paul Liu, undoubtedly he is qualified to answer the questions about the use of the Internet and websites.

ITTS provides IT network services, mailing and database management, and consulting services to customers, and also helps the company with its' own network infrastructure. Its services are customised to the customers' needs and include maintenance and repair. Microsoft, Yahoo, Acer, Citibank, J. P. Morgan, American Express, and Honda, are some of the many international and famous enterprises who are its main customers. ITTS has a good reputation in its own group businesses and keeps improving the services. Furthermore, ITTS has also cooperated with relevant industries and affiliates.

Even though Tom Tsai has not worked for the company for as long a period, as Paul Liu, he is able and competent. He is very familiar with his work. Therefore, the contribution from Tom Tsai and Paul Liu will be useful for analysis and discussion of the findings.

4.1.2 Use of the Internet

TECO has established a well-designed online service called the e-procurement system. All customers can follow the steps in the e-procurement system to accomplish transactions. The price for each product and service are available in the system. TECO will send the customer a confirmation email at the end of each transaction. All customer and transactional data is also safely secured. However, the products available in the e-procurement system, such as silicon, steel, diesel engines, generators and sheet metal material, belong to the business-to-business (B2B) transaction group. Consumers and the public are not able to purchase via the

e-procurement system. In addition, after an enterprise purchases through this system, their personal sales representative will contact them by telephonically or in person as soon as possible.

TECO encourages sales representatives to communicate via the Internet and other telecommunication tools because of the Mailing and Data Management. The data from the customer will be stored and secured in TECO's database. The history of purchases by a customer will be kept in the database in order to be conveniently traced by the company. Tom Tsai strongly agrees with the advantages mentioned in the questionnaire which include extended interactivity, extended reach, greater persistence, increased speed and higher flexibility. Also due to the distance and time differences between Taiwan and other countries, the Internet is actually very convenient for the sales representative and customer. The speed of replying to customer queries or suggestions is much faster and provides a real-time service for customers. Currently, TECO is thinking how to integrate all the data together to establish a more comprehensive customer portfolio.

However, according to the questions in the questionnaire, ITTS is a specific IT department in TECO. Its main job not only includes building up IT systems for TECO, but also provides interested companies with outsourcing services in e-business, ERP integration, mailing and data management. But when the interviewees thought about branding, they both agreed that the Internet doesn't impact the company's branding that much and it could be for two reasons. Firstly, TECO only considers the Internet as another platform or channel where customers can purchase and know what TECO is, as well as a means to contact them. It might be useful in TECO's branding but not as the main strategy, but TECO has not seen the Internet as a main method for branding. Secondly, due to the complexity of the product, TECO's reputation is achieved by high quality and by putting effort into its own businesses over the years. A motor engine needs detailed and precise design and measurement. The online service may not fulfill all customer needs and requirements. If the customer only requires regular and standard products, which are in line with international standards like CNS or JIB, they can purchase through the e-procurement system. However, if a customised product is needed, TECO has a detailed discussion with the customer on what they want, such as material, size, functions, and so on. The factor in the product reduces the integration of the Internet. Therefore, because of TECO itself and product elements, the use of the Internet has not been prevalent and does not impact and contribute to the company's branding.

4.1.3 Global and local domain names

With respect to the answers from the interviewees, the management of the websites is a complex problem for TECO. Even though TECO has businesses in over 30 countries, not all countries have their own websites. The different websites were designed by different IT companies. In a nutshell, they do not have a global domain name .com but numerous local domain names. The domain names are different and not affiliated under a global domain name. The .tw domain name is the most comprehensive website, which includes all information, related website connections and latest news. The IT department in Taiwan does not involve itself much in other countries' websites. As they know, the sharpness and colour of the logo are the same and important news will be posted on all websites as well. The text, layout, wallpaper, and images are different from each other. Tom Tsai said the websites do act as a support and beginner role for the company's branding. The customer could understand who and what TECO is, and also acquire basic information about the company and products. If the customer wants to know more or has any questions, it is better to contact TECO directly. Additionally, Tom Tsai sometimes goes to China to help them deal with problems with the IT system and websites. However, only Tom Tsai has involvement in the business in China. Fortunately, because of the similarity of the culture and language, businesses are managed well and easily. Although small problems will sometimes occur, they are not that difficult to solve.

