MASTER THESIS

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International Marketing & Sales Management

of *CAMPUS* 02 University of Applied Sciences

DEVELOPMENT OF A
B2C DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CONCEPT TO BOOST
INTERNATIONAL DIRECT ONLINE SALES ON THE
EXAMPLE OF A-WARE IN THE UK

Supervisor:

Mag. Dr. Reinhard Neudorfer, MBA

Presented by:

Sabine Schwarzl, BA

1610558009

Graz, 14th May 2018

Declaration of authenticity

I hereby certify that I have written the present thesis independently and without help from any third parties. I have not used any sources other than those which are clearly indicated and have duly provided details of the sources of both direct and indirect quotations. The present piece of work and parts thereof have to date not been presented to this or any other examination board in the same or similar form, nor have they been published. The present version is the same as the electronic version submitted.

Graz, 14th May 2018   ………………………………

                                                          Sabine Schwarzl, BA

Principle of equality

For readability purposes, gender-specific formulations have not been used in the present piece of work. It is, however, hereby expressly stated that when the masculine form is used to denote people, both sexes are being referred to.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all people who supported the development of my master thesis during this challenging time.

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Summary

The fast-moving era of digitalisation has changed people's behaviour but also economy and many businesses in the whole world. In fact entering a new market or establishing a new business online is nowadays much easier and more efficiently than in the past but of course also more competitive.

A-WARE is a start-up based in Austria offering natural protein made of hemp. Currently the company is only operating in Austria. Their products are available in the own online shop and in selected premium stores but the company wants to digitally exploit new markets across the borders of Austria and as a consequence increase revenue. Due to the fact that the United Kingdom is an attractive market for sports nutrition and superfood, the company has determined the UK as a new target market for 2019.

Therefore the aim of this thesis is to develop a B2C digital communication concept to boost international direct online sales with a special focus on the UK. For this purpose, a profound analysis of literature has been carried out and the newest insights regarding digital communication as well as contents of a digital communication concept have been elaborated. The author also found out important success factors in digital communication and the most efficient marketing tools to acquire new visitors from abroad. Furthermore secondary and primary market research has been conducted in order to validate the findings in theory but also to gain more insights from experts to be able to elaborate a digital communication concept.

Within the practical part of this master thesis, a digital communication concept on the example of A-WARE has been developed. It comprises a situation analysis, communication objectives, the personas, strategy and of course the most efficient online activities to attract new visitors from the UK. Furthermore it consists of valuable recommendations, a budgeting plan and appropriate key performance indicators in order to be able to control the digital communication activities.

Abstract

Die Digitalisierung und die damit verbundene Schnelllebigkeit haben nicht nur das Verhalten von Menschen, sondern auch die Wirtschaft sowie viele Geschäftsmodelle verändert. Neue Märkte zu erobern oder ein neues Geschäft zu eröffnen, ist in der heutigen digitalen Welt einfacher als je zuvor, jedoch ist man auch mit einem viel größeren Wettbewerb konfrontiert.

A-WARE ist ein Start-up aus Österreich, das natürliches Protein aus der Hanfpflanze produziert. Zurzeit ist das Unternehmen nur in Österreich tätig und dessen Produkte werden über den eigenen Online-Shop sowie über ausgewählte Geschäfte angeboten. A-WARE möchte die Produkte auch über die Grenzen Österreichs hinaus bekannt machen, um mehr Umsatz generieren zu können. Das Vereinigte Königreich ist gerade für den Sporternährungs- und Superfood-Bereich ein sehr attraktiver Markt und auch der Grund, weshalb das Unternehmen dieses Land als neuen Zielmarkt für 2019 festgelegt hat.

Das Ziel dieser Masterarbeit ist es, ein digitales Kommunikationskonzept zu erstellen, um Kunden aus dem Vereinigten Königreich zu akquirieren und den Online-Umsatz zu erhöhen. Basierend auf der aktuellen Literatur wurden im theoretischen Teil dieser Arbeit die Grundsteine für ein digitales Kommunikationskonzept, digitale Erfolgsfaktoren, die effizientesten Aktivitäten sowie die neuesten Erkenntnisse in der digitalen Kommunikation erarbeitet. Danach wurde eine sekundäre und primäre Marktforschung durchgeführt, um einerseits die theoretischen Ergebnisse bestätigen und andererseits neue Erkenntnisse von Experten für die Erstellung des Konzepts gewinnen zu können.

Im praktischen Teil dieser Arbeit wurde ein digitales Kommunikationskonzept am Beispiel von A-WARE erarbeitet. Dieses beinhaltet eine Situationsanalyse, Kommunikationsziele, Beschreibung der Zielgruppe, Kommunikationsstrategie und die effizientesten Aktivitäten, um neue Kunden aus dem Vereinigten Königreich akquirieren zu können. Darauf basierend werden auch konkrete Empfehlungen, Erfolgskennzahlen und das benötigte Budget dargestellt.

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List of abbreviations

B2C = Business to consumer

B2B = Business to business

CCN = Caramel

CPJ = Customer purchase journey

CTR = Click-through rate

EU = European Union

FDC = Fleur de cacao

KPI = Key performance indicators

MCA = Kotobuki matcha

SEA = Search engine advertising

SEM = Search engine marketing

SEO = Search engine optimization

SERP = Search engine results page

SMART = Specific, measurable, acceptable, relevant and timely

UK = United Kingdom

1 Introduction

1.1 Company introduction

The following chapter gives an overview about the company A-WARE, its origins, product range as well as the fields the company is currently operating.

A-WARE is a company from Hartberg, Styria, founded in 2014 by two brothers, Alexander and Patrick Thurner. The founders have committed themselves to utilize the robust and resistant hemp plant for premium food products and are therefore leading a biodynamic agriculture as well as locally farming, producing and distributing high premium products made of hemp, which are 100 % natural products from Austria without any artificial additives. In order to retain high quality standards the company is cooperating with doctors, pharmacies and biologists. Whilst Alexander is responsible for the economical success, Patrick is contributing expertise as a doctor (cf. Thurner 25.09.2017). Hemp consists of a high level of protein and valuable nutrients. Furthermore it is a fibre-rich food with an optimum relation of omega-3 fatty acids and consisting of micronutrients as well as a unique amino acid profile. Due to this fact it is easily digestible, enhances muscle building and is repairing the muscle tissue. Hence hemp protein is not only appropriate for amateur and professional sportsmen but also for health conscious people who want to benefit from the natural power by eating this superfood (cf. A-WARE 2017, p. 4 - 8). A-WARE offers a wide product range: the main product is the hemp protein, which is available in the various flavours RAW (produced without any flavours), Fleur de Cacao (FDC), Caramel (CCN) and Kotobuki-Matcha (MCA). The newest product innovation of A-WARE is the "superfine-edition" with significantly more protein content. This new product has been created by continuously developing the production processes and the innovation spirit within the company. Hemp protein from A-WARE is also the only natural hemp-protein, which is creamy after mixing it with milk, water or oat milk. Other products of the product portfolio are the hemp protein bars with raspberry or pumpkin seeds, cereals and the CBD-oil consisting of antioxidants and regenerative effects. Also worth mentioning is that the waste materials from the production process will be used for insulating materials in the building industry (cf. Thurner 25.09.2017).

Due to the fact that A-WARE is a company from Styria, the company started to sell the products mainly in Austria by building strong cooperation with pharmacies, Crossfit-boxes and selected premium stores. Besides the stationary retail the company established an online shop as well which currently generates approximately € 10.000 per year by customers within Austria. Since the founding, the brand awareness has been increased and the company continuously receives requests regarding new cooperation with partners. In its early stages the company can look back upon a number of success stories but of course wants to expand its business by also offering products in premium fitness centres and to develop further collaborations with pharmacies and selected premium stores in Austria. Not only the stationary retail should grow, the company wants to sharpen all its digital communication channels as well and optimize the current online shop in order to acquire new customers abroad. For the future there is also the vision that the sister of the two founders, who is a pharmacist, will develop natural preparations (cf. Thurner 25.09.2017).

1.2 Initial situation

Todays' digital world has tremendously changed the way how people communicate. Nowadays about 50 % of the world's population are using the internet (cf. We are social 2017). Furthermore a survey by Google says that 90 % of consumers' interactions are done via screens (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 21). A brand new e-commerce benchmark study revealed that 62 % of all traffic and 63 % of all revenues on online shops are done via search engines (cf. MOZ 2017a). To make SEO work properly, companies have to build strong brands because this will foster better results, click-through rates, more engagement, loyalty and therefore will help Google to understand the entire relationships (cf. Burr Reedy 2015). Technology is connecting people today as it was never possible before. Hence it is redefining the purchasing behaviour, how people communicate, how they are seeking for answers and solutions. The question is, how a company can influence this new generation. In fact, if a company is not aware of its customer needs at the various digital touchpoints, these customers will just move on and switch to another brand (cf. Cundari 2015, p. 1 - 10). The opportunities of online marketing are obvious: the chance to grow without physically entering a market and to reach customers across borders. A-WARE already established some online channels but without a clear communication

concept and is aware that there is a great potential to be much more successful via the online channels on the current market and abroad. Related to the growth opportunities, the author found out that the top 3 important regions worldwide for superfood are USA, Germany and UK (cf. Statista 2017). Furthermore in 2016 the country with the highest market volume for sports nutrition in Europe was the UK with € 743 million (cf. Statista 2016). A study of BCC research says that the global market for sports nutrition and high energy supplements will be worth $ 66 billion by 2020 up from $ 37.5 billion in 2014 (cf. BCC Research 2015). A-WARE's competitive advantage against the three main competitors in Austria (Myprotein, Austrohemp and Feinstoff) is that these organisations are only distributing protein products, whereas A-WARE is also farming the raw material and producing protein (cf. Thurner 25.09.2017).

1.3 Problem statement

The main difference between traditional and digital marketing is simply the time frame. Whereas methods and tools in traditional marketing were and still are applicable for a longer time, in today's digital world, trends can arise rapidly within one year. The problem of A-WARE is that the already existing and established online communication channels are not based on a concept because A-WARE does not have the required digital marketing expertise. Therefore it will be important to identify the right communication channels in which A-WARE is achieving the right users who will engage with the relevant content provided on the different channels and hence will be transformed into customers in the most sufficient way. Furthermore A-WARE is facing the challenge that the company is well known in Austria and is already present in stationary retails by striving for collaborations with pharmacies, Crossfit-boxes and selected premium shops. In order to expand the market and increase revenue across the Austrian borders where A-WARE is not known yet, the company needs a concept how it can achieve its target group only via its online channels and as a consequence increase visits on the website from customers abroad. As a first step A-WARE wants to start with the UK online market.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 Company objectives

The aim of the company is to implement a Business-to-Consumer digital communication concept in the third quarter of 2018 to efficiently achieve the target group of A-WARE on digital channels. More specifically that means to increase online revenue from currently € 0 to € 50.000 until the end of 2019 in the UK online market after successfully implementing the digital communication concept. In order to reach the revenue target it is desirable to achieve minimum 50 % traffic from visits from the UK per month.

1.4.2 Non-objectives

Derived from the above-mentioned objectives also non-objectives need to be stated, therefore it is not the aim of the company to establish a stationary retail in a specific country abroad.

1.4.3 Thesis objectives

The aim of this thesis is to elaborate a Business-to-Consumer digital communication concept for the sports nutrition and superfood industry, which contributes to the revenue and traffic goals based on the example of the company A-WARE.

1.5 Frame of reference

INTRODUCTION

INITIAL SITUATION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

COMPANY AIM

THESIS AIM

THEORETICAL PART

ONLINE RETAILING AND INTERNATIONALISATION
Understanding online retailing and e-commerce
as well as e-commerce trends in the field of B2C

GROWTH HACKING FOR START-UPS
Understanding the importance of growth hacking, the cornerstones
and the customer experience

COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO ATTRACT NEW VISITORS FROM THE UK
RACE planning framework as the basis
SEO & content marketing to attract new visitors and supportive tools

SUCCESS FACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

**DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CONCEPT
(DEFINITION AND ELEMENTS)**

- Elaboration of a situation analysis
- Definition of comm. objectives
- Selection of a target group
- Development of a strategy
- Contents of an action plan
- Resource planning
- Controlling

PRACTICAL PART

MARKET RESEARCH
• Secondary market research
Target group, competition, market insights

• Primary market research
Success factors in digital communication (qualitative)

**DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CONCEPT
FOR A-WARE**

- Situation analysis
- Communication objectives
- Target group
- Strategic options
- Content strategy
- Action plan
- Resources
- Controlling

CONCLUSION

Figure 1: Frame of reference (own presentation)

2 Online retailing in B2C

The following chapter gives an understanding about the environment of an online shop for which the author is developing a digital communication concept. As a first step the general definitions and the particularities in B2C business will be described. Furthermore there will be a focus on e-commerce trends and particularities in the B2C business.

2.1 Terminologies in the field of digital business

In theory many definitions exist in the field of digital business and e-commerce. Chaffey and Smith describe that e-commerce is dealing with selling items or transacting online. Whereas digital marketing, also called e-marketing, is the main part of digital business and defines the process of understanding customers as well as considering them in all communication activities to boost sales through campaigns by using digital channels (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 13).

Another definition by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick says that e-commerce is dealing with financial and informational electronically transactions between an organisation and a third party. It can be as well divided into sell-side e-commerce, the business transaction between a company and its customers and the buy-side e-commerce, the transaction between a company and its suppliers. The definition of e-business and digital business is similar to e-commerce but is coping with a wider range like the technology, marketing, research and development (cf. Chaffey/Ellis-Chadwick 2016, p. 22).

Heinemann says that there exist three main online platforms to handle electronic business processes: e-procurement, e-shop and e-marketplace. E-procurement is dealing with the electronic purchasing of goods, especially in the B2B sector whereas shops and marketplaces are important when particularly dealing with goods in the B2C sector (cf. Heinemann 2017, p. 45).

Before planning digital communication activities it is also important to understand for which business model the website is designed. In this case the website is planned to be a transactional e-commerce site. The main goal of such a presence is to sell products online but on the other side also provide information of the

products to assist the purchasing process offline (cf. Chaffey/Ellis-Chadwick 2016, p. 24f).

2.2 Components of a B2C online shop

A company, which wants to operate online, has to consider a lot of requirements in order to be successful via its online presence. An online shop is the interface between the supplier and the customer and has the assignment to offer a customized experience in order to pursue the customer to buy the products or services. The following figure will give a better understanding and overview of the relevant components of an online shop (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 33 - 36):
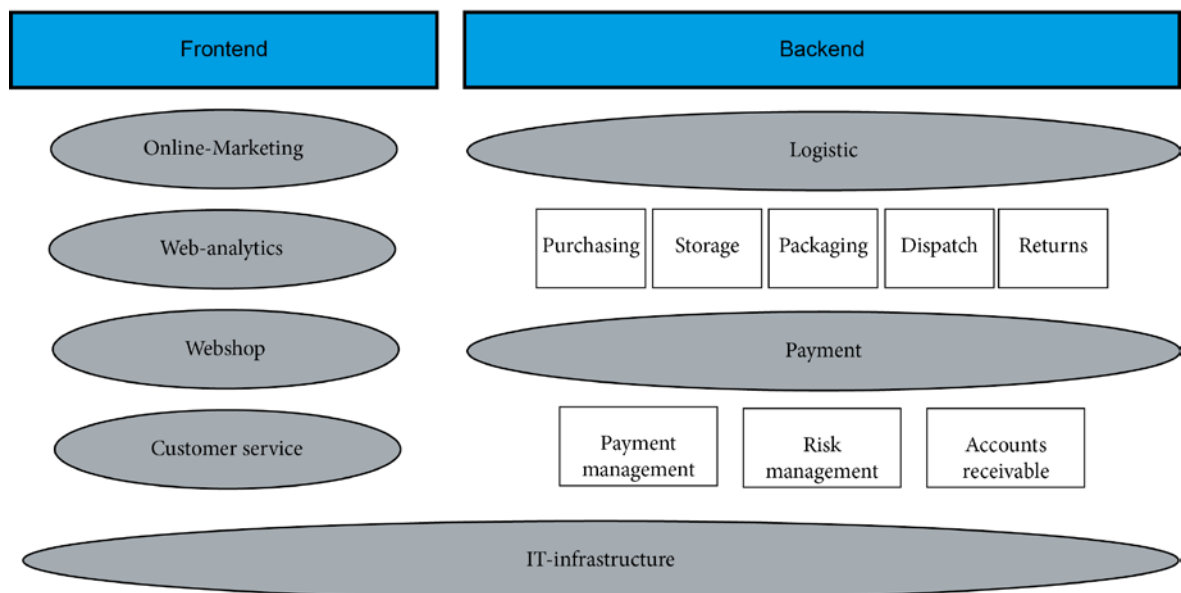
Figure 2: Components of an online shop (based on Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 35)

All in all it generally can be distinguished between the front-end and the back-end of an online shop. The front-end is the visible interface for the customer and is all about the online shop itself, the online marketing activities, web analytics and also customer service. Apart from that, the back-end consists of all parts which are not visible for the customers and coping with the technical and logistical processes of an order. This thesis will focus on the online marketing part, which consists of the traditional 4P's – product, price, place, promotion. More specifically the thesis will emphasize on the relevant measures regarding online communication of an online shop (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 35f).

2.3 Relevant e-commerce trends and particularities in B2C

1.) Internationalisation and cross border trade

Until 2020 the turnover of cross border trades will raise from currently € 19 billion to € 96 billion due to globalisation. As a consequence this means that companies in the EU will definitely get a lot of competition from online shops abroad but not only the small players, also big players like Alibaba from China is planning to enter the European market (cf. Heinemann et al. 2017 p. 16). Furthermore Amazon is already a big challenge for companies and its brands because there is an incredible price war. If brands don't want to enter this competition the focus has to be on a consistent and personalized communication combined with the consideration of customer experience management, which means to analyse the buyer personas, knowing all digital touchpoints and offering an outstanding experience on each communication channel. Due to a study of Gartner, the customer experience is for 64 % of the customers more important than the price when deciding for a brand (cf. Brenninkmeijer 2017).

2.) Digitalisation of daily life and new communication patterns

Due to the fact that half of the world's population is now online and using social media, digital and social media will play a major role in the lifecycle of a brand. For marketers it will be the task to integrate these two disciplines by not only focusing on the product or the service itself but to create an appealing digital communication. The focus should be on contextual reach, which means to find out what platforms will have the biggest impact as well as relevance and therefore generate engagement. After offering the right content, the customer journey needs to be evaluated and developed in order to achieve conversion (cf. We are social 2017).

Brand-awareness alone will be not the only important aspect because marketers have to emphasize on localized marketing and need to find out what kind of marketing channel preferences do exist in the target market to improve site traffic. One important aspect of the study from Nielsen about the four keys to win in the rapidly changing e-commerce environment is to appeal new customers (cf. The Nielsen company 2017). When dealing with communication and the expanding of businesses across the borders it will be important to look like a foreigner but to talk like a local. It requires communicating the aspects of the brand, which do have a

high value for the society of the target country while offering a tailored experience with localization (cf. Pitney Bowes 2017, p. 6f). A survey of David Bowes revealed that UK customers prefer to shop via search engines. Nevertheless also the online marketplaces do have a great importance (cf. Pitney Bowes 2017, p. 12).

Today's utterly connected world is shaping the purchasing decisions of the consumers in the future (cf. Warschun 2017, p. 12). Altogether six different generations will be on the market already in 2027, whilst the Silent Generation (1928-1945) and the Alpha Generation (2017 onwards) will not have such a high purchasing impact. Therefore four generations will be left, on which brands have to emphasize on: Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Gen X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1997) and the Gen Z (1998-2016) (cf. A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 2f).

