

Cooperative Education Report

Supplier Relationship Management at Nepal Max Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

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Title: Supplier Relationship Management at Nepal Max Technologies

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Abstract

This Cooperative report entitled "Supplier Relationship Management at Nepal Max Technologies" has the goal to teach the international trading scenario in Nepal. Objective of the study includes: (1) To maintain healthy relation with suppliers worldwide through means of effective communication (2) To analyze the possible problems that hinders trade between two companies from different countries (3) To develop possible solutions for the hindrances that might occur (4) To get an overall insight regarding the trading scenario along with possible placement opportunity. With the company I was assigned to work as Supplier Relationship Assistant under the direct supervision of the CEO. The responsibilities included communicating with suppliers to gain dealership in Nepal, documentation, analyzing, researching in the field of international trade of goods related to pro audio and music. Due to the differences in policies of various companies, there were certain problems faced during the time of commencement of a new business with a new supplier.

Upon the completion of the internship, it was found that problem was resolved by means of better research, network and communication.

Keywords: Supplier Relationship, International Trade, Effective Communication, Trading

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Siam University and Kathmandu College of Management for giving me an opportunity to gain real life work environment before actually joining a company. This has not only help me gain experience but has also provided me a path to be able to work according to my interests and choose a career field which best suits me.

I would also like to thank convey my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Shashindra Chitrakar and assistant supervisor Ms. Nishu Sharma for accepting me as a part of their company and work with them at the level of other employees. Their constant guidance and undivided attention helped me learn about the work under a comfortable working environment. Also, I am grateful to all the staff members for accepting as my own and for not hesitating to answer my queries whenever I was in doubt.

Being a part of this internship program here at KCM and Siam has indeed helped me a lot as an individual to grow in the practical field. The greatest thing about these internships were getting a chance to build connections and relations and to understand the perspective so a variety of people with different mindsets for which I wholeheartedly would like to appreciate the university's efforts for supporting me throughout my undergrad journey.

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Important note:

How Covid-19 has affected the company and your internship?

Covid-19 is a pandemic that has affected the functioning of the whole world. It has also evidently affecting my internship in particular. Nepal applied its second lockdown for more than 2 weeks during August and September due to which works were shut down. During that time I had to work from home which was a little inconvenient at the beginning as I hadn't learned a lot before the lockdown.

Due to Covid-19, there wasn't much work in the company so my learning opportunities were obviously minimized as otherwise I believe I would've been busier than I was during my initial time here. Again on October I was tested positive for Corona so I had to be away from the workplace in self isolation. Luckily, half of my time was covered by the Dashain holidays. For the rest of the period I continued to work from home as soon as I started feeling better.

There has definitely been a negative impact in my internship due to the prevailing pandemic. However, this has taught me, a fresher in the workplace, how a company can successfully thrive from such unexpected situation and apply the new normal policies to get back on track from where it had stopped.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Company Profile:

NEPAL MAX TECHNOLOGIES PVT. LTD. DALLU, KATHMANDU, NEPAL +977-1-4278356

Nepal Max Technologies is an established trading company based in Kathmandu, offering a wide range of Sound, Lighting and

Audio-Visual equipment. They also provide a range of services including delivery, setup, sound engineers, lighting engineers & installation engineers, to help people get the most from their event.

The company was founded as a family business by the CEO Mr. Shashindra Chitrakar with capital invested by two other family members. Though the company was only established in 2016, the owners have an experience of working in the field of Audio-Visual Representations for the past 25 years. This company was established to cope up with the increasing competition as Nepal started getting influenced by foreign products.

Their major works also include importing lights and sound related equipment from countries like China, India, Italy, USA and selling them in Nepal. As of now, this company is involved in designing and setting up a number of clubs within the valley and outside. They have also recently entered the musical instrumental market to increase scopes of business during the pandemic situation. They currently have sole distributorship of 11 different companies from around the world and are on the verge of gaining more dealerships from renowned companies dealing with musical instruments, light and sound. Based in Kathmandu, this company has slowly started spreading its customer base all over the country. The company thrives to grow its business with each passing day. They have retail outlets in two prime locations in the city and their main office is located at Dallu, Kathmandu.

