



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Activities for strengthening the brand of an online-based company

- A study of Lavasoft AB -

LAVASOFT

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Abstract

Title: Activities for strengthening the brand of an online-based company: A study of Lavasoft AB.

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Keywords: Branding, Lavasoft, brand platform, integrated marketing communication, online marketing communication, advocacy relationship development.

Purpose: The purpose of the thesis is to come up with proposals on activities for how Lavasoft can strengthen their brand.

Theoretical framework: There are four areas of theories which lie as the basis for the thesis: Brand platform, integrated marketing communication, online marketing communication, and advocacy relationship development.

Research model: The research model in the thesis is structured and based on the theories concerning the brand platform. The research model was used in formulating the questions and collecting the empirics regarding the brand platform.

Methodology: The thesis is based on both a qualitative and a quantitative method. The research approach is of an abductive nature and the data has been handled with regards to this view.

Empirics: The primary data consists of three conducted interviews with the CEO, Vice President – Head of marketing, and the international marketing manager at Lavasoft. Besides these interviews, there were two different surveys conducted. One survey was conducted internally with the employees at Lavasoft and the other survey was available on the Lavasoft website and had an external perspective. Secondary data consisted of a previous conducted Lavasoft survey.

Conclusions: The conclusions are structured around three research questions. The first question is about envisioning a brand platform for Lavasoft and in the conclusions a suggestion for this is presented. The second question concerns how the identified online marketing communication activities that Lavasoft are doing or could be doing can be divided into the integrated marketing communications planning matrix. In the conclusion, a Lavasoft adapted planning matrix is presented, where the activities have been divided. The third question regards the reputation and credibility of the corporate brand and how it can be enhanced by advocacy relationship development and integrated marketing communication. The conclusions in that research question present suggestions of what can be done.

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1 Introduction

This chapter is an introduction to the thesis and it starts with a go through of the background of Lavasoft. Then comes the importance of branding which is followed by the background of the problem and a discussion concerning it. The purpose and the research questions are the next parts of the introduction, which ends with an outline for the thesis.

1.1 Company Background

The technological development online is on constant advancement, new threats and opportunities are always developing. This was the foundation on which Lavasoft in 1999 started their business. New threats were emerging towards the computer industry. Computer viruses were already a well-known term but the problem with slow-running computers and annoying pop-up windows had grown substantially. As a counterattack, in order to deal with the growing problem that the traditional anti-virus software did not enclosed, Lavasoft created the first anti-spyware software, Ad-aware. Lavasoft moved from its base in Germany to Gothenburg, Sweden in 2002 were the company headquarter still remains today (Lavasoft.com, 2008).

In an attempt to deal with the damages that is created by spyware, Lavasoft work directly with the spyware industry in order to make acceptable improvements to their spyware which make them more acceptable to the environment. At the same time, Lavasoft work to create a dialog with the consumer where the consumer can alert Lavasoft to new spyware and all kinds of threats against internet security, known as malware (Lavasoft.com, 2008).

While the society advances, so is the development of the malware industry. Lavasoft has grown with the advancements of the industry, and has over the last two years grown from twelve employees to over fifty, and the company still remains privately owned.¹ Lavasoft consist of many different departments; management, legal & administration, human resources, accounts, marketing & sales, research, development, quality assurance, web development, support, it, and logistics.

Over recent years, Lavasoft has created a name for it self and shown to be a company to count on; undeniable with over 350 million downloads of Ad-aware (Lavasoft.com, 2008). Today Lavasoft is more than just a company producing anti-spyware products, and they cover a greater spectrum of internet security, with products concerning among others, anti-virus, firewall, and data encryption.

¹ Michael Helander Vice President – Sales & Marketing. Meeting 10th of November 2008

1.2 The importance of branding

Building a strong brand is a process. This process should create value, and it is progressing parallel both internally within the company among its employees as well as externally in the mind of the consumer (Melin, 1999).

According to Mårtenson (2008), the brand represents immense immaterial assets which often have a considerable greater financial value than the company's material assets. She explains that a strong brand can create leverage effects to upcoming marketing communication activities where the success of one brand creates success of another in the brand portfolio. This viewpoint is also explained by Echeverri & Edvardsson (2002), they say that the brand is one of the most important carriers of what the company really stands for and therefore the most valuable asset.

A brand consists of the product, packaging and added value (Mårtenson, 2008). Here, added value is described as the associations to the brand that the target audience has. One product can be equivalent another to the smallest detail, but still render less revenue. What creates these differentiation points are the discussed added value, which by showing the uniqueness with the product over the competitors, generate sales.

According to Melin (1999) the product lifecycle has become shortened due to the fast technological advancement, but also because the time it takes for imitators to rise. This means that the competitive advantages a company might have with their products quickly becomes obsolete and turn into points of parity instead of points of differentiation (Melin 1999). What this implies is that new ways of differentiation is necessary, which makes the brand a great new resource to use in order to differentiate the company from its competitors.

1.3 Problem background

Lavasoft has during recent years grown as a company in a higher pace than the development of their marketing communication activities, this, due to the fact that they have limited resources. The marketing communications have therefore partially been done in an ad-hoc manner which renders a business that follows the current, but presently is not in the lead.²

Lavasoft has earlier had a position as market leader on the American market, among others, because of their good reputation and because of that they were the first anti-spyware company.³

Lavasoft is a privately owned company, which they have been since the start up 1999 (Lavasoft.com, 2008). This kind of ownership structure does not exist in the same extent with their competitors. The competitors are listed on the stock exchange market and have therefore

² Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

³ Michael Helander Vice President – Sales & Marketing. Meeting 10th of November 2008

the possibility to get financial support and backing from other companies and investors.⁴ This means that the competitors can operate with far more resources than Lavasoft.⁵

This situation where Lavasoft is forced to defend its market shares and customers, although with less funds, has had a direct impact on how they work with their marketing communication. Lavasoft has always been good at, and focused on, finding cheap solutions to reach the customers with their products. Marketing communication activities that are online-based are rather often cheap and easy to perform (Levinson, 2007). Thus Lavasofts concentration has been on marketing communication on the internet. This kind of marketing communication is also the one that Lavasoft intend to primarily work with in the future⁶.

Lavasoft had a year ago approximately seven million visitors on their website every month. This number is today somewhere around five million.⁷ That shows that the problem with the marketing communication activities affects the company, with less interest in the website and Lavasoft as a brand.

The company has loyal customers who have been with Lavasoft from the beginning, especially regarding their most well known product Ad-aware. Many of the loyal customers are very skilled in the area and have an interest in the products.⁸ This put demands at the marketing communication to be sufficiently interesting for these customers but at the same time it cannot be too difficult so it scare off other groups of customers who do not possess the same level of knowledge and interest.⁹ This issue adds another aspect for the marketing communication to handle, and the company cannot risk displeasing the loyal customers in their attempt to reach the common customer.

Many in the customer base are sensitive to traditional advertising, which affects Lavasofts choice of marketing communication activities.¹⁰ In this situation, where Lavasoft carefully has to choose its marketing communication activities, the use of Advocacy relationship development can be helpful hence it is based on relationship marketing and implies a mutual exchange between the company and its customers.

The business field that Lavasoft are placed in is very fast moving and trends passes in a short time-span.¹¹ The mobility of being online is an advantage for Lavasoft by its cheap and easy-

⁴ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

⁵ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

⁶ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

⁷ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

⁸ Michael Helander Vice President – Sales & Marketing. Meeting 10th of November 2008

⁹ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

¹⁰ Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

¹¹ Michael Helander Vice President – Sales & Marketing. Meeting 10th of November 2008

to-perform characteristics. But at the same time a disadvantage as it stress for an active and thorough external monitoring of the environment which is very time consuming. To have the ability to pick up trends on the internet in an early phase and thereby be able to use it for getting their message out is a marketing communications possibility for Lavasoft.

1.4 Problem discussion

In the previous section it was established that it exists a problem at Lavasoft with their marketing communication activities, which have not been able to evolve in the same pace as the company's growth and the development of the market. One tool in helping with that problem can be to develop a brand platform. When considering the problem with the fast moving business field of Lavasoft the importance of having a brand platform is even greater, because it creates consistency. The aim was therefore to create and to come up with suggestions of activities that could be used right away and that was sustainable. This was another reason why we focused hard to envision a brand platform. This because it is a tool that can be used for a very long time if it is well developed and lies as a foundation for all the marketing communication activities. When developing the brand platform, we wanted to obtain both the internal and the external perspective of what the brand stands for. By comparing the identity with the image a more valid and well-established platform could be created. The brand image is the only external perspective being examined in the thesis.

The integrated perspective was also important, because unity and clarity are immensely important aspects of marketing communication. The customers do not only face the marketing communication, the perception of the customers is formed by a lot of things. Features and characteristics of the programs, visualization and design of the website, and the replies from support among others are examples of what the perception is based on. Chaffey et al. (2003) argues that to work integrated augment the online marketing communication activities. So in order to get as much effect as possible out of the online marketing communication activities one shall work with integrated marketing communications. This thesis did however not examine how other departments besides the marketing department works and what they do. What will be described is the need of integration and how it can be done for the marketing department.

The underlying source to the loss of visitors on the Lavasoft website is the lack of time and resources put in marketing communication activities¹². The problem lies in the ever changing environment of the internet, which makes keeping up to date problematic.

It is of interest to explore what marketing communication channels that Lavasoft are using or could be using. This for enhancing the Lavasoft brand and at the same time help Lavasoft envision a brand platform in order to distinguish the level of resilience of different channels

¹² Lina Nielsen International Marketing Manager. Meeting 10th of November 2008

for obtaining short- and long-term goals. This together with the earlier acknowledged focus on marketing communications on the internet motivates the usage of online marketing communication. As a consequence of this, all offline marketing communication will be omitted in this thesis. The integrated marketing communication perspective that will be used is believed to strengthen the durability of the online marketing communication activities and increase the impact of the communication. Advocacy relationship development could be used as a way to create relationships with the customers and create trust, and thereby make them more receptive to the marketing communications. There is a great information need for this thesis, because of the usage of many different areas of theories. Which information and how this information will be gathered, is further explained in the methodology chapter. The limitations of this thesis are, because of the extent of the problem discussion, enclosed in this section.

1.5 Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to come up with proposals on activities for how Lavasoft can strengthen their brand.

In order to easier answer the purpose and concretize what activities this thesis aim towards, three research questions was developed.

1.6 Research questions

1. How can a brand platform for Lavasoft be envisioned?
2. What online marketing communication activities should Lavasoft improve or implement in their range of activities according to the integrated marketing communications planning matrix?
3. What can Lavasoft do in order to build a better reputation and higher credibility considering integrated marketing communication and advocacy relationship development?

The first question, regards a brand platform for Lavasoft. To be able to obtain relevant data for this, and get an understanding of how to most appropriate collect it, a research model was developed. The brand platform for Lavasoft was based on the theories regarding the brand platform, but the structure is new and it was desired to distinguish it from the theories and therefore has its own chapter. Concerning the two other research questions, the data collection was not structured on a specific model and thus not included in the third chapter.

1.7 Outline

Chapter 1: In this chapter the company background is presented. Following that is a short section that handles the importance of branding. Next follows the background to the problem and then a discussion concerning it. Finally, the purpose and research questions are presented.

Chapter 2: This chapter includes theories and relevant research that are being used in this thesis. It is divided into four parts. The brand platform brings up a discussion of its contents and usage. Integrated marketing communication handles different perspectives of integration as well as the importance and benefits of it. Online marketing communication takes up six options, each containing several activities that all are online-based. Advocacy relationship development handles customer care and the building of relationships for a mutual exchange.

Chapter 3: In this chapter the research model is presented. The structure model of the brand platform that is going to be envisioned is based on the theories regarding the brand platform that is presented in the second chapter. The interview questions regarding the brand platform and both the internal and the external survey have been designed in accordance with this structure model.

Chapter 4: This chapter starts with the information needed and research approach. Then a data collection section follows, which contains information about the primary and secondary data. After that come three sections: interviews, internal survey and external survey. The chapter ends with the section involving reliability, validity and generalization.

Chapter 5: The results of the surveys and interviews are being presented in this chapter. The interviews are presented in the same order as the questions in the interview guide and the respondents answers are summarized and presented as a whole in every question. After that follows the results from the internal survey and the external survey. The results from both the surveys are presented in order with the structure in the questionnaires.

Chapter 6: In this chapter the empirics and the theoretical framework will be compared and analyzed. The chapter will pursue the same pattern as the theoretical framework chapter. Threads of reasoning will be raised that will lead towards the conclusions and answering the research questions.

Chapter 7: This is the final chapter and it encloses the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions are being made by answering the research questions out of the reasoning from the analysis and the recommendations complement this. The chapter ends with a section of recommendations for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, theories of relevance are presented. First the brand platform is discussed and this is followed by theories about integrated marketing communication, online marketing communication and finally advocacy relationship development.

2.1 The brand platform

The brand platform works as the base from where the marketing communication activities originate. It also helps in keeping continuity in all activities, which creates an understanding of the company. There are benefits of using a brand platform as a starting point when coming to decisions concerning the brand. Some of these benefits are unity, context and structure (Mårtenson, 2008).

When defining what the brand platform should comprise there is some discrepancy between authors. Melin (1999) has described a variant of the brand platform which he calls: *The strategic brand platform*. This consist of six different notions, *Product attribute, Brand identity, Core value, Positioning, Marketing communication* and *Internal brand loyalty*. Mårtenson (2008) gives her suggestions of what the brand platform could encompass, namely: *Vision, business idea and values, personality, target audience, primary brand promise, brand character, visual identity*. These aspects from Mårtenson (2008) and Melin (1999) were our primary sources which were considered when developing the structure model, that are based on these theories. There are also influences from other authors. The structure model is presented in the next chapter. In the structure model, the chosen aspects are brought up and discussed.

2.1.1 Visual identity and the product attributes

The visual identity is simply the visualization of the brand, which can be done through numerous ways, among others, slogans, and symbols. One vital part of the visual identity is the name, which itself can generate leverage effects. These effects can work to launch other products and build good marketing communication campaigns (Mårtenson, 2008). According to Dahlén & Lange (2003), the appearance of the packaging design is what first comes to the mind of the consumer when thinking of the brand, and therefore also an essential aspect.

The logotype is a symbol that represents the brand. The name can be the logo of the brand, but it does not necessarily have to be that way (Mårtenson, 2008). The more a consumer knows about a famous brand name, the quicker they can recognize it. But what is more effective when it comes to visual communication is that consumers apprehend imagery even faster than names (Dahlén & Lange, 2003).

Slogans, which also go by the name tagline or theme lines (Arens et al. 2008), have the purpose of, in a simple way with a single phrase, summarize benefits with the brand and that can become a standard statement for the company (Mårtenson, 2008) (Arens & Weigold, 2008). Slogans are also a help when keeping continuity in series of ads or a campaign (Arens & Weigold, 2008).

When it comes to the product attributes, Melin (1999) explains that it does not only emphasize the visual identity as described above. It is also important to remember that protection of the brand, patents and such, falls under this category.

2.1.2 Vision, mission, the brand identity, and the brand image

The reason why a company exists, what it stands for and what it does not stand for, should all be explained in the vision. The vision should not reflect anything negative (Mårtenson, 2008)

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) say that every company has a mission that defines them. The mission is important because it tells what the company is about, both functionally and emotionally. The primary brand promise is the company's promise towards the customers and should be able to work besides the company mission. When the market is evolving, the mission should adapt to the changes and thus also the brands promise (Mårtenson, 2008).

When describing the brand identity a model from Mårtenson (2008) was used, although it is a model that is partially based on text from the book Brand Leadership by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), see figure 2.1.

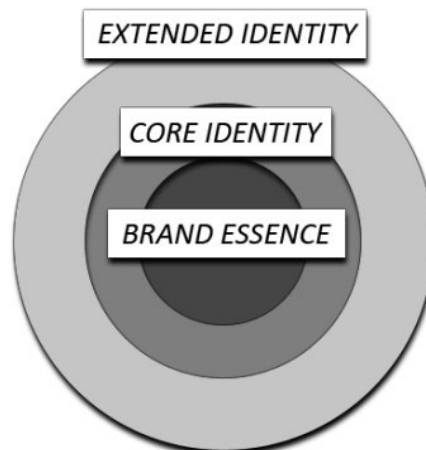


Figure 2. 1 – The brand identity (Mårtenson, 2008 pp. 43)

By this model, the brand identity consists of three parts, the brand essence, the core identity and the extended identity.

The brand essence is the very soul of the company captured in a single thought. It should not be bundled words that express the core values in one sentence (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). It is also important that the essence should be able to withstand changes over time (Mårtenson, 2008).

The core identity (sometimes referred to as core values), is according to Mårtenson (2008) the most important dimensions that summarize the vision. It shall be a set of rules that the brand should strive to live up to, usually 2-4 words (Mårtenson, 2008). The core values can create a long-term differentiated advantage, if it for the consumer strikes as valuable and easy to communicate, while at the same time facing the competition as unique and hard to imitate (Melin, 1999). Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) imply that when a brand changes market and even products, the core identity should remain the same so that the consumer and also the employees might be given the opportunity to understand what the brand stands for.

The extended identity, sometimes referred to as extended values, helps the consumer to understand what the brand stands for by adding details and filling in the picture (Aaker, 1996). It can be not only words, but a slogan, retail experience or even the product itself (Aaker, 1996). The extended identity should include the elements of the brand identity that is not in the core (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

According to Melin (1999), the brand identity has grown in interest due to the fact that a lot of companies are not able to compete with quality and chooses not to compete with price. Companies do not want their ideas and activities easily copied which makes the immaterial nature of the identity perfect when it comes to creating a competitive advantage (Melin 1999).

