MASTER THESIS

To attain the academic degree of
Master of Arts in Business
from the Degree Programme
International Marketing
of *CAMPUS 02* University of Applied Sciences

DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CONCEPT FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE FOOD & BEVERAGES INDUSTRY
with a viral marketing focus
on the example of waterdrop^{TM}

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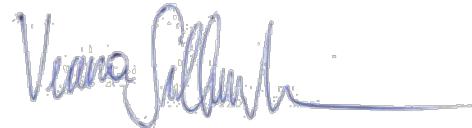Verena Silberschneider, BA
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Graz, 14th May 2018

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.

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Graz, 14th May 2018   Verena Silberschneider, 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.

Acknowledgements

Zusammenfassung

Ein rascher Internationalisierungsprozess ist vor allem für kleine Unternehmen im B2C-Bereich erstrebenswert, da durch neue Märkte mit einem kleinen und massentauglichen Produktportfolio schneller ein positives Betriebsergebnis erzielt werden kann. Gerade junge Marken in der F&B-Branche starten häufig direkt mit Online-Marketingaktivitäten und e-Commerce in länderübergreifendem Ausmaß. Die einhergehende Schnelligkeit der Prozesse führt häufig zu fehlenden konzeptionellen Schritten für Social Media Marketing. Um eine solche Internationalisierung unterstützen zu können, soll ein konzeptioneller Ansatz zur Bildung eines Social Media Auftritts und Maximierung der Reichweite vorhanden sein. Ein solches Konzept ist für die Getränkemarke waterdrop relevant, da das Unternehmen einen Markteintritt in UK plant. Das Ziel des Konzeptes ist, das geplante Umsatzziel aus Social Media in UK durch den konzeptionellen Ansatz unter Berücksichtigung von Viralitäts-Treibern zu erreichen.

Der Theorieteil dieser Masterarbeit behandelt daher die aktuellsten Erkenntnisse aus Literaturrecherchen, welche als Basis für einen starken Social Media Auftritt gelten. Hierzu zählen einerseits wichtige Treiber für Konsumenten und deren Verhalten im e-Commerce, aber auch Marktgegebenheiten innerhalb der F&B-Branche, sowie andererseits das strategische Grundgerüst für ein Social Media Konzept. Darüberhinaus wird im Theorieteil auch auf die wichtigsten Aspekte sowie die Bedeutung von Kanälen, Community, Influencer und inhaltliche Anforderungen an einen Social Media Auftritt eingegangen. Um eine Differenzierung und kostengünstige Mechanismen mit Social Media erreichen zu können, gilt es in dieser Arbeit auch, Verstärker von Viralität zu identifizieren. Theoretische Pfeiler eines SMM-Konzeptes leiten den Theorieteil zum Praxisteil über, welcher mithilfe von Fallbeispielen viraler Kampagnen sowie 17 Experteninterviews die Erfolgsfaktoren und relevante Faktoren in der Praxis erforscht. Als Basis für die Marktforschung dienen die Ergebnisse aus der Literaturrecherche und dem Theorieteil. Im Praxisteil werden die Ergebnisse in Themengruppen zusammengefasst und führen so zu einem kundenzentrierten sowie international ausgerichtetem Social Media Marketing Konzept für die Marke waterdrop.

Abstract

A fast internationalization process is of special interest for small businesses in the field of B2C, as the operating income can be increased faster through operating in various markets with a rather small and suitable for the mass-market product portfolio.

Especially young brands in the F&B industry often start directly with online marketing activities and direct e-commerce, which is not bound to traditional geographical borders. Thus, speed in processes is required, which often leads to missing conceptual approaches in social media marketing. In order to successfully support a fast internationalization process, a concept for a brand's social media appearance and to maximize reach is required. Such a concept is relevant for the beverages brand waterdrop, as the brand is currently planning to enter the market of UK. The goal of the concept is to accelerate the planned turnover target gathered out of social media in UK through the use of a conceptual approach aiming to reach virality with the brand's social media activities.

Hence, the theoretical part of this thesis deals with latest insights from literature, which delivers the basics for a strong social media appearance. On the one hand, important drivers of consumer behavior and e-commerce requirements, as well as market conditions in the F&B industry are discussed. On the other hand, the strategic framework for a social media concept is outlined in the theoretical section. Above that, crucial aspects and the meaning of channels, community, influencers, and content requirements for social media are discussed. In order to differentiate on a cost-effective scale through social media, mechanisms of virality are of special interest for the respective social media concept. Theoretical pillars of a SMM concept lead over to the practical section of this thesis, which researches success factors for a social media concept with virality aims through case studies and 17 expert interviews. The findings from theory represent the basis for the market research. The findings from the market research are summarized in topic-related sections, which lead to a customer-centric and internationalization-direct social media marketing concept for the brand waterdrop.

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List of abbreviations

B2B   =   Business-to-Business

B2C   =   Business-to-Consumer

CMS   =   Content management system

FMCG=   Fast moving consumer goods

F&B   =   Food and beverages

KPI   =   Key performance indicator

SEO   =   Search engine optimization

SMM   =   Social media marketing

UK   =   United Kingdom

USP   =   Unique selling proposition

VS.   =   Versus

1. Introduction

1.1 Initial situation

Acquiring online customers in retail is 20 to 40% more expensive than in traditional business (cf. Reichheld/Schefter 2010, p. 106). Latest statistics show that in UK, 75% of the population access the internet daily (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017). UK is especially interesting for online brands, as only 20% of the enterprises are selling online while over 70% of adults make internet purchases (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 41). Hence, it is inevitable for businesses that focus on online sales to follow a marketing concept that enables reaching the highest possible amount of consumers through social media activities in order to increase the revenue. Viral marketing is claimed to be the ultimate goal for marketers concerning maximum reach (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 59). However, there are different drivers of sharing content online (cf. De Vries et al. 2013, p. 83).

Waterdrop operates on the niche market of microdrinks, which is part of the food and beverages industry. The niche market is driven by health consciousness and a massive shift-away from soft drinks (cf. New York Times 2015). The market is huge but full of unhealthy ingredients, where consumers face constant trade-offs (health vs. cool vs. taste). Furthermore, it is extremely hard to enter (cf. KVELL 2017). The main competition of waterdrop can be split into three segments of relevance: Water brands as partner and platform, carbonates and flavored water as indirect competitors, and water additives as direct competitors (cf. KVELL 2017). In Europe, the food and beverages market represents a turnover outlook of € 932,518 million for 2018. Among the global top countries turnover-wise, UK has a 2018 total revenue forecast of € 167,438 million within the industry. This represents the highest market volume of food and beverages in Europe (cf. Statista 2017).

1.2 Statement of challenges

Based on the initial situation, there are challenges arising for waterdrop regarding further development. Waterdrop currently consists of a small team, so there is a lack of digital marketing resources. A sophisticated social media marketing concept is helpful to support internationalization (cf. eMarket Services 2017). This concept should enable the brand to approach SMM when entering a new market in such a way as that positive online word of mouth is enhanced. Above all, the

brand follows a strong and fast growth strategy. Using the budget in an efficient way is essential. Social media marketing with a focus on viral marketing is an opportunity for brands to reach consumers on a relatively low cost level (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 35-36). Furthermore, the market and consumer behaviour is important to be analyzed, in order to build a customer-centric concept. It is challenging to find the best approach for connecting with consumers on the crowded digital marketplace. Viral marketing approaches offer significantly strong opportunities for relationship building between brands and customers (cf. Miller/Lammas 2010, p. 1-2). Furthermore, as successfully applied SMM with the goal of virality appoints the online user as the advertising medium, chances for exponential spread are enabled. Above that, the message is even more authentic and credible when being shared by friends or strong opinion leaders instead of a company alone. The functions of social media channels offer a speed in sharing and reaching a broad consumer base that has not been there before and is not comparable to traditional media (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 15-16).

There is a need to develop a customer-centric social media marketing concept with specialization of virality potential for future campaigns of the brand, to support the internationalization approach.

1.3 Company objectives

The primary objective for waterdrop is to reach 9 million UK consumers through social media activities, in order to meet an annual revenue target gathered out of social media channels of € 500,000, both measured on 31.12.2019, after implementing the social media marketing concept for UK.

The second objective for waterdrop is to increase the Return on ad spend (ROAS) on all social media channels, with a target of 2 in UK, measured on 31.12.2019, after implementing the social media marketing concept for UK.

1.4 Thesis objective

The objective of this master thesis is to develop an internationalization-directed and customer-centric social media marketing concept focusing on viral marketing in the food and beverages industry, on the example of the brand waterdrop and applied on the market of UK, to support the brand's market entry in that country.

1.5 Frame of reference
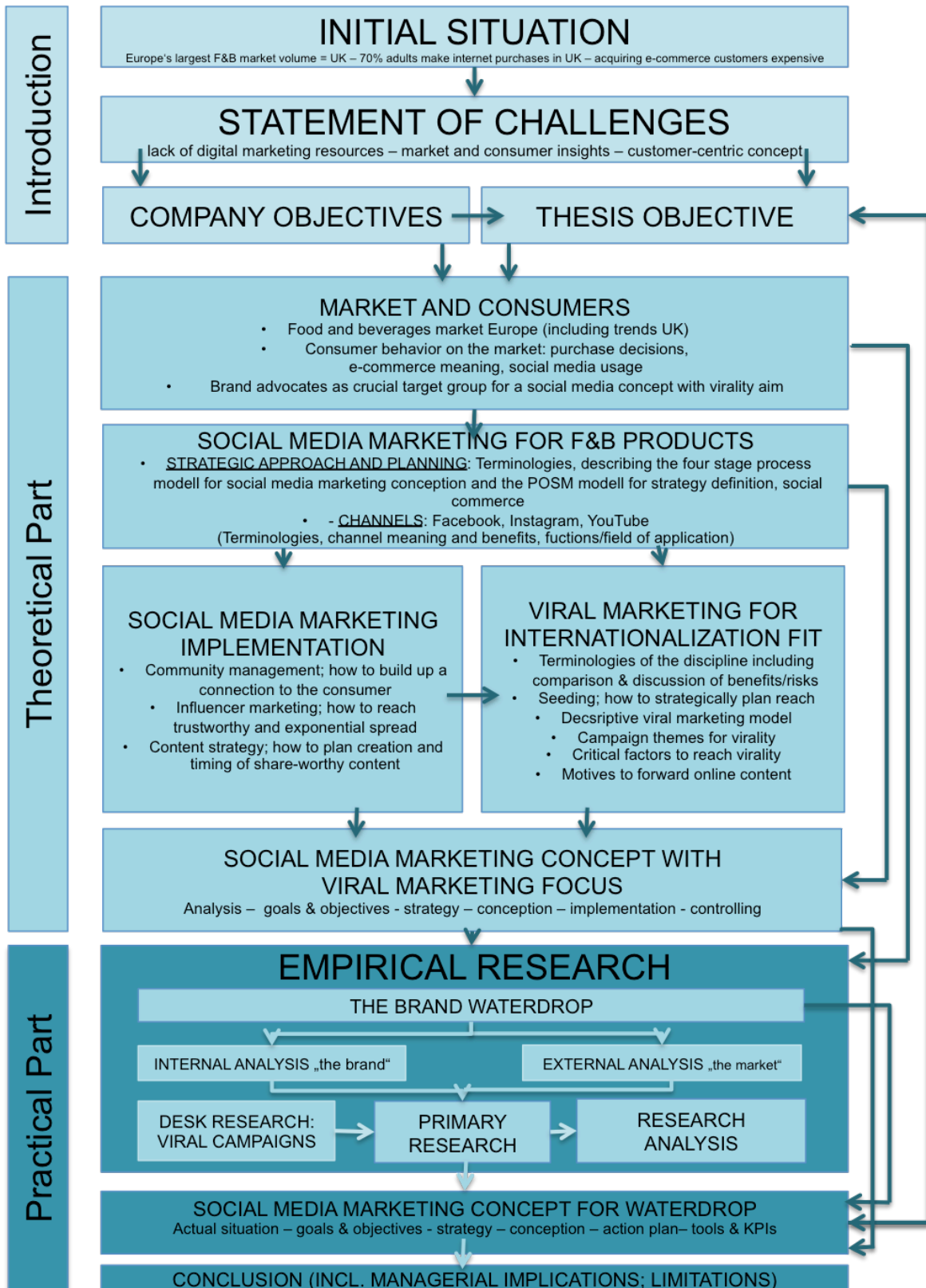
Figure 1: The frame of reference (own presentation)

2. Market and consumers

As a matter of fact, understanding the consumer in terms of purchase decisions as well as in terms of online behaviour and social media channel usage is inevitable for building a concept. Hence, for the purpose of this thesis the following section focuses not only on facts, statistics and trends of the food and beverages market in Europe but also on drivers and the defining pillars on the consumer side.

2.1 Food and beverages market Europe

2.1.1 Traditional retail versus e-commerce

Statistics and forecasts state on a constant basis for many years now that traditional retail faces difficult times, whereas online retail is growing steadily (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 3). In 2016, the European e-commerce turnover could increase by 15%, which is represented by € 530 billion (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 3). What is interesting in terms of market decisions is the fact that UK represents the largest E-GDP in Europe (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 10). E-GDP refers to the gross domestic product gathered through e-commerce activities (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 9-11). Moreover, 82% of the UK population made online purchases in 2016 (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 15). According to Ecommerce Europe, 24% of the consumers are willing to buy beverages exclusively online, and 21% of consumers show this willingness in terms of food (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 20). Still, the fact that Europeans in general are to this day preferring physical stores cannot be ignored (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 53). Indeed, a research states that only 35% of the European population agreed with the following statement: "I can see a future where retail stores are not a big factor in how I shop". In comparison, 55% of the Latin American population agreed with that same statement within the respective research framework (cf. Ecommere Europe 2017. P. 53). However, GfK currently prognoses double turnover for food and drug store products within an e-commerce context (cf. GfK 2018).

Although there are highly positive developments and growth rates in terms of e-commerce growth in a general sense, challenges are existing as well. In fact, some challenges need to be especially considered when talking about the

chances of internationalization and cross-border retail through e-commerce. Thus, those particular challenges are interesting for businesses focusing on cross-border-commerce.

Such challenges are the speed of delivery being longer than expected from a consumer point of view, technical failures, delivering wrong or damaged goods, but also difficulties with finding the right information on the website for consumers or difficult or no complaint management. To a small extent it is also a problem that a certain company does not sell in the country where demand exists (cf. Ecommerce Europe 2017, p. 57).

2.1.2 Food and beverages market and trends UK

According to the latest food and drink report of the UK-retailer Waitrose consumers, two thirds of the UK population follow some kind of diet or health drive. At the same time, experts state that the generic supermarket of yesterday is gone in terms of how consumers eat and shop. About seven in ten shoppers are feeling happier when they are able to include healthy food in their purchase. However, exclusion diets are not trending any longer. Rather, it is all about including healthy food on the shopping list (cf. Waitrose 2017, p. 3).

Regarding another study, younger consumers are ranking highest in willingness to pay a premium for health attributes in food and beverages. In addition, healthy product categories are growing faster than indulgent categories and consumers around the world are willing to take charge of their health. What is also interesting is the aspect of the high attention devoted to health and wellness but at the same time overweight and obesity rates have been increasing worldwide over the past 30 years. Indeed, the respective overweight and obesity rates increased by 28% among adults and by 47% among children over the last three decades. Furthermore, diet and exercise dominate in general. Additionally, eating natural foods that include beneficial ingredients is also trending. Thus, consumers are searching for functional foods, which are providing benefits concerning the promotion of good health or reduced health risks. Within the respective global Nielsen study, respondents prefer products that are low in cholesterol (38%), salt (33%), sugar (32%), fat (30%), high fructose corn syrup (26%), caffeine (23%) and 21% believe that gluten free products are very important (cf. Nielsen 2015, p. 2-7).

However, the questioning arising deals with the topic of willingness to pay for good or dropping bad ingredients. Are consumers willing to pay a price premium in order to get healthy ingredients for their body? In fact, the same study also asked consumers for their willingness to pay for better ingredients. Hence, for a good understanding the consumers are clustered into four interest groups, depending on their before stated personal importance for healthy ingredients. Basically, 27% of consumers are willing to pay a premium for health claims, 38% are only moderately willing to pay a higher price, 23% are slightly willing to pay that premium, and 12% of the consumers are not willing to pay the price at premium level for such products. Not to miss is the gap between the statement regarding the importance of healthy ingredients of consumers and the later willingness to pay for that (cf. Nielsen 2015, p. 11). Thus, there exists potential for brands to communicate the benefit and value of healthy ingredients, to make customers aware of unavoidable price differences. For the same topic of willingness to pay a premium, Nielsen found one exception, namely organic products. 33% of the respondents perceive organic products as necessary and are at the same time willing to pay a higher price for that (cf. Nielsen 2015, p. 11).

2.2 Consumer behaviour in e-commerce

As the final concept of this thesis is consumer centric, the essential drivers and trends of purchase decisions, e-commerce and social media are in the centre of attention at the beginning. In fact, nowadays many companies are launching direct e-commerce channels, whereas a few years ago this was claimed to be the duty or even the privilege of retailers. The dynamic companies that started with direct e-commerce are now aiming to use digital technologies to touch their potential customers through social media, among other methods. However, only being there is not enough for creating a mental connection with the consumer to support growth. There is a need to go beyond e-commerce (cf. Correia, p. 39).

2.2.1 Characteristics and drivers of purchase decisions

Although there are various approaches, discussions and theories about what really drives purchase decisions, there are certain aspects that are stronger in different environments. Consumers´ purchase decisions online differ from those offline (cf. Darley et al. 2010, p. 96). Hence, within an online shopping setup, factors of special strength for online shoppers´ decision-making are relevant

pillars. In fact, consumers within an online shopping context are often brought to a purchase decision through the online appearance like images, quality of information, or video content of the product, be it positive or negative. Furthermore, consumers tend to strive for relational behaviour, due to the fact that this makes their decision process more efficient and somehow easier as information processing is reduced at the same time. Moreover, this relational method also reduces the perceived risk for future choices that comes with decision-making in the consumer's mind. Basically, the overall information satisfaction and the relational benefit coming from an online shop are strong drivers of consumers' commitment for a particular online shop (cf. Park/Kim 2003, p. 16-18). Through e-commerce, there are various advantages and disadvantages arising for consumers with impact on their online buying behaviour. The advantages and disadvantages are described as follows:

Group	E-commerce advantage	E-commerce disadvantage
Product	Higher product and brand selection	Quality uncertainty
	Higher product and brand availability	Inability of pre-purchase experience
Promotion	Increased product and brand information from manufacturers, dealers, but also from independent agencies	Information overload and sometimes unwanted ads
		Accessing all the information means time and effort costs for consumers
Price	Increased opportunity for lower prices	Shipping costs, costs of return (potential price increase)
	Increased price information	Personal information risk (credit card, data)
		Difficulties for paying cash/with a check
Channel	Increased selection of dealers	Waiting for the delivery means time costs
	Shopping from home or office perceived as convenient in general	Effort for returning goods not wanted

Table 1: Consumer perceived e-commerce advantages and disadvantages (cf. Peter/Olson 2010, p. 480)

Hence, it is inevitable for brands to overcome the stated disadvantages of e-commerce by making effective use of the available online channels through which brands are connected to consumers. Taking care of the existing disadvantages for consumers through social media activities can thus positively influence online sales.

Not only the consumer perception has changed in the age of e-commerce, also the consumer power evolved through digital development and the newly created shopping environment. In principle, there are four consumer powers deriving from different areas. These powers are either demand-based, information-based, network-based, or crowd-based (cf. Labrecque et al. 2013, p. 259). Especially the network-based power appears to be crucial within a social media context. In general, network-based power refers to the metamorphosis of content through network actions in order to build up reputation and to influence markets. This happens through distributing, remixing, and enhancing digital content. To be precise, this power lies in the consumer's hand as value is added beyond the original content through content dissemination like sharing or liking, through content completion like comments on a blogpost, or through content modification such as video or image meme. Of course, all of this happens mostly on social media (cf. Labrecque et al. 2013, p. 259, 263).

What plays a key role in successful online communication and e-commerce is the basic understanding of the consumer decision journey. Latest scientific findings show that today's consumers take a very iterative decision journey that consists of four stages. The stages are called consider, evaluate, buy and enjoy, advocate, and bond. It is claimed to be essential for marketers to specifically target stages within that decision journey, in order to reach effective communication and influence the decision of the customer positively. As a matter of fact, consumers are often influenced more within the stages evaluate and enjoy-advocate-bond. Thus, it is crucial to give a lot of attention to the existing and also the necessary advocacy of a brand, as this will not only influence the consumer decision in a positive way, but often stops the consumer from buying a certain brand or product. For example, a weak review or comment can make

a potential customer turning his back to the brand for good. The consumer decision journey is depicted in the graph below (cf. Edelman 2010, p. 3-4).
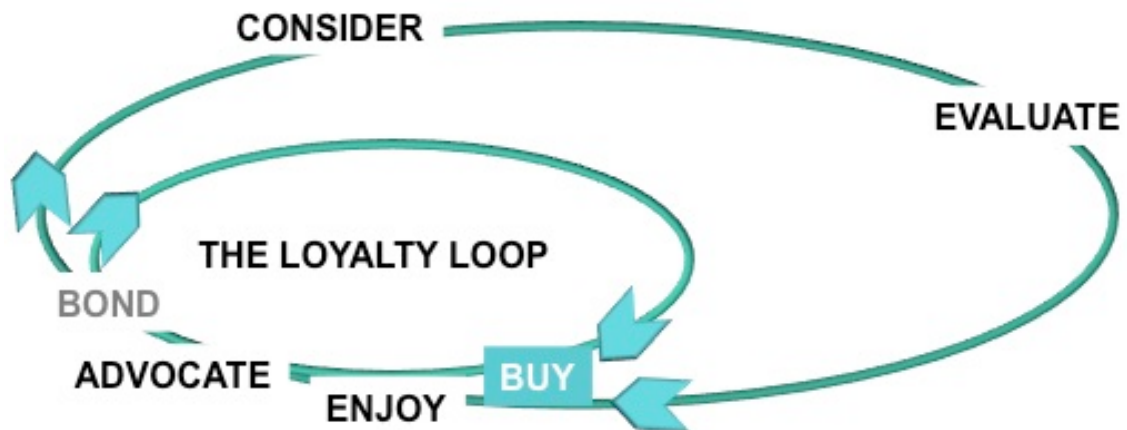
Figure 2: Consumer decision journey (own presentation based on Edelman 2010, p.5)

Consumers nowadays often tend to go through a longer evaluation phase and build a relationship with the brand after the purchase. Therefore, SMM makes the stages of evaluating and advocating increasingly relevant. Marketing activities increase purchases throughout the evaluation and advocate phase. Furthermore, these activities can enhance positive word-of-mouth. If that is the case, a broad scope of reach for the brand is facilitated (cf. Edelman 2010, p. 4). In terms of this decision journey driven strategy, three pillars are to be considered. Firstly, brands need to understand the basic decision journey of their consumers. Secondly, the preferable touch points shall be prioritized and planned in terms of leveraging them. Thirdly, the required resources to target the planned touch points accordingly need to be allocated (cf. Edelman 2010, p. 5).

2.2.2 Social media usage and behaviour UK

Essential to know is the reason why consumers are willing to follow a certain brand on social media. As a matter of fact, around 40% of consumers state that they follow brands on Facebook to get a particular discount code, and 39% of consumers at the same time say they follow brands to show others their support towards the brand. Moreover, receiving free samples, staying informed about the brand, and not missing future products are further reasons why consumers follow brands (cf. ExactTarget 2010). Among the 66 million people living in UK, around 32 million are Facebook users and 14 million people are monthly using

Instagram. Over 70% of the Facebook users, and around 40% of the Instagram users are logging in on a daily basis (cf. Rose McGrory 2017; Statista 2017).