1.2 Organization Structure

In Nepal Max Technologies, the company follows a flat hierarchical line of command. The company consists of the CEO, and has separations for various departments such as finance, marketing and sales, purchase, research, administration and human resource. The company only has 10 employees currently. The organization structure is as follows.

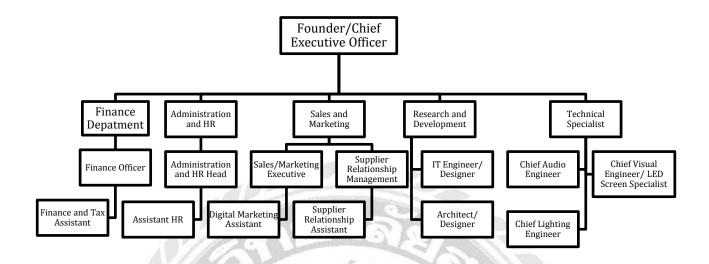


Figure 1: Organization Structure

1.3 Intentions to Join the Company:

Purchasing is the gateway between the external suppliers and the internal functions creating and delivering value for customers. This shift has incredibly enhanced the importance of the supplier base (Fassnacht, Klose PhD, & Moeller, 2008). With the influence of the western market, people have high demand of buying branded products made in foreign countries. Since there aren't any manufactures of products and equipment related to pro audio and live music and only a few manufacturers of musical instruments in Nepal, it has been a necessity to import such products from other countries given the popularity and the increased number of events and venues that are being established in Nepal at present. As we had theoretical knowledge regarding these topics, I wanted to learn practically how things worked and so I opted to join Nepal Max Technologies.

Managing quality of suppliers is of prime importance in supply chains to minimize costs arising due to poor-quality products and services (Noshad & Awasthi, 2015). For this reason, trading companies have started a trend of increasing their link of suppliers from various companies from around the world.

Therefore, as frequent interactions are needed in trade, the people have started noticing the importance of building healthy supplier relationship to avoid the hassle of miscommunication and to avoid obstacles on the way.

1.4 Objective of the Study:

- To gain knowledge regarding importance of building healthy relation with suppliers worldwide through means of effective communication for long term trade and sustainability
- 2. To analyze the possible problems that hinders trade between two companies from different countries such as difference in government policies
- 3. To develop possible solutions for the hindrances that might occur on the way of an otherwise smooth transaction
- 4. To get an overall insight regarding the trading scenario in Nepal along with policies and practices being implemented
- 5. To get insight about opportunities for job placement after undergrad

Chapter 2: Internship Activities

2.1 Job Description and Responsibilities

Internship Role: Supplier Relationship Assistant

Internship Description:

The Supplier Relationship Assistant will work as part of the Supplier Relationship Management team along with the Marketing and Sales Department to help develop and initiate relationship with multiple suppliers and maintain regular contact with the suppliers. Furthermore, the intern will also need to work on social media marketing alongside the marketing department. There will be ample opportunity to contribute ideas to management through on-the-job research. Additional job responsibilities could be developed around the candidates' strengths.

Initially I was assigned some finance related tasks as I was from that background. But, later the company asked me if I would like to switch as help was needed in the marketing department. As I had previously worked for the finance department I thought it would be better to widen my knowledge and work for a different department.

Below mentioned includes all the roles and responsibilities of the activities I had to do during my internship period:

- 1. Researching
- 2. Documentation
- 3. Handling Social Media
- 4. Daily Operations
- 5. Handling the company's accounts on online platforms like Daraz, Sastodeal.
- 6. Managing stock for certain brands under the company
- 7. Billing process

1. Researching:

Under researching I had to visit the website of the list of companies given to me. Through email, I would obtain pricelists of products under similar description and then would need to make comparison charts and draft conclusions to present to my seniors to determine cost efficiency while obtaining dealerships and making purchases.

