A Strategic Communication Plan to Increase Customer's Awareness of HierBeiDir

HierBeiDir.com

GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT

FABIENNE BULLERMANN

STUDENT NUMBER: 307046

SUPERVISOR: TEODORA VOIADES

2ND READER: MART WEGMAN

CLIENT COMPANY: HIERBEIDIR

NON CONFIDENTIAL

WORD COUNT: 17984

SUBMISSION DATE: 30.05.2016

Hanzehogeschool Groningen
University of Applied Sciences

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to say a special thank you to the team behind HierBeiDir who has given me the opportunity to write my Bachelor thesis in the environment of a young and blooming startup. Especially Philipp Bohne and Peer Lichtenberg supported me and offered a helping hand whenever I needed one

Moreover, a very profound acknowledgement belongs to my Hanze Graduation supervisor, Teodora Voiades. Her guidance, her constructive feedback and her open ear for questions motivated and empowered me during the entire process. Whenever I encountered an issue, she was there to guide and advise me. Similarly, I also want to thank my second reader Mart Wegman for his valuable notes and input on this thesis.

I would also like to thank the experts, interviewees and survey participants who took the time out of their daily routines to support my research. Without their input, this research could not have been successful.

Finally, I have to express my sincere gratitude to my family and friends who have continuously encouraged me on this journey.

Executive Summary

The Research Report

HierBeiDir is a startup located in Düsseldorf and founded in 2013. The company supports local retailers with no online appearances of their own, with entering the Internet and selling their products online on the HierBeiDir website. The startup's objective is to bring the local retail industry to the era of online commerce. However, the company is currently facing a **communication problem** that needs to be solved.

The Problem Statement

According to CEO Philipp Bohne (personal communication, 2016) the company is in their startup phase and therefore, HierBeiDir's service is relatively unknown to most customers. Consequently, the current customer database is rather small and there is no sufficient awareness on the German market yet. After consulting with the client, it was decided that, to successfully promote and sell products via HierBeiDir's website, it is first crucial to **create the needed awareness** within the startup's customers.

Objective of the Report

Consequently, the objective of this report is to **give recommendations to HierBeiDir regarding an effective communication strategy to increase customer awareness.** This strategy is supported by the development of a HierBeiDir buyer persona and an appropriate awareness campaign which is based on research about customer's online purchasing and communication behavior as well as customer's characteristics.

The Research Strategy

As a communication strategy to increase customer awareness calls for insights into customer's characteristics, multiple methods were employed to ensure detailed research and efficient data to answer the research questions. First, extensive desk research was conducted to determine relevant theories and develop a profound background knowledge of each research area. After a sufficient amount of primary data had been collected, secondary data was gathered. An online survey that

collected 230 responses from existing and potential HierBeiDir customers was used to collect quantitative data. Additionally, qualitative data was obtained by administering semi-structured interviews with both experts and existing customers.

The Research Outcomes

The online survey was answered by 230 respondents. However, **of these 230 participants, only 25 were already familiar with HierBeiDir**. This finding clearly justifies the importance of this research and the need for a communication strategy to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir as the company is still relatively unknown to the larger part of German consumers.

In regards to **customer's online purchase behavior** the research indicates that most customers are influenced by a utilitarian motivation and therefore, pay most attention to rational incentives when shopping online. Furthermore, customer's decision-making process is usually spontaneous and can thus, be influenced by promotional messages. Moreover, the research discovered that the clear majority of customers is heavily influenced by recommendations from peers and other customers. Integrating these results in a communication campaign, can help to increase customer awareness.

Concerning **customer's communication behavior** the results show that customer's preferred channel usage include both online and offline communication media. The most effective channel strategy to use is therefore, the integration of social media, the company website, newsletters as well as local newspapers and offline events. Regarding information processing the research states that customers need to be provided with rational cues and incentives in order for information to raise their attention and increase awareness.

The findings about **customer's characteristics** state that HierBeiDir's typical buyer persona is female, between the ages of 18 and 30, has at least completed a Bachelor degree and does not yet have a very high yearly income. Moreover, HierBeiDir's customers increasingly care about sustainability and view HierBeiDir as a creative, visionary and artistic brand.

The Advice

Based on the communication problem and the research outcomes, a communication strategy to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir was developed. The strategic communication plan is divided into three parts: communication contents, implementation and planning.

1. Communication Contents

Regarding the campaign's communication content, HierBeiDir needs to communicate in the right way and to disseminate the right contents to increase awareness. Thus, a communication campaign should include the following contents:

1. *Buyer Persona*: Based on customer's characteristics the buyer persona *Anna Müller* was developed. It is important for HierBeiDir to utilize the persona in the communication with customers to increase their awareness and create customized contents.
2. *Customer Recommendations*: The research clearly showed that HierBeiDir's customers are influenced by and rely on peer recommendations. By developing recommendation "stickers" for their products and website, HierBeiDir could enable customers to share their experiences and thereby, recommend HierBeiDir to others. Furthermore, a newsletter promoting a contest was developed to entice customers to recommend HierBeiDir on social media.
3. *Rational Approach*: As customers favor rational and goal-oriented incentives in services, HierBeiDir should align their communication to these preferences and include these appeals in their promotions.
4. *Social Media Guidelines*: Since the research determined social media as an important tool to increase customer's awareness, social media guidelines were developed to facilitate an easy and effective online communication. This guide provides information on how to post, what to post and how to measure communication outcomes.

2. Implementation

The research defined a combination of online and offline channels to be most suitable for the increase of awareness. Therefore, to effectively communicate the above-described contents to customers, an integrated communication campaign was developed. To communicate a persistent brand image that

can increase customer's awareness, HierBeiDir should integrate the different communication media to create a consistent campaign. To that effect, a four-step plan, including media tools for Facebook, Instagram, local newspapers and the company blog were developed. This plan includes recommendations on how to:

- Establish an understanding of your customer
- Select suitable communication channels
- Produce contents that can be translated to other channels
- Integrate channels

2. Planning

Lastly, to facilitate the campaign's execution, a detailed implementation plan and budget was included. The campaign duration was set to five months, starting in June. The first month should be dedicated to project preparations and staff briefings. The main phase (July – September) will include the execution of all suggested communication and campaign activities. The last month will be dedicated to the campaign evaluation. All campaign measures were estimated with a budget of 1092.50€.

Table of Contents

RESEARCH REPORT

1. Project Context 10
1.1 Problem Analysis 10
1.2 Organizational Context 11
2. Theoretical Framework 13
2.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior 13
2.2 Communication Behavior 15
2.3 Customer Characteristics 17
3. Research Design 19
3.1 Research Objective 19
3.2 Research Framework 19
3.3 Conceptual Model 20
3.4 Research Questions 21
3.5 Research Strategy 23
3.6 Methodology 24
3.7 Validity & Reliability 26
3.8 Limitations 27
4. Research Findings 28
4.1 Findings: Online Consumer Purchase Behavior 28
4.2 Findings: Communication Behavior 33
4.3 Findings: Customer Characteristics 37
5. Discussion 44
5.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior 44
5.2 Communication Behavior 46
5.3 Customer Characteristics 49
6. Recommendations and Conclusion 52
6.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior 52
6.2 Communication Behavior 52
6.3 Customer Characteristics 53
6.4 Conclusion 53

ADVICE & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

1. Introduction 55
2. Communication Content 56
2.1 Buyer Persona 56
2.2 Utilizing Customer Recommendations 58
2.3 Message Contents 62
2.4 Communication Worksheet & Key Performance Indicators 64
2.5 Social Media Guidelines 67
3. Implementation 68
3.1 Channel Integration 68
3.2 Client's Acceptance and Barriers 72
3.3 HierBeiDir's Policy 72
3.4 Facilitation of Communication 73
4. Planning 74
5. Conclusions 78
5.1 International Relevance 78
5.2 Conclusion 78
List of References 80

APPENDIX

1. Interview Summaries 83
1.1 Interview file 1 83
1.2 Interview file 2 85
1.3 Interview File 3 86
1.4 Interview File 4 89
1.5 Interview File 5 92
1.6 Interview File 6 96
1.7 Interview File 7 100
1.8 Interview File 8 104
2. SWOT Analysis 108
3. Competitor Analysis 109
4. Competition: Positioning Map 111
5. Research Methods per Research Question 112
6. Preliminary Research Results 114
6.1 HierBeiDir Company Profile 114
6.2 E-Commerce Statistics 124
6.3 Target Group Research 127
6.4 Online Consumer Behavior 127
7. German Online Survey 128
8. Media Tools 140
8.1 German Customer Letter 140
8.2 German Newsletter 141

1. Project Context

1.1 Problem Analysis

HierBeiDir is a German startup located in Düsseldorf. The company supports local retailers with no online appearance of their own with entering the Internet by representing their products on the HierBeiDir website. Thus, HierBeiDir functions as the missing link between online and offline commerce.

The company's customers are the ones visiting the HierBeiDir website and purchasing local products online. Here the communication problem is grounded; as HierBeiDir is in its startup phase, the awareness on the German market is low. Thus, HierBeiDir is relatively unknown to most consumers (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Therefore, to successfully promote their website and brand, it is first essential to create the necessary awareness within their target customers.

These customers represent the decisive variable in HierBeiDir's business concept since they need to be guided towards the HierBeiDir website and should be made aware about the services available to them. Despite the central role of the customers to all relevant stakeholders (retailers, investors & employees), HierBeiDir does not have a clear strategy on how to communicate with them. This was also confirmed during the intake interview with HierBeiDir. The startup is unsure about how customers can be reached and how awareness can be increased (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Similarly, the currently used communication channels and contents are also rather arbitrary (Appendix, 6.1).

Thus, the client is aware of his communication problem, which is the absence of a clear strategy on how to identify effective measures to make the organization known to its targeted customers. Consequently, the goal of this report is to develop a communication strategy to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir. Raising awareness, first requires an understanding of the customer. It is important to define who they are, why and what they purchase online and how they collect and receive information about products and retailers. Therefore, this report will look into customer's purchase and communication behavior as well as their personal characteristics.

As this research is practice-oriented, the stage of the intervention cycle can be defined. Since the communication problem has been identified and acknowledged by the relevant stakeholders, this report is located in the diagnostic stage. HierBeiDir realizes the importance of identifying factors

contributing to the communication problem but has not yet diagnosed them. Therefore, the research will focus on gaining insights into the creation of a suitable awareness communication strategy.

1.2 Organizational Context

HierBeiDir was founded in September 2013 by three German students. HierBeiDir is an online market place that provides local[1] retailers with no online appearance of their own with an entryway into e-commerce. According to Bohne "the objective of this platform is to make local products accessible to online customers and to thereby, digitalize the local charm of German cities", (personal communication, 2016). Items offered on HierBeiDir's website provide customers with a choice of local food, fashion, electronics, art and other products.

The organization's vision is "to provide online customers with the charm and expertise of regional retailers" while their mission statement is "to develop, coordinate and market the online appearance of local retailers", (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Similarly, the company's long-term goal is to be represented in 20 German cities by 2020. Once this objective is accomplished, internationalization can be approached. These corporate objectives reinforce the importance of a communication strategy, as the expansion on the German market heavily depends on the increase of customer's awareness of HierBeiDir.

The idea for the company's concept originated from a trivial problem: the founders were looking for a hammer to put up pictures on the wall but could not find one. However, the search via Google did not deliver any local retailers that would provide the desired product. The team around CEO Bohne realized this gap in the market and thus, the idea for HierBeiDir was born (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). The German name HierBeiDir literally means: Here next to you.

The company's website operates as follows: If a customer places an order, HierBeiDir contacts the retailer to ensure the product is available. HierBeiDir then sends a dispatch note to the retailer. Afterwards, the retailer attaches this note to the package and sends it via DHL GoGreen to customers. If the order was placed by a local customer close to the store, the product is delivered within 120 minutes by a bike messenger. For every product purchased via HierBeiDir, the startup receives a 10% commission. Furthermore, retailers represented by HierBeiDir pay monthly fees to the company,

[1] Local: In regards to HierBeiDir the term local does not only refer to the location Düsseldorf, but emphasizes the local character of represented retailers from different cities in Germany

depending on their preferred service level. The packages range from 39€ to 149€. A higher price offers the retailer a better SEO and SEM service and increases the number of products that can be featured online (Appendix, 6.1).

HierBeiDir's current communication includes online channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram as well as offline media as newspaper, television and radio co-operations (Appendix 1.2). The communication's objective is to create awareness of HierBeiDir (Agena, personal communication, 2016). However, there is no strategy behind the usage of these channels. Likewise, CMO Agena remarked that there is no clear plan behind the creation of content as messages are constructed on short notice and are based on a "trial and error" approach. Correspondingly, HierBeiDir owns a Pinterest account which is currently not being used and filled with content. Similarly, in February HierBeiDir was featured in a German documentary called "Local retail goes online" which aired on television. Nevertheless, this exposure did not result in a visible increase of awareness as there were only limited new followers on social media (Agena, personal communication, 2016). Consequently, for HierBeiDir to accomplish their organizational objectives, it is vital that they move from occasional promotion without an explicit vision towards a precise communication strategy.

HierBeiDir's unique selling proposition is based on their neighborly and relatable approach (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Their attainable image distinguishes them from other competitors. Additionally, HierBeiDir puts emphasis on sustainability since all purchases are either delivered via a bike messenger or DHL GoGreen. This focus on the environment further differentiates HierBeiDir from their competition.

Based on the problem analysis and organizational context it can be concluded that HierBeiDir is in need of an integrated awareness strategy. The external aim of this research will therefore, be to formulate recommendations for HierBeiDir regarding an effective communication strategy to increase customer awareness.

Currently HierBeiDir is focusing their resources on establishing themselves on the German market (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Given the present focus on the domestic industry, this research will primarily focus on national aspects. Once HierBeiDir has successfully established itself in Germany, the company considers entering foreign markets such as Austria and Switzerland. At that development stage, the communication strategy and recommendations developed in this report could be adapted to these markets and international demands. Appropriate recommendations will be included in the advice.

2. Theoretical Framework

As this report aims to increase awareness, it is pivotal to define this concept. According to Macdonald and Sharp (2003) awareness is "essential for the communications process to occur as it precedes all other steps in the process". Thus, without sufficient brand awareness, HierBeiDir's communication efforts will not be effective and customers will not consider interacting with the brand.

The research perspective aims to contribute to the creation of this awareness. Therefore, it is indispensable to establish a well-grounded understanding of the customer. Correspondingly, it is crucial to define how and why customers purchase online, how they receive and gather product information and which characteristics describe them. Therefore, the research areas online consumer purchase behavior, communication behavior and customer characteristics will provide insights into how customer's levels of awareness are created and how they can be increased.

2.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

2014 Germany had over 51 million digital customers, making it Europe's leader in e-commerce and creating countless opportunities for online providers (Figure 1). Although the demand is constantly rising, an online presence alone does not suffice. Companies need to know their customers to distinguish their own offer from competitors in the market. Therefore, HierBeiDir needs to learn about their customer's online purchase behaviors to approach them accordingly and to provide them with suitable messages. This knowledge will generate indications on how to increase customer's awareness.

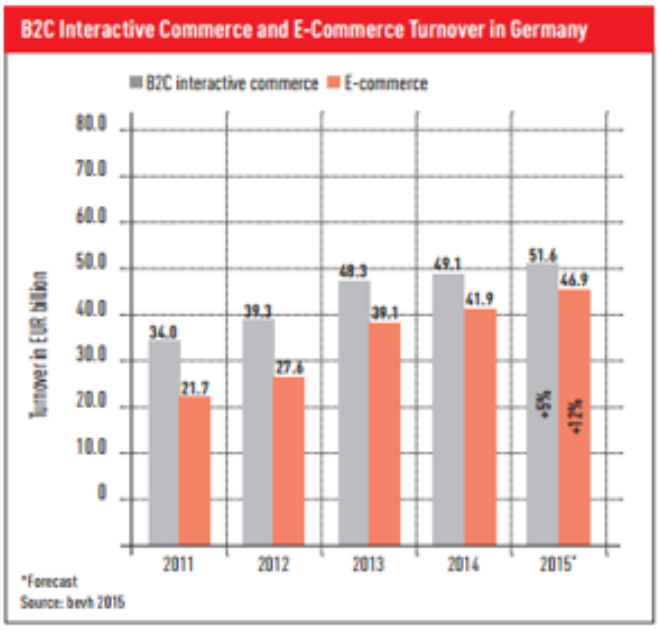


Figure 1: B2C E-Commerce Turnover in Germany. Source: http://bit.ly/1Q5fxUQ

The research area was divided into three concepts: **motivation, decision making process** and **online shopping preferences**.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) divide shopping **motivation** into utilitarian and hedonic motives. Utilitarian motivation is shaped by rational and goal-oriented incentives and defines shopping as a task. The success of the task depends on whether or not it can be completed. Hedonic motivation however, designates buying as an experience. Hedonic shoppers purchase to experience emotions such as happiness and arousal (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). For HierBeiDir it is important to analyze what their consumers are motivated by to understand which information and messages could arouse their interest and thus, help to increase their awareness.

Another variable is the customer's **decision making process.** Purchase decisions can be affected by different variables. Rosen and Simonson (2014) argue that customer's choices are usually determined by one of the factors of the influence mix (Figure 2).

1. Past Experiences (P)
2. Information from marketers (M)
3. Input from others (O)

Figure 2: The Influence Mix. Source: http://bit.ly/1oss0fO

If customers place the most value on P, decisions are based on routines. Hence, purchases are made out of habit and are not given much deliberation. In this case, awareness of a product and its provider is already given. Thus, past experiences will not be relevant for HierBeiDir' awareness strategy. Decisions influenced by M are affected by marketing measures as advertising, pricing and packaging (Rosen & Simonson, 2014). These consumers pay attention to brand images. If O holds the biggest impact, customers rely on peer recommendations. Reviews from others are significant for their purchase decisions. The higher the dependence on one factor, the lower the influence of others. Consequently, understanding what is most important to their customers will help HierBeiDir determine which promotional messages will be effective to increase customer's awareness. If customers are mostly influenced by M, a communication strategy to increase awareness needs to primarily provide marketing facts. However, if customers rely on O, peer recommendations should be integrated into an awareness campaign.

Online shopping preferences impact consumer purchase behaviors. Considering what customers require from shopping experiences helps detecting attractive incentives to raise their awareness. N. Kano developed a model (Figure 3) to categorize customer requirements (Sauerwein et al., 1996). Translating this model to modern online shopping can help HierBeiDir understand how to create value for customers and thereby raise their awareness.

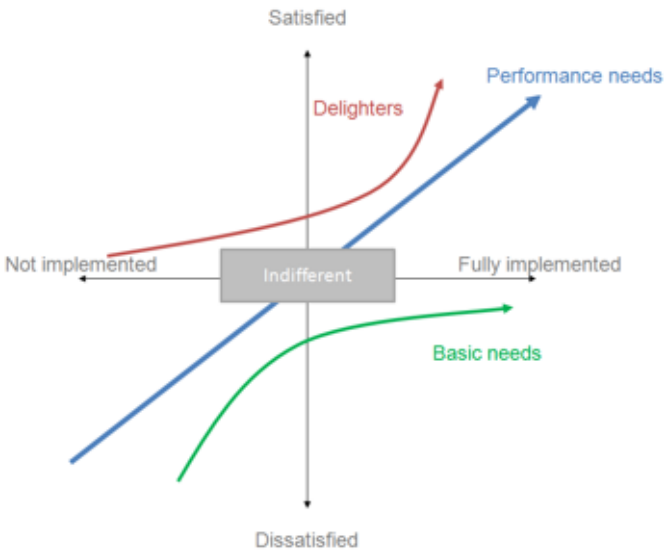


Figure 3: Kano Model. Source: http://bit.ly/1PWluVT

This model divides customer needs into three types:

1. Basic needs
2. Performance needs
3. Delighters

Basic needs are what is expected from services. Their presence does not increase customer satisfaction since it is taken for granted. Their absence however, results in discontent (Sauerwein et al., 1996). Performance needs determine how consumers evaluate products and are demanded explicitly. The more performance attributes are present, the higher the satisfaction. Delighters represent attributes that are not expected but when offered, result in high customer satisfaction and thus, are ideal to create customer awareness. Analyzing customer's requirements can aid HierBeiDir in creating communication value. By appealing to customer's needs, promotional messages can be tailored to their preferences and thereby, be more effective in raising their awareness.

2.2 Communication Behavior

Communication behavior is another characteristic for creating a communication strategy. Concepts that will be examined are **channel usage** and **information processing.**

To increase customer's awareness it is imperative to establish which communication channels are most appropriate for disseminating information. Studying the **channel usage** enables HierBeiDir to

comprehend customer's perception of certain media. This can be examined by applying the Media Richness Theory by Daft and Lengel (1986). Accordingly, all communication channels have different degrees of richness that individuals attach to them, depending on their level of equivocality and uncertainty. Media richness can hence, be explained as the facilitation of understanding and shared meaning.

As HierBeiDir communicates both online and offline with customers, the Media Richness Theory alone does not suffice as it mainly applies to traditional offline media. Correspondingly, Carlson and Zmud's Channel Expansion Theory (1999) will also be employed. This concept evaluates customer's perceptions of a channel's richness. These perceptions are based on *experiences* individuals have with the media. As this experience grows, so does the perception of the channel since "through gaining relevant experiences, individuals are able to effectively encode and decode computer-mediated-messages", (D'Urso & Rains, 2008). By using these theories HierBeiDir could determine which channels are most suitable for the successful dissemination of promotional information and thus, which channels could help to increase awareness.

After the most effective channels have been determined, a strategy to increase awareness with an integrated communication campaign will be developed. According to Rubin (2016) the success of a campaign can be raised by 63% if communications follow an integrated approach. To raise awareness, a constant message distribution via all HierBeiDir channels will be of great importance.

Information processing describes how customers handle information. This concept will help HierBeiDir to develop stronger communications and achieve higher brand awareness. To that effect, Cho's (1999) modified version of the Elaboration Likelihood model (ELM) will be applied.

Originally developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the model describes how people process information. Individuals either process messages via the peripheral or central route, depending on their motivation and ability to process (Figure 4). Via the central route, messages are elaborated cognitively and with scrutiny, whereas the peripheral route represents a mental shortcut as individuals rely on irrelevant cues (Cho, 1999).

As the original ELM concerned traditional media, Cho adapted the model to customer's processing of Internet advertisements (1999).

Accordingly, an individual's general attitude towards Internet advertising and their attitude of the used online medium, indicates if they will process a message.

Understanding how their audience processes information will facilitate HierBeiDir in designing suitable messages to increase customer awareness.

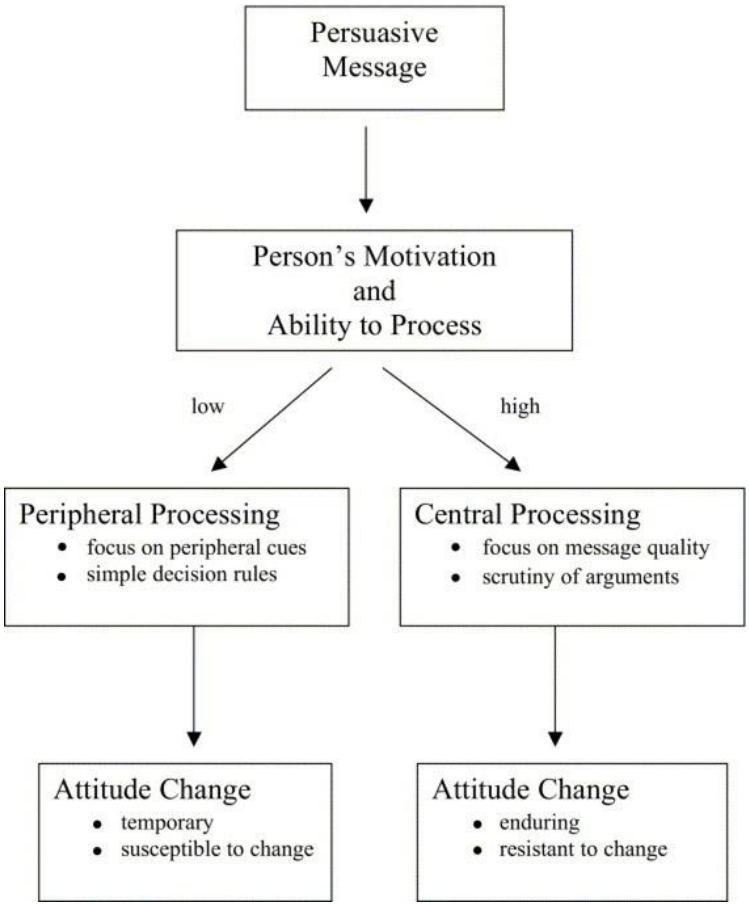


Figure 4: ELM Source: http://bit.ly/1oBXSPX

2.3 Customer Characteristics

Furthermore, HierBeiDir's customer characteristics have to be examined. Based on these attributes, a buyer persona can be developed which can be utilized in the communication strategy. Personas are "fictional, generalized representations of your ideal costumers", (Vaughan, 2015). These personas could help HierBeiDir to understand their audiences and to thereby, tailor content creation and promotion efforts accordingly. Considering that the creation of awareness calls for a clear understanding of customers, a buyer persona could also be beneficial for this process as it identifies who the customer is and how he behaves. Knowing customer's characteristics will give HierBeiDir important indications for an awareness campaign.

This process requires an analysis of the customer's **demographic** and **psychographic** characteristics and their **attitudes**.

Demographics and **psychographics** will be analyzed by determining features such as age, gender, lifestyle and interests by applying the segmentation, targeting and positioning framework. Moreover, as HierBeiDir values acting sustainably, consumer's **attitudes** will be examined with regards to sustainability. Researching customer's attitudes, opinions and behaviors will enable the creation of a suitable buyer persona, which in turn will serve as a foundation for the development of an awareness campaign for HierBeiDir.

HierBeiDir needs to be aware of how they should position themselves. Thus, Mark and Pearson's archetypes analysis can be used for further segmentation purposes (2001). According to them, brands can adopt one of twelve archetypes in their consumer's mind. The choice of archetype depends on a variety of company characteristics (Figure 5). An appealing positioning as a particular archetype facilitates the use of individualized storytelling to increase customer awareness.

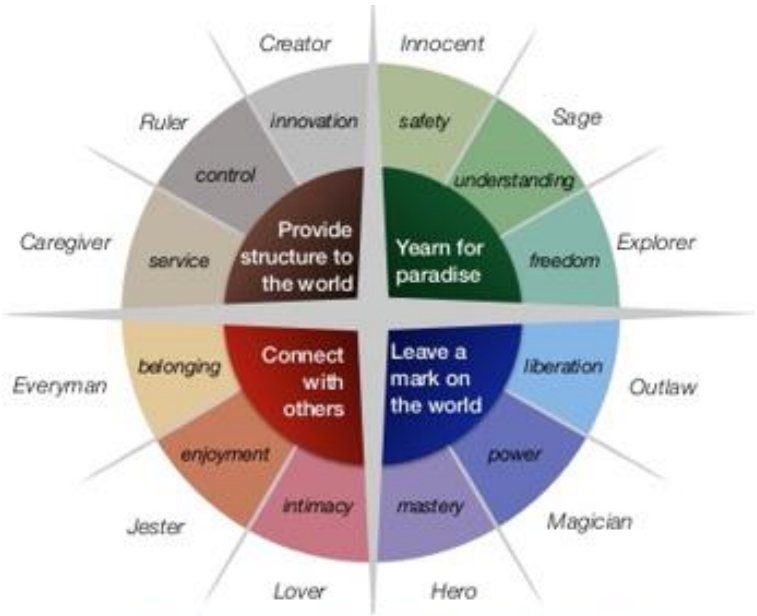


Figure 5: Brand Archetypes Source: http://bit.ly/1mQp1g5

According to Fiorelli (2015) archetypes are vital for connecting with audiences and building awareness around brands. He continues that an archetype can be used to differentiate a company's communication from competitors and thereby, connect to its targets. Thus, the right choice of archetype and storytelling for HierBeiDir could contribute to the increase of customer awareness.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Objective

The objective is based on the client's communication problem, linked to HierBeiDir's organizational goals and guides the research as it outlines its purpose and determines which goal should be achieved (Verschuren & Dooreward, 2010). As this research is based in the diagnostic stage of the intervention cycle **the research objective** is

to give recommendations to HierBeiDir regarding an effective communication strategy to increase customer awareness

***by** identifying a suitable buyer persona with which an awareness campaign can be developed, through collecting data from HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts on how motivation, decision making processes and online shopping preferences influence purchase behaviors, how channel usage and information processing affect HierBeiDir customer's communication as well as which psychographic, demographic traits and attitudes define HierBeiDir's customers.*

3.2 Research Framework

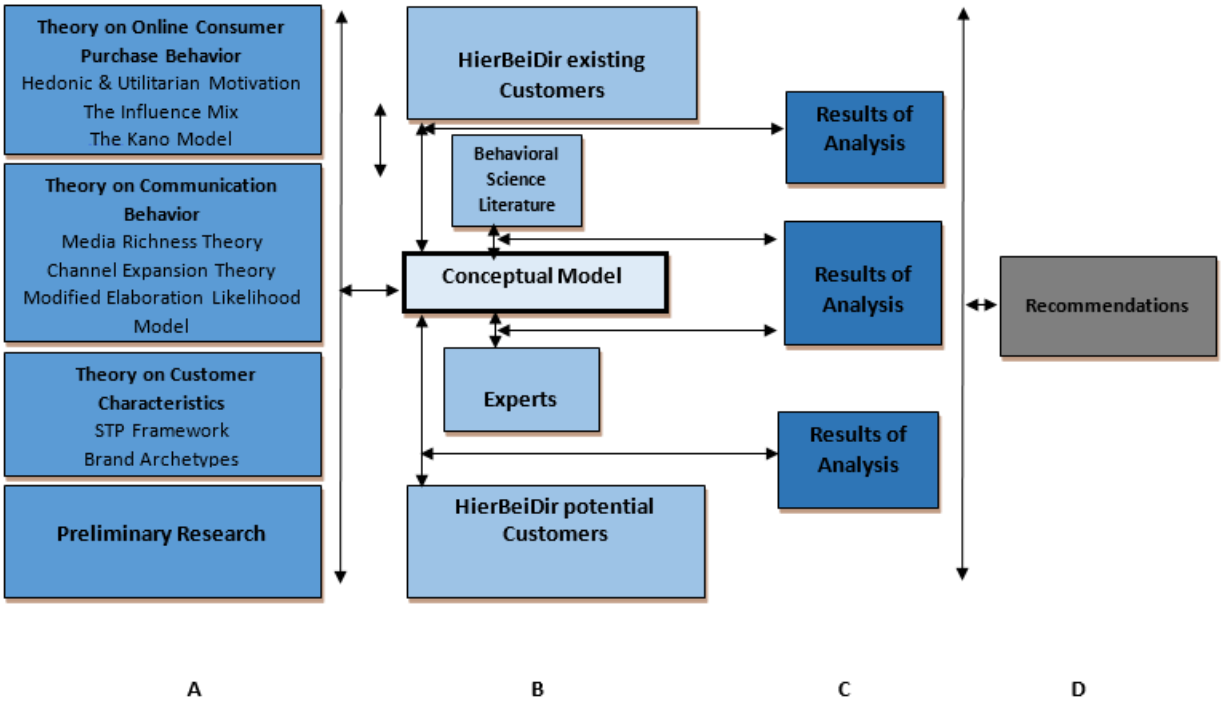


Figure 6: Research Framework

The framework (Figure 6) illustrates the internal structure of the project and represents steps that need to be taken to accomplish the research objective.

The framework is divided into four sections: (A) the study of relevant theories needed to solve HierBeiDir's communication problem; (B) conceptual model and objects; (C) results of various analyses; (D) recommendations, the external goal of the research objective.

The theoretical base of the research consists of three carefully selected areas. Additionally, studying preliminary research guarantees adequate background knowledge. Based on these theories, a conceptual model was derived which will be explained in the following section. Furthermore, four research objects have been identified, which are essential for providing knowledge and information. Consulting *experts* will provide insights into the development of an awareness strategy and buyer personas, whereas surveying HierBeiDir's *existing* and *potential customers* will generate knowledge about their communication and purchase behavior and their characteristics. The review of the last object *behavioral science literature* will provide further insights. The framework continues with confronting the research results obtained by the data collection of the research areas with the selected theories and analyzing the results accordingly. Finally, recommendations regarding the development of a communication strategy to increase customer awareness will be formulated.

The framework reads as follows:

(A) The study of theories regarding Online Purchase Behaviors, Consumer Communication Behavior and Customer Characteristics, supported by preliminary research, (B) leads to assessment criteria that will be confronted with experts, behavioral science literature and HierBeiDir's existing and potential customers. (C) The results will be analyzed and (D) correspondingly, recommendations will be formulated.

3.3 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model was derived from the theoretical areas and represents a collection of causal relationships between the research's core concepts. The model demarcates the research as it specifies what will be studied within the project.

