

**LEARNING CASE: WHAT FACTORS CAUSED THE GIGANTIC
CHINESE E-COMMERCE FAILURE ON THE ON-DEMAND
PLATFORM MARKET?**



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LEARNING CASE: WHAT FACTORS CAUSED THE GIGANTIC CHINESE E-COMMERCE FAILURE ON THE ON-DEMAND PLATFORM MARKET?

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ABSTRACT

This study found that even in a fast-paced industry that requires all players to think and act quickly, it can cost a company more than its profits, especially when entering a new market that is already crowded with aggressive competitors. This study argued that such a company came up with a new business idea and launched it into the market without thoroughly researching the market, and it demonstrated why they might fail with a thorough investigation with the relevant stakeholders. The goal of this study is to help readers understand how an unwise business model will cause companies to fail from the beginning to the end of the business, as well as to identify the key factors that will cause it to fail. The company that intended to compete in the e-commerce market but unintentionally ended up in the on-demand market.

This study used a qualitative research method. The primary instruments were in-depth interviews, as well as secondary data analysis for the relevant issues. There were four respondents for the in-depth interview, including two managers who are currently working on the team, one seller who is currently selling on the platform and one staff member who works at a competitor firm. Also, this study will use ShopeeFood as an example study with the same case scenario, which is an e-commerce firm that enters the on-demand platform market and how they differ from the firm in this case study. This study was conducted between June and August of 2022.

KEY WORDS: E-commerce platform / On-demand platform / New product development / Brand Management / Brand Positioning

35 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The rise of e-commerce is inevitable, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. Thailand's e-commerce market has grown rapidly and appears to have no plans to slow down. The online market has now increased its market share in Thailand's total market share of the retailer industry. The e-commerce market is regarded as a red ocean market, with each player attempting to win customers through promotions and marketing strategies. It appears that all companies are doing the same thing; however, if we look into the details, we can see that all of them are attempting to differentiate themselves from others; however, the digital world is a fast-paced environment in which everyone must constantly adjust and strengthen.

In a world of intense competition, technology drives opportunities all over the world, allowing businesses to thrive by developing new products. It may not be about profit alone, but about surviving, which can be considered the key success factor for business. Improving and developing new products is regarded as an important source of the company in order to gain a competitive advantage. (Owens, 2000). The market players are not only competing with promotions and deals offered to customers, but also with the innovative function beyond competitors. In a red ocean market like this, if a company is not an innovator but wants to enter a highly competitive market, they must carefully research the market, identify the customers' pain points, and respond to them. Even so, in order to survive, especially in the e-commerce industry, companies must think and act like start-ups. They cannot afford to waste time in this fast-paced industry, or they will be left behind. However, with an unclear position and a current business that is not yet strong and secure in the market, the firm may waste a lot of money and lose investor trust by entering a new market.

This study will concentrate on a major e-commerce platform, which is regarded as one of Thailand's "top three" e-commerce companies, a joint venture

between China's second largest e-commerce platform and Thailand's largest retail firm, has entered on-demand delivery services that provide instant delivery within one hour. The in-app platform has been officially launched since September 2021, with the goal of pursuing market share from strategic competitors such as Lazada and Shopee. The service firstly prioritized the fast moving consumer goods sector before broadening to other categories. (Leesa-Nguansuk 2022). Entering the on-demand market appears to be a wise move for the firm because it provides more services than competitors, giving its sellers the opportunity to expand the market as well. However, nearly a year after the in-app platform has been launched, it does not appear to improve the company's performance at all, and it even costs more because it requires the company to invest more on campaigns to promote this on-demand delivery platform. The e-commerce and on-demand delivery platform markets are completely contradictory. The case study will show readers how a gigantic e-commerce platform might fail in an on-demand delivery platform right from the start. The analysis will be based on business insights from relevant stakeholders to demonstrate how lack of preparation can cost the company.

1.2 Industry Background

Shopee and Lazada are well-known players in Thailand's e-commerce market, and large traditional retailers like Central Group have also entered the e-commerce market under the name Central Online. According to the research, the most visited e-commerce sites are Lazada (44.9 million monthly visitors) and Shopee (30.1 million monthly visitors), two of Thailand's most popular e-commerce platforms. Central Online (1.2 million monthly visitors) and JD Central rank second and third, respectively, for interested platforms (1.2 million monthly visitors). (Changwei Yang 2022)

Shopee, Lazada, and JD Central are the three firms that are regarded as the "big three" in Thailand's e-commerce industry. Lazada had the largest revenue in 2021 (14.6 billion baht), and they were the only one of the top three to start turning a profit (226 million baht) after losing 3.9 billion baht last year. In contrast, JD Central and Shopee continued their losses, with losses of 1.93 billion baht and 4.9 billion baht, respectively. (Leesa-Nguansuk 2022)

Table 1.1 "Big three" in Thailand's e-commerce industry

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Lazada								
Revenue	3,197	4,266	1,757	8,162	9,413	10,011	14,675	51,484
Profit/Loss	-1,958	-2,115	568	-2,645	-3,707	-3,988	226	-13,620
Shopee								
Revenue	0.008	0.056	139	165	1,986	1,986	13,322	21,426
Profit/Loss	-211	-528	-1,404	-4,113	-4,745	-4,170	-4,972	-20,146
JD Central								
Revenue			0.522	458	1,254	3,491	7,443	12,648
Profit/Loss			-3	-944	-1,342	-1,375	-1,930	-5,596

Source: Bangkok Post 2022

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2322714/lazada-shopee-jd-central-rack-up-losses-to-gain-users>

While on-demand delivery service market refers to an online marketplace where customers have immediate access to products and services. (Arslan 2019). Orders could be received within a few hours. Domestic sellers such as restaurants, supermarkets and groceries stores are progressively investing in technology to improve different elements of their operations, including client base expansion, infrastructure development, and people training. There are on-demand platforms such as Grab, Foodpanda, and Lineman not only provide food delivery but also other related services such as groceries delivery, which focuses on supermarket and mom-and-pop shop shopping with instant delivery. Even the massive e-commerce company Shopee has entered the on-demand market with Shopeefood, and it appears to be one of the most promising players to watch in this market.

