MARKETING COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS FOR SELF PUBLISHING AUTHORS
– IN THE LIGHT OF STONEWYLDE BOOK SERIES

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores the self-publishing book industry. This paper covers organizational analysis of self-publishing book industry in the light of Stonewylde book series. It covers the key issues faced by the author Kit Berry while marketing her book series ‘Stonewylde’. To bring the understanding on the subject, various marketing analysis were done including product analysis using SWOT analysis, competitor analysis using porter’s five force model, consumer analysis by BCG matrix and market analysis by PESTEL analysis. This paper is an attempt to build marketing communication strategy for self-publishing authors.

KEYWORDS
Self-publishing, book industry, marketing communication channel, e-books

INTRODUCTION
This paper presents the organizational analysis of Stonewylde book series and key issues faced by author while self-publishing it. The key issues were identified by conducting product analysis of Stonewylde book series by SWOT analysis, competitor analysis using porter’s five force model, consumer analysis by BCG matrix and market analysis by PESTEL analysis. This paper also defines the objective of marketing communication and the key issues discussed in the paper are presented in analysis.

ORGANIZATION ANALYSIS
The Book series ‘Stonewylde’ written by Kit Berry is a series of five books. The first three books of the series were self-published and got immense response from public. Stonewylde series has succeeded in attracting readers around the world through word-of-mouth. The target audience of Stonewylde series was young people but it got liked by people of all ages (Greco 2013). The success of this self-published book attracted the attention of Orion Books which purchased all the rights to re-publish and revise these books under the name Gollancz. The genre of Stonewylde
series is romantic and appeals love, myth, magic and harmony. The profit from selling of Stonewylde series comes from two sources – direct sales and distribution sales.

**PRODUCT ANALYSIS**

Product analysis helps in identifying a suitable price for product and potential of market. It also helps in forecasting sales volumes and life cycle of product (Baverstock 2015). There are various tools for product analysis. SWOT analysis (refer figure 1) is used to conduct product analysis of Stonewylde series-

![SWOT Analysis](image)

**Figure 1: SWOT analysis**

*Source: McDonald 2016*

1. **Strengths**
   - good writing and communication skills of Kit Berry
   - average person can feel the belongingness with the story
   - passion of Kit Berry for the topic
   - vision of Kit Berry towards book publishing

2. **Weaknesses**
   - lack of experience in book publishing
   - limited knowledge of marketing
   - challenges of book publishing and marketing

3. **Opportunities**
   - low barrier to entry in self-publishing
• connectivity with local area and people
• scope to expand market

4. Threats

• fluctuation in market
• change in taste and preference of people
• threat from e-books
• many books on similar topics

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

Competitor’s analysis is significant for growth of any company. It helps company to identify the offers of its competitors and its strategic position in the competitive market (Clark and Phillips 2014). The competitive analysis of Stonewylde series is conducted by using Porter’s five force model (refer figure 2).

![Porter’s Five force model](image)

*Figure 2: Porter’s Five force model*

*Source: Harding 2017*

The components of Porter’s five force model are explained below:

1. Threat of new entrants

Entry into publishing market is easy because of low barrier to entry and less investment. A large publisher does not have threat from new entrants because of their large circulation and customer base but for a small publisher the threat is huge. The readers who liked Kit Berry also liked reading books of Candy Harper who has written 8 books, Mara Freeman who has also written 8 books, Eve Edwards who has written 5 books, Lisa Glass who has written 5 books, Connie Hall who has written
8 books, Orion Foxwood who has written 8 books etc. Thus, it can be said that Kit Berry has threat from other new authors.

2. Threat from substitute

Internet has become a big threat for publishing industry. The reader can access books form internet in the form of e-book. It is easy to market and distribute books on internet. Readers today can read books online with applications like kindle and on Google books. The publishing industry has to find a strategy to face the threat from substitute (Lin Chiou and Huang 2013). There is a requirement of advertising the benefits of book publishing and printing. Kit Berry writes romantic books and faces equal competition from thriller, adventurous, fiction, horror, murder mystery books. Readers who liked reading Kit Berry’s Stonewyldle series also like reading Magician’s Law by Michael Scott, The Alchemist and the Angel by Joanne Owen, Sword of light by Katherine Roberts, etc.