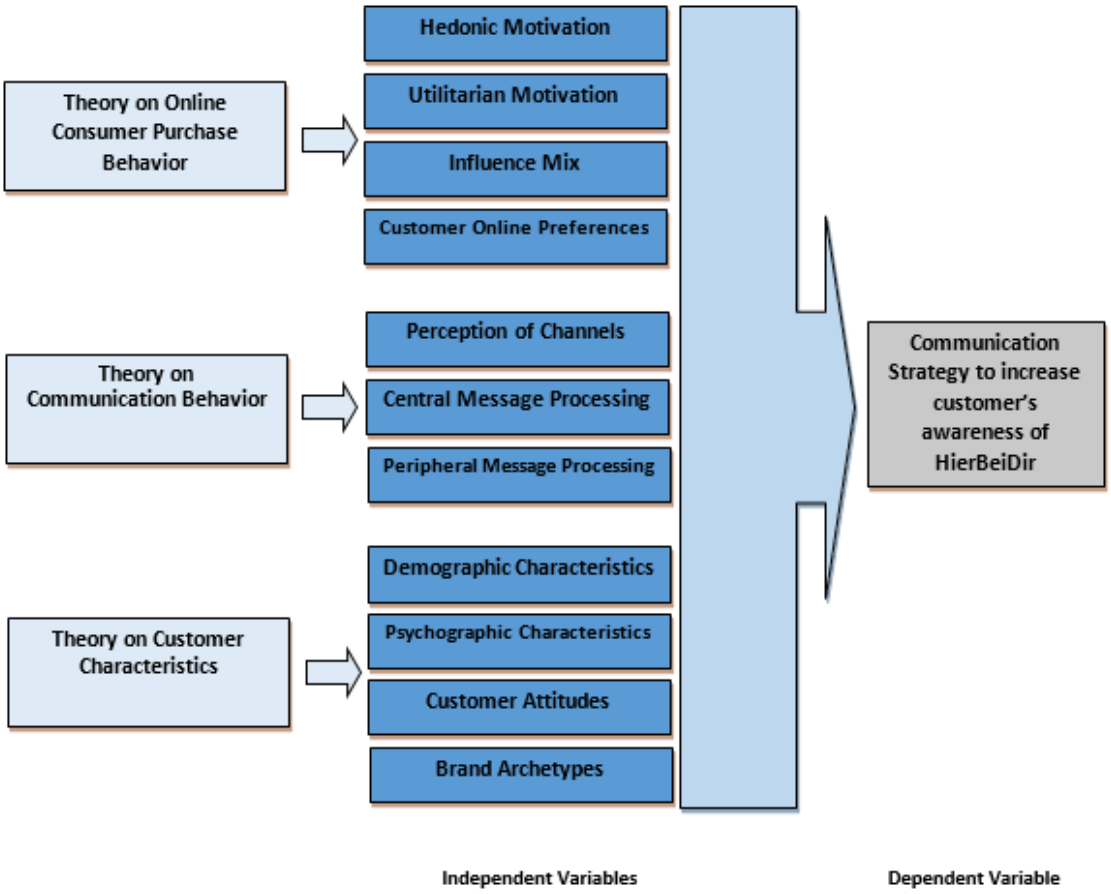


Figure 7: Conceptual Model

The conceptual model includes a set of direct effects (Figure 7). The independent variables (core concepts) exert direct influence on the dependent variable (awareness & communication plan). All independent variables affect the dependent variable however, not all independent variables are affecting each other to the same amount.

3.4 Research Questions

Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

1. Central Question:

What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's online purchase behavior according to opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and literature?

Sub-questions:

1.1 Which motivation stimulates online purchases according to HierBeiDir customers and literature?
1.2 Which aspects of the influence mix impact decision making according to HierBeiDir customers?
1.3 Which customer preferences create successful online shopping experiences as reported by literature and customers?

Communication Behavior

2. Central Question:

What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's communication behavior based on opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and literature?

Sub-questions:

2.1 What is the perception and usage of communication channels according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?
2.2 Which is the preferred route for information processing according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?

Target Group Characteristics

3. Central Question:

What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, are relevant for creating suitable buyer personas and increasing awareness according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts in the field?

Sub-questions:

3.1 Which demographics define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?
3.2 Which psychographics define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?
3.3 What is the attitude of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers towards sustainability according to customer's opinions?

3.4 Which brand archetype can be ascribed to HierBeiDir to create effective storytelling based on customer's opinions and literature?

3.5 Research Strategy

Research strategies dictate the approach taken to gather data and answer research questions. As a suitable communication strategy to increase customer awareness calls for thorough insights into consumer's characteristics, the case study strategy is most suitable as it holds several advantages (Verschuren & Dooreward, 2010):

- A general overview can be acquired
- It provides flexibility
- Depth is generated
- Results are usually easily accepted by stakeholders

A general overview of customer's behavior and characteristics is of great importance as it is needed for the development of an awareness communication strategy. Furthermore, flexibility within the research strategy is crucial for this project as it is conducted within a limited amount of time and within the environment of a young startup, which inherently holds continuous changes. Moreover, the creation of a buyer persona and an according communication strategy calls for a great depth within the data that need to be generated. Lastly, the case study strategy holds the advantage that its results are easily accepted by stakeholders, which is very important since the research and its outcomes should be helpful and acceptable for the client.

Since this research is exploratory, triangulation, the use of various data collection methods, will be employed. Qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered by conducting interviews and surveys. Additionally, desk research will be performed. By collecting primary and secondary data, theoretical foundations can be combined with empirical data.

3.6 Methodology

To achieve the objective and to answer the research questions, multiple methods were employed to collect and analyze data. Therefore, a mixed-methods research was used, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. As an awareness strategy calls for different data, one method alone would not suffice to collect all needed information. The collection and analysis of preliminary data about customer's characteristics, communication and purchase behavior required an extensive data collection to gain a general overview. This was done by employing quantitative data techniques. However, exploring these findings more closely and combining it with the expertise of professionals also called for quantitative measures. Another advantage of the mixed-method strategy is that it offers greater chances of answering the research questions and better evaluating research findings (Saunders et al., 2009).

Qualitative data was gathered by administering semi-structured interviews with experts and existing HierBeiDir customers. A semi-structured interview includes open and pre-determined questions, allowing interviewers to explore contexts and responses. Based on the interviews, key matters were identified, which were further explored by the online survey.

By conducting a survey, which collected knowledge about customer's purchase and communication behavior and their characteristics, quantitative data was collected. The survey was distributed to a strategic sample of over 270 individuals within the existing and potential pool of HierBeiDir customers. Due to reliability reasons, only 230 responses were actually used for the data analysis. According to CEO Bohne, HierBeiDir currently has a monthly customer pool of over 100 buyers (personal communication, 2016). The sample size table (2006) states that a population of 150 customers requires a sample of 137 customers to generate a 95% confidence with a margin error of 2.5%. As the online survey succeeded in gathering more than the needed 137 responses, the quantitative data can be considered as rather representative for HierBeiDir's customers.

Additionally, desk research was applied to gain insights into each research area.

The following section provides an explanation of the research techniques that were applied for each research area. An overview of the research methods applied for each research question is also provided in the Appendix (Appendix 5).

Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

To gather data on customer's online purchase behavior, different research methods were employed. By applying desk research the three key concepts *motivation, decision making process* and *online shopping preferences* have been identified. The desk research was performed as a secondary method of research and was conducted by scanning the Internet for suitable articles and reviewing subject-specific literature. This method provided insights into background information and relevant theories for online purchase behaviors. According to Saunders et al. (2009) desk research also holds advantages such as the comparability and accessibility of data. Additionally, an online survey was distributed to existing and potential customers of HierBeiDir. The survey was distributed via social media and HierBeiDir's networks. Participants were asked about their online purchase behavior and more specifically about their shopping motivations, purchase decisions and preferences. An online survey was chosen for the collection of data as it allows to gather a multitude of responses from customers. With 230 participants the online survey was able to gather quantitative data. Furthermore, four semi-structured interviews with existing customers of HierBeiDir were conducted (see Appendix 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 & 1.8). These interviews served to collect qualitative data and establish insights into customer's online purchase behaviors. The advantage of these semi-structured interviews is that they provide the needed flexibility and can help to reveal the "what, how and why" (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, the interviews were recorded to ensure correct quotations and transcripts. The collected data was analyzed by filtering the results of the online survey until only the complete and reliable responses were left. Afterwards, the charts and tables were critically analyzed to examine trends. Subsequently, the survey results were compared to the interview data concerning the purchase behavior to pinpoint similarities and deviations. Lastly, the collected results were confronted with selected theories and literature.

Communication Behavior

To research the communication behavior of customers, different methods were applied. Desk research was performed to establish an overview of the key concepts *channel usage* and *information processing* and to identify relevant literature and theories. Moreover, the online survey collected data about customer's preferred communication channels, their usage and perception of those channels and the customer's preferred kind of information. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews with existing customers gathered additional insights into the communication behavior. The data was analyzed through different steps. The online survey was scanned for relevant responses which were then analyzed with the help of the charts and tables. Afterwards, these results were compared to the interview findings and as a last step, confronted with theories and relevant literature.

Customer Characteristics

Customer characteristics were investigated by employing desk research, the online survey and semi-structured interviews with existing HierBeiDir customers and two experts on the development of buyer personas. Desk research served as a foundation of which customer characteristics would be worth examining and which theories would be suitable. The online survey and semi-structured interviews with HierBeiDir customers collected insights into *demographic* and *psychographic traits* and *attitudes* of customers. Likewise, semi-structured expert interviews provided information on how to develop buyer personas based on customer data and how to employ these personas in a communication strategy. The interviewees Norbert Schuster and C. M. were interviewed via telephone and Skype. Again, all interviews were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix 1.3 & 1.4). The survey results were analyzed first, afterwards compared to the interview findings and finally, confronted with literary and theoretical concepts.

3.7 Validity & Reliability

According to Saunders et al (2009) the reliability and validity of data depends on how it was collected. To create a sufficient degree of validity, the interview and survey questions were compared and adjusted to the research questions and research objective. This procedure was supposed to ensure that the research is measuring what it is supposed to measure. The design and structure of questions was also created so that the answers would deliver new and relevant information. Furthermore, before the survey was published, it was tested on a small group of people to guarantee the comprehensibility of all questions. To provide reliability, all interviewees were asked for the same information in multiple ways and thus, comparable results were collected. Moreover, the online survey was sent to over 270 people. However, to ensure the reliability of findings, only surveys that were filled out correctly and completely were analyzed, leaving a pool of 230 respondents. Furthermore, all interviews were recorded to guarantee accurate transcripts. Additionally, the recording enabled the interviewer to focus on the interview and the interviewees responses. Finally, the expertise of the interviewed specialists creates reliability. The experts were selected with regards to their knowledge. As the experts differ in their professions, it was possible to collect information from different knowledge backgrounds which further ads to the reliability of the collected data. While Norbert Schuster is a specialist for lead generation and persona development, C. M. possesses expertise in the field of communications marketing and entrepreneurship.

3.8 Limitations

Limitations are elements influencing a research and its findings (Saunders et al., 2009). Correspondingly, this assignment was also influenced by limitations.

The research was influenced by a time limitation to complete this project. The period from February until the end of May 2016 was determined by the Hanze University. Therefore, the collection of data through interviews and the survey was influenced by the limited amount of time available. Another limitation is that researchers have to make decisions regarding the scope of projects. For a campaign to increase awareness there are many worthwhile areas. However, due to constraints in time and resources the research had to be demarcated to the most suitable ones. As there was no funding available for this project, this further limited the feasible scope of this research. Further, the conducted interviews and findings might have been influenced by personal bias. The collection of qualitative data inherently includes personal opinions of interviewee and interviewer and consequently, the generated data might include subjective views. Finally, the online survey was distributed to a total of 270 respondents, but only 230 responses were adequate to use and it further, cannot be guaranteed that the survey reached HierBeiDir's best customers.

4. Research Findings

To give recommendations on how awareness can be increased by developing a communication strategy, extensive data was gathered. The findings were collected through interviews with HierBeiDir customers and marketing experts and through an online survey that generated 230 responses from existing and potential customers of HierBeiDir. The entire German survey can be found in Appendix 7. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative data is represented in the findings. The semi-structured interviews with customers were conducted with existing customers of HierBeiDir, namely with Carina Kraus Jurecz, Regina Ihl, Vivi-Ann Agena and Christopher Becker (see Appendix 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 & 1.8). These interviews produced insights into customer's online purchase and communication behaviors and customer characteristics. Furthermore, expert interviews were conducted with Norbert Schuster, a German expert for inbound marketing, buyer persona development and the CEO of the consulting agency strike 2, and with C. M., a marketing communications specialist to collect information about the development of buyer personas (see Appendix 1.3 & 1.4). Desk research was employed to substantiate the research results.

The analysis of the findings will follow the research questions and move from quantitative data to qualitative data.

Before diving into the results, a general remark should be made. The online survey was answered by a total of 230 respondents. Of these 230 participants **only 25** were familiar with HierBeiDir. This finding underlines the importance of a communication strategy to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir as the company is still unknown to the larger part of German consumers.

4.1 Findings: Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

Online consumer purchase behavior is relevant for the development of an awareness communication strategy for HierBeiDir. Following, relevant research findings will be reported to answer the first central research question.

HierBeiDir wants to guide customers towards their website and make them aware of their services. Thus, it is important to examine what defines and drives customer's online purchase behaviors. As this area has been demarcated into the three key concepts **motivation, decision making process** and **online shopping preferences** these findings will focus on their elaboration.

The online survey accumulated insights into customers purchase behaviors. Out of the 230 survey respondents, 59% purchase products online on a regular basis (Figure 8). This confirms, that there is a great demand and growing market for online shops.

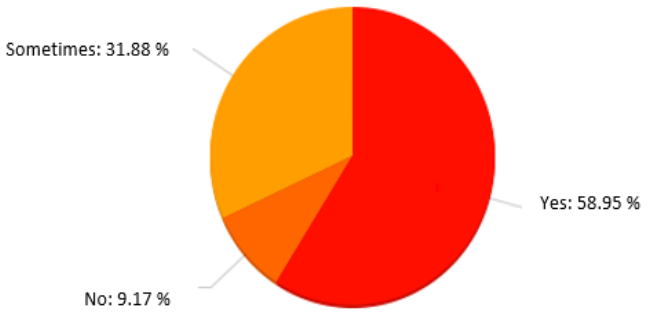


Figure 8: Online Survey: Do you shop online regularly?

4.1.1 Motivation

When respondents had to indicate their **motivation** to shop online, 65% specified that they were motivated by rational and goal-oriented aspects. Only 5% were motivated by emotional drivers. However, 30% declared that they were motivated by both aspects to the same degree. Thus, it can be examined that emotional incentives alone, do not suffice to drive customers towards an online shop and thus, are not sufficient in creating awareness. Instead, rational encouragement is needed, either in combination with emotional enticements or on its own.

Figure 9: Online Survey: What motivates you to purchase online?

Similarly, 75% consider shopping to be a task that needs to be completed. When participants were asked which factors influenced their purchase motivations, the majority named convenience, efficiency and easy accessibility. Consequently, awareness could be increased by attending to these influences. Factors with the lowest degree of influence were diversion, social factors and atmosphere.

The review of literature produced similar findings. According to Zhou et al. (2007) most online shoppers are task-oriented and try to reach their objectives with minimum irritation. Moreover, experienced Internet users, usually go online for task-specific incentives, whereas experiential users are attracted to appealing online environments (Zhou et al., 2007).

Similar data was collected during the customer interviews. All interviewees argued that the biggest motivation to shop online is the ability to save time, the convenience and the easy accessibility. As one interviewee, Vivi-Ann Agena, put it, online shopping allows her to “shop at [her] own time and speed”, (personal communication, 2016).

The research sub-question "*which motivation stimulates online purchases according to HierBeiDir customer, literature and experts*?" can now be answered. In regards to customer **motivation** the majority of customers is driven to purchase online by enticements such as convenience, comfort and accessibility. It is thus, vital to provide customers with these drivers to make them aware of HierBeiDir. Consequently, most customers have a utilitarian perspective with which they approach their online purchase endeavors. The supply of rational and goal-oriented incentives will hence, be important for the development of a communication strategy to increase awareness. By providing customers with information that appeals to their motivational cues, promotional messages are more likely to be noticed by customers and thus, increase their awareness of HierBeiDir.

4.1.2 Decision Making Process

The **decision making process** also influences online purchase behavior of customers. To develop a suitable awareness strategy, one needs to investigate how customer's decisions are made, to craft messages that contain relevant contents to create awareness for HierBeiDir's offer.

When asked which aspects hold the greatest influence over their online decisions, most respondents reported that product price, recommendations from others and product reviews were most relevant to them. The least influence was attributed to visual aspects of both the product and its promotion.

A similar result was obtained, when respondents that already purchased something from HierBeiDir's website, were asked to rank which aspects affected their decision the most. The majority (58%) declared that they pay most attention to recommendations from others and customer reviews (Figure 10). Therefore, opinions of others are important contents that trigger the attention of customers and could be used to direct their awareness towards HierBeiDir.

	1.		2.		3.			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Mundpropaganda, Kundenempf...	10x	58,82	6x	35,29	1x	5,88	1,47	0,62
Vorherige Erfahrungen mit der ...	4x	23,53	8x	47,06	5x	29,41	2,06	0,75
Werbung, Preise, Firmenmarke, ...	3x	17,65	3x	17,65	11x	64,71	2,47	0,80

Figure 10: Online Survey: If you already purchased something at HierBeiDir, please rank to which degree these aspects influenced your decision.

Additionally, most interviewees remarked that their online purchases were not planned. Instead of engaging in product research, the interviewees preferred to just browse the Internet for appealing products (Agena, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication, 2016). Therefore, the customer's decision making process is rather short and influenced by spontaneous and on site appeals. This

indicates that the customer's involvement is low and they engage in little information search beforehand. Consequently, to increase awareness, information about HierBeiDir must be easily accessible and continuously presented to the customer to guide him towards HierBeiDir.

All interviewees were asked which product information would be decisive for their purchase decisions. Again, the interviews mirror the results of the online survey. According to Agena, Becker, Ihl and Kraus Jurecz (personal communication, 2016) recommendations from others and important product aspects such as the price, the provider and product features were most relevant. When asked why, Agena countered that customer reviews were decisive for her decision making as they provide her "with a more realistic assessment of the product", (personal communication, 2016). All participants stated that they consult friends, family and online product reviews. These results suggest that peer recommendations and word-of-mouth constitute an important platform to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir.

These findings answer the research sub-question "*which aspects of the influence mix impact decision making according to HierBeiDir customers?"* The survey and customer interviews suggest that the **decision making process** is mostly influenced by recommendations from others and marketing messages such as price and product provider. Consequently, customers attach great importance to the availability of these criterions. To guide customers to HierBeiDir and increase their awareness it is thus, crucial to appeal to these concepts as they impact customer's behavior. By including user reviews and relevant marketing messages in communication, customers become more attentive to its contents and thus, awareness can be increased. Moreover, due to customer's low involvement their search efforts are limited. Therefore, to raise awareness, data about HierBeiDir should be repeated and easily presented to the customer, without the customer having to engage in extensive research.

4.1.3 Online Shopping Preferences

The last concept is **online shopping preferences**. What customers expect from an online shopping experience is important for HierBeiDir as this knowledge can guide measures to attract customers and it indicates which promotional measures can increase awareness.

Survey respondents were asked to express what preferences they have when shopping online. Out of 230 answers the most common preferences were those of easy accessibility, quick navigation, a fast delivery, appealing product descriptions and safe payment options. Interestingly, the majority of participants remarked that they put high value on the option to consult and create customer reviews, as these would often influence their purchasing behavior. Likewise, the online survey also requested

respondents to categorize the level of satisfaction created by different online shop characteristics as either low, averagely satisfying or exceeding their expectations. The results suggested that a safe delivery and the availability of product information create low satisfaction and therefore, do not constitute online shopping preferences. A moderate degree of satisfaction is created by an appealing website design, a wide-ranging product portfolio and accessibility via different devices. Therefore, these aspects represent online customer preferences, however the satisfaction generated by these might not suffice to attract new customers and increase their awareness.

Regarding which elements would exceed expectations, the majority answered price reductions, a multitude of safe payment options as well as individualized product recommendations. Similarly, literature by Zhou et al. (2007) states that specialized product information and price bargains help bonding with customers and guiding them towards services. Promoting these variables would benefit HierBeiDir's communication as these services attract customer's attention and increase their awareness.

The question "*which preferences create successful online shopping experiences as reported by literature and customers?"* can now be answered. As most survey participants reported, successful online shopping experiences include appealing product descriptions, safe payment options, rewards for existing customers and personalized product recommendations and customer reviews. The provision and promotion of these options could support the increase of customer's awareness of HierBeiDir.

As the sub-questions have been answered, the **central research question** *"what criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's online purchase behavior according to opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and literature?"* can be resolved. Customer interviews, literature and the survey confirmed that **motivation, decision making process** and **online shopping preferences** exert influence on customer's online purchase behaviors and thus, affect an awareness strategy. Concerning motivation, the majority of customers is influenced by rational incentives and thus, is driven by a utilitarian force of motivation. For HierBeiDir to increase awareness, it is important to appeal to the rational motivation of its customers. Customer's decision making process is short as most customers do not engage in research before buying products. Thus, awareness could be increased by confronting customers with easily accessible promotional contents. The purchase decision itself is mostly affected by recommendations and reviews of others and by marketing messages such as product price and benefits. Therefore, HierBeiDir should refer to these variables in an awareness campaign. Similarly, to meet customer's online shopping preferences

product reviews, safe payment options and customer rewards should be provided and promoted within a communication strategy as they strongly appeal to customers.

4.2 Findings: Communication Behavior

The research results for the area of communication behavior will be reported to answer the central research question.

Since this research area has been demarcated into the key concepts of **channel usage and information processing** the following research results will focus on their elaboration.

4.2.1 Channel Usage

Customer's **channel usage** is important for a communication strategy as it dictates which channels are most efficient for information dissemination and increasing awareness.

Most respondents stated that their favorite offline publications are local newspapers. Regarding the collection of product information, the majority of participants favored search engines, advice from friends and family and company websites.

Most importantly, when respondents were asked whether they prefer online or offline communication channels, 57% argued that they would favor a combination of both channels (Figure 11). 33% declared they prefer online channels and only 10% favored offline channels.

Figure 11: Online Survey: Do you prefer online or offline communication channels?

Similarly, all interviewees expressed that they prefer online channels (Agena, Becker, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication, 2016). Consequently, these findings suggest that a communication strategy purely based on offline channels would not conform to the customer's communication style. Thus, an increase of awareness cannot be achieved by relying exclusively on offline media. Rather, for HierBeiDir's communication to reach customers and stimulate their awareness, a combination of online and offline media is needed.

Furthermore, the survey required participants to name the online channels they use most for collecting product information. With 213 out of 230 respondents, the search engine Google was the most used channel. With 129 out of 230 responses company websites, and with 111 out of 230 Facebook were

the second and third most popular online channels. Similarly, the respondents declared that the channels they have the most experience with are Google, Facebook and company websites.

Another important finding, especially regarding the increase of awareness, is that most customers prefer to receive promotions from companies via the company website, social media, newsletters or search engines (Figure 12).

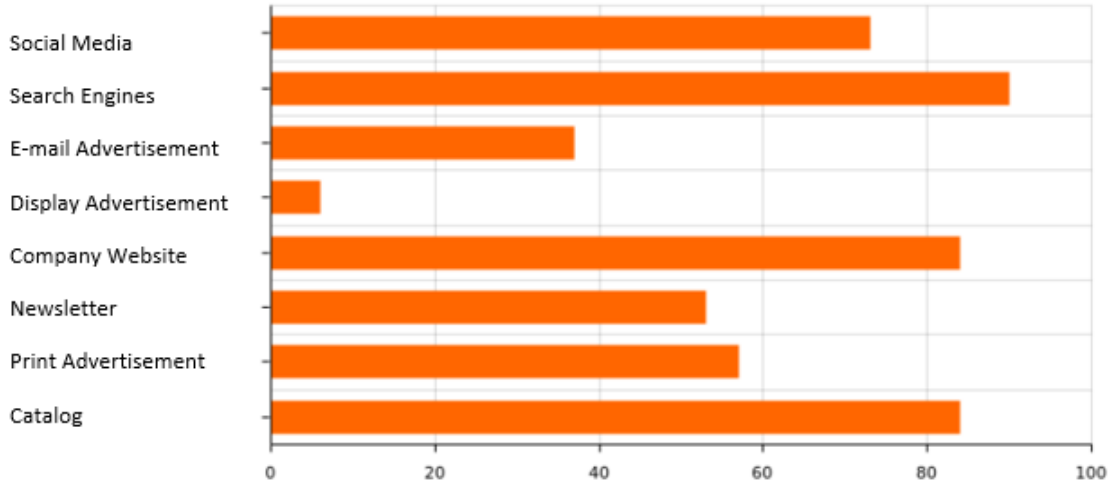


Figure 12: Online Survey: Via which channels would you prefer to receive promotional information from companies? Multiple answers are possible.

During the interviews, HierBeiDir customers stated that promotional information in the form of product reviews would be appreciated, (Agena & Ihl, personal communication, 2016). Agena stated that social media such as Instagram are also very important in her communication with companies. Seeing pictures of her favorite brands would catch her attention faster than written messages (personal communication, 2016). When placing promotional messages to raise awareness, HierBeiDir should consider these channel preferences.

Concerning message content, all interviewees explained that they like information that is more personalized. Including individual product recommendations and customer stories increases customer's level of interest in the message content (Agena, Becker, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication, 2016).

Regarding customer's perception of HierBeiDir's current communication channels, the interviews generated important remarks. All interviewees stay informed about HierBeiDir by checking their company website and social media. However, there appears to be a lack of promotion for the company blog as the interviewees Agena and Becker were not familiar with its existence (personal communication, 2016). Kraus Jurecz emphasized that she used to appreciate the HierBeiDir

newsletters but she explained that there have not been any new ones (personal communication, 2016).

When interviewees and survey participants were asked how they first became aware of HierBeiDir the majority declared that they learned about them via mouth-to-mouth propaganda and recommendations from others (Figure 13). This signals that HierBeiDir's current promotion is not increasing the awareness of consumers as most new customers are introduced to HierBeiDir by already existing customers. These results further pinpoint mouth-to-mouth propaganda as an important communication channel for changing the level of awareness.

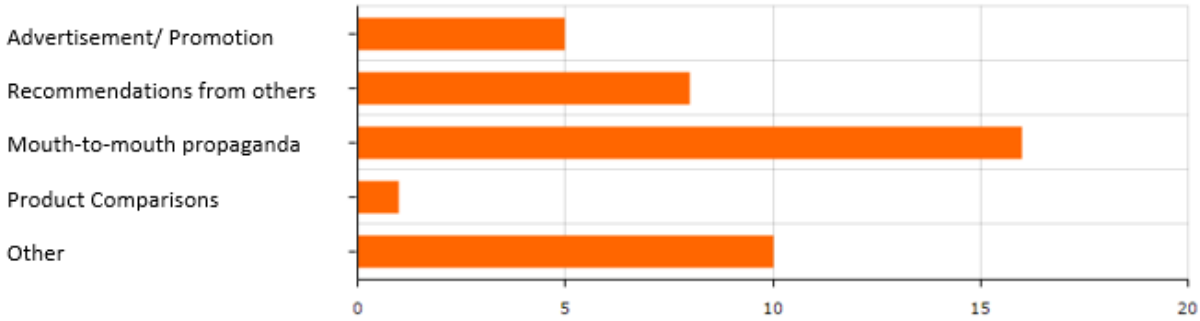


Figure 13: Online Survey: How did you first become aware of HierBeiDir?

These findings answer the research sub-question "*what is the perception and usage of communication channels according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?"* As most customers stated that they either prefer online communication channels or a combination of both online and offline, it can be concluded that offline channels alone, would not be sufficient for an awareness strategy. Therefore, HierBeiDir should use a combination of both channels while putting special emphasis on the usage of online communication channels. Furthermore, the results indicate that company websites, search engines and social media are customer's preferred media to receive promotional information since customers have the most experience with these channels. Additionally, the current perception of HierBeiDir's communication channels could be improved as some customers were not aware of their existence and promotional activities appear to not reach many customers.

4.2.2 Information Processing

Furthermore, the concept of **information processing** has been researched. Survey participants were asked to specify what they pay most attention to when processing promotional information. 58% stated that they primarily regard facts such as product price and brand name. Only 12% remember

emotions created by an advertisement and 30% remember the visual design of promotional material (Figure 14).

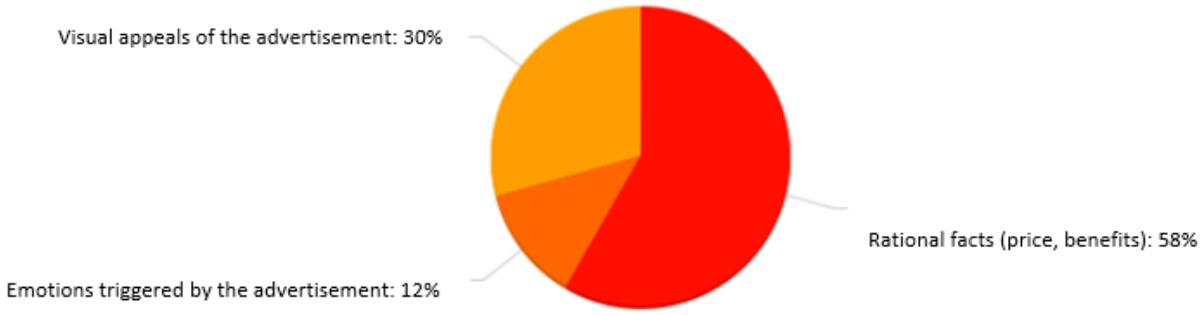


Figure 14: Online Survey: Which aspects of advertisement do you pay most attention to?

Thus, most customers pay attention to facts and process information by relying on rational cues in promotions. Additionally, the survey demonstrated that customers value the level of personal involvement regarding advertising. The higher the involvement and the more rational cues are included in an advertisement, the more attention customers pay to it. Consequently, awareness can more easily be evoked through the message. Similarly, when respondents were asked to indicate which promotional aspects were most important to them, the bulk reported that concrete facts such as product benefits, price and delivery are most relevant when processing information.

Another question required participants to choose which advertisement would create more awareness: an advertisement that provides user reviews, product descriptions and logical information or an advertisement that creates an enjoyable shopping experience, incorporates appealing visuals and stimulates excitement around products. 82% of respondents selected the first advertisement, providing factual information. The interviewees echoed the view that rational facts are important for information processing, (Agena, Becker, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication). These results indicate that a campaign featuring rational and factual contents would be suitable for the increase of awareness.

The research sub-question *"which is the preferred route for information processing according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?"* can now be answered. The results indicate that information processing is primarily done via the central route. Thus, providing rational cues such as price, benefits and product delivery within advertisements is important, as customers pay most attention to these aspects. An awareness campaign should include a multitude of these cues to be relevant to its audiences. HierBeiDir should consider these aspects in their advertising and adjust it to

customer's information processing preferences to evoke a higher brand awareness with their communication.

Concerning the answer to the **central research question** "*what criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's communication behavior based on opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and literature?"* the findings indicate relevant criteria. The **channel usage** of customers heavily shapes their communication behavior. The interviews and the survey revealed that customers can best be reached by employing a combination of both online and offline channels. The focus should be on company websites, search engines and social media. Regarding offline channels, customer stated that they prefer local newspapers articles. Furthermore, many people first became aware of HierBeiDir by being referred to the company by existing customers. Therefore, mouth-to-mouth promotion should be further encouraged. The second criteria determining customer communication behavior is **information processing**. The research indicated that most customers rely on rational cues and are mostly interested in these. Thus, to create relevant communication messages and increase awareness, rational facts such as product price and benefits are of great importance.

4.3 Findings: Customer Characteristics

This chapter discusses findings regarding customer characteristics. To create a clear profile of the customer, whose awareness should be increased, a buyer persona will be developed on the basis of these research results. Important characteristics that have been examined are customer **demographics, psychographics** and **attitudes.**

4.3.1 Buyer Personas

Before reporting on the findings, it is first important to establish an understanding of what buyer personas are. Expert interviews have been conducted with Norbert Schuster, CEO of the consulting agency strike2, and C. M., a specialist for marketing, communication and entrepreneurship.

According to C. M. buyer personas "are visualizations of the people you want as your target. They are representations based on detailed research and embody a picture of what the customer looks like", (personal communication, 2016). Similarly, Schuster explained that personas represent leads which are most fitting for your company (personal communication, 2016). The development of buyer

personas can thus, benefit awareness as they are able to create content that is more customer-oriented and tailored towards the actual needs of customers. Especially the design of a communication strategy can benefit from personas as they give a clear indication of who a company wants to communicate with and therefore, reduce the "waste" of communication (C. M., personal communication, 2016).

A buyer persona development has to be grounded on solid research of potential and existing customers of a company. After sufficient information has been collected, it can be utilized to create customer profiles. These profiles should include demographics as age gender, education and income and psychographics such as lifestyle, preferences, communication style and purchase patterns (Schuster, personal communication, 2016).

