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HONORS THESIS



Strategy & Tactics to Improve Sales for B2B Manufacturing Firms: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Manufacturing businesses primarily focus on producing products, but as a result, these firms can fall behind on their marketing efforts when compared to other business sectors. Through a case study approach, an analysis was conducted to reveal how business to business ‘B2B’ manufacturing firms can attain and use marketing research supplemented by robust data analysis from its customers to improve sales. The study was divided into 7 sections. Sections 1, 2, and 3 show the dynamics of this business sector and motivations for this project. The remaining sections 4, 5, 6, and 7 explore the practical implications through a live case study approach on how this sector can benefit from robust survey research. There were four systematic steps to accomplish this goal. First, internal and market situations of B2B manufacturing firms were assessed to discover reasoning why this fault in the industry occurs. Next, the top six customers of the case firm, “Chewbarka, Inc.,” were questioned in in-depth interviews to find critical variables in the marketplace. The knowledge acquired from these interviews was then used to inform a broader and universal online survey to the remaining customer base through their individual emails supplied by the firm. Finally, an external analysis was derived from 547 online survey respondents. The external analysis of the firm’s customers led to internal recommendations for the firm. Specifically, the data from this work informed marketing implications, operations objectives, and business growth initiatives for the manufacturing firm to strive for now and in the future through the lens of the marketing mix.

INTRODUCTION

Any typical manufacturing firm that produces a product conquers remarkable internal challenges on a day-to-day basis to keep its operations and production lines running. On an external view of the SWOT analysis for these firms, their current marketing tactics seem to be dated back to the twentieth century without signs of change (Beets, 2018). Marketing efforts have been relatively dormant in these types of firms for many years due to the fact they use most of their resources on processes and equipment to produce products. To reorganize this area, many questions will arise about how manufacturing businesses have to change their philosophies to meet the need of increasing sales in today's market. Management must be knowledgeable and sustainable to embrace innovative tactics that use critical factors outside of the manufacturing business to improve marketing and competitiveness in their market. In order to learn more about themselves and their clients to improve sales, these firms must take time to invest in detailed research, which would then enable data driven decision making. Although manufacturing firms fall behind in capturing tangible client and market data, as soon they start to deploy a robust and data driven analysis in their decision making, they will be efficiently guided on how to increase sales and outpace incoming or upcoming competition they may not even recognize.

Motivation

The primary motivation for undertaking this research project was to help inspire small business B2B manufacturing firms, who are struggling in their marketing growth efforts, that improvement can be accomplished by using relatively inexpensive methods from data collection and analysis. I presently serve as CEO of Chewbarka, Inc., 'Chewbarka,' which is the firm analyzed in this thesis. Chewbarka is a metal stampings business based in Johnston, Rhode Island. Year after year, Chewbarka manufactures millions of anodized pet tags, identification plates, luggage tags, dye sublimation tags, and metal business cards for thousands of customers on a global scale. I am the third generation in my family to operate the business.

I strive to take Chewbarka into the modern age in regards to initiating data driven decision making throughout all areas of the business. In order to reach this goal, attaining a valuable marketing strategy outlines an effective first step forward that will result in many other areas

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of business being refined, such as the marketing mix, inventory management, and proper bookkeeping. On a consistent basis, I communicate with other B2B manufacturing business owners all over the United States who are also working to develop marketing strategies themselves. Speaking with these individuals in their B2B industries has helped me understand that improving sales generation takes coordination from all departments of the business.

I also recognize studying market segments show a great opportunity for the firm because when trade adjustment grants are presented by the United States Government for manufacturing firms, those resources can be put towards more beneficial uses. Related to this research project, I aspire to help my company and other manufacturing firms, when they attain marketing grants, to use them more efficiently. Efficiency can be accomplished by already having an evidence backed baseline of their marketplace to build off of, which saves resources. The mode of thought in this business sector can be changed as modern approaches for improving marketing are implemented, for which the firm can then attain strong positive results both internally and externally.

Business Potential

Modern marketing methods founded on customer interaction and content creation show an untapped opportunity to enhance the B2B manufacturing marketplace. Although manufacturing businesses create, engineer, design, and produce their product to the best of their ability, these firms seem reluctant to allocate enough time to build an effective marketing strategy. Lisa Beets, from Precision Marketing Group 'PMG,' reports through a 2015 survey analysis of 1,820 B2B manufacturers in North America this apparent lack of marketing devotion. The survey found that only 8% of manufacturers had a dedicated marketing team in 2015, and only 19% planned to get one in 2016. Among the manufacturing companies that had a marketing team, only 1% of them rated their marketing as 'sophisticated' (Beets, 2018). This survey reveals that a wide majority of B2B manufacturers in the U.S. have not invested heavily into studying their markets, even choosing to disregard customer surveys or conduct marketplace research.

In a more recent 2020 PMG survey with 1,798 respondents, Kate Moore writes in *Manufacturing Content Marketing 2020 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends*, the effort to build

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marketing strategies has shown little progress. From this updated survey, 5% of marketers in the manufacturing firms state their marketing is ‘sophisticated’ (Moore, 2020). Although, these firms have found various benefits of utilizing SEO and online marketing, which was attributed from the COVID-19 shock. Moore continues, “41% of those surveyed said their organization documented their content marketing performance versus just 21% in 2019, indicating success from their enhanced marketing efforts” (Moore, 2020). Measuring content performance is a start for these firms, but there is much more development required when compared to the marketing advancements of other sectors such as in the B2C marketplace.

Manufacturing businesses have gained mediocre impressions in the public eye from their apparent lack of modernization throughout the years. In *2017 Public Perception of the US Manufacturing Industry Study: Deloitte US.*, Craig Giffi et al revealed these perceptions of U.S. manufacturing businesses from a Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute ‘TMI’ online survey. This survey consisted of 1,000 Americans spread across all states, with a demographic representation mirroring that of the actual United States population. The results identified that 80% of Americans believed manufacturing held vital importance to maintain economic prosperity (Giffi, 2017). However, the results also showed that less than five in ten believed manufacturing jobs to be interesting, rewarding, safe, stable, or secure. In addition, manufacturing was not considered to be the preferred industry to start a career today with less than three in ten parents who would encourage their children to pursue a manufacturing career (Giffi, 2017). The negative outlook on this business sector can certainly affect the upcoming generation’s desire to learn more about or elect to work in them.

The Need To Adapt

In response to Giffi’s report on the 2017 Deloitte survey, manufacturing firms should strive to understand and implement advanced methods of research, communication, and data analysis. These advancements can work not only to increase marketing functionality for the firm, but also to increase the attraction of educated labor to venture into the manufacturing industry. When the survey asked what the future jobs in manufacturing will look like, Giffi revealed that a majority of Americans agreed that these businesses are expected to evolve (Giffi, 2017). 88% of respondents believed that the future will demand manufacturers to have high technical skills that include marketing and data analysis, along with a need for more highly skilled

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scholars to join the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing firms were also deemed by 77% of respondents to expect to become more innovative in the near future (Giffi, 2017). These views highlight the need for manufacturing firms to strategize in their marketplaces to be a better fit for their customers and, most importantly, retain some of the skilled talent moving toward other more developed business.

There is a widening number of manufacturing jobs that need to be filled and the skilled talent pool capable of filling them is decreasing. The workforce shortage for the manufacturing industry in the United States is presented in a 2018 Deloitte study by Ben Dollar et al, *The jobs are here, but where are the people?*. Dollar writes in the analysis, “The study reveals that the skills gap may leave an estimated 2.4 million positions unfilled between 2018 and 2028, with a potential economic impact of \$2.5 trillion. Further, the study shows that the positions relating to digital talent, skilled production, and operational managers may be three times as difficult to fill in the next three years” (Dollar, 2018). Manufacturing firms must act now on modernization before the ramifications showcased by Dollar take place on themselves and then on the economy. Making technological advancements takes significant resources to undergo, but the need is clear.

A possible reason for B2B manufacturing firm’s reluctance to evolve seems to be caused from a majority of these businesses being small businesses, which indicates that the resources required to make revolutionary change may not be available to them. Shown by the United States Census Bureau Statistics of U.S. Businesses in 2017, there were 248,039 businesses in the manufacturing sector, with 244,125 members of that population considered to be small, which is defined as firms employing fewer than 500 employees (United States Census, 2020). Continuing on from the data, three-quarters of these small firms have fewer than twenty employees (United States Census, 2020). Small businesses make up the majority of this sector in the United States, thus the methods used to help them must be inexpensive, but accurate, to produce fruitful marketing strategies.

Case Study Approach

A case study on an active B2B manufacturing firm, Chewbarka, Inc., was conducted to demonstrate how small business manufacturing companies can use qualitative and

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quantitative data to understand their customers and effectively improve marketing without having to use significant amounts of resources. Chewbarka, in its twenty-five years of business history, has yet to collect and measure data from their customers or deploy data driven promotions for marketing improvement. The case company's approach to growth reveals a practical example of many other B2B manufacturing business's efforts in marketing, for instance, their effort extends to just attending a trade show every so often. This common way of thinking for these types of firms demonstrates unsustainable measurements for any aggressive growth plans clear.

Shown through analyzing Chewbarka, Inc.'s opportunities and threats from its customer's perspectives, the gain of quality data and research pertaining to specific manufacturing metrics enables strategies and tactics to be formed that can effectively reach the goals of this thesis. The marketing strategy for this case company should be reliant on robust data analysis to increase sales in a manner that will also result in driving modern business practices for the future of the firm. Every B2B market, including Chewbarka's marketplace, is unique and businesses will have to conduct their own analysis to gain insights on their own marketplace.

Objectives

- Conduct an opportunities and threats analysis from in-depth business interviews of the firm's main customers for a larger scale survey to the rest of the customer base.
- Explore new marketing and sales opportunities the case company can venture into from relevant customer satisfaction data.
- Discover where the case firm compares with its competition in regards to key variables in the industry. These key factors are to be formulated from four main categories; quality, customer service, business value, and price.
- Find product quality, system, communication, and process implications that would lead to positive impacts for the firm and its customers based on the data attained.
- Construct feasible tactics from the marketing mix that will enable growth strategies for the future sustainability of the firm.
- Reveal how other divisions of the business can interact with the external data found for increased efficiency and accuracy throughout the business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although sales growth may seem straightforward for digitized firms, simultaneously marketing and producing a product cultivates conflicts within the manufacturing business itself. In 1977, Benson P. Shapiro wrote *Can Marketing and Manufacturing Coexist?*, which illustrates both sides of this argument. In a manufacturing situation, the marketing individuals often complain to their manufacturing counterparts with frustration, for example by stating, ““Why can’t they become market-oriented or customer-oriented?’ ‘Why are they so provincial?’ Then, the manufacturing individuals express back, ‘They have no understanding of costs, profits, plants, or operations. They are just a bunch of *dumb* peddlers’” (Shapiro, 1977). This internal conflict certainly does not promote growth nor productive marketing actions for any business.

From Shapiro’s article, one prime reason that generates friction between the marketing teams versus the manufacturing floor comes from separate evaluations given from management. The criteria for the two divisions to receive rewards come from conflicting activities. On one hand, marketing individuals are evaluated on the basis of profitable growth of the company in terms of sales and market share. On the other hand, the manufacturing teams are often evaluated on running a smooth operation at minimum cost (Shapiro, 1977). The conflicting criteria shows a need for a constructive amount of tension by making sure that both marketing and manufacturing understand the need for a balanced situation, but they still strongly represent their own interests.

Manufacturers must define a well-rounded company goal with a supported strategy to avoid confrontation and have the best chance at success. Therefore, a strong initiating path to improve sales would be to coordinate all divisions together, such that everyone in the firm realizes they are a part of a homogeneous effort to attain the firm’s goals and business strategy. An example of intercompany unification in the manufacturing sector can come from the marketing division, whereas accurate reports from this division can predict sales trends. These trends then can be converted to the production needs of the factory; thus, the combination of finance and operation strengthen the business itself by working together.

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The B2B Manufacturing Marketplace

A few logistical marketing issues commonly arise for many B2B manufacturing companies because they do not have an easy path for expansion to new markets due to the nature of their industry. As Rebecca Brinkley explains in *Marketing in Manufacturing: Give it a Real Try*, manufactures have a plethora of data and engineering to get through before even creating a test product to put out (Brinkley, 2019). This limitation relates to the survey completed by PMG as to explain why B2B manufacturers are seeking to specifically target their own existing customer base for strategic growth. Unlike other firms, significant amounts of resources are needed in order to venture into new markets, thus for a majority of B2B manufactures, focusing on their marketplace to fulfill those needs becomes paramount. In order to reach and learn about their specific market niche in the most effective manner, manufacturers are starting to adopt e-commerce with stride.

In today's digital world, companies no longer know or relate to the buyer through a handshake or a demo, but rather through an automated system where the customer can see product quality and submit reviews immediately (Brinkley, 2019). Manufacturers are finding that the traditional methods of marketing to their intended audiences are no longer sufficient to effectively increase sales because of the lack of interaction. Daniela Coppola in a 2021 Statista article, *B2B e-commerce in the United States - Statistics & Facts*, reveals that online communication between companies have risen substantially. Coppola explains in her analysis, "While the use of digital channels has previously been limited to B2C companies... In order to drive customer demand and remain competitive within their industry, B2B professionals are continuously investing in the launch and optimization of e-commerce channels" (Coppola, 2021). In 2019, 80% of distributors and manufacturers in the United States planned on increasing their spending on e-commerce solutions in 2020. (Coppola, 2021). From this investment, e-commerce enables continuous knowledge on customer's needs and purchase processes through direct interaction with the firm, which has proven to show benefit for both the buyer and seller (Brinkley, 2019).

B2B Collaboration

Collaboration between B2B buyers and sellers is enabled from the data derived through internet platforms because these systems reveal value. Attaining structured data of their

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marketplace online enables the seller to gain insight on the purchasing process of their buyers. Marketing tactics can then be strategically deployed that support the factors customers tend to value during their purchasing decisions, which any success can be measured over time by analyzing sales figures. Also, when a firm suggests changes to their marketing mix to improve sales, considering the firm's progress of key external metrics is critical to avoid efficiency mistakes. As shown in both the TMI and PMG surveys, many manufacturing firms remain behind in these aforementioned efforts. Although the sellers currently have limited customer information to draw insights, the manner in which they begin the data collection process should link to elements of their overall business development plan. The case company used in this study belongs to this group of B2B manufacturing businesses who have not kept up with the times. Through the research completed from this project, the process in which manufacturing firms can start this critical communication process is displayed.

Brinkley goes on to explain that the characteristics of a manufacturing marketplace illustrate more of an opportunity in a B2B marketplace than currently believed. B2B markets have a unique perspective because their customers are eager for information to help them along their buying process (Brinkley, 2019). The business's customers do not want to be marketed to as if they are end user clients, but rather have their needs understood. Potential buyers are inclined to empower themselves with the educational tools provided to them from the seller, which serves to help propel them through their purchasing journey (Brinkley, 2019). Although B2B manufacturers are notoriously slow in the online marketing world, their hesitation does not prevent them from needing to engage in customers' thoughts (Beets, 2018). Businesses want their manufacturing partners to link their needs with their product offerings. An open system for collaboration builds long lasting relationships in the B2B marketplace, which also can allow for other informational flow, e.g., revealing new customer needs or possible competitive weaknesses (Beets, 2018).

Modernized Marketing

Traditionally, the extent of manufacturers' marketing campaigns was sending managers to trade show events for personal interaction. In an investigative article by Mark McMaster from 2002 titled, *ROI: More Vital Than Ever*, McMaster rejects these outdated dealings utilizing a Showtime survey example. McMaster writes, "Executives across a range of industries -

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primarily at companies with marketing budgets of more than \$1 million, proclaimed that they do not have to spend a lot of money on trade shows anymore to get business” (McMaster, 2002). Traditional marketing offers great perspective into people’s minds, but using measurements based on what people actually do significantly strengthens elements to base marketing plans on.

McMaster explains that the inability to accurately grasp measurements displays a severe limitation of marketing only with trade shows (McMaster, 2002). According to this article, trade shows should be treated as a supplement. In an effort to just conceptualize how far behind B2B manufacturers are compared to other segments today, McMaster’s article from 2002 clearly shows that a majority of other industry leaders have been departing from a marketing platform of only meeting face to face for many years now. Any analysis on marketing effectiveness is difficult to perform without comparing consistent results against real variables. Therefore, attaining as much measurable data about customer’s needs as possible enables manufacturers to have better insights to strategically serve their customers more than any historical alternative.

Digital Integration

There can be relatively instant benefit for both B2B manufacturers and their clients by taking even small steps toward combining technology and marketing in their firms. Referencing a survey by Mark Schmukler in a *SageFrog Marketing Report* in 2012, adapting to any form of online marketing methods has almost instant ROI. The *SageFrog* survey consisted of 160 marketing professionals who represent a variety of industries in health and life sciences, professional services, and technology. Schmukler presented in his report that when firms committed to budget allocations for attaining qualitative data on their customers, the result has led to powerful insights in customer spending (Schmukler, 2012). Any modern platform, some of which are even free to use, allow for specific engagement measurements to be generated and stored for analytical use.

Customer data can be obtained quickly and cheaply from digital platforms, which demonstrates that businesses are not relying on personal interaction anymore, but rather an online presence for their marketing efforts. 44% of the various industry respondents in the

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SageFrog survey stated that they expect their marketing budget to increase in the upcoming year due to data driven analytics from websites (Schmukler, 2012). Also found from the survey responses, technology has made interactions between companies and purchasers much more truthful to the realities of their marketplace than in the past (Schmukler, 2012). Unfortunately for this business sector, there are numerous examples showing how B2B manufacturers are lagging in this digital presence.

Competitive Strategy

From a general marketing mix perspective, manufacturers need to align their sales growth strategies to what their customers are showing them. The systematic strategy to reach this target begins with first finding out what values their customers seek. Then, uniquely designed tactics from the firm should come into place in an effort to grow those values and give both the seller and buyer beneficial leverage. The mutual relationship that begins to develop in the B2B value added marketplace drives competitive advantage from strong relationship building, which secures a more prosperous future for all of the businesses involved.

Manufacturing businesses in a B2B marketplace are not exempt from implementing strategies and attaining results that will lead to sustainable sales growth, which can be done by continually changing, adapting, and innovating with trends better than the competition. Obtaining applicable guidance from customers is necessary to make better marketing decisions than competitors. Dominique Garval states in *Business Strategy Formulation and Implementation*, “Strategy is all about being better than other players in competitive situations, where simply knowing the tools of the trade to get things done is not sufficient” (Garval, 2018). Markets evolve quickly in tandem with competitive dynamics. For this reason, manufacturers are putting themselves at risk for business interruption if they fail to keep updated on what their client base is thinking on a constant basis.

Brand Loyalty

New factors have been introduced that require businesses to be more vigilant and active in their marketing such as the globalization of trade, technological change, and the ever-changing industry regulations (Garval, 2018). All of these circumstances have caused business competition to increase dramatically worldwide, which must be taken into account to develop a firm’s marketing strategy. For manufacturers, just being good at producing a

product is not sufficient anymore for scalable sales growth (Garval, 2018). Garval warns manufacturers to adapt. They must make choices based on market research and evidence backed measurements from their marketplace resources to grow. The methods where the best competitive information can be attained comes from analyzing customer collaboration with their actual feelings, which can then derive prosperous internal recommendations.