The global future consumer study of A.T. Kearny conducted 7.000 future customers of the Gen Z and found out that mostly big corporations greatly lose the trust of consumers due to the fact that younger generations have other values than the generations before (cf. Warschun 2017, p.12). In nine years, 30 % of the world's population will be dominated by the Gen Z with a very interesting set of values summarized in the following figure:

Value	Interpretation
Digital natives	They share content, though often in small, closed communities
Tolerance	Post-race, post-gender: "Unique is the new cool"
Responsible	The global recession means they work
(Self) educated	With access to information, they gain education and transparency
Entrepreneurial	They idolize founders of disruptive businesses
Socially conscious	They value courage and social entrepreneurship

Figure 3: Set of values of the Gen Z (A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 4)

Furthermore also the ability to be connected on every place in the world at any time with any device plays a major role in the future. Younger generations tend to have access to smartphones and are connected at any time and everywhere. All these changes of individual values lead to three main principles, which will be the market drivers of the future (cf. A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 3f):

Trust

Building trust is prerequisite for retailers and brands in the future and as Steve Jobs already said, a brand is simply trust (A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 5). A study from Nielsen revealed that 84 % of all customers trust recommendations from friends and family and are very influential regarding the purchasing behaviour (cf. The Nielsen company 2013). Another study from Nielsen revealed that customers seek trust in an online channel which can be only achieved by providing a positive shopping experience. This development will definitely rise in the next few years (cf. The Nielsen Company 2017). Big corporations face a huge challenge in the future because consumers will rather trust in small ones. Another trend is the willingness to pay more for socially minded brands and its products which are produced environmentally friendly (cf. A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 5f).

Influence

As the author has already stated that the social cycle is getting more and more important, marketers need to take care of the selection of influencers for a brand. Even the most suitable customer is not necessarily the customer who generates a lot of revenue. Sometimes it can be as well the customer who buys from time to time but posts ratings or reviews which will influence a lot of other people. Engaged customers will probably become brand enthusiasts and a vital part for a company (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 168). The successful influencers of tomorrow will be more segmented and focusing on a special topic. The outcome is that followers are engaging more authentically and in a more active way and this will therefore result in trust in contrast to followers of celebrities where there will not be such a high engagement. Micro targeting is the new discipline when developing a social media strategy (cf. A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 6).

Personalization

Data is everywhere and helps to understand the customers and has even more value to create personalization as well as an excellent customer experience. The Gen Z and the Millennials are willing to share their personal information if there is a benefit and the possibility of getting something in return for example food receipts in which the target group is interested (cf. A.T. Kearny 2017, p. 7).

3.) Trust in branded shops from manufacturers

Due to the strong competition, online shops will need to differentiate themselves from others no matter if by outstanding marketing campaigns, exclusive offers and individual content. Nevertheless 43 % of customers confirm that brand articles are preferably bought in the manufacturers shop instead of another because there might be more information and a greater assortment. As a consequence in the next five years branded shopping is experiencing a big growth (cf. Heinemann 2017, p. 23). Brands are trustworthy that is not something new and trust as well as brand loyalty are essential and a key differentiator for any business. Therefore 69 % of customers from a study of Nielsen said that there is a lot of trust in branded websites (cf. The Nielsen company 2013). When deciding if a company wants to offer its products via a marketplace or via the own online shop it will be important to understand why customers buy in marketplaces or a retailers' online shop. The top 3 drivers for purchasing on a brands online shop are brand loyalty and trust, loyalty points and a personalized customer experience. The following figure shows the whole outcome (cf. Pitney Bowes 2017, p. 13):
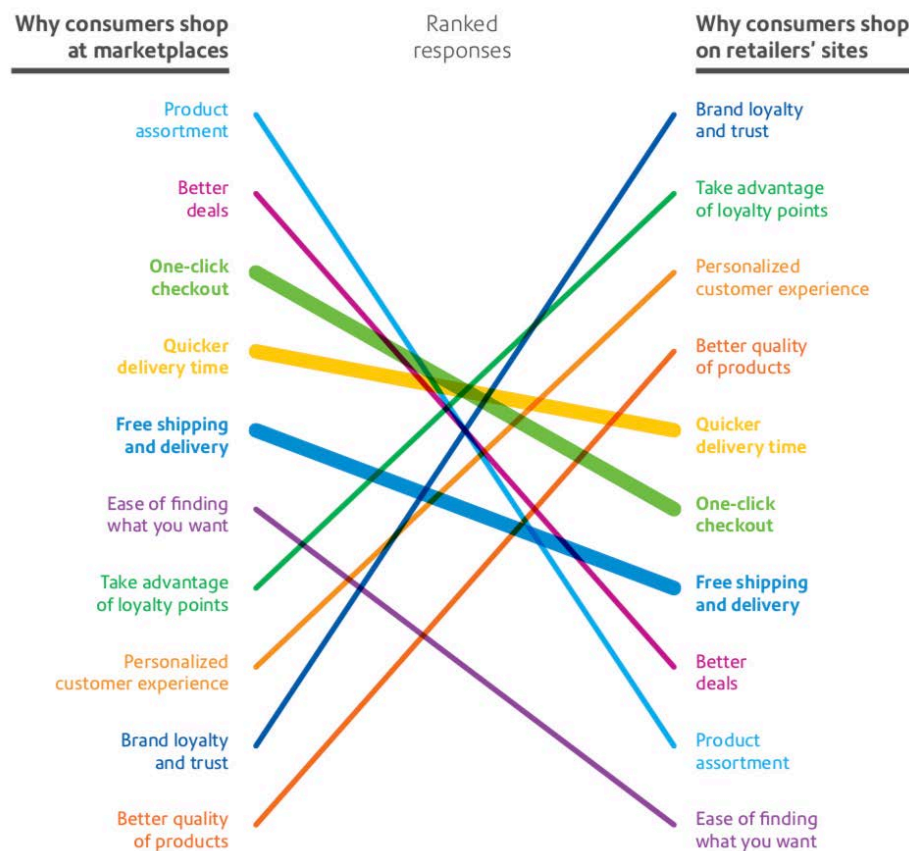
Figure 4: Marketplace vs Retailers' site (Pitney Bowes 2017, p. 13)

4.) Trend of mobile commerce

Mobile phones are a permanent companion in daily life of people and one of the most important communication media of todays' society. Doing phone calls is a minor matter because people are using the smartphone instead of the tablet or a computer because it offers access to news, content, music, videos and to essential communication platforms (cf. Harvard Business Review 2013). Therefore the trend of mobile commerce will definitely grow and consists of the three major columns: mobile shopping, purchasing preparation and mobile payment (cf. Grabs/Sudhoff 2014, p. 114). The current statistic of global mobile commerce transactions of Statista indicates that it will rapidly grow from currently $ 459.38 billion in 2018 to $ 693.36 billion in 2019 (cf. Statista 2018a).

3 Growth hacking for start-ups to achieve growth

After understanding the basics in online retailing and the upcoming trends in the B2C e-commerce business, the following chapter gives a deeper insight of how especially start-ups can achieve growth in digital business although there is usually a limited amount of budget available.

3.1 Growth hacking in the field of digital business

As A-WARE wants to achieve more growth within its digital business but has limited resources, the marketing method "growth hacking" gets increasingly important. This new method is an interdisciplinary mix comprising marketing, data analysis and testing with the goal to achieve growth within a company. Contrary to traditional marketing activities, each touchpoint between the user and the company is taken into consideration during the customer purchase journey as a potential communication channel. More or less it can be observed as an ideal combination of product, user experience and marketing with the goal to grow (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 41).

The growth hacking process is generally based on the Pirate Metrics, a funnel, each user will pass through and where it is the aim to positively influence the user in each phase (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 154):

Acquisition: The first level is about the acquisition of new potential customers to a brands website. In this phase marketers need to flourish creative thinking and try to find out the most attractive communication channels.

Activation: The next step after generating a lot of traffic to the website is to generate leads, which means that the user is doing an action on a website and in return offers his or her contact information or at least the email address. This is also the starting point of a new customer relationship and the reason why the customer always needs to be in the centre of all considerations.

Retention: In this phase a company needs to bind the lead to the brand by creating incentives so that the user is returning to the website again and again.

Revenue: A company has already made a lot of efforts up to this stage but now needs to convince the user to buy something.

Referral: If the product meets the expectations, the customer may also share this experience and this will lead to organic or viral growth (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 154).

3.2 Cornerstones for growth in digital business

Before a company is able to start with growth hacking, several basics need to be set up first. Of course the basis is to identify the business model, which means to illustrate how the company will earn its money in the future (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 69 - 77).

After defining these basics a clear positioning needs to be elaborated. Only focusing on fast growth will sooner or later lead to disappointment. A product, which will be not loved by the community, is like a holey bucket. Investments in this product will generate traffic but the success is missing. The users will neither stay on the website nor buy something and therefore also not return. If the users should love the brand, companies need to have a strong brand, which tells a story, an emotion and offers an outstanding experience (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 101 - 102).

In the past communication has been executed in a vertical way. A brand has created a message for the target group and tried to influence it through outstanding marketing claims. This is how it worked, but nowadays won't. Today there are other forces in this game like a more inclusive, horizontal and social way of communicating which is also the reason why social circles are the essential source of influence, also called the 4f's: friends, families, fans and followers. *"Beware of not meeting customer needs, because if you don't, they'll just move on"* (Cundari 2015, p. 8*)*. This quote describes the customer of the future in simply one sentence – it is also called the age of the customer. In this era the customer is taking over the leadership role and determines how marketing takes place (cf. Cundari 2015, p. 9). The following figure indicates a new customer-brand dialogue, which should not be ignored:
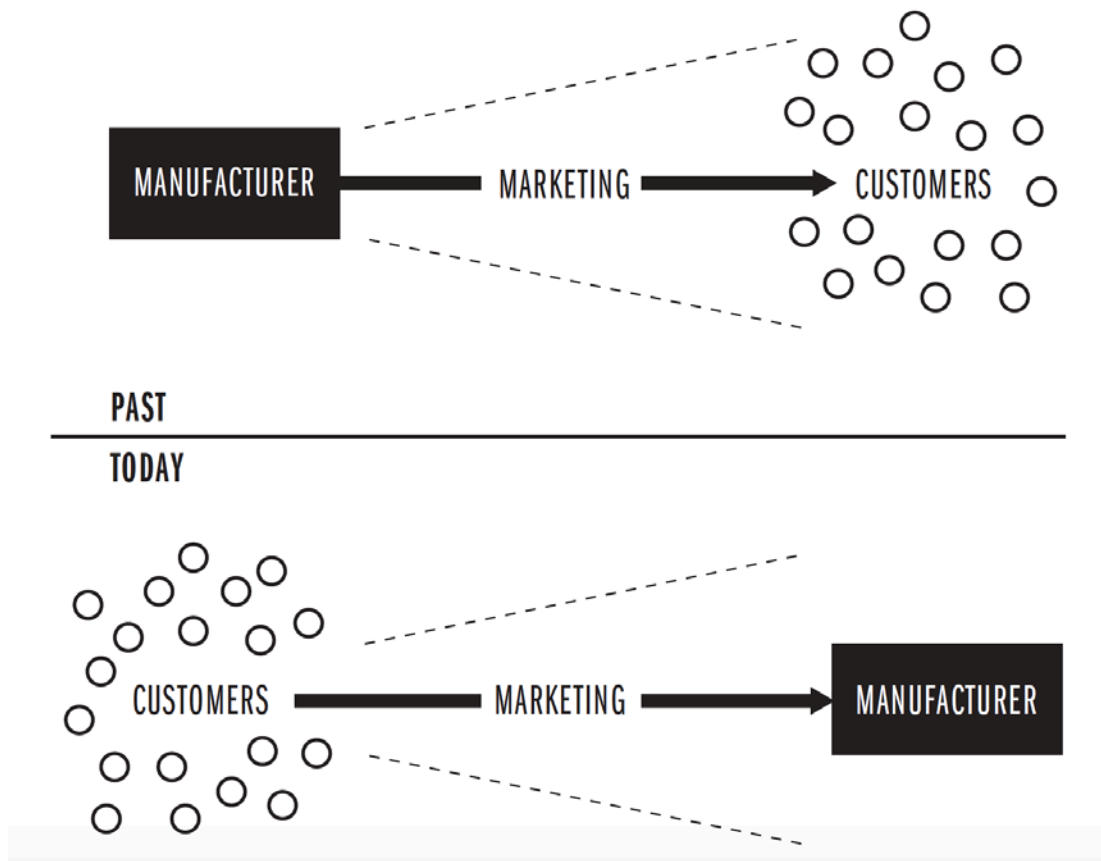
Figure 5: Age of the new customer (Cundari 2015, p. 9)

This means, if a company wants to stay competitive and build trust, it should not treat customers as a target group. In fact, the relationship should be more horizontal and customers need to be considered as friends of the brand (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 5 - 13).

The next important step to be successful in growth hacking is to determine the right target group, which is ideally described very detailed. A target group is described more in an abstract way, therefore it is recommended to create "persona", which are fictive characters, representing the ideal customer of a company (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 81 - 82).

To sum it up one of the essential aspects in the field of digital business is to care about people – like it was handled and learned in traditional marketing. Of course, today's technology allows companies to connect with people in a simple and efficient way like never before but this is only the technology, which serves companies. In the end it's about the marketers behind a brand who need to find a connection to the consumers and try to build long-lasting relationships. Finally all

these efforts will hopefully return in sales in order to achieve a return on investment (cf. Ryan 2014, p. 12).

To flourish connectivity to its full potential 3 steps need to be followed: mobile connectivity is simply the base layer as a communication infrastructure. Followed by the experiential connectivity in which an outstanding customer experience through all the touchpoints between customers and the brand should be offered. Finally the strength of connection in the communities is called social connectivity (Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 22). This connectivity also leads to an increase of weight of social conformity, which means that customers put a great emphasis on the opinions of others. People share feelings and experiences and create their own opinion if companies and brands are appealing. Usually when it comes to a purchasing decision, customers have been influenced by the own preference but in fact most of today's decisions will be social ones. This means for marketing communications that the customer is an active media of communication (Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 13f).

3.3 Understanding the customer and their behaviour online

"I think one of the biggest levers for a growth hacker is improving the user experience … at the root of sustainable growth is delivering a valuable experience. A valuable experience is what leads to retention. Without retention, there is no growth" - Sean Ellis (Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 146)

Nowadays sustainable and meaningful customer relationships can only be build by creating a relevant and engaging customer experience starting with the initial awareness to the final purchase along the customer journey (cf. Cundari 2015, p. 45). Brands also need to consider that more messages and touchpoints will not significantly increase the influence on the behaviour instead organizations have to connect on a few relevant touchpoints but in a more meaningful way (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 21). Consumers are acting in real time therefore real-time information and a "mobile-first" approach needs to be considered in the customer journey as well (cf. Zunke 2017, p. 25). Hence it is important for a brand to understand the way how customers behave and which paths they have been through from the very beginning until the end of a customers purchase process. Long ago marketers have applied the **AIDA** formula (**A**ttention,

Interest, **D**esire, **A**ction) in communication but today this concept is not serving the digital age anymore due to the fact that decision processes are not proceeding in a linear way instead they are interconnected (cf. Riedmann-Streitz et al. 2017, p. 78). In literature many definitions of customer purchase journeys do exist, but the author will mainly focus on the most relevant and newest one. The CPJ of Cundari is a completely new framework which has been developed by rethinking and merging already existing models: the customer decision journey, based on a global research, the moments of truth model by Procter & Gamble and the Zero Moment of Truth model by Google. The evaluation and combination of these 3 models created a new customer purchase journey illustrated in the following figure (cf. Cundari 2015, p. 45 - 51):

CUSTOMER PURCHASE JOURNEY
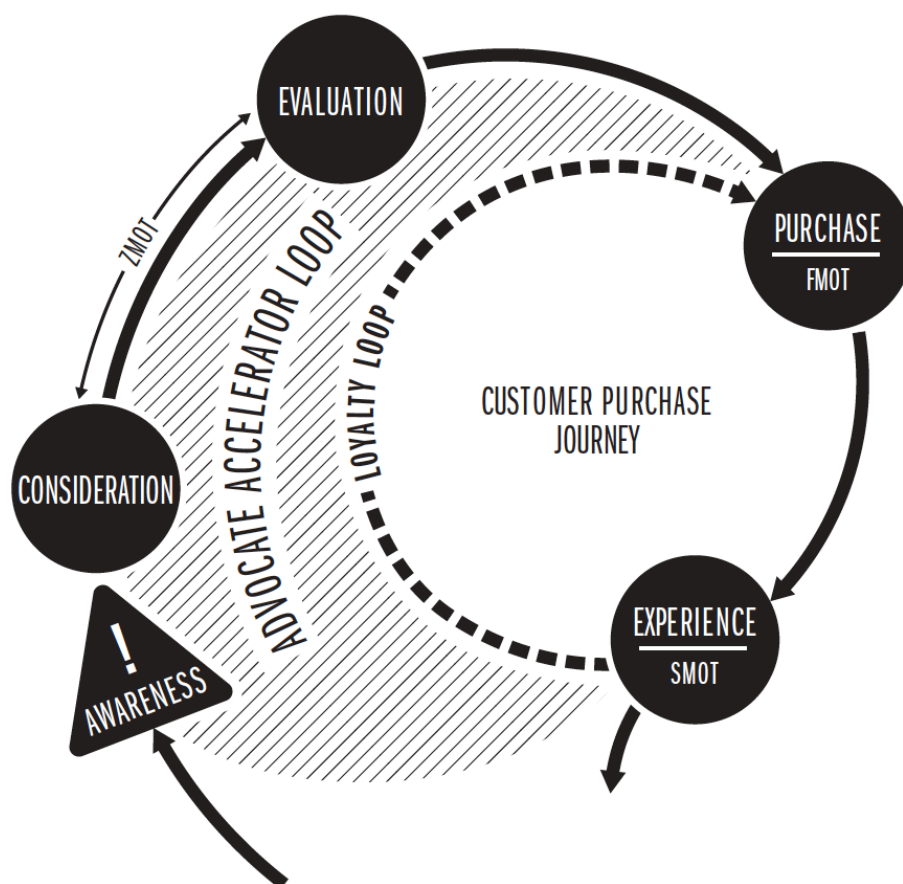
Figure 6: Customer purchase journey by Cundari (Cundari 2015, p. 51)

In order to start this purchase journey a customer needs to be aware of the brand achieved through past experience, communication activities or by recommendations of others (cf. Kotler/Kartajaya/Setiawan 2017, p. 62). These

brand awareness activities will lead to a predetermined set of brands each customer has in his mind – also called the consideration phase. After this stage the customer is evaluating the product or service and is going through the phase called "The zero moment of truth". In this phase the customer wants to gain more information and insights of the product by asking friends, looking for reviews, asking a search engine, going to the brands website or watching videos and so on. The outcome will be that some brands will maybe be cleared and some may be added and when customers finally purchase the item, the information level will be very high. When stepping into the purchasing stage of the product, the customer is facing another phase called "the first moment of truth". This phase is about how people perceive the product and what feelings occur when reading the product details. After purchasing the goods or services customers will overcome all multisensory aspects by experiencing the product. This phase in the experience stage is also called the "second moment of truth". If this experience was positive, the customer will of course repurchase the product or act as a brand advocate by sharing his experience on social media. This will of course influence other potential customers also called the "advocate accelerator loop" in this model (cf. Cundari 2015, p. 45 - 52).

