

**THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF
SMALL CLOTHING BUSINESS**

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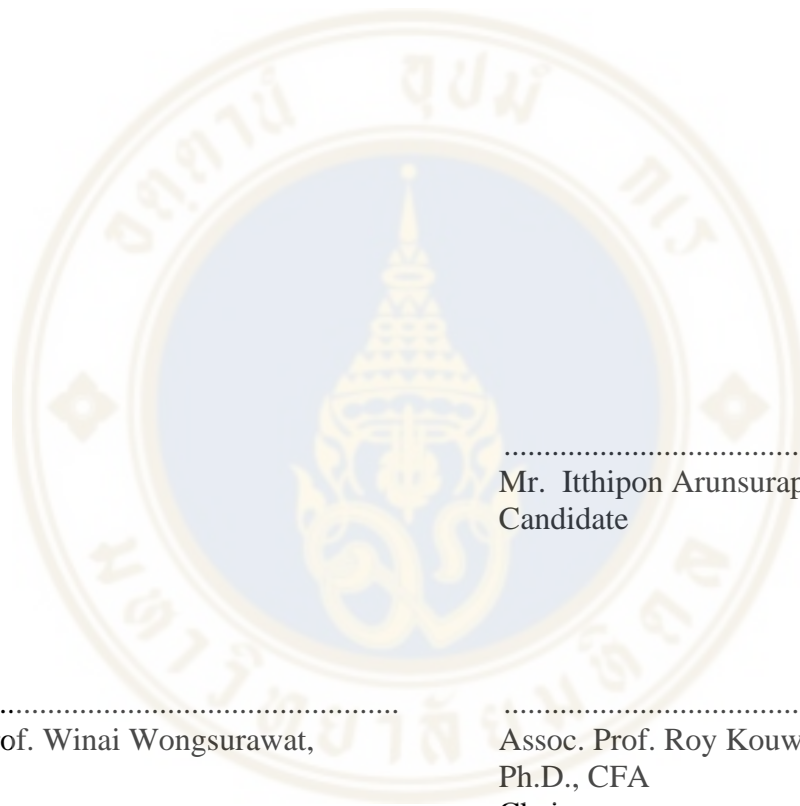


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THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF SMALL CLOTHING BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

According to the revolution of the internet and technology, becoming an entrepreneur is more manageable, especially doing an online business. However, many small businesses in Thailand become successful only the first time they launch products or services, but they fail to grow business and get lost later. The objective of this research is to identify the critical success of the company to survive more than five years by focusing on the clothing retail business.

The qualitative study was conducted by face-to-face interviews with three successful clothing stores that operate the business for more than five years, both physical stores and online stores. The result shows the five findings emerged from the in-depth interviews, which are branding, leadership ability, research, networking, and marketing. Before launching the business, the entrepreneurs must carefully think about the product that offers to the market. It must be unique and needed. They must prepare themselves with all related knowledge by taking a course or doing research and always keep update trends and competitors. Being proactive in developing networking and relationship would help expand the business, and sometimes entrepreneurs might get support from partners. Lastly, digital marketing is efficient in promoting the company as the cost is a reasonable and high return of investment.

KEY WORDS: Fashion/ Garment/ Apparel

24 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

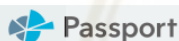
Today, if you ask a new generation of people, what they want to do to finance themselves. It is rare to find someone who said they want to be an employee of the company in the long run. Most of the people want to do their own business which they can be proud to be an entrepreneurship and generate more money than being an employee. Nowadays, the growth of the internet and technology is providing vital for a business to build an online platform to sell products without having a real retailing store. Social commerce is very popular in Thailand, especially Line, Facebook, and Instagram platforms. These social media applications are nationwide used and allow business owners to use it to contact with customers. There is an online marketplace platform like Lazada, and Shopee will enable entrepreneurs to set up an online retail store free of charge or inexpensive fee. Therefore, it is not hard for people to start a business.

