**How to Improve B2B Online Marketing Strategy for A
Case Study Company: JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd**

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This is a research-oriented thesis commisoned by a Chinese SME, JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd from China. The thesis aims at assisting the case study company to improve its **online marketing strategy in foreign B2B** environment.

JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd is a paper manufacturing and selling business unit that is currently facing its transitional phase of going to foreign market from domestic (Chinese) market. This shift generates opportunities accompanied by two challenges, one of which is from domestic to abroad (culture), the other is from traditional way to using online tools .Hence, briefly, possible online marketing tools and the synthesis of the tools in this specific business environment (B2B) should be discussed.

The core theory is based on the communication theory from the marketing mix. To be more specific, online marketing tools and strategies were emphasized. The suggestion offered in the last chapter is a coordinated marketing plan for case study company, revolving the research problem, based on theatrical and empirical study.

Keywords

B2B, online marketing, exporting ,foreign market, coordinated marketing strategy, Chinese SME, Paper industry

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The initiative of author to write this thesis resulted from her own experience as an intern working in JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd and from seeing the company struggling at this transitional phase when shifting its business from domestic market to foreign markets. As an SME (small and medium sized enterprise) itself is mature and sophisticated with its business (manufacture and sell filter paper) in China. However, when marching into foreign market, the geographical distance limited it from using traditional ways like face-to face negotiation or telephone calls. Thus, online marketing is necessary for bridging this gap. However, problems arising since the company has to work with western ways, for instance, using different online marketing tools at different stages (for instance, Facebook page should be established and no email at initial phase).

Here is a brief of the Company.

JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd., established in 1986, is a modernised paper corporation which is an integration of research, development, design, producing, marketing and selling (domestically and rarely abroad). Possessing its own branches and agencies in the main big cities in china, it is a medium-sized company with 50 personnel. JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd found in 1986, has 30years of experience in conducting business in the filter paper field and has business connections in Asian countries and Russia.

Its factory owns an independent production workshop, an assembly workshop, a moulding workshop, a machine-repair workshop, a raw material and finished product warehouse, research and development centres, expert buildings and other infrastructures.

JingFengDa defines its mission as, high quality low cost, and environmental-friendliness. It is specialized in filter papers which cater to the automobile and food industry and labs. It has its own factory for producing. The high- end products comprise more than 80% of its total production. (JingFengDa, 2014a)

Because it's exporting business just developing, there is no detailed segmentation of the foreign market according to different geographical areas.

As a consequence of the advancement and wide use of the internet, online marketing is ascending and it is providing its overwhelming advantages over the traditional ways of marketing. An increasing number of online marketing techniques and tools have been applied and deployed everywhere.

Business to business is largely thriving all around the world; there have been lots of theories and strategies on this topic. And one global trend is that the purchasing power and financial capacity is shifting from the West to the East. China, as a rising economic power, in its domestic market, there is a growing number of B2B SMEs sprouting up. JingFengDa Paper industry is one of them which is born domestically where there the competition, dominated by the big companies, is already extensively stiff, thus going internationalisation could give them a broader view and more opportunities. Therefore, they need to get a whole picture of today's online marketing and also in global B2B context.

Today is an age of customers; online marketing has also evolved from product-oriented to customer-oriented, striving for gaining both market share and mindshare. This also influences online marketing strategy of companies. And online marketing now plays a pivotal role in reaching customers effectively and efficiently.

1.2   The purpose of the thesis

Considering the truth that online marketing is much more developed in the western countries, in addition to that JingFengDa Paper´s lack of a systematic online marketing strategy in B2B field, this thesis is to carry out a plan for the case study company who is a beginner at exporting and in scarcity of the proper strategies, But have an intent to go globally.

This thesis can be thus used as one guidance for the case study company to enter foreign market by deploying proper online marketing plan when the company is still at the scratch of foreign trade.

1.3   Structure of the thesis

The basic components of thesis consist of introduction, theoretical support, and also the research in which there will carry out qualitative research through two interviews. The suggestions based on the data analysis will be given at the end of this thesis.

The theoretical study incorporates two big topics, which are Business to Business and online marketing. In each big topic, there are subtopics. For instance, B2B characteristics and B2B branding are under the category of B2B. And for online marketing, there are several popular strategies listed with the detailed explanation of them.

The research will be qualitative research through interviewing two companies marketing manager, and there will be a questionnaire formulated concerning the research problem and based on the theoretical part. The questions will be asked in a more practical and concise way to avoid common sense or general questions.

1.3 research problem and research objectives

The research is to identify the online-marketing method used by the case study company and have an insight into the advantageous aspect as well as the insufficiency of its online marketing communication in B2B foreign trade, in order to give valuable and meaningful suggestions.

To be more specific, the research target is JingFengDa Paper Co., Lt., there could be first desk study about what online marketing method it has utilized and then two interviews concerning the research problem and based on the questionnaire.

The research problems could be interpreted as,

1. What online marketing tools should be implemented at which stage of the marketing process in B2B foreign trade?
2. How to make the application of the tools a synthesized marketing plan for Jing Feng da Paper Co., Ltd at this phase when its foreign business is at scratch.

An iterative statement of the background of the case study company, Jing Feng da Paper Co., Ltd is as following,

It is a Chinese SME who specialized in producing filter paper and then wholesale them (B2B). And it has some experience and connection in domestic market (China), however,

they currently try to wholesale to market abroad. Now, its outwards business to foreign market is completely reliant on the internet. And the company is struggling in getting customers through online marketing process.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Characteristics of B2B

B2B is short term for business to business, which means the transaction between a wholesaler and a retailer or between manufacturer and wholesaler. It is kind of contradict to concept of B2C (business to customer) or B2G (business to government) type of business. (Marketing principles, 2015.)

The communications in B2B context can be conducted by one staff from one company contact one personnel from another corporate though the negotiation by using online contact ways like social media. Buying behaviour in a B2B environment is the decision making process is longer than B2C business, since more people are participating in this decision making stage. This is because that the transaction is big, buyers usually spend more time judging the quality, brand or considering the cost-effectiveness and risks.