According to observations when browsing websites, Thailand, Australia, Singapore, Taiwan and the United Kingdom have a local domain name, while the United States of America, Canada, and Japan use .com web addresses. However, all websites are English. In addition to the English language option, Taiwan's website provides both Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese, and Japan's website offer Japanese and Chinese choices. The websites in Thailand and Singapore are the same in respect of design, pictures, and news. Everything in both of them is the same. With respect to the domain names in U.S.A and Canada, we learned that TECO cooperated with Westinghouse in the American market, and acquiring Westinghouse was helpful in doing business in America. Additionally, the design of the websites is different. The Japanese website is conservative and concise, while the U.S.A website has vast numbers of pictures. All the web addresses are listed below in Figure 8:

Figure 8 All domain names of TECO

Country	Website	Domain name
Asia		
Taiwan	www.teco.com.tw	.tw
Thailand	www.teco.co.th	.th
Singapore	www.teco.com.sg	.sg
Japan	www.teco-japan.com	.com
America		
U.S.A	www.tecowestinghouse.com	.com
Canada	www.twmi.com	.com
Oceania		
Australia	www.teco.com.au	.au
Europe		
United Kingdom	www.teco.co.uk	.uk

Source: TECO's websites around the world

4.1.4 Communication strategies with customers

Most customers have dealt with TECO for a long time and have good relations with TECO. According to Paul Liu, they rarely look for new customers because their products are professional and hard to copy, such as a motor engine for wind-power generation. Furthermore, most customers are B2B type business which is easier to understand than B2C business. The targeted TECO customer profile the customer in a close relationship and customers who like low price. Because TECO's products are professional and most of them are customised, these products are produced with detailed design and to high-quality standards. TECO not only possesses the merits of design and quality but also provides customers with a lower price than other competitors.

In order to have good communication with customers via the Internet, TECO uses email, websites, and regular online promotions and replies as soon as possible. For the online interactivity, TECO often posts the latest news on several well known blogs and forums. Although TECO has no blogs or forums managed internally, many customers are able to discuss and share their responses on other popular forums. The TECO websites also provide a Search function. Customers are able to search for services they want without wasting time clicking through every page. TECO

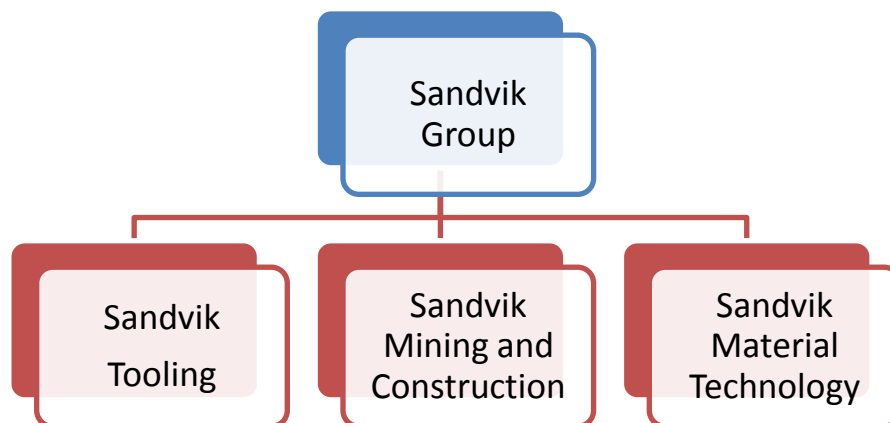
predominantly uses offline channels to communicate with customers, and the sales representative plays an important role in it.

Investigations of several popular social networks revealed that the TECO group had a minimal presence but unfortunately, only a few people added TECO and there is no picture, no product introduction, and no other functions on it. TECO has its own group on Facebook but the group has only been added by several people. In addition, it is easy to see that there are many posts and discussions about TECO from other popular forums.

4.2 Sandvik

Sandvik is a high-tech engineering company which produces lots of advanced products and is also a leading brand in the technical field around the world. Its businesses have spread over 130 countries and the operations are based on professionalism in the technology of material and have a broad insight in customer management. The whole Sandvik organisation consists of one top management tier and three divisions (Figure 9):

Figure 9: The structure of Sandvik departments



Source: www.sandvik.com

- Sandvik Tooling provides tools and tooling systems for metal cutting as well as blanks and components of cemented carbide.
- Sandvik Mining and Construction develops, manufactures and markets rock-excavation equipment, tools and services for mining and civil engineering.
- Sandvik Material Technology provides stainless and alloy steel, special metals and resistance materials as well as process systems.

