

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Business Administration, Lappeenranta
International Business
Specialization: Marketing

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Brand-Awareness through Marketing on Instagram – An Instagram Marketing Strategy for ONIMOS Clothing

Thesis 2019

Abstract

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The subject of this thesis is creating a marketing strategy on Instagram for the case company ONIMOS Clothing in order to create a strong brand that attracts more customers. The main goal is to make the brand popular in order to create brand awareness.

A case study, in cooperation with ONIMOS Clothing, was conducted. The goal of the study is to find suitable Instagram marketing tools for the company that contribute to the objective of creating brand awareness. ONIMOS Clothing has operated both online and offline in Germany for three years. For the duration of one year, the company has actively worked on its Instagram image. The growth of the Instagram account has increased steadily, but as the company is currently in a state of significant changes - such as opening a second store in London - the store wants to expand its audience.

The literature part in this thesis is about general terms concerning social media marketing and branding, which are then elaborate in the direction of Instagram Marketing. The theory also explains constructions such as social media marketing strategy and promotional tools. The theoretical part of this study consists of general information about social media and social media marketing. The information was collected within academic literature, articles, online blogs, online resources and theses. The empirical part analyzes the current situation of ONIMOS Clothing's Instagram profile and develops new ideas for the company's future Instagram strategy and activities in order to attract more potential customers.

The thesis concludes with a discussion on the current Instagram marketing and new suggestions for ONIMOS Clothing in order to develop a better marketing strategy. All in all, there are great opportunities for the company in Instagram marketing in order to create a higher brand awareness and to generate more possible customers.

Keywords: Instagram marketing, branding, marketing strategy, social media marketing

Content

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Purpose of the thesis	6
1.2	Case company information	7
1.3	Research problems and delimitations.....	7
2	Social media and branding	9
2.1	Importance of social media	10
2.2	Social media marketing	11
2.3	Fashion on social media	12
2.4	Branding	13
2.4.1	Branding on social media	14
2.4.2	Branding on social media in the fashion industry	17
3	Marketing strategy	18
3.1	Definition of marketing strategy and strategic marketing decisions	18
3.2	Social media marketing strategy.....	19
4	Instagram.....	21
4.1	Instagram explained	21
4.2	Instagram marketing strategy & brand building on Instagram.....	22
4.3	Instagram insights.....	23
4.4	Tools of Instagram marketing strategy.....	24
4.4.1	Influencer marketing	25
4.4.2	Content scheduling.....	27
4.4.3	Content creation	29
4.4.4	Giveaways.....	31
4.4.5	Instagram ads.....	32
4.4.6	Storytelling.....	33
4.4.7	Interaction with Instagram users.....	35
5	Current issues and dangers	36
5.1	Purchased followers	36
5.2	Fake sponsored content	37
6	Empirical part.....	38
6.1	Target of research	38
6.2	Methodology	38
6.3	Research process.....	39
6.4	Validity and reliability	40

6.5 Current situation of ONIMOS Clothing’s Instagram account.....	41
6.6 Analysis of Instagram marketing tools for Onimos.....	41
6.6.1 Influencer marketing	41
6.6.2 Content scheduling.....	42
6.6.3 Content creation for the target group.....	43
6.6.4 Using Instagram ads.....	43
6.6.5 Storytelling.....	44
6.6.6 Interaction with Instagram users.....	45
7 Conclusion	46
7.1 Main findings and discussion	46
7.2 New Instagram marketing strategy for ONIMOS	47
7.3 Evaluation of the process	47
7.4 Suggestions for further research.....	48
References.....	50
Appendix 1	

1 Introduction

Marketing has changed massively in its history. Currently, social media marketing is influencing our society in a totally new way. It has not only changed the way we communicate, but also enables companies to reach their audience in a different and easy way. Social media is quite simple to utilize due to its user-friendly interface and it provides cost effective options to the companies to market their brand and products.

Social media marketing has become important in today's marketing world and it is critical for companies to understand how it is working. In a fast-changing world, a company needs to be able to adapt to the new trends which are now outperforming the traditional ways of marketing. Especially in a market with many competitors, a company needs to be up to date regarding its marketing actions and its online appearance.

In this thesis, especially the social media platform Instagram will be analyzed as a marketing tool. As Instagram is used by approximately 200,000 businesses for marketing purposes, it is needless to say that Instagram is a significant platform when it comes to promoting a business. Users on Instagram are interacting with companies more than on any other social media platform. (Walsh Phillips 2017.)

Consumers trust what they see on Instagram if it is done in the right way. This is the essential part of becoming an established well-known brand. Instagram not only helps businesses build their brand, but also allows consumers the option of purchasing through the application itself.

This thesis includes an outlook on how important social media is becoming and especially the role Instagram is playing. In addition, some basic information about becoming a strong brand and how to create a marketing strategy will be given as the goal of the thesis is to develop an Instagram marketing strategy that creates brand-awareness for the case company Onimos. The theoretical framework will be public as there is no use of confidential information from the company. The empirical analysis which leads to the final Instagram marketing strategy will be created by benchmarking competitors of the company and by analyzing the company's Instagram account. Some parts of the analysis and the final Instagram strategy will not be published as they contain confidential information on the

company. In order for it to not lose its competitive advantage, the strategy - and how it is developed - cannot be published.

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The objective of this thesis is to create an Instagram marketing strategy for the case company Onimos. In order to achieve this, the different Instagram tools used by the case company must be analyzed. The main question in this thesis is how different Instagram tools work and how they can be applied in order to create brand awareness.

Those questions will be answered by combining the theoretical part with the empirical part of this thesis. The theoretical part includes information about social media marketing and branding. The empirical part combines data gathered by testing different tools on the Instagram account of Onimos with the benchmarking data about various competitors of Onimos. The term “competitors” is defined as the local competitors of the physical Onimos store, as well as successful vintage retailing shops that perform well on Instagram. The information gained is then used to build an Instagram marketing strategy for the case company Onimos Clothing.

The primary purpose is to understand the different tools used on Instagram in order to apply them to the company’s Instagram account and find out which are the most suitable ones for the case company. The aim of analyzing the different tools and creating the strategy is to increase the brand-awareness on Instagram for ONIMOS Clothing when applying the new marketing strategy.

The final result of this thesis is the Instagram marketing strategy for the case company Onimos. This strategy includes information about the current state of Onimos’ strategy and how it can be improved, but also which actions could be added to the current strategy. Therefore, throughout the thesis different concepts are explained in order to understand how an Instagram marketing strategy works.

1.2 Case company information

Onimos Clothing is a Vintage Clothing retail shop which sells second-hand clothing and accessories as well as vintage style accessories. The shop was founded by Birgit Niederhauser in 2015 in Augsburg in Germany. Since 2018, Onimos has opened a location in London, Shoreditch, and is operating as a franchise company (Onimos n.d.).

The company sells hand-picked vintage clothes from well-known brands as well as no name clothing. Every piece that arrives in the store is reviewed before it goes into the store in order to avoid offering damaged merchandise.

ONIMOS sells in the two physical stores as well as in an online shop and through the ASOS marketplace. Furthermore, Onimos uses Instagram-stories and Depop to sell clothes.

Until now, Onimos is not using any marketing channels other than Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The main social media platform used by the company is Instagram. The Onimos team is working on improving the Instagram performance since some time. Until now there is no clear structure or strategy behind the online actions. Still Onimos is using Instagram frequently and is always working on new approaches in order to gain more brand-awareness. The founder Birgit Niederhauser is continuously working on improving the online appearance and the customer experience. (Niederhauser 2019b.)

1.3 Research problems and delimitations

As Instagram marketing, as part of social media marketing, plays an important role in today's business marketing communication, it is important for a company to understand the different marketing tools that are available on Instagram. Platforms such as Instagram are a great new opportunity to reach the target group of a business. There are already many examples of companies that have been immensely successful with their Instagram marketing strategies.

But as already mentioned, this type of a platform is quite new and therefore there are two main problems: either companies are refusing to use those platforms, or they are just not having enough information on how to use the tools in an effective

way. Therefore, in this thesis the purpose is to give a better understanding of various Instagram marketing tools to make it easier for the company to use them as part of a new strategy.

This thesis contains an introduction, theoretical background, research methods, empirical study and a discussion. The introduction discusses social media marketing, primarily Instagram marketing. The theoretical background explains social media marketing in a deeper sense as well as in the context of the fashion industry. Furthermore, the theory part provides information about branding and how it is used on social media. After that, a closer look is taken on marketing strategies in order to understand the process and be able to build a specific strategy at the end of the thesis. The last point in the theoretical background discusses specifically Instagram and the different tools that are used on Instagram.

The empirical part analyzes the current situation of Onimos Clothing, and benchmarks different Instagram tools used by other companies. In addition, findings from testing various Instagram tools on the Instagram account of Onimos are displayed. In the discussion part the main results and ideas for the strategy are provided.

The research objective is to find out which Instagram tools are the most effective and suitable ones for ONIMOS Clothing. The sub-questions to this objective are as follows:

- How can ONIMOS improve its brand awareness on Instagram?
- Are there current trends or issues in Instagram marketing?
- How can the different Instagram tools be used best?

Social Media: *Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideologies and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p. 61).*

Social media marketing: Social media marketing is part of digital marketing. It includes motivating customer communications on the company's social media accounts. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2012, p.30.)