The fashion apparel business is one of the most popular markets in Thailand, as there are many segments of the customers in the fashion industry, especially female clothes. There are many different styles of clothes that can be mixed and matched, and a variety of price range that consumers can choose the preferred one. It means there is an opportunity to capture potential targets who satisfy with the style and price that the shop offers to them. On the other hand, it means a lot of competition as it is very easy for everyone to jump into this business and do a copycat. According to the data from Euromonitor, the retail value of apparel in Thailand is around 236,795.6 million THB in 2018. The table below shows that 82.8% of market share is held by many small players, which is a great opportunity for the entrepreneurs to jump into this red ocean. (Euromonitor International, 2019)

Brand Shares of Apparel and Footwear in Thailand

% Share (LBN) - Retail Value RSP - 2018

Brand	% Share
Uniqlo	3.2
adidas	2.2
Levi's	1.3
H&M	1.3
Nike	0.9
Sabina	0.9
Lacoste	0.8
Wacoal	0.8
Mc Jeans	0.8
Bata	0.7
AIIZ	0.7
Zara	0.6
Jaspal	0.5
Wrangler	0.4
Giordano	0.4
Lee	0.4
Arrow	0.4
Scholl	0.4
G2000	0.4
Others	82.8



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Figure 1.1 Brand shares of apparel and footwear in Thailand

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are considered the backbone for propelling economic growth. In Thailand, there are 3 million SMEs that are expected to generate 43% of the country's GDP in 2019. (Leesa-nguansuk, 2019). Based on the US context, only about half of new small businesses survive beyond the 5-year benchmark (Gardner, 2019). In Thailand, many startups and small businesses become successful for the first time when they launch products or services, but they fail to grow business and get loss later. Having a good idea and funding is not enough to become successful entrepreneurs. Many works of literature try to identify the critical success and failure of doing business. However, this study will focus only on the clothing industry, which is the red ocean market in Thailand, and identify how to develop sustainable growth for the clothing retail business.

1.2 The question of the study

What are the key success factors of small clothing retail shop?

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore how small clothing retail shops can survive in a competitive market, and to understand the strategy they use and the reason behind their decision. The finding of this study would be the guideline for the new entrepreneurs who want to jump into this market, and it will be benefit for the current business to learn from these cases. Learning from the past experience would reduce the risk in the business.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand to key success of small clothing shop, a literature review on academic journals could be referred to create a research framework. The first part will discuss the definition of success in small business. The second part will review the key success of the small business from past research.

2.1 Definition of small business success

There are variety definitions of successful in small business. Small business success is the degree to which the organization's goals were met or exceeded (Anderson and Ullah, 2014). Small business measures of success include growth of the business, annual turnovers, and profits (Weber, 2015). Based on the US context, only about half of new small businesses survive beyond the 5-year benchmark (Gardner, 2019). In this study, the researcher defines small business success as an organization that operates business at least five years and gain profit.

2.2 Competitive advantage

The Resource-based theory is a managerial framework used to determine the firm's unique resources that lead to gain sustained competitive advantage. The firm will perform better than competitors if their resource are better able to serve the compete market (Wickham. 2006). When the company has a highly competitive advantage, it will lead to a good firm's performance. A strategic resource is an asset that is valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable. Difference firm has different resources and difficulty in transferring resources between firms. The resources can be tangible assets, intangible assets, management skills, organization process, knowledge, or

anything else that can be used by the company to implement strategies (Balmer, 2004). There are four sources of competitive advantage (Wickham, 2006).

Table 2.1 Research framework

Resources	Potential competitive advantage
Cost	The business gains advantage from lower cost by lower input cost, economies of scale, or technological innovation. However, they are only a few cost leaders in the market as profit margin is low and rely on market share.
Knowledge	A firm will gain a competitive advantage if it knows things that its competitors do not. For example, product knowledge, market knowledge, and technical knowledge.
Relationships	Building a relationship is a must for a business to locate itself in a secure, supportive, and network. It consists of a relationship with all stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, and employees.
Structure	Creating appropriate organizational structures by being more focused on the market. Then using the signals from customers and competitors to make faster and better decisions about how to serve the customer.

2.3 Leadership

According to the Onyenego's research, leadership is a key success of the business. Leadership is the ability to influence followers and initiate strategies for accomplishing common set goals. Business knowledge and strategic planning are the most importance skills of leader in the organization (Onyenego, 2004).