The identity is the internal visualization of how the company wants their brand to be perceived by its consumers. Another perspective is the brand image which is how the brand is actually being viewed by every one outside of the company. Since the target audience also will be more or less exposed to the competitor's communication, both by their ads but also through other mediums like public relation, the consumers' views and experiences of the company can be different than desirable (Mårtenson, 2008). This is why the image needs to be surveyed constantly and compared to the identity (Melin, 1999).

2.1.3 Brand personality and characteristics

Aaker formally defines brand personality as: "*the set of human characteristics associated with a brand*" (Aaker, 1997 pp. 347). What this implies is that the brand can take on human characteristics such as gender and age as well as distinct personality traits, which can differ greatly among persons such as warmth, concern, and sentimentality (Aaker, 1996).

Aaker (1996) explains how the brand personality can create brand equity by three models: the self expression model, the relationship basis model and the functional benefit representation model.

The first model explains that a brand can help certain groups to convey their own identity. In other words, by using a certain product from a certain brand, it can help the groups of individuals using the product to express an ideal self (Aaker 1996). If a brand has a personality that is congruent with individuals own self image, then they are more likely to buy this product (Mårtenson, 2008).

The second model reflects the importance of creating an idea of relationship between the customer and the brand (Aaker, 1996). If we know who a person is and what to expect from this person it is easier to get an understanding of what that brand stands for (Mårtenson, 2008). This gives an idea if we want to be associated with this person. Sometimes, a brand personality might strike as dependable, trustworthy and boring. These are all characteristics that have great value if associated with a banker or financial advisor (Aaker 1996).

The third model explains that when communicating what a brand stands for, the brand personality can be of great importance in order to deliver the correct message (Aaker, 1996). There are different ways of how to do this, one being symbols (such as the Michelin man or the Energizer rabbit), others are countries or regions (Thai Air, Jack Daniel's and Provence) (Aaker, 1996) (Mårtenson, 2008).

2.1.4 Positioning

Melin (1999) uses what he calls the positioning triangle, figure 2.2, as starting point when describing positioning. The core value positioning represents the internal perspective, and the market and mental positioning represents the external perspective.

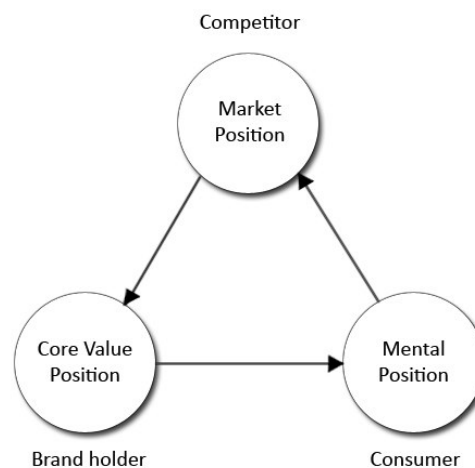


Figure 2. 2 - The positioning triangle (Melin, 1999 pp. 235)

What this model implies is that there is a connection between these three parts. In order for the brand to obtain a good position on the market it is of utmost importance that the brand has a mental connection with the consumers, in order to build up a defense against competitors and the entrance of such on the market (Melin 1999).

Melin (1999) discusses the importance of conducting a core value analysis before even trying to position the brand. The reason for this is because the core values will help in the identification of the benefits of the brand (Melin 1999). When it comes to the mental positioning, which is aimed towards the consumer, it is, according to Melin (1999), an advantage to be a pioneer on the market. Pioneer companies have a first mover advantage, which means that they can freely choose how to position themselves to the consumer (Melin, 1999).

2.1.5 External environment

According to Melin (1999) there is both an internal and external perspective. The internal perspective is the brand holder perspective and the external perspective is the consumer perspective. The external environment can consist among others brand image, brand awareness and brand loyalty (Melin, 1999). This is not a part of Melins (1999) strategic brand platform, although he describes how the platform interacts with the environment outside the company and it is from the external environment the company can get feedback.

2.2 Integrated marketing communications

Integrated marketing communication, from now on referred to as IMC, is partly about how a company can integrate the company's different departments to work more as a seamless whole (Mårtenson, 2008). This means that customer service is just as important and should be integrated with employee care and education, as well as product design, and the development of the product (Mårtenson, 2008). The other part of integrated marketing communication consists of the actual marketing communication campaign. It is of utmost importance to work with both the internal and the external aspects of the customer experience, if not it can have negative effects on the brand image (Echeverri, Edvardsson, 2002).

This process, of integrating all messages from a company with all departments of a company to achieve consistency, is IMC (Arens, Weigold, 2008). A well functioning IMC delivers a consistent communication which strengthens the brand identity (Lovelock, Wirtz, 2007).

2.2.1 Integrated marketing communication implications online

Schultz (2003) argues that the traditional way to do marketing and its channels are no longer enough. There has in the past decade been an explosion of new systems to deliver a company's message. The internet has added various options and channels to marketing. Today it can be more important where the message is delivered than what the message is (Schultz, 2003).

Therefore the importance of IMC is immense when there are numerous of different channels to coordinate and to integrate it in all the contact points (Schultz, 2003). Operating in an online environment raises both opportunities and challenges in the marketing communications area. The audiences are becoming more proactive and shattered but the companies have the ability to form and adapt their messages by applications that collect data, used for better targeting online audiences and creating personal customized messages (Gurãu, 2008).

In an IMC perspective the internet is one of the many channels that must be integrated, and the use of the internet will be the most effective, when the channels are being integrated (Chaffey et al. 2003). One big advantage of the internet is the possibility to easier and faster create a dialogue with ones customers (Chaffey et al. 2003). When reaching its customers one

does not have to drive the customer to the company website, it is possible that one better reach the customers at a site that the target audience frequently use (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

Gurãu (2008) argues that is inevitable and more efficient for online organizations to have an integrated perspective when implementing ones online marketing communication. Three strong characteristics for the internet are transparency, interactivity and memory. This forces companies to work with their online marketing communication activities in a proactive and reactive way and to combine consistency and continuity together with customization to create an attractive message (Gurãu, 2008). The continuity and consistency is important aspects of how successful the communication will be (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

2.2.2 The integrated marketing communications planning matrix

Which marketing communications activities that falls under either brand message or brand incentive can be illustrated through the IMC planning matrix figure 2.3.

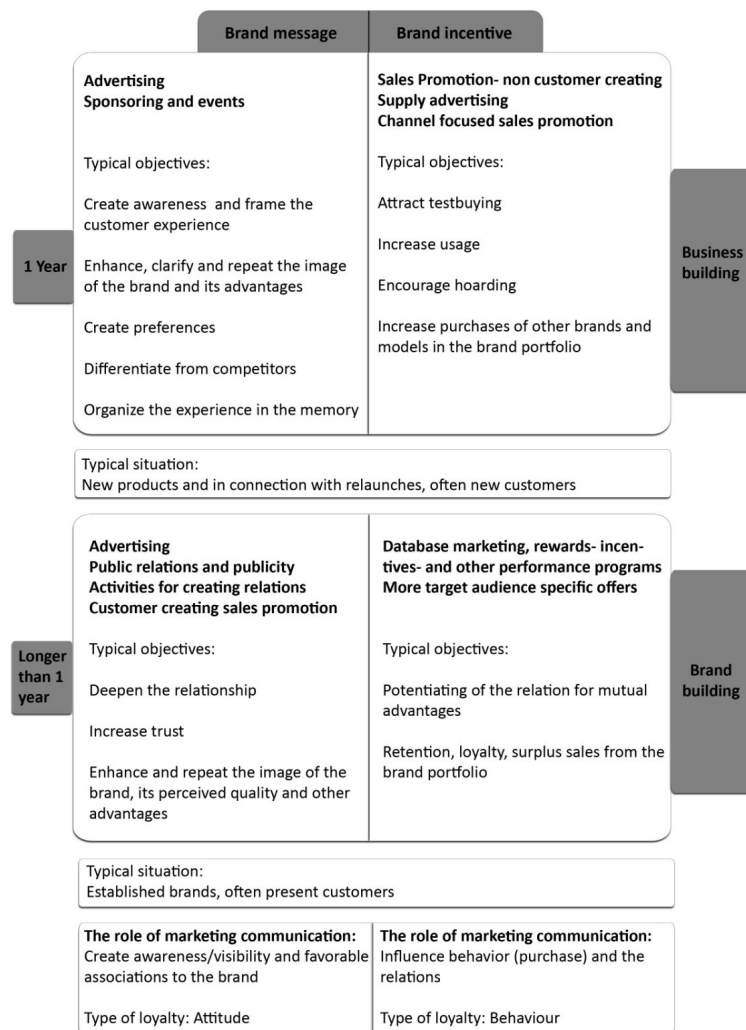


Figure 2. 3 - The IMC planning matrix (Schultz, 2004 pp. 207)

The model, figure 2.3 was first developed by Schultz (2004). Although the model presented comes from Mårtenson (2008) who developed it further.

Each quadrant of the matrix represents different types of programs that each generates a type of return. The matrix helps managers to better examine investment options and calculate return of different marketing communications investments (Schultz, 2004).

Brand message is made in the purpose of influencing the experience of the brand. The brand incentive is made in the purpose of stimulating the demand. With the brand message the companies create a loyalty based on attitude and the brand incentive creates a loyalty based on behavior (Schultz, 2004). The IMC planning matrix has besides brand message and brand incentive, two other orientations that are separated by their time perspective; business building and brand building. Business building lies within a time-span of a year and brand building lies in a time-span over a year (Schultz, 2004).

The orientations of business building and brand building are the base for one research questions, in which we will identify online marketing communication activities that Lavasoft can enact or develop further and divide them into the four quadrants.

2.2.3 Integrated marketing communication effects on branding

Schultz (2003) says that there are few things that companies control that have as much power to earn money in the market today as their brand. Marketing communication consists of a number of different possible activities and it calls for the necessity that a company must coordinate its activities to give the customers a comprehensive picture. To create leverage effects of one's resources there are three criteria that have to be fulfilled; the activities must be based on an overall picture, they must be based on continuity and they must be integrated in an IMC manner (Mårtenson, 2008).

Arens & Weigold (2008) says that what is important is not simple exchanges, but the nourishment of good, long run, customer relationships. Aaker (2005) says that it is easy for companies generally to take their loyal customers for granted. Looking at the total profits given by loyal customers in a lifetime perspective, one sees that their contribution is significant (Aaker, 2005). The key can often be to start a relation with the customers and then give rewards through customers clubs or other incentive programs (Aaker, 2005).

For a company to obtain loyal customers it takes a lot of time and investments, therefore companies oppose themselves when shifting a message or fail to amplify it or the brand identity in a consistent way (Mårtenson, 2008). The brand is thus a valuable asset, though not always treated that way, when seen as a short turn investment (Schultz, 2004).

2.3 Online marketing communication

Today, companies are using online marketing communications, from now on referred to as OMC, in a broader sense than before. Instead of just using a corporate website, companies are implementing more OMC activities in order to reach the consumers (Bach-Jensen, 2007).

Lovelock & Wirtz (2007) say that the internet is an integral part in companies marketing communication and one of the most notable aspects is its ubiquity. One great potential that OMC has, is the interactive nature of the internet that could increase the involvement of the customer to a great extent (Lovelock, Wirtz, 2007). The development on the internet has inferred new possibilities for marketing communication and the interactive features might also be even more useful and better used in this environment (Echeverri, Edvardsson, 2002).

2.3.1 The options of online marketing communication

Chaffey et al. (2006) describes in their book: *Internet Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice*, six main options when developing the communications mix. These options are shown in figure 2.4. The six options *search marketing, online PR, online partnership, interactive ads, opt-in e-mails* and *viral marketing* is presented below in the same order as in the model.

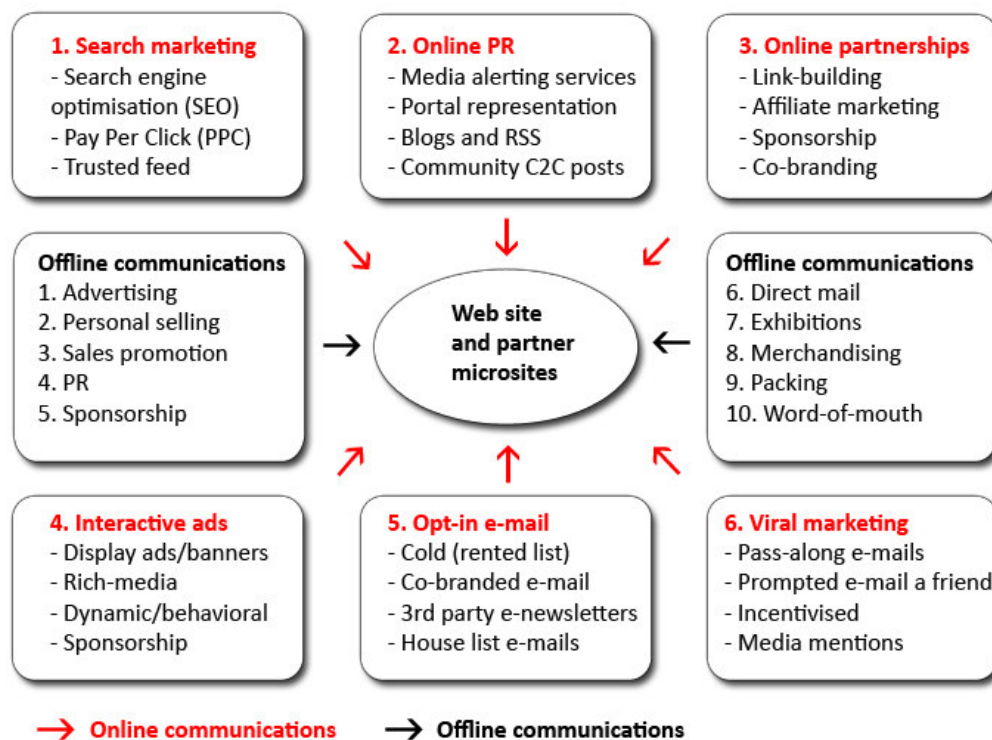


Figure 2. 4 - Options available in the communications mix (Chaffey et al. 2006 pp.349)

2.3.2 Search marketing

Search marketing or search engine marketing is about having your company represented among the top results when searching for specific keywords on search engines, for example Google or Yahoo! As seen in figure 2.4, search marketing can be divided into three parts.

Search engine optimization (SEO) can according to Bach-Jensen (2007), be divided into two categories. Organic SEO which is symbolized by reaching high ranking results without having to pay for it, while paid optimization involves just that (Bach-Jensen, 2007).

The second part is called Pay per click (PPC). What this implies is that when a keyword is searched for, there might come up a series of sponsored links. These links can be compared to advertising although only costs the company money when clicked on. But in order to be able to compete for the top spots that actually is shown; the companies have to bid on the cost-per-click (Chaffey et al. 2006).

The final part, trusted feed, is according to Chaffey et al. (2006), not as common. This is a form of search advertising which is mainly used by retailers and is advertising that is automatically uploaded to the site from a database (Chaffey et al. 2006).

2.3.3 Online PR

Online PR is about getting other websites to mention your site in different ways (Chaffey et al. 2006). When it comes to PR online, Chaffey et al. (2006) mentions four activities.

Media alerting services is about ways to inform media about upcoming activities or news, for example by an online press-release area or online newsfeeds (Chaffey et al. 2006).

Portal representation means that the company should be visible through the portals that exist. The reason for this is because portals, like Google and MSN are places online where the users spend a lot of time when not on other sites (Chaffey et al. 2006). A portal consists of a lot of different features which provides a perfect way for companies to use advertising, sponsorship or PR among others (Chaffey et al. 2006).

The third part is blogs and RSS. Blogs are best described as online journals, diaries, or news or event listings (Chaffey et al. 2006). Blogs are a perfect tool for businesses to create an interactive environment with their consumers. This because they usually have the option of leaving comments on published posts (Davison-Turley, 2005). RSS or Really Simple Syndication is what makes the blogs more powerful. It is a tool that can coordinate the blogs or news feeds so that the reader has them all in one place (Davison-Turley, 2005).

The final part of the online PR activities represented in the model is community C2C posts. Communities are networks where people with usually equal interests can meet and talk online, for example Facebook and MySpace (NE.se, 2008). Brand communities are one way businesses can use communities.

2.3.4 Online Partnership

Link building, is the first part of the online partnership option. It is about getting your link or brand onto other sites. One way to work with link building is by using reciprocal links. What this mean is that two organizations agree to link to each other sites (Chaffey et al. 2003).

Affiliate marketing is about agreeing with organizations to have a link on their site and then do not pay for doing so until a click on the link or advertisement (pay-per-lead) or click leading to a purchase or transaction (pay-per-conversion) (Bach-Jensen, 2007).

Sponsorship online is a good way to get linked to different sites. There are different options when choosing how to be an online sponsor. For instance pay for another site entirely or parts of it. When paying parts of it, Co-Branding can be too prefer, this can create synergies between companies and also help when building links or reciprocal agreements (Chaffey et al. 2003 & 2006). Sponsorship is the most effective when it is long term and low cost and its weakness are, among others, that it may increase awareness but not necessarily leads to sales (Chaffey, et al. 2003).

