



MK Communication Channel Strategy

Recommendation on selection of MK
communication channels for IMC strategy for
Numastec Coatings

Author: Iryna Shulikina

Student Nr: 343356

BA International Communication

Graduation Supervisor: Antonia Hein

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides practically-oriented recommendations regarding the selection of MK communication channels for designing IMC strategy by implementation of which Numastec Coatings will be promoted on the Dutch B2B market. IMC strategy is being defined as a form of marketing organization and planning, pursuing different goals and tasks but in the same time is retaining strategic elements congenial with the overall objectives. The client is the management of Hollander Scholtens B.V represented by Ron Huisma and Fred Oldenhuis, who are preparing distribution of Numastec Coatings in the Netherlands. The product is represented by innovative eco-friendly Termoberial coating, which is going to be introduced in the Dutch B2B market. As a dimension of the research 2 field of studies were determined: B2B communications and IMC tools. In order to find out the most appropriate MK Communication Channels in perspective of B2B environment, the expectations of Construction companies representatives' and B2B Sales professionals' had been analyzed, furthermore, they were compared to the knowledge within the field of B2B and Integrated Marketing Communication tools. The findings were derived from the conducted in-depth interviews and literature review. The results define 6 Marketing Communication Channels and methods, such as network, professional magazines, direct sales, exhibitions and website to be the most effective in terms of promotion of IMC strategy for Numastec Coatings. Nevertheless, the empirical findings show that Dutch B2B sales professional, working with Industrial market, places the biggest value to the Networking, doubting the effectiveness of classical promotional tools. The recommendation itself provides basic IMC strategy focused on the Channel strategy for Numatech Coatings. It integrates the above-mentioned communication channels in the coherent strategy in order to pursue the initial promotional objectives.

2. Project context

In the B2B world of industrial marketing promotional methods are being quite different from the traditional advertisement. Nevertheless, integrated marketing communication strategy appears to be beneficial as it is coordinating companies' marketing communications efforts, enterprises can avoid duplication, take advantage of synergy among promotional tools, and develop more efficient and effective marketing communications programs.

Marketing communication issue faced by Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. became the motive for the given research. This study, being a part of the Graduation assignment conducted by the student from the Hanze University Groningen, provides recommendations on Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy (IMC) in terms of choice of promotional mediums/channels, which was requested by the company management represented by Fred Oldenhuis and Ron Huisma.

After several months of extensive preparation of Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V for the launch of Numastec coatings on the Dutch market, management realized the need of marketing communication strategy, which could provide an effective promotion for the new product. As soon as the company will be authorized as official distributors, subsequently acquiring marketing plan and brand image of the Numastec, the management will have to decide on how to promote the product in the Netherlands.

According to F. Oldenhuis and R. Huisma the promotion will take place within B2B environment of the Dutch Construction market. Such task requires knowledge of specific marketing communication tools and channels, needed for designing the aforementioned strategy, which could be quite distinctive from the popular ways of mass communication. Moreover, in the beginning of the new entity's business development management considers to focus on construction and roofing companies of the Northern Holland, which allowed the research to encounter further (more specific) needs and values of the target audience which another crucial factor for designing marketing communication strategy for Numastec Coatings. Finally, Mr. Huisma shared concerns about use of online communication tools, and the website in particular, which was also taken into account while conducting this research.

Based on the above-mentioned factors and the views of the client, the research leads to the recommendations for integrated marketing communication strategy , which is based on the studies of B2B communications theories as well as Marketing Communication Channels, confronted with the views of target audience on marketing B2B communication mediums and tools. An important outcome of an IMC approach is that all communication mix tools, at least on the company's side, are integrated and support each other, resulting in synergy effects (Kitchen & Burgman, 2010) on the target audience, enhancing promotion of the product correspondently.

3. Organizational context

Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. is located in Groningen, the Netherlands, represented by Fred Oldenhuizing and Ron Huisma. It is a SME, which shares some features of a one person company. However, the company's competencies go far beyond of what could be assigned to a company of such a size. Company is being run by the professionals in business management, ICT, project management consulting, international trading, furthermore, the entity is performing as Bilateral Chamber of Commerce. One of the powerful tools of Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. is its Business network: National and international, governmental and political level, financial organizations. Company's commitment covers: transaction negotiations, Supply chain management, product control management, and one-side support at loading / unloading. Nevertheless, being competent in working with large-scale business fields, management is lacking professional knowledge regarding marketing communications. This fact raised concerns about Numastec project, as it required creating prospects of repetitive sales and systematic actions in the field of long-term B2B communication and relationships with prospective clients.

Since 2013 Hollander Scholtens Trading BV has been preparing signing of the agreement with Numetech Coatings SA, Luxembourg-based company, which is appointed by Numastec LLC, the joint venture of Insulating coatings Corporation Astec, (US-based company) and Progress Capital SA, (Luxembourg-based holding). Numetech Coatings is responsible for the business

development within the EMEA & CIS areas. According to the agreement Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. will become an official distributor, being a responsible executive for setting out the introduction the products (manufactured and distributed by the corporation from the USA) in the Netherlands.

Numastec LLC is a Daughter company of manufactures ICC and Progress Capital and is, additionally, an owner of the Astec and Numetech brands. The first commercial name is being used in the American and Caribbean regions, while Numastec is the name being used in the overseas territories.

Thus, receiving all the needed materials from Numetech, Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. will have full capabilities and attractive opportunities for selling the product on the Dutch market.

3.1 Product description

Currently, according to the partners, the unique Coatings of Numastec (the product) has no analogues on the European market and has an opportunity to be a revolutionary product in the industrial sector. Protecting the environment is the key issue to Numastec LLC. Hollander Scholtence Trading B.V. believes that Numastec product line will provide many solutions for several applications through Dutch region. Two strategically perspective products, namely, roofing and thermal barrier coatings, were chosen to be the first ones to introduce in the Dutch market.

Numastec products are water-based and, therefore, environment-friendly. Green products and socially responsible policies in the companies are becoming increasingly important. The products are environment-friendly and energy efficient, thus offering significant savings for their users and substantial ROI for the company. The nano-technologies and performed solutions in the field of insulation and anti-corrosion materials, waterproofing and fire retarding comply with stringent industrial requirements and energy efficiency needs in private and commercial construction, infrastructure, marine and other sectors. Most notably, over 25 years, ASTEC has sold more than 40 million square meters of surface solutions, thus, creating an impressive list of references. The variety of top-of-roofing solutions offered by Numastec is vast.

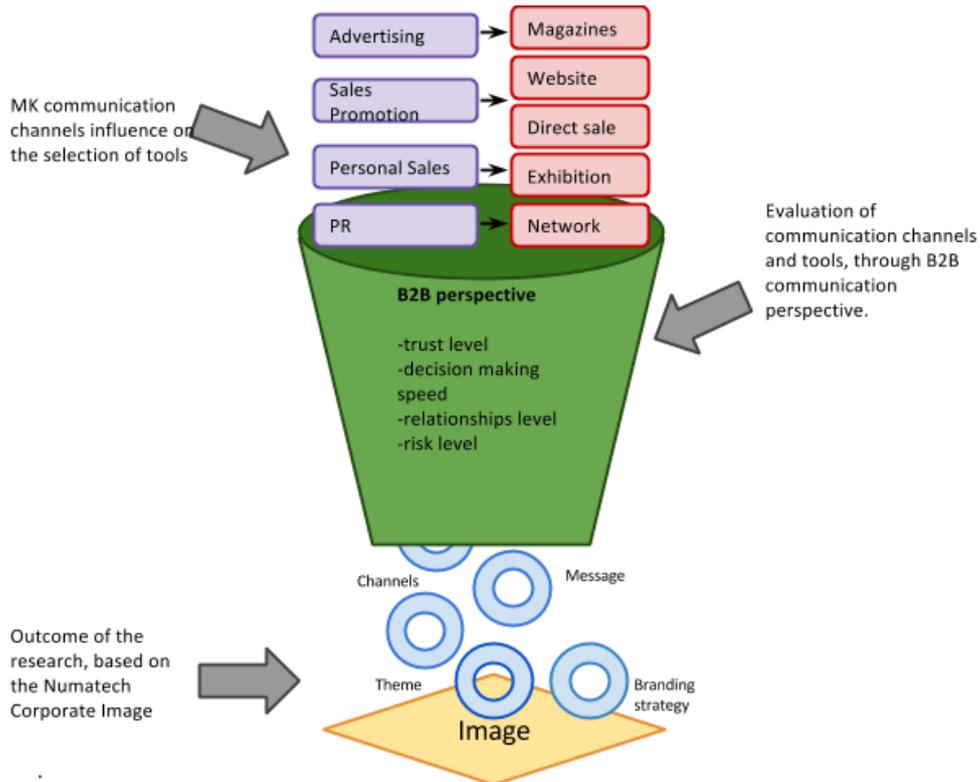
4. Theoretical Framework

The research proceeds in the scope of B2B environment which determines main directions of the project. De Pelsmacker et al. (2003) retrieved from (Chelebisova E. et al 2011) characterize B2B marketing by sophisticated and complex group buying decision, where it is important to target members who have significant influence on the final process. The most commonly used channels in the B2B market are mainly personal contacts, phone calls, e-mail, direct marketing, trade fairs and exhibitions, public relations, sponsorship and advertising in specialized media (Chelebisova E. et al 2011). Consequently, it gives the research more concentrated view in terms of MK communication tools and mediums, contributing to the design of precise IMC strategy for Numastec Coatings. Among the number of decision-makers, such variables as level of trust and long term relationship orientation have direct influence on the design of IMC strategy (view Table 2. Conceptual model). The centrality of the trust and commitment concepts to relationship marketing has thus been established and they are as crucial to marketing channel relationships as to other the B2B relationships (Achrol, 1991; Goodman and Dion, 2001, retrieved from Fill, 2005).

4.1 Conceptual design

Based on the mentioned theoretical framework, the following conceptual model was designed. It helps to clearly demarcate the research subject, and to formulate the assumed relationships between the core concepts correctly and to link the research project to an existing theory (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010, p. 267). The research uses this conceptual model to gather information about the effective communication channels formed in the perspective of B2B communication, which will contribute to the final decision on MK Communication tools for the promotional strategy for Numatech coatings

Table 1. Conceptual model



The detailed visualization of the relationships of channels and concepts of B2B perspective is presented in Table 1. Conceptual model. First of all, the research is considering certain number of communication tools and marketing channels, advised by the focus group and secondary findings. Each of 6 promotional tools, such as Advertising, Sales promotion, Personal sales and Public relations, acquires different MK communication mediums, which could play special role and input in the IMC plan. Here magazines, website, direct sales, exhibitions and network represent communication channels, which are the most used in the B2B communications. Though the latter is not a typical communication channel, indeed, synergy developed by the network helps sustain the network and provides a distinct competitive advantage, (Hadjikhani & LaPlaca, 2013) which is built on the relationship basis and helps to achieve more effective communication. Taking into consideration the specifics of the B2B environment, as well as audience, where communication will take place, MK communication mediums and tools were looked at through the B2B perspective, which influences evaluation of the last ones. A trust level, decision-making speed, relationship level, and finally possible risks, directly affect the selection of the most appropriate mediums and tools, as it relates to the values of the target audience- the receivers of the message. Those elements which corresponded to the desired

criteria of the company and customers in the most appropriate way, were selected. Eventually, the outcome provides justified methods for the design of IMC strategy, which will be bind together in the final product based on the desirable image of the company, provided in the promotional message. Therefore, marketing plan and brand image of Numastec coatings, which Hollander Scholtens trading B.V. is going to operate, became canvas for the future IMC strategy in which the selected communication channels and tools represent decisive components of the final picture, defining the direction and methods of the promotion itself.

