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How can Deepwear optimize the follow-up and management of its Australian clients in order to increase customer loyalty for its manufacturing and sourcing services?

Deepwear

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Introduction

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it." This quote from Warren Buffett captures better than any theory could, the central challenge this thesis seeks to address. In international business, client relationships are built slowly, sustained deliberately, and lost in an instant, a reality I witnessed firsthand during my internship at Deepwear*(Desk, 2026)*.

When I first enrolled in the International Business program at Helmo Campus Guillemins, I was deeply introverted and lacked the confidence to express myself in professional environments. Over the years, surrounded by people who were genuinely enthusiastic about learning and growing, I gradually developed both curiosity and the courage to step outside my comfort zone. I became passionate about international political dynamics. I have always valued independence, the ability to build my own path, make my own decisions, and confront new realities on my own terms. Therefore, going to Thailand was, in many ways, the embodiment of that aspiration.

I chose to complete my internship in Bangkok precisely because it represented the kind of challenge I needed, which is rebuilding my routine from scratch, in a continent whose extraordinary cultural diversity had long fascinated me. In July 2025, when I received a call from Dora, my future internship supervisor, I knew instinctively that I had found the right place. Fashion has always been a genuine passion of mine, and Deepwear's positioning at the heart of the international fashion industry made the fit feel natural from the very first conversation. What further convinced me was the composition office itself, colleagues from Myanmar, Japan working alongside Thai team members, making cultural diversity a lived daily reality.

From the very first day, my colleagues welcomed me with warmth that immediately dissolved any anxiety I had about starting over in an unfamiliar environment. They did not simply introduce me to the company, they introduced me to their culture, their habits, their ways of seeing the world, transforming what could have been a purely professional experience into something deeply personal. The small size of the Bangkok office played a decisive role in this, as the team was compact, there was always time to talk, to ask questions, to genuinely get to know one another. Every conversation became an opportunity to learn something new, which made my internship at Deepwear one of the most enriching experiences of my life, both professionally and personally.

This thesis addresses the following central problematic:

"How can Deepwear optimize the follow-up and management of its Australian clients in order to increase customer loyalty for its manufacturing and sourcing services?"

The objective of this thesis is to conduct an in-depth analysis of Deepwear's current customer follow-up practices in order to provide the company with concrete and actionable recommendations. The choice of the Australian market as the primary focus of analysis is not arbitrary, and the process that led to it will be explained in detail in the practical part of this thesis.

Concerning my report itself, it is structured around two parts. The first part establishes the theoretical and contextual foundations, including a presentation of Deepwear as a company, followed by an analysis of the key concepts of customer loyalty, follow-up, CRM systems, and the cultural specificities of Australian clients, considered as the target market.

The second part translates these foundations into operational reality, beginning with the prospecting phase and its limitations, moving through a critical analysis of Deepwear's sourcing and manufacturing processes, and culminating in three real client cases observed during the internship.

At the end, the conclusion draws together the key findings of this thesis, revisiting the five structural limitations identified, the five fragile moments mapped, and the four strategic axes that collectively answer the central problematic.

In the course of writing this thesis, I made use of an artificial intelligence tool, Claude, solely for the purpose of reformulating and harmonizing certain sentences in order to ensure stylistic consistency throughout the document.

Finally, all images included in this thesis that originate from external sources are accompanied by their respective source references, displayed directly below each figure. Where no source is indicated, the image was produced by me.

I invite you now to discover this thesis and the operational reality of customer loyalty in international sourcing and manufacturing.

Part 1: Theoretical Framework

This first part establishes the theoretical foundations necessary for addressing the central problematic of this thesis, which examines how Deepwear can optimize the follow-up to its Australian clients in order to strengthen their loyalty within its sourcing and manufacturing services.

It is important to note from the outset that, while the problematic encompasses both services, the theoretical analysis developed here places greater emphasis on the sourcing dimension. This reflects the operational reality of Deepwear's business model, in which sourcing constitutes the most frequently encountered service and the primary point of contact with its clients. Manufacturing is nonetheless treated as an inseparable continuation of the sourcing process, since both services share the same customer follow-up challenges within Deepwear's value chain.

This part is structured around four chapters. The first two present Deepwear as a company, examining its history, business model, competitive environment, organizational structure, and services offered. This operational foundation is essential to understand the context in which customer follow-up and loyalty management take place. The third and fourth chapters introduce the key theoretical concepts related to customer loyalty and follow-up, progressively moving from general marketing theory to the specific challenges of international sourcing and manufacturing services, with a particular focus on the cultural expectations of Australian clients.

Together, these four chapters build the analytical framework that will serve as the backbone for the practical part.

1 Chapter 1: Presentation of the Company

This structured overview is essential to grasp the strategic context in which customer follow-up and loyalty management take place, as they directly influence the way Deepwear builds and maintains its client relationships.

1.1 COMPANY OVERVIEW



Figure 1 : Deepwear's Logo

Source 1 : https://deepwear.info/

Deepwear is a progressive fashion agency offering end-to-end services for a diverse range of fashion businesses, from independent entrepreneurs and boutiques to established brands. Specializing in garments, jewelry and accessories, the company delivers expert support across consulting, sourcing[1], buying, manufacturing, image production, design, and logistics*(Deepwear, 2010d)*.

Regarding its positioning, Deepwear does not act as an intermediary. Rather, the company operates as an extension of the client's team within the production countries, enabling brands to maintain a direct presence at the heart of factories and suppliers*(Deepwear, 2010c)*.

1.2 COMPANY HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Deepwear was founded in 2007 by Thoray, an entrepreneur with extensive international experience in sourcing and manufacturing. Deepwear established its initial headquarters in Bangkok before expanding to Melbourne between 2007 and 2015. Since then, the company has pursued sustained international growth, developing a global network of over ten offices in key production countries worldwide. Today, Deepwear operates as a strategic partner for fashion brands, combining industry expertise, global reach, and an innovative sourcing approach to connect clients with reliable production partners and ensure secure supply chain management*(Deepwear, 2010e)*.



Figure 2 : CEO (Thoray D'Haese Sacoor)

Source 2 : https://deepwear.info/

[1] Sourcing refers to the process of identifying, evaluating, and selecting manufacturers or suppliers capable of producing a product according to the client's specifications, quality standards, and budget requirements.

1.3 COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

In order to contextualize Deepwear's positioning, a structured competitor analysis was conducted, identifying two categories of direct competitors, one being based in Thailand, Deepwear's operational headquarters, and one in Australia, the market examined in this thesis.

Sourcing and Manufacturing Agencies

The most direct competitors are sourcing and manufacturing agencies offering comparable services, including supplier identification, negotiation, and production management. In this category, ***Source Asia*** operates in Thailand and ***Selvedge Apparel*** in Australia for sourcing, while ***Bangkok Textile Trading*** and ***AUS Apparel Group*** represent the manufacturing segment in their respective markets*(Apparel Group, 2018; Bangkok Textile Trading, 2003; Selvedge Apparel, 2025; Source Asia, 2024)*.



Figure 4 : Direct Competitor

Source 4 : https://selvedgeapparel.com.au/



Figure 3 : Direct Competitor

Source 3 : https://sourceoneltd.com/

Integrated Fashion Service Providers

A second category of competitors consists of integrated fashion service providers offering broader solutions encompassing design, production, and logistics. ***Jaspal Group*** in Thailand and ***Visionise*** in Australia are representative examples of this segment*(Jaspal Group, 2019; Visionise, 2005)*.



Figure 6 : Direct Competitor

Source 6 : https://www.jaspalgroup.com/en/home/



Figure 5 : Direct Competitor

Source 5 : https://visionise.com.au/

Strategic Implications

This competitive landscape underscores the necessity for Deepwear to differentiate itself through service quality and relational excellence. In this context, customer follow-up emerges as a decisive strategic lever for strengthening client loyalty and sustaining competitive advantage*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

1.4 MISSIONS, VALUES AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Beyond its service offering, Deepwear's competitive positioning is reinforced by a set of core values that directly shape the quality of its client relationships.

Ethical Commitments

Deepwear places considerable importance on ethical business conduct. The company is committed to building fair and transparent partnerships, and its multi-country presence enables close monitoring of working conditions, ensuring that factories comply with environmental and social standards*(Deepwear, 2010d)*.

Cost and Time Efficiency

Deepwear distinguishes itself through its ability to deliver cost-effective solutions without compromising quality, ensuring optimal value for money. By overseeing the entire production process, the company allows clients to concentrate on the strategic dimensions of their business*(Deepwear, 2010e)*.

Quality Control

Rigorous quality control procedures are systematically implemented prior to shipment. For instance, an order of 2,000 pieces requires the inspection of at least 150 units per category, ensuring full compliance with the client's specifications*(Deepwear, 2010d)*.

Transparency and Global Network

Deepwear maintains continuous communication with its clients at every stage of the production process. Supported by a network of approximately 3,700 factories, the company is able to source high-quality materials and services tailored to each client's requirements*(Deepwear, 2010e)*.

1.5 GLOBAL PRESENCE

Deepwear operates through a broad network of international offices, with a strong presence across Europe and Asia, complemented by representations in America and Africa. Its offices span the United States, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Morocco, the Netherlands, Italy, Bulgaria, Turkey, India, China, Vietnam, South Africa, and Indonesia. Its headquarters are based in Australia and Thailand.



Figure 7 : Deepwear's Offices Location

Source 7 : https://deepwear.info/contact-us/

Strategic Location Advantages

Most of these locations are strategically situated in countries recognized for their competitiveness in garment and jewelry production. This international footprint constitutes a significant competitive advantage, enabling Deepwear to leverage in-depth knowledge of each market, including language, cultural practices, and business environment*(Deepwear, 2010d)*.

1.6 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF DEEPWEAR

Deepwear operates as a private limited company, a legal structure that provides shareholders with limited liability and protects their personal assets.

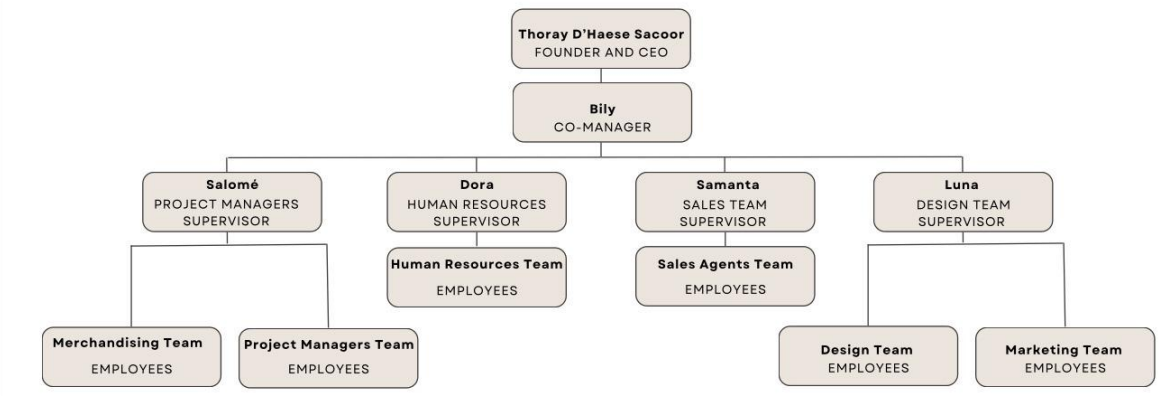


Figure 8 : Deepwear's Organizational Chart

Top Management and Departmental Structure

At the apex of the hierarchy, Thoray D'Haese Sacoor, Founder and CEO, defines the company's global strategy. He is supported by Bily, Co-Manager, who ensures its implementation across all operational departments.

Below this central leadership, the organization is structured around four specialized functional areas, which are production and project management, human resources, sales and business development, and design and marketing. The organizational chart below illustrates this structure. For the purposes of this thesis, the most relevant departments are the Sales Agents Team, which is responsible for client acquisition and the initial relationship, and the Project Managers Team, which takes over operational management once a contract is signed.

Analysis of the Organizational Chart

This decentralized structure distributes responsibilities across specialized departments, rather than concentrating them at the top, enabling each team to focus on its core expertise while remaining aligned with the company's overarching strategy.

The simultaneous presence of centralized leadership and operational flexibility allows Deepwear to remain responsive and efficient in managing its international client relationships.

2 Chapter 2: Overview of Services

Having established a clear understanding of Deepwear's identity, competitive positioning, and organizational structure, it is now essential to examine the services through which the company creates value for its clients. Understanding what Deepwear offers constitutes a necessary foundation for analyzing, in the following chapters, how customer follow-up is integrated throughout the production process and how it contributes to strengthening client loyalty.

2.1 SOURCING SERVICE

The sourcing service represents Deepwear's core activity, supporting the full production process for garments, jewelry, and accessories. Through a rigorous selection process, the company establishes long-term relationships with the most reliable manufacturing partners across key production countries worldwide*(Deepwear, 2010b)*.

The sourcing and manufacturing services will be examined in greater depth in the practical section of this thesis where their operational stages, key advantages and their direct implications for customer follow-up will be analyzed in detail.

2.2 MANUFACTURING SERVICE



Following the sourcing stage, Deepwear provides a comprehensive manufacturing service covering the entire production cycle. From prototyping, and production planning to quality control and final delivery, the company supports clients at every stage of the manufacturing process, ensuring both operational efficiency and product compliance*(Deepwear, 2010a)*.

Figure 9 : Manufacturing Service

Source 8 : https://deepwear.info/manufacturing/

2.3 COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES



Figure 10 : Buying Service
Source 9 : https://deepwear.info/buying/

Beyond its core sourcing and manufacturing services, Deepwear offers four complementary services that complete its value proposition. Its buying service enables clients to source ready-made collections through its presence in major wholesale markets. Its image production service supports brand identity through professional photography, videography, and graphic design. Its design service assists clients from the earliest stages of brand development, covering technical pack creation, logo design, and digital presence. Finally, its consultancy service provides tailored strategic guidance for both emerging entrepreneurs and established fashion brands seeking to optimize their market positioning.

While these services fall outside the primary scope of this thesis, they collectively reinforce Deepwear's positioning as a comprehensive fashion partner rather than a simple production intermediary.

3 Chapter 3: Customer Loyalty and Follow-Up Concepts

Having presented Deepwear's services and the value they create for its clients, it is now essential to establish theoretical foundations underpinning the central problematic of this thesis. Understanding what customer loyalty is, what drives it, and how it can be sustained and maintained through structured follow-up practices constitutes a prerequisite for analyzing Deepwear's current approach and identifying areas for improvement.

This chapter therefore introduces the key concepts related to customer loyalty and follow-up. It first defines loyalty and traces its evolution in marketing theory, before examining its main determinants, measurement tools, and improvement levers. It then positions customer follow-up as a central driver of loyalty and concludes with a focus on the cultural specificities of Australian clients.

3.1 DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Concept and Theoretical Definitions

Richard L. Oliver defined loyalty as a deep commitment to repurchase, emphasizing that it transcends mere repeated transactions and reflects a strong psychological attachment to a brand or service provider. Philip Kotler and Kevin L. Keller described it as the willingness of customers to consistently choose a product or service even in the presence of competing alternatives. Synthesizing these perspectives, customer loyalty can be understood as a long-term commitment that persists despite competitive pressure*(Kotler & Keller, 2016; Oliver, 1999)*.

From Transactional to Relational Marketing

Leonard L. Berry highlighted how loyalty progressively became a central concern in marketing as the discipline shifted from a transactional to a relational paradigm. Rather than focusing solely on client acquisition, companies began prioritizing retention, recognizing that sustainable growth depends on the depth and durability of client relationships*(Berry, 1995)*.

Strategic Importance

From a strategic standpoint, customer loyalty directly influences company performance. Retaining existing clients is considerably less costly than acquiring new ones, and as Frederick F. Reichheld, demonstrated, repeat purchases and word-of-mouth recommendations constitute powerful drivers of sustainable growth*(Reichheld & Teal, 1996)*.

3.2 DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY

According to Nelson O. Ndubisi, customer loyalty is shaped by four interconnected determinants, which are satisfaction, trust, communication, and commitment, and each of which significantly influences the client's decision to maintain or discontinue a relationship*(Ndubisi, 2015)*.