This model simply illustrates which stages will be relevant for this concept in order to find out the right communication tools. Beginning with the phase of awareness until the decision, SEO and the website of the company will definitely influence these stages. When having a deeper insight into the UK market and the online behaviour many essential aspects have to be considered. 81 % of all online users in the UK take the internet into consideration as a primary research tool, when gathering more information. The most important online resource when looking for information about a business is the search engine with 83 % followed by the business website with 28 % (cf. Consumer Barometer with Google 2018).

4 Online marketing tools for the sports nutrition and superfood industry to attract new visitors from the UK

In the following chapter the author will point out the most relevant communication tools for the sports nutrition and superfood industry which will help to enter the UK as a foreign market and attract new customers from UK to the website.

4.1 Online marketing and types of media

When it comes to online marketing many definitions do exist. Chaffey and Smith state that digital marketing or also called online marketing is in the centre of a company's digital business which means to understand the customers' behaviour and needs and to run customized digital marketing campaigns by using digital marketing channels (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 13). Online marketing can be also defined as market-oriented activities comprising planning, organisation, execution and controlling in order to achieve the marketing goals (cf. Kreutzer et al. 2012, p. 31). Lammenett defines it as a bundle of activities with the aim to direct customers to a certain webpage on which a business relationship can be built on (cf. Lammenett et al. 2017, p. 36f).

By using the internet as a new communication tool, it is crucial to distinguish between different communication channels: owned-, paid- and earned-media (cf. Mast 2016, p. 361). **Owned media** consists of all brand owned media platforms including for example the website, social media presence, apps or blogs (cf. Steinke et al. 2015, p. 38f). Also **offline-owned media** like brochures or retail stores are part of this type of media (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 34). **Paid media** can be defined as all media channels a brand has to pay for in order to get published. In a digital context these can be native advertisings, search engine advertising or affiliate marketing and of course traditionally includes the classic print ad, tv, radio or out of home advertising. Finally **earned media** is completing this construct and can be described as an editorial reporting by the media but also word of mouth through social media and blogs by the community of a brand (cf. Steinke et al. 2015, p. 38f).

4.2 RACE planning framework

The RACE planning framework of Chaffey and Smith helps to understand what each marketing tool is able to achieve and how it is used in a way that it reaches and engages customers. Competition is strong and in order to be competitive in the market it is necessary to plan, manage and optimize all digital channels to reach the defined targets. If companies want to reach these targets, the author recommends having SMART (specific, measurable, acceptable, relevant and timely) key performance indicators (KPI's) with an investment in customer-centric content marketing, digital media and personalized experience. The following figure gives an overview how this framework can be visualized in the way of a funnel (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 44f):
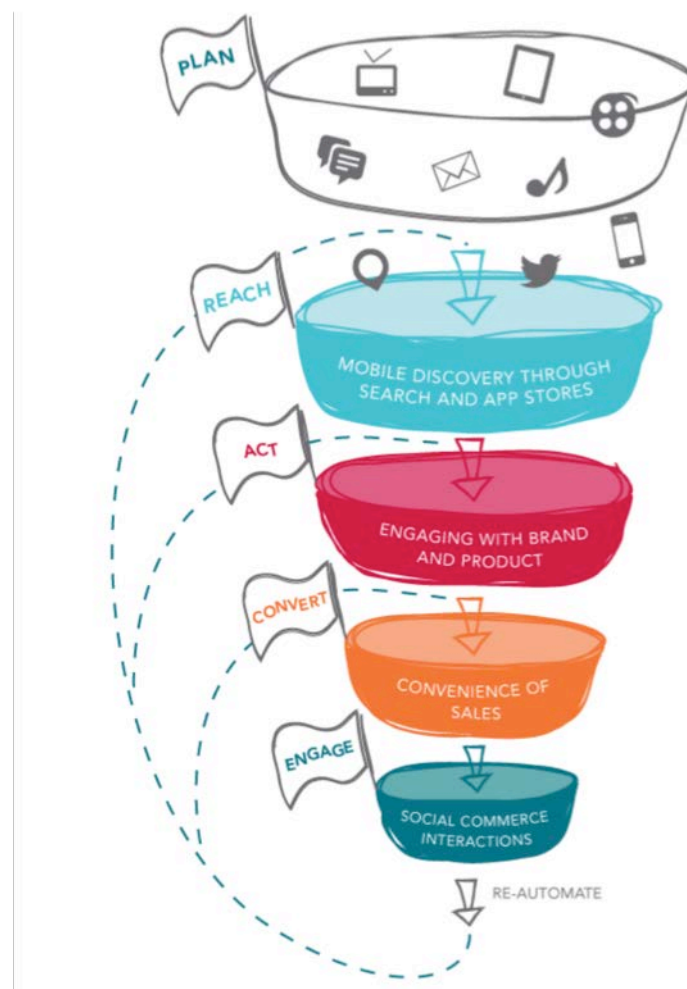
Figure 7: RACE planning framework (Smartinsights 2015)

The above-mentioned RACE planning model consists of mainly five steps:

Step 1: PLAN

Before starting with online marketing it is prerequisite to establish a strategy because without a clear positioning and message, a fundamental research and a segmentation of the target group all efforts and tactics will be not effective. For example it makes no sense to just create a new website which is not contributing to the goals of a brand.

Step 2: REACH

This step is about building awareness for a brand but also the placement of the products and services on other websites and traditional media help to achieve traffic and acquiring visits to the brands own website, blog or social media presence. In this stage the buyer is in a kind of exploration phase and seeking for information. The brands task is to use search engines, cooperate with social networks, publishers and blogs and publish the content there. Appropriate key measures are unique visitors, value per visit and fans/followers.

Step 4: ACT

After building the necessary awareness the next step is about persuading a potential customer on a brands own website, blog or social media presence. In this stage the customer is in the stage of decision making and seeking for more information on a product, reading a blog or some postings. Hence in this stage customer journeys need to be clear and the published content has to be appealing, relevant and should lead to engagement. A reliable community and interactive tools can support this stage. Important KPI's are leads, leads conversions rate, time spending on the site and engagement (shares, comments, likes).

Step 4: CONVERT

This step is dealing with the e-commerce process, product, price and promotion itself and hence about conversion and how to capitalise on marketing. Conversion rate optimization is the magic formula in this stage and to emphasize on marketing automation as well as remarketing which drives conversion. The success can be measured by sales, revenue/profit and average order value.

Step 5: ENGAGE

After converting a potential customer the game in online marketing is not over. It is about encouraging advocacies through recommendations and word of mouth because this will be a crucial success factor for social media marketing, social proof, referral and of course more sales, which can be measured by repeat purchase, satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 44f).

4.3 Website as the centre of digital communication

The basis of all activities and hence the centre of digital communication is the website. A company owns it and it is the place where the most leads are generated and transactions in e-commerce are happening. On this platform it is necessary to recognize all touchpoints because it will definitely affect the customer's digital experience and loyalty to a brand (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 295f). In the era of social media, blogs enjoy a high priority because it is fostering the dialogue between a brand and its users. This is also the reason why a website is very often combined with a blog (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 335).

But a website without traffic and content is also useless if the content is not distributed, therefore the author found out that the following activities will help to achieve the required traffic goals on the website.

4.4 Search engine marketing (SEM) to attain visibility and traffic

„Whoever controls the door to the internet, controls the internet" (Dodson et al. 2016, p. 8). This quote exactly describes the major power of search engines these days, which have taken over this control – mainly by the market leader Google (cf. Dodson et al. 2016, p. 8). Currently Google has a global market share of 77,43 % (cf. Allen 2017). Search engines are the entry point to the internet because people search for missing information by typing in their needs into a search engine. The results of the search engine are not the ones from the whole world wide web, these are only indexed sites of a certain search engine. Therefore the challenge is to really understand how search engines work in order to be effective (cf. Dodson et al. 2016, p. 8). It's a matter of fact that a brand, which is able to gain visibility on the first page of Google, will get more clicks. An international statistic revealed that

the click-through rate (CTR) on the first position is 29,17 % on mobile and 37,9 % on desktop devices but the CTR is already dramatically shrinking on the third position with a CTR of 10,6 % on mobile and 10,95 % on desktop devices (cf. Advanced Web Ranking 2017). Search engine marketing (SEM) is probably the most important digital marketing tool, a generic term for two SEM-techniques: search engine advertising (SEA) and search engine optimisation (SEO) (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 368).

Search engine advertising

SEA or also called paid or pay per click search marketing is similar to traditional advertising. If a user is typing in a keyword or a keyword phrase into a search engine many results will appear, this page is also called **s**earch **e**ngine **r**esults **p**age (SERP). Besides organic results also some results at the top of the SERP's, with an ad label on it will be displayed (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 384). Behind each ad result is a link leading to a relevant website. The benefit of SEA is that the advertiser is only paying for the ad, if someone clicks on it and thus will be forwarded to the website. This payment method is also called cost per click model (CPC). Another positive aspect is that it can be targeted on a specific phrase or keyword. If a visitor is not typing in this specific phrase or keyword the ad will not appear and divergence loss can be avoided. Up to four ads can be displayed at the top of the SERP's and sometimes also shopping ads with pictures appear. Due to the fact that the ad only appears when a customer is searching for it, there must be also a need and therefore the CTR rates are much higher instead of display advertising. The average CTR rate is about 3,54 % whereas display advertising has an average of 0,01 - 0,1 % (cf. Lammenett 2017, p. 143 - 146).

As already elaborated above, SEA is always connected with costs and only valid for the time of the campaign, therefore it would be more sustainable to rely on SEO with a more long-term view and a well-constructed international strategy in order to gain organic traffic. Of course SEA can support from time to time if further traffic is needed but the basis should be constructed with SEO.

Search engine optimization

SEO is the second SEM-technique and has the aim to achieve high organic positions preferably on the first site of the SERPs, after typing in some keywords

or a phrase (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 368f). SEO consists of technically but also creative parts and improves rankings, increases the awareness within the search engine and ultimately drives traffic (cf. MOZ 2017b). Before optimizing for a search engine it is necessary to understand how such an engine works and which functions it has. Two major tasks exist: crawling and indexing as well as providing answers. Crawling and indexing can be imagined as a network full of stops and behind each stop is another path or also called link. These links give search engines the permission to enter the website with an automated robot, also called "crawler" who is reading all codes and documents on the website and hence will get a better understanding on which topic the website is all about. This function will help the search engine to fulfil the second task namely providing relevant answers for users and websites with high popularity. Popularity and relevance are measured by many variables, also called ranking factors, on which brands have to emphasize on (cf. MOZ 2017b).

4.4.1 Optimization of a brands website for the search engine

Generally it can be said that the more popular a brand's website is, the more valuable the information may be on it (cf. MOZ 2017b). Google is changing these ranking factors from time to time within the ranking-factor guideline consisting of more than hundred important aspects, which need to be taken into consideration. In general it can be distinguished between on-page and off-page optimization (cf. MOZ 2017d).

On-page optimization is dealing with the optimization of all elements on the own website like the content and also the html source at the back-end. In fact this optimization has the aim that the search engine and the user easily understands what the website is all about that the website can be identified for a relevant search query and that finally the content on it is useful and worth to rank in the SERPs. The following main criteria need to be followed (cf. van de Rakt 2017):

- **Content:** Whereas in the past just stating some keywords on a page was enough to show the search engine which content the website is dealing with will be nowadays not enough. Content always needs to be created to fulfil the needs of the users and has to be in-depth, unique, trustworthy and designed in a user-friendly way (cf. van de Rakt 2017).

- **Title tag, meta description and alt tags:** Besides the basis of creating relevant content, the website also needs to be explained by different descriptions. The first and most important one is the title tag that defines the title of the website. These titles will show up on the SERPs, the web browser tab and on social networks and should have an optimum length of 50-60 characters describing the pages content. If the target keyword is positioned more at the beginning of the title, it will definitely improve the ranking. Also the title should not be optimized for the engine itself but for the user. The second important aspect is the meta description, the description underneath the title, shown up in the SERPs. It ideally should have 200 characters and summarize the content of the website. Since 2009 the description is not a ranking factor anymore but it will definitely enhance the CTR, if it is written in an appealing way for the customer. Finally also pictures need descriptions and therefore alt-tags should be provided behind every picture. All tags should exactly reflect what is shown on the picture (cf. MOZ 2017e).

- **Page speed:** This aspect is also quite important for the ranking factor within the search engine and can be divided into the page load time, which means how long it takes to display the whole content and time to first byte. Optimizing images and various codes like CSS, JavaScript as well as HTML, reducing redirects and browser caching can help to enhance page speed (cf. Toonen 2017). In order to identify big pictures, which hinder the page speed, it can help to search for the current pictures on Google by typing in "site:a-ware.at" and afterwards selecting pictures and hence filtering the biggest ones. Ultimately the speed test of Google within the developers' tool can also help to find out possible enhancements (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 186f).

- **URL structure:** A well-defined URL structure does also matter in regards of search engines because it will help the user to understand what can be expected on a page. The structure should be simple, relevant and easy to understand. URLs with strange variables or numbers should therefore be avoided. A good example would be www.a-ware.com/hemp-products (cf. Lincoln 2016).

- **Mobile friendliness:** Since 2015 Google also started to consider the mobile friendliness of websites as a major ranking factor. Therefore it is a must to offer an outstanding experience via all devices and especially on mobile (cf. Google 2018).

Off-page optimization is dealing with activities improving the SERPs but all taken outside of the own website. The main part of off-page optimization deals with external links, which is a link from another website to the own page. This factor is one of the most important aspects in order to achieve higher results, but external links need to be trustworthy, popular as well as relevant to the content and the anchor text should fit to the content. Also internal links are part of off-page activities and have the aim to navigate a user through the website, to show the hierarchy and dependencies and it will help to spread the linking power (cf. Toonen 2018). In reference to this, the best content on a website is useless if a brand is not doing any efforts in link building. The easiest way is to identify partners, customers and friends in the industry and to ask them for help. Another growth hack is to comment blog-posts with the brands link on a relevant article but it will be important to generate value (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 182 - 185).

4.4.2 International SEO strategy to enter a foreign country

Attracting new customers from foreign countries does not necessarily mean to translate the websites content of the home country into the target markets' language. Behind such an intention many more activities need to be considered. International SEO will help in this case to optimize the website so that search engines can identify the country and language a company wants to target. First of all the main components of a SEO strategy will be elaborated (cf. MOZ 2017c).

Step 1: Define the target audience with their interests
Every marketing concept is aligned for specific target groups hence this is valid for SEO as well. That exactly means before researching any kind of keywords it is important to understand the users' needs and behaviour. Based on this relevant content needs to be created. To get a better understanding of the target group, statistics and research within the industry will also help. The next step is to find out what the customers may search and need. Very often companies may discover topics of which they haven't thought yet (cf. Lippay 2010a).

Step 2: Keyword research

The next step after thoroughly understanding the target group is to start the keyword research in order to find out the possible search volume within the UK for a specific term. To find out such keywords it will be necessary to follow a certain scheme. These keywords can be based on the persona and their needs or based on topics but also the combination of both aspects will be fruitful. Keyword research can easily be done for free via the Google's Keyword Planner (cf. Lippay 2010b).

Step 3: Elaborate gaps and opportunities

After elaborating step 1 and 2 it is important to prioritize the most important keywords. This can be done based on search volume but also on topics which align to the strategy of a company. Afterwards it is possible to find out gaps or opportunities which means for example that companies will find out that there is some content for a specific term on the website but in comparison with the search volume, there is less traffic on the own website. Therefore a company would have to optimize the page. On the other side also opportunities can arise by discovering keywords with a high search volume which potential the company is not using yet (cf. Lippay 2010c).

Step 4: Define and analyse competitors

After analysing the own website it is necessary to find out which competitors are also targeting the same keywords and phrases. This can simply be done by typing in the relevant keyword in a search engine or also via special monitoring tools like Sistrix or Searchmetrics. After defining the relevant competitors, the following performance aspects need to be observed: content, sentiment and a comparison of on-page activities, links and the traffic (cf. Lippay 2010d).

Furthermore in an international context it is crucial that the following steps are taken into consideration when developing a SEO strategy:

Appropriate URL structures for international websites

Different options regarding the URL structure of a website do exist and of course search engines will interpret those URL structures differently. Depending on the strategy of going international, the right option needs to be selected. There may

recommendations exist for this problem, but which is the right option can only be discovered by weighting up pros and cons. Due to the fact that the company wants to target the UK as target country the author figured out that the option "ccTLDs" would be the right one but also needs a lot of resources. "ccTLD" is a type of URL structure, named by Google, which uses two-letter codes at the end of the URL to show users in which country the website is registered. It offers the clearest local signal to search engines and is the easiest way to rank in the target country. But the downside of this option is that it needs more resources because it is necessary to offer a local office address, customer service and so on. Therefore the author would recommend selecting the "subdirectory-domain" by using a .com domain with a subdirectory for example www.a-ware.com/uk (cf. MOZ 2017c).

Websites with language-target

To show the search engine in which language the content is provided and dealt with, websites need to have an "hreflang" or language meta tag. Companies also need to make sure that the provided content is not translated by translation machines instead it should be adjusted to the needs of the target group by using the right currency and local language. To achieve the best user experience and to gather out the most of organic results, companies have to spend their resources on translation – that's definitely a good basis for a solid SEO strategy. Also the website design and the content should be adjusted to the culture of the country – as the author already stated in chapter 3.3.2 (cf. MOZ 2017c).

Further important SEO signals

Linking to local content and building links from local resources as well as hosting the website in the UK will have a positive impact on the search engine results (cf. MOZ 2017c).

4.4.3 Content marketing & strategy to support SEO

As already described in the previous chapter of search engine marketing, SEO can't be efficiently operated without valuable and relevant content for the target group. In theory two definitions namely content marketing and -strategy do exist and have to be properly explained:

Content marketing brings brand awareness, is building trust and has a great impact on the willingness to pay for a product but has to be in line with enhancing a brands business by for example increasing the revenue. There are again many definitions of content marketing (cf. Hilker et al. 2017, p. 3f). Robert Rose from the marketing institute says: *"Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience — with the objective of driving profitable customer action"* (Rose 2018). Hilker describes content marketing as an innovative marketing approach for a brand related to the positioning of content through the web. The character of relevant content can be described as inspirational, informative, stimulating, emotional, sustentative and shareable. Content marketing is not promotional and assists online marketing, branding and sales (cf. Hilker et al. 2017, p. 4). Kingsnorth says that great content is credible, shareable, useful or entertaining, interesting, relevant, different and on brand. When talking about content, very often only articles come into peoples' mind but in fact it consists of many more types: case studies, white papers, videos, blogs, images, infographics, podcasts and so on (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 232 - 235). Especially online shops can benefit from content marketing for example by creating a website which shows relevant content instead of products. The content should deal with possible questions and problems coming up during the customer journey. Despites the relevance for the customer also search engines love sophisticated content (cf. Grabs/Sudhoff 2014, p. 251f).

Content Marketing in contrast to content strategy is dealing with the questions what, when and where the content will be published to generate awareness, traffic, reach or sales (cf. Ruisinger 2016, p. 247). On the other hand a **content strategy** is dealing with the questions why and how can content be created. It consists of a situation analysis and requirements referring the content to meet the user needs and to achieve the defined business aims. The content strategy quad of Brain Traffic will help to effectively achieve these goals (cf. Brain Traffic 2018).

Figure 8: Content strategy quad by Brain Traffic (Brain Traffic 2018)

The content strategy quad consists of four components divided into content and people components:

Content-components:

- Substance: Which content does a company need and what kind of message has to be communicated to achieve the target group?
- Structure: How can the content be organized, prioritized and distributed?

People-components:

- Workflow: How much resources have to be planned and which tools and processes are needed?
- Governance: How are decisions being made regarding the content and the strategy (cf. Brain Traffic 2018).