To sum up, the conceptual model of the research is built on investigation of proper MK Communication tools for IMC strategies in the B2B environment, which would be consequently selected taking into consideration the influence of Target group’s expectations. Finally, the "the most suitable of marketing communication tools within an IMC approach can lead to a better overall outcome and may also deliver a more holistic picture" (Kitchen and Burgman, 2010,p.6)

4.2 Research perspective

The perspective of the research will be derived from studying various theories on the B2B communication and MK com instruments. The intended recommendations will be the result of the conclusions based on confrontation of the research perspective focused on the area of B2B Marketing communications with the research objects, in this case Views of the target group on communication channels (See Table 2 Research perspective) (Verschuren &Doorewaard 2010, p.68)

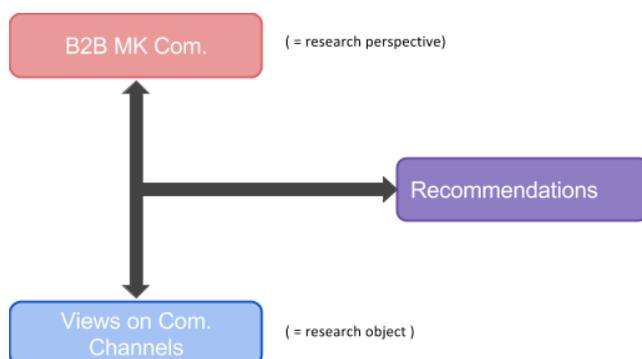


Table 2. Research perspective

5. Research Design

5.1 Research objective

5.1.1 Intervention cycle

Based on the project context and preliminary research it was concluded that this project can be referred to as the practice oriented design research, according to the Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010). Consequently, a practice-oriented researcher should aim at the production of new knowledge (Verschuren 2009). The initial problem was already clearly stated at the beginning of the project and is seen by the client as a need of designing promotional campaign to launch a new product, which is conveyed in terms of the research as lack of knowledge to design an Integrated Marketing Communication plan for Numastec Coatings.

5.1.2 Objective

a) The objective of the research is to make practical-oriented recommendations for the management of Hollander Scholtens regarding the selection of MK Communication Channels for designing IMC strategy in order to promote Numastec Coatings on the Dutch Market by

b) Analyzing expectations of construction companies and B2B sales professionals in MK Communication, comparing them to the knowledge about B2B and IMK communication derived from the in-depth interviews as well as secondary literature review, which would provide the parameters/criteria for B2B MKC strategy.

The research aim is to investigate the most appropriate Communication channels and tools for promotion of Numatech Coatings which should be utilized in order to be able to effectively reach prospective customers and deliver the message, as well as explore factors, which are influencing B2B communication on the Dutch construction market. Accordingly, these findings will provide Hollander Scholtens Trading B.V. with a communication framework, which will be the basis for the design of IMC strategy for Numatech Coatings.

5.2 The research framework

According to Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010) it is useful to come to a general understanding of different steps which need to be taken in order to realize the objective. Research framework is a schematic representation of the research objective and it includes approximate steps that need to be taken in order to realize this objective. The final goal of the research project is to design recommendations about IMC strategy for Numastec coatings.

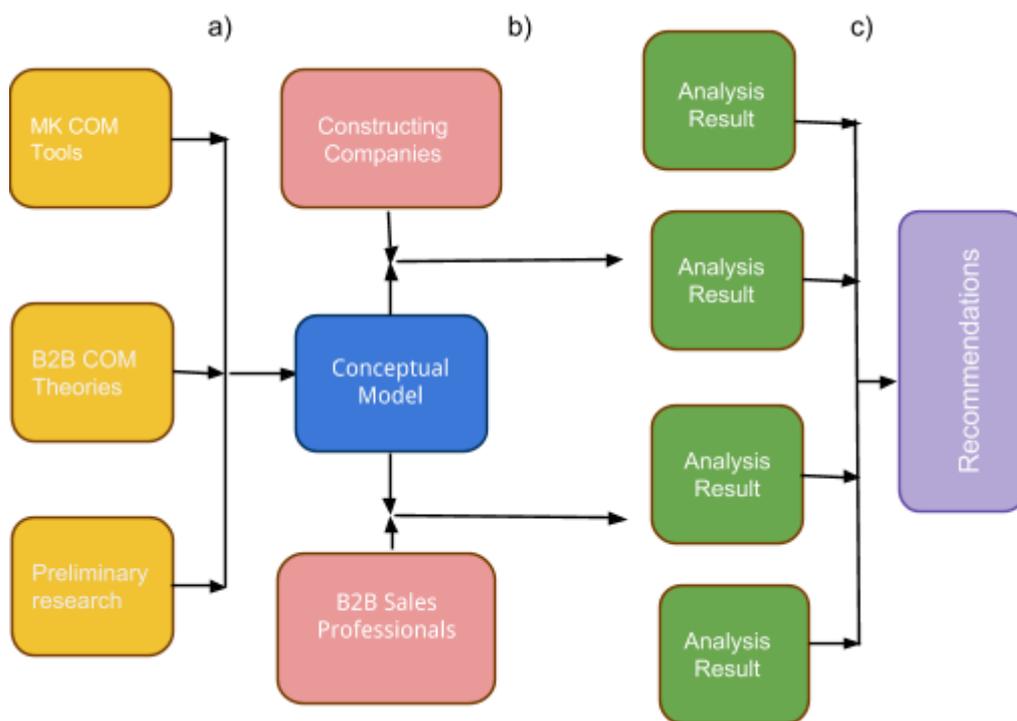


Table 3. Research Framework

The following research framework was constructed based on the key concepts of B2B perspective and MK communication channels, which have been chosen after studying relevant literature on those fields during preliminary research.

Based upon the two main parts of the research objective, the research framework has been established, which laid the ground for the further definition of the central questions.

The vertical arrows in the graphical version of the framework symbolize the factors which have been confronted, while the horizontal arrows show where conclusions could be drawn up from using the confrontation. The a) section of the framework represents the theoretical fields, such as MKC Tools as well as B2B communication, which were studied and analyzed for the provision of the theoretical background of the research. It also refers to the design of the Conceptual

model of the research (Section 4.1 Conceptual design), and has a more profound insight there. As the next step, theoretical results have been confronted to the part b) of the research framework by the views of the focus group, here named as objects. According to the b) part of the research objective, the objects of the research are Construction companies representatives and B2B sales professionals who expressed their views and experience in utilizing MKC tools in B2B communication environment. Finally part c) of the theoretical framework focuses on the analysis of gathered data, which provides qualitative conclusions and recommendations about selection of MK Communication Channels for designing IMC strategy in order to promote Numastec Coatings in the Dutch Market.

5.3 Objects

The objects of the research are one of the main sources of information and knowledge for the strategy design. In this project main research objects are represented by the target group consisting of Construction companies, which hypothetically could be interested in Numastec product, and B2B sales professionals experienced in B2B marketing and communications. Construction companies and B2B sales professionals provided research with insight into their preferences, values and needs in terms of marketing communications, and it created a framework and requirements for designing recommendations for IMC strategy for Numastec. Variety of target groups are suitable for the research as well as for Hollander Scholtens B.V.'s practical purposes, which was mentioned by the management earlier, and the target groups' views provide comprehensive information concerning the choices of communication channels in B2B surroundings. As it is mentioned in the part b of the objective, the analysis of views and values of construction companies and B2B sales professionals in MK Communication and its comparison with knowledge about B2B and marketing communication within Construction market are derived from the in-depth interviews as well as secondary literature review displayed in part a of the research framework , and it provides the parameters/criteria for B2B MKC strategy to contribute to making a promotion plan. For better stirring each of the objects will be described more thoroughly:

Object A

Construction companies are assigned as a research object A. Construction Companies could be not only the one time buyers, but regular consumers of the product, which makes final communication aim different. That turned a research to the long-term perspective, and aimed communication towards Bert Poelstra (Perslucht), Rick Raatjes (Verbion), Rolf Kuiper (Verbidak Dakdekkersbedrijf) (See Appendix) construction companies located in the North Holland. During the interviews the representatives of these companies kindly shared their experience in business communication .According to Blech & Blech (2003) it is essential rule of the successful marketing to know needs and values of the target audience in order to be able to satisfy it. This thesis, in fact, became a reason for the selection of the object, and provided knowledge, which, as it was mentioned in the conceptual model, will become one of the criteria for choosing MKC channels and tools.

Object B

Object B is being embodied by the B2B sales representatives, who have experience working with the construction companies. The interviewees who provided insight into the MK and communication experience are high level professionals, with the extensive experience. For instance, Mr. Reind Sonderman has 30 years of sales and project management experience in the construction industry, and, even though, he is a representative of the old school sales-men, his remarks and innovative view made a great input into the research process. Dick Jansma has been working for 25 years in sphere of B2B communications, among direct sales, he is also organizing events meeting and seminars for his company's clients, and could provide an adequate reflection on the most successful communication channels. Finally, Gerrit Brand is a Communication professional, who has his own agency, and being experienced working with industrial B2B communication, could provide the research with insights into promotion for the B2B clients.

5.4 Research Questions

The design of the research questions is corresponded to the research framework, eventually aiming to reach the objective of the research. The research questions are divided into three sections, whereas section A are the Theoretical questions which focus on providing theoretical insights.

Research questions:

What knowledge are required to contribute to the design of the effective IMC strategy to promote Numastec coatings in the Dutch market?

Theoretical Central Questions

1. According to the recent research and theories, which Marketing Communication tools and channels are the most appropriate for the design of IMC strategy, regarding B2B perspective?
2. How, according to the theories, does Marketing communication channels effect B2B communication, in terms of risk level, decision making speed, closeness of the relationships and the level of trust ?

Theoretical Sub-questions

1. How important is Network in terms of B2B MK communication?
2. What impact does Professional Magazines having terms of B2B MK communication?
3. What is a role of Direct sales in terms of B2B MK communication?
4. What impact do Exhibitions have in terms of B2B MK communication?
5. What is contribution of Website/Professional online platforms in terms of B2B MK communication?

Empirical Central Question

1. What are the expectations of Construction companies and B2B sales professionals about the best B2B MK communication tools and channels, as well as values and beliefs, which could contribute to the design of IMC strategy for Numastec?

Empirical Sub-questions

1. Which expectations in terms B2B MK Communication do Construction companies and B2B sales professionals have?
2. Which communication channels are the most preferred by Construction companies and B2B sales professionals?
3. How do Construction companies and B2B sales professionals make decisions about acquiring new supplier?

Analysis Central Question

1. What kind of knowledge was gained after analysis of research concepts in terms of recommendations concerning the design for IMC strategy?

5.5 Methodology

5.5.1 Research strategy

The research was designed under the scope of studies of Dr. Verschuren (2013) and his work “Designing a research project” (Verschuren and Doorewaard 2010).

The research strategy resembles the following case studies in combination with grounded theory approach. Here the case study is a strategy for conducting research which focuses on empirical investigation, complemented by grounded theory approach, which is referred to as the process of comparing empirical data to the theory (Chelebisova E. et al 2011).

Cases are represented by the research objects mentioned in Section 5.3, in which the research attempts to gain a profound insight, (Verschuren & Doorewaard , 2010), in terms of the expectations of B2B MK communication tools.

5.5.2 Nature of the research

Inductive depth approach was chosen to provide strong evidence for the recommendations as for the selection of Communication tools for Numastec IMC strategy, based on the results of qualitative interviews with Construction companies, which hypothetically could be interested in Numastec product, and B2B sales professionals, who are experienced in B2B marketing and communications, as well as professional research findings in the research and theories of B2B. This is a small scale approach that yields knowledge that could be generalized to a lesser extent, but nevertheless enabled the research to achieve depth, elaboration, complexity and soundness, thus minimizing risk of uncertainties (Verschuren & Doorewaard , 2010, 156).

Being aimed to obtain a general idea of the object as a whole, the research refers to the holistic knowledge. According to Verschuren (2009) in empirical research holism means studying the entire object instead of an aspect or a part of it, studying the real life object instead of a dummy. This conclusion supports the qualitative unstructured and open way of gathering data, such as open interviews.