Implementing constructive digital feedback shows again and again a critical tool for maintaining differentiation, loyalty, and product awareness in the marketplace. Only through an external lens can firms actually know how their products are performing and the perception of their brand. In 2015, Fernando Suarez explained in his article, *Perfect Timing? Dominant Category, Dominant Design, and the Window of Opportunity for Firm Entry*, an in-depth strategy based on live perceptions from customers will positively transform relationships. Suarez reveals B2B businesses must have their own brand explored from the outside-in to attain any useful information for moving forward (Suarez, 2015). The article continues to explain that the engine behind exploring how a brand is observed comes from pertinent communication between the customers and firm. This point relates to McMaster and Garval because any type of for-profit company must be willing and able to invest in collecting relevant data of their customer base to market effectively and efficiently.

Survey Tactics

Surveys from businesses to businesses can attain quality data like any other segments if focused enough on relevant topics. Cori Pearce argues, in *How Best to Create a B2B Customer Survey*, the questions must be accurate to the business environment. If not, the results will be generalized responses that do not truly serve the customer or surveyor, which is especially certain for a survey directed for other businesses. In an effort to prevent generalizations, Pearce goes on to explain that customer satisfaction is a very important factor to keep in mind. In other words, respondents should be enthused while taking the survey. This philosophy corresponds with Brinkley's article showing that the B2B marketplace desires collaboration.

Another recommendation by Pearce shows that a B2B survey must have one or two objectives at maximum in order to keep clear and focused (Pearce, 2019). Following these guidelines,

the two objectives for this thesis was focused on understanding customers' perspective on just opportunities and threats. Customers who take surveys want to have their thoughts supported through understanding and subsequent action. As stated by Chris Rygielski, in *Data Mining Techniques for Customer Relationship Management*, "Firms today are concerned with increasing customer value through analysis of the customer lifecycle. Technologies of data warehousing, data mining, and CRM techniques afford new opportunities for businesses to act on the concepts of relationship marketing" (Rygielski, 2002). Beginning with surveys, the tools of CRM and data mining can be initiated to reveal promising opportunities.

As previously discussed, B2B manufacturing firms have been deemed outdated when compared to new technologies for marketing methods, but nevertheless, these firms need to start somewhere in any data collection and analysis process. Rygielski affirms that new sales growth initiatives urge the importance for businesses to start with relating to their current customer's needs and feelings. Rygielski writes, "Businesses should not just deal with customers in order to make transactions, they must turn the opportunity to sell products into a service experience and endeavor to establish a long-term relationship with each customer" (Rygielski, 2002). When intentionally shifting away from targeting market share, manufacturers can fully discover the depth of each customer's needs, which is a much more promising method for sales success (Suarez, 2015). Conducting more business with current customers makes more sense, given the high cost of acquiring new customers. Suarez agrees with this philosophy by writing, "Manufacturers should seek to continue to make its own lane, focus on its own products and customers, such that the company does not have to go out and attempt to rebuild product lines and compete for new business" (Suarez, 2015). When marketing research is conducted, manufacturing businesses must not venture out too far in new territories, but rather concentrate on current customer data (Suarez, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Before beginning this thesis, there was zero marketplace analytics, customer relationship management 'CRM' system, or well-maintained bookkeeping records provided by the case firm to conduct any immediate useful sales growth analysis. The only resource available provided to use was the business's customer contact list, which contained their customer's

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email addresses. With this list, the strategy used to begin reaching the objectives of the thesis came from an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from Chewbarka's customers through customer surveys. A two-part process was used to generate customer value data. The first phase consisted of interviews carried out over a phone call with six top customers of Chewbarka, Inc. These in-depth and structured interviews were approximately twenty to thirty minutes each. The interviews were conducted with the goal of finding critical marketplace variables and reaching a truthful understanding of where Chewbarka's larger scoped customers stand in regards to their business's purchasing trends. Also discussed were potentially better positionings for Chewbarka to meet the needs of those discussed trends. After gathering the responses, the information obtained from the interviews informed the creation of a broader customer wide emailed survey. The broader survey tool was then used to derive recommendations for the firm's marketing mix improvement.

Potential Research Issues & Ethical Considerations

Before constructing the two surveys, I completed the CITI research training certification.

Then, Appendix A and B surveys were shown and passed by Professor Yoon on 12/15/2021 for IRB certification. These questions also were presented and read numerous times by my faculty advisor, reviewer, and professor for HN-390. I will be working directly with Chewbarka, Inc. throughout the entirety of this case study. I, Frank T. Ricci Jr, am Chewbarka, Inc's President and CEO as of 8/23/2019 to the present date. With total authority and responsibility of the company, I grant full access to conduct research on the firm's current customer base, conduct telephone interviews, and pilot survey administration to the customers on the company's behalf.

My role also makes me personally liable for any hardship or ethical concern that may arise from this thesis, which I openly accept. I am the only person from the company conducting and analyzing the data from this thesis to satisfy its objectives for the company. The goal of this study was to find relevant marketing information and variables to increase sales of the case firm, which the methodology used can hold as an example procedure for other businesses of its type. Nothing that was found in this thesis is to be demanded to be used by Chewbarka, unless chosen to do so by the firm. There was zero personal monetary gain from completing this project from the business to myself. I also elected to have this project available only to

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the Bryant University community. This choice was to protect all parties and trade secrets from a global database that could inspire competitive forces.

Survey Distribution

Before the first survey interview took place, a notification prior to the observation was emailed to the selected customers from Chewbarka that detailed the objectives and rewards for the survey if they chose to participate. A set time was agreed on from the customer and I such that we could connect with respect to each other's schedules. If the customer did not wish to be interviewed, another select customer from the firm would take their place. The second customer survey was distributed only to customers who elected they would like to be a part of email notifications from www.chewbarka.com as a part of their website registration process. There was zero use of sensitive business information from both observation techniques in formation of this thesis. The survey data was stored on a secure, encrypted, properly maintained, and cloud backed server that is owned by Chewbarka, Inc.

There are no potential research problems with the literature or documents that were used and discussed in this thesis. There were no concerns with personnel, participants, or site sponsorship that would need to be altered. Every step of this research conducted was voluntary and fully up to the respondent. There were no ethical issues, instances of harm, or instances of malicious acts against the case firm or customers now and in the future. Names, identifying remarks and or characteristics of people or businesses used were censored. The only names that were allowed to be used in this study were the case firm's and my name. In regards to working with people in the surveys, the ethical concerns would be if the survey was aimed to create harm. The in-depth conversations and the online surveys were not designed at all to create any hardship, pain, or stress, and did not intend to do so on the respondents. The surveys were not an evaluation of physiological strength. The surveys were completely confidential. A completed informed consent to take the survey was needed to begin to answer any of the questions. There was no debrief for the respondents after the external research because the survey and in-depth interviews were not meant to confuse or mislead the respondent in any way.

COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 has certainly impacted businesses globally. The surveys were intended for other active businesses to take; thus, survey results were impacted by the pandemic. There were three specific instances of survey takers who stated in open response questions that their business slowed or shut down due to COVID-19 complications. Although the pandemic was an obvious limitation, customers were asked to take the survey honestly as their current market stands or as if their business was still operational. Perhaps there could have been more responses to the survey without a COVID-19 interference, but the results were analyzed as is. The in-depth interviews did not seek to discuss how business has changed, but rather to look at the future of the industry in a post COVID-19 world. Although the clear market hardships on businesses, the online survey was still sent out on time as planned.

DATA USAGE

When the survey terminated, the results obtained from the survey data underwent a comprehensive analysis with the intention reaching the objectives of this project, which entailed finding avenues to increase sales for the firm. The reasoning for this specific methodology used was to accurately measure and learn more about significant variables in the marketplace. Also, the process sought out to find as to why and which type of customers choose to purchase from Chewbarka over competitors. The data and insights collected was sorted to create distinct market segments from the firm's population of customers. This step-by-step process of analysis suggested a framework for the case company to build from, which may require the firm to invest in developing better systems in order to cultivate this method more.

The quantitative data generated was used to determine how the elements of the marketing mix could be altered, due to the value and weight placed on the other factors questioned, such as the quality of goods in comparison with the competition. For example, a change in the element of price could be at the expense of a few customers, but for an overall net gain shown from the weighted results. Qualitative answers were compiled to find similarities and trends. If numerous respondents indicated the same issue or comment, these patterns were deemed as a high priority to consider. Quantitative responses were then used for validating those areas of

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interest for the firm. The data report also showed where Chewbarka could invest in an expansion of its product lines, which was based on significant numbers of clients requesting similar sought-after product offerings. The data was then finally used to identify where Chewbarka has differentiating qualities from competitors to pivot and build long term growth plans. Opportunities and threats were identified based upon the evidence from the feedback and continued outside research. The data collected from this survey was analyzed with the intention for the organization's future use.

Informative Interviews

The in-depth phone interview outline is located in Appendix A. Questions 2,3, and 4 relate to Chewbarka's external threats. Questions 1,5, and 6 were meant to reveal opportunities in the market for Chewbarka. Both of these sets of questions served as a general overview of the macro environment of their respective industries and how Chewbarka fits in them. These initial analyses on the marketplace only gathered qualitative feedback. The conversations revealed that speed of fulfillment, margin, communication, and consistency were the biggest factors in their purchasing decisions. It was specifically noted that the businesses appreciated Chewbarka's product and service, but they generally thought Chewbarka did not reach out to them enough or introduce them to new products well. They also revealed a lack of knowledge about Chewbarka's ownership, background, and other procedures.

In regards to competition, the interviews outlined that products coming from China continue to be a significant fraction of all of their total product offerings. The price from China for similar products were explained to be 75% less in price than what Chewbarka charges. The main factor for choosing Chewbarka was the outstanding and consistent quality of product. A \$50.00 Chewbarka credit reward for completing these phone interviews was granted to the selected top six customers, which some refused to take. With the information gathered from these customer interviews, many more questions were generated for the larger scoped survey.

Online Survey: Mechanics

Building off of the initial top six customer conversations, an online survey to the remaining customer base of Chewbarka was distributed via their registered emails with the company. The potential reward for taking this survey was a Chewbarka store credit of \$100.00 for five random survey takers. The award was only available for those who completed the survey in

its entirety. The customer email list used consisted of customers specifically related to the firm's two main business divisions, which are pet tag engravables and dye sublimation items. The final survey was endorsed by case company representatives before distribution, which consisted of members in management. The scope of the survey was to gain as much information as possible on how customers value the Chewbarka brand in relation to its marketing mix, for examples, what exactly customers appreciated about its products and how Chewbarka can accurately describe its marketplace. Other aims for this survey included exposing competitive interference in Chewbarka's sales and how customers perceive the future of their business area.

Surveys were completely voluntary and each respondent had the ability to leave the survey at any point. If the respondent elected to stop, their answers would still be recorded up to that point on a section-by-section basis, which any editing ability was halted after 24 hours. The surveys that were not completed 100%, excluding the open response questions, were not used in the final analysis and recommendations. Respondents could only take the survey once. The only individuals able to take the survey were those provided with a survey link. Qualtrics was used to distribute the survey, which then the data gained from the system was structured for analysis. Qualtrics is a commonly used and professional survey platform that does not cause any data or spam problems to the recipients. The Bryant University Qualtrics license was used to administer the process and open the software capabilities to the case firm.

Online Survey: Explanation of Questions

The emailed survey to customers of Chewbarka is located in Appendix B. From the survey takers perspective, the questions of the survey were meant to be built in a fashion that did not reveal the main objectives of the survey to the customer. There were 29 table questions, with three opportunities for open responses. In Appendix B, Part I Question One presented the respondent a general question regarding what they believed the best suppliers do well. The first question displayed was intentionally an open response because this framework can get the respondent invested to complete the survey as well as to get them settled on the topics of the survey. The last two questions of the survey also showed open response questions, which asked the respondent how well does Chewbarka fit their needs and what, if anything at all,

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could be done better. Only the open response questions could have been skipped or left unanswered. All of the other questions became quantitative responses for data analysis.

Four Factors to Research

The quantitative responses were categorized to fall into four factors of external research, consisting of value, customer service, quality, and price. These factors were developed from the in-depth interviews. The factor of value relates to how customers view the business as a whole, what the business stands for, and the brand. The factor of customer service consists of overall customer relationships, helpfulness, and attentiveness from the firm to the customer. The factor of quality consists of product quality, shipping, and speed of correct order fulfillment. Lastly, price consists of the proper pricing based on the product's quality, how individual firm's marketplaces agree with the price, and the willingness of customers to purchase products again.

In Part II, questions 1,8,11,17, and 20 pertain to value. Questions 2,5,9,14, and 19 pertain to customer service. Questions 4,7,10,13, and 16 pertain to quality. Questions 3,6,12,15, and 18 pertain to price. These factors are then weighed in Part III for questions 1,2,3, and 4, which again relate to value, customer service, price, and quality respectively. For the remainder of this report, 'factor(s)' means the criteria illustrated above.

Part IV measured the four factors against any competitive forces. In Part V, the first two questions asked for a value measurement from buying from a U.S. manufacturer followed by purchase consideration of imported products versus purchasing from Chewbarka. Then, the survey asked questions pertaining to the survey taker's business, their engravable and dye sublimation business, and how the products from Chewbarka are used in their firm. Lastly, before the final open response questions, questions 28 and 29 asked the respondent their interest level in two new product lines that Chewbarka is considering to launch. The survey gave the opportunity to ask these probing questions naturally. These two questions also served to split the survey results up to see any differences in the engraving versus dye sublimation product lines, scoring high on question 28 pertains to specifically engravers and 29 pertains to specifically dye sublimation printers. The last fill-in was for the raffle if the respondent wished to participate in it.

DATA OVERVIEW OF EMAILED SURVEY

The emailed survey ran from January 6th, 2021 to February 1st, 2021. The data was exported from Qualtrics and then sorted to enable robust analysis through Google Sheets. In total, there were 752 individual responses. Out of this population, 547 survey takers completed the survey 100%. The average time to complete the survey was approximately ten minutes. The locations where the surveys were taken can be seen in Appendix C. By using this data, each respondent was divided into eight regional markets: Asia, Canada, Central America, Europe, Mexico, Oceania, South America, and U.S.A. Seen in Appendix D, the marketplace mostly consists of U.S.A. businesses at 81.72% of the population. Shown in Appendix E, 96.53% of respondents stated they are a small business with less than 14 employees. One last initial takeaway was that 64.5% of those who wrote their position in their company displayed the title of ‘CEO,’ ‘President,’ or ‘Owner.’

Marketplace Structure

Sorting the data based on revenue and firm size reveals the type of global marketplace Chewbarka is selling to. Seen in Appendix F and coded in blue, the 80.26% of all customers do not generate a significant amount of engravable and dye sublimation revenue per month in their markets, which are the only main product lines of the firm. Based on this evidence, Chewbarka’s business survival seems to be heavily placed on the sheer volume of orders from small businesses and larger quantity orders from a select few small businesses. In total, 96.53% of customers have 1 - 14 employees.

Chewbarka’s marketplace seems to be a niche or a small part of their customers’ greater businesses because most customers are generating at or less than \$1,000 a month in their engravable tag or dye sublimation divisions. This insight is brought to light by customers stating Chewbarka’s products are a small part of their main business, for example from an open response question, “I’m a small company and the lasering is only about 10% of my work, trying to find more.” This quote from a customer adds some more evidence to support this conclusion.

Breaking down the data into use groups reveals more characteristics of the business in the marketplace. Shown in Appendix G, when customers purchase products from Chewbarka,

81.54% of customers participate in value added processes at retail for end users. As a result of this finding, the purchasing power of the majority of Chewbarka's customers are low because wholesalers tend to have greater purchasing power than retailers, especially for small businesses. Given these details, Chewbarka displays a strong customer base in individually limited marketplaces. The firm seems to already have a significant following from a particular segment. If Chewbarka attentively understands their customers well enough, there may be other opportunities to branch into for these existing customers that were never considered.

With the knowledge gained that the marketplace consists of many retailers, greater levels of data analysis on percentages of sales volume based on splitting up wholesalers and retail customer types must be done to derive more useful insights. Dividing these two types of customers based on actual sales figures is critical to reveal more information on any pricing structure changes needed, actual types of products being ordered, and the quantities that are ordered from the retailers versus the wholesaler customers. Investing time on proper bookkeeping will allow this functionality, which cannot be accurately derived here due to the focus of this particular survey. This internal recategorization and accounting process has just begun and will be continually practiced in the business moving forward.

Total Customer Satisfaction Scores

Taking into account how respondents weighed their feelings in Appendix B Part III, Chewbarka scored an 84.99% in the weighted average global customer satisfaction score derived from the four factors. Excluding Asia, the firm earned a 91.70% average weighted total satisfaction score. This percentage was found by averaging all related factor questions from a 1 - 5 scale with 5 being the highest. Each factor was multiplied by the respective factor weights, which when summed had to equal 100%, then each score was added together for a maximum total score of 5. Seen in Appendices H and I, the highest weighted average score came from Mexico at 90.31%, which is approximately 5.32% higher than the global weighted average score.

Separating the four factor scores by region in Appendix I shows the Asia market to also score the lowest in all categories with a score of 69.09%, due to a sum of 5 being the highest possible mark. From all of the data collected from the interviews and survey analysis thus far,

Asia revealing to be the lowest scoring market displays a predictable threat due to the major international competition located there against Chewbarka. Each of the factors shown in Appendix I can be examined at different levels, which when then combined with other elements such as business size and the business's inventory share that consists of Chewbarka's products, elements of the marketing mix can be evaluated.

THE MARKETING MIX

Product Overview

Building off of the summed weighted average scores by use group in Appendix J, analyzing the weighted average factor scores reveal product quality to be the most significant and best scoring value factor, which is coded in green. As evidence of this score, customers have included comments to the effects of, "Have not seen others that offer this grade of quality tags," "Just keep focusing on quality (which you do very well) and I and my customers will be happy," "I have tried other suppliers before I discovered you but no one can compare to the quality of the anodizing or the brightness of your aluminum after being lasered," and "I appreciate your friendliness and quality of product!" The importance of quality can be seen in Appendix K with quality showing a 38.5% relevance level, which is 11.3% higher than the next closest factor weight of price, when all market weight factor scores found in Part III question 21 are averaged and then summed together. The results on quality consistently show this factor to be throughout all regions the highest rated and the most needed factor out of all others for Chewbarka's product and in customer's marketplaces based on any segment.

Product: Opportunities

From the customer's perspective, Chewbarka manufactures high quality, made in the U.S.A., and able to be value added products that their customers and end users enjoy. From Appendix L, when the survey asked in Part V question 23 if the end users of Chewbarka's products preferred products made in the U.S.A, 64.72% globally stated that their customers care to any extent that they are purchasing U.S.A. made products. When comparing only retail or wholesale in Appendix M for another perspective, again the data supports a positive trend that customers seek U.S.A. produced goods to any extent.