3. Bargaining power of buyer

The bargaining power of buyers is high as there are various choices for readers available. Apart from this, reader can access and download e-book for free from internet. Social networking sites are also cheaper or almost free source of marketing for reading material. Kit Berry faced challenge while publishing her book because of low switching cost of buyer, well-educated and informed customers and availability of free reading materials.

4. Bargaining power of suppliers

The bargaining power of supplier i.e. author of books is very low. Some famous authors can exert pressure on publishers but in majority an author has low bargaining power (Benghozi and Salvador 2016). Kit Berry also faced challenges while publishing her books and hence she published her book under her own self-publishing Moongazy and she gives credit to social networking sites for the success of her series.

5. Intensity of rivalry

The competition in book publishing industry is aggressive. There are various segments in book publishing and each has separate target audience but each category compete with each other to attract reader (Reimers 2014). The competitors of Kit Berry are using various strategies to increase their number of books sold. Some authors attend literacy events and other give advertisement on YouTube. Some provides publishing of books to various book publishers to increase the number of books published and circulated. For instance, J K Rowling of Harry Potter series succeed in selling more number of books by connecting with several book publishers.
Thus, it can be said that Stonewylde series faces various challenges from substitutes and other competitors. But it can focus on its strength and strong content which reaches to the heart of reader.

**CONSUMER ANALYSIS**

Consumer analysis helps in gaining information regarding consumer with respect to needs and demographics of target market. It helps in identifying the profile of readers, the benefit they can achieve from the book offered to reader, differentiation level of market, etc (Buschow Nölle and Schneider 2014). The model used for consumer analysis is BCG matrix (refer figure 3). BCG matrix is a tool for strategy formulation on the basis of portfolio of product and growth opportunity in the market.

![BCG Matrix](image)

**Figure 3: BCG Matrix**

*Source: Mitra 2017*

The BCG matrix for Stonewylde series is given below-

1. **The cash Cows**

These are the products which occupy the largest market share of the product line (Sutherland 2014). In such case, the company has profit above its expenses. These products dominate the market.
2. The dogs

The products having lower growth market than cow are the dogs. They have reached their breakeven point and started churning profits. Every marketer in the market wants to reach at least to breakeven point.

3. Question marks

Question marks have low market share but a large hope to grow in the market. There is the new product line in the segment. They enter into new product line or new market with a hope to grow their market share. For this, the product is required to put efforts to convert their product from question mark to star. But if the product is not growing from the point of question mark, then it is a signal of danger for product (Heebels Atzema and Van Aalst 2013). None of the company will carry a product line which is not beneficial. It will be sooner or later discontinued.

4. The star

These are the high growth product in the growing market with high market share. The company keeps on investing in the product line expecting the product to grow from star to cash cow.

In respect to Stonewylde series, the author has focused on one area i.e. romantic series which balances the risk with a prospective of long term growth. In publishing sector, the author is required to come up with new series every time as the previous popular books sale will go down after a particular time.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Market analysis is analysis of target consumer, competitors, and macro environment factors. It is important to conduct market analysis to frame strategies to cope with changing external environment.

Figure 4: PESTEL analysis

Source: Grünig & Kühn 2015
PESTEL analysis (refer figure 4) is used to conduct market analysis-

1. **Political factors**
The office of fair trade of UK looks after the regulation of book retail industry. It is formed to protect the interest of consumer. It takes action against any book publisher who breaches the consumer protection law. Stonewylde series has no threat from political environment of UK book market.

2. **Economic factor**
The economic condition of UK is influenced by falling currency of UK. It increases the cost of printing for publishing company and increase the threat from competing e-books. The publishing industry faces cost of printing, cost of paper and cost of distribution. It increases the challenges for book publishing.