In 2009, there were 44,000 employees working for Sandvik group and they created around 72 billion SEK in sales. (Sandvik, 2010)

4.2.1 Background of the interviewees

Anki Hallman

She is an Internet content manager at Sandvik Material Technology. She is responsible for web communication and working on the Internet sites and their branding. Her job is to map the products, services, and structure the contents, product information and data from the customers' perspective.

Sandvik Material Technology not only concentrates on high-tech materials and products, but also develops close relations and cooperation with customers. Actually, there are separate marketing and web communication departments in Sandvik. After finishing the Internet projects, the departments will be merged into one big communication department.

Tina Wilhelmsson

Tina works at Sandvik Group and is responsible for general information services, investor relations, media contacts and PR within the Sandvik Group.

4.2.2 Use of the Internet

According to the interviews with two interviewees, Sandvik has its own IT department but this department only deals with the technical business of the Internet and computers. All customer-related problems and tasks are handled by the marketing communication department. Sandvik not only understands the importance of the Internet, but has also put much effort on increasing the use of the Internet. In all of Sandvik's divisions business through the Internet is called e-business, and forms a crucial part of their business operations. There are several online shops provided by Sandvik, such as Sandvik Coromant's Shop Online and Kanthal's e-commerce. In addition to the Internet for customers, Sandvik also cares about the internal intranet, and it is kept up to date with regular changes. The employees can access the information they need about their business areas with this valuable and effective internal network.

Both of the interviewees agreed on the impact of the Internet on the company's branding. Sandvik did a survey with 1,000 customers as to which media channels are their primary source of information, and the result showed that 91.9% of the respondents obtain their information from the Internet.

4.2.3 Global and local domain name

The website is one of the Sandvik group's most important information channels, which is visited monthly by over 250,000 users. Sandvik is implementing Internet projects in order to create new websites and re-organize the existing websites. The purpose of updating websites in Sandvik is to achieve the business goal of attracting customers to the website in order to receive new and updated information and to purchase product, and to strengthen the Sandvik brands and to create customer awareness of the brand.

Sandvik has now established new websites. Kanthal is one of the Sandvik Material Technology brands. The layout and design of Kanthal is different from the old websites and its representative colors are yellow and red. All information on the Kanthal website is presented in a product oriented manner instead of an organisational oriented way, as it is on the old websites. All products are presented with a small picture. In the future, the new websites will be merged with the old websites and customers will see a website with a revolutionary style. However, Sandvik is facing the language problem. Even though the language will be translated by Google translation, the name of the products is still a problem for Sandvik. As the name of the product might be different in America, Europe, and Asia, it is hard to translate and allow customers to understand what the product is.

With respect to the use of domain names in Sandvik, they do not use local country domain names such as .it for Italy or .tw for Taiwan and they are using sub-domains instead, such as .com/it and .com.tw. Additionally, all domain names are presented in the same way now, including layout, logo, color, graphics. As I mentioned above, the new websites are designed with a new look but when these websites are combined with the old , all pages will be adjusted to the same design.

4.2.4 Communication strategies with customers

In order to understand the customers, Sandvik has done the investigations, surveys, statistics, and directly asked customers what they need and want. Sandvik always

wants to know what customers are thinking, but they don't only focus on a certain type or category of customers. Sandvik offers product information, organisational information, and technical information based on what customers are looking for instead of who they are. Everyone who is interested in their products or information could be their customers. Moreover, Sandvik also pays attention to communication strategies with customers on websites, and try their best to improve it. Improvement of communication is one of the purposes of the new websites. The contact methods provided on the websites are more accessible to customers, such as email and phone numbers. Sandvik has considered the blog, forum, and social networks as an interactive marketing and communication tool. Sandvik has further attempted to do branding and business on social channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

In order to know what customers want, the new websites will record and statistically analyse what products or information customers have browsed and clicked. Sandvik will assess the products and information that are most popular and offer services related thereto. So far, although Sandvik does try to advance their websites as much as possible, they still utilise both online and offline channels to do branding and businesses.