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When shorting the weighted factor data to just the U.S.A. marketplace in Appendix N, the market shows that there can be product identification improvements from showcasing that purchasing products from the U.S.A. refers to high quality standards, which can be seen by customers who selected 'Strongly Disagree' on this question. Business in the U.S.A. who selected that the case firm strongly disagreed that it successfully advertised itself as a U.S. manufacturer, also showed that the factor of quality to be of the highest value at 46.76%. Globally, only 52.65% of customers agree that Chewbarka successfully advertises itself as a U.S. manufacturer from Part II Question 1. The data shows an opportunity for the firm to exercise more of its 100% made in U.S.A. characteristic to its customer base in an effort to reveal that the products produced originate from the U.S.A., which tend to reverberate higher quality products.

Expanding upon the firm being known for product quality, evidence supports that there is a lot of room for Chewbarka to grow on its customer's market wants and the firm has the means to do so. From all of the data gained thus far, customers value high quality goods, products that can be sold in a small business retail space, the ability for a few employees to manage the goods, items that do not require significant capital to stock, and the ability to add value, such as custom personalization of the product. Now that the case firm knows much more about its customer's needs, new products can be introduced that link with what the industry calls for by abiding to these criteria found from the data. There are many new product examples that can be thought of with these guidelines. Also known from the firm's reliance on having a large number of customers, a high traffic rate from the already segmented customers shows tremendous marketing and product growth prospects into the awards and personalization industry.

Products: Threats

The businesses in this industry seek high quality products, which Chewbarka has shown to supply consistently. Despite showing superior quality, in regards to if customers seek substitute goods, 55.75% of customers reveal to any extent that they are not actively seeking to move on to substitute goods (See Appendix O). Although, having just 34.73% of customers showing strong brand loyalty reveals a threat that must be confronted. Building off of this data, 44.24% of customers reveal they are willing to switch to another supplier for the two

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main product lines Chewbarka sells. When taking into account how much customer's inventory consists of Chewbarka's product from Appendix P, the customers who have a majority inventory share show a trend to not seek product substitutes at 40% of this group. Of the less than 50% of inventory share, 35.1% seek substitute goods. Price level and customer service factors must be analyzed as well to find more reasoning for a lack of inventory share.

Although quality is revealed to rank either superior or the same in the majority of all regional markets (See Appendix Q), the market for the types of goods Chewbarka produces shows limitations for individual company growth. Again, product quality is shown in Appendix K as the most valued factor throughout the marketplace. At the same time, the weighted quality score for Chewbarka is also the highest out of all factors, which is independent of inventory share size as seen in Appendix R. The same trend is even more prominent in the U.S.A. marketplace (See Appendix S). With these findings, another threat revealed shows that the demand must be of low volume for these higher quality tags in the majority individual marketplaces. Attaining more inventory share through marketing the same high product quality is not a solution to substantially increase sales for this firm. The market seems to be maximized in terms of knowing about the product's quality because no matter the share of inventory level, the weighted score of quality is consistent.

Chewbarka seems to demonstrate the attributes of an established startup company with a limited avenue for product growth in its current customer base. Quality, although of a high standard, is not enough to drive significant sales increases in just the engraving and dye sublimation tag business alone (See Appendix F). Data again supports the method of sales growth could be done by new product lines to the existing customer base founded on the customer's most valued criteria in **Product: Opportunities**. The firm's customers know the quality of the product, but inventory levels are up to the customer's marketplace needs, and not based on what the retailers only want to sell.

The high-quality products Chewbarka produces are for a particular customer base whereas Chewbarka seems to act as both retail distributor and manufacturer of the product. Customers recognize that Chewbarka produces high quality goods, thus the distribution part of the business for this market could be an area of expansion where the firm is lacking. In a way,

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acting as a distribution point for retailers protects this manufacturing firm from significant sales losses. If this firm had a market of a few critical buyers, losing just one would be detrimental. Distribution companies deploy several digitized systems, thus in order to expand into more products for distribution, the technical foundation of the firm needs to be built up.

For added reasoning why Chewbarka should to learn more about other products they can distribute to their customers to attain sales growth, there is only a 10.4% difference between the number of customers who have 1% - 49 % and 50% - 100% of their engravable or dye sublimation inventory consisting of Chewbarka's product. As shown in Appendix T, without any filtering, the graph details inventory levels of customers tend to consist of a 75 - 100% inventory share or 1 - 24% share, with a 23.2% difference respectively. Breaking these details down by wholesale or retail users in Appendix U, the divide shows a greater inclination for wholesalers to not maintain higher levels of product inventory from Chewbarka. From this data, sales growth from the existing products, although known to be of superior quality, seem to be of limited potential. Chewbarka could compete to earn more inventory share, but demonstrating better quality is limited. Simply, the customer's market may not require the highest quality of goods.

Place: Overview

For this particular manufacturing business, purchasing transactions are made on an online website. The firm's place of business does not service any walk-in clients nor does it have a physical storefront. Customers are served from the website and then shipped their orders. In regards to ordering from this website, customers have stated complaints to this website from Part V in open responses, "Improve ordering," and "Responding to emails about support issues would be a good start, especially when it is about your product or broken parts of your website." In an independent analysis, the current website gets the bare minimum of a transaction done, but there are numerous improvements to be made. In Appendix B Part I, which asks what makes a company great to work with, respondents repeatedly stated, "Website was easy to use, clear descriptions," "Website works really well for ordering," "Website that helps you find products easily," and lastly, "Easy, clear website for placing orders." The current website of this firm depicts exactly how many other manufacturers find threats in the criteria of place.

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Place: Opportunities

A significant amount of traffic needed for the firm to stay in business flows through the firm's website domain to conduct transactions. From the vast majority of the traffic coming from small businesses (See Appendix F), this platform and domain could be used to showcase the business attributes that Chewbarka holds. Small businesses are shown to care about the values of a business greater than any other sized company. As shown in Appendix V, the weight assigned to value average decreases as the firm size increases. As a result, the majority of customers care about and want to know more about who they are purchasing from. Displaying Chewbarka's attributes such as being a third-generation family business, maintaining 100% made in U.S.A. products, and having environmentally friendly commitments can spark a greater connection between the customer and firm. A remodeled website can sustain this traffic for placing orders, thus opening up to customers more on a new platform can enable the firm to relate to its customer base better. In doing so, a greater relatable experience for customers can be established.

The location where and how the volumes of orders are being processed reveal opportunities for marketplace growth. Building a more sophisticated online marketing channel can be accomplished and would not be a waste of resources because the target segment is already interacting with the firm's current website. Although the brand seems to be solidified in its already existing marketplace, there could be a wealth of needs undiscovered yet. When customers were asked in Part IV Question Four how Chewbarka compares with its competition on aligning with their needs, only 61.97% of customers agree Chewbarka's product lines align better. Although this data details the alignment of the current product lines, more measurements on needs must be completed if more products are to be added. Robust website systems have shown for many other industries to accurately reveal what customers are looking for. This ability can also be exploited by the manufacturing firm because the high volume of customers is already using the existing website, which will aid in the collection of big data if or when the platform is modernized.

Better advertising campaigns, accurate trends, and engagement records can be developed through the data spawned from the interactions of an upgraded online channel. Tracking and measuring customer interaction in an effort to discover the needs of industry can be done

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without having to retrain how customers purchase from the business. Overall, having a place that can efficiently support customers during their purchasing process would be of value to the customer base and fuel potential future customer expansion. The firm is currently undergoing an upscaled remodeling project for their website capabilities because of this valuable volume of traffic on the website already channeling there.

Place: Threats

Chewbarka fails to cater fully to customer needs online. The firm does not perform well in functionality and usefulness for the firm, for example, there were 65 instances of the words ‘shipping’ or ‘ship’ that related to some kind of hardship from open response questions. The website has issues, specifically in the shipping module, that was explained to create a poor experience from customers. Not only does this functionality fail, but any data from the website, such as sales figures for products, requires a technician to attain because the website is so outdated. Big data resources on any customers do not exist for this firm. Also, there are zero integrations from the current website to other parts of the business, which makes all operational tasks manual and open for costly mistakes.

The current website and ordering system also are not a globally friendly environment. Some examples of a lack of functionality include that the website is only available in English, the pricing is set only to USD, and there are a multitude of other issues internally that create external threats, such as building a reputation of poor customer interaction. The website also fails to collect external data on customers, which does not allow the firm to conduct evidence-based research from any evolving data. This website has created a poor service culture by having quality products, but poor systems to support that characteristic. A disconnected customer base leaves the firm open to attack at any time. Competitors can easily overtake the business that Chewbarka has when viewing its constraints of place.

Another threat is the physical location of Chewbarka, which makes shipping a pain point for international and long distanced domestic customers. There is only one business facility located in Rhode Island that gets impacted by weather and long-distance shipping costs, whereas other distributors have multiple warehouses. On an international stand front, shipping has always been a hassle unless they are purchasing in small quantities to avoid customs and

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tax implications. One international customer has stated in regards to poor shipping availability, “Chewbarka’s company has set unreasonable delivery charges for their shipping.... This has caused me to withdraw from making any further orders with that company....” The theme of poor shipping conditions continues in other examples. The impact of logistical inefficiencies from the firm’s physical place showcases this threat.

Promotion: Overview

In the B2B marketplace, successful promotion entails how well the firm demonstrates tailored customer service according to the buyer’s needs. When buyers reach out to the firm or the firm connects with buyers, this action creates a situation where an employee can show superior customer service based on technical knowledge, which then enables sales tactics to take place. A dissatisfied buyer can certainly become satisfied through enlightening customer service from the knowledge the representative has, but if this value factor is lacking, then the customer will certainly seek other companies to do business with to get the answers they need.

Chewbarka’s customer service has scored fairly consistently amongst all regions by inventory share with an unweighted average score of 78.62% (See Appendix W). In most cases, the lower the inventory share reveals a lower the customer service score. Notability in the Oceania market, the customer service score based on inventory share is reversed from the expected result. Improvements are needed when taking into account how well the firm keeps customers informed of new products, which is another frame of customer service. As seen in Appendix X, Chewbarka’s customers indicate a low average of 30.79% satisfaction rate above neutral. Interaction with the customer whether on a call, Zoom, or email, enables the firm to learn more about the customer and their business. Understanding these needs from active communication can help lead the customer to take interest in other product styles the firm already offers that the customer may not have previously known about.

Promotion: Opportunities

Buyers in the B2B marketplace prefer not to frequently change suppliers if they do not have to. Support from the seller is necessary to keep the buyers satisfied with their supplier, which can be accomplished through active communication. Any investment into better communication systems will have an immediate impact on the firm and improvement of its

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customer service. Chewbarka demonstrates a 70.02% better customer service experience in comparison with the competition (See Appendix Y). The data indicates that the firm is doing well communicating with customers with only 2% of customers saying Chewbarka is performing worse than competitors.

Using customer service as an avenue to sell more can be done without significant investment. When analyzing Appendix Y with Appendix X, an opportunity is revealed that shows Chewbarka has the capability to get in touch with the market better than most in the industry and that people are willing to listen. Combining a strong customer service reputation identifies that there is an opportunity to sell more products during these personal customer service interactions. Also, building a marketing effort on customer service enables the firm to collect data on the various retailers. This action can generate paths for selling other types of product buyers may need. For instance, Chewbarka can use a newly made team to help the retailers of those products sell more value-added features, which of course, these products originated from Chewbarka in the supply chain.

Chewbarka's customer service outreach mainly comes from emails and phone calls directly with the buyer. 61.24% of customers stated that they strongly agree and 19.93% stated that they somewhat agree that Chewbarka supports buyers during their purchasing process (See Appendix Z). Analyzing Appendix Z, Y, and X together show that the firm's customer service is valued during the purchasing process (See Appendix Z and Y) and that these instances of communication could also be used to keep people up to date on products and other developments (See Appendix X). This opportunity from the data shows that the firm should introduce other products that will fit future needs while at the same time as assisting customers with their current needs. When applicable, practicing customer service, while also trying to promote, should help keep customers up to date. Recently, taking action on this theory has shown consistent positive responsiveness and admiration by the customers with growing success.

Another strong avenue for promotion from the firm is through online marketing. Products that promoted online have shown to gain a significant number of views, which again shows the reliance on the quantity of customers (See Appendix F). A strong following can be seen from

the firm's YouTube channel, which earns thousands of views per instructional video (Chewbarka's Tags, 2008). Chewbarka's Instagram account has also shown progress by gaining over 1,300 followers as of 3/1/2021 in a six-month period (Chewbarka, 2021). The interactions on the manufacturing firm's accounts show that other businesses value product developments. The way interaction takes place on these platforms should be linked with what small businesses owners and entrepreneurs' value.

Using these social media platforms reveals another opportunity to enhance promotion by showing retailers new and innovative value-added personalization ideas. This opportunity could potentially help customers to sell more products provided by Chewbarka. Chewbarka can evaluate how and which products should be promoted from proper bookkeeping and CRM, which is enabled by having a large and dependable repetitive customer base. A necessary process to enable this analysis, which has already begun, entails going back in time to categorize correct sales figures and invoices to know which products, quantities sold, and to which customer the products were sold to for further relevant marketing recommendations.

Promotion: Threats

A lack of strong CRM capabilities creates a major threat because the firm is not able to measure customer satisfaction rates. Current marketing projects are completely manual and have not been given adequate tools to use for an extended period of time. The lack of these systems also allowed customers to forget that Chewbarka even exists. Directly from the open response questions, one customer stated, "Reach out to customers. I've forgotten about you with no emails or messages in a year." This particular customer has clearly fallen victim to a completely manual communication process. Not having a CRM system to push sufficient outbound communication is a severe threat to the business and any promotion that could be accomplished is wasted.

Other than responding to clients who contract the manufacturing firm on their own, there is a lack of aggressive outbound communication with customers. In a B2B marketplace, fluid communication between the buyer and seller is repeatedly shown to be one of the biggest elements required for transaction growth. Stated from another open response question about communication, "I liked the fact that it was possible to communicate quickly from your

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company. But that is now a thing of the past. Now you even ignore my emails.” This response reveals that outbound communication needs to be improved, as this buyer stated clearly a lackluster communication experience. Without open communication, there cannot be any truly effective promotion.

These two referenced customer quotes arise the questions of how many others have forgotten about the firm or have also been left behind. A reason as to why this firm is failing behind in this regard is because the firm fails to measure negative or positive interactions, take note of who or has not has been talked to, and document what was talked about. The firm’s history shows zero effort in measuring interaction rates, which the firm is now in the process of developing. As a result of this neglect, there is some repeated evidence from the survey that there is a lack of communication dialog with customers who do not order frequently.

Price: Overview

Price is the second largest factor at a 27.2% weighted sum of all other target factors (See Appendix K). The average unweighted price level satisfaction score by region and volume ordered per month can be found in Appendix AA. This graph shows some consistency with price level satisfaction other than the Asia market. Chewbarka deploys economies of scale pricing on every individual order basis, thus the more products ordered, the less in price per unit will be charged. Discounting the Asia marketplace, the average price score for purchases of 1 - 499 units per month is 87.25% and for 500+ units per month purchased the average score is 88.62%.

The price overall seems to be consistent with the higher quality goods produced. This claim is validated in Appendix AB and AC when the survey asked if the products are worth the price in Part II Question 6. Even in the U.S.A. market, 94.41% of respondents agreed to any extent that the products are worth the price. Combining the data found in Appendix AA and AB shows that the price level is mostly satisfactory across all regions except Asia and the price satisfaction rating is aligned with businesses’ purchasing power.

Filtering the four value factors over the number of units purchased per month shows the only factor to significantly increase with an increase of purchase size is quality (See Appendix AD). A significant finding from the data shows that the weight assigned to price at higher

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quantities ordered is lower on a global basis. Revealed from this graph, there is an increasing rate of the need for quality while there is a decreasing rate of the need for better pricing and customer service. Outside of the data gained from this online survey, select larger companies globally who work as wholesalers deemed 'distributors' by the firm indeed make up a significant portion of revenue from the firm from larger quantity orders.

Price: Opportunities

Pricing scores by use group reveal similar consistent results of the overall price satisfaction by region (See Appendix AC). Excluding the Central America market, the price acceptance score for the products by retail or wholesale are almost the same at a 3.96% difference, which conclusion can also be seen in Appendix AA. In the U.S.A. market, there is only a .34% difference in price satisfaction score. Globally, the retail average price score equates to 86.36% and the wholesale score equals an 84.15% satisfaction rate. These details showcase that no matter the use or the greater volume price levels, the price is flexible for markets and the price is acceptable through the quality of the products found in Appendix AB.

The price level at higher ordering quantities seems as though it can be increased on a per unit volume basis. Looking at the United States market only, the concern for the quality of products is even more pronounced as the number of units purchased per month increases (Appendix AE). Shown in red, the price factor weight at the average 500 + volume level is 24.11% lower than the average price weight below 500 units per month purchased.

Chewbarka can maintain quality at all levels as seen in Appendix Q, independent of how many units are ordered. As a result of meeting the needs of consistent high-quality products for customers who order larger quantities of units at a time, a plan to increase their price level seems applicable and warranted for the seller.

Along the same pricing issue topic, Chewbarka has over its history given customers even greater price breaks off of the website price, for example, the previously mentioned wholesale 'distributors' who spend a significant amount of revenue for the firm. With this analysis from the data, the firm seems to be leaving a great deal of revenue uncollected. These special customer distributors, such as those interviewed from the informative international surveys (Appendix A), who also happen to be larger companies at over 250+ employees, rarely spoke

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of price being an issue. Only quality and shipping speed of products were stated to be of the most importance, which Appendix AD shows evidence of.

More in-depth analysis must be completed by sales per customer, by quantity of units ordered over set timeframes, type of styles ordered, and by individual order to find an exact target price for every price break that is currently available. The organization process of the current business's accounting software to enable this deeper analysis was completed as of March 10th, 2021 after four months of data building. All sales data before late August of 2019 is unfortunately corrupt or unusable for any long-term analysis due to poor bookkeeping methods in the firm.

Price: Threats

Chewbarka's products are shown to be expensive in comparison to its competitors in every regional market (See Appendix AF). Only 39.29% of the time the pricing for Chewbarka's goods is better than the competition. Increasing the price demonstrates a risk that must be evaluated carefully. A price increase for the wholesale 'distributors' must be completed over a reasonable amount over time because they will certainly take notice. Although, these businesses can afford larger expenditures at once from their strong purchasing power. These types of customers showed quality over and over again to be their main reselling point of Chewbarka's products, thus Chewbarka should be compensated fairly for it. Overall, Chewbarka seems to be selling themselves short.

Another variable to discuss is if major distributors cannot purchase from Chewbarka anymore because of slight increases in price. Larger companies will take action to end business relationships triggered by their systems, for example, their accounting reveals that they cannot meet margins at their current price level to their customers. As a result, the customers of the distributors will have to find another source. This new source of product can come directly from the manufacturer, Chewbarka, itself. This plan will need a clear pricing, fully operational processes, and stronger distribution structures before attacking this external threat and possibility opening opportunity.

