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TresBizz B.V.

Graduation Assignment



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this research report is to give valuable advice for TresBizz to effectively market her new products, namely the China-imported phone-related accessories, in the Netherlands. The research was conducted to examine the behaviour and preference of potential customers and to obtain insight into intercultural communication strategies with Chinese suppliers with support of relevant literature that is reviewed. Theories in the fields of online marketing strategy, online consumer behavior and intercultural communication formulated the conceptual model. A set of cause-effect variables derived from the research theoretical aspects. They include: "Well-designed website", "Adequate promotion", "Social media influence", "Trust towards the brand and its products", "Price and promotion activities", "Share information from others", "Chinese business culture", and "Intercultural communication skills".

According to the conceptual model, three central research questions have been developed:

1. Which aspects of online marketing communication strategy should be taken into consideration when TresBizz promotes phone-related accessories to the consumers in the Netherlands?
2. What criteria could influence Dutch online consumer's purchasing behavior towards TresBizz's phone-related accessories?
3. What cultural aspects should be taken into consideration when TresBizz communicates and cooperates with its Chinese partners?

In order to obtain an answer to these research questions, the author has chosen to apply a mixed research method; an online survey in combination with the semi-structured interviews, focus group interview session and desk research. Consequently, the research results show that price, quality, trust as well as attitude towards online business and its products, are the most important factors that influence Dutch online consumers' behaviour. Other customers' reviews and communication through social media have a significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions. In addition, "Guanxi" and "Mianzi" are the key components in Chinese business culture. Hence, suggested strategies that can be best adapted to client's case include: creating attractive price campaign and meanwhile ensuring products' quality; taking full advantages of social media platforms to build a good relationship with customers; and being familiar with Chinese culture in order to establish effective cooperation with Chinese partners.

Based on the research findings of the TresBizz research project, a well-formulated advisory plan is provided. There are 5 sections in this plan: 1) implementing website strategies to TresBizz's web-shop; 2) improving the company's social communication performance; 3) setting up price campaigns to promote new products; 4) managing services in order to increase customers' satisfaction level; 5) establishing an oversea trade department. For making an operational plan, PDCA (plan-do-check-adjust) four-step management method was employed.

Section 1: To redesign TresBizz's web shop and to evaluate the improvement by checking click rate as well as conducting an online survey. Two staff members with website competences, from the marketing department are going to be in charge of this recommendation.

Section 2: To select proper social media platforms and develop them as online communication channels. Click rate of TresBizz's social media platforms could be used as the measurement. Staff in the marketing department and sales department will be in charge of this work.

Section 3: To set up various price campaign and to evaluate sales revenue. This work will be charged by staff from the marketing department.

Section 4: To design convenient customer service and manage the service through requesting and collecting customer's feedback. In order to effectively match clients' needs, consumer research should be conducted regularly. Staff in the marketing department will be responsible.

Section 5: To establish a professional department that is concerned and specialised with overseas cooperation and communication matters. Additionally a focus group interview with the Chinese supplier is advised to be conducted on a regular basis. In order to efficiently benefit from the budgets, all responsibilities could be given among the current staff, preferably with a Chinese cultural background and oversea trade experience.

These recommendations are attainable for TresBizz in the current situation, at this moment in time. For further successful development of TresBizz, the client may need to consider improvements of factors such as deadlines, budget and staff. Previous mentioned factors might be worthwhile considering in order to improve operational efficiency of TresBizz.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Context

This research project is conducted with the purpose of helping the client, TresBizz, to solve the problem about how to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market with proper market strategies.

TresBizz is a young and multi-cultural company with its headquarters in Almere, the Netherlands. Founded in 2012, its main business comes from providing software to both commercial sectors and individuals. Nevertheless, as the contracts of several software selling authorizations were ended at the end of 2015, currently, TresBizz is in the transformation phase and is looking for new business opportunities. On an international IT trade fair, the cheap Chinese mobile-phone accessories with good quality, such as phone cases, cables and power banks, attracted the attention of TresBizz. Because the cost of labor in China is relatively low compared to Europe, most of the mobile-phone accessory manufacturers in China can provide distributors with cheaper prices. As a consequence, the margin will be higher for TresBizz if it imports products directly from Chinese suppliers.

As an e-commercial platform, TresBizz can promote the sale of mobile-phone accessories on its own web-shop. The online channel will offer the same convenience as it sells software. And the competitive pricing, without a doubt, presents the company with a major opportunity to mark itself as one of the most influential merchandisers in this field. Thus, TresBizz decided to work on developing China-imported mobile-phone accessories distribution as its new business. However, since TresBizz only sold virtual software license before, the lack of tangible products distribution experiences will bring new challenges.

Because the communication with online consumers of tangible products might be different from consumers who purchase virtual products. In addition, as this is the first time for TresBizz to cooperate with Chinese suppliers, the lack of intercultural communication skills will bring challenges as well.

Therefore, this research is undertaken for giving client advice on promoting sales of China-imported mobile-phone accessories in the Netherlands. By examining and analyzing market strategies and consumer behavior from literature as well as field research, effective strategies for matching consumers' needs and smoothing the cooperation with Chinese suppliers will be offered.

1.2 Organizational Context

1.2.1 Internal Factors

Organizational structure

TresBizz B.V. is a Dutch company with its headquarters in Almere, the Netherlands, which was founded by Soedesh Baladien, CEO, in 2012. After prepared for one year, the business operation initiated in October 2013. At that moment, TresBizz had one staff in the Netherlands and four employees in India for marketing and technical assistance. Within the software industry, the company aims to be the best not only by offering customers very sharp prices but also by offering clients additional services such as free installation support and consultation service. The mission of this company is to always provide products and services with high quality. The organization consists of two departments, namely the sales and marketing department. The sales department is mainly in charge of product sales and after-sale services. When consumers browse products on TresBizz's web-shop, any questions about the products, such as the using details of software, or the difference between two software with similar function can be answered by sales employees via online live chat

tool. As TresBizz uses online order system, employees from sales department deal with collecting orders at backstage and sent ordered products to the consumers. After consumers purchased products, the sales employees also response to the requirements of additional services such as free installation supports. The marketing department is responsible for setting up and implementing effective and competitive marketing strategies. Before involving new products, marketing staff needs to do market research to evaluate whether the products are valuable. For each sale season, they are also in charge of designing promotional activities or launching advertisements. When the company meets any challenges, like the current situation, they are responsible for working out achievable solutions. Along with the expansion over the last three years, a global platform has been formed ensuring that customers all over the world can enjoy TresBizz's sharp prices and excellent services.

In order to keep competitiveness, TresBizz keeps researching new product leads. Since TresBizz has been growing very fast in the last years and expanded its platform to currently 10 countries, it aims to expand its business even further. The goal of the last quarter of this year was to be online in at least two more countries, and the goal for the coming year is to be active in at least 20 countries in total. As it is mentioned in the previous text, currently, the company has turned its focus to boosting the sales of Chinese mobile-phone accessories in the Dutch market and thereby China is the newest country that TresBizz will do business with. China is one of the countries with the highest export volume. The Chinese government has set up several free trade zones to decrease the barriers of doing business globally. Consequently, TresBizz can enjoy the benefits as international trade is encouraged. Moreover, due to the current worldwide economic environment, the Chinese currency, RMB, is decreasing dramatically. This presents TresBizz with a great opportunity to gain a bigger margin because of lower import prices and higher sale prices. In addition, if TresBizz starts its

business with Chinese partners, the intercultural communication requires employees with related cultural background knowledge to be involved. As a result, the multi-cultural employees with perfect after-sales skills would be a unique selling point of TresBizz as well.

Up till now, there are approximately 40 employees working for TresBizz in total, in India and the Netherlands. As the company is enlarging its business into more European countries, there are several interns with different nationalities currently working for the company as well. Because of the company decided to establish a cross-national connection with Chinese suppliers, employees with Chinese cultural background are needed. When those employees are recruited in future, a more complex cross-cultural work environment within TresBizz is formed. Besides the opportunities, there are also some internal difficulties that TresBizz has to face. First of all, there is no specific department in the current organizational structure to deal with oversea trade issues, such as importing products from China and then selling them within the Netherlands. In addition, as the company does not have enough experience with importing products from China, difficulties might arise when it is trying to operate smoothly and communicate effectively with the Chinese suppliers.

Products

The main business of the company is to offer software licenses to customers of both the business to business (B2B) and the business to consumer (B2C) market. There are more than 300 products offered by TresBizz, which includes Microsoft, Xerox, Norton and Kaspersky products. Furthermore, the company provides additional services such as free installation support and related consultation. During working hours, consumers can ask for installation help via the phone or an online live chat service, and if necessary the installation can be completed remotely. In 2016, TresBizz is working on involving mobile-phone accessory as a

new product category, and it is dedicated to expand the market from B2B to B2C within this new field. However, as the company used to only provide virtual products and related services, a lack of experience in selling tangible products will bring new challenges for TresBizz. There is a difference between the customers who mainly purchase the tangible product and virtual products. This difference will also influence the way how company to communicate its products to target customers. Effective communication requests sufficient knowledge. The knowledge is not only about looking for a totally new target group, but also about making use of TresBizz's existing customers and letting them accept the new products.

1.2.2 External Factor

Competitors

Since TresBizz is an e-commerce platform and focuses on online marketing, the competitors are online companies within all the markets it is active in. Nevertheless, for the convenience of doing research only in the Netherlands, the focus of this research will be only on the Dutch market. Among all web-shops who sell mobile-phone accessories, CoolBlue.nl and BOL.COM are the best known with strong brand awareness. Because of the limited amount of time for research conducting, these two companies are defined as the main competitors that will be analyzed. As one of the direct competitors of TresBizz, CoolBlue.nl is an e-commerce platform that offers electronic devices and related accessories. It is a well-known website within the Netherlands and has a good reputation. Another powerful competitor is BOL.COM, which offers a wide variety of products and also holds a strong brand image within the country.

As a starter of the mobile-phone accessory distributor, the external goal of TresBizz is to access into this field smoothly by reaching the target audience in

the Netherlands correctly and then encouraging the brand awareness in a short time. Compared to these two major competitors, TresBizz has an obvious advantage when it purchases products with a cheaper price directly from the manufacturers in the GuangDong province of China. The direct purchase process avoids unnecessary spending caused by distributors. TresBizz can also negotiate with the manufacturers, making it a win-win situation. The cheaper sell price will attract consumers in some degree. However, as a newcomer in this market, TresBizz's current brand awareness is still lower in comparison with its competitors. Effective communication strategy is needed for introducing TresBizz's products and the brand to its consumers.

1.3 Problem Analysis

Starting off as an online merchandiser, TresBizz is convinced to carry on promoting and distributing virtual products through the most effective online channels, with which they are also most acquainted with. However, when the selling authorization of its main products-software licenses-are ended, TresBizz had to transform. The cheap China-imported mobile-phone related accessories seem to be a very good opportunity. Nevertheless, because of approaching target consumers and promoting tangible products with new supply channel, namely directly imported from China, it is challenging from both internal and external aspects.

Based on the explanations in the previous paragraphs, the client faces a problem to determine proper online marketing strategies to communicate new products, namely China-imported mobile-phone accessories, to target customers in the Netherlands. Additionally, TresBizz intends to build smooth cooperation relationship with Chinese suppliers. However, the limited knowledge of tangible products' customers' preferences and behaviors restricts the client's external communication; and the limited knowledge of cooperation with partners from

different culture background obstructs TresBizz's internal communication. Hence, it can be deduced that the potential concerns that need to be addressed can be divided into two sections: 1) to set up effective marketing communication strategies by adequate marketing research that focus on the preferences and behaviors of the target audience in the Netherlands, in order to drive brand awareness and thereby encourage sales; 2) to set up effective intercultural communication strategies by research on Chinese working culture, in order to minimize obstacles caused by cultural difference and thereby establish a smooth cooperation relationship.

In order to help TresBizz with approaching these concerns, practice-oriented research needs to be applied. This type of research belongs to the diagnostic stage, which helps the company define the issue, analyze the reasons behind the issue, and provide effective recommendations. Theories in the field of online marketing strategy, online consumer behavior and intercultural communication contribute to formulating a theoretical framework that guides the execution of the research. In the next chapter, related theories and concepts will be explained in more details, a theoretical framework will be drawn, and a research objective and research questions will be clearly defined.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Research Objective

The goal of the research is to find out an effective way for TresBizz to market its new products, namely the China imported phone-related accessories, in the Netherlands. Therefore, the whole marketing process can be preliminarily divided into two parts: on the one hand, TresBizz needs to build an effective relationship with its Chinese suppliers; on the other hand, TresBizz needs to attract the customers in the Netherlands, make them accept its products and also

try to earn customer loyalty. However, as the company does not obtain enough experiences with selling tangible products through the online channel; it lacks enough knowledge about its target consumers' purchasing behaviors, their preferences, and attitudes towards China imported products. It might be challenged for TresBizz to make the first step when it accesses into a new field. Likewise, as the company does not obtain enough experiences with doing business with Chinese; language barriers, as well as the cultural difference in working place, will be huge obstacles that the company has to face. In addition, in order to build a strong relationship with the Chinese partners, finding an appropriate way for TresBizz to communicate with the Chinese suppliers should be considered. Therefore, learning Chinese business culture and negotiating style is crucially essential for TresBizz to doing business in a Chinese way.

Thus, this research could be defined as a practice-oriented research which aims at providing valuable suggestions for TressBizz with its new market. Before the research starts, it is important to formulate measurable research objective that helps define what kind of research needs to be undertaken. There are several essential criteria that need to be taken into consideration while defining an effective research objective, they are: useful, realistic, feasible, clear and informative (Verschuren & Doorewaard,2010, p.36).

Hence, based on the analysis in previous text, a research objective can be established as:

To provide advices to TresBizz about promising market strategies to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market by:

Examining potential online client behaviors and preferences, clarifying intercultural communication strategies with Chinese suppliers, and reviewing relevant literatures.

2.2 Research Areas

2.2.1 Online Marketing Strategy

As basically TresBizz is a web shop that distributes products and delivers service through the electronic channel, it is essential for TresBizz to select effective online marketing strategies in order to promote its sales and satisfy its customers in the Dutch market.

Online marketing

Kotler (2010) stated that nowadays, the Internet influences approximately 42 percent of entire retail sales and 97 percent of consumers among the worldwide use the Internet to research products before making buying decisions. Online marketing has vastly expanded the opportunities for goods and services providers to distribute their offerings to customers with long-distance. According to Alan Wilson, Valarie A. Zeithaml, Mary Jo Bitner, and Dwayne D. Gremler (2012), the benefits of online marketing include but not limited in: consistent delivery for standardized service, low cost, customer convenience, wide distribution, customer choice and ability to customize, and quick customer feedback (Wilson et al., 2012). To be specific, through e-channel, customers are able to purchase when and where they want; they can widely compare the price for the same products and get comprehensive feedbacks rapidly. As the online marketing reduce the use of intermediaries, supply and deliver cost is decreased as a consequence. Meanwhile, products delivered through the internet will not be altered as other channels with human interaction tend to, the delivery is more likely to be the same all the time.

Chaffey (2000) illustrated that online marketing contains the function of a company website in conjunction with online promotional methods, such as advertising, search engine marketing as well as build up partnership with other

websites. Those methods could be implemented for acquiring new potential consumers as well as providing related services to existing customers for the purpose of developing the customer relationship. As online marketing is viral if in comparison with other kinds of marketing. One of the characteristics of the viral marketing is that it encourages oneself to disseminate a marketing message to others within his or her social networks; it can also be seen as another form of word of mouth, but in the digital domain (Kirby, 2012, p.88). Hollensen (2008) illustrated that it is essential for the marketer to take this feature into consideration as it could help to distribute information and thereby attract potential customers automatically, and the way it processes is like the duplication of the virus.