This lead to the situation that buyers may try lots of brands before establishing the long term relationship with the seller. And the detailed process may be meeting the seller several times and asking for the samples to test or gather information from all kinds of aspects, for instance, searching through the internet or ask some of the sellers' business partners. (Dr. Temporal, P 2005)

In this situation, the brand image is very important, which means that the brand should be differentiated to attract the buyers to believe this is what they want. And the company needs to segment the market accurately to aim at the right buyer group.

The B2B partners tend to keep the long term business relationship owing to the cut down of consumption or time searching for the new partner and examine the quality and do the research.

2.2 B2B marketing mix

Marketing mix, a well-known tool for marketer, can be understood as two concepts, one is 4Ps concepts, including product, price, place and promotion. (McCarthy, Jerome E.)

And this one can be associate with another concept, called 4Cs, to better sketch the marketing strategies and give a frame to the marketing work for the business. (Philip & Keller 2012)

The analysis of **B2B Marketing mix** in the manufacturing industry is essential, it assist the manufacturer or the seller to understand the purchasing behaviour of the B2B consumers better and thus provide better marketing strategy.

Products provide Customers solutions

It is an age of customers, the customer-orientation is the core value in any business. In B2B, the products manufactured by the company must live up to the needs of the potential customers. In B2B, both quality and quantity means a lot to the business counterpart, since the volume of goods is big, accordingly, the quality is of significance. (Business-Business Marketing 2013)

Jing Feng da Paper Co., Ltd offers high-end products, those filter paper types are for lab use, automobile use, industrial use and chemical use. It has its own workshop and mill, so basically it can offer big amount of products.

Price represents customers Costs

In contrast to B2C, the total price paid once in B2B is much higher since the buyer pur-chase in bulk. So the suitable and negotiable price is significant to the consumer and they desire to get their money's worth. And this situation, branding is important since it added value to the products. (Management-Study-Guide 2013a)

JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd provide products at a negotiable price if buyer would like to buy in big amount. And its price is at the average level among the Chinese filter paper providers. However, the company tried to use less price strategy.

Place offers convenience

It is very important to provide the product at a **place** that is accessible and convenient to the consumers, but at the same time, it is also very important to come up with the right channel of distribution because it also influences other steps in the marketing mix. Here the place refers to all the online channels. (Management-Study-Guide 2013b)

JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd.'s foreign trade will first take place through the internet. It means that the transaction will be done through the online platform. For the company, it has two web site to get the money from buyers, one is the homepage of the company, and another one is ALIBABA online platform which is famous for B2B foreign trade.

In desk study, author's observation on company's marketing tool will discuss more about this platform.

Promotion enables 2-ways communication

Promotion refers to the means of communication a company uses to promote its brand among its clients. In this regard, the product or brand must be clearly distinguished from other such as the competitor and good relations also have to be established with the customers such as after sales services. Promoting one's brand successfully increases the sales and eventually earns profits for the organization. (Management-Study-Guide 2013c)

This part will be unfold in detail in B2B marketing communication theory, to be more specific, all about online communication tools.

2.3 B2B branding

A branded item signalled to the consumer the origin of the product provided assurance about the place and methods of production, and certified that brand-owing corporate entity stood solidly behind the brand.

Branding is theoretically part of products category in marketing mix concept. However, it is intangible elements of products, and it could also be important in communication process during marketing.

The goal of branding is differentiation in the competition over the competitors' brands to create uniqueness and added-value which is attached to the brand. Product is tangible, it generate the market share, in contrast to brand which is intangible and occupy the mindshare.

The brand equity is consist used theory in the topic of branding, which consist of three parts, consumer equity, brand value and retaining of the customers. Consumer equity can be perceived as how much mindshare is occupied by the consumer, how often the brand image is appearing in consumers mind. Consumer equity is brand awareness, brand associations, brand symbols, perceive quality, customers' loyalty. And the consumer equity affects the brand value, which is another element of the brand equity, which is consumers' purchasing will influence the finical performance of the brand.

Considering the buying behaviour in B2B context is characterized by big transaction, time consuming decision making and intent of long-term cooperation, branding can highly evoke the customers loyalty, illustrated in another way, means cost-effectiveness, customers retention and repeat purchase. (Miller 2012a, 5-6.)

2.4   B2B marketing communication

Marketing communication falls into the category of promotion of the marketing mix. It refers to the efforts of promotional activities which can strengthen the customers' loyalty, gain customers attention, and improve the customers' interaction with the company.

In B2B, the marketing communication can be different from that of B2C. The tools or activities used are more or less the same, but the role or function of each tool may be different.

In B2B, the marketing communication still aims at creating value by improving the relationship with customers. But all the promotional activities are not carried out for the individual, but for a company or a group of involvers. This means, in B2B, the communication should focus on elements like long-term, reliability, convey of information rather than merely emotion. This is decided by the characteristics of the B2B.

Online marketing and several most used tools

Online advertising, also called online marketing or Internet advertising is a form of marketing and advertising which uses Internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. It includes email marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, many types of display advertising (including web banner advertising), and mobile advertising. (Miller 2012b, 101-105.)

2.4.1   Email marketing and opt-in email

Result from the wide spread use of internet in B2B and the growing number of ecommerce involvers, email marketing is commonly regarded as one of the major method of reaching the customers effectively and efficiently. Basically, any email conveys commercial or promotional message sent to customers can be broadly recognized as email marketing.

Email marketing is invariably done in the following formats, periodical newsletters; sales letters, graphic and electric directs consist of products/service list. The purpose of email marketing is to boost the customers' loyalty, retain the old customers, identify new customers and encourage the repeat purchase.

The advantages are apparently originated from the truth that it could achieve the goal of contacting customers regardless of the geographic distances, time zone, in the way of lowering the cost and optimizing the resources. Most importantly, it reaches the targeted person directly. The effectiveness and efficiency of the built- up of the customers relationship can be measured by keeping track of the clicks and investigation in new registered customers. In this way, the ROI (return on investment) can be easily examined. Additionally, email marketing allows the company to send multiple copies to a host of potential customers.