2.2.3 Brand advocates as driving forces for B2C SMM

Although general consumer behaviour is key for building a customer-centric concept for SMM, understanding the special group of brand advocates is crucial when thinking about maximum reach. According to latest statistics, one in three internet users worldwide is considered a brand advocate, with 50% of this group commenting or liking content online and 40% sharing content or links on a daily basis with other users (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017). The figures represent the importance of reaching especially this target group with marketing activities, as this will bring the potential of exponential spread. Above that, research states that consumers' purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by recommendations from family, friends, or colleagues. The challenge for brands is finding and targeting optimal groups of individuals to trigger a widespread adoption of the brand and its products (cf. Wortman 2008, p. 6).

Who are brand advocates?

In terms of the personality, the brand advocate is described as being a trustworthy, extroverted and also extremely well-networked person with a high potential to influence a possible rise or fall of brands through a strong presence online. Thus, this group represents relevant partners for brands. Furthermore, the brand advocate wants to stand out from the crowd and seeks individuality. In terms of new products, advocates are more likely to find out about latest product innovations and launches (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017). According to literature, opinion leadership is connected to the level of a person's innovative personality trait (cf. Sun et al. 2006, p. 1118). In fact, nine out of ten online consumers are trusting recommendations from family or friends the most, whereas just two of ten consumers are trusting online advertisement (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 10). This shows the strength of a targeted communication directed to particularly strong opinion leaders, in order to enable maximum reach. 14% of the brand advocates make use of social networking sites for their research, which is twice as high as non-brand advocates do (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017). This highlights the importance of understanding this target group before carrying out activities on social media.

What also drives the behaviour of advocates is a trend-seeking mind-set, which is shown through keeping on track with fashion and technology trends twice as much as average consumers. Advocates are then quick and more likely to give opinions or brand advice and share experiences with other consumers. Yet, opinions can be either positive or negative, which means that brands should highly focus on gaining the attention of brand advocates, to proactively influence this open communication (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017).

Why brand advocates?

Investing in the target group of brand advocates will later pay off for brands, as this can be described as an effective method of enlarging the channel reach (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017). Above all, the most important aspect of targeting brand advocates is trust. As a matter of fact, consumers are highly trusting brand advocates, and most notably, the level of trust is higher compared to the level of trust consumers give towards brands (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 10). Due to the fact that consumers are overwhelmed with brand and product recommendations these days, it becomes more and more challenging for brands to find authentic and thus effective channels to spread content. Basically, the reason why consumers trust advocates to such a notable extent is the fact the consumers know that advocates do not gain anything from giving the recommendation for a certain product or brand. Hence, this also marks the difference between the popular influencers and advocates. But at the end of the day, targeting brand advocates pays off in sales figures, as the graph below demonstrates (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 10-11).
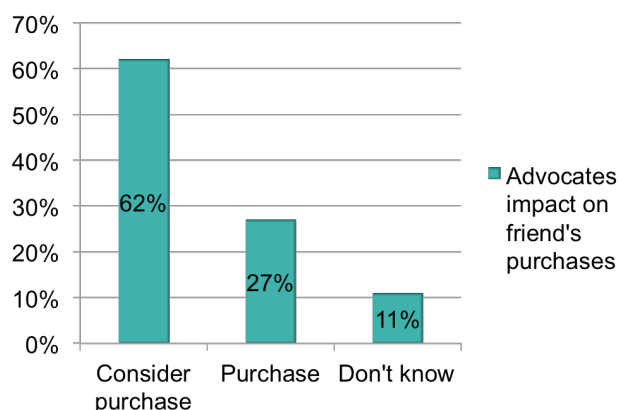
Figure 3: Advocates´ impact on purchases (based on Fuggetta 2012, p. 10-11)

Not only in terms of trendsetting, but also regarding post-purchase word-of-mouth are brand advocates of immense concern for brands. Regarding latest statistics, brand advocates are sharing their experiences with brands or products twice as much as non-advocates. Moreover, 14% of brand advocates post a particular review online, whereas only 8% of non-advocates are willing to do so. It can be said that brand advocates highly appreciate video content, with YouTube as a notably effective and suitable channel. Basically, 25% of the advocates are more influenced by online marketing activities than by traditional advertising on TV (cf. Consumer Barometer 2017).

Brand advocates, in comparison to other consumers…
- Have larger social networks
- Use social media more intensively
- Have a higher brand-consciousness
- Tend to adopt innovative products earlier
- Are more charismatic, outgoing, adventurous and optimistic persons
- Are more successfully creating content and actively sharing on social media (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 16)

How to address brand advocates

Firstly, opinions or recommendations of brand advocates cannot be bought. Instead, advocates spread positive word-of-mouth when having positive brand experiences and based on the fact that brand advocates are motivated by the desire to help others. However, it is not as simple as calling loyal customers, so consumers who are repeatedly buying a certain brand over a longer time period, brand advocates. Some consumers are just through convenience sticking to a particular brand and all of a sudden switching to another due to convenience reasons again, without ever actively recommending that first brand (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 12-13). In the first place it is necessary to identify those consumers of a brands existing customer base, who are considered to be advocates. Through the use of monitoring tools for a brand's social media channels the most engaging and positively acting followers can be recognized. Important to mention is the fact that this monitoring and recognizing step is rather difficult for large brands, due to the fact that it takes a lot of effort and critical reviewing whenever

there is a lot word-of-mouth. For smaller brands it should be a feasible and valuable process of monitoring the existing base of followers, as a good monitoring tool a marketer lets see the number and type of all mentions from a particular author (cf. SmartInsights 2013).

Secondly, through social media channels brand advocates gained an incomparable power and scope of spreading their positive word-of-mouth. It is inevitable for companies to consider and cherish the intensity of networks online. On average, an advocate who recommends something online reaches around 300 to 600 people through social networks (cf. Fuggetta 2012, p. 12). To make the most value out of this power on the advocate's site, the actions of advocates should somehow be appreciated. Thus, there are certain actions a brand can carry out to reward the brand advocates for their positive and active word-of-mouth. First and foremost, thanking the advocates for their mentions or sharing by answering or liking their postings is crucial. Further options are outlined in the table below (cf. SmartInsights 2013).

Rewarding option	Description
Share advocate's content	Advocates are sharing brand content, so it is nice and suitable vice versa. However, it needs to be checked if the content is appropriate for channels.
Giveaways, discounts	Sending gifts, discounts or vouchers to the advocate (maybe for new products) to thank them for the positive actions.
Invitation for guest blogging or interview on brand's site	Not only makes this action feel the advocate special, moreover it shows the value of advocates for the brand to the community in general.
Invitation to special events	This brings the relationship level to offline-channels and lets the brand become connected to the advocates in real-life as well.
Involving with products	Using honest opinions and advices of brand advocates concerning products and also content by inviting them to previews or beta programmes.
Advocate of period X-program (weekly, monthly etc.)	By thanking the already existing advocates on a regular basis, a brand can encourage others to become brand advocates as well. In addition, this action again demonstrates the existing brand advocates that the brand values the active and positive behaviour.

Table 2: How to reward an advocate (cf. SmartInsights 2013)

3. Social media marketing

Social media – an omnipresent term, used with extremely high frequency, not only in terms of marketing but most of all among the population for a direct connection to the world, which basically means people, brands, and organizations. Digitalization processes and a change in the media landscape through the internet call for marketing strategy adaptations on the one hand, and optimizing the marketing investment on the other hand (cf. Dăniasă et al. 2010, p. 278-282). However, strategic approaches and distinctions regarding what needs to be prioritized for a certain industry, brand, and target group are key, but often missed out. This chapter provides the strategic basis that eventually constitutes a SMM concept.

3.1 Terminologies

In general, social media is defined as any website or application, which enables users to create and/or share content, and further to take part in social networking (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 150). Other definitions are distinguishing social networks as a mutually used network on the internet, which connects consumers online computer-assisted and the term of social media, which mostly refers to digital media and technologies enabling users to connect but also to create and share media content individually or in a group (cf. Gabriel/Röhrs 2017, p. 12). Although the definitions are often the same, there are differences depending on the particular topic or goal for a certain literature framework. For this thesis, the focus lies on social media channels, somehow skipping other pillars connected to SMM, in order to enable a precise concept.

Further terminologies of importance are paid, owned, earned, promoted, and shared media. Firstly, paid media refers to advertisements, which are paid in order to push a brand, like ads on Facebook or YouTube. Secondly, owned media represents created content of the brand itself spread through a blog or the brand's Facebook channel for example. Thirdly, earned media comes into play whenever users or influencers generate content about a certain brand. This can be valuations and blog posts, among other activities. Last but not least, promoted and shared media refer to sponsored advertisements on Facebook as

well as shared content on social media such as re-tweets or recommendations (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 69).

Social network sites are strongly important for brands as these platforms enable the sending of electronic invitations to other members and are further a suitable channel for enhancing online word-of-mouth. As a matter of fact, research states that word-of-mouth referrals have a substantially longer carryover effect compared to traditional marketing activities (cf. Trusov et al. 2009, p. 90). Most actions of brands on social media channels are announcing new products, making prize competitions, interacting with fans, handling customer service issues, and providing useful information and advice (cf. Tsimonis/Dimitriadis 2014, p. 336). A proven key to success and differentiate is the strategic building of trust and commitment via social media (cf. Sashi 2012, p. 267).

Whereas this section discusses the main aspects of social media process, strategy, and planning, the following sections will go deeper into the aspects that accelerate voluntary online word-of-mouth and linked virality.

3.2 Four-stage social media marketing process

Principally, there is a four-stage process that describes strategic social media marketing. The respective stages are goals, channels, implement, and analyze (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 154). The model has be chosen as it offers a broad view on the topic of social media conception. As the graph below displays. certain aspects that need to be done within the application of a sophisticated SMM concept are clustered within themed stages.
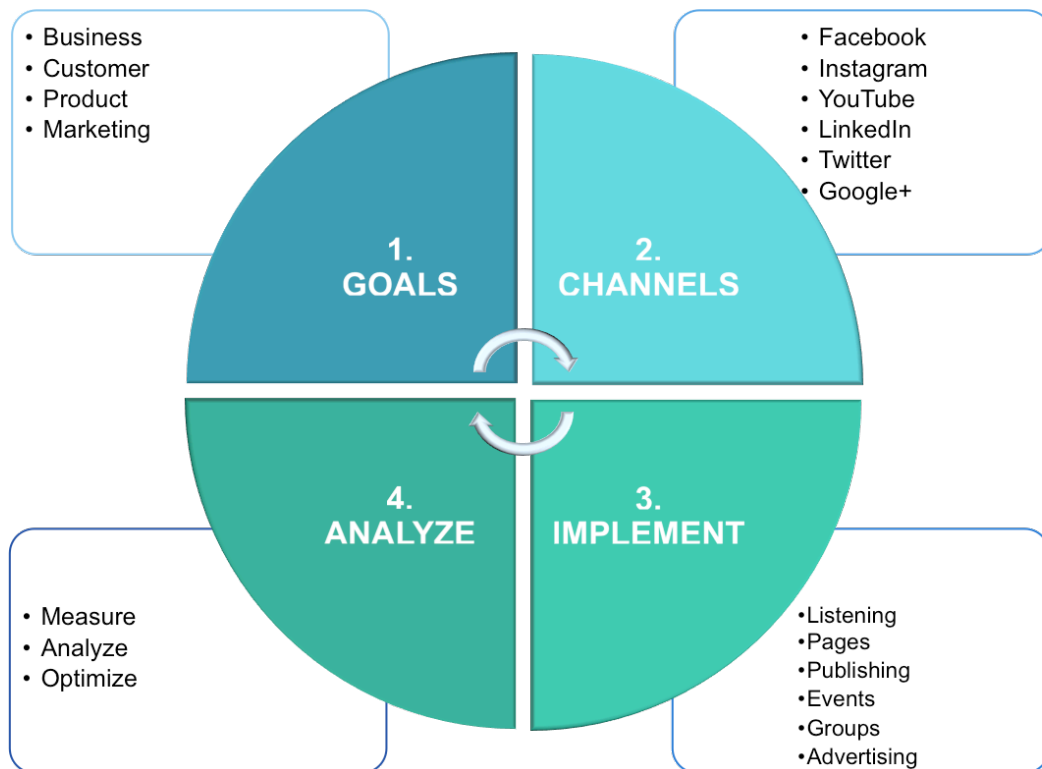
Figure 4: Four-stages social media marketing process (based on Dodson 2016, p. 154)

Although the stages take place in a step-by-step order because the goals need to be set at the beginning, and analyzing can of course only take place after implementation of certain activities, it can be seen as an iterative process (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 154). Whereas the first stage includes setting social media objectives for a brand, defining a strategy by setting goals, the second stage includes the channels available on social media. To be precise, this stage should in reality represent the channels a brand focuses on. Thus, the channels need to be understood in terms of suitable area of daily activities and content at the beginning. As a matter of fact, there are channels which increase the customer reach of a brand and improve growth more than others are able to (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 153-165). This mostly depends on the product or brand aspect and customer base, such as B2B or B2C, product type, product complexity, and content. Thirdly, implementing constitutes of various aspects that are essential for engaging with the customer base. It is all about analyzing what the audience wants, planning content strategically and work goal-oriented on the different platforms. This stage goes far beyond just delivering interesting content. Last but not least, analyzing the social media performance is crucial and determining success for the online communication of brands. Each channel offers various

services for analysis and measurement, so that brands can keep on track with their social media campaigns (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 187-245).

3.3 POSM-concept to define a social media marketing strategy

Social media marketing requires a precisely defined strategy, a targeted communication on the channels of choice, and well-organized measures (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 94). Although there are brands existing, which follow a more experimental approach of integrating social media into the total marketing strategy, many others treat social media as long-established media channel (cf. Weinberg/Pehlivan 2011, p. 276). Thus, there needs to be concept that enables a structured and goal-oriented way of applying SMM for a brand. In principle, there are four important stages that need to be followed in order to define a SMM strategy. The respective concept is called POSM-concept and depicted through the graph below (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 94).

PEOPLE	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	MANAGEMENT
Analyse and define target groups.	What goals should be reached with social media?	Chose social media channels and define a content strategy.	* Community management * Online reputation management * Monitoring
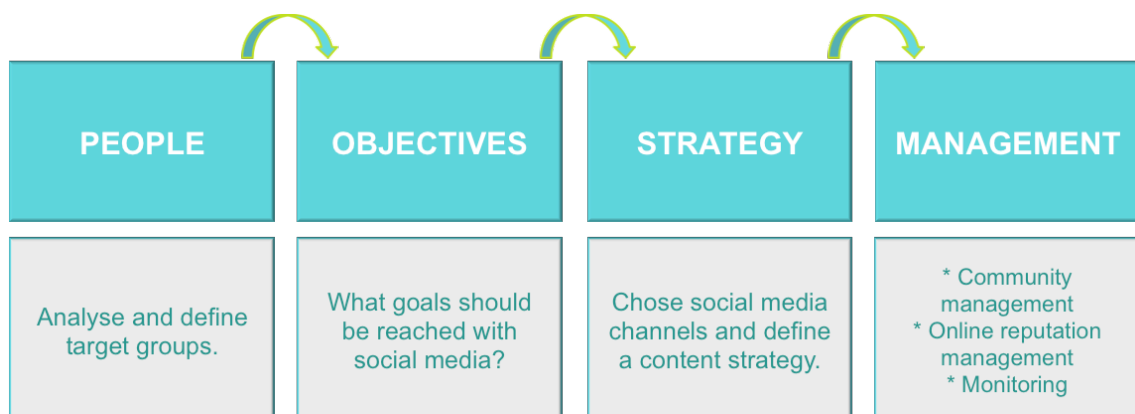
Figure 5: POSM-concept (based on Grabs et al. 2017, p. 94)

3.4 International social media marketing

The scope of an internationalization process of companies or brands calls for supporting and appropriate marketing and communication methods. Not all activities are conveying and facilitating a market entry to the same extent. Aiming for a maximum reach by applying viral marketing within the social media concept is a promising approach for brands, which helps them spread campaigns or certain content at highest speed and scope levels (cf. Gabriel/Röhrs 2017, p. 60). Nevertheless, in order to make the content or communication accessible for a broad consumer base, certain aspects need to be considered. Regardless of the existing social media strength of brands in their home market,

it sometimes appears to be a quite challenging phase when these brands are outgrowing local plans and strategies. Still, the growth of digital comes with the fact that most businesses have to think global and adapt their presence for an international audience (cf. Kingsnorth 2017, p. 35). The inevitable networking power makes social media the perfect internationalization support (cf. Okazaki/Taylor 2013, p. 67). Relevant factors for making a social media marketing concept internationalization-fit are considering culture, language, and payments. As already stressed in the first part of this thesis, understanding the culture of the target region(s) is a key factor for future success. Whether a targeted market responds well to online shopping or not, and how to reach and catch consumers' attention is very important for the fundament of each concept and its´ future output. Furthermore, lifestyle points like average commute times and working hours should have an influence on targeting and customer support programs of brands. Also the digital landscape including smartphone and tablet penetration have a high impact on the core of a SMM concept. This can be very detailed, as even the weather in the target market plays a role, due to the fact that this defines the time spent indoors or outdoors. Furthermore, even though it might be an obvious factor, language takes careful analysis and use. Not only in terms of brand name, but also in terms of common phrases, authenticity is key (cf. Kingsnorth 2017, p. 35-37). Latest articles and expert opinions demonstrate the importance of a social media brand personality that is honest and friendly (cf. Sprout Social 2017).

When it comes to ads and campaigns, it should of course meet the target market´s basic requirements concerning currency and also pricing preferences, in order to avoid clicking barriers (cf. Kingsnorth 2017, p. 35-37).

3.5 Social commerce

According to various statistics, social media could not yet be established as a very strong sales channel, as often social media is representing only 1% of the customer journey (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 493). Still, social media platforms enable huge traffic for online shops, which makes social media an inevitable channel for brands focusing on e-commerce. Indeed, traffic contribution from social media towards websites is constantly increasing (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 493).

In short, social commerce combines the topics of e-commerce and social media, which means a special form of e-commerce that actively engages the customers and focuses on a personal relationship and communication between a brand and the social media user. The term sums up a collaboratively designed shopping experience, which takes place online. Amazon is considered as the pioneer regarding social commerce, as the platform uses customer and user feedback for accelerating further purchases for many years now (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 493-494).

Figure 6: Social commerce (own presentation)

To distinguish the term social commerce from social media marketing, it needs to be clarified what main goals lie beneath social commerce. Referral marketing, advertising, and online shop integration are claimed to constitute the framework of social commerce (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 497).

The crucial point of social commerce lies within especially attractive offers for fans and followers. In reality, users who follow a particular brand on its social media channels expect to benefit not only regarding information and entertainment. First and foremost, these followers are looking for offers and special promotions (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 496-498).

The fact that 95% of consumers' decisions are made unconsciously as well as based on various emotional triggers, social norms and rules can be used to strategically apply social commerce. Social media usage contributes to the fulfilment of certain needs human carry within. When it comes to the well-known Maslow pyramid of needs, social media finds its place among the level of social needs in general. Every like, every comment or other positive feedback acts as an emotional reward, thus, consumers feel comfortable within social networks in an unconscious manner (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 502; Laja 2017;

Pispers/Dabrowski 2012, p. 114). To make use of this natural and unconscious process in a social commerce environment, the following aspects form a strategic approach in that field.

1.) Stay realistic

Final purchases are not made on social media, but successful storytelling supports turnover increase.

2.) Entertain with content

The key to social media success is consumer engagement, which requires high quality content in the first place.

3.) Sell with social proof

Recommendations of others or categories such as bestsellers or similar products other customers bought encourage the purchase decision.

4.) Make use of influencers

People trust authorities, so building relationships with bloggers, stars, and other celebrities is of high relevance.

5.) Make use of artificial scarcity

In an over-branded world full of numerous offers, scarcity and exclusive offers make certain brands or products appear more interesting to consumers. Limitations in terms of time or quantity cause that appearance.

6.) Accelerate commitment

As commitment often refers to the longing for consistency, creating a consistency of positive tonality can increase commitment on social media. A positive tonality can be reached via contests for example.

7.) Increase customer loyalty

Only a lucky and satisfied customer can become a loyal customer.

8.) Enable offline experience

Offline experiences such as sales parties among friends are proven to be highly effective regarding first purchases. There is no stronger social booster than the positive feedback of a friend.

3.6 Social media channels for products in food and beverages

3.6.1 Facebook

Despite the fact that social media is mostly used as a general term social media platforms can be classified into subgroups. On that account, Facebook is considered a social networking site, which enables users to connect with friends

and colleagues and at the same time users are creating personal information profiles (cf. Kaplan/Haenlein 2010, p. 62-63). As the largest social network worldwide, Facebook offers massive opportunities for brands to connect with consumers (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 171). That is what makes Facebook especially promising for viral marketing. Regarding enterprises using social networks, Facebook represents the most used of all. However, it needs to be mentioned that there are regional tendencies arising in terms of social media channel preferences (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 171). Facebook is especially of interest for brands, which are aiming to create content of such value, as that users are sharing it on an exponential level. As a matter of fact, video content can be shared easily on Facebook, which enabled a cost-effective way of targeting massive reach that can in the best-case scenario end up in a snowball effect (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 177).

The reason why Facebook is an inevitable channel for all brands following a SMM strategy is its steady development and new features. With 1.9 billion monthly active users but also concerning traffic lead to websites the platform offers massive opportunities for brands (cf. Socialbakers 2017; Grabs et al. 2017, p. 178).

By now, Facebook has established itself far beyond a simple network for socializing. Rather, it acts as a platform linking devices regarding communication, information, and various services. In general, Facebook users spend a lot of time on the platform, while being highly interactive (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 178). Users are active on the platform on a daily basis, with over one billion Facebook-Users logging in mobile. According to Socialbakers, Facebook currently counts 1,981,181 fans in UK (cf. Socialbakers 2017). Regarding the types of interactions on Facebook in UK, 50% are represented by reactions, for example a like for a posting, 36% of interactions are shares of certain postings, and 14% of the interactions are comments. Besides, it is also interesting, which types of content are leading for Facebook in UK. As also stated in other sources, Facebook is in the lead with 56%, followed by photo represented by 29%, and links with 13%. Important to mention is also the fact that only 1% of all content consists of status updates. In terms of Facebook fans, e-commerce is the top industry on the platform with more than 85 million fans in UK according

to latest statistics. The branch of e-commerce is then followed by retail, fashion, FMCG food, and beauty (cf. Socialbakers 2017).

Without doubt, brands can make use of Facebook for many reasons. Above all, Facebook offers marketers the chance to listen to the target group and customer base and to gain insights into their behaviour and preferences. Many companies mainly try to use this channel as some kind of monitoring tool to learn about the product satisfaction and the online reputation of a particular brand (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 183). However, another reason why Facebook is an essential pillar for a SMM concept is its power to build up and strengthen relationships with consumers. Direct contact with consumers and also the media industry has become very accessible and rather comfortable in daily business life when applied via channels like Facebook. Introducing new products to consumers and providing existing or potential customers with product information combined with a personal touch is known to be very suitable for marketing activities on Facebook. Facebook enables brands to specifically target the most important groups of consumers, based on profile data and shared information, pictures, videos and links. In fact, Facebook is systematizing these tracks and processing them for later targeting. Nevertheless, concepts need to be highly sophisticated, if a brand wants to stand out from the crowd on Facebook. Campaigns need to be highly emotional and monetarily attractive to reach a certain action of consumers (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 183-185). Moreover, most users have more friends

Figure 7: Facebook opportunities (own presentation)

Listen to and learn about consumers

Strengthen relationship and direct contact

Product advertising and supporting product launch

Increase reach

Accelerate sales figures

on their social media channels than in real life. Thus, the reach is incomparable. Product recommendations and positive word-of-mouth can be spread exponentially. Above all, Facebook is able to support turnover growth of brands via various tools and applications. Through targeting with Facebook-ads, remarketing, custom audience with Facebook-pixel and product representation functions, revenues can be gathered directly from social media channels (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 184). Facebook channels must not be understood as a one-way communication tool. Rather, Facebook is a medium for dialogue, which means that the success of a certain page is directly connected to the content quality. Aiming for a high interaction rate is a determining factor of virality potential. The actual reach of a particular content is ascertained by the relevancy Facebook itself rates the respective posting or campaign for the target audience. As a result, all factors of importance are combined via the algorithm that determines the individual content for users, which is constantly updated (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 193-194).