Regarding growth hacking tactics in this field, the author would recommend to try the following one: besides doing a thoroughly keyword research, there is also the question what problems the target group really has. In this case the online offer of www.answerthepublic.com will help to find such phrases and hence also the right content for the target group (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 186f). Another helpful

hack would be: if a company has written a nice blog entry about a relevant topic for the target group but there are just a few people who have read the article. There might be a potential for improvement of the headline. Very often such articles are qualitative but nobody has invested time into the headline, which is in fact a marketing tool and has the aim to make curious. The following strategies can help: ask questions, surprise, intrigue, write how-to articles, start with a bang and end with a cliff-hanger, use strong adjectives, use numbers, use popular search queries, use negative headlines and finally keep short but be aware that Google is only showing 65 characters. Usually the first and the last three words of a headline will get the attention (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 196f).

4.5 Social media marketing to attain social signals

Apart from SEM, content marketing and a well-developed content strategy, social media is another distribution tool, which will support the traffic goals and gather social signals for the content and therefore contribute to the ranking position in the SERPs. Social media are a plurality of networks or tools where people are exchanging, networking and sharing relevant content. Social media is always proving that people love to talk about products and services because buying a product means also talking to people who will have an influence on the purchase. This happens through communication, especially on social media (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 32 - 39). The benefits of social media are obvious (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 112):

- increase in brand awareness, corporate image and brand loyalty
- acquisition of new customers and employees through recommendation
- establishment of good customer relationships
- enhancement of rankings within the search engine

4.5.1 Facebook as the main channel for the UK

With 2.07 billion active users per month, Facebook is one of the biggest social media platforms (cf. Noyes 2018). Facebook is also the biggest social media platform used by the society in the UK with a share of 80,75 % (cf. Ecommerce foundation 2017b, p. 31). It is a platform where people have an own profile, mostly with the real name, with the intent to connect with other friends. Users relinquish a

lot of personal information by interacting with other postings or sharing pictures and status messages. All these personal information help to understand what preferences the customers may have and this will later assist companies to target them quite accurate. Besides advertisement, companies should be present with the own brand so that fans can engage with it. Apart from this, Facebook users are online several times each day, mostly using their mobile phone (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 32 - 39). The latest update from the Facebook owner revealed that the algorithm of Facebook is running through a significant change. Facebook has been founded to connect people but after a few years it received complaints from users that content from brands and media are very dominant. This led to the adjustment that the newsfeed will from now on show more content from friends. Brands or media content will only be visible if the engagement is good or the content seems to be important and relevant for the user (cf. Zuckerberg 2017). To sum it up brands with a presence on Facebook need to be relevant and engage with the users in order to be visible and hence survive. Therefore content marketing is prerequisite also for social media.

Postings should have a corporate design in order so that users will identify the brand very fast. Also event-pages or groups can be very important because there is no regulation of the reach so far (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 217f). Another hack is to motivate the team of a company to like, comment or share the postings and it is also recommendable to find a small group of real fans and experts, who will also support the brand by engaging with the postings. Finally also the cooperation with other companies with the same target group will help to acquire new customers for example producing an e-paper together (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 212f).

4.5.2 Influencer marketing within the UK to get local traffic

Influencers are people who can spread opinions and trends without nearly any effort and people will simply love it and buy products and services, which have been promoted (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 296). The basis for creating influence is the social capital in relation to the relationships between people. Social capital depends on reach, relevance and response. Reach alone would not end in influence because only in combination with relevance, which is based on trust and response it will work properly (cf. Grabs/Sudhoff 2014, p. 234). If a company wants

to generate brand awareness, launching a new product or entering a new market, influencer marketing can be a powerful tool – especially on Instagram, where it works quite successfully (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 296). Generally 5 types of influencers can be distinguished:

- **Advocates:** This type of influencer is very loyal and is in love with the brand. This person will share all information about it in the circle of friends and family.
- **Ambassadors:** These are people who are company or brand ambassadors, mostly bloggers or employees of the brand.
- **Citizen influencers** can be described as people who have good online and offline connections and have a high influence on other people. This type of influencer does not necessarily love a brand but talks about trending topics and influences other people.
- **Professionals/occupational influencers:** People like Steve Jobs, who have climbed the career ladder are also influencers.
- **Celebrity influencers:** These are actors, musicians, stars and celebrities who will demonstrate brand awareness (cf. Grabs/Bannour/Vogl 2017 p. 129 - 130).

The following growth hack will help especially start-ups to generate a good basis of followers and to get connected with influencers: Companies need to find out the most relevant influencers within the niche (possible with tools like BuzzSumo or Ninjaoutreach) and have to follow these influencers and the most relevant followers of this page. Finally it is recommended to like three posts, share one and regularly comment those postings (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 217f).

4.6 E-mail marketing to facilitate customer relationship management

After successfully implementing content and social media marketing, the company can also collect leads and take those for maintaining customer relationship and building a community by using e-mail marketing. This is a way of direct marketing via e-mail and has the purpose to guide subscribers to the company's website. A newsletter should be ideally personalized and offer relevant content. Depending

on the company, the content can deal with editorial news about a specific industry or new offers and products, which need to be communicated (cf. Lammenett 2017, p. 91 - 96). E-mail marketing has also the benefit that a company is not dependent on big corporations like Facebook or Google. Moreover all these collected email addresses are an important asset for the company in order to connect with its target group (cf. Herzberger/Jenny 2018, p. 205f).

4.7 Success factors in international digital communication to attract new customers from the UK

Summarising the previous chapters in this thesis and studying several sources of literature, the author came to the following conclusion regarding the success factors for a digital communication concept for online shops:

Device independent online shop as the basis
Heinemanns findings regarding the success factors in digital communication revealed that the online shop needs to have a magic attraction and has to communicate a clear value proposition. Furthermore the search possibilities and the service on the website need to have an easy navigation (cf. Heinemann et al. 2017, p. 173).

Due to the fact that mobile usage is growing each year, websites need to have a responsive design. This means that the website is adapting depending on the device, no matter if it is accessed via desktop, mobile or tablet. Apart from this, a responsive design is also an important ranking factor for search engines (cf. Eixelsberger/Sternad/Stromberger 2016, p. 17f). Finally mobile payment methods will definitely reduce the termination rate of an online shop (cf. Grabs/Sudhoff 2014, p. 122). "About us" sections, easy contact forms, reviews and customer photos, security badges and high quality images will definitely build trust. Free shipping as well as retargeting can help to optimize the conversion (cf. Slimas 2017). In order to achieve customers abroad, organisations need to offer their information in a multilingual way. It is also recommended to offer this content via own URL's. In any case the possibility to switch between the languages should be easy for the user (cf. Eixelsberger/Sternad/Stromberger 2016, p. 18f).

Considering customer experience & centricity

The traditional communication where the sender states a message to the receiver is out-dated in these days. Customers need to be understood as well as seen as a partner and have to be integrated in the processes of an organisation. The customization and personalization of customers approach and communities in social networks are a crucial success factor in the digital age (cf. Heinemann et al. 2017, p. 173f). Each touchpoint between a customer and a brand leaves tracks in the mind of the customer and in most of the cases this impression controls the perception towards a brand in a subconscious way (cf. Kircher et al. 2017, p. 22). In e-commerce a company is dealing with an on-going engagement and communication with the target group based on price, product presence, social influence and finally delivery (cf. Feinleib et al. 2017, p. 67). The author also came to the conclusion that crucial sources of influence are friends, families or fans and that's also the reason why influencer marketing has to play a major role in social media marketing.

Relevant communication channels and content

An international communication concept is not an end in itself hence it always needs a clear strategy and has to be aligned with the strategy of the company (cf. Mast 2016 p. 435). In the context of content marketing it will be necessary to analyse if the personas in the target market are the same like in the local one. The use of platforms, seasonal events and holidays also can differ. Another important aspect is the creation of content by a local native (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 255f). Finally the selection of the channels with the most impact and relevance on engagement in the target market needs to be analysed (cf. We are social 2017). When dealing with international communication companies should try to think globally but act locally (cf. Pitney Bowes 2017, p. 6f).

Search engine optimization is the key tool for the UK market and also a success factor in the field of international business. It's not a surprise that a study with user databases of over 120.000 online businesses have revealed that 34 % of the whole traffic on online shops is made by SEO (cf. Allen 2016). Relating to the previous paragraph the multilingual presence has also an influence on the ranking factor. When nearly the same content exists in many languages, Google may not rank these sites so high. Organisations can prevent this by using localisation-

markups, which help Google to understand the localisation of the website. Another possibility to enhance the ranking is to acquire many external links from the target market. Keywords and phrases should be available in the required language and of course local connotations and different keywords need to be considered. (cf. Eixelsberger/Sternad/Stromberger 2016, p. 19f).

Customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty

Throughout nearly the whole previous paragraphs customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty always played a major role in the field of digital communication and online shops. Therefore these three characteristics are the fundamental key success factor, which need to be understood first.

Customer satisfaction: In times where offer exceeds demand on the market, consumers are in a good position of negotiation. Their needs, wishes and problems are in the centre of each organisation. The online market is a showcase model for this oversaturated market. In B2C e-commerce the barriers for switching to another online shop with comparable products are quite low, due the fact that the location is not influencing the purchasing behaviour. As a matter of fact, if the customer is not satisfied with the performance the probability is high that next time another online shop will make the deal. Dissatisfaction can also appear much earlier before any transaction has been made caused by inadequate search functions, misleading navigation, lack of suitable payment models and too little information (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 53 - 55). While customer relationship management seemed to be important when dealing with services in the past, it is nowadays a central communication task (cf. Mast 2016 p. 307). Key activities with a positive influence on customer satisfaction in regards of communication are the models of payment (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 69).

Trust: Without obtaining customers trust organisations will not have a business at all (cf. Morgan 2015). E-commerce has a large degree of anonymity due to the fact the customers can't evaluate the quality of the product or the integrity of the seller. Furthermore many processes like the payment- and logistic process are handled behind the scenes. Hence there must be trust towards an online shop when ordering new products or services (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 56f). Key activities with a positive influence on customer satisfaction in regards of

communication are reputation, satisfaction with former purchase orders (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 70f).

Companies who want to enhance the fundament of both, customer satisfaction and trust, in reference to online shops are forced to take the following actions:

- **Quality of the system:** A good quality of design is determined by offering a good performance and user friendliness on online shops. In contrast to the stationary retail, in online retail there are no employees who will assist, therefore the aspects website design, search and navigation as well as ease of use are enjoying high priority.

- **Assurance:** The term assurance depends on the two important aspects of security and privacy. Security is dealing with the protection of data whereas privacy deals with the handling of personal information on the internet (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 63f).

Loyalty: Customers are loyal when purchasing on a regular and repeated basis. In the past years loyalty has become a main concern in today's marketing because it offers a lot of benefits for the success of an organisation. The acquisition of new customers is far more expensive than retaining existing ones. Moreover satisfied customers will take over positive word of mouth propaganda and hence influence existing customers but also people who have not been customers yet. After obtaining more information, it will be much easier to personalize all communication activities (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 57) The importance of influencing other people can also be proved by a study where 40 % of all e-commerce traffic is generated through direct traffic. Direct traffic originates from directly typing in the URL but also if customers are sending links to friends, which will be followed (cf. Allen 2016).

Development of a strong brand for customer relationship
Apart from a good customer relationship it is necessary to establish emotional loyalty to retain customers to a company. This can be achieved through a strong brand because it has the function of building trust, orientation and identification (cf. Mast 2016 p. 308). Another success factor of a brand is the social design of a

company where the strategic orientation towards the community is in the foreground. No matter in which industry, the digitalisation has changed the customers to actors who want to feel, communicate and shape a brand. Only if this dialogue exists, the brand will be perceived as relevant and reliable (cf. Kircher 2017, p. 34f). Of course in an international playground linguistic and cultural differences exist. Therefore brand names need to be checked beforehand (cf. Kircher 2017, p. 39). Additionally from previous paragraphs the author comes to the conclusion that also branded shopping experience will constitute a great success factor.

5 Components of a digital communication concept

The following chapter deals with the general understanding of communication in the digital age and a thorough elaboration of the components of a digital communication concept.

5.1 Core parts of a digital communication concept

Hardly any other discipline has been affected so much by the digitalisation than communication. Communication in a sustainable way means to communicate as little promotional as possible and to actively involve customers. There is a reason behind the saying that the best promotion is the one from excited customers. Hence recommendation is the most honest way of communication. So as a matter of fact, products and services which are not recommendable, also do not have the value for buying it and will therefore be dead in the future. Firstly this means that brands need to acquire new customers through valuable content and word of mouth. Secondly to develop existent customers to recommenders and finally to encourage people, who can't or don't want to be a customer to share a brands content. Promotional communication is nowadays not working anymore, therefore brands have to emphasize on content (cf. Schüller 2016, p. 263 - 265). Digital communication can be described as the communication process in cooperation with digital media, which means to distribute content through digital communication channels (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 84). Many definitions of a digital communication concept exist. Schmidbauer and Jorzik define a communication concept as a navigation instrument for all communication activities derived from analysis and strategy. All activities run through a feedback loop by monitoring the performance to show if the communication was a success or not (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 26). The author is focussing on an integrated communication concept with the approach of integrating marketing- and corporate communication in one concept (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 35). Mast defines integrated communication as the management of all communication processes within a company as well as internal and external environment and has the aim to create a consistent, formal and chronological appearance in line with the target group (cf. Mast 2016 p. 38). The author has chosen the concept of Ruisinger due to the fact that it concentrates more on digital communication and reflects the

outcomes of the already used literature in this thesis. In the following subchapters the main parts of a digital communication concept will be elaborated:
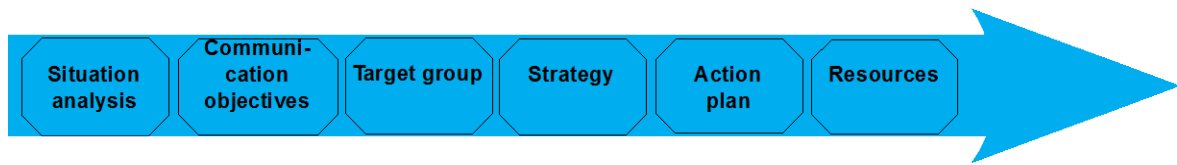
Figure 9: Components of a digital communication concept (based on Ruisinger 2017, p. 226)

5.2 Elaboration of a situation analysis

Every communication strategy needs a solid foundation and this has to be set up in the situation analysis of a communication concept (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 132). The analysis should give a clear understanding of the current situation within the company comprising its offers, the competitors on the market and the industry itself. Superficiality and mistakes in this phase will result in a deficit within the strategy later on. It also gives a current status about the previous communication activities, visibility of the brand within the web and answers about the target group (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 161f).

1.) Analysis of the organisation

The first step is to analyse the own organisation before determining any strategies or goals. This step is about what a corporation stands for, which goals it follows, the values, unique selling proposition, how it sets itself apart from competitors, current position on the market, brand promise, strengths and weaknesses and self-image vs. public image (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 163f).

Digital performance analysis

Regarding the general analysis of the organisation there is also a need to analyse the current performance of a website. Therefore it is important to consider the unique visitors, conversion rate, page views, repeat visits, average time visitors spend on the website, most popular pages and subscription rate for the newsletter. Outside of the own environment CTR rates regarding display advertising and Google ads as well as social media engagement need to be considered (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 570).

Analysis of the communication

Due the fact that relevant content for the target group is one of the critical success factors in communication, there should be a great emphasize on the previous communication activities in order to elaborate communication tasks. In this phase companies need to ask themselves if a marketing strategy, clear communication goals and determined target groups exist, which activities have been done so far and if they have been successful, how the target group has interacted with the content and how much resource is available within the company for this topic (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 166).

Analysis of the visibility

When dealing with digital communication it is of course crucial to analyse the visibility on social media platforms but also within search engines based on a specific topic. Furthermore the presence on social media, how influencers and other media are talking and writing about a brand need to be observed. This analysis will give a sense of how positive, negative or neutral the communication is at the moment (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 168f).

2.) Analysis of the target group

In communication it is a crucial requirement to understand the needs, behaviours, expectations, desires and digital communication behaviour of the target group. Therefore media usage, online activities, interests, expectations towards a brand, desires, wishes, online affinity, the attitude towards the company and where the target group is accessible should be analysed. Companies need to find out how comments, shares, clicks, recommendations and ratings can be boosted (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 172f).

3.) Analysis of competitors within the industry

This analysis will help to estimate the own communication activities in a realistic way and to get more insights about the competitors and a snapshot of the industry (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 170). For the competitor analysis, a company needs to determine a vertical row with relevant criteria in digital communication like for example the setup of the website, used communication channels and activities on social media. Afterwards on a horizontal row, three main competitors should be stated. After answering all criteria in line with the competitor and the own

company, the results need to be rated on a polarity scale and after connecting the dots the outcome will be a clear picture of the current situation (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 132). The following aspects can help to analyse the target group:

- **Channels:** The first step can be done by analysing the existing channels of the competition like the own website and the social media presence.
- **Content:** Regarding content it is important to observe what kind of content the competition is offering and which content is working for the competition on social media channels.
- **Sentiment:** This aspect within the analysis part gives an overview of how the community is talking about the competitor.
- **SEO:** The observation of the competitors SEO strategy is also necessary in this stage by reviewing all relevant aspects like website traffic, keywords, key phrases, links and so on (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 566f).

4.) Analysis of the influences from the environment

In order to understand the environment where a company wants to operate, the PESTEL or also called PESTLE-analysis will give more insights into this field. The PESTLE analysis consists of **p**olitical-, **e**conomic-, **s**ocial-, **t**echnological-, **l**egal- and **e**nvironmental-factors within a country and can be described as follows (cf. Pestle analysis 2017):

Political: The political factor deals with the influence of a government on a certain industry or the economy.

Economic: This factor is about the current performance of an economy and how it is influencing the company.

Social: It is all about the social environment of the target market and dealing with demographics, cultural trends and the population.

Technological: This term deals with the question if technological innovations do exist, which will further on affect the company.

Legal: The legal factor is divided into two parts: internal and external. Internal policies are determined within a company whereas external aspects arise from the business environment.

Environmental: The last part is about the influence of the surrounding environment on the business, like for example climate changes or geographical particularities (cf. Pestle analysis 2017).

5.) SWOT-analysis

In this phase all analysis need to be collected and brought into one overall conclusion. Hence the **SWOT** (**S**=strengths, **W**=weaknesses, **O**=opportunities, **T**=threats) analysis needs to be conducted. Strengths are the capabilities of a company whereas weaknesses are the contrary part of it. Opportunities are dealing with the chances whereas threats are dealing with the risks due to the environment of an organisation (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 178f). First of all it is necessary to state the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

strenghts	**opportunities**
weaknesses	**threats**

Table 1: SWOT analysis (based on Springer Gabler Verlag 2017)

The next step is to illustrate these factors on a SWOT-catalogue, which shows expandable chances, how risks can be weakened by strengths but also which weaknesses need an improvement, if a risk from the environment would encounter a weakness (cf. Springer Gabler Verlag 2017).

External factor/ development	meets internal strengths/weaknesses				which means opportunities/ threats			Leading to the following challenge
	+	-	strength /weakness	cause	+	-	opportunity /threat	
+ = strength or opportunity / - = weakness or threat								
1 = low / 2 = medium / 3 = strong								

Table 2: SWOT-catalogue (based on Mairhofer 2014, p. 113f)

5.3 Definition of communication objectives

Digital communication should not be an end in itself in fact it has to contribute to the goals of a corporation (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 185). Communication objectives always derive from the marketing objectives of a company (cf. Meffert/Burmann/Kirchgeorg p. 607). In order to determine in which direction a company wants to go it is important to set up qualitative-strategic goals as a first step. Examples in communication would be: image and reputation, awareness, visibility, credibility, influencer relations, community development and branding. Without the ability of measuring goals, it will be worthless. Therefore quantitative-smart goals need to be determined. **SMART** goals possess the characteristics **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ccepted, **r**ealistic and **t**imely (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 186 - 189).