2. Documentation:

In jobs like these where financial transactions of large sums are required, the official papers have to be correct without any errors. The documents needed for such trades are Proforma Invoice, Packing List and Commercial Invoice. The others include bank documents. I needed to make sure that the PI was made according to the bank and custom office's requirements. So I needed to communicate with the company accordingly. I would then handover the documents to my supervisor who would check if everything was fine or needed amendments.

3. Handling Social Media:

I was also given the responsibility of handling the social media account on Facebook for the company. For this I needed to create and post content 4-5 times a week. In addition to that I had to reply to the messages from clients with the assistance of my seniors regarding prices and availability. I was in charge of ensuring daily interactions in the page. The page currently has 7.3k+ likes.

4. Daily Operations:

Daily operations included assistance to any senior as and when required, help in packaging for online deliveries, feeding in data of transactions on a daily basis, creating a medium between the outlets and the warehouse, taking information from the outlets about stock and restocking as and when necessary.

5. Handling the company's accounts on online platforms like Daraz, Sastodeal.

The company recently launched its account on the Daraz App, which is a renowned e-commerce platform in Nepal. Through this platform, the company has been doing sales of items like

microphones and webcams. I completely handle these accounts as the products kept here were brought when I had already joined and I have complete knowledge regarding these products. These include uploading products along with descriptions, communicating with clients, etc. The company is trying to open up a shop on Sastodeal platform as well.

6. Managing stock for certain brands under the company

There are two brands that were brought in after I joined the company. I was directly involved in these transactions which is why I am given the responsibility to maintain stock levels and inform when to restock items. I used to sit with the storekeepers to cross check the stock.

7. Billing process and others

Sometimes when people were in a rush, I was taught to make bills and talk to clients. I was also sometimes assigned to make presentations for the team to show to clients. There were various other small tasks that were assigned to me during the course of this internship period.

2.2 Contributions made during internship:

For the first few days I was assigned to work in the finance department. There I engaged in maintaining ledgers and got to know more about the tax calculations for a trading company which involves heavily in importing goods and equipment from abroad. I was also involved in the marketing and research department. I got to learn more about the customers and the present projects the company is involved with. I had to make comparison charts using excel among different companies for potential partnerships.

I have been handling their online media platforms and their online sales as well as the account in Facebook is something I look after. I have made few posters for the company's Facebook page as well. Also, I have helped in setting up an online store through the platform of e-commerce sites Daraz and Sastodeal. The company has been gaining new customers through these platforms and has been earning consistent revenue.

I have effectively maintained stock for two suppliers and have been in constant talk with them. I have also maintained accounts for these companies through the Manager.io software. I have done a lot of research works for the company. I have also helped in calculating costing for the products that have arrived in consistent to their international MRPs (maximum retail prices). I have placed orders to suppliers from countries like China, USA, and Sweden and have assisted until the placement was shipped and closed. Recording transactions is another thing I have contributed. As I got familiarized with the bank procedures, I assisted others while filling forms and checking documentation when people from concerned departments were absent. These are some of the contents and work contributes for Nepal Max Technologies:



Figure 2: Packages developed as marketing strategy

These were part of special deal packages as part of an introductory offer as the company had just introduced this brand in the market. As Nepal still was under lockdown and the educational institutions were operating online, the marketing team thought it would be a good idea to set them as target market to increase sales and introduce the brand.

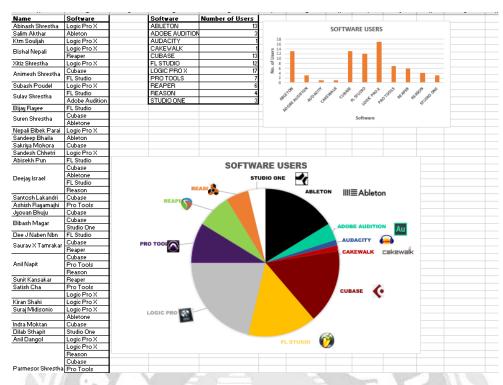


Figure 3: Research done on various recording software used by customers

This was a research done through Facebook about the software used by various sound engineers and related people in Nepal for mixing and recording audio, the results of which helped the company choose a dealership for audio interfaces-sound cards.