Price changes will affect the small businesses more so than larger corporations on many different levels. Small businesses consisting of 1 - 14 employees rely on consistency, whereas

bigger businesses can cope with one small product offering being phased out of their total larger product revenue lines that they offer (See Appendix F). All customers who purchase from the firm's website are able to order any quantity of units at a time to build bulk discounts to reduce their price per unit. Although, small businesses are also known to not have a lot of capital to spend all at once to earn greater economies of scale pricing per unit such as the bigger corporations can.

As stated from one survey taker in regards to validating low retail purchasing power, "I'm sure I am a very small buyer with you guys, but to me, I spend a lot of money with you all." A complete change in the methodology of how the pricing structure works due to the increase in innovation and current business conditions is clear. A systematic change in the pricing structure needs to be implemented such that bigger corporations no longer can take advantage of the historical pricing system. The major distributors must also be challenged because they attain better rates for products whereas they could be charged reasonably more (Appendix AD) .

Chewbarka shows a significant imbalance in its current pricing structure. Retailers, who make up the majority of customers, are being charged a disproportionate amount of money than distributors who are also allowed to purchase at any quantity per order and get significant price breaks. Customers who are able to send more money at a time and are willing to do so, are getting price breaks for which takes advantage of other businesses and at the expense of lost potential revenue for the manufacturer. In addition, distributors who get beyond website pricing seem to be competing with Chewbarka, which makes an even greater paradox in the marketplace. Pricing scores based on the use groups of wholesalers and retailers validate the claim of a pricing imbalance with the current pricing structure (See Appendix AG).

TACTICS

Tactics: Product

Chewbarka has the opportunity to differentiate its product offerings based on serving the same customer base for years with the same product lines. With a robust online presence, a greater level of analysis can be conducted on industry values in order to drive sales growth for the firm. The new product offerings must be tailored to the industry without having to completely

change customer's purchasing journeys. A pre-segmented marketplace already comes to the firm, thus continuously finding the needs of those businesses can be done with a degree of accuracy. As shown in Appendix R and S, the firm may have a better chance of increasing sales with new product lines rather marketing the same two product lines based on high quality.

Chewbarka mainly sells two types of goods that have many different styles in the marketplace, but customers have stated there many different varieties to choose from (See Appendix AH). Evidence supports that the number of styles offered can be cut down by earning a 92.87% agreeance to some extent that Chewbarka offers many styles to choose from. For a manufacturing firm, this skew indicates that styles of products are too heavily diverse, which makes the firm work harder to maintain product lines that are failing to generate significant growth prospects. An inventory of products that are unnecessary leads to wasted space on the business's website and on the stock floor. In order to fulfill the distribution of new product lines, space must be created in both places. There are numerous products that will be discontinued with this plan, which again will be found by proper bookkeeping and actual sales measurements.

The focus of the market needs to be brought on the products that only sell well to make space for other marketplace needed goods. With simplified inventory, along with some possible new products that may not even have to be manufactured, Chewbarka will be able to compete with other distributors in the awards and personalization industry to increase sales. There is no need to have significant marketing investment initially to showcase product developments because volumes of customers are already visiting Chewbarka's website and social media. Any new product lines will have to be evaluated to see what matches the needs of customers best, as well as maintaining the four factor values in these new offerings. These new products can be found through utilizing ideation processes such as the Design Thinking Process from IDEO.

Concluded from the data, the firm can take advantage of getting to know the customer base well enough to find more needs to fulfill. If there are new levels of manufacturing needed, the new product lines would be best suited to use the pre-existing tools and equipment that

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Chewbarka already has on its manufacturing floor. Business planning has to be performed based on all future growth ideas. Chewbarka can fully function as the manufacturer of product lines, but the firm also can develop its distribution business as well. A business plan analysis for this company must be performed to identify which path would be better suited for the longevity of this company.

Tactics: Place

The face of this manufacturing firm's business is their website. People know and share the firm's goods through this website; thus, as shown from responses in the survey, a total rebuild and reorganization from the ground up is needed. There are many types of websites that can function to accomplish transactions, but the right system is needed to support data collection and different types of products hopefully to be sold on it. A part of the website creation plan includes showing off Chewbarka's business values to its customers. Mission statements, visions statements, environmentally friendly statements, photographs of the people in the firm, and history of the firm all need to be showcased because small businesses care about the values the seller has (See Appendix V) .

The current website and social media interaction rates can enable CRM to be done. Building off of this option, an ERP system investment will be well worth the capital expenditure. An ERP system that can integrate with a website and CRM would be the best suited situation for this firm. Notably, shipping, tracking lots, lean manufacturing management, and restocking points from better bookkeeping can be established given the time, proper testing, and investment. There must be a cost benefit analysis to be done on how in-depth the firm is willing to go into data driven decision making from an ERP system.

When an ERP system grows from data both internally and externally, the development will benefit the user experience and the firm's sustainable growth on a proper foundation. A smoother purchasing process will enable streamlined communication between the buyer and seller on unprecedented levels for this firm. Linking a website with an ERP system accomplishes a strong place in the firm's marketing mix. A website overhaul should enhance the storefront of the seller for the buyer to view that needs to be integrated with all other areas of the business such as accounting and marketing. Fortunately, during the process of writing

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this thesis, the case firm earned a \$150,000.00 NETACC grant from the Economic Development Center that will be used for this specific restructuring. The buyers in the marketplace will hopefully take notice that the seller is making an effort to serve them better.

In order to accomplish an ERP installation, there must be a baseline to work off of or the install will cause significant waste. A small manufacturing business, such as Chewbarka, does not have the significant number of resources like other established businesses who can afford mistakes. Before entering an ERP system development, spending time in the lieu of capital to completely understand the manufacturing process and order fulfillment processes, start to finish in the most efficient way possible, enables a planned use of resources without guessing functionality. Spending money on an enterprise system that may not completely fit the needs of the firm should be prevented because of the amount of prior research before entering.

A start to finish contract and plan must be put into place before beginning such an endeavor. Then, a filtering process must take place to highlight only the best fit ERP software. The objective of a new software is configuration, e.g., the software has as minimal customization or special coding as possible and could be based off of the processes that are currently in place. If an ERP system is found with as minimal custom coding as possible through configuration, then the processes inside of the firm may have to change to adapt to the ERP for the system to work. Every employee must be trained on the new system as well as those on the manufacturing team must learn this system before activation. Prior preparation from every area of the business will prevent poor results.

Tactics: Promotion

Given the capital investment in an ERP system and then building a sales and/or marketing team that makes decisions based on data from an integrated system will enable effective promotion. Finding customer trends, driving customer service, and revealing what customers are looking for will enable strategic sales growth. Building off of a CRM tool, the firm also can support their customers by helping them sell more. Customer service representatives must be able to support such growth by being properly trained on all product specifications.

An ERP system will also allow the firm to become much more data oriented. Being data oriented will forcibly teach all of the employees of the firm exactly how the manufacturing

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and distribution processes should work. A system that can showcase exactly the terms, product tolerance specifications, and other intelligence will benefit the employee to learn more about the firm and then make the buyer satisfied with this knowledge. Customer service will be improved by the knowledge gained from getting used to an ERP system in the firm. All the parts of the marketing mix will improve when the knowledge of the people in the firm increases.

Continuing with training, the entire team at Chewbarka should be enrolled in professional sales training. There are a multitude of courses online courses available, such as public speaking, emailing ethics, and communication classes to aid in this development. These investments in the firm's staff can have a great impact on the customer to enable more sales promotions to take place. The majority of conversations with customers have been through personal communication with the employees via email or phone call. To a reasonable extent, the firm should seek not to deploy any automatic email replies or instantly generated messages that other sectors rely on. Communication should occur in this marketplace by generating personal connections in an effort to continuously build stronger relationships as seen in the **Literature Review**.

Whichever route Chewbarka executes the aforementioned tactics will have a ripple effect across the entire industry due to the firm's location in the supply chain. Fortunately for the firm, customers do not seem to have an immediate substitute if they do not like these necessary changes due to the quality Chewbarka's product exhibit, which is explained in **Product: Overview**. Months ahead of time prior notice and mentoring feedback from communication with customers on potential changes will be necessary to not severely harm either party from these revolutionary changes.

Tactics: Price

Chewbarka seems to operate as a global manufacturer and distributor, which creates conflicts in business planning and pricing. Chewbarka acting as both causes confusion and inconsistencies, which is illustrated in **Price: Threats**. One of the threats stated in that section was that the price is not better than competitors. Along with the data in Appendix AF, Chewbarka must clearly define who their competitors are. Perhaps the wholesale

‘distributors’ who Chewbarka sells to, although they generate a high portion of revenue for the firm, are the ones Chewbarka is competing with in the same marketplace. Chewbarka is the manufacturer of these products the industry uses; thus, the firm is positioned to take action in defending and growing its market share from these distributor customers through price. Finding actual sales figures, conducting a revenue loss analysis in an effort to enhance profitability, and perhaps then finding if the firm can earn more revenue in the long run must be completed in regards to fighting this threat before any more actions can take place.

Originally, the firm priced its products through a cost-plus basis without consideration of how that strategy could affect the firm and its customers in their marketplace. Adding on to the pricing issues revealed from the survey data, the current website charges most customers based on the quantity of units ordered and by style of product, but some customers over time have been allowed to have their own pricing, which was found from Appendix A. Some customers seem to have been trained on their own way of purchasing that fits them, but not the manufacturer. In an effort to change this climate, any new sales channels must come from well-defined transaction avenues with organized rules. The firm must take a price and operation position that combats these pricing threats.

Since the data demonstrates that the factor of price is flexible, two new suggested rules are requiring customers to purchase in packs and to only allow orders to be placed through the firm’s website for lot tracking. As stated, this particular manufacturing business is doing more than just manufacturing. With this simplification plan, the products should be sold in minimum 5 unit lots because some small businesses may not be able to afford more than that per order. Processing and inventory management will be much easier for the firm in numerous ways with items in packs, such as enabling barcoding processes. In compensation for forcing customers to purchase in packs, this plan may entail that the price per unit for lower quantity lots to be slightly reduced. The reduction of price for lower quantity lots should be aligned with the average purchasing price trends of customers at this range. Some businesses may be harmed, some may benefit, but this change must be done for the automation of the firm. Selling in packs increases the total revenue per any order, but some customers may be helped from a lower cost per unit.

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Building off of the knowledge that prices are too high for one group and too low for another (see appendix AG), accounting has begun to find simplified and proper price levels that will benefit the firm and the retailers in this particular marketplace. Retailers have stated from open response questions in regards to price, “Smaller business can’t always afford to purchase bulk therefore not being able to take advantage of lower prices,” “Prices lower. Walmart sells them for less,” “Lower price breaks would help a lot,” and “I have a few clients that want them [tags], but lots of people back off when they see the price tag or I’d sell a lot more...But, I may have to offer a cheaper card to sell more if I’m going to keep getting turned down for the price.” These quotes show the imbalance in price is valid and adjustments are needed. An updated website system will allow for a simplified pricing structure, a reduction of how many styles offered to reduce carrying costs, and a branded platform to sell more than just engravable or dye sublimation tags on.

On the opposite side to handle wholesalers buying in bulk and the handful of ‘distributors’ who routinely purchase from the firm, these groups will have to undergo a price increase. Although before this takes place, customers will have to be marked as a retailer or distributor, which can be easily found by research into the customer online and then coupled with supportive evidence by their average price level they are being charged per order. Some distributors are already known by the firm, some are not.

Such that there will not be a major sales catastrophe or an influx of retailer orders that the firm may not have the resources or tools to fulfill, the manner in which a price increase will be accomplished for this group must be done marginally. Gradually increasing the pricing for higher order quantities by 1% for just one quarter seems to be reasonable and fair given the analysis thus far. If total revenue for this group increases, then the next quarter will have the same effect of a 1% increase until sales start to decline for this use group. Although, if overall sales increase because of the greater pricing has increased the number of retailers buying directly from Chewbarka in the market, then other valuations will take place that may entail more price or process adjustments.

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Implications of Recommendations

Without spending a significant number of resources, the information found from this research in this business's market can reveal avenues that may never have been considered by the firm. Attaining more data on customers may entail the use of professionals to enable a more precise level of analysis. Nevertheless, the manner in which the data was obtained set up the framework for the future of the firm by enabling the comparison of various satisfaction levels over time. The people and culture in the firm should be impacted for the benefit of the entire company if their external data is taken seriously.

From a business standpoint, any actions to support data driven analysis will not only have effects on marketing initiatives, but also to support the entire business's maturity. This need for change is supported by Deloitte saying in their 2018 *Skills Gap* analysis, "As digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution redefine manufacturing jobs, leaders and workers alike need to embrace a new work environment. Here, advanced technology and digital skills must blend with uniquely human skills to yield the highest level of productivity. Understanding how work might change can help the industry as a whole prepare for a future that promises to be transformative" (Dollar, 2018). The B2B manufacturing landscape must change to take hold and develop with the technology for their external analysis as much as in their internal operations.

B2B manufacturing firms who use robust data to make decisions position themselves for long term success. Being able to measure data in one area of business opens the door for all other business divisions to build off from as well. Just from the work of improving marketing from attaining concrete data, this action enables many other implications for the firm to base its operations on. Some examples of business procedures that can benefit from fully digitizing just one area include inventory management, production scheduling, customer service, and accurate bookkeeping controls.

Unexpectedly, during the process of becoming increasingly digitized, employee morale throughout the business improved. Employees in the case firm have expressed their happiness with the various improvements and with the new heading the firm is moving in. This project's journey began by understanding opportunities and threats from the marketplace, for which the

impact spread across other areas of the business to enable a culture of data driven decision making. Manufacturing business plans need to include the investment of attaining external data that can help make better business decisions. Using any part of the business to begin implementing data driven strategies can help these firms operate more effectively as well as potentially become more attractive for skilled labor to join them.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – In-depth Interview Questions

1. How can Chewbarka better meet your needs now and in the future better?
(Open response)
2. What do you think of China's product and service compared to Chewbarka?
(Open response)
3. What is the biggest threat to Chewbarka?
(Open response)
4. What do you wish Chewbarka would change?
(Open response)
5. What area would you mostly categorize your business in or moving towards?
(Open response)
6. How do you envision your industry growing in the foreseeable future? How can Chewbarka help you in that?
(Open Response)

[END OF SURVEY]

Appendix B – Online Emailed Survey

1. Statement of purpose

The Ideal Supplier Company Questionnaire:

You are invited to participate in a study of the excellent customers of Chewbarka, Inc. Chewbarka is committed to your business's operational and customer success. You can help Chewbarka fulfill this mission by filling out the following survey. With this survey, we can help you make your business more successful. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you purchased from Chewbarka's Tags.

2. Description, Including Risks and Benefits

If you decide to participate, we will conduct a study involving the following criteria of Chewbarka: The company's value, product quality, customer service, and price of our product to you. There are no right or wrong answers, but we do ask you to be truthful. This survey can be completed in less than 10 minutes.

4. Confidentiality

Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the general public in a way that can be traced to you. In any written reports or publications, no participant other than the researchers will be identified, and only anonymous data will be presented.

This consent form, with your signature, will be stored separately and independently from the data collected so that your responses will not be identifiable.

5. Compensation and Costs (optional)

Complete this survey and potentially WIN A CHANCE TO GET \$100.00 IN CHEWBARKA STORE CREDITS! If you submit your contact information, FIVE LUCKY survey-takers will win \$100 CHEWBARKA CREDIT on their next order.

6. Statement that Participation Is Voluntary

Your participation is totally voluntary, and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Chewbarka, Inc. or Bryant University, who is helping to administer this survey, or either employees in any way. If you decide to participate, you are also free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships. However, it is re- requested that you notify the investigator of this.

7. Persons to Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Frank T. Ricci Jr (frankjr@chewbarka.com) or call 401-494-9911. If you have any additional questions later, we will be happy to answer them. You can have a copy of this form to keep.

8. Signature Indicating Informed Consent

Please (Select YES/NO) to begin the survey if you have decided to participate.

Your selection indicates only that you are at least 18 years of age and have read the information provided above. Your selection does not obligate you to participate, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

PART I

1. In a few words, what makes a company great to work with?

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(Can Skip, open response)

PART II

Strongly Disagree Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
1	2	3	4	5

As a supplier of ball chains, split rings, engravable, and printable tag products
CHEWBARKA...

1. ... successfully advertises itself as a United States manufacturer.
- 2.... keeps you up to date on the latest products available.
- 3.... does not price products unreasonably or out of your market.
- 4.... offers products that your customers want to buy again.
- 5.... has readily available customer service throughout your purchasing process.
- 6.... has products worth the price.
- 7.... is consistent with their product quality.
- 8.... successfully advertises itself as a family owned and operated business.
- 9.... makes the process of exchanges, refunds, and order add-ons easy.
- 10... ships product in a reasonable amount of time.
- 11... successfully advertises itself as an environmentally friendly business.
- 12... offers significant price incentives at higher order quantities.
- 13... has safe and/or secure shipment packaging.
- 14... goes 'the extra mile' to be certain you are satisfied.
- 15... understands that your business needs to make a profit.
- 16... offers products that make you and your customers feel excited about.
- 17... successfully offers a variety of styles of products such as engraving, ball/key chains, dye sublimation, and printed tags to choose from.
- 18... prices products that reflect the company's reliability and service.

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19... is concerned about your success.

20... successfully advertises itself selling premium grade products.

PART III

Directions: Listed below are four elements pertaining to suppliers. We would like to know how important each of these items are to you in a purchasing decision.

21. Please weigh the importance of the following questions. The weights must add to 100%.

1. The supplier is aligned with business values you and your customers hold. _____
2. The ability for the supplier to promptly solve or answer any questions. _____
3. The price of products from a supplier is justified. _____
4. The product from the supplier is dependable and of high quality. _____

100%

PART IV

22. How does CHEWBARKA compare with its competition in regard to the following:

1. Customer Service: Worse | Same | Better
2. Product Quality: Worse | Same | Better
3. Product Price: Worse | Same | Better
4. Aligns with my needs: Worse | Same | Better

PART V

To what degree to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

23. My customers care that my products are made in the United States.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
Agree				
1	2	3	4	5

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24. I consider purchasing from other sources other than Chewbarka, such as imported tags from China.

Strongly Disagree Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
1	2	3	4	5

25. How much revenue does your ID / Pet Tag division of your business earn per month?

- Less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 - \$4,999
- \$5,000 - \$9,999
- \$10,000+

26. In your ID / Pet Tag division of your business, what percentage of your inventory consists of Chewbarka's products?

- 1%-24%
- 25%-49%
- 50%-74%
- 75%-100%

27. When you buy Chewbarka's products, how do you use it? (Please Mark all that apply.)

- Sell engraved or printed products to customers at retail.
- Reseller / Wholesale distributor to other businesses
- Use the products in internal operations and/or marketing efforts.

28. How many Tags do you currently purchase from CHEWBARKA per month? (Excluding Ball chains and Split rings)

- 1-99
- 100-499
- 500-1999
- 2000+

29. How many individuals are employed in your organization?

- 1-14
- 15-49
- 50-249
- 250+

30. What new product lines or items would like to see developed by CHEWBARKA that you think would be successful in your marketplace?