1.3 Objectives

The goal of this study is to help readers understand how an unwise business model will cause companies to fail from the beginning to the end of the business and to clarify what the key factors of its failure are. This study will also serve as a guideline for how to be successful as a consultant when designing a new business model that assists a specific firm in achieving its goal, as well as for start-up entrepreneurs on how to prepare when deciding to start a new business and organizations that want to enter a new market, particularly the on-demand platform market in Thailand. This study will cover the core business lessons such as Cultural Management, Strategic Management,

Marketing, and Managing People in Organizations in order to visualize how these management lessons can be applied in the case study in this research study.

This study used a qualitative research method. The primary instruments were in-depth interviews, as well as secondary data analysis for the relevant issues. There were four respondents for the in-depth interview, including two managers who are currently working on the team, one seller who is currently selling on the platform and one staff member who works at a competitor firm. Also, this study will use ShopeeFood as an example study with the same case scenario, which is an e-commerce firm that enters the on-demand platform market and how they differ from the firm in this case study. This study was conducted between June and August of 2022.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 New product development

Product Development refers to the series of tasks that start with the identification of a market opportunity and end with the production, marketing, and delivery of a product or service.

There are three major functions for product development.

- Marketing - The activities that establish a connection between a business and the customers, such as market segmentation, customer needs analysis, and opportunity identification for new products or services. Additionally, the company's communication tool with customers aids in setting goals and creating effective product promotions.
- Design - The process of defining the form of a product or service to meet the needs of customers. It relates to platform mechanics, system and user interfaces in this study.
- Manufacturing - The function that combines the design, operation, and coordination of the manufacturing system to produce the finished product or service. It also comprises purchasing, activating, and installing. (Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang 2020)



Source: Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang, 2020

Figure 2.1 Product Development Process

Product Development Process refers to the process by which a company comes up with, designs, and commercializes a product or service. The NPD process is critical for the creation of goods that meet the demands of industrial customers and

differentiate a firm from its competitors. (Magdalena. 2017). To successfully launch new products or services that lead to the company's goals and achievements, it is critical to have a structured and organized process that provides a clear roadmap for the development of new products and services. (Owens, 2000). Moreover, in order to gain a competitive advantage, the company must be able to manage its technology efficiently and effectively. The NPD process is also defined as the steps that assist the firm in transforming ideas, market possibilities, and a set of assumptions about a certain technology into a marketable product.

The process begins with determining the customer's needs. Customer requirements are problems for which customers are looking for solutions in the form of products or services. It is also the heart of all successful firms, as it is the reason why customers prefer them over competitors. Gathering data from customers assists the firm in widening its opportunity; it will assist the firm in establishing product or service specifications. The method strives to comprehend consumer requirements and establish a thorough understanding of the target market. Second, establishing target specifications. Development teams create a set of specifications to offer specific direction on how to design and construct a product or service. These requirements lay out in exact, quantifiable detail what the product must accomplish to be commercially successful. The requirements must represent the demands of the consumer, differentiate the product from competitors. The following process involves product generation and selection of product concepts; it begins with a pattern of customer needs and target specifications that will form the product or service concept before proceeding to the final selection phase. The firm will then be able to analyze those concepts in terms of alignment with customer needs and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each concept. (Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang 2020).

After completing the concept selection, the firm must test the concept with potential customers in the specific market. (Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang 2020). Concept testing must be properly scoped in order to manage costs efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, the company must be aware of the project's risks. The company must identify and structure a risk management process that includes all relevant stakeholders to ensure that there are solutions in place to address potential risks. The concept testing process will help the firm ensure that the products or services work as intended and are

validated in the eyes of the customers. (Pienaar, Cornelia & Van der LIngen, Elma & Preis, Eugene. 2019)

To summarize, firms must conduct research in order to precisely identify customer needs and quickly enter the market with products that can meet those needs with cost effectively and efficiently. However, it may not be solely dependent on marketing strategy; it is a combination of marketing, problem design, and manufacturing or implementing the products or services. Product development that is successful should result in a product or service that can be sold profitably. (Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang 2020).

2.2 Brand Management

A company's brand is one of its most valuable assets, especially when it is well associated with its products or services. The stronger the brand, the easier it is for the company to make decisions, reduce risk, and achieve its goals. Brand management will help to strengthen a brand's ability to deliver on its promises and maintain its strength over time. A brand is a name, sign, symbol, or design that is associated with products or services in order to differentiate them from competitors. However, many marketing experts claim that the brand is something that generates awareness, reputation, and is memorable.

“The new competition is not between what companies produce in their factories but between what they add to their factory output in the form of packaging, services, advertising, customer advice, financing, delivery arrangements, warehousing, and other things that people value.” - Harvard’s Ted Levitt

Therefore, a brand is a powerful tool for creating value for both businesses and customers. It connects functional and emotional values that customers will perceive. A strong brand will attract the attention of all relevant stakeholders, including customers and other parties such as business partners, and many others. It has a special meaning for customers because it is a tool that they can easily evaluate when making purchasing decisions. Branding is something that differentiates a company from others in the eyes of customers. It is not always about a well-chosen name or logo because customers are emotionally attached to its success, making it difficult to bring success and maintain the

brand. Branding will assist companies in becoming more appealing, attracting consumers' attention to their products and services in a specific market. Thus, a brand is something that will create a bond and relationship between a company and its customers, with customers willing to trust and be loyal to the brand because the two share similar traits or personalities. Similarly, consistent product performance and appropriate other marketing tools such as promotions will increase customer satisfaction from product or service consumption, causing customers to repurchase from the company.