Satisfaction and Trust

Customer satisfaction reflects the degree to which a service meets or exceeds expectations. As Adrian Payne explained, when expectations are consistently fulfilled, satisfaction naturally generates trust, a foundational element in relationship marketing. Trust is further reinforced through reliable service delivery, operational transparency, and the consistent respect of commitments over time*(Payne et al., 2017)*.

Communication

Robert M. Morgan identified communication as a critical pillar of partnership maintenance, defining it as the capacity to provide timely, accurate, and relevant information to clients. Research consistently demonstrates that effective communication reduces uncertainty and exerts a direct positive influence on loyalty*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

Commitment and Emotional Attachment

Commitment reflects the mutual willingness of both parties to invest in the preservation of their relationship. Clients remain loyal when the perceived benefits of the collaboration outweigh its costs, and emotional attachment plays a decisive role in reinforcing this behavioral loyalty over time*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

3.3 MEASURING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer Lifetime Value

Among the most widely used measurement frameworks is Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), which quantifies the total value generated by a client throughout the entire duration of the relationship. CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems are specifically designed to optimize this metric by increasing purchase frequency and reducing transaction intervals*(Buttle, 2008)*.

The Role of CRM Systems

As Francis Buttle emphasized, CRM systems collect and centralize all client data, including past interactions, purchase history, and individual preferences, enabling companies to anticipate needs, personalize communication, and reduce the risk of client attrition. These platforms support structured follow-up through automated reminders, scheduled meetings, and proactive service updates.

Beyond relationship management, CRM systems also enhance problem resolution. When an issue arises, immediate access to the client's history allows for rapid, informed responses*(Buttle, 2008)*.

3.4 IMPROVING THE DETERMINANTS OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Service Quality

Richard L. Oliver argued that satisfaction is elevated not merely by delivering the expected service, but by consistently exceeding client expectations through responsiveness and attention to detail. Personalization plays a particularly significant role in this process, as tailored solutions increase the perceived relevance of the service and deepen client engagement*(Oliver, 1999)*.

Building Trust Through Transparency

Trust is reinforced through clear and consistent communication regarding processes, timelines and responsibilities, elements that are especially critical in complex environments such as international sourcing. Respecting commitments and demonstrating effective problem-solving capacity is equally essential, as they signal professionalism and strengthen the company's credibility over time*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

Sustaining Communication and Perceived Value

Christian Grönroos underscored the necessity of continuous and structured communication, maintained through regular updates and proactive interactions, to preserve the strength of client relationships*(Storbacka & Strandvik, 1994)*.

Valarie Zeithaml further demonstrated that perceived value, enhanced by clearly communicating the benefits of cost optimization, time savings, and risk reduction, constitutes a powerful lever for loyalty development and long-term partnership consolidation *(Zeithaml, 1988)*.

3.5 CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP AS A DRIVER OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Robert M. Morgan defined customer follow-up as the totality of actions undertaken by a company to initiate and sustain contact with clients before and after a commercial interaction. Grounded in relationship marketing theory, follow-up positions long-term engagement as a strategic priority over short-term transactional objectives*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

Through this operational mechanism, companies reinforce the key determinants of loyalty identified above. Follow-up enables continuous monitoring of client satisfaction, facilitates rapid problem resolution, and demonstrates the reliability upon which trust is built.

3.6 MONITORING FOLLOW-UP EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluating Relationship Quality

A. Parasuraman emphasized the necessity of continuously monitoring the quality of client relationships to ensure the effectiveness of follow-up strategies. This monitoring process encompasses the evaluation of both satisfaction levels and relational strength over time, most commonly through direct feedback collected via surveys, meetings, or informal discussions*(Parasuraman, 1988)*.

Interaction Frequency as an Indicator

Christian Grönroos identified the frequency and quality of interactions as reliable indicators of follow-up effectiveness. A decline in communication or engagement may signal a deteriorating relationship, while response speed and problem resolution capacity directly shape client perception *(Storbacka & Strandvik, 1994)*.

Behavioral Analysis

Werner Reinartz highlighted the value of behavioral tracking in assessing follow-up performance. A reduction in orders or project activity may signal underlying dissatisfaction, whereas an expansion of collaboration indicates a well-functioning strategy. Effective monitoring therefore combines qualitative feedback with behavioral analysis to identify vulnerabilities and sustain relational quality*(Reinartz, 2012)*.

3.7 CULTURAL SPECIFICITIES: THE CASE OF AUSTRALIAN CLIENTS

While the principles of customer loyalty and follow-up apply broadly across industries, their practical implementation must be adapted to the cultural context of the client. As Geert Hofstede demonstrated, *"National culture significantly shapes communication styles, relational expectations, and decision-making processes"(Hofstede, 1991)*.

Australian business culture tends to be characterized by a direct, relatively informal communication style. Unlike many European or Asian counterparts, Australian professionals generally favor straightforward exchanges and tend to value transparency over formality. In B2B[1] relationships, this translates into a strong preference for clear, honest, and timely communication, and an explicit aversion to hierarchical protocol. Customer follow-up strategies targeting this market should therefore generally prioritize responsiveness, clarity, as non-negotiable standards*(Hofstede, 1991)*.



Figure 11 : Deepwear's Bangkok Office
Source 10 : https://deepwear.info/buying/

Geographical distance and time zone differences introduce additional structural challenges. Deepwear's Bangkok headquarters implies a three-to-four-hour gap with Australia, which can delay responses and generate frustration during critical production phases. A proactive and structured follow-up system is therefore essential to compensate for the physical distance and ensure that Australian clients consistently feel informed and supported*(Handfield et al., 2015)*.

Finally, Australian entrepreneurs tend to evaluate their partners primarily on reliability, problem-solving capacity, and consistent delivery. For Deepwear, sustaining a high level of service quality and demonstrating concrete outcomes at every stage of the collaboration are therefore decisive factors in securing long-term loyalty within this market*(Hofstede, 1991)*.

[1] B2B (Business-to-Business) refers to commercial transactions conducted between companies, as opposed to B2C (Business-to-Consumer) transactions between a company and individual customers.

3.8 FROM THEORY TO OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

This chapter has established a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding customer loyalty and the central role of the follow-up in sustaining long-term client engagement. It has further highlighted the cultural specificities of Australian clients, whose expectations regarding communication, transparency, and responsiveness directly shape the conditions under which loyalty must be built and maintained.

4 Chapter 4: Follow-Up in Sourcing and Manufacturing Services

It is now essential to apply these concepts to the specific operational context of sourcing and manufacturing services. While the general principles of loyalty and follow-up apply across industries, their implementation takes a particular form in an international production environment, where complexity, cultural differences, and geographical distance generate unique challenges that demand a tailored approach.

This chapter examines the specific role of customer follow-up within Deepwear's sourcing and manufacturing services, analyzing how communication and transparency function as key success factors, and how the intercultural dimension must be integrated into the follow-up strategy to ensure trust, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty. Given that sourcing constitutes the most structurally prominent service within Deepwear's operations, the analysis naturally places greater emphasis on this dimension. Manufacturing is nonetheless addressed as an inseparable phase of the same process, sharing identical follow-up challenges and loyalty implications.

4.1 COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY AS KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Robert M. Monczka and Rob Handfield established that the effectiveness of the sourcing service does not only rely on the identification of reliable suppliers, but equally in the capacity to maintain consistent communication and ensure transparency throughout the entire process. In this environment, customer follow-up becomes a critical mechanism for sustaining trust and ensuring that the client perceives lasting value in the partnership*(Handfield et al., 2015)*.

This principle operates across two distinct dimensions. First, during the supplier validation phase, the follow-up demonstrates the service provider's commitment to supporting the client beyond initial supplier research, reinforcing the perception of Deepwear as a strategic long-term partner rather than a transactional intermediary *(Handfield et al., 2015)*.

Second, as Martin Christopher highlighted, international supply chains inherently involve elevated levels of complexity, encompassing communication barriers, cultural differences, production delays, or quality control challenges. An effective follow-up system enables early risk identification and continuous coordination between all parties involved*(Christopher, 2016)*.

Ultimately, transparent communication and effective problem resolution collectively reinforce the client's trust in their sourcing partner, a foundation upon which lasting loyalty is built*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

4.2 FOCUS ON AUSTRALIAN CLIENTS

Beyond operational complexity, the effectiveness of the customer follow-up is further shaped by the intercultural dimension of the client relationship. As Edward T. Hall demonstrated, cultural differences directly influence the way individuals perceive time, communication, and professional accountability*(Hall, 1976)*.

Australian professionals tend to exhibit a low tolerance for ambiguity and generally expect not only to be informed of progress, but also to fully understand the responsibilities of each party involved in the production process. Where delays and quality issues are frequent, any ambiguity in communication may be perceived as a lack of professionalism rather than an unavoidable operational constraint. Consequently, project managers and sales agents must ensure that production updates are communicated in a clear and unequivocal manner, and that the role of each stakeholder, being Deepwear, the factory and the client, is explicitly defined at every stage of the collaboration, in order to prevent misunderstandings that could irreversibly damage the relationship*(Handfield et al., 2015)*.

The time zone difference between Thailand and Australia introduces an additional structural constraint. Weekly meetings must be scheduled with consideration for the three-to-four-hour gap, and urgent communications regarding production or quality issues must be addressed within short timeframes to demonstrate the responsiveness that Australian clients often regard as a fundamental indicator of professionalism*(Handfield et al., 2015)*.

Finally, cultural adaptation of customer follow-up must be understood not merely as a communication adjustment, but as a genuine strategic differentiator. By demonstrating intercultural awareness and tailoring its follow-up approach to the specific expectations of Australian clients, Deepwear reinforces its positioning as a trusted long-term partner rather than a simple service provider, a differentiation that directly contributes to loyalty consolidation and sustainable growth within this market*(Hofstede, 1991)*.

5 Conclusion of the Theoretical Framework

This first part has established the theoretical and contextual foundations necessary for addressing the central problematic of this thesis. The presentation of Deepwear as a company has highlighted the strategic importance of client relationships in a competitive international environment, where differentiation relies not only on service quality but equally on the ability to build and sustain durable partnerships.

The theoretical framework developed in Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated that customer loyalty is not a spontaneous outcome but the result of a structured and continuous follow-up process, built on four interconnected pillars, which are satisfaction, trust, communication, and commitment. It further established that this process must be culturally adapted to the specific expectations of Australian clients, who value directness, transparency, and responsiveness, and who face unique structural challenges arising from geographical distance and time zone differences.

Theory alone, however, is insufficient to fully answer the problematic. Understanding how these concepts translate into concrete operational reality, where unforeseen events, cultural frictions, and production constraints constantly test the quality of the client relationship, requires a practical analysis grounded in direct observation and professional experience.

Part 2: Practical Adaptation

This second part translates the theoretical concepts into the operational reality of Deepwear, examining the choice of the Australian market, the concrete implementation of customer follow-up, the challenges encountered, and the solutions identified to strengthen client loyalty through a more effective follow-up strategy.

In line with the nature of the internship and the cases observed, the practical analysis is primarily grounded in the sourcing service. The manufacturing dimension is nonetheless present throughout, as it constitutes an inseparable phase of the production process, addressed in particular through quality control, bulk production management, and logistics coordination. This emphasis on sourcing should therefore not be interpreted as an exclusion of manufacturing, but as a reflection of where customer follow-up challenges proved most visible and most consequential in practice.

6 Study Limitations

Before entering the analysis of my internship experience, it is necessary to establish the boundaries within which I conducted this study, so that the cases presented in the following chapters can be interpreted within their appropriate context.

6.1 CONFIDENTIALITY CONSTRAINTS

First, Deepwear's strict confidentiality policy restricted access to key internal data, including turnover, headcount, and complete client files, inevitably limited the depth of my quantitative analysis.

6.2 LIMITED SAMPLE SIZE

Second, only three Australian clients were examined, representing a limited and inherently non-representative sample, as these were the clients I encountered during my internship rather than a systematically selected group.

6.3 INCOMPLETE CASE OBSERVATION

Third, the Kaitlyn collaboration was still ongoing at the time of writing, preventing observation of critical stages such as bulk production and final delivery.

6.4 SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Fourth, assessments of client satisfaction and loyalty are based primarily on my personal interpretation of interactions rather than formal feedback, introducing a degree of subjectivity.

6.5 SHORT OBSERVATION PERIOD

Fifth, the four-month observation period captures only a fraction of the loyalty dynamic, which by nature develops across multiple collaboration cycles.

6.6 RESTRICTED INTERNAL ACCESS

Finally, as an intern, access to certain internal discussions and strategic decisions was restricted, meaning that some aspects of the analysis may rely on partial information.

1 Chapter 1: The Choice of Australia

Having acknowledged the limitations of this study, it is now essential to justify the choice of Australia as the target market, as this decision directly shapes the scope and relevance of the entire practical analysis.

1.1 MARKET IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Defining a target market was not straightforward given that Deepwear conducts international prospecting without focusing on a single country. The selection process therefore required personal initiative and methodological rigor.

An initial exploration of Asian markets revealed significant barriers in terms of language and cultural distance, leading to the decision to broaden the prospecting scope without geographic restriction. Out of approximately 700 prospects identified, around 130 were based in Australia, the second-largest concentration by the country, the first being the United States *(appendices 1 and 2)*.

Rationale for Selecting Australia

Several converging factors justified the selection of Australia as the primary target market. The country hosts approximately 55,000 companies operating in the clothing and fashion industry, with nearly 30% concentrated in New South Wales. Deepwear's existing headquarters in Melbourne further facilitates market entry, as the company's established credibility and local administrative presence, including the Co-Manager Bily and the legal team, reduce the barriers typically associated with entering a new market. The absence of language barriers, English being the primary language of business, constitutes an additional structural advantage*(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024; Deepwear, 2010c; IBISWorld, 2024)*.



Figure 12 : Co-Manager (Bily Dimoski)

Source 11 : https://deepwear.info/sourcing/

Beyond these methodological considerations, Australia represents a strategically significant market from a commercial standpoint. Based on internal data collected during my internship through direct observation and access to Deepwear's client database, Australian clients account for approximately 20% of the company's active client portfolio, making them one of the most significant client segments alongside European markets. Predominantly composed of independent entrepreneurs or small-to-medium fashion brands with a strong emphasis on quality, sustainability, and transparency, this segment aligns closely with Deepwear's core values and service offering.

The combination of market scale, institutional presence, linguistic accessibility, and commercial potential collectively justified the selection of Australia as the most relevant and strategically justified market for the scope of this thesis.

2 Chapter 2: Customer Follow-Up at Deepwear

This chapter examines the practical implementation of the customer follow-up at Deepwear, analyzing the prospecting process, identifying its main limitations, and proposing concrete recommendations for improvement. Alternative prospecting approaches are subsequently explored to assess how Deepwear can strengthen its client acquisition strategy in a competitive environment.

Before entering this analysis, it is essential to clarify why prospecting is addressed in a thesis centered on customer loyalty. At first glance, these two concepts may appear disconnected. However, as Morgan and Hunt explained, the foundation of any long-term relationship is built from the very first interaction. The way a company approaches, communicates with, and follows up on a prospect directly shapes the initial perception of the relationship and influences future loyalty. The prospecting phase must therefore be considered as the starting point of the customer follow-up process, as this is the first opportunity for Deepwear to demonstrate its professionalism, responsiveness, and personalized approach. Any weakness at this stage has a direct and lasting impact on the company's ability to build loyal and long-term client relationships*(Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

2.1 CURRENT CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP PROCESS

Understanding Deepwear's Positioning

At the beginning of my internship, I needed to develop a clear understanding of Deepwear's purpose in order to identify the right audience. The company operates through two distinct channels, meaning that interns prospect actively via Instagram, while clients reach out spontaneously, typically contacting the CEO directly via WhatsApp, email, or phone, who then redirects each inquiry to the appropriate sales agent *(appendix 3)*.

Prospecting Activities

From my second month onward, I began prospecting via Instagram, by analyzing Deepwear's competitors, examining their followers, and identifying brands that might be interested in Deepwear's services. I investigated their followers and asked if they might be interested in Deepwear. For each prospect, I collected relevant contact details, such as phone numbers, email addresses, and any other useful information, and systematically updated their profile in HubSpot, Deepwear's CRM system *(appendices 4 and 5)*.