2.3.5 Interactive Ads

When advertising on the internet companies places advertising content on another website (Chaffey, et al. 2006). Sponsorship has already been gone through and is not described in this section.

Banner advertising is the most common and simple form of online advertising and the purpose of it are often described as driving traffic to a website (Chaffey, et al. 2003). The design of the banner should also be tested on representatives from the target audience. This is because the creative side should become as effective as possible and the timing and placement of the banner carefully planned (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

Rich-media is a banner that involves for example an animation or sound, a rich-media banner is thus not a static one (Chaffey, et al. 2006). Chaffey et al. (2006) emphasizes that the creativity and interactivity is central for a rich-media banner.

Dynamic/behavioral is about relevance and to continuously serve the customers with dynamic information, which also can be called behavioral ad targeting (Chaffey et al. 2006). Behavioral ad targeting gives the advertiser the possibility to target the visitor and with this increasing the frequency of exposures (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

2.3.6 Opt-in e-mail

Opt-in e-mails simply mean that an individual agrees to receive e-mail communication from a company or organization. The first three ways of opt-in e-mails concerns acquisition of new customers and visitors to a site. The fourth way is house list e-mails and regards prospecting conversation and customer retention.

A cold e-mail campaign is when the recipient receives an opt-in e-mail from a company that has rented a list of e-mail addresses to inform or offer something. It is of importance to state where the message comes from or else the risk of it being treated like spam is great (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

When receiving a co-branded e-mail the recipient gets an offer from a company that they have a fairly strong affinity to. This way is quite similar to cold e-mail but is considered as warmer because of the stronger link to one of the brands (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

Third party e-newsletter is about placing oneself in newsletters with an ad, sponsorship or an editorial PR piece and the placement later links to a desired page. Followers of e-newsletters tend to at least scan through the document and therefore a placement there can be rather cost-effective (Chaffey et al. 2006).

The house list is something a company or organization owns and consists of lists with contact information about customers (Chaffey et al. 2006).

2.3.7 Viral marketing

Viral marketing is a form of word-of-mouth, which involves passing on information on development of products, new services and other information from user to user (Keller, Kotler. 2006).

When the message is spread by e-mail or word-of-mouth alone it is called pass-along e-mails. If the e-mail has a high "WOW" factor the probability for it being passed on is greater (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

Prompted e-mails are when the e-mails contain a link to a website where one can send or forward a special e-mail. The company then sends the e-mail to the persons chosen. This can also be done from a website and is then called web prompted message and it works in the same way as the e-mail (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

An incentivized viral is one that offers a reward for forwarding it and providing someone else's e-mail address. A common way for doing this is to arrange a contest where people fill in the e-mails and thereby has the possibility to win a prize (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

Media mention handles the seeding of the virals. When doing a campaign it is important to get as many targeted online and offline mentions in the media as possible to increase awareness and the spreading of the message (Chaffey, et al. 2006).

2.4 Advocacy relationship development

Advocacy relationship development, from now on referred to as ARD, is according to Urban (2004, 2005) a more appropriate name than relationship marketing regarding the relationship between the company and the customers, because it is based on a mutual exchange

Numerous corporate scandals have had the effect that more and more consumers are generally rather critical to the business world (Mårtenson, 2008). At the same time it has become harder to differentiate ones products and to reach the customers with the desirable message. The companies must therefore change in order to be understood as credible and attractive as a cooperative partner (Mårtenson, 2008). The customer power has also grown due to the access of more information, basically from the internet that has a big impact on the purchase process (Urban, 2005).

In facing this described reality, the companies basically have three possible alternatives to choose from, according to Urban (2005): The first alternative aims to amplify the traditional push/pull model of marketing, the second alternative focuses on strengthening the relationship to the customers, and the final alternative is to embrace true customer advocacy.

One way to gain experience of the customer purchases in order to more efficiently target the customer is customer relationship management, from now on referred to as CRM, (Urban, 2005). CRM can be used to create better products built on identified customer needs. But CRM has a disadvantage because it is a one-sided communication and therefore the communication is not always received and perceived as intended (Urban, 2005).

A functioning ARD consists of a dialogue instead of a monologue. Nonetheless CRM can be a useful tool in identifying customer preferences. And as a company develops its ARD, CRM can be used to advocate for customers, giving them unbiased and open information, only targeting the customers that are receptive and interested in the products and thereby creating a mutual dialogue (Urban, 2005).

2.4.1 The advocacy pyramid

According to Urban ARD consists of four parts; *Total quality management, customer satisfaction, relationship marketing and customer advocacy*, illustrated in figure 2.5.

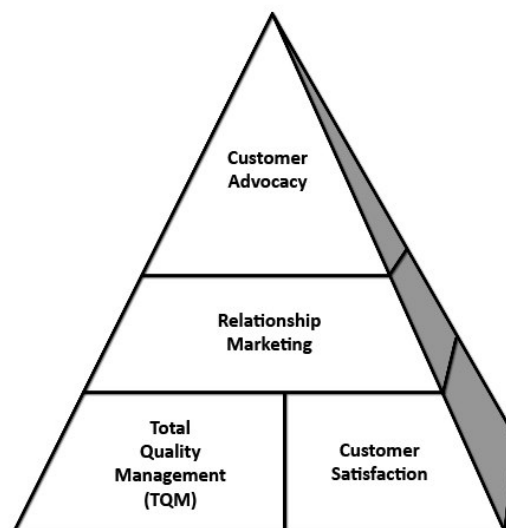


Figure 2. 5 - The advocacy pyramid (Urban, 2004 pp. 79)

These four concepts can be seen as parts of the advocacy pyramid. The base is made out of total quality management and customer satisfaction. Upon that comes relationship marketing that makes the companies learn enough about the customer to be their advocate and to reach the top of the pyramid that is made up of customer advocacy.

Advocacy is depending on trust, without that there is no foundation to build a true and genuine relation on (Urban, 2004). In the context of customer advocacy it is of importance for companies to focus on two-sided and unbiased information. Advocacy dictates and urges companies to increase customer satisfaction and to adapt the concept of total quality management, in order to have superior products. This makes the consumers choose their products because of the value it brings (Urban, 2004). After working with the quality and the customer satisfaction, there is a good foundation for creating relationships. Relationship marketing is the next step towards customer advocacy. ARD is a long term commitment and is also an honest, open and ethical way of marketing that gains the customers, the company, as well as the society (Urban, 2004).

There is a risk for a trade-off between the short term sales and the long term effects of ARD. It is an ethical decision about taking a short term loss because of product improvements that have to be done in the total quality management process, in order to gain from the trust of the future loyal customer base (Urban, 2004).

2.4.2 Eight factors for achieving ARD

To obtain ARD there are eight factors that companies shall consider according to Urban (2005).

1. *Transparency*, to give transparent information that is open and honest and even might include competitor's products.
2. *Quality of products and service*, this is important because without quality a company cannot honestly recommend the products to the customers, which makes the customer trust difficult. This issue is of greater importance in customer advocacy matched against relationship strategies, if not having superior products one cannot really recommend their own and still have the customer's interest in mind.
3. *Product comparison*, even if having superior products that might not be what the every customer needs. Then the company must be willing to recommend other companies if they have better suited products for the specific customer needs.
4. *Alignment of incentives*, companies must have incentives that award the employees in alignment with the customer benefits. Savvy customers are suspicious to incentives offered by sellers unless they are convinced of a mutual reward and a possible long term relationship.
5. *Partnering*, to build trust one can help the customer help themselves by giving the consultation and covers areas even outside of the strict boundaries of the product.

6. *Cooperative design*, in developing new products and features companies can enact the customers in the process and give them the possibility to give their input. In software industries the customers frequently helps manufacturers to detect bugs.

7. *Supply chain*, a company that have an ARD strategy must make sure that all of their channel partners, distributors and retailers, have the same image of how customers shall be treated and answered, which is vital to the brand image. A company is only as trustworthy as its business partners by the standards of many customers.

8. *Comprehensiveness*, a company cannot only see the responsibility for the customers trust limited to its marketing and distribution. They must in order to have advocacy, involve the entire company in this.

The path towards ARD is somewhat demanding and includes trade-offs in the present in order to achieve desired results in the future. It is essential to create a trust and a dialogue with ones customer in order to build a mutual loyalty. The eight factors are elements of this process.

2.5 Summary of theoretical framework

There are four areas of theories which lie as the basis for the thesis.

- *The Brand Platform*
- *Integrated Marketing Communication*
- *Online Marketing Communication*
- *Advocacy Relationship Development*

The brand platform is a way to guideline the company when developing all of their marketing communication. When developed, it is a good way for the company to keep unity, context and structure both when facing outwards, as well as facing inwards.

Integrated marketing communication is used by the company in order to achieve consistency in their work. It is about being integrated internally among employees and departments as well as integrating the marketing communication activities.

Online marketing communications are ways for a company to do market communication online. In similarity with traditional marketing there are different options to choose from, some more effective than others when trying to achieve certain purposes.

Advocacy relationship development is a more true form of relationship marketing. It is about creating a relationship with the consumer which is based on giving and receiving. ARD can create a stronger brand loyalty if handled correctly.

3 Research model

This chapter contains the research model, which is structured and based on the theories presented about the brand platform. The structure model will be gone through, part by part, and the content of the model will be explained.

3.1 The brand platform structure model

The structure emanated from Mårtenson (2008) with her suggestions of the brand platform with influence from the strategic brand platform by Melin (1999) as well as Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000). Since these are just suggestions of what the brand platform might consist of, the structure of this was developed to suit Lavasoft. This was considered to be the best approach since all of the theories concerning the brand platform model are similar but at the same time brings up small different aspects. It is thus not a new model but the structure and the parts of it are put together in a new way.

What the parts stand for and how they are compared is described in the following sections, and the platform itself is shown in figure 3.1.



Figure 3. 1 - The brand platform structure by Blidner Knittel & Borg.

3.1.1 Vision

First and foremost we wanted to illuminate the company vision as the starting point for the brand platform. Mårtenson (2008) says that there should be a clear link between the company's vision and the brand vision while at the same time the overall strategy.

The overall company vision should then act as a starting point when developing the brand vision for specific brands in the company (Mårtenson, 2008). In this case, the work revolves around the corporate brand. This means that the company overall vision will work as the brand vision. Because of this, both the brand vision and the corporate vision are from now on simply referred to as vision.

3.1.2 Mission

The primary brand promise or key benefit is a promise to the consumer, and in itself the foundation for a unique statement called key benefit claim which can be used when developing marketing communications campaigns (Mårtenson, 2008).

The benefit that comes with using the brand and that is a part of the mission can be among others, emotional, functional or enhance the brands credibility (Mårtenson, 2008). What is important is that it differentiates the brand from the competitors while staying motivational for the consumers (Mårtenson, 2008).

3.1.3 Brand identity

Mårtenson (2008) does not specifically describe the brand identity as a part of the brand platform, although she uses the term core value which is a part of the brand identity. Melin (1999) on the other hand uses the term brand identity as a part in his strategic brand platform. We therefore combined Mårtensons (2008) entire explanation and model based on Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) of brand identity, with the notion of brand identity incorporated in the platform developed by Melin (1999). Therefore figure 2.1 was used as a guideline for the brand identity.

Melin (1999) separates the brand identity with what he calls core values in his model. He describes the core values as the values of a brand that represents a differentiated additional value. In the Mårtenson (2008) model she, similar to Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000), uses the term core identity. While in the text of Mårtensons book, she refers to it as core values. Since the description of the core values used by Melin (1999) and the description of the core identity (core value) used by Mårtenson (2008) and Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) show a resemblance to one another, we decided to use the term core value.

3.1.4 Brand personality

Mårtenson (2008) suggested brand character as a part of the brand platform as well as brand personality. We made the decision due to the resemblance and how they join in to each other, only to use brand personality.

Melin (1999) does not encompass brand personality, but it is considered to be a competitive tool that can be used in order for companies to obtain differentiation from their competitors, and thus of relevance in a brand platform.

3.1.5 Brand positioning

Mårtenson (2008) does not suggest brand positioning, from now only referred to as positioning, in the brand platform. Therefore the attention is focused to Melin (1999), and his theories on the subject. The research and analysis regarding the positioning will be structured according to figure 2:2.

Melin (1999) makes a distinction in how to position a brand. According to him, a company or brand should try to position the brand both externally as well as internally. With the external positioning as he calls it, the positioning statement should be facing the consumer. What differentiates the internal positioning is that it is directed towards the own organization. If internally established, it can help the company determine the external positioning and get an understanding of how to compete with the competitors (Melin, 1999).

3.1.6 Visual identity

Melin (1999) brings up visual identity and packaging design in the brand platform which he calls product attributes.

Mårtenson (2008) mentions: The brand name, the logo, the package design and slogans as elements of brand visualization. The visual identity part of the structure model will expire from Mårtenson (2008).

3.1.7 External environment

The external environment is where the marketing communications are aimed at. The external environment interacts with the internal perspective which consists of the other six parts of the structure model. The choice of including the external environment is motivated by the interaction and could be used as a feedback function. The external perspective is therefore not to be forgotten. The external environment is only included in this thesis by the external survey which examines the brand image.

4 Methodology

This chapter starts with the information need and the research approach, this is followed by the data collection, interviews and the internal- and external surveys. The interview and the survey sections have the same structure with selection of respondents, and approach. The chapter ends with a part about validity, reliability and generalization.

4.1 Information need

The thesis handles quite large areas and therefore had a relative big information need. Most of the information needed, regarded Lavasoft and their present marketing communication activities and their way of working. But there was also some external information that was necessary to obtain. To gather the information it was decided to perform three interviews with employees at Lavasoft. Except the interviews, two surveys were conducted, one internal for the employees at Lavasoft and one external which were for visitors of the Lavasoft website.

Both the internal and the external surveys were made in the process of envisioning a brand platform for Lavasoft. The brand platform structure model presented in the previous chapter is the base for how the work was structured. This structure was used in forming the questions for both the surveys. When writing the interview questions about the brand platform, this structure was also used. It was necessary to conduct two surveys in order to be able to compare the brand identity with the brand image. The internal survey was conducted in order to obtain an idea of the brand identity, and the external survey was conducted in order to get an idea of the brand image.

Since the brand platform is an instrument working as the foundation for all the marketing communication activities, it is imperative that the brand platform is sustainable. That is achieved by getting adequate information from both internal as well as external sources. With a well elaborated brand platform the most appropriate marketing communication activities are easier to sort out and to integrate with rest of the company. That is why a great deal of primary data is collected for the brand platform.

Besides the brand platform, the interview questions were about the three other areas of theories. Through the interviews, information was obtained about how Lavasoft operates today. In order to obtain the information, interviews were performed with persons who were best suited to provide an adequate answer related to the purpose.

4.2 Research approach

In order to come up with proposals on activities, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods was chosen. The qualitative method consists of the three interviews. A part of the internal survey which is quantitative also consists of qualitative questions. The quantitative method consists of the external surveys and greater parts of the internal survey.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods is because the data required has different purposes. All of the questions in the external survey and some of the questions in the internal survey needed to be quantified in order to get the necessary result. The interviews on the other hand needed to be qualitative because the informant's subjective image of the topic was necessary.

The benefits of using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach are because the qualitative method helps in bringing out a lot of different facets and that is in depth (Jacobsen, 2002). This is best suited for smaller groups and therefore a good approach when getting as much information as possible. At the same time when dealing with larger groups and trying to determine the size of a phenomena, not going as in depth but when getting a more broad view, the quantitative method is often to prefer (Jacobsen, 2002).

This way of combining both a qualitative and quantitative method is called method triangulation according to Jacobsen (2002). This is also strengthened by Andersen (1998) where he says that it is about choosing different techniques of gathering data that can complement each other. If, for instance the quantitative methods have a weakness, some of the strengths of the qualitative method can weigh in (Andersen, 1998).

Our use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the thesis motivates an *abductive* research approach. What this implies is the use of a variation of a both *deductive* and *inductive* approach.

The deductive approach explain how the researcher first creates an expectation of how the reality appears and then collects empirics in order to see if these expectations consist with reality (Jacobsen, 2002). Andersen (1998) explains deduction as when; from generalized principles, draw conclusions about individual events.

The inductive approach is an alternative to the deductive approach. This explains how the researcher goes from empirics to theory (Jacobsen, 2002). By first collecting data, systematical analyze it and then comes to the conclusion about what theory to use. Andersen (1998) explains induction as when we, from an individual event, keep to a principle or general knowledge about the theory.

The abductive approach explains that the researcher got an empirical event, a result. This is related to a rule, a theory, which leads to a new assumption about the event (Danermark et al. 2003). The researcher uses theory to analyze the empirics and then comes to a new conclusion about an event.

4.3 Data collection

The primary data is data that is collected by the researcher for the first time for a specific problem, and that comes from a firsthand source (Jacobsen 2002). The reason primary data was gathered in this thesis was due to the fact that there was a need for information that did

not exist in any documentation or other secondary sources. The sources for primary data came from interviews, the internal and the external surveys.

Secondary data does not originate from sources that is specific for the problem, nor is it taken from a primary source, but still of relevance for the researcher (Jacobsen 2002). The secondary sources in the thesis consist of scientific literature, articles, and a previous conducted Lavasoft survey that is available in appendix five.

When searching for secondary data in the shape of literature and articles, the search have been focused on internet marketing, corporate branding, marketing communication and integrated marketing communication as well as advocacy relationship development. Since we are located in and students of the University of Gothenburg, the primary source for finding books and articles have been the databases and libraries in connection with the university.