Business knowledge is the source to gain a competitive advantage. The leaders of the company must know their business, so they are not disconcerted with the complexity of operations and leading employees (Cronin-Gilmore, 2009). Lacking knowledge could become a barrier to success in business (Fillis, 2015). However, the

resource of small business is limited. It is impossible for the owners to be experts in everything, but at least, the leader must know how to lead employees to the company direction. There are many sources of information that the entrepreneurs can seek out, such as professional associations, networking, research, learning classes, and other areas. Open-mind to learn new things would assist in developing a strategy for the business (Cronin-Gilmore, 2009).

The experience of the entrepreneurs is a key attribute in operating a small business. The more experience you are, the more knowledge you have. Some industries legally require experience in form of education, such as a pharmacist. The past of the working experience is also considered as an experience because similar situations were present, or it was the same field. Experience in operating a business was deemed an essential part of strengthening the business (Cronin-Gilmore, 2009). If the leaders have a high level of experience in their field, the more trust that business gains from the stakeholders.

Strategic planning is how business leaders establish goals, analyze any internal and external environments that may positively or negatively impact the business, and find ways to move the business in the right direction (Abdaklrim, 2013). Strategic leadership in the organization is also important. Leadership must have the ability to hire and mentor the right employees for set goals (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Participative leadership style inspires employee job satisfaction and increases an employee's performance by encouraging them to participate in a decision-making process (Ferraris, 2015).

2.4 Networking

Networking relationships is consisted of each party helping another party working together on a mutual project. Networking provides an opportunity for business growth. It increases connectivity with the marketplace, and that lack of networking could contribute to business failure (Turner, 2015). The good relationships that small business owners have with external organizations have the potential to assist in business growth, and survival (Street and Cameron, 2007). With a limited resource of small business, networking is a useful tool to build a relationship with the customers at cost

efficiency (Onyenego, 2004). Social media is an effective platform for enterprises to connect with customers to share business information, marketing, and customer service. The firm adopted social media to create a network among businesses, customers, and suppliers. The company that ties social networks with customers will be able to develop consumer trust that leads to high selling performance (Tajvidi and Karami, 2017).

2.5 Marketing

Marketing is an activity and a process for communicating that value of the products or services to the customers. It helps create awareness and value for the product. Brand awareness is vital as it is a foundation of the business. Consumers will not buy any products from the brand if they do not seem aware of your products before. Marketing creates value for the brand by letting the consumers know the solution to their pain point. And helps business owners analyze a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to gain competitive advantages (Gardner, 2019). Marketing involves research, branding, communication, and building a good relationship with customers. Marketing strategy must be created to meet customers' needs and differentiate yourself from the competition to gain a competitive advantage (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2014)

Nowadays, technology has a strong impact on the business. Leaders of the company must learn to use these online tools to reach potential customers. Social media marketing is the most important factor in business growth. The past study results showed that when small business owners invested in digital marketing, the result shows a positive outcome (Pai, 2017). Social media helps increase business exposure, traffic to the store with lower advertising costs. It also helps create a good relationship with the customer. Moreover, business owners also can take advantage of online technology to collect consumer data to gain information for the future marketing plan as well (Onyenego, 2004).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This paper uses a qualitative method to understand the key success factors of small clothing retail shop. The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with the foundation or partner of three retail clothing shops that become successful in their business. The qualitative method is the most suitable way to obtain all the information needed to answer the research question. It provides more insightful and in-depth detail of what are they doing to survive in the competitive market at least five years and still gain profit until now.

3.2 Data collection

To gain useful information, the criteria for selected interviewees is critical. This research focuses only on the small clothing retail shop that was established at least five years and continues its business until now. With this condition, all provided information should be reliable and practical to sustain the business and align with the definition of success that defined in chapter II. There are four people from three garment shops join an interview session in this paper. Below is an introduction of all participants.