5.5.3 Technical research methods

The research strategy implies different methods of primary research. Because of the relatively small number of research units, qualitative research techniques will be the most appropriate to use. In order to answer Empirical research questions, it was opted for 6 intensive face-to-face in-depth interviews consisting of open questions or topics (Verschuren and Doorewaard , 2010) about :

What are the expectations of Construction companies and B2B sales professionals about the best B2B MK communication tools and channels, as well as values and beliefs, which could contribute to the design of IMC strategy for Numastec?

The aim of the interviews is to gain relevant knowledge of Construction companies' and B2B sales professionals' views on B2B Marketing communications channels and tools. Nevertheless, gained information was analyzed in a way to provide the most relevant recommendations for the selection of MKC tools to make Numastec IMC strategy appealing to all cases. In terms of secondary data which was obtained by the conducting literature review on MK Communication Channels and B2B Communication theories, which showed the relationships of the presented concepts (see section 4.1). Moreover, secondary research was also focused on formulation of the canvas, which was adjusted with the primary data in consequence of continuous comparison (Verschuren and Doorewaard , 2010).

The conclusion of the research presents the evaluation of the theoretical and empirical findings, providing the most appropriate MK Communication tools in B2B environment for Numastec Coating.

5.5.3. Limitations

Since the duration of the project was limited, the whole scope of the area of B2B Marketing communication in its environment has not been covered and thoroughly explored. To the contrary the assignment should and was rather be seen as a background for further exploration. Taking into account miscommunications which occurred during the working process in Hollander Scholtens B.V., the project faced certain changes, which made the further research more complicated. Unfortunately, there was none official marketing data about Numastec Coatings received, and the management of Numetech Coatings CA, refused to co-

operate for the purposes of this research, as the last legal agreements concerning the project with the Hollander Scholtens B.V. have not been signed yet. Such situation made it impossible to continue qualitative work on the Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy for Numastec Coatings, thus, forcing the research to change its course and to focus on the area different than the one described in the Proposal. Such an overall situation put certain pressure on the research execution process which undoubtedly affected the results.

6. Research Results

The key concepts which were defined in the theoretical framework as the result of preliminary research such as marketing communication channels (network, direct sales, exhibitions, magazines, web site/ professional online platforms) as well as B2B communication variables (risk level , decision making, relationships, and the level of trust) form the background of the research analysis, which helps to evaluate their effectiveness and role in terms of creating IMC strategy for Numastec Coatings.

This section is aimed to answer T-questions of the research, which will provide theoretical insight into the selection of the appropriate MK communication tools and channels for B2B environment.

6.1 Integrated Marketing Communications

The trend of declining of traditional marketing communication media is being progressing nowadays. For the purpose of achieving maximum communication impact for the promotion of Numastec Coatings, and responding to the changes of lifestyle, technology and competition, the research decides to address to integrated marketing communications (IMC).

In order to understand specifics of the desired integrated marketing communication strategy and role of marketing communication tools there, it was needed to distinguish IMC itself. IMC could be shortly defined as the planning and execution of all types of advertising-like and promotion-like messages selected for a brand, service, or company, in order to meet a common set of communication objectives (Percy, 2008), as well as concept that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines—for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations—and combines these disciplines to provide clarity and maximum communications impact (Belch & Belch, 2003). Integrated marketing communication strategy performs various communication roles and the main goal of it is a provide qualitative consistency on all the levels, to lead to a better overall outcome and provide more holistic picture. Belch & Belch (2003) state that IMC is one of the easiest ways for a company to maximize the return on its investment in marketing and promotion.

IMC strategy is very complex, it requires solid marketing planning and research in order to provide a solid knowledge about your customers and market, as well as portion of creativity, which helps to design qualitative message and select appropriate Communication channels. Appendix 1 IMC outline presents the framework of construction elements of Integrated marketing strategy, which could be interesting for Hollander Scholtens in their further development of the marketing communications for Numastec Coatings.

According to Jensen (2008) a pivotal part of any IMC planning process is the prioritization of communication channels. Involvement of more than 1-2 different communication tools during the Marketing communication is not new, and IMC provides the synergy of their simultaneous application and effective planning, which provides better message delivery and stimulates response of the target audience. In order to create successful IMC strategy the correct combination of communication tools and techniques should be defined.

6.2 Marketing Communication Tools and Channels in B2B perspective

Pursuing the initial marketing goals of satisfying consumer needs, communication channels have to be designed in the way to be able to create match touch points with the target audience (Percy, 2008). According to the preliminary definition presented in the Theoretical framework (See Section 4.) B2B marketing communication distinguishes from B2C by targeting not the end user of the product but the businesses, distributors etc., who are not representing individual end users, but management of companies or other decision makers. This is very important fact which has to be considered during the determination of the communication means in marketing. Percy (2008) insists to evaluate the number of promotional channels and tools, based on the size of the company, as well its communication objectives.

According to Chlebišová (2011) it is necessary, especially in B2B markets, to apply highly precise targeting through the direct marketing and the use of created databases. Selected media such as network, direct sales, exhibitions, magazines, website/ professional online platforms could be effectively used in the form of Direct marketing. Direct Marketing Association defines it like:

An accountable system of marketing which uses one or more communications media to effect a response. It is an interactive process where responses from or about buyers are recorded in a database for building profiles of potential customers and providing valuable marketing information for more efficient targeting.

Communication/promotional mix, which consist of Advertising, Sales promotion, Personal sales and Public relations, can be used in order to effect direct responses from the target audience as well as being integrated with the traditional advertisement.

In terms of promotional mix, advertising is defined as any paid form of marketing communications and is characterized by the great variety of methods. The difference of B2B advertising is that it does not specifically address the end user, instead it performs its task of raising awareness and creating positive brand attitude among the company decision makers, who often represent very specific target markets. B2B professionals in the industrial marketing did not find much help in the existing above-the-line advertising methods (Jensen ,2008), though decision maker may use appropriate professional magazines and brochures (Persy ,2008).

6.2.1 Magazines

The Study of Media Involvement conducted for the Magazine Publishers of America (MPA) found that magazines are the medium turned to most by consumers for knowledge, information, and usable ideas (retrieved from Belch & Belch, 2003). This media is also distinguished by the high permanence, where 75 percent of consumers retain magazines for future reference, as they can pass them along to other readers. Numerous magazines are targeted towards specific businesses and industries as well as towards individuals' preferences.

Features of magazine advertising (Percy ,2008)(Belch & Belch, 2003)

- aimed at almost any type of audience one might require;
- the most specialized of all advertising media;
- prestige of the medium;
- long life span;

- creative flexibility;

According to (Danaher & Dagger,2013) magazine advertising does not affect much sales, as the magazine adds emphasize on a branding message more than on the promotional sale.

Moreover, high class business magazines are considered to be a costly advertising, but their transformation to the online issues considerably decreased the prices.

Being one of the advertising communication channels, magazines also deliver promotional materials through PR content. The aim of Public relations is the creation and maintenance of favorable relations between stakeholders, as well as to enhance companies image (Percy, 2008). This is considered to be a low cost type of promotion with the specific targeting. Sometimes this communication could fail as audience, might not perceive a promotional message

6.2.2 Personal and Direct selling

Personal selling is characterized by the personal communication between buyer and seller. The same as in direct sales it is very customized and reaches an individual customer personally. There is variety of forms of direct sales(personal presentation, demonstration, direct emails, telemarketing etc.).This provides a great opportunity to demonstrate the product and to change the message, in some forms to address the receiver's specific needs and wants (Blech & Blech 2003). According to Percy (2008) personal selling is a primary MK Communication tool in the industrial markets, which links retailers or dealers in business-to-business marketing.

Some other features of personal and direct selling:

- high targeting potential;
- time consuming in terms of response;
- cost effectiveness, per customer purchase.

Personal selling in particular requires professional and skilled seller, which will be able to customize to the needs of the client. It stimulates relationship marketing enhancing level of trust and long-term mutual relationships with the customer. Very often personal and direct sales get combined especially for B2B communication. Referring to Blech & Blech (2003) direct marketing is using great databases to be able to target only the needed individuals.

Telemarketing and Direct mail became essential tools to get a life meeting with the customer. These communication tools show great flexibility and creativity and comprise a major force of direct sales nowadays.

Very often direct sales are combined with the sales promotion techniques. This support form of product promotions is characterized by small gift, awards, premiums, offers etc made in order to stimulate product or service, brand name etc.

6.2.3 Trade shows/ Exhibitions

Trade shows is another interactive tool of promotional media. Numerous promotional functions can be performed on the trade shows. It brings together buyers and sellers, retailers and industries, partners and potential customers. A number of promotional functions can be performed at trade shows, including demonstrating products, identifying new prospects, gathering customer and competitive information, and even writing orders for a product (Belch & Belch 2003, p.551). Trade shows are particularly interesting for traders and new product. It is an opportunity to promote yourself in the highly demanding environment as well as opportunity to expand your network, or create leads. 20% and 25% of an industrial marketers' communication budget is spent on trade shows (Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992). Though the particular value of it is an opportunity to communicate with new interested people, as well as enhance the relationships with old ones.

6.2.4 Website and other online platforms

Electronic communication tools reached almost everybody in the business world. The area of online business-to-business (B2B) marketing communications in particular seems to have been adopted quickly, with firms spending 10 per cent of the total budget online compared to only 6 per cent of the B2C budgets (Jensen, 2008). Moorman (2012) referring to Fortune 1000 reports states that they planned to decrease spending on traditional media (television, radio, and print) by .8% in the next 12 months while increasing online advertising spending by 12.8%.

It is obvious how online communication has strongly integrated itself in the field of promotion

and advertisement. Its portability and speed allowed business-to-business marketers quickly adopt and move their businesses online. Website nowadays is a “must have” of every respected organization. Being isolated from the internet sales companies lost their customers, as some of the businesses are just not able to compete in the comparatively more expensive offline environment. Websites become creative and functional. They promote brand images, offering product and services online, position companies, offer technical catalogs. Every business person cannot imagine their life without e-mailing or texting, and there could be 100 more proofs of the acceleration of online communication.

Nowaday there are numerous ways and strategies how to promote a website online. Considerable of attention is paid to the online banners, hipper links, social media, and SEO. All of these are designed in order to increase customer interaction with the company, promoting awareness, loyalty and creating relationships. Appropriately constructed e-mail messages (not spam) sent to customers are effective forms of new media advertising; this finding is encouraging many firms that are now seeking ways to engage with their customers through e-mail (Godfrey, Seiders, and Voss 2011). Another trend, which stimulates creation of the relationship online, is request of registration. Companies are creating their databases of customers and try to keep them as long as possible, by sending them custom content, e-mails, suggestions, news. etc. Anyway, providing better service through quicker and easier problem solving represents an added relationship value in the electronic context and it contributes to the buyer–supplier relationship.

Because of the hybrid development of online communications that will soon change from the generation X to Y, who are very active online user, Jensen (2008) insist that it is one of the major long-term decisions nowadays.

6.2.5 Network

Nowadays business network is a marketing type and marketing tool. It makes easier to reach stakeholders and decision makers. Hadjikhani and LaPlaca (2013) state that synergy developed by the network helps sustain the network and provides a distinct competitive advantage (p.302). Network is built on trust and mutual relationships .Trust, which often leads to greater commitment in terms of interpersonal loyalty, is described as confidence in a partner's honesty,

reliability, and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999, retrieved from Fill 2005).

In terms of MK communication network is a perfect generator of WOM, which could be particularly useful for the low budget SMEs. Moreover, it could always provide the necessary lead, which is so important for the direct marketing practitioners.

7. Conclusions

Being a logical continuation of the b) part of the research object this chapter is summarizing the research result section and provides coherent analysis conducted on the comparison of the theoretical findings on the B2B MK Communication tools and channels as well as concepts of Business-to-Business communications to the expectations of the B2B Sales professionals and Construction Companies representatives.