4.4 Interviews

Some of the advantages of using interviews are that the researcher is able to ask many and difficult questions and if any uncertainties arise concerning a question it can easily be straightened out (Dahmström, 2005). Some of the disadvantages of using interviews is that they are time-consuming and the risk of interview-effect, which is when the interviewer might influence the interviewee by its choice of words and tone of voice (Dahmström, 2005).

4.4.1 Selection of interview respondents

According to Jacobsen (2002) there are three steps in the process of choosing respondents. The first step is to get a good overview of who might be interesting to study, with no regards to limitations. The second step is to divide the respondent population into subgroups. The final step is to choose criteria's for selecting the respondents (Jacobsen, 2002).

Due to the orientation of the thesis; the selection of desirable interviewees was limited to a few people. First of all, personnel at Lavasoft were the initial assortment being done. When choosing subgroups from the population that is Lavasoft, we looked at the company's different departments from which information was needed, that was of relevance. Since the focus is on marketing, the marketing department became the selected subgroup within Lavasoft. Besides marketing, the CEO was included into the selected group. With this in mind, it was narrowed down to three people that were believed to hold the most adequate information for the thesis.

The people who were interviewed are as followed:

Management

Jason King, Chief executive officer

Michael Helander, Vice president – Head of marketing & sales

Communications & PR

Lina Nielsen – International Marketing Manager

The reason Jason King was chosen, was because he is the outermost responsible for the company’s management and therefore of natural reasons involved in decisions concerning the corporate brand. Jason King did only get questions from the first category in the interview guide, the brand platform. Michael Helander is as the marketing manager involved in everything concerning marketing and sales, and therefore asked questions from all the categories in the interview guide. Lina Nielsen was also asked every question since she works with marketing communication and holds information regarding every area.

These three became the selected interview respondents because of their positions in Lavasoft.

4.4.2 Interview approach

The approach when conducting the interviews was what can be called an open individual interview, although not entirely open according to Jacobsen’s (2002) five grades of structuring an interview, illustrated in figure 4.1.

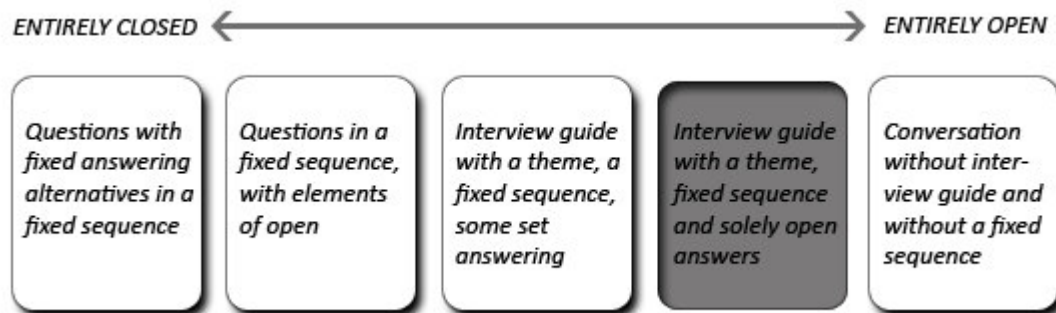


Figure 4. 1 - Degrees of the structuring of an interview (Jacobsen, 2002 pp.163)

This means that the interviews used a guide with a theme, a fixed sequence of questions with the only alternative to give open answers.

This kind of interview is suitable when there are few numbers of respondents, when the interest lies in what the individual has to say and how this person interpret and gives opinion to a certain phenomena (Jacobsen, 2002).

The interviews were held face to face with the selected respondents at the Lavasofts office. This is a good way to do an interview because it is easier to get a more relaxed and pleasant atmosphere (Jacobsen, 2002). When conducting an open and personal interview, it is unsuitable to do it over the telephone (Jacobson, 2002).

When performing the interviews, it was of importance to get out as much information as possible. Therefore, the interviews were recorded so that nothing important was missed while at the same time having the opportunity to do exact quotations and keeping a continuous eye contact. A well performed interview demands eye contact which is hard to maintain when taking notes (Jacobsen, 2002).

Jacobsen (2002) also recommends a time limit for the interview that is approximately one to one and a half hour. When longer the respondents can get tired and if shorter than half an hour it is hard to obtain relevant information (Jacobsen, 2002). Therefore the interviews were kept to approximately 45 minutes with a maximum of one hour. The interviews with Michael Helander and Lina Nielsen who were asked all of the questions naturally took longer time than the interview with Jason King who only was asked the first category of questions.

The interview guide can be found in appendix one, and in appendix four, the questions from the interview guide are gone through and motivated, and the purpose of the questions are displayed. The category division in the interview guide followed the division in the theoretical framework, in order to further secure that the answers needed would be obtained.

4.5 Internal survey

In order to collect information from all the employees at Lavasoft, an internal survey was conducted at the office. The purpose of this survey was to gather information primarily regarding the brand identity of Lavasoft in order to compare this with the brand image. The internal survey also included questions about the primary brand promise and the brand personality.

Some of the advantages of using a group survey is that a lot of people can be reached with the survey in a fast manner while at the same time not lose peoples answers due to fall offs (Dahmström, 2005). The disadvantages of using this kind of survey are among others the risk of influence from the researchers, the risk of peer pressure and also the risk of exposed anonymity (Dahmström, 2005).

4.5.1 Selection of internal survey respondents

When selecting the population for a group survey it can be defined in two ways, either everybody in the group including the ones not present or everybody in the group that is present. The fall offs that occur due to absence of persons in the group is practically nothing that is being handled, though one can try to conduct the survey when there is a high level of presence in the group (Dahmström, 2005).

Our selection for the internal survey was quite easy to define, since there are just over fifty persons working at Lavasoft this naturally became the selected group. We set a goal to acquire at least 35 completed questionnaires, the reason for not setting the goal higher is that many are travelling, not uncommonly abroad. There are of course also the risks of sickness within the group the specific day of the survey. But with at least 35 completed questionnaires we considered it possible to be able to identify patterns and tendencies among the answers.

4.5.2 Internal survey approach

The internal survey was developed from the structure model shown in figure 3.1. The questions handled the brand essence, core values, extended values, key benefit and the brand personality. These are all marketing terms and most of the employees have a technical background. This made it difficult when formulating the questions in a way that was understandable for everybody. The idea of using examples and shortly explain what the purpose of the questions was came to mind, and examples were taken from Mårtenson (2008) where Volvos values are described. A draft was made and discussed with Neringa Persson at human resources and Lina Nielsen at communications & PR. After listening to their opinions the necessary issues was reworked and then tested on one of the employees at Lavasoft, who had not seen it before. The test fell out well and shortly after that handed out.

It was of importance that the respondents got a sufficient time frame for completing the survey, this in order to minimize the fall offs and other risks (Dahmström, 2005). The internal survey was handed out to everyone present at the Lavasoft office, and then collected the day after. This gave the respondents quite some time to fill out the survey. In total 44 questionnaires was handed out and this was the selected group.

The internal survey can be found in appendix two, and in appendix four the purpose of the questions from the internal survey are explained and presented.

4.6 External survey

The information regarding the brand image was acquired through the external survey that was available for answering at the Lavasoft website.

The advantages of using web surveys are that they are quick, one has a strong control of the answering alternatives and the data registration is direct (Dahmström, 2005). Some of the disadvantages are difficulties with the framework and other technical aspects, time consuming planning phase, and everybody does not have internet access (Dahmström, 2005).

4.6.1 Selection of external survey respondents

When selecting the population for a web survey one must be aware of that the target population is not the same as the frame population. Everybody in the target population have not the possibilities to be within the frame, the access to the internet can be such a factor (Dahmström, 2005).

Since no e-mails were sent out, but instead, the survey was on the Lavasoft website, there was an awareness of, that not every customer of Lavasoft would answer the external survey. Only a small part of the customers and others who visited the website could answer. A broad segmentation of the responses was made by asking a question about the level of computer experience. The Lavasoft website has almost five million visitors every month; this gave a

high number of possible respondents. The aim was not to get a cross-section of the target audience. That would have required a thorough research to identify. Even if the result from the external survey not can be considered to represent a cross-section of the target audience, it still represents an image of the brand that consumers have and is thus useful in comparison with the brand identity.

4.6.2 External survey approach

The external survey was partially developed from the answers of the internal survey, for example the alternatives in the questions concerning the core- and extended values. A previously conducted survey from Lavasoft was also used when developing the external survey, this in order to avoid the questions that had already been answered, being asked again.

The time frame was of great importance because a higher number of answers would probably be obtained if the time required to answer the survey was as short as possible. The external survey was developed in cooperation with Mattias Lundmark, who is part of the management at Lavasoft and in charge of web development. In accordance with the internal survey the external survey was discussed with Lina Nielsen and some adjustments were done. After doing this it was tested on several people through a test version available on the internet. The people who did the test gave their responses which were used for some final adjustments. The survey was after that put up on the Lavasoft website where it was available for approximately two weeks.

The external survey can be found in appendix three, and in appendix four the purpose of questions from the external survey are explained and presented.

4.7 Validity, reliability and generalization

Validity, reliability and generalization are important aspects and the researcher could consider these aspects as a help when trying to be critical to the collected data (Thurén, 2004).

4.7.1 Reliability

Reliability means that the research has been done correctly, that it is reliable. To achieve a high reliability it shall be possible to obtain an equivalent result with the same method, when conducting a different study (Thurén, 2004).

If different people in different studies achieve the same result, one says that the results are able to be tested intersubjective. This means that it is possible to disregard the researcher's personality and thereby strengthen the reliability (Thurén, 2004). The notion of intersubjectivity is more common within social science and is consistently more used than the notion of truth. Practically does the notion of intersubjectivity mean, that something is

accurate if others agree to that description. The more that agrees to the description, the greater probability of accuracy (Jacobsen, 2002).

The internal and the external survey as well as all of the interviews has been carefully planned and analyzed before carried out. Both the internal and the external survey was tested on several different persons, then reworked after feedback, and then tested again, before finally being implemented. By discussing the surveys with employees at Lavasoft and testing it on persons, not related to the surveys, it is believed that the risk of misinterpretations and fall offs will be minimized. Also, by planning the interview questions, the risk of misinterpretation could be minimized and the quality of the interviews increased, thus leading to a greater chance to obtain relevant information.

4.7.2 Validity

Validity means that the research really examines what was meant to be examined. Even though a measurement may be correctly performed and the result is correct it is not certain that the research is of relevance for the purpose of the research (Thurén, 2004).

Our focus lies on enhancing the Lavasoft brand. The selection of interview respondents can be considered to have a high validity because all of the respondents are involved with the branding work. The purpose of the internal survey was to get the employees view of the brand identity. Therefore the validity concerning the internal survey must be considered as high. The selection of respondents for the external survey is perhaps not as high considering the problem with controlling who the respondents are. The answer frequency in both the internal and the external survey was satisfying with high number of respondents which can be seen as strengthening the results of the surveys. The questions in the interviews and the internal and the external survey concur with the purpose of the thesis. This can be considered to strengthen the validity. With this aspects brought up, the internal validity has been discussed. The external validity, called generalization, is presented in the next section.

4.7.3 Generalization

Generalization can be explained as the degree of an outcome that can be transferred to another context. The result should be able to be transferred from one context to another (Jacobsen, 2002).

There are two forms of validity, internal and external. The internal validity is concerning the accuracy in the description of a phenomena and the external validity is regarding in which degree the conclusions can be generalized.

The external validity cannot be considered to be as high as the internal because the thesis is about Lavasoft and issues relating to that specific company. Some conclusion may be transferable to other contexts, but for obvious reasons not all conclusions can be generalized.

5 Empirical data

In this chapter the empirics is presented. The chapter is divided into three sections and starts with a go through of the interviews followed by the internal and the external surveys. The sections will present the answers on the questions in a similar order as the interview guide and the two survey questionnaires.

5.1 Interviews

The interview guide was divided into four different areas, in accordance to the theoretical framework, that each contained a number of questions where there was a need of information. The empirics will be presented as a summary of the answers received on every question in every category by all of the respondents. Not every aspect brought up in the interviews will be mentioned, only those of relevance for the thesis.

5.1.1 Interview questions

Below follows the result of the performed interviews. Michael Helander and Lina Nielsen answered all of the questions. Jason King only answered questions from the first category.

Brand Platform

- *Do Lavasoft have a brand platform?*

Lavasoft do not really have a brand platform at the time being, though they have an interest in it and there is a kind of platform being developed by management. That platform includes mission, vision. There is also a thought of what makes Lavasoft different which can be seen as key benefits and part of the mentioned platform. One can say that there are general guidelines today, but nothing formally documented as a brand platform. The guidelines are based on the notion of internet security for everyone regardless of status or geographical location, which is part of the Lavasoft vision.

- *What is the Lavasoft vision?*

The vision is the one that can be found on the Lavasoft website and is as follows: *“Our vision is that every computer user, regardless of economic status or geographic location, has the power to control their individual privacy and security. We strive to promote an environment of ethical change in the malware industry to uphold our ideals of social and corporate consciousness”* (Lavasoft.com, 2008). It was mentioned that it possibly could use a revision. One certain change that has recently occurred is the change from spyware to malware. Malware includes more issues concerning internet security than spyware and that is the reason for the upcoming change

- How do Lavasoft work with their visual identity?

There are branding guidelines for how to use logos and fonts, a kind of graphic profile. Until recently there was only one variant of the Lavasoft logo, that has now changed and there are several variants that can be used. The Ad-aware logo was revised about one or two years ago, to what it is today. Lavasoft works with taglines and they use a couple different variations. One is “*The original anti-spyware company*” and another is “*Protects your privacy*”, both these taglines are connected to Ad-aware, because Ad-aware is the original anti-spyware product. They also use “*The world’s most popular anti-spyware*” and that is based on Ad-aware being the most downloaded program ever. All the e-mails are using the same template, with Lavasoft logo and fonts. The newsletter follows the same style. The guidelines are being followed in generally all of the marketing communication.

- What do you think are good relative bad aspects of Lavasofts visual identity?

Low recognition of the company logo and the corporate brand is a bad aspect and a good aspect would be the high recognition for Ad-aware and its visual components. One aspect is that Lavasoft has quite a lot of loyal customers who do not like changes, and they are the vocal ones. Changing something in the visual identity might risk upsetting some customers. Lavasoft have been upholding high ethical standards throughout the years which still affect the marketing communication and the visual identity.

- How do Lavasoft choose to position itself on the market?

Lavasofts position on the market is mostly based on the fact that they were the first on the market with anti-spyware. Besides that there are no specific parameters that are communicated with the positioning. Lavasoft has earlier been and still is a company for consumers and small companies, much related to Lavasofts history and this is more a positioning based on mental images with the customers. There are plans for increasing the empowerment in the company and in this process the mission and vision of Lavasoft are going to be further integrated with the employees.

- On what information is that positioning statement based?

The positioning is not really based on anything besides that Lavasoft were the first. They have not analyzed the market or their competitors in order to position themselves against them. Some understanding of both the market and the competition exists, although it is not established and done in a way that can be used in the positioning statement. This is planned to happen within the next year.

Integrated Marketing Communication

- Is Lavasoft currently working with IMC?

When it comes to the marketing communication Lavasoft work integrated and their campaigns are coordinated to be perceived as a whole. All of the e-mails have the same

appearance and design, and different activities follow the same guidelines. In the internal perspective regarding integration between the departments there are some discrepancies between the answers. There is integration in some ways, although not as a routine. It is a weakness that could be improved and it would be very valuable to connect the departments better.

- In what ways are Lavasoft working with IMC?

When launching a campaign there is cooperation between the marketing, sales, support, and web departments. There is sometimes integrated work being done with the development department, but not on a regular basis. So in summary there is internal integration but it is being done in an ad hoc manner. The marketing communication activities that are done today follow a line of consistency. Promotion mailers, e-mails, newsletter and search marketing among others are almost always being integrated in some way. Some ways the internal knowledge is integrated with the marketing campaigns at Lavasoft is, when the different departments help with expert knowledge, for instance when writing the copy.

- Is there anything that you would like to change in the way Lavasoft works with IMC?

One issue that was brought up was the ability to identify patterns with the customers that could be used in the marketing. For example if the support get the possibility to gather information and rate the most common problems or if someone have spotted a trend that can be used. There were positive attitudes towards an increased internal integration, but how that could be done was not described. The website can be analyzed from a customer perspective to find out how it is perceived and what parts that should be updated more frequently, to understand that, there has to be more integration between the departments.

Online Marketing Communication

- What OMC activities are Lavasoft using today?

Two distinctive channels that were mentioned was the newsletter and opt-in e-mails and that are also channels that they can control themselves. Regarding the opt-in e-mails they are doing co-branded e-mails quite often and sometimes also third party e-newsletters and house list e-mails. Lavasoft uses banners to some extent, for example in PC World online and other computer magazines. Products can be distributed through the mailing lists of the online magazines as trial versions as an attempt to increase awareness and preferences. One sort of activity used, was reviews of the products. Lavasoft has a couple of partner companies that they are doing cross-selling promotion with. They sometimes offer trials of different programs in exchange for editorial space or a cut on the revenue. Lavasoft works with co-branding together with its business partners, even sponsorships occur sometimes for non-profit organizations. The cooperation with their business partners also involves link building and affiliate marketing. Search engine marketing is one relative large kind of marketing communication activity that Lavasoft are conducting. Both paid search and work with keyword optimizing. With search engine marketing it is easy to follow the results and

calculate the turnover. Press releases and articles are also used by sending it out through different channels and having a free usage of it. Lavasoft uses RSS feeds which give them the possibility to be linked to portals and communities that people are using, the blog written by employees at Lavasoft can be linked that way for example. Different media alerting services are also being used for press releases.

- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using OMC for Lavasoft?

OMC is imperative for Lavasoft since they are an online based company with products that are used because of the internet. Other advantages are that OMC activities are quick, it can be distributed right away and it is very cost efficient. One disadvantage is that there is much information available on the internet so where one chooses to place the message is very important. Lavasoft protects people online, so the chance of seeing the marketing communications online is high.

- Are there any OMC activities that Lavasoft would like to develop or increase its usage of?

Virals were brought up by the respondents and what was more specifically mentioned was to identify bloggers and other underground sources that can be used for spreading the word. Lavasoft want to get back to its roots in some sense, with word-of-mouth as the primary tool, as it was in the beginning. To further develop the online PR was brought up as well.

- Do you know how effective OMC activities are for Lavasoft, compared to each other and compared to other marketing communication activities?

Here the answers was distinctly affirmative, Lavasoft has a good overview of what the different activities renders in return. Even though they have the data it can be hard compare different activities with each other and to do any absolute measurements. The e-mails have a higher conversion rate than the search engine marketing and that is because the e-mails turn to people who already are customers.

- Are Lavasoft using different OMC activities regarding to business building and brand building?

They are not directly dividing the OMC activities into business or brand building, but there is awareness of what the effect of different activities are. The newsletter is an example on a brand building activity that has the purpose to create and obtain a relationship with the customers. The search engine marketing is mainly a sales channel but have also hopefully an awareness effect that can be connected to be brand.

Advocacy Relationship Development

- Do Lavasoft have a lot of loyal customers? If yes, why is that, do you think?

Lavasoft has a relatively large loyal customer base; many of them have been customers since the beginning when Ad-aware first came. One of the reasons for having loyal customers is

because of Lavasoft through Ad-aware was the first on the market. Lavasoft started as an underground company and that label has followed the company, partially because Lavasoft keeping strict to their ethics and not pushing their marketing communication as most of the competitors do. At the same time this group of loyal customers might hold them back since they cannot evolve their marketing communications in the same way that the company and the market are growing. Lavasoft gets information about the customers when they purchase one of their products. That database of information could be used in customer relationship management, but only in consent of the customer.

- What activities does Lavasoft do in order to create customer satisfaction?

Lavasoft has recently started a reward program for loyal customers that will give the customers points of the products they are purchasing, which will give those discounts in the future and thereby enhance customer satisfaction. Striving to have such a good product as possible is a way to satisfy the customers and Lavasoft aim to have a superior product. Program features as user-friendliness and function can also be seen as a way to satisfy the customers. For the free version users there is a forum that is open for everybody and supervised by Lavasoft. Besides the e-mail support, which is for the paying customers, Lavasoft has also recently secured the possibility to provide telephone support.

- In what way does Lavasoft interact with its customers?

The support was mentioned as a way to interact with the customers. They also use people who work as test-users when developing new products. My Lavasoft is the name of a new community that Lavasoft has developed and that shall be a forum for the customers. It shall be a place for creating a dialogue with computer users and for the computer users to interact with each others. Updates, news and other things of interest will be available there and the ambition is to build relations with their customers.

5.2 Internal survey

In this section the results from the internal survey that was conducted with the employees at Lavasoft is presented. 44 questionnaires were handed out and 36 answers were received. Since the goal was set to obtain at least 35 answers, the answer frequency was satisfying.

The reason why we did not obtain a 100% answer frequency of the total population of Lavasoft employees is due to the fact that only 44 persons were present at the time for the survey. Since the limited amount of time available for conducting the survey, these fall-offs were accepted. When it comes to the fall-offs in the answering frequency of the present population there are a number of reasons why this happened, one of them being our personal time-limit. Since we used parts of the internal survey in order to develop the external survey, it was imperative to quickly gather the internal surveys in order to be able to continue with the work. If the employees would have had more time to fill it out, there might have been some more responses. Another thing that could have affected the answer frequency of the present population was that the work-load for some of the employees was extensive that specific day.

The results of the internal survey are presented below. When summarizing the answers, it is not the individual's answer that is of importance, but how it relates to other answers and together forms a context. That is why the result has been interpreted and presents it as a whole.

5.2.1 Survey questions

Below follows a presentation of the results from the internal survey. In the questionnaire for this survey, there were not any predefined answering alternatives, and therefore the result is presented starting with the most common. The numbers in the figures is represented by the number of respondents choosing the specific answer.

Question 1

What is the brand essence of Lavasoft, the very soul of the company?

The brand essence is a way to describe a company through a single thought or idea.

(Example: Volvo's soul: Safety in traffic).

We were able to detect two general themes when evaluating the answers in this question. The first theme that was encountered was internet security. What this theme comprises is the notion of security, safety, privacy and also protection for the masses on the internet. Further follows examples, demonstrating answers from the first general theme:

- *Internet security and privacy.*
- *Protecting the privacy of everyone, everywhere.*
- *Keeping people's internet experience safe.*

The other major theme that was detected was the original anti-spyware company. This theme takes up the concept that Lavasoft actually was the first anti-spyware company on the market. This shows that this is an important issue for the employees, being the original. Further follows two examples, demonstrating answers from the second general theme:

- *Original.*
- *The original anti-spyware company.*

The reason only two examples could be provided, is because even though it is a major theme, they all answered by writing one of these two examples. Besides these categories there were four other answers that did not fit directly into these themes, although showed resemblance by being indirectly about internet security or originality.

Question 2

What 3 words do you think best describe what Lavasoft stands for, its core values?

The core values are the most important aspects of what the company stands for. (Example: Volvos three core values are being represented as Quality, Safety and Environmental care).

It was chosen to quantify the results into table 5.1 showing all the words that occurred more than once. These words were chosen because they were the most relevant and also for the reason that some of the words that appeared only once in question two, also appeared in question three although with quite a higher frequency. Some of the words occurring in this question were similar to one another.

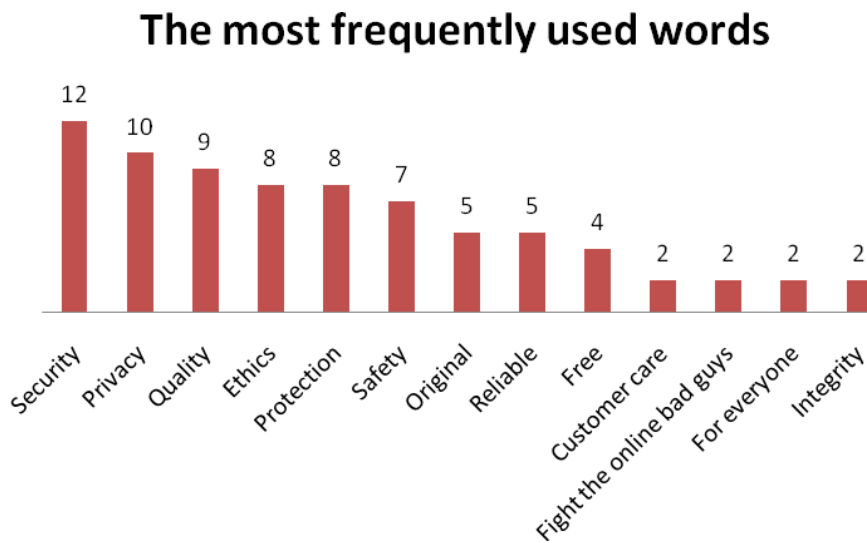


Table 5. 1 - The most frequently used words - core values

Given the result shown in table 5.1, one can see that all the words that were included in the first general theme regarding the question about the brand soul also are represented as core values. The originality theme is also represented here.

Besides the two general themes from the first question that involves security, privacy, protection, safety and original, the two most popular words are quality and ethics. After that comes reliable and free as quite common words.

Question 3

What other words than the core values could be used to describe the company?

(Example: Other words that describe Volvos characteristics are excitement, design and driving pleasure).

This question was also quantified which is shown in table 5.2.

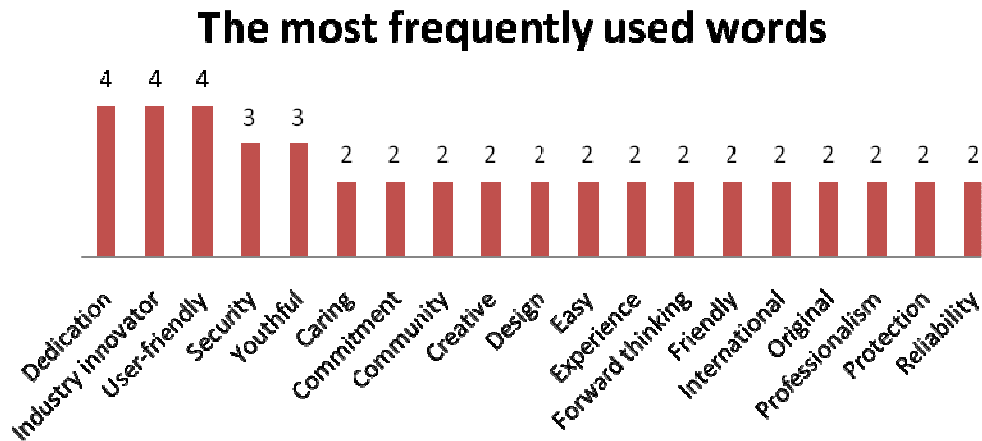


Table 5. 2 - The most frequently used words – extended values

The three most frequently occurring words are dedication, industry innovator and user-friendly. Following these are security and youthful as common words. Then there are large numbers of words that are occurring more than once, which can be seen in table 5.2.

Question 4

What makes Lavasoft better than the competitors, what is the key benefit?

The Key benefit is an advantage that makes a company different or unique, better than others.

Regarding the key benefits of Lavasoft, we were able to detect three areas that contained similarities. Of course there are no distinctive lines but in order to interpret it, there had to be some limitations. The first area that was detected had to do with their experience as a company, originality and their reputation. To demonstrate how these similarities was grouped together follows some examples:

- *Lavasoft has been in the industry longer than any other company.*
- *Experience – Longevity of time in anti-malware industry. Reputation – known for its ethical behavior.*
- *First to market, high brand recognition for Ad-aware: The original anti-spyware.*

The second area detected regarded customer focus, ethics and that the products are free:

- *Ethics, we care about the customers.*
- *Provides free, anti-spyware software for any computer user, and free support forum for users of the software.*
- *High company ethics.*

The third area deal with the size of the company as well as its fast moving nature:

- *Independent, or at least more than our competitors. Only we can take the final steps in the industry, which are so important.*

- *We are small so we should be much faster to respond to customer needs and market changes.*
- *We are a small company which makes us agile.*

Not all answers could be encompassed in these three areas, although the majority of the answers were. The primary brand promise is one part of the mission. Lavasofts mission statement can be found on their website and reads: *“as an innovation driven organization, to pioneer and deliver high quality security solutions that protect individual computer users and business networks worldwide from compromising and intrusive privacy threats”* (Lavasoft.com, 2008).

Question 5

If you could describe Lavasoft as a person, how would you describe that person?

(Example: age, gender, features, interest, education and so on...)

The answers for this question do not directly give a unified image of Lavasofts personality. We began by looking at what gender the person would have, it was discovered that the majority of those naming gender as a factor, chose male. When it came to the age, the general distribution was evenly divided between the ages from teenager to old man with the exception of people in their twenties, which were more common than the other ages. A very high number of answers brought up education as a factor, no matter age or gender, the person seems to have a higher education. When it comes to the person’s interests, computers, technology and security are mentioned quite often. Travelling, people and fashion are also mentioned as interests. Some of the features that are mentioned more often among the answers are protective, wise, smart and nice. Another occurring factor is the struggle towards once again becoming the greatest. Some of the answers refer to the person as an athlete that has had an injury and is struggling to do a comeback.

5.3 External survey

The survey was available on the Lavasoft website for approximately two weeks and 470 answers were received. Considering that the survey was voluntarily, it is a satisfying number of responses. As described in the internal survey section the questions in the external survey was mostly based on the answers from the internal survey. Question two and question three was not locked to minimum or maximum answering alternatives, the survey was not programmed this way. This means that even though we wanted them to choose three and five words, it was possible to choose more or less words. This, however, did not inflict on the result of the survey, since it was the general idea of the image of Lavasoft that was wanted, the exact numbers were not necessary to obtain.

5.3.1 Survey questions

Below follows a presentation of the results from the external survey. The numbers are presented in the same order as in the questionnaire. The numbers in the figures is represented by the number of respondents choosing the specific answer.

Question 1

What level computer user do you consider yourself?

It was believed that they most likely would not be novices, since the respondents were visiting the website and also likely to have an interest in computers. Result, see table 5.3.

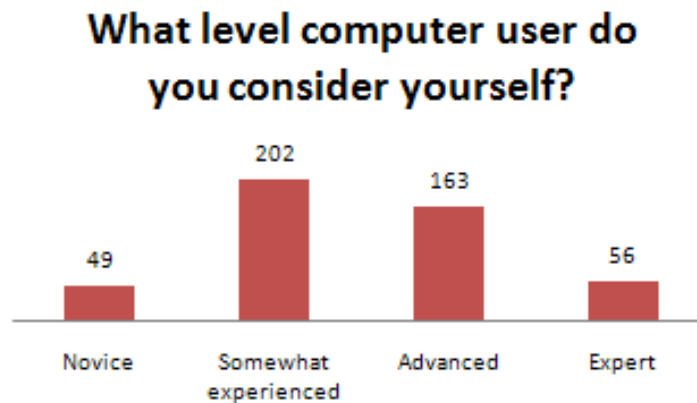


Table 5. 3 - *What level computer user do you consider yourself?*

As we can see, the majority of respondents are somewhat experienced or advanced, and the lesser of respondents are novices, with a slightly higher number of experts than novices. This question was not further used in the thesis.

Question 2

Choose three words that you feel best describe Lavasoft.

In this question, which is summarized in table 5.4, the objective was to get an idea of the core values representing Lavasoft externally. In similarity with the internal survey, security was the most common word, followed by protection, quality and reliable. Privacy is also a frequently occurring word, with over one hundred responses. After that follows an evenly divided group of words under hundred responses containing ethics, basic, original and advanced.

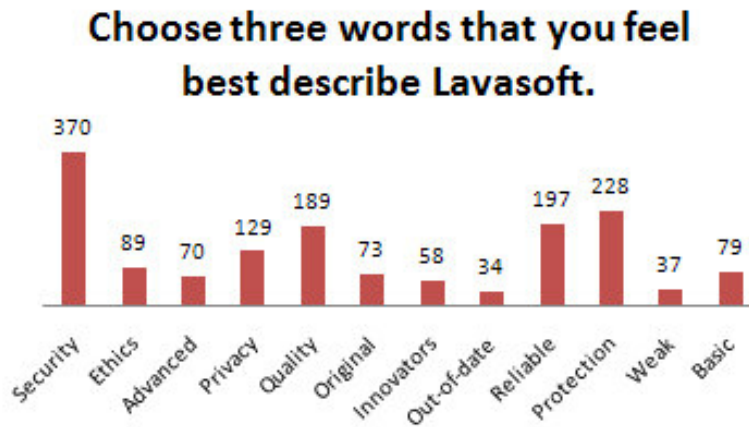


Table 5. 4 - The most occurring words – core values

Not too many chose to highlight the negative words, which is positive for Lavasoft.

Question 3

Choose five other words that represent Lavasoft characteristics and its products.

This question gave the external image of the extended values. The answers here are shown in table 5.5.

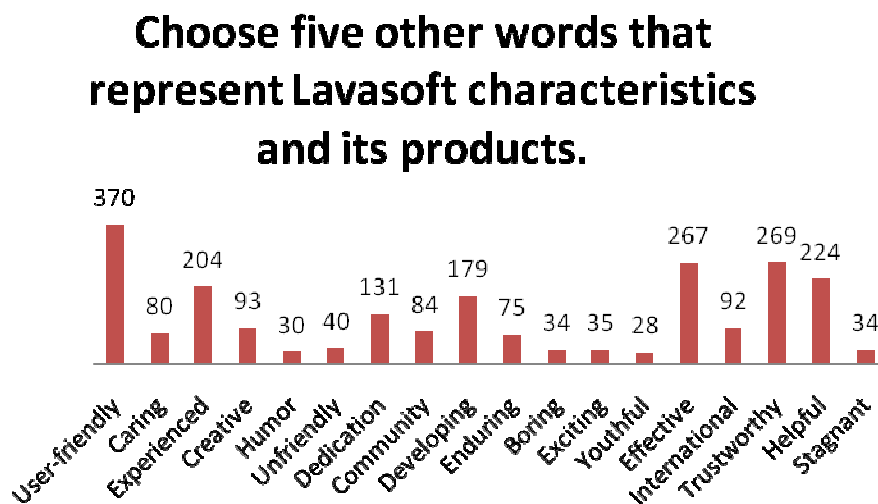


Table 5. 5 - The most occurring words – extended values

The top rated word in this question is user-friendly. The next following words are effective, trustworthy and helpful. Experienced and developing are also high in answer frequency. There are furthermore a number of words that is around one hundred responses namely dedication, which is above one hundred followed by creative, international, community and caring just under one hundred. Again there is a low frequency on negative words.

Question 4

Please grade the following aspects of Lavasoft.