Contact and Follow-Up

Once contact details had been collected, I initiated outreach by email, followed by a phone call two to three days later. The objective of these calls was not to sell a service but to schedule a meeting between the prospect and a sales agent. For prospects without a phone number, a reminder email was sent after two to three weeks *(appendix 6)*.

Reporting and Monitoring

At the end of each working day, I submitted a daily report to my supervisors detailing every phone call made, email responses received, and any relevant information gathered about each prospect's production process, including their level of interest and the reasons behind their decisions.

This reporting process also revealed a noteworthy behavioral pattern specific to Australian prospects, who tended to respond more positively to direct and concise communication, confirming the cultural characteristics established in the theoretical framework *(appendix 7)*.

2.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT APPROACH

Lack of personalization

One of the most significant issues I encountered was the absence of personalization in prospect communications. Due to a daily KPI[1] of 100 prospects, I was instructed to prioritize volume over quality, which inevitably led to the use of standardized and generic emails. As a result, prospects did not feel individually addressed, reducing engagement and diminishing the perceived value of Deepwear's services.

This limitation carries weight in the Australian market, as a generic email directly contradicts the cultural expectations of Australian entrepreneurs, who value authenticity, directness, and personalized engagement. Such an approach risks compromising Deepwear's first impression, the very foundation upon which long-term trust must be built *(Hofstede, 1991; Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

[1] KPI (Key Performance Indicator) is a measurable value used to evaluate the achievement of a defined objective. In this context, it refers to the number of prospects to be identified and contacted on a daily basis.

Recommendations

Deepwear should reduce its daily KPI and adopt a more qualitative prospecting approach, supported by a CRM-based segmentation. Prospects could be categorized, for instance, into independent designers, small brands, and established labels, with semi-personalized email templates developed for each segment. A brief preliminary analysis of each brand's positioning, product type, and potential needs would further allow for the inclusion of tailored elements, such as relevant supplier brochures, ensuring both efficiency and impact.

Theoretical Link

As Morgan and Hunt emphasized, personalized interactions constitute the foundation of long-term relationships, a principle that carries an even greater weight in the Australian market, where professional networks are relatively concentrated and first impressions are decisive. A generic approach signals a lack of effort that Australian entrepreneurs are unlikely to overlook. As Buttle highlighted, CRM-supported segmentation enables more relevant communication, directly increasing the probability of converting a prospect into a loyal long-term client(Buttle, 2008; Hall, 1976; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Lack of Profile Analysis

A second limitation concerned the insufficient depth of prospect profiling. Due to time pressure, brand selection was based on rudimentary criteria, primarily whether the brand operated in clothing or jewelry, without verifying alignment with Deepwear's Instagram prospecting target, which focuses on small to medium-sized independent brands. This resulted in a significant proportion of irrelevant outreach and low conversion rates.

Recommendation

Deepwear should implement a structured lead qualification process within HubSpot, incorporating clearly defined criteria such as company size production method and sourcing needs. A scoring system would enable the prioritization of the most relevant prospects, streamlining the workload of sales agents and improving overall conversion efficiency.

Theoretical Link

As Kotler and Keller emphasized, effective segmentation is not merely an efficiency measure, it is a matter of relevance, and relevance is precisely what Australian entrepreneurs expect from the very first point of contact. Reaching out to brands that fall outside Deepwear's target profile not only wastes resources but risks damaging its reputation in a market where word-of-mouth carries considerable influence. A structured qualification process therefore serves a dual purpose, which is improving short-term conversion rates while protecting long-term credibility within the Australian market*(Kotler & Keller, 2016; Oliver, 1999)*.

Wrong Contact Targeting

A critical obstacle encountered throughout the prospecting phase was the difficulty of reaching the appropriate decision-makers within target companies. Most email addresses collected corresponded to customer service or social media departments, meaning that messages were frequently redirected, ignored, or filtered as spam, significantly reducing the probability of scheduling meaningful meetings.

Recommendations

Deepwear should leverage more advanced prospecting tools, such as LinkedIn Sales Navigator or professional databases, to directly identify decision-makers, including production managers, founders, and sourcing managers. HubSpot should be enhanced with a contact validation step, and a multi-channel approach combining email and LinkedIn outreach should be adopted to maximize the likelihood of reaching the right person to ensure that the right person is being targeted.

Theoretical Link

This limitation is particularly consequential in the Australian context, where flat organizational structures and direct accessibility to decision-makers are cultural norms. Australian entrepreneurs generally expect to be approached directly, failing to do so can signal a lack of professionalism. As Christian Homburg established, successful B2B partnerships depend on direct engagement with decision-makers, and this principle that applies to force in a market where the first interaction sets the tone for the entire potential relationship*(Hall, 1976; Homburg, 2002)*.

Technical Constraints

A further operational limitation concerned Deepwear's phone contract, which did not cover several key fashion markets. This restricted my ability to contact prospects via phone, one of the most effective outreach methods, and forced me to rely on WhatsApp or email, which generated lower levels of engagement.

Recommendations

Deepwear should upgrade its telecommunications subscription to an international business plan covering all key fashion markets. Additionally, granting interns access to VoIP[1] solutions, which are integrated directly with HubSpot, would enable international calls, call tracking, and performance monitoring, enhancing both communication efficiency and prospecting oversight.

Theoretical Link

For Australian clients, for whom geographical distance already constitutes a structural barrier to engagement, this limitation is especially damaging. As Morgan and Hunt established, communication quality directly shapes the perception of reliability, and for Australian B2B clients, reliability tends to be the primary criterion by which partners are evaluated. Inability to make a phone call is not interpreted as a technical constraint, it is rather perceived as a lack of professionalism. Upgrading communication infrastructure therefore represents a direct investment in the trust that underpins long-term loyalty within this market*(Hall, 1976; Morgan & Hunt, 1994)*.

[1] VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is a technology enabling telephone calls to be made over the Internet rather than through traditional telephone networks, allowing international calls at significantly reduced cost.

Lead Management Issues

The final limitation identified concerns the management of inbound leads received via Instagram, WhatsApp or email. As Deepwear's Instagram account is exclusively managed by the CEO, all direct inquiries from potential clients are received and redistributed by Thoray alone via a shared WhatsApp group comprising all sales agents. This informal and unstructured distribution process creates a significant risk of delayed responses or missed opportunities, directly undermining the quality of the initial client experience.

Recommendations

Deepwear should integrate inbound lead management directly into HubSpot. Each new inquiry received by Thoray, should be systematically registered in the CRM, capturing key information such as the client's name, contact detail, and nationality. HubSpot could then automatically assign the lead to the most appropriate sales agent based on language or geographic area, ensuring structured, traceable, and timely handling of every inbound request.

Theoretical Link

Australian entrepreneurs who proactively reach out to Deepwear represent high-value opportunities, ones that the current process risks losing through delays or misrouting. As Buttle highlighted, CRM systems enable companies to manage client interactions in a coordinated and timely manner. In the Australian market, where responsiveness is perceived as a direct indicator of professionalism, a delayed or missed response to an inbound inquiry can permanently foreclose a relationship that the client themselves had chosen to initiate*(Buttle, 2008; Hall, 1976)*.

Synthesis: From Prospecting Limitations to Loyalty Implications

The five limitations identified throughout this chapter share a common consequence. Indeed, they collectively weaken the first impression that Deepwear makes on potential clients, undermining the relational foundation upon which loyalty is built.

As established in the theoretical framework, customer loyalty is a product of a consistent and cumulative experience that begins from the very first interaction. In the Australian market, where professionalism, responsiveness, and personalized communication are non-negotiable expectations, any deficiency at the prospecting stage carries disproportionate long-term consequences. Addressing these limitations is therefore a strategic investment in the quality of future client relationships, and a direct contribution to answering the central problematic of this thesis.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE PROSPECTING APPROACHES

Use of ContactOut

The systematic reliance on Instagram prospecting produced the same limitation, which is the outreach to customer service or social media teams rather than decision-makers, resulting in messages being passed along internally with no guarantee of reaching the appropriate contact. To address this inefficiency, I tested ContactOut, a specialized software enabling direct access to the personal contact details of decision-makers.

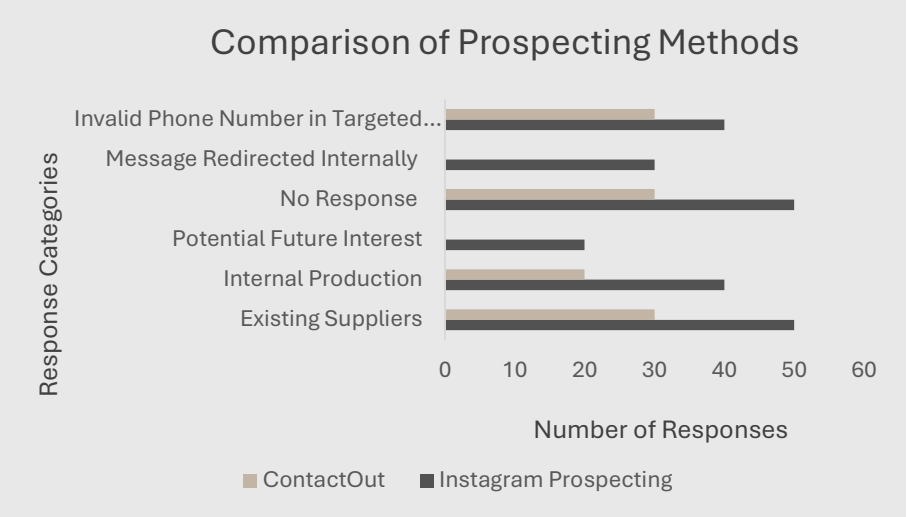


Figure 13 : Prospecting Methods Comparison

As illustrated in the graph above, Instagram Prospecting generated significantly higher response volumes across most categories, particularly regarding existing suppliers, internal production, and no response. ContactOut, by contrast, produced fewer overall responses, with no recorded instances of scheduled meetings or future interest expressed. This discrepancy is largely attributed to the greater time dedicated to Instagram Prospecting and the higher receptivity of prospects through this channel. It is nonetheless worth noting that ContactOut demonstrated a clear advantage in reaching decision-makers directly, as evidenced by the lower proportion of internally redirected messages compared to Instagram Prospecting.

Overall, ContactOut demonstrated the limitations of social media-based prospecting while offering a more targeted pathway to decision-makers. However, access to the right contact alone proved insufficient to ensure meaningful engagement. These results confirm that a multi-channel strategy, combining targeted identification, personalized outreach, and adequate communication infrastructure, are essential to optimize Deepwear's prospecting effectiveness. Personalized and direct interactions remain decisive, as they signal genuine effort and reinforce the trust that underpins effective customer follow-up. Although Instagram Prospecting brought more interactions, several challenges remain.

Chambers of Commerce Strategy

Given the limitations of both Instagram prospecting and ContactOut, I explored a third approach, which is establishing partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, recognized for their extensive networks, and diverse client portfolios across multiple industries, including fashion *(appendix 8)*.



Figure 14 : Spanish Thai Chamber of Commerce

Source 12 : About us - Spanish Thai Chamber of Commerce

I began with the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, as Spain is one of the countries in which Deepwear maintains an office. During this exchange, representatives, including Leyre Ruiz de Alda Juaniz and Mario Jimeno Bennassar, explained that Spanish brands frequently approached the Chamber seeking support to export to Thailand, particularly in identifying suppliers *(appendix 9)*.

While the Chamber could provide supplier names, it was unable to facilitate introductions, negotiate pricing, or manage the production process. This is precisely where Deepwear's expertise becomes relevant. Indeed, the Chamber generates leads, and Deepwear assumes full operational responsibility for their needs. I observed that the complementarity between the two organizations was immediately apparent.

Following this initial collaboration, I extended outreach to multiple Chambers across several countries, securing meetings with the Belgian and Luxembourg, British, French, and Brazilian Chambers of Commerce. The partnership model remained consistent across all discussions.

However, membership, a prerequisite for accessing the networks and events organized by these institutions, requires a financial investment. Following a discussion with the CEO, it became clear that selectivity was essential. The Belgian and Luxembourg Chamber, for instance, comprised predominantly chemical industry members, with no meaningful fashion industry representation, rendering membership commercially unviable for Deepwear. Conversely, the Spanish and French Chambers both count fashion brands among their active members and represent markets with strong cultural ties to the fashion industry, making membership a strategically sound investment. The German and Canadian Chambers declined collaboration outright, citing the absence of a dedicated fashion division *(appendix 10)*.

Chambers of Commerce represents a strategically valuable prospecting channel, offering access to qualified and prescreened networks while enhancing Deepwear's credibility in target markets. The structured interactions, through networking events and members' meetings, foster repeated engagement that relationship marketing identifies as a driver of trust and long-term partnership development. Their effectiveness, however, is contingent on the presence of fashion-relevant members and a genuine willingness to collaborate.

It is worth noting that the implementation of this strategy remains subject to Deepwear's internal budgetary constraints, as membership fees represent a recurring cost that must be evaluated against projected returns, a dimension that falls outside the analytical scope of this thesis but constitutes a relevant operational consideration for the company's management.

3 Chapter 3: Sourcing and Manufacturing Services Processes

This chapter provides a structured analysis of Deepwear's sourcing and manufacturing processes, presenting each operational stage while simultaneously identifying the moments where customer follow-up is most vulnerable. While the overall process is well designed, certain phases carry inherent relational risks that, if inadequately managed, can erode client trust and compromise loyalty, a dimension particularly significant for Australian clients, whose expectations regarding transparency, responsiveness, and communication make them especially sensitive to any gap in the follow-up process.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF SOURCING AND MANUFACTURING SERVICES

As established in Part 1, Deepwear's sourcing service connects clients with reliable manufacturing partners while preserving direct communication between both parties, and its manufacturing service oversees the entire production cycle through to final delivery. Rather than revisiting these definitions, this chapter focuses on analyzing how customer follow-up is integrated, and where it is most challenged, at each stage of this process.

A critical structural consideration must be noted from the outset. The flexibility Deepwear offers, allowing clients to subscribe to one or both services independently, while commercially advantageous, introduces a vulnerability from a follow-up perspective. When a client engages in only one service, the continuity of Deepwear's involvement is reduced, increasing the risk that the client perceives the company as a transactional supplier rather than a committed strategic partner, a perception that directly undermines long-term loyalty.

3.2 FINANCIAL COMMITMENT AND OPERATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Financial Structure and Project Duration

Deepwear's collaboration is structured around a three-month contractual period, at the end of which the client either continues the partnership or chooses to work directly with the supplier, bypassing Deepwear entirely *(Deepwear, 2010b)*.

This structure represents both a strength and a critical risk. On one hand, it provides a clearly defined timeframe within which Deepwear can demonstrate its value. On the other hand, the contractual endpoint constitutes a natural exit point, a moment where the client consciously reassesses the added value of the relationship. The quality of customer follow-up throughout these three months is

therefore decisive, as it directly determines whether the client perceives sufficient value to justify continuation. This transactional moment must be treated as one of the most strategically fragile points in the entire client relationship, requiring a proactive and deliberate retention approach.

Operational Transition and Project Management

Upon contract signature, project responsibility is transferred from the sales agent to the project manager through a structured briefing involving the CEO, the sales agent, the client and the incoming project manager. During this session, the client communicates all relevant project specifications, design requirements, pricing expectations, timelines, and production parameters.

This handover, however, represents an inherent moment of relational fragility. The client has invested in a personal relationship with the sales agent during the commercial phase, and the transition to a new point of contact can generate a sense of discontinuity or abandonment if not managed with care. The briefing meeting must therefore serve not only as an operational transfer but also as a relationship continuity exercise, formally introducing the project manager and explicitly reassuring the client of the consistency and quality of support they will continue to receive.

Local Presence and Added Value

Deepwear's physical proximity to factories constitutes a decisive competitive advantage, enabling continuous production monitoring, barrier-free communication with suppliers, and rigorous quality oversight. While the associated cost may initially appear significant, it should be understood as a strategic investment, one that delivers tangible added value through risk mitigation, professional negotiation, and on-site supervision*(Deepwear, 2010e)*.