Regarding the number of buyer personas, the experts remarked that the choice depends on the company. For a startup of HierBeiDir's size, it would be advisable to first concentrate on one persona which represents their ideal customer and who would be easiest to engage (Schuster, personal communication, 2016).

Once a persona is created, it should be incorporated into all communication efforts. According to Schuster and C. M., company employees should be briefed about the persona's characteristics and advertising and communication strategies should be aligned to the characteristics of the persona (personal communication, 2016).

Consequently, an awareness strategy can benefit from a buyer persona, as it gives indications about preferences, interests and habits. By appealing to these characteristics an awareness campaign can be adapted to customer's needs and will thus, be more effective.

4.3.2 Demographics

Understanding customer's **demographics** is important for the development of buyer personas and subsequently, the construction of a communication strategy. Out of 230 survey respondents 65% were female and 35% were male. With 40% most respondents belonged to the age group between 18 and 25. The second biggest age group was the one of people between 45 and 55 and the third biggest group was those of 25 to 30 year olds. The majority of participants had a good education as 30% were Bachelor graduates. As many respondents were students, 25% did not yet have a regular income, however 21% of the respondents earned a yearly income between 30.000 and 45.000 Euros.

When only examining the data generated by the 25 already existing customers of HierBeiDir the demographic results are similar. 72% of customers were female and likewise, 72% belonged to the age

group between 18 to 25 year olds. 24% were between 25 and 30 years. Similarly, to the potential customers the highest education on average is the Bachelor degree with a percentage of 56. The most common occupation of existing customer respondents was student and therefore, 60% of the participants do not have a regular income yet.

During the customer interviews, this trend was reconfirmed. Three out of four interviewees are female and both Agena and Ihl belong to the age group of 18 to 25 years, whereas Becker was 29. Most have completed a Bachelor degree and are now working. The third interviewee Kraus Jurecz also belonged to one of the largest age groups of HierBeiDir: 45 to 55 years. As a kindergarten teacher her yearly income lies between 11.000 and 20.000 Euros.

These demographics are important for developing a suitable buyer persona. Both experts, Schuster and C. M. argued that demographic characteristics are vital for the construction of a buyer persona as they help to create a clearer picture of the company's ideal lead (personal communication, 2016).

Furthermore, culture also plays a role for the development of a buyer persona. Germany is a very masculine and individualistic country (What about Germany, n.d.). According to Zhou et al. (2007) customers from individualistic cultures are more prone to purchase products online. Similarly, male societies are often more involved in e-commerce. This further emphasizes the customer's preference towards online shopping.

The research sub-question *"which demographic traits define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?"* can now be answered. The research suggests that the most common HierBeiDir customer is female, between the ages of 18 and 30, has completed a Bachelor degree and possesses a limited yearly budget. It is crucial to consider these customer qualities when designing the buyer persona and measures to increase their awareness.

4.3.3 Psychographics

Furthermore, the **psychographics** of customers are important. To succeed in increasing awareness, knowledge about customer's characteristics is needed. According to the persona experts, important aspects are customer's lifestyle, opinions, traits and purchase behaviors (C. M. & Schuster, personal communication, 2016). Survey respondents were required to select traits that would best describe their way of life, opinions and character. The statements that were chosen to be most fitting by the majority of respondents were:

- I care about my environment
- I am down to earth

- I am ambitious
- I am family-oriented
- I am communicative
- I am reliable

These qualities indicate a lot about the lifestyle and character of customers. The chosen traits are important since they reflect how customers view themselves. This information is important as it can determine how to approach these people. Moreover, the interviewed customers stated that they liked to be outdoors, do sports and spend time with their friends and family (Agena, Becker, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication, 2016). A typical day was described as starting off with going to work in the morning, coming home in the late evening, doing some sport and then relaxing at home by either watching television or browsing the Internet. This information aids the development of a buyer persona as it points out how the customer's daily routine is organized and where possible touchpoints with HierBeiDir could be created to raise awareness.

Additionally, the interviewees were requested to name challenges that they are facing daily. Since all of the respondents are employed, a struggle was to find time in their busy schedule to do their shopping. Kraus Jurecz commented that she is often busy during the entire day and once she gets home, she feels too tired to leave the house again to go shopping. Therefore, she prefers to do most of her shopping online to save time and effort (personal communication, 2016). Similarly, Agena revealed that she tries to avoid overflowing shopping malls in her free time and instead often browses the Internet after work to purchase products (personal communication, 2016). These challenges represent touchpoints for HierBeiDir to increase awareness by offering customers a solution to these obstacles.

These results corroborate the ideas of Dutta-Bergman (2002), who suggested that psychographics are essential for developing audience profiles as opinions, interests and hobbies shape customer behavior and thereby, influence their reactions to communication measures.

Based on these findings the research sub-question "*which psychographic traits define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?*" can be answered. The lifestyle, purchase behavior and daily challenges of customers are defining them and thus, influencing their behavior and the way HierBeiDir should communicate with them. The results showed that the customer's most important characteristics are that they like to communicate, care about their environment and consider themselves to be family-oriented and dependable. Further, the customers appear to be hard-working and are thus, facing the challenge of combining their free time and work.

As a consequence, they prefer to purchase products online as it saves time and energy. Incorporating these traits will help to increase awareness since they indicate possible touchpoints and areas of interest with customers.

4.3.4 Customer Attitudes

The next concept are **customer attitudes**. As described in the theoretical framework, this concept refers to customer's opinions about sustainability. Since HierBeiDir offers customers the service to deliver products sustainably by either using DHL GoGreen or hiring a bike messenger, it is necessary to examine if their customers are interested in such an option and if this service could help to raise awareness.

Accordingly, survey respondents were asked to specify whether or not they pay attention to environment-friendliness when purchasing a product. 60% expressed they would sometimes consider the product's sustainability and 22% said they pay attention to it (Figure 15). When asked whether or not they consider it important that companies engage in their social responsibilities and care for the environment the clear majority (70%) answered with yes. These results indicate that customers care about a company's commitment to sustainability.

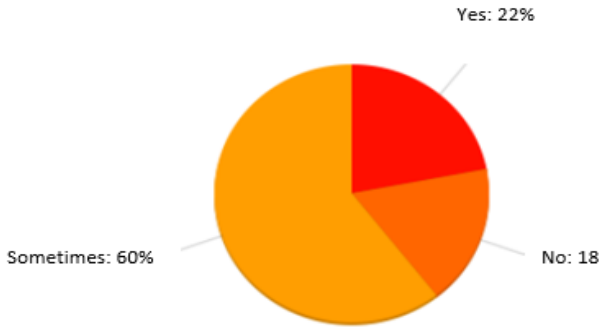


Figure 15: Online Survey: Do you pay attention to whether or not a product is sustainable?

Further, it can be remarked that regarding their personal rate of adoption to sustainable innovations, most customers (51%) indicated that they wait until they can read customer reviews before adopting to something themselves. This again underlines the importance of recommendations and customer reviews for awareness.

Similarly, all interviewees explained that they consider acting sustainably to become increasingly important. When asked whether HierBeiDir should promote their sustainable service more to customers, all respondents strongly agreed. The company's sustainable delivery could help to increase awareness as HierBeiDir helps to care for the environment and simultaneously manages not to be more expensive than its competitors, giving them an advantage (Ihl, personal communication, 2016). Likewise, Kraus Jurecz argued that the eco-friendly delivery only adds to the enjoyable HierBeiDir

shopping experience as you feel good about your purchases afterwards (personal communication, 2016). Therefore, the promotion of this service could assist the awareness increase.

The research sub-question "*what is the attitude of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers towards sustainability according to customer's opinions*?" can now be answered. Survey and the customer interviews demonstrated that sustainability is becoming increasingly important and its awareness is rising. The majority of customers stated that they value the social responsibility of companies and that they prefer to receive sustainable services. Many customers even recognized HierBeiDir's sustainable approach and delivery as a competitive advantage. Therefore, it is important for HierBeiDir to further promote their environmentally-friendly services and appeal to customer's interest to increase awareness.

4.3.5 Brand Archetype

Concluding, the findings regarding the appropriate brand archetype for HierBeiDir can be described. A brand archetype represents the characteristics that audiences ascribe to a brand or company. By selecting a fitting profile, HierBeiDir can use individualized storytelling to connect to customers and increase their level of awareness.

Based on desk research, three brand archetypes that most resemble HierBeiDir were selected. The profiles are the archetype of the creator, the protector and the regular guy. Presenting these profiles to the customer interviewees, three out of four selected the creator to be most fitting for HierBeiDir (Agena, Ihl & Kraus Jurecz, personal communication, 2016). This profile includes the following characteristics:

- Creative, artistic, visionary, inspiring
- Focus on portrayal of self-image
- Do-it-yourself orientation

Based on these findings the research sub-question "*which brand archetype can be ascribed to HierBeiDir to create effective storytelling based on customer's opinions and literature?*" can be answered. According to the interviewees' perceptions, the brand archetype most fitting to HierBeiDir is the creator. It is important to keep the characteristics of this archetype in mind when developing a communication strategy since the way customers perceive a company's character influences how they

want to communicate with them. By adjusting HierBeiDir's storytelling to the creator, awareness can be raised and a connection with customers can be build.

The **central research question** "*what criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, are relevant for creating suitable buyer personas and increasing awareness according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts in the field?*" can now be approached. For the creation of an effective buyer persona, **demographics** are essential. The research demonstrated that the average customer is female, between the ages of 18 and 30, has at least completed a Bachelor degree and does not yet have a very high yearly income. Regarding **psychographics** a customer persona should be communicative, dependable and should care about their environment. Daily challenges that affect customers is the struggle of combining work and personal life. The customer's purchase patterns are defined by wanting to save time and energy and therefore, doing a lot of shopping online. Research about **attitude's** showed that most customers are interested in sustainability. Lastly, customers perceive HierBeiDir to be creative, visionary and artistic and thus, the creator **brand archetype** is most fitting for the startup. Adjusting HierBeiDir's communication and storytelling accordingly will help to create awareness. Concluding, these customer characteristics should be considered because they provide implications for the creation of HierBeiDir's buyer persona and awareness strategy.

5. Discussion

This chapter confronts the research with the theoretical concepts. Furthermore, the resulting outcomes will be discussed and implications for the development of a communication strategy will be drawn.

5.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) distinguished between two shopping **motivations**: utilitarian and hedonic. While utilitarian motivation is driven by rational incentives, hedonic shopping motivation is shaped by experiential factors.

The survey reported that most respondents are motivated by goal-oriented cues and consider shopping to be a task. As the theory states, these drives belong to utilitarian motivation. Consequently, the success and satisfaction of this activity depends on whether or not it can be completed. According to Childers et al. (2001) a utilitarian buyer can be facilitated by providing product information, supplying options to compare products and minimizing the effort needed for the product search. Thus, by ascertaining that the buyer's process is simple, the utilitarian motivation to visit HierBeiDir's online store can be uphold.

As utilitarian shopping motivation is influenced by goal-oriented incentives, these variables should be provided to customers in HierBeiDir's communication. Survey participants argued that their motivations are affected by convenience, efficiency and easy accessibility. These results mirror the theory since "in the utilitarian view, consumers are concerned with purchasing products in an efficient and timely manner to achieve their goals with a minimum of irritation", (Childers et al., 2001). Resulting, HierBeiDir should attend to rational needs to raise their customer's awareness.

Since the current awareness of HierBeiDir is low, the startup should cater to customer's motivations to get their attention. Ergo, HierBeiDir should recognize the importance of motivation to create awareness.

Customer's **decision making process** can be explained with the influence mix by Rosen and Simonson (2014). This model states that purchase decisions are either influenced by past experiences, marketing messages or by input from others.

Confronting this model with the research findings, it can be deduced that the most relevant aspect of the influence mix is the third: input from others. As most respondents remarked that they are heavily influenced by customer reviews and recommendations from others, this further underlines their relevance for customer's behaviors. Hence, customers will pay special attention to review websites, social media and product evaluations and recommendations (Rosen & Simonson, 2014). Customers use this information to get reassurance from other real-life examples. These customers learn from their peers' experiences with a product. Thus, HierBeiDir should provide sources of information where customers can satisfy their knowledge needs and receive adequate input from others as this will help to raise awareness.

Additionally, the research demonstrated that marketing messages have the second biggest influence on customers. Therefore, variables such as product information, advertising and product price are also important to communicate to customers (Rosen & Simonson, 2014).

As these aspects constitute customer's influence mix, HierBeiDir should attend to both to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir. Hence, the availability of recommendations, customer reviews and product and brand information is important for the development of an awareness communication strategy.

Following, **online shopping preferences** will be confronted with the theoretical concepts. The research indicated that for an online shopping experience to be satisfactory, easy accessibility, appealing product descriptions, safe payment options and a quick website navigation need to be provided. Customers remarked that the availability of product and customer reviews is a priority. This result further highlights the customer's focus on their peer's opinions.

These findings corroborate the ideas of Sauerwein et al. (1996) which divided customer preferences into basic needs, performance needs and delighters. The majority of customers ranked the above listed aspects as exceeding their expectations regarding their level of satisfaction. According to the Kano model, this would categorize the variables as delighters (1996). Consequently, these attributes are not expected, however, when offered result in high customer satisfaction (Sauerwein et al., 1996). Therefore, HierBeiDir should strive to meet these preferences and advertise them to increase customer's awareness.

Furthermore, the research implied that a safe delivery and the availability of product information only generate a low degree of customer satisfaction. Thus, these variables can be identified as basic needs. The sole provision of these aspects will not increase customer satisfaction or awareness as their presence is taken for granted (Sauerwein et al., 1996).

5.2 Communication Behavior

The findings about customer's communication behavior have implications for the development of a communication strategy to increase HierBeiDir's awareness.

According to Daft and Lengel (1986) customers **channel usage** depends on the degree of richness attached to that channel. Different channels can thus, be placed on a continuum, going from the richest to the leanest one. The channel with the highest degree of richness is the channel customers attached most importance to and have the most experience with. As the online survey demonstrated, most customers prefer a combination of both online and offline channels (57%). Therefore, the richness customers attribute to online and offline channels will be considered.

Regarding online channels, customers consider Google, company websites and Facebook the richest (Figure 16). Online blogs and Instagram possess an average amount of richness, while Bing, Yahoo and Twitter represent the leanest channels. Consequently, the richest channels are the ones that provide the best opportunity for HierBeiDir to reach their customer and increase their awareness. The leanest channels are not suitable for the distribution of marketing messages as customers have a low usage level. Thus, Bing, Yahoo and Twitter do not facilitate the creation of awareness.

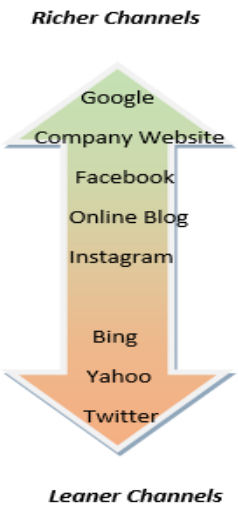


Figure 16: Online Channel Richness

Similarly, a continuum for offline channels has been created. The offline channels with the highest degree of richness are local newspapers, peer conversations and television (Figure 17). Brochures and posters are given an average level or richness, while radio and telephone are positioned at the end of the continuum. This indicates that the best offline channels for HierBeiDir to increase their awareness would be local newspapers, peer conversations as well as television.

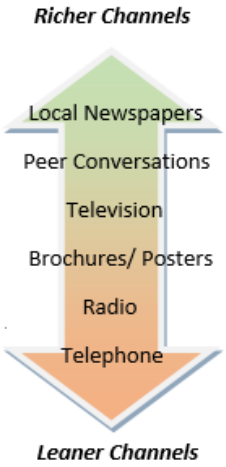


Figure 17: Offline Channel Richness

These findings are in accord with Carlson and Zmud's Channel Expansion Theory (1999) as the channels that are considered to be the richest also are the ones the customers have the most experience with. The more an individual uses a channel the higher the perception of the media. Moreover, as the usage increases, so does the ability to encode and decode messages.

These findings suggest that the best combination of online and offline channels for HierBeiDir's awareness strategy would include: Google, the company website, Facebook, online blogs, Instagram as well as local newspapers, peer conversations and television.

Desk research also matched these results. According to D'Urso and Rains (2008) it is essential to not only create one channel to communicate with customers. Rather multiple channels have to be created to increase customer's awareness since "multi-channels using both offline and online may interact to create the best outcome in supporting each channel", (D'Urso & Rains, 2008).

Consequently, HierBeiDir should combine these channels in an integrated strategy. Naik and Raman (2003) define Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) as the synergetic interaction of different channels, which combines the effect of different communication activities and thereby, exceeds their individual effectiveness. By combining the most suitable online and offline channels, HierBeiDir could thus, increase the effectiveness of their awareness campaign.

To spread HierBeiDir's promotion and to thereby, create awareness, an integrated campaign needs to fulfill several prerequisites. All channels have to provide customers with the same brand messages to ensure consistency (Ireland, 2002). Furthermore, HierBeiDir should not steer customers towards one channel, but let them interact where they prefer. Moreover, awareness can be increased, if each channel is employed according to its strengths. Lastly, channels should be unified to provide a seamless communication (Ireland, 2002).

As customers are not yet aware of HierBeiDir and their communication channels, it is important to consider the described requirements and to employ an integrated approach to reach customers and to create a consistent brand image.

Furthermore, the research regarding **information processing** can now be confronted with the theory. According to Settle et al. (1971) through information processing customers manage messages and thereby, develop an acceptance or rejection of a brand's communication. Understanding how customer process information is therefore, important to frame an effective awareness campaign.

The Elaboration Likelihood model provides indications for customer's information processing. The model argues that attitude formation is achieved via two routes: Either individuals use the central route and cognitively elaborate on message contents, or individuals engage in the peripheral route which resembles a mental short-cut and relies on emotional cues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

When survey respondents were asked which message contents they pay most attention to, 58% chose rational cues. This suggests that most customers cognitively elaborate logical facts and therefore,

embark on the central route to process information. This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that customers attribute importance to their level of personal involvement with a product when contemplating promotions. According to Cho (1999) a high level of personal involvement indicates a high degree of motivation, which in turn increases the likelihood of someone taking the central route to process information.

The theory continues that if an individual takes the central route, the accomplished attitude formation can be enduring and resistant to change (Cho, 1999). A condition for the central processing however, is the availability of rational cues. As customers will scrutinize given information HierBeiDir should secure the provision of credible and relevant content.

These insights can also be related to computer-mediated communication. Cho (1999) argues that individuals deliberately process messages if they have a positive attitude towards Internet advertising and the used online medium. As the survey showed, customers prefer receiving promotion via the Internet. Thus, by placing promotion on customer's preferred online channels, the likelihood of customers deliberating the message can be increased.

The research of Di Blasio and Milani (2008) demonstrated that communication via computers triggers the central route more quickly than face-to-face conversations do. Since online communication does not provide the same multitude of peripheral cues as personal communication does, individuals are more prone to use the central route when processing online information. As peripheral cues such as non-verbal stimuli and contextual distractions are not present, it allows for a more deliberate message processing via the central route (Di Blasio & Milani, 2008).

Most customers are not aware of HierBeiDir and have not yet formed an attitude about them. Thus, a communication strategy should focus on supporting the central route. By providing cues relevant for customer's information processing, HierBeiDir can guide their attitude formation and increase customer's acceptance and awareness of company messages.

The Social Judgment Theory created by Sherif as explained by Dainton and Zelley (2005) also supports these results. The theory argues that an individuals' attitude towards a subject provides indications on how they process promotional messages. Every person evaluates message contents based on their opinion on a particular matter. These positions fall into one of three categories: the latitude of acceptance, which contains ideas an individual accepts, the latitude of rejection, which involves ideas a person rejects or the latitude of non-commitment, which represents ideas an individual feels neutral about (Dainton & Zelley, 2005).

Consequently, customers' responses towards promotional contents depend on their stance regarding the topic. Similarly, a customer's reaction to a message depends on the level of ego involvement connected to the topic (Dainton & Zelley, 2005). Hence, a person that is highly involved in a topic will have a large latitude of rejection, making it difficult for messages to fall into their latitude of acceptance. Likewise, their latitude of non-commitment will be smaller. The closer a message falls towards a person's latitude of acceptance, the easier the new idea will be considered as acceptable. Therefore, it can be argued that one way to achieve an increase of awareness and lasting attitude formation is to construct messages that fall within the latitude of non-commitment and are close to topics positioned in the latitude of acceptance.

Since many customers are not aware of HierBeiDir, most of the company related messages will fall into people's latitude of non-commitment. It would therefore, be advisable that a communication strategy connects these contents with ideas that fall under or close to customer's latitude of acceptance. By combining the neutral HierBeiDir messages with topics that customers already agree with, such as the multiple benefits of online shopping or the importance of sustainability, customers will be more likely to accept HierBeiDir's messages. The application of the theory could hence, be beneficial for increasing customer's awareness of HierBeiDir.

5.3 Customer Characteristics

Customer characteristics were examined with regards to their **attitudes**. The findings can be confronted with Rogers' theory concerning the Adoption of Innovation. This model argues that customers usually belong to one of five groups when it comes to their attitudes and behavior towards innovation (Rogers, 2003):

- Innovators: the first individuals willing to take the risk of testing something new and unfamiliar
- Early adopters: more discreet in choices than innovators, possess a high level of opinion leadership
- Early majority: adopt after innovators and early adopters but before late majority
- Late majority: adopt to innovations after the average population, wait for reviews from others
- Laggards: Last to adopt, more focused on keeping traditions

In the online survey, 51% of customers belonged to the fourth group: the late majority. Respondents stated that they do not test or adopt innovations until they have the chance to review a sufficient

amount of customer reviews. Therefore, these customers orientate themselves and build their awareness of an innovation with the help of opinion leaders and recommendations from others (Rogers, 2003). For HierBeiDir this indicates, that customers place importance on the behavior and opinions of their peers. Thus, a communication strategy to increase awareness should incorporate the exchange between customers. Thereby, HierBeiDir could promote their company innovations such as their sustainable delivery service and their focus on local retailers.

Moreover, these results corroborate those obtained by Park and Kim (2008). While studying online consumers the authors found a connection between consumer awareness, the rate of adoption and online consumer reviews. Their findings suggest that companies should provide product information for customers with different levels of expertise with a certain innovation. Likewise, online reviews should contain the relevant information that customers are seeking. Considering that most customers are not aware of HierBeiDir, this means that reviews are all the more important (Park & Kim, 2008). As customer's awareness and knowledge level of HierBeiDir is low, reviews should provide information that centers on the company's benefits and services for potential and existing customers. Naturally, the content of online reviews cannot be controlled by HierBeiDir. However, to provide every customer with the information that is most relevant to him, Park and Kim (2008) further suggest that companies use a system to organize reviews. This measure could help HierBeiDir provide customers with the reviews and information that has the best mental fit.

Finally, **brand archetypes** are combined with theoretical backgrounds. Mark and Pearson's archetype analysis (2001) helps to establish a company positioning based on customers' perceptions. During the customer interviews most respondents considered the creator to be most fitting for HierBeiDir. The creator's biggest ambition is to contribute to society by bringing his individual vision to life (Mark& Pearson, 2001). This can be related to HierBeiDir as they are striving to translate local retail into the online sphere. Furthermore, creators receive pleasure by realizing something that has not existed before, like to foster innovation and to forge something of lasting value (Mark & Pearson. 2001). Simultaneously, the creator has no tolerance for mass-production and lack of creativity (Mark & Pearson, 2001). Again, these attributes can be related to HierBeiDir as they are aiming to compete with big international merchandisers to promote the individual and unique local retailer. Correspondingly, Mark and Pearson (2001) argue that creators should engage their customers with their marketing efforts and stress the uniqueness of their service.

It is important for HierBeiDir to represent these traits within their communication with customers. Since most customers are not aware of HierBeiDir, they do not know what the brand represents. Therefore, attention should be given to these qualities as they are defining HierBeiDir's image in the

mind of their already existing customers. Incorporating these attributes in their promotional messages could support HierBeiDir in building a relationship with their customers and thereby, increasing awareness.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

This research examined customer's online purchase behavior, communication behavior and customer's characteristics with the objective of developing a communication strategy for HierBeiDir to increase customer's awareness. Based on the research results, recommendations for this communication plan can be given.

6.1 Online Consumer Purchase Behavior

- As the majority of customers is driven by a utilitarian motivation, it is important to primarily promote **rational, goal-oriented and functional appeals** to raise awareness
- **Convenience, efficiency, a simple buying process and easy accessibility** of HierBeiDir's services should be emphasized as customers place high value on these aspects
- Customer's decision making process is **short and spontaneous** and can thus, be influenced by promotion
- HierBeiDir should provide a multitude of **recommendations and customer reviews** as they are of great interest to customers
- **As customer's involvement is low and they engage in little research,** awareness can be increased by repeatedly confronting customers with advertising that is easily accessible

6.2 Communication Behavior

- A suitable communication strategy should include a multi-channel approach; **a combination of online and offline channels**
- **An integrated marketing strategy** with consistent messages for all channels should be developed
- Customer's preferred online channels are: **Social media, search engines and company websites**
- Customer's preferred offline channels are **local newspapers, television and personal conversations**
- As customers use the central route to process information, a **rational approach** should be provided
- For customers to accept HierBeiDir's communication, **promotional messages should be combined with topics customers value and agree with** such as the multiple benefits of online shopping or the importance of sustainability

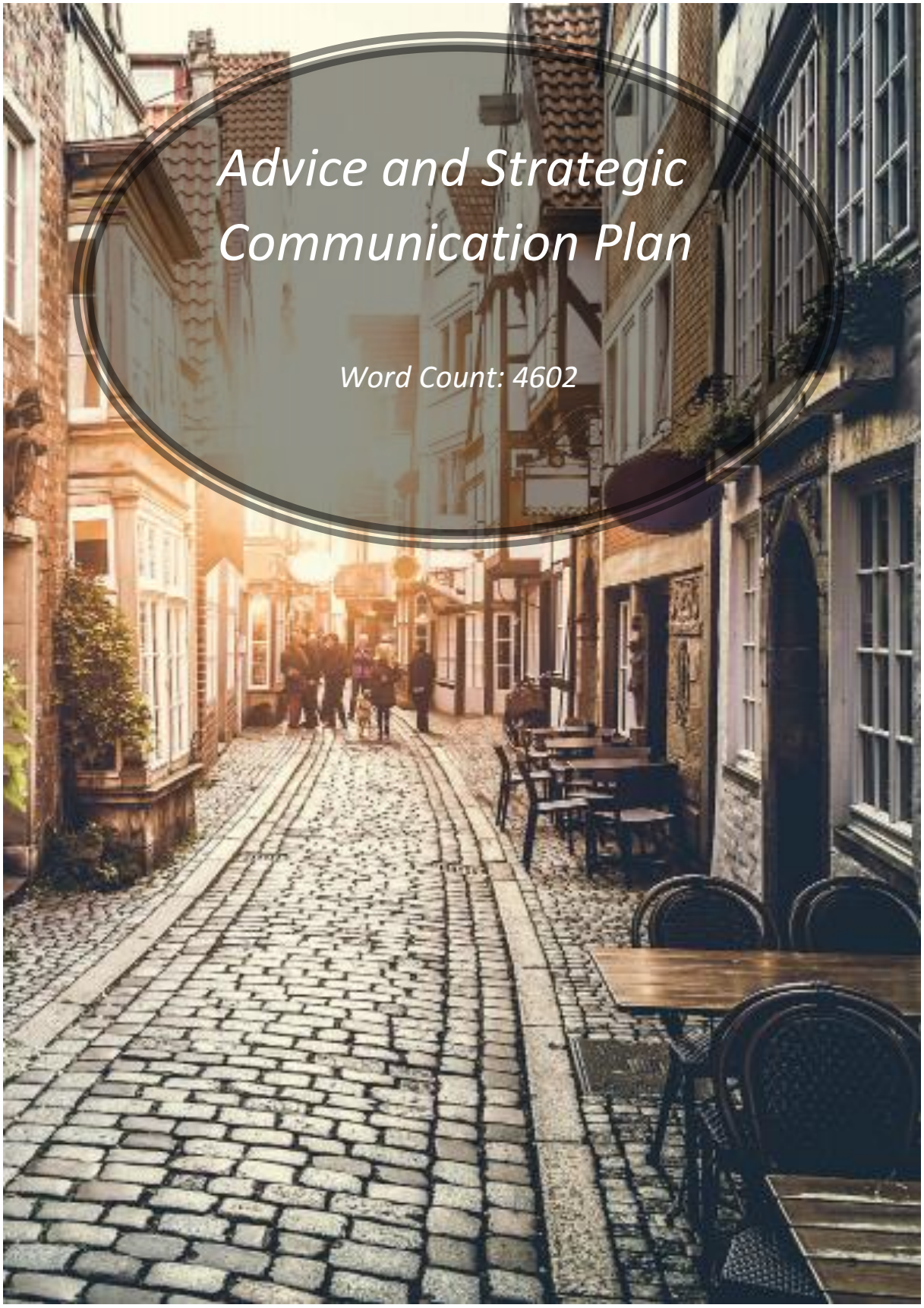
6.3 Customer Characteristics

- One buyer persona that represents HierBeiDir's **best customer who is the easiest to reach** should be developed
- The **development of a suitable buyer persona** is essential to guide the communication strategy and should be incorporated in all communication efforts
- HierBeiDir's best customer possesses the following **characteristics:** female, between 18 and 30 years, has completed at least a Bachelor's degree and possesses a limited yearly income, considers herself as communicative, family-oriented and dependable, works hard and considers online shopping as a measure to save time and energy
- **Sustainability is becoming increasingly more important to customers** and HierBeiDir's sustainable delivery should be promoted more actively to increase customer's awareness

6.4 Conclusion

For every research area conclusions have been drawn that led to the suggested set of recommendations. These instructions will serve as the foundation for the formulation of an advice concerning the development of a communication strategy to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir.

Moreover, due to the limitations and barriers of this project, it is recommended to build on the findings of this report and to further look into the areas of customer's communication behavior. As some of the employed theoretical concepts have not yet been updated, the extension through a current theory would be advisable. Additional research into the most effective communication channel usage and customer's reaction towards promotional contents, could thus, reveal complementary insights that would add value to an awareness strategy. Furthermore, HierBeiDir should engage in additional research to bring an extended focus and further detail into their customer analysis.



Advice and Strategic Communication Plan

Word Count: 4602

1. Introduction

As the objective of this research is to produce a communication plan to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir, the following advice will do exactly that. Based on the client's communication problem, which namely is the lack of customer's awareness of HierBeiDir on the German market, and the research outcomes, a communication strategy and its implementation plan will be presented. This plan will translate the findings about customer's online purchase behavior, communication behavior and customer characteristics into concrete communication measures to create awareness. Furthermore, it will be indicated how this advice impacts HierBeiDir's current communication. Lastly, a clear and realistic implementation plan will be developed to ensure the achievement of the objective. Throughout the entire advice, the creation of awareness will be the dominant theme.

The research results emphasized that the lack of awareness indeed represents the communication problem of HierBeiDir as only 25 of the 230 survey respondents were familiar with the startup. This indicates the urgency and underlines the importance of implementing an advice as soon as possible. Furthermore, these findings indicate that a sporadic, unplanned promotion, as employed currently, does not suffice to create sufficient awareness. Rather a continuous and long-term promotion is needed. Thus, the following advised communication measures have to constantly be executed over the next months.

The research findings revealed a number of implications for HierBeiDir's future practice. The recommendations developed within the research will serve as the foundation of this communication plan with the goal of increasing customer awareness of HierBeiDir. The communication objective is thus specifically, to achieve a measurable and realistic raise in awareness within the time frame of the campaign. The communication strategy is divided into three parts: the campaign's **communication content**, **implementation** and **planning**.

2. Communication Content

2.1 Buyer Persona

The research results and conclusions indicated that a buyer persona would be beneficial to generate awareness for HierBeiDir. The research and theory defined buyer personas as "fictional, generalized representations of your ideal costumers", (Vaughan, 2015). Therefore, a persona serves as a visualization of who a company wants to reach and communicate with (Schuster, personal communication, 2016). As the findings and Rosen & Simonson's influence mix (2014) highlighted the importance HierBeiDir's existing and potential customers attach to recommendations from others, it is advisable to include a persona in HierBeiDir's awareness campaign. According to the global trust in advertising and brand messages report (2013) customers are more likely to accept and trust recommendations from people similar to themselves.