Instagram: Instagram an *online photo-sharing application and social network platform* which is free to use for everyone. Users can interact with different content posted in various ways. Since 2012 Instagram is owned by Facebook. (Rouse n.d. b.)

Instagram Insights: Instagram Insights is a tool for business profiles that gives the user information about the followers and the performance of the content that is published on the account and in the stories (Instagram 2019).

Instagram story: Instagram story is a feature for adding pictures and videos that disappear within 24 hours. They can be opened as many times as a user wants until the 24 hours are over. (Sanchez 2018, p.19.)

Branding: Branding means to define a company's differences and advantages over other companies in order to be unique and recognizable. The brand is the identity of the company for which the customers are most likely to prefer the products over competitive products. (McCartney 2012, p.1.)

Instagram Marketing Strategy: The Instagram strategy is aiming to build a brand's vision and to create a unified unique appearance of a brand (Sanchez 2018, p.56).

2 Social media and branding

In this chapter a closer look will be taken on social media in general and social media marketing. Then it will be briefly displayed how fashion is affected by social media platforms. The second step in this chapter is to analyze branding and its components with a closer look on branding on social media. As this thesis is aiming to build a marketing strategy on social media to increase brand-awareness, the connection between social media and branding needs to be understood. This connection will be built across the different sub-chapters of this chapter.

2.1 Importance of social media

Before social media was established, companies were communicating through traditional marketing channels such as tv, radio and print. With the rise of social media, companies were forced to adapt to the changes on the market. Therefore, nowadays companies are often using social media platforms for marketing purposes. (Durmaz & Efendioglu 2016.) Traditional marketing is focused on passing on a message to the customer. There is no interactive process between company and customer, just a linear flow of information, whereas marketing via social media triggers interaction between the company and the potential customer. (Evans & McKee 2010, pp. 4-5.)

This interaction concludes in various benefits for the company. Businesses can effectively use social media platforms to target their audience, to understand and to communicate with the potential customers. This makes it easier to adapt to the customer's needs. Companies are able to establish brands and create brand awareness with the information gained through social media. (Growthgurus 2018.) As social media has no geographical limits, people around the world can be reached. Social media offers a high potential to reach a significant number of customers with a small budget for marketing activities. In addition, as already mentioned, the communication between company and consumer is one of the most important benefits that has evolved with social media. People are sharing opinions and experiences of which companies can benefit, either by the good reputation they get from the users or by using the evaluations of the users in order to improve their product or service. (Ovsyannykov n.d.)

Not only the change from traditional marketing to social media marketing indicates the growing importance of social media. Also, the continuous growth of social media in general shows the growing importance of social media itself. Social media platforms are growing daily. The statistics in Figure 1 from Statista (2019a.) shows the steady growth in social media users over the past 10 years. Future estimations according to those statistics show a continuous growth ten social media usage. Social media is growing worldwide, and people spend more and more time on social media (Statista 2019b).

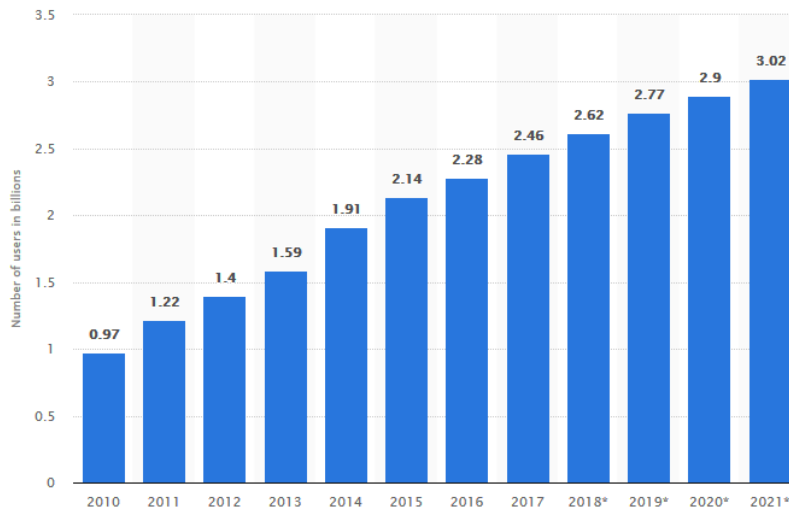


Figure 1 Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2021 (in billions) (Statista 2019a)

Social media includes various platforms where people and businesses can share content. Each of the platforms works in different ways and have their own benefits and disadvantages. Some of the most popular social media platforms in 2019 are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter, when looking at the number of users and their real activity on the platforms. (Ahmad 2019.)

2.2 Social media marketing

Social media marketing cannot be described in the one right way. But the basic concept is that people can share content through an electronic platform. Social media marketing means communication, which is more interactive than with traditional marketing tools such as tv or the newspaper. Not only the company itself is creating content for the organization or the brand itself, but also the consumers are now part of the process. One point that is certain when talking about social media marketing is that it opened new doors for companies and especially brands. The possibilities to interact with a great amount of people and potential customers have increased drastically. Social media creates a connection between people and a different way how to present a brand. (Agresta & Bough 2011, pp.2-4.)

Social media is powerful because as a content creator one can reach thousands of people who then share again the message. In addition to that, one can respond more easily to potential customers' opinions and needs. Since there has been a

shift involving that consumers spend relatively more time on social media than with traditional marketing tools, there is a greater opportunity for companies to reach more people through social media marketing. (Agresta & Bough 2011, pp. 8-10.)

With social media marketing also the definition of the brand changed. Brands are no longer only a message, or an image created by a company. The brand nowadays represents an attitude of the consumer. This leads to the implication that the emotional bond between brand and customer is getting significantly more important, but it has also become more difficult for the company to create this bond. (Agresta & Bough 2011, pp.11-13.) The above was just a short outlook on how social media affects branding. In chapter 2.4 and onwards the phenomenon will be discussed in further detail.

One additional opportunity that social media marketing delivers is trustworthiness. If a follower is reading about a brand on the page of a trustworthy blogger or influencer the person is more likely to believe in the message immediately. If there is a personal connection between the follower and the blogger, the follower tends to support the given message. This implies that good influencers have a positive effect on the brand as their personal positive brand influences the message of the company's brand in a beneficial manner. This is simply explained by the use of heuristics. Heuristics describe the process of choosing a product or brand because the general attitude towards it is positive. Heuristics can be described as a rule of thumb. If everybody or a significant person likes something, it needs to be good. (Dahl 2015, pp. 134-135.)

2.3 Fashion on social media

With the rise of social media, the view on fashion has shifted. Before social media made an appearance, the overall relationship of customers with fashion was different. Magazines were the main advertising channel, which is quite distant to the potential consumer. The way that fashion is presented nowadays is more interactive and personal. Consumers are given the possibility of shopping popular items directly instead of simply viewing them in magazines. Fashion became

more accessible for everyone. For example, high fashion brand products are no longer easily accessible exclusively for privileged people. (Claire 2017.)

Social media users trust in people's experience that they share online rather than traditional ads, especially in the fashion industry. The traditional ad is made by the company, which, in the consumers point of view, only wants to sell. Therefore, shared opinions on social media platforms can be an incentive for consumers to rather trust a fashion brand. The influencer business is one significant trend that came along with social media and especially with Instagram, and specifically the clothing industry is benefiting from this trend. Nevertheless, influencers can send a different message about the brand image to the potential customer to create brand awareness. As already mentioned, social media users trust others' experiences and opinions. This is especially effective if the person is someone the user admires or trusts. This implies that a brand or product can gain credibility through social media activities. (Wilberg 2018.)

Companies are now given various ways to reach and influence people not only via the fashion influencers. Additionally, companies can encourage the consumer to interact with the company's online platforms and create involvement with the brand. Platforms such as Instagram come with various ways to interact with a company's profile or their content which creates involvement with the brand. As consumers are increasingly in contact with the brand, they feel closer and more involved. The customers not only gain possibilities to interact and display their own opinions, but also acquire transparency and new opportunities. Also, the companies themselves got closer to the consumer. As they get direct feedback, they can react and respond more easily to consumers' reactions and feelings. (Wilberg 2018.)

2.4 Branding

Branding in general has a long history and has been facing many changes over time. But, especially by implementing new technologies, companies face greater challenges for their brands. Companies need to adapt their brand strategies to the current trends such as social media platforms. Basic concepts have changed, and different, more appropriate approaches are needed. Before the shift from the

industrial period to the informational age, consistency of a brand was the core, but now different values are the key to a successful brand. (Ingram 2016.)

In the following chapter the traditional branding concepts will be explained. Afterwards, a closer look will be taken on the new branding approach on social media as the goal of the thesis is to build a marketing strategy for the social media platform Instagram. Finally, some aspects of branding a fashion company will be explained as for different industries different approaches may be needed. (Ingram 2016.)

2.4.1 Branding on social media

Before branding on social media became possible and popular, traditional branding was used. The main characteristic of traditional branding is *one-way communication*. While traditional branding contains solely content produced by the brand or company, modern branding approaches include the creativity of the consumer. In traditional branding, the company creates the brand image, the values, and distributes those through traditional channels such as radio, tv or posters. (Grzesiak 2015.)