Strategies for online marketing

Besides the benefits that mention in the previous section, Wilson et al. (2012) listed several challenges in online marketing such as “price competition, inability to customize because of standardized nature of the service, lack of consistency due to customer involvement, changes in consumer behavior, security concerns, competition from widening geographies” (Wilson et al., 2012).

In terms of the possible challenges that might be faced by TresBizz, the following strategies are addressed. Firstly, since the internet has made prices comparing more and more simple for customers, attractive price campaign is helpful. At the same time, besides price factor, products' quality is always a focus in the online marketing field, everyone will choose the product with higher quality if they can get it for the same price. Competition, not least from those e-commerce giants, has already caused a succession of brutal price wars. However, the perceived service quality will be the core competitiveness if it is judged from a long-term perspective. Secondly, for matching customer's special needs and demands, some customize services can be provided as additional value, especially in the case of

low-cost but high-update-frequency products like phone-related accessories. In the end, a successful e-business platform cannot only rely on technology because customer variability may also cause problems. They need human help as well when they feel difficult to learn some new skills. Information technology can be used as a tool to help customers service themselves, also, cultivating a responsive human intervention can lead to an advantageous strategy (Fitzsimmons, J. A. & Fitzsimmons, M. J., 2008). Thus, manual customer service can be seen as a valuable strategy because of the customer will gain more confidence to this virtual business and reduce the security concerns at the same time.

Online marketing strategy's purpose is to help the company with improving its e-commercial performance and publicity of its brand awareness. By applying these strategies, it will not only improve site traffic but also promote to enhance the effect (Peng, 2012).

The effect of social media on customer relationship building

Maintaining a stable relationship between firm and customer is beneficial for both two sides, especially for the firm. To begin with, strong customer relationship can bring economic benefits directly. By involving the connection of customer-company relationship, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and cash flow level, there will be a positive chain of all the factors that finally result in a positive result of cash flow level, or in another word, the long-term economic (Tarasi, Bolton, Gustafsson & Walker, 2013). For a company, building a strong relationship with customers can bring a higher overall return, an increased purchases and lower costs at the same time. And by building a good relationship with the customer, the satisfaction of customers can accordingly be accomplished, which can directly lead to a growing purchase. Moreover, in

addition to word-of-mouth communication, the loyal customer will influence and attract new customers without the extra investment from the firm.

In the past, when the social media wasn't so developed and popular, customers were more likely a stakeholder with legitimacy but lacking of power and urgency (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997). But now, the development of social media and online social communication channel offer the power to the customers to make a greater influence on the firm, which spontaneously draws the attention of the management of firms. As pointed out by Nguyen and Leblanc (2002), the online social communication tools create more focused interactions with groups that are interested in a product or a brand. The propagation of social media has encouraged a revolution in the field of communication. Customers expect the brand or company interact with them through a medium, where the consumer has control over the conversation. Therefore, the nature of social media platforms provides an excellent opportunity for the company that wishes to obtain positive feedback from word of mouth.

Online social communication tools form a group, members in the group discusses any issue and various members post their like and dislike comments. More often the comments are deliberate and true expressions of that particular individual about a product, service or brand (Otte & Rousseau, 2002). With this step, the firm can directly apply its marketing strategy on the tools and get in a direct online conversation with the customers who prefer to know details about the product which they intend to buy, and whether it would suit their requirements and usages. All of these form the social capital of a firm.

As a systematic approach for attracting and retaining a large group of people, online social communication tools can be used by firms to create a free platform for information sharing. Because the certain group of people is attracted by the information they are all interested in, they are more likely to choose to stay with

the firm which has the similar position with them. In addition, by answering the customers' requirements through its social communication platform in time, customers' will feel that they are being listened. It would instil customers' confidence and trust upon the firm and the product or service (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

2.2.2 Online Consumer Behavior

Since TresBizz is an e-commerce platform and focuses on online marketing, the nature of the company determines that most of its sales are from online consumers. Thus, it is essential for the company to understand its target consumer group's purchasing behavior; and thereby adjust the online marketing strategy according to their needs. To be specific, for the purpose of developing and providing products that satisfy consumers' expectations, TresBizz needs to understand how consumers choose, experience and evaluate its offerings; as well as what factors are considered as important for those consumers during their purchase process.

Influence factors on consumer behaviour

Wilson et al.(2012) defined that consumer behavior following 6 stages in consumer decision making, purchase and evaluation process. They need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, consumer experience and post-experience evaluation (Wilson et al., 2012). In the first three decision-making steps, the consumer will be influenced by both internal and external factors. To be specific, internal factors including self-background, personal previous experience and personal need will determine the recognition of purchase need; while external factors such as the advertisement from products provider and word of mouth evaluation from other customer do have a strong impact on the final choice choosing.

Personal factors

Nowadays, consumers intend to switch between online channels when purchasing products. Mainly because of the relative incensement of financial, security and performance risks that the internet exposes in comparison with offline shopping (Lee, 2009). What is more, to analyze from a psychological perspective, trust is based on consumer's expectation that the seller will behave in an ethical, and responsible manner and fulfill his commitments despite the customer's dependence (Gefen et al., 2003). Consequently, the extent of the trustworthiness from the consumers is likely to determine the final purchasing decision, between the consumers and sellers (Gupta et al., 2009). Li (2014) stated trust is more important for online retailers than offline because from the perspective of consumers, they perceive more risk in online shopping due to the fact that they are unable to visit the physical shop, and inspect the products they are interested in purchasing. Besides, trust is important for the establishment of long-lasting relations between buyers and sellers as well as plays the key role, for the development of customer loyalty (Santos & Fernandes, 2008).

Moreover, Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van den Bergh (2010) stated that the consumers' online behavior is dependent on perception and attitude about the brand. Firstly, the customers observe the company and then generate attitude about it. They will have intentions to buy or engender purchase-related behavior if they have an positive attitude (p.86). Consequently, creating positive brand image and attitude ought to be taken into TresBizz's consideration.

Advertisement

Suh and Han (2003) indicated it is essential for the e-retailers to build consumer trust in order to have long-term success. Hence, it is crucial to inspect the risk factors that could potentially influence trust in online shopping, as well as investigate the intentions of online consumers (Papps, 2016). Therefore, proper

advertising could help with changing the attitude of consumers towards a specific product and reduce the perception of product risks (Kopalle & Lehmann, 2006). If companies want to attract and keep more customers, they need to fully understand the preference of their target group and present full advantages of their own business through every possible channel.

The concept of advertising has evolved from showcasing the usefulness of the merchandise like it was done in the 19th century. Various researchers of that times have found that advertising steers customers towards purchasing a service or a product (Marks & Hooghe, 2000). The products that are advertised nowadays focuses on the meaning and how it would significantly improve the lives of the people (List, 2004). It has been proven that the people value the sentiment of the product and how it will make them feel. This feeling is what is driving the consumers to buy the products.

Influence from shared information

As the social network is well-developed nowadays, customers are more likely to be influenced by other customers' feedbacks. Many studies were undertaken to analyse consumer patterns in the social networks. There is a predominant notion that social media promotion have an effect on the consumer buying patterns as there is a huge potential in deducing the effects of social networks on the purchasing habits of the consumers. If there was a positive feedback in the social networks, it aided in more sales. It can be summarized from the initial results that the people buy the merchandizes that have positive feedback.

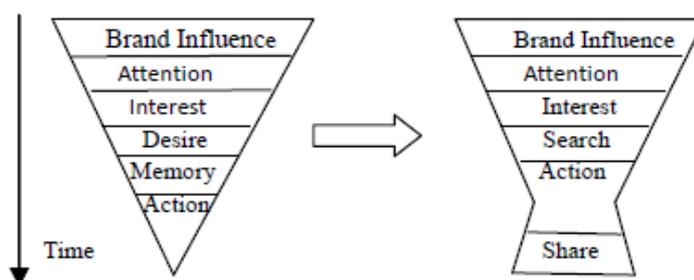


Figure 1. Evolution Illustration from AIDMA to AISAS Model

Figure 1: Evolution Illustration from AIDMA to AISAS Model

From the figure evolution illustration from AIDMA (attention-interest-desire-memory-action) Model (Hall, 1926) to AISAS (attention-interest-search -action-share) Model (Kobayashi, 2006), it can be seen that with the effect of Share, the Action is no longer decrease gradually in AISAS model. Social network, besides it is one of the platforms where network consumers can share information, it could be a perfect advertisement tool as well. By providing a platform for sharing information, potential customers will be influenced and thereby become the real customers in future.

2.2.3 Intercultural Communication

TresBizz is a Netherlands-based company that aims to cooperate with companies located in China and eventually import products from those Chinese suppliers. Consequently, intercultural communication plays an essential role during the cooperation process. For the purpose of eliminating unnecessary miscommunication, it is important to understand the cultural uniqueness of the Chinese partners.

Culture aspect and its influence in business context

Culture, as the complex of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor, 1871), has the assignable influence in cross-cultural business context. Hofstede (1980) encouraged management researchers to engage in cross-cultural studies of work-related values to further understand the business partnership from a more global viewpoint. The behaviors of group members are impacted by their own cultural backgrounds. At an individual level, persons' inherent beliefs, values, and patterns of social behavior can be related to the persons' special

cultural background and experience. For instance, during our growth process, culture in our living region can unconsciously make us to realize what kinds of behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable, what kinds of behaviors deserve praise or criticism. Therefore, culture significantly impacts socialization processes in terms of how we regard ourselves and what we believe and treasure (Steers, Sanchez-Runde & Nardon, 2010). At a collective level, such as the case of TresBizz that communication is conducted between two communities with totally different cultural backgrounds, communicators' beliefs, behaviors and judgment will be impacted by culture. In addition, since how people evaluate their satisfaction level according to what they perceive as being important and meaningful to them, the evaluation of same conversation style will be different in different cultural ideologies.

The overall Chinese business culture

In relation to the culture aspect, the existing theories and studies are mainly from Western countries. However, since China has its culture distinctiveness, influence from the Chinese culture should be taken into account. It can help with a deeper understanding of this management issue, gaining the useful research data, and developing suitable advice in the end.

For further exploration on Chinese culture distinctiveness, the culture dimensions theory is used in this part. According to Geert Hofstede (1991), the cultures differences among countries can be grouped into different dimensions which are Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Pragmatism, and Indulgence (Hofstede, 1991.). Figure 2 shows the scores for China:

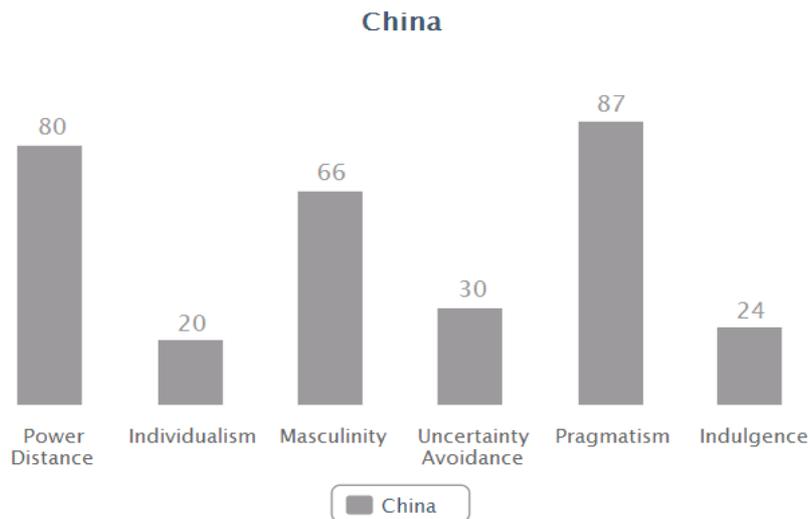


Figure 2: The Dimensions Scores for China (Hofstede, 1991)

Based on Figure 2, China has high power distance which scored 80, it means that the inequalities are accepted in China (Hofstede, 1991). As a result, if TresBizz can get support from local government, the cooperation with Chinese suppliers will be more smoothly.

Beside, collectivism, which is the core idea of Chinese Communism, is a very important content to cultivate Chinese ethos in the construction of socialism culture development, so that the individualism in China just scored 20 which is the lowest dimension (Hofstede, 1991). As the idea of collectivism is accepted by the Chinese traditional culture, and it is melt into Chinese personality, therefore in China, the thinking of “the group is regarded as more important than the individuals” is very common. Influenced by this culture, Chinese used to hide their feeling. During the communication process, Chinese partners may performance differently from their real thoughts in heart and sometimes this vague attitude might lead to ineffective communication.

In addition, China is a pragmatic and restraint society as the dimension of the pragmatism in China scored 87 and the indulgence scored 24 (Hofstede, 1991).

Chinese believe the truth depends on the situation, context, and time (Hofstede, 1991). Based on this viewpoint, it might spend more time to build a strong relationship with Chinese as it is not easy to earn the trust.

Other Chinese culture regarding with this research

The theory of Hofstede provides an overview image of Chinese cultural ideology. In order to have a deeper understanding of Chinese working place culture, the following three factors should be mentioned.

Firstly, the Guanxi (relationship) is a very important Chinese culture aspect. It means the preferential treatment given to the partners in an exchange, in the form of easy access to limited resources, increased access to controlled information (Lee, 1988). If the person has a good Guanxi in a specific social circle in China, he/she can benefit in having the ability to make project/things done smoothly. Moreover, Guanxi network does not have to be based on money; Chinese is more likely to define it as friends, so the Guanxi in China is based on trust and mutual benefits (China Business Desk, as cited in Handy, 2003).

Secondly, the Mianzi (Face) is another essential culture represents for social reputation which is highly valued by Chinese (Bond, 2010). Mianzi as a public self-image to others, it can be achieved through success. Revealing one's weaknesses, problems or any negative side will result in a loss of Mianzi; losing face means the embarrassing situations or the sense of shame. It can be damage the Guanxi between each other (Bond, 2010). Mianzi plays an important role in the Chinese workplace, no matter the issue is rationality or fairness, most Chinese managers expect high respect from their partners without any query.

Servaes (2014) classified that Chinese culture and communication is influenced by Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and therefore "harmony" is one of the fundamental values of the Chinese society. In order to avoid the conflict and keep

the harmony, "Guanxi" and "Mianzi" are considered as two elementary components. The connection between business and personal relationships among Chinese society is extremely tight and the line between those two is greatly blurred.

Intercultural communication skills

In order to minimize the miscommunication, there are several skills needed to be implemented to deal with the cultural difference. Bennetts (2004) stated that the intercultural skills contain the ability to break down interaction between two cultures, forecast misunderstanding and adaptive behavior. The purpose of this skill is to inform people that knowledge, attitude and behavior need to work together for understanding a new culture and development to occur.

Furthermore, it is necessary to highlight the cultural features of Chinese mobile phone accessories so as to attract local Dutch consumers. Yu (2010) stated that the Chinese products usually reflect the features indirectly, which emphasize pull-sell attraction. Kim, Pan and Park (1998) pointed out that such the Asian culture as Chinese, Korean and Japanese culture are high context culture, and so the people with the cultural background tend to express the features implicitly and indirectly. This phenomenon can also be presented in the products. Therefore, it is possible for TresBizz to show Chinese culture on the website pages so as to differentiate the company from the competitors.

2.3 Research Framework

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The theoretical framework can be seen as the guidance of a research project with related theories so as to solve the research problems. In this research, the key concepts include online marketing strategy, online consumer behavior and

intercultural communication. Specifically, for promoting the sales of China-imported mobile-phone accessories with proper strategies, theories of online marketing strategy should be researched. In order to reach the target group and satisfy them, it is essential to know their preferences and behaviors. As TresBizz is a European company who intends to cooperate with Chinese suppliers, theories on intercultural communication will provide knowledge for avoiding misunderstandings that caused by cultural differences.