In this manner the results of the research will answer the question about which marketing communication tools and channels are the most appropriate for the design of IMC strategy for Numastec Coatings.

According to the findings, IMC strategy is a form of organization and planning, which allows the marketer carefully organize and plan marketing communication of the company, pursuing different goals and tasks but at the same time keep the strategic elements congenial to the overall objectives and marketing communication means integrated in the way in which they support each other and eventually provide a holistic view of the brand.

The IMC aim of the research allowed it to focus on the different Marketing Communication tools such as Advertising, Personal Sale, Sales promotion and Public relations. In the Scope of B2B communication, it was distinguished Direct marketing tools as the most popular and effective in case of Numatech Coatings promotion on the Dutch market. Despite the scholarly findings of Belch & Belch (2003) , Percy (2008) this Idea is supported by the empirical findings, of B2B sales professionals as well as Construction companies representatives, who unanimously agreed about use of direct marketing Communication tools, such as Personal selling, Exhibition, Emails and Telemarketing in terms of Direct sales and, especially, Network. In this way, the mediums which can provide Face- to-face communication, in the same time diminishing risk level from the untrusted dry promotion, provide product samples and full qualitative technical description of it, are considered the most effective MK Communication tools for Numastec Promotion on Dutch construction market. Notwithstanding, as the matter of fact, successful direct sales performance is highly dependent on the skills and professionalism of the seller. Interviewees noted that negative impression, created by aggressive and ignorant seller's

communication, could destructively influence the brand image as well as future communication of the company itself.

Special attention has to be paid to the Network, which does not belong to the classical communication tools but is highly valued by communication scholars and appreciated by professionals. Network as a MK communication method is vital in the B2B communication especially within SME's in Industrial markets. Based on the mutually beneficial long-term relationships, network can perform different roles. This reliable, trusted source of knowledge, which could remarkably influence the decision making process, as in positive so in negative way. Network is always a source of the new leads for the product, in terms of Personal sales, so combination of, at least, these two channels already will be successful, in case of B2B marketing promotions.

The contradictory B2B MKC tool in this research appear to be promotion in Magazines. Among the interviewees it was supported only by the Gerrit Brand, who is an advertiser professional and publisher. The rest of the interviewed audience, which is working on the marketing in their companies correspondently, doubted the effectiveness of the media. Luckily, there is a simple explanation. The problem was centered in the goals which were assigned to the MK channel. According to researchers, in B2B industrial communication, magazine advertisement, even PR article, does not effectively stimulate sales, what was actually expected. Nevertheless, this is a very good tool for raising awareness about the brand, as well as its image creation. This fact should not be neglected by the IMC strategic planners, as long-term brand awareness promotion, provided by magazines, together with the direct marketing tools will only stimulate positive brand recognition, which indirectly will lead to enhancing sales.

In the B2B circles, companies try not to neglect trade shows and exhibition. As was stated in the theoretical findings it is a great opportunity to meet perspective clients and partners face-to-face, as well as to support former connection, which is doing a lot with networking, and relationship development. Generally, this is rather universal tool demanding involvement of different marketing communication techniques, which is a great example of integrated marketing communication.

Finally, the website and online communication must be observed. Professionals and scholars

call it “must have” for the B2B businesses, though the former experts understand huge advantage of the online communication only till the certain extend. Danaher & Dagger (2013) call online communication a “hybrid”, which has adopted almost all of the known marketing tools. Its great benefits are mobility, cost effective promotion, and huge opportunities of targeting and vehicles for Mk Communications. Nevertheless, people in B2B environment tend not to trust the technology in full, as the risk of being involved into online fraud remains high. That is why online communication tools like Website, professional business platforms, social networks, search engines etc, seem to be as a great opportunity for raising awareness of the Industrial brand, as well as chance of enriching a network. The Website is being highly valued by the B2B professionals and construction business representatives for the good visual presence as well as opportunity to provide all the product technical data, which saves the sellers time and money.

To sum up, this report provides the knowledge of Integrated Marketing Communication strategy in the B2B environment. In the scope of the research there are 5 marketing communication channels and techniques selected, and these ones are being considered as those which can satisfy the expectations of the sellers and costumes the best, simultaneously corresponding to the scientific data. Moreover, selected channels, could be easily integrated into each other, and contribute to the design of IMC strategy to promote Numastec coatings on the Dutch market.

8. Advice

8.1 Extract of Basic Strategic MKC channels strategy

This is basic plan of MKC strategy. According to limitation there were no relevant marketing information provided for the creation of a solid plan. That is why objectives and creative strategy are based on the researcher's assumptions.

8.2 Executive summary of the Strategic MKC channel strategy

Integrating MK communication strategy for the Numastec Coatings, is aiming to contribute to the effective penetration of the Dutch market, starting from the Construction and Roofing companies in the Northern Holland. The main MK communication tools are network, direct sales, exhibitions, professional magazines, website/professional online platforms. Mk communication channels will be integrated under the common creative strategy and comprehensive planning, where one medium will support the others.

Target audience: Construction and Roofing companies.

Location: Northern Holland

Duration: 3 months (April- June 2014)

8.3 Marketing objectives and strategies related to media

The promotional objectives of the for Numatec Coatings are to:

- Raise awareness about new Brand (Numastec Coatings) within the roofing and construction companies.
- Create a positive image of the Brand, associated with the innovative and revolutionary, and eco-friendly product.
- Find a Brand niche within the market, building network/ partnerships.
- Promote sales.

8.4 Clearly stated media objectives that are tied to marketing strategies and objectives

- Get 100 responses within 3 months of the awareness campaign.
- Generate positive WOM within the existing Hollander Scholtes B. V network.
- Reach 7% of sales, from the existing database of direct sales.
- Create effective exposure for readers of business Construction and roofing magazines.
- Get 300 followers in social networks.
- Develop effective functional website.

8.5 IMC Channel Strategy

MK Communication channel outline, as a part of IMC Strategy of the Numastec Coatings, is aimed to create a coherent communication framework , which will bind presented media strategies, in order to provide a holistic view on the promotion in general. Selected MK communication channels correspond with the media objectives and represent direct marketing approach. The final goal of the promotional campaign is to reach 100 responses within 3 months of promotional activities. Taking into consideration a complexity of of the Industrial Protective Coating product, its price and B2B market conditions, in which the strategy will operate, 100 of responses or interests in the Brand is a realistic target. These responses could turn into sales or effectively contribute to the creation of brand awareness in the future. Moreover, this will enable Hollander Scholtens B.V. to create a networking database of customers and partners, who might contribute to the brand development in the future, cultivating long-term relationships. Meanwhile, Hollander Scholtens will use their own network in order to start with a smooth market penetration using existing connection, which in perspective will generate WOM and new leads.

The use of direct sales will be guided by the preliminary constructed database. Among personal sales it also will be focused on the organization of the promotional presentations and events. 7% of the sales represent qualitative realistic reach of this promotional tool, which could satisfy the company, depending on the size of the purchase.

The next MK communication channel does not usually refer to the Direct Marketing. Nevertheless, specialized business magazines are very effective in terms of brand awareness.

Carefully selected mediums will provide Numastec Coatings with the qualitative geographical and social brand exposure, which will contribute to the previous promotional methods, by creating a positive Image.

The final strategic focus is online awareness in tune with the promotional channels. Before the actual promotion will start (April 2014), Hollander Scholtens need to develop solid online presence, represented by the Dutch website, Professional Social network accounts and platforms. After this will be done, strategy will focus on the online promotion. Good website will provide opportunity for the company to create greater geographical awareness, provide its customers with visuals and technical description of the product expand their network, etc. All the promotional elements have one creative strategy, represented, by message, visual and promotional materials, and theme. This will provide integration of the MK communication Channels of Numastec Coatings, which will result in better delivery of the message and reach of the objectives.

8.6 IMC strategy details per channel

Networking strategy has two direction:

- 1) monitoring and engaging personal network of Hollander Scholtens B. V.;
- 2) engaging into professional business networks and coalitions (Roofing Companies coalition, “ Branch organisatie”, “Bounetwerk “ etc.)

The first option will provide company with definite clients, as they are being in the mutual relationships for a while. Hence ,there is no risk or barriers for the construction companies to trust the management of Hollander Scholtens B.V. Owing to the fact that Numatech Coatings does not have any client database and work examples in the Netherlands, this is the best start.

In order to expand the network, it is wise to get into bigger official network organization, which assists its members in running their businesses. These networks always keep their members updated with the latest news, organizing annual (or even oftener) meetings and events. This is a good opportunity to promote the Brand in a close professional environment of potential clients.

In case of strong competition, connections could be created in a closer manner, through direct communication with the use of their lead.

Among the leads, sales, and long-term relationships, networks provide effective WOM, which is also a great advantage for the new product on the market

Direct sales

Like network, direct sales require plenty of face- to-face communication. Moreover, it requires a skilled professional salesperson as well as solid database of leads. It is doubtless advantage if leads were provided by the company's own network and it is possible to refer to the person of contact. It creates trust and makes communication easier, and clients are becoming more open. Among personal sales, other promotional methods like presentation and events, where actually the leads will be invited, could be used. This kind of promotion requires very careful management, preparation and investment. Though its effectiveness in terms of brand awareness and sales stimulation is hard to deny. Before starting any promotional activities, especially direct sales, set of promotion materials, and technical catalogs, samples etc. should be prepared.

The direct selling itself could have couple of stages till the meeting itself, such as e-mailing, direct mails and calling. If everything goes well there is opportunity to meet the client directly. This strategy will definitely require more work force and as the management of Hollander Scholtens proceed direct sales themselves it will be too time consuming and disadvantageous.

Professional magazines

Depending on the budget this channel could be used in different ways as well. First of all creative advertising in the magazine which is issued 4 times in the year is a good investment as, this kind of printed media usually remains with the owner for rather long time. Presence in a respected journal or magazine enhances the image and adds value to the brand, because of its prestige.

Problem solving content is one of the favorite advertising methods within B2B, but it should be congenial with the other mediums and refer to the terms of the IMC strategy. Magazines have small effect on sales, but positive one brand awareness, which is the most needed for a new product.

The second option of the Magazine promotion is an article, which will introduce Numatec Coatings. This could be considered even more cost effective tool, as some issues do not take money for this kind of product placement. As it was mentioned before it could be nice problem solving story, which would be told on behalf of your former client, technician, etc. The example of such magazine is “Cobau”.

Exhibitions

Participation in the Dutch Construction Exhibition will be useful for brand awareness and network building. It would be advisable to participate in such Fair as “Promotiedagen”, as Brand is unknown, and exhibition is very diverse in terms of the participants, so it could simple be a waste of money. It is better to consider Building Construction Trade Shows in the Netherland, which are more effective and specific. It is very good opportunity to generate new leads, partners, etc. Good preparation to the exhibition should take couple of months. It requires careful promotional planning as well as budget planning.

List of the Construction Trade Shows in the Netherlands : Bouwplan, Infra Relatiedagen Hardenberg, SGA Vakdagen Hardenberg, Building Holland, Renovatie, etc.

Web site/online platforms

Online presence is vital for the B2B SME like Hollande Scholtens B.V. This is cost effective multifunctional platform, which will considerably contribute the Brand image, awareness and sales. Numastec Coatings has international website only, which is registered on the name of their parent company Numetech. Being a Dutch distributor Hollander Scholtens have couple of options how to proceed with the website, and these options should be also discussed with the owners of the Brand.

- Numastec Coatings, separate Dutch-English website. This will be only Hollander Scholtens responsibility how to manage it, but difference with their international website could create problems with the brand online presence as well as brand image.
- Numastec page on Hollander Scholtens website (short version). This seems as more realistic option, but It will require promotion of Hollander Scholtens B.V.,

to make people to get to the Numastec Dutch page, and this is very different approach.