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Sterling Silver ID and Pet Tags:

Not at all Dislike Somewhat Neither Like or Dislike Like Somewhat Very
Interested

1 2 3 4 5

Anti-Chip Premium Dye Sublimation Tags:

Not at all Dislike Somewhat Neither Like or Dislike Like Somewhat
Very Interested

1 2 3 4 5

31: What would you like CHEWBARKA to know and understand about you or your company that you think we don't quite understand?

(Can Skip, open response)

32: What do other suppliers offer or do better than CHEWBARKA?

(Can Skip, open response)

Please provide contact information to be entered to win one of the FIVE \$100
CHEWBARKA credit give-a-ways.

Full Name: Company Name: Job Title:

Email:

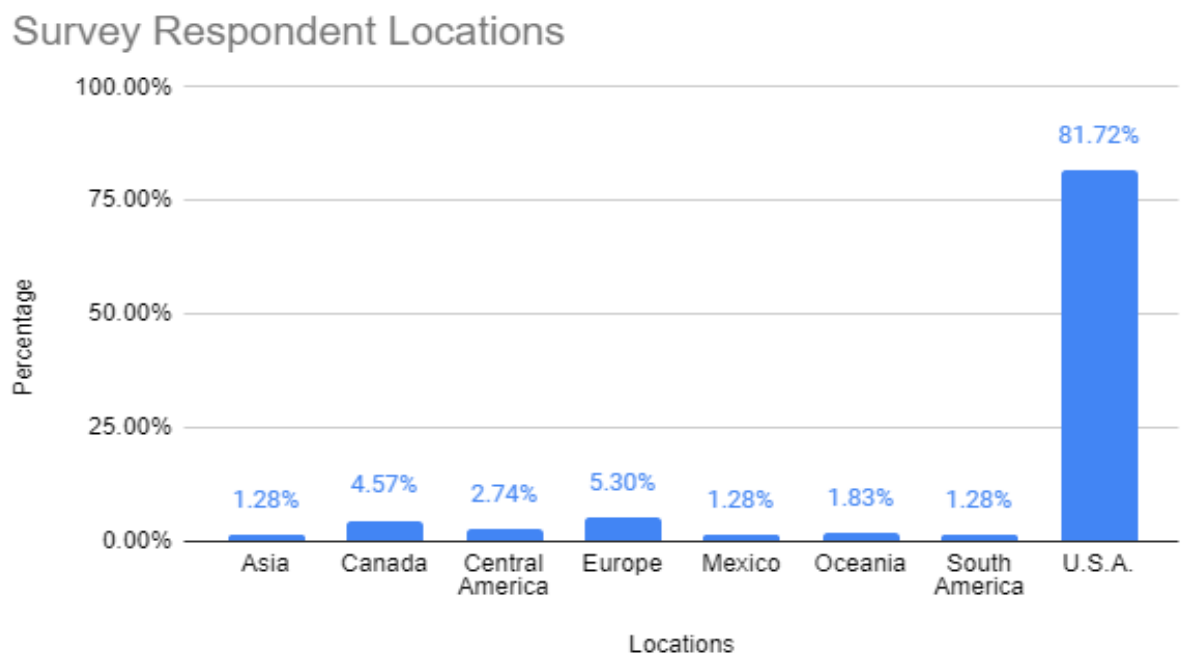
[END OF SURVEY]

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Appendix C – Map of Respondent Locations



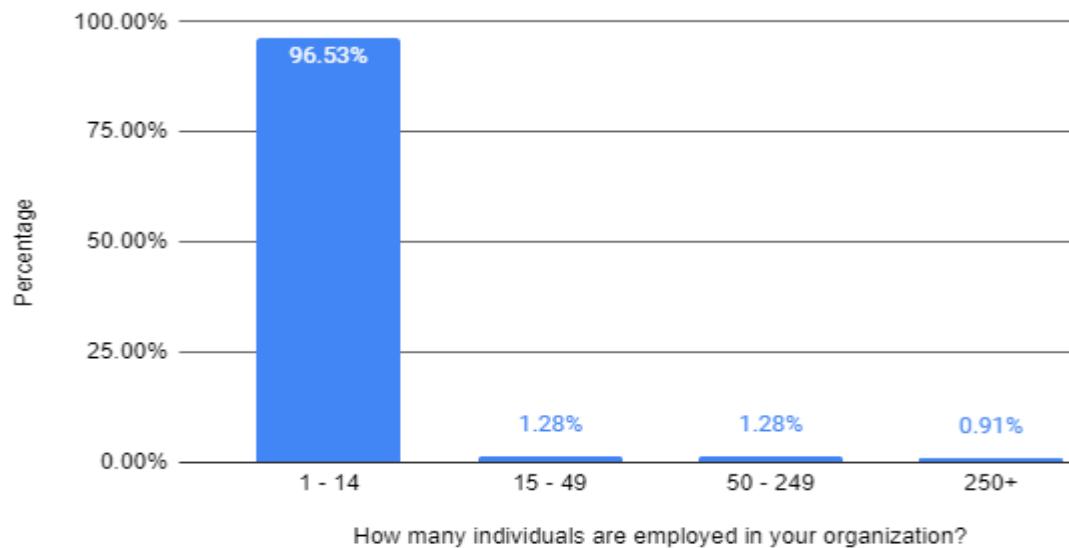
Appendix D – Location Percentages



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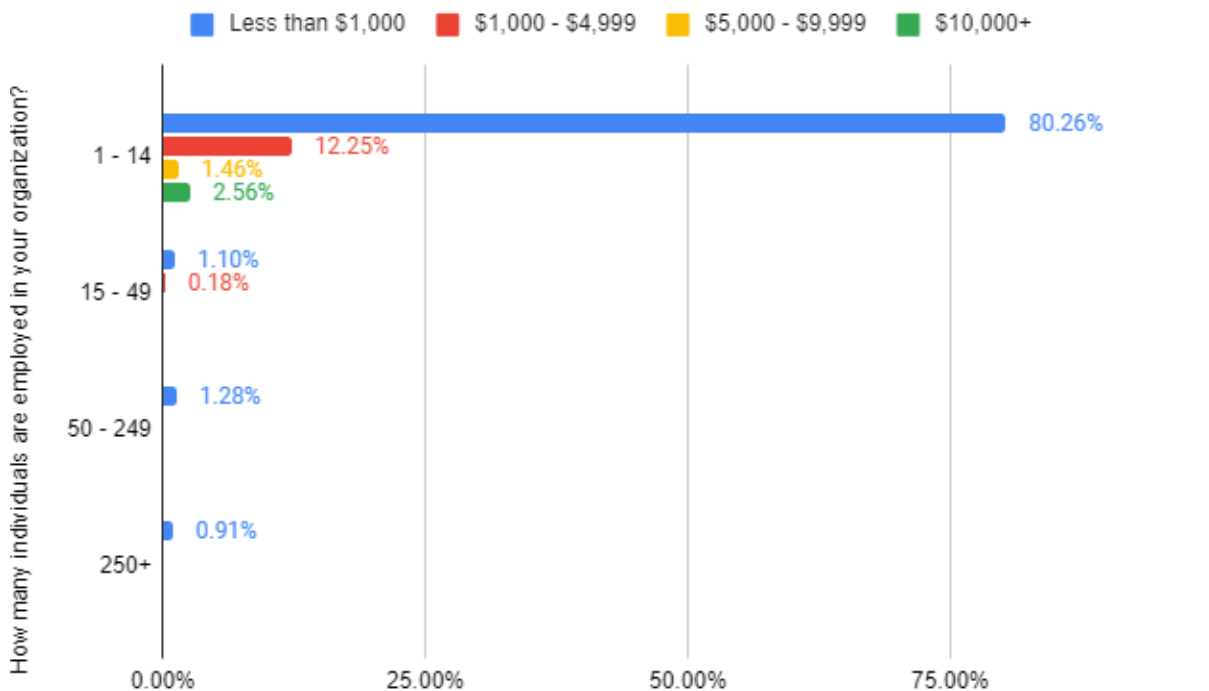
Appendix E – Business Employment Size

Business Employment Size Comparison



Appendix F – Tag Division Revenue Per Respondent By Firm Size

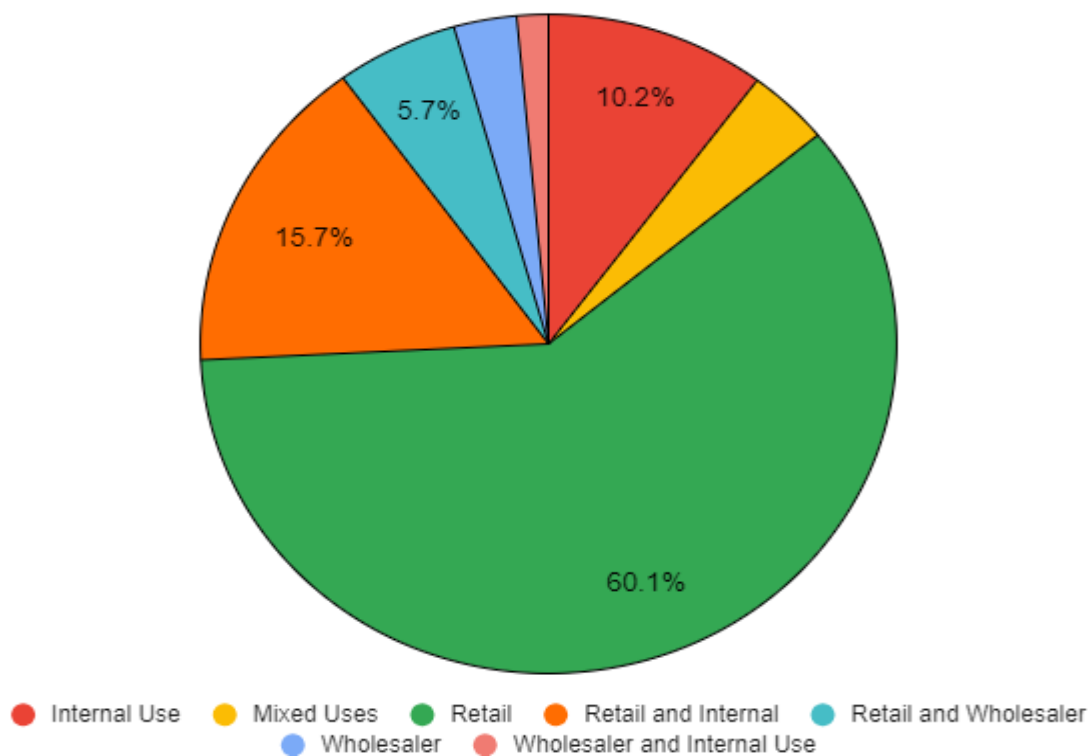
Count of Tag Revenue Per Month & Business Size By Total Respondents



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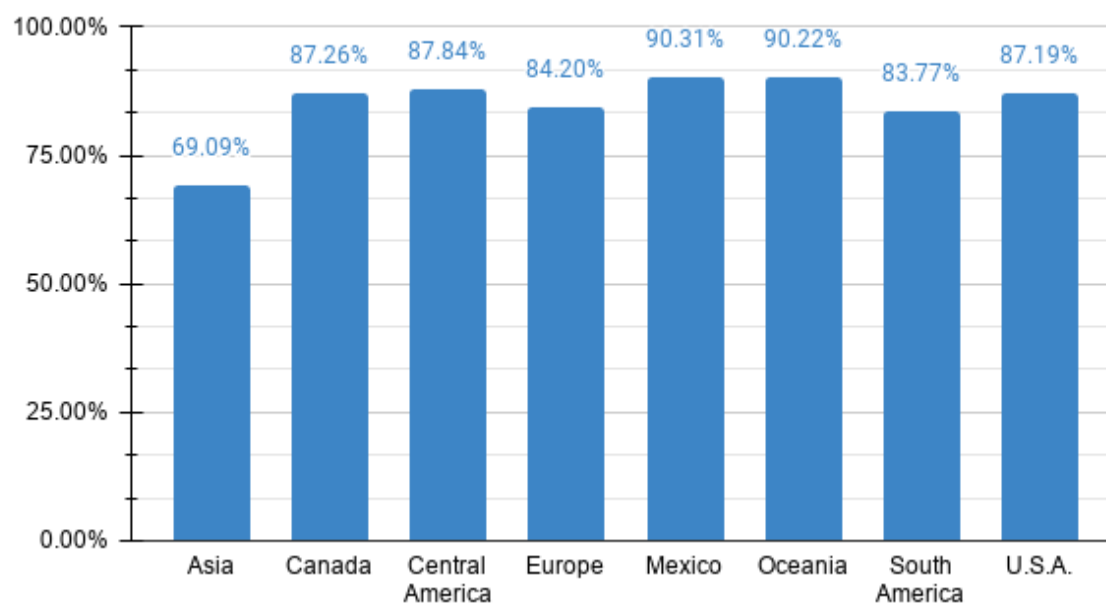
Appendix G – Global Use Groups

Global Market Use Groups



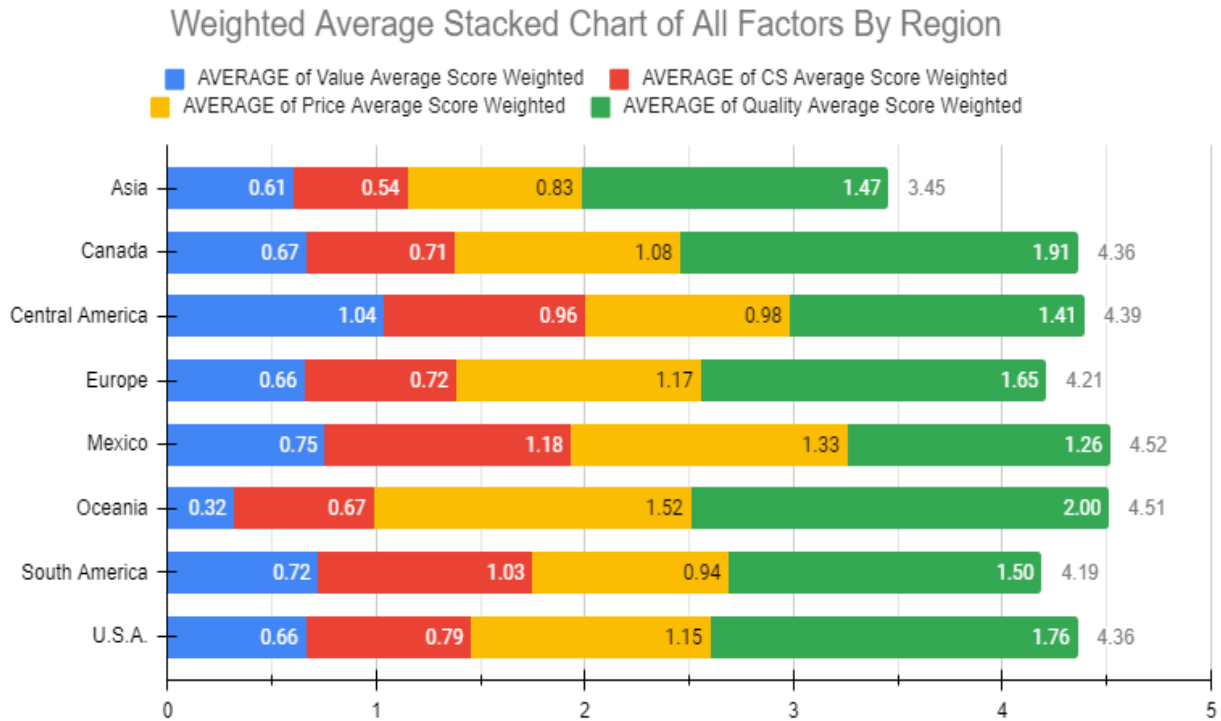
Appendix H – Global Market Average Score & All Factors Weighted

Global Approval Rating - All Factors Average Weighted

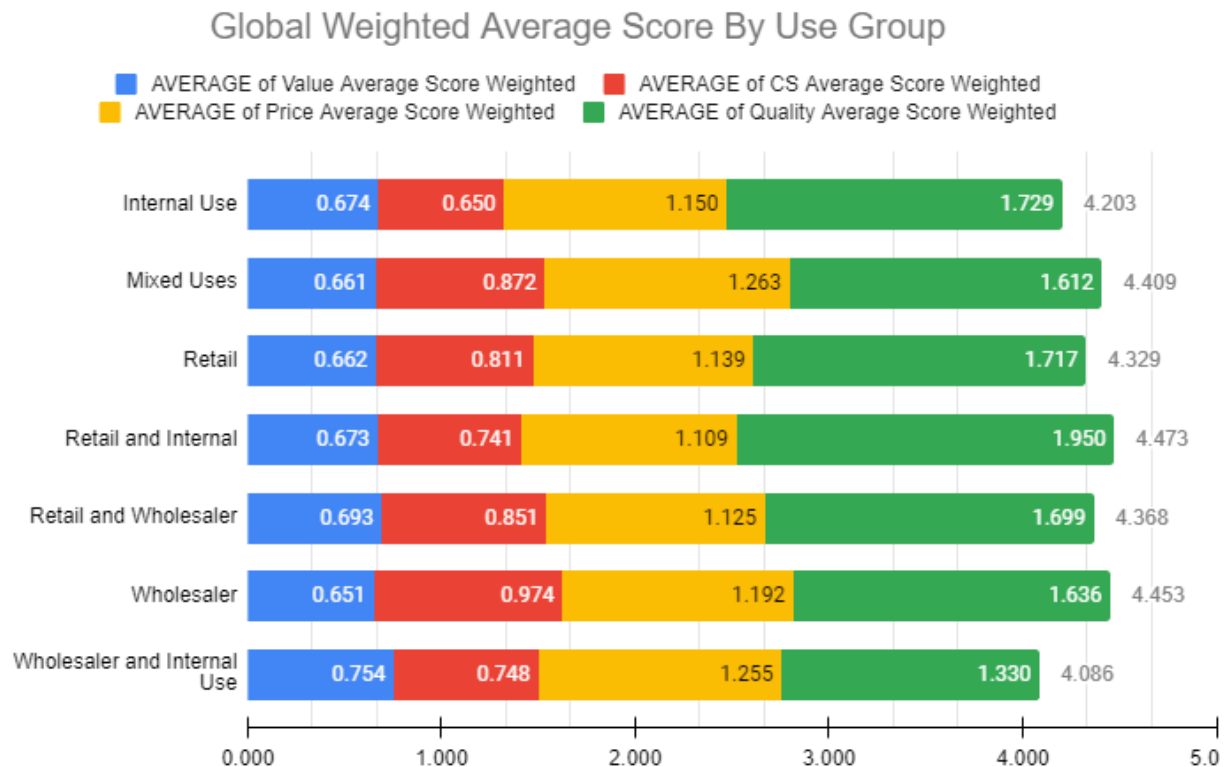


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Appendix I – Global Market Average Score & Factors Separated by Weight