The research framework for this report will be explained as following:

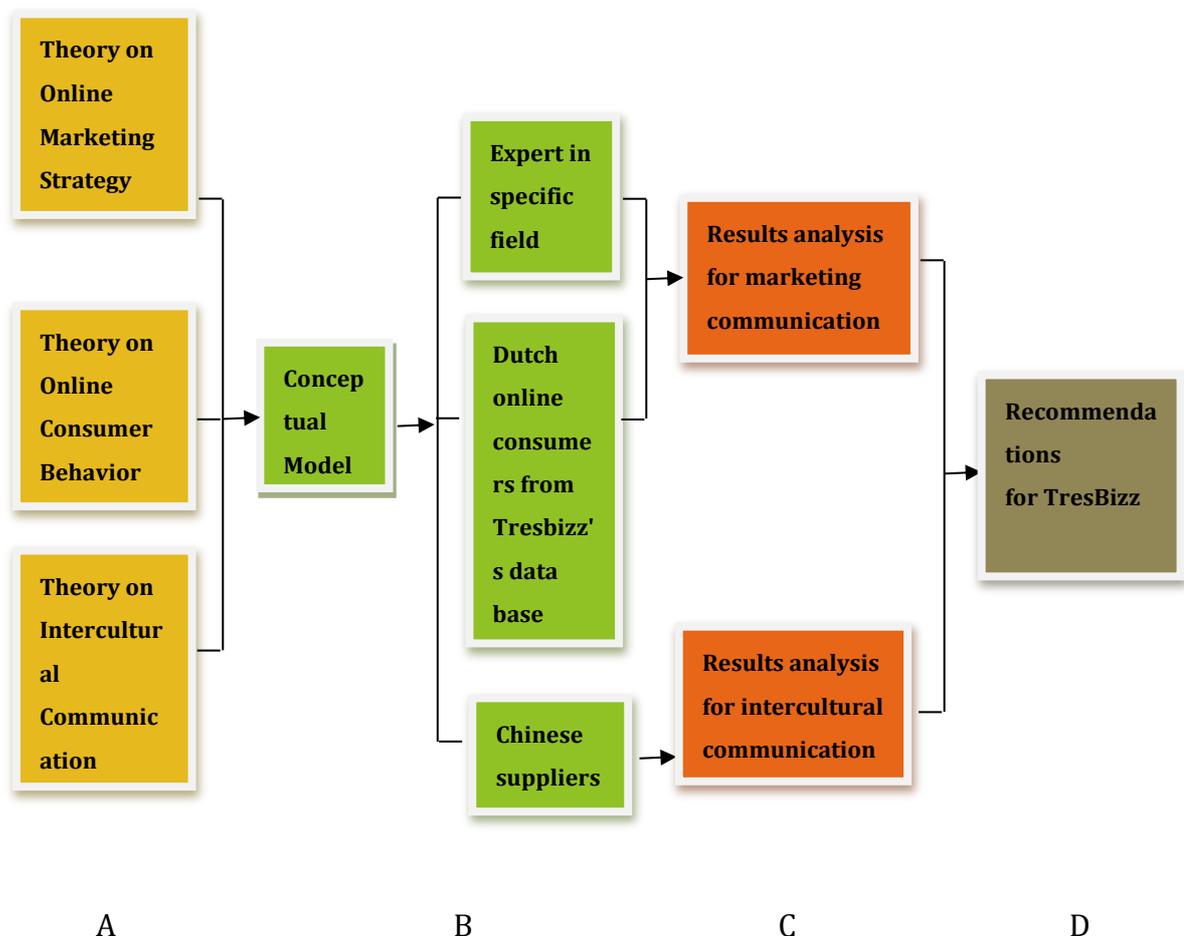


Figure 3: Research Framework

As can be seen from the Figure 3, the research framework is divided into four parts. The A part presents three relevant theories to support the research that could help TresBizz with selling the China-imported phone-related accessories through the online channel. These areas are: online marketing strategy, online consumer behavior and intercultural communication. The study of these theories is supported by preliminary desk research and relevant literature review.

Part B consists of two parts which are the conceptual model and research objects. First of all, the conceptual model will be elaborated to identify the particular areas that this research will focus on, and it presents a set of cause-effect variables (see Figure 4). Key concepts are derived from part A and therefore, independent variables are confronted with a dependent variable. Moreover, within this stage, the research objects have been formulated which are the expert in the specific field, Dutch online consumers from TresBizz's database and Chinese suppliers.

Within Part C, the outcomes of the research will be analyzed based on the primary and secondary data, the final conclusion will be drawn on those results.

Part D will lead to a solid recommendation for TresBizz based on the evaluation of the results, and it intends to help the company with developing an effective communication strategy.

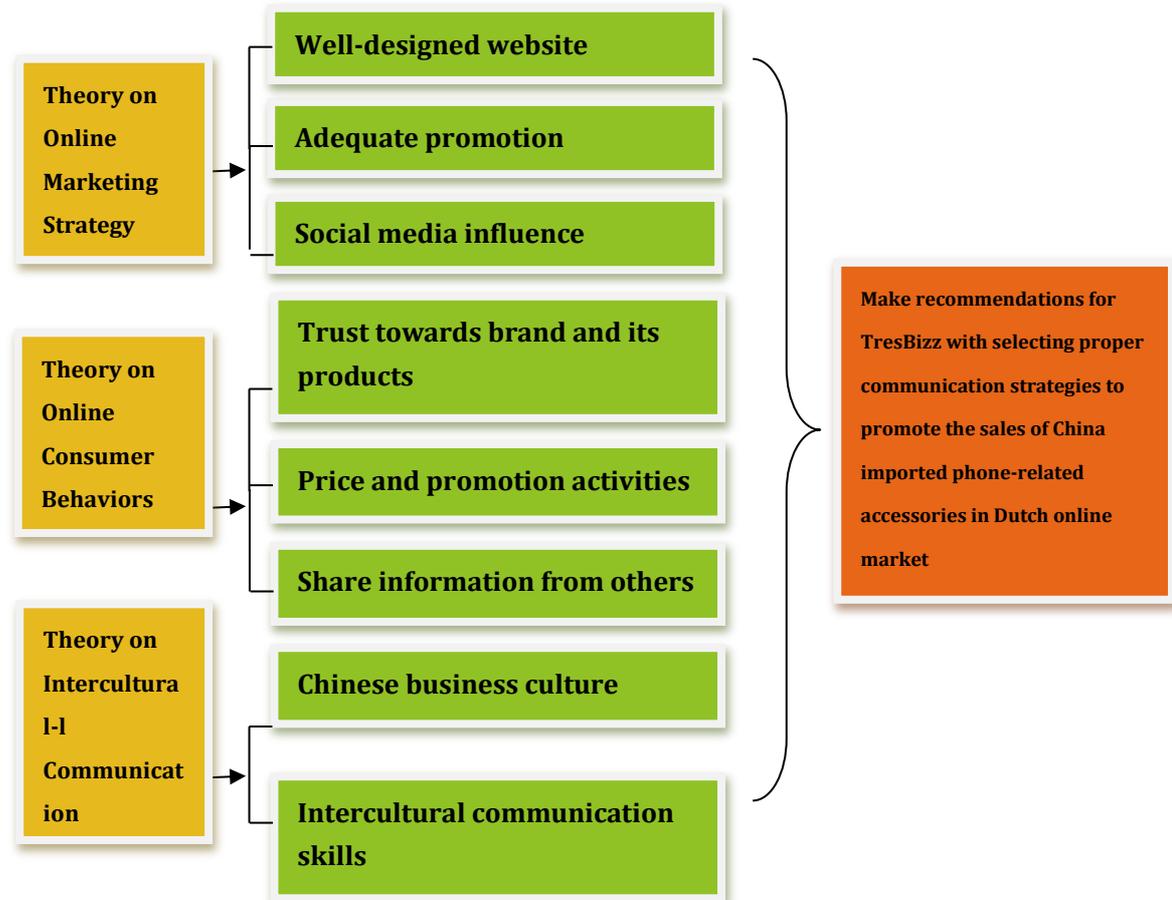


Figure 4: Cause-effect Variables

Particular research areas are identified based on the literature review section. To be specific, in Chapter 2.2.1, after introduced the characteristics of online marketing in general, it listed several online marketing strategies which closely related to TresBizz's case. These strategies can be summarized as adequate promotion activities and well-designed website. Additionally, in this section, it also mentioned that social media has a certain influence on building the relationship with customers who purchase online. Therefore, "social media influence" is identified as a cause-effect variable which impacts the final online marketing strategy making.

Likewise, in Chapter 2.2.2, factors that influence online consumer behavior are mainly from three parts: personal reason like the trust towards the brand and its

products; information sent by the company with the purpose of advertising, such as price campaign or promotion activities; and information from other customers. Thus, the cause-effect variables for online consumer behavior section can be identified as “Trust towards a brand and its products”, “Price and promotion activities”, “Share information with others”.

For TresBizz’s case, the intercultural communication is between the Dutch company and its Chinese suppliers, thus, unique Chinese business culture is the main concept that should be researched. Because fully understanding of the different cultures will directly result in smooth cooperation. As intercultural communication skills are also necessary for all cases which include discussions across different cultures, it is identified as a cause-effect variable as well.

2.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objective which aims at giving client advice about promising market strategies to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market by examining potential online client behaviors and preferences, clarifying intercultural communication strategies with Chinese suppliers, and reviewing relevant literature, the following research questions need to be answered. Each central question is related to a specific research area. They are “Online marketing strategies”, “Online consumer behaviors” and “Intercultural communication with Chinese suppliers”. As it is mentioned in the previous text, each research area has several cause-effect variables (See Figure 4). In order to fully answer each central question, sub-questions are designed based on each cause-effect variable one by one. Key concepts that used in sub-questions derived from those variables directly.

Online marketing strategies

Central question 1:

Which aspects of online marketing communication strategy should be taken into consideration when TresBizz promotes phone-related accessories to the consumers in the Netherlands?

Sub-questions:

1.1 In what way does website design has an impact on online consumers' decision making?

1.2 What factors should be taken into account when TresBizz develops its online promotion?

1.3 To what extent does social media influence online consumers' decision making?

Online consumer behaviors

Central Question 2:

What criteria could influence Dutch online consumer's purchasing behavior towards TresBizz's phone-related accessories?

Sub-questions:

2.1 To what extent does trust affect consumers' online purchasing behavior?

2.2 What online promotional activities will be preferred by online consumers in the Netherlands?

2.3 To what extent does shared information influence consumers' online purchasing intentions?

Intercultural communication with Chinese suppliers**Central Question 3:**

What cultural aspects should be taken as consideration when TresBizz communicates and cooperates with its Chinese partners?

Sub-questions:

3.1 What cultural aspects does TresBizz need to take into consideration while doing business with Chinese suppliers?

3.2 In what way does intercultural skill set influence the business cooperation between TresBizz and Chinese suppliers?

3 Research Strategy and Method

3.1 Research Strategy

In order to probe the research questions, mixed-methods which combine quantitative research as well as qualitative research have been chosen. Because quantitative research method is always used to find out opinions or facts that can be analyzed statistically by numerical data for a large group of people, and qualitative research strategy is suitable to investigate human thoughts in depth (Verhoeven, 2011).

To be specific, quantitative data is collected by online survey while qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interview, focus group interview and desk research. Firstly, related theories and trends are gathered through desk research. This provides a primary understanding of online marketing strategies and unique Chinese culture in the workplace. Secondly, for getting the Dutch online consumers' opinions towards their purchases, questionnaire is designed and posted on an online survey system. Thirdly, for integrating opinions of relevant experts from both the Netherlands and China, the interviews are conducted as another qualitative study. Based on the desk research findings and survey questions, interview questions are developed which aim at gaining more in-deep answers. According to the results of field research which include both interview and questionnaire, a better understanding of online marketing strategies, Dutch online consumers' behaviors and attitudes, together with Chinese workplace culture can be integrated. Based on the influence factors that defined by all research results, suggestions can be ultimately offered in order to help TresBizz to set up effective strategies.

As can be seen from the Table 1, different research strategies are implemented for different research questions with specific research objects.

Research Object(s)	Research Questions	Research Method
TresBizz's employees, Chinese expert	Central Question 1, Sub-question 1.1, 1.2, 3.3	Desk Research, Focus group interview, Semi-structured interview
Dutch online customers	Central Question 2, Sub-question 2.1, 2.2, 2.3	Online survey
Chinese supplier	Central Question 3, Sub-question 3.1, 3.2	Desk research, Semi-structured interview

Table 1: Method per Questions

3.2 Data Collection Method

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The quantitative data is obtained from the online survey that aims to gain knowledge about the Dutch online consumers' perception in general. Collected data includes consumers' attitudes towards online phone-related accessories purchase, influential factors of online purchasing behaviors as well as the online marketing strategies that they are interested in.

This online survey was disseminated through QQ survey system and it was sent to the participants through TresBizz intranet mail. Involved participants are selected from the database of TresBizz; determine the factor of sample selection is only the consumers who have purchased products through company's website before, no matter which nationalities they are. The survey was posted online on 01-05-2016 and then was retrieved after 7 days; 50 responses were gained in total.

For questionnaire used in this research specifically, it is developed in English. The questionnaire is consisted of 24 questions. 3 questions show the information on social demographics, such as gender, age and occupation. 10 questions are related to online purchase behaviour in general while 5 questions have a specific focus which is consumer preferred online marketing strategy. Another 6 questions present the perceptions about phone-related accessories purchase. The questions are designed based on the desk research results and company's specific situation. The appropriate questions in the questionnaire can lead to a better understanding of the consuming psychology of Dutch online consumers and their feelings regarding the online purchase. It provides the most reliable information from the potential customers of TresBizz's Chinese imported phone-related accessories.

3.2.2 Interview

Moreover, the interview method is implemented to gather qualitative data. Five Dutch employees from the World Trade Center of TresBizz, Almere were invited; they all hold work experience in online purchase promotion. One Chinese expert from the AAEON Europe BV was involved as he has abundant online marketing experiences, and he can also give valuable suggestions from a Chinese perspective. Besides of them, one Chinese supplier, as the representation of Chinese expert for doing international trade, was interviewed. The interviewees were facilitated by the researcher in order to enable them to provide useful and valid information and suggestions.

This method of data gathering allows the research to ask more in-depth questions when reputed and draw relevant conclusions. In addition, as during the interview process, researchers can be adjusted the further questions depends on interviewees' responses; this approach makes the researchers garner a comprehensive view of the subject in question which cannot be done in

the questionnaire approach. Thus, for exploring the in-deep perspectives from management level, interviews are valuable.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Because of the questionnaire was posted and managed through an online survey system, all primary data could be analyzed automatically. In order to explore the connections and relations between different variables, the researcher made intersecting data compare and then summarized the results.

3.3.2 Interview

For analyzing the interview, the first researcher listened to the recording and wrote down each sentence. If the interview was conducted in Chinese, the researcher translated them into English. After reading through all conversations, researcher picked up repeated or similar answers, put them together and highlighted the keywords. As the final step, researcher listened to the recording again to check the integrated information.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

The importance of reliability and validity of research findings needs to be emphasized during the process of research design for the purpose of avoiding collecting the inaccurate information (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p156).