In sum, TECO is an international electric and machinery company and does business in over 30 countries. The IT systems, telecommunication equipment and home appliances, are their main business sectors. The interviewees, Paul Liu and Tom Tsai, were helpful in executing this study. ITTS is a specific IT department in TECO and not only establishes IT systems for TECO but also offers outsourced services in the e-business sector. There are several online services in TECO's websites for online customers, such as e-procurement, product information, and organisational information. TECO's websites are designed by the local IT departments in every country, so the styles are different from each other, such as logo, text and layout. TECO has managed local websites in Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, U.S.A, Canada, Australia, and U.K with different addresses and domain names. With respect to the online communication strategies, TECO focuses on customers with close relationships and customers who are cost conscious. The communication comprises of the email, websites, and online promotions and has online interactivity mostly through blogs and forums. The basic online services are available in TECO's websites for the customer.

Sandvik is a systematic and global company, which trades in over 130 countries. Anki Hallman and Tina Wilhelmsson were helpful interviewees for this study. Sandvik has

an IT department, marketing communication department, and web communication department to deal with the Internet projects. They recently updated their websites with new services so that all brands and departments are connected together and the look of the websites has been standardized. The information is provided in a product oriented way instead of an organisation oriented way. The website designer also created a new function to record customers' behaviours and needs. New information will be updated according to the statistically assessed more popular needs.. The social network is one of the online channels for Sandvik and they try to do online business via popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. However, Sandvik has not paid attention to a specific customer category and any customer who is interested in their product is Sandvik's customer, which means Sandvik pays attention to all customers. Nonetheless, online and offline channels are crucial for Sandvik to do business.

5 Analysis/Discussion

In this chapter, the empirical data from the last chapter is analysed and discussed. The four points obtained from the empirical data are the Internet as a branding tool, global and local domain names, communication strategies, and the impact thereof on the company.

5.1 The performance of marketing communication in Sandvik and TECO

Sandvik

The first level of the four pillars is to understand the customer. For Sandvik, anyone interested in their products can be their customer. However, there are millions of users in the online environment and it is easy to waste resources on the wrong customer. Therefore, it's better to have targeted customers and try to get a closer relationship with them and know them. With respect to online communications, the website is the main communication tool with the customers and also utilises email and other techniques. Sandvik systematically manages its websites and sets up the links and connections between brands and departments. For instance, Kanthal is one of the brands in Sandvik. In the old website, the customer would often consider Kanthal as a company, not a brand affiliated to Sandvik. However, after establishing the new website, Sandvik integrated all brands and departments into a network, where the customers can link to each brand and product from a single website. In addition, the information in the new website is offered in a product oriented way instead of an organisational oriented way and all products are presented with a photo. All website design is standardised with the same look, feel, layout, color, logo, provided services and information, no matter which of the countries is applicable. Sandvik has also improved the contact methods for customers, such as email or web based comments. The customer can easily leave comments under the information they read. Sandvik really has put in a lot of effort. In respect of online interactivity with customers, which is the most important part, Sandvik has tried to do business and branding on social networks like Facebook and Twitter. However, they have just started managing social networks and are still in the early stage. Finally, Sandvik attempts to provide a unique level of service in direct relation to the customers' needs. The new website can record the usage history and Sandvik is able to assess which information is most popular. i They can then provide the latest relevant information.

In the whole performance of the marketing communication, Sandvik has good performance across all four levels. However, if they plan to offer a better performance, it is better to have targeted customers and deeply understand them. Thereafter they could customise the communications strategy for each client.

TECO

TECO performs better than Sandvik and know that their targeted customers who are attracted by low price, and customers have a close relationship. Teco know their clients better than Sandvik. TECO's websites provide basic services for the customer, such as products, latest information and contact information. In respect of the third pillar, TECO has started to get involved in social networks but is also in the early stage. In respect of the fourth pillar, they don't yet offer customers unique online services.

TECO puts a lot of effort into online marketing communication with customers. They have a good performance for the first two pillars, but must improve the third and fourth pillars, such as trying to build a relationship and conversation with customers or provide unique services for targeted customers.