3.3 SUPPLIER SELECTION

The sourcing process begins with supplier identification. Once the production country and design specifications have been confirmed, the project manager evaluates and proposes a shortlist of factories based on quality standards, pricing, minimum order quantities, and reliability. This combination stage, encompassing supplier identification and, where necessary, design and development, typically spans three to six weeks.

From a customer follow-up standpoint, this phase is particularly demanding. Waiting several weeks for supplier proposals without receiving regular updates can generate significant anxiety and erode confidence in Deepwear's capacity to deliver, a risk amplified for Australian clients, who may feel geographically isolated from the production process due to the time zone difference. Proactive communication throughout this phase, including intermediate updates, sourcing process reports,

and transparent explanations of any delays, is therefore essential to maintain engagement and prevent early disengagement.

3.4 NEGOTIATION AND SUPPLIER FINALIZATION

Once potential suppliers have been identified, Deepwear conducts negotiations to secure the most favorable conditions in terms of pricing, timelines, and contractual terms. This phase leverages the company's market expertise and established supplier relationships, enabling clients to access competitive agreements that would be difficult to obtain independently.

Following negotiation, the client selects a supplier, and a formal tripartite[1] agreement is established between Deepwear, the client and the factory. Consistent with its positioning as a non-intermediary, Deepwear actively encourages direct communication between the client and the factory.

While this approach reflects the company's core philosophy, it introduces a tangible follow-up risk, as direct client-factory communication develops, Deepwear's visibility over the relationship diminishes, making real-time monitoring of client satisfaction more difficult. Regular check-in with both parties must therefore be maintained even after direct communication is established, ensuring that any emerging misunderstanding or dissatisfaction is identified and addressed before it escalates.

3.5 SAMPLING PHASE AND VALIDATION

Prior to full-scale production, Deepwear places considerable emphasis on the sampling phase. Prototypes are produced and rigorously inspected internally before being presented to the client, a verification step designed to preserve the company's credibility and prevent avoidable delays.

If samples meet the required standards, the client validates and production can begin. Where adjustments are needed, the client communicates directly with the factory. This process is supported by weekly meetings between the client, the project manager, and the sales agent. On average, the sampling phase spans approximately six weeks.

The sampling phase represents arguably the most emotionally charged stage of the entire collaboration, the moment at which the client's vision materializes for the first time. It is correspondingly one of the most fragile moments in terms of customer follow-up. Unmet expectations at this stage can rapidly escalate into a loss of trust, particularly if Deepwear's response is perceived as defensive or reactive rather than proactive. Furthermore, while direct client-factory communication during adjustment rounds is operationally efficient, it can generate a sense of

[1] A tripartite agreement is a contractual arrangement between three distinct parties defining the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of each party throughout the production process.

isolation for clients who encounter language barriers or communication difficulties. Project managers must therefore remain closely involved as mediators and support resources throughout this phase, regardless of whether direct communication has been established.

3.6 BULK PRODUCTION AND QUALITY CONTROL

Following sample validation, bulk production begins, a phase that typically lasts approximately two months. Unlike conventional approaches, quality control at Deepwear is conducted continuously throughout production rather than exclusively at the final stage, enabling early identification of deviations and ensuring greater transparency for the client.

Deepwear's on-site presence enables direct factory supervision at this stage. In a production run of 2,000 pieces, for instance, approximately 250 units are inspected monthly to verify compliance with quality specifications.

Despite the robustness of this approach, bulk production represents a phase where client follow-up naturally becomes less frequent, as the client is not directly involved in the day-to-day factory operations. This reduced visibility can generate uncertainty, particularly for Australian clients, who tend to place a strong emphasis on transparency and ethical production standards. Regular production updates, photographic evidence of quality inspections, and proactive communication of any identified issues are therefore essential during this phase to sustain client confidence and reinforce the perception of Deepwear as a genuinely committed partner*(Buttle, 2008; Handfield et al., 2015)*.

3.7 LOGISTICS AND FINAL DELIVERY

Once production is complete, Deepwear coordinates the logistics and delivery of the finished products, managing international shipping operations through incoterms such as FOB or EXW[1]. Delivery timelines vary depending on the chosen mode of transport, air or sea, and the contractual responsibilities assigned to each party are determined by the selected incoterm*("Incoterms® 2020," 2020)*.

The logistics phase is frequently underestimated as a loyalty touchpoint, yet it constitutes the final stage of the client experience and therefore carries disproportionate weight in shaping the overall perception of the collaboration. Any delay, miscommunication, or lack of transparency at this juncture can significantly damage the relationship, even when all preceding phases have been

[1] Incoterms are a set of trade rules published by the International Chamber of Commerce defining the responsibilities of buyers and sellers regarding the transfer of risk, costs, and delivery obligations. FOB means the seller is responsible for the goods until they are loaded onto the vessel, after which the buyer assumes all risk. EXW means the buyer assumes full responsibility for transport and risk from the moment the goods leave the seller's premises.

managed flawlessly. For Australian clients in particular, who must navigate international import regulations and extended shipping timelines due to geographical distance, proactive communication regarding shipping progress, expected delivery dates, and customs developments is not optional, it is a fundamental component of effective customer follow-up *(Christopher, 2016)*.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Overall, Deepwear's sourcing and manufacturing processes reflect a structured, comprehensive, and value-driven approach to production management, designed to ensure efficiency, quality, and risk reduction while maintaining transparency and direct client communication at every stage. The weekly meetings organized throughout the collaboration ensure continuous alignment between all parties, reinforcing engagement and demonstrating a level of commitment that transcends a purely transactional relationship.

While the service is initially structured within a three-month contractual period, Deepwear's objective is to establish durable partnerships, and in practice, many clients choose to continue collaboration beyond this initial phase, reflecting a high level of perceived value and satisfaction.

However, as analyzed throughout this chapter, the process contains several structurally fragile moments where the quality of customer follow-up is particularly decisive, including the handover from sales agent to project managers, the sourcing phase during which the client's visibility is limited, the sampling phase where expectations must be carefully managed, the bulk production period when communication naturally diminishes, and the logistics phase which constitutes the final impression of the entire collaboration. Identifying and addressing these vulnerabilities through a proactive follow-up strategy is therefore essential for Deepwear to convert satisfied clients into loyal long-term partners, which lies at the heart of the problematic addressed by this thesis.

4 Chapter 4: Analysis of Former Australian Customers

This chapter analyzes real interactions with Australian clients in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Deepwear's existing customer follow-up process. From my second month onward, I was integrated into Aurore's WhatsApp groups with existing clients, which allowed me to observe live collaborations and gain direct insight into how relationships are managed across different situations.

While Deepwear oversees the entire production process, certain events fall outside its control. This chapter is therefore structured around two contrasting cases, one in which customer loyalty was successfully preserved, and one in which it was irretrievably lost, illustrating the conditions under which the follow-up either strengthens or fails to sustain the client relationship.

4.1 FIRST CASE: CUSTOMER LOYALTY MAINTAINED

Customer Profile and Project Overview



The first customer I worked with was Dimitri, an independent entrepreneur based in New South Wales, launching his first men's activewear collection. His range comprised five designs, three tops and two bottoms, for which he had already prepared designs and tech packs[1]. The sourcing phase was consequently completed within approximately three weeks.

Figure 15 : Tech Pack Representation

Source 13 : https://deepwear.info/design/

[1] A tech pack (technical package) is a document containing all the technical specifications of a garment, including measurements, materials, construction details, and labeling requirements, used to communicate production requirements to the factory.

Strategic Choices and Intercultural Challenges

From the outset, Dimitri's primary concern was timing. He selected China as the production country for its competitive costs and rapid manufacturing capabilities, with a firm objective of launching his brand in July.

This choice, however, introduced two structural challenges directly relevant to the customer follow-up. First, the two-hour time difference between Guangzhou and New South Wales, and the three-hour time between the Australian region and Bangkok required careful scheduling of meetings and updates, as real-time communication was not always feasible. Second, and more significantly, the cultural gap between China and Australia proved consequential. The Chinese factory consistently prioritized harmony and indirect communication, whereas Dimitri expected direct, frank, and immediate responses. Every issue arising at the factory level required careful mediation from Deepwear, not only linguistic but cultural, to prevent misunderstanding from escalating into relational deterioration*(Hofstede, 1991)*.

Sampling Phase and Production Launch

Lian, the project manager, and Dimitri, agreed on a four-week sampling phase, during which I observed Lian conducting multiple on-site factory visits to verify compliance with Dimitri's specifications and the agreed timeline. Once the samples were validated, bulk production was launched, with an estimated duration of one and a half months.

Unforeseen Events and Crisis Management

During the production phase, repeated power cuts and mechanical failures at the factory caused an overall delay of approximately two weeks. Dimitri, unsatisfied, contacted Lian expressing his intention to terminate the collaboration.

This reaction was largely consistent with the cultural profile established in the theoretical framework. For Dimitri, financially and emotionally invested in a clearly defined timeline, a two-week delay was not perceived as an operational inconvenience but as a breach of trust. Geographical distance compounded this reaction, as unable to verify the situation on-site, he was entirely dependent on the information provided by Deepwear. This dynamic highlights one of the most fundamental challenges in managing Australian clients remotely, when difficulties arise, the client's inability to intervene physically intensifies their reliance on Deepwear's communication, making transparency and proactive updates particularly critical compared to many domestic business relationships.

Follow-Up Strategy and Problem Resolution

Despite these difficulties, Lian maintained weekly meetings with Dimitri throughout the entire process, providing transparent and detailed updates at every stage. Thoray subsequently asked Aurore, the sales agent, and me, to propose solutions before escalating the situation further, a protocol that reflects Deepwear's approach of exhausting all relational options before involving senior management.

I proposed a modest timeline extension, drawing Dimitri's attention to the flexibility that remained within the logistics phase. I also referred to the contractual clause covering unforeseen events beyond Deepwear's control and emphasized that Lian had physically verified the factory situation on each occasion an issue arose.

Although the contractual clause would have legally absolved Deepwear of further obligation, I understood that preserving the relationship required a more proactive response. Dimitri indicated his willingness to continue the collaboration provided that financial compensation could be obtained from the factory. Although this was an unusual request in the Chinese business context, where financial concessions are rarely granted as a matter of principle, Lian was able to negotiate a 5% reduction in production costs by leveraging Deepwear's long-standing relationship with the factory.

This outcome illustrates a key strength of Deepwear's model. The concession obtained would have been unachievable by Dimitri independently, given the cultural and relational distance between Australian entrepreneur and a Chinese factory. Deepwear's intervention as a culturally informed intermediary not only resolved the immediate crisis but reinforced Dimitri's perception of the company as a genuinely committed and indispensable partner.

Following this agreement, the collaboration continued without further incident. Despite the two-week delay, products were delivered in June, ahead of the July launch, and the overall timeline was preserved.

Key Analytical Insights

This case demonstrates that the success of the customer follow-up in international sourcing depends not only on the quality of internal processes but also on the capacity to navigate cultural differences between the client's country and the production country. For Australian clients working with Chinese factories, Deepwear must function as a bridge between two fundamentally different communication cultures, ensuring that the client always feels informed, protected, and prioritized, regardless of what is occurring on the factory floor. This cultural mediation role is rarely addressed in conventional CRM frameworks, yet it proves indispensable in practice.

CRM Management

Throughout this case, I used HubSpot as a central tool for structured follow-up management. From the moment the delay emerged, I documented each stage of the process, recording the transition from sampling to production, the first signs of factory disruption, and the precise moment at which Dimitri began considering termination.

Every interaction between Aurore, Lian and Dimitri was logged, maintaining a complete and traceable relationship history that allowed the entire team to remain aligned throughout the crisis.

The 5% commercial gesture was formally registered in HubSpot as a reference point for future cases involving similar solutions, and once the relationship had stabilized, I initiated a feedback collection process to assess Dimitri's perception of the resolution. Finally, I tagged him for a long-term follow-up, with the objective of sustaining the relationship beyond immediate collaboration and encouraging future engagement.

4.2 SECOND CASE: CUSTOMER LOYALTY LOST

Client Profile and Project Characteristics

The second customer I worked with was Elise, an independent entrepreneur based in Melbourne who already owned a boutique and possesses experience in collection development. Her project involved four bikini designs and two resort wear pieces, for which she had already prepared all designs independently.

Elise's profile differs substantially from that of a first-time entrepreneur. Her experience has given her precise quality standards and a sense of what acceptable production looks like, leaving her with a significantly lower tolerance for deviation than a client encountering the production process for the first time. As a Melbourne-based entrepreneur, deeply embedded in Australian business culture, she expected Deepwear to assume full ownership of any issue arising during the collaboration, regardless of its origin. This combination of experience and demanding expectations made her one of the most complex clients from a customer follow-up perspective.

Sourcing Phase and Country Selection

The technical complexity of the bikini designs and resort wear production extended the sourcing phase to approximately six weeks. Elise selected Thailand as the production country, drawn by its recognized expertise in swimwear and resort wear, and was unwilling to compromise on fabric quality or finishing standards.

This choice introduced specific intercultural challenges. While the three-hour time zone difference between Bangkok and Melbourne was manageable, the cultural distance between Thailand and Australia proved consequential. The Thai factory tended to favor harmony, face-saving[1], and indirect communication, an approach that contrasted sharply with Elise's expectation of direct accountability. When quality issues arose during the sampling phase, the factory's responses were cautious and deliberately vague, which Elise found both frustrating and difficult to interpret. Deepwear's cultural mediation role was therefore critical, and any gap in this mediation carried an immediate risk of misunderstanding and relational erosion*(Hall, 1976)*.

[1] Face-saving refers to a set of behaviors aimed at protecting one's social image and avoiding public embarrassment or loss of prestige, a concept significant in many Asian business cultures where maintaining harmony and avoiding direct confrontation is prioritized over explicit communication of problems or failures*(Hofstede, 1991)*.

Sampling Issues and Collaboration Breakdown

Once the supplier was selected, the sampling phase began but quickly became problematic. Despite multiple rounds of adjustments and material substitutions requested by Elise, the factory consistently failed to meet her quality standards. After approximately four to five weeks without satisfactory outcomes, Elise decided to terminate the collaboration.

Attempted Solutions and Loss of Trust

Following this decision, Aurore and I worked to identify possible remedies. Given that Elise was not constrained by time, I proposed switching to an alternative factory, two suppliers had been identified for each garment category during the sourcing phase.

However, by this point, the issue was no longer operational but fundamentally relational. During the sampling phase, Elise had traveled to Thailand on-site, as Deepwear routinely recommends to clients who wish to directly oversee production. Simultaneously, the Thai New Year took place, resulting in a full week of communication silence between Elise and the project manager, as weekly meetings were not maintained.

Although the factory continued operating during this period, Elise was left to manage interactions directly on-site without any support from Deepwear. The language barrier, factory staff spoke limited English, and Elise spoke no Thai, made these interactions particularly challenging. The absence of structured communication from Deepwear during this critical period reinforced her growing sense of isolation and loss of control, ultimately precipitating the collapse of trust.

This situation exposes one of the most critical vulnerabilities in Deepwear's follow-up process, which is the absence of contingency communication protocol for periods of cultural or institutional interruption. The Thai New Year, known as Songkran, is a week-long national celebration during which business activity across Thailand is significantly reduced. For an Australian client unfamiliar with this cultural reality, the sudden silence from the project manager was not interpreted as a normal cultural pause but as negligence and disorganization. This misinterpretation is structurally inevitable from a cultural standpoint, as Australian business culture does not generally involve comparable periods of collective unavailability, and the notion of a week-long national holiday disrupting an active production project would typically be considered wholly exceptional*(Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2004)*.

After Songkran, when Deepwear attempted to request further adjustments, the factory declined. Having already produced three rounds of samples, it considered additional iterations an unacceptable commercial loss, particularly given the uncertainty surrounding Elise's validation. This refusal further constrained Deepwear's capacity to intervene and marked a definitive loss of operational control over the process.

We also explored the possibility of negotiating financial compensation. Nonetheless, Elise rejected this option and stated that she no longer wished to collaborate with what she perceived as a "middleman", despite our efforts to clarify Deepwear's positioning.