Another approach is OPT-IN email, also known as permission marketing, which refers to a method to bring in quality leads. Opt-in email is fundamentally used on the Webpages for customers actively register with their email address and allow the seller to send the relative promotional and commercial information of the company. In other words, this eliminates or avoids the customers' reluctance of the massive irrelevant emails, since the registered users have a higher intend into purchasing the certain kinds of products of the company. Moreover, higher satisfaction and positive interaction has been involved in using opt-in email

Nevertheless, the companies should responsibly generate value by utilizing the built-up email list ethnically correct to avoid customer's complaint and satisfaction on irrelative, annoying emails which could ruin the customer relationships. (Miller 2012b, 101-105.)

2.4.2   Search engine marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing, short in SEM, is a format of online marketing, refers to generating visibility of the company among the search engine result pages. An effort of refinement and extend the relative content of the information can enhance companies ranking in the result page. The largest search engine marketing (SEM) vendors were Google Ad Words, Bing Ads, and Baidu (most-used Chinese search engine). Considered as one of the most growing online marketing component among others, there are several tools to

analyze the rankings and popularity of the Webpages according to keywords typed in or the relevance about the information searched. (Miller 2012c, 106-108.)

Search engine optimization (SEO)

It is a strategy incorporated in search engine marketing. It is a supplementary to the search engine ads, in which companies' ranking is advanced by paying to search engine webs, for example Google adds. However, search engine optimization is to generate more presence of the webs by rewriting the context and modifying the keywords or insert more pictures, plant videos. Thus, in the search engine result page, the web can be more visible in the ranking. (Miller 2012d, 109-113.)

Search engine paid ads

In contrast to the SEO, there is also one method which exposes the company's information on the search engine result page that is search engine advertising. This can be illustrated by the example of google AdWords, which is growing rapidly these days. The company will pay for the advertising which will appear on the result page for viewer or browsers click on that adds. (Miller 2012e, 114-117.)

2.4.3   Company's webpages

In B2B, the company's web pages are the basics for its promotion and presence to other potential business partners or potential customers. It is of significance to provide an informative and comprehensive web which can give most of the elementarily required information to the reader and thus gain attractiveness. There are different web pages owed by company to function for different purpose, for instance, present the company profile or strengthen the customer's relationship or create the interaction between the customers. But the company's home page lay the foundation for customers' perception of it.

The layout and the design of the company webpages essentially needs following sub-section, homepage, contact, PRODUCT/SERVICE list and even after sale service and forum.

The higher the comprehensiveness of the webpage, the better understanding of the business will be perceived by the viewer.

Forum could be included as a section to improve the interaction between the company and customers and even among the customers, thus the higher possibility of purchase can be resulted in.

A well designed company webpage should be a synergy of both highly relative information and also the company's mission and vision and cooperate social responsibility. (Miller 2012f, 117–121.)

2.4.4   Social media marketing and Content marketing

Social media are publically perceived as the social media webpages, social networks like Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, tweeter, LinkedIn, blogs, google+(Chinese ones are Wechat,Sina micro blog, etc.,), and also instant message, which aims at sharing and producing content based on users, generating information online. The format includes photos, text, videos.

The concept focuses on low barriers for common people to enter this community and improve the interaction with users to share the opinions and experiences. In the business environment, this lead to the electronic mouth of word opinion on the company's business performance through the internet. In spite of this, the individual opinion from the third-party is considered as the most valuable information which will affect company's image. Thus, the manipulation of the social media marketing tends to flow out of the company's control since the customers' recommendation and word of mouth comments are the leading factors to decide whether it is a success.

The proper approach is to strengthen the self-promoting and enhance the positive interaction for long-term relationship, and also the short time immediate hit may create a buzz in the community. (Miller 2012g, 122-125.)

Content marketing has been popularized by a multitude of B2B companies who agree with the higher investment in its content which refers to information or the experience related to the end-user or audience in the context. A variety of forms used in content marketing are pictures, videos, customer's stories and info graphics.

Most of the B2B companies established the blog or use their home site to integrate the content marketing with other online marketing tactics. The purpose of content marketing is to enhance the customer involvements and simultaneously deliver the information of the business in more graphic way. Seemingly, it is not focus on the selling of the products, rather, it concentrate more one customers retention and interaction.

The qualified and value-added information once delivered, customers involved in content marketing will get themselves acquainted with more detailed information such as, the development process, decision making process of the company, therefore gaining the customers loyalty which is important especially in B2B.

The success of content marketing is measured by investigating the number of visitors and the growing number of clicks. However, the genuine measurement is the improvement of the sales and the growth of revenue. (Miller 2012h, 126–129.)

2.4.5 Web banner

It is the format of the advertisement appears as a banner or pop-up on the webpages carried out by the add server. A click on the banner will lead the user go directly to the web which the company provide the information. There are banners of the different size and appears in the different ways. (Miller 2012i, 130-133.)

2.4.6 Online marketing platform

Online marketing platform is an online marketing place which has integrate business directory, local search engine, search engine optimization (SEO) tool, customer relationship management (CRM) package and content management system (CMS).

EBay, amazon, and newly rising Alibaba are the best examples of the online platforms. It is catering to both B2B and B2C. The combination of all the functions of searching, filtering, contacting, managing, marketing and selling, make it resemble the real life market place, where the customers can experience the whole process of purchasing.

The advantages of the online platform are apparently to those SMEs who haven't the brand and capacity to gain visibility in short time, however, the platform offers the chance to gain the presence by displaying their company profile, product lists, contact and details about the business process including the payment method with a huge loads of other business with the security of the transaction ensured by the big name of the platform. Additionally, it has gathered a lot of business at the platform, it could be highly attractive to those customers who intent to seek purchasing without consumption of much time and a sense of insecurity.

Despite that, it allows the B2B partners to carry out in time online chatting which could largely improve the effectiveness and efficiency of interaction and communication. (Miller 2012j, 152–154.)