Latest statistics imply that there are three main pillars that determine the recommendation of a brand's Facebook channel:
1) **Constant up-to-date content and news**
2) **Vivid community**
3) **Personal appeal**

In terms of benefits, users prefer channels that deliver one or more of the following aspects:
1) **Information**
2) **Entertainment**
3) **Material benefit**

Regarding information, users prefer background-stories, life hacks, and experiences, among other things that deliver value. For that purpose, partners, distributors and customers often act as sources of original information. The mention-function on Facebook supports the effective usage of the before listed partner pages. Furthermore, entertainment plays a key role, as users like to be entertained by funny or weird content. Regarding the type of content, video is

mostly stated to be king. However, users also like to benefit from following brands. Hence, the ability to win something or to bargain makes users very happy (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 195-197).

3.6.2 Instagram

In terms of branding, Instagram is considered the perfect channel. Although this platform belongs to Facebook now, its strengths and benefits differ from those of Facebook. It offers the chance to entertain users and (potential) customers with aesthetic pictures. Thus, Instagram can be described as some kind of picture community (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 283-285). On Instagram, engagement is sought with multiple hashtags that come with relevancy to a certain brand and its products, connected to topics or hashtags, which are searched for a lot. Building up brand awareness and customer loyalty is stated to be effective through the functions and user base of this platform (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 226). By using hashtags, the number of followers can be increased on Instagram. However, most hashtags are written in English, which makes Instagram especially for brands with an international direction highly effective and relevant (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 302).

Beyond the basic functions of this channel, it is meaningful for brands as Instagram is booming. Pictures are able to reach a higher level of attention than just word could do. This enables brands to convey personal photos and background information to consumers and thereby inform about latest products or projects. Especially brands that offer products for beauty, fashion, food, or sports can make perfect use of this platform. Not only brand-created content can be posted on Instagram, but also reposting of relevant pictures of customers or influencers has been proven to be highly effective. However, mentioning the owner of the picture is inevitable (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 286). When it comes to ads, the structure of those on Instagram follows the ad structure on Facebook. The ads are marked as sponsored for the users (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 226).

Regarding the target group, the average user on Instagram is aged 13 to 35 years, with a higher tendency towards women, who are interested in the topics of healthy lifestyle, fitness, design and interior, as well as travel, outdoor and fashion. With over 70% of Instagram users actively searching for brands or products and 37% among the users following up to five brands on the platform, the channel impresses with an incomparable strong interaction rate. Often,

those users follow certain brands just due to the fact that they find a brand sympathetic (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 287). Thus, the channel is a must for all brands that operate on markets touching the topics mentioned above, which also includes the industry of food and beverages.

In fact, a trend that can be especially highlighted regarding the before mentioned leading topics on Instagram is "superfood & fitness". Very often, users of Instagram are considered to be very active persons, who are highly interested in healthy eating and doing sports. As these consumers are seeking products that include superfoods and also support their fitness, sources of inspiration are very welcome to that consumer base (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 288).

Instagram Stories

Whereas the channel Snapchat was trending in the last years, Instagram reacted to that and is now offering Instagram stories, which somehow brings the same functions as Snapchat to users. These functions are mainly based on pictures or short video-clips that disappear again 24 hours after posting (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 293-294). So called ephemeral content has become so important that it requires an individual strategy (cf. SmartInsights 2017).

3.6.3 YouTube

Millions of users like to be entertained and therefore enjoy the massive collection of videos on various platforms. Social video marketing offers the chance to not only communicate and promote products, but also to entertain the users or (potential) customers. Moreover, social videos come with the benefit of a high level of reach and search engine positioning (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 229). The main objective of content communities like YouTube is the sharing of media content between users with high popularity (cf. Kaplan/Haenlein 2010, p. 63).

Above all, videos come with the strength of motion and dynamic, which leads to a higher level of attention from users that is way better than for pictures. On that account, brands can transmit relatively much content and clear messages to users. However, it is recommended to keep the goal of gaining the user's interest within the first three seconds of the video. At the same time, the video should not be longer than 90 seconds, unless it is possible to build a certain level of dramaturgy (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 226). Beyond that, the strength of social videos on a platform like YouTube allows brands to successfully integrate

storytelling into the communication activities. Such videos reduce complexity in terms of stating the product benefits while including emotions (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 230). When it comes to viral marketing and concepts aiming for maximum reach, videos play a key role, as they are able to accelerate reach. If a video is only placed on a website, it is of course limited in terms of spread. However, when being uploaded on YouTube, millions of users can find, love, and share a video. Often, users on YouTube do not know a certain brand, but somehow come across a brand's video and by that, get to know the product or the emotional world behind a brand (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 231).

Concerning latest statistics, the corporate YouTube channel for FMCG with the largest audience in UK is Kellogg's UK & Ireland with around 40,000,000 total views. With regard to the average number of followers for a brand's channel on UK YouTube, 114,598 followers represent the current state (cf. Socialbakers 2017).

4. Social media marketing implementation

This chapter focuses on three contemporary promising pillars of the implementation phase of a SMM concept, which are community management, influencer marketing, and content strategy.

4.1 Community management

Whenever a customer reaches a high level of identification with a brand, a positive effect on loyalty, satisfaction and recommendation activities can be enabled. In order to strengthen consumers' identification with a brand, not only the relationship between the brand and the consumer, but also the relationship among consumers needs to be pushed (cf. Bauer et al. 2013, p. 7). Furthermore, active member participation is crucial for the effectiveness of any online brand community (cf. McWilliam 2000, p. 45-46). In addition, a key indicator for performance of a brand community is the level of participation, which also increases the likelihood of adoption of new products from the brand and at the same time decreases the likelihood of such regarding competitive brands (cf. Bagozzi/Dholakia 2002, p. 19-21; Kozinets et al. 2010, p. 71-74; Thompson/Sinha 2008, 65, 78-80). Hence, considering strategic pillars of community management and success antecedents should be part of any SMM concept.

4.1.1 Types of users within brand communities

According to various studies, consumers' behaviour in online brand communities can be either interactive or non-interactive (cf. Burnett 2000). Of course, when it comes to seeking for a campaign to get viral, interactive consumers are the more favourable group for targeting, as this group has the power to spread a brand's message exponentially. Still, non-interactive members, which are so called "lurkers", are of high interest too, as there is a certain ratio of lurkers to interactive community members. Hence, behind every active community member, there are numerous lurkers, who are browsing the web and seeking information too (cf. Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 4).

Regarding a Nielsen study, there is a 90-9-1 rule that can be considered in terms of user participation. Whereas 90 percent of users are lurkers, who read to observe but do not actively contribute to the community, nine percent are contributing from time to time, but with other dominant priorities in their daily life.

In addition, one percent of users participate to a high extent, with the highest account on contributions. This group mostly leaves the impression that they are living online, just because they tend to post just minutes after some commenting or other event occurred (cf. Nielsen 2006). In fact, lurkers participate to the highest extent in real figures, as the highest participation in online brand communities is active lurking. Active lurkers are users, who may take something from the community and pass it along to others, beyond the framework of the online channels. Hence, this group accelerates word-of-mouth too. Lurkers might also include those people who are visiting a community for customer support and find a solution there, but this group never really contributed to the community. Moreover, this group of community users tends to contact the original poster through another channel, such as e-mail or telephone. By that, lurkers are extending the communication concerning a particular brand far beyond the online community (cf. Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 4-5).

4.1.2 *Motives for participation*

There are five antecedents of participation within the framework of brand communities. These motives are the information motive, the self-discovery motive, the social integration motive, the social enhancement motive, as well as the entertainment motive (cf. Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 2). These motives can be strongly linked to significant drivers for viral campaigns, which will be discussed in the following chapter (cf. Libert/Tynski 2013; Dobele et al. 2005; Ho/Dempsey 2008; Odén/Larsson 2011).
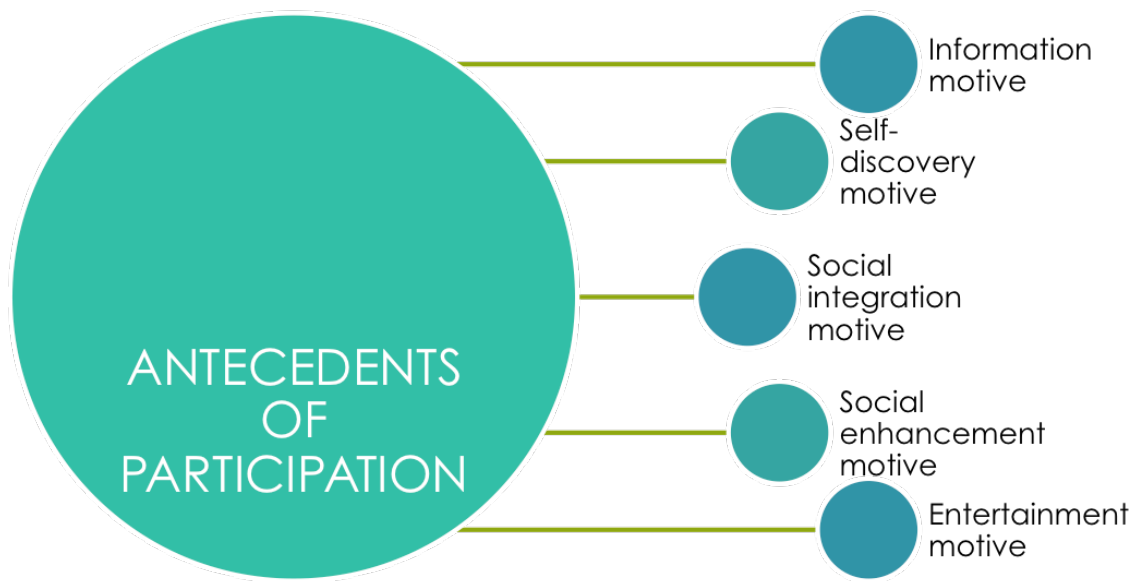
Figure 8: Motives of community participation (own presentation)

To understand the mechanism behind the information motive, it can be said that there are needs regarding information, which can either refer to receiving or sharing certain information. This is also connected to solving a particular problem, generating an idea, or buying and selling a product (cf. Dholakia et al 2004, p. 259-260). Additionally, research states that communities, which share similar interests and hobbies are more important to opinion seekers that are looking for information online than for opinion leaders (cf. Sun et al. 2006, p. 1118). The motive of self-discovery involves interacting with other members to attain future goals and social resources, and above all, to understand as well as deepen one self through applying social interactions (cf. Dholakia et al 2004, p. 259-269; Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 7-8). When it comes to the social integration motive, users aim to meet like-minded people, who offer support. At the same time, consumers are able to establish and nurture friendships through brand communities, hence the need for that social interaction can be fulfilled through such communities. Moreover, the social enhancement motive refers to the acceptance and approval one community participant achieves from other participants and the status derived from the contribution within the community framework (cf. Dholakia et al. 2004, p. 244). The fifth motive fulfils entertainment needs, by fun, enjoyable, and pleasurable activities shared with other community members (cf. Korgaonkar/Wolin 1999, p. 56, 64). In reality, the entertainment

motive has been identified as a meaningful predictor concerning the participation of users within digital communities. One example for such entertaining activities within brand communities would be Nikon's "Picture of the Week" (cf. Dholakia et al. 2004, p. 251; Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 9-10).

Not all five motives are equally strong among online brand communities. Whereas transaction-oriented communities like Amazon are more following the information motive, lifestyle brands might be more based on the entertainment or self-enhancement motive. Beyond the brand and product specification, the country's culture plays a key role for community participation. It makes a difference for the social media strategy whether the culture is rather collectivistic or individualistic (Madupu/Cooley 2012, p. 18).

4.2 Influencer marketing

Successful branding within the social web is to a huge extent determined by the level of influencer relations a particular brand possesses. Influencers are defined as people who are able to spread a brand through personal high influence on the social web. This influence is ascribed to media reach, famousness, or status. In fact, the cooperation between a brand and an influencer is stated to be most effective when it comes to lifestyle products. If a brand is able to build up strong influencer relations, brands or products are able become a trend. However, if a brand is aiming to benefit from the power of influencers, monetary incentives, positive impact on reputation or status and social recognition need to be given as an exchange (cf. Brown/Hayes 2008, p.37-40; Grabs et al. 2017, p. 127-128). In fact, if marketers are able to identify their particular key influencers and then listen to them, strong alliances are formed. (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 191).

Above all, influencers are acting online. However, this group of people also finds their sphere of action offline. Research has defined five types of key influencers, which are named and described in the table below (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 128-129; WOMMA 2013, p. 23-38).

Type of influencer	Description
Advocate	Loves a brand and likes spreading positive word-of-mouth among friends and other contacts. Not only is this type of influencer loyal, but also representing brand expertise within the respective social network.
Ambassador	Ambassador for an organization or a brand. This persons can be employees but also bloggers.
Citizen influencer	People that are well networked offline as well as online and at the same time have a large circle of friends and are highly active on social media. In differentiation to advocates, citizen influencers are per se no fans of a particular brand. Rather, citizen influencers hold a powerful network and thereby this group of influencers is representing a tremendous level of influence.
Professional/ Occupational influencer	This type of person reached the scope of influence through a career. Examples for professional influencers would be Steve Jobs or Sheryl Sandberg.
Celebrity influencer	Celebrity influencers generate brand awareness due to the fact that they are stars, musicians, actors, or other celebrities. This group of influencer can create brand awareness online as well as offline.

Table 3: Types of influencers (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 129-130)

Not all decisions regarding influencers need to be made based on intuitions. Most large companies are following some kind of influencer-scorings, in order to ensure a well-organized pool of influencers that are of special interest for a particular brand. Otherwise, choosing out-dated or irrelevant influencers due to badly or wrong executed analysis could waste precious time (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 129-130).

4.3 Content strategy

As a matter of principle, content marketing reflects a term no marketer is able to avoid in a crowded marketplace. Content marketing puts additional value for the consumer in the centre of attention (cf. Baetzgen/Tropp 2013, p. 13-14; Löffler

2016, p. 203). Per definition, content marketing refers to the creation and spread of relevant and useful content for the consumer, which is directed to a specific target group, in order to not only engage consumers but also to build profitable customer relationships (cf. Content Marketing Institute 2017). Whereas content strategy can be described as the obligatory part of a marketing concept that puts consumers in the center, content marketing is the highest level of sophistication regarding dealing with content (cf. Löffler 2016, p. 203). What lies beneath the aim of providing content is that not only trust, but also the perceived usefulness of a brand's online activities affect brand experience for consumers in a positive way (cf. Morgan-Thomas/Veloutsou 2013, p. 21).

Nine out of ten organizations are nowadays marketing with content, by publishing ideas, information, and entertainment. The application of content strategies is rising due to its positive response to consumer preferences (cf. Jutkowitz 2014). Content-marketers are aiming to generate stories, which users can identify with. In fact, content marketing describes a part of marketing that is in the end acting as some kind of advertising-free marketing. Although this might appear to be a contradiction in the first place, through content marketing users are not lead to offers by simple commercial phrases. Rather, consumers are provided with stories and useful insights that can be found within the environment of a certain product or brand. To reach that goal in marketing, knowing the target group, who visits an online shop, concerning their ideas, interests and needs is crucial (cf. Löffler 2016, p. 206).

Before implementing a content strategy into a concept, some questions help finding the content strategy to deliver relevant content (cf. Löffler 2016, p. 219):

Questions regarding the target group:

- Preferred reactions
- Relevancy of topics with additional value
- Target group profile

Questions regarding the organization:

- Content responsible person
- Internal setup (Resources, know-how, budget, guidelines, meeting plan)
- Content controlling

Questions regarding the planning:

- Content format

- Channels
- Realistic timing

Questions regarding the realization:

- Partners for collaborations
- Technical requirements
- Sophisticated online presence
- Ease of sharing

<u>Native advertising</u>

When talking about content strategy and marketing, native advertising represents the latest trend and promising approach for successful content implementation. Native advertising describes a spectrum of online advertising forms, which are sharing a focus on minimizing disruption for the online experience of consumers. In fact, the minimized disruption takes place by letting the advertisements appear in-stream. There are various ways, how the disruption can be reduced. On the one hand, optimized placements to increase relevance for users are one option to reduce disruption for users. Creating native advertisements that blend in perfectly with the respective media surrounding has been positioned as a very strong content marketing approach recently (cf. Campbell/Marks 2015, p. 602-603).

According to the findings of a recent study regarding native advertising, language and positioning of native advertising have an impact on the recognition of the respective content. The study showed that disclosure position affects visual attention. As a matter of fact, a style of wording such as "sponsored" or "advertising" as well as middle or bottom positioning of that could increase advertising recognition compared to other conditions. As a follow-up effect of this advertising recognition, more negative evaluations are reached. At the same time, visual attention mediated the relationship between the disclosure position and advertising recognition within the framework of the respective study (cf. Wojdynski/Evans 2016, p. 157-168).

Over the years, brands learned to adopt their content on social media channels in such a way as to let the messages not appear to be all about sales and promotion. In fact, these types of messages have been looked past by users on social media. Native advertising is linked to source disclosure and consumer

invitation. Often, publishers of such ads provide little or no disclosure of source for users and are thereby tricking them into consuming certain content while connecting its origin to the respective publisher for example (cf. Campbell/Marks 2015, p. 603).

5. Viral marketing for internationalization fit

In order to achieve the highest possible reach, many marketers are aiming to apply viral marketing strategies for the SMM activities. Due to the fact that entering a new market means a brand is not known in that foreign market yet, viral marketing is especially suitable because of its exponential spread characteristic (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 11-20). As a matter of principle, with viral marketing activities, brands put the communication, the meaning, and the adoption in the hands of consumers. However, the main challenge for brands is to detect the nature behind voluntary sharing of brand content (cf. Dobele et al. 2005, p. 146, 149).

5.1 Terminologies, benefits and risks

Viral marketing is defined as a special approach for marketing with the characteristics of more subtle advertising messages and strong engagement aspects through a high level of additional value for the consumer. As a consequence, the marketing activity gets some kind of infecting aspect and users are willing to become advertisers themselves by sharing the content with friends, relatives, or colleagues (cf. Mayer 2009, p. 5). The strong connection to SMM lies within word-of-mouth marketing, as social media channels offer various tools that make sharing and spreading content incomparably fast and easy. For example likes or share buttons encourage users to not only consume a certain posting, but beyond that share it with their respective network. In this sense, viral marketing is part of SMM and can be described as a strategy that is seeking for viral effects instead of traditional paid advertising (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 38). Other definitions include the aspect of consumer-to-consumer communications in order to disseminate information about a service, product or brand. Very interesting is the finding of De Bruyn's and Lilien's study, which states that it is proven to be effective targeting virality among a network of friends. However, the respective study found that aiming to reach shares among professional or colleague networks is in the end not highly effective regarding the quality of traffic on the brand's website. Thus, there is a positive effect of sharing brand content with friends on later activities such as purchases on the brand's web-

site, but not concerning the same sharing among a rather professional network on social media (De Bruyn/Lilien 2008, p. 160-161).

Viral marketing is characterized by the following aspects:

- The user/consumer is acting as the advertising medium

- The advertising message is strategically placed in the background of the posting or campaign

- The posting or campaign comes with a high level of emotions, thus, aiming to reach consumers' motives (cf. Berger/Milkman 2013, p. 22 Tusche 2017, p. 11-12)

Due to the fact that viral marketing puts the consumer into the lead of conversation, this special marketing approach comes with certain benefits but also risks. First of all, viral marketing content is able to break through the noise, which means that customer centric postings with high emotional content can cut through the clutter in a crowded online environment (cf. Libert/Tynski 2013, p.1). What is more is the strong financial benefit, as viral marketing is claimed to be rather inexpensive compared to other marketing activities (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 36; Dobele et al. 2005, p. 144). Furthermore, successful viral campaigns produce over one million impressions. Hence, such campaigns are creating a tremendous brand exposure and also free press. Besides that positive effect, viral campaigns mostly reach high social engagement, sharing and interaction with a brand and increased digital brand advocacy as a follow-up effect (cf. Libert/Tynski 2013, p. 1-2). Due to voluntary transmission by users, a peer-to-peer transmission is generated, which is not common with other advertising methods (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 36; Dobele et al. 2005, p. 144-145). But also massively improved organic search rankings and traffic to the brand's website together with a boost of the general brand engagement are beneficial effects of approaching viral marketing (cf. Libert/Tynski 2013, p. 1-2). In addition, the diffusion speed, which is rapid and exponential, as well as the audience reach with more effective targeting and access to diverse audience via social contacts are strong arguments for implementing virality aims into a SMM concept (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 35-36).

However, every coin has two sides, so besides the significant benefits, there are also risks that lie within the application of viral marketing. Above all, there is

a lack of control, because as soon as the content is out there in the world of social media, brands have to face a rather uncontrollable nature. Not only is there the risk of lacking control mechanisms for the distortion processes like filters, but also an adverse selection of customers and losing control over timing is possible. Further, there exists the potential of negative word-of-mouth or even hate sites that may lead to negative perceptions of brands. Besides, legal and ethical standards represent critical factors for any viral campaign. For example, consumers might feel exploited if the content is not authentic or if it has no real additional value for the consumer. Viral marketing is risky, not least because it comes with a high level of consumer dependency (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 36; Kaikati/Kaikati 2004, p. 6, 9-10, 17-19; Dobele et al. 2005, p 144, 149; Helm 2000, p. 159-160).

5.2 Seeding to maximize reach of SMM campaigns

An essential part of viral marketing activities is the strategic and targeted spread of campaign content and advertising message, which is called seeding. Due to the fact that it is rather difficult to just let the campaign get viral on its own, viral spread calls for active measures of the brand. Although a video or other content of a campaign might gain high impressions itself, this does not automatically guarantee traffic to the website, which is mostly favourable for brands as sales targets need to be met. Thus, planning a SMM concept with focus on viral marketing requires budget for seeding. Often, this budget can account for half of the total campaign budget (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 117).

First of all, the channels for seeding need to be considered with their specialities regarding the optimum spread of content. What makes the seeding of viral campaigns special on common social media channels is the additional virality that is reached by the fact that users see what users of their network clicked. Furthermore, the news feed comes with information about already existing comments, likes, and shares. Striving for a high level of engagement is crucial on all social media platforms, as it is determining the later reach of a brand's content. In addition, friends of users who see a particular posting are also able to see the interaction with the posting. Hence, high authenticity is enabled before supportive payments from the brand are even made. In terms of Youtube, the definition of the right keywords is of highest importance, so that the video can be easier found later. Moreover, the social media accounts of

influencers, which have been discussed in previous chapters, are representing high potential to spread viral content. Instagram is in the centre of attention regarding influencer marketing. Additionally, the social news aggregator Reddit enables users to save found or created content that can then be rated by other users. This is very common, especially in English-speaking countries. Not to forget is e-mail-marketing, which also delivers a perfect support for seeding of campaigns (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 117-118).