This approach led to attaining great public attention for brands, but the trend is downgrading as branding nowadays is targeting new generations. The new generations desire interaction and personalized content. (Grzesiak 2015.) It is important for a brand to define a target group in order to decide which branding approach is suitable. As the younger generations spend more time online than consuming traditional media, the traditional branding path may not be appropriate for every brand, especially if the target group is rather young. (Dewberry 2018.)

Nevertheless, traditional branding has its advantage too, tangibility. As well as online marketing may work for a certain company, the brand stays intangible. Printing a logo on small merchandise products and spreading them to customers or distributing them at events makes people remember the logo and therefore the brand. (Dewberry 2018.)

Nowadays branding has developed to an online format. As mentioned previously, branding on social media is different from traditional branding, but still as

important - if not even increasingly more significant (Agresta & Bough 2011, pp.11-13). Simply saying, there has been a shift in how brand management is operating (Bruhn et. al 2012).

Nowadays brands are rather personalized and products of the people's affections. The brand does not need to have an enforced message. The message is made by the consumer, the social media user him- or herself. The most important factor regarding a brand is to create value for the customer and form an emotional bond. (Ingram 2016; Agresta & Bough 2011, pp.11-13.) Not only the creation of the message has changed. Brands nowadays need to be more creative and create a unique experience for the customer online. (Ingram 2016.)

When talking about the difference in branding nowadays and how the creation of content has changed, Bruhn et. al (2012) defines two types of social media content, the user-generated, and the company-created content.

User-generated content makes the company trustworthy and displays the likability of the company among various people. The brand image can be strengthened with this kind of content. Company-created content can increase brand awareness, the hedonic brand image is not affected. Company-created content can support the user-generated content by encouraging consumer interaction. (Bruhn et. al 2012.)

While company-created content is easy to control by the company, consumer-created content is not as manageable. The company needs to control the user-generated content and build strategies on how to interfere at this point. As this kind of content creates credibility for a brand, it is not to be neglected. (Ingram 2016.)

Looking at the company created content, the visual brand is important. This means that all components of a company's social media appearance need to form one unit. For example, characteristics can be classified as a color; the same color scheme should be used throughout all social media channels. Other components are constant filters or the steady use of one logo. This creates a consistent and unified picture of the brand that people can remember. (Jackson 2017.) Not only is the visual branding important on social media, but creating a

personality for the brand can also help the brand. Together with the visual brand, the company should display a culture of the company and be authentic towards the product or services that it provides. (Jackson 2017.) The goal is to create an identity for the brand that contains one specific message to the potential customers (Standberry 2017). One concept (Figure 2) that combines those several characteristics, of a unified brand image, is the social media brand voice by Stephanie Schwab (2011).



Figure 2: Social Media Brand Voice (Schwab 2011)

This model describes *'who your brand sounds like'*. It describes the impression of a brand within four different categories. First the customer type, the character/persona, needs to be defined. A persona describes a person who is the typical customer of the company. The tone describes the way of communication where the company shows more of its character. This defines the way the company interacts with the customers. The next part is the language use by the brand. The type of language used defines the brand and not every language type suits every business. Technical jargon is not suitable for every business as well as slang is not appropriate in every case. The last part to consider is the purpose of the brand. It needs to be pointed out what value the customer finally receives. (Schwab 2011.) Those four entities are the basic concepts to consider when creating a brand on social media.

Undeniably, there are various other factors to consider but they reassemble around the same goal, a unified and strong brand. Those four concepts of the social media brand voice model build a core concept for online branding.

One main additional aspect to consider within branding on social media is the short life of social media. Consistent interaction with the platforms is necessary to not be left behind and forgotten. As social media is growing rapidly the engagement for one post does not last quite long. Therefore, the platforms must be updated constantly as there are many competitors on the social media networks. (Jackson 2017.)

2.4.2 Branding on social media in the fashion industry

There are different approaches to how fashion labels sell their brand on social media. In this part several approaches will be identified and explained.

One approach is to show the lifestyle of the possible customer told within a story. The customer needs to recognize their own characteristics in the story told about the product. The potential customer will probably identify themselves with the product and feel connected to the product, the brand. This implies a company needs to create a story around the brand that potential customers can connect with. (Dunlap 2018.) Storytelling makes the clothes unique, which is especially important when talking about the vintage clothes regarding the case company in this thesis. Telling a story makes the label more personal and creates an emotional connection, something with which the customer can identify. (Heth n.d.)

Another option is to post pictures in the company's profile which other people took. This shows the variety of people wearing the brand, and in addition, saves time for the company's employees. In this approach, the heuristics hold true again: if many people wear a clothing piece it needs to be fashionable. (Dunlap 2018.)

Being different than competitors is nothing reinvented. But this could also be a social media strategy. Most brands try to fit in the general accepted appearance of similar brands. This does not make a brand stand out against other fashion brands. A brand needs to be unique but still match the potential consumer's desires. This is a difficult balance to keep and it may not be that easy to implement, but it makes a brand unique and special. (Dunlap 2018.) Being different is especially important in the vintage industry as not a real, own brand is

sold, but still the brand stands for the clothing. The brand needs to sell a unique story that makes the label different from other vintage sellers. (Heth n.d.)

One strategy that is used in the fashion industry, which also matches with the social media brand voice model, is to create one unified template for the brand appearance. The color palette and the tone for instance need to be defined and carried out through all social media actions. This makes the customer recognize the brand at first sight and builds trustworthiness. (Dunlap 2018.)

3 Marketing strategy

A marketing strategy is a set of guidelines which helps a company focus on its targets. This set contains information about decisions on marketing actions, the market, or communication of a product, for example. In order to build a marketing strategy, different strategic marketing decisions need to be defined. The strategic marketing decisions help to make the strategy rather detailed and understandable. (Shankar & Carpenter 2012, p.23.)

The marketing strategy aims to exploit the full potential of gaining the attention of customers. The company will be given a straight direction in order to reach potential customers. (Chan 2019.)

In the following chapters, more details about creating a marketing strategy for a company will be explained.

3.1 Definition of marketing strategy and strategic marketing decisions

One simple definition of the term 'marketing strategy' is given by Chen (2018). *A marketing strategy is a business's overall game plan for reaching people and turning them into customers of the product or service that the business provides.*

This implies that the marketing strategy contains different tools and basic parameters that a company uses throughout all business activities. The marketing strategy contains information about the targeted consumer, the competitors, the used channels, values for the consumer and the brand message, for example. (Chan 2019, Chen 2018.)

Building the marketing strategy starts with defining the overall goal of the company. Analyzing the market, the competitors, and the company itself are the following steps. Afterwards, the target consumer needs to be identified and analyzed. (Smarta n.d.) For example, defining typical personas in order to display the typical customers of a company's product will help to make the strategy more specific (Chan 2019). Then, the value proposition is added to show why the offered product or service is better compared to the competitors and which value the customer receives. Finally, the way of communication is stated in the marketing strategy. This implies which tools are going to be used in order to promote the product or service to the customer. (Smarta n.d.)

1. Defining overall goal
2. Analyze market (self, Competitors)
3. Identify target consumer
4. Value proposition
5. Communication (tools)

Often the marketing strategy contains or is oriented on the 5Ps of the marketing mix, namely price, product, place, promotion and people (Duermyer 2019). This approach can be defined while reading rather modern sources.

Whereas the marketing strategy is the overall plan, the strategic marketing decisions are the small steps within the strategy. For example, when talking about one of the main points of the marketing strategy for example the market analyzation, in which one matching strategic marketing decision is going to be where the company should compete. (Shankar & Carpenter 2012, pp.13-23.)

3.2 Social media marketing strategy

Creating a social media marketing strategy differs from creating a general marketing strategy but some of the basic components remain the same. For example, the analysis of the market is still part of the strategy, but various other steps are added in the social media marketing strategy.

Comparing various online resources, a pattern for a social media marketing strategy can be found. The strategy process includes primarily eight steps. In the

following one model put together from three different resources will be explained. This model will be used throughout the thesis.

1. Defining the company's goal/s
2. Analyzing and identifying the target group/audience
3. Analyzing and identifying the competition
4. Reviewing the company's social media presence
5. Improving and creating content
6. Finding inspiration and interaction
7. Creating a calendar
8. Testing, evaluating, improving (Newberry & LePage 2018, Influencer Marketing Hub 2019, Barnhart 2019b).

First, the company needs to define the overall goal of the marketing campaign. In this thesis the overall goal is to create brand-awareness on Instagram for the company ONIMOS. After defining a clear and structured goal, the audience or target group needs to be identified and analyzed. The understanding of the audience leads to the conclusion of what may influence and attract them. This is important for the content creation, for example. Some characteristics that need to be considered here include: the age, the gender or the location of the audience. Not only the target group needs to be researched but also the company's competitors need to be identified and analyzed. The competitors' weaknesses could not only be used to the advantage of the own company, but also as inspiration for the own company to use in order to further improve their own advantage. The last step before starting to plan the company's actions is to analyze the company's current taken on Instagram. (Newberry & LePage 2018, Influencer Marketing Hub 2019, Barnhart 2019b.)