Table3.1 Retail's brand profile

	Brand A	Brand B	Brand C
Established years	2015	2013	2013
Clothing style	Feminine	Simple with animal embroidery	High street
Price	2,000 - 3,600 THB	250 - 1,500 THB	500 - 3,000 THB
Physical store	-	Chatuchak market	Siam square Soi.2

	Brand A	Brand B	Brand C
Online store	Social media, Lazada, Shopee	Shopee	Official website
Facebook fans	51,933	6,204	339,895
IG followers	42,000	22,700	77,000
Avg. post per week	7 post per week	4 post per week	7 post per week
* Updated as of November 6, 2019			

3.2.1 Brand A

Brand A is a clothing shop established in 2015 and sells products on an online channel only. The price range of the brand is 2,000 -3,600 THB. Social media and LINE@ are the main contact points, but customers can buy products on Lazada and Shopee as well. Brand A offers clothes in feminine style with lace, bow, or puffy sleeves. The interview session with Brand A was conducted on October 8, 2019, at Scale coffee shop, Phutthamonthon Sai 2, near the owner's house. The duration of an interview is around one hour.

3.2.2 Brand B

Brand B is a clothing shop that was established in 2013. They sell their products on the Chatuchak weekend market. The physical shop is opened on Saturday and Sunday only, but the online store on Shopee is opened 24 hours. By the way, 70% of sales come from the store at Chatuchak. Brand B offers unisex clothes that can be wore both male and female. The signature of Brand B's apparel is an animal embroidery in every product, and it was recognized as a couples apparel. The price of Brand B starts at 250 -1,500 THB. The two founders of the brand were invited to join the interview session by the owner of Brand A. The meeting was held at Scale coffee shop on October 8, 2019. The duration of an interview is around one hour.

3.2.3 Brand C

Brand C was established in 2013. They start the business by buying all the clothes from the Platinum mall and resell them at the shop at Siam Square. With a good taste of fashion, all selected products look high fashion. The price they sell is lower than

big brands, so it is not hard for the brand to become popular. Today, they have their own designers and do all production in China and open an online shop in the past two years. The interviewee is a co-founder of the brand who does all operations at the backend. The meeting was held at her coffee shop, Scale coffee on Phutthamonthon Sai 2, on October 8, 2019. The duration of an interview is around twenty minutes.

3.3 Interview questions

The interview questions were developed to obtain specific answers based on the framework discussed in the literature review. The questions were designed as open-ended questions that allow a respondent to answer based on their complete knowledge, feeling, and understanding. Below is an interview guideline. The researcher will ask more detail when the answer was not cleared. Additionally, the researcher will guide the answer that was reviewed from the literature when the interviewee cannot think of the answer.

Table 3.2 Research questions

Framework	Question
Competitive advantage	1. Please tell me about your brand and a unique selling point that make you different from other brands? 2. What was the motivation to settle your own business? 3. What kind of strategy helped you rise above competitors?
Leadership	4. How do you prepare to become a small business owner? Any training or education? 5. What were the barriers you do business, and how to solve it? 6. How do you motivate your employees?
Networking	7. Do you have business partnerships or alliances? 8. How does it help you promote business?
Marketing	9. What strategies did you use to start this business? 10. How do you promote your business now?

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

After conducting an interview with all participants, there are five emergent themes that researcher identifies as a key success of clothing retail shop.

Theme1: Branding

All clothing can cover up the skin, but the people usually choose the brand and style that represent their character and personality. Branding adds value to the product and creates differentiation among competitors. According to the interview, all participants confident that the clothing of their brand is different from the other shops. The design is unique. The quality of the fabric is quite good compared to the price. Then branding can be considered as a strategic resource to gain a competitive advantage. It contains all characteristics of strategic resources, which are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (Balmer, 2004).

The owner of Brand C said that “Her brand started from buying all clothes from Platinum Mall, which is the big wholesale market in Bangkok. The cost of apparel at Platinum is quite cheap, especially when you buy as a wholesale. She mixes and matches the clothes that she buys from Platinum on a good-looking model and takes a photo. Then, she posts it on social media and sells it with a 3-5 times higher cost than she bought. She charges at a high price because the concept of her brand is every day is runway look, so all design of clothes in her shop looks like high street brands.” The answer of brand C shows that she applies branding concept. She adds the value to the Platinum clothes by taking a fashion shooting and communicating to the consumers. The purchasers perceive it as a value, so they are willing to pay a high price for Brand C.