In order to get the opinion on every aspect and to see what was good and bad aspects of Lavasoft, we used a scale with different grades. This was made instead of asking for the best suitable option. The results are summarized in table 5.6.

■ 1. Bad ■ 2. Not so good ■ 3. Neither good nor bad ■ 4. Good ■ 5. Very good

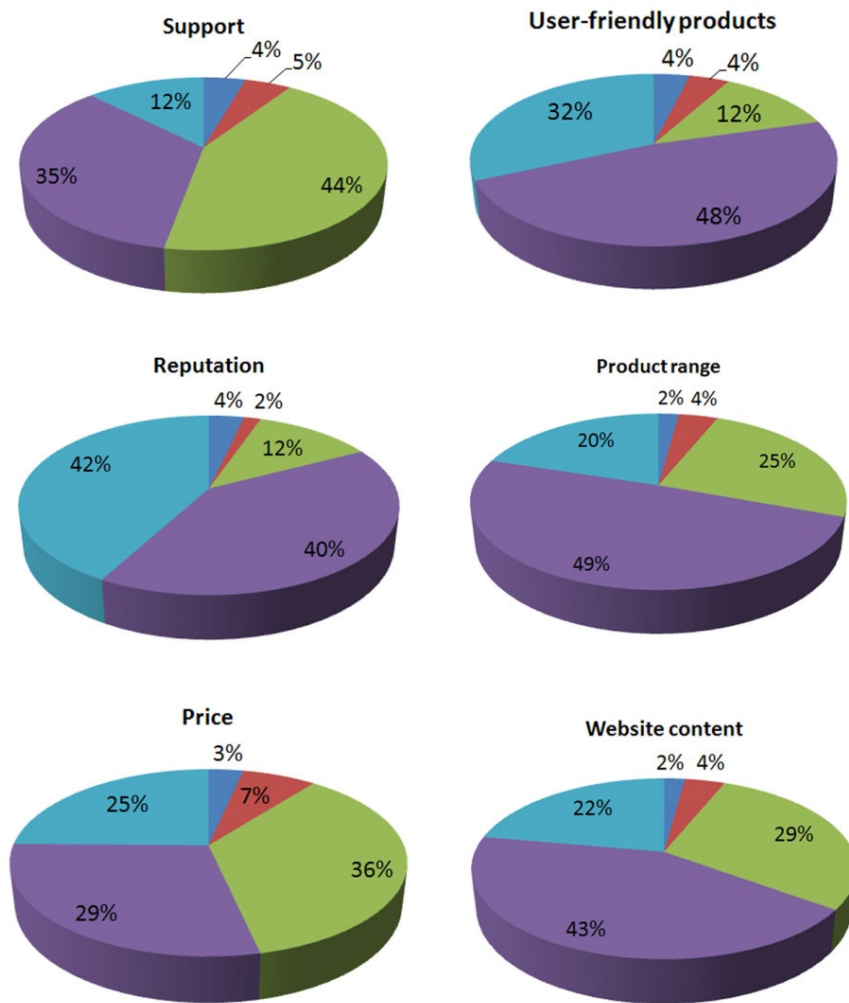


Table 5. 6 – Good and bad aspects concerning Lavasoft

Overall there was a positive image of the different aspects. Bad and not so good was not predominant in any manner. From a branding perspective, the high numbers in reputation are promising, although, it is hard to say if it concerns the corporate brand or the Ad-aware product brand.

Question 5

How did you hear about Lavasoft?

This question helped understand how the respondents came in contact with Lavasoft and is therefore related to OMC. The result from this question will be used as a background when giving suggestions for OMC activities and is summarized in table 5.7. One thing that could have been done differently was the term *other* which we added to the question just to see if there was any other ways that they had found out about Lavasoft. There could have had type-in answering alternative instead of the other option which would have given a deeper understanding of what these alternatives was. A qualitative type-in answer would demand for an interpretation. It was desired that the external survey should to be easy to quantify and that was a reason for doing the way it was done.

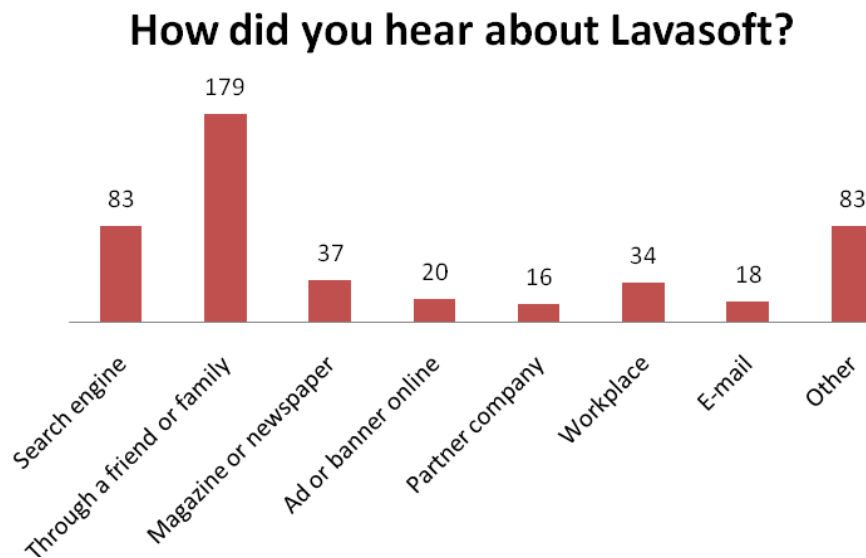


Table 5. 7 - How did you hear about Lavasoft?

The most common answer is through a friend or family which shows that word-of-mouth is a very important aspect of the marketing communication. Following that is search engine and other. This shows that search engine marketing is important but also that other alternative OMC activities might need more attention. The remaining alternatives were lower and divided quite evenly.

6 Analysis

This chapter contains the analysis of the four areas of theories that has been brought up. The analysis is made by comparing the theoretical framework with the empirics. The chapter has the same structure as the earlier chapters, starting with the brand platform, followed by integrated marketing communications, online marketing communications and finally advocacy relationship development.

6.1 The Brand Platform

In this section the collected empirics was put in relation to the theoretical framework. The structure model from chapter three is the foundation for the analysis and every part of it are gone through.



Figure 6. 1 - The brand platform structure by Blidner Knittel & Borg

6.1.1 Vision

The Lavasoft vision has been on the Lavasoft website for a very long time before recently being updated. The business field of internet security has developed greatly which has led to the improvements. This has been done in order to improve the scope of the vision including all types of malware and not focusing only on spyware. The vision should explain what the company stands for and also directly target and be relevant towards the end-user. Lavasofts vision is oriented towards every computer user and very well explains what the company stand for which is internet security for everyone, everywhere. What makes the Lavasoft vision credible is that it is customer focused and satisfying a real customer need. Everyone using the internet needs to be protected, which is also shown in the revisal of the vision. In the beginning Lavasoft only protected the consumer from spyware. Today they do a lot more, and with the broadening of services provided, they have updated their vision. This shows that Lavasoft has matured both in the broadening of their assortment of products falling under internet security, and also by updating their vision showing both the consumers and the employees the changes the company has done.

6.1.2 Mission

The mission statement should show the customers what the benefits of using the company's products are. When analyzing the empirics regarding this question from the internal survey it is hard to determine one unified benefit that should represent the primary brand promise. But one thing all three areas we detected in the empirics had in common was that it relates to internet security. The current Lavasoft mission statement is very well explaining the benefits of Lavasoft. It clearly illustrates the functional benefits of their products by promising high quality security solutions. When it comes to the emotional side of what the mission promises it has not as high priority, hence the nature of the products, which is to prevent computer intrusions. The wholeness of the mission statement could be seen as emotional in some ways by its promise to pioneer the business and protect the privacy.

6.1.3 Brand Identity

The brand identity described in the theoretical framework explains three parts, brand essence, core values and extended values. In the process of analyzing the data and coming up with suggestions for the brand identity and its parts, the external perspective, brand image was compared to the internal perspective, brand identity.

Brand essence

The brand essence can according to the respondents be summarized into two categories which were presented in the empirics, *Internet Security* and *the original anti-spyware company*. The essence should be a summarized single thought that holds the company together in all aspects.

The second theme about originality should not represent the brand essence, because the brand identity should be able to withstand changes over time. Since the company vision has changed from focusing on spyware to expand and focus on a wider spectrum of internet security the use of the term spyware is no longer valid. Internet security is about more than spyware, including viruses and other threats. That is why the originality theme is misleading and the internet security theme is providing a more enduring and suitable essence for the continued development of Lavasoft. For the same reason is the originality theme not appropriate as a core value either.

Core values

The core values are words that in short summarize the vision, and should just as the brand essence, be able to endure changes over time. A recurring set of words in both the internal and the external survey was security, protection, quality, privacy, ethics, reliable, and original. The core values usually consist of 2-4 words, should be easy to communicate, and that the company should try to live by. The core values that we think are the most suitable are security, quality, privacy and ethics.

Security is the most commonly occurring word in both the internal and the external survey. It is a great part of the vision and summarizes the Lavasoft message in a clear and consistent way. Security is also an inevitable part of the brand essence. Security as a core value should comprise safety for the computer users and protect them when being online.

Quality was, when comparing, one of the most occurring words in both surveys. Quality as a core value does not only infer technological quality and by that quality in Lavasofts products, but also quality in customer care and as an employer. The word quality is not mentioned in the vision, but in the mission statement. Lavasoft strive to have superior products, satisfied customers as well employees. This motivates the selection of quality as a core value.

Privacy is the next chosen core value. It was the second most common word in the internal survey and among the top five in the external survey. Privacy is about the personal integrity of the users and keeping the information private, both online and offline.

Ethics is about conducting business in an ethical way and to have a social and corporate consciousness. Lavasoft have since the beginning worked with high ethical standards which have made them somewhat different than their competitors. Ethics was not the most occurring word on the surveys. Although, ethics is among the top rated words and has a substantial value in the company history and it is also a part of Lavasofts vision.

Extended values

The extended values help the consumer with getting a multifaceted and more detailed explanation of what the brand stands for. The extended values can be represented by more words than the core values. The words suggested as extended values for Lavasoft are original, innovation, dedication, trustworthy, and user-friendly.

Original is suitable as an extended value since they were the first anti-spyware company on the market. It is an important part of their identity, while at the same time, not the core of the company. The fact that they are the original gives Lavasoft credibility in internet security issues. The word experience occurred in the surveys and is by us included in original. Because Lavasoft has been in the business from the beginning they naturally have gained experience.

Innovation was what started the company and even though it has had its temporary dips it is a word that Lavasoft embrace. Words similar to innovation such as developing, industry innovator and creative have been included in this extended value.

Dedication and commitment to the cause of internet security, keeping the computer-users protected. Lavasoft is constantly working with possible improvements of their products, and finding new threats. Dedication was a very common word in the internal survey, although it was not as high in the external survey. We believe that dedication is an important part of Lavasoft, in building customer advocacy, and it corresponds with the vision.

Trustworthy is also about building customer advocacy. By letting the customer know that a Lavasoft product and its support are reliable and effective they should and can aspire to create a long-term trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was the second most common word in the external survey, which can be consider as a good foundation for creating relationships.

User-friendly was the most common word in both of the surveys. The fact that it was superior in numbers in the external survey shows that the users really think that Lavasoft has user-friendly products. The term user-friendly should not only focus on products but be a central part of the entire customer experience, for example the website and support. The customers have a positive image of the website content, support, and the user-friendliness of the products which was supported by the graded question in the external survey. It is of importance to have an integrated message towards the customers, which the wide use of the term strengthens.

6.1.4 Brand personality

The brand personality can be a differentiating tool in order to be unique in the customer's eyes. A brand can take on human characteristics and create associations that enhance the brand equity. The analysis is going to be performed based on Aaker (1996) and his notions on the subject, presented in the theoretical framework.

Self-expression model concerns the individual's self-image and is more suitable for brands that want to create emotions. Lavasofts products are more of a protective nature that you buy

in order to avoid potential problems. That kind of products does not fit so well in this category in that aspect. Although, no one like being associated with being unprotected.

Relationship basis model reflects the importance of the customer relationship. This model emphasizes Lavasofts personality at its best. It is easier to trust a person that you know and that you know what to expect from this person. This aspect is an advantage for Lavasoft for different reasons, one being Lavasofts experience and time in the business. Another reason is that Lavasoft is dedicated to internet security, which creates trust. The internal survey showed tendencies towards having an interest in computers and having a higher education. These are two aspects that correlate with the relationship basis model and should be a part of the brand personality. Even if an interest in computers and higher education is not how you would present your own self image, it is qualities that are imperative for companies who are dealing with internet security. But this is not all that is Lavasoft according to the employees. The internal survey also showed that the person is nice and caring with a real interest in people. The person is also fond of travelling which can be seen as a symbol for the international side of Lavasoft. What this implies is that there is not only expert knowledge in internet security, but they also care and have an interest in their customers.

Functional benefit representation model is representing how a company can deliver a correct image through symbols, countries, or regions. For Lavasoft this would mainly be represented by symbols since they are internet based and not linked to any specific geographic location. Lavasoft strives to be leading within internet security and should try to get their name associated with protection against all kinds of internet threats.

6.1.5 Brand positioning

Positioning is the process and the result of building an image for a brand that can be related to a specific place on a market. The analysis of Lavasofts positioning will be based on figure 2.2.

Core value position is the internal perspective on the positioning and is based on the core values. The suggested core values for Lavasoft are security, quality, privacy and ethics. This should give the employees at Lavasoft a unified image of what Lavasoft stands for. The internal dimension of the positioning was not mentioned by any of the respondents in the interviews. The brand platform in itself and especially the brand identity can be seen as a way to understand this internal position. To have conducted the internal positioning and identify the core values helps when positioning the brand externally.

Market position is how the company places itself on the market in comparison with its competitors. Lavasofts market position has always been based on the fact they were the first with anti-spyware. Besides that there has been no thorough analysis of the market or their competitors. The mission statement that Lavasoft has can to some extent help the analysis and the understanding of Lavasofts market position. Lavasofts external position has been based more on the other part of the external perspective which is mental positioning.

Mental positioning represents a positioning that is aimed directly towards the consumer. The reason that Lavasoft has a relative strong position externally in spite of their lack of market positioning is that they were pioneers. The mental position is thus stronger than the market position. The external position is, as seen in the empirics, not really based on anything else than being the original. The fact that Lavasoft have quite a lot of loyal customers that have been with the company since the beginning witness on a strong and positive mental positioning. Although when shifting the focus from anti-spyware to all types of malware this advantage in mental positioning is more fragile. Therefore one can argue that a proper market and competitor analysis is needed.

6.1.6 Visual identity

There are a number of elements that form Lavasofts visual identity, and the elements detected are name, logo, slogan, and package design.

Regarding the corporate name we found that it was not very well-known compared to the product brand Ad-aware. There is thus higher brand recognition for Ad-aware than Lavasoft. This means that Lavasoft as a brand does not create the desirable leverage effects that it could with higher brand recognition.

Lavasoft have recently created branding guidelines for the usage of the logo, fonts, and colors. This was made in order to have a consistency and clarity in their marketing communication. The Lavasoft logo has not gone through any major changes throughout the years, which is positive in a branding perspective. The logo should be unique and distinct in order to fast recognize the brand. These factors are relatively low for Lavasoft because of the low brand recognition.

What can be said about the packaging design are that the Ad-aware box still follow the same color scheme and therefore is easy to relate to the predecessors. The other products have a more visible and stronger focus on the Lavasoft name than Ad-aware. If the Lavasoft name is more visible in connection to Ad-aware, there might be a strengthening of the brand.

Since Lavasoft is an online based company their website is as important as any packaging design. This is presented in eight languages, with Lavasoft and business news easily accessible. It is also having a logical introduction where the visitor right away have the possibility to get more involved by choosing if they are home, business or non-profit users.

The use of tag-lines is more common than slogans at Lavasoft. What was found was that there had not really been tag-lines for Lavasoft, but instead tag-lines for Ad-aware or tag-lines based on Ad-aware. Lavasoft has not really used tag-line based on the company. If Lavasoft wish to get more focus on their corporate brand, they might have to work on a tagline that is exclusively suited for Lavasoft as a corporate brand.

6.1.7 External environment

The external perspective is as earlier stated not a focus in this thesis. The external environment has been involved in the brand platform by the conducted external survey. The survey mainly sought the brand image and other aspects regarding the parts of the brand platform. The results of the external survey indicate a good brand image. Another way the external environment was involved is through the brand loyalty, primarily found in relation to advocacy relations development. According to the respondents there are a relatively large group of loyal customers, which tends to brand loyalty. Another part of the external environment is the brand recognition which was low for the corporate brand.

6.2 Integrated marketing communication

According to the interview respondents, Lavasoft frequently work integrated when doing their online marketing communication campaigns. This represents the external perspective. There is a lack of integration in the internal perspective; which means that the different departments are not regularly working together.

6.2.1 External integration

As the empirics showed, the external integration is good. The marketing communication is done in a consistent and structured way. There is an insight and consciousness regarding the importance of integrating their marketing communication towards the consumers.

Besides this there is another reason for good external integration and that is the size of the marketing department. The marketing department only consists of a few people which makes them all involved in the campaigns, and frequently communicate how different activities affect each other. The guideline for Lavasofts visual identity increases the unity and perception of the consistency of Lavasofts external communication. There is an understanding at the marketing department of what the purpose of the marketing communication activities is, in a brand building and a business building perspective.