After analyzing the market and the company's social media presence the company is able to start producing new content based on the previous analysis of the market. The content should be created regarding the developed brand voice of Schwab (2011), mentioned in chapter 2.4.1, which is also based on the market analysis. The main part to remember is to post content that the target group is interested in while combining informative and entertaining content. Inspiration for the content can be found on similar accounts or even competitive

Instagram accounts. After all it is important to engage with accounts that may suit the target group the company defined earlier. The engagement may lead to new followers and more visibility for the brand itself. In order to create a great social media marketing strategy, the company should create a schedule when to post what kind of content on Instagram. This helps to create a unified theme for the account and to consider the target audience's online behavior more easily. The last part of the social media strategy is to test the different tools of Instagram, evaluate the outcome of the usage and improve what has gone wrong. (Newberry & LePage 2018, Influencer Marketing Hub 2019, Barnhart 2019b.)

4 Instagram

This whole chapter will focus deeply on Instagram itself and its tools that can be used for marketing purposes. First, Instagram itself will be explained and how brands can be built on this platform. Then a short outlook will be given on Instagram Insights, as it is an important tool when analyzing a company's Instagram account and therefore it will also be used for the empirical study. The last topic in this chapter forms the largest part in the fourth chapter. Here some Instagram tools are chosen for deeper examination. The tools that are displayed in this theoretical part are also part of the analyzing process in the empirical part.

4.1 Instagram explained

Instagram is one of the most popular online platforms where users can share content with each other. Not only are private users interacting with each other on Instagram, but brands heavily use the platform to gain new customers. The concept of Instagram is to set a focus on visuals such as pictures. Whereas other social media platforms also give opportunities to only upload texts, the idea of Instagram is to spotlight the visuals. (Sanchez 2018, p.4.)

Instagram is now owned by Mark Zuckerberg, who bought the company one and a half years after it was established. The reach of Instagram is growing every year, and, as already mentioned in chapter 2.1, the number of active users is increasing every year and future prospects are also positive. Right now, there are 500 million users who visit the social media platform on a daily basis and around

800 million users are active per month. (Hauser 2018, p.10, Sanchez 2018, p.6.) According to Sanchez (2018), per day 2 billion likes and about 15 million comments are posted on Instagram. The benefits of Instagram are that it provides its services in 25 languages and people all over the world have access to use Instagram.

Brands use Instagram to promote their products and services. Instagram gives a company the opportunity to generate sales through Instagram. Statistically, about one third of the Instagram users have purchased something through the app, which shows that Instagram gives great potential to gain new customers. (Sanchez 2018, pp.6-8.) Another function that Instagram is performing better than other social media platforms is the way how an audience can be created - no other platform makes it easier to gain followers and therefore popularity in an organic way without paying. But also, interaction of potential customers with the company's profile is the greatest on Instagram. Compared to Facebook engagement, Instagram is performing 10 times better and even 84 times better than Twitter. (Sanchez 2018, pp.11-12.)

Especially for business profiles, Instagram provides a lot of opportunities. Various data about the potential customers can be gathered and then used for marketing purposes on Instagram. Brands can use Instagram easily to become known by new potential customers but also to maintain loyal customers. All those opportunities can be taken with quite a low risk and low budgets compared to other marketing tools and actions. (Sanchez 2018, pp.16-23.)

4.2 Instagram marketing strategy & brand building on Instagram

Using Instagram for marketing purposes is quite popular as the platform is one of the most powerful ones nowadays. Especially now companies should use this potential as the generation that is using Instagram is typically avoiding traditional forms of advertisement and are switching to platforms such as Instagram. Instagram marketing is earning that amount of success because of its visual concept. People learn and remember images rather than anything else, which creates more potential for interaction with potential consumers. Instagram marketing is based on *inspirational, authentic and consistent content*. Those

factors are the key to establish a successful brand on Instagram. (Sanchez 2018, pp.52-55.)

The basic idea when using Instagram for marketing is to employ the available Instagram tools in the right way in order to reach potential customers (Hauser 2018, p.38). Those tools will be explained in detail in chapters 4.4.1 onwards.

According to Sanchez (2018), Instagram marketing is all about telling a story to the users that touches and involves them in order to build a strong brand. There are four important aspects when creating a strong story on Instagram for the potential customer. The first part when creating the story for a brand is to be authentic. As already mentioned in previous chapters, authenticity is essential. Users want to see content that they can relate to and that seems tangible for them. Another aspect to remember is to use the senses of the follower. It is important to create connections in the Instagram users' mind through their senses. Even through Instagram, smell, taste, sound, and touch can be stimulated. The third part of creating a story is using archetypes that can be found in the social media brand voice model mentioned earlier. Archetypes describe the tone and the character of a brand. The last point is to make use of stereotypes. If a brand is not going with certain stereotypes, they tend to have a greater impact on the follower. (Sanchez 2018, pp.56-60.)

For branding on Instagram not only the right story and appearance are the key to success. Details such as the name of the account need to be considered well. The Instagram name needs to be simple and short; it may include, for example, the target region of the company. Also, the profile picture needs to be considered, mostly using some symbol such as the company's brand logo. The content in general needs to be original and beautiful because that is what Instagram is all about. Brands are successful if they provide content that is high quality and consistent. (Sanchez 2018, pp.63-66.)

4.3 Instagram insights

Instagram Insights is a tool for Instagram business accounts that displays deeper information about what is happening on the company's accounts. Information about the performance of the company's account and content, but also about the

followers are examined within Instagram Analytics. When using this tool, it is important to understand the different metrics and terms used. (Instagram 2019.)

Reach can be defined as the actual number of people who have seen the company's post. A reach rate can be calculated by dividing the number of people who have seen the post by the number of followers the company has. In contrast, the term impression defines the number of times the content has actually been viewed. This implies that the reach is always lower than the impressions, as impressions are adding up the number of visits on a profile or certain posts. (Sanchez 2018, pp.124-125.)

Engagement is defined as the number of likes, comments, saves, and messages a post gets. The engagement rate is calculated by dividing the number of the mentioned actions by the total number of followers. (Sanchez 2018, pp.125-126.)

Exits are people who did not watch the Instagram story until the end. Those result from three different situations. The Instagram app has been closed, the story has been closed via the X in the top corner of the story, or the user swipes down the story for going back to the normal feed. The exit rate can be calculated by the number of exits divided by the number of impressions. (Sanchez 2018, p.129.)

Swipe away defines users who swipe left or right on a user's story in order to view the story of the next person they follow or to go back to the former story of another user. A tap forward only means that within a story the viewer skipped one part in order to get to the next content of the story they are currently watching. A tap back is basically the same, just in the contrary way. (Sanchez 2018, pp.129-130.)

The completion rate sums up the users who watched the entire story of an account without tapping forward or exiting the story, whereas the shortcuts add up all the users who skipped parts of the story or exited it before it was ending. (Sanchez 2018, p.130.)

4.4 Tools of Instagram marketing strategy

In the following, some Instagram tools are chosen to be explained in more detail how they work and how they can be applied to a company's account. The tools are chosen according to the analyzing purposes in the empirical part. Some of the tools displayed are already employed by the case company Onimos,

however, further details should be generated for the case company. Some of the tools are not applied yet by the company, but they are potential new tools to be included in the Instagram marketing strategy.

4.4.1 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing can be defined as increasing a company's brand-awareness or promoting its products with the help of influential people on social media. However, an influential person does not mean a person with many followers, but rather a person who has influence in their community, on the people who do follow the influencer. An influencer must fulfill three main criteria in order to be helpful for a company. Even if the number of followers is not the main characteristic that is important for being an influencer, the reach of the influencer should be wide. There are so-called micro-influencers who have quite a small reach in terms of the number of followers, but still they may be credible in the eyes of the customer, which is the second criteria an influencer needs to fulfill. The followers need to trust him or her because of the influencer's knowledge or appearance. The last characteristic the influencer needs to possess is the ability to be a salesman. The influencer must have the ability to persuade the followers of the advantages of a product and provide good reasons for them to buy the product as well. (Dada 2017.)

Influencer marketing is not about paying someone to promote a product, which is not called influencer marketing but celebrity endorsement. The goal of influencer marketing is to build a relationship with the influencer, which motivates both parties to work with each other. Influencer marketing is based on a sincere interest of an influencer in the product. It is important to work with influencers who are attracted by the kind of products or services a company is providing and because they fit to the influencer's lifestyle. (Dada 2017.)

There are some major trends visible in influencer marketing in 2019. Some of those trends which are useful for companies to increase their brand-awareness will be explained in the following sections.

As already mentioned, a micro-influencer, who can be defined as *someone who has between 1,000 and 100,000 followers*, are useful for a company. Even if the

number of followers is quite low, their authenticity is high. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.a.) In 2019 the focus is on working with micro-influencers and nano-influencers who can be defined as someone *with fewer than 1,000 followers who has immense influence with a comparatively narrow market* (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.a). Influencers who are bigger than the two mentioned types are usually only suitable for certain types of brands or brands that have high amounts of budget for Instagram marketing as the competition to cooperate with those influencers is quite high. Being popular in terms of the number of followers does not indicate credibility and trustworthiness in the recommendations for products or services. Even if micro- and nano-influencers seem to have little impact on Instagram users, their power is not be underestimated. They have a niche audience which might fit a company's brand well and therefore the number of people who are truly interested in the recommendation of the influencer is relatively high. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.a, Bloom 2019.)

Another trend in 2019 is to build strong relationships with the influencers a company is working with. This means that the company does not only work with people for one time but that they find influencers who continuously are part of the marketing strategy. This not only gives continuity to a brand but also credibility as the influencer is not mentioning the brand only for one time but throughout a longer term. This is also an opportunity to avoid risks when working with new influencers. Some of them might have a good online appearance but the company cannot know if the cooperation will succeed in the desired way when starting to work with someone whom it does not know. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d. a, Bloom 2019.)