With all proposed solutions exhausted, the situation was escalated to Thoray. Drawing on his experience, he quickly assessed that reversing Elise's decision was unlikely and redirected his efforts toward restoring a minimum level of trust. He informed Elise of her legal rights, under the terms of the agreement signed following the sourcing phase, the factory was contractually obligated to deliver according to the specifications it had confirmed. Its failure to do so constituted a potential breach of contract, entitling Elise to claim financial compensation.

Outcome and Long-Term Relationship Perspective

Elise ultimately chose not to pursue legal action, despite Deepwear's offer to manage the process on her behalf. She nonetheless expressed genuine appreciation for the support received and acknowledged the company's willingness to challenge one of its own partner factories in her defense, a stance that had clearly exceeded her expectations.

Deepwear subsequently terminated its collaboration with the factory and implemented structural measures to prevent similar situations, including clearer protocols for client support during on-site visits and enhanced contingency planning for cultural holiday periods.

From a long-term loyalty perspective, this outcome, while representing a lost collaboration, is not without residual value. The goodwill expressed by Elise suggests that the relationship is not permanently closed. In the context of relationship marketing, such residual goodwill constitutes a foundation upon which future reconnection may be built, provided that Deepwear maintains a consistent and professional long-term follow-up. Lost clients should not be treated as definitively closed files, but as dormant opportunities that may be reactivated when the conditions for trust are reestablished*(Buttle, 2008)*.

CRM Management

In a case where operational difficulties had escalated into a full-relational breakdown, CRM became a tool not for managing the collaboration, but for preserving institutional knowledge and protecting the company's long-term reputation.

I documented each stage of the project in HubSpot, from supplier selection through the final sampling failures, identifying unmet quality expectations and the Songkran communication gap as the two critical factors in the breakdown of trust.

Once the collaboration had ended, I updated Elise's status to "lost client-reconnect in the future", added detailed explanatory notes, and initiated a feedback process to assess her perception of the service quality and communication throughout the collaboration.

This systematic documentation transforms an individual failure into a collective learning resource, one of the most enduring contributions a well-managed CRM system can make to the continuous improvement of customer follow-up practices.

5 Chapter 5: Kaitlyn, an Ongoing Collaboration

This chapter analyzes Deepwear's customer follow-up process through a live case study, a collaboration that was still active at the time of writing. Unlike the two previous cases, which could be assessed in their entirety, this analysis is limited to the stages observed in real time, meaning from initial contact and supplier sourcing through the sampling phase. Its primary value therefore lies not in demonstrating a completed loyalty outcome, but in illustrating how a proactive and structured follow-up strategy is built and sustained at each stage of active collaboration, and in identifying the vulnerabilities that must be closely monitored in the phases ahead.

5.1 CUSTOMER PROFILES AND BRAND POSITIONING

The client at the center of this chapter is Kaitlyn, a Melbourne-based entrepreneur preparing to launch a fit-focused fashion brand dedicated to small women. Her collection, comprising four to five styles of pants and tops at approximately 150 units per style, is designed primarily as a market validation exercise, with an initial launch planned for the French market before expanding to the United States through a digital-first, e-commerce strategy.

A defining characteristic of this project is its strong ethical dimension. Kaitlyn's commitment to responsible sourcing and sustainable production informed her selection of Thailand as the production country, recognized for its expertise in natural fabrics, primarily wool, denim, and cotton shirting. This ethical positioning also means that any perceived inconsistency between Deepwear's sustainability commitments and actual factory practices would have a disproportionate impact on her trust.

Kaitlyn's profile is representative of the Australian entrepreneurial archetype described in the theoretical framework, which is pragmatic, results-oriented, and deeply invested, financially and emotionally in her project. The planned launch in France further compounds the complexity of the collaboration, as production must comply not only with her personal quality standards but also with European import regulations. Any compliance issue emerging late in the process could have significant financial and reputational consequences, making transparent and anticipatory communication from Deepwear an absolute necessity.

5.2 SUPPLIER SOURCING AND FACTORY SELECTION

The technical diversity of Kaitlyn's collection, spanning denim and women's ready-to-wear in wool and cotton shirting, required the identification of multiple specialized factories. Elena, the project manager, was responsible for this research and, approximately six weeks after the initial briefing, had successfully sourced five factories for denim production and five additional factories for wool and cotton shirting.

As Kaitlyn already possessed her own designs and tech packs, the sourcing phase focused exclusively on supplier selection, technical feasibility, and production organization, bypassing any need for Deepwear's internal design team.

During this phase, Aurore and I had the opportunity to visit one of the Thai factories directly to assess its capacity to manage Kaitlyn's project. We discussed production volumes, fabric sourcing options, quality expectations, and timelines with factory representatives, a verification step that allowed Deepwear to confirm feasibility before presenting the factory to the client.

From a follow-up perspective, this factory visit constitutes a meaningful intermediate strength. By physically verifying conditions on the ground rather than relying solely on supplier declarations, Deepwear demonstrated a level of operational diligence that extends well beyond standard sourcing practice. In the context of a client whose project is built on ethical production values, this proactive verification must be systematically communicated as part of the follow-up process, it directly reinforces Kaitlyn's perception of Deepwear as a genuinely committed partner.

5.3 COSTING STRATEGY AND PRICE ADJUSTMENTS

An important early challenge concerned pricing expectations, Kaitlyn initially anticipated a retail price of 100 USD for the pants and 50 USD for the tops, equivalent to three times the estimated production cost. While this markup may appear commercially intuitive, it proved insufficient for a start-up brand when factoring in logistics, marketing, taxes, operational costs, and profit margins.

Deepwear intervened proactively, providing cost benchmarking based on actual supplier quotations and market standards. The pants initially came in at approximately 50 USD per unit in production cost, well above Kaitlyn's assumptions, but through negotiations conducted by Elena, this figure was brought down to approximately 30 USD per unit. Kaitlyn subsequently adjusted her retail pricing strategy to reflect a more financially sustainable model.

This episode illustrates a dimension of customer follow-up that extends beyond operational management, the advisory role. By identifying and addressing the pricing gap before it could become a source of frustration or financial miscalculation, Deepwear demonstrated a genuine commitment to Kaitlyn's long-term business success rather than simply executing the sourcing request.

5.4 SAMPLING PHASE AND PRODUCTION PLANNING

Once factories, pricing conditions, and production requirements had been validated, the sampling phase commenced using Kaitlyn's existing tech packs and fit references. Given that the brand targets a niche body type, small women, fit precision represented a critical success factor, and the sampling process was structured accordingly around fit accuracy, fabric quality, and garment construction.

The estimated duration of the phase was approximately five weeks, with one revision anticipated before final approval.

The overall timeline, encompassing sourcing, sampling, approximately sixty days of bulk production, and ten to fifteen days of air freight from Thailand to France, was projected at four to five months. Compliance with European import standards applicable to the French market added a further layer of complexity to the supplier selection criteria.

At the time of writing, the collaboration had not yet progressed beyond the sampling phase. However, the specific nature of the fit requirements, targeting a niche body type with limited production quantities, elevates the risk of multiple sampling rounds, which could extend the timeline and generate frustration. Drawing directly on the Elise case, Deepwear must ensure that communication throughout this phase remains structured, frequent, and culturally adapted. A clear sampling calendar with predefined checkpoints and transparent communication of any required revision is essential to prevent any sense of isolation or loss of control on Kaitlyn's part.

5.5 CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP AND CRM MANAGEMENT

Initial Contact and Lead Registration

Kaitlyn's first interaction with Deepwear occurred when she reached out to Thoray directly via Instagram. Thoray transferred the lead to Aurore, the sales agent, who assumed responsibility for the commercial relationship. I registered the origin of this contact in HubSpot as "Call Request", considered as the starting point of a fully documented follow-up trail.

Introductory Meeting and Expectations Mapping

Aurore organized an introductory meeting during which she presented Deepwear's services, sourcing process, pricing structures, and collaboration timeline. I registered this meeting in HubSpot as the first official sales interaction and added detailed notes capturing Kaitlyn's key expectations, meaning her objective to launch a fit-focused brand for small women, her preference for responsible sourcing in Thailand, her quality requirements, and her estimated quantities *(appendix 11)*.

Approximately one week later, once I became directly involved in the follow-up process, I supplemented these operational notes with behavioral and cultural observations, specifically Kaitlyn's strong focus on sustainability, transparency, and quality. This early profiling allowed the entire team to adapt subsequent communications to her established expectations from the outset *(appendix 12)*.

This documentation practice reflects one of the most important intermediate learnings of this case, which is capturing behavioral and cultural information from the very first interaction, not only operational data, enables a far more personalized and anticipatory follow-up approach. If systematized across all client profiles in HubSpot, this practice could significantly improve Deepwear's overall follow-up quality, particularly for Australian clients whose cultural expectations demand a tailored and transparent engagement style.

Contract Signature and Status Update

Approximately one week after the introductory meeting, Aurore recontacted Kaitlyn to confirm her decision. Upon confirmation, the invoice and service contract were issued. I updated Kaitlyn's status in HubSpot, a transition that formally opened the operational phase of the collaboration *(appendices 13 and 14)*.

Sourcing Phase Documentation

Once the payment was received and the contract was signed, Elena assumed operational responsibility for the project. I updated the deal status in HubSpot from "sales phase" to "sourcing phase" and systematically documented all updates provided by Elena, including the factories identified for each fabric category, supplier quotations, and discussions regarding sustainability requirements. Every interaction between Kaitlyn, Elena, Aurore, and the factories was logged, ensuring full transparency and a shared understanding of the project's progression across the entire team.

Sampling Phase and Ongoing Follow-Up

Once the supplier agreement was validated and the sampling phase began, I created follow-up reminders in HubSpot for weekly meetings, sampling updates, and validation deadlines. All feedback regarding fit accuracy, fabric quality, and revision requests were systematically recorded, building a real-time picture of Kaitlyn's evolving satisfaction and expectations.

This systematic use of HubSpot throughout the collaboration illustrates how well-implemented CRM can serve as the operational backbone of an effective follow-up strategy. Even in the absence of the outcome, the structured documentation of every interaction, expectation, and decision point already provides Deepwear with a comprehensive understanding of Kaitlyn's profile and relationship history. This accumulated knowledge will prove decisive in the phases ahead, particularly if unexpected challenges arise during bulk production or logistics, enabling the team to respond in a manner fully consistent with the client's established communication preferences. This case therefore confirms that customer follow-up is not a reactive mechanism activated when problems occur, but a continuous and proactive investment that begins from the very first interaction and compounds in value over time.

Intermediate Conclusions and Projected Outcomes

Two key strengths characterize the management of this collaboration so far. First, the early and systematic documentation of Kaitlyn's behavioral profile, communication style, and personal values in HubSpot represents a significant improvement over the two previous cases, where this type of information was captured reactively rather than proactively. This knowledge base positions Deepwear to respond in a fully personalized and culturally adapted manner if unexpected challenges emerge. Second, the factory visit conducted by Aurore and me prior to presenting the supplier to Kaitlyn demonstrated a level of operational diligence that directly reinforces the client's perception of Deepwear as a genuinely committed partner.

Two critical vulnerabilities must nonetheless be monitored closely in the phase ahead. As already highlighted in the sampling phase analysis, the fit complexity of Kaitlyn's project represents the most immediate risk, as multiple revision rounds could extend the timeline and generate frustration if communication is not maintained with sufficient structure and frequency. The second vulnerability concerns the transition from the sampling to bulk production, the phase that proved most operationally and emotionally demanding in the Dimitri case. At this juncture, production delays, quality deviations, and factory communication challenges are most likely to materialize, and the cultural distance between Australia and Thailand will be most acutely felt.

From a projective standpoint, two distinct scenarios can be anticipated. In an optimistic trajectory, if the sampling phase concludes within the estimated five-week timeline, fit accuracy is validated within one or two revision rounds, and Deepwear sustains its current level of proactive communication through bulk production and logistics, the collaboration is likely to yield a highly satisfied client with a strong propensity for reengagement. The combination of ethical factory selection, personalized follow-up, and demonstrated advisory value aligns precisely with the profile of a client likely to return for future collections and to recommend Deepwear within her network.

In a pessimistic scenario, if the sampling phase extends beyond the estimated timeline, communication becomes less structured during the transition to bulk production, or if European compliance requirements generate unforeseen complications, Kaitlyn's trust could deteriorate rapidly. As a client who is emotionally and reputationally invested in her brand, she is likely to react to perceived inconsistencies with considerably greater intensity than a purely transactional client would, making the maintenance of follow-up standards during the most operationally demanding phases critical.

Ultimately, the Kaitlyn case reinforces the central conclusion running throughout this entire practical analysis, which is that the outcome of a client relationship in international sourcing and manufacturing is not determined at the end of the collaboration, but at every single interaction point along the way. The intermediate strengths identified here suggest that Deepwear possesses the operational and relational capacity to convert this collaboration into a loyal and durable partnership.

6 Chapter 6: Comparative Analysis of the Three Cases

	Dimitri	Elise	Kaitlyn
Communication	Consistent and transparent, weekly meetings maintained	Structured initially, then interrupted during Thai New Year	Proactive and personalized from the very first interaction
Problem Management	Proactive, timeline extended, 5% compensation negotiated, relationship preserved	Reactive solutions proposed after the trust had been lost, too late to reverse the breakdown	Preventive, pricing gap identified and resolved before it could generate frustration
CRM Utilization	Reactive but effective, crisis documented in real time, commercial gesture registered	Post-mortem failure used to build institutional memory and schedule long-term reconnection	Proactive, behavioral and cultural data captured from the first meeting
Loyalty Outcome	Achieved, products delivered on time, client tagged for long-term relationship	Failed, collaboration ended, residual goodwill reserved	Ongoing, positive trajectory established

Figure 16 : Three Cases Comparison

6.1 ANSWER TO THE PROBLEMATIC

Based on both the theoretical framework and the three case studies, Deepwear can optimize the follow-up of its Australian clients through four interconnected axes. While the problematic encompasses both sourcing and manufacturing services, the following recommendations are primarily drawn from observations made during the sourcing and sampling phases. They nonetheless apply to the manufacturing dimensions as well, since both services share the same customer follow-up logic and are delivered as part of a continuous collaboration cycle.

Structured Communication

Across the three cases, communication continuity emerged as the single most decisive factor in determining whether a client relationship was preserved or lost. In the Dimitri case, weekly meetings were maintained without interruption throughout the entire production process, including during the period of factory delays caused by power cuts and machinery failures. Although Dimitri expressed his intention to terminate the collaboration, the unbroken flow of transparent updates had preserved sufficient trust to allow a negotiated resolution. Conversely, the Elise case demonstrated that even a single week of silence, caused by the Thai New Year, was sufficient to irreversibly damage a relationship that had otherwise been managed correctly. For an Australian client physically present in the production country, unable to communicate with the factory due to language barriers and receiving no updates from Deepwear, this silence was not interpreted as a cultural pause but as abandonment.

These two cases collectively establish that structured communication must be treated as a non-negotiable operational standard. Concretely, weekly meetings must be maintained without exception at every stage of the collaboration, clients must be informed proactively of any deviation before they need to ask, and a designated point of contact must remain available during cultural holiday periods in production countries. For Australian clients, who generally expect directness and immediate accountability, any gap in this standard can be disproportionately damaging and extremely difficult to recover from once trust has been compromised.

Cultural Adaptation

Each of the three cases involved a different cultural configuration, as Dimitri worked with a Chinese factory, Elise and Kaitlyn worked with Thai factories, and each introduced specific intercultural challenges that directly impacted follow-up quality. In the Dimitri case, the Chinese factory's preference for indirect communication and harmony-preserving responses contrasted sharply with Dimitri's expectation of frank and immediate responses. Deepwear's cultural mediation role proved essential, since without its ability to translate not only the language but also communication style between the two parties, the relationship would have deteriorated far earlier. In the Elise case, the Thai factory's face-saving and indirect approach generated significant frustration for a client accustomed to direct accountability, particularly during the sampling phase when quality expectations were not being met.

These observations confirm that cultural adaptation is not merely a communication adjustment but a strategic operational capability that Deepwear must develop systematically. Project managers must be trained to anticipate the communication preferences of Australian clients and to brief them proactively on the cultural specificities of the production country before the collaboration begins.