Regarding the detailed process of seeding, this can happen either simple or extended. The following graph displays the main aspects of each version.
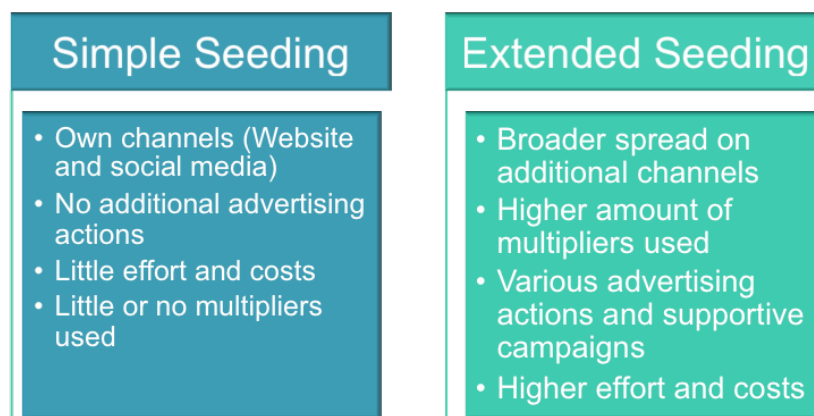
Figure 9: Simple and extended seeding (based on Tusche 2017, p. 119)

In general, simple seeding more or less implies that users discover a brand's content themselves and are actively willing to share it later, whereas extended seeding encourages the sharing of content. Taken actions to accelerate this sharing would be researching suitable influencers, press relation, and also coordinated e-mail-campaigns (cf. Tusche 2017, p. 119). Research also states two different approaches for seeding that is either marketer-selected or self-selected. The marketer-selected approach refers to the marketer's explicit identification of a target audience subset (seeds) and direct communication with that group, whereas in the self-select approach marketers provide some kind of platform for the audience, where the respective audience then starts seeding and initiating the viral campaign on its own (cf. Stewart et al. 2009, p. 4).

5.3 A descriptive viral marketing model

Without doubt, many brands that are actively applying SMM are seeking for their campaigns to get that viral character. However, it is tricky to plan this outcome for a particular posting. Yet, combined literature findings deliver a strategic framework, which enables the highest potential for virality by consider-

ing the crucial factors of past viral content on social media. In general, the campaign should firstly engage the user, secondly reward the user, and thirdly, come with a social factor for the user (cf. Odén/Larsson 2011, p. 5-7).
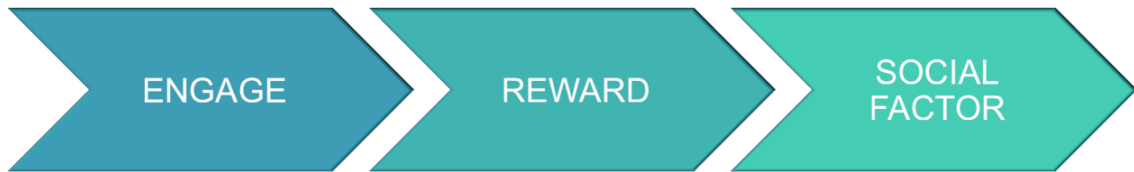
Figure 10: A descriptive viral marketing model (own presentation)

In terms of the stage for engagement, a campaign should come with the ability to light a spark of emotion (Phelps et al. 2004, p. 338-339, 342). It means that the campaign has to captivate the user, thus, gaining his interest and thereby arising room for the user's potential decision to spend time on sharing the campaign. This might seem obvious, however, this needs to be considered in the conception process already. There should be instances in which consumers are able to affect the campaign (cf. Odén/Larsson 2011, p. 5). To identify engaging messages, there are specific points, which altogether support the factor of engagement (cf. Dobele et al. 2005, p. 146-149):

1. Content should capture the imagination due to the fact that it is intriguing or fun
2. Consumers are attached to the product, which should be easy to use or high in visibility
3. Users need to be well targeted
4. The source is credible and authentic
5. Leveraging combinations of technology

Furthermore, the stage of reward is focused on the specific user, who shall get something out of the campaign. According to research, consumers share something in order to accelerate neural and cognitive mechanisms that cause a rewarded feeling. This can often be approval on social networks via a like or comment from followers (cf. McKean 2015, p. 31). Marketers are in charge of finding opportunities to reward users, to get the most out of the campaign. It is very important to make sure that users located in Europe for example get the same reward as users on another continent. By that, brands focus on offering

access to the reward to as many users as possible, in order to increase the rewarding factor. This reward can appear in different forms, which mostly depends on the type of campaign. In general, the reward should be something that the audience benefits from. Sometimes this reward is something the user is even expecting. However, most important is the broadest access to the reward possible, the suitability of the reward quality and quantity for the particular campaign, the more users can benefit the better, and sharing content to friends should always benefit the audience (cf. Odèn/Larsson 2011, p. 6). Thirdly, the social factor mostly depends on how well a brand uses social media as a tool for the specific audience of a campaign to interconnect. As already mentioned in the chapter before, there are ways beyond the public social media channels and groups of how users can communicate with each other and spread content of brands. A viral campaign fulfills the social factor and uses social media as a tool well, whenever the campaign content is actively leading users to other social media sites. Still, the social factor not only includes the interconnection of users, but also the connection between the user and the brand. Self-developed web services or applications for the respective campaign are promising for viral campaign, to accelerate a good communication flow (cf. Odén/Larsson 2011, p. 6-7).

5.4 Campaign themes that enforce virality

Campaigns go viral when they are touching on human emotions (cf. SmartInsights 2014). First of all, charity gets people involved. However, it is rather tricky to tell which charity to give and how to design the process.

Figure 11: Suitable viral campaign themes (own presentation)
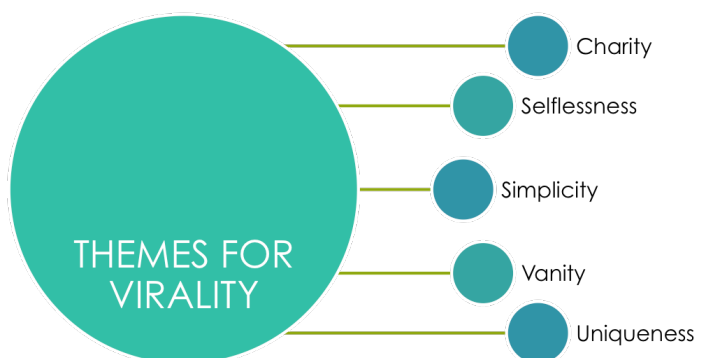
Beyond that, there needs to be a reason for doing charity, as authenticity should not be missed. What is more is that there should also be an action connected to the charity background of any campaign. What action should the user take, in order to be part of that charity and to reach involve-

ment? Regarding the theme of selflessness, there is a strong connection to charity. Most people have the feeling that egoism is something that defines today's society. Helping others lets consumers feel good and also realize that there is so much more every individual person could do to help others. If a campaign offers users the opportunity to do so, involvement is enabled. When it comes to simplicity, the main focus should be on making the message as easy to understand as possible. In fact, when campaign content is just not easy to understand, or if a required action to get consumers involved needs a lot of effort, the effectiveness will most probably be more or less zero. Hence, sharing and understanding of potential viral campaigns needs to be enabled from the very beginning. Most viral campaigns in the past have also been driven by vanity. This might appear to be somehow contrary to charity or selflessness. Yet, it can be seen as vanity when a person is publicly showing how generous they are. Above all things, every viral campaign is outstanding and of course reflecting a high level of uniqueness. Although it might be working to some extent, if campaigns are copying others, huge potential for virality is lost. In general, followers are weaker than brands, which reach a surprise effect with their content. What makes the escalation of campaigns even possible is of course the use of social media. Even though the basic use of social media for viral marketing is not connected to the themes above, its massive meaning for virality needs to be stressed again at this point (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 59-61).

Besides the most common themes that have been able to reach virality in the past, there are also different types of viral campaigns. A viral marketing campaign can either focus on social interaction, be unintentional, or it can be a commercial type. The last one is the most common for brands, as the brands mostly want to somehow be connected to the campaign of course and contribute to the brand image, awareness level, or sales for example. What defines a commercial viral campaign is the motive of creating interest of users, the visibility is intention driven, and the intention behind the campaign is either open viral or concealed viral. If a campaign is concealed viral, the brand is conveyed very subtle, the content and aim of the campaign really is in the center of attention. However, with the concealed approach, ethical issues are likely to arise (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 43).

5.5 Critical factors for viral marketing campaigns

According to experts in the field of viral marketing, there are critical factors, which need to be considered in order to ensure virality for any campaign. These factors are described in five theme groups. The topics are product and service characteristics, diffusion characteristics, peer-to-peer information conduit, message content, as well as the overall campaign structures. For a better and detailed understanding of the application for a marketing conception, these critical factors are outlined in the table below (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 37-38):

Critical virality factor	Specific aspect	Practical example question
Product and service characteristics	Suitability	Is the brand's product or service that is marketed suitable for a viral marketing campaign?
Diffusion characteristics	Exponential	Is the content spreading exponential among the audience?
	Reach of audience	Is the content reaching a broad range of users and also the right audience?
	Speed	Is the content spreading rapidly among users?
Peer-to-peer information conduit	Available and used channels	Which channels for communication are available to the transmitters and receivers of the message? What are the preferred channels of transmitters for transmitting the message or brand content?
	Available and used technology	What is the available technology for messaging of transmitters and receivers? Which technologies are the transmitters using for transmitting the content?
	Combinations of leveraged technologies	Which are the technologies that the transmitters and the receivers are combining in order to send and also receive messages?
	Credibility of source	What is the content transmitter's level of credibility from the content receiver's point of view?

Message content	Ease of use	How easy is it to use the message? Is the visibility of the message high?
	Fun and intrigue	What about the content's level of fun and intrigue to both, the transmitter and the receiver?
	Imagination	Is the message imaginative?
	Engaging	Is the message or content engaging the transmitter as well as the receiver?
Overall campaign structure	Viral activity encouraged	Is the campaign encouraging viral marketing activity?
	Considering ethical and legal issues	Is the campaign aligning with ethical standards? Is it meeting legal requirements?

Table 4: Critical factors for virality (cf. Woerndl et al. 2008, p. 37-38)

5.6 Motives to forward online content

Although the technical and campaign aspects are crucial and determining for the later reach of brand content on social media, the consumer behaviour regarding this topic must not be left out. Various experts dealt with the topic of motives to forward content online. This section outlines four different aspects that drive consumer behaviour in terms of viral marketing.

Certain brand content is more likely to reach a large group of users, when the intrinsic motivation of users to forward that particular content is targeted
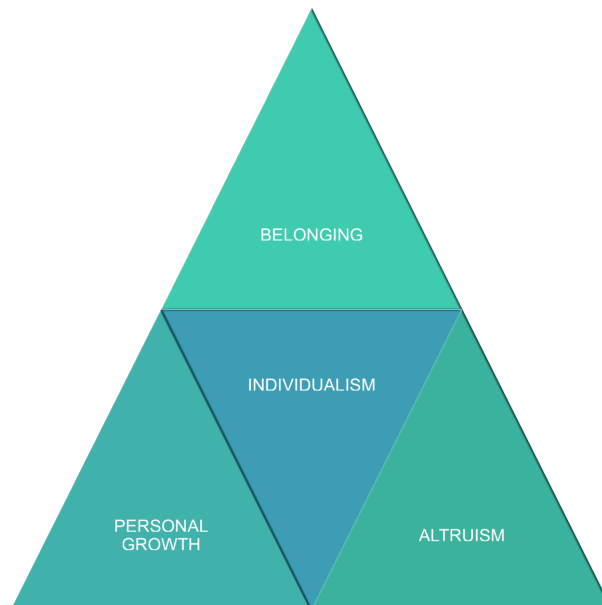
Figure 12: Motives to forward online content (own presentation)

successfully. In order to do so, marketers first need to understand the main aspects of forwarding motivation. As viral marketing aims to spread messages

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through personal communication instead of mass communication, the intrinsic motives need to be included into a viral campaign conception (cf. Ho/Dempsey 2010, p. 1000).

Firstly, many users want to be part of a group. Social bonding and relationship bonding determine various actions consumers take. The second motive has to do with the need of being individualistic. Many users feel that they need to be different and use online content forwarding to show how they differentiate themselves from the crowd. The third motive is driven by the need to be altruistic, which has to do with acts that appear to be selfless and are seemingly based on love and affection. Last but not least, some consumers share content online because they need to satisfy an inner need for personal growth (cf. Ho/Dempsey 2010, p. 1002-1005).

6. Development of a SMM concept with focus on viral marketing

After discussing the theoretical background for a SMM concept, the actual planning or conception needs to happen. For this step, the following outlined planning process provides orientation for the strategic aspects and differentiation between terms.

6.1 Analysis

Every concept should start with a phase of analysis. Not only the internal, but also the external environment has to be evaluated and brought together in one framework. From that point on, it is possible to set goals and define a strategy as well as to fulfil further necessary steps like conception, planning implementation activities and also the controlling options.

In order to create a SMM concept, the environment is required to be analysed regarding internal strengths and weaknesses, and also the external opportunities and threats, with a focus on the targeted market. For this, the SWOT-analysis is the most common and sophisticated approach. However, in order to be as detailed as possible in that stage, the target group as well as the key aspects such as language, social behaviour and trend orientation should be included in that phase (cf. Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon 2018).

6.2 Goals and objectives

Before carrying out a conception and thinking about how to implement a particular SMM concept, the basic objectives for the respective brand management need to be evaluated and defined. Before defining a specific objective for various business areas, the overall goals shall be stated first. As described in chapter three's SMM process, goals can be related to businesses, customers, products, and marketing. The most common objectives for each area are stated in the following.

Type of goal	Specific goal
Business	Lead generation
	Sales increase
	Cost reduction
	Profitability improvement
	Hire the best talent
	Become the thought leader
	Gain market share
Customer service	Consumer satisfaction
	Chance of referrals or repeat business
	Provide best-in-class customer service
	Deliver world-class digital experience
Communication	Brand personality building
	Reputation building (positive)
	Effective crisis management to keep brand personality and reputation high
Marketing	Branding
	Awareness
	Engagement

Table 5: Types of goals (based on Dodson 2016, p. 158; Kingsnorth 2016, p. 75)

All objectives need to be structured to meet the criteria of relevance (does the objective fit with the vision), resonance (does the objective fit with the business values), responsiveness (is the objective adaptable and flexible if required), and recognisability (is the objective easily understandable) (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 75). After checking these criteria concerning the basic suitability of goals, all particular and individually formulated brand objectives for various areas need to be defined in a smart manner. This means every single objective shall be stated specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 77-78).

6.3 Strategy

Strategies are specific things that are planned to be done, in order to meet the prior set objectives. Whereas goals are mostly broadly formulated, strategies must be more focused. From the strategies, the action plan is created. Howev-

er, before defining the final strategy, the sales funnel should be broken down in every step in order to discover the appropriate strategies (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 79).

1. **Awareness**
2. **Consideration**
3. **Findable**
4. **Informative**
5. **Ease of use**

For all stages, the respective internal levers should be considered (cf. Kingsnorth 2016, p. 80).

1. **Awareness**: Public relations, above-the-line marketing spend
   Strategy example: Increased display advertising across highly targeted sites
2. **Consideration**: Proposition and brand values
   Strategy example: Development of a market-leading digital proposition
3. **Findable**: Marketing activities
   Strategy example: SEO improvements on a significant level
4. **Informative**: Content
   Strategy example: Content strategy development
5. **Ease of use**: Customer service, conversion funnels, user experience
   Strategy example: conversion rate improvement

Starting from this level, concrete action plans provide a more detailed layer of planning how the strategies can be delivered.

6.4 Conception

For the conception of a brand's social media appearance, the channels and focus of activities shall be defined based on the before stated situation, goals and objectives, and strategy. Especially the demographics of the market and online behaviour, as well as the main channel after research findings need to be defined. However, this is possible after a practical analysis that is individualized for the particular brand. Above all, viral marketing campaigns can be analyzed through real-life-cases, which deliver a further pool of characteristics for the conception phase. The conception will include:

- Channels
  - Channel focus
- Pillars of content
- Unique characteristics of the social media strategy
- Adaptations for the market of choice (such as language, content focus)
- Virality approach

In order to create a viral campaign or viral content for the social media channels, the following three-step-process can be followed.
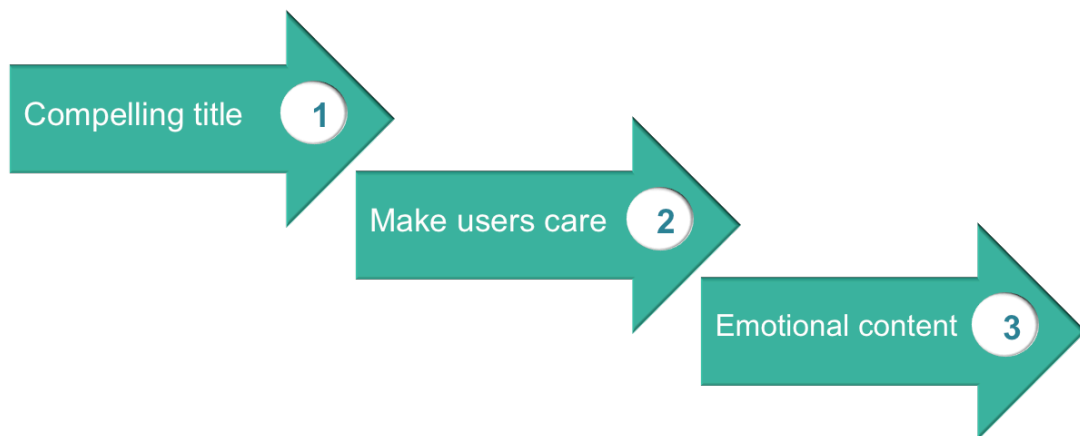
Figure 13: Viral campaign conception (own presentation)

Firstly, the title is what attracts new users. Hence, it is all about getting the initial click, because the more users are consuming the content, the higher the chances to achieve maximum reach on social media. Secondly, strong emotional drivers, as discussed in chapter five, are to be included to increase the level of affection of users. Eventually, this will increase the amount of people sharing the content with their network. Important to mention is that heavy use of branding might cause many consumers to disregard the respective content as salesy or even spammy, which could lead to a decrease or loss of interest, abandonment, or even backlash. Hence, the second step should be focusing on creating contrast between high levels of emotionality and aspects with less emotional activation. Thirdly, in addition to a rather minimal branding, successful viral campaign conception strongly requires content that transfers highly emotional messages to users. Most viral campaigns are characterized by positive emotions outlined in the previous chapter. Still, some campaigns have been able to become viral although being based on negative emotions (cf. Libert/Tynski 2013).

6.5 Implementation activities and measures

When it comes to implementing the SMM strategy, the most important pillars, which have theoretically been discussed in this thesis, are listed in the following overview.

- Having a valuable, customer-centric and market-outstanding content strategy
- Identifying and integrating the most suitable influencers for the particular brand and product
- Setting up a community management that enables hearing the voice of users and thereby enables a transactional relationship with the consumers
- Considering the most important cultural aspects of the target market
    - Individualism vs. collectivism
    - Language
    - Target group characteristics and demographics within the target market

All these aspects will lead to an action plan for implementation and concrete measures for waterdrop.

6.6 Controlling

No great concept can work effectively without detailed monitoring. Hence, necessary tools to measure all SMM activities need to be understood and strategically implemented into social media concepts. Otherwise, brands would just put effort in without connecting targets and activities wisely. Even though there are numerous well-structured monitoring tools on the market, experts recommend not to trust the outcome of one single tool by itself.

Instead, brands should follow the performance facts of various tools simultaneously (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 135). The following table outlines effective tools for monitoring SMM activities.

Tool	Focus	Aim
Talkwalker	Social analytics, benchmarking, dashboards and monitoring	A broad and widespread and neatly arranged setting of monitoring. In addition to various social media analyses, this tool conducts daily searches of key words and sends it directly as a report. Word-of-mouth can be monitored properly by that.
Alert.io	Mobile social media monitoring	This tool is also available as an app, hence very effective for on the go. Like most other tools it monitors company and brand names in addition to other keywords.
Social Mention	Monitoring and KPI categorizing of mentions	A little more advanced that Talkwalker, Social Mention already tries to categorize the found postings/keywords into KPIs.
Buzzsumo	Analyzes virality of content	A very suitable tool for getting an overview of brand names within social media and connected links and articles that are shared and/or discussed within the same context.
Hootsuite	Monitoring, social media management and reporting	Hootsuite is recommended by experts due to the benefit of not only spreading social media messages on various channels but also monitoring keywords at the same time. Thus, the tool enables brands to cluster findings according to keywords and give an overview of all channels including the competition.
Hastracking	Influencer monitoring	A tool for tracking hashtags on social media channels within a particular timeframe.
Klout	Scoring influence potential	Analyzes the score of influence of a social media profile through use of a certain algorithm.
Little Bird	Influencer research	A tool that finds and measures the suitability of influencers for a particular brand.

Table 6: Social media monitoring tools (cf. Grabs et al. 2017, p. 136-149)

Above all, the KPIs need to be defined according to the objectives of a brand and SMM concept. The following table outlines a pool of common and contemporary recommended KPIs for social media marketing.

Key performance indicator	Calculation	Area of suitability
Share of voice Share of mentions within a particular market	Number of mentions about own brand / number of total mentions (own brand + competitors´)	Competitor watch; brand monitoring
Sentiment ratio Amount of negative, positive, or neutral mentions	Positive or negative or neutral mentions / Total mentions	Consumer feedback
Audience engagement Share of active users who contribute to a conversation in social media via comments/likes,/shares	Comments + links to concrete topics / all topics	Issue management
Conversation reach Number of users making expressions about brands, products, trends on social media	Number of active users / total number of users	Issue management, consumer feedback
Active advocate Amount of consumers that accelerate a positive opinion within a determined time frame on social media	Number of generated positive opinions (e.g. within last month) / total number of opinions	Consumer feedback
Advocate influence Influence of a positive mention of one particular user (or of an own advertising program) on the opinion formation of other users	Influence of one positive opinion on social media / total number of positive opinions	Consumer feedback

Advocacy impact Actual ability of one positive opinion to change the opinion of a critical user in a positive way	Number of generated opinion formations (due to purchase recommendation or advertising program) / total number of positive opinions	Consumer feedback
Resolution rate Share of satisfactorily answered consumer inquiries on social media	Number of satisfactorily answered consumer inquiries on social media / total number of consumer inquiries on social media	Consumer feedback
Resolution time Required time for the reply of a consumer inquiry on social media, e.g. minutes, hours, or days	Total required time for replying to all consumer inquiries / total number of inquiries	Consumer feedback
Satisfaction score Relative customer satisfaction on social media	Feedback of one user / feedback of all users	Consumer feedback
Topic trends Most frequently mentioned topics (product, brand, service) identified within the framework of one particular monitoring	Number of a particular topic / total number of topics	Trend scouting
Idea impact Number of interactions and positive opinions accelerated through a new product or service	Number of positive mentions or discussions about respective topic / total number of positive mentions or discussions	Trend scouting, product launch controlling

Table 7: Social media key performance indicators (cf. Absatzwirtschaft 2010; Grabs et al. 2017, p. 150-152; Weinberg 2012, p. 54-55)

Quality scale of interaction

One very important aspect of controlling the social media performance and defining key performance indicators is the quality scale of interaction. Regardless of its necessity, a simple like or follow on a brand's social media channel is not enough to report a successful performance. Hence, marketers should strive for getting users involved in a conversation and measuring the number of such users. The graph below depicts the different levels of interaction quality, starting with a like, over a comment, to the desired spread, and achieving a goal like a purchase that is contributing to the overall sales goal. However, each channel is unique and has its own qualities that need to be understood (cf. Dodson 2016, p. 197).