3. **Social factors**
The society is spending less on purchasing books in past decade. The customers reading books vary from an age group of 12 to 70 years. But this reading group has decreased the purchasing books. Hence, there is a decreasing trend seen in purchase of books.

4. **Technological factors**
There are various high quality printing techniques available in market. Technology is kept on growing and upgrading. The new technology which is used in printing is called as digital printing. These technologies are beneficial for large quantity of printing.

5. **Environmental factors**
People are growing concern for environment friendly products. Books are published on paper for which large number of trees is cut. It is a point of concern for society. The strategy for book printing industry to deal with this concern is eco-printing and recycling of paper. The books are published on chemical free papers (Ohta and Tamura 2014).

6. **Legal factors**
The legal issue faced by book publishing industry is from copyright act. The copyright acts are to protect the original work of authors. Copyright act gives the recognition to the author hard work and uniqueness.

**KEY ISSUES**
The key issues identified from the given analysis are summarised below-
The main issue identified in this paper is that self-publishing authors are not able to identify their target audience. Stonewylde series is a romantic book series for young generation but it was liked by readers of all age. Stonewylde series is a non-fiction book which has no benefit to reader other than that they can relate it with their lives. The objective of author of Stonewylde series is to make
people happy with her work. The objective behind writing a book is not making money or becoming famous. It satisfies the author’s creativity and to relate with others who had similar experience (Hu and Smith 2013). The strength of the author’s timing, good communication and determination cannot be duplicated.

**MARKETING COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE**

There are various marketing communication media channels available for a self-publishing author to market his work, create awareness about his work and increase sales of book. The marketing communication media channels are social media, publicity, blogging, promotion, email marketing and direct selling.

![Marketing Communication Mix](source: Fill & Turnbull 2016)

Marketing communication is a tool for brand awareness which helps seller to provide information regarding product to target audience (refer figure 5). It helps in retaining the loyal customers and adding new customers (Maxwell 2014). The marketing communication medium is selected on the basis of type of product, brand awareness and type of target audience. The objective of marketing communication is to develop awareness about product, change or shape attitude, stimulating a desire to purchase and projecting a brand image which is explained below-
1. Develop awareness
The main objective of marketing communication is to create awareness about product to target audience. It is most important for a company which is new in market. A new entrant has to make its place in mind of consumer regarding their company and products offered (De los Santos and Wildenbeest 2017). It can be done through print or TV advertising. It can be done through online media marketing such as social network sites. The main aim is to reach directly to the mind of target consumer and develop a perception of product for consumers.

2. Change or shape attitude
Sometimes existing companies use marketing communication to change their image in minds of consumers. Sometimes it is done to recover from a bad publicity (Martin and Tian 2016). Sometimes it is done for repositioning of a brand.

3. Stimulating a desire to purchase
The key objective of marketing communication of an organization whether new or existing is to stimulate the desire of purchasing in the target consumer. This objective is fulfilled by communicating the benefit of using product by target consumer. Marketing communication acts as a stimulating catalyst for target consumer to make purchase decision (Thompson 2013).

4. Projecting a brand image
Customers have various choices to select from brands. One of the objectives of marketing communication is to attract the attention of target consumer towards their brand. It is a way to persuade consumer to purchase the brand by projecting a brand image in eyes of consumers.

CONCLUSION
This paper discusses the key issues faced by Kit Berry while marketing Stonewylde book series. It was found that book publication faces challenges from e-books, free downloads, other popular reading material, already established publishers and authors, high cost of printing, cost of marketing, advertising and publishing, knowing the need of target audience, change in taste and preference of readers, continuous requirement of bringing new product in the market as the demand for existing popular product will go down sooner or later. The external market drivers also influence the sales of books and choice of readers. It is important for book publisher to identify the marketing communication strategy to attract target audience.
REFERENCES