Deepwear must also position itself explicitly as a cultural bridge demonstrating that its local presence near factories is not only an operational asset but a protective mechanism that shields Australian clients from the misunderstandings that would inevitably arise if they were to navigate these intercultural dynamics independently. This positioning constitutes a genuine competitive differentiator that Deepwear should leverage far more systematically.

Preventive Use of HubSpot

Across the three cases, the use of HubSpot revealed a clear maturation trajectory. In the Dimitri case, the CRM was used reactively, documentation began when the crisis emerged, and 5% compensation was recorded as a post-hoc reference. While effective in managing the immediate situation, this approach meant that the early warning signs of Dimitri's dissatisfaction were not captured before they escalated.

In the Elise case, HubSpot served primarily as a post-mortem tool, the Thai New Year communication gap was documented as a critical incident and a long-term reconnection reminder was scheduled, but this came too late to prevent the breakdown. In the Kaitlyn case, by contrast, HubSpot was used proactively from the very first interaction. Indeed, behavioral preferences, sustainability values, and pricing expectations were captured at the outset, reminders were set at each milestone, and the pricing gap was identified and resolved before it could generate conflict.

This progression illustrates a fundamental shift in how CRM systems should be understood within Deepwear's follow-up strategy. Rather than a documentation tool activated by problems, HubSpot must function as a proactive relationship management system capable of anticipating risk periods, flagging vulnerabilities, and triggering communication actions before dissatisfaction has the opportunity to develop. This means systematically capturing behavioral and cultural data from the first client interaction, creating automated reminders at every critical production stage, flagging cultural holiday periods in production countries as high-risk communication gaps, and transforming critical incidents into institutional memory accessible to all project managers.

Relational Approach to Problem Management

Both the Dimitri and Elise cases demonstrated that the timing of Deepwear's intervention is more decisive than the quality of the solution itself. In the Dimitri case, the one-week production delay was objectively beyond Deepwear's control, and the contract included an explicit clause covering unforeseen events. A purely contractual response would have been legally defensible, yet Deepwear chose to prioritize the relationship. A timeline extension was negotiated, and Deepwear leveraged its long-standing relationship with the factory to secure 5% production cost reduction, a concession Dimitri could never have obtained independently, given the cultural distance between Australia and China. The result was a completed collaboration and a client tagged for long-term follow-up. In the Elise case, solutions were proposed but too late, which means that trust had already been lost during the communication gap, and no operational or financial remedy could restore it.

These contrasting outcomes establish a clear protocol that Deepwear should formalize and apply systematically. When a problem arises, the project manager must first propose operational solutions, such as timeline adjustments, factory negotiations, and alternative suppliers, before involving the sales agent, who escalates to the CEO only as a last resort. Every proposed solution must prioritize relationship preservation over contractual compliance, as the long-term value of a loyal Australian client far exceeds the short-term cost of a commercial gesture or a renegotiated timeline. For Australian clients, who tend to evaluate their partners primarily on reliability and crisis-response capacity, a company that demonstrates genuine commitment during adversity does not merely resolve an issue, it transforms a moment of vulnerability into a loyalty-building experience.

6.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, optimizing the customer follow-up of Australian clients at Deepwear requires not isolated improvements but a comprehensive and integrated strategy combining structured communication, cultural awareness, preventive CRM utilization, and relational problem management. Implemented consistently, these four axes create the conditions for client relationships that evolve beyond transactional satisfaction into genuine and durable loyalty, which represents the ultimate objective of this thesis.

7 Conclusion of the Practical Analysis

This second part has translated theoretical concepts into operational reality, demonstrating that customer loyalty in international sourcing is neither spontaneous nor guaranteed, it is the product of deliberate, continuous, and culturally adapted follow-up at every stage of the collaboration.

Through the prospecting analysis, the operational process, and the three case studies, a consistent pattern emerged, which is that the quality of the client relationship is determined not by one decisive moment, but by the cumulative effect of every interaction from the very first contact through to final delivery.

The contrasting outcomes of Dimitri, Elise, and Kaitlyn collectively established that structured communication, intercultural awareness, preventive CRM utilization, and a relational approach to problem management are not optional improvements, they are strategic imperatives for Deepwear to convert Australian clients into loyal, long-term partners.

Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to provide a concrete response to the following central problematic:

"How can Deepwear optimize the follow-up and management of its Australian clients in order to increase customer loyalty for its manufacturing and sourcing services?"

This work identified five structural limitations in Deepwear's current prospecting process, each carrying direct consequences on the quality of the first impression made on potential Australian clients. Concrete recommendations were formulated for each, anchored in the cultural expectations of the Australian market. The analysis of Deepwear's sourcing and manufacturing processes further revealed five structurally fragile moments where follow-up quality is most decisive, providing project managers with a clear map of where relational risk is highest.

The three client cases brought these findings to life. Dimitri demonstrated that proactive communication and culturally informed problem management can preserve a collaboration even in the face of a two-week production delay. Elise established that a single week of communication silence can irreversibly destroy a relationship, regardless of the quality of the solutions proposed afterward. Kaitlyn illustrated how a preventive, systematically documented follow-up approach creates conditions for durable loyalty before any crisis has the opportunity to emerge.

Together, these three cases led to four strategic axes, which are structured communication, cultural adaptation, preventive use of HubSpot, and a relational approach to problem management.

Beyond its academic contribution, my internship represented a deeply transformative personal experience. As someone who began her studies as an introverted and reserved person, choosing to go alone to Thailand, a country I had never visited, in a professional environment I had never encountered, required a level of courage and self-belief that I had to build from scratch. Adapting to a new country, a new culture, and a new daily routine without any familiar reference points pushed me to grow in ways that no classroom could have replicated. I learned to be resourceful, to navigate uncertainty with composure, and to find confidence in environments where I was, at first, completely out of my comfort zone.

This internship also taught me that cultural differences, rather than being obstacles, are extraordinary sources of learning. Working alongside colleagues from Myanmar, Japan and Thailand on a daily basis gave me a perspective on the world and on professional relationships that I will carry throughout my entire career.

I would wholeheartedly recommend Deepwear to future interns. Not only because the company offers genuine and demanding professional experience in the heart of the international fashion industry, but also because the small size of the team and the cultural diversity of the office create the conditions for meaningful human connections that are rare in larger corporate environments.

I would like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this thesis, and I genuinely hope that you found it both informative and engaging.

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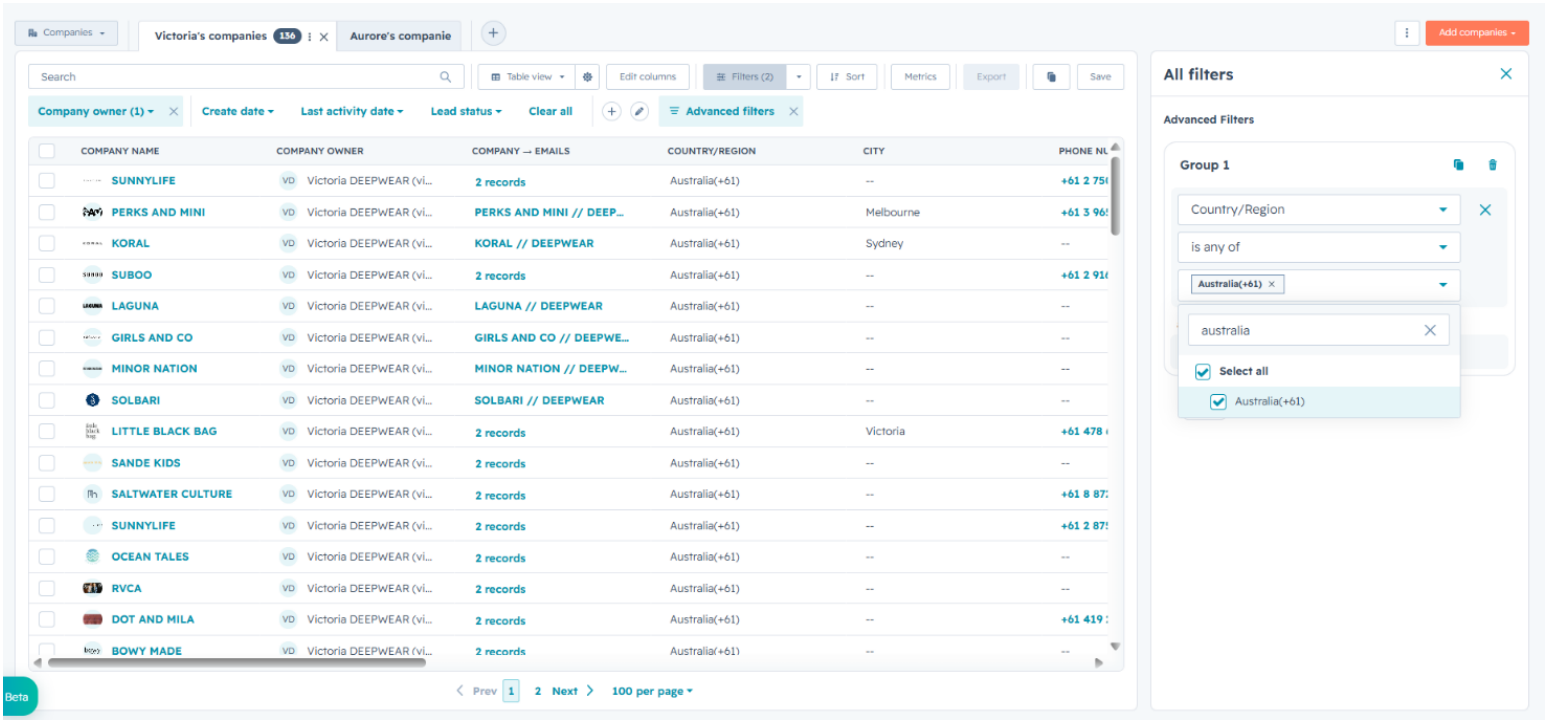
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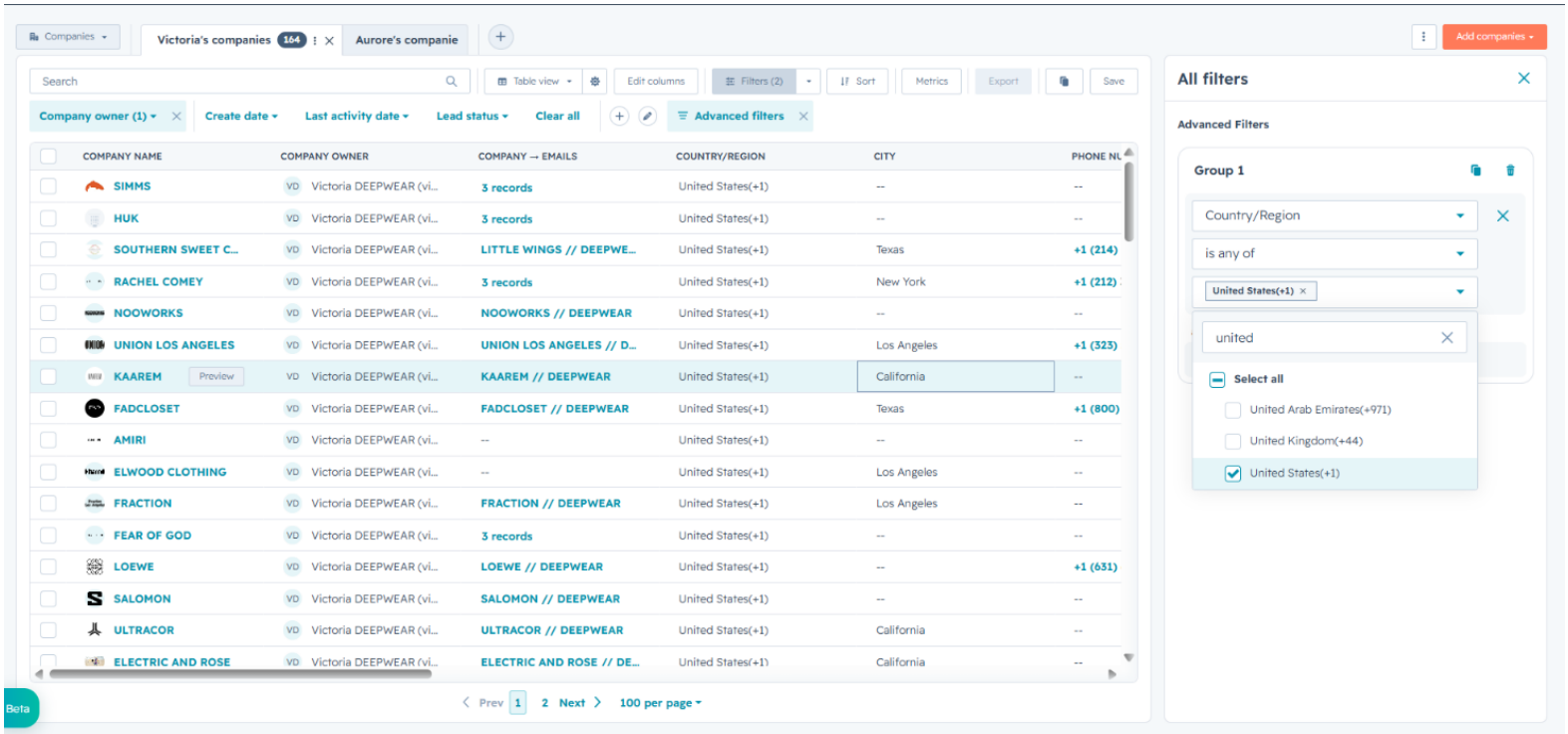
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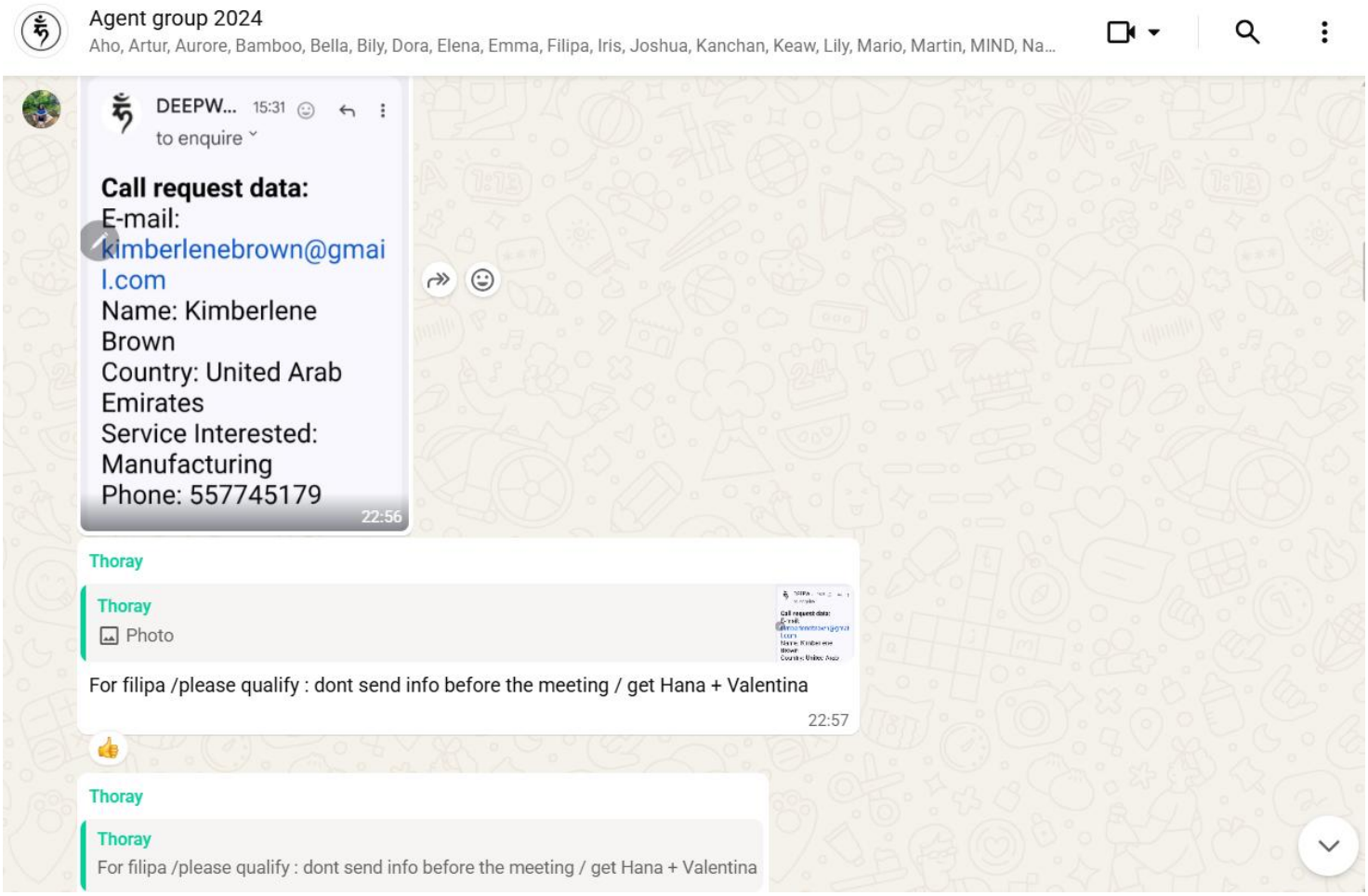
Appendix 1: Australian Prospects



Appendix 2: American Prospects



Appendix 3: Example of Thoray's Demand



Appendix 4: Outreach Email Template

243 of 1,013

BEBE ORGANIC // DEEPWEAR

Victoria DEEPWEAR <victoria@deepwear.info>
to info, bcc: 46529566

Tue, Feb 24, 6:06 PM

Tracked Associated to 2 record(s)

Hello Bebe Organic,

Hope you are well. I permitted myself to write spontaneously as I was looking at your feed on Instagram and thought that we could maybe collaborate. We are a progressive fashion team based in Thailand.