ANNA MÜLLER

Name	Anna Müller
Gender	Female
Age	28Years
Education	Master's Degree
Occupation	Junior Marketing Consultant
Marital Status	In a relationship
Location	Düsseldorf
Income	11.000 - 20.000€

TRAITS:
- Cares about her environment
- Tries to act sustainably
- Communicative
- Down-to-earth
- Ambitious

MOTIVATION:
- Primarily, rational, goal-oriented and functional motivation combined with emotional appeals

GOALS:
- To purchase products online to save time and energy
- To find products that are unique
- To buy from a company that acts sustainable

PAIN POINTS:
- To "waste" remaining free time with shopping in the stores
- Not eager to spend time in the shops but willing to review products online

DAILY TASKS:
- Works at her full-time job
- Goes to the gym
- Buys groceries
- Runs the household

TRIGGER:
- Product reviews and peer recommendations
- Personalized recommendations

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:
- Combination of online and offline channels
- Online: Facebook, Instagram, Company Website, YouTube
- Offline: Local newspapers, television, offline events

QUOTES:

"For me, online shopping is perfect- it's just easy, convenient and you can do if from everywhere without having to visit a certain store."

"I rely a lot on recommendations and reviews from other customers. I really like it when I see pictures or videos of other customers wearing/ using the product. That gives me a more realistic view of the product."

"HierBeiDir helps me to save time since I can shop products online and it helps me to help local retailers without losing the benefits of online shopping. Also they offer unique products I can't get anywhere else.'

Media Tool 1: HierBeiDir Buyer Persona Template

Based on these results, HierBeiDir can address customers more effectively and consequently, be more successful in increasing their awareness by crafting a buyer persona and including it in the communication strategy. Further, the persona allows HierBeiDir to get more personal in its messaging and align contents to customer's preferences.

The buyer persona (Media Tool 1) represents HierBeiDir's ideal customer; more specifically the customer that will be the easiest to reach and the most profitable. The persona is based on the previous research and conclusions. The name *Anna Müller* was chosen, as this first name and surname are one of the most common within Germany and will thus, appeal to a lot of customers.

Even though the research results identified students between the ages of 18 and 25 as the most *common* HierBeiDir customer, this audience provides barriers for HierBeiDir as students have a limited budget and are thus, not the most profitable segment for HierBeiDir.

In cooperation with the client it was therefore, decided to target the third largest group: customers between the ages of 25 and 30. The research identified their following characteristics: mostly female, have a yearly income of 11.000 to 20.000 Euros, a good spending power, communicate and purchase a lot online and care about their environment and local city. Applying these findings resulted in the above described persona.

Furthermore, the research interviews with persona experts showed that it is important that all HierBeiDir employees are briefed about *Anna Müller* and her characteristics. According to Schuster (personal communication, 2016) the persona can only effectively influence a company's communication if the staff is knowledgeable about the profile. Therefore, the persona only leads to success if all team members are familiar with her.

These research conclusions suggest that it would be advisable for HierBeiDir to **conduct a workshop** to educate employees about what buyer personas are, how they can be integrated into communications and which traits are defining HierBeiDir's persona. This is important to guarantee that all employees are briefed about a change in HierBeiDir's communication policy.

As the research and experts explicitly stated it does not suffice to only create a buyer persona. According to C.M. a persona should guide the design of communication measures (personal communication, 2016). Thus, the research conclusions advise to embed the buyer persona in HierBeiDir's communication strategy.

Consequently, the customer profile reveals important content requirements as well as style and tone of promotional messages. As *Anna Müller* is young, communicative and down-to-earth this indicates

the **use of informal language and a relatable tone of voice**. By adjusting HierBeiDir's communication to these guidelines, their messages are more likely to be heard by their target customers as they are specifically tailored to their communication style. This will also help to differentiate HierBeiDir's messages from competitors and thereby, support the increase of awareness.

Moreover, the research conclusions demonstrated that customers clearly care about their environment and sustainability is becoming more important to them. By **advocating HierBeiDir's sustainable delivery**, a customer preference can thus, be attended to and customer's interest and awareness can be evoked. Promoting customer's ability to act sustainably by choosing DHL GoGreen or a bike messenger to deliver their products will help to increase awareness as this service distinguishes HierBeiDir from other companies.

Furthermore, the research demonstrated that promotional messages need to address the **persona's goals, motivation and pain points**. These aspects provide indications about customer's objectives, incitements and their challenges. By appealing to these triggers and positioning HierBeiDir as the key to achieving these objectives, customer's interest will be awakened and awareness can be created.

Based on the research the following guidelines are advisable:

- HierBeiDir should organize a workshop to brief employees about the buyer persona
- HierBeiDir should use informal language and a colloquial tone of voice when communicating with customers
- HierBeiDir should address customer's concern for the environment by promoting their sustainable delivery
- HierBeiDir's promotion should trigger customer's goals and motivations and offer a solution to their pain points

2.2 Utilizing Customer Recommendations

For HierBeiDir to increase customer's awareness with a communication campaign it is essential to not just randomly interact with their audiences but to communicate in **the right way** and to disseminate **the right contents.**

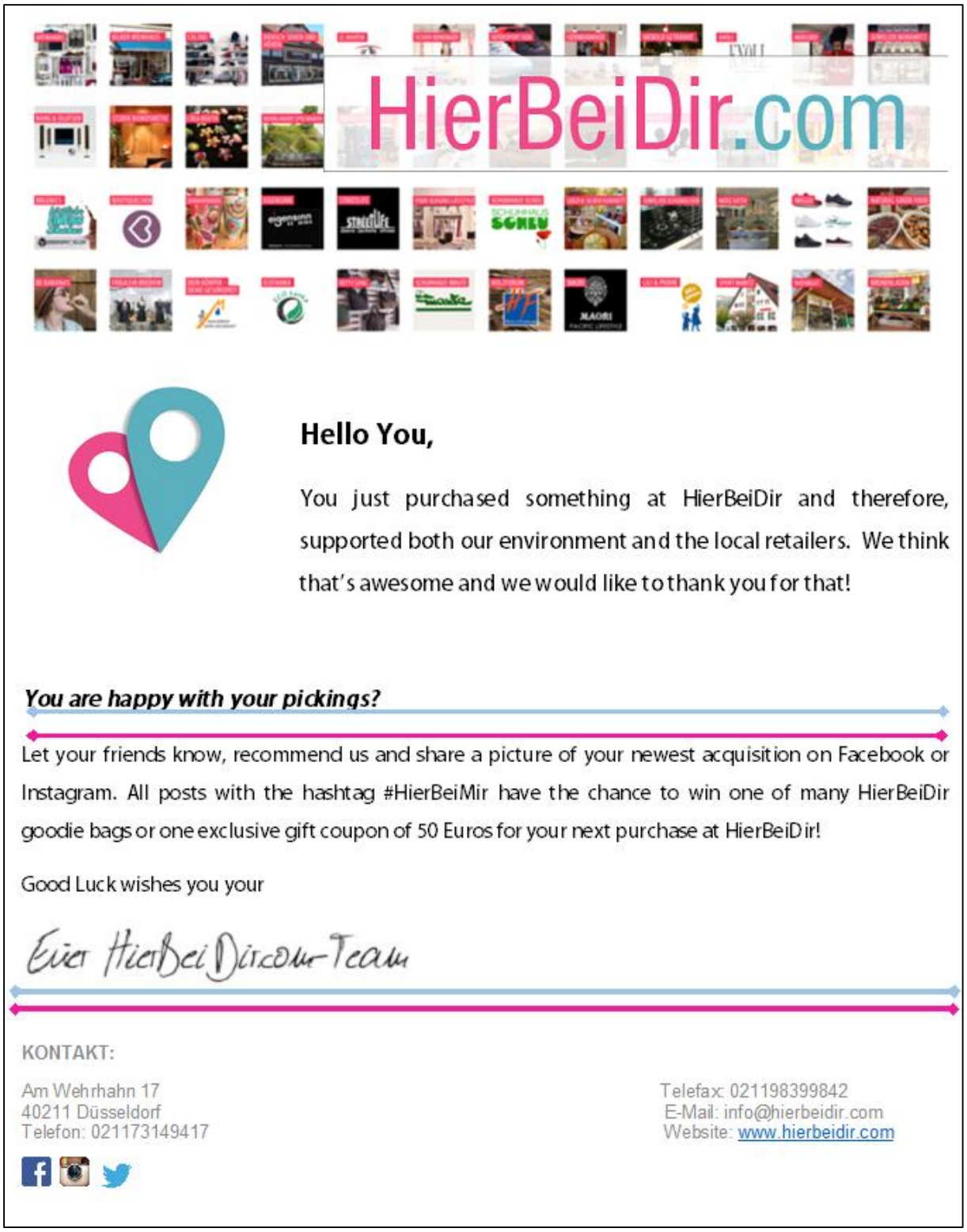
The research conclusions found that HierBeiDir's **customers heavily rely on and are influenced by recommendations** from their peers and customer reviews. Based on these results, HierBeiDir can raise

awareness about their brand and services by appealing to this customer preference and providing customer with peer recommendations.

Media tool 2 illustrates a possible design for a customer letter or e-mail. The original German version can be found in Appendix 8.1. Within this letter HierBeiDir thanks customers for their purchase and contribution to the environment and local retail. As advised in the previous chapter, the tone of voice and use of language is colloquial and approachable, which communicates HierBeiDir's desired brand image.

The letter features a contest that invites customers to share their recent purchase on social media and to thereby, recommend HierBeiDir to their friends. As an incentive for customers to encourage them to share this message, an exclusive HierBeiDir goodie bag (Media tool 3) and a voucher of 50 Euros could be given to the winner of this contest. Just as the research suggested, this measure would play on customer's need for peer recommendations. Furthermore, by having customers share their recent purchases, HierBeiDir could employ them to help raise their awareness, engage them in the content creation and thereby, reach potential new customers. Moreover, branded goodies such as brochures, a phone case and a bag also help to raise awareness as they direct people's attention towards HierBeiDir's brand.

Additionally, the creation of HierBeiDir's own hashtag on social media helps to raise customer awareness. Engaging customers in a small contest offers advantages as contests are a good tool to increase the startup's fan base, to interact with the audience, to collect valuable customer data and to delegate a part of marketing to the customer himself (Pickering, 2011).



Media Tool 2: Customer Letter

Media Tool 3: HierBeiDir Goodie Bag

As Rosen & Simonson's influence mix (2014) identified recommendations as an important influence on customer's awareness, it is advisable to integrate them into HierBeiDir's website services. The research recommendations suggested to install a system that would enable customers to rank the different HierBeiDir products and to share these reviews with other customers.

Therefore, HierBeiDir could develop different "*stickers*" that help customers to communicate their product recommendations. Media tool 4 represents an example of three different labels that customers could select for their favorite products. These labels let customers distinguish between recommended, highly recommended and must buy products.

The research showed that customers like to communicate on social media. These labels could thus, be directly integrated into HierBeiDir's social media channels. By providing the option to share these stickers on Facebook and Instagram, customers could inform each other about their recent purchases and whether or not they would recommend them to their peers. This measure would additionally, help to contribute to HierBeiDir's objective of raising awareness and would also be a valuable extension of their current communication.

Media Tool 4: Recommendation Stickers. Design in dependence on http://www.inhomereviews.com/rankikng-system/

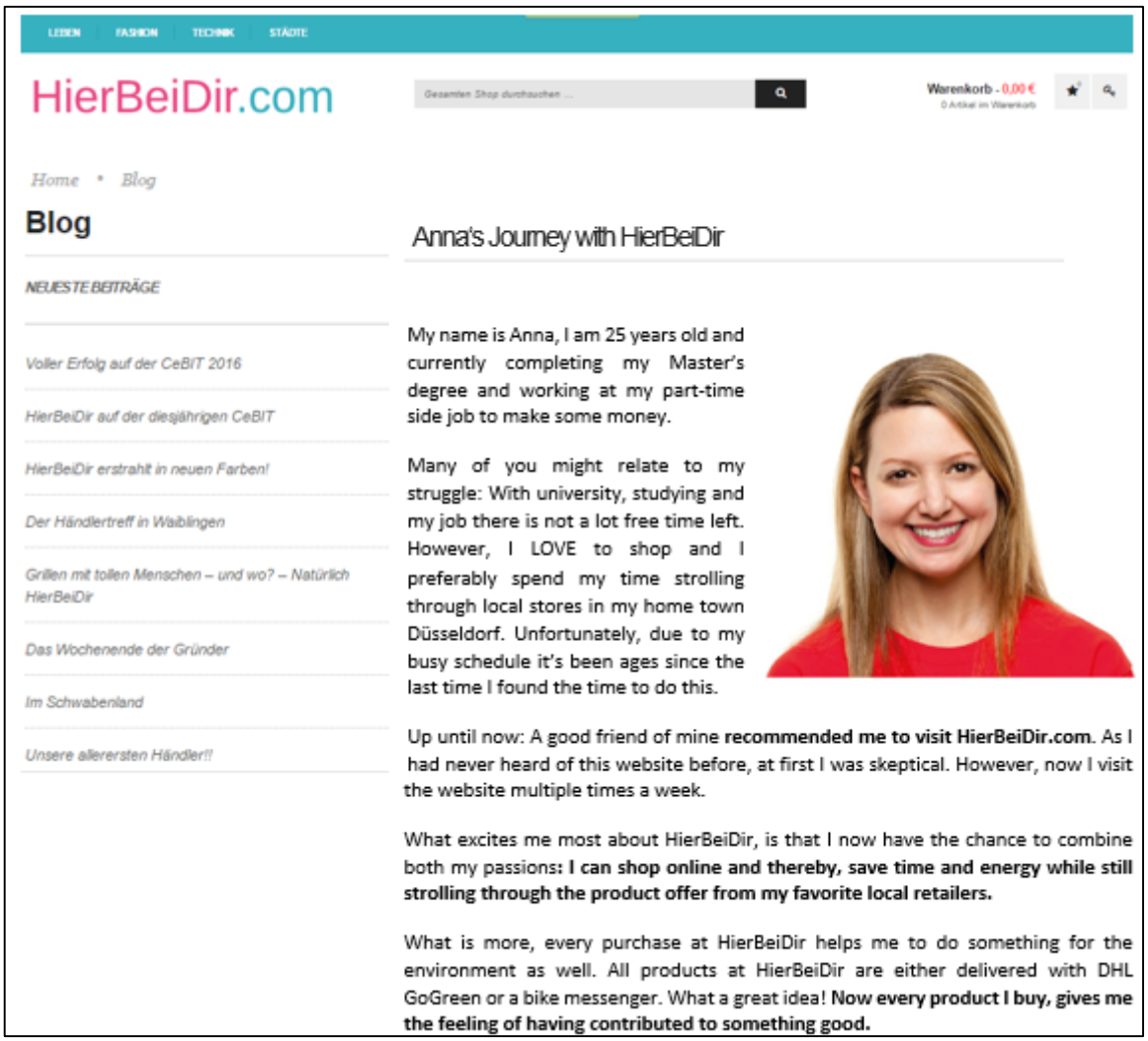
2.3 Message Contents

According to the research findings and Cho's modified Elaboration Likelihood model (1999) customers are most likely to process promotional messages if these **follow a rational approach**. Correspondingly, HierBeiDir's communication should follow this concept to create awareness around their advertisements.

Regarding message contents it is thus, advisable to focus on providing goal-oriented and functional appeals. As the research further indicated that **convenience, efficiency, easy accessibility and a simple buying process** raise customer's awareness and interest, these aspects should be clearly communicated to HierBeiDir's customers. Since the customer's current involvement with HierBeiDir is rather low it is moreover, necessary to constantly repeat promotional messages to achieve maximum exposure and awareness.

Moreover, the findings of the Social Judgment Theory (Dainton & Zelley, 2005) concluded that customers best respond to promotional messages if they are combined with topics they already agree with. As customer's current awareness of HierBeiDir is still low, the startup's communication would be best facilitated by integrating the advantages of online shopping and the importance of sustainability into their messages. By appealing to the audience's preferences and their daily challenges, HierBeiDir

could position themselves as the solution. This could be done by integrating the buyer persona (Media tool 5).



Media Tool 5: Possible Buyer Persona Blog Post

The research indicated that customers like to relate to other customers' stories. Consequently, letting *Anna* tell her journey with HierBeiDir could help to increase awareness as many similar customers will relate to her. By having *Anna* write about the topics the research suggested such as **sustainability, convenience, recommendations and efficiency,** HierBeiDir appeals to customer's preferences.

Furthermore, HierBeiDir could increase the effectiveness of their campaign and generate additional awareness by organizing an event. Naturally, many events require enormous resources. To adapt the work load to HierBeiDir's available budget and staff, a guerilla marketing event would be advisable. Guerilla marketing is a promotional method that engages low-cost measures to achieve maximum outcomes (What is guerilla marketing, n.d.).

A guerilla marketing campaign that would be feasible for HierBeiDir, would be to initiate a *scavenger hunt.* Within this event HierBeiDir could challenge their audiences to collect the HierBeiDir logo at different locations within Düsseldorf. As a campaign for all of Germany would be too expensive, it is recommended to first "test-run" the event in Düsseldorf, where HierBeiDir is located. HierBeiDir's logo (Figure 18) could be distributed amongst the existing shops of retailers that are also represented on HierBeiDir's website. In this manner, customers would not only get an increased awareness of HierBeiDir, but also the retailers and products that are represented by the startup.

Figure 18: HierBeiDir Logo

Afterwards, HierBeiDir challenges customer's to find one of these stickers, to take a picture of themselves with the logo and to share the image on either Facebook or Instagram while using the hashtag #HierBeiMir (German for #herewithme). As an incentive, HierBeiDir could give away further goodie bags and the opportunity for one person to win a coupon for a free purchase up to 150 Euros at HierBeiDir. To create the best possible awareness for this event, HierBeiDir should make use of their integrated media channels to promote the event.

This event would only require limited resources but could go a long way in benefiting HierBeiDir's organizational objectives and the increase of customer awareness.

2.4 Communication Worksheet & Key Performance Indicators

To facilitate HierBeiDir's communication and to make the implementation of these measures more realistic, a table providing an overview of the communication contents has been created (Table 1). Additionally, Table 2, gives an overview of important key performance indicators (KPIs) for Facebook (Eyl, 2012) and company websites (Moore, 2014). These KPIs will enable HierBeiDir to track and measure the effectiveness of their communication contents.

Target Audience	Communication Objective	Key Messages	Channel / How Delivered	When Delivered	Who Delivers/ Author
HierBeiDir team	Inform	Strategy overview & policy briefing	Staff meeting Feedback from staff will be directly collected and if possible, included in campaign.	Preliminary staff meeting before the start of the campaign.	CEO Philipp Bohne
HierBeiDir potential & existing customers.	Increase their awareness of HierBeiDir & inform about buyer persona.	The buyer persona resembles the customer. Ergo, her recommendation of HierBeiDir can be trusted.	Blog post, newspaper article, Facebook & Instagram. Feedback is collected by monitoring customer's comments, likes and shares. Feedback should be utilized for improving the next posts / articles.	These publications start of the campaign. First, the blog post is published. Additional promotion on Facebook and Instagram follows. Next, the newspaper article is published, followed by promotion on social media.	Author of the blog is the buyer persona. Author of social media is HierBeiDir. Author of newspaper article is a journalist and HierBeiDir.
HierBeiDir recent buyers	Engage customers, renew their awareness & utilize them to spread awareness.	HierBeiDir thanks customer for purchase & support. Challenge customer to share and recommend their HierBeiDir purchase.	Either a customer letter or customer e-mail.	The customer letter is send to customers after they purchased something at HierBeiDir.	The author of the letter is the HierBeiDir team.
HierBeiDir potential & existing customers.	Increase / create awareness.	HierBeiDir offers customers the chance to recommend, rank and share their experiences.	Recommendation stickers are available on company website. Their introduction is communicated on blog, newsletter and social media.	First, a blog post is published. Afterwards, the post is promoted on Facebook and Instagram. Lastly, the story is featured in the weekly newsletter.	HierBeiDir is the author of all posts.
HierBeiDir team	Inform & collect feedback on campaign.	Campaign evaluation & future policies.	Staff meeting	After campaign measures are completed.	CEO Philipp Bohne

Table 1: Communication Worksheet

Key Performance Indicator	What It Says	How It Is Measured
Facebook		
Number of Fans	This indicator is the most prominent and visible as it is available on every page. Expresses the amount of people that follow your page. Deliver a first impression of a page's popularity.	Counts all Facebook users that follow your page. Effectiveness however, is limited as many followers might be inactive.
Level of Growth	Growth measures the increase of fans within a certain time period. Delivers a relative view that enables comparisons with other pages. Creates an overview of how the page and activity is evolving.	Measured by assessing the change of fans within a specific time interval divided by the total number of fans.
Talking About	Talking About is an effective indicator to assess how customers engage with a Facebook page. It portrays social activities related to your page.	This indicator outlines the number of users that interacted with a Facebook page within the last seven days. Interactions include comments, likes, shares, posts etc.
Reach	Facebook provides the reach of each post. It indicates how many of your followers have seen the post in their feed.	This indicator counts in how many user's newsfeed your post is included. However, effectiveness is limited as "seen" does not necessarily mean that customers read the post.
Traffic to Company Website	The primary goal of most Facebook pages is to guide users to the company website or blog.	Google Analytics helps to determine how many visitors were guided to the website by Facebook.
Company Website		
Website Audience	This KPI helps to evaluate who is visiting your company website, where they came from and if the visitors converted. The results indicate which channels are most useful to guide visitors and increase awareness of the website.	Google Analytics measures sessions of new and returning visitors as well as unque visitors.
Sources of Traffic	This indicator provides information about how visitors found your website and thus, determines the most valuable channels.	Google Analytics indicates how visitors were guided to the website, e.g. from newsletters, social media, search engines etc.
Page Tracking	This KPI shows whether visitors were pleased with what they found on the website or of they left immediately. This indicates what customers are looking for and whether they are satisfied with what is provided.	Google Analytics measures the duration of visitor's session on your website and indicates their bounce rate.

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators

2.5 Social Media Guidelines

To facilitate an easy implementation of these communication interventions, a social media guide was developed. This guide is based on the research conclusions and provides recommendations on how to best facilitate HierBeiDir's future communication and to raise awareness.

1. **Messages to post**

- Customer reviews about HierBeiDir's products and services
- HierBeiDir's unique offer: Local products with a national & sustainable delivery
- Create multiple posts that Include the buyer persona to appeal to similar customers
- As customers care about sustainability, catch their interest with stories about HierBeiDir's commitment to the environment
- Appeal to customer's preference for online shopping and advertise how HierBeiDir provides the best of both worlds: online shopping at local retailers

2. **How to post messages**

- Only post on customer's preferred channels (Facebook, Instagram, company website) to avoid "waste" of communication
- Link messages to other channels and most importantly, the company website
- As customer's current involvement with HierBeiDir is low, messages should be repeated regularly to increase awareness
- Follow a content plan
- Post 3-4 messages per week
- Provide rational information to meet customer's preferences

3. **How to measure social media activities**

- Assign one employee to keep an overview of all social media activities
- Use the above described KPIs
- Each month, evaluate which social media activities have been the most successful and which have not
- Keeping the awareness objective in mind, set social media goals that you want to accomplish each month
- Conduct monthly staff meetings to brief the entire team about the current state of social media and communication policies

3. Implementation

3.1 Channel Integration

The research determined that 57% of customers favor a combination of online and offline channels, in which the focus lies on online media. An awareness campaign should thus, employ this approach to distribute HierBeiDir's messages. The research conclusions further indicate to integrate the different communication media to create a coherent campaign. To guarantee an easy implementation and a facilitation of communication, HierBeiDir should follow these four steps (Schiff, 2014):

1. Establish an understanding of your customer:

The research defined HierBeiDir's ideal buyer persona. Studying her characteristics provides HierBeiDir with an understanding of their customer.

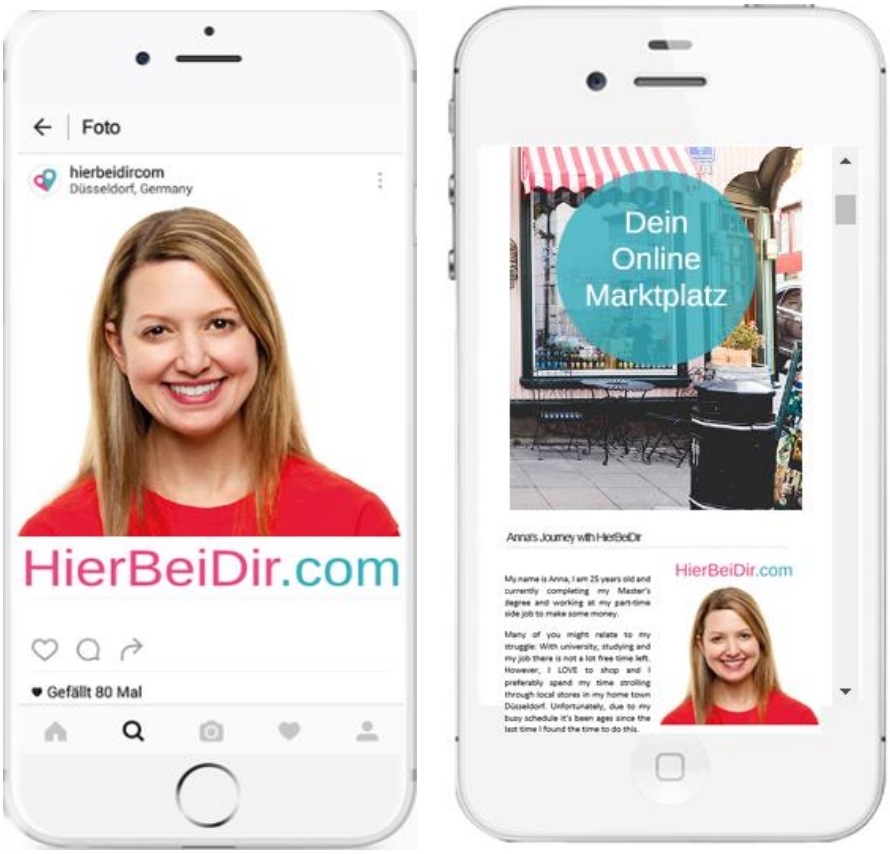
2. Select suitable channels:

As HierBeiDir's budget is limited, it is advisable to only employ channels that help to meet HierBeiDir's objectives. The research conclusions identified the following online and offline channels to be most effective to communicate with customers: Facebook, Instagram, company website, newsletters and local newspapers. According to Carlson and Zmud's Channel Expansion Theory (1999) these are the channels customers have the most experience with and thus, the best perception of. Step 3 and 4 elaborate how these different channels can be connected and integrated.

3. Produce contents that can be easily translated to other channels

When crafting promotional messages, HierBeiDir should keep in mind that contents should be played via different channels and therefore, need to be easily adaptable. The research underlined the importance of integrating the chosen channels with each other to maximize their impact and increase awareness. According to Ireland (2002) the integration of contents on different media platforms increases the likelihood of customer's being exposed to company messages and thus, increases the probability of a raise of awareness.

Taking these research conclusions into account, HierBeiDir should create contents that can be played on many different channels. Contents remain the same and do not need to be constructed for each platform separately. Following, media tools 6-8 give examples of how contents can be translated to different channels and how coherent messages will help to communicate a consistent brand image. Appendix 8.2 also includes an example of a German newsletter.



Media Tool 6: Anna's Journey on Instagram & Company Website

Media Tool 7: Newspaper Article

Media Tool 8: Facebook Post

4. Integrate Channels

Research further showed that for an integrated awareness campaign, the different channels need to be connected with each other. To harvest the full potential, HierBeiDir should ensure to link all communication channels to each other. Thus, a post on Facebook should refer to the company website, blog and newsletter, whereas the other channels should do the same. Further, the research conclusions suggested all channels should be integrated under the same theme and reflect a clear positioning of HierBeiDir. Therefore, if the theme of a chain of posts e.g. concerns HierBeiDir's sustainable delivery, messages on all channels should reflect a consistent position on this topic. Media tool 9 gives an example of how a social media post could integrate other channels and thereby, guide customers to other HierBeiDir platforms.

Media Tool 9: Integrated Facebook Post

3.2 Client's Acceptance and Barriers

The chosen communication interventions were selected in cooperation with HierBeiDir. During a meeting the communication tools were discussed, adapted and accepted by HierBeiDir. Especially, the intervention to introduce recommendation stickers to HierBeiDir's website and to provide customers with the opportunity to communicate these on social media was met with great interest by the client. According to CEO Bohne this campaign measure meets their organizational goal of spreading awareness and improving their website service to customers (personal communication, 2016). Furthermore, Bohne highly supported the creation of a social media handbook. As the organization's current online communication is based on trial and error, Bohne continued that this handbook would facilitate their future communication and give structure to their social media appearance. Lastly, the buyer persona was also developed in acceptance with HierBeiDir and is based on their ideal customer segment.

Regarding the implementation of the advice, HierBeiDir should be aware of possible barriers. For instance, the communication interventions to engage customers in an online contest and offline event could hold barriers. Customer's behavior cannot be controlled and accurately predicted. The success of these campaign activities, thus ultimately lies in the hand of HierBeiDir's customers. Moreover, a possible barrier might also impact the buyer persona. The research of existing and potential customers might not have reached the most ideal customer segment. Thus, HierBeiDir should conduct further research to update the persona. Lastly, the research showed that awareness is something that needs constant reinforcement. Therefore, another barrier of the campaign might be, that it can indeed influence the current level of customer awareness, however HierBeiDir needs to constantly reinforce and further expand it to permanently remain in their customer's mind.

3.3 HierBeiDir's Policy

The advice should also be linked to HierBeiDir's policy and support the organization's long-term objectives. As CEO Bohne stated, HierBeiDir's policy is to make local products accessible to online customers and thereby, digitalize the local charm of German cities (personal communication, 2016). Additionally, the startup's long-term objective is to establish a presence within 20 German cities. As the research stated, awareness is essential for these objectives "as it precedes all other steps", (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). Therefore, enabling HierBeiDir to first create sufficient awareness will also assist their overall policy and organizational objectives. The research findings further support

HierBeiDir's policy and vision to employ a sustainable approach, as the results clearly indicate a rising customer interest in acting sustainably. Moreover, the colloquial approach of the communication strategy supports HierBeiDir's policy and objective of obtaining the image of the neighborly and relatable startup (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Further, the internal organization and other stakeholders need to be informed about possible new policies. As suggested in the advice, workshops and staff meetings could help to brief staff and management about new communication policies and could assist in motivating them to support the campaign. These workshops should also explain that the new communication policy will facilitate the achievement of organizational goals.

3.4 Facilitation of Communication

The advice should aid HierBeiDir in meeting their objectives and should facilitate the startup's communication. The recommended measures assist HierBeiDir's communication process in the following ways:

- The buyer persona facilitates HierBeiDir's understanding of their customers and thereby, makes communicating with them easier. Moreover, the given instructions and templates can be used by HierBeiDir to conduct additional research and design further buyer personas in the future (advice section 2.1)
- The social media guidelines assist HierBeiDir in facilitating their online communication. By following those recommendations HierBeiDir's social media messages can be made easier, more effective and tailored to raise customer's awareness (section 2.5)
- The instructions for an integrated campaign facilitate HierBeiDir's communication as they advise how channels can be connected and incorporated. Having consistent content on all platforms, makes HierBeiDir's promotion process easier. Additionally, establishing an inter-functional collaboration between HierBeiDir's communication instruments will aid the implementation of the advice (section 3.1)
- The step-by-step planning further facilitates HierBeiDir's communication as it provides a detailed implementation guide for all necessary campaign activities (section 4)

4. Planning

The communication strategy's objective is to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir. To facilitate this goal and to maximize the campaign's impact, a clear and realistic implementation plan is crucial. This chapter will thus, outline important activities and deadlines.

First, the duration of HierBeiDir's campaign is set to five months. This period of time will provide a sufficient window to execute all suggested media tools and campaign activities without HierBeiDir's staff having to rush and neglect other responsibilities. The entire campaign can be divided into three phases:

1. Project briefing
2. Communication activities
3. Evaluation phase

The first month of the campaign serves as a preparation phase. Within this time the following communication plan steps need to be completed (Figure 19):

1.	Project Briefing & First Steps
	Kick Off Staff Meeting
	Assign staff to campaign activities
	Buyer persona workshop
	Allocate financial resources
	Contact needed media cooperations
	Prepare media tools for their launch

Figure 19: Communication Planning Extract 1

An initial staff meeting will help to brief all employees and stakeholders about the communication strategy and new policy. This is important as everyone should be aware of changes and enthusiastic about the new course. Next, employees will be assigned to campaign activities. It is advisable to have CEO Bohne assigned as supervisor as the campaign was developed in cooperation with him. Further, Marvin Agena, current CMO, should be assigned head of communication and will thus, monitor all campaign communication activities. A buyer persona workshop will educate the team about HierBeiDir's ideal customer, her characteristics and how to approach her. Afterwards, financial resources need to be allocated. As Bohne stated that a budget ranging until 1.500 Euros would be feasible, 1092.50 Euros (Table 3) should be implementable (personal communication, 2016). As head of communication, Agena will contact media co-operations. A list of newspapers that previously

cooperated with HierBeiDir can be found in Appendix 6.1. Lastly, the design of media tools will be completed for their launch. The deadline for these measures is **30.06.2016**.