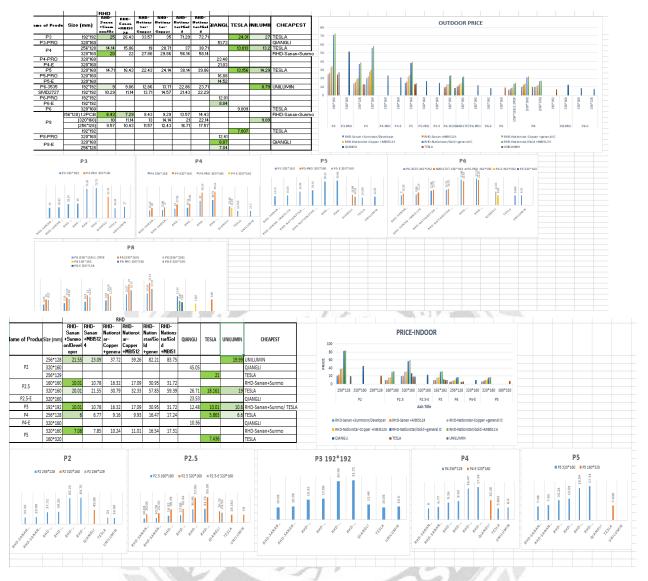


Figure 4: Research and comparison charts for various LED screen companies

These are comparison charts compiled by me related to price of LED screens offered by various Chinese companies. The data was given to me from the office. I had to separate the categories of each type of LED according to size and then compare prices to determine the most cost efficient company to choose from. The bar graphs made it easier for me to present my findings.

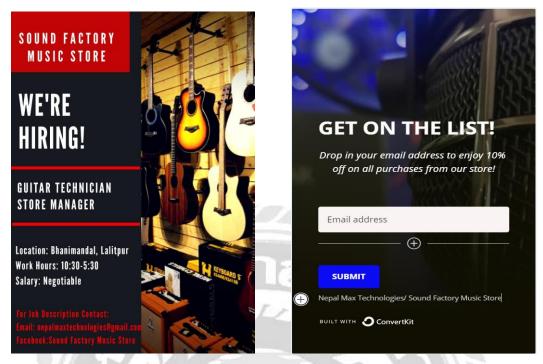


Figure 5: Job Post and Form for the Facebook Page

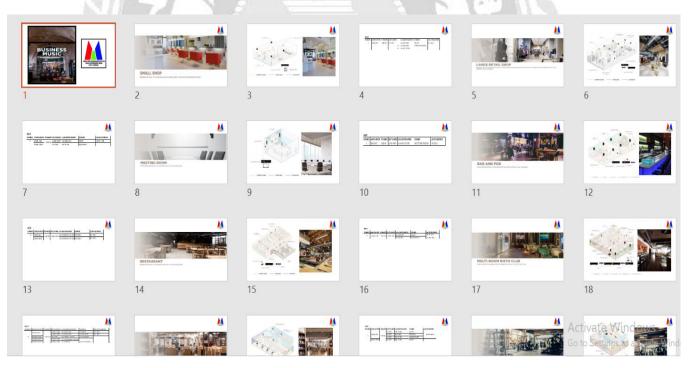


Figure 6: Presentation made for Marketing Purpose

A brand that the company was previously associated to, RCF Italy, had just launched their "Business Music" series post pandemic. So, I had made this presentation for the marketing team to pitch to the clients regarding this new line of products.

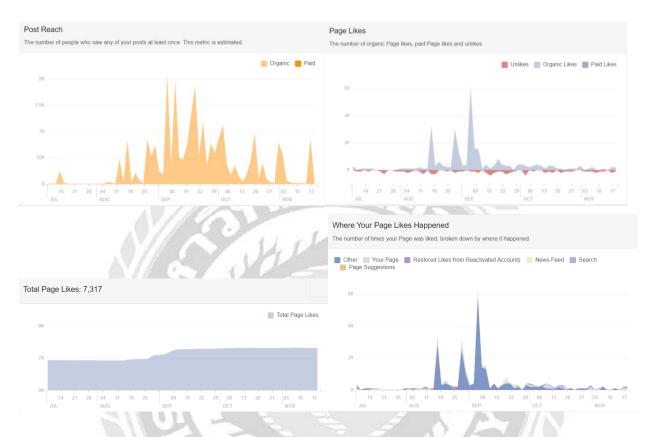


Figure 7: Statistical Representation of Engagement on Facebook (my contributions)

The retail page of the company had an increase in the number of post reaches and likes. I used to handle this page with the cooperation of two other employees from the marketing team.