Goal achieved: purchase, registration, subscription → GOAL **4**

User retweets, reposts, forwards → SPREAD **3**

User comments on content → COMMENT **2**

User likes or follows → LIKE **1**

Figure 14: Quality scale of interaction (based on Dodson 2016, p. 197)

7. Brand profile: waterdrop

Waterdrop is a brand of the company KVELL GmbH that has been launched in Austria in January 2017. The brand represents a new product category that is called "microdrinks". Not only does it embody a highly innovative product, but also a unique consumer experience. Waterdrop is matching the unmet needs of consumers who are looking for health and customization, as there is a massive shift away from sugar, driven by health concerns and regulations. Further, the huge trend of customization offers opportunities within the segment of liquid water enhancers. Hence, the vision of waterdrop is to be the pioneer of the new product category "microdrinks", which enable consumers to customize their water to add taste and functionality of any desire, anytime, anywhere.

The current product portfolio of the brand consists of five different types of waterdrops, which are called focus, boost, youth, defence and the newly added relax. All products contain diverse sets of vitamins and superfood extracts. Moreover, the brand follows the approach of developing highest sustainability standards for their products. Thus, the inlay packaging is based on paper foam technology, which is 100% sustainable and bio-degradable. Furthermore, the company invested a lot in research and development regarding the lightest weight possible for the product, which makes it particularly suitable for e-commerce and shipping worldwide on a low cost level.

With a turnover figure of more than € 800,000 in Austria, just within the first year of operating in the country, waterdrop strives for a fast growth and market entry strategy.

7.1 Description of the brand and concept in the home market

In general, the company has two main target groups, which are B2C as well as B2B customers. For the aim of this thesis, the B2C target group is in the center of attention. For this B2C target group, the main orders are placed online. This fact definitely represents the sales focus of waterdrop. However, throughout the brand's first business year of 2017, waterdrop opened up several pop-up stores, which are mainly aimed at accelerating awareness among the target group and offering product experience at the highest level possible to potential customers. By the use of such activities, the company primarily wants to create touch points

to the end customer, in order to get the consumers' attention towards the products of waterdrop, as well as towards the online shop of waterdrop, which will remain the "place" where the company wants to lead the consumers, regardless of their local sales establishments. The main strategy of waterdrop concerning addressing consumers in terms of sales touch points is based on four pillars: First and foremost, there is the online shop, which is always the priority for the brand. However, there are additional pillars to reach consumers. The second pillar is represented by the before mentioned pop-up stores. Thirdly, the company added another pillar, namely retail. Just in autumn 2017, waterdrop appeared on the shelves of all BIPA stores in Austria. Pillar two and three are used by the company in order to create awareness in the mind of consumers, with the aim of telling these customers about the product appearance and further about the online shop of waterdrop. The fourth pillar is targeting the B2B area, by selling B2B solutions to hotels or smaller companies such as accountants, who want to offer healthy water additives to their employees and customers.

7.2 Description of the target group

For social media and paid media campaigns the following target groups are known and reached by waterdrop.

Lifestylers

This target group consists of young and modern women with a high interest on trends and new products, with many early adopters among the community. In terms of age, this group is mainly found within the age range of 21 to 35 years. Moreover, these lifestylers come with a high body consciousness. Healthy eating and regular sports activities characterize this consciousness. As this group likes to try new products, the information seeking process regarding novelties is mostly done via social media, with a special focus on Instagram. Lifestylers are very keen on new and aesthetic things. Additionally, this audience is always on the go and have an immense impact on other purchasing decisions, which means that these customers often induce a second target group to buy.

Health-conscious-women

The second large target group that is clustered for all waterdrop social media activities are the so-called health-conscious-women, which are represented by women aged 35 years and more. These women are in the prime of life and have a high level of body-consciousness. Above all, this target group takes care about proper nutrition with an active, sporty lifestyle in general. Health-conscious-women drink a sufficient amount and are seeking sugar-free and preservative-free products. Some women among this target group also tend to be diabetics. In terms of function, health-conscious-women are looking for products that can do more for them, which are at the same time practical and easy to use. They take care of the ingredient-composition of the products and put a lot of effort in the research-phase within that context. Sometimes these women are the head of the family, who are also looking for sugar-free and healthy products for their children. Besides all these health-driven facts, this target group as well wants to try out hip products.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the described target groups are the main clustered groups for social media activities. Experience shows that the brand can reach various consumer groups defined by different behavioural characteristics. However, especially within the strategic conception of social media campaigns the above-described target groups should be considered strongly.

8. Primary research

The following sections describe the research design, as well as the research target, method, assumptions, and analysis of the primary research.

8.1 Research design

In order to develop a new social media concept with a specialization on viral marketing for the brand waterdrop, it is necessary to obtain further information about viral marketing on social media. Figure 15 shows the research design of the primary market research. A detailed version of this design will be provided in the appendix of this thesis, together with a project plan that shows the timeframe and planning of the primary research.

Main research objective
To find out how experts approach social media marketing within an internationalization context while focusing on exponential spread of consumers for the respective social media campaign.

Research method
• Qualitative method – summarising content analysis
• Expert interviews
• Open guideline-based technique

Sampling
• Interview with 15 experts
• Experts coming with a professional background in:
(A) social media marketing (B) viral marketing campaign – conception and/or conduction
(C) know-how of the market UK and/or food and beverages

Interview guideline categories
• Social media and viral marketing
• Social media conception
• Virality factors and possible prediction
• Internationalization and measurement
• Consumer/trend behaviour in UK, focus on F&B products

Figure 15: Research design (own presentation)

Qualitative research through expert interviews has been chosen for this thesis as there is not yet enough rational proof available that predicts virality. Hence, in-depth interviews with experts in the field of social media marketing will be able to discover practical, realistic, as well as proven methods of applying viral marketing to support a market entry. In order to provide a decent outcome for the brand, 17 experts will be interviewed.

To be precise, an expert is defined as a person, who is suitable for the research with expert know-how in a particular field of interest. This has to be some kind of specific knowledge that can defined for one distinct area. Not every person has the same expertise. (cf. Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, p. 118)

For the purpose of this thesis, the experts for the interviews shall come with a professional background in one or more of the following fields:

- Social media marketing
- Internationalization
- Campaign conception
- Know-how of the market UK and/or the industry of F&B

8.2 Research target

The target of the research is to answer the main research questions regarding the best approaches for an international and customer-centric social media concept and which factors enable virality for a brand.

8.3 Research method

Qualitative research methods mostly differ from quantitative research methods in terms of data analysis. Whereas quantitative analysis focuses on data representation and interpretation via numbers, qualitative analysis follows the approach of representing data through the use of verbal reports. Such data can be interview minutes among other options. The paragraphs of such minutes are then analysed regarding the contextual meaning and brought together into the opinion of a sample (cf. Smith 2015, p. 1-2). The text, which is gathered through the use of this research method represents essential data material that enables the later analysis and interpretation to present the results (cf. Flick 2009, p. 75)

To be precise in terms of characteristics, qualitative research comes with three main pillars. Firstly, qualitative methods are able to discover relatively unknown fields of research. Secondly, qualitative research methods enable the researcher to learn about more self-evident and habitual behaviours, even concerning thoughts and emotions. Thirdly, qualitative research approaches can give insights in terms of moods (cf. Holzmüller/Buber 2009, p. 7-8).

Furthermore, qualitative methods focus on the creation of theoretical statements based on scientific knowledge in terms of a particular topic. Even though such a qualitative study includes various interviews, even one single interview is often

able to already discover important findings, as the sample size has relatively low meaning in the field of qualitative studies (cf. Brüsemeister 2008, p. 9). For the purpose of the expert interview analysis within this thesis framework, the summarising content analysis according to Mayring is used. Hence, the content of the interviews is reduced to the key statements of all findings (cf. Mayring 2015, p. 67)

1. Defining analysis entities

2. Paraphrasing of relevant text passages

3. Generalisation of paraphrases

4. First reduction through selection

5. Second reduction through selection

6. Assortment of new statements as category systems

7. Checking the final system of categories with the initial material
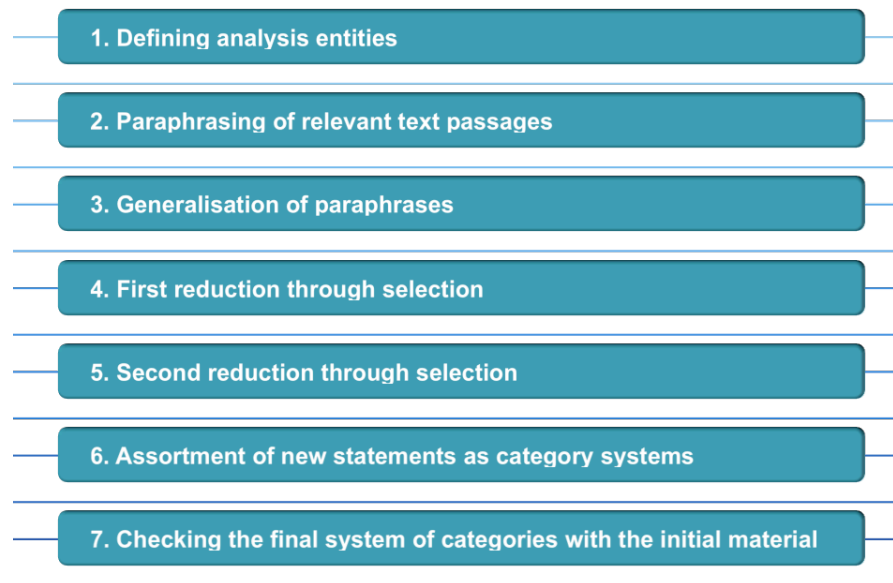
Figure 15: Summarsing content analysis steps (cf. Mayring 2015, p. 70

8.4 Assumptions and defined research model

In order to reach the research goal within a qualitative framework, hypotheses are build, which are in that context called assumptions regarding a population (cf. Hartmann/Lois 2015, p. 5). This thesis focuses on assumptions in the beginning, based on the literature findings, which represent a starting point. Hence, these assumptions are not to be proven, but are acting as the main strategic leveraging point to gather knowledge and insights (cf. Brüsemeister 2009, p. 24-25). According to Mayring, in individual cases assumptions make sense within a qualitative research framework (cf. Mayring 2015, p. 25).

At the beginning of the interview, general questions regarding social media conception and viral marketing are asked. The questions include asking about the relation between a conceptual social media approach and the success of a brand on various platforms, as well as asking about the meaning of community management, content marketing, and influencer relations. Furthermore, the

questions target special requirements for communicating with consumers of B2C and F&B products (A1, A2).

Furthermore, it can be assumed that picture and video material that is highly relatable have an impact on the reach of a particular social media posting or campaign (A3). However, the theoretical models described in chapter five lead to the assumption that the speed of interaction arousal concerning a certain posting are an indicator for the virality potential of a posting (A4). Assumptions are made that there are differences regarding the opportunities of maximum reach for the different social media platforms (A5). Additionally, it can be assumed that a sophisticated and customer-centric social media concept is able to support the internationalization process of a brand within the F&B industry (A6).

A1	The engagement level of social media users is based on the content's intensity of emotions
A2	The success of a brand on social media is influenced by a conceptual approach on the topic
A3	Relatable picture and video material has an impact on the reach of a posting or campaign
A4	The speed of interactions with a certain social media posting are an indicator for the virality potential of a posting or campaign
A5	Particular social media platforms offer higher virality potential than others
A6	The internationalization of brand can be positively influenced by a strong social media appearance

Table 8: Assumptions

Based on the assumptions deriving from literature research, the following model has been developed within the framework of this thesis. It is assumed that social media conception with strategic approaches increases the social media performance of a brand. At the same time, a conceptual social media approach enables engaging and suitable content, as driving motives and campaign themes can be considered through such a process. Hence, content that targets motives and themes proven by research is also able to increase the reach and interaction of a brand's social media appearance (cf. Ho/Dempsey 2010, p.

1000-1005; Kingsnorth 2016, p. 59-61). Whether or not a high level of reach and interaction on a particular brand's social media channels has an impact on the internationalization success of a brand is the aim of this primary research. The purpose of this model is to visualize the structure and reflect the concepts and pillars from the theoretical part. Moreover, it clarifies the aspects that are in the focus of the practical methodology and is directed towards the research questions and challenges from the beginning of this thesis (cf. Hennink et al. 2011, p. 41).
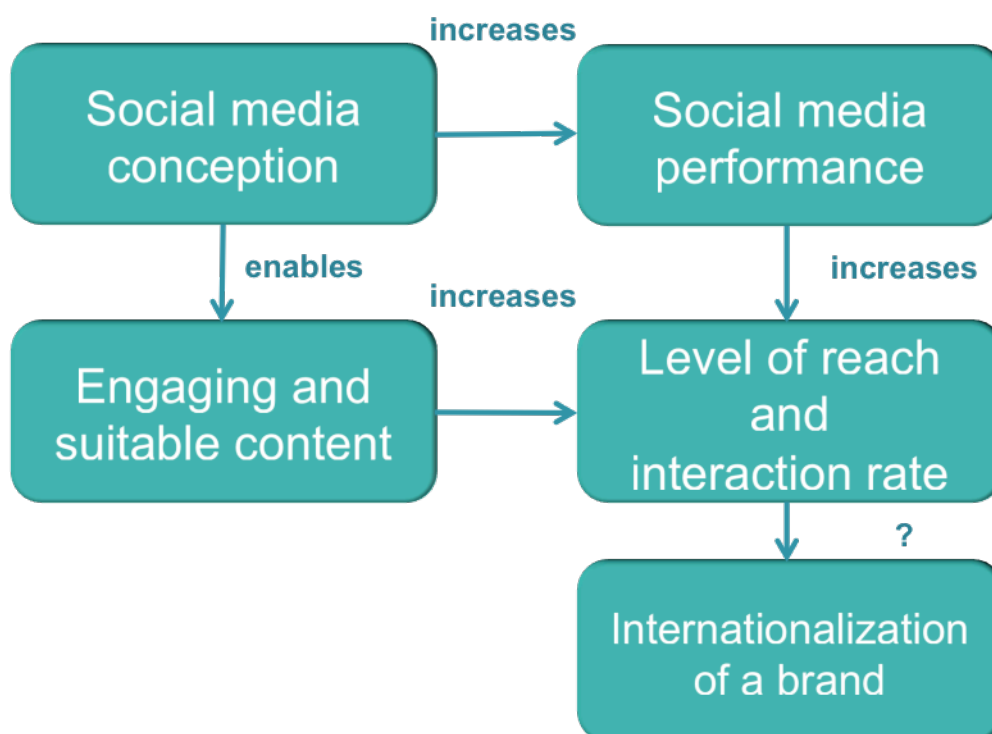
Figure 16: Research model (own presentation)

8.5 Research analysis

Based on the interview guide, seventeen expert interviews have been carried out within the framework of this thesis. As the aim of the final concept is to follow a strategic approach for social media including the potential for maximum reach (virality) in the food and beverages industry of UK, the experts needed to be selected accordingly. Thus, the following expertise criteria have been defined in the beginning, whereas at least two of the criteria had to be fulfilled by each particular expert.

- Social media/digital marketing expert (3+ years professional experience)
- Content/campaign management expert (4+ years professional experience)
- Food and beverages marketing expert (4+ years professional experience)

- UK/international business knowledge

However, the interviewer took care to keep the criteria spread among all interviewees as evenly distributed as possible. Important for all experts is the fact that those experts, who had no specific UK-market knowledge, have been required to at least fulfil the criteria of international business experience.

NO.	Expert criteria	Company / position	Gender
1	Social media marketing expert Campaign management expert International business knowledge	**Professional experience in the B2C and e-commerce fields** Social media & campaign manager	female
2	Social media/digital marketing expert Content management expert International business knowledge	**MISS magazine (media)** CEO	male
3	Social media/digital marketing expert Campaign management expert F&B marketing expert International business knowledge	**All I Need (beverages)** Head of marketing	female
4	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert F&B marketing expert UK business expert	**Flipside Group in UK (Marketing agency)** Head of social media and content	male
5	Social media marketing expert Content management expert International business knowledge	**Havas Beebop (Social media agency)** Social media manager	male
6	Digital marketing expert Campaign management expert International business knowledge	**Leder & Schuh AG** Head of e-commerce	female
7	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert International business knowledge	**LIDL Europe** Social media manager	female
8	Social media marketing expert	**4P Marketing Agency**	male

	Content management expert UK business expert	**in UK** Social media manager	
9	Digital marketing expert International business knowledge	**Self-employed (inter-national basis)** Digital marketing manager	male
10	Digital marketing expert Content management expert F&B marketing expert International business knowledge	**Anonymous compa-ny in the beverages industry (global company)** Content and social media manager	female
11	Social media marketing expert Campaign management expert International business knowledge	**Havas Beebop (Founder) and self-employed** CEO	male
12	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert International business knowledge	**OTTO Group** Social media manager	female
13	F&B marketing expert UK/international business knowledge	**Anonymous compa-ny in the food indus-try (global company)** Product manager	male
14	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert F&B marketing expert UK/international business knowledge	**Makava (beverages)** Social media & PR manager	female
15	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert UK/international business knowledge	**Flipside Group in UK (Marketing agency)** Social media market-ing expert	male
16	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management	**The Reason Why Communication**	female

	expert UK/international business knowledge	**(Marketing agency)** Social media and creative marketing manager	
17	Social media marketing expert Content/campaign management expert UK/international business knowledge	**Anonymous start-up business with B2C e-commerce focus (international company)** Social media manager	male

Table 9: Expert overview

Prior to the step of carrying out all interviews, a pre-test has been done, in order to review the interview guide in terms of comprehensibility and to make final adjustments if necessary (cf. Baur/Blasius 2014, p. 299).

The following section analyses and sums up the findings from the research analysis regarding the contextual sections derived from the research objectives.

8.5.1 Social media and viral marketing

Regarding expert opinions and thoughts on the topics of social media and viral marketing, it can be said that all experts stated that there is a strong linkage within the two topics. Some called social media the only channel where viral marketing can take place. Furthermore, throughout the interviews viral marketing success has been called the main goal and highest success every marketer would wish for. However, many experts mentioned that the way virality can be induced has changed within time. In the beginning of social media, maximizing reach has been some kind of natural process, whereas nowadays it has become an industrialized approach. Many people and agencies out there are approaching a particular network to share certain content on a business level. For that purpose, professionals contact social media users with many followers on various platforms, in order to generate high reach potential. Very often, influencers are used to create that desired effect of virality. The UK experts also mentioned that particularly strong YouTubers are contacted on a regular basis and asked to spread brands on their channels. However, this means that brands have to pay for virality and the perceived authenticity from a consumer perspective might be harmed in many cases. Furthermore, every single expert

mentioned the fact that it has become nearly impossible to get a massive reach just organically. The reason for that trend is that especially Facebook has worked on a new algorithm, which puts relevancy of particular brand's content even more in the center than ever before. In addition, Facebook recently announced that the social network shall go back to the roots, where personal information sharing with friends mattered more than lately. Hence, whenever a brand follows a strategy that asks for seeking virality, financial investment into maximized reach is required.

8.5.2 Social media conception

When it comes to the meaning of conception for social media marketing, every expert stated that a conceptual and strategic approach towards these marketing activities for sure makes a difference for the later success of a brand on these platforms. Thus, concepts should include the fact that every single posting a brand puts out there in the world of social media has to convey the main message of the brand. Putting the target group into the center, right at the conception phase, represents one key success factor of any concept. The majority of experts mentioned that a professional content strategy is necessary for any conceptual approach concerning social media. Without such a conceptual approach it has become nearly impossible to stand out from the crowded social media newsfeeds of users. However, brands need to decide on their individual balance between paid and earned content on social media. The budget level and extent of paid advertisements highly impacts the virality potential of campaigns. According to the interview findings, the relation between costs for content and costs for ad-push should be 1/3 to 2/3, with the majority of budget supporting the advertisement with push-budget. In addition, the strategy for social media shall be in line with the overall company, brand, and digital marketing strategy. The experts within companies need to be up-to-date all the time. Knowing about latest technical features on the respective platforms often rewards the brand with higher reach, if applied in early stages. Building alliances with strong partners will help to find a position within the highly contested social media world of F&B.

Content

Especially the UK experts on social media stated that paid versus non-paid content should be considered in the conceptual phase of social media marketing. In many cases, seeking virality means paying for a certain reach. Non-paid content will be every single post that is not supported financially and helps conveying the brand's message on social media platforms. First and foremost, in terms of conceptual steps, any brand content shall be shareable and engaging. Above that, the majority of experts stated that in order to create a shareable, meaningful, and relatable posting or campaign, brands need to realize the importance of keeping the content as low as possible its regarding plain advertising appeal. In order to increase organic reach, brands need to think about how to make even a boring message relevant for the right target group. Content strategies that often work are brain twisters or videos that leave consumers with a strong emotional feeling. One recommendation that could be interesting to find a conceptual approach would be the hero hub hygiene model.

Community

According to expert insights, building a brand's own community should be considered at the very beginning of a social media conception. By forming a strong, often rather homogeneous group of community members, the later targeting and tailor made content becomes of highest efficiency. Above that, a community that has a strong personality and is interested into a certain topic or themes a brand communicates, brands can become less dependent on influencers and their respective communities. However, the fact that social media is not a one-way communication should be considered all the time. Many brands tend to just put some content out on their channels without real interaction, which is not the main idea of social media marketing.

Influencers

Without doubt, all experts share the opinion and experience that influencers are key factors concerning building up brand awareness and maximize reach of a brand. However, these influencers need to be screened, selected, and treated carefully and in a highly professional manner. Among other aspects, the influencers a brand cooperates with have to fit with the values and the identity of the

brand. Otherwise, positive long-term effects might be low or completely missing, as community members of a non-suitable influencer might avoid following the brand directly.

Brand advocates

Brand advocates are connecting the community and the influencer pillar strongly. The experts said that brand advocates are of massive importance for a brand's social media marketing performance. One expert said that paid influencers are highly expensive, whereas advocates also drive a brand's performance on mostly no costs. However, according to expert opinions, brand advocates need to be nourished with special content, special invitations or appreciation, among other things. One expert had the experience that brand advocates are able to pre-screen campaigns, pictures, or products, in order to meet the target groups expectations the best way possible. However, such brand advocates should not be turned into a paid influencer. They should be treated authentic and honoured for their participation and positive word-of-mouth. Showing them appreciation through messages or special events would be effective and appropriate.

Channels

What plays an essential role in the conception of a brand's social media marketing approach is the channel selection. In terms of viral marketing aims and internationalization for a F&B product, every expert named Facebook as the main and necessary platform. This platform enables a broad reach and sophisticated as well as highly professional targeting options. In terms of ranking in the expert interviews, Instagram was stated as the second important channel. Further channels included Twitter as an interesting platform for B2C brands in UK. However, YouTube was stated more like a platform that is nice to have, but that is also rather a search engine a brand could use, if professional and suitable video can be uploaded. Furthermore, messenger marketing is stated to be a very promising and personal option for direct marketing communication with consumers. Through the use of WhatsApp as a strategic marketing channel, brands are able to not only extent their channel reach in a rather authentic manner, but also get the chance to directly talk with consumers in a targeted

manner. That can complete the massively overwhelming branded postings on social media platforms completed by another channel. Only a few brands are using this channel as a strategic approach, even though the messages can be even more targeted with increasing levels of artificial intelligence. Some experts also mentioned that a brand-own blog offers the chance to increase the level of credibility and offer more relevant or non-advertising content to the community.