2.5   E-CRM (online customer relationship management)

In traditional way of marketing, there is always involves CRM, refers to customer relationship management. In the era of e-commerce, the CRM tend to resort to the internet as well and how to manage the customers' relationship digitally is a vital topic in online B2B marketing. The convenience is the company can use the database to better manage the relationship with the customers.

Company's webpage is the basic environment to generate the leads which may bring the possible purchase in the future. And company can use the database and customers' detailed profile to better offer the customized service to cater to customer's need. And there should be some convenient function for customers to make the webpage informative. The forum or online chatting can be established as a tool to better the customers experience during the purchase. If all the tools are used in a well-combined way, it can generate more value for the company's sale.

Believed by Miller, there are five steps involved in online marketing process to manage the relationship of the customers, these five phases are, reach, acquisition, conversion, retention, loyalty. And different online marketing tools have their own role in each stage.

Reach, means that exposing your company information, thus customers can use SEM/SEO to get to know you, or they can get tour information through advertising and blogs/PR.
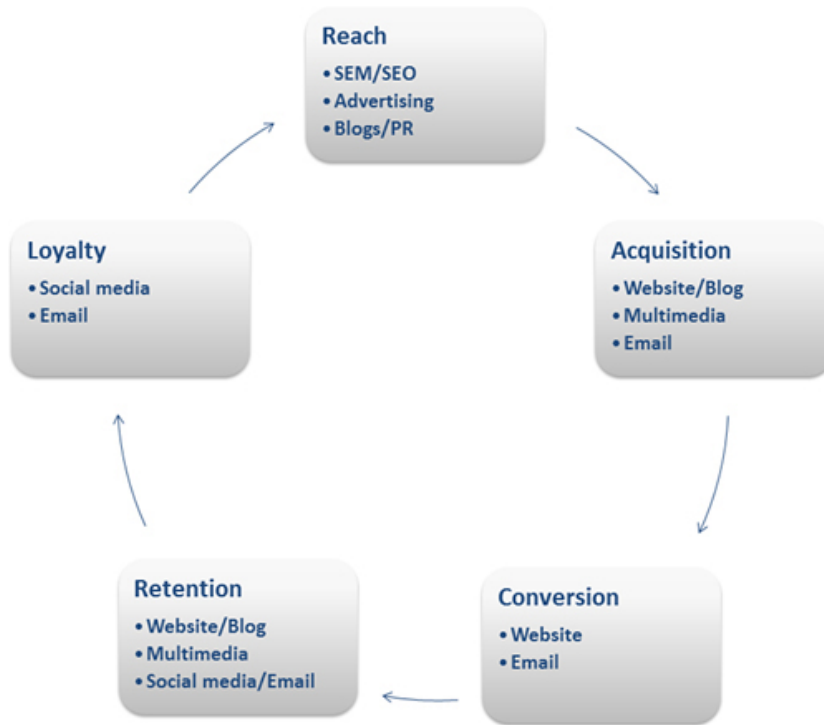
Acquisition means customers start to be interested in you and may have a closer look at company's information and get more involved in interaction with the seller. During this stage, it is always seen that potential customers visit company's page or blog more, and get more active in multimedia, even there will be emails sent and replied by the potential customers.

Conversion is the stage that seller persuades the potential customer to become consumer and make a purchase, webpages and email are most used at this stage.

Retentions refers to the effort made by the company by mostly using web/blog, multimedia, social media, email to get consistent consumer attention about the company and try to make them do repeat purchase of the products.

the final stage is the loyalty, which means that consumer become the advocate of the company and lead referrals to other potential customers, and then the new customers will enter the first stage. (Miller 2012k, 163-168.)

Figure 1: define the stages of managing the customer relationship

Reach
- SEM/SEO
- Advertising
- Blogs/PR

Acquisition
- Website/Blog
- Multimedia
- Email

Conversion
- Website
- Email

Retention
- Website/Blog
- Multimedia
- Social media/Email

Loyalty
- Social media
- Email

2.6   Summary of the theory

The theory part consists of most of the theoretical support needed in B2B online market-ing. Firstly, it is important to understand the differences of the B2B and B2C by introducing the characteristics of B2B and its customers purchase behaviours. And also the B2B branding can improve the efficiency of the B2B marketing and also give competence to company's future prospect.

There are also several online marketing tools introduced to the B2B SEMs who are at the scratch of their global B2B business. These tools are commonly used by most of companies, however, only the combined and cohesive usage of the tools can bring the efficiency.

3 Research

3.1 Qualitative research

Compared with quantitative research method which aims at revealing the tendency by collecting and analysing big amount of data, qualitative research method is in pursuit of having an in-depth understating of the research questions by answering how and why.

Basically, most used instruments are interviews and surveys carried out for a small group of participants in contrast to numerous respondents. Having an insight of the phenomenon and trying to find out the details entailed and also the influencing factors of it are the ultimate goal of qualitative research method.(research method, 2015a)

In qualitative research, it is of essence to secure the reliability of the collected data, since the frequently happened problem is collection of misrepresented data. Same research tools should invariably give the same result which is applicable to the phenomenon. And during the data gathering process, it is significant to think about the key factors for collecting trustful data which will represent the fairness and availability. The data collection will affect the data analysis and also the conclusion to the research, so it is considerable to certify that the right target and right research questions are chosen. Hence, when collecting data, the research problems should be clearly defined and the researcher should always keep in mind about what is wanted and what is needed in the research. Additionally, the research should be conducted in an honest way to assure that the same method in this research will all the way come to the same conclusion.

When it comes to the analysis of data, in order to get trustworthy and valid result, analysis should actively think about the connections about the similar data that have been gathered. To be more specific, similar data should genuinely connect to one another rather than happen to coincide with one another. (research method, 2015b)

In this thesis, the qualitative research method is selected, since the qualitative and in-depth answer can give an insight of the improvement of online marketing communication in global B2B. The qualitative research will be conducted in two ways, one part of which is

desk study of the case study company's online marketing techniques , another one is the interviews with three people from different companies.. One is marketing manager from the case study company, and another one from another company who has similar background and also doing the similar business in filter paper industry. The last interview would be one foreigner whose company is the potential buyer of the case study company. This person himself is a staff in marketing department and from him, we could know what kind of marketing is expected when customers are searching for seller.