Customers use brands to represent themselves, or in other words, they use a specific brand to portray themselves. Different brands have different values or characteristics that will appeal to a specific group of customers; this is the relationship between brands and customers. It has special meanings that reflect one's perception and self-image. Customers have many options today, and there will be even more in the future; however, brands will help simplify customers' choices by lowering risk and increasing the value of the products or services consumed.

Brands will create a strong image and serve as the firm's reputation in terms of business activities. It is a good faith commitment to the business partner to expand the greater opportunities as well as the company's profitability. It will assist the company in gaining a competitive advantage. It not only attracts customers' attention, but also that of other external stakeholders who want to be a part of a strong business, which can influence their brand image. A strong brand will attract the attention of all relevant stakeholders, including customers and other parties such as business partners, and many others. (Keller 2013)

2.3 Brand Management Process

The key to brand building is when a brand is seen differently from other brands in a certain product category. Naming the product with a distinctive and valuable meaning that will set it apart from competition. There are four processes for managing a brand.

1.) Identifying and Developing Brand Plans

The firm must clearly understand the brand in order to position itself in relation to competitors, which will help the firm visualize how to develop long-term brand planning.

2.) Designing and Implementing Brand Marketing Programs

When beginning to design, a combination of brand elements can be used as an initial starter. Then, create marketing campaigns and supporting activities that correspond to the designed plan. Marketing activities must be relevant to the brand's direction. The firm is required to design the brand in relation to what the brand is supposed to position in the minds of customers.

3.) Measuring and Interpreting Brand Performance

The ability to measure from short-term to long-term is required in order to develop appropriate tactics and strategies. It will assist the firm in periodically adjusting their own tactics to align with the designed planning.

4.) Growing and Sustaining Brand Equity

Growing and sustaining branding strategies necessitates the firm's awareness of and ability to adjust over time in order to sustain branding management strategies. Any changes to marketing activities will result in long-term marketing programs. (Keller 2013)

2.4 Branding and Digital Platform

Branding is even more important in the service sector because it helps customers understand the nature of the services. It will improve the various services provided by the specific firms. (Keller 2013) Take, for example, Grab, which offers a variety of on-demand services such as Grabtaxi, Grabmart, Grabexpress, and so on. In the service sector, branding is an effective way to represent the firm's vision toward their expertise under their name. Many companies have failed to promote their brands because they only focused on brand awareness in the eyes of customers and not on what the brand truly represents. The company must provide valuable reasons why customers should choose them over others. During the brand development process, the company must critically create differentiated aspects that customers value the most, such as price,

time, or convenience. They must also concentrate on other important aspects of extra services such as customer service and after-sales services. Successful brands typically position themselves in innovative ways to satisfy their customers by offering appealing features and services, rather than relying on uncontrollable factors like word-of-mouth or heavily invested marketing campaigns. (Keller 2013)

2.5 Brand Awareness

In the process of building brand equity, brand awareness is linked to brand image. The firm must carefully select brand elements in order to create brand awareness in the minds of customers. Customers will be more likely to purchase if they are aware of the brand. Customers are unlikely to stick with a single brand, but will instead consider several options on the market. Customers will consider brands with which they are familiar. Brand awareness enhances the likelihood of being included in the set of considered brands. Customers can easily switch to other competitors in the digital business world, so well-established brands will easily go to customers' consideration choices.

2.6 Establishing Brand Awareness

Increasing brand awareness entails increasing visibility, which makes the brand more familiar. It will increase the likelihood of customers seeing, hearing, and thinking about the brand, and as a result, they will be more likely to remember the brand. Thus, repeating exposure to brand elements as well as marketing activities such as advertisement, campaign, promotion, or public relations will most likely increase customer brand awareness. (Keller 2013)

Foodpanda Thailand, for example, has appointed "Pau-Pau," an animated character, as their brand ambassador. This character is designed to easily engage people in order to create long-term brand value for customers. The character appears in advertisements across all platforms, including television commercials and social media. Pau-Pau's character is clear in terms of its purpose, which is linked to the company's

objectives, which aim to target the young generation, Gen Y and Gen X, and create the linkage between the brand and target customers. (Makmek 2022).

Although repeating brand elements increases the likelihood of recognition, it also necessitates links between the brand and the products or services. Brand elements such as logos, symbols, or characters can be designed to achieve high recognition. As the marketing team attempts to bridge the gap between its product or service category and the brand. Customers should, ideally, think of a specific brand when they think of a specific category. It is necessary to establish a strong link through strong marketing programs that will strengthen the connection between the brand and its category. It is critical in the long run when the company considers changing its brand, such as expanding, merging, or forming a joint venture with partners. (Keller 2013).

2.7 Brand positioning

Brand positioning is a critical component of marketing strategy. It refers to the design of what the company offers and how the company's image is projected in the minds of the customers. It is the designed location where it will be placed in the target customers where they will be satisfied with their consumption, maximizing the firm's profit. A good strategy will guide the firm on how to design its marketing strategy and clarify on its vision of where they want to announce themselves in the market and where they stand among their competitors in the market. (Keller 2013).

Brand positioning development refers to the planned location of the brand in the consumer's mind. Marketing research will assist the company in the development of its brand positioning. They will receive accurate information that will assist the company in determining the brand statement and clarifying internal objectives.

There are several components to developing brand positioning, which are as follows:

- Determining the target market
- Understanding the current perceptions of the brand and competitors in the target market
- Understanding the frame of reference — from the perspective of the target market

- Identifying the brand's distinctiveness.
- Identifying the most compelling selling points for the target audience.
- Position statements are being tested.
- Making certain that positioning materials are consistent with the communication strategy.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty will improve with a strong brand position. Sales will be made at a lower cost. Brand positioning is a fundamental marketing strategy that should be aligned with the overall strategy of the organization. (Semans 2009-2010)



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Method

The primary instrument for the qualitative method was in-depth interviews. There were four respondents for the in-depth interview, including two managers who are currently working on the team, one seller who is currently selling on the platform and one staff member who works at a competitor firm. Also, this study used ShopeeFood as an example study with the same case scenario, which is an e-commerce firm that enters the on-demand platform market and how they differ from the firm in this case study.