One of the major trends in 2019 is that companies become rather aware about threats on Instagram such as inorganic followers of influencers, who simply are followers who are bought and do not add any value. Companies start to realize the problems and the appearance of such threats and try to work against those. Also, companies learn how to spot those threats. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.) Different threats that companies need to deal with on Instagram nowadays, especially when it comes to influencer marketing, will be explained in the fifth chapter of this thesis in order to be able to take a closer look on them.

There are some statistical data that reinforce the importance and usefulness of influencer marketing. The two main facts are: first, micro-Influencers have statistically seen higher engagement rates on their profiles than the big influencers (as already mentioned, the engagement rates are the key to successful brands), and second, 49% of the consumers believe in influencers recommendations and 40% buy something an influencer has promoted beforehand. (Knightley n.d., Johnson 2018.)

4.4.2 Content scheduling

Scheduling the content on Instagram means to create a plan that defines on which day and at what time of the day a posting will be published on the Instagram account. This is important to get the maximum of potential customers to see the posts of a company on Instagram and has become rather important with the change of the algorithm of Instagram. (Cooper 2019.) When Instagram got introduced the users simply saw the Instagram posts of the people they follow, in reverse chronological order. Nowadays, there are three different aspects that influence what content is seen first when opening Instagram. (Newberry 2018.)

One will mainly see posts that Instagram calculates one may like, based on the amount of interaction with various similar posts or accounts. For example, by liking and commenting quite often on posts that are related to fashion, then it is most likely that Instagram will show fashion related posts in the timeline of the user. But also, the most recent posts that were uploaded when opening the app will be shown first in order to keep the user up to date. The third criteria of what posts will preferably be shown first is one's relationship with an account one follows. Posts of accounts that one not only follows, but often interacts with in the form of tagging them, liking and commenting are more likely to be shown when Instagram is opened. (Newberry 2018, Hauser 2018, pp.21-22.)

Those factors of the operating mode of the Instagram algorithm are important for brands to consider when scheduling their content in order to get the potential consumers to actually see the content. This implies that companies need to reinforce the interaction of Instagram users with the company's profile posts in order to be seen as content that users are interested in. This goes hand in hand

with finding the right time when to post. If the companies post when the target customers are most likely to be online on Instagram, the probability of them seeing the post is higher and the chance of them interacting with the post rises. (Newberry 2018.)

This shows that content scheduling is closely connected to the characteristics of the Instagram algorithm and that scheduling means to use the algorithm to the companies' favor. Previously, the algorithm and its effect on scheduling has been explained. It is hard to separate content scheduling from using different tools, which will also be explained later in this thesis. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, some approaches will be described on how to use the algorithm to increase the reach of a profile's posts. Additionally, the detailed use of some of those approaches will be explained in further chapters.

Creating interesting content in order to engage Instagram users to interact with one's profile is one of the most significant tools to use, and as already explained, interaction pushes the company's profile to the top of the timeline of the followers. Content includes pictures as well as short videos. Secondly, it is also quite good because it keeps the Instagram user interacting with a profile for a longer time span. Additionally, the tools, stories and live videos keep the businesses profile constantly appearing on the consumer's account, which might lead to more interaction. In addition, when content is published, the caption and hashtags are the key to interaction between the accounts. For example, asking the followers to tag someone or to tell their opinion creates engagement. In this context giveaways, in a well-considered amount, are also great opportunities to motivate people to interact with a post. The last point to consider are the peak times of Instagram activity of the target customer. Posts need to be published at typical times when the target group is most likely to be active on Instagram. (Barnhart 2019a.)

The connection between the main point, finding the right time to post and the examples of different approaches, and how to gain interaction is that if the scheduling is perfect, but if the motivation of interaction is missing, the entire scheduling plan is useless. The audience may see the post because of its

recency and well employing of the algorithm, but will not interact, which indeed is one of the main goals of content scheduling. (Barnhart 2019a.)

Referring to posting content at the right time, for each industry there are different times that are rather or less favorable for posting. SproutSocial conducted a research on the posting schedules of consumer goods brands. In Figure 3, the results for the best posting times on Instagram can be seen. On Saturdays at 11am and 1pm the highest engagement with Instagram postings takes places whereas Mondays are the least preferable days. Generally, each day between 10am and 3pm are the most stable times to post. (York 2018.) Which time is the most suitable one regarding the specific target group of Onimos will be defined in the empirical part through combining those statistics with testing different times on the Instagram account of Onimos.

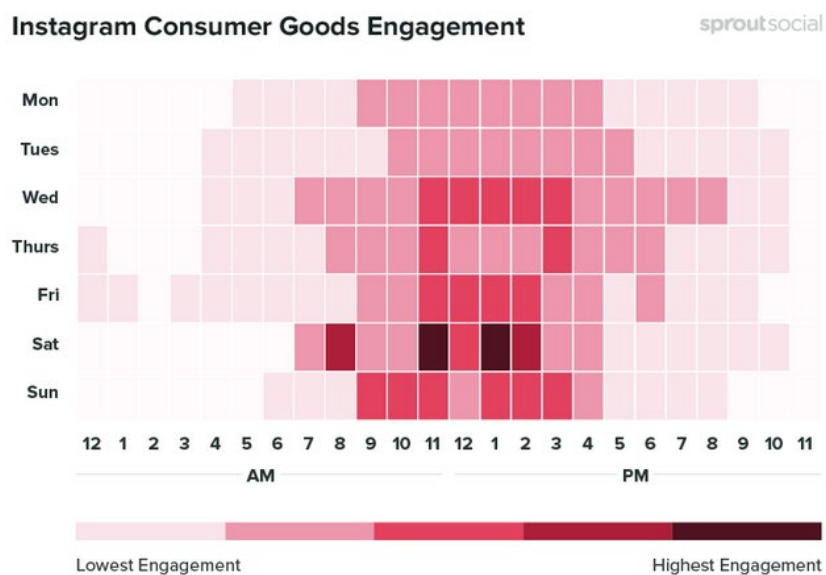


Figure 3: Instagram Consumer Goods Engagement (York 2018)

4.4.3 Content creation

When referring to the content on an Instagram account there are two major categories that need to be considered: the sort of the posts and the design of the content.

Looking at the type of posts, there are four different options other than posting pictures that were created by the company itself. Picture content can also come from the influencers who the company is working with, which was explained in a previous chapter, but also from user generated content campaigns, which means

that the company engages the consumer to create content in order to get reposted. Quite similar to those two is also the option to repost content that fits one's own profile. Those can be found by searching various hashtags that are related to the company's brand style. But not only pictures should be considered as content for the Instagram profile, but also videos or gifs are used to diversify the feed. (Lydon 2018.)

The design of the content itself also needs to be considered. There are different possibilities a company should consider when designing the content. The first step is to define a lifestyle that the company wants to sell to the customer in order to have a clear, common theme throughout the Instagram account. (Paul 2019a.) When defining the lifestyle for the account, the customer personas from chapter 2.4.2, branding on social media, should be considered in order to create value for the potential customer (Socialbakers n.d.) But not only the personas are part of the content design. The whole social media brand voice model of Schwab (2011), which was mentioned previously, should be considered when designing the content. This implies that when creating the content all four entities of the social media brand voice model should fit together in the end. This will create a unified content theme and design.

Another point to consider when referring to the design of the content is that pictures should not contain too much information and stimuli. They should be kept minimalistic with a clear focus on the message or a product. Another important factor is the balance and contrasts in the content. The picture needs to be recognizable in terms of colors, shapes and for example light (Lydon 2018.) Referring to the recognition via colors, it can be brand supporting to keep the Instagram content in the color theme of the brand itself. This makes the account to appear uniform and consistent even if totally different topics are approached. (Paul 2019b.)

Like content scheduling, content creation is closely connected to other tools. Also, for the content creation the scheduling and its planning beforehand is essential (Paul 2019a).

4.4.4 Giveaways

Giveaways on Instagram are quite easy to conduct as there are nearly no regulations on them compared to Facebook, for example. The only feature that Instagram requires is to have a statement of release below the promotion of the giveaway. The statement should look like the following one:

Per Instagram rules, this promotion is in no way sponsored, administered, or associated with Instagram, Inc. By entering, entrants confirm that they are 13+ years of age, release Instagram of responsibility, and agree to Instagram's terms of use. (Herman 2018.)

After considering the legal issues, the plan for a giveaway needs to be set. The first item to decide is which purpose the company is pursuing with the giveaway: does the company want to have more interaction on the content, motivate consumers to create own content, or earn followers on its account, for example. Regarding the different goals the rules must be set differently. Generally, it can be said that giveaways support the already explained usage of the Instagram algorithm. Giveaways lead to more interaction on an account, which again leads to higher visibility of the company's posts. (Herman 2018.)

Subsequently, the contest has to be planned in terms of determining a price that appeals to the possible contest participant, defining the rules for what the person needs to do in order to participate in the giveaway contest, if there are any restrictions and a deadline. Eventually, a special hashtag can be created for the lottery. Finally, the notification of the winner needs to be clarified. When the planning process is done, the giveaway is going to be published and promoted on the Instagram account itself. It should obviously be shown that the content posted about the giveaway is not an ordinary daily picture. It should be made clear at first sight that there is a giveaway. (Herman 2018.)