The owner of brand A, she wants to own her brand. She starts with her passion for feminine style clothes. She found that her competitors offer a product at a high price because the production cost of this style of clothes is quite high. There are a

lot of details to produce this style of clothes. She realizes that this is an opportunity for her to do business. Based on the branding theory, Brand A was created for the women who love to dress in feminine style. She offers a sweet form of clothes to them with high quality, but affordable price compared to the competitors. This is how she captures the target market and differentiate herself from other competitors.

While Brand B offers a simple style of clothes, but the signature of brand B is an animal embroidery on every product. It is the value that brand B added to all garments. When its value matches the client's personality, they will buy products from Brand B.

Theme2: Leadership ability

Lacking knowledge could become a barrier to success in business (Fillis, 2015). The owner of Brand A supports this literature. She said that when she shared the design of the new collection to the garment factory, sometimes, her design has been rejected because her design is hard to produce. But the garment factory did not tell her the truth but said it is impossible to do that. Fortunately, the owner of brand A takes a course about fashion design and tailoring before. She has the knowledge to talk with the factory and success in her negotiation. She could believe from the supplier and could not launch her new collection if she lacks knowledge.

Brand B fails in strategic leadership. There are only three people who work in this brand, two founders, and one personal seller at Chatuchak, who works at the weekend only. The two owners of Brand B must do everything by themselves since product development and deliver online orders to the post office. They are working seven days a week for seven years since they start the business. If they want to travel, they have to close their shop or delay online delivery. The reason that they could not find anyone to work with them is the task that they assign to the employee and the location of the office at Phutthamonthon Sai 2. They hire an admin to operate stocks and prepare online delivery only. There is no opportunity to grow in the career path. Therefore, no one wants to work in this position. This is the reason why the ability to manage people is a threat to the growth of the business for Brand B.

On the other hand, if we remove the price factor, profit margin factor, and the number of orders per day factor. Brand A is doing better in terms of people management. There is a low turnover rate. The office of Brand A is located at Phutthamonthon Sai 2 as same as Brand B. Therefore, the location should not be a problem to find the new staff. The owner of Brand A said that all staff in her company must graduate in fashion design, even office admin. The role of admin in her company does not only check stocks and do an online delivery. They must do a marketing role. When there is a fashion shooting, the admin has an opportunity to propose the location and coordinator with external parties. So, there is a chance to share an opinion and growth in career paths that lead to job satisfaction (Ferraris, 2015). It also reduces the workload from the owner as well.

Theme3: Networking

All the participants agreed that networking helped promote business growth. The owner of brand A starts promoting the business without any investment in advertising. She opens the magazine and finds the editor's contact to present her brand to the magazines. She allows all magazines to borrow the clothes from her brand to makeup fashion shooting. She said that this is a win-win strategy. She can promote her brand, and the magazines save the budget to buy new clothes for a fashion shooting. During that period, the magazine still popular, and she got contact from celebrity managers to borrow her clothes. Her brand becomes popular after celebrities wore her clothes and post on Instagram. She keeps connecting with all persons that she coordinates with and sent the news update to them consistency. Brand A slightly grew and was recognized because of word of mouth that many celebrities wore her brand. The owner of brand A insists that she never pays for celebrities to promote her brand. However, if they like her clothes, she willing to give it for free to promote her brand.

Sometime networking would solve business problems, especially in Thailand. The working style of Thai people is collectivism. They are willing to help other people if you are their ally. The owner of brand B explains that before long holidays like Songkran or New year. They will launch a new collection as they know that people likely to buy new clothes to take a photo during the travel period. To do that,

the factory must produce the products and send all garments to them at least one week before a long holiday. However, the factory does not produce clothes for their brand only. It might be impossible to deliver all the orders they expect. The strategy is they use a good relationship to negotiate with the supplier to provide half of their orders before a long holiday. Therefore, Brand B has a new product launch and can deliver to the customers who pre-order in time.

Another case from Brand C is the failure of lacking good relationships with partners. Brand C hires a new merchandiser to deal with all suppliers. One day, the supplier that brand use for three years calls to the owner that they do not accept any orders from Brand C anymore. The reason is a new merchandiser pressure the supplier too much on a timeline, not flexible. In this case, the owner uses a good relationship to make the situation better. The small business does not have a high power to negotiate with the supplier. Therefore, all cases support the theory that having good networking and relationship would help assist in business survival and sustainable growth (Street and Cameron, 2007).