The in-depth interviews for this study were designed to cover all stakeholders' perspectives on the platform, with questions tailored to each stakeholder's role. However, the interview theme would conceptualize platform performance, including in-app operation performance, user experience, branding, and business insights from the management team from both platform managers and sellers who operated on the platform. The interviews took place between June 3rd to July 26th, 2022.

3.2 Interview details and Interviewee's information

3.2.1 Company's managers

According to the interviewees' request for confidentiality and privacy, they would prefer to be identified as Manager A and Manager B.

1) *Manager A* has been with the company since 2019 as a business development executive and has started working as a business development manager in the instant delivery business in 2021. The primary responsibilities include planning and strategizing in the selection and recruitment of potential sellers into the platforms. The

interview took place on 20 June 2022 and was conducted online via Zoom as a communication tool.

Interview Questions for Manager A

- 1.) What is your role and key responsibilities?
- 2.) Can you tell me about the background of the “Instant Delivery” business of your company?
- 3.) Why partnering with Panda?
- 4.) What are the strategies to recruit sellers?
- 5.) Who are the sellers you are looking for? Why?
- 6.) Can you describe the function of your instant delivery platform?
- 7.) What are the marketing strategies to attract customers?
- 8.) Who are your target customers?
- 9.) Who are your major competitors?
- 10.) Are you facing any obstacles managing “Instant Delivery” platform?

2) **Manager B**, who has been working as a merchandising manager for the company in the instant delivery business since July 2021. The major responsibilities include developing strategies to manage the department's key account and SMEs portfolio in order to maximize sales and profits for the company. Also, to develop a strategy for pursuing higher gross merchandise value, as well as to match and categorize campaigns and sellers. Finally, planning for solutions to assist sellers. The interview took place on 24 June 2022 and was conducted online via Zoom as a communication tool.

Interview Questions for Manager B

- 1.) What is your role and key responsibilities?
- 2.) Can you tell me about the background of the “Instant Delivery” business of your company?
- 3.) What are the strategies to manage sellers?
- 4.) Can you describe the function of your instant delivery platform?
- 5.) What are the marketing strategies to attract customers?
- 6.) Who are your target customers?
- 7.) How much is the campaign budget? And what is the platform sales per month?

- 8.) How do you design marketing campaigns?
- 9.) What category has the highest sales on the platform?
- 10.) Who are your major competitors?
- 11.) Are you facing any obstacles managing “Instant Delivery” platform?

3.2.2 Seller

Food Promart has been in business for over ten years, specializing in fresh and frozen foods which they are importing from Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and many other countries. Food Promart has been a part of the "Instant Delivery" platform since 2021. Ms. Ben, the interviewee, works as an online marketing manager, where she is in charge of planning and strategizing in the online market in order to drive sales toward the company's goals. In addition, to explore additional online distribution channels. The interview took place on 26 July 2022 and was conducted as a written email.

Interview Questions for Seller

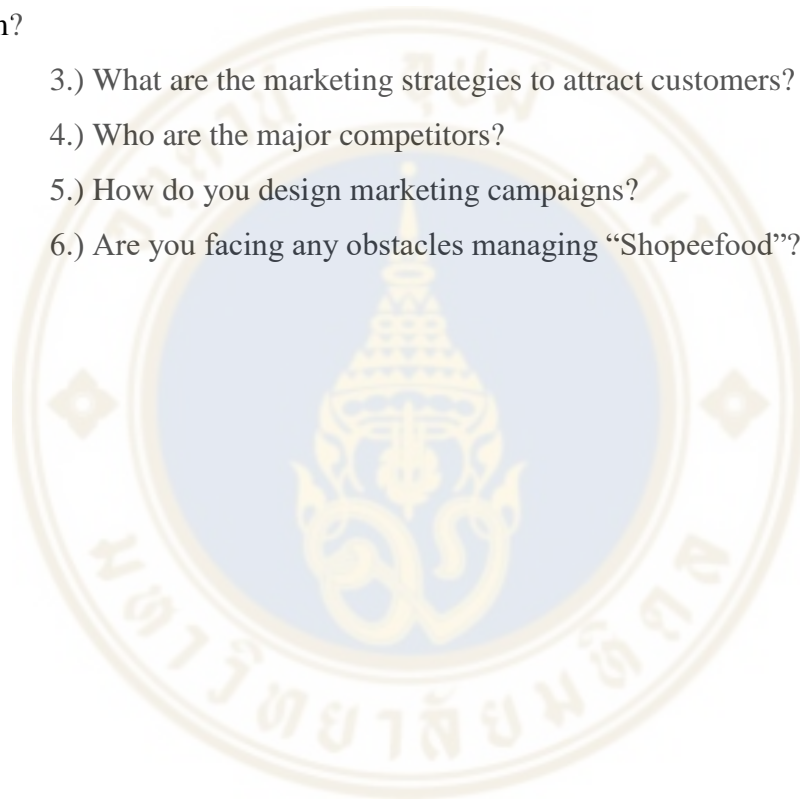
- 1.) What kind of products do you sell, and how long have you been in business?
- 2.) What is your role and key responsibilities?
- 3.) What are the reasons why you choose to operate on this platform?
- 4.) How long have you been operating in this instant delivery platform?
- 5.) What is your average sales per month on this platform?
- 6.) What is/are your preferred on-demand platform? Why?
- 7.) Can you describe a good on-demand delivery platform?
- 8.) What do you think about this “Instant Delivery” platform?
- 9.) What would you recommend for this platform?
- 10.) Have you joined any campaigns on this platform? Was conversion good?