We assist brands in design, sourcing, manufacturing and quality control with our network of workshops and factories.

We are also present with our own Deepwear offices and exclusive team in India, China, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Australia and Vietnam. Therefore, we can support you in these production countries

We are at your disposal for any further information about our services.

Here are our links to our Instagram and Facebook to show you our level and rhythm of work and the type of products we can develop for you:

DEEPWEAR WEB

DEEPWEAR IG

DEEPWEAR FACEBOOK

If you would like to discuss a project or an idea, feel free to propose a date and time for a video call where we will be able to ask each other all the questions we may have and take the right direction from there.

I also attach below the full introduction of our services for your analysis.

Don't hesitate to call us at any time and here is the direct WhatsApp number of our CEO Mr Thoray d'Haese Sacoor: +66843338757, he speaks most European languages fluently.

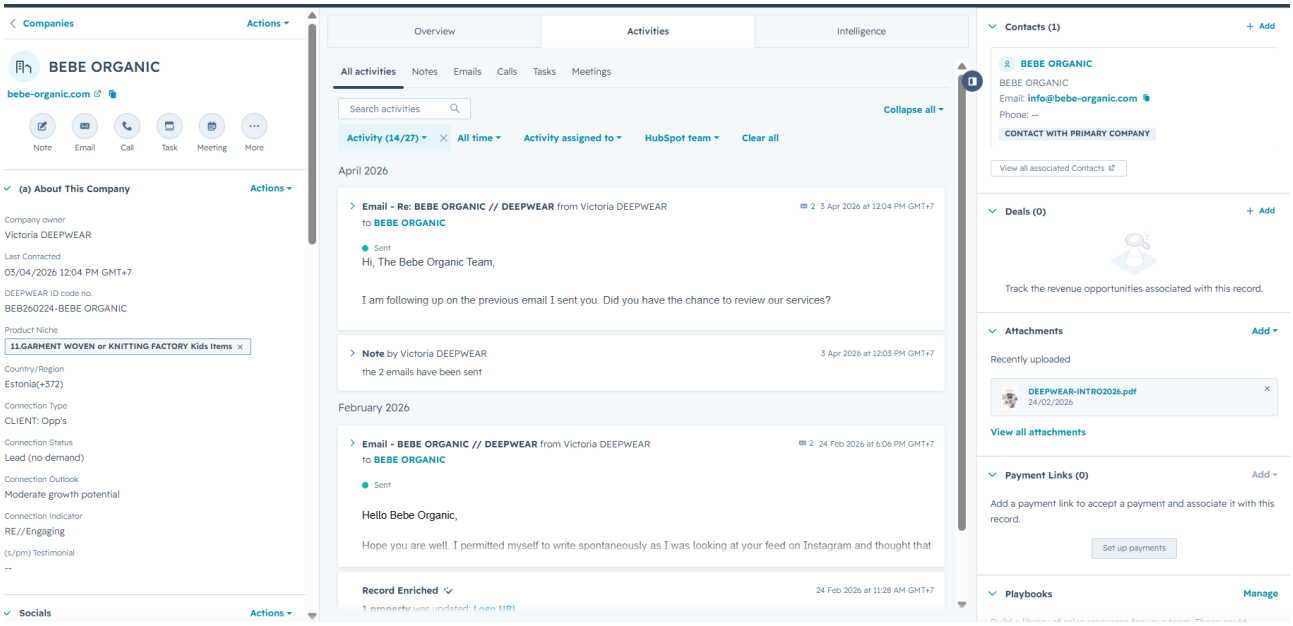
Looking forward to hearing from you soon. 🙂🙏

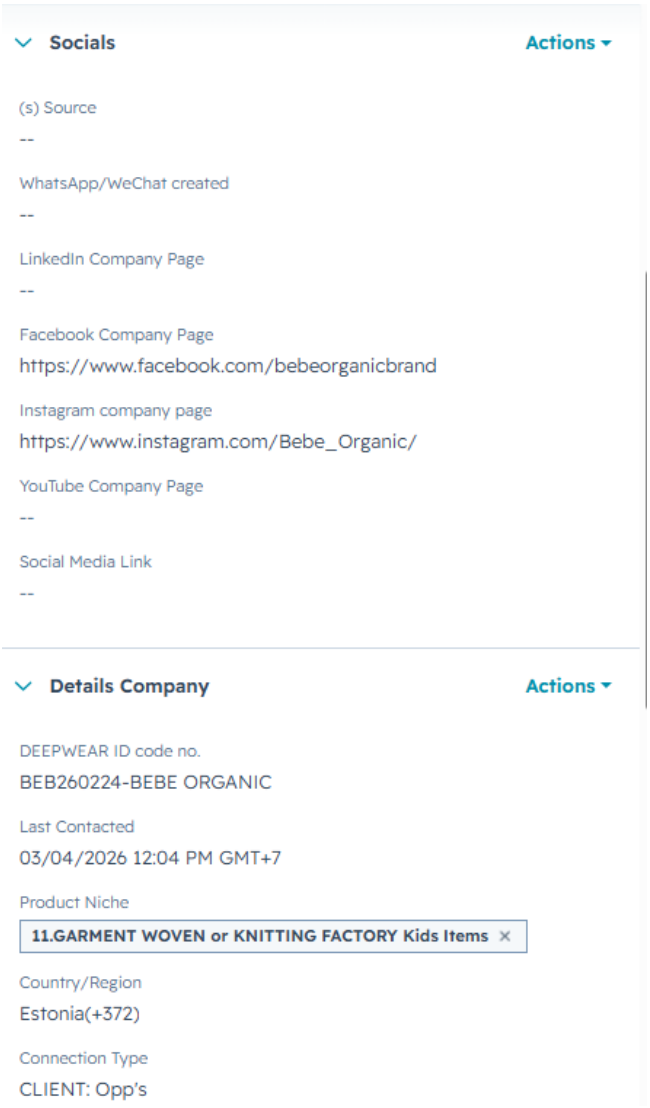
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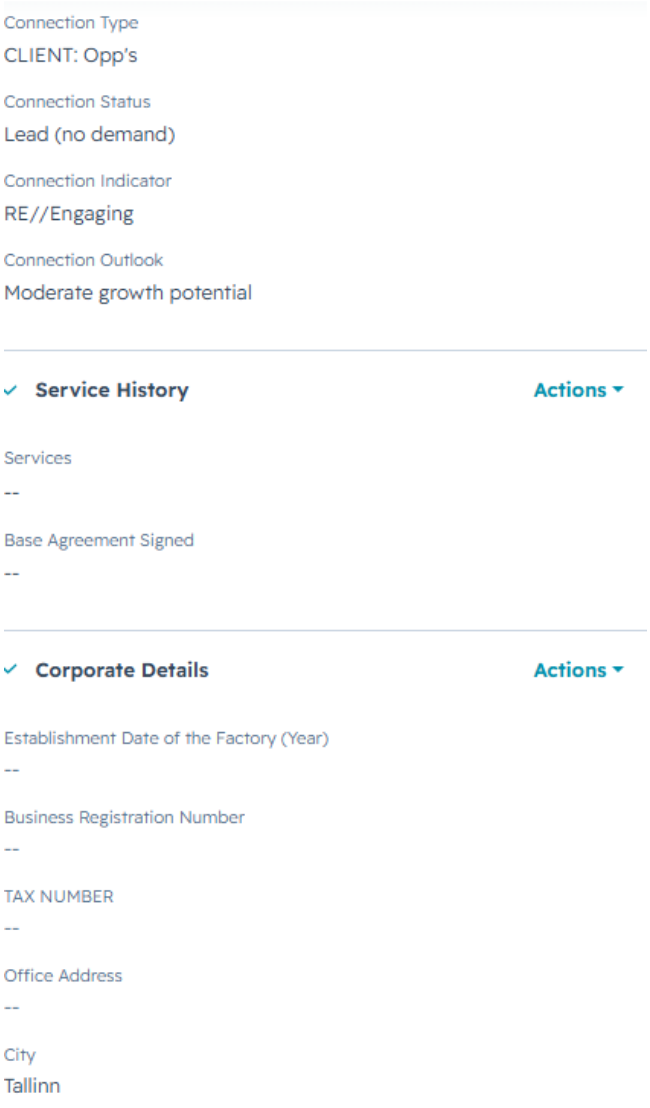
Kind regards,
Victoria,

On behalf of **Thoray d'Haese Sacoor**
DEEP*WEAR* Global Fashion Agency
Mobile **+66 84 333 8757**

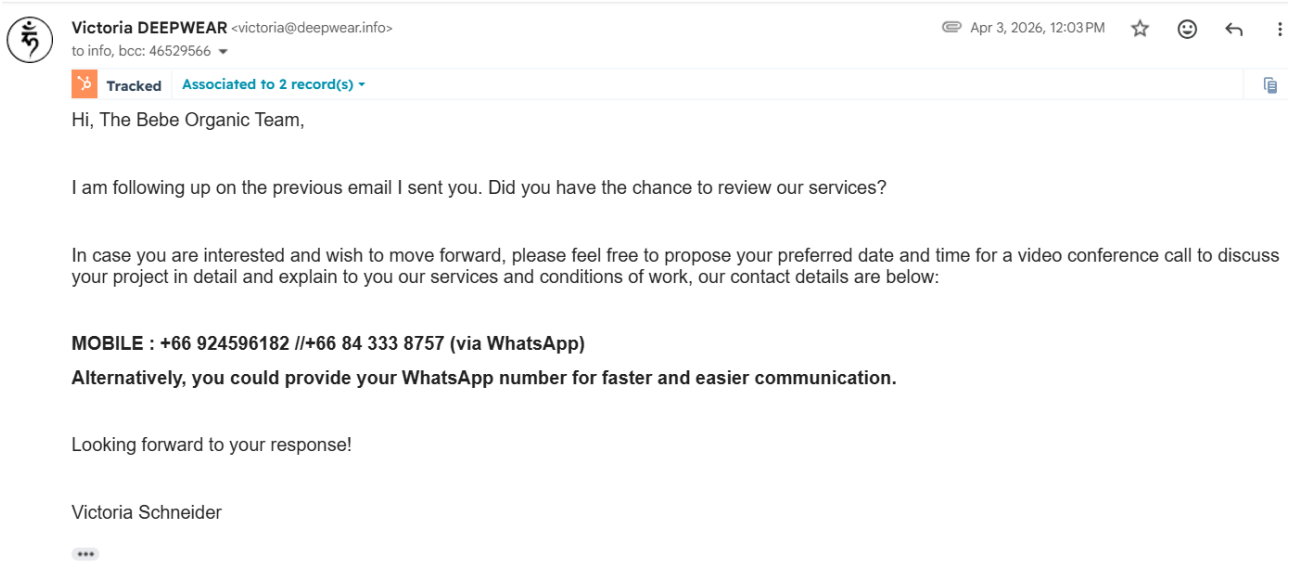
Appendix 5: Contact Details







Appendix 6: Follow-Up Email Template



Victoria DEEPWEAR <victoria@deepwear.info>
to info, bcc: 46529566

Apr 3, 2026, 12:03 PM

Tracked | Associated to 2 record(s)

Hi, The Bebe Organic Team,

I am following up on the previous email I sent you. Did you have the chance to review our services?

In case you are interested and wish to move forward, please feel free to propose your preferred date and time for a video conference call to discuss your project in detail and explain to you our services and conditions of work, our contact details are below:

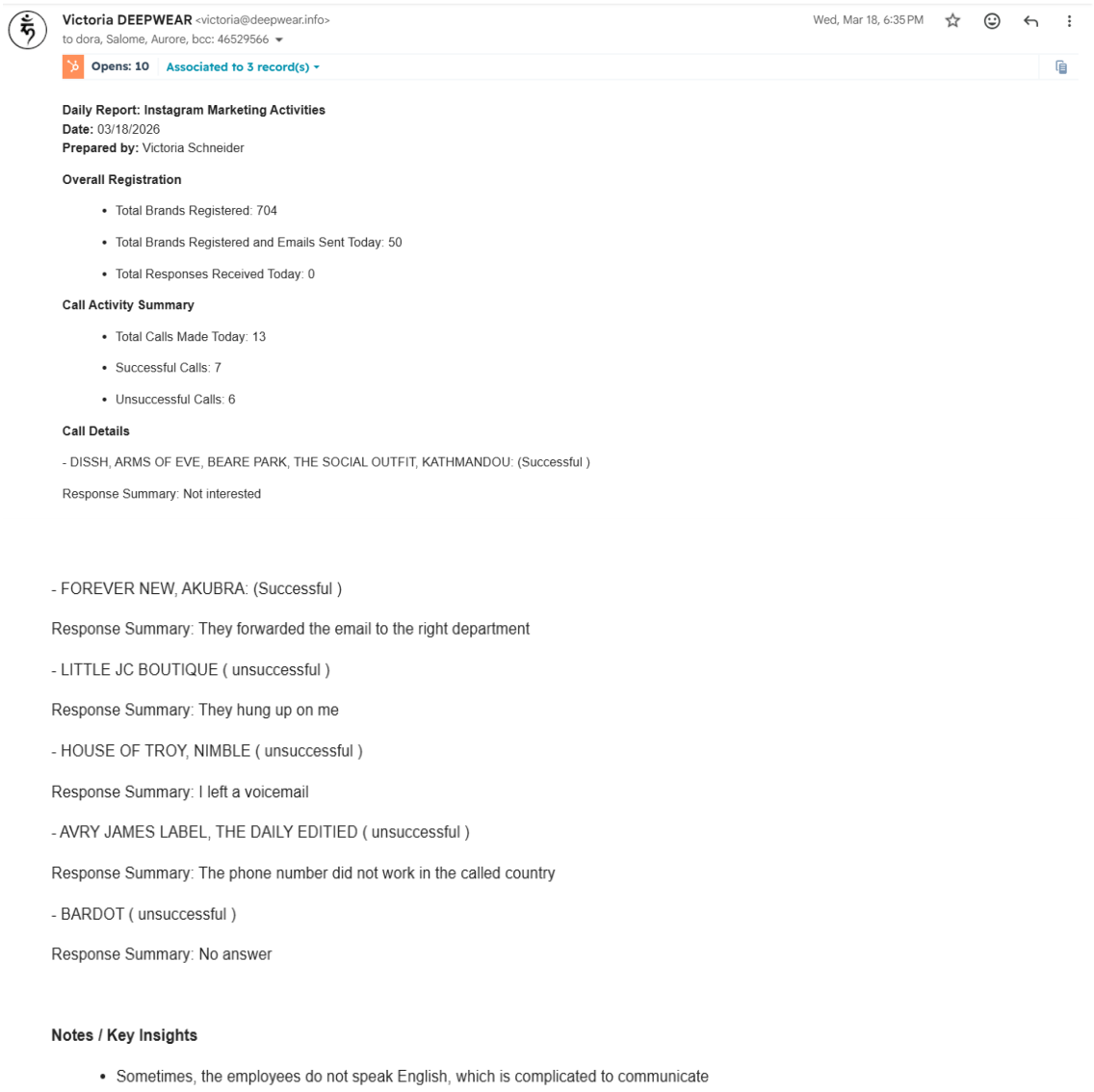
MOBILE : +66 924596182 //+66 84 333 8757 (via WhatsApp)

Alternatively, you could provide your WhatsApp number for faster and easier communication.