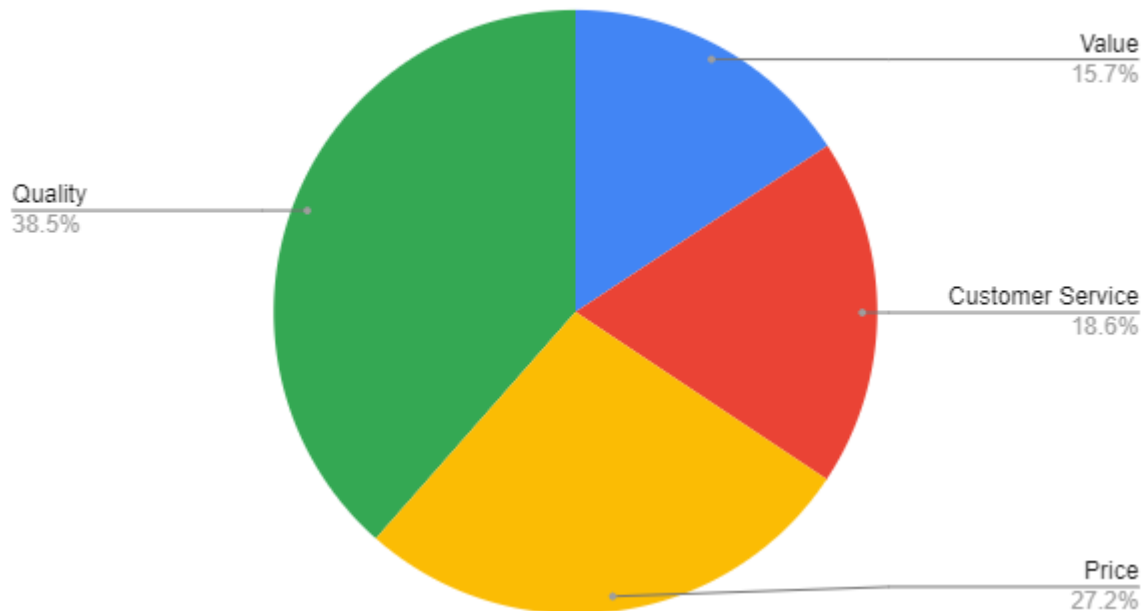
Appendix J – Weighted Average Factor Score by Use Group



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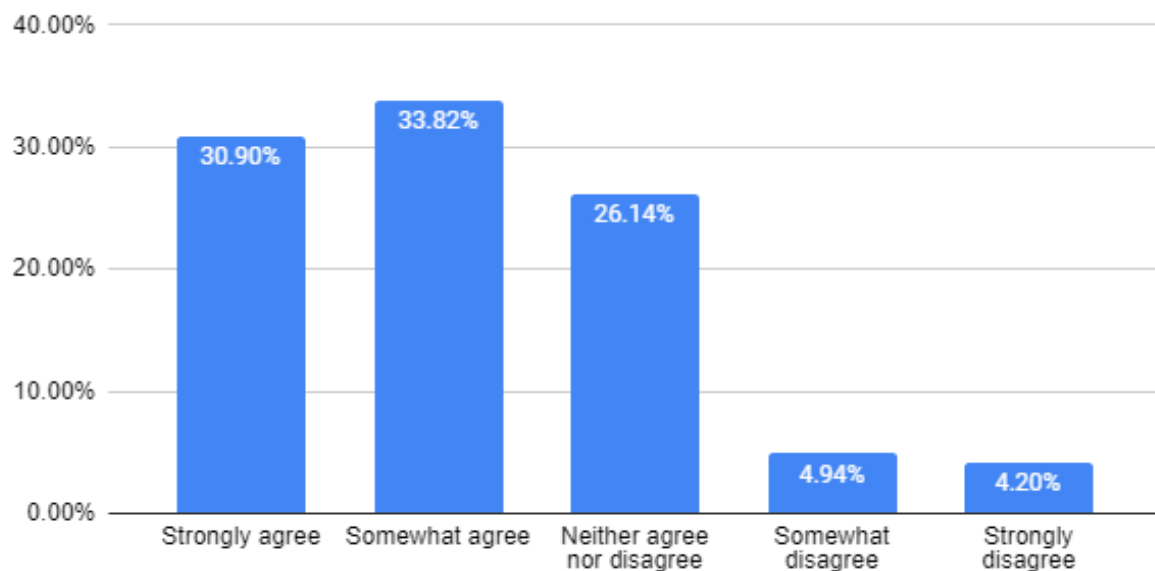
Appendix K – Sum of Factor Levels

Weighted Significance Levels of The Four Factors



Appendix L – Percentage of Customers Preferring U.S.A. Made Goods

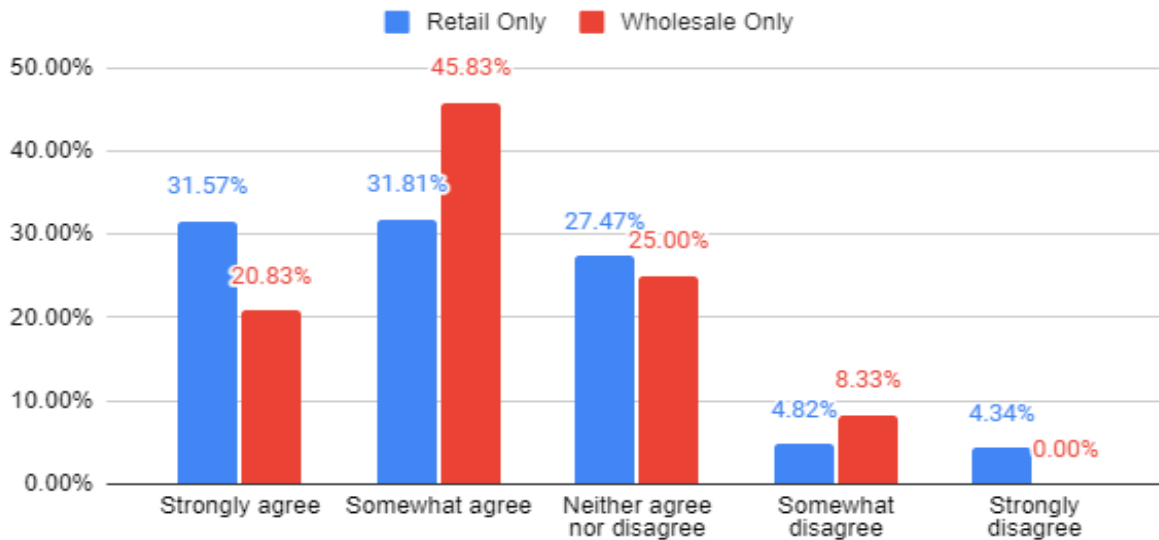
Percentage of "My customers care that my products are made in the United States."



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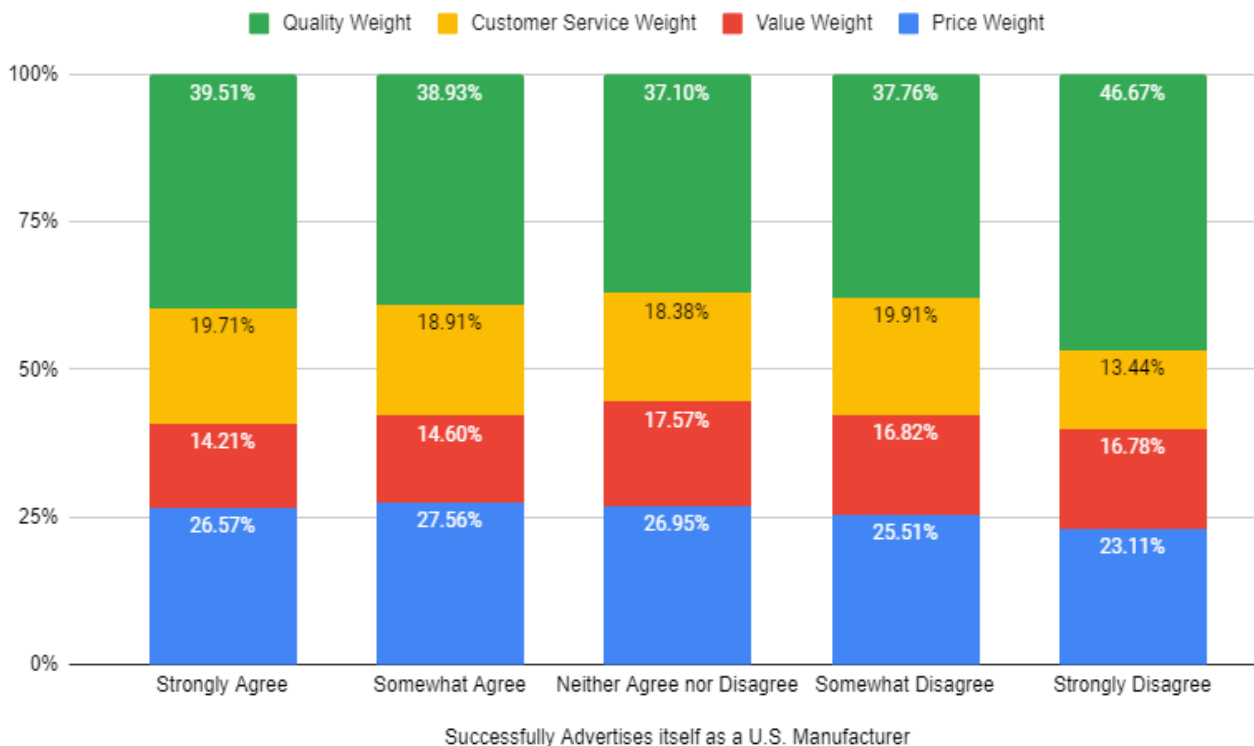
Appendix M – Percentage of Preferring U.S.A. Goods. By Retail & Wholesale Only

Selection Percentage of "My customers care that my products are made in the United States." Retail & Wholesale Only



Appendix N – Factor Weights Based On Part II Question 1 (U.S.A. Only)

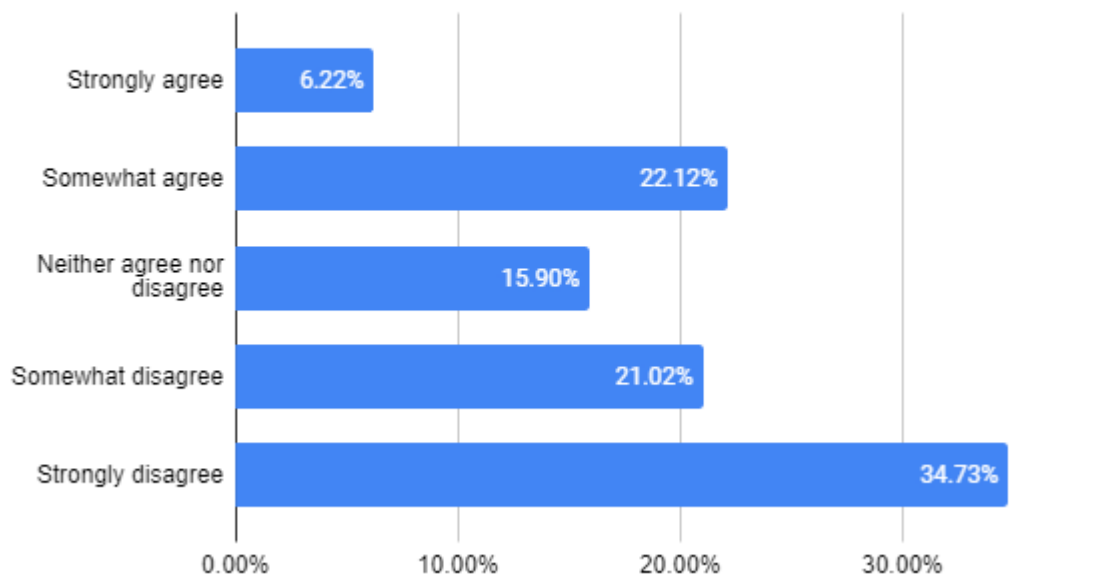
Successfully advertises itself as a United States manufacturer. VS. Weighted Factors



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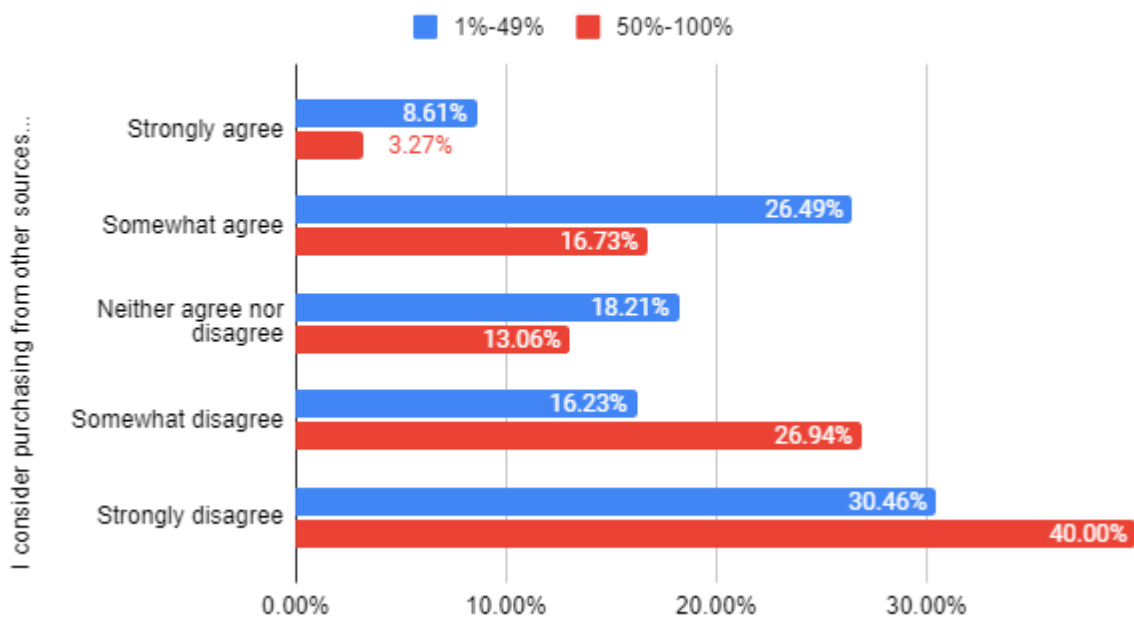
Appendix O – Substitute Product Difference Part V Question 24

Product Competition: "I consider purchasing from sources other than Chewbarka, such as imported tags from China."



Appendix P – Product Competition by Inventory Share

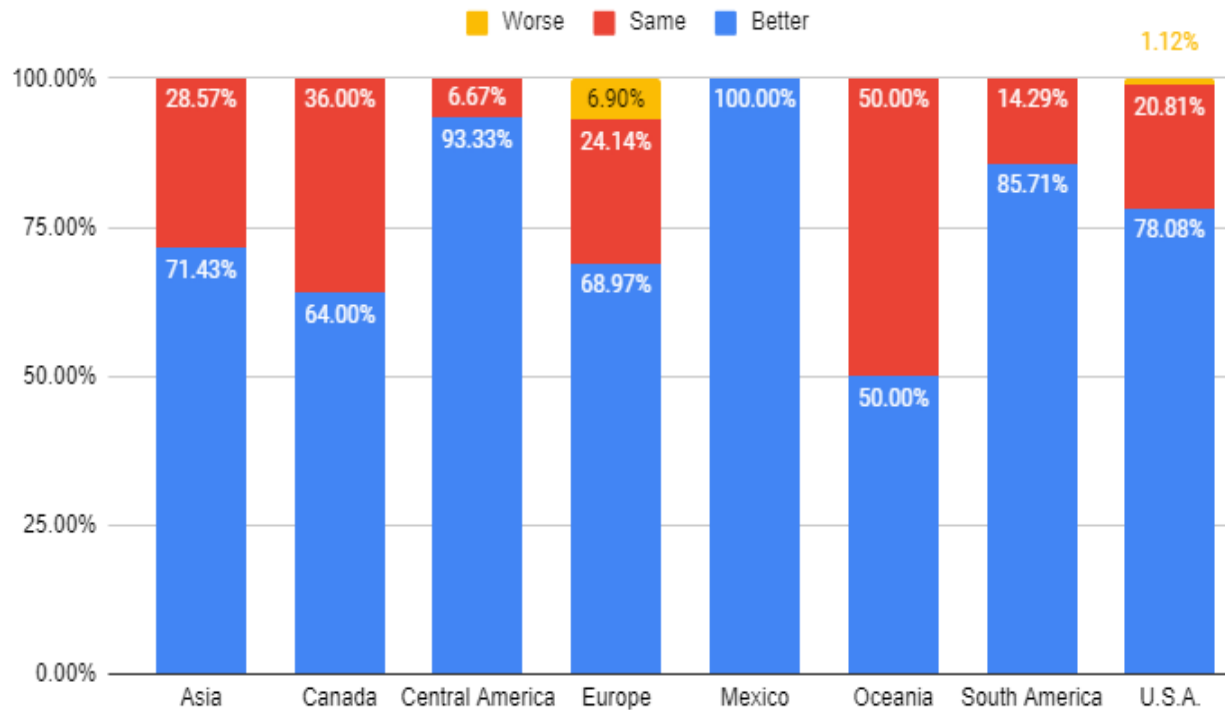
Product Competition: By Inventory Share



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Appendix Q – Quality VS. Competitors

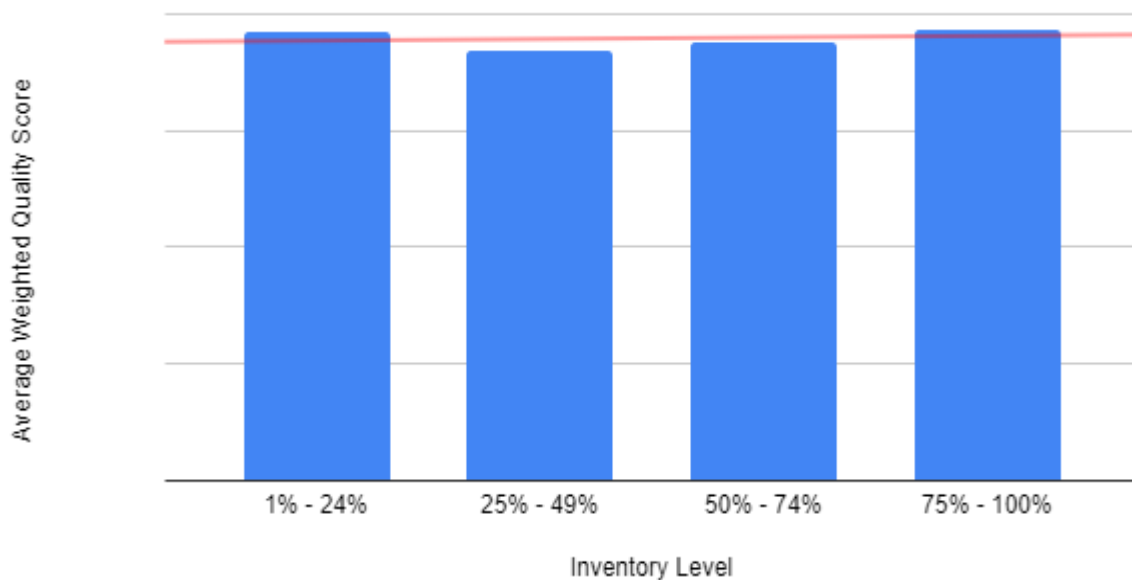
How does CHEWBARKA compare with its competition on Product Quality