S	specific	Goals have to be formulated in a explicit, unambiguous way.
M	measurable	Target figures need to be measurable on the basis of numbers and KPI's
A	accepted	Goals have to be accepted by all persons involved and will be followed with encouragement.
R	realistic	Goals are achievable based on the available resources.
T	timely	Goals need to have schedules and are terminated.

Table 3: SMART Objectives (based on Ruisinger 2017, p. 189)

Several methods representing digital objectives do exist. Due to the fact that the author has already introduced the RACE framework in chapter 4.2. it is desirable to work on this model as well in the objective part of the digital communication concept. Hence each step in this phase can be quantified into an objective:

- **REACH:** This phase is about attracting visits to a website and gain awareness. A possible target can be to increase the monthly visits from the UK by 10 %.
- **ACT:** After the user has interacted with the content the next measure is about generating leads.
- **CONVERT:** After the user gets attracted by a brand and has also interacted with the content it is desirable to get new customers. Therefore a possible goal would be to increase the online conversion rate.
- **ENGAGE:** To achieve long lasting relationships, the KPI engagement plays a major role and can be measured by shares, likes and comments on social media channels or the number of reviews from satisfied customers on the online shop (cf. Chaffey/Smith 2017, p. 579).

5.4 Selection of a target group

"It's about conversations, and the best communicators start as the best listeners" (Solis 2007). In the past communication experts have always been seeking for

new messages but today the duty is to be a good listener who cares about the emotions, needs and questions of the target group. In this stage it is also important to have a look at the initial situation analysis of the target group in order to find out what kind of behaviour the customers were used to (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 199f).

Selection of the target group

The first step to roughly define the target group is to find out what kind of reference groups a company wants to interact with. These can be customers, employees, partners, journalists, influencer or public institutions. After selecting the right target group it needs to be more clustered as well as described and also prioritized due the fact that it will not be possible to communicate with each target group in the same intensity (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 201f).

Segmentation

There are various possibilities to cluster target groups: according to socio-demographic characteristics, markets, kind of relationship and the function (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 203f). In this case the author has chosen the segmentation according to socio-demographic characteristics, which are the following (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 231f).

- **Demographic characteristics:** age, sex, family status, nationality,
- **Geographical characteristics:** country, region, town, community, living environment
- **Socio-economic characteristics:** educational background, profession, income
- **Behaviour-related characteristics:** media usage, information behaviour, purchase and recommendation (cf. Schmidbauer/Jorzik 2017 p. 231f).

Personas

Identifying these characteristics is one part and is still used when defining a target group, but in order to really understand the customer, the behaviour and motivation behind each person, marketers need to create personas. A persona is a comprehensive profile of a potential customer with all relevant information a company wants to know. But in fact it is not real person hence marketers create such personas because it helps to understand about what these people care about

and what questions are considered when engaging with the provided content. This way of visualization will help to better connect with the target group and will also assist content creators in their daily work (cf. Leibtag 2014, p. 159 - 162). To create such a persona a marketer needs to put himself in the shoes of this person and for example describe the daily life of this person including demographic, daily routine, media usage, technological facilities, position in business, daily business activities and challenges. But at the end companies have to ask themselves how they can help this persona and what communication should provoke. Creating those fictional personas is one part but it should also be linked with the existing data within the company revealed from analytics. Afterwards this persona needs as well a name and a virtual picture and at the end there is a warrant of apprehension of each persona (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 211 - 216).

5.5 Digital communication strategy

After analysing and determining all the previous steps in this communication concept, it needs a clear strategy, which merges the communication objectives with the target group. It describes how to influence the target group and which topics the company wants to stand for by determining the positioning, communicative messages and strategic implementation as well as the direction of how to communicate (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 221).

5.5.1 International communication

Not all communication channels and instruments can be globally applied due to different environmental factors. Depending on this fact organisations need to find an internationalisation strategy, which emphasizes on similarities or differences. There are two major approaches: the standardisation and the differentiation strategy. The standardisation strategy tries to operate international communication also for the global market whereas the differentiation strategy tries to focus on a local realisation.

The standardisation strategy is aligned to create a uniform communication across the borders. There is the belief that all countries do have a similarity regarding the relevant aspects, which need to be handled. In practice this would mean to just translate an advertisement from German to Japanese but in this case the question

is, if it is really possible to reach the customer by only translating some words of an advertisement. In reality a global communication concept in case of a standardised communication strategy will not work because communication is local and very personal. While it would sometimes be possible in reference to persuasive advertisement, communication on a level playing field where it is the aim to achieve dialogue, understanding and trust, will be not possible. The differentiation strategy is taking these concerns into account and arranges its communication based on the particularities of a country, which helps to approach the target group and the local media in a more accurate way. Most of the international companies try to think globally but act locally which is a mixture of both strategies (cf. Mast 2016, p. 429f).

5.5.2   Strategy options in digital communication

The strategic implementation part is a connection of the strategic part and the activity plan where the strategy will be defined (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 230). In literature many strategy options exist but the author focuses on the relevant ones, also based on the previous literature part of this thesis. Therefore four strategies can be taken into account and also mixed up: dialogue-, branding- and entertainment-, image-, profiling- and reputation- as well as sales-strategy (cf. Schwede 2013).

Sales strategy

As the goal is to achieve revenue this strategy is the most important one. In this case digital media is used to sell products or services by offering cross- and upselling activities or video clips about the offer (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 236).

Dialogue strategy

Only generating revenue without engaging with the target group won't lead to success. Therefore a company needs to interact with customers and has to develop a strong community by offering interactive elements in order to motivate the customers in an emotional way. This strategy places enormous demand on a company because it is resource-intensive and must be open minded for a transparent communication. The image-, profiling- and reputation strategy also belong to the dialogue strategy but is applied on the long-run to strengthen the brand awareness (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 293).

Branding and entertainment strategy

Although the sales and dialogue strategy are the most important strategies, also some creative and viral campaigns will generate more reach and hence establish a more innovative appearance. Therefore visual media like for example expressive pictures and videos are crucial for presenting a brand in an emotional and dynamic way (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 236).

5.5.3 Content strategy

Strategic content has the aim to orientate communication towards the needs of the target group in order to achieve the strategic corporate goals. The SCOM-framework will help to find the right strategy. It consists of the following aspects (cf. Lange 2017):
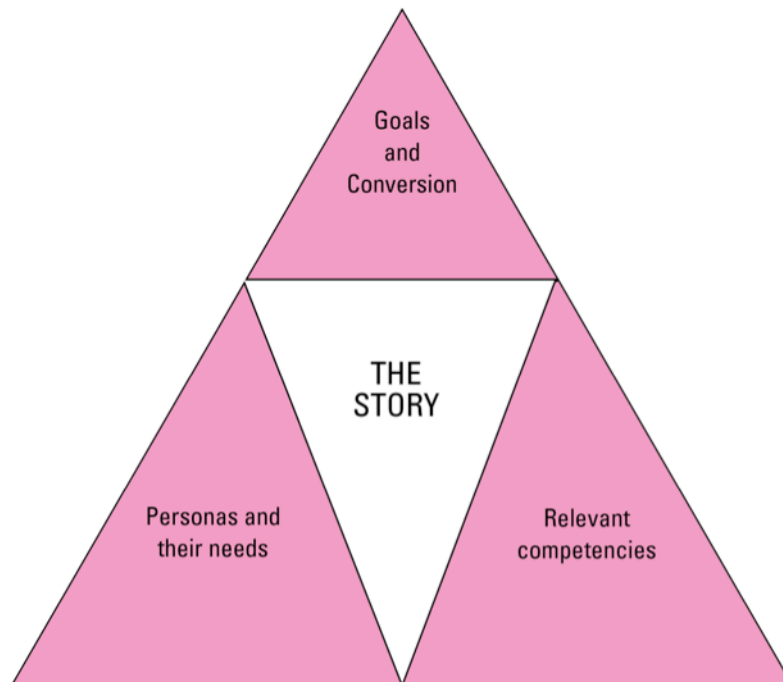
Figure 10: SCOM-framework (based on Lange 2017)

1.) Goals

Before creating a content strategy it is always the task to analyse the current situation. Which content already worked and which did not. Then clear goals need to be defined, which content marketing can influence.

2.) Personas and needs

Content is useless if it does not satisfy the needs or answer the questions of a brands target group. Thus personas need to be created and described so that brands will create content that really matters and is relevant.

3.) Competencies within a company

The knowledge about the target group is essential and already a first step towards a good content strategy but only half of the job. In order that the target group loves the provided content, companies need to ask themselves where they have their competencies.

4.) Conversion

A good content strategy should also lead to more conversion and therefore sales. Companies need to find a creative way to combine meaningful content with the provided products.

5.) The core-story

This is the core element of a content strategy an can be also seen as a mission. All pieces of content, created in the future should deal with this core-story (cf. Lange 2017).

5.6 Contents of an action plan

The foundation for the creation of content is to set up a theme planning where all topics have to be orientated on the field of expertise and on the needs of the target group. The following topics can be generally determined: stories about the own company, information about the industry, service, publications and miscellaneous. After setting up the content strategy with the relevant topic planning it is crucial to coordinate the content and to assign responsibilities, time, distribution and seeding within an editorial plan. Besides focusing on the content it also helps to have an overview of all activities and to determine the channels where the content will be

distributed – ultimately content needs a distribution strategy as well (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 278 - 280). The figure stated below is an example for an editorial plan:

Content plan 2018

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER		Occassion	Keywords	Responsibilities		Channels								
				Author	Approval	Face-book	Ins-tagram	Pinterest	Blog	Twitter	Google+	Youtube	Other	Status
		Description	Listing											
CW 37	11.09.	Mustermann Event	#event, #product-launch #hemp	SABINE	YES	x	x		x					
CW 38														
CW 39														

Figure 11: Example of an editorial plan (own presentation)

5.7 Resource planning

Of course all the previous steps in this digital communication concept need resources. This is also the reason why it is beneficial to determine personal, timely and financial resources already beforehand:

Personal resources: Personal resources are a key issue in this field in order to create content, distribute and coordinate everything in digital communication. Activities also need enough resources to perform successfully.

Time resources: Another essential part is the matter of time. Many employees complain that the digital importance is not anchored in the mind of top management. There is the impression that digital communication is only about publishing news but in fact it is about research, planning, coordination, communication and distribution of content and furthermore about facilitating a dialogue and to entertain the target group.

Financial resources: Another misbelief in digital communication is the belief that it is cheaper in contrast to traditional media. Financial resources have to be planned for the conception, installation, implementation and monitoring of digital communication (cf. Ruisinger 2017, p. 291 - 299).

5.8 Controlling

Communication also needs to be analysed regarding success and failure and helps to understand what works and what does not work. There are many tools available to track the achievements in digital communication: web-, social- and SEO-analytics, user experience and tag management (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 265 - 274).

- **Web analytics:** This is an analytics tool that collects all standard data on a website and offers valuable information on real-time visitors, demographics, customer path, traffic sources and so forth.

- **Social analytics:** These kind of tools help to understand the effectiveness of social media efforts and how the audience is engaging with the content on social media platforms.

- **SEO-analytics:** SEO tools give an indication of the overall organic search performance of a company and analyse all relevant aspects which need to be improved for better results. The competition can be tracked with such tools also.

- **User experience:** The best communication activities are effortless if the user experience on the website is just misleading. Therefore it is important to track how users are experiencing the website and how it can be optimized for a better conversion (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 265 - 274).

The following table will give an overview of possible KPI's based on the particular instrument used in digital communication:

Instruments	Possible KPI'S
Website & Blog	visits, page views, average stay, bounce rate, traffic sources, conversion rate, click-through rate, exit page, returning visitors
E-Mail Marketing	opening rate, click rate, conversion rate, bounce rate, reading duration, subscriber list,
Online visibility	presence and accessibility, visibility in

	search engines based on defined keywords and phrases, ranking compared to competitors and the industry
Social Media	reach, fans and followers, interaction-rate, traffic to website, sentiment analysis
Messenger	number of messenger dialogues, quality, frequency, sentiment rate, newsletter subscribers, click-through rates

Table 4: KPI's in digital communication (based on Ruisinger 2017, p. 321)

6 Market research

The following chapter is dealing with the primary and secondary market research to develop a digital communication concept in the practical part of this thesis. Firstly the author decided to conduct a secondary research by gaining more insights about the current situation into UK and then to conduct qualitative interviews in order to find out the missing information as well as verifying the findings from theory.

6.1 Secondary market research

The objective of the secondary market research is to gain detailed information for the elaboration of the situation analysis within the digital communication concept. Therefore the current situation of the market, the target group and the competition need to be analysed. Finally all internal strengths and weaknesses will be connected with possible threats and opportunities and as a consequence strategic challenges arise.

Topic	Information
E-commerce market in the UK	• Situation within the e-commerce market as well as the sports nutrition and superfood industry
Competition	• Relevant competitors and their digital performance
Target group	• Consumer behaviour regarding premium products
Internal analysis	• Current situation and digital performance within the company
PESTLE	• Relevant external impacts from the environment on the company

Table 5: Information regarding secondary research (own presentation)

6.2 Primary market research

6.2.1 Survey objectives

A-WARE wants to acquire new customers online from the UK but is currently only operating in Austria and therefore doesn't have the experience in this market. In order to be able to establish a digital communication concept to efficiently achieve the target group, primary market research has been applied. The following research questions have been defined to develop an international digital communication concept for A-WARE:

- What needs to be generally considered when going international with an online shop and based on the example of the UK?

- Which are the most effective communication channels regarding customer acquisition in the UK?

- What are the success factors in digital communication in an international e-commerce business environment and to which extent can the elaborated factors in theory be justified?

6.2.2 Research method & sample

Qualitative market research can be divided into group discussions, individual interviews and qualitative monitoring. Group discussions, also called focus groups are discussions consisting of 6-10 people, talking about a specific topic. This method consists of a lot of group dynamics. Furthermore qualitative monitoring is the observation of specific situations. Finally individual interviews can be divided into three different parts: explorative interviews, psychological in-depth interviews and focussed interviews (cf. Oberzaucher 2012, p. 25 - 31). Qualitative market research is especially applied when dealing with complex researches with the aim to get individual answers (cf. Naderer 2011, p. 27 - 29).

For this thesis, the author has chosen qualitative market research because only experts in this specific area are able to answer the stated research questions. The disadvantage in focus groups will be that some experts may not want to share the

whole communication strategy in front of possible competitors. Therefore for this thesis the author has chosen in-depth interviews because this method offers deeper insights into a specific topic (cf. Kuß 2012, p. 140 - 142).

Sample

To answer the above-mentioned questions it is prerequisite to define a well-defined sample size and the right interviewees. In contrast to quantitative market research, in qualitative research there is no representative selection and a smaller number of cases necessary (cf. Kuß et al. 2012, p. 47). A total of 15 experts have been interviewed for this market research and two different target groups have been chosen:

- B2C companies from Austria in the sports or food industry with experience within the UK market
- Experts in the field of digital communication

Furthermore these target groups also needed to fulfil at least 4 years of experience and the following criteria:

- Experience in the field of digital marketing and communication
- Knowledge regarding the internationalization of B2C online shops

For the acquisition of the interview partners the personal business network and Linkedin have been used. There was as well the challenge that companies are not allowed to share any insights and competitive advantages and therefore were not willing to participate. Other experts within the companies have agreed but only under the condition of being anonymised.

The interview has been conducted with a guideline of open questions which has been prepared in advance.

6.2.3 Interview partners

Nr.	Company	Contact person	Products/services
1	Niceshops	CEO	E-commerce software provider and shop owner
2	Scoop & Spoon	Head of communication and digital marketing	Digital communication agency based in Austria and London
3	Woom	E-commerce and marketing specialist	Selling premium bikes
4	Mahoom	Online marketing specialist	Consultant for e-commerce and SEO
5	Anonymous	Head of marketing & communication	Offering nutrients for the sports industry
6.	Löffler	Head of e-commerce	Sports clothing industry
7	A-Commerce	CEO	E-commerce consultants and e-commerce association
8	Anonymous	Head of e-commerce	Sports clothing company
9	Getontop	CEO	Online- & performance marketing agency
10	Waterdrop	Head of marketing	Beverages for health conscious people
11	Anonymous	Head of marketing	Sports glasses company
12	Liveramp	CEO	Startup for omnichannel marketing and former career at Amazon in the UK
13	Intersport Rent International	E-business / online marketing	International renting company for ski equipment
14	Rock Mission	CEO	Growth hacking agency based in London
15	Big Power	CEO	Protein snacks company

Table 6: Interview partners primary research (own presentation)

6.2.4 Main findings

Motivation of going international

In general the motivation behind going international via an online shop by entering new markets is to achieve more growth hence in the most cases revenue, market share or brand awareness. In fact only operating in Austria will not be profitable for a company, therefore it makes sense, due to the market similarity (nearly the same culture, language, currency) to focus as a first step on Germany and as a second step on the whole DACH-region. The UK is usually the door opener for the USA. Furthermore producers with the main strategy to have retailers in countries abroad are very often creating an online shop as a second main pillar and hence online and offline are encouraging each other in a positive way.

Differences and insights into the United Kingdom

Although the UK seems to be an attractive market regarding sports nutrition and superfood and a well-developed e-commerce market, the UK is highly competitive and saturated. Shop designs therefore need to be much more differentiated.

The UK has been experienced as a more innovative and open-minded country in contrast to Austria. Furthermore the country is several years ahead regarding digital marketing trends. This matter of fact needs to be taken into consideration regarding customer experience, communication and design on a website. Due to wording differences from country to country, it is prerequisite to instruct a native speaker for the translation. Regarding the design UK sites seem to be much cleaner and people like to try out new things but in general it can be said that the design within Europe is nearly the same. The UK tends to be a lot more price sensitive as well as offer and discount driven therefore voucher and cashback sites or various other promotional sites can be a big driver of sales. Apart from this Amazon is very strong on the market and should be considered when operating online in the UK. Especially in big cities like London or Manchester online advertising is quite expensive.

Customer experience is at least very important for the UK and the following aspects need to be considered: consistency and easy navigation, page speed, easy and fast check-out as well as delivery, means of payment (Paypal, all credit cards) and also a local telephone number should be stated.

For the future Brexit is a big issue for the e-commerce business because significant uncertainties do exist and nobody knows how it will affect the business. Another trend in the UK is that consumers prefer organic products from abroad and will spend more money for premium food especially if it is organic and vegan.

Internationalisation of e-commerce businesses

As a start-up with fewer resources it is especially crucial to establish the brand on the home market first before going international. Before targeting a foreign country it is advisable to make sure to do it with total commitment. After a bad initial experience, it's hard to win the customers back later on.

Sometimes also marketplaces are a good alternative to enter new markets with less costs instead of operating an own online shop. This strategy helps to get an overview of how attractive the market really is. Amazon for example offers "fulfilment by Amazon" where the logistic is operated via Amazon and the brand will be listed much higher on the result page. To facilitate the internationalisation process and to increase brand awareness cooperation with companies who have the same target group can also be advisable.