The following three months will be dedicated to the implementation of the communication activities and the increase of customer's awareness. The second month marks the beginning of the campaign's main phase. From July until September the following activities will be completed (Figure 20):

2.	Communication Activities
	Introduce Customers to Buyer Persona
	Publish the buyer persona blog post
	Publish the buyer persona newspaper article
	Publish the buyer persona newsletter
	Promote persona material on all HierBeiDir channels
	Utilize Customer Recommendations
	Send out customer letter/ e-mail to buyers
	Promote contest & prices on all HierBeiDir channels
	Introduce customers to recommendation stickers
	Promote stickers on all HierBeiDir channels
	Announce contest winner on company website
	Promote contest winner on all HierBeiDir channels
	Organize & Execute Scavenger Hunt Event
	Distribute HierBeiDir pins in represented local stores
	Announce scavenger hunt on website & in newspaper
	Conduct scavenger hunt for two weeks
	Promote scavenger hunt on all HierBeiDir channels
	Announce the winners of the scavenger hunt
	Promote the winners on all HierBeiDir channels

Figure 20: Communication Planning Extract 2

Detailed information on how to complete these activities is given within the two previous chapters. To facilitate the final campaign evaluation, each month ends with monitoring the progress. For the planning to be feasible for HierBeiDir's small team, each month has been given an individual topic and deadline:

- July: Introduce customers to buyer persona. Deadline: **31.07.2016**
- August: Utilize customer recommendations Deadline: **31.08.2016**
- September: Organize and execute scavenger hunt event Deadline: **30.09.2016**

To measure the campaign's outcome and to assess if the objective has been met, the last month is assigned to the evaluation of communication activities (Figure 21).

3.	Evaluation of Campaign
	Measurement of communication activities
	Measurement of awareness objective
	Evaluation staff meeting
	Conclusions for future policies & communication

Figure 21: Communication Planning Extract 3

For the campaign evaluation the supervisor Bohne and CMO Agena should evaluate the success of communication measures and how they contributed towards the awareness objective. In a closing staff meeting, campaign conclusions and implications for future policies should be drawn. The campaign deadline is **31.10.2016**.

As the advice recommends ongoing communication for HierBeiDir to create and uphold awareness, it is important to not end the communication measures after these five months. For the long-term creation of sufficient awareness, HierBeiDir will need to conduct several campaigns to constantly communicate with their customers. The above described five months campaign will thus, serve as the kick-off of HierBeiDir's new awareness policy and will be continued by other communication campaigns following the suggested guidelines.

An overview of all campaign activities, milestones and important deadlines is given in the planning below (Figure 22).

Lastly, the resources required for the implementation and achievement of the communication objective should be regarded. As most communication such as social media posts, articles in local newspapers and customer letters or e-mails do not create any financial costs, the total budget for the entire five months of the campaign adds up to 1092.50€ (Table 3) and is thus, under Bohne's maximum costs and should be feasible. The listed numbers of desired units of bags and cases was suggested by the client.

Activity	Price of One Unit	Desired Units	Total Costs	Provider
Branded Bag for Goodie Bag	1.19€	500	593.00€	Werbeartikel-Discount
Branded iPhone Case	5.99€	50	299.50€	Vistaprint
Voucher Recommendation Contest	50€	1	50€	HierBeiDir
Voucher Pin Event	150€	1	150€	HierBeiDir
Total Campaign Costs				**1092.50€**

Table 3: Campaign Cost Estimation

Communication Campaign Planning

	Activity	June				July				August				September				October			
		CW 22	CW 23	CW 24	CW 25	CW 26	CW 27	CW 28	CW 29	CW 30	CW 31	CW 32	CW 33	CW 34	CW 35	CW 36	CW 37	CW 38	CW 39	CW 40	CW 41
1.	**Project Briefing & First Steps**																				
	Kick Off Staff Meeting																				
	Assign staff to campaign activities																				
	Buyer persona workshop																				
	Allocate financial resources																				
	Contact needed media cooperations																				
	Prepare media tools for their launch																				
2.	**Communication Activities**																				
	Introduce Customers to Buyer Persona																				
	Publish the buyer persona blog post																				
	Publish the buyer persona newspaper article																				
	Publish the buyer persona newsletter																				
	Promote persona material on all HierBeiDir channels																				
	Utilize Customer Recommendations																				
	Send out customer letter/ e-mail to buyers																				
	Promote contest & prices on all HierBeiDir channels																				
	Introduce customers to recommendation stickers																				
	Promote stickers on all HierBeiDir channels																				
	Announce contest winner on company website																				
	Promote contest winner on all HierBeiDir channels																				
	Organize & Execute Scavenger Hunt Event																				
	Distribute HierBeiDir pins in represented local stores																				
	Announce scavenger hunt on website & in newspaper																				
	Conduct scavenger hunt for two weeks																				
	Promote scavenger hunt on all HierBeiDir channels																				
	Announce the winners of the scavenger hunt																				
	Promote the winners on all HierBeiDir channels																				
3.	**Evaluation of Campaign**																				
	Measurement of communication activities																				
	Measurement of awareness objective																				
	Evaluation staff meeting																				
	Conclusions for future policies & communication																				

Important Deadline:

31.10.2016 End of Campaign

To Do

Figure 22: Communication Campaign Planning

5. Conclusions

5.1 International Relevance

HierBeiDir's current organizational objective is to establish themselves on the German market and to raise national awareness. Once this has successfully been achieved, the formulated advice could be translated to international demands and markets.

Austria and Switzerland are the most beneficial markets to enter next (Bohne, personal communication, 2016). Since the language in these countries is also German, already used marketing and communication measures could be directly translated into these foreign markets. The use of a buyer persona could also be implemented. However, as the current buyer persona is based on research about German HierBeiDir customers, it would be advisable to first test the appropriateness of this profile on the foreign markets. This could be done by showing the developed persona to focus groups in both Austria and Switzerland and testing if the foreign customers respond positively to the profile. Based on this test, the persona should be adapted accordingly. Furthermore, it would be advisable to engage in additional research about the customer communication and purchase behavior in those foreign markets.

Provided that HierBeiDir engages in further research to familiarize themselves with the international markets, many of the described recommendations could be implemented in these countries.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to develop a communication strategy and campaign to increase customer's awareness of HierBeiDir. The developed research findings and recommendations have a number of significant implications for HierBeiDir's future practice. To effectively influence and increase the current level of awareness, HierBeiDir should execute a communication campaign with the duration of five months. This campaign should utilize the developed buyer persona and integrate her in several communication measures. Furthermore, the campaign should integrate a mixture of online activities such as social media, blog posts and newsletters with offline tools such as local newspapers and events. By engaging the customer and interacting with him in many different, yet integrated ways, HierBeiDir could achieve a general raise in awareness. It is further advised to engage in an on-going communication to increase awareness and to consider this campaign only as the first kick-off.

Consequently, implementing the advice given in this report, could benefit HierBeiDir's organizational objectives, enhance their current communication and facilitate the increase of customer awareness.

List of References

Carlson, J. R., & Zmud, R. W. (1999). Channel Expansion Theory and the Experiential Nature of Media Richness Perceptions. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 42(2), 153-170.

Childers, T. L., Carr, C. L., Peck, J. & Carson, S. (2001) Hedonic and Utilitarian Motivations for Online Retail Shopping Behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 77, 511-535.

Cho, C.H. (1999). How Advertising Works on the WWW: Modified Elaboration Likelihood Model. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising,* 21(1), 34-50.

Daft, R., & Lengel, H. (1986). Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness and Structural Design. *Management Science,* 32(5), 554-571.

Dainton, M., & Zelley E. D. (2005). *Applying Communication Theory for Professional Life – A Practical Introduction.* London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Di Blasio, P., & Milani, L. (2008). Computer-mediated Communication and Persuasion: Peripheral vs. Central Route to Opinion Shift. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24, 798-815.

Dutta-Bergman, M. J. (2002). Beyond demographic variables: Using psychographic research to narrate the story of Internet users. *Studies in Media & Information Literacy Education,* 2(3).

D'Urso, S. C. & Rains S. A. (2008). Examining the Scope of Channel Expansion: A Test of Channel Expansion Theory with New and Traditional Communication Media. *Management Communication Quarterly,* 21(4), 486-507.

Eyl, S. (2012). Top 10 Facebook KPIs – Critical Review. Retrieved, May 19th, 2016 from http://blog.fanpagekarma.com/2012/10/30/kpis-overview/?sw=1

Fiorelli, G. (2015). Understand and Harness the Power of Archetypes in Marketing. Retrieved April 30th, 2016 from https://moz.com/blog/the-power-of-archetypes-in-marketing

Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages. (2013). Retrieved May 10th, 2016 from http://www.nielsen.com/content/corporate/us/en/insights/reports/2013/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages.html

Hirschman, E. C. & Holbrook, M. B. (1982). The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings and Fun. *The Journal of Consumer Research,* 9(2), 132-140.

Ireland, L. C. (2002). Channel Integration Strategies: Building the Ideal Customer Experience. Retrieved, May 9th, 2016 from http://www.targetmarketingmag.com/article/channel-integration-strategies-28154/4/

Macdonald, E. & Sharp, B. (2003). Management Perceptions of the Importance of Brand Awareness as an Indication of Advertising Effectiveness. Retrieved April 29th, 2016 from http://marketing-bulletin.massey.ac.nz/V14/MB_V14_A2_Macdonald.pdf

Mark, M. & Pearson, C. S. (2001). *The Hero and the Outlaw – Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Moore, K. (2014). Top 5 Google Analytics KPIs: A Beginner's Guide to Web Analytics. Retrieved, May 19th, 2016 from http://www.datapine.com/blog/top-5-google-analytics-kpis/

Naik, P. A. & Raman, K. (2003). Understanding the Impact of Synergy in Multimedia Communications. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 40 (4), 375-388.

Park D. H., & Kim S. (2008). The effects of consumer knowledge on message processing of electronic word-of-mouth via online consumer reviews. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 7(4), 399-410.

Petty, R. E. & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and Persuasion – Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Pickering, B. (2011). 4 Reasons Why Contests Should Be Part of Your Marketing Strategy. Retrieved, May 11th, 2016 from https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/4-reasons-why-contests-should-be-part-of-your-marketing-strategy/

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press.

Rosen E. & Simonson, I. (2014). What Marketers Misunderstand About Online Reviews. Retrieved February 21st, 2016 from https://hbr.org/2014/01/what-marketers-misunderstand-about-online-reviews

Rubin, R. (2016). Implementing Channel Integration for Better Response. Retrieved, May 9th, 2016 from http://www.marketinggeneral.com/2016/04/20/implementing-channel-integration-for-better-response/

Sample Size Table, (2006). Retrieved April 29th, 2016 from http://www.research-advisors.com/tools/SampleSize.htm

Sauerwein, E., Bailom, F., Matzler, K., & Hinterhuber, H. H. (1996). The Kano Model: How to Delight Your Customers. *International Working Seminar on Production Economics,* 1, 313-327.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Student (*5th Ed.*).* England: Pearson Education Limited.

Schiff, J.L. (2014). 7 Ways to Create a Successful Integrated Marketing Campaign. Retrieved May 12th, 2016 from http://www.cio.com/article/2377257/online-marketing/7-ways-to-create-a-successful-integrated-marketing-campaign.html

Settle, R. B., Faricy, J. H., Warren, G.T. (1971). Consumer Information Processing: Attributing Effects to Causes. *Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research,* 278-288.

What about Germany? (n.d.) Retrieved April 29th, 2016 from https://www.geert-hofstede.com/germany.html

Vaughan, P. (2015). How to Create Detailed Buyer Personas for Your Business. Retrieved February 21st, 2016, from http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33491/Everything-Marketers-Need-to-Research-Create-Detailed-Buyer-Personas-Template.aspx

Verschuren, P., & Doorewaard, H. (2010). *Designing a Research Project* (2nd Ed.). The Hague: Eleven International Publishing.

Zhou, L., Dai, L., Zhang, D. (2007). Online Shopping Acceptance Model – A Critical Survey of Consumer Factors in Online Shopping. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 8.*

HierBeiDir.com

APPENDIX

1. Interview Summaries

1.1 Interview file 1

Interview file 1	**Date: 10-02-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 11.00 am**
Main Topic: Intake Interview with the client HierBeiDir	**Duration: 60 min**
Place: Düsseldorf	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewees: Phillipp Bohne & Peer Lichtenberg	
Role of interviewees: Philipp Bohne (CEO), Peer Lichtenberg (Head of HR)	
Goal of Interview: To get to know the client and the organization, to discuss the topic and the general direction of the research. Establish common ground and explore the communication problem more extensively.	
Intake Interview Summary: • HierBeiDir's general concept is to support local retailers to build up an online presence for their stores • HierBeiDir wants to give a face to online commerce and become the first contact point for local shopping • The company was founded in September 2013 and the website went online in April 2014. The idea originated when the founders were looking for a hammer but could not find a local store that offers the product online • the objective of this platform is to make local products accessible to online customers and to thereby, digitalize the local charm of German cities • Goal for 2020: establish a presence within 20 German cities • Need to increase awareness on the market • Relevant stakeholders of the company: local medium-sized retailers, online customers, local customers • HierBeiDir differs from their competitors • Focused on representing local retailers • Offers to deliver the product sustainably (via DHL GoGreen or bike messengers) • According to Bohne the company's unique selling proposition is their approachable, attainable, relatable and neighborly feel	

- HierBeiDir's vision is to provide the online customer with the local charm and expertise of regional retailers
- The company's mission is to develop, coordinate and market the online appearance of local retailers
- No internationalization planned yet, goal is to first secure their position in the German market. Afterwards interesting markets for internationalization would be Austria and Switzerland
- Extensive potential for growth in the market
- Online commerce market is continuously expanding, at the same time local retail industry is still strong
- Retail industry is worth 400 billion Euros, e-Commerce is worth 45 billion Euros
- Increasing digitalization is a lucrative opportunity
- Internal focus is on sustainability, however difficult to communicate to target group as a USP
- HierBeiDir wants to be perceived as likeable, local. Individual, responsible, costumer-oriented, sustainable
- Communication channels used to reach customers: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Corporate website, e-mails, newsletter for retailers
- Material that is disseminated contains mostly information about HierBeiDir
- HierBeiDir's ideal "wish" customer is 28, employed, conscious, sustainable, not only focused on the product price
- Communication Problem: There is no data about their target group of end consumers, HierBeiDir has only done research about their target group of retailers. The company is very unsure about who their actual consumer is, what characteristics they have, how they can be reached. They have never done an analysis of their final customers. Many unknown variables. As the company is still very young it is important to increase the awareness on the market

1.2 Interview file 2

Interview file 2	**Date: 22-02-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 13.00 am**
Main Topic: Interview about HierBeiDir's Communication Channels	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Düsseldorf	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Marvin Agena	
Role of interviewee: CMO	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of HierBeiDir's current communication activities and communication channels.	

Interview Summary:

- Currently used online communication channels: Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Google, XING, YouTube, Company Website, Company Blog
- Currently used offline channels: Radio, television, local newspapers, articles in trade magazines, appearances at trade fairs
- The goal of communication is to share content, create interactions with audiences, to promote products, spread news, to create awareness of HierBeiDir and the retailers that they are representing
- As of yet there is no clear strategy behind the selection of channels, more of a trial and error approach
- Likewise, at the beginning of February, HierBeiDir was featured in the documentary "local retail goes online" which was featured on the German television channel WDR. However, after the documentary was aired, there was no visible increase in awareness as there was not a great increase in likes on Facebook, Instagram etc. and purchases did not increase visibly either
- Pinterest is not really used anymore
- Communication in general should serve four functions: local advertising, product advertising, employer branding, branding for HierBeiDir
- So far, there is no content plan available. Contents are created at short notice
- There has been more research regarding the communication behavior of the retailer than that of the HierBeiDir customer
- Extensive research on the communication behavior of the retailer: mostly use Facebook because it is convenient, fast and low cost. E-mail marketing is also a good tool. Offline media channels are preferably television, radio and newspapers
- The little research that has been done on end-consumers shows that they use Google to get informed about shopping related matters. Four out of five local purchases were researched on the Internet prior to the purchase. Stimuli can also be created via Instagram, Facebook and magazines

- It is important to learn more about the communication style of customers so promotional efforts can be aligned to those findings
- The channels with the biggest reach are television and Facebook
- Channels that are uses most often Facebook, he company website and newspapers

1.3 Interview File 3

Interview file 3	**Date: 30-03-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 13.30 am**
Main Topic: Interview about the Development of Buyer Personas	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Telephone Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Norbert Schuster	
Role of interviewee: Expert for Lead Generation, Inbound Marketing, Buyer Personas and CEO of the consulting agency strike2.	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of buyer personas, their benefits as well as their development **Contents of Interview:** Definition of personas, development of buyer personas, needed characteristics, use and application of buyer personas in communication	
Interview Summary:	
Norbert Schuster is a German expert for lead generation, Inbound marketing and buyer personas. He is the CEO of his own consulting agency called strike2. His agency consults companies in how to make their marketing and communication efforts more efficient by targeting the leads that are most profitable to the client. A very important part of his work is the development of buyer personas for his client companies. • Schuster defines buyer personas as the best customer or lead for a company • Personas can tell companies who their actual customer is and they help to guide companies towards this customer • Companies benefit from buyer personas since it distances them from engaging in ego-posting. Often companies are to focused on themselves and not on the creation of content that is relevant for the actual customer • Personas enable a creation of tailored communication content • To develop buyer personas it is important to not be too shallow. Intensive research into the customers is needed • Important to research age, gender, income, education, hobbies, interests, lifestyle, life goals and challenges of customers • "Generally, two to three personas are most advisable in order to represent your best customers appropriately. However, if a company is rather small, they should focus on one persona which represents the best customer and which is the easiest to reach and engage" • Attention should also be paid to how customers purchase products, whether purchases are spontaneous or planned, which channels are used and what product information is relevant for their buying process	

- Once buyer personas have been identified all employees should be made familiar with these personas and their story should be told to relate to similar customers.
- Communication strategy needs to be aligned to the buyer persona that you want to target
- Buyer personas should play an essential role and should influence the creation of content to a very high degree

Interview Transcript (English Translation):

- **An important aspect of your work are marketing personas/ buyer personas. How would you define these personas?**
  For me a buyer persona defines the customers/ the leads that are the best for your company. Personas tell you who your actual customer really is and guide you towards your ideal customers. Developing personas provides companies with a clearer picture of their best targets.

- **What do you think is the benefit that companies can achieve from developing personas?**
  An important benefit of buyer personas is that companies are motivated to move away from their ego-posting. Often companies are too focused on themselves and do not consider if the content they are creating is also relevant for their customers. By developing personas, companies turn from ego-posting to customer-oriented content. Customer profiles through personas enable companies to create efficient business units and to create suitable content marketing strategies. Thus, content can be tailored towards customer's actual needs.

- **To which degree does the development of personas support/ add/ differ from a normal target group analysis?**
  The development of personas fine-tunes the target group analysis. A standard target group analysis is rather vague and only focuses on the bigger picture of your customers but not on the individual customer himself. Personas however, go one step deeper and reflect a more accurate picture of your customer.

- **How do you develop buyer personas? What are important steps in the process?**
  A common mistake in the development of personas is that the analysis of many companies is too shallow. It is vital to collect information that is relevant such as age, purchase behavior, motivations, whether people are dominant or focused on security. You need to gather information about their challenges, pain borders, hopes, informational behavior.

- **Which demographic and psychographic aspects are important for the development of a buyer persona?**
  Research your customer's age, gender, income, education, hobbies, interests, lifestyle, and life goals. What influences their purchase behaviors? How do they usually communicate? What drives and motivates them? Do they want to gain status or are they focused on improving their health? It is important to know what customers aim for.

- **How do I utilize/ transform collected customer data into personas?**
  It is important to not stop after having created the persona. The collected customer data can be transformed into a poster. Each persona should get its own poster. Generally, two to three personas are most advisable in order to represent your best customers appropriately. However, if a company is rather small, they should focus on one persona which represents the best customer and which is the easiest to reach and engage. These persona posters should be exposed to employees on a daily basis so that everybody in the company is familiar with them and their inherent characteristics. It is important that everyone, especially people in direct contact with customers, is acquainted and briefed

about the different personas. Moreover, everybody should be able to position themselves in the shoes of these personas and see situations and marketing messages through their eyes.

- **Regarding customer online purchase behavior, which aspects are especially important for the development of buyer personas?**
  Attention should be paid to how customers gather information and how they process it. Do your customers buy spontaneously? Or are their purchases planned thoroughly? How much time to they invest? What kind of guidance do they need from you? Which facts and evaluations are important to them? What does the customer journey look like? How do you take the customer by the hand and support him? Which questions might the customer be asking himself. All these questions need to be answered.

- **Regarding customer communication behavior, which aspects are especially important for the development of buyer personas?**
  Regarding the communication behavior it is important to find out which channels are most effective and suitable to communicate with your best customers. Do they prefer online or offline channels? Look at their needs, their routine and their habits. What content is most appropriate for which channel? Does the persona prefer to read articles or to watch videos? All this information can help to define the persona more clearly.

- **Once buyer personas have been identified, what are the next steps? Especially regarding marketing and communications.**
  After personas have been defined you need to translate them into your marketing. For instance you could design advertisements including your personas on your website. Tell their story to relate to similar customers. Be aware of which content is appropriate for which persona and which channel. Align your social media strategy to your personas, or design a blog that relates to your buyer personas. All measures should lead back to your buyer persona and be grounded on their characteristics.

- **Especially, if there are multiple personas, how do you differentiate your marketing/communications efforts?**
  There is often a relationship between your personas –something that all of them have in common. By defining these relationships you can connect marketing activities and find the common interests.

- **To which degree do buyer personas influence the content that needs to be created?**
  To a very high degree! Buyer personas set the bar for the content that needs to be created in order to effectively communicate with your ideal customer. All other content is just ego-posting and not really relevant for your customer. It is always good to relate your content to the individuals that you are trying to reach and influence.

- **Is there a method that can be applied to test the effectiveness/ suitability of the personas?**
  If a buyer persona is suitable or not can be seen via the feedback that you will receive. You can also interview your customers and ask them questions related to your buyer personas. It is always important to listen to your customers input.

- **Once a buyer persona has been established, how often should you update/ adjust them?**
  There is no golden rule. It depends on how well you knew the persona while you designed them and how much additional knowledge you have gained since. You should always update the persona if new insights have been gained.

1.4 Interview File 4

Interview file 4	**Date: 30-03-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 15.00 am**
Main Topic: Interview about the Development of Buyer Personas	**Duration: 60 min**
Place: Skype Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: C. M.	
Role of interviewee: Marketing, communication and entrepreneurship specialist	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of buyer personas, their benefits as well as their development **Contents of Interview:** Definition of personas, development of buyer personas, needed characteristics, use and application of buyer personas in communication	
Interview Summary:	

C. M. is a marketing, communication and entrepreneurship specialist who has already worked in the marketing departments of several international companies. During these years he has gathered expertise and insights into the use and development of buyer personas.

- C. M. defines buyer personas as visualizations of the customers a company wants to target
- Personas are representations that are based on detailed research about your customers
- The purpose of these personas is to bring the customer closer to the company and help companies realize who they are actually targeting and communicating with
- The benefit for companies is to be able to customize their communication strategy and make marketing efforts more efficient and specific
- Developing personas first requires detailed research
- Characteristics that should be researched include demographics such as age, gender, income, education, family status, occupation and psychographics such as lifestyle, values, opinions, hobbies, interests
- Personas help employees to focus
- By researching more and more about the persona the final image will eventually come to you. This process can guide you to define your best, your ideal customer. The customer that would be the easiest to convince.
- The process is like taking a photo: "**At first, the camera is still blurry and not focused on the picture of the person. By collecting more and more information the picture gets sharper and eventually it will focus and zoom in on the image of a person – your buyer persona**."
- Collected data should be clustered in order to identify the buyer persona
- It is important to find out how your customers shop online and prefer to communicate with the company
- Once buyer personas have been identified it is important to adjust the communication strategies to this persona/ personas
- It is essential to ask yourself **firstly** what do you want the customer to know, **secondly** what do you want the customer to feel and **thirdly** what do you want the customer to do -> according to that a communication strategy can be developed

Interview Transcript:

1. **An important aspect of marketing are marketing personas/ buyer personas. How would you define these personas?**
   Buyer personas are visualizations of the people you want as your target. They are representations based on detailed research and embody a picture of what the customer looks like. The **purpose** of developing personas is to incorporate the client and bring him closer to the company. Personas help companies realize who they are actually targeting and communicating to.

2. **What do you think is the benefit that companies can achieve from developing personas?**
   Good buyer personas help to design he communication strategy, to personalize it more and to make it clear who you are talking to. Companies can see what influences their customer's behavior. Personas can also show how a product related to the customer and how the communication needs to be adjusted to that. Personas enable differentiation and help to be more specific, more effective. Personas ensure that there is less waste of communication and create a sense of focus.

3. **To which degree does the development of personas support/ add/ differ from a normal target group analysis?**
   Compared to a standard target group analysis, personas can make the characterization more visual. They are real human beings with real values, interests and hobbies. Companies can get a real impression of who their customer is as personas embody their ideal customers. This provides a better grasp and goes one step further than the target group analysis. Personas help employees to focus, to meet the client and get more vivid pictures of the customers instead of having just a pool of data.

4. **How do you develop buyer personas? What are important steps in the process?**
   The first important step is to build a foundation based on detailed research. You need to get closer to the persona with every step. Companies need to ask themselves "What do I need to know? What do I want to know?" Important aspects to consider are hobbies, interests, values, political orientation, and lifestyle. It is also interesting to know what challenges, problems and hopes your customers are facing. If you are aware of their challenges, you can find out how your product can help them overcome these challenges and how you can play a role in the solution of their problem. So it is important to consider where HierBeiDir is stepping into this process. By researching more and more about the persona the final image will eventually come to you. This process can guide you to define your best, your ideal customer. The customer that would be the easiest to convince.

5. **Which demographic and psychographic aspects are important for the development of a buyer persona?**
   Important demographic aspects would be age, gender, education, family status and spending power. These characteristics can tell you a lot about your customers and eventually your personas. Especially the education tells you which tone of voice would be important for your communication messages. Regarding psychographics it is important to look at hobbies, interests, lifestyle, purchase behaviors online, benefits the customer is looking for, what challenges are they facing.

6. **How do I utilize/ transform collected customer data into personas?**
   You can use clusters to collect and define similarities. You need to look at the data and percentages you gathered. Pay attention if they are returning customers, if they are into online shopping. Are they for instance female serial online shoppers? If there are customers with similarities you can cluster them into groups. It is important to not only do this by yourself but to also include the client and people who are often in contact with customers. Organizing brainstorming sessions can help cluster customer data into personas. The process of persona development can be described as a camera as it moves from a blurry picture to focused one with each new piece of data and information.

7. **Regarding customer online purchase behavior, which aspects are especially important for the development of buyer personas?**
   It is important to find out how confident your customers are with shopping online. Are they extremely confident and purchase nearly all items online? Or are they only shopping online sporadically. By defining the frequency with which your customer is buying online, you can find out a lot about your customer.

8. **Regarding customer communication behavior, which aspects are especially important for the development of buyer personas?**
   Very important for the customer communication behavior is the use of channels. How do your customers want to communicate with you? Online, offline, with what frequency? Social media or print? Email, newsletters or YouTube videos? You need to find out what customers are most comfortable with. A persona can help if you want to find a way to connect with the customers, identify with them and relate to them in a deeper way. Personas can help customers relate to the product and feel like it is also addressed directly to them. Thus, you could also use a persona in your communication with customers.

9. **Once buyer personas have been identified, what are the next steps? Especially regarding marketing and communications.**
   Once personas have been identified it is essential to integrate them in the design of a communication strategy. When choosing communication channels and the content you want to communicate you should always keep in mind what your persona would like to hear, read or watch. Ask yourself **firstly** what you want the customer do know, **secondly** what you want the customer to feel and **thirdly** what you want the customer to do. Personas should guide the development of all these measures. Try and have the persona in front of your eyes while designing your strategy. It will help you to make it more fine-tuned, more spot-on. This way, messages will be more personalized.

10. **Especially, if there are multiple personas, how do you differentiate your marketing/communications efforts?**
    You need to make decisions. But it always depends on the aim you are pursuing. Are you communicating with all of them? Or are you selecting one channel for each persona? You should adjust different channels to different personas. For instance, you could design different versions of posters, flyers and videos. Use different pictures, slightly different messages to address different personas. Different stories will attract different buyers.

11. **Is there a method that can be applied to test the effectiveness/ suitability of the personas?**
    Personas can be tested by using A & B testing. You could ask your best customers if they would give you an interview. Show them two different versions of an advertisement (version A and version B) and let them decide which they like best. This way, you could test the suitability of the personas. Furthermore, you could also test a panel or case groups.

12. **Regarding advertising, do you consider rational or emotional appeals to be more effective?**
    It really depends on the product. Facts as price, delivery and benefits to be gained are always important to customers. You could still use a mixed approach though. Tell the customer what is unique about your company and connect it to emotions that would be appealing to them and their challenges.

1.5 Interview File 5

Interview file 5	**Date: 04-04-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 10.00 am**
Main Topic: Customer Interview about purchase & communication behavior and other customer characteristics	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Telephone Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Carina Kraus Jurecz	
Role of interviewee: Returning Customer of HierBeiDir	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of the customer's behavior and characteristics in order to define the target group & buyer personas more clearly **Contents of Interview:** Communication behavior, preferred channels, online purchase behavior, preferred product information, previous experiences with HierBeiDir	
Interview Summary (English Translation):	

Carina Kraus Jurecz is a returning customer of HierBeiDir. She is 56 years old, is married and has one son. The highest education she completed is the vocational diploma. Currently Mrs. Kraus Jurecz is working as a kindergarten teacher where she is earning a salary between 11.000 and 20.000 Euros annually.

- Mrs Kraus Jurecz a busy kindergarten teacher that often does not have the time to go shopping after she has completed her work in the evenings
- She also does not like to sacrifice her weekends and remaining free time for such things as shopping
- Therefore, she regularly shops online and purchases products via the Internet
- Nearly 50% of her shopping is done online
- She considers convenience, comfort, easy access and the ability to save time to be advantages of online shopping
- Mrs Kraus Jurecz's purchases are usually spontaneous and she prefers product information about quality and price
- Recommendations from others are also important to her
- She prefers online communication channels and mostly uses Google and company websites to inform herself
- Advertising should include both emotional and rational incentives, however rational is more decisive for the purchase
- She considers shopping to be a means to an end, a task that needs to be completed
- Mostly influenced by prior shopping preferences and marketing messages
- HierBeiDir differentiates itself from other shops since they are giving a face to the e-commerce by representing local retailers, more personal and relatable
- HierBeiDir provides the perfect opportunity to buy special presents and products that are not available everywhere else, but are something special
- Stays informed about HierBeiDir via their blog and company website
- Kraus Jurecz would like to have more personalized product recommendations and more stories on the blog about the retailers and their personal histories
- She first learnt about HierBeiDir via friends and family -> recommendations from others

Interview Transcript (English Translation):

1. **What does a typical day in your life look like?**
   In the morning I usually like to do sports. My work as a kindergarten teacher starts around noon and I get home late in the afternoon. The evenings I often spent relaxing with my husband at home.

2. **How do you like to spend your free time from work?**
   I like to be outdoors a lot and to spend my free time in the fresh air. I often go swimming or jogging. I also like to visit the sauna from time to time. So overall just relaxing and spending a lot of time outside.

3. **What are challenges that you have to overcome in your everyday routine?**
   Often I am busy during the entire day so once I get home I often feel tired and exhausted from work. Therefore, I often do not feel like going out again or going shopping. However, I also do not like to use my weekends for these to do's. I think the weekend is supposed to stay free from responsibilities and should be used to enjoy the free time.

4. **What are goals and objectives that you have in your life?**
   I want to see and experience a lot. I would like to travel to different countries and see things I have not seen before.

5. **Do you shop online regularly? If yes, what advantages does online shopping offer you?**
   I like to shop online and I also do it quite regularly. I would say that nearly half of my total purchases are done online. Mostly I buy clothes online. I think that the advantage of online shopping is that it is easy, comfortable and it saves you a lot of time. You can do it from your couch at home and also shop outside of the usual opening times of stores.

6. **Do you usually shop spontaneously or are your purchases planned?**
   My purchases are spontaneous. My closet for instance is full but I decide on which products to by while I am browsing online. I usually do not plan ahead of my shopping.

7. **What kind of product information is important for your purchase decisions?**
   I like to know about the quality of the product and of course the price.

8. **Regarding product information, which format do you prefer to receive the information in?**
   I like to read recommendations and the experiences of other customers. But good pictures and informative texts are also important. It depends on the entire package of the product. When I shop, I take the time to look at the information I need and I am also interested in learning about the product.

9. **Do you prefer online or offline channels to get information about products?**
   I prefer to inform myself online.

10. **Which of those channels do you use most often to gather information?**
    Primarily I use Google and company websites to collect the product information I need.

11. **Where/ who do you turn to for product recommendations?**
    I often look at customer product reviews. They help me to learn more about products and their features. However, they are just supportive materials. They do not ultimately decide whether or not I am going to purchase something. If I am convinced that I want a product I am going to buy it anyways.