For ensuring the research's reliability, researcher tried to carry out the research procedure strictly follow the designed research strategy. The purpose of the survey is to gain insight knowledge of the target group by collecting quantitative data. Questionnaires have been delivered to the customers from the database of TresBizz to fill in with enough time, so that the participants were able to submit

the answers without bias and time limitation, which could ensure the reliability of the data. Based on the survey questions, the focus group interview was developed which aims to gain more detailed answers to the research questions. However, by using the focus group method there was a major issue that researchers need to be taken into consideration, which is the bias from both sides of interviewer and interviewees. In order to minimize the degree of bias, the interviewer made sure to be objective and avoided personal opinions. Furthermore, during the focus group interview, it is essential for the interviewer to listen to others' statements with patience and guide them in a proper way. When there was any dispute occurs during the interview, the interviewee had to take control and solved the problem without panic. Moreover, the role of the interviewer is to guide the interviewees so that they could understand the questions and topics that need to be discussed to assure the reliability.

In order to increase the validity of collected data, it is essential to ensure the relevance between the questions and the problems that TresBizz is facing. Hence, the questions from the online survey were formulated closely related with the problems of the client. All questions were checked and approved by the company supervisor and the CEO. For ensuring the outcomes of this research are valid, every step of the research process was operated validly. All respondents, for both questionnaires and interviews, were selected in certain categories. In addition, as two interviews were conducted with the Chinese supplier, Chinese cultural background was taken into account during the interview design and conduction. Moreover, for gaining real perceptions from the respondents, before the interview, the interviewer mentioned that the information of the respondent was confidential, the record was just for the thesis writing and everyone would have a code instead of their real name. As a result, the answers got from respondents are worth to be trusted. Since part of the feedbacks kept repeat and

it means that the opinions received in the field research reflected the common perceptions of participants.

3.5 Limitations

In general, the comprehensive research methods and data obtained from the reliable sources that applied in this research make the findings of this report becoming reliable and effective. Nevertheless, it has several limitations that the researcher needs to take into consideration just like other research.

First of all, the survey is mostly made up of closed questions, which relevant with TresBizz's issue, that restricts the receivers to submit alternative answers. Limitations might be caused by limited options that provided for the participants. Furthermore, in order to narrow down the target group, participants selected from the database of the company are limited on the consumers who have purchased though TresBizz's web-shop before. The numbers of responders are thereby not as many as a large-scale. Similarly, although interview approach is very precise, it is time-consuming. It was not possible for the researcher to have access to all the people that in the marketing team. In this context, limited interviewees might also result in some limitations. Moreover, participants from the focus group interview are regular hiring by the world trade center and thus they did not obtain enough time to fully concentrate on the interview. Likewise, finding a Chinese supplier as suitable interviewee is challenged since finding a proper time to operate the interview is difficult due to the time difference between the Netherlands and China.

4 Research Results and Interpretation

The purpose of this research is to give TresBizz advice about promising market strategies to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market by examining potential online client behaviors and preferences, clarifying intercultural communication strategies with Chinese suppliers, and reviewing relevant literature. In order to achieve this goal, mixed-methods research was implemented to obtain useful data and formulate valuable research findings. In this part, research results gathered from both quantitative and qualitative research will be reported; and each research area's central and sub-questions will be answered based on the analysis of research findings.

4.1 Research Area: Online Marketing Strategies

Towards the central question 1 "which aspects of online marketing communication strategy should be taken into consideration when TresBizz promotes phone-related accessories to the consumers in the Netherlands?", a focus group interview was first conducted with 5 Dutch employees from the world trade center of TresBizz (See Appendix 3).

According to the results from the focus group interview, well-operated web-shop should hold the features of various products, attractive price, good reputation, user-friendly system and well-developed after-sale customer service. To be specific, firstly, as it is also showed in quantitative research findings that price and discount would influence online consumers' purchasing intention, well-designed pricing strategy should be employed by TresBizz. Addition to the price campaign, one of the interviewee mentioned that low price might attract eyes in the first place, but the quality of products is always the real focus as Dutch consumers tend to be very rational. As it is also pointed out in Chapter 2.2.1, in order to reduce the risk that caused by intangible online selling, an

appropriate way to display more details of the products will be helpful. Secondly, as an online platform, a smooth-operated system is essential. In order to avoid some unexpected technological errors, adequate human support is needed. Moreover, as nowadays business is not goods-oriented but services-oriented, well-designed additional services such as free shipping, flexible return policy and free consultancy can be involved as the useful online marketing strategy. Thirdly, as the current focus of TresBizz is to promote China-imported products; highlighting Chinese characteristic, such as customizing Chinese pattern on the phone case, could be a unique strategy to differentiate the company from the competitors (see also Chapter 2.2.3). Last but not least, according to the focus group interview, other consumers' comments (word of mouth) is significant for influencing online consumers' purchase behaviors, which is a coincidence with previous desk research findings as well as online survey findings. Therefore, providing a free area for consumers to comment products and TresBizz's service is a recommended online marketing strategy.

Considering the special case of TresBizz which is developing an adequate online marketing strategy for promoting products that made in China, a Chinese online marketing expert Xiaobin Shi was invited for a semi-structured interview (see Appendix 3).

From a Chinese perspective, the interviewee first mentioned that TresBizz could improve its website from the following aspects: in terms of language, currently there are four official languages which are Dutch, English, French and Spanish. As the cooperation with Chinese suppliers might also result in the increase of Chinese online users of TresBizz's website, Mandarin is suggested to be added. Furthermore, the website is quite normal at this moment which does not attractive at all, it might be a good idea to show customers the latest trends of the software industry. For instance, putting the updated news of windows system on the website between section "Special offers" and "About us". This will

potentially increase the amount of click of the website. Moreover, in terms of offering more evidence for the products, some company put the introduction video for certain products which gives a clear explanation to the customers how the products work.

Secondly, the interviewee stated that the sales promotion is the most effective way to attract customers. Most times when a company introduces a new product to the market, low price strategy always applies in order to get more market share of the market. Meanwhile, a variety of the payment methods offers customers with more options. In terms of attracting Dutch customers, iDeal and Debt card are needed, as the current payment methods are only limited in PayPal and credit card.

Thirdly, Xiaobing Shi highlighted the importance of social media influence on online marketing. The interviewee pointed out that more and more companies start to use social media as their promotion channel. For instance, the Vodafone had introduced its new 4G network on Youtube advertisement. In addition, social media gives people more power to talk with the company. In the past, companies hardly get feedback from customers but nowadays, companies have the opportunity to get feedbacks from customers before the product has been launched on the market. Besides, social media provides a platform for the companies to build relationships with customers. There are also shortages for using social media as marketing tools. For instance, customer's negative feedbacks will potentially influence other customer's decision making. However, if the company can respond rapidly and recover the service immediately, a positive result will be formed and the consumer's satisfaction level might be higher because of the excellent performance of the company.

The interviewee suggested that TresBizz could create its own client database and send regular email to the customers about new product launched and sales promotion. In addition, the interviewee also said: "try to do some advertisement

on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. I am sure most of your clients are using all of the social media mentioned above. Asking the employees to share the articles from TresBizz and post it on their Facebook page. The snowball will eventually get bigger and bigger. It will not cost too much by using social media. Compared with the traditional promotion, social media saves lots of costs for the company". Regarding the concept of viral marketing strategy (see Chapter 2.2.1), the interviewees stated that this online marketing strategy is based on trust among one self's social network which is unlike other marketing strategies. It could help the company with raising the brand awareness within the social network and it is a very effective and important marketing method especially for the small-medium company which is not that well-known for the public.

Besides, a potential opportunity is to make alliances with other companies both in the Netherlands or in China. It can either via online shopping channels or other websites that are selling similar products. The interviewee mentioned that TresBizz could cooperate with several free sports online watching channel, such as "Vipbox.com". Those websites provide audience free online sports watching. The audience should do several ads clicks in order to reach the free site. It can eventually link sports lovers to visit the website of TresBizz.

In conclusion, adequate online marketing strategies will best reach the target audience in the Netherlands, to drive the brand awareness, to gain trust and thereby encourage sales of phone-related accessories. Possible strategies suggested by interviewees include attractive price campaign with various payment methods, a well-designed website with smooth operation system and appealing layout, excellent addition services, and well-managed customer comments area. According to the magnificent influence from today's social media, social communication tools and social media platforms should be taken into account. They could eventually help TresBizz to reach more customers and build good relationships with customers; get feedbacks from customers and post free

advertisement through shared information. Additionally, offering customizing service and making an alliance with other websites are useful strategies as well.

4.2 Research Area: Online Consumer Behaviors

In order to collect first-hand information from TresBizz' online consumers, the online survey (see Appendix 2) was disseminated through QQ survey and it was sent to the participants through TresBizz intranet mail. Although a small sample size with 50 responses will lead to a certain limitation, as all participant are consumers who have purchased in TresBizz's web shop, the information collected from the survey could still be highly useful.

The questionnaire is derived from the central question 2, sub-question 2.1-2.3. To start with, first 5 questions show the general information on participants. In summary, the target group consists of 26 males and 24 females between the age of 18-55. 44% and 48% of participants are students and employed, and all of them had online shopping experience. 30 interviewees answered that they had less than 10 times online shopping experience for the last year and 20 participants answered with more than 10 times.

Regarding purchasing phone-related accessories, the results of questionnaires show that 88% respondents would purchase phone-related accessories via the online channel; the most likely reasons for consumer purchasing online are "I really need it" (40%) and "Cheap price" (40%) (see Figure 5). In addition, the respondents stated that criteria like "Cheaper price than physical shop" (40%), "Broad selection of goods" (32%) as well as "Time-saving" (20%) influence their purchase decision in different degrees (see Figure 6). However, when asked "would you buy the phone accessories through online because of the attractive advertisement even though you do not need it ?", 80% respondents chose the negative answer. Here can be concluded as the participants in this survey are relatively rational consumers who will not waste money on unnecessary stuff. Likewise, according to the result of "what kind of information do you search for

when buying phone accessories?", more respondents (76%) chose "Rational information".

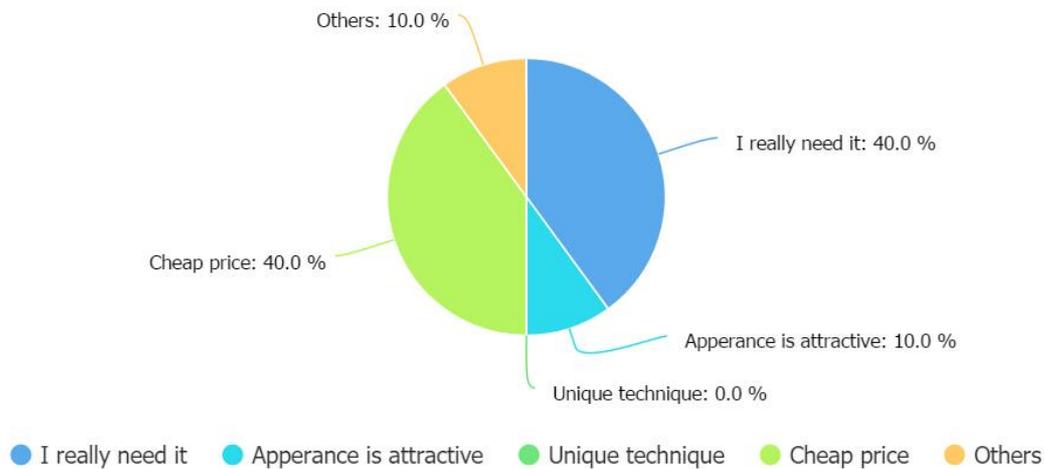


Figure 5: What reason would make you purchase phone accessories through online?

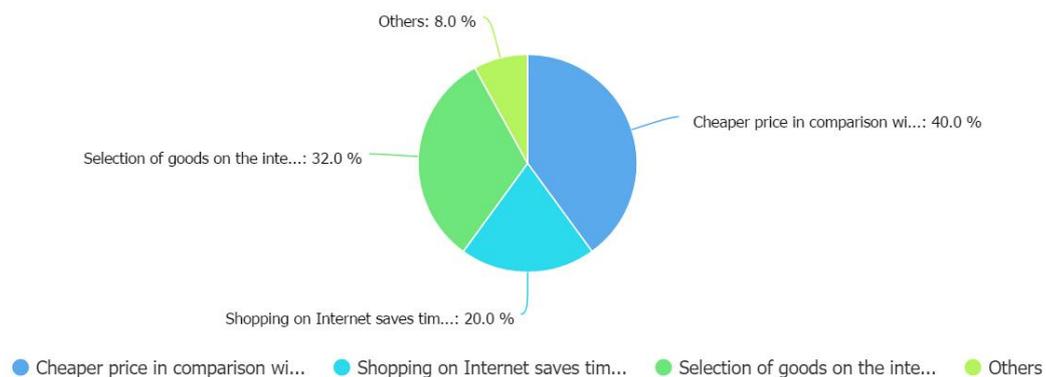


Figure 6: What criteria influence your purchasing behaviour towards phone-related accessories?

Regarding to the factors which are important for Dutch online consumers to evaluate their purchases, the survey elucidates that 76% of the participants thought that "Facts including price and brand name" is essential for them to take the buying action. In addition, "Quality" and "Price" are considered as the most important factors while purchase online (see Figure 7). Moreover, 36 participants stated trust is very important to some extent and it affects their

online purchasing behavior. This proved the arguments that mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2 which is trust is more important for online retailers than offline. 76% interviewees stated that they would not purchase from an e-commerce company without doing any research about it. 74% of participants stated that they always look for customer reviews before purchase online. Therefore, it could be concluded that positive review could help customers with gaining trust and encouraging them to take the purchase action. This can also be proved by the result of the question “how important does customer review influence your buying decision?”: 23 people thought customer review is very important and it could influence their buying behavior, 16 participants stated that they do care about it to some extent but it is not that important for them (see Figure 8). What is more, for participants with the different occupation, other customers' opinions are relatively more important for retired and employed people (see Figure 9). Here can be concluded as sharing information is a common manner for online consumers and meanwhile, shared information has a significant influence on online consumers' behaviors; which can also be found from the Figure 1 in Chapter 2.2.2.

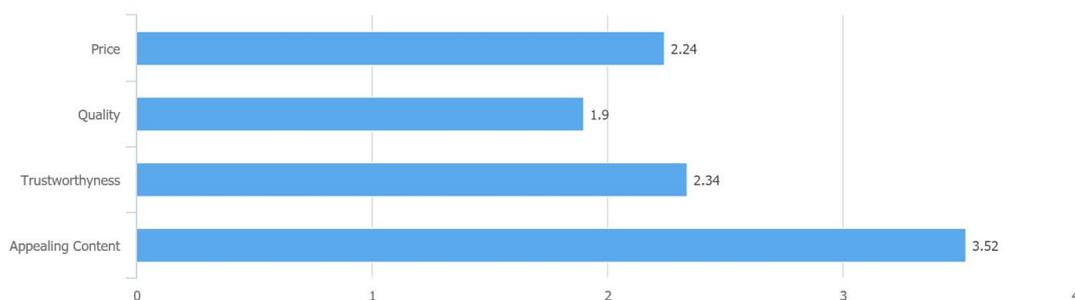


Figure 7: Ranking Which features do you consider to be most important when you purchase online.