5.2 Business strategy in social network

Both TECO and Sandvik are trying to figure out how to do business with social networks. TECO has created a group on Facebook but hasn't managed it well. Sandvik has a project working on this technology and are still assessing how to do it and how they can benefit from these popular social networks. It is difficult to comment on the consequence of doing business on social networks because the online environment is changing, but the company should keep an eye on it and be flexible. Therefore, I would like to suggest that TECO and Sandvik keep working in this area.

Understanding who uses the social networks could let profile the users thereof, and then they can target those they want. Nowadays, according to Figure 4, most users who use social networks are young people, and only 30% of adults are using social networks. Young people could be a perfect target for the company, and the company should think about how to fulfill young people's needs. However, Charlene et al (2007) mentions that regularly refreshing the content is needed, but how frequently should the company update the content? The company might refer to Figure 5, which points out the frequency with which social networks are utilised. It shows that 60% of

teenagers, 68% of young adults and 42% of adults use social networks every day or even more often. If the company focuses on adults, renewing the information every week probably is a good idea because 74% of adults use social networks weekly or even more frequently.

Furthermore, which is the most popular among the popular social networks? According to Figure 6, MySpace is the leading social network in all ages. Facebook users are mostly young adults. If the company wants to start business in social networks, MySpace and Facebook must be their first choices.

After the company acquires the statistics discussed above, they may ask whether the customers are interested in the company profile or products, and if so how interested they are. According to Figure 7, 18 to 26-year-old people have the highest interest in the marketer's, retailer's or service provider's profile and around 30% of the teenagers, young adults, and Gen X'ers (27-40 year olds) also have an interest. For the users interested in marketer social network profiles, about 35% of the youth and 49% of adults visit marketer's profiles daily or more frequently. Over 20% of the youth and adults read marketer's profiles two to three times per week. Therefore, I mean that daily users are more interested in marketer's profiles.

In addition to the data mentioned above, there are other key points stated by Charlene *et al* (2007). The authors say that involving the customer in a conversation and establishing a relationship are also crucial. Social networks are a good platform where the company can have a two way conversation with customers. The company provides the latest information for customers, and customers can comment with their opinions. My interpretation is that social networks provide a unique channel and develop a friendship between the customer and the brand.

The theories from Charlene *et al* (2007) are based on US online users, so if the company wants to do business in other countries, it is better to do a local market survey. This is a limitation.

5.3 Cultural impact

Culture influences the business environment. First of all, the colour might represent a different meaning. Blue is both TECO's and Sandvik's colour. They ought to consider whether the blue colour is bad in certain countries because it might give a negative brand impression to customers. In addition, language is another obstacle they could

face. Anki mentioned during the interview for instance, that they are currently dealing with a language problem. Due to the discrepancy of written vocabulary, they are wondering how to translate the name of the product into different languages. Language is always one of the most critical lessons for the company.

However, the company would feel that some countries accept online information more easily than others. For online business, the international company will meet tougher barriers in East or Southeast Asia than in other regions because of their resistance to the Internet. They should put a lot of effort in extending their online business. Additionally, from the website management perspective, the company also has to think of the importance of culture. It is better to have a local domain name for a collective and masculine society. For instance, the manager of the website should set up a local domain name for local people, such as .se for Sweden and .tw for Taiwan. This action may be able to influence the customers' feelings and behaviours.

Cultural impact is an issue that can be deeply investigated. All international companies will face it and consider it when they develop their communication strategies.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research questions are answered. The recommendations after finishing my study and further research are also presented.

6.1 Answering the research questions

What are the main online communications with customers in TECO's and Sandvik's online branding? How do they manage it?

With respect to the main online channel with customers, Sandvik and TECO both regard the website as the main tool. For Sandvik, they understand that the purposes of updating websites are the business goal, information needed by users, and the strengthening of their brands. Firstly, in the new websites Sandvik integrates all brands, departments and branches as a network. The user can speedily link to every brand or branch they want with ease. Secondly, the information on the websites is presented in a product oriented way instead of an organisational oriented manner, and all products are shown with a photo. Thirdly, the design of the websites looks the same, such as the logo, latest information and colour. Sandvik advance the contact method. The customer can easily comment with their ideas by email or phone. Fifthly, the new website can record the customers' on-line behaviour. All information or product visited by the customers is recorded and then the latest information is updated according to the history. In addition, Sandvik also tries to create new online interactivity with customers on social networks, such as Facebook or Twitter.