There is no patent remedy regarding the internationalisation of B2C online shops and the ideal domain strategy. In many companies it was common that the business grew and then they decided for the .com domain with the distinction between country and language. Other experts said that a local domain can be a powerful growth lever because it enjoys more trust within a country. As a consequence this strategy needs a lot of effort because companies need to offer a local customer service, an office address in the UK and a local hosting. The alternative and much more cost savvy strategy at the beginning would be to start with the .com domain consisting of language and country selection possibilities and an hreflang-tag. No matter whether a company is choosing the first or the second option, when founding a company it is recommendable to save all brand domains worldwide and as a second step to redirect them to the .com page. The main shop systems currently used on the market are Shopware, Shopify, Magento, Hybris, WooCommerce but also internal solutions.

Other important aspects are to offer the right currency, the content needs to be translated by a native speaker and to cooperate with local logistic companies which helps to minimize initial costs and guarantees fast delivery.

Communication tools for acquiring new customers from the UK

All communication tools stated within the theory of this thesis can be confirmed and are usually used in a mixture. Of course the selection of the right communication tool depends on the products, the target group and the market. Before going international and especially for start-ups cost effective growth hacks and viral campaigns can help to achieve growth for example with Kickofflabs.

SEO plays a major role and is a precondition for online shops. Besides the technical basis companies can only differentiate themselves when offering the better solution/answer in terms of content than the competitor. An interesting outcome is that SEO via Amazon is much cheaper than SEO within the own online shop. Before investing a vast amount of money in continuously improving on- and off page activities it is recommendable to first invest a little bit of budget into SEA to get a feeling of how the market is acting and which search terms and also needs are already existing. Also market-entry packages by offering some protein-welcome-packages for a very low price instead of getting feedback can help to better understand the target group.

Depending on the goals, social media marketing is on the one hand beneficial for brand awareness as well as building a strong brand but on the other hand also to generate sale. Due to the fact that the UK is quite expensive regarding advertising, it would first make sense to focus on similar countries or smaller cities with lower advertising prices. This helps to generate first reactions on the advertising and after achieving a social proof it should be advertised on the target market with higher costs. The target group will more likely react on it because the posting has already a lot of reactions. Influencer marketing has a mixed image within the research because some had good experience whereas some said that it does not generate growth. In general the basis for successful influencer marketing is a careful selection. It will be important to find out some micro-influencers with the relevant target group for the brand who have the passion to present and write about the product of a company and also integrate affiliate links.

Surprisingly, although email marketing has a bad image it is one of the most effective communication tools to generate sales but the subscriber-list should have grown organically. It has been also proven that sending an email after the user has some products in his basket will help to convert him to a customer.

Online PR, which means to cooperate with journalists and getting mentioned within relevant articles, is another way of how to reach new customers. It can also be useful to search for relevant blogs and forums in which A-WARE can offer valuable information regarding the product. Many experts also said that offline communication activities like events or tastings within a stationary retail leads to a lot of traffic online.

Communication starts with acquiring new customers but after the converting process customer service is an essential part of communication and has to be done by native speakers.

Success factors in digital communication

The success factors in digital communication which have been elaborated in the theoretical part of this thesis can also be observed in practice. The core statement of this research is that no matter how much traffic a company will have on its page, it will be useless if a brand has no clear positioning, does not offer the right content to the target group, has no unique selling point and isn't authentic.

Moreover to be successful in the long-run, companies need to have strong brands which give the feeling of trust. Of course, start-ups will not have enough resources at the beginning to be able to only invest in brand awareness, therefore it is important to convince with relevant content. Effectively using a CRM database or third party data set can be incredibly useful to display relevant offers or messages to customers. A side effect of having a strong brand is that companies can generate much more organic direct traffic and hence trust. Amazon for example is successful because it has a strong brand in which customers can trust and also the reviews and the detailed product information simply reflect trust.

Another success factor is to optimize and control. Especially in digital business, companies get so much data. Analysing and continuously optimizing the customer

experience is a key for success. Reviews and ratings of the community are much more important than what the brand is communicating. Hence it is necessary to respond to all comments in order to be available for the customer. Of course this feedback will also help the further development of the product.

"Less is more" – a website should not be overcrowded because that will give people a possibility to think and create doubts. Companies need to be on point and also consistent. Sometimes a landing page doesn't need more than a headline in reference to the advertising, a call to action and a form for the email address. Also the checkout has to be easy and fast and possible purchasing triggers like product reviews need to be placed at the right position to achieve conversion. Effective communication results in a better customer experience, retention and better return on investment in any new developments.

If there is not much budget available, companies need to find creative and clever ways to generate growth – so everything the mass is not doing.

Trends

Pretending and testing new trends is good but also quite time consuming. Therefore start-ups should learn from the big competitors because they have already been in the same stage and put a lot of effort and resources in it which a start-up normally hasn't.

Amazon has such a market dominance and companies need to ask themselves if it still makes sense to establish an own online shop. On the other side this would lead to a kind of dependency because all customer data will stay at Amazon and companies have to offer prices and capacities demanded by Amazon otherwise there will be not listed on premium positions.

Another trend in times of Siri and Alexa is that companies will have to adapt the content regarding search requests because people will more and more search via a voice-operated system and this means a massive change for SEO. Apart from the technical progresses like virtual reality, chatbots or artificial intelligence it will be the challenge for companies to offer relevant communication. People will still

seek for strong brands with relevant content, an excellent customer service and emotional shopping experience.

The new data protection regulation, which will come into force in May 2018, is already the first step towards a safer handling of customer data. Therefore companies have to offer relevant content in order to get personal data.

7 Digital communication concept for A-WARE

7.1 Situation analysis

1.) Analysis of the target market UK

It's a matter of fact that e-commerce sales steadily increased from year to year and is expected to achieve a revenue of € 602,84 billion in 2017 within Europe (cf. Ecommerce Foundation 2017a, p. 32). Surprisingly the UK still has the largest e-commerce market within Europe and with 7,16 % the highest E-GDP (cf. Ecommerce Foundation 2017a, p. 35f). It is also important to mention that 82 % of United Kingdoms' population purchased goods and services online in 2016 and the food sector experienced almost 14,1 % growth in online sales. In 2016 people between 25 and 34 years purchased utterly the most (cf. Ecommerce Foundation, 2017b, p. 15 - 25).

Superfood and sports nutrition market in the UK

While sports nutrition products have often been associated with bodybuilders or sports athletes in the past it seems that it has become an integrated part of daily exercisers. A study from Mintel in 2016 reveals that the UK market sales on sports nutrition will raise by 27 % until 2018 and young consumers and high-earners are the main users of sports nutrition products. Also 47 % of consumers using sports nutrition products said that these products are part of their diet. Sports nutrition foods and drinks do not only have the function to facilitate muscle growth or losing weight but are especially attracting the target group which are keen on having a healthy and active lifestyle. The main factors why people in the UK are eating and drinking high protein products are obvious: 41 % make sure to get enough protein, 37 % want to support the own healthy lifestyle and 41 % try to keep saturated for a longer time (cf. Mintel 2016).

The same tendency as for sports nutrition can be observed for the superfood industry in the UK. Superfood in general can be described as a food rich in nutrients and is beneficial for health (cf. Collins 2016). Especially hemp is expected to be one of the top food ingredients to watch in 2018 after a study from Mintel. Although the hemp plant has been ignored for a long time, high protein products it will be an ingredient in many plant-based and "free from" products (cf. Schofield 2017).

The UK has a strong dependency regarding food import on EU because it executes almost one third. There is definitely a trend of rising demand for healthy, innovative, vegan and functional convenience snacking and food to go products. Also the organic market is growing within the UK but the own production cannot cover the demand therefore customers from the UK like to buy organic products from abroad. This would be a chance for Austrian companies to corporate with gourmet food or health food stores (cf. WKO 2018a).

2.) Internal analysis of A-WARE

A-WARE stands for innovation, quality and authenticity in the sports nutrition and superfood industry. On the Austrian market the company is well known in Styria and Vienna and many notable pharmacies and retailers sell their products. The strength due to the small size of the company is that it can be quite flexible and is therefore able to adapt to the changes on the market very quickly. But also a weakness occurs because the scalability of the production is limited and very big amounts of quantities could be harmful.

Values & unique selling proposition

The whole supply chain of A-WARE is regional and therefore all processes are handled within at least 30 km around the headquarters. The raw material is directly harvested from the own agriculture and this guarantees a small ecological footprint, premium quality regarding the raw material and is therefore a differentiator in contrast to big corporations. Furthermore A-WARE offers the first protein grown and made in Austria and there is no other comparable competitor on the market regarding quality, taste and drinkability. The production process from hemp plants to protein should not be underestimated which is the reason why A-WARE has created an own processing technology.

Corporate goals

- The superordinate goal of A-WARE is to achieve 50 % growth at a constant quality per year.

- A-WARE should be associated with hemp and high premium products instead of mass production.

- Due to the fact that the hemp plant has a great medical potential, the company wants to develop the product further in 2019.

- In the third quarter of 2018, A-WARE wants to enter the UK market with an online shop.

Digital analysis

A-WARE has currently an own website (www.a-ware.at) with a small online shop, one Instagram and a Facebook channel which are analysed in the following paragraphs:

Website: The website of A-WARE is currently operating on an .at domain and only available in German. Unfortunately the .com as well as the co.uk domain are already assigned to another owner. The website contains information regarding the company, the hemp itself, products and the production but there is also hidden content in the form of PDF's on the website. Furthermore there is also a small shop available but with less product details. Also displayed on the site: the partners and the social networks.

At the moment there exists neither SEO nor a content marketing strategy. The main traffic is of course from Austria and due to the fact that there is no English version available the traffic from abroad is also limited. In March 2018 the website had 1.532 visits, 4.954 page views, an average session of 2,43 minutes, a bounce rate of 42 % and 50 % have been users of a smartphone. The look and feel of the website is designed in an appealing way and easy to navigate.

Facebook: Facts: 765 fans

A-WARE has already a lot of mentions within its strong media network like for example at "Kleine Zeitung" or "Kurier". These kinds of postings do have a lot of interaction. The main target group on Facebook is between 25-34 years old and mainly from Austria. A-WARE is mainly posting information on the product and new retailers. It seems that also regarding social media no clear content plan exists because the types of content and also the posting rhythm are quite mixed. Facebook is also a touchpoint for questions regarding the product.

Instagram: Facts: 66 postings, 342 followers, 88 subscribed channels

A-WARE is already using user-generated content on its Instagram channel and this seems to work very good because there is a lot of interaction on each post and there are a lot of mentions from fans.

3.) Analysis of relevant competitors within the UK

Competitor 1: Myprotein

https://www.myprotein.com/

Myprotein is positioning itself as Europe's number 1 online sports nutrition brand. The website of myprotein.co.uk directly redirects to the .com domain and offers a wide product range of protein powders. The company is operating worldwide and on the website it is possible to switch between the country, the language and the currency. The design reflects a premium character.

Channels: Facebook (1.8 million fans), Instagram UK (423.000), Google+ and Twitter (151.000)

Myprotein is operating on a very professional level on all channels and always tries to post relevant and useful content for the target group in combination with the products. The Facebook page is a global page which means that the content will appear in the users' language when logged in. On Instagram and Twitter the brand has own channels for each country. On Google+ the latest posting is from 2016 therefore this page is not up-to-date anymore.

Content: The customer is in the centre of all activities because they offer the right product based on a specific goal or based on a type of sport. Furthermore the company also sells sports clothes and has an own blog dealing with supplements and nutrition. The blog answers all questions regarding training, nutrition, supplements and recipes and also has a brand ambassador programme. When accessing the website a shop can be perceived but the content is somehow in the foreground.

Sentiment: The company seems to have strong community and there are a lot of interactions on social media. The customer experiences are mainly positive.

SEO: When analysing the page regarding search engine optimization it can be observed that this page is nearly ranking for every kind of keyword relating to sports nutrition.

Competitor 2: Bulkpowders

https://www.bulkpowders.co.uk

Bulkpowders is offering its products within Europe and has an own domain for each country. Furthermore the user also has the possibility to change the currency. It seems like this company is also the competitor of Myprotein because it is set up in the same way.

Channels: Facebook (203.621 fans), Instagram UK (55.500), Google+ and Twitter (28.000)

It can be observed that Bulkpowders is miles behind the strongest competitor Myprotein. There is a clear focus on promoting "the core" on all social media channels combined with products. The design reflects no premium status in the opinion of the author.

Content: This website has a strong focus on the shop at first sight by showing a lot of products and bestsellers. After having a deeper look it also represents the community of Bulkpowder called the Core.

Sentiment: Within the channels as well as via customer service there are mainly good reviews and positive interactions.

SEO: There is already a big difference between Bulkpowders and Myprotein regarding search engine optimization but the company is also putting in a lot of effort and has a clear strategy.

Competitor 3: SevenHills

https://www.sevenhillswholefoods.com/

SevenHills is focusing on the organic and premium values of its products and accessible via the .com domain. The domain is valid since the end of 2015 and currently the website is only optimized for the UK because there is no possibility to change country or currency settings.

Channels: Facebook (940 fans), Instagram (5011 followers), Google+ and Twitter (422)

SevenHills has nearly the same size and power like A-WARE and is a good example of how to communicate the values premium and organic across all channels. The main focus seems to be on recipes but also information regarding the farmers and new products do exist.

Content: Apart from the strong positioning on organic & premium superfood by presenting a lot of information about the philosophy, the company also has a blog in which all relevant information for the target group can be found. Furthermore there are also some cooperation with sport athletes.

Sentiment: There are no current reviews regarding the customer service available but the interactions on the various channels seem to be quite positive.

SEO: Since the website is online the company is continuously improving its SEO rankings for the relevant keywords like hemp protein, organic matcha, organic spirulina and so on.

4.) Analysis of the target group

Online consumer behaviour insights

The most active consumer group within the UK is between 21 and 35 years old (cf. Advantec 2017). The reasons why consumers in the UK are choosing a retailer is depending on these three aspects: price, trust and stock (cf. PWC 2018a). Due to the fact that price and quality are in general given, the ease of use and customer experience within an online shop is a key success factor as well as personalisation and meaningful connections lead to 40 % more purchase (cf. PWC 2018b). Regarding communication tools Facebook is with 70,88 % market share one of the biggest social media networks within the UK (cf. Statista 2018b). A study from Advantec revealed that there is an influence of Facebook and Instagram on the purchasing behaviour and people are willing to buy products via the social channels. Mobile & desktop usage together are the most common ways of how consumers shop and almost 53% of all respondents are reading customer reviews every time. Apart from this free delivery to the UK is mainly a must have (cf. Advantec 2017).

Cultural particularities in the UK

One of the biggest challenges in international B2C e-commerce business is the culture. It defines how people behave, act and what values exist – not only in daily life but also on the web. How customers are searching for information, what triggers actions and how a website is perceived mainly depends on the culture (cf. Idler 2013). It has an impact on the product assortment, payment and of course marketing and in this context most of all on the design of an online shop which starts with the navigation, colours and ends with pictures. While a customer in a stationary retail is able to verify the quality at the premises, an online shop has the disadvantage that it has to offer enough information regarding the products, the delivery- and payment issues in order to acquire the prerequisite trust. From a cultural perspective it is necessary to translate the whole content into the local language of the destination country because only in this case the customer can fully trust. Also important to consider is that some countries do have more than one language – therefore the decoupling of the country and the language selection have a great impact. There are also differences between the same languages like British and American English are not exactly the same – this is the reason why

there should be always a native in charge of the translation. Translation alone is not enough for the internationalisation of an online shop. A company has to emphasize on the cultural dimensions of Hofstede which is one of the biggest studies on national values (cf. Stallmann/Wegner 2015, p. 289 - 291). The following figure will give an overview of Hofstedes dimensions and reflects the differences between the home market Austria and the target market UK:
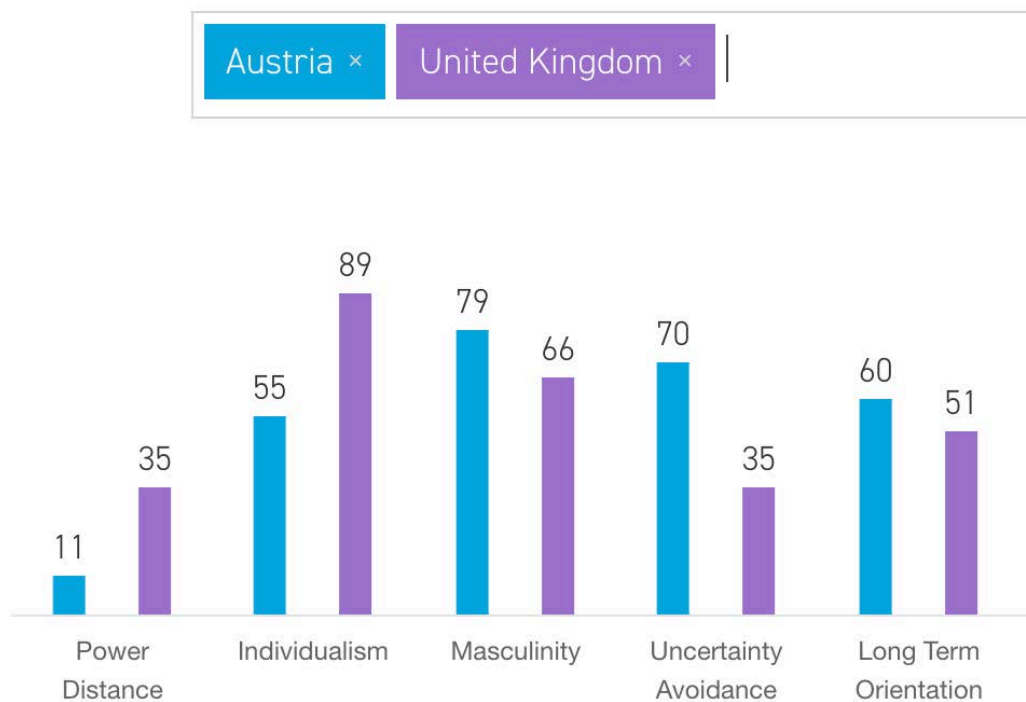
Figure 12: Comparison Hofstedes dimensions: Austria vs. UK (Hofestede Insights 2017)

Power Distance: This dimension is dealing with the equality of a society and describes to which extent the less powerful people accept how the power in a country is distributed (cf. Hofstede Insights 2017). People from a country with a low power distance don't like it to be controlled. In this case a website needs to have objective and detailed information so that the customer can make its own opinion on it. To make these people engage with the content and trust the website a company has to treat them with respect and to take care of interests. Societies with a high score of power distance are used to accept leadership and authorities. In this case an online shop has to state clear statements and facts in which the customers are not having so much responsibility. These societies trust the company as an expert and are less critical (cf. Idler 2017).

Individualism: Societies which are more individualistic are supposed to look more on themselves than on a group whereas for a collectivist society it is quite normal to belong to groups and to take care of them (cf. Hofstede Insights 2017). When it comes to web design and a high score on individualism, a company should focus on the individual desires of the target group because these societies will mainly look for things based on their own interests and goals. Collectivist societies don't act on their own interest. The decisions are highly influenced by others hence a company has to offer references, testimonials and options for social media sharing that an instant feedback from friends is possible (cf. Idler 2017).

Masculinity vs. feminity: A high score in this dimension means to deal with a masculine culture which is driven by success, achievement and competition. Hence a low score describes a more feminine culture where it is not necessary to stand out of the crowd. It is more important that people are caring for each other (cf. Hofstede Insights 2017). If a country has a dominance of masculinity it is crucial to offer high quality and to be aware of the critical evaluation but also competition and incentives can be an attraction for this group. If a company has to deal with a more feminine society it is more important to offer them a great experience. This kind of culture loves to be entertained, to get engaged and to give feedback (cf. Idler 2017).