- Dutch language option on the international website + Dutch distribution office reference to Hollander Scholtens B.V. This option will save brand consistency. But it should be clearly discussed and agreed with the Numetech that Hollander and Scholtens is responsible for the Dutch distribution and sales, in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

As soon as the website will be ready, it is possible to start its promotion online , with the use of SEO and Google adwords, affiliate marketing and participation in online professional networks as well as Business oriented social media (Linkedin, Biznik, Alibaba etc).

Unfortunately, because of lack of data, it is difficult to decide on budgeting as well as planning. Nevertheless, meanwhile Hollander Scholtens could evaluate suggested promotional tools and consider development of the complete IMC strategy.

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Appendix

Interview Transcriptions

Interview 1.

Interviewee: Bert Poelstra

Date: 15.11.2013

Duration:21.00 min

Iryna: First of all, I would like to ask you, do you work within construction industry or do you involve in cooperation with it somehow?

Bert: okay, we are delivering and buying parts from them...I use their craftsmanship.

I: ..Okay.

B:...this when I have bigger projects...

I: Yes.

B:... then I use their craftsmanship.

I:Can I ask you to describe a little bit more your business, in general?

B:..... [yeah]

We are. How do you call it in English (laugh)...Emm...First, we are the service which delivers product to factories. We have not built directly only one product. there are different companies who asks me to take care of their projects or repair machines. ...Em.. we are a service company...Technical service company.

I:.....[Technical service]

B:Yes. We provide our service engineers who work at side at factories (coughs).

I: Okay.

B: That is one thing. We have more things to do. Here at our plant we are producing spare parts for those companies....Eee. That's one thing and we are producing parts, which are demanded. So clients send us their sketches, models, and something like that. and we are producing them. but it is not always the same product. We are usually working on demand. Let's say this way.

I: Thank you. What are you doing if you need a new supplier, how do you look for that company? What kind of communication channels do you use? For example, online, magazines, networking?

B:.....[Eeee]

I: How do you do this?

B: Firstly, suppliers are searched for their qualities, considering the project, when it is big. Then you are looking for the company who is qualified in that. We are looking for qualities. And we have several companies who can help us, but some times company can do it very fast,.....

I:.....[Right]...

B:...sometimes it is very cheap, but we are looking for their qualities. First I have the project, and than i can say, if the project can last longer, and then delivery time is not a problem, and then i can go to somebody who can provide good quality and low price. When things should be done very fast and price is not an issue, than i look for another company in a region. Mostly, these are repairing problems, when the price is not an issue but the time is an issue.

I: Okay. But what tools do you usually use to look for them? Is it your personal network? or may be you are searching through internet? Or...

B: Formally, personal network.

I:Personal network.

B:.....[Yes.]

We have been 15 years working here, and i have build a network, and I know the factory by their qualities.

I: Okay...

B:.. Of Course we are looking at other opportunities to get new suppliers , how they develop and may be new possibilities. Personal contact, I like to have a personal contact with the company I'm working with. I go there with the visit to look how they work. Then you have a better view about their possibilities. You can have a nice internet site, or nice....

I:... magazines?

B:... Yeah, magazines, etc., but I prefer to ga there and to have personal contact, with the company.

I: Good. You say that you are providing services, how do you look for your clients then? the same way?

B: Emm... we have a very steady group of customer they come with us and we working formally here in a regain, and we try to use our network. Because, it is very difficult to go to a company, usually the big company and to sell your things To make a contacts in a new company is very difficult.

I: Like a new contract..

B:Yes, if ,for example I go to Ekzo or name other big companies here, I can't just go I need to call and ask for the sale department...

I: [yes]..

B: ..hey hold it back. So it is better if there is someone who knows the people, and he can take you, and you can go there together, so you can introduce yourself in a good place. So network is very important. So it is not like you are selling the car it is another way of doing business.

I:Yeah,yeah..okey, it is not simply retail business..

B: No, it is not like lets phone today to fifty companies to sell something..(laugh)

I:(laugh)

B:It is better to introduce yourself with another client or friend or something.

I:Okey. Thank you. it is clear that you are looking for the supplier and new client depending on your need but does it happen that occasionally you see the information or advertisement and you are paying attention...

B:.....[No.]

I:...my following question is: What kind of promotional methods, will make you to pay attention to the product?

B:....Mmm...

I: Something like magazine advertisement , good website or maybe there are some other ways in this business how to advertise..

B:....Emm..First, I'm looking how companies are doing business. They must to do it like i do. I like to do business without nonsense. When they can clearly explain what they can do. You can have a beautiful website, with loads of nice graphics. but for me is important to see what they can do. it is not necessary to have long stories, a lot of text..(laugh). It has nothing to do with me. Words "I'm grate" it is not the way I would like to be approached. It should be written easily. as well references are very good. And then you can call to the reference and ask how is that company. It is better than one sided presentations.

I:Well, lets imagine, that there is a new supplier, who sees you as a prospective client. And he wants to reach you somehow. What do you think will be the best way to reach you? To call you, to bring you samples, or brochures for example, to bring your attention as much as possible.

B:Noh... I like to do it personal way. Any way could be good, but if you have an American way to sell, to push, push, push, it is not for me. Something like " I'm the best! You have to buy

this..Bla, Bla, Bla..!" -No, Goodbye!(laugh)..

I:Yeah..(laugh).

B: That's not the way to have a click. I think, first , when you have salesmen, you should see that they like what they sell. it is not only because of money they make it, but because of the good product. The best way to do it on the casual way.

I: And face to face...

B: No. .it's not only that. it is may be the way they try to get contact. The first impression, is mostly make you to come with a decision. If you want to do business with that company. When I try to sell something, I try make a guest to feel like at home, try to be nice etc. Not the American way. But some people like it and some people don't. I don't.

I: You would say that this is very personal?

B: Yeah. I think, if you go to the direct sales, you need to encounter personal things also, to make it like they want to be contacted with you. And for me it, better normally to ask. If I need it, than i need it. And it's over, but don't call me tomorrow again and again. It doesn't work.

I: I would agree that this aggressive way is not an option.

B: We had a sales representative. He was so annoying that when he came for the third time we send him away. And the problem was not in his product, but the way he was selling it. may be in the North of a Holland it is going in another way, but for example in the South of the country, they are completely direct and they more like to push. But here in the North it going more easier.

I: Yeah (laugh),the other question. I have an example of communication channels, please rank it from one till five , which you consider the most important communication channels in the business, in your opinion.

B: Network is very important. I i would like to buy a car and I wonder your opinion. And if you tell me that Peugeot is not good, and the service there is bad, I won't go there. So network is..

I: ...Very important.

B:..Yes, Yes. In my business i also ask my friend an advice.

I: Okay.

B:What is personal sales?

I: I meant salesmen who are coming to you. But we already discussed it. You said, that it depends on how they do this.

B: Yes. Yes. Brochures, could also work but it is not so big deal.

I: In my last question, I'm wondering about exhibitions. How often do you participate? And how effective do you think it is?

B:We do it one or two times in a year. Here in Groningen, where have you been. It is network event. A lot of contacts, a lot of people I know are coming there, like Fred. You come there to speak with each other not to sell something, but to know what is around, how things are going.

I: So basically, it is news sharing thing.

B: Yes, news, network, its not an exhibition for sale. Otherwise, we can exchange the contacts and next week I can call the person, that kind of sale.

I:Okay.

B: So not usual kind of sale but long term..

I:...Perspective. Oh, that is nice.

B:.....[Yeah].But that is the business we were in. That's not like book sales, or car parks. the factories and the business they do is not today, it is tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

I: it should be planned...

B: Yes, yes. And it is good to listen about perspectives , which might companies have this year. Are they going to build something new, or they are trying to speed up the production process? Then I know that something is planning, and then we try to stay in contact, to know whether is

something that we can do. And that is more long term..

I: ..perspective.

B: Yeah.

I: Nice. But except exhibitions do you use something else to track the trends in the industry, and market?

B: Of Course, I read business magazines, and you have an internet..

I: Sure...

B:... and we have good contacts with the Metaalunie... its is business union, for steel companies and they are very active to pick up things in a market.

I: So they support you as a member.

B: Yes, yes. I can call them and they can help me with the financial advice, they also can advice me on the project, which i might be interesting in.

I: Okay, so you got all news within the industry.

B: Yes it is an industry union, and they also organize not exhibitions but meetings to entertain us, but where we can also to speak to other members, and deal to do some things together, even help each other. These i see as the most important sources to get to know things.

I: That is basically all, thank you very much.

Interview 2.

Interviewee: Rik Raatjes

Date: 6.11.2013

Duration:20.46 min

Iryna: Generally, I would like to talk with you about communication within the construction industry, as well as how do you communicate with your clients and partners, considering the research perspective announced earlier. First of all, could you tell me more about you business and company?

Rick: Back in a days we were one big company, divided in a trading part which we are right now, a roofing part, and flooring part. In 1992 company felt apart, and was divided in three correspondent parts. Right now, there are three divisions. one of it is a trading company that is us, we don't have services we are just trading goods. The other companies, like a flooring companies, they do have services, like applying industrial floors.

I:Okay.

R:The other part like a roofing company, they also have services they are applying roofs, and doing renovations. same for the flooring part. The flooring company and us were separated this January, but we are all on the friendship level. So there is a kind of agreement, also for this project. When product is traded and project is not included, so application of the roof or the floor, that's our core business and that's what we do. So from the history we are actually delivering the same product ,what the flooring company uses. Do you know , what I mean? When there is a professional construction company, they can come and order the same product what the flooring company uses. So we have a very broad clientele, and we have big industrial and food companies as a clients etc.

I:Any big businesses basically. Very interesting. What if you need a new supplier, how would you take a decision to go for it?

R: Well most of the time, we not decide that we need a new product, because most of the time this is a special case , when customer asks do we have a special kind of product. And if we don't have this kind of product in our spectrum we search for it...

I: Okey.

R:.. just by internet, or among our existing suppliers etc., etc. But most of the time new suppliers and new companies come to us and say “Hey! We are company X and we think that you need this product!”.

I: And then they try to..

R: And then they try to sell it to us. What happens then is that we look in what range we can set the product, and that we don't have an overlap. If we don't have overlap than we test it. When it's a roof product or cleaning product or floor product, we also look for any competition. And the other thing, which is really important is the service of the supplier. So how do the brochures look? Do they have technical personnel? How long does the product exists?

I: Okay, so all their kind of features.

R:Yeah. Did they test it over years? Because, in our opinion wonder products do not exists.

I: (Laugh)

R: So for example, if you have a product and if you think that it is perfect to cover ceramic cells. It is nice to test it? But do you also know what happens in ten years? Do you know what i mean?

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: So this is most of the time, how do we base our decisions.

I: Okay. How actually this companies rise your attention? How is it possible to approach you? is it coming directly to you?

R: Sure.

I: So this is the best way?

R: Am..Come directly this is mostly waste of time cause we are not always around. But I mean if it's a matter of following up, when it's not to much of a push. For example, you will call me, and say “Hi, I'm Iryna, and I would like to talk to you about new roofing coating.» Well, most of the time we wouldn't say no, but we ask for some digital information. That's how we do it. Of course, you can send some brochures thinking about, whether it is interesting for our existing product range. one week later you call us, and say “Mr. Raatjes, I've sent you some digital information. What is your opinion about it? And can I, may be, to make an appointment to explain the features of the product life. But then you've gone. And there is no reason to say no. Do you know what I mean?

I: Yes.

R: Because, you've just been doing...[what we expect.]..

I:[Like step by step].

R:..Basically. And I experienced the same with my clients. I don't want to be a pusher. because then you don't selling in the best way,I think. And an appointment should be a win-win situation for the both parties. So if you come to us it basically costing money and time.

I: Yeah.