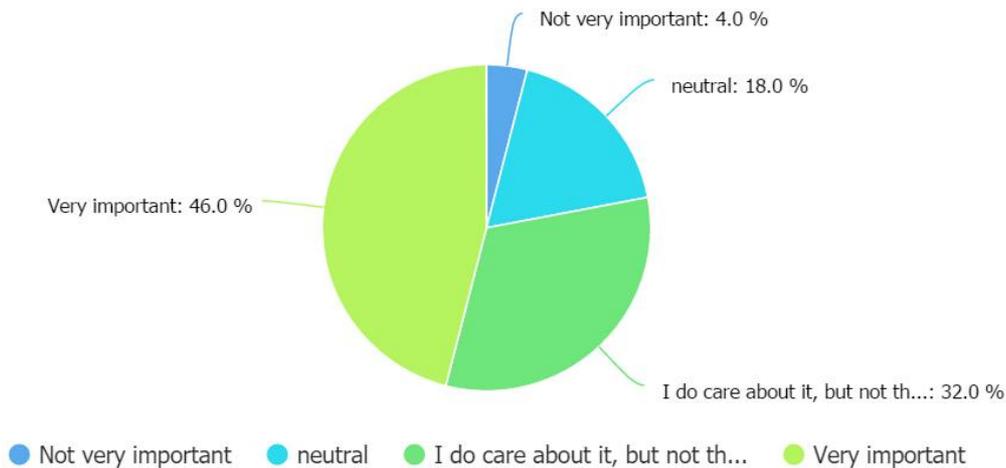


Figure 8: How important does customer review influence your buying decision?

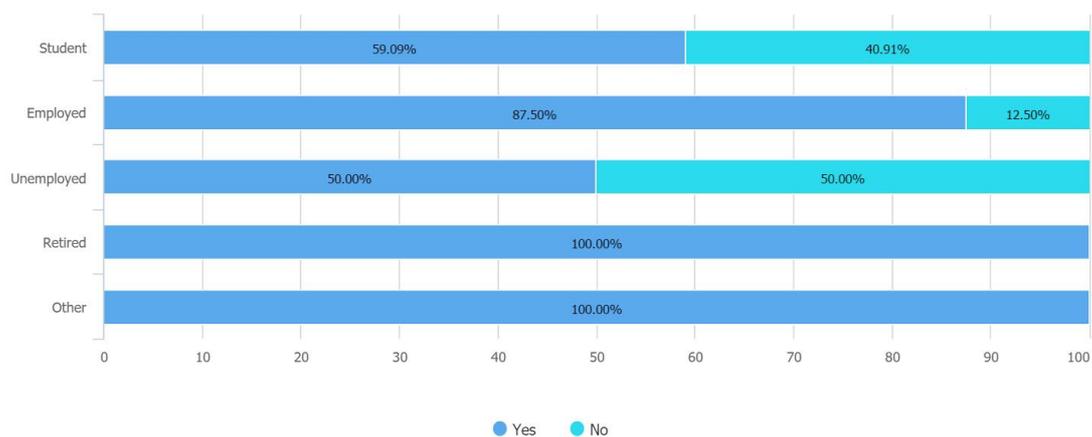


Figure 9: How important the customer review for people with different occupations.

For the sub-question "what online promotional activities will be preferred by online consumers in the Netherlands?", 70% of answers showed that "Price campaign" (huge discount) would influence the purchase decision; and this followed by "Interesting advertisement" (16%) (see Figure 10). In terms of specific promotion strategy, according to the results of the survey, the most attractive activity is "All products 21% off" as it was answered by 70% of participants, which followed by "The 1+1 for free", "Purchase for a certain amount and get coupons for the next time shopping" and "Others" (see Figure 11). Furthermore, the importance of discount with free delivery followed by

cheap price was answered by 29 participants for the question of "what kind of online promotional activities could attract you before purchasing the products?". Accordingly, it could be illustrated that price and discount are key factors that influence their final purchasing behavior. However, 78% respondents still insisted that they won't purchase the product they might not need even though the online promotion is good; but a slight difference can be found between male and female respondents, as woman seem to be more likely to be attracted by promotion activities (see Figure 12).

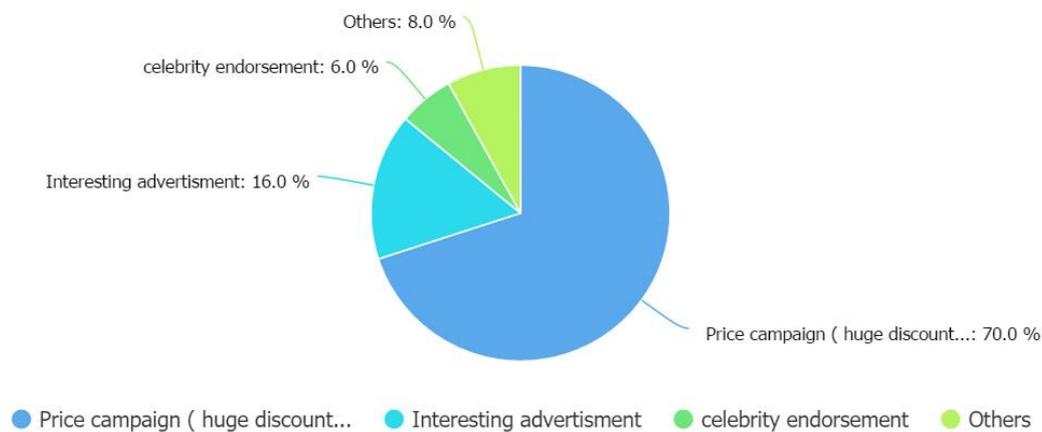


Figure 10: What kind of online marketing strategy would influence your purchasing decision?



Figure 11: .What kind of online promotional activities could influence your purchasing

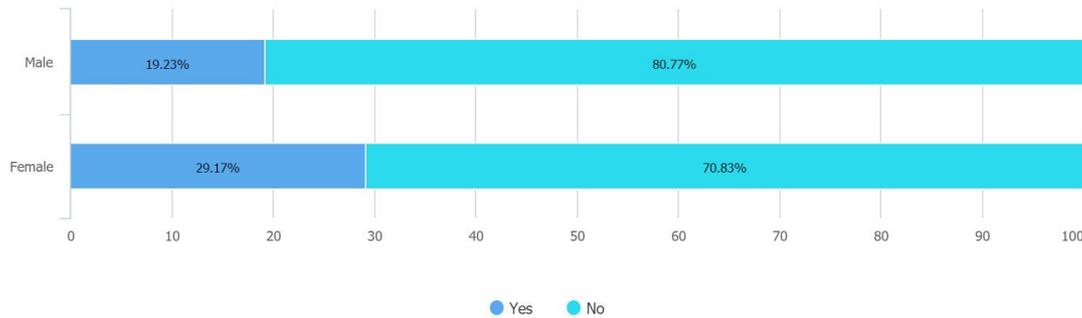
behaviour?

Figure 12: Promotion activities' influence on male and female likelihood of purchasing products they might not need

Regarding to the question of "which online channel do Dutch online users prefer while purchasing products online?". 28 participants chose "Through search engines" as an option which means they search for online shops through the third party website such as Google Ad Words. Out of the 50 survey participants, 21 people stated that they prefer using "bol.com" to purchase products and another 10 people chose "Google shopping" as the option. Furthermore, regarding to the question of "via which channel do you prefer to get promotional about a product?", the result shows that more than half of the participants prefer to seek for product related information from the "Company's website" and 12 people prefer to get information from "Search engines", and only 2 people prefer "Email advertising" as the channel to receive information. Here can be concluded as the Dutch online customers believe in self-searched information and the company's webpage as the key physical evidence for customers to evaluate the service they will receive should be well-designed and managed. What is more, as not a large amount of participants showed the preference of receiving advertisement by email, TresBizz should notice that over-posted email advertisement might be considered as annoying for some customers.

Considering the case of TresBizz which is focus on promoting products that made in China, when it has been asked whether consumers trust the product that made in China, a positive result is got as 37 (74%) answered with yes. More specific, as can be seen from the Figure 13, with the growth of respondent's age, the trust of China-made products is increased.

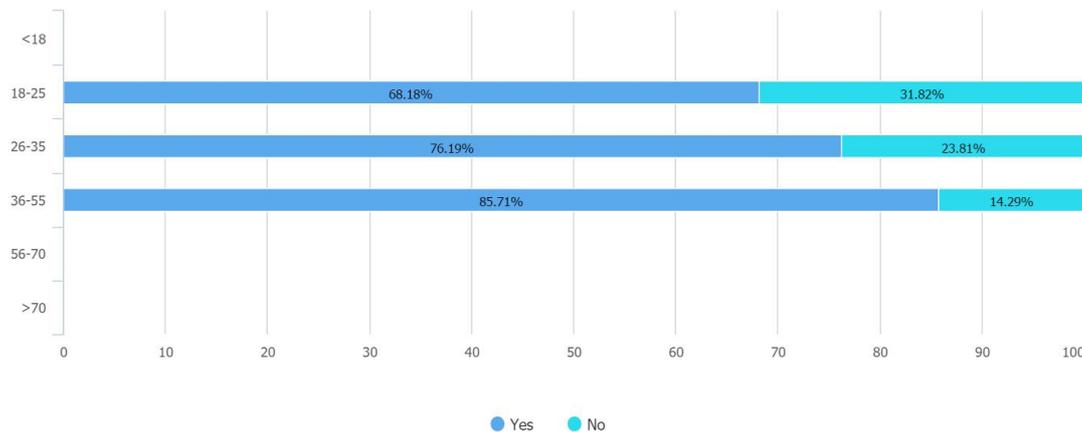


Figure 13: Trust towards products made in China among different age group

At the end, the results for question "what criteria influence your selection of an e-commerce company to purchase the product?", the outcome states that more than half of people think "Popularity", "Reputation", "Word of mouth", "Simple and clear shopping process" as well as "Good customer service" are factors they would take into consideration while choosing an e-commerce company. Based on the results that analyzed in previous text, regarding the central question 2 "what criteria could influence Dutch online consumer's purchasing behavior towards TresBizz's phone-related accessories?", it can be concluded that consumer's need and product's quality are as important as the price; appropriate pricing strategies can promote the sales to some degree, but the reputation of the company and trustworthiness are the key factors that could influence consumer's purchasing behavior. As online shopping might bring more risk to consumers because of it is established in an intangible environment, other customers' reviews are considered as powerful evidence for most consumers.

4.3 Research Area: Intercultural Communication with Chinese Suppliers

In order to understand how the cultural difference could influence the business process; and how to prevent the misunderstanding while doing business in a cross-cultural context, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a Chinese supplier Mandy (see Appendix 3). Mandy, who is a team leader of a Chinese electronics company called Remax, has rich experiences of doing export business to Europe. To start with, the outcomes of the interview stated that Chinese people prefer the European enterprises to communicate and negotiate in an indirect way. Aggressiveness and rudeness should be highly avoided while doing business with a Chinese partner. This statement keeps coincidence with the Chinese cultural characteristic that mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3; it is essential to show modest and politeness as Chinese culture trends to maintain the harmonious.

Furthermore, Chinese companies always focus on long-term orientation when to do business with others, which means building a long-term relationship is extremely significant in Chinese business culture. As the same as the argument from studies on Chinese culture, the interviewee illustrated that Chinese culture is a typical kind of relationship-oriented culture. Many businesses are constructed based on the relationship, and thus, it is necessary for the European companies to keep in mind that the long-term relationship is the key part of doing business with the Chinese firms.

Moreover, in terms of intercultural communication skills, Mandy explained that utilizing appropriate communication skills are able to obtain and increase trust from Chinese companies and minimize the misunderstanding from each other. For example, Chinese culture is a kind of high power distance culture, which can also be found from Figure 2-the culture dimensions from Geert Hofstede (1991),

expressing hierarchy in conversation or emails can make the Chinese people feel to be respected, and hence they would like to continue further business with the European firms.

To sum up, regarding the sub-question 3.1 "what cultural aspects does TresBizz need to take into consideration while doing business with Chinese suppliers?", it can be concluded that communicate and negotiate in an indirect way is considered as "keep face" and present respect to Chinese partner; and this contributes to build a long-term relationship and thereby encourages further cooperation. For the sub-question 3.2 "in what way does intercultural skill set influence the business cooperation between TresBizz and Chinese suppliers?", the interview with Chinese supplier shows that, in order to maintain good commercial intercourse with the Chinese supplier, it is important for the company to be aware of the cultural difference and understand, respect as well as try to adapt the Chinese business manner.

5 Conclusions

In order to formulate reliable conclusions, the findings of the field research will be compared with the theoretical guidance which contributes to form the theoretical framework of this report.

Online marketing strategies

As stated earlier in the research report, three sections of marketing strategies that could be applied by TresBizz's case are website marketing strategy, promotion strategy as well as social media influence. In terms of the website marketing strategy, Peng (2012) argued that website marketing strategy's purpose is to help the company with publicity of its website. This statement has been proved by interviews that it is essential for TresBizz to improve its current

website so as to increase the website publicity. In order to reach more target audiences, TresBizz should make an alliance with other websites. In addition, Mandarin site will eventually help TresBizz to attract more Chinese suppliers and get a better purchase price. An adequate pricing strategy is mentioned by both previous studies and the research results of this report; but products with attractive price should also hold good quality. Furthermore, Killian and McManus(2015) illustrated that the propagation of social media has encouraged a revolution in the field of communication. According to the results of the interviews, it can be concluded that Dutch social media can eventually increase the amount of consumer of TresBizz. In addition, it is important for TresBizz to control the customers' feedbacks, especially try to control the negative feedbacks. Besides, Kirby(2012) mentioned that one of the effective strategies related to the internet is the viral marketing. This statement could be supported by the results of interviews that viral marketing could help the company with raising the brand awareness without costing too much money yet effectively. It could disseminate information widely and it is based on the trust within information sender's own social network.

Online consumer behaviors

Keeping coincidence with the statement of Li (2014) which is trust is more important for online retailers than offline, the findings clearly show that the target group ranked trust is the most significant factor for influencing the online purchasing behavior. Thus, TresBizz needs to make sure that they should provide trustworthy feeling to the consumer, in order to convince consumers to purchase without any hesitation. Furthermore, according to Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van den Bergh(2010), consumer's online behavior depends on perception and attitude about the brand. In the results of the survey, it is visible that more than half of participants took price and brand name into consideration when

encounter online purchasing. Because the brand with a positive reputation could bring the security feeling to the consumers while purchasing online. Furthermore, viewing the results from survey and interviews, cheap price and the huge discount could influence consumer's purchasing decision and help with building a positive attitude towards the product. Nevertheless, according to the outcomes of the survey, consumers in the Netherlands are relatively rational because they stated that they will not waste money on unnecessary stuff, "Quality" is as important as "Price" when they purchasing online. Moreover, the findings of survey prove the argument that shared information from other consumers has a certain impact on the purchase decision making.

Intercultural communication with Chinese suppliers

As it is mentioned in previous literature reviews, "Guanxi" and "Mianzi" are considered as two elementary components in Chinese business culture. This argument is also supported by the findings of the interview which stated that reliable relationship should be maintained with the Chinese partner, in order to have a smooth long-term cooperation. Respecting partners in a Chinese way, like "keep face", will help to build a good relationship. Furthermore, the findings also clearly stated that implementing proper intercultural skills, which argued by Bennett(2004), helps to minimize the misunderstanding occurred by the culture difference and increase trust from Chinese companies. For cooperating with Chinese, indirect communication method is more preferred.