3.2   Population and sampling

Population refers to the group that who will provide information for the research problem to which the researcher is going to identify the answer.

According to this population, in research, there will be a sampling frame which incorporates all the members from the population that is wished to be researched. However, it is manifest, there is a limitation on how many of them can be researched because of time and resource. Consequently, only some representatives can be researched and these representatives from the population, called sample. (Explorable, 2015)

In this thesis, the samples are the potential customers and those companies who are conducting similar business, since samples from both group can help to reveal what kind of marketing strategy are of value. Additionally, the case study company is one sample in research as well.   Not so many samples will be studied since author is interested in indepth answers to conduct qualitative research.

The criteria of selecting companies are, the ones who are in filter paper industry, doing similar business. Specifically, the companies who are doing cross border business and highly reliant on internet marketing and have good knowledge of online marketing strategies will be targeted. The criteria for choosing the right interviewees are in marketing department, experience in doing online marketing and having an insight of marketing to foreign buyers.
So here is a brief look at the interviewees, including information about their company and their position:

3.3 Data collection process

Data refers to the materials in the format of numbers, words or graphics which is of supportive relevance for the study or the research.

Data is of significance for the research since it reveals the tendency or truth concerning the research problems. However, the collected data needs to be reliable, valid and accurate, otherwise, the analysis of data will be irrelevant to the research problem. (stat trek, 2015a)

Basically, there are two types of data can be collected, one is the primary data, another one is secondary data. Primary data is the collection of relevant resources collected for research by the researcher, in contrast to that secondary data is collected by previous researcher or other person.

Primary data is collected by researcher through interview, observation, surveys. The advantages of primary data is reliable, valid and accurate since the researcher knows the whole process of the collection of the data. For instance, primary data always gained by interview, observations, surveys through filling in the questionnaires. It is done by costly and time consuming data collection method. (stat trek, 2015b)

The secondary data, is the data collected already by someone and already documented, obviously, get an access to the secondary data can cut down the expenditure and the time which will be spent. However, the reliability and validity is suspicious since the current researcher has no idea about the details of the collection process of the data, and it may be expired and less valuable as the time lapse. (stat trek, 2015c)

In this research, primary data gained through the both desk study and interview. Desk study of how the case company's online marketing tools is through author's observation. And the primary data gathered through interview will be a supplementary for the desk study and also help the researcher to have an insight of the research problems. There will be two interviews carried out for the data collection. one interviewee is case study company's marketing manager Mr DongZhibing, , another one is Mr.Liu who is working in Xinji PengRui filter paper Co., Ltd as a marketing manager as well. Here is a chart of interviewee's information.

interviewees	position	company	Date of interview	place

Dong Zhibing (Dong)	Marketing manager	JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd	1.2.2015	Shijiazhuang
Mr. Liu	Marketing manager	Xinji PengRui filter paper Co., Ltd	12.2.2015	Shijiazhuang

3.4 Interview questions and questionnaire

Questionnaire is a set or series of question intended to collect data from respondents. Questionnaire is an element of data collection and can be conducted as follows. Firstly, interviewers are dispatched to select approach and question respondents; secondly, by offering reward to respondents that reply the questionnaire; thirdly, when interviewing in person, communication aids are used and when sent by post a return envelope is sent along with. (Malhotra 2010, 334)

This is a qualitative research based on the theory as well as some understanding about the case study company. The question types is open end questions which encourage the interviewees to give in-depth information about what they understand about the questions and the solutions. Basically, both of the interviewees are marketing manager, even though they are from different company, they are doing similar tasks that is online marketing. Additionally, the company background are quite similar, both are in paper industry, try to shift focus from domestic market to abroad. It is nessasery to mention that second interviewee's company Xinji PengRui filter paper Co., Ltd has longer time experience in foreign country, even though it is specialised in mainly automobile filter paper and some lab use filter paper, still, its answer could be very valuable, since the situation is very similar.

Basically, the questionnaires for both interviewees were asking the same questions, however, during the interview, there could be some minor difference, which actually doesn't make any difference. In appendices, the questionnaire for both companies' interviewees could be browsed. And following is the analysis about questionnaire.

There are two big section of the questionnaire, in both of which consist of several questions. The first section focus on some main points about B2B marketing. For example, how B2B marketing is different from B2C marketing, what should be especially paid attention for? And how branding give advantages in B2B sales. Also, concerning B2B type

business is happening online, how it is different from the traditional ways of marketing (face to face, phone calls, flyers, etc.)?

The second section is about asking detailed online marketing tools used in B2B foreign market. To be more specific, when to use which tool to achieve what expected result? Also, two interviewees will be asked to give a coordinated online marketing plan according to their understanding and experience.

Thirdly, one more question will be added to the second interview for asking for some suggestions for the case study company, after researcher simply illustrated the case study company's situation.

After two interviews, there will be a gap between the answers given by two interviewees. Xinji PengRui filter paper Co., Ltd is better and more sophisticated than the case study company, so, if the difference of the answers are studied, the method for improvement can be revealed as well.

3.5   Validity and reliability

While making research plan for commissioner there are some factors may lead to the research invalid or the result unreliable. It is necessary to identify those potential factors before beginning of the project. Validity and reliability are the indicators of a successful research. (Uni, 2015a)

Validity is of significance in research since it represent that the certain results of the research is valid and it reflect the truth. The measurement of the validity is to see whether the same results will be generated in all kinds of occasion by using certain instruments. If the respondents give the same kind of the reply to the same type of the questions, then the results is believable and valid. It is a process of transferring the data to the valid truth. Even when the different researchers will analyse the same data, it will come to the same conclusion. Hence, readers could easily find research is conducted on certain ground.

In qualitative research, in order to keep the validity of the research results, the researcher has to certify that the research questions are relative to the research problems, Also making sure that using the right method to analyse data and the results will also be the same.

Reliability refers to how trustworthy the results are. In this way, the data needs to be comprehensive and the instruments for analysing must be reliable.