3.2.3 Shopeefood Staff

Mr. Chanon Visuthjaree has been a key account associate at Shopeefood for one year. The primary responsibility is to increase the sales of key partners on the Shopeefood platform. The interview took place on 26 July 2022 and was conducted online via Zoom as a communication tool.

Interview Questions for Shopeefood Staff

- 1.) What is your role and key responsibilities?
- 2.) How does the “Shopeefood” platform relate to the “E-commerce” platform?
- 3.) What are the marketing strategies to attract customers?
- 4.) Who are the major competitors?
- 5.) How do you design marketing campaigns?
- 6.) Are you facing any obstacles managing “Shopeefood”?



CHAPTER IV

FINDING ANALYSIS

The interview began with two managers who have been working for the instant delivery team since the beginning, and insight information was obtained during the session about how they launched this platform from the beginning. In addition, an interview session was held with other stakeholders, such as sellers who have been experienced in many platforms, to hear their thoughts on the platform. Furthermore, to compare with a competitor who has a similar pattern of entering the on-demand platform market. The following finding analysis will show what types of factors cause failure on the platform.

4.1 The background of “Instant Delivery Platform”

How did the platform start?

The instant delivery platform was founded with the intention of differentiating itself from competitors such as Shopee and Lazada. Given that their competitors' e-commerce platforms and standard delivery services typically take 1-3 days to deliver to customers, how about delivering to them in one hour? The team was then formed to run the instant delivery platform. The platform's concept began with an e-commerce with 1-hour delivery, with the project launching in Bangkok before expanding to other provinces. They intended to use riders to deliver for them and decided to partner with Delivery Hero Thailand, which currently operates their own on-demand platforms such as Foodpanda, Pandago, and Pandamart. Pandago is the service sector acquired from Delivery Hero Thailand, in which a rider will pick up products and deliver them to customers.

They recruited the first batch of sellers from their own database who were already selling on their e-commerce platform. However, one of the issues they were having was that most sellers who sell on e-commerce platforms stock their products at

their warehouse or the company warehouse, and the majority of the warehouses are located outside of Bangkok. So, they needed to establish seller recruitment criteria, such as sellers who could join having a store in Bangkok. According to Manager A, the majority of sellers they recruited were supermarket, minimart, and freshmart because their platform features matched more with FMCG products and the majority of sales came from supermarket sellers.

Who are the major competitors and target customers?

The company's Instant Delivery platform was created to initially compete with their major competitors in the e-commerce market but after figuring it out that their platform is more suitable for groceries market then they shifted the focus to the players like Grab, Panda and Lineman. According to Manager A and Manager B, they want to focus on both markets which are e-commerce and on-demand delivery markets as they are pursuing the market shares from two different markets.

Manager B claimed that their target customers are 25-45 years old with a shopping lifestyle and high purchasing power, which is a similar target group to their e-commerce platform. Manager A also stated that they want to focus on their existing customers by encouraging them to use their instant delivery service. However, given the platform's current performance, he stated that they are unable to select a clear target customer, which is why they are focusing on all potential customers, including existing customers from the e-commerce platform, customers in the e-commerce market who demand instant delivery, and customers in the online groceries delivery market.

How is the in-app operation process?

The in-app operation procedure was entirely based on their e-commerce platform system. With its own icon, the instant delivery platform icon was located within the main platform interface.

(See Figure 4.1). The instant delivery platform interface looked similar to e-commerce platforms which were only different in color. (See Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.1 The instant delivery platform interface



Figure 4.2 E-commerce platforms

Every function and feature was similar to e-commerce, but they managed sellers separately, which means that if the platform's current sellers want to join the instant delivery platform, they must sign a new contract. Furthermore, all coupon discounts, member points, and other related promotions could be applied cross-functionally. Managers were also asked how they developed campaign and promotion criteria. They simply use e-commerce logic, which means they did not design the campaigns and promotions but will obtain them from the e-commerce platform because they did not have authorization to do so.

Moreover, according to Manager B, because the instant delivery platform system is based on an e-commerce system, several necessary on-demand platform functions do not exist, such as a comment box where customers can make an on-demand request when ordering to customize the foods and beverages orders, such as the level of sweetness or spiciness.

How did they promote their new platform?

The primary communication channels for the instant delivery platform are the Facebook fanpage and the Line Official account, which are used to communicate with customers and promote campaigns. There are 451 likes on the page (updated 20th June 2022).

Following the official launch, they use the major Facebook account on the e-commerce platform, which has 573k likes. With such a large disparity in the number of likes, they would use the main account to help promote each campaign in order to attract new users to the platform. During the campaign, they would also provide sellers with a discount subsidy of up to 50% and create artworks, which they would then let sellers post on their channels. They attempted to bring consumers through the seller channels while also gaining visibility through other channels as much as possible. Manager A claims that by displaying their platform icon on the homepage, they hope to attract the attention of existing customers as their first target group of customers. The instant delivery platform icon is located on the second interface of the e-commerce application (see Figure 4.1), which requires more than a click to see the instant delivery platform icon, and the name under the logo is "1H Delivery".

Furthermore, for offline marketing, they promote the platform by sending staff to restaurants such as Moo-Kra-Ta (BBQ pork restaurants) and Shabu restaurants,

where staff would advise consumers about the platform and offer special discounts if they registered and ordered something right away. Manager A, on the other hand, claimed that while it appeared to be effective in terms of gaining new customers since the traffic in the restaurants is crowded, they rarely returned and repurchased after that day. In addition, they occasionally have marketing booths in shopping malls that offer coupons, free gifts, and discounts on purchases.

What is the company's marketing budget for the instant delivery platform?