6 Recommendations

This thesis aims at giving client advice about promising market strategies to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market by examining potential online client behaviors and preferences, clarifying intercultural communication strategies with Chinese suppliers, and reviewing the relevant literature. For communicating a new product to its target group, effective marketing strategies, as well as target consumers' preferences and behaviors, are essential parts which should be considered carefully. In TresBizz's case which involves products suppliers with different cultural background, extra consideration on intercultural communication is significant for ensuring smooth operation in a whole. Thus, the advice for TresBizz would be interpreted from these three sections:

Online marketing strategies

In order to form adequate strategies to make the communication with consumers more effectively, a focus group interview and a semi-structured interview were conducted with experts in online marketing field. According to the results of the interviews, well-operated web-shop should hold the features of various products, attractive price, good reputation, user-friendly system and well-developed after-sale customer service. Therefore, advice are integrated as:

- Redesigning TresBizz website with more attractiveness;
- Creating attractive price campaign for promoting the new products;
- Involving varies of payment methods for offering more convenience to Dutch online consumers;
- Posting introduction videos of products for increasing consumers' confidence towards online shopping;

- Setting up faultless service mechanism to ensure the customers have a pleasing shopping procedure;
- Launching well-managed customer comments area;
- Employing social media platform for building a close social bond with customers;
- Proving customizing service for highlighting the China-imported products' uniqueness;
- Making alliances with other relevant websites.

Online consumer behaviors

- According to the outcomes of the survey, "Quality" and "Price" are considered as the most important factors when the customers in the Netherlands purchasing online. However, customers insisted that they won't purchase the cheap product which they might not need. Thus, TresBizz should notice that the consumers' needs and products' quality are as important as price; extra attention should be paid on matching consumers' demand and ensuring products' quality;
- In the survey, many participants stated that "trust" is very important for them and it affects their online purchasing behavior. This proved the arguments that trust is more important for online retailers than offline. Besides, participants said brand with a positive reputation could bring the security feeling while they purchasing online. Therefore, TresBizz should notice that trust and attitude towards web-shop and the products it sells are important for Dutch online consumers. The company should provide evidence as much as possible, in order to fully present itself to the consumers;

- As 74% of participants in the survey stated that they always look for customer reviews before purchase online, hence, other customers' reviews have a strong influence on online consumer purchase behaviors. TresBizz should set up a free feedback area on its website in order to let consumers leave comments and suggestions for the company.

Intercultural communication with Chinese suppliers

For smoothing the intercultural communication with Chinese suppliers, suggestions were collected through a semi-structured interview with a Chinese supplier. As an expert with sufficient experiences in international trade, she introduced the characteristics of working culture of Chinese businesses, and gave some examples of intercultural communication skills. The advice for TresBizz can be summarized as:

- Establishing specific department in charge of importing related issues;
- Recruiting employees with a certain knowledge-base of Chinese cultures, in order to well communicate and cooperate with the Chinese clients;
- Inviting experts who have rich experiences in doing business with China as the consultants for the company; and offering Chinese culture workshop for employees to well understand Chinese business manners;
- Visiting Chinese factories or having business dinner with Chinese partners frequently, to maintain a stable partnership with Chinese suppliers.

The above advices recommended to TresBizz are in an overall level, more specific advices will be presented in the followed Advisory Report.

Advisory Report

In order to help the client with solving the communication problems about promising market strategies to online sell China-imported mobile-phone accessories on the Dutch market, an advisory report is provided. Within this report, a well-formulated step-by-step plan with doable advice is presented. Based on the research findings of the TresBizz research project, the offered advice are derived from the report's conclusions and recommendations.

The client faces a problem to determine proper online marketing strategies to communicate new products, namely China-imported mobile-phone accessories, to target customers in the Netherlands. Additionally, TresBizz intends to build smooth cooperation relationship with Chinese suppliers. According to the research results, improvement strategies can be suggested from 5 sections: 1) implementing website strategies to TresBizz's web-shop; 2) improving the company's social communication performance; 3) setting up price campaigns to promote new products; 4) managing services in order to increase customers' satisfaction level, and 5) establishing an oversea trade department.

PDCA Cycle

For making an operational plan, PDCA (plan-do-check-adjust) four-step management method is employed as it is normally used for developing business improvement process.

Section1: Implementing Website Strategies

Plan- as it is illustrated in the research findings, the major target consumers of TresBizz prefer to search for product information through the company's website. Therefore, a clear, attractive and user-friendly website should be offered to customers in order to encourage the final purchase decision. Thus, the first strategy TresBizz needs to adapt is the website strategy.

In an interview, the Chinese online marketing expert Xiaobin Shi stated that the current website of TresBizz is quite ordinary and lacks attractiveness. In addition, as can be seen on its official webpage, the website structure is quite chaotic and unclear. For instance, on the front page there are too many colors, which make it difficult to present the company itself. An innovative and catchy website could help the company build brand awareness and obtain a higher click-through rate. Regarding this, the company could implement a new website theme that is less colorful and chaotic, but is concise and catchy. Therefore, it could be a good idea to learn from other well-designed websites with higher popularity, such as coolblue and bol.com, in order to acquire some inspiration.

Furthermore, online shopping is built on a virtual environment and before consumers receive the products they ordered, all online shopping services are intangible. When customers lack knowledge on how to judge the actual quality of the products sold online, then they will rely on these tangible cues such as website design, product's introduction and backstage employee's action. The more information the company provides, the less risk the customer perceives. Therefore, in terms of offering more evidence for the products, more details about products and an introductory video for certain products that gives a clear explanation to the customers about how the products works, can be employed by TresBizz's web-shop. Additionally, in order to inform consumers about the latest trends of the product's profile, updated news about new products should be presented on the main page of the site with a special font or color, which is easy for customers to locate and at the same time functions as a reminder.

Moreover, a stable and user-friendly system will guarantee a smooth online shopping process of consumers. Additionally, this will result in more trust in the web-shop owner. Likewise, a variety of payment methods will be more convenient for consumers. Currently, TresBizz's only accepts Paypal and Credit

card for payment, so the website needs to be improved in this aspect as well. Thus, in order to attract more Dutch customers or potential customers from other European countries, iDeal and Debit card should be implemented as the most important payment methods. If it is doable, adding Alipay and China-Union card to satisfy current Chinese suppliers should be considered as well.

In order to expand the popularity of the website and thereby to reach more potential customers, TresBizz could cooperate with other online channels such as Youtube and Facebook. The effect of this method is that people must click the advertisement before watching the video or browsing the website unintentionally, which helps TresBizz to increase brand exposure and attract new customers.

Finally, as the importance of other consumers' influence is emphasized in the research findings, it is necessary to set up a customer forum on the website for customers to write down comments concerning products, their online purchase experiences and the attitudes about the company. As mentioned in the research report, customers always seek for product reviews before purchasing, and positive reviews could increase trust and boost purchase behavior. Thus, launching a well-managed customer feedback area is highly recommended.

Do- as this moment, the implementation of abovementioned website strategies will be charged by marketing department because it is responsible for setting up effective and competitive marketing strategies. Since hiring professional website designer will cost a lot, the website of TresBizz can be first improved by current employee with design talent; and then can be sent to designer for advices. In a long-term development plan, a specific website design and maintain department should be established, because of the web-shop is the frontline service deliverer of TresBizz.

Check- this step is to measure the improvements. The most direct measurement is to calculate the increase of the click rate. An online survey can be sent to website users for evaluating the user satisfaction level towards the improved website. In general, the survey will be scored from 1 to 10 (1=Strongly dissatisfied, 10=Strongly satisfied) for each question, the final score will be the average score of all questions. The questions can include the website outlet, function, operation, etc.

Adjust- whether if the implementation plan should be adjusted depends on the final score of the survey which used in 'check' step. If the final score is under 6 in one survey for a selected solution, the responsible department should to adjust the improvement plan for the certain solution.

Section 2: Improving Social Communication Performance

Plan- Nowadays, through social media channels, people can spread the latest information at anytime and anywhere; and because of that, the spread of information has reached a new level. As a consequence, good social communication performance, based on an adequate strategy, could help a company establish a positive brand image as well as raise brand awareness. The result of the survey illustrated that around ten percent of consumers prefer to get promotional information about the products via social media. Participants also pointed out that social media provide a free platform for the company to build a reliable social bond with customers. Currently, TresBizz has an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and LinkedIn. However, none of these accounts are active at this moment. Therefore, in order to inform customers about the latest product trends and raise brand awareness of the company in a manner that they prefer, different strategies need to be implemented depending on the social media platform. There are several steps that need to be taken into consideration:

(1) Which social media platform TresBizz should select?

Every social media channel is unique compared to others; and each one has its own style as well as its specific target audience. The one TresBizz is recommended to choose should be the one that best suits its marketing structures and strategies. Therefore, when TresBizz is selecting the proper social media channel for them, several factors need to be taken into account. The first factor is how much time is Tresbizz willing to spend on managing the platform. It needs to be well planned in advance before taking actions. In general, social media platforms require a minimum of one hour per day during the starting phase. Once the platform is on the right track, time for maintaining can be reduced. The second determinant is the type of information that TresBizz wants to share through the social media platform. Some platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest accept illustrations and photographs; others like Twitter, Google+ focus on the qualitative textual content. Therefore, if TresBizz wants to successfully present itself through different social media channels, it is essential to determine the desired information it wants to bring across.

(2) Fully filling in company profile

A complete company profile gives an indication of the professional level of the company, and it is also a strong signal to tell people who access the company's social network that the company attaches great importance to their participation. On social media platforms, information generally consisted of two parts: visual information and textual information. For the visualized data, TresBizz should aim to ensure that the visual content on the social media platform maintains a certain continuity and familiarity. For instance, TresBizz's profile picture on the Facebook and Twitters accounts should be the same. Likewise, the top cover pictures for those two accounts should be similar as well. Regarding to the textual information, TresBizz should set up key word strategy in order to be

easily found by target customers. Furthermore, the language should be interesting and catchy, for the purpose of attracting readers' attention.

(3) Giving TresBizz's marketing content a style

In this step, TresBizz needs to define what kind of impression the company want to give to its customers; and what kind of relationship does the company wants to have with the customers. Since the company is on its transaction phase, thus it is important for TresBizz to posit itself and define a style for the long-term development.

(4) Selecting publishing strategy

It is necessary for the company to figure out what kind of content should be published via different social media platforms and which frequency could be kept. With the vivid quality, visualized content could convey plenty of information and it is easy to be accepted by the receivers. Thus, interesting pictures should be considered by TresBizz as one of the most important content types. Additionally, it is essential to know what kinds of information (notifications) do TresBizz's targeted customers like most. Furthermore, as the frequency and quantity of launched notifications are also important for successfully operating social media platforms, to find out the right time to publish information is another key factor. However, since TresBizz does not obtain enough experiences on operating social media network, it barely has any fans. Therefore, it is important for the company to know the content publishing data that presented in the following figure (see Figure 1).

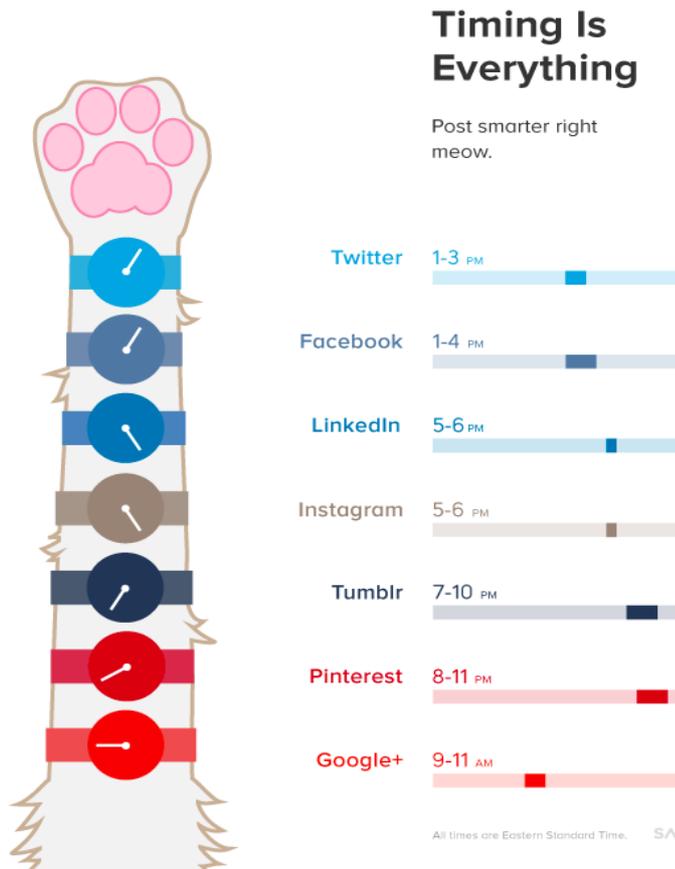


Figure 1: Time for posting via different social platform

Do- as an online marketing strategy, this part of improvement will be charged by the marketing department. Besides, because of some information shared through the social media might be product-related, the sales department which is more familiar with the products will play the regulatory role.

Furthermore, according to the research results that mentioned in the previous content, it shows that online marketing strategy is established on the trust within oneself's social network. At the beginning stage of the business, the interviewees also stated that employees of TresBizz should fully participate in products promotion and take full advantages of their social networks. Based on these findings, some strategies can be applied:

After defining the right social media platform to promote TresBizz's web-shop and its products, there are three methods could help TresBizz to expand its

social influence; and the first one is by using Instagram effect. The company could search for Instagram celebrities who have a certain amount of followers to promote its products. This strategy is provided by the survey results of the question "what kind of online marketing strategy would influence your purchasing decision?". Even though there were only a few participants chose the celebrity endorsement as the preferred option, it could still be concluded that some people believe in what celebrities recommend. Comparing to celebrity endorsement, the Instagram strategy is much cheaper, easier to achieve the effect, and consumes less time. Besides, Instagram is becoming one of the most popular social media platforms, by using the right hashtag and hiring the right blogger, it could bring a tremendous impact for TresBizz. The second method could be adopted is posting Unboxing videos on Youtube channels and sharing it through company's official website as well as social media channels like Facebook. Today's consumers are very rational that they want to see if they will receive what products promise and what they could expect before making the purchasing decisions. Lots of brand and individual post Unboxing videos to give evidence of the experience that someone goes through when they open a new product for the very first time; and the purpose is to explain the detail information of the product. Thus, a good Unboxing video could convince customers, gain trust from the buyers and thereby accelerate the buying behavior. Based on the survey and interview outcomes that customers consider trust as the most important factor and it could directly influence their behavior, this method is valuable for TresBizz to employ as a strategy. Since Unboxing video does not need to be professionally yet provides casual feelings, therefore, using this method could decrease the cost but reach the desired result. The third method for sharing products and company related news is to create banners and posters for social media. Sometimes it is difficult for consumers to read all of the information they are looking for. Hence, an informative and attractive banner or

poster shared through social media could catch consumer's attention and play the capture leading role to induce the customer to browse the company's official website.

Check- after finished those steps mentioned above one-by-one, it is essential for the company to test information publishing and analyze the outcomes. TresBizz could try to post content on Twitter for instance, to see whether textual content with related pictures obtains more click rate than simple text; and whether the pictures improved by software have more views than original pictures etc. If the testing result is positive, then the company could convert the method as the regular marketing strategy and implement in the end.

Adjust- after the "check" step, which sections need to be adjusted can be determined. In addition, advice for further development can be collected from the interaction with social media users on the selected platform. As the end-users and potential customers, their feedbacks are very valuable.

Section 3: Setting up Price Campaign

Plan- since TresBizz is on its transformational phase from offering the software license to selling physical products, therefore, it is difficult for the company to be competitive in this new market as a beginner. Thus, in order to acquire a certain market share, related price strategies need to be used to attract customers as well as promote new products. The outcomes of the questionnaire and interviews illustrated that price and promotional activities have a strong impact on consumers online purchasing behaviors; and additional benefits such as free shipping or flexible return policy are also the influence factors that customers will take into considerations. Regarding to the research outcomes, related attractive price campaign and promotional activities can be carried out for new products launching.