From the beginning, there can be stated unclear objectives and problems, which can result in ambiguity. It is common situation, when the group focuses on too many goals to reach. The end result can be found as bad collection of data and inappropriate research. Secondly, there can appear certain problems in choosing the right sample, for example, sample is too small for research. Another problem is the situation when interviewees are not sufficiently qualified or do not pay attention to answers. In this case, the research can lose credibility because of insufficient data. ((Uni,2015b)

Thirdly, instruments of collecting data can be designed in an improper way, for example, questionnaire of the project is complicated and contains awkward questions or there are a big number of questions, and participants are not motivated to complete forms. Furthermore, when data analysis is conducted focusing on range of technics rather than results, the research would be useless.

Similarly, the research would be meaningless if qualitative methods would be mixed up with quantitative. Additionally, if the project team will not follow the implementation plan and research will be completed too late, it will not have credible results, and commissioner will not rely on findings.
 (Korostoff, K 2013b)

In this specific research, validity and reliability can be fulfilled.

Firstly, concerning validity, the questionnaire was formulated in a relevant way, revolving the research problem: What online marketing tools should be implemented at which stage of the marketing process in B2B foreign trade?
How to make the application of the tools a synthesized marketing plan for Jing Feng da Paper Co., Ltd at this phase when its foreign business is at scratch? Afterwards, two research problems are subdivided in several questions in questionnaire. In this way, more detailed answers will be given by respondents. And the chosen interviewees will answer in concise, honest way to provide data.

Secondly, in terms of reliability, the instruments used here is interview based on the questionnaires. The questionnaire is based on both theoretical support and also author's observation on its marketing strategy. Interviewees are marketing managers who has

worked on online marketing strategy, so they can provide direct and valid answers to the research questions.

4 Key results and Analysis

It is a qualitative research in which two interviews will be conducted based on the questionnaires to ask two respondents from two companies. Before this, there will be a quick observation by researcher about case study Company's online marketing strategy, in order to have more understanding about what tools has been used to which extent.

For interviews part, the key results and analysis will be presented in two ways, firstly, there will be answers to each question from different respondents, and then there will be a concluded analysis about the overall answer from two respondents separately.

4.1 Observation on company's online marketing strategy

Desk study refers to collecting and analyzing the available information obtained through the previous research revolving around the research problem and objectives.

The necessity of doing desk study primarily lies in cutting down the avoidable fieldwork and enhances the productivity and proficiency of the work. Additionally, it renders the work more cost-effective and diminishes the involvement of the risk. It is also commonly recognized as the fundamental phase of quantitative research simply because more initiative impression and understanding should be obtained in bid to lay the foundation of the upcoming pragmatic fieldwork or other practical steps. The unawareness and neglecting of the potential problems or the lack of systematic planning based on exist information can lead to the failure. From this perspective having an overall view of the plan and assimilate useful information is conducive to the whole plan. (J. H. Charman 2013)

The online marketing method used by the company

Company's webpage

Company's webpage is well-organized in two languages, English and Chinese,   for both domestic and international market. And the information is comparatively comprehensive as an SME.
 It has sections like home,product,contact,coporate social responsibility and   about us, basically include all the fundamental information about company's profile,capacity,history of development, product list, certificate of quality, pictures and videos about producing process in factory and working environment of the office.

Email marketing

The company builds up its list of potential customers or previous costumers list through online marketing platform and previous purchase record and SEO of relative company. The newsletters for or the update of product list or product recommendation are sent to the customers. And there is also a segmentation of the customers according to their needs of the category and volume of the products.

The opt-in email register system is used on its home site and also the blog where there are information and content about the company. If the customers are willing to know more about the company, there email address will be sent to the company through opt-in system and then newsletter will be sent.

Web banner

Company has its banners in some of B2B marketing page together with other brand to generate more customer attention. But it hasn't started to have its banner on some foreign webpages.

Social media marketing

Because of the blockages of Facebook and tweeter and LinkedIn in china. So far, company hasn't any profile in these big social media. And this lead to an obvious incompetence to the company compared to their foreign competitors who has built up a community through Facebook, tweeter and LinkedIn. Additionally, linked in has playing an increasingly professional role in business area, without any profile there actually minimized its presence? Its social media marketing strategy is highly insufficient.

Content marketing

The company decided to improve its content marketing trough the blog by providing the history of development and also editorial customer's story. The positive aspect is the company established its business since 30 years ago and it has well connected network in domestic market and emphasis has been put on its sophistication about manufacturing and know-how in paper industry.

The mission and vision of providing fist class paper by using high-tech and customized design and being ecofriendly has been mentioned and fabricated in its self-promotion articles.
And the customers' stories are in various formats, including pictures, text, videos and interviews or feedbacks from customers. This has been done successfully for improving the customer relationship to achieve the ultimate goal of retention of the customers.

In the blog, there is also the forum for the customers to interact with each other, providing word of mouth fame thus to secure the customers loyalty and chance to gain new customers.

The only drawback is there is no English version of the blog, since the company hasn't launch its English blog for the global market, however, according to the top office, this will be carried out soon.

Online marketing platform

The company has registered on Alibaba (www.alibaba.com) which is now one of the biggest online trade and transaction platform for international traders. **Alibaba Group** is a privately owned Hangzhou(Chinese City)-based group of Internet-based e-commerce businesses including business-to-business online web portals, online retail and payment

services, a shopping search engine and data-centric cloud computing services. In 2012, two of Alibaba's portals together handled 1.1 trillion Yuan ($170 billion) in sales, more than competitor's eBay and Amazon.com combined The company primarily operates in the People's Republic of China, and in March 2013 was estimated by The Economist magazine to have a valuation between $55 billion to more than $120 billion. (The economist 2013)

Alibaba itself is a famous platform for both Chinese and some foreign businessmen in B2B filed. When company has one stand there in the platform, it is already a big promotion for the products. And also on the platform, there is search engine system, by typing in the key words like filter paper or even paper can find company's profile and products, but not so visible.

Company's profile can be seen there together with the product list and payment method. Also there provide online chatting to offer further information.