Theme4: Research

Market research helps entrepreneurs understand consumer behavior and market trend. Effectively utilize market research will lead to higher profit and competitive advantage (Pai, 2017). All participants support that they keep tracking the size of clothes that customers buy from them. This information could be useful for them to make a decision in the production process. For example, how many sizes S, M, and L that they should produce for each collection. They could lose the opportunity of sale or have many inventories left at stock If the owners order the wrong size from suppliers. Finally, profit might lower than expectation.

The owner of Brand A also mentions that she always observes what kind of characteristic of her customers. Brand A sells a product through the online channel only, so usually, clients contact her through direct messages on Facebook, Instagram, or LINE@. She has an opportunity to study her customers by looking at their social media profile that they contact with the brand. She can know information about her customers, such as gender, age, married status, education, or their lifestyle if their social media are

unlocked. She utilizes this data on advertising targeting, select the model that her clients follow, or what is the competitor brands that her client follows. Therefore, observation is the free market research tool that the business owners can use to understand their target market and make an adjustment on marketing strategy. Previously, she thought that her customers are female 20-25 years old, first jobbers. But when she looks at their profile, most of them are female age around 30 years old who already married and be a full-time housewife. Then, she adjusts online advertising targeting according to the knowledge she found. The result shows that with the same amount of investment on Facebook, she got a higher number of sales orders. Additionally, she tries to use a celebrity who is a young mom with a kid to promote her business. It also shows positive feedback from the customer as well. Therefore, market research would minimize investment risk to entrepreneurs.

Theme5: Marketing

Online marketing can increase brand awareness, change consumer's attitudes, and impact on buying decisions. When a small business invests budget in online marketing, the result will show a positive outcome (Pai, 2017). All participants support that advertising on Facebook and Instagram is necessary. The owner of Brand C said that they start a business without any networking help promote the business. They use only Facebook ad when starting the business, and every spending turns into a sale. The more you spend on advertising, the more sale orders you get. While Brand A said that she never uses social media advertising until the last three years that Facebook changes the algorithm and reduces the number of reaches on all Facebook pages. She notices that the engagement and sale orders are significantly dropped, so she decides using Facebook ad to reach more customers and drive sales. The result shows a positive outcome, there are more people ask for more information, and she gains more sales after investing in online marketing. Brand B also support that they gain more sale from the online channel after spending on Facebook ad. However, 70% of their sales come from the offline channel, so they do not pay on social media advertising too much. They focus on joining public events that allow online fashion shops in Thailand to sell their products offline in the same place. There are many kinds of this type of events such as Zaap on

sale, LOL market. Therefore, marketing is an essential tool to promote your business and gain sales.

By the way, how much to reach customers is essential, but the message that the brand communicates with customers is also important. For clothing retail, all participants agree that visual is the most important to attract customers. The interviewees said that they invest budget around 50,000 - 100,000 THB for fashion shooting to create beautiful images. Half of the budget is a model cost. When a good-looking model has worn your clothes, it generates product demand. When customers see it, they will need it.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to figure out the key success of clothing retail shop. The participants in this study were three success small clothing brands who operate the business for at least five years. The result shows the five factors contribute to the success of clothing shop: (a) branding, (b) ability of leadership, (c) networking (d) research (e) marketing strategy.

The first factor is branding. Every clothes are the same in terms of function, but branding makes it different. People decide to buy your product as it is unique and has a value that cannot find in other places. When starting the business, entrepreneurs must show the unique selling point that differentiates yourself among competitors and use marketing strategy to communicate it to the consumers.

The second factor is the ability of leadership. Usually, the leader of small businesses is the business owner. Knowledge and strategic thinking are essential skills. Knowledge is a source to gain competitive advantage, and strategy must be developed from the knowledge as well. These skills will lead the business in the right direction and solve the right problems.