Manager A admitted that the budget for promoting the platform through online channels is too low, and the company expects to profit too quickly, which is unlikely given the nature of a start-up business.

"Our Instant Delivery platform has about 20 campaigns per month," said Manager B. She stated that the campaign's budget is around 100,000 THB per month and that they can generate sales of around 200,000 THB per month. This is the total budget for online marketing campaigns, which consists entirely of campaigns and promotions, with the remainder going to offline marketing events such as booths in shopping malls and sending staff to restaurants.

What are the challenges?

According to platform managers, who admitted that they manage their businesses in a Chinese manner and that they lack Thailand's market vision. For example, in China, the online market has reached its maximum capacity, the online traffic is already overloaded and cannot expand, so they decided to shift to offline marketing as their main strategy, which they applied in Thailand; however, in Thailand, the online market still has high potential and is still growing, so reducing the online methods only limits the platform's ability to grow further. There is no money set aside for online marketing.

Then, in April 2022, a layoff occurs. The team was reduced from more than ten people to three people, who are recently working on the instant delivery platform team. On that particular day, 200 employees were laid off in Thailand headquarters. Manager A stated that all pending tasks needed to be put on hold for a while due to a lack of staff. The remaining three people are overburdened because they must handle all of the tasks.

Last but not least, there have been reports that Thailand's largest retailer group will pull out of the joint venture. Manager A confirmed that it is true. The company's status will change from joint venture to wholly owned by a Chinese e-commerce company, and its name will change accordingly.

What is the seller's point of view?

According to Ms. Ben, Food Promart's online marketing manager, who has been working with many online platforms to drive sales through various channels. The total monthly sales they can make on this instant delivery platform are around 20,000 THB. So far, their preferred channel for generating the most sales is Grab. She stated that the instant delivery platform system is complicated and that many procedures are required to operate the back-end. Furthermore, the firm should improve in several functions such as delivery option service, which allows sellers to arrange the delivery process themselves, which sellers normally do not want because it can confuse their staff, and stock management system, which requires sellers to update the number of stock for each item in real time (similar to e-commerce platform system), which is complicated when applied to on-demand platforms such as the instant delivery platform. Furthermore, the ideal platform for K. Ben is that the platform functions and system are simple to manage, allowing sellers to operate their back-end smoothly, especially for fresh markets or supermarkets with a large number of SKUs to manage.

How does the competitor do?

Shopee, a direct competitor in the e-commerce market that has also entered the on-demand platform market as "Shopeefood." Mr. Chanon, a key account associate, stated that Shopee has a similar idea to apply the e-commerce system to the on-demand platform, but only some functions have been implemented. The core back-end system remains unchanged, but they customized the various methods to fit their food delivery platform. They redesign the system required by their new platform. It is also an in-app platform linked to the main app, Shopee.

Similar to the company in the case, Shopeefood's first target customer is the e-commerce platform's current customers, and their food delivery platform is located on the first page of their main app to gain high visibility from Shopee customers. "The daily active Shopee users can see very easily" - Mr. Chanon. This strategy aided them in rapidly establishing a strong customer base. In terms of marketing, they have researched

competitor platforms for promotion discounts in order to offer customers a better discount rate and gain a large market share in a short period of time. They also provide a co-funded voucher, which allows sellers to collaborate to provide add-on discounts, allowing the platform to offer even better deals than other platforms. Because they will provide greater visibility to the participating sellers. They also have a campaign that offers a 99% discount to new ShopeeFood users. Mr. Chanon mentioned that there is only one competitor with whom they are attempting to compete, and that is Grabfood. Foodpanda and Lineman are two other direct competitors in the market.

ShopeeFood's marketing campaign pattern is similar to that of their e-commerce platform; however, they will focus more on categories and brand promotions. The category campaign will be based on each type of food, such as beverages week, which will concentrate on beverages such as coffee, milk tea, and so on. Second, brand promotion will be focused on the brand, allowing brands to participate more in the co-founded deal and gain more visibility (as mentioned above). Finally, they have mega campaigns similar to the e-commerce platform, but the campaign mechanics are tailored to their food delivery platform.

Shopee appears to have done better in designing their new platform. They have clear objectives and properly divide functions for each of their platforms. They are precise in how they design marketing campaigns in order to offer the best deal in the market. Because of their strong brand name, they have leverage when negotiating with top brands in the restaurant market, attracting more and more players to participate in co-funded deals or joint promotions. The offer of increased visibility is appealing because Shopee communicates its brand name extensively in the market. Partnering with such a well-known company appears to be a wise move for many restaurants looking to enter the online market.

Shopee's image is strong, and it serves as the firm's reputation. Because the company is well-known for campaign activities such as collecting coupons and discount vouchers. According to Keller (2013), this creates a commitment to the business partner to expand the company's profitability as well as the company's opportunities. It will help the business gain a competitive advantage. It not only catches the attention of customers, but also of other external stakeholders who want to be a part of a strong business that can influence their brand image. As a result, ShopeeFood can gain a significant

competitive advantage in a relatively short period of time. Finally, they clearly differentiate between two platforms, despite the fact that they use the same core system but operate differently. ShopeeFood performance is unrelated to Shopee; it is an independent platform that can develop its own marketing strategies and implement some of the main platform's marketing campaigns.

4.2 Analysis: Why the company's "Instant Delivery Platform" might fail?

Poor design of New product development process

In a highly competitive market, on-demand delivery platforms must study consumer pain points through competitor platforms and design and provide user friendly interfaces. Strong competitors such as Grabmart and Pandamart have heavily invested in technology and have adapted their on-demand function to provide the highest level of customer satisfaction. On the other hand, in this case, the company did nothing; they simply applied what they had and used it right away, without regard for users. Customers will quickly switch to competitors.