8.5.3 Factors of maximum reach (virality)

According to the interviewed experts, what leads to virality often has to do with offering relevant content to the target audience. Motives lying behind a user's decision to share something have a lot to do with vanity and what makes a particular user look good on social media. Brand content is shared when a user wants to convey the same image as a certain brand. Furthermore, showing good intentions and altruism often is something that leads to the decision to share a posting. Moreover, social media experts often recognize that users want to be noticed for having a certain opinion on trending issues. Highly divisive topics that are of contemporary interesting have been named by the experts repeatedly. Many experts recommended to use such topics, but to stay neutral on the message and let the community discuss their opinions on the issue. That cannot just support engagement and virality, but this neutrality might also lead to a higher ranking within the algorithm functions of Facebook in the extent of reach. Moreover, too advertising content should be avoided. Consumers want to have real content, otherwise they see no benefit in sharing something. Many experts named video campaigns that conveyed strong and relatable stories or emotions out of everyday-life situations that leave the viewer with reflective thoughts.

One mechanism for virality that was often mentioned by experts is the use contests or competitions. However, whereas around 50 % of the experts think this mechanism is at least effective regarding reaching virality, the remaining experts doubt the long-term benefit for brands. Among other aspects, most experts said that it is better to have less followers, but these ones are genuinely interested in a brand or company compared to having a sudden increase in followers through a contest. As most of these sudden fans are only interested in winning something, they might never engage with a brand's postings but in-

stead bring the ranking of a brand down due to low interaction rates. In a broad sense it tends to be video content that reaches highest engagement rates.

Regarding what factors of conception (influencers, content, community) mostly influences reach, most experts stated that content is king. However, one expert said, he would first go for community. Still, if there is no content, nobody would be able to share something. To sum up the statements, content, community, and influencers are completely interconnected. It is dangerous for brands to prioritize one over the other. What has been noticed during all interviews is that influencers are more important when building up awareness for a brand and should be reduced and replaced with a focus on the brand owned community over time.

8.5.4 Social media for F&B products

In terms of communicating with consumers of B2C products, especially in the food and beverages industry, experts stated that a brand has to be careful about who the brand wants to talk and bring the content to. Only that can generate relevance. Furthermore, one of the challenges a lot of marketers face in the F&B industry is that it is highly regulated. However, the same expert said that this challenge can be turned around and be used as potential. When F&B marketer know the framework the particular target group or niche market is dealing with, these marketers can build a very specific appearance and position for the respective brand. Another challenge regarding the F&B industry and consumer requirements is the difficulty to communicate how food or drinks taste. An expert coming from the agency industry in UK gave the insight that his agency tries to match what consumer think they are going to experience when tasting the product with what the communication of the brand on social media conveys. Especially in the beverages industry, brands appear on their social media channels in a way that it is aspirational and demonstrated like consumers perceive the brand. Hence, consumers somehow are able to position themselves, their personality, when following and engaging with a brand on social media. By scrolling through a brand's social media feed, experts can immediately tell whether or not a brand has understood its main audience. Concerning the behaviour in the F&B industry, massive healthy-driven trend behaviour is recognized. However, most consumers are concerned about ingredients but are

not finally willing to completely eat and drink healthy. Another characteristic of consumers in that industry is a love of experimentation. Consumers like to try new tastes and editions, which has increased lately. In order to define the most suitable communication approaches, A/B testing is highly recommended.

8.5.5 Internationalization and measurement

Social media offers the unique opportunity to open up communication to and with consumers all over the world broadly, fast, and on a relatively low cost level. Despite the massive chances, critical factors must not be forgotten. The main benefit all experts mentioned are the current functions of Facebook regarding simple language adaptation, which makes it rather easy for brands to target different countries in different languages without opening a new account. The experts recommend to build up the social media appearance one month before officially launching the product in the country, in order to already gain awareness and interest of consumers. Experts coming from large enterprises stated that starting an international social media appearance at early stages makes it easier, as a change in language among other thinks might not work in a stage where the community has been developed to a large extent. This is important when it comes to English-speaking brand channels. Besides the decision concerning language, understanding the target market's culture is essential for the later performance of all activities.

In terms of measuring a brand's social media performance, various recommendations have been made by the experts. The experts stated that there are numerous options of KPIs available on the market and social media platforms enable brands totally comprehensive measuring opportunities. However, this massive pool of options often leads to confusion. Staying focused and keeping the current stage and needs of a brand in mind help determining the relevant indicators. Above all, engagement as well as reach figures shall be considered. Especially in earlier stages of a young brand entering a new market, follower increase is significant. The return on ad-spend, click-through-rate, and conversion rate are especially important for a company focusing on social commerce. To ensure a thought-out measuring, consequent tracking of all links and postings is necessary in the first step. Together with one or more monitoring tools, this will lead to one strategic monitoring and measuring approach. What is more is that statistics and data each social media platform provides is crucial, as

knowing the target group was stated to be key to success according to many experts. In addition, following a continuous and precise community management will lead to qualitative insights into the target group. Another important aspect in terms of virality will be paid versus organic reach as well as share of buzz.

8.5.6 Trends and behaviour

Especially the UK-based experts mentioned that although the combination of influencers and outstanding and cool content have been strong drivers for viral marketing, there is a trend of marketers walking away from influencers. More and more experts reconsider and measure the real business impact of influencers. UK experts also recognize that the next generation target group is more savvy and immediately notices when these consumers are being sold to. YouTubers believe that they are the media now. However, this might as well come with a turn-off-effect for brands and consumers due to a lack of authenticity.

The following trends have been named by during the interviews (behavioural and technical):

- Artificial intelligence as a game changer in general
- Chatbots on social media
- Voice search tools and options on social media
- Less artificially staged content, more authentic and everyday pictures again
- Messenger marketing and artificial intelligence
- More frequent and sophisticated use of story-functions
- Considering new platforms
- Location best marketing (tell a user right in front of a supermarket to buy product X now in the store)

8.6 Assumption testing

After reviewing the findings of expert interviews, all assumptions from section 8.4 could be verified. The findings show that a conceptual social media approach not only has a positive impact on the brand success, but further enables quick internationalization through awareness support. Furthermore, Facebook was stated to be the strongest channel for virality and emotional content is

claimed to be king by all experts. Picture and video content is a promising tool to catch the attention of users, and speed of interactions is a crucial factor for virality.

9. Social media marketing concept for waterdrop

After finishing the theoretical and practical research of this thesis, one concept for waterdrop is developed.

9.1 Analysis

Regarding the analysis, this concept includes case studies of successful viral campaigns and a SWOT analysis. Furthermore, the following table includes main aspects regarding the target market UK.

Aspect	Important information
Target group	Lifestylers and health-conscious-women (as described in chapter seven)
Language	British English
Social media behaviour	UK market share of relevant social media channels as of January 2018: Facebook (around 70%), Twitter (around 11%), Instagram (around 4%), YouTube (around 3%)
Trend orientation	As stated in chapter two of this thesis, about two third of the UK population are considering healthy living and some kind of diets. In general, also the experts coming from the F&B industry perceive a trend towards healthy and mindful living with preferences for healthy products.
General culture in UK versus in the home market (Austria)	Among all six dimensions of Hofstede, UK ranks the highest for individualism and the lowest in power distance as well as uncertainty avoidance. The graph below depicts the comparison of all dimensions for Austria and UK. According to experts, content is able to drive virality and bring a unique character to a brand's social media appearance. However, in the same context, understanding and approaching the particular culture is a critical factor regarding international social media marketing.

Table 10: Market analysis (cf. Hofstede Insights 2018; Statista 2018)
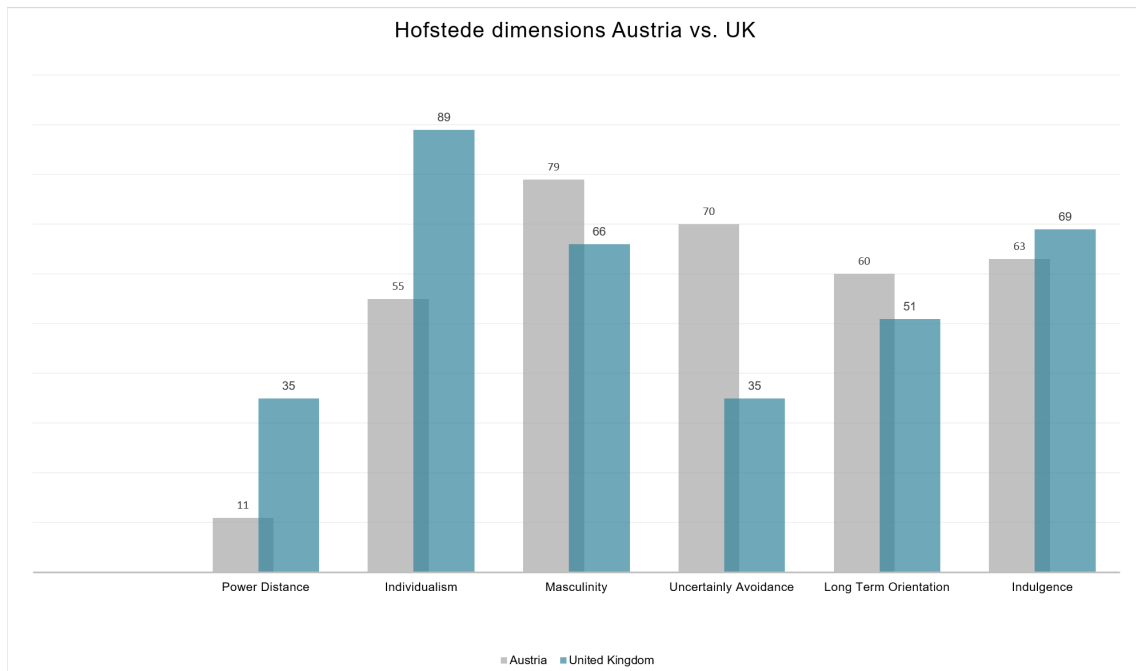
Figure 17: Cultural dimensions Austria versus UK (own presentation based on Hofstede Insights 2018)

Dimension	Description UK
Power distance	Describes the extent to which less powerful people expect and accept unequal power distribution. The UK population is rather low in power distance, therefore people believe that inequalities among people should be minimized.
Individualism	The degree of interdependency among society members. The high scores for UK undermine that the British are private and highly individualist persons.
Masculinity	Masculinity represents whether the population of a country wants to be the best (masculine) or wants to like what they are doing (feminine). The score of 66 for UK depicts the fact that the British are highly oriented towards success.
Uncertainty avoidance	Describes the extent to which a culture avoids insecure situations through beliefs or institutions. The values or that dimension in UK state that the population feels rather comfortable with not knowing what the day brings and changing plans.

Long-term orientation	Refers to the approach of dealing with challenges of the present and future.
	With a score of 51 for UK, it is not really possible to define a significant orientation for that dimension.
Indulgence	Indulgence refers to a culture's level of controlling desires and impulses.
	With a value of 69, the UK population is defined to be indulgent. Thus, the British want to realize their impulses and desires in order to have fun and enjoy life.

Table 11: Cultural dimensions (cf. Hofstede Insights 2018)

9.1.1 SWOT analysis

The following SWOT catalogue has been prepared based on literature findings and company know-how of waterdrop.

External development	-	+	Strength / weakness	Reason	-	+	Opportunity / threat	Strategic challenge
F&B is a dynamic market		2	Waterdrop is a quick business	The company size and overall dynamic mind-set		2	F&B market in UK is trend-oriented and healthy lifestyles are popular among the population	Enter the market and build awareness for the brand for F&B in UK
Reaching the target group becomes more and more challenging on social media	3		No waterdrop presence in UK yet	As the market is not operated yet, there is no real-life experience with waterdrop, social media and e-commerce potential for UK available	3		Launch in UK enabled through quick e-commerce and social media set-up	Know the market and social media behaviour in advance, in order to be precise in communication when entering the market
Trend orientation drives the health-conscious niche market		3	Healthy ingredients and image of waterdrop	The brand comes with healthiest ingredients that are meeting latest F&B reports and trends, which delivers a high strength		3	Tough competition and taste can not be conveyed through social media	Stand out in the niche market by clearly stating the health benefits of waterdrop
Understanding the culture and target group is crucial for social media performance	3		No market know-how yet	Waterdrop has no statistics and performance reports for their UK target group yet	3		Overcome lack of culture and market know-how	As the competitors already know the culture, targeting the content is easier for them. Understanding the UK social media culture will determine the success of waterdrop.
Brexit will most probably influence business activities		2	Optimized processes through e-commerce focus and small logistics requirements	Waterdrop was born online, hence e-commerce makes it easier to overcome traditional trade risks. As long as selling in the UK is allowed, waterdrop is prepared.	2		Potential risk for selling and shipping	Constantly be up-to-date about developments and do not miss law and tax changes, if necessary.

Legend:
+ strength / opportunity   - weakness / threat   scale: 1-low, 2-middle, 3-strong

Figure 18: SWOT catalogue (cf. KVELL GmbH 2018)

9.1.2 Case study of viral campaigns

In order to analyze a real-life case, contextual factors that help narrowing the analysis in general shall be defined in the beginning. Specialized frameworks or methods to determine performance of organizations and brands in certain areas are crucial. Broad approaches do not provide the most analytical view, whereas particular and detailed structures do (cf. Ellet 2007, p. 19). Due to that reason, the theoretical part of this thesis already provides the framework for the following case studies. Chapter five of this thesis includes the critical factors for viral marketing campaigns, in order to define the viral success of a certain campaign.

My Starbucks Idea

The concept of "My Starbucks Idea" has been launched by Howard Schulz in the year 2008, with the aim of helping the company to fulfil more customer-centric tasks. Through the respective campaign, Starbucks managed to engage with consumers and build as well as strengthen the relationship with numerous consumers (cf. Harvard Business School 2015).

The general social media strategy of Starbucks follows the idea of local Starbucks pages, in order to meet needs deriving from cultural differences. Above that, content is king for the brand, including a high amount of video content (cf. LeaderLabdotcom 2010). The main reason for Starbucks to use social media, is to listen to consumers. Hence, the campaign "My Starbucks Idea" aims to find solutions for known or unknown problems or missing products and services at Starbucks. What makes that special is that consumers themselves can contribute by supposing the new ideas for the brand. Since the campaign was launched in 2008, over 150,000 ideas have been mentioned on the microsite of the brand, and more than 250 of those customer-centric ideas were implemented by Starbucks. Such ideas include the product "Cake Pops" but also free Wi-Fi at all locations or mobile payment through drive-through's at Starbucks, just to name a few (cf. Harvard Business School 2015). The following characteristics derived from the models and factors regarding virality described in chapter five could be analysed within the Starbucks campaign:

- Product and service suitability
- Reach of audience
- Message content (ease of use, imagination)

- Overall campaign structure (viral activity encouraged)
- Encourages motives of sharing (belonging, personal growth)
- Used virality-promising campaign themes (selflessness, vanity, uniqueness)

The campaign offers a highly suitable product, as many consumers participated in the campaign. Thus, the product and services of Starbucks appear to be highly suitable and relatable among online communities and consumers. The audience was reached with a message that was easy to understand and which accelerated the imagination of users, who later contributed to the real business activities of the company. By that real implementation of ides, virality was again encouraged by the brand. However, the campaign did not really make the most of social media channels, as it lead to the microsite of the brand. A button for users to share with the brand would enhance virality on social networks.

Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola's "Share a bottle" campaign not only reached a massive amount of consumers, furthermore this campaign increased brand awareness and sales figures tremendously (cf. Coca-Cola Company 2014). Above all that is what marketing campaigns originally are aiming to do. Hence, the case of this particular campaign also is analyzed regarding the factors of the model described in chapter five.

The respective campaign initially started in Australia, where it was carried out in order to connect consumers with the brand and to accelerate the sharing of "happiness moments". In the center of the campaign was the message "Share a Coke with…" and consumers could than buy the bottle or can with nearly every name on it. Numerous moments of happiness have been shared in real and virtual words by consumers, and the campaign is stated to be the first-of-its-kind celebrating the first name of people in a playful and social way. It became a massive success with over 250 million named bottles and cans sold in a nation with around 23 million inhabitants. Thus, the campaign after that succeeded in more than 70 countries just by the year 2014. In addition, this represents a massive success due to the fact that Australia is known to be a highly developed country, which is difficult in terms of growth for a brand (cf. Coca-Cola Company 2014).

According to latest figures, over 650,000 shares are found under the hashtag #shareacoke on Instagram (cf. Instagram 2018). The following virality character- istics described in the theoretical section of this thesis can be found after ana- lyzing the campaign "Share a Coke":

- Product suitability

- Diffusion characteristics (exponential sharing and reach of audience)

- Peer-to-peer information conduit

- Message content (ease of use, fun and intrigue, engaging)

- Overall campaign structure (viral activity encouraged)

- Encourages motives of sharing (belonging, altruism)

- Used virality-promising campaign themes (selflessness, uniqueness)

First of all, this B2C product in the food and beverages industry appeared to be highly suitable for maximum reach. Above that, the content has been shared exponentially and also enabled immediate virtual sharing through a special campaign plug-in on Facebook. The message was easy, fun, and above that highly engaging not only through the call-to-action: Share a coke with a certain person. In terms of enforced virality through the brand this campaign is again supported through the call-to-action and the snowball-effect arising by the fact that one user shares the content with another user. Above that, the motives of belonging and altruism are conveyed by the campaign message, as well the strong drivers of selflessness and uniqueness.

Edeka

In terms of up-to-date video content and emotionally driven campaign manage- ment, Edeka is claimed to be the pioneer in Europe. Together with an agency, the brand managed to carry out two campaigns that went viral on social media. As a German retailer for food and beverages, Edeka puts emotions among families in the centre of the campaign's attention. The brand video tells the story of a grandfather on Christmas, who first has to die, in order to bring all family members together, as everyone is stressed out by their everyday life. Emotions are high and users shared the video exponentially on social media right after the release in December 2015 (cf. Horizont 2015). On Facebook the campaign video was able to reach 22 million views to this day, which marks a significant success and marketing approach trend in Europe. Marketing experts highlight

the Edeka campaign's demonstration of how important speed has become regarding a brand's social media reach and success (cf. Facebook 2018; W&V 2015). In addition to the success on YouTube, by February 2018 the brand reached over 59 million views with the respective campaign video (cf. YouTube 2018). Above all, Edeka encouraged user engagement by asking the community to share one's personal moment of coming home. For that, consumers should use the hashtag #heimkommen to collect all pictures. The framework to accelerate the hashtags for this campaign was based on a contest, where all consumers using the hashtag had the chance to win something. Furthermore, the campaign video has also been broadcasted in cinemas and on television to maximize the reach (cf. Horizont 2015).

- Diffusion characteristics (exponential sharing and reach of audience)
- Peer-to-peer information conduit
- Message content (ease of use, engaging)
- Overall campaign structure (viral activity encouraged)
- Encourages motives of sharing (altruism, personal growth)
- Used virality-promising campaign themes (selflessness)

In comparison to the first two campaigns, Edeka did not put the product or the service in the center of communication. Instead, the brand used a highly relatable and emotional real-life scenario, in order to involve users on social media. Moreover, the video was shared on YouTube and Facebook, where users could easily share the video by clicking one button. Sharing was encouraged through addressing the motives of altruism and personal growth, as well as through the overall campaign theme related to selflessness and caring about one's family.

The three real-life cases of viral marketing highlight the common factor of emotional bonding among users through relatable campaign themes. In addition, all three brands found a way to involve consumers, which led to the fact that consumer shared the content or engaged with it. Whereas Starbucks focused on involving the consumers by making their ideas count in the everyday business activities of the company, Coca-Cola focused on the emotions of fun and belonging by bringing consumers together and offering a personalized product. Edeka conveyed the call-to-action way more subtle than the other brands, but

was able to reach a massive amount of consumers by focusing on a highly emotional, strong, and moving campaign theme in the time before Christmas.

9.2 Goals and objectives

The goals and objectives for waterdrop are stated in the following section.

Type of goal	Specific goal
Business	Lead generation
	Sales increase
	Gain market share
	Enter new markets
Customer service	Chance of referrals or repeat business
Communication	Reputation building (positive) on the new market
	Social media marketing implementation on the new market
Marketing	Awareness
	Engagement

Table 12: waterdrop's business goals (based on company requirements)

The goals stated above are business goals of waterdrop. All of these general goals need to be considered throughout the complete concept and approach. For the specific needs of the thesis framework and for the SMM concept, the following main targets have been defined in detail:

The primary objective for waterdrop is to reach 9 million UK consumers through social media activities, in order to meet an annual revenue target gathered out of social media channels of € 500,000, both measured on 31.12.2019, after implementing the social media marketing concept for UK.

The second objective for waterdrop is to increase the Return on ad spend (ROAS) on all social media channels, with a target of 2 in UK, measured on 31.12.2019, after implementing the social media marketing concept for UK.

9.3 Strategy

After defining the main goals of a business and a particular concept, strategies throughout the sales funnel need to be established. The strategies for waterdrop are outlined as follows.

Sales funnel step	Strategy
Awareness	Increased brand awareness of waterdrop through investment in display and social media advertising and in influencer cooperations
Consideration	Development of authentic brand values and a proposition of waterdrop as a healthy niche product in the target market of UK
Findable	On-site and performance marketing improvements on a significant level
Informative	Outstanding content development with quick conveying of the brand's USP and values The content shall also provide additional benefit for the user.
Ease of use	Increased conversion rates

Table 13: Sales funnel strategies

9.4 Conception

For the final conception of waterdrop's social media marketing to support the internationalization to UK, all aspects defined for conception at the end of the theoretical section are individualized as follows.

Channels, focus and recommendations

Facebook

- Conversion focus
- Offer highest virality potential through sharing options
- Sophisticated targeting
- Social commerce potential
- Easy adaptation options (language, content, geographical constraints)
- Implement campaigns that increase engagement
- Use tools that are known for high sharing and interaction rates
- Post constant and up-to-date content and news
- Accelerate a vivid community
- Offer a personal appeal and authenticity

Instagram

- Branding focus

- Suitable for waterdrop as the brand is suitable for visualizing the brand values and lifestyle
- Instagram stories offer additional functions like connecting offline touch-points with social media
- Instagram shopping will be launched and offers tremendous conversion potential for waterdrop, especially as it will be launched in UK first
- Form strong visual identity and give real-life insights through Instagram stories
- Include Instagram shopping as soon as it is available

YouTube

- Video content upload
- Video advertisement, if available
- First focus on building awareness and a community on Facebook and Instagram
- Later, implement video content on YouTube, if resources are available
- Content shall deliver added value for consumers
- Interesting topics can be defined after monitoring the community interests on Facebook

Twitter

- Strong social media platform in UK (according to market share data and UK experts)
- Already consider Twitter as an important channel when hiring expertise for UK social media
- Focus on sharing up-to-the-minute news and bring them into relation with brand and product features or values
- Link content on other platforms via Twitter (performance on that has to be checked in controlling measures)

Messenger marketing

- Extent channels through use of messenger marketing starting with WhatsApp
- Best fit for personal touch
- Reaches the consumer directly and avoid massive branding overload on SM platforms
- Stay authentic

- Be quick and available
- Not a one-way-communication, hence answering to probable responses of consumers is a must
- Enables real targeted communication and interaction

Blog

- Provide relevant content on a long-term basis
- Open brand-own blog, connected to the website and deliver hacks, recipes, health tips, expert interviews among other relevant topics
- Include video content

Recommended pillars of content

- Strong themes out of research and case studies
- Also health driven because UK trend
- In relation to the cultural dimensions described in the analysis step
- Use trending topics and bring it into relation with brand values
- Avoid too promotional content
- Use polarizing topics that are of current interest and communicate from a neutral perspective
- Monitor the community, find their interests and most relevant topics for them, to deliver highest value of content

Unique characteristics of the waterdrop social media strategy

- Design
- Lifestyle
- Playful
- Early adopters
- Demonstrate healthy living

Adaptations for the market of choice

- Content
- Timings
- Frequency
- Language

- Additional features
- Currency/payment methods

Virality approach

- Following the framework derived from literature and expert interviews (final framework depicted and described below)
- Understand the community and tailor the content
- Avoid being too advertising
- Use influencer-reach throughout the first steps on the market
- Use push budget, as the algorithm will not enable pure organic virality anymore

After reviewing the critical factors of virality according to literature and expert statements, the model below could be provided for the thesis.