6.2.2 Internal integration

The answers from the respondents differed on this issue, which tends to an unstructured way of working integrated internally. There is no formal way of integrating the different departments on a regular basis. The different departments do work together in a number of ways. When marketing are writing copy, the development and research departments sometimes provide their expertise on the subject. At Lavasoft the marketing- and sales departments have a naturally close relationship which helps them integrate their work. When launching campaigns the marketing department works together with sales, web and support as well as the technical departments in some extent. What could be done better is to, formally, within the company work integrated and find structures that ease the work. At the same time

the employees could continuously look to analyze what can be used in increasing the customer satisfaction and find new trends in the business. These findings from the employees could be very valuable to the marketing department in their work to better communicate with the customers.

6.3 Online marketing communication

The analysis of OMC applied to Lavasoft will pursue the same pattern as figure 2:4. The empirics showed that Lavasoft currently are working with quite a lot of the different OMC options.

6.3.1 Search marketing

Lavasoft are currently working with search engine marketing in two of the three aspects. Trusted feed is not worked with at Lavasoft. Lavasoft are doing search engine optimization in two ways, both the organic way and the paid optimization. The organic way is being done by the web department at Lavasoft who are processing the content of the website in order to achieve a higher ranking result in the search engines without paying for it. Paid optimization is done by Lavasoft in order to further achieve high ranking results. The other aspect is pay per click. Lavasoft are using pay per click as an additional way to increase visibility at search engines. One has to make a bid for how much to pay for each click and the one that gives the highest bid gets the best advertising spot. This situation is not optimal for Lavasoft thus their marketing budget is limited and they could face difficulties bidding over competitors. Another problem facing Lavasoft is that the search engine Google has recently pulled back the trademark protection, meaning that any company can make a bid for a keyword associated with Lavasoft.

6.3.2 Online PR

In this category of options, Lavasoft are currently working in some way with all of the aspects. Lavasoft have a press list and are using different tools to send out press releases and alert the Medias. The portal representation that is being done by Lavasoft is having an RSS feed that can be linked to the portals. Regarding communities the new My Lavasoft community will work as a forum for the customer. There are a number of forums about internet security and the My Lavasoft community aims to gather the customers at one place and help them, as well as bring them together in order for them to help each other. At the Lavasofts website there is an RSS feed on industry news and the Lavasoft blog.

6.3.3 Online partnerships

Lavasoft has an active exchange with their online business partners. Of the four aspects in this category Lavasoft are conducting them all. What can be considered as sponsorship by Lavasoft is that they are giving away internet security tools to non-profit organizations. There is an objective at Lavasoft that goes in line with their ethical standards to continuously sponsor academic and charity organization. In exchange for this sponsorship they might get a mentioning on the organizations website, but it is nothing that they demand. There is, at the marketing department, a well developed way of working with online partnerships. The fact that Lavasoft already are working with all of the aspects is an indication of this. Regarding affiliate marketing, Lavasoft works with both pay-per lead and pay-per-conversion. Co-branding is very common in the form of cross-promotions. Lavasoft offers an additional product from one of their business partners in order to increase the customer value, and the business partner does the same. Then the profits are divided among them. By permitting their download partners to sell Lavasofts products at their websites, Lavasoft gets linked at these download sites. Link building is also being done with other business partners.

6.3.4 Interactive ads

In this category the online marketing communication activities are very limited. The sponsorship has already been mentioned in online partnerships. Since Lavasoft operates with partially a hand-off approach and a restricted budget the use of banners is uncommon. When doing banners, it is the specific campaign that determines if it is rich-media banner or not. Behavioral ad targeting is something that Lavasoft with the present ethical standards is never going to work with.

6.3.5 Opt-in e-mail

Opt-in e-mails are another category where Lavasoft are doing a lot of activities. Lavasoft does not use rented lists, because of the Lavasoft ideals. The business partners that Lavasoft are doing cross promotions with are also the ones they do co-branded e-mail campaigns with. E-newsletter is not common, but has occurred. When doing this activity it is often a matter of exchanging business favors rather than monetary payment. Considering Lavasofts limited budget, exchanging favors with business partners and other companies is a strategy that is in line with their size. Lavasoft works with a house list in that sense of sending a newsletter to the customer who has optioned to receive it. The newsletter is a good resource when communicating with the customers and recommending products. Because of the receivers of the newsletter has opted in one can assume that they have an interest of internet security and therefore also receptive to the information presented.

6.3.6 Viral marketing

Lavasoft are currently not doing any viral marketing according to the options in figure 2.4. Although the Lavasoft blog and the My Lavasoft community can be seen as ways to create an interest and passing on information. One objective that Lavasoft has is to get back to its marketing communication roots. The company was first spread through word-of-mouth, and that objective is believed to be obtained by virals. Through the interviews it was brought up that Lavasoft wishes to identify bloggers and other underground sources that have an influence and a great reach.

6.4 Advocacy relationship development

Lavasoft has a group of loyal followers that have been with the company since the beginning. One of the reasons for this is believed to be that Lavasoft has stayed true to their principles and ethical standards, providing free anti-spyware with a hand-of approach to marketing communication.

6.4.1 Adapting to market development

Lavasofts hand-of approach and being available for everyone with voluntary personal information have meant missed out opportunities to use a database for CRM. When purchasing one of Lavasofts products the customers fill in name and address. These are factors that could be used for segmenting and analyzing the market. The information obtained from the purchases can however not be used without the customer consent, because of present legal restrictions. We think that Lavasoft should focus to communicate the benefits, of opt-in e-mails and the newsletter, for the customers in order for them to give their consent. How the option to be targeted is presented could be revised in order to further display the value of it. The market has developed and today Lavasoft is more than just an anti-spyware company. Their range of products means that they surely will target different customer needs than before. One of the difficulties when growing and following the market development is how to keep the loyal customers, while at the same time attract new ones. This is a challenge for the marketing department and interactivity with the customers becomes even more important.

6.4.2 Achieving advocacy relationship development

Concerning this growth problem Lavasoft could enact the third alternative that Urban (2005) has identified and embrace ARD. If Lavasoft takes on that alternative it is of importance to consider the advocacy pyramid and its components. To better understand how the process towards customer advocacy can be done we are going to analyze Urbans (2005) eight factors for achieving advocacy relationship development from a Lavasofts perspective.

Transparency is something that Lavasoft already have to a high degree and their ethical standards are supporting this.

Quality of products and service is an issue that Lavasoft needs to work with, one need superior products to truly recommend them as the best alternative. At the moment Lavasoft cannot honestly recommend their products as the best one. There are hopes that the new products released during 2009 will bring closer to superiority. As mentioned in the advocacy pyramid, figure 2.5, total quality management needs to be embraced.

Product comparison regards the customer needs and Lavasoft cannot, if any other product better meets this need, recommend their own products. There is a positive attitude towards the product range as shown in figure 5.6, which shows Lavasofts ability to cover a broader spectrum of internet security. But this is only relevant if the products are competitive.

Alignment of incentives means that the benefits that Lavasoft promotes must encourage a long-term relationship. Lavasoft recently started a reward program that will give customers points and by that future discounts. This program is a good attempt to build relations.

Partnering is something Lavasoft do by launching My Lavasoft and giving the customers a channel to discuss problems and news with Lavasoft and each other. The discussions on the forums can handle anything concerning internet security and issues regarding Lavasoft products. By doing this, Lavasoft has a possibility to enhance the customer satisfaction and by that come closer to achieving customer advocacy.

Cooperative design is an aspect that Lavasoft frequently uses by letting the customers work as testers of new products. They are also working with the spyware industry in order to make the spyware more acceptable. Lavasoft also operate with consumer reporting for improving the products.

Supply chain applied to Lavasoft means that their business partners should follow the ideals of Lavasoft. Some of the partners do not follow the Lavasoft vision and standards to a full extent and this need to be worked on. A reason can be legal restrictions which might take time to change. This is an essential factor for Lavasoft for their ethical standards. Business partners who do not follow the same ideals may bemitre the Lavasoft brand.

Comprehensiveness is in some extent an aspect Lavasoft are performing well in. Customer involvement exists in several departments. Although there is a problem with the internal integration which could be further developed.

Taking on customer advocacy infers a vulnerability if ones products are not up to the standards. Lavasoft has hopes regarding the new products being released on the market to achieving a high standard. It is up to the company to decide which factors to integrate, based on the presumption on the products and other aspects. Even though not backing all the factors, every factor by itself could make a contribution.

7 Conclusions & Recommendations

This is the final chapter which contains conclusions and recommendations. The research questions are going to be answered here. Every research question will include conclusions and recommendations. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research.

7.1 Research question 1

1. *How can a brand platform for Lavasoft be envisioned?*

7.1.1 Conclusions and recommendations

In the analysis a discussion was held concerning the content of each of the parts in the brand platform. That discussion led to the envisioning of a brand platform for Lavasoft, which is shown in this section. Each part is presented by itself and is a suggestion on what could be a sustainable brand platform for Lavasoft.

VISION

“Every computer user, regardless of economic status or geographic location, has the power to control their individual privacy and security. We strive to promote an environment of ethical change in the malware industry to uphold our ideals of social and corporate consciousness”

We believe that the Lavasoft vision statement is working. Since they made the change from spyware to malware, and by that covering a greater scope they are showing that they are more than just anti-spyware and can therefore evolve even more in the future within internet security.

MISSION

“As an innovation driven organization, to pioneer and deliver high quality security solutions that protect individual computer users and business networks worldwide from compromising and intrusive privacy threats”

We believe that the Lavasoft mission statement are fulfilling its purpose and is a guideline for the development of Lavasoft.

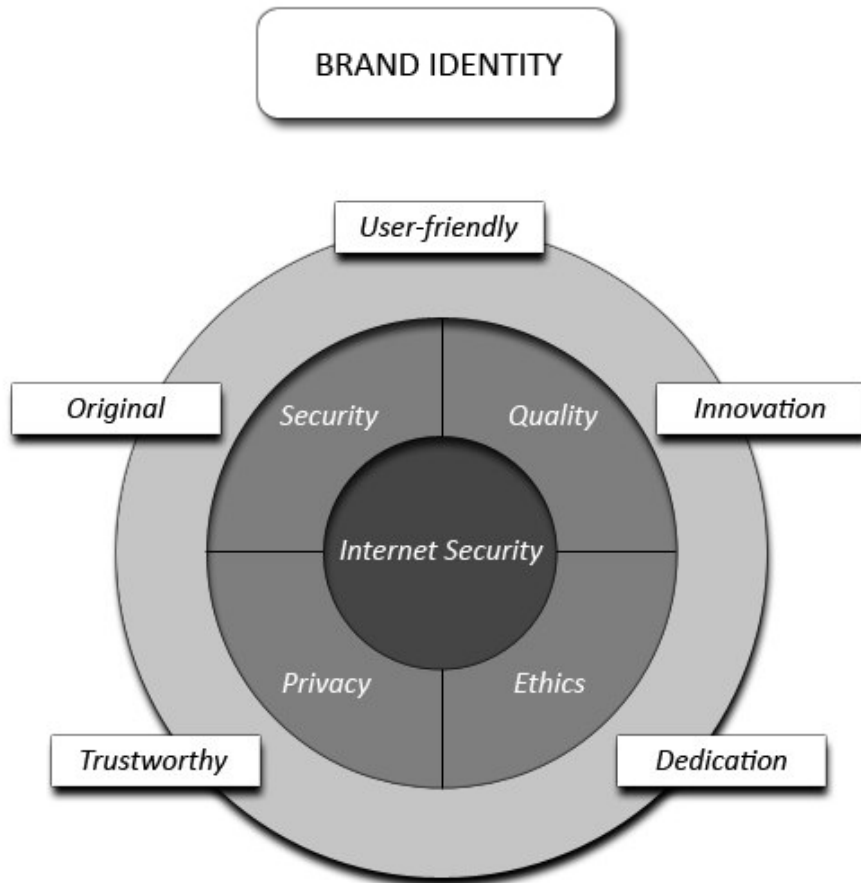


Figure 7. 1 – The brand identity of Lavasoft by Blidner Knittel & Borg (Based on Mårtenson, 2008 pp. 43)

A lot of work was done in order to find out how Lavasoft can identify themselves, both when it comes to the internal perspective as well as compared to the external. The suggestions for the essence, core and extended values are described in figure 7:1, as the Lavasoft brand identity.

**BRAND
PERSONALITY**

Age: 20-29

Gender: Male

Education: Higher (University)

Characteristics: Wise, persevering, and generally a nice guy

Interests: Computers, technology, travelling, and people

Another part of the identification process is the brand personality of Lavasoft. There were some discrepancies among the answers, but we believe that we were able to pin down some of the characteristics that are the personality of Lavasoft.

BRAND
POSITIONING

Internal positioning: Based on the brand identity and this brand platform, Lavasoft should be able to establish their internal positioning throughout the company.

External positioning: The conclusion is that there is not enough background material to state a credible external positioning. At the moment, it is primarily based on being the original anti-spyware company.

When it comes to the brand positioning, a unity among the employees and their perspective is of importance. That is why the brand identity in addition to the vision and the mission of Lavasoft, would work as a good foundation when spreading a message internally of what the brand is, why it exists, and what it hopes to achieve. The external positioning is for the moment primarily based on the fact that they were the first, both the market and the mental positioning. What can be a good idea is to establish the internal position before stating the external. Once this is done, Lavasoft could implement the external positioning, which will be based on market analyzes which could be done parallel with establishing the internal. The positioning, both the internal and the external perspective, is an aspect that needs to be worked with.

VISUAL
IDENTITY

Name: Lavasoft, seems to be working, although low brand name recognition.

Logotype: The logo has been developed and is now more flexible due to improvements of logo usage guidelines, found in the graphical profile, as well as added varieties of the logo.

Package Design: The products package design follows a consistent pattern in coherence with the company history. The website is logical and gives a professional impression. Lavasofts graphical profile is a helpful tool in this aspect.

Slogans & Tag-lines: There are several Ad-aware tag-lines, but none specifically directed towards Lavasoft as a corporate brand.

Lavasoft has with their relatively new graphical profile created consistency in their visual identity. It appears that nothing is in need of change regarding the name and the logo. What they need to work with more, when trying to link stronger brand awareness to the Lavasoft brand, is to come up with a well thought through corporate slogan. Not directed to the individual products but the brand that is Lavasoft. This is something that the identification parts of the brand platform could aid in doing.

EXTERNAL
ENVIRONMENT

Lavasoft has a good brand image and a loyal group that follows the brand. As we earlier stated, the corporate brand recognition is low.

The recommendations made, together with the progress that already has been done, will hopefully have positive effects on the external environment by augmenting brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty.

7.2 Research question 2

2. What online marketing communication activities should Lavasoft improve or implement in their range of activities according to the integrated marketing communications planning matrix?

7.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations

The different OMC activities discussed in the analysis has been put in to the IMC planning matrix context. Figure 7.2 presents activities both for business building and brand building, as well as brand message and brand incentive. Each category also contains recommendations for activities to implement. Both of the brand incentive categories do not include any suggestions for activities that are recommended. This is because there are no activities that Lavasoft are not currently doing that are of interest or suitable for further development or implementation.

The first category is brand message for business building and contains present activities from interactive ads, and recommendations regarding viral marketing. Lavasoft are currently working with some interactive advertising. They have made a deliberate decision not to work with behavioral ad targeting and it is nothing to recommend for Lavasoft either. The reason for this is their ethical standards and it contradicts what Lavasoft do in their line of work. In order to create awareness for their brand and differentiate Lavasoft from their competitors it was recommended using all the viral marketing activities.

In the second category, brand incentive for business building, Lavasoft is well covered. They are currently working a lot with this type of OMC activities, and the only recommendations are to continue doing so. There are activities in both search marketing and opt-in e-mail that Lavasoft are not currently doing, trusted feed and cold -rented list. These activities are not recommended since they are not applicable or suitable for Lavasoft.