A good new product development strategy should include three major functions. The first is marketing, which necessitates market analysis. Second, design, the firm should design the form of product or service to meet the needs of the customers. Third, manufacturing, which is the combination of design and operations. The process begins with determining the customer's needs. The first step in developing a new product is identifying the needs of the customers in order to provide something that is superior to competitors. Customer requirements are problems for which customers are looking for solutions in the form of products or services. (Ulrich, Eppinger & Yang 2020)

The platform was founded on the idea of differentiating itself from its competitors; however, it was not founded on focusing on the platform's overall strengths and. It was not founded on the basis of market research. The company's e-commerce platform appears to be falling behind in terms of sales and growth (Leesa-Nguansuk 2022), so they wanted to do something to outperform its competitors, but the cost of running a completely new platform was prohibitively expensive. They did not conduct thorough research, that is why they needed to shift to the on-demand platform market

which meant that their competitors had changed as well. To conclude, there was no proper research conducted by the company to determine whether the customer truly requires instant delivery when shopping on an e-commerce platform. According to the interviewees, the products category that customers require instant delivery is FMCG products.

Furthermore, when inventing a new service that already exists in the market, the firm must be certain that their new product is innovative and can provide concrete solutions to customers; otherwise, the new product is not solid enough in the eyes of customers; in this case, the firm failed to identify the customer's needs due to an ineffective new product development process and market research. With the nature of the tech business, such as e-commerce, there should be an agile nature where everything moves quickly, a fast pace-environment, but because the firm is considered to be large on a global scale, when they start to run the business with the attachment to the main business, the change is very difficult, which is contrary to how this business should be. Besides that, it appears that the firm failed to design the proper system that corresponds with their instant delivery platform because they applied the entire e-commerce system without noticing the unnecessary functions. There are some unnecessary functions for the instant delivery platform when using the entire system from the e-commerce platform, for example, according to Ms. Ben, Food Promart's online marketing manager, the stock management system that requires seller to monitor stock in real time which is unnecessary for the on-demand business and the seller who has to deal with other several platforms, they do not have time to manage it and there is no single on-demand platform that have such a stock management system.

Unclear Brand positioning

Managers claim that their platform wants to focus on every potential customer in both the e-commerce and on-demand markets. They want to gain market share in both markets, so they've mixed up competitors and customers. It is difficult to focus on both markets because they have very different promotion and campaign strategies. For example, Shopee and Lazada have always held double-digit campaigns as their mega campaigns, such as the June 6th campaign, which will be 6.6, or the July 7th campaign, which will be 7.7, and so on. According to platform managers, in order to compete in the e-commerce market, their instant delivery platform must also conduct

mega campaigns like these. On the other hand, they still have to concentrate on the on-demand market, which is held on a daily basis. ShopeeFood, for example, focuses on food category discounts, new users, and brand discounts, which are completely different from the e-commerce side. Although this instant delivery platform is more likely to be an on-demand platform, their promotions and campaigns are very similar to those of an e-commerce platform. In an on-demand market, this means they lose their competitive advantage.

One thing they still lack is a clear brand positioning, as they are unsure of which group of customers or market they are aiming for. This demonstrates that they did not design their positioning from the beginning because they did not determine the target market and did not understand the current perceptions of the brand and competitors in the target market, which are the first two components to developing brand positioning, according to Semans 2009-2010. If the firm plans well on brand positioning strategy from the start, it will be able to create marketing strategy and clarify on where they want to declare themselves in the market. (Keller 2013). Furthermore, it appears that the offline events held at restaurants to gain new customers did not focus on the target market, and did not even appear to have. They only cared about the number of customers. These customers may not be a good target, which is why their repurchase rate is low. Besides that, while the managers stated that they want to focus on each group, it appears that they heavily invest in promotion through offline channels in order to gain customers from restaurants.

To conclude, the company has been causing friction between two of its platforms, namely the e-commerce platform and the instant delivery platform. They run these two platforms independently, but it appears that they are still unsure whether to be a "e-commerce platform that provides an instant delivery service to customers within 1-hour" or a "on-demand platform that provides an instant delivery service to customers within 1-hour." The instant delivery platform is either a completely new platform aimed at customers in the on-demand market, or it is simply a new feature added to their main e-commerce platform. According to the managers interviewed, it is an independent platform because they have to recruit the new sellers themselves, and if those sellers who have already been selling on the e-commerce platform, they must sign a new contract so that they manage this platform as a whole new platform targeting customers

in the on-demand market. However, the things that the firm reflected are still contradictory, such as marketing activities or campaigns that the instant delivery platform still needs to rely on the main business, and this business unit appears to receive insufficient support from the firm.

Lack of Marketing Communications (Low Brand Awareness)

The instant delivery platform has low in-app visibility (refer to Figure 4.3). This in-app platform is difficult to identify, and the logo is not appealing to consumers. Even though the instant delivery platform has its own name and logo that has been promoted on their online channels, they use a different name and logo when it is in the app. They are calling their instant delivery platform "1H Delivery," which is not appealing and it is on the second page of its homepage, so customers must scroll to the next page to see the instant delivery platform icon. Because their first target group is existing customers from e-commerce platforms, in-app visibility should be the method by which the platform generates the most traffic, however, even in its own app, there is a lack of visibility. The name and logo are not exposed enough to catch the attention of customers.



Figure 4.1



Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 The instant delivery platform has low in-app visibility

In comparison, when customers open the main app "Shopee," they will immediately see the logo and name of Shopeefood, which is prominently displayed and promoted in their application. Customers do not need to scroll to the next page; when they open the Shopee app, they will see the Shopeefood logo right away. (See Figure 4.3). They also have 1.9 million followers on Facebook and they are very consistent in their marketing content creation.