The third factor is networking. The good relationships that small business owners have with other parties have the potential to assist in business growth and survival (Street and Cameron, 2007). It is unnecessary to have networking for the first time when starting a business. It can be built later. Networking can create a positive impact that helps entrepreneurs growth the market without payment. It can help entrepreneurs solve the problem if you have a good relationship with them. However, it also creates a negative impact on the brand as well. For example, when consumers found that product or service is awful. Word of mouth is easy to spread out, especially in the social media era. Therefore, keep a good relationship with all stakeholders is essential. Nowadays, social media is an essential platform to connect with customers. All brands

must keep updating their social media regularly because customers will lose trust if they see a brand's social media lack updates.

The fourth factor is research. The research will make entrepreneurs understand who their customers are, where they are, and how to reach them. Observation is a free tool that everyone can use. The entrepreneurs should observe what kind of characteristics of the customers, what they like, or dislike and adjust a marketing strategy according to their behavior. Additionally, finding and keep a statistic record would make would an entrepreneur gain a competitive advantage. For example, they should track the sizing of the customers or color that popular. Then use this data to analyze and decide the next step in the production part. It would reduce the risk of investment.

The fifth factor is the marketing strategy. Consumers will not be aware of your product if entrepreneurs do not communicate with them. The effective marketing strategy would create awareness of the brand and motivate target audiences to buy products. Nowadays, online marketing allows entrepreneurs to reach their target market at a lower cost compared to other media. By the way, the message that talks to the customer must be creative and attractive. A fashion photo shooting is a popular tool that all shops in this study use to promote their business. The photos will be used to show the product's catalog and can be used as a visual in advertising. In fashion retail, word of mouth is easy to be created, especially women's garments. It might be unnecessary for entrepreneurs to spend a lot of advertising budget if they an attractive visual to promote.

5.2 Recommendations

The entrepreneurs can apply the finding from this study in the business. Additionally, there are some recommendation for the retail clothing owners as follows.

5.2.1 Develop the brand

All clothes that business offers to the market must be crafted with uniquely identifies and value that customers could not find from other brands. Even though the product's design can be copied, but the value could not. The quality and price should be

different. Small businesses should focus on developing the brand from one product line to make a clear perception in the consumer 's mind. Once the brand was recognized, the consumer will trust the brand. At that time, entrepreneurs can do a brand extension by launching products related to clothes like shoes or accessories to gain more profit margin.

5.2.2 Keep learning

The entrepreneurs must keep updating the knowledge related to the business. For example, the trend of the industry, keep updating on the competitors and learning about your customers. Then apply the learning on your business strategy. Observation and articles on the books or internet are the easily accessible tools for learning.

In some topics, the specialist or expert can provide you in-depth knowledge. For example, how to design clothes, how to make clothes, or how to do online advertising. These courses will fulfill the knowledge of entrepreneurs. Additionally, the people who take the course will get to know the person who has the same interesting. It would be a great opportunity to create networking among the people who have the same interesting with you. This is a chance to exchange knowledge with other people and create a long-term relationship.

5.2.3 Go online

If the location of the physical store is excellent. The entrepreneurs would get benefit from a lot of walk-in traffic. However, there are free e-commerce platforms that allow business owners to use for free, like Shopee and Lazada. There are many discounts for the customers on Shopee, but for the shop's owner, you still receive money at the full price you set. These are free additional channels that entrepreneurs can sell the product and generate more revenue while Lazada charges you an additional fee when products were sold. For the shops that already sell online on social media, these marketplaces would be another channel for you. Rely on social commerce is very risky because social media account can be shut down without notice, and you will be lost all customers. When the business is big enough, the entrepreneurs can build their website later.

Additionally, if entrepreneurs consider doing advertising, online media is the best option. The cost of digital media is cheaper than other channels but effective in reaching potential customers. There is no minimum spending, but the more you spend, the more sales you get. Sometimes, online media does generate sales to entrepreneurs directly. It might create awareness of the store, intentions to purchase, or traffic at the offline stores. It depends on the advertising objective.

5.3 Limitations and future research

There are two limitations to this study. The First one is sample size, which consists of three small clothing shops only. One of them sells online-only, and the rest have a physical store in Bangkok. The type of garments is focused solely on female clothes, which not represent the perspective of all clothing shops. The second is time constraints from participants. The time is limited to collecting information. Future research could increase the number of sample sizes, including male garments, and expand to a more diverse geographic. Furthermore, focusing on specific themes discussed in this paper would provide more in-depth detail for the next research.

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