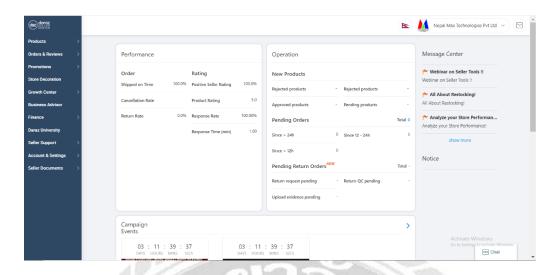


Figure 8: The seller center application of Daraz

The above picture shows the summary of the overall performance of the store. The tabs on the left side can be used to insert products, edit details, manage orders and reviews, and know about the total transactions and finances, earnings made through the use of this platform.

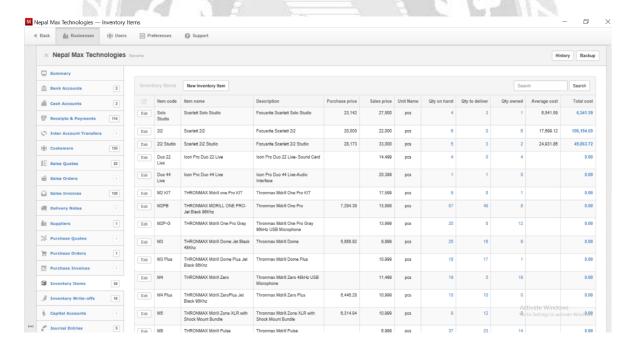


Figure 9: A snippet of the Manager Application

I used this application/ software in order to manage and record daily transactions and record and keep track of inventory which made it easier for me to know when to inform the supply team to start with a new order.

Chapter 3: Identification of Problems Encountered During Internship

3.1 Indication of successful problem solving:

During my stay, there were a few challenges I faced mostly during the first few days of my internship which are listed below:

1.) Challenges faced due to Covid-19:

Due to spiking number of corona cases in Nepal, at the beginning of my internship period we had to stay at home due to lockdown. I hadn't been able to adapt to my work as learning time was very less. During that time work from home (WFH) culture was implemented at the office. I had a lot of confusion and had to contact my seniors numerous times just to get things done which was hectic. After this, I even tested positive and had to isolate myself for a period of 14 days. This definitely halted my learnings.

The first work from home session was difficult for me. After that the office opened for a while and I planned to learn about a lot of things during that time which made it easier for me to work from home even when I was in self-isolation. My internship differed from my course background. I was slowly able to capture and understand all the marketing activities going around by taking guidance and help from my supervisors along with home research on the topic that I was not clear during the day. Though it took me a while to familiarize myself with the marketing strategy of the company, it was made quite easier with the help of my supervisors. I used to closely monitor them while they worked. They even taught me using examples from their previous works. For example, when I was first told to research about our prospective suppliers to import LED lights in the company, I didn't know about what all to look for, however, through proper guidance and previously made comparison charts I was able to draft conclusions based on the brand name, price, quality, reviews, etc.

2.) Clashes in background:

As I am from Finance background I was expecting to get assigned in that department. However, as I wanted to challenge my limits I decided to work on a field different from mine. I faced difficulties in adjusting in my early days.

3.) Time differences:

As I had to communicate with suppliers from various countries, due to difference in time zones, sometimes it used to be difficult at times of urgency. Many times I had to communicate with them even after office hours.

As I was assigned works related to supplier relationship management, one of my main jobs was to communicate with suppliers as and when required. It was easier to work with suppliers from China and India as the time difference isn't large. But when it came to suppliers from UK and USA, it was quite difficult to communicate when needed as the banks used to open only for short time due to Covid and so the work used to be delayed. But this problem was solved too with proper communication. Sometimes when emails were not replied to I had to look for their personal messengers due to urgency.