R: And I should be serious, by inviting you for the appointment. So if you firs call me and say “Would you like some information?” and then follow it up, and say “Hey, I've sent you information.”, the information should look good then. And then you followed it up, by asking for the appointment, as “I ask just for an hour of your time.”, and if you have some live product with you and you can, do a test on the spot....

I: And impress you, yeah?

R: Yeah.

I:What do you think about the on-line presence, about the website? And what kind of information, except technical qualities, you would like to see there?

R: From you?

I: Yes. From the perspective product.

R: Well it is always handy to show directly product features, but not sell it as a wonder product. and since industrial coating products most of the time are not environmentally friendly, it's good to show that it has this specific stamp, that it is eco friendly or whatever.

I: Okey

R: And that it has a safety data sheets.

I: This kind of things. More practical and technical things.

R: Yes. Because the end user is most of the time a practical type of client as well.

I: Okay. Do you expect some kind of after service, or some kind relations with the new supplier? And how do you experience this now when you working with your suppliers?

R: So what do we experience or what do we expect?

I: What do you experience now? And what do you expect from the company beyond qualitative product?

R: Well. since we are trading company, we can't handle all products ourselves. From every product we know just a little bit. So what we expect from our suppliers is that they will support us with the actual technical details. I don't mean paper, because paper is paper. But when you go to construction materials or industrial cleaning products, there is more than just saying, where you can use it for. So if we sell it, and our client has some questions, we expect that we can easily get the representative, and explain things to the customer together. and it is always a good idea to have some back up. We always use a back up. The only thing we want to sell products on our trade name, that clients can basically get any facility product with us, but then it is up to suppliers, how do they deal with the clients.

I: Okay.

R: Do you know what I mean?

I: Yes, yes. It's going great, and I'm following you. The other question of mine: Do you use any printed promotional materials like magazines, brochures, etc?

R: Yeah.

I: Are there any? Is it important to use them?

R: Yes. there are? I can give you samples they are in the office. there are some magazines , which are highly recommended in our branch. Magazines , which are always read, for example, "Facility management", but they also have a very well visited website. There is around 5 magazines, which we always read, and use in our knowledge.

I: do you have any other channels ? which helps you to stay tuned to all the industry innovations?

R: Ammm... well there is a site called "Cleaning journal" which every day send some news though the e-mail. But I won't highly recommend it.

I: Online sources could be very important. You are young man, but especially in this industry most of the people are much older, and I would assume that they are not really in touch with the online sources.

R: True. But we are on the virtue of the switch I think. Cause, I'm a young man, true, in this industry, but people who make decision, will be younger in five year as well. Because the generation of my father (the director of the company) is the "baby boomers" generation...

I: Yeah.

R: ...they all will be retired in five years. So if you set up a lot of printing materials, i think that you're missing the boat. Because my generation is already somewhere in these companies. I'm thirty one. And we gradually, somewhere in five years will take over.

I: Right.

R: So if you are planning penetrating the market within five years. I think you also should consider online sources. but now everybody is doing that, so you should be careful that you still stand out. Because everybody. for example now is sending, news updates. So if you will just

send the they don't think that it will have an effect that we all want. You know what I mean?
I: Yeah, not to make it cheap, mainstream, and useless promotion. But there are ways to make it more sophisticated and impressive.
R: Sure.
I: The last question about actually about the promotional techniques, like exhibitions and presentations. If you receive an invitation to the product presentation, will you consider to participate?
R: Yeah, sure. That is actually what I forgot to say. 80% of our suppliers are bigger companies, really big companies. and they organize through the Netherlands also internationally in-house fairs for their existing clients, saying about product updates, what they bring in new, and then they following it up with the news updates. so they just rent a room in a hotel or whatever. They bring in clients and introduce the new product live. So dealers, so to say are updated personally, which I think is really important.
I: Nice. Finally, would you consider, to deal with our type of coatings?
R: Yes. Because we already are dealing with this type of coatings, not the particular one but similar. So it is really interesting and in this economic situation this projects will restored instead newel build. So I think there is room for this product.
I: Great. I think that is basically all, if I have some other questions could I contact you.
R: Sure, I'm always interested in this kind of things. So don't hesitate to contact me.
I: Thank you very much.

Interview 3.

Interviewee: Reind Zonderman

Date: 12.11.2013

Duration: 14.16 min

Iryna: So this research is focused on the B2B MK Communication in the construction industry. I'm so happy to have you here, because now I understand that you know a lot about that.

Reind: I hope so (laugh).

I: So this is the focus of the interview, which is aimed to help to construct MK COM strategy in the end. The first question. Which kind of companies are you mostly specialized on, and were working with?

R: I was working with the MK companies, SMEs, Industrial companies where products were derived from a crude oil. So we had our own refinery, we were refining crude into bichiment, and then into raw building products, and that to waterproofing materials.

I: Okay.

R: And in this kind of business I was with another company. Construction basically.

I: Construction.. So you should be aware how actually construction companies are making decisions to go for the new supplier, new product?

R: If you mean these companies, who are using materials?...

I: Yes.

R: So buying waterproofing materials elsewhere..

I: Yes, yes.

R: There is a very big market for waterproofing materials in Europe. There is too much capacity, too much producing machines, lets say in Europe. So this choice is very easy. If you go to leather construction companies, who looks for raw material there is also a lot to suggest. And then they go for quality. If they have a problem they go for people and for companies? who

can solve the problem, lets say the road builders.

I:Ookey.

R: And then they come a lot. I was working for the company in Groningen here, which has a lot of experience in road building and waterproofing, and they want to derive products from crude refineries.

I: Actually, what kind of ways do they use to search for new suppliers and clients? Do they do it from their network, for example, or that's online search, or exhibitions, etc. How do they do this?

R:Eh, nowadays it all goes through the ICT, computers, lets say Google and so on, and through network. the company has a network around it. So it needs product A or B, and he is asking around..

I: okay.

R:...but normally I go to internet and (pshheet) and look for it and see the suppliers then.

I: So that's the easiest way?

R:Yes. And when you have found it, and it's in India, and I can go to the embassy in India? and asking them the same question "Do you know people, who are producing this?". And they can find it for me.

I: Oh, that's great. Now, I would like to focus on questions about communication channels. being a company representative, which values do you present to your customers, except good quality of product?

R: If you have a product here in Holland, also in Germany, it should be tested everywhere before you put it on the market. So the more test certificates you have, than client knows exactly that the quality is right. There is no need to explain it anymore because it is all there. that also includes the CE marking, what you were talking about.

I: Is there any after services?

R: After service works more immediately when the product is supplied, when someone from the producer company is there saying "Well look at this, look at that..". And most of the companies have a technical leaflet, which is explain how to apply the product. A lot of people have leaflet of the product itself, but do not have a technical leaflet how to apply it. and that is also very important. And give demonstration also.it is not aftersales, but could work like it also.

I: Okay, great. What if you represent a new brand on the industrial market how would you attract new customers? How would you advertise yourself?

R: In building industry the margins are very low. lets say from the producers to end users, they are very low. because there is a lot of competition you cannot do a lot. You can go to exhibitions and invite your customers there. What we and a lot of companies do. They could also do more local events and to invite all the customers to come to see. But when there is a big exhibition, I think you should be there, have your leaflets, do some advertisement in the construction magazines, if you have the money. It's not a lot to do.(laugh)

I:Not a lot..

R: No(laugh)

I: What about direct communication like direct mail, direct sales?

R: Yeah, that's what we are doing also: sending mails out.

I: Does it work?

R: Well, a lot of time it doesn't work. Cause, companies receive a lot of mails..

I: You perceive it like SPAM..: So these are not such effective channels like exhibitions.

R: Yeah, you can go to exhibition, you can send the emails, you can phone the guy. A lot of people have internal sales, we also were dealing around internal sales with four-five people,...and it's also phoning. Than may be, can reach them better than through direct mail.

Person to person, business to business is always better than sending mails.

I: You are talking about face to face communication?

R: Yeah, face to face is the best. Computers don't do business, we always say, people do business.

I: Even now in the period of ICT?

R: Yeah, people do business, yeah still.

I: Now I would like to ask you to rank communication channels according to the level, of their importance in your business.

R: So 1) Personal sales, 2) Exhibitions, 3) Website, 4) Network is very important.

I: Network?

R: Yeah, if you know a lot of people, if you know that you are reliable and have a good product, they always buy from you. It's my experience in 30 years. And if you don't cheat they ? they always come back.

I: Come back, alright. How do you think is it possible to make your client to bring his friends to you? Are there any tricks or skills?

R: Yes they do, they do! If I need some information, I think "may be he knows?" and he is in my network he will tell me. Even if he is buying himself there he will tell me. if you build up your network, if you maintain it, if you see them, not every day may be, you can always ask them for anything , that is my experience.

I: Thank you. Finally, I would like to ask you about the product which I'm working on. Will you consider to buy it? And do you think it have perspectives on the Dutch market?

R: I have to study it, because it is the matter of cost. And if the quality is good, and based on what you and Fred told me there must be a market for it. For example, these termoberial systems they are unbelievable. I have never seen it before.

I: I was also impressed

R: The Netherlands is a very crowded country and the fire protection is very important to it. buildings are very close to each other, so if one burns the rest will be damaged as well. so if the price is good it will work. If it works in the states, It will also work here.

I: So here is a demand for the protective coatings.

R: There is always demand for it. If you have a particular type of coatings you will find here its market.

I: So it is particularly all i was interesting in. Thank you very much.

Interview 4.

Interviewee: Dick Jansma

Date: 19.11.2013

Duration: 22.52 min

Iryna: Please, tell me more about you work and business.

Dick: I'm working in logistics, international logistics worldwide. We are arranging transports, documentation for goods all over the world.

I: Okey, I'm wondering, have you ever experienced working with the construction companies?

D: Yes. but now we are working with the Charlie Coffee, it is worldwide, And we are arranging green coffee for them and distribution to the end customer.

I: So you are a middle person, a distributor?

D: Yes, yes.

I: okay. In terms of B2B communication, if I may ask you, how do your customer find you? And

how do you find your customers?

D: I find my customers by looking around in export and import clubs.

I: There are this kind of organizations...

D: Yes. There are a lot of them in Groningen, Drenthe, Friesland. whatever. As well internet-Google. the find us with internet, as they know our name. And I give some times presentations in the country, around Holland and here.

I: Okey, so it is like you are arranging events where you are doing presentations.

D:Yes, for example in January I'm working for Douane Groningen. we do presentation for the export companies in the North of Holland. it's about 250 people.

I: Nice. I try to find now, what are the best communication channels and ways to reach your customers? I Understood that you are using these clubs, Internet and personal presentations....

D: Yes, i'm working with it for 25 years already, and of course you have you network, your friends. And i have a lot of knowledge in Rotterdam, Antwerp. and mostly they can ask you for the business. I try to develop network by doing a lot of presentation. I am responsible for creating network for my company.

I: Like creating a client base. And all of this presentations you are arranging yourself?

D: Yep.

I: You are creating the event, inviting people...

D: But mostly for Douane Groningen they ask me to give a presentation. and that is about IO status. IO is like authorized economic auditor, that is like ISO in Holland, That's mean that you have the highest level for safety. Companies with the big names like Philips, they must be sure that your company is safe, and they could export their products by PAX.

I: In the B2B environment , if the new product is entering the market, which steps you will Davis to take to reach your customers or to find new partners?

D: I am mostly looking for some parties and exhibitions, events where I can meet them in relaxed way. Sometimes if I have a new project, we arrange a fishing day or a day on the water or a nice event. Or.. how to say it...

I: More entertainment like...

D: Yes it is a lot of entertainment, your close is casual..

I: And it is not really official thing.

D:Yes, yes, and then you have more success than when it is on the formal state.

I: So people are getting more open to talk.

D Yes. the are willing to talk more, because when they are wearing their suits they are closed, and talk less.

I: Okay, what do you think about approaching through emails as the business way of communication?