12. **What convinces you more to purchase something online? Rational or emotional aspects?**

For me it is a mixture of both. Rational facts are very important to learn about the product and its features. Emotional appeals however, often help to make me become aware of a product and to become interested in it.

13. **Do you consider online shopping to be more of a task that needs to be completed or an experience and pastime in itself?**
Shopping is a means to an end. If I don't have the time or motivation to go into the city to do my shopping, I simply do that online because it is much easier and convenient. Of course, sometimes I also just browse the online shops to pass the time.

14. **Prior preferences, recommendations from others or marketing messages such as price, which of these aspects influences your purchase decisions the most?**
I am mostly influenced by my prior preferences and marketing messages. Recommendations of others play more of a supportive role but are not decisive.

15. **Via which channels would you prefer to receive promotional materials from companies?**
I like receiving emails and newsletters. I also look at the company's website but newsletters help me to gain an overview of what is new and what has changed. Otherwise it is hard because the company website has so many different things all at once.

16. **Which contents should these materials include? What would be interesting to you?**
I would like to receive product recommendations based on my previous purchases. Furthermore, I would like to learn more about the product's history and the retailers that are responsible for the product. A deeper view into the company and the business would also be interesting. It would make it a bit more personal.

17. **How did you first learn about HierBeiDir?**
It was recommended to me by my son. He showed me the website and what the company is doing.

18. **Which products did you purchase at HierBeiDir so far?**
I purchased different things as birthday presents at HierBeiDir. Electronic products for instance. I also bought clothing for myself.

19. **What do you like most about HierBeiDir?**
I like the idea and their approach that they are helping local retailers to enter the digital market. I think it is important that they also get the chance to survive in the modern world. It is a very worthwhile cause and I really like to support this. HierBeiDir is very domestic-oriented. I think that HierBeiDir helps to keep the city's charm alive.

20. **What differentiates HierBeiDir from other online shops?**
I think that HierBeiDir has a more personal charm, they give a face to the products and retailers that they are representing. HierBeiDir is not as anonymous and cold as giant online shops such as amazon. HierBeiDir serves a social objective and when I buy a product at HierBeiDir it gives me a good feeling because I can see who I am supporting with this purchase. I am supporting real people instead of faceless conglomerates.

21. **For which occasions did you buy products at HierBeiDir?**
A lot of my purchases were presents for my friends and family. Of course I also bought some of the products for myself. I love that at HierBeiDir I can buy products that are unique and not just "off the rack". These products are special because I would not find them anywhere else. The entire purchase

gave me a good feeling, from the order itself to the pretty package that arrived at my door. The entire experience is much more personal.

22. **Which channels do you use to stay informed about HierBeiDir?**
I regularly check their shop and website and check if there is anything new on their blog. I would also like to receive more newsletters again.

23. **How does HierBeiDir help you to overcome challenges in your daily life?**
HierBeiDir helps me to save time. I don't have to go to the city and search if there is a store that I might like. I can do it on my own time and convenience whenever it fits my schedule best.

24. **Is there something that you would like to see improved in HierBeiDir's service?**
I would like to get more detailed and interesting newsletters to stay informed about the company, their retailers and their products.

25. **HierBeiDir offers customers a sustainable and eco-friendly delivery. How did this aspect influence your purchase decision?**
I thought this is a wonderful idea. It is important to put emphasis on sustainability and I think it only enriches and adds to the overall shopping experience if you can support such a good idea. It also sets HierBeiDir apart from others.

26. **Is sustainability something that HierBeiDir should promote more to their customers?**
I think so. It is such a good influence and you feel better when you can support such a good cause. I think that more and more people should be made aware of this and should support this.

27. **Which of the following descriptions fits HierBeiDir best?**

The creator:

- **Creative, artistic, visionary, inspiring**
- **Focus on portrayal of self-image**
- **Do-it-yourself orientation**

The Protector:

- Helps others
- Avoids selfishness
- Defines himself through customer service
- Generous

The Normal Guy:

- Values connection to others
- Values belonging to a group
- Possesses solid virtues
- Loyal companion
- Down-to-earth

1.6 Interview File 6

Interview file 6	**Date: 06-04-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 10.00 am**
Main Topic: Customer Interview about purchase & communication behavior and other customer characteristics	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Telephone Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Regina Ihl	
Role of interviewee: Returning Customer of HierBeiDir	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of the customer's behavior and characteristics in order to define the target group & buyer personas more clearly **Contents of Interview:** Communication behavior, preferred channels, online purchase behavior, preferred product information, previous experiences with HierBeiDir	
Interview Summary:	

Regina Ihl is 24 years old and is a returning customer of HierBeiDir. Currently Regina has finished her Bachelor degree and is now doing a six months internship. She is living in Erkelenz, a small city near Düsseldorf. As an intern Regina does not have a regular income yet.

- A typical day in Regina's life consists of work and evenings of relaxation
- She regularly shops online as it is a great pastime for her. It also is very easy and convenient for her to be able to buy products on her phone while she is travelling
- Her purchases are spontaneous
- Product price and recommendations from others are important product information to her
- She prefers to receive product information in the form of videos, product reviews, pictures or articles
- Regina uses mostly online communication channels to inform herself about products
- Uses Google, company websites and social media to inform herself
- In regards to purchasing clothes she values emotional aspects and her own prior preferences the most
- In regards to purchasing other products rational aspects and reviews from others are most important
  For her, HierBeiDir helps her to save time since she can shop products online and it helps her to help local retailers without losing the benefits of online shopping.
- HierBeiDir differentiates itself from other online providers with their focus on local retailers and their special and different product portfolio

Interview Transcript (English Translation):

1. **What does a typical day in your life look like?**
   In the morning I go to work at my internship placement. I usually go there by train. In the evening I go home and I like to read a book or call my friends. I also regularly browse the Internet a lot and sometimes I visit several online shops.

2. **How do you like to spend your free time from work?**
   I prefer to spend my free time with my friends. I also like to do Yoga.

3. **What are challenges that you have to overcome in your everyday routine?**
   I often struggle to relax and calm down after I have spent the day working in the office.

4. **What are goals and objectives that you have in your life?**
   I want to find a job that suits me and that challenges me. I also want to find a balance between work and my personal life.

5. **Do you shop online regularly? If yes, what advantages does online shopping offer you?**
   I regularly shop online. I think a lot of women do that. Online shopping is just easy, convenient and you can do if from everywhere without having to visit a certain store. Especially, if you are in the train and there is nothing else to do, online shopping is great pastime. I also like to just order and try on clothes in my room at home.

6. **Do you usually shop spontaneously or are your purchases planned?**
   Spontaneously.

7. **What kind of product information is important for your purchase decisions?**
   The price is very important. Also I pay attention to recommendations from others and whether or not the provider of the product is credible.

8. **Regarding product information, which format do you prefer to receive the information in?**
   I like to receive product information in videos and product reviews. Articles and pictures can also be helpful. Videos are often more interesting and engaging.

9. **Do you prefer online or offline channels to get information about products?**
   I prefer to inform myself online.

10. **Which of those channels do you use most often to gather information?**
    I usually use apps on my phone to gather information. So Google for instance and social media.

11. **Where/ who do you turn to for product recommendations?**
    I often search on the company websites or look at comparison portals to compare different products with each other.

12. **What convinces you more to purchase something online? Rational or emotional aspects?**
    When I am buying clothes, shoes and accessories I am mostly influenced by emotional aspects. With all other products rational aspects such as benefits, features, price are more important.

13. **Do you consider online shopping to be more of a task that needs to be completed or an experience and pastime in itself?**

HierBeiDir.com

I consider online shopping to be a pastime. It takes time when you want to compare different sites and products with each other but it is also fun to do. If I am bored and want to pass some of my time I often look at my shopping apps and might even purchase something.

14. **Prior preferences, recommendations from others or marketing messages such as price, which of these aspects influences your purchase decisions the most?**
Again, when it comes to clothing I pay more attention to my prior preferences. With other products I am mostly influenced by recommendations from others as they can help me decide whether or not a product fits with my expectations. Recommendations help me to judge the quality of a product.

15. **Via which channels would you prefer to receive promotional materials from companies?**
I like to receive e-mails with recommendations and information. But I also often check social media if my favorite shops have posted something new and interesting.

16. **Which contents should these materials include? What would be interesting to you?**
I would like to receive product recommendations based on my previous purchases.

17. **How did you first learn about HierBeiDir?**
I first learned about them via the Internet when I searched for a product.

18. **Which products did you purchase at HierBeiDir so far?**
Banana bread.

19. **What do you like most about HierBeiDir?**
I like that they are different and that they offer things that others don't. Also I like that they support the local retailers.

20. **What differentiates HierBeiDir from other online shops?**
They offer products that you cannot find anywhere else. The products are special and often handmade. The personal stories of the retailers make the shopping experience much more personal and relatable.

21. **For which occasions did you buy products at HierBeiDir?**
I purchased products there to use them for myself.

22. **Which channels do you use to stay informed about HierBeiDir?**
I check their social media accounts and their website.

23. **How does HierBeiDir help you to overcome challenges in your daily life?**
HierBeiDir helps me to save time since I can shop products online and it helps me to help local retailers without losing the benefits of online shopping.

24. **Is there something that you would like to see improved in HierBeiDir's service?**
I cannot think of something.

25. **HierBeiDir offers customers a sustainable and eco-friendly delivery. How did this aspect influence your purchase decision?**
No it did not affect my purchase decision.

26. **Is sustainability something that HierBeiDir should promote more to their customers?**

Yes, I think sustainability is becoming more and more important and people show increasingly more interest in acting sustainable. Also HierBeiDir offers a sustainable delivery and still manages not to be more expensive than other companies in their delivery.

27. Which of the following descriptions fits HierBeiDir best?

The creator:

- **Creative, artistic, visionary, inspiring**
- **Focus on portrayal of self-image**
- **Do-it-yourself orientation**

The Protector:

- Helps others
- Avoids selfishness
- Defines himself through customer service
- Generous

The Normal Guy:

- Values connection to others
- Values belonging to a group
- Possesses solid virtues
- Loyal companion
- Down-to-earth

1.7 Interview File 7

Interview file 7	**Date: 13-04-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 17.00 am**
Main Topic: Customer Interview about purchase & communication behavior and other customer characteristics	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Telephone Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Vivi-Ann Agena	
Role of interviewee: Returning Customer of HierBeiDir	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of the customer's behavior and characteristics in order to define the target group & buyer personas more clearly **Contents of Interview:** Communication behavior, preferred channels, online purchase behavior, preferred product information, previous experiences with HierBeiDir	
Interview Summary (English Translation):	

Vivi-Ann is 20 years old and is a returning customer of HierBeiDir. Currently Vivi-Ann is completing her apprenticeship as a travel and tourism management assistant. She has finished her technical diploma and she is living on Langeoog. Her yearly income is below 11.000 Euros.

- Agena describes a typical day in her life as getting up early in the morning, leaving the house for work and returning around 17.00. After work she likes to relax, do sports, browse the internet or watch television
- Challenges in her daily life are to combine work and studying with each other. Often there not enough time for other things
- She does all of her shopping online
- Considers online shopping to be more convenient, easier and it doesn't require her to go to overcrowded stores. With online shopping she can shop at her own speed and time
- Her purchases are spontaneous and she considers shopping a pastime
- She mostly relies on customer recommendations/ reviews
- Agena prefers online communication channels
- Regarding product information she would like to receive pictures and videos to see pictures or videos of other customers wearing/ using the product
- She mostly uses company websites, Facebook and Instagram to inform herself about products
- Agena is motivated by both emotional and rational aspects
- About HierBeiDir she likes that products are more personal and interesting due to their background history and their origin from small local retailers
- Appreciates the sustainability aspect and thinks this should be promoted more

Interview Transcript (English Translation):

1. **What does a typical day in your life look like?**
   Typically I have to get up early in the morning. I leave the house for work and return around 17.00. After work I like to relax, do sports, browse the internet or watch television.

2. **How do you like to spend your free time from work?**
   I prefer to spend my free time with my boyfriend and friends.

3. **What are challenges that you have to overcome in your everyday routine?**
   Challenges in my daily life are to combine work and studying with each other. Often there is not enough time left for other things

4. **What are goals and objectives that you have in your life?**
   I want to finish my apprenticeship and study at a university of applied sciences. I want to get a good job later on.

5. **Do you shop online regularly? If yes, what advantages does online shopping offer you?**
   I actually do all my shopping online as there are not that many shops in my city and I often do not have the time to go the stores. I think purchasing products online is just easier, more convenient and faster. I also do not like to go to malls that are overflowing with people. That is just too stressful. Online I have a better overview of all the products and I can shop at my own time and speed.

6. **Do you usually shop spontaneously or are your purchases planned?**
   Spontaneously. I tend to just browse shops and if I like something, I buy it.

7. **What kind of product information is important for your purchase decisions?**
   I rely a lot on recommendations and reviews from other customers. They help me to judge a product before buying. The product provider and the delivery are also important to me.

8. **Regarding product information, which format do you prefer to receive the information in?**
   I prefer to receive product information with pictures and videos. I really like it when I see pictures or videos of other customers wearing/ using the product. That gives me a more realistic view of the product instead of the edited pictures in online shops. Product descriptions should always be short and not too long.

9. **Do you prefer online or offline channels to get information about products?**
   I prefer online channels.

10. **Which of those channels do you use most often to gather information?**
    I mostly use the company website itself to get product information. Furthermore, I also use google and look at comparisons sites. I also like to use social media such as Instagram or read blogs. Pictures often catch my attention faster than written texts.

11. **Where/ who do you turn to for product recommendations?**
    I turn to recommendations and reviews from other customers. I also ask my friends for suggestions.

12. **What convinces you more to purchase something online? Rational or emotional aspects?**
    I am convinced by both. If I buy clothes I buy what looks good and what appeals to me. But facts as price, benefits and delivery is also important.

13. **Do you consider online shopping to be more of a task that needs to be completed or an experience and pastime in itself?**
    For me online shopping is a pastime. I often do it if I have nothing else to do.

14. **Prior preferences, recommendations from others or marketing messages such as price, which of these aspects influences your purchase decisions the most?**
    Recommendations from others influence me the most.

15. **Via which channels would you prefer to receive promotional materials from companies?**
    I don't like newsletters. I would prefer to have promotional information on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Maybe also videos on YouTube.

16. **Which contents should these materials include? What would be interesting to you?**
    I would like to see pictures and stories of other customers using the product. Something just a little bit more personal than the average advertising. I also like to have product recommendations based on my previous choices.

17. **How did you first learn about HierBeiDir?**
    I first learned about them from my brother.

18. **Which products did you purchase at HierBeiDir so far?**
    Jewelry and a key chain.

19. **What do you like most about HierBeiDir?**
    I like that they support the local retailers. They also offer different and extraordinary products for instance a lot of spices, special coffee etc. Also the website in general is very appealing to me.

20. **What differentiates HierBeiDir from other online shops?**
    Products are more personal and interesting due to their background history and their origin from small local retailers. It is just something new and interesting in relation to other big stores. All products are portrayed fondly and it does not feel so organic. I think it is very important to buy from the original sources as much as possible and HierBeiDir supports that.

21. **For which occasions did you buy products at HierBeiDir?**
    I bought all products as presents for family and friends. The products there fit special occasions.

22. **Which channels do you use to stay informed about HierBeiDir?**
    I check their social media accounts, especially Facebook and Instagram, and their website. But I didn't know that they have a blog.

23. **How does HierBeiDir help you to overcome challenges in your daily life?**
    HierBeiDir helps me to save time when I do my shopping and offers me the chance to help local retailers.

24. **Is there something that you would like to see improved in HierBeiDir's service?**
    Sometimes I think the website is a little bit too crowded and you spend too much navigating.

25. **HierBeiDir offers customers a sustainable and eco-friendly delivery. How did this aspect influence your purchase decision?**
    Yes. I think this is a great and worthwhile approach that should be continued.

26. **Is sustainability something that HierBeiDir should promote more to their customers?**
    Yes, I think this is getting more and more important and people's awareness is rising.

27. **Which of the following descriptions fits HierBeiDir best?**

The creator:

- **Creative, artistic, visionary, inspiring**
- **Focus on portrayal of self-image**
- **Do-it-yourself orientation**

The Protector:

- Helps others
- Avoids selfishness
- Defines himself through customer service
- Generous

The Normal Guy:

- Values connection to others
- Values belonging to a group
- Possesses solid virtues
- Loyal companion
- Down-to-earth

1.8 Interview File 8

Interview file 8	**Date: 22-04-2016**
Year 4/ Graduation assignment	**Time: 15.00 am**
Main Topic: Customer Interview about purchase & communication behavior and other customer characteristics	**Duration: 30 min**
Place: Telephone Interview	
Name of interviewer: Fabienne Bullermann	
Name of interviewee: Christopher Becker	
Role of interviewee: Returning Customer of HierBeiDir	
Goal of Interview: To establish a better understanding of the customer's behavior and characteristics in order to define the target group & buyer personas more clearly **Contents of Interview:** Communication behavior, preferred channels, online purchase behavior, preferred product information, previous experiences with HierBeiDir	
Interview Summary:	

Christopher is 29 years old, a returning customer of HierBeiDir and currently lives in Mainz and works as a teacher for Biology and Physical Education. His yearly income is between 11.000 and 20.000 Euros.

- A typical day for him is to go to work, go home and work on his lectures and afterwards do sports
- Challenges for him are to work so much and still find time to do shopping and care for the household
- He does a lot of his shopping online
- Considers online shopping to be more time-efficient, convenient and it offers him more product variety
- His purchases are usually planned and he considers shopping to be a task that needs to be completed
- He prefers to use online channels
- Regarding his purchase decisions, customer reviews and recommendations are most important, they heavily influence his final purchase decisions
- He collects recommendations from friends, family and from the Internet
- Becker pays most attention to rational and functional aspects, they are the most convincing for him
- Learned about HierBeiDir from friends
- He has already purchased jewelry as a present for his girlfriend at HierBeiDir
- Would prefer to receive company news via social media. He wasn't aware that HierBeiDir has a blog Becker appreciates the overall design and concept of HierBeiDir and likes the idea to bring the local retail and its uniqueness to the Internet.
- He also values a sustainable delivery and thinks this should be promoted more as it is a very important thing to do

Interview Transcript (English Translation):

1. **What does a typical day in your life look like?**
   In the morning I go to school and do my lectures, afterwards I go home and then I still have to prepare the lectures for the next day. That takes me around 2-3 hours. After that I usually do sports or go to my football training.

2. **How do you like to spend your free time from work?**
   Sports, football and my friends.

3. **What are challenges that you have to overcome in your everyday routine?**
   It is often very stressful to give lectures and afterwards still prepare the lessons. If I also have to grade essays I often don't have any time left to do my shopping or clean the house.

4. **What are goals and objectives that you have in your life?**
   I want to be successful in my job and personal life.

5. **Do you shop online regularly? If yes, what advantages does online shopping offer you?**
   I do. Most often I buy sport equipment and sports clothes on the Internet. For me that is much more convenient and comfortable after a long day of working. It saves time and it offers a greater variety of products than the stores in the city. I also feel like online shops are better organized.

6. **Do you usually shop spontaneously or are your purchases planned?**
   My purchases are usually planned, at least if I buy something really expensive on the Internet like Ski equipment.

7. **What kind of product information is important for your purchase decisions?**
   I always look at customer reviews and recommendations of products before buying. If these reviews paint a negative picture of a product, I don't buy it. They have a great amount of influence on me.

8. **Regarding product information, which format do you prefer to receive the information in?**
   I prefer to written information like articles or reviews.

9. **Do you prefer online or offline channels to get information about products?**
   I prefer online channels. They are much more time-efficient than offline channels.

10. **Which of those channels do you use most often to gather information?**
    The first step is for me to always look at the company website. Afterwards I look for product reviews from other customers, either on the company website or other sites.

11. **Where/ who do you turn to for product recommendations?**
    If I know my friends or family know about a product, I ask them first. Otherwise I look at online reviews.

12. **What convinces you more to purchase something online? Rational or emotional aspects?**
    Definitely rational and functional facts.

13. **Do you consider online shopping to be more of a task that needs to be completed or an experience and pastime in itself?**
    For me it is a means to an end, something that needs to be completed.

14. **Prior preferences, recommendations from others or marketing messages such as price, which of these aspects influences your purchase decisions the most?**

HierBeiDir.com

Recommendations from others influence me the most.

15. **Via which channels would you prefer to receive promotional materials from companies?**
I don't like e-mails. I like to receive news via social media.

16. **Which contents should these materials include? What would be interesting to you?**
I would like to see something that is relevant to me. Maybe some more reviews, someone testing the product.

17. **How did you first learn about HierBeiDir?**
I first learned about them from my friends.

18. **Which products did you purchase at HierBeiDir so far?**
Jewelry as a present for my girlfriend.

19. **What do you like most about HierBeiDir?**
I like that they have a very appealing design and overall concept on their website. Also the idea behind the company is a very good one.

20. **What differentiates HierBeiDir from other online shops?**
The idea to bring the local retail and its uniqueness to the Internet.

21. **For which occasions did you buy products at HierBeiDir?**
I bought there to purchase a gift for my girlfriend.

22. **Which channels do you use to stay informed about HierBeiDir?**
I check their social media accounts. I didn't know that they have an online blog.

23. **How does HierBeiDir help you to overcome challenges in your daily life?**
HierBeiDir helps me to find products from local retailers. With their support I can also buy from local shops instead of having to order the mass produced products from big companies.

24. **Is there something that you would like to see improved in HierBeiDir's service?**
No.

25. **HierBeiDir offers customers a sustainable and eco-friendly delivery. How did this aspect influence your purchase decision?**
Yes. This aspect definitely influences my purchase decision. It is very important for me to act ecologically.

26. **Is sustainability something that HierBeiDir should promote more to their customers?**
Yes, I think this should be more promoted since it is a very good cause.

27. **Which of the following descriptions fits HierBeiDir best?**

The creator:

- Creative, artistic, visionary, inspiring
- Focus on portrayal of self-image
- Do-it-yourself orientation

The Protector:

- **Helps others**
- **Avoids selfishness**
- **Defines himself through customer service**
- **Generous**

The Normal Guy:

- Values connection to others
- Values belonging to a group
- Possesses solid virtues
- Loyal companion
- Down-to-earth

2. SWOT Analysis

3. Competitor Analysis

1.

Company	Amazon
Founded in	1994
Reach	Global Reach
Product Portfolio	Food, Beverages, Electronics, Fashion, Entertainment, Home & Garden, Books etc.
Revenue	10.54 Billion Euro
Target Group	All customers are targeted
Delivery	Global Delivery
Logo	amazon

2.

Company	eBay
Founded in	1995
Reach	21 million visitors per month
Product Portfolio	Fashion, House & Garden, Electronics, Entertainment, Books etc.
Revenue	16.04 billion USD
Target Group	Private buyers & sellers, professional online retailers
Delivery	Global Delivery
Logo	ebay

3.

Company	Locafox
Founded in	2013
Reach	Customers in Berlin, Bremen, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, München, Stuttgart, Köln, Hamburg
Product Portfolio	Fashion, House & Garden, Electronics, Entertainment, Books, Beauty, Toys & Baby etc.
Revenue	-
Target Group	Families, older generations, local citizens
Delivery	Within cities
Logo	LocaFox

4.

Company	atalanda
Founded in	2014
Reach	Within Germany
Product Portfolio	Food, Beverages, Art, Fashion, House & Garden, Entertainment
Revenue	-
Target Group	Private consumers, professional online retailers
Delivery	Within German cities
Logo	atalanda

5.

Company	sugartrends
Founded in	2014
Reach	Local, regional, national as well as international
Product Portfolio	Fashion, Jewellery, Art, Furniture
Revenue	-
Target Group	Young, modern and creative customers
Delivery	global
Logo	SUGARTRENDS. Find Unique Products from Local Shops

4. Competition: Positioning Map

5. Research Methods per Research Question

Research Area	Research Question	Research Methods
Online Consumer Purchase Behavior	1. What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's online purchase behavior according to opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts	Desk Research & Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview
	1.1 Which motivation stimulates online purchases according to HierBeiDir customers, literature and experts?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview, Desk Research
	1.2 Which aspects of the influence mix impact decision making according to HierBeiDir customers?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview
	1.3 Which customer preferences create successful online shopping experiences as reported by literature and customers?	Online Survey, Desk Research, Semi-structured Interview

Research Area	Research Question	Research Methods
Consumer Communication Behavior	2. What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, determine customer's communication behavior based on opinions of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts in the field?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview, Desk Research
	2.1 What is the perception and usage of communication channels according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview
	2.2 Which is the preferred route for information processing according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview, Desk Research

Research Area	Research Question	Research Methods
Customer Characteristics	3. What criteria, as delineated from the theories reviewed and other relevant literature, are relevant for creating suitable buyer personas and increasing awareness according to HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers and experts in the field?	Online Survey, Semi-structured Interview, Desk Research

	3.1 Which demographics define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?	Online Survey, Interview, Desk Research
	3.2 Which psychographics define HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers according to experts, literature and customers?	Online Survey, Interview, Desk Research
	3.3 What is the attitude of HierBeiDir's potential and existing customers towards sustainability according to customer's opinions?	Online Survey, Interview, Desk Research
	3.4 Which brand archetype can be ascribed to HierBeiDir to create effective storytelling based on customer's opinions and literature?	Desk Research, Interview

6. Preliminary Research Results

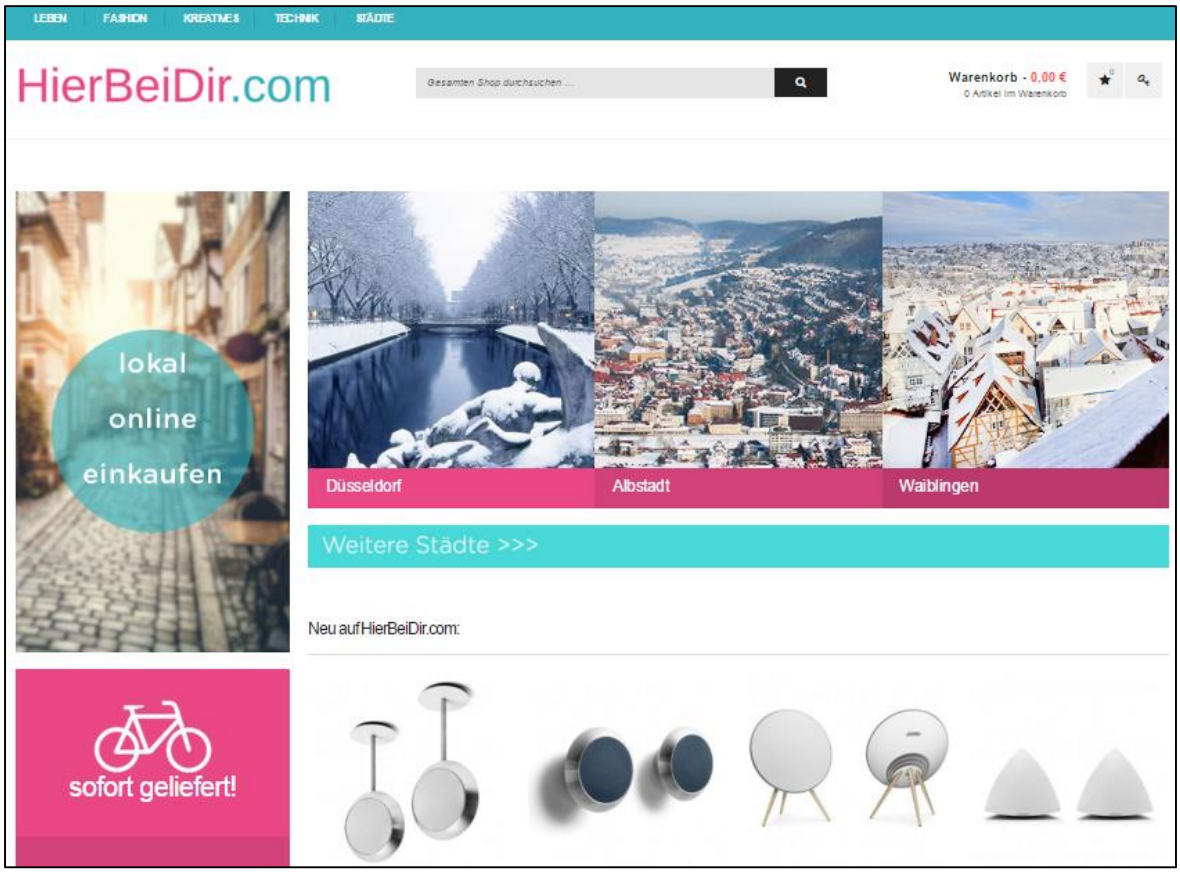
6.1 HierBeiDir Company Profile

Company Logo:

HierBeiDir.com

Company Website:

Domain: https://hierbeidir.com/



HierBeiDir Price and Performance List for Retailers

Leistungsübersicht HierBeiDir.com

	Durchstarter	Entdecker	Eroberer
Grundgebühr	39€ /pro Monat	79€ /pro Monat	149€ /pro Monat
Artikel	125	500	Unbegrenzt
Verkaufsprovision	10%	10%	10%
Bezahlabwicklung	X	X	X
Versandabwicklung	X	X	X
Retourenabwicklung	X	X	X
SEO	X	X	X
SEM	★	★★	★★★

Company Description:

"Often the online world is perceived as anonymous and non-transparent - we want to give a relatable face to online commerce"- HierBeiDir

- HierBeiDir is a small and young company which considers itself as a complementary partner of the stationary retailers within e-commerce
- Founded September 2013
- The website went online in April 2014
- a growing local market place on the Internet, translate local shops to the online world
- want to preserve the local feel and love for the city's character
- want to represent the heart/ charm of the local retailers online
- keeps the personal relationship towards the retailer alive
- HierBeiDir offers owner-managed companies the opportunity to sell their products and services online in cooperation with the HierBeiDir platform
- not only promotes the products but also tells the stories of the retailers
- HierBeiDir is thus offering an online presence to companies that do not have their own online appearance
- the company's core concept is to create attention and desirability for their retailers and to manage and meet the demands of their customers
- HierBeiDir are not only representing the retailers online but also connect them on the digital market while preserving a local approach and customization
- With the help of HierBeiDir the customer is able to gain an overview of the local offer and to support the local businesses with their purchases
- HierBeiDir can also be considered as the missing link between the online and offline channels/ online and offline commerce since the customers know from whom they are buying their products and services which creates a more relatable, local and approachable relationship between buyer and seller
- customers are able to consult the expertise of the retailers in order to avoid bad bargains

- the approachable and short mental distance between buyer and seller also accounts for the creation of long-term relationships
- HierBeiDir is therefore promising the online customer a new feeling of familiarity and intimacy that is usually not present within online e-commerce
- delivery is sustainable -> either with a bike messenger or DHL GoGreen
- HierBeiDir also offers the advantage that they are offering their customers several products and services from one source, meaning there is only one contact person necessary
- HierBeiDir also combines competences in IT, Internet marketing, SEO and other core competences that retailers need for a successful online representation of their shop
- Participating shops have the opportunity of paying different fees to HierBeiDir which come with different service packages
- If a product is sold via HierBeiDir, the company receives a provision of 10%
- the packages can be cancelled monthly
- If a customer places an order, HierBeiDir contacts the retailer to make sure that the product is still in store. HierBeiDir then sends a dispatch note to the retailer. The retailer then has to attach this note to the package and send it via DHL GoGreen to the customer. If the order was placed by a local customer the product is delivered by a bike messenger

HierBeiDir Vision Statement:

"To provide the online customer with the local charm and expertise of regional retailers"

HierBeiDir Mission Statement:

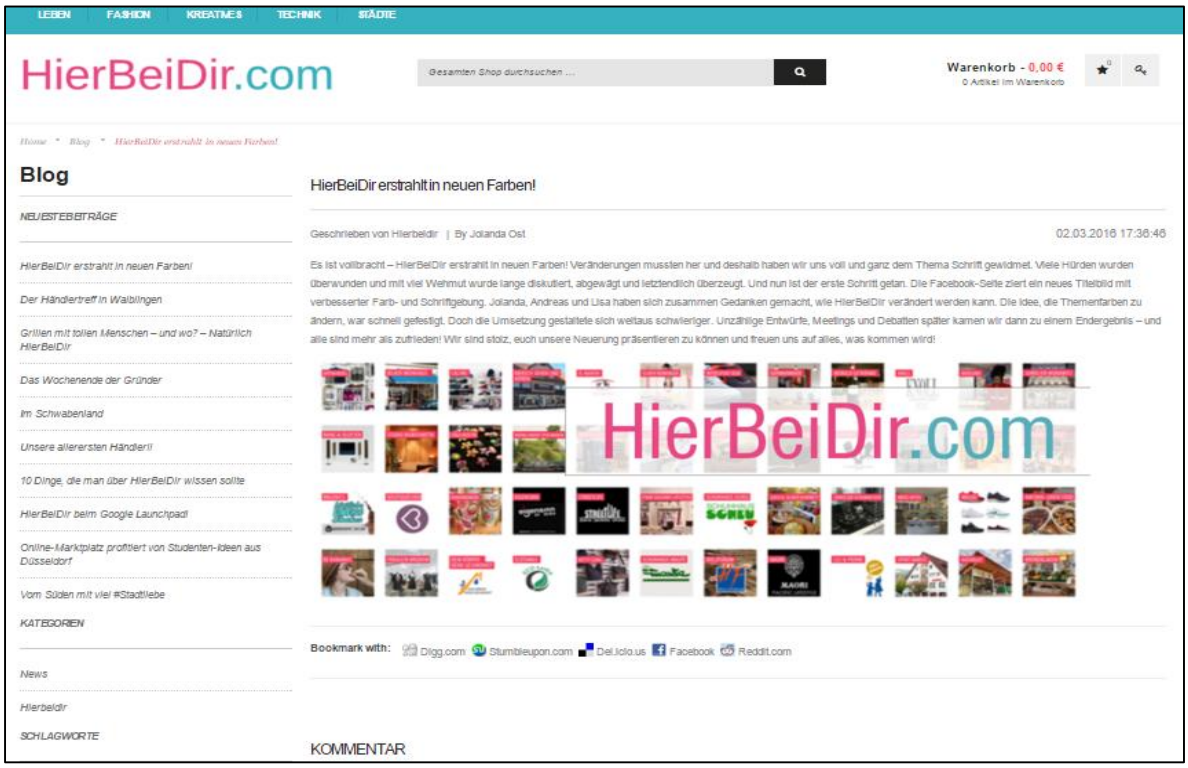
"To develop, coordinate and market the online appearance of local retailers"

HierBeiDir Current Communication Channels

Facebook Account:

Twitter Account:

Company Blog:



HierBeiDir German Media Coverage:

Media Source 1: Gründerszene

Media Source 2: Gründungsnetzwerk Düsseldorf

GRÜNDUNGSNETZWERK DÜSSELDORF

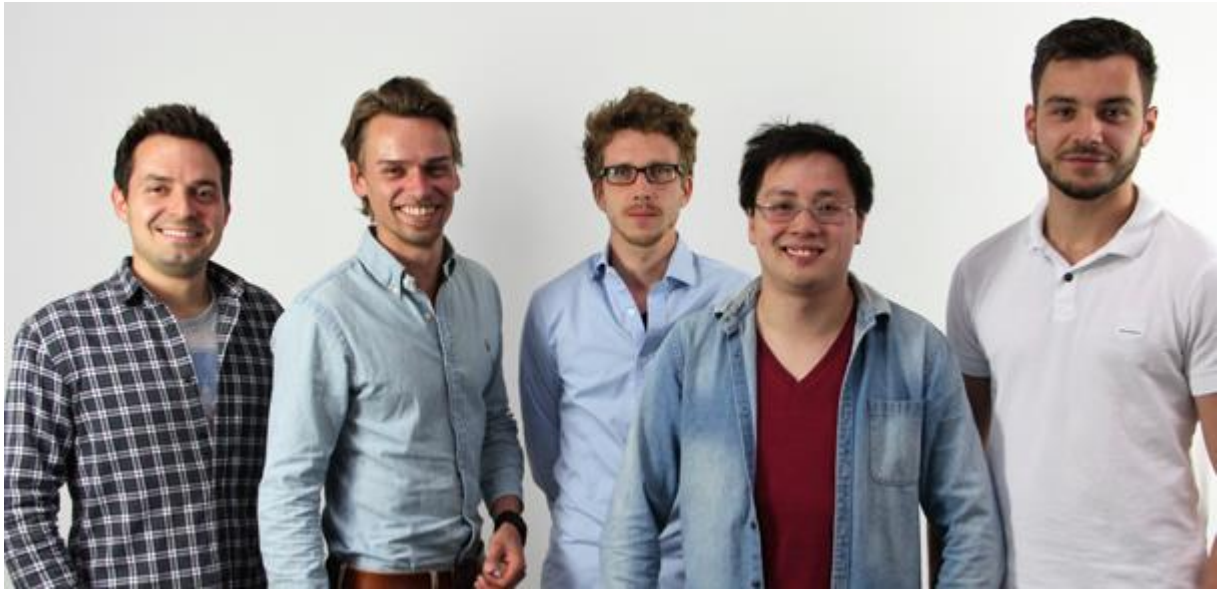
Unternehmen des Monats Oktober 2015

HierBeiDir.com

HierBeiDir.com Lokales entdecken!