Uncertainty avoidance: The future cannot be foreseen and this is the aspect uncertainty avoidance is dealing with. If the score is low it means that a society is happy by not knowing what will happen tomorrow (cf. Hofstede Insights 2017). Translating this matter of fact into web design would mean that the visitors are open to try out something new and take risks. For example a company can offer a widget where customers can easily change the background colour of the shop or customize it (cf. Idler 2017).

Long-term vs. short-term orientation: This dimension is about how a society is dealing with its past and the challenges of the future. Long-term orientation means that it is important for a society to maintain traditions whereas societies with a short-term orientation prefer a more pragmatic approach (cf. Hofstede Insights 2017). When dealing with short-term orientation a website should offer pictures and experiences with known values and traditions – simply something the visitor is

familiar with. Visitors with a long-term orientation need detailed information that will convince them regarding the value of the offered product. Also long-term discounts, wish lists and social media sharing options can be helpful in this case (cf. Idler 2017).

5.) Environmental influences within the UK

Brexit and the consequences

On the 23rd of June 2017, 51,9 % of all Britain's have voted for the Brexit which has the consequence that the United Kingdom will leave the EU. At the moment there is a high uncertainty existing because nobody knows how the UK will negotiate the withdrawal (cf. WKO 2018b). At the moment it seems that the UK will leave the EU on the 31st of December 2020 and until this date the import of foods with an origin from the EU can be imported without any restrictions (cf. WKO 2018a).

Legal aspects regarding e-commerce business in the UK

When operating an e-commerce business within the UK, companies have to comply with the following directives and laws (cf. linkilaw 2017):

- The Distance Selling Act 2000
- The Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- ICO Cookie Law (cf. linkilaw 2017).

The Distance Selling Act 2000 is regulating how goods and services are sold online. A few important regulations are: to display correct prices and to indicate the VAT. Purchase orders have to be acknowledged and can be returned within 14 days. The return policy needs to be stated within the terms and conditions of a website as well (cf. linkilaw 2017).

The Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002 is dealing with the rules regarding the e-commerce business. The most relevant ones are: displaying the terms and conditions, displaying the price incl. VAT without unclear information, displaying of company name, VAT number, address where the

company is registered, company registration number and contact information. Marketing promotions have to be marked as such and if emails are commercial or unsolicited this needs to be stated as well (cf. linkilaw 2017).

The Data Protection Act 1998 is valid when doing business with customers. It regulates that companies have to clearly communicate and the purpose of collecting how personal information will be used. Furthermore those data should not leave the EU. The registration at the information commissioner's office is therefore prerequisite (cf. linkilaw 2017). It is also important to mention that with 25th of May 2018 the EU data protection law will be in force. This is an EU-wide standardisation of protecting personal information from natural persons. Due to the Brexit, the UK has to implement this regulation as well but when the UK will leave the EU, it will publish an own regulation (cf. Gösswein 2018).

ICO Cookie Law says that companies who use cookies have to mention this in the cookie policy (cf. linkilaw 2017).

6.) SWOT-analysis

The next paragraph is dealing with the SWOT analysis and concentrates on evaluating how external factors are influencing the company and which strategies can be conducted. The external factors derive from the theoretical part of this thesis, expert interviews as well as secondary market research and the evaluation has been carried out in a group of 3 people.

Based on the SWOT-analysis, the market is very attractive but also extremely competitive. Furthermore the Brexit is a big issue because great uncertainty exists and consequences are still unknown. Therefore the company needs to prepare appropriate strategies for the different scenarios. Another result is that A-WARE needs to do a lot of tasks before digitally entering the UK market. First of all the internationalization strategy needs to be determined. Due to the strong competition the website needs to be state-of-the-art and pursue with relevant content. Apart from this a clear SEO-strategy needs to be implemented because it is one of the most important communication tools. Fast deliveries are very important in this market therefore A-WARE needs to cooperate with local logistic partners. As customers from the UK are very price sensitive, A-WARE has to find the right target group and target them accurately. Of course expanding the market means as well that A-WARE has to invest in more cultivation area. The detailed analysis can be observed on the following tables:

External factor/ Development ...	... meets internal strengths/weaknesses				... which means opportunities /threats			... leading to the following challenge
	+	−	strength /weakness	cause	+	−	opportunity /threat	
Brexit in 2020		2	A-WARE is operating in the UK	Uncertainty how it will affect e-commerce		2	Increase of import taxes and duties	Developing strategies for different scenarios
Fulfilment of legal requirements in the e-commerce business	2		Knowledge within the company	CEO graduated in law	2		Saving costs	Regulations can be applied without external expertise
Fast deliveries		2	Long delivery times	Headquarter is in Austria		2	Dissatisfied customers and A-WARE is not competitive	To cooperate with local logistic companies or partners
Highly competitive market		3	No state of the art website	Lack of time and expertise		3	A-WARE is not competitive	To invest in an appropriate state of the art website and to consider customer centricity and experience
Price sensitive consumers		1	Positioned in a higher price level	Premium products		1	Losing competitiveness	To cooperate with retailers in the premium segment and to find the right target group

Table 7: SWOT-catalogue for A-WARE (own presentation)

Advertising in the UK is very expensive	2	Can't afford expensive advertising	2	Higher costs for advertising instead of generating sales	To find in creative ways and growth hacks
Internationalisation with a .com or local domain	3	Current domain is an .at domain	3	Problem with the internationalization	To rethink the brands domain and determine a strategy
SEO is the most important communication tool for online shops	3	No clear SEO strategy	3	Loss of traffic and sales	Creating a SEO strategy
Content marketing as the basis for SEO and to persuade the target group	2	No content marketing existing	2	Customers will not be convinced and SEO can't work properly	To invest in resources and setting up a content strategy
E-mail marketing as an effective communication tool for a present community	2	No e-mail marketing activities	2	Loss of revenue and community building	To develop a strategy how leads can be generated and sending newsletters to customers

Table 8: SWOT-catalogue for A-WARE (own presentation)

Amazon has a strong dominance in the UK	1	Not part of Amazon	1	Depend-ency is not desired	1	Lose revenue	To try out Amazon in the UK in combination with the own online shop
Sports nutrition and superfood market raises	3	Can serve this trend	3	Offering these products	3	New way of growth and generating more revenue	To digitally enter the new market
Demand of organic food from abroad is rising	3	Can serve this trend	3	All products are vegan & organic	3	New way of growth and generating more revenue	Expansion of raw material
Trust as the basis	2	Already proved in Austria	2	A-WARE is trustworthy	2	Customers who will buy the products	To further develop this strategy also in the UK
Strong brand	2	No brand awareness in the UK	2	Not present on the market	2	Customers will not buy the product	A-WARE has to persuade with relevant content and get awareness through influencer
New market means more demand	1	Not enough amount of products	1	Limited raw-material	1	Not competitive and unsatisfied customers	Investment in new cultivation area

Table 9: SWOT-catalogue for A-WARE (own presentation)

7.2 Communication objectives

In order to increase online revenue from currently € 0 to € 50.000 until the end of 2019 in the UK online market and to achieve minimum 50 % traffic from visits from the UK per month communication objectives need to be set up.

REACH:

- In order to achieve the defined revenue goals the website needs to have a minimum of 1.290 visits per month from the UK.
- Furthermore it is the aim to rank at least with the top 5 keywords and phrases within the search engine in the second quarter of 2019 in order to contribute to the organic traffic goals

ACT:

- In order to build up a strong community it is the aim to generate minimum 50 leads per month for newsletter marketing by offering relevant content like for example receipts.

CONVERT:

- To achieve the revenue goals it is the aim to increase the conversion rate from currently 3,3 % to 3,5 % until the second quarter of 2019.

ENGAGE:

- Long lasting relationships are a result of satisfaction therefore A-WARE has the aim to get minimum 5 positive customer reviews per month.
- The interaction rate on each posting on social media should be at least 6 %.

7.3 Personas

After defining the communication objectives the right target group for A-WARE needs to be determined and can be described by the following criteria:

- current and future customers
- male and female
- between 25-34 years old
- living in the UK
- with and without children

- health conscious, sporty lifestyle, organic is important
- higher middle class

The above mentioned criteria give an indication how the target group of A-WARE can be determined but to better understand it, the following personas have been created:

Lisa is 27 years old and has a bachelor and master degree in international marketing. She is working as a marketing manager in London. Besides her stressful daily life she is putting a lot of emphasis on healthy food and beverages. Therefore she wants to shape her life consciously and is caring on a well-balanced nutrition. When deciding for food and beverages the quality is very important as well the origin of the product and most of all that it is organic. Since one year she also enjoys being a vegan and loves this way of living. In her spare time she is spending a lot of time with her boyfriend, loves to cook and is of course active on social media. She is interested in content which is beneficial for her lifestyle, she likes cooking and to try out new vegan recipes. If there is some time left despite her crowded agenda, she also likes to go the gym, for jogging or a yoga session – just to feel comfortable with her body & soul.

David is 32 years old and loves doing sports on a regular basis. He is working as an art director in a communication agency in Manchester and loves to be creative. Due to his many sports activities in a week, he also has to take care of a well-balanced nutrition in order to cover his daily demand. Therefore food and beverages should contain a lot of nutrients which will foster the muscle growth and will be good for the body. At the weekend he loves to go out with his friends and is enjoying his single life. He places a premium on good health and personal appearance and is also willing to pay a higher amount of money for products which will contribute, to his values. Being online on Instagram and giving some private insights is an integral part of his daily life. He is always interested in content about muscle growth and sports nutrition as well as new ways of how to gain more muscles.

7.4 Digital communication strategy

Based on the determined objectives A-WARE has to follow a combination of three strategies: sales, dialogue as well as branding and entertainment strategy which will be described in the following paragraph:

Sales and dialogue strategy

The whole digital communication of A-WARE has the overall aim that customers will buy A-WARE products. This can be only achieved with the combination of the sales and the dialogue strategy. A-WARE should always think from the customers' perspective and offer relevant content. Only relevance will lead to meaningful interactions with the target group and at the end to trust and hopefully revenue. It is necessary that A-WARE replies to all interactions and questions on social media, direct messages and customer reviews.

Branding and entertainment strategy

Besides the sales and dialogue strategy A-WARE needs to get more reach. Viral content and growth hacks will be beneficial for this strategy in order to achieve the goals.

7.5 Content strategy

1.) GOALS

The goal of A-WARE's content at first sight is to lead users from all communication channels to the website of A-WARE to generate more traffic. Furthermore the second goal is to generate brand building and viral content that ends up in more reach within the channels.

2.) NEEDS OF THE TARGET GROUP

To achieve the above stated goals, meaningful and relevant content needs to be created. Therefore the following main topics within the target group have been elaborated:

Lisa:
- **Eating:** healthy vegan recipes, how-to-guides regarding food preparation,

- **Advises:** doing sports although life is hectic, what superfood is good for health, what are the newest fitness trends, how is hemp affecting health
- **Benefits of training:** why yoga should be done once a week, why pilates is beneficial for health

David:
- **Eating:** recipes for muscle building & fat loss
- **Nutrition:** what is the best protein for the training, what is the difference between natural and traditional nutrition
- **Training:** what exercises will foster muscle growth, how to get a sixpack

3. OWN COMPETENCIES
- Raw material, production and retail from one brand
- Organically grown and high standards regarding raw material
- Competence regarding health benefits (brother is doctor, sister is pharmacist)

4. CONVERSION
Most of the content should also be linked with products from A-WARE but only in the case when it is authentically.

5.) THE STORY
„Be aware" – this is the core story of each content type which will be created in the future. The main message should be: "Always be aware of what you eat and how it can be beneficial for your health and body"

7.6 Action plan

Communication objectives can only be achieved with the appropriate communication tools. Therefore the following chapter is dealing with the determination of the most effective tools and the planned way of execution.

1.) Determining effective communication tools

After elaborating the customer purchase journey, the communication objectives and also the most effective communication tools, these aspects need to be merged in order to get a clear picture. As a result, the following figure gives an overview of which communication tools are suitable in a certain stage during the customer purchase journey and how these tools can finally contribute to the above mentioned communication objectives:

Customer purchase journey	Communication goals	Communication tools
Awareness	Reach	• Search engine optimization • Search engine advertising • Marketplaces • Social media • Content marketing
Consideration	Act	• Content marketing • Customer experience • Website and online shop
Evaluation	Act	• Content marketing • Website and online shop
Purchase	Convert	• Website and online shop
Experience	Engage	• Social Media • Website

Table 10: Determination of communication tools (own presentation)

2.) Execution based on an action plan

The previous communication tools need as well to be planned in an action plan. Therefore the author has developed a plan for the implementation and for the operating phase. The operating phase lasts one year and the activities should afterwards be controlled and perhaps adapted. The following figure gives an overview in which order the activities have to be planned when attracting new users from the UK:

A-WARE action plan

Activities	2018 Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dez	2019 Jan	Febr	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dez
Saving domains	red																	
New website incl. SEO technical requirements	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow														
Creating new content		orange	orange	orange														
Translation from German to English			orange	orange														
SEO on page optimization			orange	orange														
Setting up social media accounts for UK			orange	orange														
Cooperation with logistic partner			orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange
SEA + entry packages					green	green												
Starting to sell via own platform & Amazon							yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow	yellow
Social Media Marketing					orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange	orange
Influencer Marketing								green	green	green					green	green		
Newsletter Marketing											red	red	red	red	red	red	red	
Ongoing creation of content					green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green

Table 11: Action plan for A-WARE (own presentation)

7.7 Resources/budgeting

After selecting the right activities they also need to be budgeted in order to achieve the turnover of €50.000 in the year 2019. Due to the fact that A-WARE consists of 3 persons, some activities can also be done within the company and are calculated with an hourly rate of €50. Also the web design and the graphic design as well as social media consultancy is done by friends, therefore the prices are not usual on the market and calculated with an hourly rate of €55. The translation will cost €70 per hour. The calculation is split into the implementation and also operating costs.

Planned measures	Calculation base	Budgeted costs
Adjustment of the website and online shop incl. technical SEO	100 hours for the online shop; 20 hours for SEO	€6.600,–
.com domain	2 hours for the set-up; yearly fee (€15,-)	€125,–
Creation of new Instagram UK account, Facebook global page,	10 hours for the set-up	€500,–
Creating first content for the website	25 hours for content creation	€1.250,–
Translation from German to English by a Native speaker	7 hours for translation	€490,–
SEO agency (for on-page optimization)	flatrate	€2.000,–
	Total	**€10.965,–**

Table 12: Implementation budget (own presentation)

Planned measures	Calculation base	Budgeted costs
SEA agency	flatrate for 2 months at the beginning	€ 2.000,–
Resources for Amazon (setting up, execution)	10 hours for the set-up	€ 500,–
Content Marketing	12 hours per month for creating content	€ 7.200,–
E-mail marketing tool and creation of monthly newsletter	Creation is based on 3 hours per month, rest is for the tool	€ 2.000,–
Hosting & registration fee domain	package price	€ 250,–
Social media marketing	8 hours per month	€ 4.800,–
Graphic design for newsletter template, social media templates	flatrate	€ 400,–
Influencer marketing	2 influencer cooperation	€ 4.000,–
Advertising budget for SEA and social media	€ 1.000 for SEA - rest for social media	€ 2.800,–
SEO consultancy	3 hours per month à € 100,–	€ 3.600,–
	Total	**€ 27.550,–**
Implementation & operational budget	**TOTAL**	**€ 38.515,–**

Table 13: Operating budget (own presentation)

After determining the budget for the implementation and operating costs the author has also conducted a cost/benefit analysis in order to find out which measures do have the greatest benefit in contrast to the costs:

Measures	Costs	Benefits
Search engine marketing	€ 9.700,–	Visibility, brand awareness, organic traffic and revenue
Social media marketing	€ 7.300,–	Reach, engagement, brand awareness, community building, revenue
Influencer marketing	€ 4.000,–	Reach, engagement, brand awareness, community building, link-building, visibility within the target group, revenue
E-mail marketing	€ 2.200,–	Customer relationship management, revenue
Content marketing	€ 8.940,–	Supports all stated activities, conversion, revenue, traffic
Website inclusive online shop	€ 5.875,–	Revenue, brand awareness
Amazon	€ 500,–	Brand awareness, revenue

Table 14: Cost/benefit analysis (own presentation)

To summarize the previous analysis it can be said that besides the website, where all transactions occur, content marketing is the most important activity. Without relevant content all the other activities can't work properly. Furthermore search engine marketing and social media marketing are essential for the distribution of this content. E-mail marketing is very important but can only be implemented with organic grown subscriber-lists. Amazon is an additional activity which is also beneficial but not a requirement.

7.8 Controlling

This chapter is indicating the right key performance indicators in order to control the implemented measures. The author advises to use Google analytics, analytics tools from Facebook and Instagram and also Sistrix for SEO.

Planned measures	Key performance indicators
Website and online shop	• Visits • Duration of stay • Conversion rate • Bounce rate
Search engine marketing	• Amount of organic traffic • Visibility index (Sistrix) • Keyword ranking
Social media marketing	• Reach • Interaction • Sentiment
E-mail marketing	• Opening rate • Click rate • Conversion rate

Table 15: Key performance indicators (own presentation)

8 Recommendations

1.) DACH region

First of all, before entering the UK-market it is recommendable to expand the market within Austria, afterwards Germany and finally Switzerland. Especially start-ups do not have big budgets and in order to prevent A-WARE of burning money, it should first expand within the home market Austria and afterwards try to access similar markets like Germany and Switzerland.

2.) Internationalisation strategy

Before starting the internationalisation process and all the planning, A-WARE needs to make a decision regarding the domain because the www.a-ware.com and the www.a-ware.co.uk domains are not available anymore and used by another brand. This will of course harm the international growth of A-WARE. A recommendation would be to find similar domains for example www.aware-nutrition.com. When the first decision regarding a new domain name has been done, the author recommends taking the .com domain with language and country selection. Also the local domains should be registered and have a redirect to the main domain.

3.) Adjustment of the website inclusive online shop

Regarding the development of the new website with the online shop several aspects are recommended:

- Native speaker for the translation of the website
- WooCommerce would be an appropriate shop system for the starting phase
- Due to the highly competitive market A-WARE has to differentiate itself in terms of customer experience
- Customer service is prerequisite for customers from the UK
- Fast delivery within the UK is a must have to be competitive
- Prices need to be stated in local currency
- Communicate seasonal discounts
- Reviews and ratings need to be communicated
- Technical requirements regarding SEO need to be implemented

4.) Setting up communication tools to acquire new customers

As elaborated in the theoretical and also verified in the practical part of this thesis, SEO is a precondition to enter the UK market. The entire technical SEO requirements need to be considered within the development of the new website. When deciding for the .com domain, A-WARE also needs to make sure that the "hreflang-tag" is implemented. Regarding the right keywords, SEO is building on the fundament of the content strategy and the author would recommend optimizing on short and long tail keywords. Usually long tail keywords will be much cheaper than short tail keywords and are more targeted. As a consequence, this will definitely bring the qualified traffic to the website. Backlinks should be at first sight generated through influencer marketing and also blog entries in other forums. As far as A-WARE doesn't have high brand awareness in the UK, it has to convince its customers with excellent and relevant content for the target group and of course relevant content is also the fundament for SEO.

If influencer marketing is a success or fail really depends on the initial selection. Thus the company should preferably select micro-blogger, who will promote the products in an authentic way and have the right target group. During all these processes A-WARE should also generate leads which means e-mail addresses in order to build up a subscribers-list for future e-mail marketing activities.

4.) Entry package & marketplace Amazon

When setting up the most important functions regarding the online shop and communication activities, the author would suggest investing a little bit of budget into SEA and promoting a special entry-package. At the beginning A-WARE should also try to list the products within Amazon marketplace to generate sales very quick but also the own online shop need to be launched. Of course this activity has also its downsides for example that no community building is possible but at the beginning it can be helpful to have revenue streams quite fast and the combination of these both ways can be very interesting.