D: The last two, three years I think It is not working. It is over now. We tried it a lot. We did emails, posts and regular mails. Actually we have an action. Sometimes we send companies a pencil together with a letter, which says that this pencil is to sign the contract.

I: Nice!

D:Yeah Such things,

I: You try to make it as creative as possible.

D: Yes. And then people think , "why do i get this pencil?- Oh, for signing the contract. Which contract?-PAX, OK!"

I:(Laugh) You make your customer to think about you.

D: Yes normally all this letters are gone, they are like SPAM. But when you have a bit of attention, or a little moment when there is an action with the person, than you may have luck.

I: You have a chance.

D:You have a chance, that they read your name. And next time they meet me on the exhibition

or whatever, they say "Hey! You've sent me the pencil!. So they remember it, and that's important.

I: So you would advise to have as much as possible of this interaction with a client?

D: Yeah, and what is also positive, when you go often to events people know you. I'm a big guy, and they recognize me, and that continue the story. Because when you meet person for the fifth time, he thinks about doing business with you. It doesn't happen for the first or second time, but when you drink a beer with the person he might do business with you. It's OK, and you can have a business appointment after. When you make it in Holland, may be in Russia it is very different, but when you make here a hundred calls, you will be very luck if you have one or two appointments.

I: Yeah. That's true. It is so hard to reach people. Now ,I'm struggling with it by designing my communication strategy, because by doing calling you know that most of the time you will be rejected.

D: Yes it is so hard. In the past I worked for UPS. And there we had one days, when you needed to make calls for the next week. and there was a girl and me and we both phoned the whole day, and we made about 150 calls a day. And then, if you are luck, you get 4 responses. It is very difficult especially at this time. You will hear "No" from the reseprionist, because person is gone, or they do not what any changes, or they are very busy, and "No", "No", "No". Yesterday I my had to make 4 appointments for his school. he thought that it would be an easy job but in the end of the day he had tree and said: "This is crazy, how do you do it?" But for me the same.

I: True.

D: You have a new product. and in newspapers is given a lot of attention for the new product. Next day you are calling there suggesting your service. But there is no response, why? I don't know.

I: I will show you something. Here is a list of the Mk communication channels. Could you please rank them from one till 5, you can have less, by the level of importance in B2B communications. And please write your name here and I will just collect it later.

D: Here?

I: Yes.

D: The most important I give a number 1?

I: Yes. You opinion.

D: That is important one- Personal sales, because you can look in there eyes and you can talk to them. You can get to know what kind of person is it. Is it a serious person or he is nothing. This is very important- network. the whole world is in the websites and social media. Now you can't do without it....I tried also specialized magazines, but not result.

I: So you mean the result was very low.

D: Yes. when we have a new project, we will count the effectiveness and results of e-mail, exhibitions from the previous projects, but from specialized magazines we never have heard anything, never. it is very expensive and it is not effective. No. May be in other branches, but not in ours.

I: Alright.

D: Network, direct sales, social media... direct mail is mostly SPAM. Brochures... they throw them away.... TV, Radio (laugh), yeah, it is very, very expensive... So I will stick to four. Oh, events, than five.

I: Five, great.

D: Nice list.

I: Thank you. How would you finally advice to reduce this communication risk, for me who starts with a new product?

D: I would advice to rich the person who is very important in a typical branch. because if you

come to great event and try to make contacts, it will not work. mostly you are looking for the right person in the right place. I had a story with one of my customers, whom I tried to get for the two or three years. And finally I got a moment. We were on the football game, and he was sitting next to me. We had a beer together and it was king of friendship, a kind of...

I: Connection?

D:...the ice was melting. And then I asked him for a coffee, telling that I'm very interested in his business. and he said "That's OK, you can call me tomorrow." After 2,5 years I was trying to reach him. So you must have a little luck. And if you ask him for football game 99%, he won't go. Because in Holland, people are very afraid of ...if you got something you have to give something.

I:So he was afraid, that he will own you something..

D:Yes, yes. That is very typical Dutch. I also warn everybody in the business, not to accept gifts, or at least big gifts. Because you have always to do something back.

I:Okay...

D: When we worked for Charlie, there were people 10 years ago from MASK (this is containership company) and they wanted to give my colleague and me golden watches.

I: Wow!

D: We did not except that. When you except this you have a problem, because you must do business with them.

I: It is like commitment, right?

D: Yes it is a commitment. you buy your customer. I tell always "Don't do that. Keep it clean." Specially for American companies. they get nothing. If you give them a bottle of wine they may not except it.

I: It sounds very interesting, because in my culture it won't be considered as a bribing. Giving a present to the partner is a normal gesture of politeness, But in western countries....

D:It doesn't work. Five years ago I was in Moscow. i have read that if you are coming to your customer give him a present. So we brought few Dutch products to them. That was very normal. When they came to us with vodka and some special Russian products, it was not normal here. Because people thought "O-ow, what is going on?" So little gifts are okey. In SMEs it is okay, but when you are dealing with the big companies, it is bad idea, because they will think that you want to buy them.

I: I have heard that Dutch businessmen are really quality oriented, so if you can prove them that your product is very good, than you are on the way to your success.

D: Yes.

I:The other question how B2B take care of the quality of promotional material. Cause as far as I know, Asia, eastern Europe like it to be very fancy.

D: No, they will say that it too much blink, blink. They are typical and practical people. They don't like to throw away the money. They think if they can afford that, then they could read of that and make the product cheaper.

I:SO very practical views.

D: A lot, mostly are very practical. There is always people, who are working in a very rich segment. But famous people want it, and then it works. The rest prefer normal way, polite and normal.

I: Thank you very much, that were all questions of mine.

Interview 5.

Interviewee: Rolf Kuiper

Date: 13.12.2013

Duration:32.52 min

Iryna: Can you tell me more about your work and your company?

Rolf: We have a roofing company in Winschoten. We work in the North of the Netherlands and a little bit in Germany. We have 20 people of staff. And our business is dealing with roofing and flat roofing. And we are cooperating with the Housing companies. And how do you call it? De Gementee Groningen? Do you know?

I: Yeah, like governmental organizations.

R: Yes, the local government. And we work for building companies, who build buildings. Then we work for people, who own houses, who need help with the flat roof. The roofing can be new, if it is a new building, as well as we can make a renovation.do you know what i mean?

I: Yes, for example, after storm I suppose you had a lot of work.

R: Yes.But renovation market, so roof on the roof is 75% of our business. And new roofing is 25%.

I: Okey. Great. I wonder, how do you usually look for new products or new suppliers?

R: We get our materials from the producers. And the makers have their own R&D departments which introduce new products to us like "We have this or we have this. «And then with that product we can go to our customer.

I:so with this product you can make roofing for them.

R: Yes. What we also do, we make isolations. So first we make isolation and than roofing. but new products come from the makers. They come to us, so we can see the new product.

I:So basically sales representatives from the producers come to you and make small presentations about their products.

R:Yes. That's how we get a new information about the products for our business.

I: From my former interviews, I have heard that businesses get abused by this aggressive sales representatives

R: No. I can understand it. I'm myself a salesman for my company. A lot of salesman are like "Buy, buy, buy!", but when you have a great product and after introduction your customer thinks 'Wow, this is very good.', then they will buy it.

I: So it is about presentation?

R:Yes. More presentation, not "Buy, buy, buy!". In our work it is a presentation to a customer, what do they like , what do they want. And then we can look if we have the products to suggest them.

I: Okay, that makes sense of course.

R:yes.

I: I would like to ask, when you get a new supplier, or product what do you value the most about the product?

R: What we value the most in our business is the quality.

I: And it should be presented directly, right?

R: Yes, yes. Some quality. For the roofing it is very important. So when we make a roof we must give a 10 years guarantee. The price is very important as well but the quality is the priority. And the other thing is very important as well when there is a problem in the product, which can be, they must stand behind the product, and give the new product to solve it. This week I have something. Two years ago we made a roof and now it has some problems. So I contacted the producer of the product saying that we have a problem, and he said that we'll get new materials for roofing and he also will pay hours we spend to apply them. So it's a good guarantee.

I: And the services..

R: And the services, yeah. our customers must have a good services, that is so important.

I: Okay. Let's imagine that there is a new product appearing in the market. what will bring your attention to it? For example solid advertisement, super quality, innovation etc.

R: I think what makes the attention, like examples which Fred shows me. If two years ago I was told that there is a material the roofing product , which is white, but normally it is black, and which makes the temperature inside the building 5 degrees lower. That brought my attention because I have never heard about this before. And I got interested, because it is a nice product But then I think what is a profit. 5 degrees is a big difference. and then we can buy it for our customers. Do you know what I mean?

I: As far as I understood this advertisement should show you, how you can use this product. that there is something new and special about it.

R: Yes ,but when there is something new and you see the advertisement, you always have to see it in practice. You know what i mean?

I: Yes.

R:When I see it in practice, when i can look on it life, can try it..

I:Not only words

R:Not only words, but come with the things. Let me see it, let me feel it, let me think about it , so I can make a change in my head.

I:True.How do you keep tuned to industry innovations? What communication channels do you use or people?

R: We have traditional market. For years ago we noticed that gas prices got much higher and we thought about isolation. Than producer of this product came and said "Hey, we have good isolation!" So we can use it. they must come with a good products. and we got the most information from the producers, and when they have something new they find us themselves. But how do you find them, it usually through salespeople or internet and their websites. But in our business it is very important to see the product.

I:Some of mine interviewers mentioned business magazines. Do you use those?

R: Yes, we use business magazines. There are two business magazines for our company. I read them but..

I: They are not so effective..

R: No, I will look at it and think " I know this, and I know that. When they have something new that have to tell it to me. Good magazines are very nice and i will read them, but...muah..

I:But not for your sales.

R:for your sales you need to go to your customer

I:Okey

R: You will look for the new customers, you have to contact them and introduce yourself and your products, that is very important in our business.

I:Good. I was wondering, do you participate in any business networks or organizations?

R:Yes, yes, yes. We have "Branch organisatie", and we are member. So two times a year, that is in March and in October, they have a meeting in the middle of Holland, so we can go there with the colleagues from our country, and they they tell the thing about our industry. You know?

I:Like news..

R:Yeah, like news, but not only about the products but as well about other things...

I: Like economic situation..

R: Yes, all, new products, those, which already passed. All that things two times a year, and we go there because it is very interesting. You are sitting with your colleagues in one room you talk with each other than you hear a lot, and then the "branch" companies share new things. That is important for us.

I:Useful, good.

R: That is useful. When comes a speaker a producer, they present something new. And

afterwards you can come and talk to them ,and work may be later.

I: Can you also present yourself?

R: No. We are there not to present ourselves, but we are there to listen, we can make questions, but not to present ourselves. We are only visitors.

I:What communication channels do you use to promote your own company?

R: We have a lot of customers, with whom we maintain a long term relationships.

I:Networking..

R:Yeah,because I'm already 21 year working in this company they know me. I visit them once, twice a year we are talking, having a coffee or something. And when they have some work to do, they call me and then I will look what i can make for them, product, prize and so on. And when I have to have new customers, because you have not enough of your standing ones, I will search myself via internet, find their contacts call them, to look with whom I can deal with. After I know the name I can make a very nice "documentaries" of our company and send it with the post. And when your name is standing there he will open it. and two weeks later I will call him. And then I will try to make a date, you know?

I:Yeah, a meeting..

R:Yes, a meeting and i hope after he says "Come to me, you have nice things." This way we try to make, and when it works for a new customer, than it is only networking. So we try and we have a new internet site, which is very nice, if you want to find us online. But in our business is very important a personal contact. If they don't know me , who I am , I make no business.

I:Okey. Thank you. From the communication tools you mentioned web site, personal sales, mails, what about exhibition? Like Promotijedagen for example.

R: we have two exhibitions in our working environment, and we are there for years. We see there a lot of people, and our customers, so we can sit and we can talk. Last time in 2 days I saw hundred of our customer, with some of whom we worked years ago. So for us it is very nice, that they see us.