Do- the implementation of setting up price campaign plan will be charged by the marketing department. To be specific, firstly, the marketing department should make the list of the Dutch national holidays and design interesting price campaign for each holiday. For example, for the Christmas celebration, TresBizz could launch "21% off" discount for all of the new products and set up "Christmas package" for attracting customers. Secondly, in order to reach more audiences and encourage customers to purchase through TresBizz's web-shop, the company could post related activities through social media platforms. For example, if a customer recommends his/her friends to purchase online, the customer him/herself will get "50% off" discount for the next time online shopping; and his/her friends will get free gifts as "New customer". By doing so, it could obtain more loyal customers as well as raise the brand awareness among a larger audience group. Thirdly, for the cheaper products like cables, promotional activities such as "Buy one get one for free" can be implemented.

The purpose of adopting pricing strategy is to build better customer relationships to retain more long-term clients and develop loyal customers. At the beginning of the web-shop promotion, additional service like shipment should be included in the price in order to attract more consumers. Once the company's brand awareness is raising, price for each service can be adjusted based on the local market and those free services will only be offered to customers with TresBizz's membership.

Check- to measure the improvements after implementing the price campaign, sales changing can be evaluated. In order to get a more accurate result, both sales amount and sales income should be calculated and compared. Furthermore, the survey about the attractiveness and the satisfaction level towards the price campaign should be conducted.

Adjust- improvement plan modification should be depended on the sales together with the opinions of consumers. At the current starting stage, the goal in the short term could be small margins but quick return. Because of as a newcomer, a cheap price can attract more consumers in a short time. But for a long-term development, the quality of products and the service will be the focus since the low price is not enough for keeping loyal customers. Moreover, as the consumer satisfaction is the core of business, the needs and demands of consumers should be fully matched. Therefore, consumers' feedbacks should be an important consideration for improvement plan modification.

Section 4: Managing Services

Plan- based on the previous findings, the reputation of the company and trustworthiness are the key factors that influence consumer's purchasing behavior and therefore it is important that the TresBizz could give a positive and trustworthy impression to its potential customers. First of all, the company should focus on measuring customers' satisfaction by creating a scoring system on the website. Once customer finished purchasing online, they could be able to grade the website and service based on their experience as well as write remarks for the improvement. By doing so, the company could have an overview about which aspect needs to be improved and what advantage needs to be kept. Besides, for fully understanding the customers' perceptions of their online purchase experiences, TresBizz needs to gather information from both loyal customers and defectors. By analyzing data and finding out the reason why the customer decides to stay or leave, the company is able to recover its failure and improve the service quality.

In today's customer-oriented business environment, products and services should be designed and offered with a "customer logic". Customer logic is what customer trying to do or want to get. Not knowing what customers expect is one

of the root causes of not delivering to customer expectations (Wilson et al, 2012); and giving the customer what they want is crucial for every successful company. Accordingly, it is necessary for a company to understand the expectation and desire of the customer accurately. Since a common definition of service quality is that the service should correspond to the customers' expectations and satisfy their needs and requirements (Lovelock, 2010) and service quality is a kind of personal selling, and involves direct interactions between salespeople and potential buyers, all standards of so-called quality should be decided by customer's demands. Finding out what customers expect is essential to providing service quality, and marketing research is the key vehicle for understanding customer expectations and perceptions of services (Wilson et al, 2012). From the beginning of the website set up, multiple research methods should be employed by TresBizz to study customer expectation and find out the tendency can be applied into their service delivery design. The company should analyze both strength and weakness; aimed at challenge as well as limited. More specifically, TresBizz can take Database customer research and SERVQUAL survey as the quantitative research approaches. It could provide membership in several levels to collect information from numbers of customers to manage market segment. In this way, employees can set up their database and offer more suitable service to match different claims. It can also send out SERVQUAL surveys questionnaires periodically to monitor the service performance and compare with competitors at the same time. Besides, Critical Incident Studies is suggested to conduct for analyzing individual consumer who has special online purchase experience with TresBizz. CIT studies can give manager variety information vividly, such as whether the website is well-designed and user-friendly or the products is value for money. This kind of information about both advantages and disadvantages during service delivery process well help

TresBizz to understand what the real needs of customers and then change its service into a much more effective way.

In terms of specific service management, first of all, a well-developed return policy needs to be published. The literature in previous research report stated that, from a customer's perspective, customers undertake more risks for purchase online than purchase at physical shops because of they could not inspect the products. Hence, a well-developed return policy could bring consumers the sense of security and encourage them to purchase without worries. Furthermore, excellent customer service by backstage employees plays a key role in increasing customer's satisfaction. As it is discussed in the previous text, a successful e-commerce platform cannot only rely on technology and force client to use it, professional customer service employee with the willingness to deliver supports will provide more satisfactions to customers. However, TresBizz has great experience of selling software license and providing technological support, but the support team does not have enough experience for dealing with the physical products. Therefore, product-related knowledge needs to be taught and professional training needs to be arranged as well.

Do- the implementation of consumer research will be charged by the marketing department. By collecting and analyzing consumers' preference, expectation and satisfaction, adequate strategies that can satisfy consumers more effectively can be made. The implementation of customer service during the sale procedure and the after-sale service will be responded by the sales department.

Check- as the purpose of conducting customer research is to fully understand the perspective of customers and thereby design adequate service to satisfy them, improvement plan can be "checked" through the research.

Adjust- which part of the improvement plan should be adjusted depends on the outcomes of the customer research which used in 'check' step.

Section 5: Establishing Oversea Trade Department.

Plan- at this moment, TresBizz is in its business expanding phases. In order to be competitive within the phone-related accessories market, the purchasing price needs to be controlled as low as possible. As China is one of the countries with highest export volume and products made in China are considered as low price with decent quality, consequently, there will be more and more business contacts with the Chinese suppliers in the future.

Currently in the company, there is only one Chinese employee who is in charge of communicating with Chinese partners. Along with the ever-increased cooperation opportunities between TresBizz and its Chinese suppliers, a specific department is required to be established due to more and more complex and intense import-related issues. Besides, more employees with a certain knowledge-base of Chinese cultures should be hired for the purpose of well communicating and cooperating with the Chinese clients. In addition, a responsible person for managing this department and coordinating the works among employees is needed. This manager should be able to fully understand the Chinese culture as well as business communication styles, and he/she should play the medium role between those two countries. By hiring such a person, time is saved and troubles of negotiating with Chinese partners are prevented. If the hired person has a certain personal relationship with Chinese suppliers or relevant stakeholders, it could help the company to obtain a better price deal as well.

Furthermore, besides the full-time staff, it would be a good idea for TresBizz to invite experts who have rich experiences with doing business with China as the consultants for the company. They can also organize workshops regarding to

Chinese cultures for the employees. It is important for all of the employees to have knowledge about the culture they are doing business with; and to be aware of the different business manners.

Moreover, as it is stated by the findings from both desk research and field research, "Guanxi" and "Mianzi" are the two key elements of Chinese business culture, one more advice could be provided as a frequent connection should be set up in order to build a closer business relationship with Chinese partners. The director of the company should invite Chinese client to the Netherlands for formal or informal meetings and have some business dinners. If it is available and convenient for both sides, the management of TresBizz could also visit the Chinese companies and factories to enhance the relationship.

Furthermore, since effective cooperation with Chinese suppliers can be seen as a selling point for today's TresBizz in order to distinguish itself from other competitors, it is important to put Mandarin as a language option on its website. Although the existing targeted consumer group does not speak Chinese, most of the new products are supplied by the Chinese suppliers and they will also become users of the TresBizz website, thus it is necessary to make these change. With a higher accessibility caused by breaking the language barrier, Chinese suppliers will be more satisfied as they can easily find information about the company and its products, as they highly respect these details. Based on the information from the website, suppliers could have a general overview about the capacity of the company and the possibilities for further cooperation. Along with the continually increasing opportunities of Dutch-Chinese cooperation, it might also attract more Chinese speakers as potential customers of TresBizz in the future.

Do- in order to establish this oversea trade department, current employees with Chinese cultural background in both marketing department and sales

department should be involved. Because of in comparison with recruiting new employees, current staff are more familiar with the situation of TresBizz. But depending on the budget of TresBizz, several new employees with strong working capacity and oversea trade experiences should be hired for the important position as well. Because their professional work can accelerate the development of TresBizz's capacity in dealing with oversea trade issue; and thereby they can bring more benefits if in a long term consideration.

Check- in order to measure the improvement, focus group interview can be conducted with Chinese supplier to evaluate the efficiency of the advisory plan.

Adjust- which part of the improvement plan should be adjusted depends on the outcomes of the research which used in 'check' step.

Improvement plan organizing

In this section, a plan implementation scheme is made for the purpose of organizing the improvement plan implementation clearly. It includes operationalization, evaluation method, specific schedule, responded staff, and supposed budget. The duration of the plan implementation will be from September 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. According to the discussion with the client, TresBizz has 10,000 Euros as improvement budget. At this moment, TresBizz is at its transformational stage, all employees should assume more responsibilities in order to help TresBizz to achieve its development goal.

	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5
Operationalization	To redesign <u>TresBizz's</u> web-shop	To select proper social media platforms and develop them as online communication channels	To set up various price campaign	To design convenient customer service and manage the service through collecting customer's feedback	To establish professional department for dealing with oversea cooperation related issue effectively
Evaluation	Click rate of <u>TresBizz's</u> web-shop; Online survey about website design	Click rate of <u>TresBizz's</u> social media platforms	Sales revenue; Customer survey about price campaign	Consumer research	Focus group interview with Chinese supplier
Schedule	01.09.2016-31.10.2016	01.10.2016 - 30.11.216	Autumn sale (suppose to be launched in October): 01.09.2016 - 30.09.2016 Christmas and New year sale (suppose to be launched on 24.12.2016): 01.12.2016 - 20.12.2016	01.09.2016 - 30.09.2016	01.10.2016 - 31.10.216
Staff	Two staff with website design capacity in marketing department	Staff in marketing department and sales department	Staff in marketing department	Staff in marketing department	One director with strong working capacity and oversea trade experiences; Two or Three employees with Chinese cultural background
Budget	*Overtime payment for employee: 10 Euros ×15 ×8×2=2400 Euros	**Instagram promotion: 1000 Euros×2 =2000 Euros Unboxing video making: 800 Euros ×2=1600 Euros Other social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, <u>Linkedin</u> , etc.) management: 1000 Euros	0	0	***Overtime payment for director: 20 Euros ×15 ×4=1200 Euros Overtime payment for employee: 10 Euros ×15 ×4×3=1800 Euros

Figure 2: Plan implementation scheme

*Because of the small budget (10,000 Euros) of TresBizz, this part of the improvement is still charged by the current employees. Thus, the cost of plan implementation embodies as the payment of overtime working. According to the current regulation of TresBizz, each employee can have 15 hours overtime per

week, and the payment for each hour is 10 Euros (this is only the overtime wage; taxes and social security will be calculated in the total wages). As this period will be around eight weeks, and there will be two staff involved, the final budget for this part is 2400 Euros in total.

**This part of cost is based on the average budget of other promoters.

***At this moment, TresBizz doesn't have the plan to hire a new employee, this department will be established by current staff with the related background first. Thus, the cost of plan implementation embodies as the payment of overtime working. According to the current regulation of TresBizz, each employee can have 15 hours overtime per week. The overtime payment is 10 Euros/hour for employee and 20 Euros/hour for director (these are only the overtime wages; taxes and social security will be calculated in the total wages). As this period will be around four weeks, and there will be three employees and one director involved, the final budget for this part is 2600 Euros in total.

Barriers and limitations

During the advices implementation process, there could be several difficulties and barriers for the company:

First of all, in order to improve the website performance and establish measurement mechanism, manpower is highly required. As it is mentioned in the previous text, hiring professional team could help the company to reach its goal but this will be limited with TresBizz's small budget. Without spending a huge amount of money, it could take a long time until the expected outcome is reached. Therefore, TresBizz ought to recruit interns with the background of website design or social media platform operation. However, interns will cause another managerial problem as lots of interns will leave when the internship is finished, a human resource gap will occur which could bring a negative impact

for the company. For the full-time employees, high turn-over rate can also be found as there is no motivated reward system.

Moreover, at this moment, Tresbizz's organizational structure is not fully-developed yet. Hence, the role division within the company is unclear and the horizontal communications between different departments are insufficient. For instance, the marketing department is doing different tasks at the same time such as purchase, logistic or even graphic design. This situation bothers employees as they cannot fully concentrate on the tasks they supposed to finish. It makes the ineffective human resource management even worse.

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Appendix 1: Situation Analysis

1. Overview of TresBizz

TresBizz.com, with headquarters in the Netherlands, is an E-Commerce platform which is delivering to B2B and B2C (mainly) software licenses. We believe in “Human Capital Driven Company” from the start. This concept is very beneficial for every staff member and automatically we are generating interest amongst the buyers, suppliers and the employees in this complete line of business. TresBizz distributes products that span from the daily software of Microsoft Office to more advanced professional digital tools, such as Anti-virus software. Up until now, besides the company’s offices in the Netherlands, it has successfully branched out to India and Morocco, and is commercially active in over 11 countries including France, Belgium and Spain. With TresBizz’s accumulated experiences in the business throughout the years, the company actively and constantly seeks for opportunities to further acquire a distinctive and competitive market position, hopefully with the help of newer and more innovative products in the market.

Company profile

After comprehensive market research, TresBizz has been founded in 2012. During 2013 and 2014 TresBizz evolved itself into an E-Commerce platform for software in particular. In the software market, we aim to be the best not only by offering the customer very sharp prices but also by offering our clients free installation support including additional services. Policy of the company is to always deliver high quality products and services. TresBizz keeps researching to add new product lines on it’s platform in order to be a pioneer in multiple product segments and markets.

Since TresBizz has been growing very fast in the last year and expanded its platform to currently 10 countries, we still aim to expand our platform even further. The goal for last quarter of this year is to be live in minimum 2 extra countries and next year to be active in minimum 20 countries. Together with the Expansion within 3 years it has to be a global platform in order to have customers all over the world enjoy TresBizz services and sharp prices. Even though TresBizz aims to grow fast, we still want to maintain the high quality of our products and services on an international level. To guarantee the quality of delivery and from pre sales up to after sales service, we have already implemented different processes within TresBizz and soon more processes will be implemented which are standardized for blue chip organizations who are operating on an international level.

2. Macro Environment

Demographical

The world bank (2014) illustrated the population of the Netherlands was 16,854,183 and it is the 10th most populous country in Europe. Furthermore, the majority of the population of the Netherlands is racially Dutch and there are massive immigrants from more than 200 countries inhabited in the country. Nowadays the country has a migration rate of 1.99 migrants per 1,000 inhabitants per year.

Economic

The International Monetary Fund (2014) illustrated that the Netherlands was ranked as the 18th largest economy of the world in 2012 and the GDP per capita of the country was approximately 43,404 dollars, which makes the Netherlands to be one of the richest nation in the world. Nowadays, online shopping has

become one of the main method for Dutch consumers to purchase products. Statistics Netherlands (2015) stated that over the entire year of 2014 there were 10.4 million Dutch internet users had at least one time online purchasing experience and nearly 9 million Dutch people regularly buy products via the Internet.

Social

From the cultural aspect, the Dutch society is considered to be a modernizing international society and it has high quality standard of living. Majority of the population of the country is well educated and able to speak multi languages.

Technological

The Netherlands is one of the most developed country in the world within technology field. The Dutch consumers are able to use a variety of communication methods coupled with network service and wireless operation. The country is considered to be one of the best in the world regarding technology sector. More than 94 per cent of the houseld within the country have wideband internet access (NEA,2013)

Environmental

Environmental obligation aims to protecting the environment and regulation within different countries are different. The European Union has high standard regarding environmental sector which helps to green the EU economy and protect nature, quality of life of living in the EU countries (European Union, 2015).As the member of the EU, Dutch government always takes environment factor as the top priority.