5.) Think different and optimize

Especially as a start-up, resources need to be planned very effective and efficient. Hence it is recommended to always think different, than all the other competitors.

This means for example to try out new growth hacks and the most important part: controlling and optimization are a vital part in order to be successful. Finally it needs to be said that A-WARE should not re-invent the wheel thus analysing the big competitors and copying the good ideas.

9 Conclusion

Even though going international with an online shop seems to be easy at the very beginning, it doesn't reflect reality. Of course todays technology is facilitating this process of going international but businesses will not be successful without developing a clear concept. The translation of a website into a foreign language won't be enough because cultures and also the needs and behaviours in each country are different.

As a consequence brands have to analyse the target group and consider these aspects in all communication activities. Apart from this a brand needs to have a clear positioning in order to differentiate itself against competitors. Especially start-ups with limited budgets need to find creative and efficient ways to attract visitors to the online shop.

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11 Appendix

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3   Interview guideline for retailers

INTRODUCTION

- Please give me a short introduction about your company!

- What are the experiences so far in e-commerce?

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ONLINE SHOP

- To which countries are you offering your online shop and since when?

- What was the motivation behind it?

- Do you have an own online shop for each country?

- Which shop system are you using?

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ONLINE SHOPS ESPECIALLY IN THE UK

- Have you specifically chosen the UK as the target market or focused on language targeting?

- Have you experienced any cultural differences especially in the UK and does your shop design differ from the home shop?

- How long does it take to monetize the online shop?

- What have been your learning's so far?

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO ACQUIRE NEW CUSTOMERS

- Which aspects are especially important for a successful digital communication in e-commerce business regarding:
  - Search engine optimization
  - Content marketing
  - E-mail marketing
  - Social media

- Which communication channels have you used to acquire new customers and which channels have been the less or the most effective?

- What are in your opinion the key success factors in digital communication in international e-commerce business?

- Also based on the criteria from theory:
  - Device independent online shop as the basis
  - Relevant communication channels and content

- Customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty

- Development of a strong brand

- Considering customer experience & centricity

- Which trends do you think will be present in the future?

4 Interview guideline for experts

INTRODUCTION

- Please give me a short introduction about your company or the company you are working for!

- What are the experiences so far in e-commerce? And especially in/with the UK?

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ONLINE SHOP

- What is usually the motivation behind entering a new foreign market online?

- Based on your experience do the most online shops have an own shop for each country or one for all?

- Which shop system are the most common?

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ONLINE SHOPS ESPECIALLY IN UK

- Would you suggest to specifically choose the UK as the target market or would you focus on language targeting?

- Have you experienced any cultural differences especially in the UK and do you think that a shop design differs? (Austria vs. UK)

- How long does it take to monetize an online shop?

- What have been your learning's so far in e-commerce?

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO ACQUIRE NEW CUSTOMERS

- Which communication channels have you used to acquire new customers and which have been the less or the most effective?

- Which aspects are especially important for a successful digital communication in e-commerce business regarding:

- Search engine optimization

- Content marketing

- E-mail marketing

- Social media
- What are in your opinion the key success factors in digital communication in international e-commerce business?
- Also based on theory - what aspects are important? Regarding:
  - Device independent online shop as the basis
  - Relevant communication channels and content
  - Customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty
  - Development of a strong brand
  - Considering customer experience & centricity
- Which trends do you think will be present in the future?

5 Project plan

Master Thesis Project Plan // Sabine Schwarzl

M = Milestone
WP = Work Package
MS = Master Seminar

WP	M	Content	Dependencies	Start date	Ends after (days)	End date	Status	Who?
1.	x	Start: Introduction to the topic	1.0	01.07.2017	148	25.11.2017	95%	S
1.1		Basic literature research	1.0	01.07.2017	107	15.10.2017	100%	S
1.2		Setting up the project plan	1.0	20.09.2017	3	23.09.2017	100%	S
1.3		First contact with MT-Coach	1.0	19.09.2017	1	19.09.2017	100%	S, MM
1.4		Initial situation	1.1	22.09.2017	6	27.09.2017	100%	S
1.5		Problem statement	1.1, 1.4	23.09.2017	5	27.09.2017	100%	S
1.6		Company and thesis aim	1.1, 1.4, 1.5	23.09.2017	5	27.09.2017	100%	S
1.7		Frame of reference	1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6	24.09.2017	4	27.09.2017	100%	S
1.8		First meeting with MT Coach	1.0-1.7	05.10.2017	1	05.10.2017	100%	S, MM
1.9		Feedback Induction of meeting	1.8	06.10.2017	3	08.10.2017	100%	S
1.10	x	Kick of Meeting	1.0	13.10.2017	1	13.10.2017	100%	S, MM, CM
1.11		Feedback Induction of Kick-off meeting	1.10	14.10.2017	3	16.10.2017	100%	S
1.12		Preparation of MS1 documents	1.4-1.11	15.10.2017	6	20.10.2017	100%	S
1.13	x	Handing in MS 1 documents	1.12	20.10.2017	1	20.10.2017	100%	S
1.14	x	MS 1	1.13	27.10.2017	1	27.10.2017	100%	S, MM, HDP
1.15		Feedback Induction of MS 1	1.14	28.10.2017	14	10.11.2017	100%	S
1.16		Coaching session	1.14, 1.15	28.10.2017	1	28.10.2017	100%	S, MM
1.17		Further literature research	1.14-1.16	29.10.2017	15	13.11.2017	100%	S
1.18		Feedback Induction and Rethinking of Content	1.14-1.17	29.10.2017	11	09.11.2017	100%	S
1.19		Contact with company about adjustments	1.14-1.18	02.11.2017	1	02.11.2017	100%	S, CM
1.20		Adjustment and checking with MT-Coach	1.15-1.19	10.11.2017	7	16.11.2017	100%	S, MM
1.21		Feedback Coach	1.16-1.20	13.11.2017	1	13.11.2017	100%	S, MM
1.22		Feedback Induction Coach	1.21.	13.11.2017	1	13.11.2017	100%	S
1.23		Adaption Project Plan	1.14-1.22	14.11.2017	2	15.11.2017	100%	S
1.24		Finalization of MS 1 - Second Attempt documents	1.14-1.22	16.11.2017	1	16.11.2017	100%	S
1.25	x	Handing in MS 1 documents - Second Attempt	1.24	17.11.2017	1	17.11.2017	100%	S
1.26	x	MS 1 - Second attempt	1.25	22.11.2017	1	22.11.2017	100%	S, MM, HDP
1.27		Feedback Induction of MS 1 - Second Attempt	1.26	23.11.2017	2	24.11.2017	100%	S
1.28		Adjustment and checking with MT-Coach	1.25, 1.26	24.11.2017	1	24.11.2017	100%	S, MM
1.29		Feedback Coach	1.28	25.11.2017	1	25.11.2017	100%	S, MM
1.30		Feedback Induction Coach	1.29	26.11.2017	1	26.11.2017	100%	S
1.31		Sending & Receiving the MT Agreement to all involed parties	1.26	28.11.2017	7	04.12.2017	100%	S, MM, CM
1.32		Sending the MT Agreement to Campus 02	1.31	06.12.2017	1	06.12.2017	100%	S, HDP
2	x	Start theoretical part		26.11.2017	51	16.01.2017	100%	S
2.1		Further literature research theoretical part section 2 and 3	2.0	26.11.2017	17	12.12.2017	100%	S
2.2		Writing 2.0-2.3	2.1	26.11.2017	5	30.11.2017	100%	S
2.3		Writing 2.3-2.5	2.1-2.2	30.11.2017	6	05.12.2017	100%	S
2.4		Writing 3.0-3.4	2.1-2.3	06.12.2017	3	08.12.2017	100%	S
2.5		Writing 3.5-3.7	2.1-2.4	08.12.2017	5	12.12.2017	100%	S
2.6		Review chapter 2 and 3 finished	2.1-2.5	12.12.2017	1	12.12.2017	100%	S
2.7		Feedback Coach	2.6	13.12.2017	1	13.12.2017	100%	S, MM
2.8		Feedback Induction Coach	2.7	14.12.2017	2	15.12.2017	100%	S, MM
2.9		Further literature research theoretical part section 4 and 5	2.0	12.12.2017	19	30.12.2017	100%	S
2.10		Writing 4.0-4.4	2.9	12.12.2017	5	16.12.2017	100%	S
2.11		Writing 4.5-4.9	2.9-2.10	17.12.2017	4	21.12.2017	100%	S
2.12		Writing 4.10-5.3	2.9-2.11	26.12.2017	3	28.12.2017	100%	S
2.13		Writing 5.4-5.8	2.9-2.12	29.12.2017	2	30.12.2017	100%	S
2.14		Evaluation & Conducting of possible interview partners	4.0	30.12.2017	21	19.01.2018	100%	S
3	x	Preparation of practical part	2.0	02.01.2018	1	02.01.2018	100%	S

Figure A 1 Project plan (own presentation)

Master Thesis Project Plan // Sabine Schwarzl

M = Milestone
WP = Work Package
MS = Master Seminar

WP	M	Content	Dependencies	Start date	Ends after (days)	End date	Status	Who?
3.1		Survey design	2.0	02.01.2018	4	05.01.2018	100%	S
3.2		Data transfer theoretical part and survey design	2.0-3.1.	05.01.2018	1	05.01.2018	100%	S, MM
3.3		Feedback Induction	3.2.	08.01.2018	2	09.01.2018	100%	S, MM
3.4		Company meeting	2.0-3.3	10.01.2018	1	10.01.2018	100%	S, MM, CM
3.5		Feedback Induction of company meeting	3.4	10.01.2018	3	12.01.2018	100%	S
3.6		Preparation of MS 2 Documents	3.5	13.01.2017	4	16.01.2018	100%	S
3.7	x	Handing in MS 2 documents	3.6	17.01.2018	1	17.01.2018	100%	S
3.8	x	MS 2	3.7	26.01.2018	1	26.01.2018	100%	S, MM, HDP
3.9		Feedback Induction of MS 2	3.8	27.01.2018	2	28.01.2018	100%	S
3.10		Adjustment and checking with MT-Coach	3.8-3.9	27.01.2018	2	28.01.2018	100%	S, MM
3.11		Feedback Coach	3.10	29.01.2018	1	29.01.2018	100%	S, MM
3.12		Feedback Induction Coach	3.11	29.01.2018	1	29.01.2018	100%	S
4	x	Start practical part	2.0, 3.0	29.01.2018	78	13.04.2018	100	S
4.1		Acquisition of interview partners and making appointments	4.0	29.01.2018	10	07.02.2018	100%	S
4.2		Company introduction	4.0	29.01.2018	2	30.01.2018	100%	S
4.3		Secondary market research	4.0,4.2	30.01.2018	13	11.02.2018	100%	S
4.4		Evaluation of the findings in secondary research	4.3	11.02.2018	3	13.02.2018	100%	S
4.5		Design of interview guideline	3.0-3.1	13.02.2018	6	18.02.2018	100%	S
4.6		Data transfer findings & interview guideline to Coach	4.0-4.5	18.02.2018	1	18.02.2018	100%	S, MM
4.7		Feedback Induction	4.6	19.02.2018	1	19.02.2018	100%	S, MM
4.8	x	Company meeting	4.0-4.7	21.02.2018	1	21.02.2018	100%	S, MM, CM
4.9		Pre- Test of interview guideline	4.1,4.5	23.02.2018	4	26.02.2018	100%	S
5	x	Start of qualitative market research	4.0	26.02.2018	20	18.03.2018	100%	S
5.1		Appointments with experts	4.1, 5.0	26.02.2018	21	18.03.2018	100%	S
5.2		Transcribe interviews	5.1	26.02.2018	21	18.03.2018	100%	S
5.3		Development of the digital communication concept	2.0, 4.0, 5.1	19.03.2018	10	28.03.2018	100%	S
5.4		Recommendations	5.3	28.03.2018	5	01.04.2018	100%	S
5.5		Conclusio	5.4	01.04.2018	3	03.04.2018	100%	S
5.6		Data transfer practical part to MT coach	4.0	03.04.2018	1	03.04.2018	100%	S, MM
5.7		Feedback Coach	5.6	03.04.2018	2	04.04.2018	100%	S, MM
5.8		Feedback induction coach	5.7	05.04.2018	2	06.04.2018	100%	S
5.9		Preparation of MS 3 documents	5.8	06.04.2018	8	13.04.2018	100%	S
5.9	x	Handing in MS 3 documents	5.8	13.04.2018	1	13.04.2018	100%	S
5.10	x	MS 3	5.8.	20.04.2018	2	20.04.2018	100%	S, MM, HDP
5.11		Feedback Induction MS 3	5.8	21.04.2018	1	21.04.2018	100%	A
5.12		Adjustment and checking with MT-Coach	5.8-5.11	21.04.2018	1	21.04.2018	100%	S, MM
5.13		Feedback Coach	5.12	23.04.2018	1	23.04.2018	100%	S, MM
5.14		Feedback Induction Coach	5.13	24.04.2018	3	26.04.2018	100%	S
6	x	Finalize the Master thesis	5.14	26.04.2018	7	02.05.2018	100%	S
6.1		Copyediting	6.0	02.05.2018	5	06.05.2018	100%	S
6.2		Induction of corrections	6.1	08.05.2018	4	11.05.2018	100%	S
6.3		Printing	6.2.	11.05.2018	1	11.05.2018	100%	S
6.4	x	Handing in Master thesis	6.3.	14.05.2018	1	14.05.2018	100%	HDP, MM
6.5	x	Evaluation MT						
6.6	x	Deadline library ready master thesis						S
6.7	x	Final examination						

S = Student
HDP = Head of Department
MM = Master Mentor
CM = Comissioning Company

Figure A 2 Project plan (own presentation)

A-7

	WP	Task
WEEKLY TO DO LIST		
KW 37	1.1	Basic literature research
KW 38	1.1	Basic literature research
KW 38	1.2	Setting up the project plan
KW 38	1.3	First contact with the MT Coach
KW 38	1.4	Initial situation
KW 38	1.5	Problem statement
KW 38	1.6	Company and thesis aim
KW 38	1.7	Frame of reference
KW 39	1.1	Basic literature research
KW 39	1.4	Initial situation
KW 39	1.5	Problem statement
KW 39	1.6	Company and thesis aim
KW 39	1.7	Frame of reference
KW 40	1.1	Basic literature research
KW 40	1.8	First meeting with MT Coach
KW 40	1.9	Feedback induction of meeting
KW 41	1.1	Basic literature research
KW 41	1.10	Kick-Off Meeting
KW 41	1.11	Feedback induction of meeting
KW 41	1.12	Preparation of MS 1 documents
KW 42	1.11	Feedback induction of meeting
KW 42	1.12	Preparation of MS 1 documents
KW 42	1.13	Handling in MS 1 documens
KW 43	1.14	MS 1
KW 43	1.15	Feedback induction of MS 1
KW 43	1.16	Coaching session
KW 43	1.17	Further literature research
KW 44	1.15	Feedback induction of MS 1
KW 44	1.17	Further literature research
KW 44	1.18	Feedback Induction and Rethinking of Content
KW 44	1.19	Contact with company regarding adaption
KW 45	1.15	Feedback induction of MS 1
KW 45	1.17	Further literature research
KW 45	1.18	Feedback Induction and Rethinking of Content
KW 45	1.20	Adjustment and checking with MT Coach
KW 46	1.17	Further literature research
KW 46	1.20	Adjustment and checking with MT Coach
KW 46	1.21	Feedback Coach
KW 46	1.22	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 46	1.23	Adaption Project Plan
KW 46	1.24	Finalization of MS 1 documents- 2nd attempt
KW 46	1.25	Handing in MS 1 documents
KW 47	1.26	MS 1 Second attempt
KW 47	1.27	Feedback Induction MS 1 second attempt
KW 47	1.28	Adjustment and checking with MT coach
KW 47	1.29	Feedback Coach
KW 47	1.30	Feedback Induction coach
KW 47	1.31	Sending the MT agreement to MT Coach and company
KW 48	1.31	Receiving the MT agreement
KW 48	2.1	Further literature research theoretical part section 2 and 3
KW 48	2.2	Writing 2.0-2.3
KW 48	2.3	Writing 2.3-2.5
KW 49	1.32	Sending the MT agreement to Campus 02
KW 49	2.1	Further literature research theoretical part section 2 and 3
KW 49	2.4	Writing 3.0-3.4
KW 49	2.5	Writing 3.5-3.7
KW 50	2.5	Writing 3.5-3.7
KW 50	2.6	Review chapter 2 and 3 finished

Figure A 3 Weeky project plan (own presentation)

KW 50	2.7	Feedback Coach
KW 50	2.8	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 50	2.9	Further literature research theoretical part section 4 and 5
KW 50	2.10	Writing 4.0-4.4
KW 50	2.11	Writing 4.5-4.9
KW 51	2.9	Further literature research theoretical part section 4 and 5
KW 51	2.11	Writing 4.5-4.9
KW 52	2.9	Further literature research theoretical part section 4 and 5
KW 52	2.12	Writing 4.10-5.3
KW 52	2.13	Writing 5.4-5.8
KW 52	2.14	Evaluation and conduction of possible interview partner
KW 1	2.14	Evaluation and conduction of possible interview partner
KW 1	3.1	Survey Design
KW 1	3.2	Data transfer theoretical part and survey design
KW 2	2.14	Evaluation and conduction of possible interview partner
KW 2	3.3	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 2	3.4	Company meeting
KW 2	3.5	Feedback induction of company meeting
KW 2	3.6	Preparation of MS 2 documents
KW 3	2.14	Evaluation and conduction of possible interview partner
KW 3	3.6	Preparation of MS 2 documents
KW 3	3.7	Handing in MS 2 documents
KW 4	3.8	MS 2
KW 4	3.9	Feedback Induction of MS 2
KW 4	3.10	Adjustment and checking with MT Coach
KW 5	3.11	Feedback Coach
KW 5	3.12	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 5	4.1	Acquisition of interview partners and appointments
KW 6	4.2	Company introduction
KW 6	4.3	Secondary market research
KW 7	4.4	Evaluation of the findings in secondary market research
KW 7	4.5	Design of interview guideline
KW 7	4.6	Data transfer findings & interview guideline to coach
KW 8	4.7	Feedback induction
KW 8	4.8	Company meeting
KW 8	4.9	Pre-test of interview guideline
KW 9	5.1	Appointments with experts
KW 9	5.2	Transcribe interviews
KW 10	5.1	Appointments with experts
KW 10	5.2	Transcribe interviews
KW 11	5.1	Appointments with experts
KW 11	5.2	Transcribe interviews
KW 11	5.3	Development of the digital communication concept
KW 12	5.3	Development of the digital communication concept
KW 12	5.4	Recommendations
KW 13	5.4	Recommendations
KW 13	5.5	Conclusio
KW 14	5.6	Data transfer practical part to MT coach
KW 14	5.7	Feedback Coach
KW 14	5.8	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 14	5.9	Preparation of MS 3 documents
KW 15	5.10	Handling in MS 3 documents
KW 16	5.11	MS 3
KW 16	5.12	Feedback Induction MS 3
KW 16	5.13	Adjustment and checking with MT coach
KW 17	5.14	Feedback Coach
KW 17	5.15	Feedback Induction Coach
KW 17	6.1	Copyediting
KW 18	6.2	Induction of corrections
KW 19	6.3	Printing
KW 20	6.4	Handling in Master Thesis
KW 25	6.6	Library ready Master thesis

Figure A 4 Weekly project plan (own presentation)