Search engine marketing

Owing to the fact that the company is at its scratch of marketing to foreign country, it has only apply the search engine optimization to its online marketing strategy in this category. The company's best-selling products are qualitative and quantitative filter paper which is for lab use. So the content has been refined into keywords as followings, filter paper, qualitative, quantitative, high quality, lab use, cheaper, paper. And the company label itself as premium manufacturer in china, experienced, international, paper industry, high quality, cheaper products. And it tried to build up more traffic to its online shop to ALIBABA and also to its own webpages. Later on, when company get more capacity, it will start to use search engine adds to present higher ranking in search engine result page.

4.2   Key results and analysis for interviews

Concerning the first question: Now it is an age of hi-tech, you are using internet as the basement, in this case, what do you see the difference between B2B and B2C type? Both interviewees 'viewpoint is almost the same. They indicated that B2B and B2C are very different business type no matter it is carried out online or offline. It is obvious that B2C is easier since it targets at individuals and there won't be big transaction. In contrast, B2B means a company buy something from another company, more steps are involved. And it is not dependent on only one person's will, especially when there is big transaction.

Partners like to establish long term relationship, since looking for a stable seller actually is time-consuming. When it comes to doing business online, for B2B, and for outbound business, Mr Liu from Xinji PengRui filter paper Co., Ltd, has more to say, he believed that westerners pays more attention on quality, so longer time will be spent on decision making. And normally, nobody will order big amount of goods when they find you through internet, even it is a famous and secured online platform.

The second question aims at theory of B2B online marketing mix. The question is: Concerning that you are using online platform as your market place, you contact your customers or leads through internet, what you suggest about the display about product information and the price strategy (online B2B marketing mix)?

Mr.Dong (case study company)and Mr.Liu(marketing manager from a more experienced company) both answered that in this sense, they should have reached a wider range of business than using traditional marketing tools, however, the situation was opposite at the first stage. Because initially, they didn't have a good product list, and some information is missing (sometimes can be mispresented translation), for example, specification, certificate, explanation about the product usage. Mr. Liu added that, it is evident that, in specific paper industry, buyers are experts and they want more detailed information. It is not like in the real market place where the potential buyer can ask directly from sellers, so it is highly possible that customers first ask for mailing some samples to test. Sometimes, the instant message sometimes cannot be processed in time. Also, if some important or detailed information is missing, buyers think that you are not professional, and they have lots of other sellers' products to choose, they like to see the product information comprehensive

at initial stage, since it shows your profession and it is time-saving. Then they can start to ask about something else.

Another point is price strategy. Mr.Dong from Case Study Company indicates that, they like to use it when buyer would order big amount of commodity. Mr. Liu from another company, said, they sometimes use this for frequent or loyal customers, but for new customer, they didn't like to use it so much especially when they didn't order a lot of goods. However, new sellers online should not always expect big transaction.

Then, the third question is about B2B branding, how it is contribute to B2B online marketing. Both respondents said that branding is important. Especially Mr.Dong from Case Study Company said that they like to build up brand for long term purpose. But it seems that Mr. Dong didn't have a detailed plan on how to gradually build up the brand. Mr. Liu said that, branding is important; however it is not easy for any company to do that. Building up a brand is a dazzling part of the whole blueprint, but it is difficult. For SMEs, the most secured way is to build up your brand among your loyal customers, if an SME at initial stage is too ambitious, there will be lots of problem. It is obviously understandable that SMEs don't have experience and especially capacity to turn itself a famous star overnight. SMEs have to be cautiously and take steps to do this. Firstly, SMEs need to seize some customers and turn them into loyal ones and then think about branding, but it doesn't mean you don't need a good fame at initial scratch, since some companies just sacrifice customers' benefit for little money. Finally, both companies' marketing managers agree that branding will contribute a lot and it cost a lot as well. Why to build up a brand is easy to understand, however, how to build it is a big topic.

The second section questions are all about online marketing tools and coordinated usage of these tools.

First question, what online tools for marketing are you using? What are the most used ones if think about the overall picture of the business? (Importance of the online marketing tools, popularity of the tools, the tendency of online B2B marketing)

Concerning this question, Case Study Company use platform, homepage, email, mostly. It is starting to have Facebook, LinkedIn Page, and blog content marketing has made some progress. In contrast, Mr.Liu from a more sophisticated stage, said basically they use all the tools mentioned in the theory part. He believes that, all of them are an integral part of

the coordinated plan however; he believes that SEO and content marketing are ascending. Also, these two tools are closely linked to branding. For online platform and homepage, they are the fortress of both companies' online business; it is evidently it has to be sophisticated.

What do you suggest about each tools you used, when market to foreign buyers, is the second question.
Case study Company's answer is email and online instant message for contacting. SEM for marketing, paid ads will be considered. But he will first make homepage and online platform pages look better and then start to use more tools.

Mr. Liu has more to talk about the usage of the tools. He believes that it is true some tools are descending and kind of be rendered outdated, for example, email marketing. However, it is true a business cannot live without sending emails. And you cannot send emails to some new customers when they haven't allowed you to do so. But if they are your old customers, please send them information they are interested in. Paid ads on Search engine result pages will help but you need to firstly make sure that when it leads customers to the page, the pages have to be kind of perfect; otherwise you are tarnishing your brand. And they trust more SEO result. Social Medias like Facebook, tweeter, LinkedIn are something must-have. You may don't answer all the questions, however, you put your product information there, or some sort of company's stories for content marketing. Web banners are not so popular now, it is similar to paid ads which will improve your survival rates but it requires some investments. To conclude, SEO, blogs are good start for your customers to know you more, for retention, loyalty, emails, social media, blogs are good helpers.

Third question in this section: In the future, what tools will be more popularized? Why? (Popularity of the tools, the tendency of online B2B)

Mr.Dong believed that content marketing will, since it helps with branding. And Mr.Liu believed so as well. But, Mr.liu still emphasized that more efforts should be put on content marketing, of course, at the same time, SEO,email,social media, are important.