Hierbeidir UG (haftungsbeschränkt)
Am Wehrhahn 17
40211 Düsseldorf
Telefon 0211 73149417
Telefax 0211 98399842
info@hierbeidir.com
hierbeidir.com

HierBeiDir.com ist ein Startup, welches lokalen Einzelhändlern den Weg in den Onlinehandel weist. Über eine Online-Verkaufsplattform kauft man hier bei echten Händlern, also bei echten Menschen ein. Bei HierBeiDir.com hat man die Möglichkeit, beim Händler aus der Heimatstadt einzukaufen oder neue Händler aus anderen Städten zu entdecken. Die vorhandene regionale und überregionale Vielfalt wird somit online erreichbar gemacht, trägt aber gleichzeitig zum Erhalt des inhabergeführten Einzelhandels bei. Durch den Online-Einkauf auf HierBeiDir.com stärkt der Kunde somit den Einzelhandel in den Städten. Ganz nebenbei tut der Kunde auch etwas Gute für die Umwelt, da die Bestellung auf kürzeren Wegen umweltfreundlich per Fahrradkurier in 120 Minuten bis zur Haustür geliefert wird, auf längeren Transportwegen wird mit DHL GoGreen versendet.



Media Source 3: NRW Startups

NRW STARTUPS

NEWS | INTERVIEWS | STARTUP-SCREENER | NRW STARTUPS | JOBBÖRSE (GRATIS)

KÖLN | BONN | DÜSSELDORF | AACHEN | MÜNSTER | RUHRGEBIET

Neues Startup Profil: Hierbeidir aus Düsseldorf

BY MANUEL • 18. NOVEMBER 2013 • DÜSSELDORF • COMMENTS (1) • ♡1725

Wie heißt Euer Startup?

Unser Startup heißt Hierbeidir und wir kommen aus Düsseldorf.

Was für ein Problem der Welt da draußen wollt Ihr lösen – und wie?

Oft scheuen Einzelhändler die hohen Investitionen für einen eigenen Online-Shop. Fehlendes Know-How und mangelnde Erfahrung machen den Einstieg zu einem unkalkulierbaren Risiko. Trotz eines stetigen Wachstums des E-Commerce Sektors und einem schwächelnden Einzelhandel, haben viele das Potenzial des neuen Vertriebskanals noch nicht für sich entdeckt.

Wir bieten jedem Einzelhändler, der den Weg ins Internet noch nicht gefunden hat, einen einfachen und kostengünstigen Start ins E-Commerce. Mit unserem Provisionsmodell können Händler, ohne Risiko einer Fehlinvestition, sicher sein, sich mit uns als professionellem Partner am Online- Markt zu etablieren.

Nutzen für unsere Partner

Hierbeidir.com bietet hierfür eine einfache Lösung an. Waren können ohne Internet- und Marketingkenntnisse in unserem Onlinekaufhaus einem großen Publikum zugänglich gemacht werden. Durch Zentralisierung und Automatisierung werden Kosten und Arbeitsaufwand gesenkt. Diesen Wettbewerbsvorteil können wir an unsere Partner weitergeben.

Nutzen für unsere Partner

Hierbeidir.com bietet hierfür eine einfache Lösung an. Waren können ohne Internet- und Marketingkenntnisse in unserem Onlinekaufhaus einem großen Publikum zugänglich gemacht werden. Durch Zentralisierung und Automatisierung werden Kosten und Arbeitsaufwand gesenkt. Diesen Wettbewerbsvorteil können wir an unsere Partner weitergeben.

Das Gründerteam hat hierzu ein umfangreiches Dienstleistungspaket mit unseren Partnern entwickelt. Bestellungen werden vollautomatisch über unser System weitergeleitet. Empfangen werden die Aufträge per E-Mail, FAX, Smartphone oder in Zukunft auch über unseren Clouddrucker. Eine Internetanbindung ist nicht zwingend notwendig, um bei uns seine Waren anzubieten. Zudem wird gleichzeitig der für diese Region zuständige Logistikpartner über den Auftrag informiert. So kann der Fahrradkurier innerhalb der Frist seine Fahrten bestmöglich organisieren, um Leerfahrten und Kosten zu vermeiden.

Nutzen für den Endkunden

Das Sortiment wird dem Kunden in erster Linie regional angezeigt und verkauft. Unsere gemeinsamen Kunden erhalten ein vielfältiges Angebot ihrer Stadt und Region. Es ist dennoch möglich deutschlandweit zu stöbern und seine Bestellung aufzugeben. HierBeiDir.com bietet alle Bequem- lichkeiten eines herkömmlichen Online-Shops mit einem Rundum-Service für die Händler. Dabei spielt es keine Rolle, ob die Bestellung per Smartphone, Tablet oder Computer getätigt wird. Lokal verfügbare Waren können innerhalb von max. 120 Minuten von Kurieren geliefert werden oder direkt im Laden abgeholt werden.

Womit wollt Ihr Geld verdienen? Wie sieht Euer Business Modell aus?

Unser Potential schöpfen wir einerseits aus dem starken Einzelhandel und anderseits aus dem stark wachsenden E-Commerce hierzulande. Wir vereinen die Stärken beider Märkte und bringen sie unseren Kunden näher.

Seite 10 Jahren gibt es einen stark wachsenden Markt in diesem Bereich. Die Aufgabe in der Zukunft wird sein den Einzelhandel in diesen Bereich zu implementieren.

Media Source 4: Impulse

KONFERE

impulse

Ideen umsetzen. Werte schaffen

MANAGEMENT UNTERNEHMEN RECHT + STEUERN FINANZEN WIRTSCHAFTSPOLITIK

› Gründung › Geschäftsideen › Hierbeidir.com

Hierbeidir.com

„Wir waren anfangs total euphorisch und naiv“

Marvin Agena, Mitbegründer von Hierbeidir.com, zieht Bilanz: Was ist aus dem ersten Businessplan geworden?
© Felix Gemein

Einzelhändler online zu bringen, diese Idee hatten Marvin Agena und seine Freunde. Wie steht es heute um das Unternehmen? impulse hat nachgehakt.

Noch zu Studienzeiten ärgerte sich Marvin Agena mit seinen Kommilitonen Philip Jurecz, Peer Lichtenberg, Philipp Bohne und Nam Vo über die Macht der großen Onlinehändler. 2013 gründeten die fünf Hierbeidir.com – ein Portal, das Einzelhändlern einen lokalen Web-Marktplatz bietet. Für jeden online verkauften Artikel zahlen die Ladeninhaber 10 Prozent Provision an das Start-up, dazu kommt eine monatliche Grundgebühr von 40 bis 150 Euro.

impulse: Was denken Sie heute, wenn Sie in Ihren ersten Businessplan schauen?

Marvin Agena: Wir haben uns vieles zu einfach vorgestellt, auch weil wir anfangs sehr positives Feedback bekamen: Als wir 2013 über unsere Geschäftsidee bloggten, rief sogar Rocket Internet bei uns an. Wir waren total euphorisch – und ziemlich naiv.

Was waren die Schwierigkeiten?

Wir wollten zu viel auf einmal: eine tolle Webseite, sofort Kapital aufnehmen, groß werden. Aber viele Investoren haben uns damals noch nicht ernst genommen – ein ziemlicher Dämpfer. Wir haben dann beschlossen, uns zunächst auf den Vertrieb zu konzentrieren.

Und hat das geklappt?

Anfangs war es schwierig, die Händler von unserer Idee zu überzeugen. Unsere erste Strategie war, jeweils 20 Läden aus den 20 größten deutschen Städten zu gewinnen. Dabei wurde uns klar, dass wir effizienter arbeiten, wenn wir uns auf einen Standort konzentrieren. So haben wir uns erst mal Düsseldorf vorgenommen.

Wie sind Sie bei der Akquise vorgegangen?

Wir haben uns persönlich bei den Händlern vorgestellt und unsere Idee bei Events der Wirtschaftsförderung präsentiert. Das hat viele Kontakte gebracht. Als wir erste namhafte Kunden wie Bang & Olufsen verkünden konnten, entstand ein Sogeffekt. Diesen „Zugpferden“ haben wir als Eröffnungsangebot die Grundgebühr erlassen. Bei anderen Städten gehen wir nun genauso vor – und wollen sie wie Düsseldorf schrittweise erschließen.

Wie finanzieren Sie Ihren Wachstumskurs?

Unsere drei Business-Angel haben 150.000 Euro investiert. Wir selbst haben noch mal 75.000 Euro in die Firma gesteckt. Wir haben einen engen Kontakt zu unseren Geldgebern. So konnten wir auch in schwierigen Zeiten auf sie zählen.

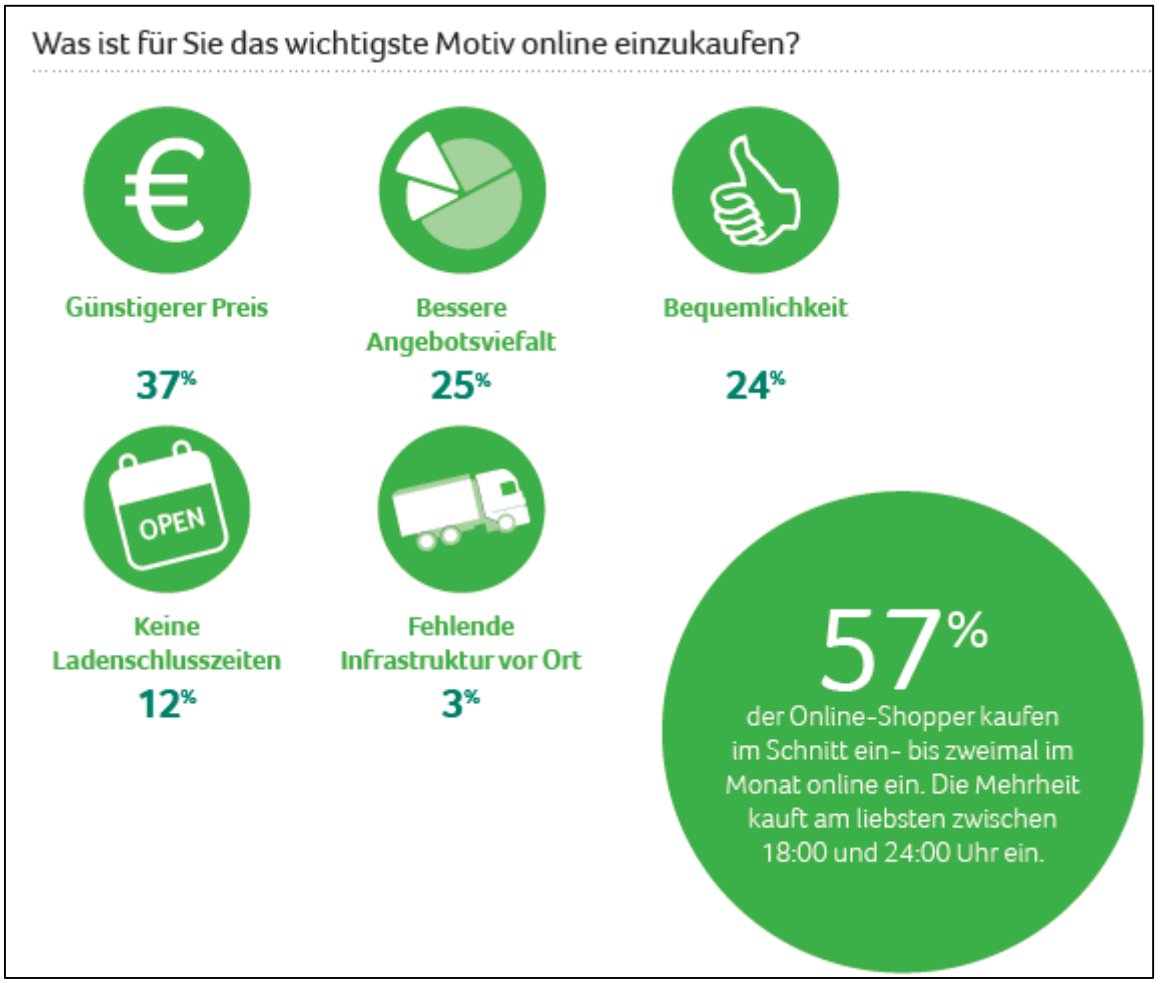
Ihren Break-even Mitte 2014 haben Sie verpasst. Wie lautet das neue Ziel?

Wir erwarten, dass wir Mitte des nächsten Jahres erstmals schwarze Zahlen schreiben. Dazu brauchen wir etwa 200 weitere Händler. Das können wir schaffen. In fünf Städten führen wir bereits konkrete Gespräche.

Was steht noch in den nächsten Monaten an?

Wir haben derzeit jeden Monat rund 80.000 Besucher auf unserer Seite, aber wir müssen diese Zahl weiter ausbauen, um profitabel zu werden. Dabei helfen uns auch Kooperationen – etwa mit Zeitungsverlagen: So können Einzelhändler, die eine Printanzeige schalten, ihre Produkte gegen einen geringen Aufpreis auch bei uns präsentieren und verkaufen. In der Anzeige wird dann auch auf den Onlineshop verwiesen. Man muss nicht alles allein schaffen – auch das haben wir gelernt.

6.2 E-Commerce Statistics



- According to the Ecommerce benchmark report, 57% of online shoppers purchase products online once or twice a month
- The most important motives for purchasing online are:
  1. Cheap Prices
  2. A bigger product portfolio
  3. Convenience
  4. No closing time
  5. Lack of sufficient infrastructure
- 49.8 % of online shoppers are male, 50.2% are female
- The majority of online shoppers lives in city with more than 100.000 citizens

Alter	Antwort in %
18 bis 25 Jahre	12 Prozent
26 bis 40 Jahre	28 Prozent
41 bis 65 Jahre	43 Prozent
über 65 Jahre	17 Prozent

- 12% of online shoppers are between the age of 18 and 25 years
- 28% of online shoppers are between the age of 26 and 40 years
- 43% of online shoppers are between the age of 41 and 65 years
- 17% of online shoppers are over the age of 65 years

Welche Marketinginstrumente nutzen Sie derzeit, um Kunden in Ihren Webshop zu holen?

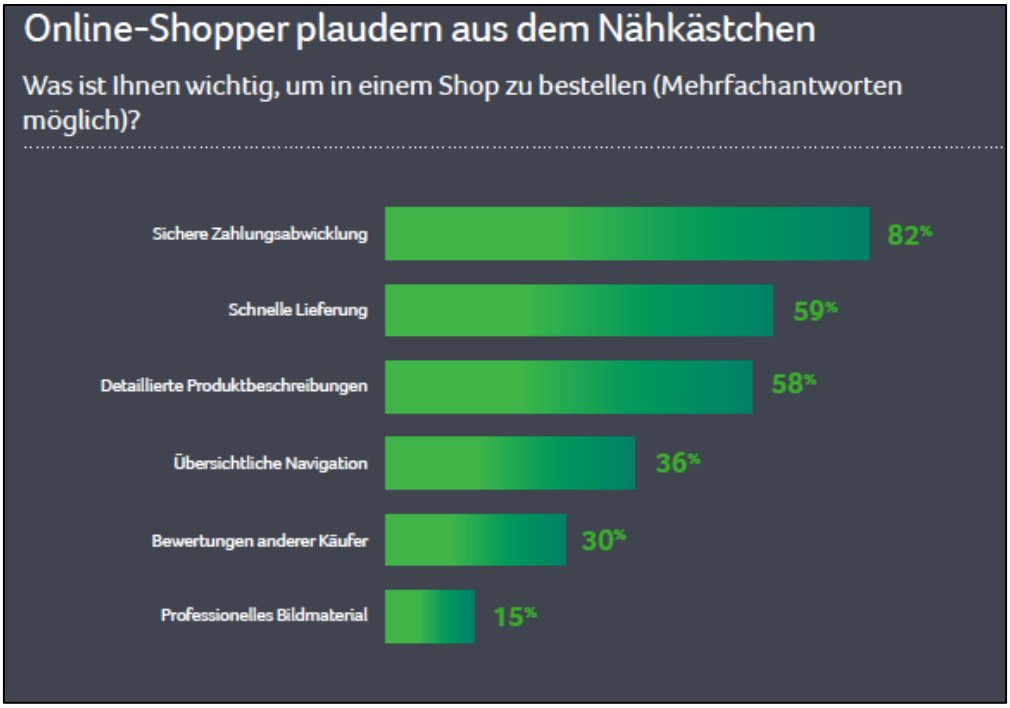
Marketinginstrument	Erfolgreiche Händler	Weniger erfolgreiche Händler
E-Mail-Marketing/Newsletter	58 Prozent	62 Prozent
Soziale Netzwerke	54 Prozent	53 Prozent
Anzeigen	47 Prozent	40 Prozent
Print (z.B. Flyer, Broschüren)	33 Prozent	31 Prozent
Bannerwerbung	24 Prozent	34 Prozent
Partnerschaften	15 Prozent	30 Prozent
Google Adwords	21 Prozent	18 Prozent
Sponsoring	10 Prozent	12 Prozent
Andere	5 Prozent	7 Prozent

- 58% of successful operating companies use e-mail marketing and newsletters to guide their customers towards their online shops
- 54% of successful operating companies use social media networks to guide their customers towards their online shops
- 47% of successful operating companies use banner advertisements
- 33% of successful operating companies use print media such as flyers or brochures

Über welche Kanäle werden Online-Shopper auf Angebote im Netz aufmerksam?

Marketinginstrument	Antwort Shopper
Google-Suche	67 Prozent
Elektronischer Newsletter	40 Prozent
Empfehlungen über Freunde (offline)	29 Prozent
Soziale Netzwerke	18 Prozent
Online-Bannerwerbung	14 Prozent
Anzeigen in Drucksachen	10 Prozent
Flyer, Broschüren	6 Prozent
Eventsponsoring	2 Prozent
Andere	8 Prozent

- 67 % of online shoppers discover a company's product portfolio by searching on Google
- 40% of online shoppers discover a company's product portfolio via electronic newsletters
- 29% of online shoppers are informed by peer recommendations and mouth-to-mouth propaganda



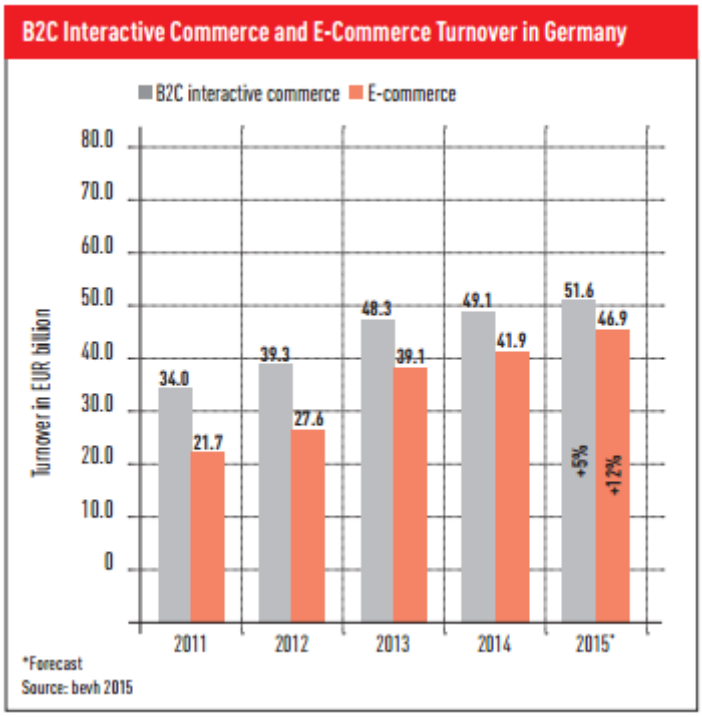
- 82 % of online shoppers care about save payment options when purchasing something online
- 59% of online shoppers consider a fast delivery to be important
- 58% appreciate detailed product descriptions
- 30% regard recommendations and peer product reviews as essential

6.3 Target Group Research

Changing Consumer Characteristics:

Characteristics	Implication
More aware	Know there are multiple alternatives
Well informed	Quite well informed about availability of products
Quality conscious	Know which are quality products
Recognizing global brands	Knowing global brands are prioritizing them
Informed about international currencies	Knowing that paying in one currency at that point might be cheap
Have access to products globally	Can buy products from many different sources
Have swift delivery	Consumers know that the product will be delivered quickly

6.4 Online Consumer Behavior



- With more than 51 million (94 percent of internet users aged 14+) digital consumers in 2014, Germany enjoys the greatest e-commerce customer potential within Europe - making it the clear continental leader
- Together, German B2C multichannel online and mail order business generated total turnover of more than EUR 49 billion in 2014
- Accounting for more than EUR 41 billion of this sum, e-commerce generated more than 85 percent of total industry turnover

7. German Online Survey

Zielgruppenanalyse

1. 1.Welches Geschlecht haben Sie? *

   Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

   80 (34.8%): Männlich

   150 (65.2%): Weiblich

2. 2. Welcher Altersgruppe gehören Sie an? *

   Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

   93 (40.4%): 18 bis 25

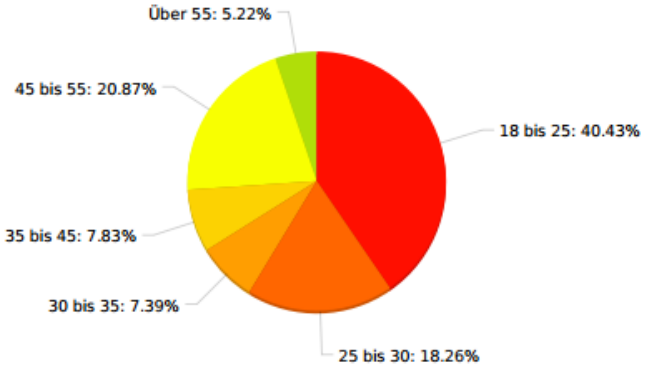
   42 (18.3%): 25 bis 30

   17 (7.4%): 30 bis 35

   18 (7.8%): 35 bis 45

   48 (20.9%): 45 bis 55

   12 (5.2%): Über 55

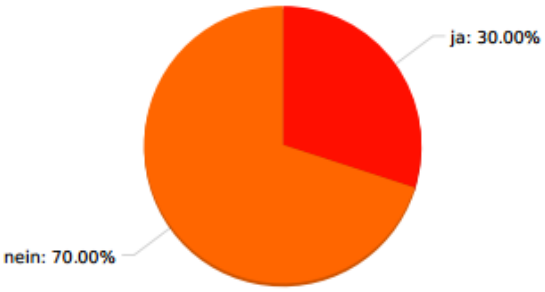


3. 3. Sind Sie verheiratet? *

   Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

   69 (30.0%): ja

   161 (70.0%): nein



4. 4. Haben Sie Kinder? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

75 (32.6%): ja

155 (67.4%): nein

5. Was ist Ihr höchster Schulabschluss? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

25 (10.9%): Realschulabschluss

71 (30.9%): Abitur

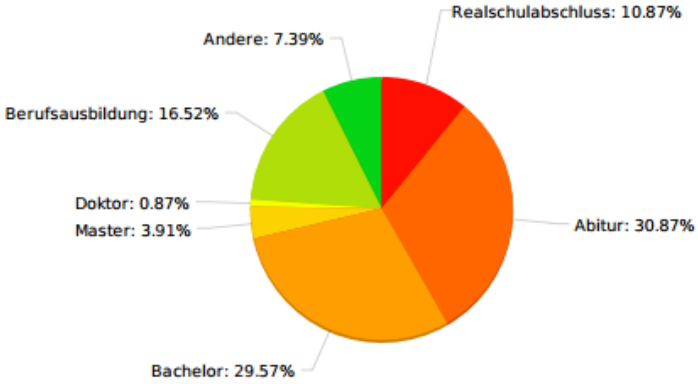
68 (29.6%): Bachelor

9 (3.9%): Master

2 (0.9%): Doktor

38 (16.5%): Berufsausbildung

17 (7.4%): Andere



7. Wie hoch ist Ihr jährliches Einkommen? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

58 (25.2%): Kein festes Einkommen

39 (17.0%): Unter 11.000 Euro

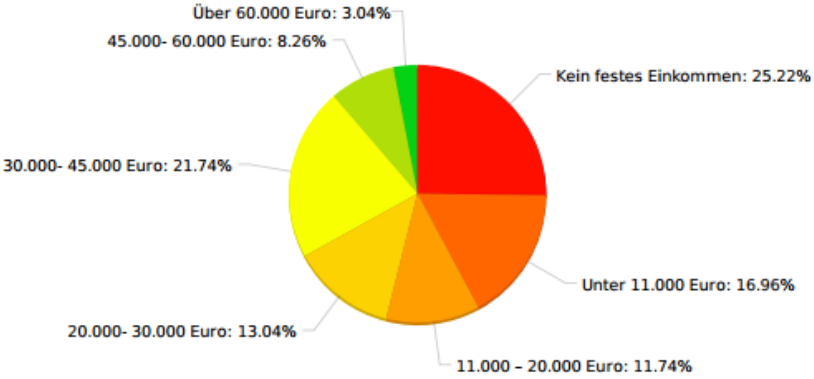
27 (11.7%): 11.000 - 20.000 Euro

30 (13.0%): 20.000- 30.000 Euro

50 (21.7%): 30.000- 45.000 Euro

19 (8.3%): 45.000- 60.000 Euro

7 (3.0%): Über 60.000 Euro



8. 8. Welche Zeitungen oder andere Publikationen lesen Sie? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich. *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

159 (69.1%): Lokale Zeitungen

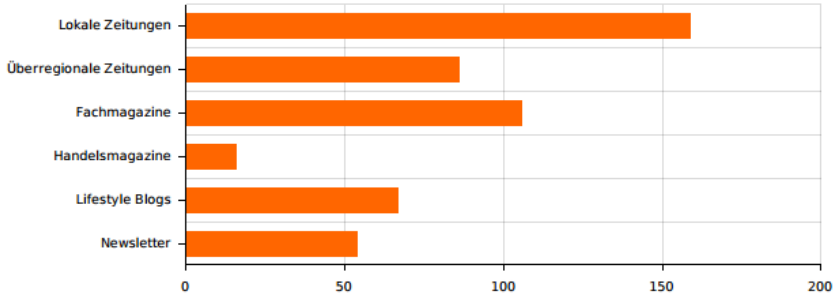
86 (37.4%): Überregionale Zeitungen

106 (46.1%): Fachmagazine

16 (7.0%): Handelsmagazine

67 (29.1%): Lifestyle Blogs

54 (23.5%): Newsletter



9. 9. Mittels welcher Medien informieren Sie sich über Produkte und Dienstleistungen? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich. *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 229

207 (90.4%): Suchmaschinen

97 (42.4%): Social Media

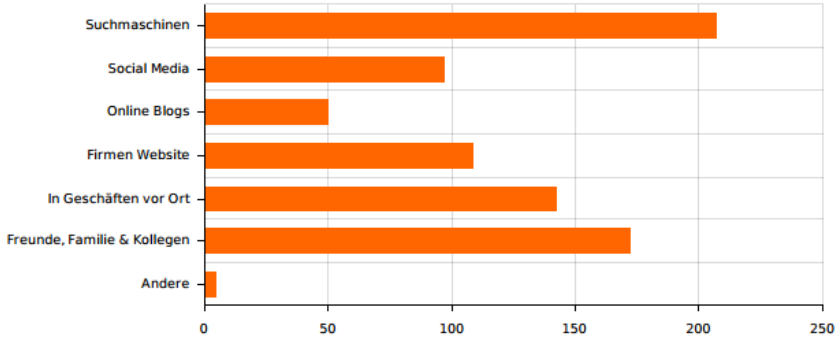
50 (21.8%): Online Blogs

109 (47.6%): Firmen Website

142 (62.0%): In Geschäften vor Ort

172 (75.1%): Freunde, Familie & Kollegen

5 (2.2%): Andere



10. 10. Woher beziehen Sie Produkt-/ Serviceempfehlungen? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich.