Political

Before expand the business to a country, it is essential to take different aspects as consideration and one of them is the political factor since it has a great impact on the economy. Netherlands is famous for its freedom of speech and inclusivity, thus information within different media channels could be disseminated without any barriers and receivers could receive appropriate content without any restriction or censorship from the government's side. Information through the Internet is transparent and subjective.

3. SWOT Analysis



Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1.What is your gender?

导出分析数据

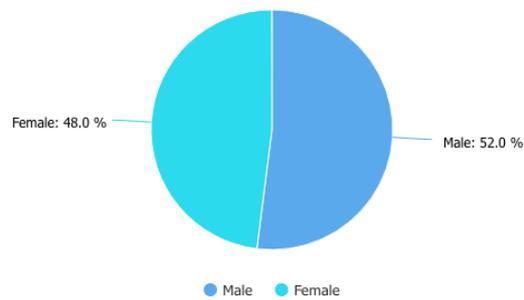
选项	小计	百分比
Male	26	52%
Female	24	48%
有效填写量	50	

饼图

柱状图

条形图

折线图



2.How old are you?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
<18	0	0%
18-25	22	44%
26-35	21	42%
36-55	7	14%
56-70	0	0%
>70	0	0%
有效填写量	50	

饼图

柱状图

条形图

折线图

3.What is your Occupation?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Student	22	44%
Employed	24	48%
Unemployed	2	4%
Retired	1	2%
Other	1	2%
有效填写量	50	

饼图

柱状图

条形图

折线图

4.Did you ever shop online?

导出分析数据

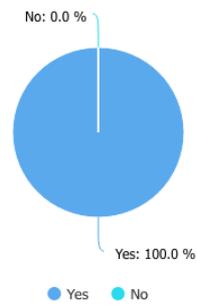
选项	小计	百分比
Yes	50	100%
No	0	0%
有效填写量	50	

饼图

柱状图

条形图

折线图



5.How many times did you shop online for the last year?

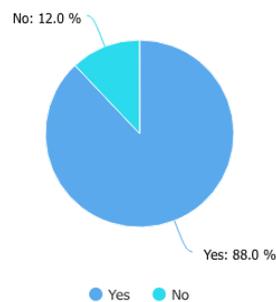
编号	文本答案	提交时间
1	less than 10 times	2016.05.05
2	less than 10 time	2016.05.04
3	More than 10	2016.05.04
4	About 5-10 times	2016.05.04
5	1	2016.05.03
6	25+	2016.05.03
7	5	2016.05.03
8	4	2016.05.03
9	twice	2016.05.03
10	Once a two weeks	2016.05.03

6.Will you purchase phone-related accessories (phone case, cables, power bank, headphones) through online channel?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Yes	44	88%
No	6	12%
有效填写量	50	

饼图 柱状图 条形图 折线图



7. What criteria influence your purchasing behaviour towards phone-related accessories ?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Cheaper price in comparison with the physical shop	20	40%
Shopping on Internet saves time	10	20%
Selection of goods on the internet is very broad	16	32%
Others	4	8%
有效填写量	50	



8. What reason would make you purchase phone accessories through online?

导出分析数据

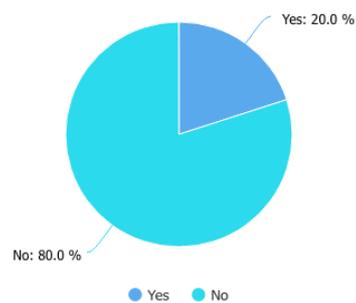
选项	小计	百分比
I really need it	20	40%
Apperance is attractive	5	10%
Unique technique	0	0%
Cheap price	20	40%
Others	5	10%
有效填写量	50	



9. Would you buy the phone accessories through online because of the attractive advertisement even though you do not need it ?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Yes	10	20%
No	40	80%
有效填写量	50	



10.What kind of online promotional activities could influence your purchasing behaviour?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
All products 21% off	35	70%
1+1 for free	5	10%
Purchase for a certain amount and get coupons for the next time shopping	2	4%
Others	8	16%
有效填写量	50	

11.What kind of online promotional activities could attract you before purchasing the product?

编号	文本答案	提交时间
1	/	2016.05.05
2	buy one plus one for free	2016.05.04
3	Cheap price	2016.05.04
4	Discounts, free delivery costs.. to name a few.	2016.05.04
5	Discounts, free shipping	2016.05.03
6	exploration of usability Profit	2016.05.03
7	discount	2016.05.03
8	discount on products	2016.05.03
9	none	2016.05.03
10	Discount	2016.05.03

备注：本题回收超过10条，更多详情请导出查看

14.What criteria influence your selection of a e-commerce company to purchase the product? (More than one option)

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Popularity	18	36%
Reputation	30	60%
Recommendations by others	22	44%
Simple and clear shopping process	30	60%
Good customer service	26	52%
有效填写量	50	

15. Via which channel do you prefer to get promotional about a product?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Company website	19	38%
Search engines	12	24%
Social media	10	20%
Display advertisement	1	2%
email advertising	2	4%
Online platform	6	12%
有效填写量	50	

16. What kind of information do you search for when buying a phone accessories?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Rational information such as price, services, facts	38	76%
Emotional aspects, recommendations from others, catchy advertising, good design of the product.	12	24%
有效填写量	50	

17. When encountering online purchasing, what aspect usually do you take into consideration?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Facts, such as price and brand name	38	76%
Feelings triggered by the advertisement	4	8%
Visual appeals of the promotion	8	16%
有效填写量	50	

18. What kind of online marketing strategy would influence your purchasing decision?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Price campaign (huge discount)	35	70%
Interesting advertisement	8	16%
celebrity endorsement	3	6%
Others	4	8%
有效填写量	50	

19.To what extent does trust affect your online purchasing behaviour? from degree 1-5 (1 is least important)

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
1	0	0%
2	2	4%
3	12	24%
4	23	46%
5	13	26%
有效填写量	50	

20.Will you purchase from an e-commerce company without doing any research about it ?

导出分析数据

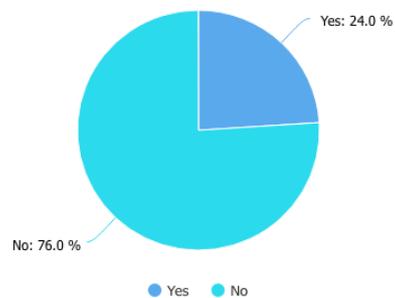
选项	小计	百分比
Yes	12	24%
No	38	76%
有效填写量	50	

饼图

柱状图

条形图

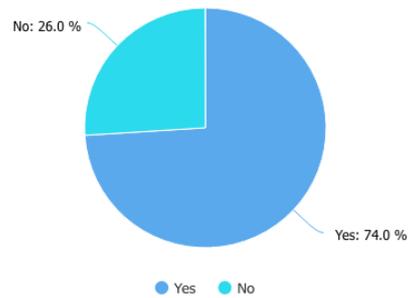
折线图



21. Do you always look for customer reviews before purchasing the product?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%
有效填写量	50	



22. How important does customer review influence your buying decision?

导出分析数据

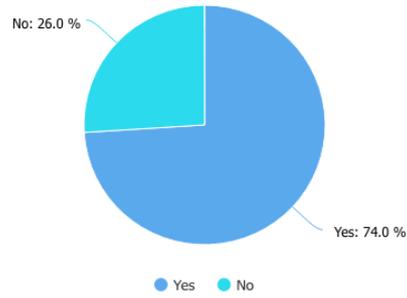
选项	小计	百分比
Not very important	2	4%
neutral	9	18%
I do care about it, but not that much.	16	32%
Very important	23	46%
有效填写量	50	

23. Do you trust the quality of the product that are Made in China?

导出分析数据

选项	小计	百分比
Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%
有效填写量	50	

[饼图](#)
[柱状图](#)
[条形图](#)
[折线图](#)



24. Ranking Which features do you consider to be most important when you purchase online.

导出分析数据

选项	排序第1	排序第2	排序第3	排序第4	综合排名
Price	16	14	12	8	2
Quality	17	23	8	2	1
Trustworthyness	14	10	21	5	3
Appealing Content	3	3	9	35	4
有效填写量	50				

Appendix 3: Interview Transcript

3.1 Focus group interview

Chunyi: Good afternoon everyone, first of all I would like to thanks all of you for coming to the interview today. I know all of you are busy with work and it is a honor for me to have a interview with you guys. Could you guys introduce yourself first please?

A: Hi everyone, I am currently working for TresBizz as marketing executive.

B: Good morning everyone, I am working for a Japanese company in the WTC as a SEO analytic.

C: I am B's colleague and I am also working for a Japanese company as purchase.

D: I am 30 years old and working for a German company at logistic department.

E: I am an expat and working for a Japanese company as marketing executive.

Chunyi: Haha I see, there are several people are working for Japanese companies.

BCE: laughing..

Chunyi: So I have a questions to ask you guys, according to your opinion What online marketing strategies will be preferred by you guys while doing online shopping?

A: Well, for me, attractive price and beautiful website would be a plus while selecting online shop. If I have to pay the same price then why would I shopping online right?

B: I agree with A, price is indeed very important for me aswell. But I do prefer the website with a user-friendly system that easy for me to search for the information I need, for instance Bol.com is a very good website and they also have good customer service which is very important.

Chunyi: What about you D?

D: Well, for me the most important factor is the reputation of the website. I need to trust the website first then buy products there, it make sense right? Haha. But I am also attracted by the online discount, it is very appealing for me.

E: I totally agree with D. Trust is very important for me and it directly influence my purchasing behaviour. Moreover, I do think customer service plays an important role. If the service is not good and I would not want to purchase again through the same shop. But that's my personal opinion of course.

Chunyi: If you have to list the most important factor, what would you guys suggest?

A: I believe it price and reputation.

C: Good website design, good customer service.

D: I would say all of those elements above since all of them add up to make a good website.

Chunyi: Which site do you guys purchase from?

A: For me coolblue.com is a good choice since I really like the design of the website and the colour of the website is consistent and easy to use, I really like it.

C: I always use google shopping since it is very convenient for me to use by that site and its easy to search the information.

Chunyi: Thanks guys for your time and information provide for me, its really help me a lot.

Everyone: No problem at all, good luck with your internship.

3.2 Interview with marketing expert

Chunyi: Good evening Xiaobin, thanks for accepting the interview, I know you just finished working, it is a pleasure that you still make time for me.

XiaoBin: Good evening Chunyi, its my pleasure as well, if you have any question, please ask me.

Chunyi: Okay, I am doing my internship at an IT company in Almere and therefore I have some questions regarding online marketing to ask you.

Xiaobin: Sure, ask me please.

Chunyi: Since you are the marketing expert, in what way do you think website marketing strategy have an impact on promoting and selling phone-related accessories to the Dutch market?

Xiaobin: First of all, I think website is very important for the company. In terms of language, of language, there are officially four languages, which are Dutch, English, French and Spanish. There is no need to put all the flags on the website.

In addition, I think it would be wise to put mandarin on its website.

Chunyi: And why is that?

Xiaobin: There are more suppliers coming from China. Furthermore, the website is quite standard, which does not attract attentions from people. It might be a good idea to show customers the latest trends of the software industry. For instance, put the updated news of windows system on the website between section "special offers" and "about us". This will potentially increase the amount of click of the website. In addition, some company put the introduction video for certain products, which gives a clear explanation to the customers how the products works.

Chunyi: I totally agree with your suggestion.

Xiaobin: Secondly, the channel strategy is essential. Variety of the payment methods makes customers easy to choose. Currently, there are only paypal and credit card can be chosen on the website. In terms of attract Dutch customers, iDeal and Debt card is a must payment methods.

Chunyi: is there anything more need to be taken as consideration?

Xiaobin: Moreover, a potential opportunity is to make alliances with other companies both in the Netherlands or in Europe. It can either via online shopping channels or other websites that are selling similar products. The

interviewee mentioned that TresBizz could cooperate with several free sports watch online channel, such as “Vipbox.com”. Those websites provide audience free online sports watching. The audience must do several ads clicks in order to reach the free site. It can eventually link sports lovers to visit the website of TresBizz.

Chunyi: Thanks for your detailed answer, is there anything more you would like to add?

Xiaobin: yes, there is one last thing I want to mention, the sales promotion is the most effective way to attract customers. Most times when a company introduces a new product to the market. Low price strategy always applies in order to get more market share of the market.

Chunyi: Thanks for your explanation for this question, I have one more thing to ask, to what extent does social media influence online marketing strategies?

Xiaobin: well, more and more companies start to use social media as their promotional channel. For instance, the Vodafone had introduced its new 4G network on Youtube advertisement. In addition, social media gives people more power to talk with the company. In the past, companies hardly get feedback from customers. Nowadays, companies have the opportunity to get feedbacks from customers before the product has been launched on the market. Besides, social media provides a platform for the companies to build relationships with customers. However, there are also shortages for using social media as marketing tools. For instance, customer’s negative feedbacks will potentially influence other customer’s decision making. Plus, if a company is over-promoted to the customers, it might lose customer’s attention.

Chunyi: Regarding this, do you have any suggestions?

Xiaobin: I suggest the company should create its own client database and send regular email to the customers about new product launched and sales promotion. In addition, the interviewee also said: “*try to do some advertisement on Facebook,*

Twitter and LinkedIn. I am sure most of your clients are using all of the social media mentioned above. Ask the employees to share the articles from the company and post it on their Facebook page. The snowball will eventually getting bigger and bigger. It will not cost too much by using social media. Compared with the traditional promotion, social media saves lots of costs for the company”.

Chunyi: Thanks for your time and cooperation, I would like to know if I have further questions, can I still ask you?

Xiaobin: Sure, you have my wechat and QQ, you can always approach me by that and I would like to give you more advices and I wish the great success of your study.

Chunyi: Thanks a lot and I wish you have a nice evening.

3.3 Interview with the Chinese supplier

Chunyi: Good afternoon Mandy, first of all I would like to thanks for accepting the interview. I know Remax has rich experience with Western companies, therefore there are several questions I would like to ask you.

Mandy: Good afternoon Chunyi, sure, no problem.

Chunyi: What kind of culture aspect you think the company TresBizz need to take into consideration while doing business with Chinese suppliers?

Mandy: Chinese people prefer the EU enterprises to present implicate and indirect ways to do business with them. Keep in mind do not be too aggressive and dominant when communicate with the Chinese companies, instead showing modest attitude would be a great and proper method to deal with them. Furthermore, Chinese companies always focus on long-term orientation when to do business with others, which means building a long-term relationship is extremely significant in Chinese culture. Concentrating on short-term return is going to ruin the relationship with Chinese enterprises.

Chunyi: Thanks for your detailed answer, next question, in what way does intercultural skill set influence the business cooperation between TresBizz and Chinese suppliers?

Mandy: For my personal opinion, utilizing appropriate intercultural skills are able to obtain and increase trust from Chinese companies. For example, Chinese culture is kind of high power distance culture, expressing hierarchy in conversation or emails can make the Chinese people feel to be respected, and hence they would like to continue further business with the European firms.

Chunyi: Thanks again for your answer, and I would also like to ask to what extent does business relationship affect business cooperation with Chinese suppliers?

Mandy: Chinese culture is well known as typical relationship-oriented culture, many businesses are constructed based on the relationship, and thus it is necessary for the European companies to build business relationship with the Chinese suppliers. As mentioned in previous content, the long-term relationship is the key part for doing business with the Chinese firms.

Chunyi: Thanks a lot for your cooperation and your answer is really detailed and well-explained. I am looking forward to cooperate with you again in the near future.

Mandy: no problem at all, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me