However, TECO manages its' websites differently from Sandvik. Firstly, TECO's websites in different countries are designed and managed by the local IT department in order to fulfill local customers' needs. Secondly, the basic services, such as contact information, promotions and email, are available on the website and the latest news is updated regularly. Thirdly, TECO also participates in the social networks, like Facebook, even though TECO's websites are not as good as Sandvik's. They have tried to improve the online communication with customers and understand the importance of online business.

Have TECO and Sandvik tried new channels to improve the business, such as social networks?

TECO and Sandvik have both already realised the emergence of social networks and believe it will be helpful for online business. TECO and Sandvik have started to learn how to increase the interactivity with customers. They know that the information and promotions could be presented via videos, photos and words as well as that regular updates are necessary. Nonetheless, they also have discussions with other industries to share experiences with each other. TECO and Sandvik are still in the early stages and still have to put much effort into social networks.

Have TECO and Sandvik paid attention to the importance of culture in the management of the website?

TECO has interpreted the cultural impact, so the local websites are designed by local IT departments in order to reach the local culture and style. In addition, the language options should be greater for overseas customers. Sandvik however has not dealt with the cultural issue, so they have standardised all their websites. No matter whether in a global or local website, the information is the same. But they are facing the language problem caused by cultural differences. Sandvik is confused about how to translate products' name into other languages in order to fulfill its local vocabulary.

Cultural impact is one of the most crucial issues for an international company. The obstacles caused by cultural differences will come to you, regardless of whether you intend to deal with them or not.

6.2 Reflections and suggestions for future studies

The Internet has changed many aspects in the business field and also attracted my attention. Online branding is still a new topic for B2B industries and the company's website is only one of the media which is appealing to customers as a communications tool. Therefore, I would like to recommend further study about the use of websites as part of a communication strategy. Use of the Internet is a basic topic to understand how the company utilizes it and know the importance of the Internet for the company. Secondly, the global and local domain names refer to the global and local websites. Everything on the website will influence the company's branding, such as layout and information. Investigating global and local domain

names made me interpret how the domain names work. Thirdly, according to the literature, communication strategies are the core of online branding and include four pillars. The customer plays a higher position than before and all companies want to understand and satisfy the customers' needs. Thus, the investigation of use of the Internet, websites, and communication strategies could present the performance of the company's online branding generally. Many perspectives should also be investigated in order to map comprehensive online branding for the company. For the empirical findings, I chose a phone interview with TECO and a face to face interview with Sandvik, which is a qualitative approach. These two companies do business around the world and greatly contributed to this study.

However, there were some obstacles and limitations while I was doing this work. Few companies have a special department or organization for online branding and most of them are in the early stage. The selection of the case study is one of the limitations. In addition, distance might be another problem for me because the head office of TECO is in Taiwan and the only way for me to get answers was through the phone call interview, which has some uncertain factors which might cause misunderstanding. And the theory about the social networks was surveyed from US online users. If the company wants to do business in other countries, it is probably not suitable for the local market.

This study is valuable for the companies that are interested in online branding or have already done it but do not know how to improve it. If the company wants to do online branding, this study can assist them in understanding the importance thereof for online branding in online marketing communication, which consists of four pillars, and to manage online branding stage by stage. Secondly, if the company has already paid attention to online branding but does not know how to improve it, social networks and cultural impact could be the next factors to think about. Social networks provide new interactivity with customers and cultural impact is used to fulfill local customers' needs in different countries.

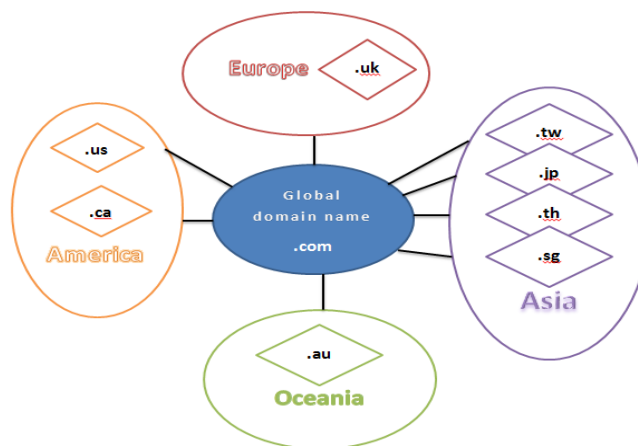
For further research, social networks might be helpful for business-to-customer (B2C) business, but whether business-to-business (B2B) business could be successful in social networks is a question. Culture is one of the factors that influence marketing communication strategies, and the follower can keep investigating other impacts that could influence marketing communication.