I: So it not mainly for creating new contacts, but for the support of old ones.

R:Yes, yes. New contacts is very difficult, but the customer who already were with us they come.

I: This is one of the way to support the relationships.

R: Ow, yes.yes, you support your relationships.(laugh)

I: We've almost done. Here is a list of the Mk communication channels. Could you please rank them from one till 5, you can have less, by the level of their importance in B2B communications in you business. One is the most important, four is the least important.

I:We can see that brochures and posters, and TV/Radio are not very important.

R: No. That for us doesn't work. There is one thing, which works. When we are working on the building, then mostly we make covers with the company name on it.

I:That is a nice idea.

R:You know what I mean?

I:Yes. Sure.

R:Than a lot of people say and recognized. We also have our branded busses. And when we are making some advertisement on the roof, people say that "Oh we know you. You were there" that is what people see

I:I think it is a really nice brand presence. So it is a nice branding on you vehicles, on you covers.

R:That is the thing, that people see us and they think "Wow, that is a good company, they are professionals" . One of our biggest clients is UMCG Groningen, so when customers know they work for UMCG, they think "That this is a good company". So that things make you great.

I:Nice!

R:Very nice!

I: I was happy to hear new good information.

R: the thing is that I love my work, and I you come to the client and the client smiles to you back. He is the person , who makes it. every company has a person, which who you actually doing business, as well with a company of course, but if the person is not good, than nothing works. For example my workers, it is very important how they behave with the client, are the nice? This + good service and vehicles and people talk makes your company.

I: Thank you. The last question is about our coatings, could they work for you?

R: Yes. I think so. You can see in our country, there are a lot of flat roofs, and in summer it is very hot. When you make coating on your roof, which reflects some sun, and the temperature inside is going down. That is very nice. also It great for the old people to remain low temperature. this is also good for the buildings which use a lot of air conditioning, when the temperature gets lower, the consumption of electricity will be less, and you can save the money. Then I will think that it is very nice, but can I see it?

I: You need to see the evidence?

R:Yes, it is very important to have an example.

I: I was also thinking about that. To have any building in Groningen done to show it.

R: In Winschoten we have a building, with a flat roof. We what to display there every product that we use on that roof.

I: Oh, you test it over there.

R:Yes but we still need to make it, in sectors. Why do we do that. We have one roof with the sun panels, we sell it for our own, so we have it here (showing the drawing).And near we want to make roof all in samples, and then we can show it to our customers. So they could see everything. We are not ready yet, but we are starting it. but that is very nice.

I:Very good Idea. Thank you, it was great to talk to you.

Interview 6

Interviewee: Gerrit Brand (who is he?)

Date: 13.12.2013

Duration:11.30min

Iryna: I would like to talk with you about B2B communication. Have you ever worked in this sphere? And how to bring Businesses together? Have you ever experience to work in business communications?

Gerrit: Yeah.

I: My main question is how do they communicate? How do they promote themselves?

G: How do they communicate.... First of all they have to build an image. Lets call it a corporate image, s they have their corporate communication. You have to filter the essentials from what I'm saying. So they need a good image. In general if you are talking about their advertising, or brochures or things like that. It is more like, «look, how big we are , how strong we are, or how good we are!” So it looks more like a general presentation. Or presentation in general, nothing else.

I: Some other interviewees of my who represent construction businesses were really concerned about quality presentation. What do you think of it?

G: Who says so? The companies themselves?

I: They say is we are choosing and advertisement of new product, we are looking for the outstanding quality. Do they usually point out this information in the magazines and other promotional materials?

G: Hmm.. Let me think. Yeah, I think. But it depends, what kind of industry you have. I think most companies they put emphasis on the quality they deliver. like construction companies

they will tell you they make the best buildings. but here in the Netherlands, in the Western world we already take it for granted. I mean you don't expect a big construction company, that they are going to bring a bad quality. they have build up a good corporate image, and this is what they put in the advertisement, which already includes the fact that they make a good product.
I: Yeap, sure.

G: The people are not doubting to much about their product. Although, of course, you can't trust anybody, but they won't use bad materials.

I: The issue in my case is that I particularly try to bring a new product to the market .And this is the hardest, at the beginning to create this image and value, because people create this. it is in their heads. I'm looking for the best communication channels.

G: Aha, and what kind of product is it?

I: These are industrial coatings, for different surfaces. They say that their USP is ecologically friendly formula, as well as revolutionary features. For example, if it is fire protective coatings, they literally can save the building.

G: So you are wondering, how to put it to the market and to whom you have to sell it?

I: I have an idea selling it to the construction companies first. that is the way we are able to reach their networks and customers. but I'm also interested in more classical MK communication channels, like website, magazines, brochures etc. they also were talking about huge importance of the networks. So, actually, how do the advertise usually?

G: Emm, first of all if you have a construction material , which it is yeah? the best way to advertise it in the magazines or news pairs for the building sector.

I: Like specific professional magazines?

G: there is one newspaper called "Cobau" .Something that everybody in the industry is reading. So you have to find, something that we call "vakliteratuur" in Dutch, the literature about your profession. For example construction companies , they have their own magazines and whatever websites, and organizations, which inform them about their business. So i think it is the best advertise in medium which reaches all construction people. Yeah?

I: Yeah..now I would like discuss the network as it was really emphasized during my previous interviews..

G: What do you mean by Network.

I: I mean connections, friends, relations of other people, which can influence their decisions. And how to make those connections?

G: Was it already sold this product?

I: No, it is new.

G: Not yet. So I think what you need is to figure out what are the magazines and the media, with which you can best reach construction and building companies. Than you can make an advertisement but you can also do PR thing, like free publicity. You will write an article about this thing, you will make pictures, you will go to the place , where they have implement it and picture the product live, as well find engineers and people, so called witnesses, who tell, how good the staff is.

I: For example clients , who will give a positive feedback.

G: Yeah. You have to make a kind of advatorium, you have to make an article, which will be sent to all this papers, and can be published for free. they don't pay you and you don't pay them. ha? Readymade PR things.

I: the questions of the exact prices and things will be researched next month. I think.

G: So you have to figured out which are the media, then you have to figured out , which are the ways you can reach them. The advertising, OK, it costs money. The agencies, and people to make a publicity come to me because that is what we do. We are also deal with writing. You can make PR, like press release. First, figure out which are the media. Than you can , maybe do

some thing on the Facebook, but it is not so important.

I: I think that it is really complementary to the image. I mean online presence like Website, Facebook, LinkedIn.

G: Website it is good to make.

I: Yeah. but the thing is that our company is a distributor of this product. The original company is located in the Brussels, and they have a pretty nice website. So now I'm struggling with the decision, Should we make our own company website and add the page of the product, should we add our contacts to the original website or something else?

G: Emm, I think you don't want people go directly to the head office right?

I: True. but why Dutch people should go to the Brussels, if they can easier reach us over here?

G: So you better make a website for yourself. And there make a link to the other website.

I: Yeah, probably that is wiser.

G: Can you make websites?

I: Unfortunately, I'm not a web designer.

G: Than we can make a website for you may be. Here (gives a business card). If you will make a communication plan on paper, than we can have a look on it and discuss it.

I: that would be great . Thank you.

G Cause, I have to go.

I: No problem , we are done.

Interview 7.

Interviewee: Ron Huisma (who is he?)

Date: 13.11.2013

Duration:15.22 min

Iryna: What is USP of Numatech Coatings?

Ron: Their USP's are: water base, no service, no chemicals inside. It is ceramic membrane technique, so it is also energy saving. The thing is when you put it on the roof the sun doesn't come in so it stays cool inside, but in the winter it is visa versa, the warmth stays in the building.

I: Alright. The second question. Whom do you see as the main target audience for this product in the Netherlands?

R: The main target audience to start with is actually roofing industry. We have already some roofing companies who actually are building and renewing the roofs. These companies including architects are our main start. Because Numastec have also some other products , which are on the offshore that's shipping coatings, and they are second. We start with the roofing

I: Okay, According to the contract Hollander and Scholtens are distributors of the product. i would like to know in general how does this process go.

R:In general, Numetech(LUX) and Astec(US) have a joint venture. And we are distributors of the product. We order it from Numatech, but production is in The States. But when we are above a certain limit, that means that liters are going to hard, than they are going to establish a factory somewhere in Europe. You know?

I: Okay.

R: Because actually we are exporting water, though it is a substance we have to pay 6% import duty, as 70 % of it is water.

I: Alright ,At this particular moment what are your goals and what are you working, on?

R:Well I ordered I track of samples. And we are going to start to select some prevalent roofing

companies. And show them and teach how to use this product .Actually we are distributors here for the roofing companies.

I: Good. What about certificates are they ready?

R: The certificates. It is all now certified by STS, and automatically we got CE certificates.

I: So there are no legislative questions anymore?

R: no, no, no. STS is a company registered in 280 countries. So with this advocatuur we are registered in 280 countries worldwide.

I: Okay. What about communications? How do you see it? What about website?

R: That what we are thinking about we can relate it to their. But what we do , because all of it is in English, we have to translate a lot of things in Dutch also. So we want to have a Dutch website, similar to the main one of Numetech. We are allowed to use their logo and brand name. but what we do behind it, we put all the technical datasheets on the website that we do not need to send them to the interested people, but they will have to registrant on the website to be able to see it

I: Okay, fair enough. So meanwhile the website is being proceeding?

R: Yes it is in process now.

I: Do you personally will sell the product or you will also recruit some sellers?

R: No we are point at companies, we have some preferred companies, because it's a technical issue, and you have to train the people who are doing the roofing, fire protection etc. So we selected couple of companies. We will bring their people to the office teach them how to work with the product, and we only concentrate on distribution.

I: What about other communication channels, like exhibition, magazines etc.?

R: That is what we have to do also. We have to introduce ourselves also through technical magazines, and also we have to go to exhibitions, but we have to choose construction or offshore ones.

I: So we also allowed to do it as an distributors, i mean?

R: Yes. no problem, because we get all the tools from the main office. if we have an exhibitions we can use their brochures also, magazines etc.

I: I'm wondering, how do you minimize the risk in B2B communication?

R: We need to show our products. We have some movies from the previously done work, which we can show them. We give them some samples, or proof that this is really working. And pricewise product is very good. That means that in competition we can show them that for one roof of 1000m2 we only need three days with three people, when common roofing system with six people you need one week.

I: okay. I understand. There are some Dutch construction network organizations, which support some industries and companies. Would you consider to enter those networking's?

R: No. Not at this stage. the thing is that we are going to penetrate the market through this roofing companies, and if they will be excited about the product, and say yeah this is the best product. Then we will start to work with the other companies. The biggest one are Sigma and AKZO, so we need to avoid them in the beginning. When we have some settlement in the market, then they cannot avoid us, but in the beginning they try to find some bad issues about their competitors, to protect their own product. So we start very quietly and slowly on the market. And once we are established, then we can be approached by them.

I: Okay, but meant this kind of organizations, were similar companies are gathered together to share all the news about the market. And entering this kind of networks would be a great push for us.

R: Yes, that is correct, we don't go there. the big competitors, they have so much money , that they mostly own all the market. Once we are settled, okay then they will notice us.

I: But wouldn't you mind if i will consider thin option in my advice?

R: That not what we need now. What we are doing now. We dividing Holland in four parts and make some pitching of our product. Like a small marker. We'll invite 10-15 companies to the hotel conference room, we show them the product we show them the movie and then move to the next stage.

I:OK. I got it. Do you know how actually Numatech is selling their product themselves?

R:They have just went to the exhibition in Brussels. That is one, and the other is that they approach a big roofing companies personally, and they try together to explore the market.

I: So mostly they are practicing a direct sales?

R" Direct sales ,Yeah!

I:I Think this is all for now.

R:And the other questions you have will be answered soon.