4.) Unfamiliarity with bank processes:

At first it was difficult for me to clear out the processes in the bank for the payment to be made to the suppliers due to errors in the documentations works that I had prepared. So, I had to nag with the suppliers many times. Some of them felt a bit annoyed as the processes in Nepal are a bit stricter than that of other countries.

As I was in charge of bringing in documents from the suppliers to carry the customs processes forward, I had to clearly state the format of the documents. However, most times there was one or the other thing missing in the documents so the process had to be redone. I solved this problem by converting the documents sent by them into a format that we wanted and asked for their approval before it was sent to the bank. The suppliers then had to just fill in the information that was indicated missing and the works were later simplified which decreased the number of errors faced during documentation processes and the works were now done on a faster manner than my early internship days.

5.) Work pressure:

As before this internship started we had a long time to stay at home, coming out and working in an office felt a bit overwhelming as the habit of working had been interrupted.

So, I used to feel very pressured when deadlines at work came near and I hesitated a bit to ask for help too because everyone seemed quite busy as the works had just resumed.

Work pressure got to me as there were a number of suppliers I had to talk to in the beginning as the company had decided to increase their reach post pandemic. I had to do a number of jobs at once and it became difficult for me to remember things. However, with proper guidance and help from my seniors, I was able to minimize this feeling of stress.



3.2 Examples:

- 1.) For example, I used to keep track of stock by working with the warehouse personnel and kept the office informed about availability of products. I also was active on Daraz, talking to the clients and making necessary product changes. The second work from home sessions were quite efficient. During the 11:11 sale in Daraz, I checked the stock accordingly by contacting the warehouse personnel and assisted them to provide the products wherever necessary. I acted as a mediator from home so to efficiently carry on the work and make deliveries prompt.
- 2.) For instance, I had to talk to the Sales Manager of a UK based company, the replies always used to come at around 8 at night Nepali Time. So, I had to contact my superior and gave prompt replies. This way the company could continue as normal the next day rather than having to wait for an entire day. Luckily, all the people I interacted with were very annoyed and cooperated and understood my situation.
- 3.) For instance, we had an audio-interface brand of whom we wanted dealership. Since they were new to working in Nepal, they found it difficult to understand the requirements. So I asked for their original PI, filled in all the details that our customs required in red and asked them if they could amend properly. This way we were successful to send in the money and bag the dealership. One problem dealt during documentation meant we had no worries regarding this in the next shipments.
- 4.) For instance, I made it mandatory to sit with my supervisor at the end of the day to report what I had done for the day. Then they would hand me a set of work to be done the following day. I planned the things to be done accordingly by setting a timeline. I understood the importance of time-management by setting personal deadlines. This way I was able to allocate time for each work and did not end up creating a chaotic situation for myself.

Chapter 4: Contributions and Learning Process

4.1 Learnings during the internship period

working from, or even under any other condition.

There are many things I learnt during my internship here at Nepal Max Technologies. To begin with, I got to learn the tax requirements of Nepal for trading companies and the process of making quotations for clients according to their needs. I also leant basics of how to use the software like Manager.io and Tally to record transactions and for accounting purposes. I also know about the bank procedures and the requirements to create a TT to remit money abroad. I even learned a little about the procedures to apply for LC in case of orders of larger amount. One of the major learning for me was that things do not occur as per the set theories every time which means a theory remains the same in that particular situation where ever you read it whereas practical learning has a lot of external factor affecting it. It might be the people you're learning from or

There is a lot of difference between the student life and the life of an employee. When we begin to work, we need to accept a lot of things as in, we need to compromise. The first thing that is needed is social skills which can make us successful in the workplace. During the internship, I worked with other colleagues, and got to know how the industry actually works. I also learnt to adjust myself in the office environment. There is a certain way to interact to people in the job. No matter what the business structure of the organization, there is still a pattern that people follow to communicate. These things were also learnt. As there wasn't a lot of theories related to such companies taught in the course it was a full on experience as I didn't know what exactly to expect from this. However, I realized it really is difficult to do trade in a country like Nepal due to strict and some unnecessary rules. I learnt that Nepal has yet to develop its systems to be fully modernized and digitized for procedures to be made easier and more convenient for the importers here in Nepal. Maybe the strict policies and regulations with lack of explanation is one of the reasons Nepal lags behind in this area. It was like an eye-opener for me as I didn't know the systems very well except for the theoretical learnings. The four months in this esteemed company was indeed a very productive experience for me as a potential employee.