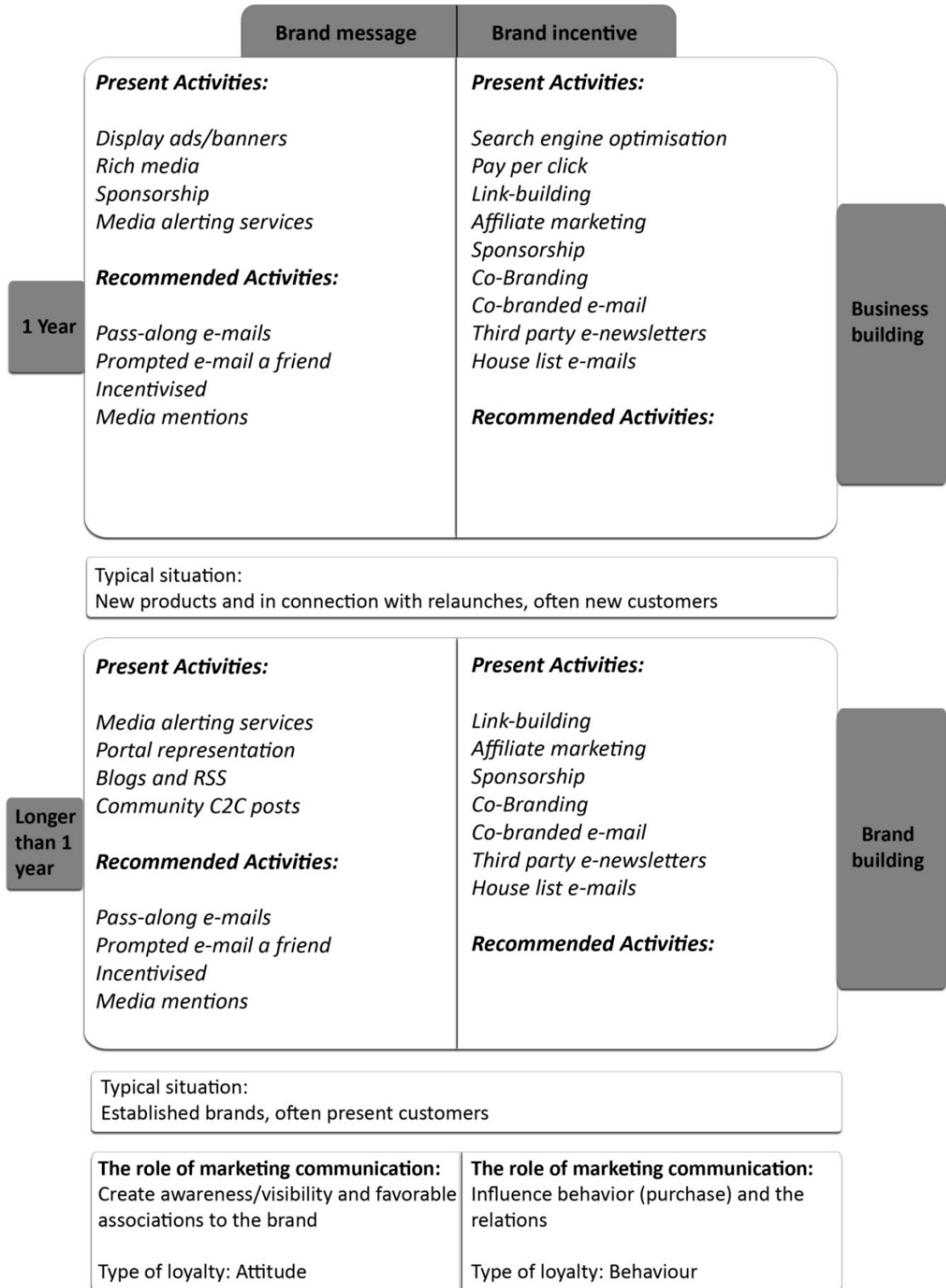


Figure 7. 2 – The IMC planning matrix of Lavasoft by Blidner Knittel & Borg (Based on Schultz, 2004 pp. 207)

The third category includes online PR activities as Lavasofts present activities with brand message for the brand building purpose. The recommended activities are the same as in the first category, namely implementation of viral marketing activities. Furthermore, there are suggested activities that not originate from figure 2:4 but still refer to online PR and viral marketing. Even though these are mainly for brand building they are also applicable for business building. Lavasoft could increase the usage of new media such as video communities for instance YouTube and Google Video. What could be implemented here is the creation of Lavasofts own channel, where people can watch as well as subscribe to video posts that continuously could be recorded. Lavasoft can also increase their portal representation and their presence in different communities for example MSN, Facebook, and iGoogle. What could be done here is to start forums and the development of applications for scanning the computer directly online without having to download any program. Lavasoft are currently working with a blog on their website. What could be improved is the development of a comments function, which could increase the interaction.

The fourth and final category is brand incentive for brand building. The present activities for this category involve online-partnerships and opt-in e-mail. In similarity with the second category, this category does not contain any recommendations. Lavasoft is not working actively with CRM which would fall under this category. They are about to start a reward program for loyal customers, which also would fall under this category and would have been a recommendation, if not already being started.

7.3 Research question 3

3. What can Lavasoft do in order to build a better reputation and higher credibility considering integrated marketing communication and advocacy relationship development?

7.3.1 Conclusions and recommendations

Lavasoft has recently implemented the My Lavasoft community, this is going to create a platform where the customers can meet and get help, both from other customers as well as from Lavasoft employees. This will work as a good source for information regarding updates and news in the business for the customers. Lavasoft could also gain important information by this interaction. My Lavasoft could be a forum for everyone in the field of internet security and render Lavasoft more of a position as an expert. If Lavasoft augment their position as the original with expert functions in the field of internet security their credibility might increase. If people are using the My Lavasoft community, it will likely increase the awareness of Lavasoft as a corporate brand. The use of other communities, portals and video communities could further enhance Lavasoft as an influential and reliable part of the internet security business.

Another thing that Lavasoft has implemented is the telephone support option. This will hopefully enhance the already good image of the Lavasoft support, which is shown in table 5.6, and by that improving both their reputation and credibility.

What Lavasoft needs to work with is the internal integration. If the internal integration is working, then it will result in more efficient external integration, even though the external integration already is working in a consistent way. One way to create a greater consistency among the different departments and employees of Lavasoft is to use the brand platform as a guideline when striving towards reaching the same goals. For the moment, the company vision and the mission are being used for this purpose. By going further and incorporate the brand identity and the other parts of the suggested platform, the integration within the company could be improved. When having internal integration the consumer will receive a unified message and this might strengthen the brand and make the external communication more credible.

The support department is at the moment the one that has the most interaction with Lavasofts customers. In order to increase the customer satisfaction, improve product features and better target the customer needs the support department could have a reporting system where specific information are gathered. The information could later be used in development of enhancing the quality of the products and in the marketing communication to make it more adequate for the customers.

If enacting on customer advocacy, the quality of the products are in focus. For the moment Lavasoft are fulfilling many of the factors for achieving this, there is though doubts of the superiority of the products. In ARD it is vital with honesty and therefore Lavasofts products must be up to the standards if customer advocacy is to be reached. Getting information from the support could also be used in this work.

7.4 Future research

In this section we will present some recommendations on future research, there are no intergroup order between the recommendations.

- Examine how the internal integration between all the different departments within the company could be improved and suggestion for implementation.
- Examine more closely exactly what work needs to be done at Lavasoft to obtain ARD.
- Do a thorough market analysis in order to establish the external positioning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Interview guide

Brand Platform

- *Do Lavasoft have a brand platform?*
- *What is the Lavasoft vision?*
- *How do Lavasoft work with their visual identity?*
- *What do you think are good relative bad aspects of Lavasofts visual identity?*
- *How do Lavasoft choose to position itself on the market?*
- *On what information is that positioning statement based?*

Integrated Marketing Communication

- *Is Lavasoft currently working with IMC?*
- *In what ways are Lavasoft working with IMC?*
- *Is there anything that you would like to change in the way Lavasoft works with IMC?*

Online Marketing Communication

- *What OMC activities are Lavasoft using today?*
- *What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using OMC for Lavasoft?*
- *Are there any OMC activities that Lavasoft would like to develop or increase its usage of?*
- *Do you know how effective OMC activities are for Lavasoft, compared to each other and compared to other marketing communication activities?*
- *Are Lavasoft using different OMC activities regarding to business building and brand building?*

Advocacy Relationship Development

- *Do Lavasoft have a lot of loyal customers? If yes, why is that, do you think?*
- *What activities does Lavasoft do in order to create customer satisfaction?*
- *In what way does Lavasoft interact with its customers?*

Appendix 2 - Internal Survey

In the thesis we are developing a brand platform for Lavasoft. A brand platform helps in the creation of marketing communication campaigns in order to keep them unified and internally established throughout the company. The result of the survey will be treated as a whole; no person's answer will be singled out. Please use the first words that come to mind.

Before answering the questions, please fill out what Lavasoft department you work for:

Department:

Question 1

What is the brand essence of Lavasoft, the very soul of the company?

The brand essence is a way to describe a company through a single thought or idea. (Example: Volvo's soul: Safety in traffic).

Question 2

What 3 words do you think best describe what Lavasoft stands for, its core values?

The core values are the most important aspects of what the company stands for. (Example: Volvos three core values are being represented as Quality, Safety and Environmental care).

1.

2.

3.

Question 3

What other words than the core values could be used to describe the company?

(Example: Other words that describe Volvos characteristics are excitement, design and driving pleasure).

1.

2.

3.

Question 4

What makes Lavasoft better than the competitors, what is the key benefit?

The Key benefit is an advantage that makes a company different or unique, better than others.

Question 5

If you could describe Lavasoft as a person, how would you describe that person?

(Example: age, gender, features, interest, education and so on...)

Thank you for your participation.

Regards// Christian and Christopher

For more information about us, and the work on our thesis visit our blog.

Appendix 3 - External Survey

Lavasoft Branding Survey

We need your help!

We are two students from the University of Gothenburg, writing our bachelor thesis in marketing for Lavasoft. We would really appreciate you taking the time to fill out this short survey and help us in our research. Thanks so much in advance!

What level of computer user do you consider yourself? (required)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Novice | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat experienced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced | <input type="checkbox"/> Expert |

Choose three words that you feel best describe Lavasoft. (required)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Original |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovators | <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-date | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Weak | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic |

Choose five other words that represent Lavasoft characteristics and its products. (required)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> User-friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring | <input type="checkbox"/> Experienced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Unfriendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dedication | <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Developing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enduring | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youthful | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective | <input type="checkbox"/> International |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> Stagnant |

Please grade the following aspects of Lavasoft. (required)

Bad Not so good Neither good nor bad Good Very good

Support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
User-friendly products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Product range	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Price	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How did you hear about Lavasoft? (required)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Search engine | <input type="checkbox"/> Through a friend or family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine or newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Ad or banner online |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner company | <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Thanks for your participation.

**Best regards,
Chris & Chris**

Curious about our work? [Read our blog!](#)

Appendix 4 – Interview and survey questions

Interview questions

Brand Platform

- Do Lavasoft have a brand platform?

This question gave the answer if it for Lavasoft was desirable to use a brand platform. Since one problem with developing new marketing communication activities was time, a brand platform could help Lavasoft by giving them the frame which would decrease this.

- What is the Lavasoft vision?

The brand platform should comprise all important aspects that might be a part of the outgoing communication. By asking this question, an idea of what the vision is, was obtained, and also how it has changed over the years and what might be possible future changes.

- How do Lavasoft work with their visual identity?

By asking this question, an understanding of how Lavasoft use visualization of their brand, and how the different parts are integrated with each other were acquired.

- What do you think are good relative bad aspects of Lavasofts visual identity?

This question gives an idea of what each person's subjective opinion regarding what might be good, and what they might need to have to work with.

- How do Lavasoft choose to position itself on the market?

This question was asked in order to be able to analyze the position part of the brand platform and get an understanding of where the company stands, when developing the suggested marketing communication activities.

- On what information is that positioning statement based?

In order to examine the foundation of the position, this question was asked to gain information on the subject of what sources the positioning is based on, in order to evaluate the credibility.

Integrated Marketing Communication

- Is Lavasoft currently working with integrated marketing communications?

This question helped to get an understanding if Lavasoft was working integrated at the moment.

- In what ways are Lavasoft working with IMC?

This question gave an idea of how the different departments was involved with each other and also gave an idea of how it might be improved.

Is there anything that you would like to change in the way Lavasoft works with IMC?

This questions purpose was to give information regarding whether they lacked integration, had problems concerning it, or just had suggestions on areas for improvements.

Online Marketing Communication

- What online marketing communication activities are Lavasoft using today?

By asking this question an idea of which OMC activities that they are using today would be obtained. Which one is the most frequently used?

- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using OMC for Lavasoft?

This question gives answers about the strengths with OMC applied on an online-based company and which things that could be seen as a weakness. The answers were useful in analyzing what might be enhanced in Lavasofts work with OMC.

- Are there any OMC activities that Lavasoft would like to develop or increase its usage of?

The question gives an idea of how Lavasoft would develop its OMC activities and which they would go for in the near future. Their preferences would come to be a base or guideline for the future work.

- Do you know how effective OMC activities are for Lavasoft, compared to each other and compared to other marketing communication activities?

With this question the intention was to see if Lavasoft did any follow up on their activities and if that was the case, which activities were the most effective. This question would give guidelines in the work of proposing activities for Lavasoft by knowing which are the most effective today. That is if they had knowledge about the effectiveness, otherwise the question would not be further examined.

- Are Lavasoft using different OMC activities regarding to business building and brand building?

Here the matter was to know if Lavasoft worked with different time perspectives with their OMC activities, depending if the purpose of the activity was to build the brand or to build business.

Advocacy Relationship Development

- *Do Lavasoft have a lot of loyal customers? If yes, why is that, do you think?*

This question gives a picture of the size of Lavasofts loyal customer-base and also the interview respondent's view of how they managed to acquire them.

- *What activities does Lavasoft do in order to create customer satisfaction?*

This question answers if Lavasoft actively are working with customer care and satisfaction, and also which activities they consider fulfilling this objective.

- *In what way does Lavasoft interact with its customers?*

This question concerns how Lavasoft creates a dialog, in order to communicate with their customers and potential customers. This provided the opportunity to see how it works today, and what they have planned for the future.

Internal survey

Question 1

What is the brand essence of Lavasoft, the very soul of the company?

The brand essence is a way to describe a company through a single thought or idea. (Example: Volvo's soul: Safety in traffic).

This question handles the brand soul and is of a qualitative nature, when creating a brand platform the brand identity is essential and the soul is the very centre of what the company stands for and this is a natural starting point.

Question 2

What 3 words do you think best describe what Lavasoft stands for, its core values?

The core values are the most important aspects of what the company stands for. (Example: Volvos three core values are being represented as Quality, Safety and Environmental care).

In this question the purpose was to see if it is was possible to find patterns for a generalized image among the Lavasoft departments about the core values and also see what words that are the most common. This image of the identity was used for comparison with the external image.

Question 3

What other words than the core values could be used to describe the company?

(Example: Other words that describe Volvos characteristics are excitement, design and driving pleasure).

This question gives the respondent the opportunity to further describe the identity of the company in a more everyday fashion. Both the results of question two and three were handled in a quantitative way.

Question 4

What makes Lavasoft better than the competitors, what is the key benefit?

The Key benefit is an advantage that makes a company different or unique, better than others.

The objective with this question was to find out what Lavasoft is better at, according to the employees. We thought that it would be interesting to see if different employees had different views of the advantages of Lavasoft. The benefits that were found were later compared to the Lavasoft mission in order to see if the employee image of benefits correlated with the mission statement.

Question 5

If you could describe Lavasoft as a person, how would you describe that person?

(Example: age, gender, features, interest, education and so on...)

This question was used to get an idea of what Lavasofts brand personality might look like. Question four and five are as well as question one, of a qualitative nature.

External survey

Question 1

What level computer user do you consider yourself?

This question was used in order to be able to do a broad segmentation of the respondents answers based on their computer skills. It was also done so that Lavasoft could segment the answers if wanted.

Question 2

Choose three words that you feel best describe Lavasoft.

Here, the most common words from the internal survey regarding the core values were mixed with other words that together would form a wide variety of answering alternatives. Both positive and negative words were possible to choose. We did this to be able to compare the identity with the image.

Question 3

Choose five other words that represent Lavasoft characteristics and its products.

This question does also handle the comparison between the identity and the image, and is based on the answers of the extended values in the internal survey. The selection of words was made in the same way as in the previous question.

Question 4

Please grade the following aspects of Lavasoft.

Here the purpose was to see what the customers thought about some aspects concerning Lavasoft. The aim was to see what the advantages was and in which aspects Lavasoft are doing well.

Question 5

How did you hear about Lavasoft?

This question functions as a way to find out how the people in general hear about Lavasoft. The question also gives us some information about which marketing communication activities that are working.

Appendix 5 - Previous conducted survey

Customer Survey

We need your help!

In order to provide you with the products and features most beneficial to you, we could really use a little input from you. We would really appreciate you taking the time to fill out this short survey. Thanks so much in advance!

What level computer user do you consider yourself? (required)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Novice | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat experienced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced | <input type="checkbox"/> Expert |

How many computers are in your household? (required)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 |

Which of the following online threats are you most concerned with? (required)

Please choose your top 3.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identity theft | <input type="checkbox"/> Phishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virus | <input type="checkbox"/> Trojans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spyware and malware | <input type="checkbox"/> Spam scans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyloggers | <input type="checkbox"/> Botnets |

What features do you consider important when it comes to protecting yourself online? (required)

Please mark all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Spyware | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Virus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Spam | <input type="checkbox"/> Firewall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Link scanning / safe search |

What is more important to you when choosing a security program? (required)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Features | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Price |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ease of Use | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |

What kind of security programs do you currently use? (required)

Please mark all that apply.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Spyware | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Virus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Spam | <input type="checkbox"/> Firewall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

What Lavasoft products are you currently using on your PC? (required)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ad-aware Free | <input type="checkbox"/> Ad-aware Plus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ad-aware Pro | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Firewall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registry Tuner | <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Toolbox |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Lock | <input type="checkbox"/> File Shredder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | |

When was the last time your computer was infected by a virus, spyware or other form of malware? (required)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In the last 3 months | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-6 months |
|--|--|

- 6-12 months More than 12 months
 Never I don't know

What are you most interested in receiving from Lavasoft? (required)

Please mark all that apply.

- Industry news
 Current threat updates
 Tips and advice on how to stay safe online
 Lavasoft product updates
 Exclusive offers

What type of security products are you most interested in? (required)

- Products for a home computer
 Office or small business
 Corporate or network environment

Would you recommend our products to other people? (required)

- Yes No
 Maybe I have never used a Lavasoft product

How easy do you think it is to find the information you are looking for on the Lavasoft website? (required)

- Very easy Needs improvement
 I rarely visit the website I don't know