There are many ways on setting the rules for the participation in the giveaway contest. The most common requirements are to tag a friend below the post about the giveaway, follow the account which is running the giveaway and leave a comment - which can require anything from one word to telling a whole story. Another option could be to ask people to take a picture related to the brand and

eventually combine it with a hashtag for the lottery. (ShareThis 2019.) This option goes again hand in hand with content creation considering the consumer created campaigns from the previous chapter.

4.4.5 Instagram ads

Instagram ads can help the company to raise awareness for the brand or a special product but also give more information about those to the potential customer. In addition, the increase of website visits, more sales or new offline customers can be achieved when using the tool Instagram ads. Instagram ads gives different possibilities, to reach those objectives, to the company. There are various types of promotions on Instagram. A company can promote content through story ads, photo ads, video ads, or carousel ads. Those ads can simply be created within the Instagram app which is called quick creation. Then a company can choose where the ad should lead the people who see the advertisement to its profile, its website, or to the direct messages. The quick creation is a step-by-step tool which is easy to use without any instructions being needed. Instagram ads can help the company to raise awareness for the brand or a special product but also to give more information about those to the potential customer. (Instagram n.d.)

Promotions for Instagram can also be created with the Facebook ads manager, which provides even more possibilities, details, and guidance for the Instagram advertisement creation. When creating an ad with the Facebook ads manager the first step is to select an objective such as increasing the engagement, brand awareness or traffic. As the second step, the audience needs to be defined. This step is quite similar to the defining process of the target group in the quick creation process. The third step is to decide on the placement. With the Facebook ad manager, the company can automatically place the ad also on Facebook to reach more people. The fourth step is to define the budget, which also follows a similar process as in the quick creation for ads. The only difference here is that the creator again has the possibility to consider more details and the ad manager gives advice on decisions, how they should be made. The last step is to choose the content and descriptions for the ads. Again, the Facebook ad manager gives advice on formats and requirements for the content. (Cyca 2018.)

4.4.6 Storytelling

In 2016 the feature of Instagram stories was introduced. It is a tool that allows the user to publish a video, picture or a boomerang that disappears after 24 hours. Only the publisher of the story is able to see how many people and who watched the story, but after 24 hours the story will be deleted automatically, and it will only be visible for the publisher in their archive. Instagram users can react directly to a story via a private message or swipe up for a quick reaction which is only one emoji. (Rouse 2018, Hauser 2018, p.19.)

The Instagram story itself has many features that can be used. The location, the temperature, gifs, texts, polls, and drawings, for example, can be added to the story. With some of those features the Instagram story becomes visible for other Instagram users who are interested in the location that has been tagged in the story for example, but who are not necessarily followers of the account. A good Instagram story is characterized by its variety and authenticity. (Carbone 2019.) In the following some of the special story features will be explained in regard to their use for the company.

Using Hashtag and Location Stickers is useful for the discoverability of the company's profile. Users can search, for example, for locations and then they are able to see stories that have been tagged with the location they searched for. The same procedure holds true for hashtag stickers used in stories. This implies that if that kind of a sticker is used, Instagram users who are not following the company's account are able to see the story of a company and therefore may discover the profile. (Carbone 2019.)

Polls and Emoji sliders are also a possibility of getting to know the target group of a company better. Instagram Insights already provides some data about the followers, but this data is hardly enough to define the typical customer. With polls the participants can decide between two different choices, and emoji sliders give the follower a possibility to express their opinion on a scale. Another tool that is similar to the two mentioned ones is a tool to interact more personally. With polls and emoji slider users are only able to vote but with the question asking tool a company can encourage followers to ask direct questions or to simply express

their opinion. This can be helpful for the company to develop products or to become better known by potential consumers. (Carbone 2019.)

A rather new sticker for the Instagram story is the countdown function. A countdown for a sale or some special action can be set up. The follower can subscribe the countdown and will get a notification when the countdown is finished. This is a good way to promote events or important dates for customers to remember, for example. (Carbone 2019.)

Also live-videos belong to the features of the Instagram story. The company is able to share live content through stories, and after the video is finished it can be posted to the story in order to be available for 24 hours like all other story content. Live videos are good to keep followers up to date and make them feel connected to the company. (Carbone 2019.)

One tool that creates personality and authenticity are the gifs. Gif stickers can be added quite easily to the story content such videos and pictures in order to emphasize the message of the content, for example. (Carbone 2019.) This is closely connected to further chapters when talking about strengthening the brand. Showing the personality of the brand is important in order to create loyal followers who can identify with the brand.

Compared to the feed content, the postings in the Instagram story do not have to be scheduled carefully as they are not affected by the algorithm of Instagram. Even though scheduling is not a priority, it is important to be consistent in posting to the story regularly. (Carbone 2019.)

Not only the tools need to be considered, but especially for the brand building there are some factors that need to be applied in the Storytelling. As mentioned previously the consistency of a theme, filters or colors among other things is important to keep the brand image uniform in each way. The follower must directly recognize that the story he or she is watching is created by that one brand without looking at the company's name. (PlannThat n.d.b.)

One feature that can easily be used in Instagram stories are visuals that make the story different from others. Those visuals will become associated with the

brand. Those can, again, be colors, a typical style of writing, one location or even faces that should be associated with the brand. (PlannThat n.d.b.)

4.4.7 Interaction with Instagram users

Interacting with Instagram users in order to grow the engagement rate is of growing importance. Derived from what has already been mentioned about the algorithm, it can be said that the interaction with potential customers is necessary to make a company's profile visible on Instagram and to build a strong brand. There are several rules that should be followed in order to interact with followers in the right way.

Asking questions below postings motivates people to give a comment on a post. The question asked does not even have to be connected to the company's business. This approach should simply build a connection between the commenting person and the brand. Interaction in terms of a comment on a brand profile can build a stronger bond than only a like of the post. Regardless if the comment was motivated by a question or if the follower commented out of their own motivation, replying to comments below postings is quite important, but the way of replying is the key to a loyal follower. The person who commented needs to feel valued and cared about. Authenticity of the reply should be given in terms of not pretending to know this person, but rather acting as if getting to know someone in order to not to overwhelm the person who commented. (PlannThat n.d.a)

Connecting with the followers in different ways is important. Simple actions already can make a difference. Followers want to feel valued, therefore one like on a post of the follower, for example, can make them feel cared about. In this way the company also gets to know the follower better by seeing what their interests are. This technique is also useful in a broader perspective. Comments and likes can be placed under posts of users who are not following the company but who share similar interests, which can be found out, for example, through similar hashtags or through the Instagram recommendations page that is specifically created for the company's profile by Instagram. With this strategy a company can specifically target Instagram users but also becomes more visible for other users. This is important because the more people know about the brand

and show that they have an interest in the brand, the more popular the brand can get. Also sharing content that followers create belongs to that strategy. Engaging with other Instagram members that fit to the company's business is more effective when the engagement happens directly before and after posting content to the company's feed. (PlannThat n.d.a, Hughes 2018.)

The main points to remember when interacting with Instagram users are to stay authentic according to the brand, make the user feel valued, and to choose the right timing for postings in order to generate value from the interaction regarding the Instagram algorithm.

5 Current issues and dangers

When companies are working with Instagram as a marketing tool, they need to consider that there are also some dangers. With the evolution of Instagram, some critical topics emerge that a company needs to be aware about. This awareness is necessary in order to be successful and not waste money based on false beliefs and data.

5.1 Purchased followers

Some people who want to become influencers assume that the most important factor for being one is to have a high number of followers. That is why many people think it is useful to buy followers in order to pretend that many people have an interest in this person and their opinions. The problem of purchased followers is that those accounts are inactive fake profiles created by Instagram bots. Mostly this is a problem for the influencer themselves because it leads to an unbalanced account appearance as those followers are not interacting with the content. This means that the number of followers increases, but the number of likes stays quite low. It is needless to mention that those fake followers do not add any value to the account and to the company that is possibly cooperating with an influencer who has bought followers. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d. b.)

Companies can detect those imbalances by comparing different data of the profile and looking at some factors, taking a look at the engagement rates of the account.

A genuine influencer will have an engagement rate of 1-3% compared to the number of followers. Engagement rates that are lower or significantly higher than 10% should also raise awareness in the company that the influencer is not as genuine as they claim to be. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.b.)

Analyzing the list of followers an influencer has can also be a source of spotting a fake influencer. Fake profiles that have been created by a bot can mostly be identified at the first look. Those profiles do not have a profile picture or any pictures in their feed and mostly their privacy is set to private instead of public. In addition, those profiles do not look as if an effort has been put into the bio section of the profile. If an influencer has many of those suspicious followers, it is most likely that this person purchased followers. (Influencer Marketing Hub n.d.b.)

5.2 Fake sponsored content

A problem which is not easy to detect for companies is fake sponsored content. This includes content that is marked as being sponsored by a company but has not been sponsored and the influencer is simply pretending to be paid. This can happen with either fraudulent intent or with good intent. Fraudulent intent means trying to make an influencer pretending to already get paid by companies. Therefore, it is believed that other companies will follow if they see that this influencer is already working together with other brands. In comparison, good intent would mean that the person who wants to engage an influencer is simply trying to push the profile by posting good content which looks quite similar to a sponsored post in order to get reposted by brands. This implies there are two different types of intents among the fake sponsored content but either way they are misleading companies that may want to work with the influencer because of the delusive content that they are posting. (Lorenz 2018, Robles 2019.)