4.2 Details of learning process and knowledge received:

In the short period of the first two weeks, I got the gist of how this company functions. Due to COVID-19 the works had been affected a lot. However, the company was still involved in a number of projects. In order to complete assigned roles, I read a lot of articles related to marketing and launching of products along with how events can be conducted virtually through the internet. I also went through articles and books for tax procedures in Nepal. Also, I utilized my excel skills to prepare comparison charts for research and development.

I have been able to understand the problems the company faces during the shipment processes and some of the methods to deal with them. I have worked with the accounts department as well and have been able to practically implement skill sets learned from books. I have been familiarized with some rules of the accounting processes in Nepal as I had talks with our internal auditor as well.

The importance of e-commerce during the time of pandemic was fascinating as even though the company's retail outlets were closed, we still were receiving orders. Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) plays an important role in the reduction of costs and the optimization of performance in industrial enterprises (Mettler & Rohner, 2009). The importance of good relationship with suppliers was highlighted as the person we are reaching to for assistance and our relationship with them was crucial to determine how flexible and beneficial the trades could be for the company. I could attend seminars about music and pro-audio related topics which widened my knowledge at a completely new subject for me.

With the assistance of my seniors and supervisor, I was able to clear all the doubts I faced while working and fulfil all the responsibilities that were provided to me. I believe that I was being treated not as an intern but as an employee. I had been given roles of utter importance with proper guidance. Unlike my previous internships, I was not bored by having less or no work. Instead, I was burdened with work. When my seniors remained absent, the work was given to me to do, more than what I did previously. I got to practice the theories I had learnt in college in a practical manner through this internship. I can truly say that this internship widened my horizon and made me realize my potential to some extent.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Self-assessment as a professional

The journey for me as an intern in the field of marketing was truly a fun and new experience as I always used to tell myself that marketing wasn't suited for me. However, this internship has been the most insightful for me among others as I dealt with a unique crisis situation first hand-Covid. I realized that I have a lot to learn from the people working around me. In many different scenarios, I noticed the differences between theories learnt versus actually practically applying it.

The learning I had were limited as there was constant interferences due to the pandemic. However, in this internship I didn't run out of work, more so I was bombarded with work sometimes as I had to stay after work hours just to complete my tasks. It was a wholesome experience for me as I can feel myself evolve as a professional. I have had the opportunity to practice my team skills and communication skills in this company. This internship made me realize how important these skills are in the workplace.

My major learnings from the internship which I will definitely carry forward is that you always need to follow up on what you've done and get feedback from the right person as honest feedback really helps oneself grow. Surely, my theoretical knowledge also came to the test in the first few days I worked with the finance department. Some of the necessary skills one must possess in order to work effectively in a company professionally includes social skills, time management skills and multitasking skills and I have gained practice in all these. I would say that this internship was a very important learning period, the knowledge of which I believe will give me a competitive advantage in the future.

This experience certainly helped me hone on my strengths and work on my weaknesses. I was able to understand the fact that opportunities are made only if you are able to grab chances that are available around you. Having worked here, I now know that I can take my financial and marketing knowledge hand in hand to prove myself as an asset in any career path I join in the future. I believe all these learning will definitely boost my confidence and experience and prepare me for the professional world.

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Annexure



Figure 10: Corporate Office of Nepal Max Technologies



Figure 11: A Glimpse of the Office



Figure 12: Employees attending a webinar



Figure 13: Warehouse of Nepal Max Technologies located at Bouddha





Figure 14 and 15: Glimpses of Retail Shop located at Bhanimandal



Figure 16: Employees caught at work during COVID-19