Looking forward to your response!

Victoria Schneider

Appendix 7: Example of Daily Report



Victoria DEEPWEAR <victoria@deepwear.info> Wed, Mar 18, 6:35 PM

to dora, Salome, Aurore, bcc: 46529566

Opens: 10 Associated to 3 record(s)

Daily Report: Instagram Marketing Activities
Date: 03/18/2026
Prepared by: Victoria Schneider

Overall Registration

- Total Brands Registered: 704
- Total Brands Registered and Emails Sent Today: 50
- Total Responses Received Today: 0

Call Activity Summary

- Total Calls Made Today: 13
- Successful Calls: 7
- Unsuccessful Calls: 6

Call Details

- DISSH, ARMS OF EVE, BEARE PARK, THE SOCIAL OUTFIT, KATHMANDOU: (Successful)

Response Summary: Not interested

- FOREVER NEW, AKUBRA: (Successful)

Response Summary: They forwarded the email to the right department

- LITTLE JC BOUTIQUE (unsuccessful)

Response Summary: They hung up on me

- HOUSE OF TROY, NIMBLE (unsuccessful)

Response Summary: I left a voicemail

- AVRY JAMES LABEL, THE DAILY EDITIED (unsuccessful)

Response Summary: The phone number did not work in the called country

- BARDOT (unsuccessful)

Response Summary: No answer

Notes / Key Insights

- Sometimes, the employees do not speak English, which is complicated to communicate

Appendix 8: Email Outreach to Embassies

Victoria DEEPWEAR <victoria@deepwear.info>
to info, bcc: 46529566

Fri, Mar 20, 3:06 PM

Opens: 7 Log email to HubSpot

Dear Sir, Madam,

My name is Victoria Schneider, I come from France and work for Deepwear, an international fashion agency based in Bangkok. We assist brands with design, sourcing, manufacturing and quality control using our network of workshops and factories.

Moreover, we can help people interested in fashion to develop their brand step by step.

I reached out because I would like to visit one day, if possible, to explain Deepwear's purpose, our services, and how we can help those launching in the fashion industry.

If you agree, can we schedule a time during the week when a meeting is organized for those interested in the fashion industry?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Kind regards,
Victoria,

On behalf of **Thoray d'Haese Sacoor**
DEEP*WEAR* Global Fashion Agency
Mobile **+66 84 333 8757**

Spanish - Thai Chamber of Commerce <info@spanishthaicc.com>
to Alejandro, me

Wed, Mar 25, 6:00 PM

Opens: 7 Log email to HubSpot

Dear Victoria,

Thank you very much for reaching out and for introducing Deepwear, it sounds like a very interesting project.

We would be happy to meet and explore potential ways of collaboration. If it works for you, we could arrange a meeting on Monday, 30th at 11:00 AM at our offices, so we can get to know each other and better understand how we can work together.

I am copying Alejandro from the Economic and Commercial Office, who will also join us for the meeting.

Please let me know if this time suits you, and we will be happy to confirm.

Best regards,

Mario Jimeno
General Manager
Spanish-Thai Chamber of Commerce

SPANISH - THAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

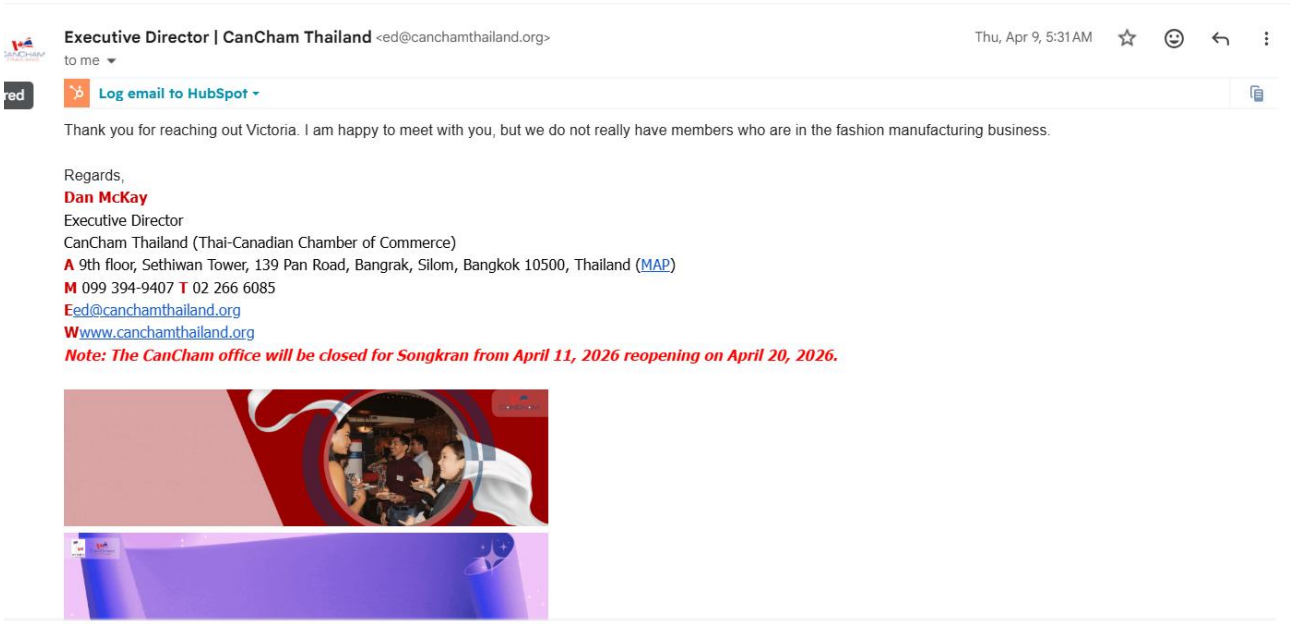
SPANISH - THAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (SPTCC)

Appendix 9: Members' Business Cards





Appendix 10: Example of Chamber's Negative Response



Executive Director | CanCham Thailand <ed@canchamthailand.org> Thu, Apr 9, 5:31 AM

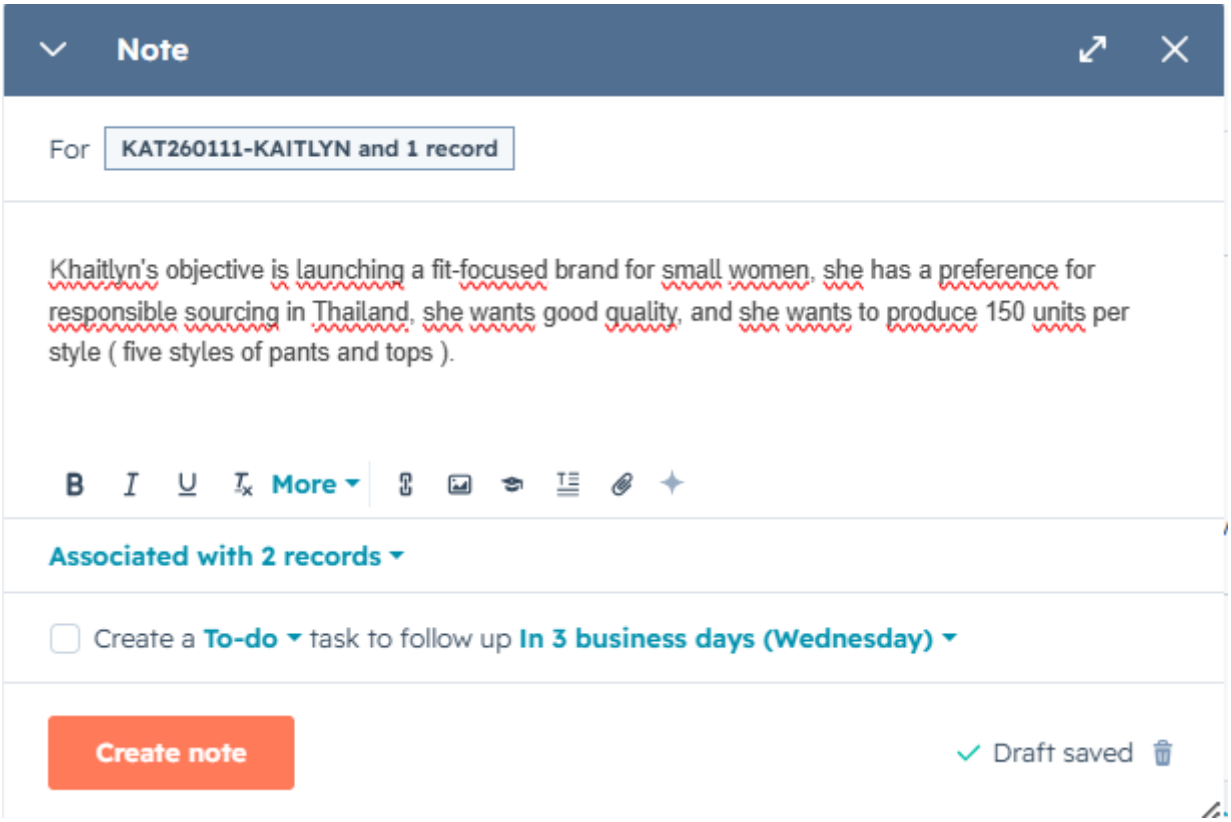
to me

Log email to HubSpot

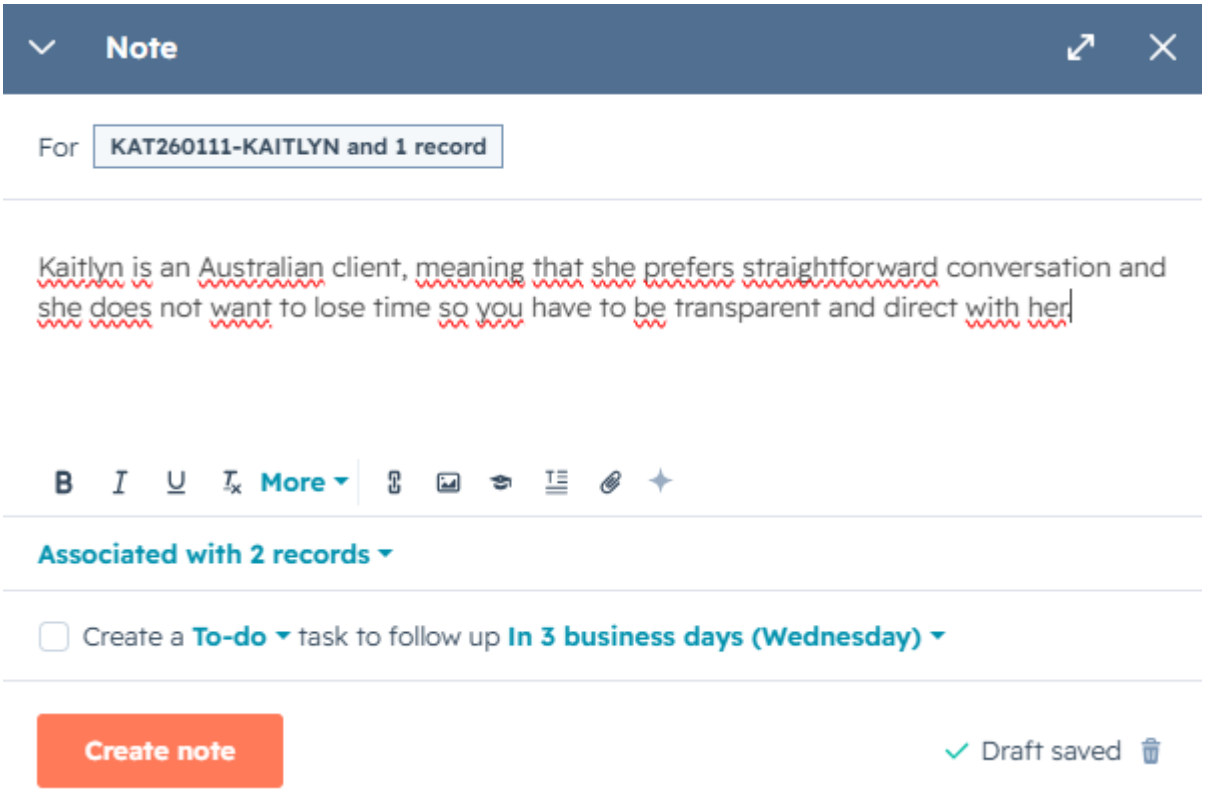
Thank you for reaching out Victoria. I am happy to meet with you, but we do not really have members who are in the fashion manufacturing business.

Regards,
Dan McKay
Executive Director
CanCham Thailand (Thai-Canadian Chamber of Commerce)
A 9th floor, Sethiwan Tower, 139 Pan Road, Bangrak, Silom, Bangkok 10500, Thailand (MAP)
M 099 394-9407 **T** 02 266 6085
Eed@canchamthailand.org
Wwww.canchamthailand.org
Note: The CanCham office will be closed for Songkran from April 11, 2026 reopening on April 20, 2026.

Appendix 11: Kaitlyn's Key Expectations



Appendix 12: Kaitlyn's Additional Expectations



Appendix 13: Aurore's Follow-Up Email

Email - Final contract + Invoice // PETITE BISCUIT x DEEPWEAR from Aurore DE... Pin Copy link 19 Mar 2026 at 7:42 PM GMT+7

Aurore DEEPWEAR
to Kaitlyn Engen <kaitlynengen@gmail.com>

Reply Forward Delete

Opens: 10 Clicks: 0

Dear Kaitlyn,

As confirmed, I've attached both the Invoice and the final contract.

To move things forward without delay, we kindly ask that the payment be made within 2-3 days. Once completed, please share the proof of transfer so we can confirm receipt and immediately schedule your first briefing meeting with your dedicated Project Manager.

Regarding the contract, please feel free to review it and if there are any points you'd like to amend, we're more than happy to discuss and adjust. If everything looks good, you can simply return a signed copy at your earliest convenience.

We're truly excited to begin this collaboration and bring your project to life. Getting the payment finalized will allow us to hit the ground running and give your project the momentum it deserves.

Thank you again for choosing Deepwear, we can't wait to get started !

I remain at your entire disposal.

Aurore

Appendix 14: Kaitlyn's Status

DEAL STAGE TIME STAMP Actions

Date entered "Prospect ((SD) Opportunities)"
11/03/2026 3:40 PM GMT+7

Date entered "(1) Demand rec/replied ((SD) Opportunities)"
11/03/2026 3:45 PM GMT+7

Date entered "(2) Intro Meeting booked/completed ((SD) Opportunities)"
11/03/2026 3:45 PM GMT+7

Date entered "(3) Proposal sent/confirmed ((SD) Opportunities)"
12/03/2026 7:00 PM GMT+7

Date entered "(3+) HOT Deals ((SD) Opportunities)"
16/03/2026 9:26 AM GMT+7

Date entered "(3++) Invoice (within the Month) ((SD) Opportunities)"
19/03/2026 7:41 PM GMT+7

Date entered "(4) Invoice+Contract sent/sign ((SD) Opportunities)"
30/03/2026 10:31 AM GMT+7

Date entered "(5) Payment pot (transit)/rec ((SD) Opportunities)"
30/03/2026 10:32 AM GMT+7