Product and service suitability has been left out for the final model, as expert interview and case study findings lead to a promising virality potential for waterdrop's products. The overall campaign structure, the diffusion characteristics, the peer-to-peer information conduit, and the message content have been verified as crucial factors for virality potential through all experts. In addition to verifying the important factors of an existing model, it could be extended by important themes and aspects, especially in terms of content.
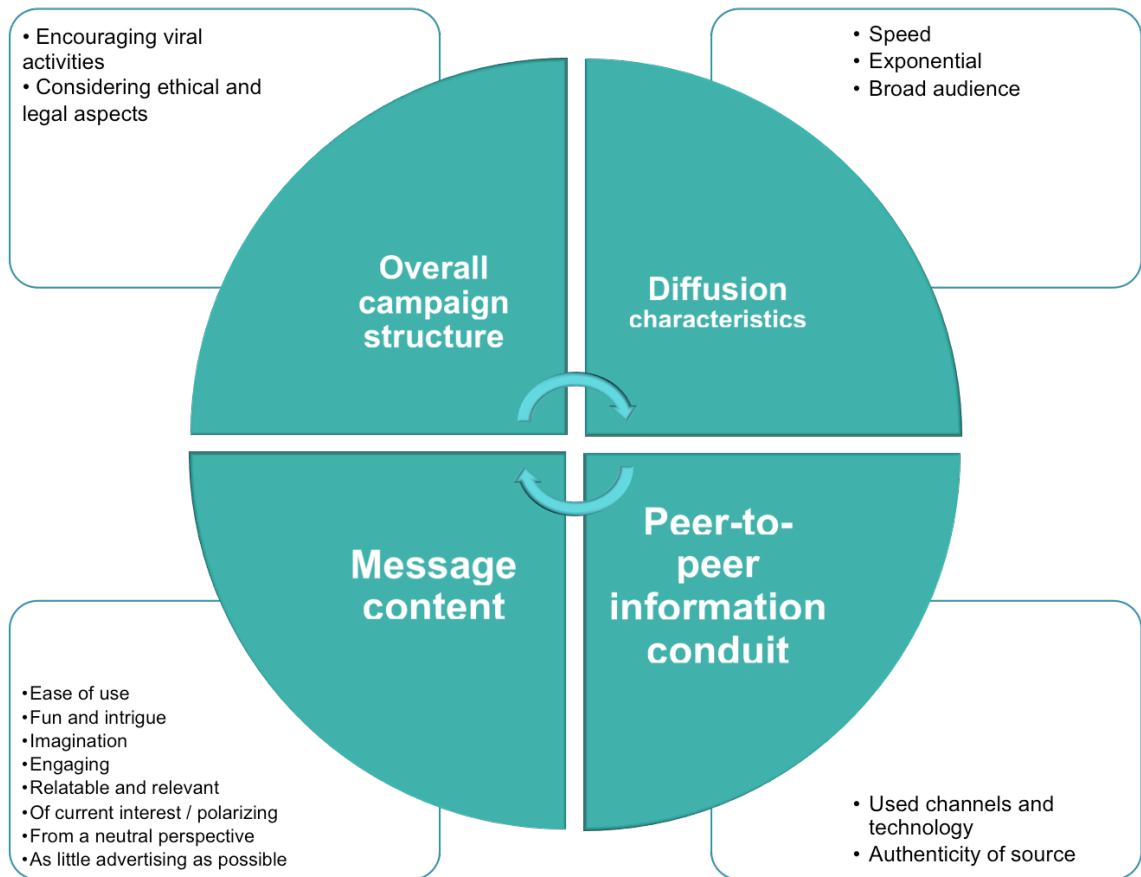
Figure 19: Virality model (own presentation)

In addition to following this model, the conception step of this SMM concept includes the three steps outlined in chapter six. These steps include finding a compelling title, make users care, and address or convey high emotions.

According to all findings within the framework of this thesis, aggressive branding and promotion methods should be treated carefully when aiming for virality. The content and message need to be touching and highly relevant.

9.5 Implementation activities and measures

In the following section, the implementation activities and measures as an action plan for waterdrop are defined.

Implementation: activities and measures				
Step	**Task**	**Description and measures**	**Est. Costs**	**Period**
1	Further market and culture analysis	• Define current brand positioning and USP on the home market • Specific user research in UK through reports of UK government (regarding taste and preferences and impression of waterdrop)	1.000 €	July to October 2018
2	Budget and monitoring planning	• Include production and advertising costs • Set up professional moni-toring • Cash-based accounting • Set key KPI: ROAS	Personnel costs of accountant	August 2018
3	Responsible social media expert	• Define a responsible social media expert for UK • Hire new expert or pro-mote internally	70,000 € additional annual personnel	July to September 2018
4	Conception	• Consider all conception steps from section 9.4 (visit expert conference for that purpose)	1,800 € + personnel costs	October to November 2018
5	Content planning and creation	• Plan content while consid-ering most important cul-tural aspects (dimensions, language, target group characteristics, trend-orientation, channel be-haviour) **Measured through:** • KPI "Topic trends"	5,000 €	October 2018 and ongoing

6	Set up community	• Get started on the UK market and test content performance and preferences • Learn about consumers • Constant monitoring of performance and user engagement on content • Highlight best and worst interactive postings after a month to adapt strategy	5,000 € for production, possible translations, and push-budget	December 2018 and ongoing
7	Cooperation building	• Identify and integrate most suitable influencers and further partners for cooperation • Build up relationships with UK influencers • Focus on YouTubers • Authentic fit with the brand need to be in the center **Measured through:** • Conversions per influencer • Follower of particular influencer and brand	15,000 €	December 2018 and ongoing
8	Channel management	• Build up, fill, and measure performance with KPIs defined in section 9.6	Ongoing costs according to calculation	December 2018 and ongoing
9	Identify brand advocates	Define brand advocates on the target and home market Qualitative analysis after monitoring	ongoing personnel costs	April 2019

10	Interview and use brand advocates to adapt or improve	• Focus group or special event to gain insights with waterdrop advocates • Organize get together and ask for feedback on the brand and the products	700 €	May 2019
11	Carry out of campaigns	• Adapt content after first learnings and share it • Measure the performance with the monitoring tool • Emotional video content campaign together with advocates recommended • Use virality model from section 9.4	Ongoing costs according to calculation	May to July 2019
12	Support virality with partners and budget	• Share content with agencies and influencers as well as paid advertising on social media channels	7,000 €	May 2019 and ongoing
13	Control and measure performance	• Include sophisticated and constant monitoring for dynamic development • Compare KPI's constantly	4,000 €	January to December 2019

Table 14: Implementation activities and measures for waterdrop

9.6 Controlling

After reviewing literature as well as research findings, the key factors for successful controlling of a social media concept are summed up as follows:

Above all, at least one sophisticated monitoring tool need to be implemented by the brand. The most recommended ones are Talkwalker, Hootsuite, Buzzsumo, and Hashtracking. Besides a basic monitoring dashboard, every link shall include a tracking. By that waterdrop can ensure that a proper controlling is possible. After forming that basis, the recommended key performance indicators should be evaluated and analysed. All of the KPIs that are recommended in this

concept consider the fact that the concept focuses on supporting the internationalization of the brand and are therefore especially focused on the timeframe within the first year on a new market. As a matter of fact, KPIs vary from the development stages of a brand, its community and the market awareness. The finally recommended KPIs derived from literature and practical research findings for building awareness and a community on a new market.

- Follower increase
- Engagement rate
- Conversion rate (Purchase in the shop)
- Click-through-rate
- Share of buzz
- Return on ad spend (ROAS)
- Sentiment ratio
- Advocate influence

The recommended KPIs are focusing on starting on a new market with a social media appearance and will change over time. All indicators support the current phase of the brand with the market UK, which is not operated so far. Hence, some basic KPIs like follower increase make sense.

In addition to the recommended KPIs, the following table represents a rough budget estimation based on gross values. However, this is only focusing on social media marketing and does not include further costs for internationalization such as logistics, further marketing activities, or customer care.

Estimated costs	Matter of expense	Gross values
Personnel costs	Social media expert	€ 40.000,-
	Video content creator	€ 30.000,-
Conference attendance (two persons)	Tickets	€ 220,-
	Flight costs	€ 700,-
	Expenses	€ 400,-
	Transfer & hotel costs	€ 500,-
Translation costs	(25h translation time)	€ 2.500,-
Content	Various content planning and research costs	€ 5.000,-
	Picture and video production	€ 6.000,-
	Push and influencer budget	€ 40.000,-
Equipment	Software	€ 4.000,-
Total social media budget		€ 129.320,-

Table 15: Estimated costs for waterdrop
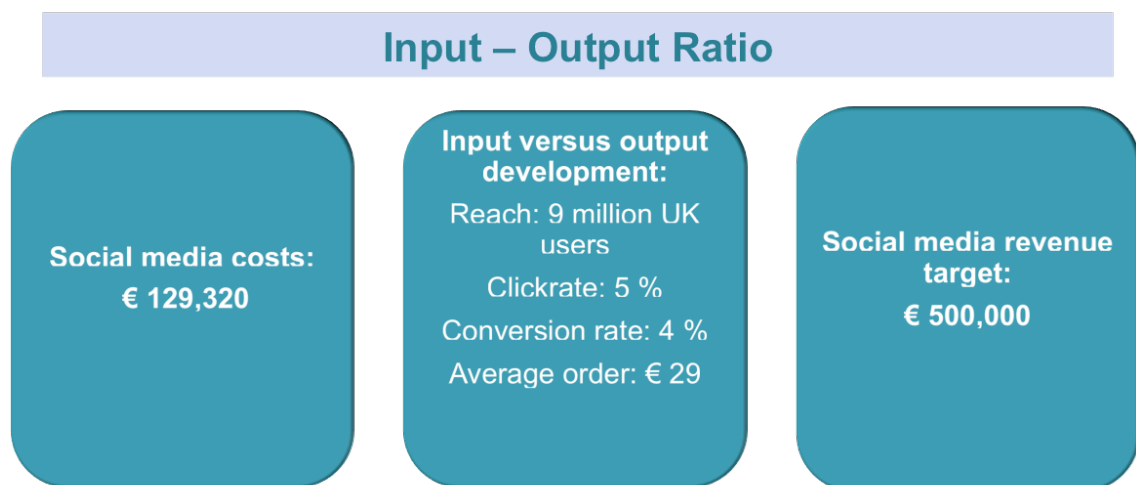
Figure 20: Input-output ratio

Timeline

The further planning steps will be kicked off in July 2018. The first steps of final analysis, budget and resource planning will take place from July to September 2018. After that, the entitled social media specialist and the content creator for UK should start with strategic planning and further trend research. This trend research should be done through talks to current top-experts, which are found on conferences in UK. Until the end of November, the first activities for social media and UK should be planned. However, these activities shall of course

match with overall business and marketing approaches concerning the target market UK. After that, the channels shall be opened on already in December 2018, in order to softly launch the channels and awaken curiosity for the product. In January 2018, the further steps of implementation activities described in section 9.5 will be carried out and be revised after four months.
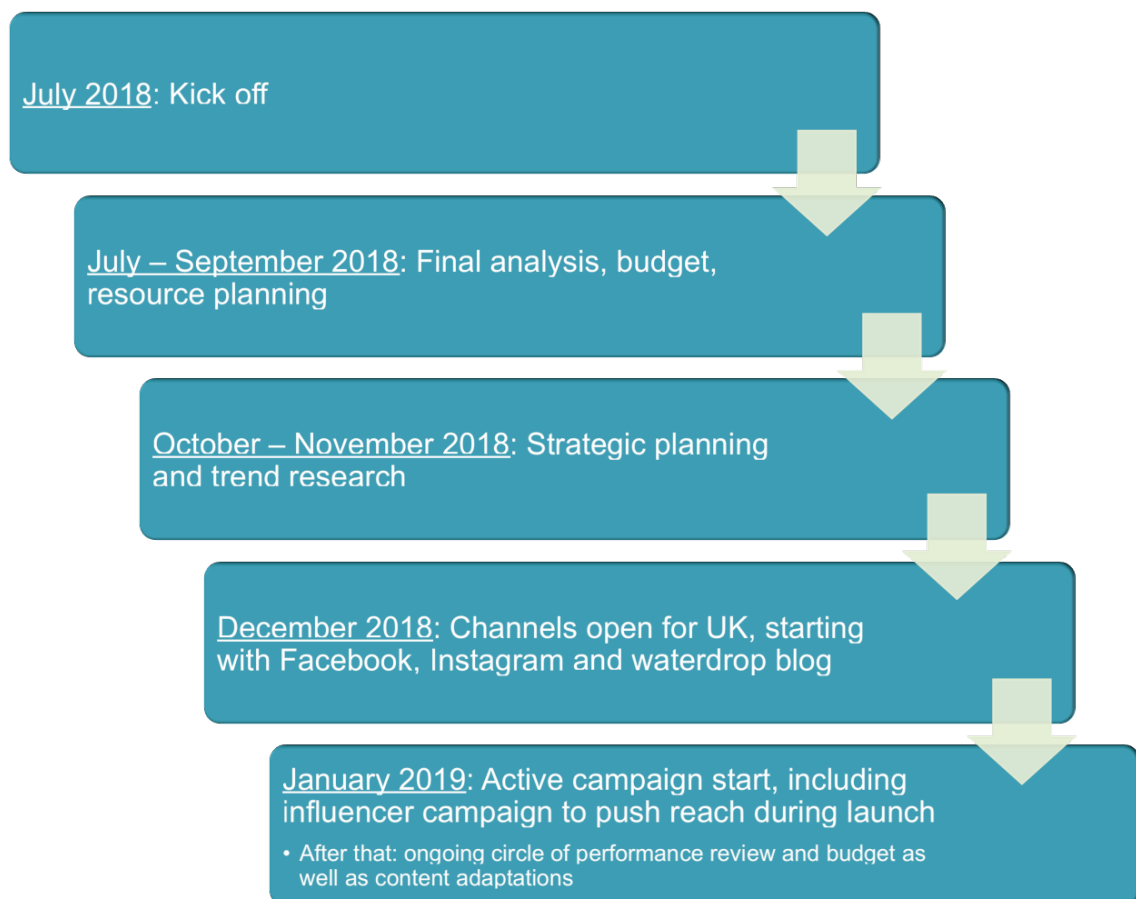
Figure 21: Timeline overview

9.7 Final concept overview

The following figure summarizes the overall concept parts for the planned SMM steps of waterdrop, which have been identified throughout this thesis.

Overview SMM concept for waterdrop		
GOALS	1. SMM implementation in UK 2. Build up awareness in UK 3. Increase conversion rates and ROAS, in order to meet an annual UK social media revenue of 500,000 euros	
USP waterdrop	• Design • Playful • Lifestyle • Early adopters • Health trend	
CHANNELS	1. Facebook	• Main channel • Highest virality potential • Conversion focus • Campaigns that accelerate engagement
	2. Instagram	• Branding focus • Strong visual identity • Instagram shopping in UK
	3. Messenger marketing and blog	• Enables authenticity • Personal appeal • Niche channels (WhatsApp) • Additional and valuable content (Blog)
	4. YouTube	• Additional channel for the second step • Only if valuable video content available • Make use of YouTube advertising
	5. Twitter	• Additional channel for the second step • Recommended for UK • No virality potential or focus
VIRALITY FACTORS (more details in Figure 19)	• Speed in diffusion • Peer-to-peer information conduit • Message content • Overall campaign structure	
CONTENT STRATEGY	• Trending topics • Avoid too promotional appeal • Cultural aspects • Polarizing but from a neutral perspective • Fun and intrigue	
INFLUENCER STRATEGY	• Work with 3-5 influencers in UK at the launch • After that, identify brand advocates, show appreciation and actively involve this group of followers through communication, events, and focus groups	
RECOMMENDED MARKET ADAPTATIONS	• Content • Timings • Frequency • Language • Additional features • Currency/payment methods	
KPIs	• Follower increase • Engagement rate • Conversion rate • Click-through-rate • Share of buzz • Return on ad spend • Sentiment ratio • Advocate influence	

Figure 22: Concept overview (own presentation)

10. Conclusion

Strong brands on social media differentiate themselves through a deep understanding of the community, outstanding visual identity and cutting-edge content. Crucial is the fact that SMM enables brands to support a rather fast internationalization process. The literature research and the practical study through cases and expert interviews of this thesis stress the importance of strategic approaches in social media marketing. Thus, long-term success can be accelerated. As a matter of fact, for small and young companies reaching sales figures in order to ensure business stability is necessary. Hence, it is necessary to get the attention of consumers at a very high level of speed and at the same time, deliver the right content that is able to maximize reach. Strategic work on the virality potential is of special importance when it comes to small companies. However, knowing a countries culture, targeting the right channels, and knowing requirements for a particular industry have been stated to be crucial factors for any social media appearance. Due to limitations, the main characteristics of a SMM concept with virality aims were in the focus of research:

- Consumer understanding, requirements, and special developments in the F&B industry, with more detailed information for the target group of waterdrop and the UK culture
- Necessary conception tasks to build social media awareness in a new market
    - Influencer relations and polarizing as well as trending content marketing have been identified as the main drivers of SMM success
    - Brand advocates are of special interest for small brands, as this target group offers a massive word-of-mouth potential and represent authentic sources for recommendations on a no- or low-cost-level
    - Facebook has been identified as the main channel for virality potential in the field of B2C SMM
    - Allocating push budget is necessary, in order to reach the critical mass, regardless of the content quality

In addition to all required conception tasks and content recommendations of this thesis, fast response to consumer trends and topics is stated to be crucial for any social media strategy.

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Appendix

Project plan master thesis Silberschneider Verena

Project	Master Thesis Silberschneider
Project titel	Make it viral. Identifying viral digital mechanisms to support the market entry of waterdrop in UK
Project lead	Verena Silberschneider
Date	17.09.17
Additional information:	Mentor: Mag. Dr. Reinhard Neudorfer, MBA (RN); Company mentor waterdrop: Julia Freidl, BA (JF)
Status	17.11.17

Start of respective calender	18.09.17
Only workdays showing then X	

Color scheme

planned
finished
milestone

Month	Sep.17	Okt.17	Nov.17	Dez.17
CW	38 39	40 41 42 43	44 45 46 47 48 49	50 51

Pos.	Show line	Task No.	Phase and tasks	Start date	Ends after (days)	End date	Status	Milestone (date)	F	Responsible person (Support from)	Dependency - task to be fullfilled before
1	x	1	Topic preparation including first application	20.02.17	61	07.06.17	100%			VS (JF/waterdrop)	
2		1.1	Meeting with company and topic discussion	15.03.17	1	15.03.17	100%			VS (JF/waterdrop)	
3		1.2	Topic research and decision, incl. application prep.	16.03.17	36	20.04.17	100%			VS (JF/waterdrop)	1.1
4		1.3	Submission of topic application	21.04.17	1	21.04.17	100%			VS	1.2
5		1.4	Topic application approved	07.06.17	1	07.06.17	100%	07.06.17	f	VS	1.3
6	x	2	Preparation phase MT	07.06.17	142	07.12.17	100%	07.12.17		VS	1
7		2.1	Literature research (basic first, then advanced, ongoing)	07.06.17	118	02.10.17	100%			VS	1.4
8		2.2	Reading MT and formal guidelines	11.09.17	7	17.09.17	100%			VS	
9		2.3	Announcement of coach	18.09.17	1	18.09.17	100%			VS	1.4
10		2.4	First contact with coach, organizing meetings	18.09.17	1	18.09.17	100%			VS	2.3
11		2.5	Topic rethinking and definition	18.09.17	15	02.10.17	100%			VS	2.1
12		2.6	Goal rethinking and setting	18.09.17	15	02.10.17	100%			VS (JF)	2.1, 2.5
13		2.7	Frame of reference	18.09.17	15	02.10.17	100%			VS	2.1, 2.6
14		2.8	Making a basic structure of MT (content, structuring topics)	18.09.17	15	02.10.17	100%			VS	2.1
15		2.9	Send documents before meeting to coach	02.10.17	1	02.10.17	100%			VS	2.1-2.8
16		2.10	Kick off meeting coach	05.10.17	1	05.10.17	100%	05.10.17	f	VS (RN)	2.9
17		2.11	Rethinking and adaptation	06.10.17	5	10.10.17	100%			VS	2.10
18		2.12	Kick off meeting coach + company	11.10.17	1	11.10.17	100%	11.10.17	f	VS (RN, JF)	2.10, 2.11
19		2.13	Rethinking and adaptation	12.10.17	9	20.10.17	100%			VS (RN, JF)	2.12
20		2.14	Preparation MS1 documents and presentation	12.10.17	9	20.10.17	100%			VS (RN)	2.10-2.13
21		2.15	Document upload MS1	20.10.17	1	20.10.17	100%			VS	2.1-2.14
22		2.16	Final preparation MS1	21.10.17	6	26.10.17	100%			VS	2.15
23		2.17	MS1	27.10.17	1	27.10.17	100%	27.10.17		VS	2.1-2.15
24		2.18	Including MS1 feedback and rethinking	28.10.17	4	31.10.17	100%			VS	2.17
25		2.19	Status update coach (call) + update (mail) to waterdrop (JF)	30.10.17	2	31.10.17	100%			VS (RN, JF)	2.17, 2.18
26		2.20	New literature research and preparation new concept incl. topic and goals	30.10.17	4	02.11.17	100%			VS	2.18
27		2.21	Appointment Mag. Dr. Madenberger regarding topic discussion	02.11.17	1	02.11.17	100%			VS (KM, RN)	2.18-2.20
28		2.22	Preparation MS1 documents and presentation (2nd attempt)	28.10.17	9	16.11.17	100%			VS	2.21
29		2.23	Submission of MS1 documents (2nd attempt)	17.11.17	1	17.11.17	100%			VS	2.22
30		2.24	MS 1 (2nd attempt)	22.11.17	1	22.11.17		22.11.17		VS	2.23
31		2.25	Including MS1 (2) feedback and rethinking	23.11.17	3	25.11.17				VS (RN, JF)	2.24
32		2.26	Preparation of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	23.11.17	16	07.12.17				VS (JF, RN)	2.25
33		2.27	Submission of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	07.12.17	1	07.12.17		07.12.17		VS	2.26
34	x	3	Theoretical part	28.10.17	98	02.02.18					2
35		3.1	In-depth literature research	23.11.17	41	02.01.18	50%			VS	
36		3.2	Chapter notes according to literature	23.11.17	4	26.11.17				VS	3.1
37		3.3	Connecting goals and literature findings	26.11.17	1	26.11.17				VS	3.1, 3.2

A

Project plan master thesis Silberschneider Verena

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Project titel	Make it viral. Identifying viral digital mechanisms to support the market entry of waterdrop in UK
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Status	17.11.17

Start of respective calender	18.09.17
Only workdays showing then X	

Color scheme
- planned
- finished
- milestone

Month	Dez.17	Jän.18	Feb.18	März.18
CW	48 49 50 51 52	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12 13 14