The last question for both interviewees is asking about their coordinated plan.
This is a research plan conducted for improving online marketing strategy for Case Study Company JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd, so this questions aims at identifying the difference between two companies JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd'stratergies based on their answers.

Mr.Dong from JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd said, they are now doing online marketing, through following steps. Firstly, home site and Alibaba online platform are the place for transaction and advertising. Of course on those pages, more information is waiting to be added. And then they try to search for buyers through both online platforms since there are some buyers post their need for products. Also they try to find some buyers through search engine. Emails will be sent to those potential buyers. And the establishments of social media networks on Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., tweeter is in process. He said that company will pay for some ads to improve its visibility online in search engine result pages. And the company hope that it can keep the customers by contacting them through sending product information through email or online instant message.

Mr.Liu illustrates his company's online marketing strategy as following. Firstly, homepage and Alibaba online platform must be well-organised and informative, make it a professional page. Then, quote to those customers who have posted a request. Online platform has this function. At this stage, company can send immediate message rather than email. Try to straighten your rankings in search engine result page by refining your keywords and give more detailed information. And this normally requires some techniques, there are some know-how experts knows how to do this in a legal way. However, it is always like that, when companies have more information, more specific information, it gives them more opportunities. If they want to know this company more, they will try to find more information, it is advantageous if company has blog or some professional webs. Keep the content refined; keep the format professional, it is better than have lots of simple and messy webs. Lots of updates should be done on blogs, social media, as well.

When they got some customers, they should try to keep them as long-term customers by periodical email which includes product information they may be interested in. At the same time, Keep Company's social media page updated about latest news, products, promotional activities, and try to post something like customers' stories or stories about company's development. The interaction through social media and email will improve the loyalty of customers.

5 Suggestions and recommendations

This chapter will provide valid suggestions and recommendation to the case study company JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd on how to improve its online marketing strategy in outbound B2B concerning its current situation.

Revolving the research goal, the research problems illustrated in the first chapter were:
1. What online marketing tools should be implemented at which stage of the marketing process in B2B foreign trade?
2. How to make the application of the tools a synthesized marketing plan for Jing Feng da Paper Co., Ltd at this phase when it's foreign business is at scratch

In this chapter, these questions will be given answers by giving a coordinated online marketing plan to Case Study Company JingFengDa Paper Co., Ltd.

It is obvious that Case Study Company understands the nature of B2B and has some ideas about how to do online marketing according to its own situation. And it even thinks about branding, which is a good start.

However, it aims too high at initial stage. It would be well-advised that, they use a little bit price strategy and don't expect too big transaction at beginning.
It should make it homepage and online platform page looks better, with more specific information, like some professional information about the product. For example, for some products, company have different specification, company should list them there rather than keep potential business partners asking about those. Marketing Through the internet means that, you cannot seize the customers when they browse your web, you can try to seize them only when they ask. Don't leave the customers disappointed just after they see your web and products information which is incomprehensive.

Also, big transactions will happen only when customers will trust you a lot. In this sense, being too ambitious at beginning is not good for business. Company should start with small business; try to accumulate customers' loyalty, especially for foreign buyers, they needs sometime to choose the seller. So, branding should be done gradually, it is true that if they like your products, they will trust you.

For online communication or online marketing process, it should be flexible enough but not at the sacrifice of losing customers. That's way, the most important thing is what information should be sent or displayed at what time, and the target audience should be the right group of people.

The whole process for Case Study Company is expected to be like followings.

Firstly, the homepage and Alibaba online platform should be well organised, which will also better SEO (search engine optimization) results. Some translation requires to be accomplished on those pages, since some important information is missing according to researcher's observation. At the same time, blogs are better advised than paid ads currently, just because company's temporary situation Emails should never use for reaching the leads, if it is not asked. Subscribers all valuable potential customers, which should be taken seriously and should be sent products information periodically.

When potential customers get to know company's products, the informative and professional blogs and the well-managed social media will help potential buyers to know more about the company and its products. If they subscribed for emails, then according to their browse record, company should know which kind of products information should be sent to lead to the conversion. And all those information should be compatible with each other.

At the conversion stage, homepage and online platform is the place for transaction, and email including promotional activities can be sent to persuade.

For retention, it is important to keep good customer relationship. For this purpose, interaction through social media, blogs and email is playing a vital role. Content marketing is of great significance. Company's story, customer story and news and promotional activities should be updated all the time to keep the company alive in customers' mind. Facebook, tweeter and LinkedIn page should be updated at the same pace.

For customer loyalty, it is a long-term topic. However, this should be planned at very initial stage. Company should not do something destroy its image. And this is related to branding as well, since the company should first seize the old customers and persuade repeat purchase and try to establish a brand among old customers.

To conclude, Case Study Company should start with small business and accumulate credibility among old customers and then try to develop more and more customers. Infor-

mation of the products should be concise, professional, this is the basic. And western social media is the most important tool for retaining customers and strengthen customer relationship, promotional ads and company's stories or customers' stories and interaction between customers and company plays a vital role. Before this, SEO results actually could be very good free ads for company to attract customers. Email should be only sent to old customers or subscribers. Finally, all the marketing information should be cohesive and compatible.

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Attachement

Questionnaire for interviewees

Section one: The background is that this business is for exporting rather than selling in domestic market.

1. Now it is an age of hi-tech, you are using online marketing as the basement, in this case, what do you see the difference between B2B and B2C type? (characteristics of B2B)

2. Concerning that you are using online platform as your market place, you contact your customers or leads through internet, what you suggest about the display about product information and the price strategy?(online B2B marketing mix)

3. In online B2B, and when the business is outbound, how important is branding? How much will it contribute to the sales?(branding)

Section two

1. What online tools for marketing are you using? What are the most used ones if think about the overall picture of the business?(importance of the online marketing tools, popularity of the tools, the tendency of online B2B)

2. what do you suggest about each tools you used, when market to foreign buyers?

3. In the future, what tools will be more popularized? Why?(popularity of the tools, the tendency of online B2B)

4. Can you talk about your coordinated plan about online marketing process in B2B to foreign buyers?