This problem mainly occurs because nowadays many people try to start a career as influencer. They pretend to be high in demand in order to make a good appearance online and to call attention to their profile. This problem makes it harder for companies to work with influencers. The company has to put more effort in researching on the influencer and their actions to be sure of the honesty and quality of the profile. (Lorenz 2018, Robles 2019.)

Even if the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has set rules for which posts need to be disclosed in which way as advertisement for a company, many influencers are not respecting those guidelines. According to the FTC, a material connection between an influencer and the company needs to be revealed if a payment in form of monetary or material compensation is received by the influencer. Furthermore, the FTC demands a clear disclosure of the partnership, which means that simply marking a sponsored post with a single hashtag that is not even explicitly indicating the sponsorship is not sufficient. (Federal Trade Commission 2017.)

6 Empirical part

6.1 Target of research

The study in this thesis was conducted in order to understand Instagram marketing tools in a better way, analyze the competitors' actions and the case company's account, and to finally create a clear and unique Instagram marketing strategy for Onimos Clothing.

As Onimos discovered Instagram as a tool that is working quite well for the company, Onimos was interested in learning more about the different Instagram tools. As Onimos' goal is to raise the brand awareness and to become more popular, Instagram is a good channel to work on those goals.

The literature part of this thesis is the foundation of the empirical part. With the knowledge from the theoretical part and the gathered data in the empirical part, an Instagram marketing strategy will be created in order to manage the brand more effectively on Instagram.

6.2 Methodology

The theoretical part was built up on theories from academic and other literature. As the topic is quite current, most of the literature sources are online resources from the past two years. The theory part provides the basic knowledge that is needed for the study research, which is based on primary data including the knowledge from the theoretical concepts.

The methodology in the research part is split in to two different parts. On the one side, benchmarking was used to analyze some Instagram accounts of competitive vintage retailers. Competitors in this case are vintage retailers that are located close to the physical Onimos shop and have a good Instagram appearance, but also vintage retailers that are no direct competitors in terms of the location but based on the success of their Instagram accounts. The companies that were chosen for the research are Atika London, Rokit Vintage and Beyondretro as the companies that are physically located close to Onimos. Gullygarms, Truevintage Clothing and Darkparadise Vintage are the companies that have been chosen because they are quite successful on Instagram. On the other side, case study was conducted. In this part the case study was designed, the data was collected and analyzed in order to report the results. The combination of the two tools was chosen because it was thought that with this method more relevant data can be gathered and merged into a more thorough Instagram marketing strategy.

6.3 Research process

The process of this thesis study followed the five displayed steps in Figure 4.

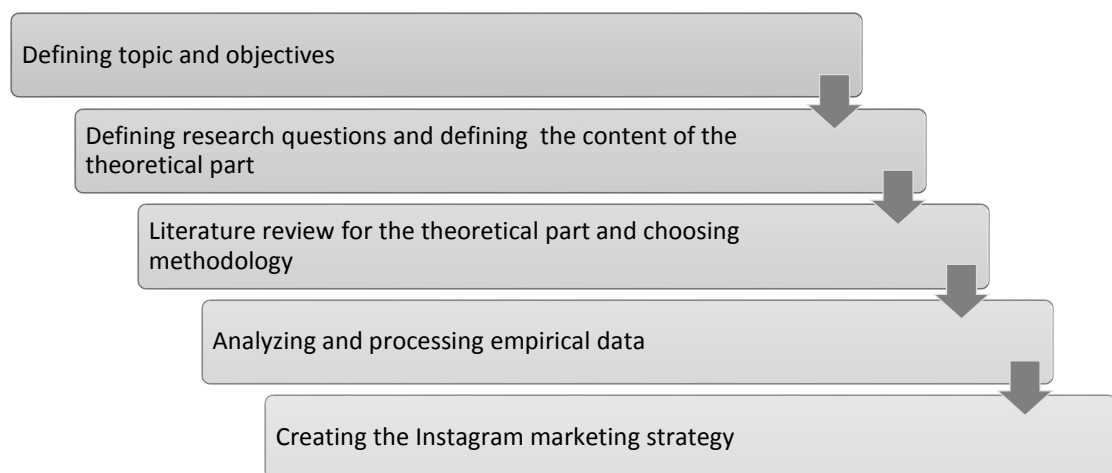


Figure 4: Thesis Process Flowchart

The process, which can be seen in Figure 4, started by generating a topic that suited the interests of the case company. Therefore, the company outlined the objective that the thesis should pursue, which is mainly to increase the brand awareness. Then the research questions were defined regarding the objective of

the thesis and the case company's needs. Next, a rough plan about the contents of the theoretical part was established. The actual literature review is based on displaying basic concepts of marketing and branding topics and rather current literature on the actual Instagram theme with a focus on the fashion industry. The methodology was chosen to be a combination of benchmarking and a case study. The author chose this approach, as it was thought that in this way specific data can be gathered that is the most suitable for the case company. Benchmarking was chosen as the case company needs to keep competitors in mind but can also learn from them, and the case study was chosen as different tools could be tested directly with the company's Instagram account. The data analysis was conducted based on the gathered data from the two mentioned approaches and finally the Instagram marketing strategy was created by combining the knowledge from the theoretical part with the analyzed data.

6.4 Validity and reliability

The quality of a research is commonly assessed by evaluating the reliability and validity of the sources used within the data collection. The validity and reliability of a case study is measured by four criteria: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. In order to control the quality of those aspects, some case study tactics should be used by the assessor. Most of the case study tactics are applied after the design phase of the case study when the data collection, analyzation and final composition are in process. (Yin 2018, pp.42-47.)

The secondary data used, such as books, articles and adequate blogs, are employed to support the understanding of the empirical data in relation with the objectives of the research. For increasing the validity, the concepts from the theoretical part were used during the collection of the data as well as when analyzing the final results. A challenging element in the data analysis is the fact that on Instagram sometimes it is not clear which actions actually affected which results. Therefore, the conclusions need to be drawn with caution without interpreting connections that are not valid and reliable. Especially as Onimos already is quite active on Instagram it is difficult to separate the actions from the case study from the average daily Instagram activity.

6.5 Current situation of ONIMOS Clothing's Instagram account

In the following, the current situation of the Instagram account of Onimos will be analyzed. This part will include what Onimos already is doing on Instagram and which guidelines they have established for the Instagram appearance. It will not be included which actions have been developed throughout the research process. This chapter will not be included in the published version as it includes confidential information that is only accessible for the case company.

6.6 Analysis of Instagram marketing tools for Onimos

The purpose of this thesis was to create a unified Instagram marketing strategy for the case company ONIMOS Clothing. The company has some rules established but they have not been documented or justified in any form. Throughout the theoretical part of this thesis, various components of an Instagram strategy have been researched, and within the benchmarking of competitors and the observation of the company's account actions those components have been looked at rather closely. The target was to gather information about Instagram tools that the company uses already and tools that might be interesting for the company in order to create a structured strategy with the different tools.

Seven tools have been researched but only six of them are considered more closely in the empirical part. The author decided to only do further research on the six chosen tools as the seventh one, the giveaways, did not seem to be a key for creating brand awareness. The final Instagram strategy includes an explanation of how to use influencer marketing, content scheduling, content creation, Instagram ads, storytelling, and the interaction with Instagram users.

6.6.1 Influencer marketing

Onimos already has experience with influencer marketing in the German market. Nevertheless, when Onimos moved to London, it also started to work on connections with several influencers. Onimos offers the influencers PR samples in exchange for several postings by the influencers about the brand Onimos. The

problem that has been seen is that often the brand of Onimos does not profit very much from the influencers' work as Onimos would hope.

When researching influencer marketing, it was defined more clearly which types of influencers exist, and which might be more useful for a rather small company. Onimos should focus and spend time on searching for possible micro- and nano-influencers. After finding them, they should not only be included in one single cooperation, but a good relationship should be built with them. This will lead to further future cooperation, which makes this form of advertisement rather trustworthy. The followers of the influencer will see that the influencer is honestly involved with the company's products and that the influencer is not only showing them for a payment.

While benchmarking the other companies' Instagram profiles, it was quite hard to find information on if they are using influencer marketing or not. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, often it is not clear if people have been paid for content creation or if they are just customers who create good content and want to become influencers.

Nevertheless, it would be suggested for Onimos to continue the influencer marketing as it is a good chance to make the brand more visible. Especially as the company is quite new in London, it is important to become known by local people. When looking at the audience of Onimos in its Instagram Insights, still the largest percentage of followers are located in the German market and only a small portion of followers are located in the United Kingdom. This indicates that Onimos needs to spread in this market. Based on the theoretical framework, influencer marketing might be a good way to spread the brand image.

6.6.2 Content scheduling

For the content scheduling there are two different sections: scheduling the Instagram feed and scheduling the story postings. This part will not be published as information of Instagram Insights of the company is shown and the company wants to keep this information confidential.

6.6.3 Content creation for the target group

This chapter is not going to be published as various information from this chapter would give other potential competitors too much information about Onimos' actions.

6.6.4 Using Instagram ads

Onimos has not been using Instagram ads until now. As Onimos is a small-sized company, the budget for Instagram marketing is not very large and until now Onimos was investing quite many resources in the influencer marketing.