Appendix R – Global Weighted Quality Score

Global Average Weighted Quality Score vs. Inventory Level

■ Average Weighted Quality Score — Trendline for Average Weighted Quality Score $R^2 = 0.046$



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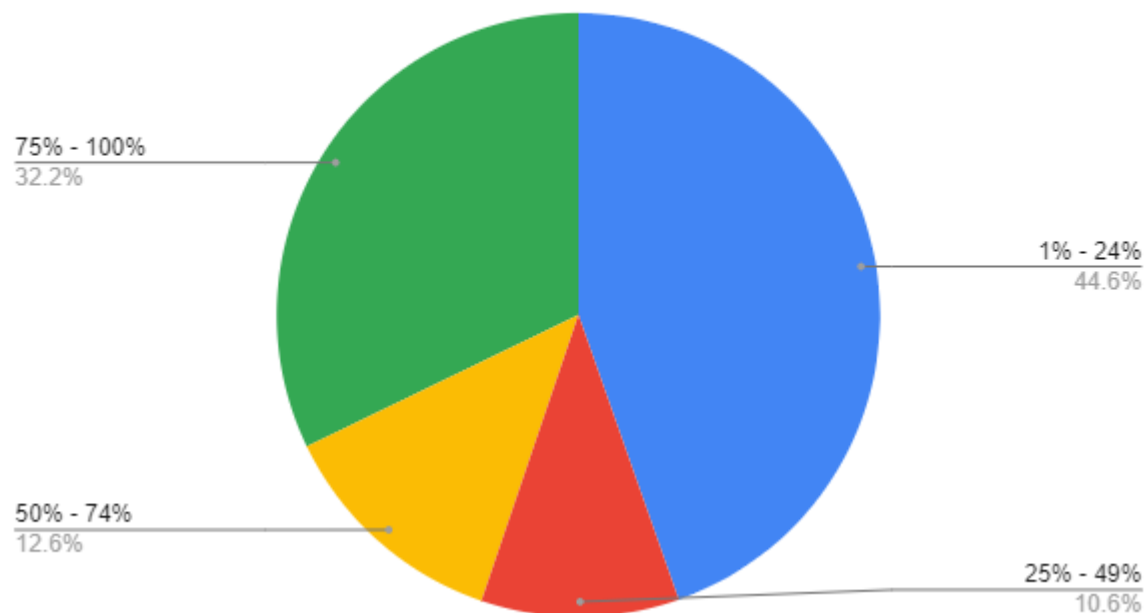
Appendix S – Weighted Quality Score (U.S.A. Only)

U.S.A. Average Weighted Quality Score vs. Inventory Level



Appendix T – Inventory Share

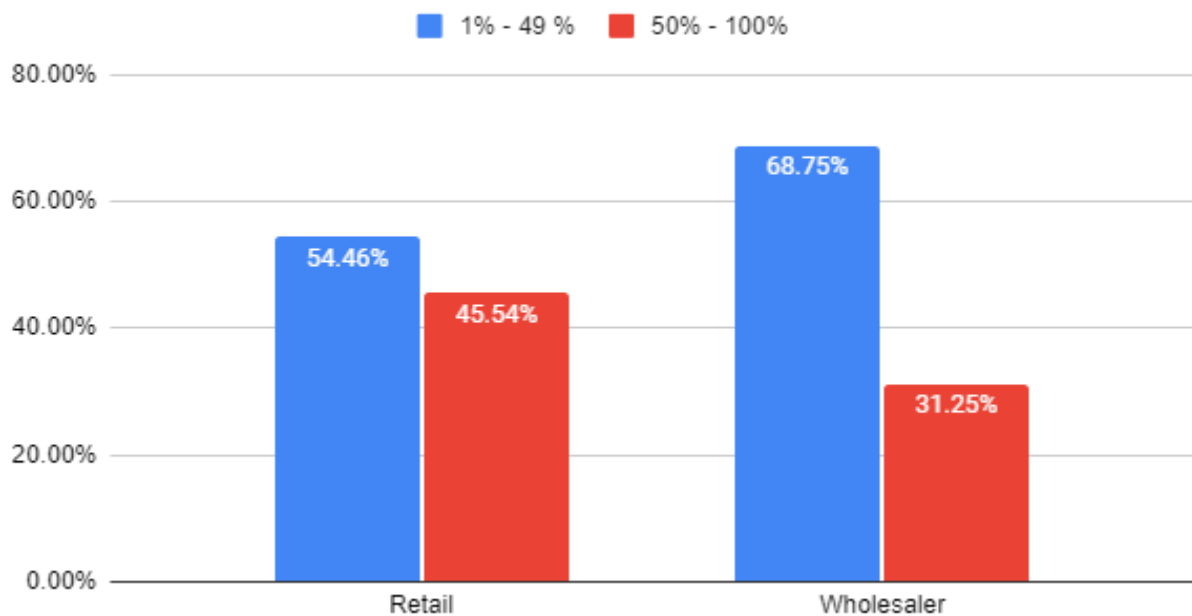
Inventory Share



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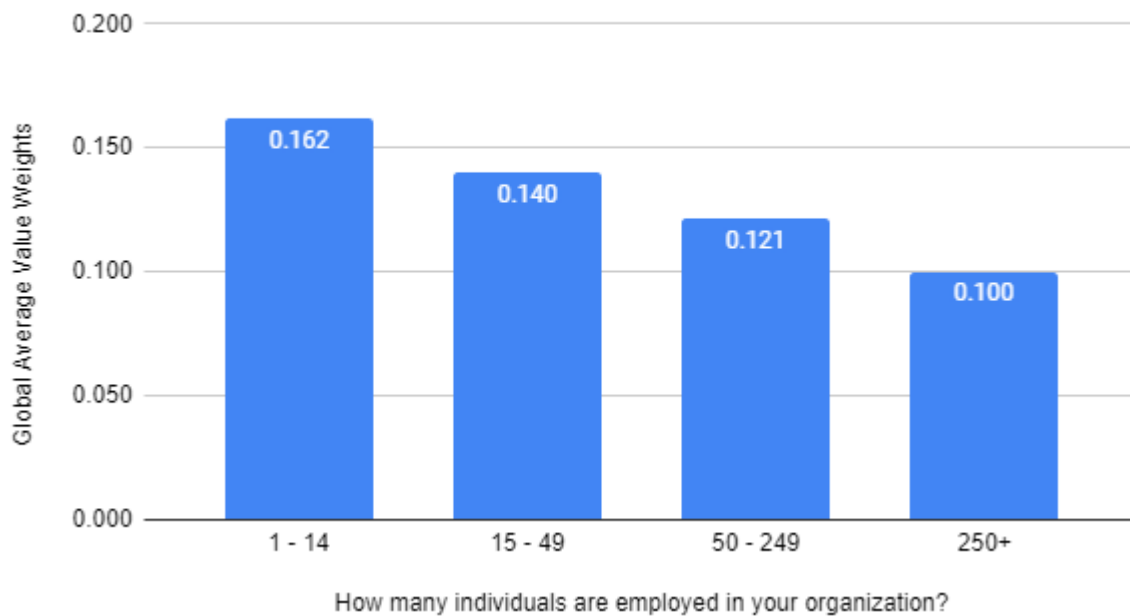
Appendix U – Inventory Share: Retail & Wholesale Only

Retail Vs. Wholesale Uses Inventory Share Levels



Appendix V – Value Score by Firm Size

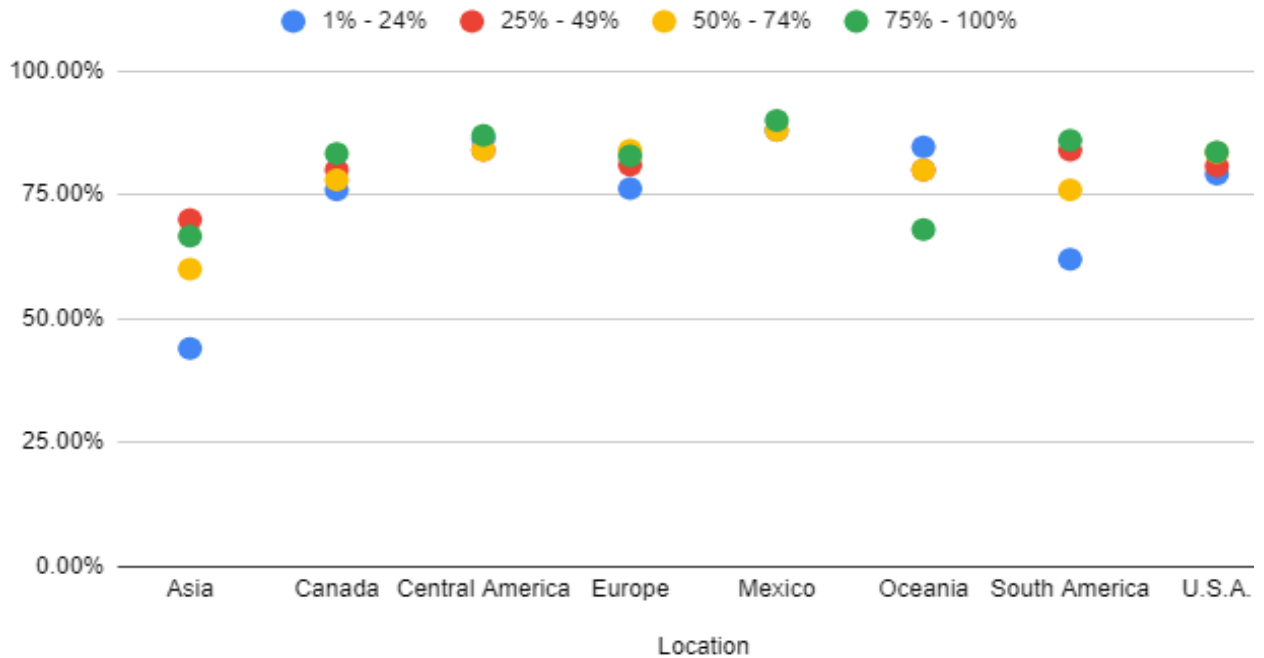
Global Average Value Weight vs. Firm Size



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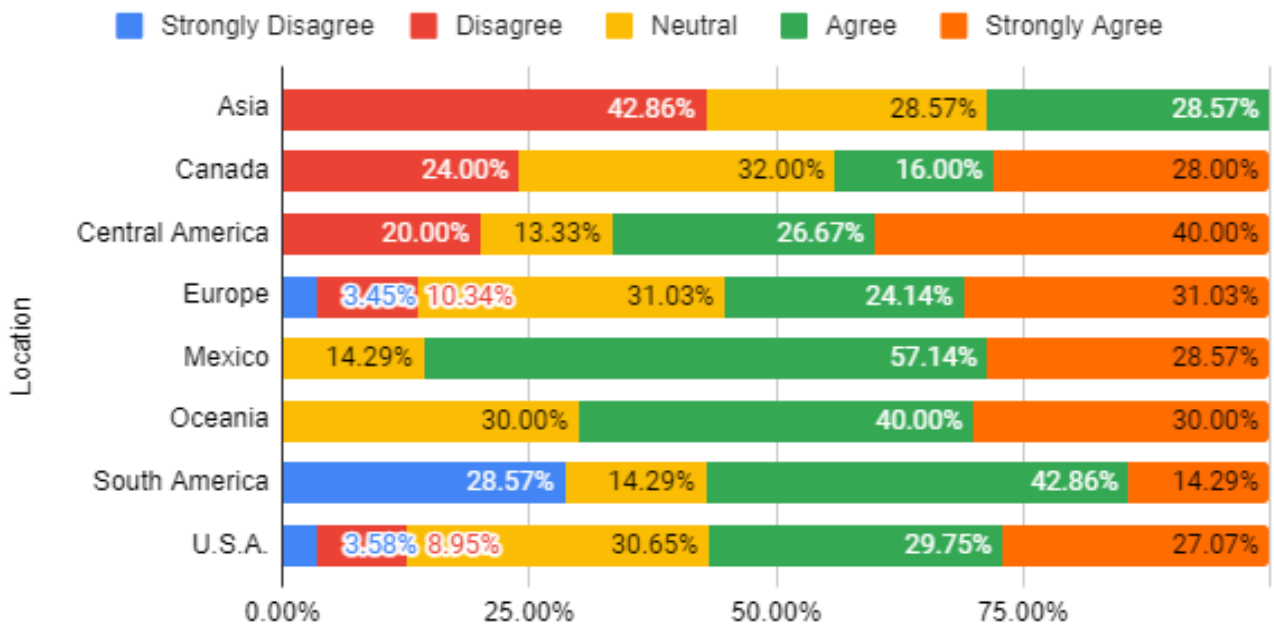
Appendix W – Customer Service Score By Market & Inventory Share

Customer Service Score By Market & Inventory Share



Appendix X – Percentage Score of Part II Question 2 By Region

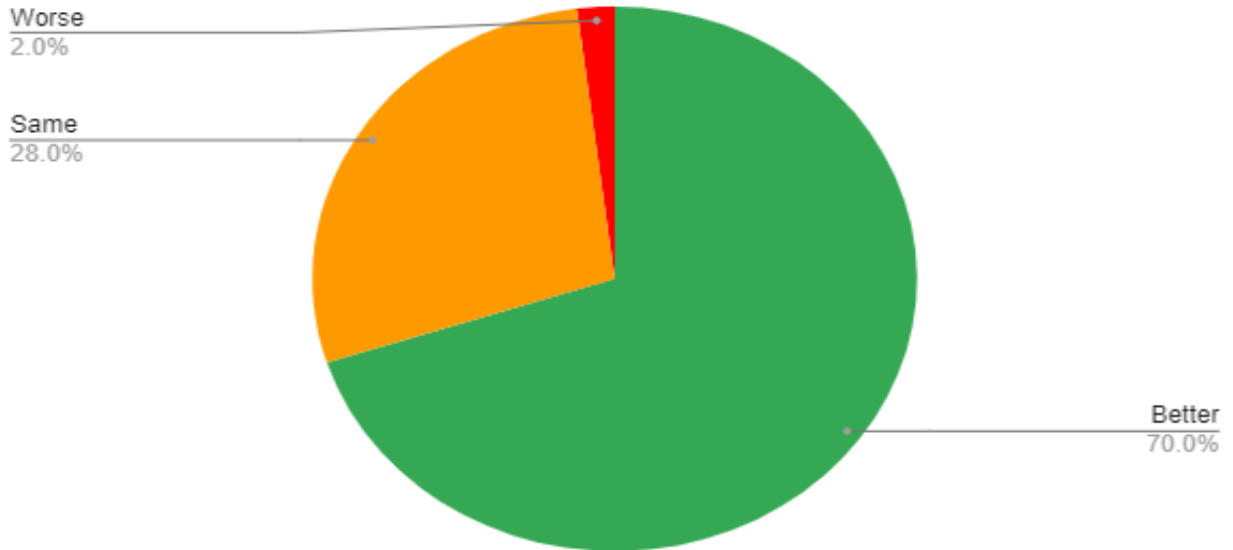
Satisfaction of "Keeps you up to date on the latest products available." By Region



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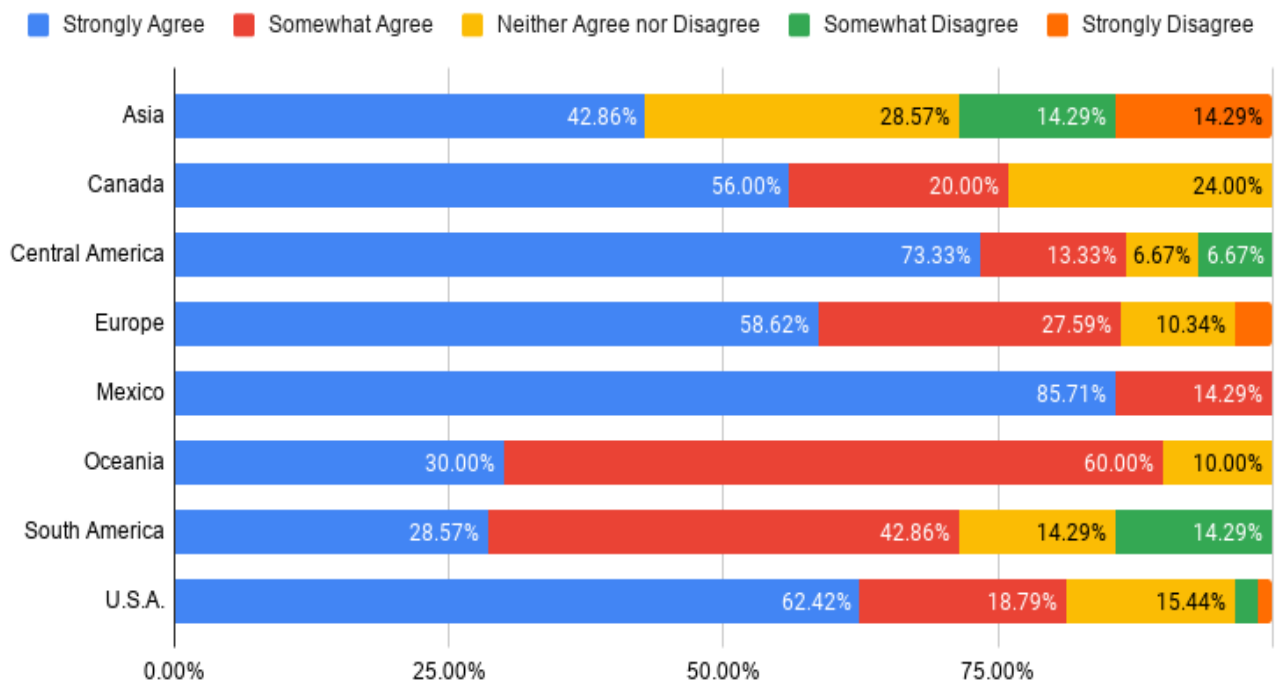
Appendix Y – Customer Service VS. Competitors

"How does CHEWBARKA compare with its competition on Customer Service"



Appendix Z – Percentage Score of Part II Question 5 By Region

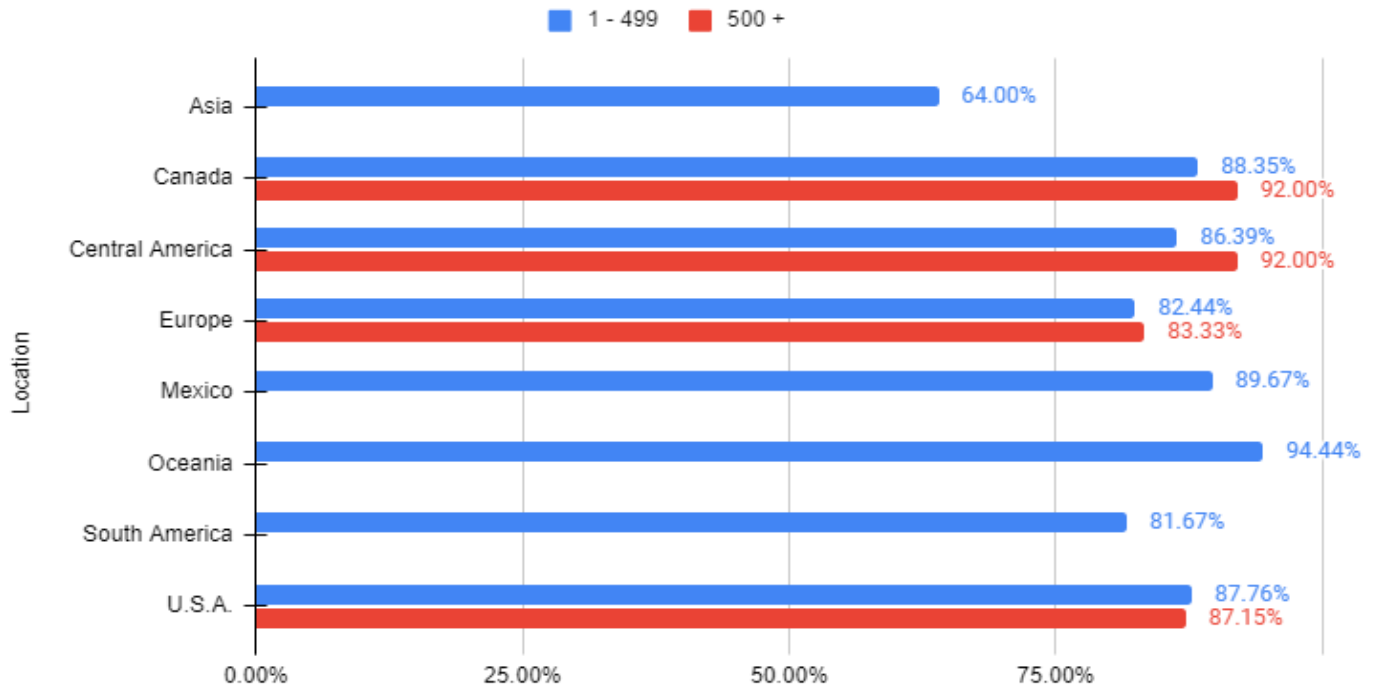
Percentage of "Chewbarka ...has readily available customer service throughout your purchasing process."