6.3 Recommendations for the TECO and Sandvik

A systematic management of the websites

The company should establish a domain name system. For example, TECO could establish a core domain name, which is easily available for all customers, and connect with other local domain names to be a network of websites (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The network of TECO's domain names



Source: Own construction

Then TECO could have an integrated strategy for online branding. Once they establish the whole network, the strategies are capable of being comprehensive or focusing on each area, such as the strategies for Asia, Europe, or America and combined with the ideas I discussed above.

Precise STP Analysis

It is very difficult for a company to cover every type of customer. However, according to the interview with Sandvik, they said all customers are their customers. A company should divide customers into several segments and then target the segment that has the most customer potential and a better opportunity to succeed. Finally, the company should position itself based on their strengths. A clear STP Analysis could cause a series of changes for a company. The company would know what they have in this business and market, and which customers they are going to focus on. The company will not spend unnecessary time and resources on the wrong customers. Therefore, Sandvik could start to make a clear STP Analysis to understand themselves and the customer.

Appendix 1

Below is the questionnaire used for the interviews and consists of three main objectives: (1) use of the Internet (2) global and local domain names (3) communication strategies with customers. The data collection was accomplished by conducting interviews via a questionnaire and secondary data was collected through their websites.

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Online branding

Topic: Online branding- the implementation of a global domain name and local domain name

Aim of the research: investigate brand management via the Internet as a tool and how to communicate with customers through global domain names and local domain names

Approaches: by the four pillars of online branding: (1) understanding customers (2) marketing communication (3) interactivity (4) content. Also how these communication approaches are utilized in both global domain names and local domain names

The use of the Internet

The Internet enables database marketers to increase their communication capabilities with their customers in terms of the speed and relevance of the communication (Chris O'Leary, Sally Rao, Chad Perry, 2004). Sawhey et al. (2005) stated that the Internet enhances the ability of firms to engage customers in collaborative innovation in

essentially five ways: (1) Extended reach (2) Enhanced interactivity (3) Greater persistence (4) Increased speed (5) Higher flexibility.

1. Does the company have a special department for IT? Why do you have it?
2. How big is the impact of the Internet for the company's branding?

Global and local domain name (Website)

In general, the domain name could be categorized into two types: a global domain name “.com” and a local domain name, such as “.se” for Sweden and “.tw” for Taiwan. Domain names are useful for Internet users to identify the primary entities and resources on the Internet. The Multinational corporations use both global and local domain names in order to approach their online identity (Murphy *et al.*, 2003; Tan *et al.*, 2003). According to Hanson (2000) and Ward and Lee (2000), they both state that an effective online presence is crucial for the success of a brand on the Internet.

1. What are the differences between global and local domain names? Such as logo, color, layout, and so on.
2. What roles do global and local domain names play for the company's branding?
3. Could you give me an example about which local domain name is impressive or special?
4. What effects do the global and local domain names have for the future of the company?

Communications strategies with customers

According to Geoffrey (2007), online branding consists of four pillars: (1) **Understanding customers**: such as the service-side data capture, client-side data capture, online surveys, or databases (2) **Marketing communications**: the communication via the Internet provides free flow, information exchange, and two-way communication. Online communication tools are the company website, email, and other online techniques (3) **Interactivity**: online interactivity is the central pillar and very different from the past, such as blogs, RSS feeds, or online communities (4) **Content**: successful online branding should offer targeted customers with unique messages, unique functionality and unique content to help them undertake a particular transaction, such as website design, website search, webpage flow, information search, and website content grouping.

1. What methods do you use to understand your customers?
2. Who are your targeted customers? Why?
3. What kind of mutual communication with customers do you have?
4. How do you improve the interactivity with customers?
5. Can the websites provide unique services to customers?
6. Does the company depend on online or offline channels?

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