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 228

201 (88.2%): Freunde

161 (70.6%): Familie

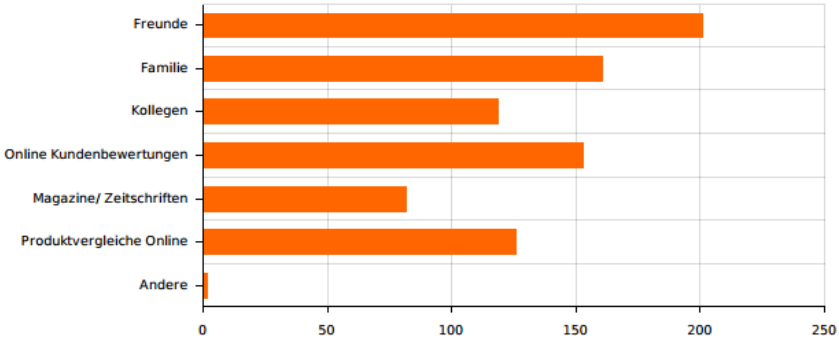
119 (52.2%): Kollegen

153 (67.1%): Online Kundenbewertungen

82 (36.0%): Magazine/ Zeitschriften

126 (55.3%): Produktvergleiche Online

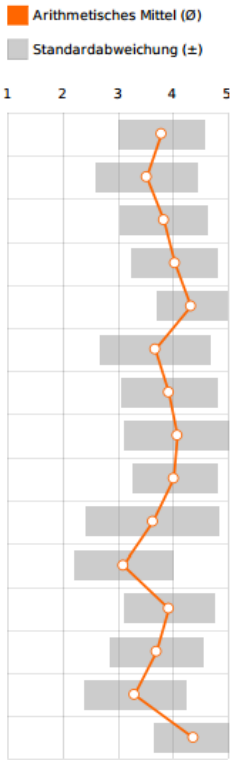
2 (0.9%): Andere



11. 11. Inwiefern treffen die folgenden Aussagen auf Ihre Persönlichkeit zu: *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 229

	Trifft gar nicht zu (1)		Trifft weniger zu (2)		Trifft bedingt zu (3)		Trifft größtenteils zu (4)		Trifft voll und ganz zu (5)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Ich achte auf meine Umw...	2x	0,87	12x	5,24	51x	22,27	131x	57,21	33x	14,41	3,79	0,78
Ich betrachte Situationen...	3x	1,31	27x	11,79	80x	34,93	86x	37,55	33x	14,41	3,52	0,93
Ich bin ambitioniert	2x	0,87	9x	3,93	56x	24,45	122x	53,28	40x	17,47	3,83	0,79
Ich bin bodenständig	3x	1,31	5x	2,18	32x	13,97	129x	56,33	60x	26,20	4,04	0,78
Ich bin ehrlich	2x	0,88	-	-	9x	3,95	124x	54,39	93x	40,79	4,34	0,64
Ich bin ein Optimist	7x	3,06	21x	9,17	59x	25,76	93x	40,61	49x	21,40	3,68	1,01
Ich bin ergebnisorientiert	3x	1,31	7x	3,06	57x	24,89	100x	43,67	62x	27,07	3,92	0,87
Ich bin familienorientiert	4x	1,75	17x	7,42	21x	9,17	99x	43,23	88x	38,43	4,09	0,96
Ich bin fröhlich	1x	0,44	6x	2,62	42x	18,34	118x	51,53	62x	27,07	4,02	0,77
Ich bin heimatbezogen	14x	6,11	34x	14,85	38x	16,59	79x	34,50	64x	27,95	3,63	1,21
Ich bin immer up-to-date	10x	4,37	42x	18,34	98x	42,79	70x	30,57	9x	3,93	3,11	0,90
Ich bin kommunikativ	2x	0,87	9x	3,93	46x	20,09	117x	51,09	55x	24,02	3,93	0,82
Ich bin lebhaft	2x	0,87	16x	6,99	66x	28,82	108x	47,16	37x	16,16	3,71	0,85
Ich bin mutig	8x	3,49	31x	13,54	90x	39,30	82x	35,81	18x	7,86	3,31	0,92
Ich bin verlässlich	2x	0,87	2x	0,87	12x	5,24	104x	45,41	109x	47,60	4,38	0,71



12. 12. Kennen Sie das Unternehmen HierBeiDir? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 230

25 (10.9%): Ja

203 (88.3%): Nein

2 (0.9%): Ich bin mir nicht sicher

13. 13. Falls Sie HierBeiDir kennen, wie sind Sie das erste Mal auf das Unternehmen aufmerksam geworden? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich.

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 35

5 (14.3%): Werbung/ Promotion

8 (22.9%): Empfehlung anderer

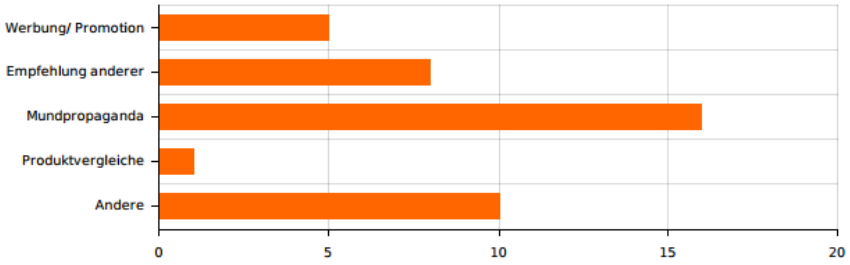
16 (45.7%): Mundpropaganda

- (0.0%): Produktrecherche via Suchmaschinen

1 (2.9%): Produktvergleiche

- (0.0%): Lokale Händler haben auf das Unternehmen verwiesen

10 (28.6%): Andere



14. 14. Falls Sie HierBeiDir's Website bereits besucht haben, bitte geben Sie den Anlass für Ihren Website-Besuch an. Mehrere Antworten sind möglich.

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 27

4 (14.8%): Routine Besuch

5 (18.5%): Shopping aus einem spezifischen Anlass

6 (22.2%): Werbung/ Promotion

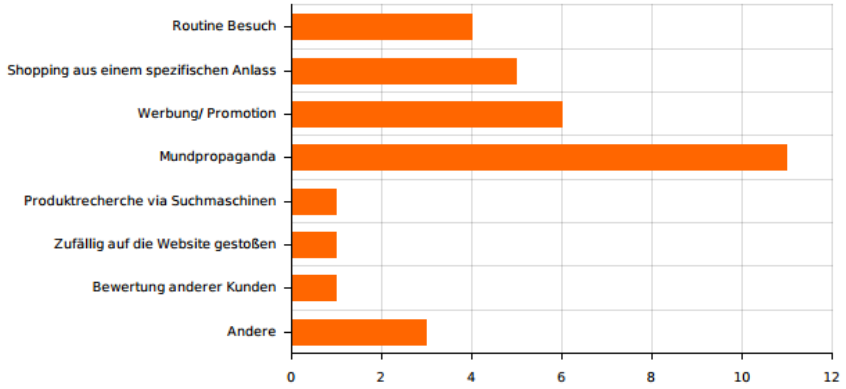
11 (40.7%): Mundpropaganda

1 (3.7%): Produktrecherche via Suchmaschinen

1 (3.7%): Zufällig auf die Website gestoßen

1 (3.7%): Bewertung anderer Kunden

3 (11.1%): Andere



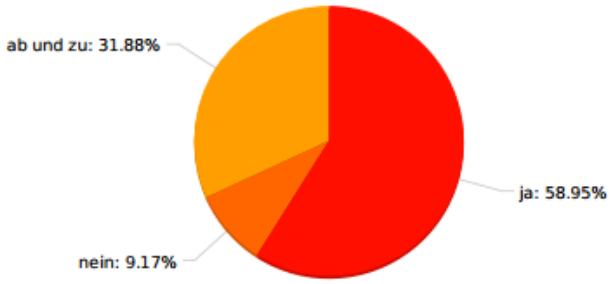
15. 15. Kaufen Sie regelmäßig Produkte online? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 229

135 (59.0%): ja

21 (9.2%): nein

73 (31.9%): ab und zu



17. 17. Welches Statement trifft mehr auf Sie zu:

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 227

169 (74.4%): Shopping ist für mich ein Mittel zum Zweck

58 (25.6%): Shopping ist für mich ein Zeitvertreib/ Hobby

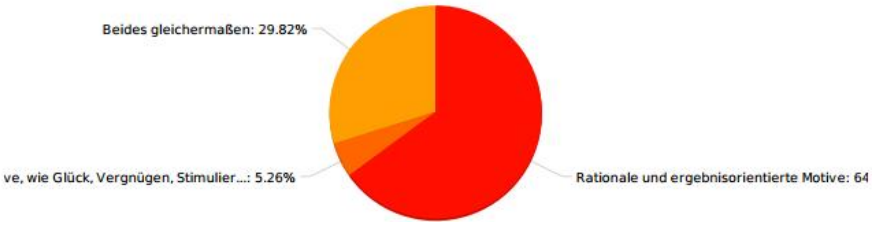
16. 16. Was motiviert Sie dazu, Produkte online zu erwerben? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 228

148 (64.9%): Rationale und ergebnisorientierte Motive

12 (5.3%): Emotionale Motive, wie Glück, Vergnügen, Stimulierung

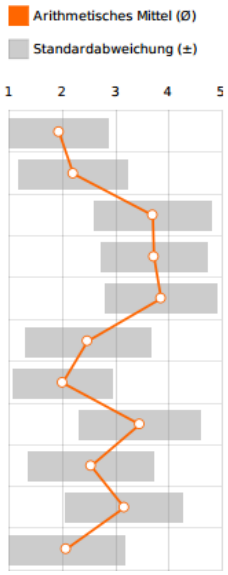
68 (29.8%): Beides gleichermaßen



18. 18. In welchem Maße dienen diese Faktoren als Motivation Ihres Online-Kaufverhalten? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 228

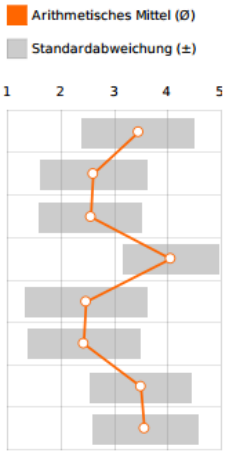
	Kein Einfluss (1)		Wenig Einfluss (2)		Durchschnittlicher Einfluss (3)		Großer Einfluss (4)		Sehr starker Einfluss (5)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
• Ablenkung	97x	42,54	65x	28,51	53x	23,25	12x	5,26	1x	0,44	1,93	0,95
• Ambiente/ Atmosphäre	72x	31,58	66x	28,95	65x	28,51	22x	9,65	3x	1,32	2,20	1,03
• Bequemlichkeit	11x	4,82	25x	10,96	42x	18,42	93x	40,79	57x	25,00	3,70	1,11
• Effizienz	9x	3,95	15x	6,58	54x	23,68	100x	43,86	50x	21,93	3,73	1,00
• Einfachheit	9x	3,95	20x	8,77	35x	15,35	96x	42,11	68x	29,82	3,85	1,07
• Selbstbelohnung	61x	26,75	58x	25,44	59x	25,88	41x	17,98	9x	3,95	2,47	1,18
• Soziale Faktoren	84x	37,00	74x	32,60	55x	24,23	13x	5,73	1x	0,44	2,00	0,94
• Verfügbarkeit von Infor...	21x	9,21	19x	8,33	66x	28,95	81x	35,53	41x	17,98	3,45	1,15
• Vergnügen	58x	25,44	56x	24,56	55x	24,12	52x	22,81	7x	3,07	2,54	1,18
• Vorherige Erfahrungen	22x	9,65	38x	16,67	69x	30,26	79x	34,65	20x	8,77	3,16	1,11
• Zeitvertreib	95x	41,67	59x	25,88	40x	17,54	31x	13,60	3x	1,32	2,07	1,12



19. 19. In welchem Maße beeinflussen diese Faktoren Ihre Online- Kaufentscheidungen? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 228

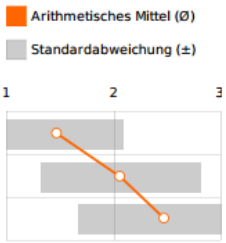
	Kein Einfluss (1)		Wenig Einfluss (2)		Durchschnittlicher Einfluss (3)		Großer Einfluss (4)		Sehr starker Einfluss (5)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Persönliche Präferenzen	11x	4,82	30x	13,16	62x	27,19	92x	40,35	33x	14,47	3,46	1,05
Routine	39x	17,11	56x	24,56	93x	40,79	35x	15,35	5x	2,19	2,61	1,01
Werbung	27x	11,84	88x	38,60	74x	32,46	34x	14,91	5x	2,19	2,57	0,96
Preis	5x	2,20	7x	3,08	32x	14,10	105x	46,26	78x	34,36	4,07	0,90
Verpackung/ Design der P...	60x	26,32	50x	21,93	75x	32,89	35x	15,35	8x	3,51	2,48	1,14
Promotion im Online Shop	48x	21,05	76x	33,33	65x	28,51	34x	14,91	5x	2,19	2,44	1,05
Empfehlungen	7x	3,07	22x	9,65	80x	35,09	87x	38,16	32x	14,04	3,50	0,95
Kundenbewertungen	7x	3,07	23x	10,09	69x	30,26	89x	39,04	40x	17,54	3,58	0,99



20. 20. Falls Sie bereits ein Produkt über HierBeiDir erworben haben, welcher dieser Faktoren hat Sie am meisten beeinflusst?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 17

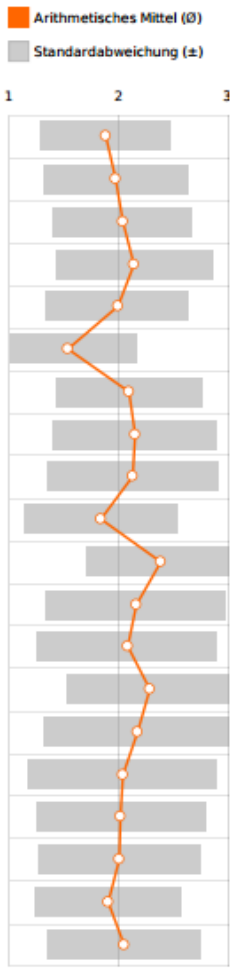
	1.		2.		3.			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Mundpropaganda, Kundenempfehlunge...	10x	58,82	6x	35,29	1x	5,88	1,47	0,62
Vorherige Erfahrungen mit der Website...	4x	23,53	8x	47,06	5x	29,41	2,06	0,75
Werbung, Preise, Firmenmarke, Untern...	3x	17,65	3x	17,65	11x	64,71	2,47	0,80



22. 22. Bitte bewerten Sie den Einfluss folgender Online Shop Merkmale auf Ihre Zufriedenheit bei einem Einkauf: *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

	Geringer Zufriedenheitsgrad, da Selbstverständlichkeit (1)		Durchschnittliche Zufriedenheit (2)		Übersteigt Erwartungen (3)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Ansprechendes Website D...	53x	23,45	146x	64,60	27x	11,95	1,88	0,59
Bonus Programme für Sta...	53x	23,45	127x	56,19	46x	20,35	1,97	0,66
Breites Produktportfolio	41x	18,14	134x	59,29	51x	22,57	2,04	0,64
Hochwertige und ansprec...	44x	19,47	107x	47,35	75x	33,19	2,14	0,71
Individualisierte Produkte...	48x	21,24	132x	58,41	46x	20,35	1,99	0,65
Interessante Newsletter	119x	52,65	92x	40,71	15x	6,64	1,54	0,62
Kundenbewertungen	41x	18,14	123x	54,42	62x	27,43	2,09	0,67
Leicht zu navigieren	49x	21,68	93x	41,15	84x	37,17	2,15	0,75
Nutzerfreundlichkeit	55x	24,34	86x	38,05	85x	37,61	2,13	0,78
Option Produkte als Gesc...	76x	33,63	111x	49,12	39x	17,26	1,84	0,70
Preis-Ermäßigungen	26x	11,50	89x	39,38	111x	49,12	2,38	0,68
Pünktliche Zustellung	61x	26,99	67x	29,65	98x	43,36	2,16	0,82
Rückgaberecht	68x	30,09	72x	31,86	86x	38,05	2,08	0,82
Schnelle Zustellung	38x	16,81	86x	38,05	102x	45,13	2,28	0,74
Sichere Zahlungsmethoden	67x	29,65	54x	23,89	105x	46,46	2,17	0,86
Unversehrte Lieferung	79x	34,96	58x	25,66	89x	39,38	2,04	0,86
Verfügbarkeit von Produk...	65x	28,76	92x	40,71	69x	30,53	2,02	0,77
Viele verschiedene Zahlu...	61x	26,99	103x	45,58	62x	27,43	2,00	0,74
Zugang über verschieden...	62x	27,43	122x	53,98	42x	18,58	1,91	0,67
Zugängliche Ansprechpart...	50x	22,12	115x	50,88	61x	26,99	2,05	0,70



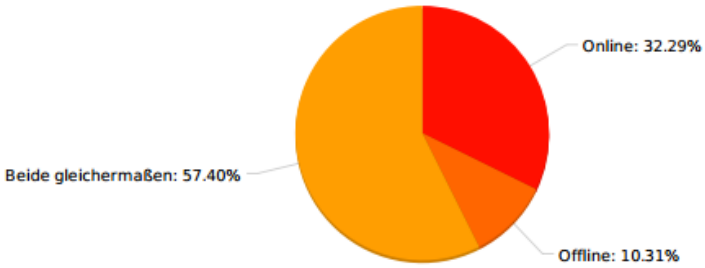
23. 23. Bevorzugen Sie Online oder Offline Kommunikationskanäle?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 223

72 (32.3%): Online

23 (10.3%): Offline

128 (57.4%): Beide gleichermaßen



24. 24. Über welche dieser Online-Kanäle informieren Sie sich über Produkte und Online-Shops? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich. *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

111 (49.1%): Facebook

4 (1.8%): Twitter

42 (18.6%): Instagram

19 (8.4%): Pinterest

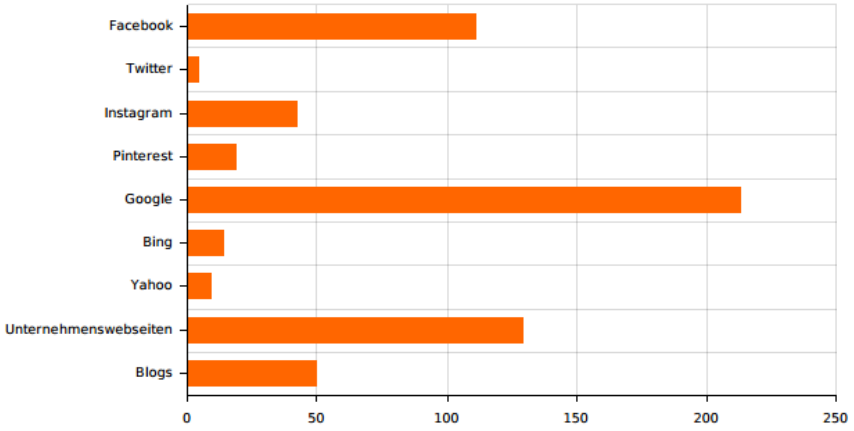
213 (94.2%): Google

14 (6.2%): Bing

9 (4.0%): Yahoo

129 (57.1%): Unternehmenswebseiten

50 (22.1%): Blogs



25. 25. Über welche dieser Offline-Kanäle informieren Sie sich über Produkte und Online-Shops? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich. *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

148 (65.5%): Publikationen - Zeitungen, Magazine, Fachpresse

7 (3.1%): Telefon

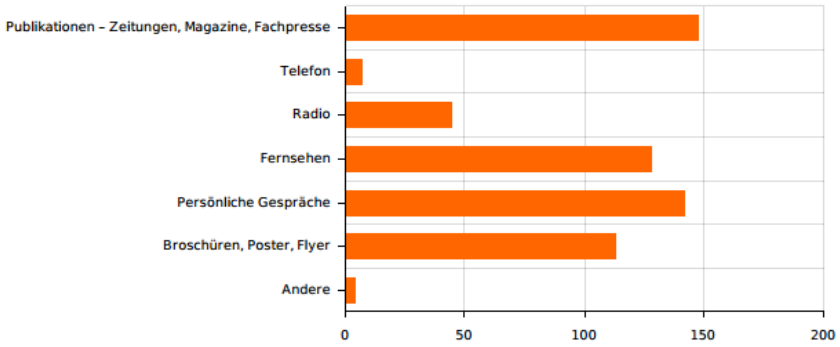
45 (19.9%): Radio

128 (56.6%): Fernsehen

142 (62.8%): Persönliche Gespräche

113 (50.0%): Broschüren, Poster, Flyer

4 (1.8%): Andere



27. 27. Über welche Kanäle würden Sie es bevorzugen Werbematerialien von Unternehmen zu erhalten? Mehrere Antworten sind möglich. *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

73 (32.3%): Social Media

90 (39.8%): Suchmaschinen

37 (16.4%): Email-Werbung

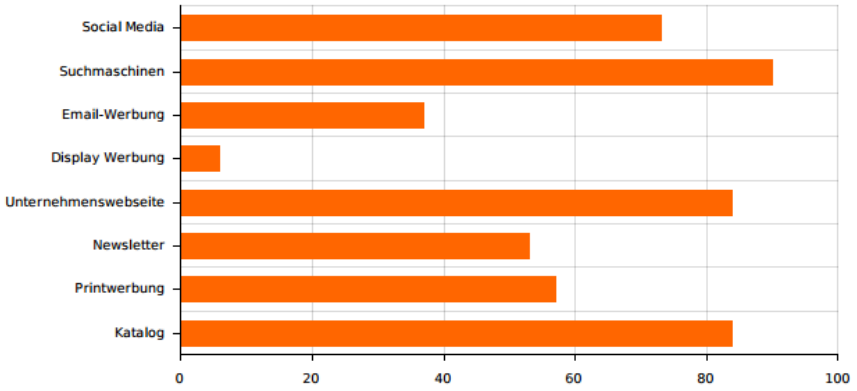
6 (2.7%): Display Werbung

84 (37.2%): Unternehmenswebseite

53 (23.5%): Newsletter

57 (25.2%): Printwerbung

84 (37.2%): Katalog



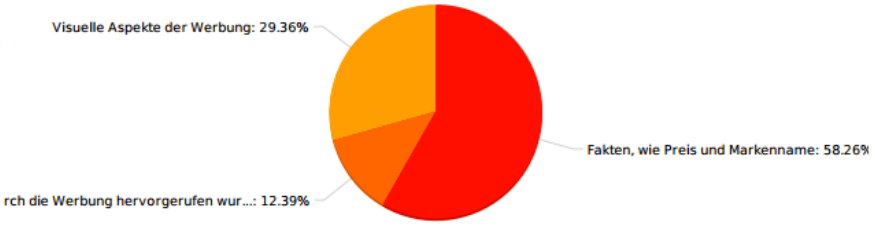
28. 28. In Bezug auf Werbematerialien, an welche Aspekte erinnern Sie sich im Nachhinein am meisten?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 218

127 (58.3%): Fakten, wie Preis und Markenname

27 (12.4%): Emotionen, die durch die Werbung hervorgerufen wurden

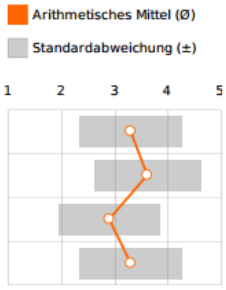
64 (29.4%): Visuelle Aspekte der Werbung



29. 29. In Bezug auf Werbematerialien, welche Aspekte beeinflussen Ihren Grad an Aufmerksamkeit am meisten? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

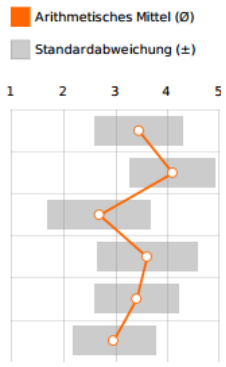
	Kein Einfluss (1)		Wenig Einfluss (2)		Durchschnittlicher Einfluss (3)		Großer Einfluss (4)		Sehr starker Einfluss (5)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Design und Präsentation ...	7x	3,10	39x	17,26	78x	34,51	83x	36,73	19x	8,41	3,30	0,96
Der Grad der persönliche...	8x	3,54	21x	9,29	64x	28,32	89x	39,38	44x	19,47	3,62	1,01
Der Grad der persönliche...	16x	7,08	56x	24,78	96x	42,48	48x	21,24	10x	4,42	2,91	0,96
Inhalt des Werbematerials	9x	3,98	32x	14,16	87x	38,50	77x	34,07	21x	9,29	3,31	0,96



30. 30. In Bezug auf Werbung, welche der folgenden Aspekte erachten Sie als überzeugend? *

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 226

	Nicht überzeugend (1)		wenig überzeugend (2)		Durchschnittlich Überzeugend (3)		Größtenteils überzeugend (4)		Vollkommen überzeugend (5)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
Bildmaterial	4x	1,77	21x	9,29	90x	39,82	90x	39,82	21x	9,29	3,46	0,85
Konkrete Fakten (Preis, L...	2x	0,88	6x	2,65	35x	15,49	106x	46,90	77x	34,07	4,11	0,82
Emotionale Anreize (Freu...	24x	10,62	80x	35,40	68x	30,09	49x	21,68	5x	2,21	2,69	1,00
Glaubwürdigkeit des Wer...	6x	2,65	19x	8,41	70x	30,97	90x	39,82	41x	18,14	3,62	0,96
Genereller Eindruck der ...	3x	1,33	20x	8,85	101x	44,69	85x	37,61	17x	7,52	3,41	0,81
Kontext der Werbenachri...	8x	3,54	46x	20,35	120x	53,10	48x	21,24	4x	1,77	2,97	0,79

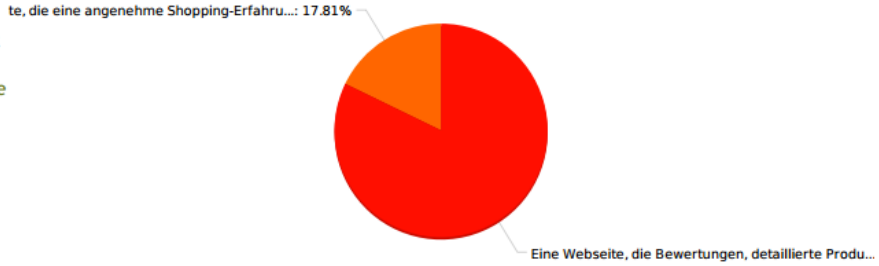


31. 31. Welche dieser Webseiten würde Sie eher dazu bewegen ein Produkt zu erwerben?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 219

180 (82.2%): Eine Webseite, die Bewertungen, detaillierte Produktbeschreibungen und logische Informationen bereitstellt

39 (17.8%): Eine Webseite, die eine angenehme Shopping-Erfahrung erschafft, ein ansprechendes visuelles Design hat und Begeisterung um den Kauf kreiert



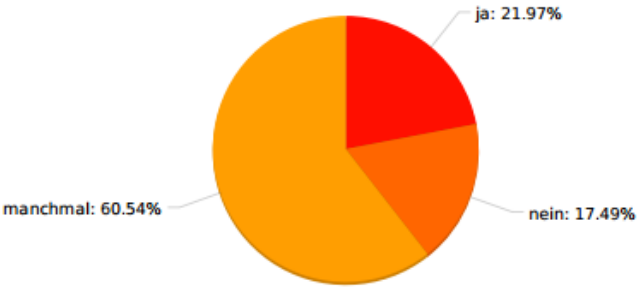
32. 32. Achten Sie beim Kauf eines Produkts auf die Umweltfreundlichkeit?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 223

49 (22.0%): ja

39 (17.5%): nein

135 (60.5%): manchmal



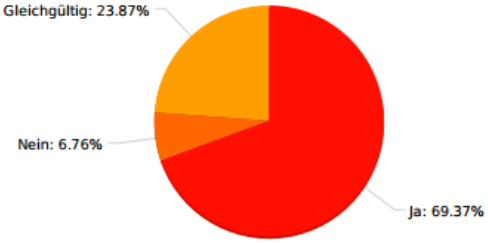
33. 33. Ist es Ihnen wichtig, dass sich Unternehmen ihrer sozialen Verantwortung bewusst sind und sich für die Umwelt einsetzen?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 222

154 (69.4%): Ja

15 (6.8%): Nein

53 (23.9%): Gleichgültig



34. 34. Bitte wählen Sie das Statement, welches Ihre Einstellung zum Thema Nachhaltigkeit am besten beschreibt?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 224

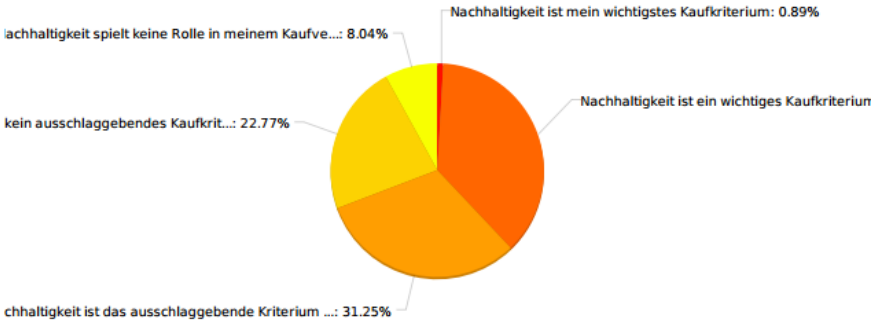
2 (0.9%): Nachhaltigkeit ist mein wichtigstes Kaufkriterium

83 (37.1%): Nachhaltigkeit ist ein wichtiges Kaufkriterium

70 (31.3%): Nachhaltigkeit ist das ausschlaggebende Kriterium sobald andere Kriterien erfüllt sind

51 (22.8%): Nachhaltigkeit ist kein ausschlaggebendes Kaufkriterium

18 (8.0%): Nachhaltigkeit spielt keine Rolle in meinem Kaufverhalten



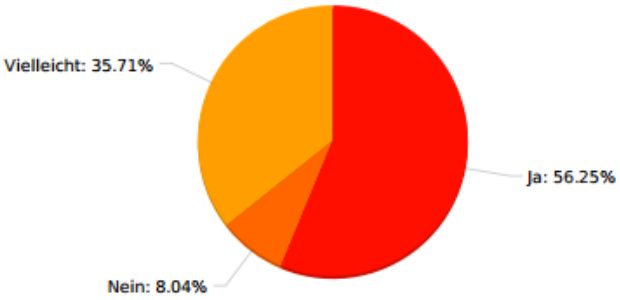
35. 35. Würden Sie ein nachhaltiges Produkt einem umweltschädlichem vorziehen?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 224

126 (56.3%): Ja

18 (8.0%): Nein

80 (35.7%): Vielleicht



36. 36. Welches Statement beschreibt Ihre Einstellung gegenüber nachhaltigen Innovationen/ neuen Technologien am besten?

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 224

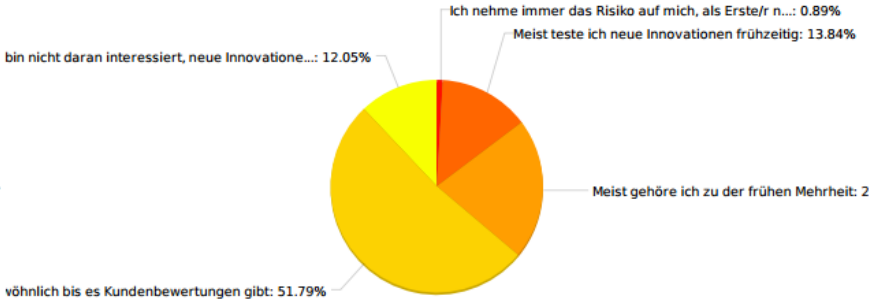
2 (0.9%): Ich nehme immer das Risiko auf mich, als Erste/r neue Produkte auszuprobieren

31 (13.8%): Meist teste ich neue Innovationen frühzeitig

48 (21.4%): Meist gehöre ich zu der frühen Mehrheit

116 (51.8%): Ich warte gewöhnlich bis es Kundenbewertungen gibt

27 (12.1%): Ich bin nicht daran interessiert, neue Innovationen zu testen



8. Media Tools

8.1 German Customer Letter

Hallo Du,

Du hast soeben etwas bei HierBeiDir eingekauft und damit dazu beigetragen, der Umwelt und dem lokalen Handel etwas Gutes zu tun. Das finden wir spitze und danken Dir vielmals!

Du bist zufrieden mit Deiner Ausbeute?

Lass es Deine Freunde wissen und teile ein Foto Deiner neuesten Errungenschaft auf Facebook oder Instagram. Unter allen Posts mit dem Hashtag *#HierBeiMir* verlosen wir ein exklusives HierBeiDir Goodie Bag und obendrauf einen Gutschein über 50 Euro für Deine nächste Bestellung!

Wir wünschen Dir viel Glück!

Euer HierBeiDir.com-Team

KONTAKT:

Am Wehrhahn 17
40211 Düsseldorf
Telefon: 021173149417

Telefax: 021198399842
E-Mail: info@hierbeidir.com
Website: www.hierbeidir.com

8.2 German Newsletter

Guten Morgen!

Auch diese Woche gibt es viele tolle neue Dinge auf HierBeiDir.com zu entdecken! Unser wöchentlicher Newsletter hält dich immer auf dem Laufenden, sodass Du mit Sicherheit nichts verpasst!

Neuer Blogpost zu Anna's Journey!

Jetzt zuschlagen, Daniel Wellington Uhr für 89,10!

Der Sommer steht vor der Tür! Jetzt Brille von Nebelkind sichern.

Euer HierBeiDir.com-Team

KONTAKT:

Am Wehrhahn 17
40211 Düsseldorf
Telefon: 021173149417

Telefax: 021198399842
E-Mail: info@hierbeidir.com
Website: www.hierbeidir.com