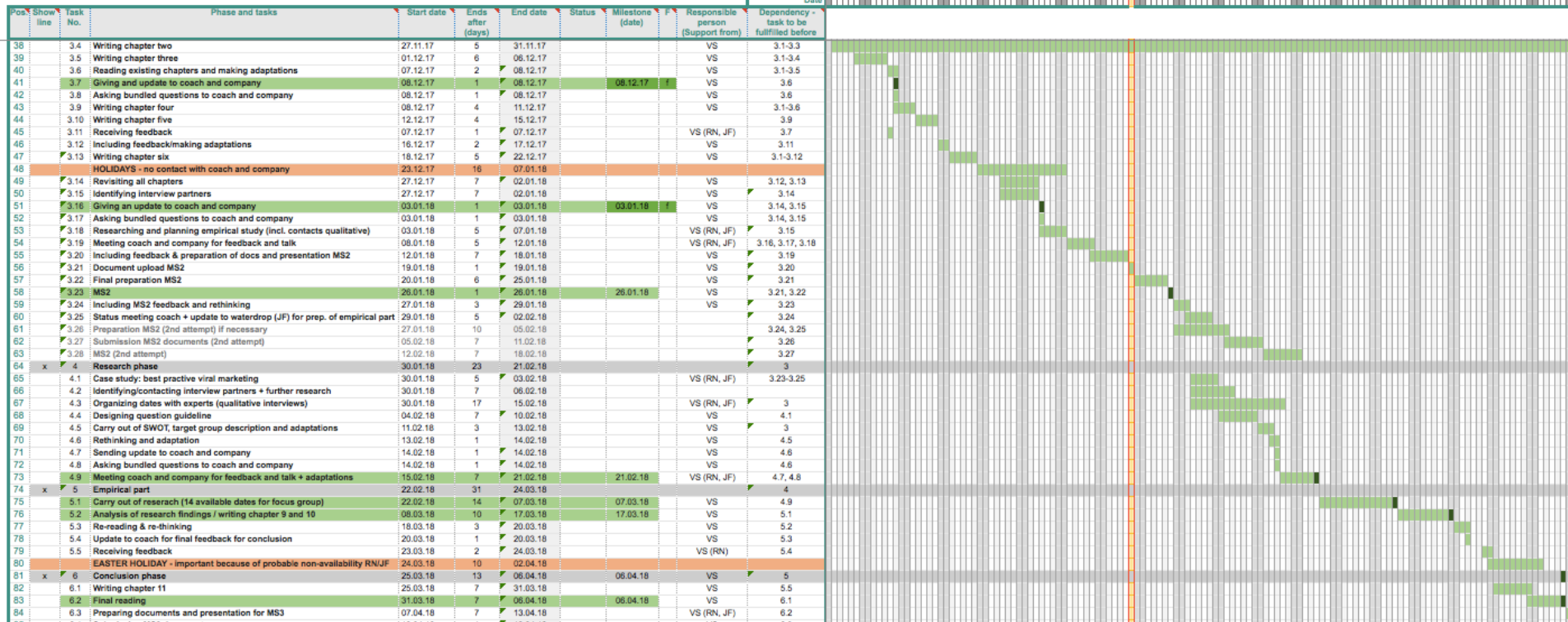| Pos	Show line	Task No.	Phase and tasks	Start date	Ends after (days)	End date	Status	Milestone (date)	F	Responsible person (Support from)	Dependency - task to be fullfilled before
38		3.4	Writing chapter two	27.11.17	5	31.11.17				VS	3.1-3.3
39		3.5	Writing chapter three	01.12.17	6	06.12.17				VS	3.1-3.4
40		3.6	Reading existing chapters and making adaptations	07.12.17	2	08.12.17				VS	3.1-3.5
41		3.7	Giving and update to coach and company	08.12.17	1	08.12.17		08.12.17	f	VS	3.6
42		3.8	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	08.12.17	1	08.12.17				VS	3.6
43		3.9	Writing chapter four	08.12.17	4	11.12.17				VS	3.1-3.6
44		3.10	Writing chapter five	12.12.17	4	15.12.17				VS	3.9
45		3.11	Receiving feedback	07.12.17	1	07.12.17				VS (RN, JF)	3.7
46		3.12	Including feedback/making adaptations	16.12.17	2	17.12.17				VS	3.11
47		3.13	Writing chapter six	18.12.17	5	22.12.17				VS	3.1-3.12
48		3.	HOLIDAYS - no contact with coach and company	23.12.17	16	07.01.18					
49		3.14	Revisiting all chapters	27.12.17	7	02.01.18				VS	3.12, 3.13
50		3.15	Identifying interview partners	27.12.17	7	02.01.18				VS	3.14
51		3.16	Giving an update to coach and company	03.01.18	1	03.01.18		03.01.18	f	VS	3.14, 3.15
52		3.17	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	03.01.18	1	03.01.18				VS	3.14, 3.15
53		3.18	Researching and planning empirical study (incl. contacts qualitative)	03.01.18	5	07.01.18				VS (RN, JF)	3.15
54		3.19	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk	08.01.18	5	12.01.18				VS (RN, JF)	3.16, 3.17, 3.18
55		3.20	Including feedback & preparation of docs and presentation MS2	12.01.18	7	18.01.18				VS	3.19
56		3.21	Document upload MS2	19.01.18	1	19.01.18				VS	3.20
57		3.22	Final preparation MS2	20.01.18	6	25.01.18				VS	3.21
58		3.23	MS2	26.01.18	1	26.01.18		26.01.18		VS	3.21, 3.22
59		3.24	Including MS2 feedback and rethinking	27.01.18	3	29.01.18					3.23
60		3.25	Status meeting coach + update to waterdrop (JF) for prep. of empirical part	29.01.18	5	02.02.18					3.24
61		3.26	Preparation MS2 (2nd attempt) if necessary	27.01.18	10	05.02.18					3.24, 3.25
62		3.27	Submission MS2 documents (2nd attempt)	05.02.18	7	11.02.18					3.26
63		3.28	MS2 (2nd attempt)	12.02.18	7	18.02.18					3.27
64	x	4	Research phase	30.01.18	23	21.02.18					3
65		4.1	Case study: best practive viral marketing	30.01.18	5	03.02.18				VS (RN, JF)	3.23-3.25
66		4.2	Identifying/contacting interview partners + further research	30.01.18	7	06.02.18				VS	3
67		4.3	Organizing dates with experts (qualitative interviews)	30.01.18	17	15.02.18				VS (RN, JF)	3
68		4.4	Designing question guideline	04.02.18	7	10.02.18				VS	4.1
69		4.5	Carry out of SWOT, target group description and adaptations	11.02.18	3	13.02.18				VS	3
70		4.6	Rethinking and adaptation	13.02.18	1	14.02.18				VS	4.5
71		4.7	Sending update to coach and company	14.02.18	1	14.02.18				VS	4.6
72		4.8	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	14.02.18	1	14.02.18				VS	4.6
73		4.9	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk + adaptations	15.02.18	7	21.02.18		21.02.18		VS (RN, JF)	4.7, 4.8
74	x	5	Empirical part	22.02.18	31	24.03.18					4
75		5.1	Carry out of reserach (14 available dates for focus group)	22.02.18	14	07.03.18		07.03.18		VS	4.9
76		5.2	Analysis of research findings / writing chapter 9 and 10	08.03.18	10	17.03.18		17.03.18		VS	5.1
77		5.3	Re-reading & re-thinking	18.03.18	3	20.03.18				VS	5.2
78		5.4	Update to coach for final feedback for conclusion	20.03.18	1	20.03.18				VS	5.3
79		5.5	Receiving feedback	23.03.18	2	24.03.18				VS (RN)	5.4
80			EASTER HOLIDAY - important because of probable non-availability RN/JF	24.03.18	10	02.04.18					
81	x	6	Conclusion phase	25.03.18	13	06.04.18		06.04.18		VS	5
82		6.1	Writing chapter 11	25.03.18	7	31.03.18				VS	5.5
83		6.2	Final reading	31.03.18	7	06.04.18		06.04.18		VS	6.1
84		6.3	Preparing documents and presentation for MS3	07.04.18	7	13.04.18				VS (RN, JF)	6.2

Project plan master thesis Silberschneider Verena

Project	Master Thesis Silberschneider
Project titel	Make it viral. Identifying viral digital mechanisms to support the market entry of waterdrop in UK.
Project lead	Verena Silberschneider
Date	17.09.17
Additional information:	Mentor: Mag. Dr. Reinhard Neudorfer, MBA (RN); Company mentor waterdrop: Julia Freidl, BA (JF)
Status	17.11.17

Start of respective calender	18.09.17
Only workdays showing then X	

Color scheme

planned	
finished	
milestone	

Pos.	Show line	Task No.	Phase and tasks	Start date	Ends after (days)	End date	Status	Milestone (date)	F	Responsible person (Support from)	Dependency - task to be fullfilled before
73		4.9	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk + adaptations	15.02.18	7	21.02.18		21.02.18		VS (RN, JF)	4.7, 4.8
74	x	5	Empirical part	22.02.18	31	24.03.18					4
75		5.1	Carry out of reserach (14 available dates for focus group)	22.02.18	14	07.03.18		07.03.18		VS	4.9
76		5.2	Analysis of research findings / writing chapter 9 and 10	08.03.18	10	17.03.18		17.03.18		VS	5.1
77		5.3	Re-reading & re-thinking	18.03.18	3	20.03.18				VS	5.2
78		5.4	Update to coach for final feedback for conclusion	20.03.18	1	20.03.18				VS	5.3
79		5.5	Receiving feedback	23.03.18	2	24.03.18				VS (RN)	5.4
80			EASTER HOLIDAY - important because of probable non-availability RN/JF	24.03.18	10	02.04.18					
81	x	6	Conclusion phase	25.03.18	13	06.04.18		06.04.18		VS	5
82		6.1	Writing chapter 11	25.03.18	7	31.03.18				VS	5.5
83		6.2	Final reading	31.03.18	7	06.04.18		06.04.18		VS	6.1
84		6.3	Preparing documents and presentation for MS3	07.04.18	7	13.04.18				VS (RN, JF)	6.2
85		6.4	Submission MS3 documents	13.04.18	1	13.04.18				VS	6.3
86		6.5	Final preparation MS3	14.04.18	6	19.04.18				VS	6.4
87		6.6	MS3	20.04.18	1	20.04.18		20.04.18		VS	6.4, 6.5
88		6.7	Including MS3 feedback and rethinking	21.04.18	2	22.04.18					6.6
89		6.8	Submission MS3 documents (2nd attempt)	18.06.18	5	22.06.18					6.7
90		6.9	MS3 (2nd attempt)	25.06.18	5	29.06.18					6.8
91	x	7	Finalization phase	23.04.18	68	29.06.18					6
92		7.1	Finalization MT (Final proofreading)	23.04.18	11	03.05.18				VS	6.7
93		7.2	Print MT	04.05.18	7	10.05.18		10.05.18		VS	7.1
94		7.3	Upload MT + upload of theoretical part for plagiarism check	14.05.18	1	14.05.18		14.05.18		VS	7.1
95		7.4	Evaluation MT	11.06.18	7	17.06.18		17.06.18		VS	7.3
96		7.5	Deadline library-ready MT incl. application for restrictions of use	29.06.18	1	29.06.18		29.06.18		VS	7.2
97	x	8	Final examination	02.07.18	5	06.07.18		06.07.18		VS	7.1-7.5
98											
99											

Month		Dez.17			Jän.18			Feb.18			März.18	
CW	48 49	50 51 52	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12 13 14
Daycount					
Weekday					
Date					

CW	Number	Task	Dependency	Start	End
44	2	Preparation Phase		30.10.17	05.11.17
	2.18	Including MS1 feedback and rethinking	2.17	28.10.17	30.11.34
	2.19	Status update coach (call) + update (mail) to waterdrop (JF)	2.17, 2.18	30.10.17	31.10.17
	2.20.	New literature research and preparation new concept incl. topic and goals		30.10.17	02.11.17
	2.21	Appointment Mag. Dr. Madenberger regarding topic discussion	2.18-2.20	02.11.17	02.11.17
	2.22	Preparation MS1 documents and presentation (2nd attempt)	2.21	28.10.17	16.11.17
45	2	Praparation Phase		06.11.17	12.11.17
	2.22	Preparation MS1 documents and presentation (2nd attempt)	2.21	28.10.17	16.11.17
46	2	Preparation Phase		13.11.17	19.11.17
	2.22	Preparation MS1 documents and presentation (2nd attempt)	2.21	28.10.17	16.11.17
	2.23	Submission of MS1 documents (2nd attempt)	2.22	17.11.17	17.11.17
47	2	Theoretical Part		20.11.17	26.11.17
	2.24	MS 1 (2nd attempt)	2.23	22.11.17	22.11.17
	2.25	Including MS1 (2) feedback and rethinking	2.24	23.11.17	25.11.17
	2.26	Preparation of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	2.25	23.11.17	07.12.17
	3.1	In-depth literature research (ONGOING, ALL WEEKS)		23.11.17	02.01.18
	3.2	Chapter notes according to literature	3.1	23.11.17	26.11.18
	3.3	Connecting goals and literature findings	3.1, 3.2	26.11.17	26.11.17
48	2, 3	Theoretical Part		27.11.17	03.12.17
	2.26	Preparation of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	2.25	23.11.17	07.12.17
	3.4	Writing chapter two	3.1-3.3	27.11.17	31.11.17
	3.5	Writing chapter three	3.1-3.4	01.12.17	06.12.17
49	2, 3	Theoretical Part		04.12.17	10.12.17
	2.26	Preparation of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	2.25	23.11.17	07.12.17
	2.27	Submission of MT agreement with entrepreneural assignment	2.26	07.12.17	07.12.17
	3.6	Reading existing chapters and making adaptations	3.1-3.5	07.12.17	08.12.17
	3.7	Giving and update to coach and company	3.6	08.12.17	08.12.17
	3.8	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	3.6	08.12.17	08.12.17
	3.9	Writing chapter four	3.1-3.6	08.12.17	11.12.17
50	3	Theoretical Part		11.12.17	17.12.17
	3.9	Writing chapter four	3.1-3.6	08.12.17	11.12.17
	3.10	Writing chapter five	3.9	12.12.17	15.12.17
	3.12	Including feedback/making adaptations	3.11	16.12.17	20.10.35

CW	Number	Task	Dependency	Start	End
51	3	Theoretical Part		18.12.17	24.12.17
	3.13	Writing chapter six	3.1-3.12	18.12.17	22.12.17
52	3	Theoretical Part		25.12.17	31.12.17
	3.14	Revisiting all chapters	3.12, 3.13	27.12.17	02.01.18
	3.15	Identifying interview partners	3.14	27.12.17	02.01.18
1	3	Theoretical Part		01.01.18	07.01.18
	3.14	Revisiting all chapters	3.12, 3.13	27.12.17	02.01.18
	3.15	Identifying interview partners	3.14	27.12.17	02.01.18
	3.16	Giving an update to coach and company	3.14, 3.15	03.01.18	03.01.18
	3.17	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	3.14, 3.15	03.01.18	03.01.18
	3.18	Researching and planning empirical study (incl. contacts qualitative)	3.15	03.01.18	07.01.18
2	4	Theoretical Part		08.01.18	14.01.18
	3.19	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk	3.16, 3.17, 3.18	08.01.18	12.01.18
	3.20	Including feedback & preparation of docs and presentation MS2	3.19	12.01.18	18.01.18
3	3	Theoretical Part		15.01.18	21.01.18
	3.21	Document upload MS2	3.20	19.01.18	19.01.18
	3.22	Final preparation MS2	3.21	20.01.18	25.01.18
4	3	Theoretical Part		22.01.18	28.01.18
	3.22	Final preparation MS2	3.21	20.01.18	25.01.18
	3.23	MS2	3.21, 3.22	26.01.18	26.01.18
	3.24	Including MS2 feedback and rethinking	3.23	27.01.18	29.01.18
5	3, 4	Theoretical Part / Practical Part		29.01.18	04.02.18
	3.24	Including MS2 feedback and rethinking	3.23	27.01.18	29.01.18
	3.25	Status meeting coach + update to waterdrop (JF) for prep. of empirical part	3.24	29.01.18	02.02.18
	4.1	Planning empirical part - research design	3.23-3.25	30.01.18	03.02.18
	4.2	Writing chapter seven and eight		30.01.18	06.02.18
	4.3	Identifying interview partners	4.1	04.02.18	07.02.18
	4.4	Organizing dates with people (qualitative)	4.1	04.02.18	10.02.18

D

Week	WBS	Task	Pred.	Start	End
7	4	Practical Part		12.02.18	18.02.18
	4.5	Carry out SWOT + target group description + adaptations	3	11.02.18	13.02.18
	4.6	Rethinking and adaptation	4.5	13.02.18	14.02.18
	4.7	Sending update to coach and company	4.6	14.02.18	14.02.18
	4.8	Asking bundled questions to coach and company	4.6	14.02.18	14.02.18
	4.9	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk + adaptations	4.7, 4.8	15.02.18	21.02.18
8	4, 5	Practical Part		19.02.18	25.02.18
	4.9	Meeting coach and company for feedback and talk + adaptations	4.7, 4.8	15.02.18	21.02.18
	5.1	Carry out of reserach (14 available dates for focus group or expert interviews)	4.9	22.02.18	07.03.18
9	5	Practical Part		26.02.18	04.03.18
	5.1	Carry out of reserach (14 available dates for focus group or expert interviews)	4.9	22.02.18	07.03.18
10	5	Practical Part		05.03.18	11.03.18
	5.1	Carry out of reserach (14 available dates for focus group or expert interviews)	4.9	22.02.18	07.03.18
	5.2	Analysis of research findings / writing chapter 9 and 10	5.1	08.03.18	17.03.18
11	5	Practical Part		12.03.18	18.03.18
	5.2	Analysis of research findings / writing chapter 9 and 10	5.1	08.03.18	17.03.18
	5.3	Re-reading & re-thinking	5.2	18.03.18	20.03.18
12	5, 6	Practical Part / Conclusion Phase		19.03.18	25.03.18
	5.3	Re-reading & re-thinking	5.2	18.03.18	20.03.18
	5.4	Update to coach for final feedback for conclusion	5.3	20.03.18	20.03.18
	5.5	Receiving feedback	5.4	23.03.18	24.03.18
	6.1	Writing chapter 11	5.5	25.03.18	31.03.18
13	6	Conclusion Phase		26.03.18	01.04.18
	6.1	Writing chapter 11	5.5	25.03.18	31.03.18
	6.2	Final reading	6.1	31.03.18	06.04.18
14	6	Conclusion Phase		02.04.18	08.04.18
	6.2	Final reading	6.1	31.03.18	06.04.18
	6.3	Preparing documents and presentation for MS3	6.2	07.04.18	13.04.18
15	6	Conclusion Phase		09.04.18	15.04.18
	6.3	Preparing documents and presentation for MS3	6.2	07.04.18	13.04.18
	6.4	Submission MS3 documents	6.3	13.04.18	13.04.18
	6.5	Final preparation MS3	6.4	14.04.18	19.04.18
16	6	Conclusion Phase		16.04.18	22.04.18
	6.5	Final preparation MS3	6.4	14.04.18	19.04.18
	6.6	MS3	6.4, 6.5	20.04.18	20.04.18
	6.7	Including MS3 feedback and rethinking	6.6	21.04.18	22.04.18
17	7	Finalization Phase		23.04.18	29.04.18
	7.1	Finalization MT (Final proofreading)	6.7	23.04.18	03.05.18
18	7	Finalization Phase		30.04.18	06.05.18
	7.1	Finalization MT (Final proofreading)	6.7	23.04.18	03.05.18
	7.2	Print MT	7.1	04.05.18	10.05.18
19	7	Finalization Phase		07.05.18	13.05.18
	7.2	Print MT	7.1	04.05.18	10.05.18
20	7	Finalization Phase		14.05.18	20.05.18
	7.3	Upload MT + upload of theoretical part for plagiarism check	7.1	14.05.18	14.05.18
21	7	Finalization Phase		21.05.18	27.05.18
22	7	Finalization Phase		28.05.18	03.06.18
23	7	Finalization Phase		04.06.18	10.06.18
24	7	Finalization Phase		11.06.18	17.06.18
	7.4	Evaluation MT	7.3	11.06.18	17.06.18
25	7	Finalization Phase		18.06.18	24.06.18
26	7	Finalization Phase		25.06.18	01.07.18
	7.5	Deadline library-ready MT incl. application for restrictions of use	7.2	29.06.18	29.06.18
20	8	Final examination		02.07.18	06.07.17
	8	Final examination	7.1-7.5	02.07.18	06.07.18

E

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE
Social media with a viral marketing focus for B2C products in the food and beverages industry

At the beginning I would like to thank you. I highly appreciate your willingness to participate in the interview. I am convinced that this interview will be a major contribution to the success of the research. As part of my master's program "International Marketing" at the University of Applied Sciences CAMPUS 02 in Graz, I am currently writing my research paper. The thesis deals with social media conception with focus on viral marketing to support an internationalization in the food & beverages industry. I examine factors and strategic principles that enable virality for B2C products. The user behaviour plays a very important role in my work, since it is a customer-centered concept. As part of this interview, I intend to identify the basic factors of a social media concept identified in theory, as well as to verify or falsify the basic factors of maximum reach. In addition, the created model for a social media concept with a focus on viral marketing should be checked for applicability.

The interview will take about 50 minutes. It is important to mention that there are no wrong answers.

If you agree, I would like to record this conversation using a digital capture device. I will also take notes. I assure you that all information will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

INTRODUCTION PART

Agreement for the recording of the interview:
   yes   no

Personal data:
Do you want to stay anonymous?
   yes   no

Name:

Group of experts/criteria:
   Social Media/Digital Marketing Expert
   Content Management/Campaign Management Expert
   Food and Beverages Marketing Expert
   UK/International Business Knowledge

Gender:
   Male   Female

Icebreaking question: The interviewee should talk freely about his/her thoughts on social media and viral marketing. This should be a small talk to open the expert interview.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONCEPTION & STRATEGY

Do strategic approaches to social media have any impact on the success of a campaign, particularly in terms of reach? What should be considered in the conception phase?

What is special about B2C / F&B products and the required way of communicating with consumers? Are there any specialities?

How do you perceive the meaning and interaction of community management, content marketing, and influencer relations for a social media concept?

Which of the aforementioned aspects most effectively affects reach?

SOCIAL MEDIA & VIRAL MARKETING

Which motives are perceived in practice that bring users to share brand content?

Which themes or emotions are considered as strong drivers on social media?

Which tools or mechanisms are known for the highest reach or interaction?

VIRALITY FACTORS

The following factors are mentioned in theory as a determining framework for the achievement of virality. What factors can you confirm from your experience? How important are the respective factors? Can you weight these?

Product und service characteristics
    Suitability

Diffusion characteristics
    Exponential
    Reach of the target group
    Speed

Direct information exchange (Peer-to-peer)
    Available and used channels
    Available and used technologies
    Effective combination of technologies
    Credibility of the source

Message Content
    Ease of use
    Fun and intrigue
    Imagination
    Engaging

Overall campaign structure
Viral activity encouraged
Considering ethical and legal aspects

Which social media KPIs make the most sense in practice? Do quantitative or qualitative values count more? Can you give examples in this regard?

CHANNELS, CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & INTERNATIONALIZATION

Which channels are best for B2C products to increase reach? On an international scale? What are the specific features of the individual channels and how can they be used within the awareness phase of a brand?

What is the impact of social media with regard to the internationalization of a brand? What factors must be given special consideration in supporting internationalization with social media?

Which trends are perceived in consumer behavior on social media? How is the behavior changing and to what extent do brands have to adapt their strategic approach here?

Which further trends are perceived especially in the UK market?

CLOSING PART

Is there anything you would like to add or important further notes on the subject?