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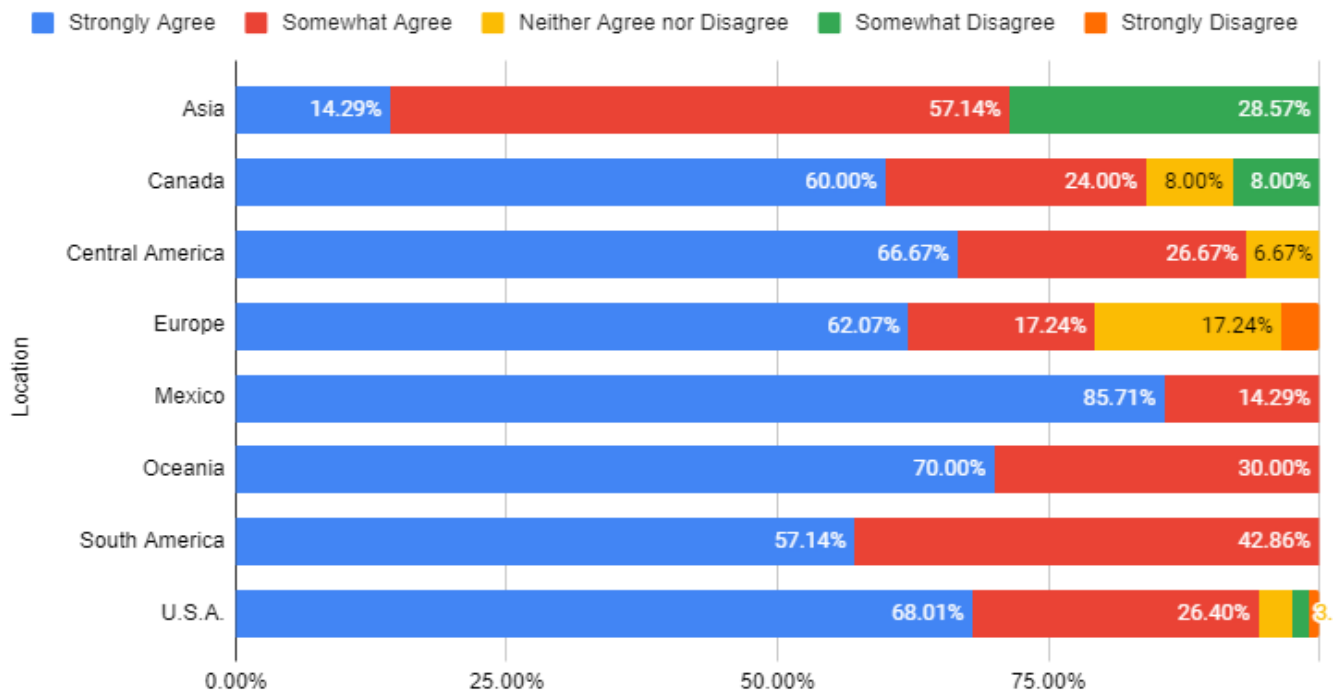
Appendix AA – Average Price Score by Region & Volume of Purchases Per Month

Average Price Score Unweighted By Region & Purchases Per Month



Appendix AB – Part II Question 6 By Region

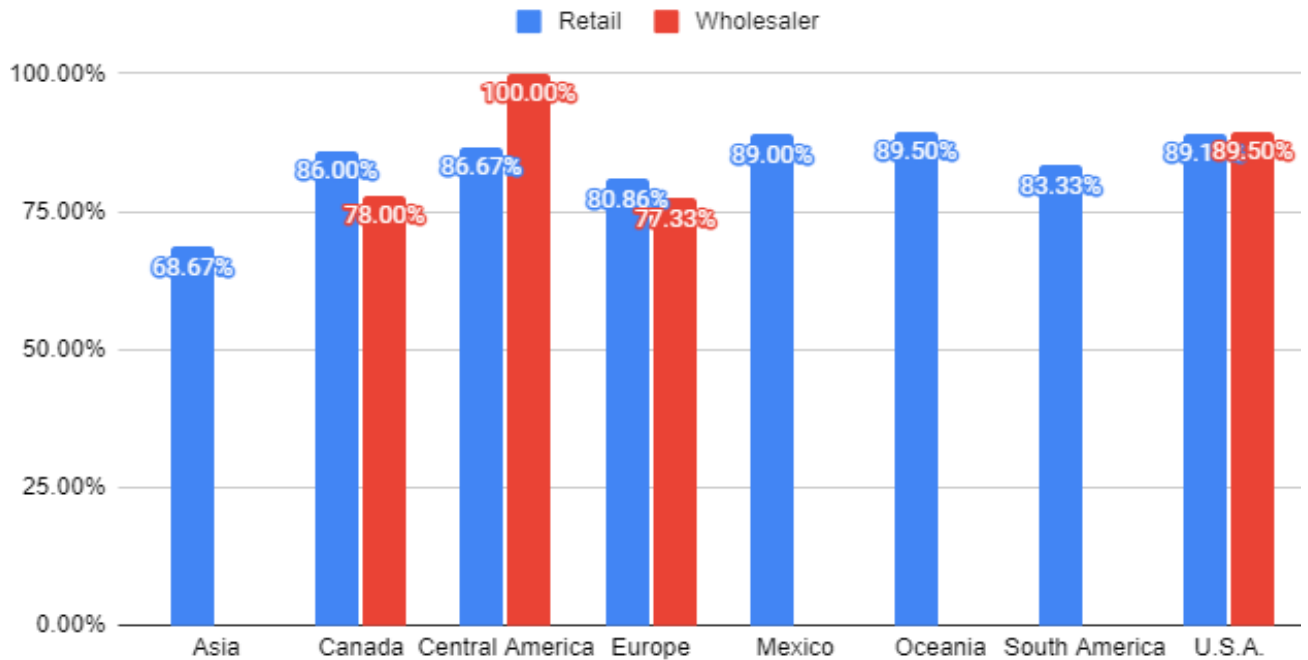
Chewbarka... "has products worth the price." By Region



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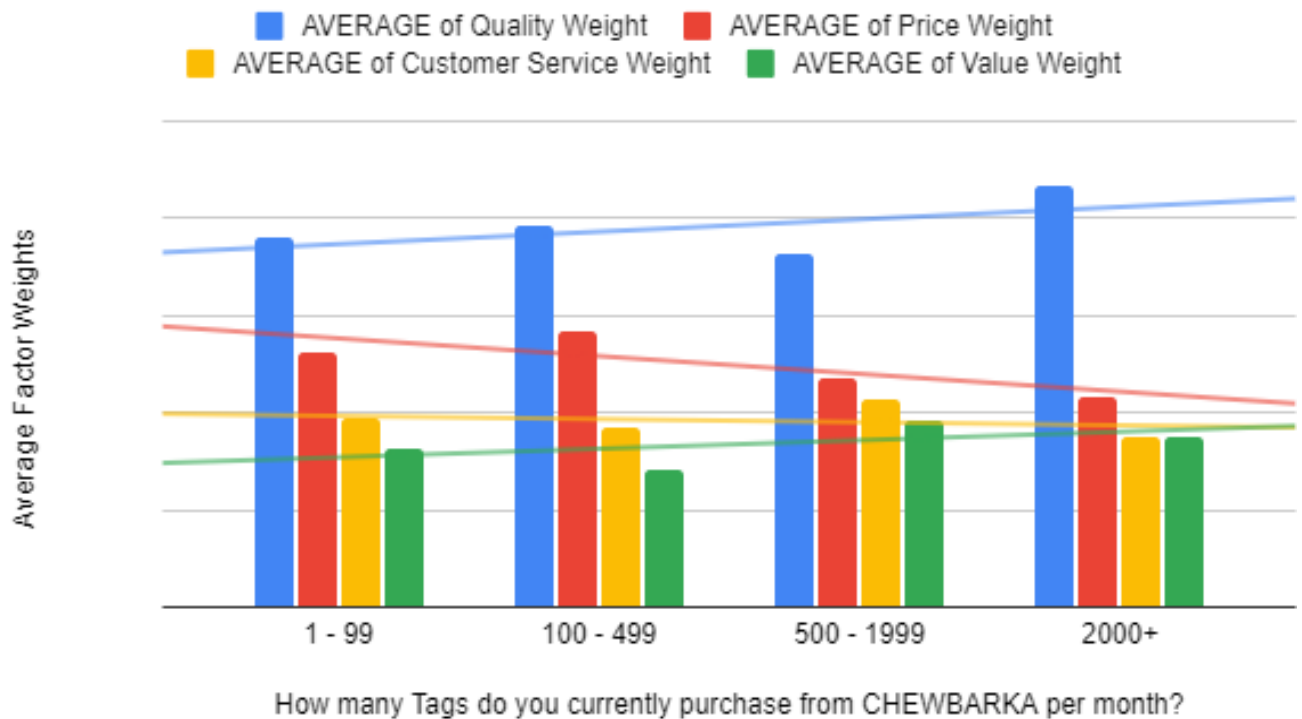
Appendix AC – Price Level Satisfaction Score by Region: Retail & Wholesale Only

Price Satisfaction Level By Region. Retail & Wholesale Only.



Appendix AD – Global Factor Weights by Quantities Purchased Per Month

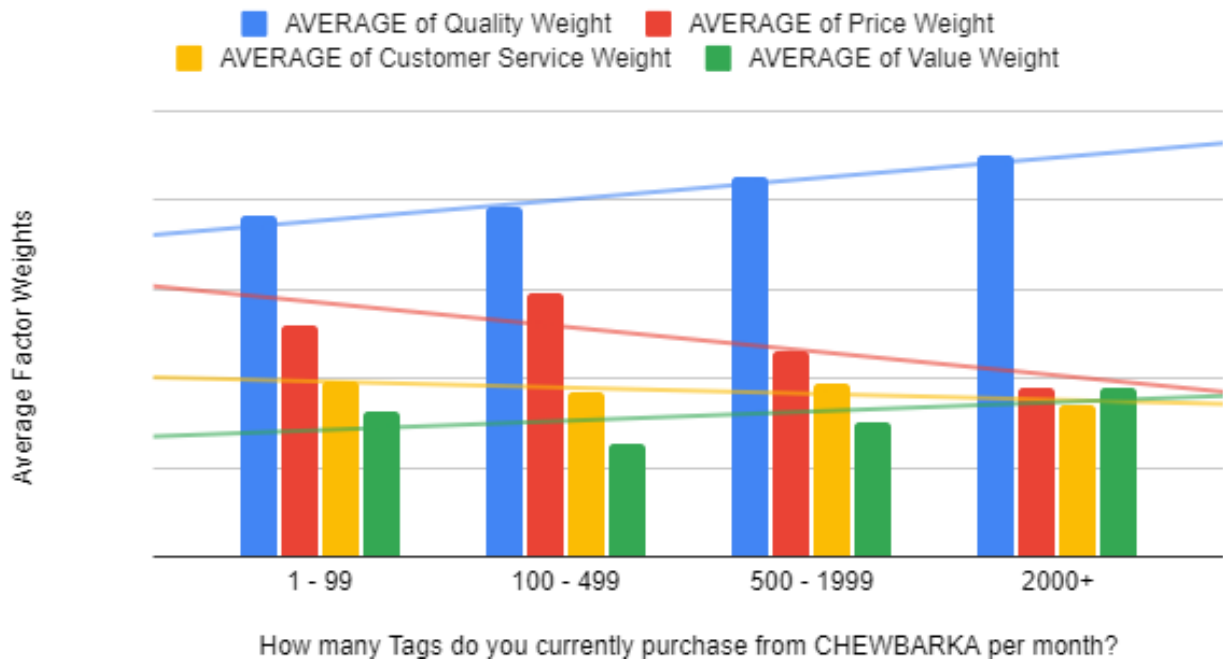
Factor Weights By Purchases Per Month



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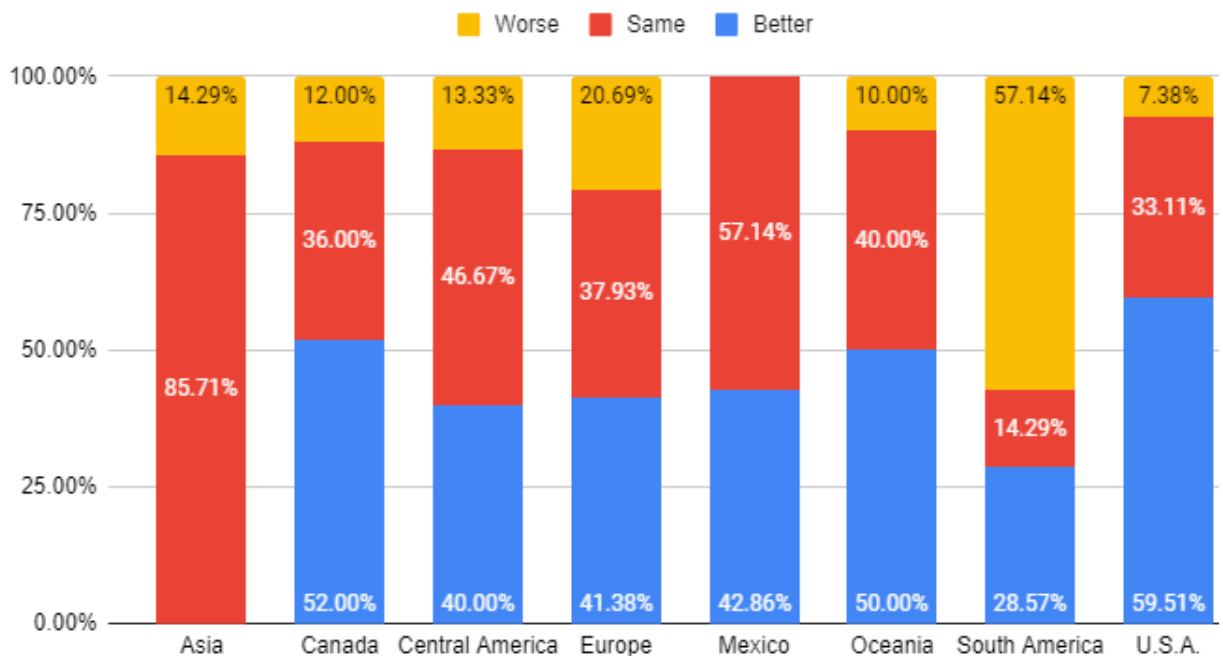
Appendix AE – Factor Weights by Quantity Purchased Per Month (U.S.A. Only)

Factor Weights By Purchases Per Month (U.S.A. Only)



Appendix AF – Price Score VS. Competitors

Percentage of Chewbarka's Price Level VS. Competition



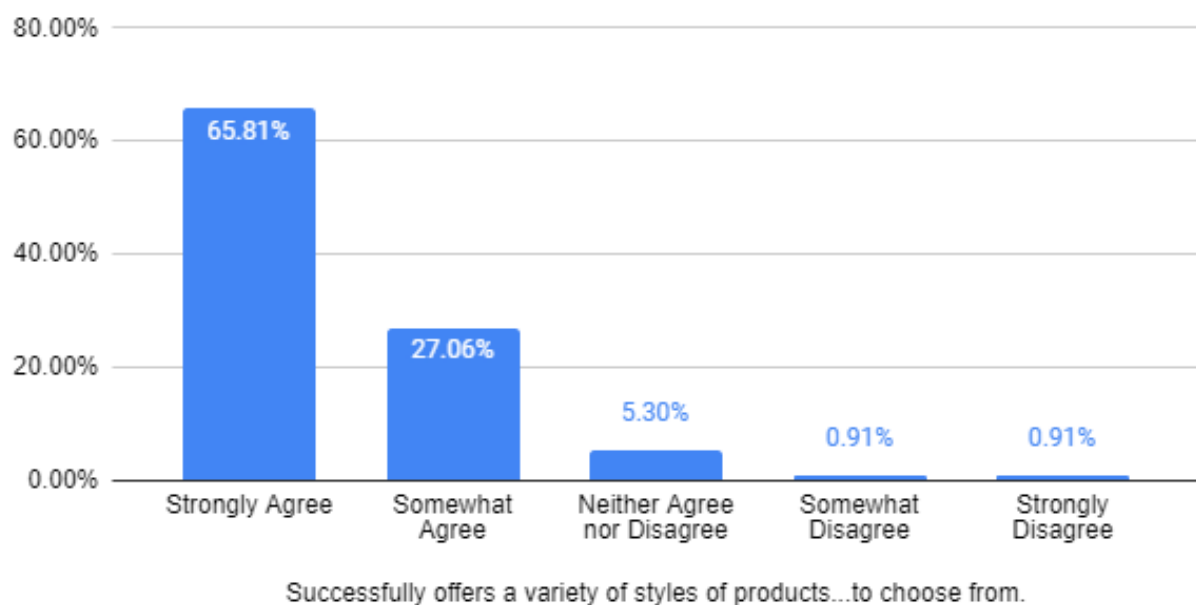
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Appendix AG – Global Price Score: Retail & Wholesale Only



Appendix AH – Percentage Rating of Part II Question 17

Chewbarka... "Successfully offers a variety of styles of products...to choose from."



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