Although every player in the digital market invests heavily in promotions in order to gain as much market share as possible, the company in this case does not have other marketing activities such as public relations or boosting ads in Facebook or Google to create a strong brand awareness in the market. Because their Facebook page has only 451 likes, it will have an impact on their brand image. According to the interview, there is no advertising in either online or offline channels. They only care about gaining new customers by offering discounts, but they refuse to expose their brand to the market. Currently, there are only two primary ways to promote their platform: first, send artworks to high engagement sellers to post on their Facebook pages. Second, sending staff to promote the platform in restaurants by giving out vouchers and anticipating future purchases. Their two methods are insufficient for creating strong brand awareness. They continue to have insufficient market visibility. To build strong brand awareness, the company must increase repeated exposure to brand elements as well as marketing actions such as advertisement, campaign, promotion, or public relations. (Keller 2013)

Lack of resources

According to the parent company's directive to conduct business in a Chinese manner, they do not have a budget for online marketing, so the platform cannot change the way they have been doing things and can only allocate the budget they have. Compared to other platforms in the market, they all heavily invest to expose their brands in the market both online and offline in order to get as many people as possible to know them. By applying what works best in China may not be wise in the Thailand market. The online market in Thailand has been growing and will not stop soon, especially in the on-demand industry. As a result of the pandemic, the industry is expected to grow indefinitely, and it is the market trend for younger generations.(Arslan 2019).

Second, due to the layoff incident, there are only three people working in this team, and according to Manager B, there are nearly 300 sellers selling on their platform, which is difficult to manage in the current situation. There isn't enough manpower to keep the platform running. When there was a lay-off policy, the company would choose the team with the lowest performance, so the instant delivery platform team was the very first team that was picked up by the headquarter because the team was still new and fresh and hadn't yet generated good performance, which is why the team is only left with three people from more than ten.

Lastly, Thailand's largest retailer group will pull out of the joint venture which will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the company's fund and investor confidence. There will be a negative impact on investors who may be unwilling to fund the company's business. The true reason for leaving the joint venture could be about the economy, despite the fact that this retailer group has its own platform and ranks third in terms of most visited e-commerce sites. (Yang, Changwei, 2022). It makes sense for this retailer group to focus solely on their platform and to stop growing potential competitors, such as the company in this case.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Recommendation

1) Extract “Instant Delivery Platform” from “E-commerce Platform”

By separating the two platforms, the company will be able to focus on their new business independently and clearly understand their target customers. Even though the main goal of the Instant Delivery platform was to become a valuable feature for their e-commerce platform, it eventually turned out to be groceries and supermarket deliveries instead. If the company is successful in breaking out of the e-commerce business, they will have a better opportunity to grow their on-demand service segment. Once they have a clear path of who they are and which exact market they are serving, this method will guide their repositioning strategy.

2) Strengthen “Instant Delivery platform” brand name

One of the primary reasons they are failing to attract customers' attention is a lack of brand consistency. Once they have decided to break out from the firm's main business, they should strengthen their instant delivery platform brand name. By having a strong brand name, they will be able to attract the attention of all relevant stakeholders and will increase customer satisfaction from product or service consumption, causing customers to repurchase from the company. In terms of business activities, brands will establish a powerful image and serve as the firm's reputation. Instead of relying on uncontrollable elements like word-of-mouth or substantially funded marketing campaigns, successful firms often position themselves in new ways to please their customers by giving attractive features and services. (Keller 2013). They can begin by doing more online marketing, as they still lack online elements to build brand awareness. In order to strengthen their brand name, they must also increase brand awareness, which will allow them to expose their brand elements to the market.

3) Research more about the on-demand platform

They should first learn about the culture of Thai stakeholders including customers, sellers, and other relevant parties. Because there are so many platforms competing in this highly competitive market, there are numerous pain points. It is an opportunity to research what the competitors are lacking in order to fill in the gap. This method will at least fulfill what they are missing in the new product development process. Furthermore, they will be able to identify their target customers, which will assist the platform in designing more effective marketing tools and communication.

4) Redesign the user interfaces

After recognizing the pain points of customers from various platforms, they should redesign their platform's user interfaces to be more friendly and to include more on-demand features, which will allow them to reposition themselves and become more of a "on-demand platform" in the eyes of customers.

5.2 Conclusion

There is no time to waste in today's fast-paced environment, especially in the digital world. To beat the competition, the company must act quickly. There will be no time to follow all of the details in the design new product development process, and following the entire process will not guarantee the company's success. However, being an agile company that needs to act quickly may only be suitable for the company that introduces an innovative product or service to the market that no one has done before, but in this case study, the market already exists and is a very red ocean market. Using a new product development process will at the very least point the company in the right direction. Before starting a new business, the company must first understand not only its customers, but also all other relevant stakeholders.

Due to the obvious poor design of the new product development process, the company unintentionally entered a new market, costing them the competition in the on-demand delivery market. When entering the on-demand sector, the major competitors are no longer Lazada and Shopee, but rather Grab and Foodpanda, which also provide grocery delivery service. At this point, the company's first mistake is that they did not study the sector thoroughly enough, and as a result, they focus on the wrong

target group. Also, the platform system and user interface are not designed for this service that will further cost the company to fix the system.

This case demonstrates that a strong brand name will attract not only customers, but also strong business partners who want to be a part of the strong brand platform in order to strengthen their own businesses. For example, when Shopee achieved a strong brand name and introduced a new service to the market, people began talking even though mass communication had not yet occurred. Furthermore, the partnered restaurants are willing to offer greater discounts in order to gain greater visibility through Shopee food communication channels. Moreover, conducting research is important and necessary for all businesses, particularly when starting a new one, in order to understand the true pain points of customers. It will assist the company in developing suitable products and services that will attract more customers.

Last but not least, the case study shows how a large corporation, known in the market as "the big three," fails to conduct new business. Having a new product or service is not difficult for them, but it will cost them a lot of money, and it will cost even more if they lose investor trust. With the fast-paced environment, the company must be cautious about their quick actions because, in a highly competitive market, one failure can have a significant impact on the company's image.

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