With Instagram ads it is possible to spend little money, but in return reach a few thousand Instagram users. The budget can easily be controlled and estimated. As the goal for this thesis is to increase the brand awareness, one of the main suggestions is to try Instagram ads with a smaller budget. The reason for this suggestion is that it is easier to reach Instagram accounts that are not following @onimos.store through Instagram ads than to be found by other Instagram accounts by accident. Furthermore, it is recommended to start an Instagram ads campaign after the Instagram account of Onimos itself has applied the other components of the Instagram strategy for a while in order to present a unified image to the new potential followers.

Onimos can then select the target audience of the Instagram ad in order to reach more Instagram users that are located in the United Kingdom. A well thought through selection of the target group will lead to an effective use of the money that is invested Instagram ads.

When working with Instagram ads it is important to choose a suitable layout for the ad in order to create brand awareness. There are many ways to approach this tool in terms of the design of the ad. As Onimos wants to create brand awareness, it is important to work with the existing color scheme of Onimos and to point out what is typical for Onimos. Based on the company's image, it would be suggested to create a carousel ad in which models can be seen wearing Onimos vintage clothes. The company should stick to the bold colorful scheme

because this is what represents the company. The logo of Onimos should also be included in the pictures and perhaps at the end of the carousel, or between the pictures there could be one picture where the emphasis is placed on the logo. This can be done by showing some Onimos merchandise such as stickers, jute bags or paper bags or by showing a picture of the shop front.

6.6.5 Storytelling

The storytelling was mostly analyzed by benchmarking the competitors' actions. It could be seen that there are many different approaches. Some companies have a settled scheme of what they are posting. For example, Truevintage Clothing is posting the same type of pictures every day. In addition, their theme is very clear and minimalistic, which is also visible in their Instagram feed. Also, Darkparadise Vintage is following several rules, but they are using a rather colorful layout. However other companies such as Atika or Rokit have a rather unstructured color scheme. While analyzing the mood boards in Appendix 1, that have been created for all companies' story content, it became clear that the companies that

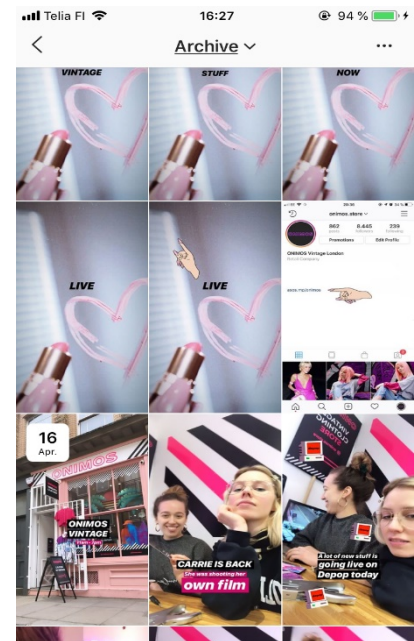


Figure 5: Screenshot of @onimos.store Stories Archive

follow certain color schemes and layout regarding the backgrounds or also the type and color of the text. *“A mood board is a collage or composition of images, visuals and other objects, often created for the purposes of design or presentation. Mood boards can help designers to figure out how to create unified styles or themes for a design project.”* (Techopedia n.d.) Also using the same models several times in an Instagram story makes the story more recognizable in terms of the brand because the Instagram user gets used to the faces and connects them with the brand. In the case of Onimos, a color scheme has been set to the colors pink, purple and black which the company uses clearly and continuously. This can be seen when looking at the story postings of Onimos. An example from 16 April 2019 can be seen in Figure 7.

Another feature that Onimos is managing quite well in its Instagram stories is to make the follower part of the day at the company. Onimos makes its brand tangible and likeable.

Also, the use of GIFs was introduced to the company's story throughout the thesis process. The company is adding GIFs that follow the color scheme of Onimos and that underline the brand image of the company.

The usage of the different features for the Instagram story, such as emoji sliders or question tags, might not directly be useful for creating brand awareness because they are not unique enough, but still the company could employ them in order to get closer to their followers. Those features keep the followers interacting with the profile and, as mentioned in previous chapters, this is an important part of building a strong brand.

One of the next goals of Onimos should be to arrive at 10,000 followers in order to be able to use the swipe up link function. The swipe up link makes a brand look more serious and it will be rather easy and convenient to visit, for example, the company's website, which is also part of a brand's appearance.

6.6.6 Interaction with Instagram users

As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework, the interaction with the Instagram users should be an essential part of the Instagram strategy. Interacting with other Instagram users means to comment, like, or share their posts, for example. Onimos should develop a routine to like and comment on profiles that already are following the company but also on accounts that might be interested in the company. Those accounts could be found through location tags or hashtags for example. This makes the company's profile more visible and more people might pay attention to the company's profile.

Interacting with Instagram users is also important in order to create and increase engagement. Interacting with comments and likes will make the Instagram user more valued and recognized. This influences again the appearance of the posts of Onimos regarding the operating mode of the algorithm of Instagram.

7 Conclusion

In the conclusion part the author reviews the main findings of the thesis, describes the success of the research process and gives suggestions for further possible research on this topic.

7.1 Main findings and discussion

In today's world branding through social media creates the success of tomorrow. Instagram is a great social media platform that gives a company an easy and cheap way to grow if the platform is managed well. Even if the company is quite small, Instagram is a good tool for marketing the brand. With little resources the company can employ different tools of Instagram marketing and make the brand visible to a large number of people. Compared to traditional marketing methods Instagram marketing is not connected with less effort but with less monetary need.

In order to be efficient with Instagram marketing, companies require a well thought through strategy. Because Instagram is attractive, the market is highly competitive, and the company needs to stand out against its competitors and outperform them. As Instagram is quite a creative platform, it gives a company many opportunities to be unique.

The company can communicate easily and quite personally with the consumers. Communication, interaction, and engagement are the most important factors to success. The company needs to find a way to create traffic on its profile in order to be recognized as a likable and well-known brand.

According to the study, the key elements of building a brand successfully on Instagram are:

- a documented strategy for Instagram that will be followed and updated continuously
- posting content every day in order to stay visible on the platform
- creating a unified brand image throughout the whole online appearance regarding the Social Media Brand Voice model

- reinforcing engagement on the company's profile in order to circumvent the difficulty of the algorithm of Instagram
- interacting with other profiles in order to gain visibility
- creating content that the followers can identify with
- including Instagram ads to the strategy.

7.2 New Instagram marketing strategy for ONIMOS

According to the main findings, a new marketing strategy was created. This part will also not be published as this chapter includes a personalized Instagram marketing strategy for the case company. In order to keep the competitive advantage of the company, this data is confidential.

7.3 Evaluation of the process

In general, the thesis process went as planned and the outcomes were satisfying for the author. The biggest challenge was to find data for the theoretical framework that is citable as part of a scientific work. As the topic is targeting a rather modern scientific issue, it is difficult to find suitable academic sources of information. Nevertheless, the author managed to find suitable content where the needed information could be extracted.

The benchmarking of the competitors gave the author an outlook on different approaches in using the different tools of Instagram. Those findings could then be analyzed, and the different companies could be easily compared. While proceeding, it became clear that there is not only one way to be a successful brand on Instagram. There were huge differences in how the companies proceed. During the research process it could be also seen that some of the companies change their approaches over time. This showed that there is not one masterplan on how a company should proceed. It could be seen that the companies that are quite successful on Instagram have a rather unified and planned image than the companies that were chosen because of their physical closeness to Onimos. Nevertheless, there are only small components that each company puts together in a different way according to their goals and beliefs. Regardless of the strategy

the company approaches, the personality and the appearance of the company need to show a unified picture regarding the social media brand voice.

For benchmarking, the author's purpose was to choose companies that are very different, yet possess some critical similarities. This was decided in order to get a broader picture, but still able to compare the companies' actions. One difficulty that arose while doing the benchmarking was that the author cannot know if the company is taking their actions on purpose or if they do not have a planned Instagram marketing strategy. Many different companies may use several tools by accident without a special purpose behind the actions. This makes it difficult to distinguish if the tools are just easy and common to use or if they truly influence the company's success.

While applying the suggestions for the new strategy the company still needs to keep in mind the dangers of social media and especially Instagram, as they mentioned in the theoretical framework. Some of the tools, such as influencer marketing, might work quite well, but only if they are used carefully and the influencers who are chosen are selected after observing their actions and doing some research on them. This might take time, but if it is done right, the results will be more effective for the company.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

As Instagram marketing is still a very young approach and developing steadily, there is not much literature available. Especially because Instagram marketing has grown quite fast and extensively, there are many differences in the various information sources and researchers need to be careful as to the trustworthiness and validity of the sources. It is important to stay up to date on the process, as the platform and its marketing options are steadily evolving and changing, and the competition is high.

Further research that could be interesting for a company that is employing Instagram as a marketing tool could be done on copyright violations as this may become a major topic in the future of Instagram. Especially for companies, this could be important in order to avoid a scandal or bad reputation.

This thesis looked at many different tools in a focused manner. If the company wants to improve further, it could investigate the different individual tools in more depth. For example, when looking at the content, the company could analyze the Instagram Insights with all its components in order to find out which content is actually bringing value for the brand. In this thesis only an overview of the different possibilities and some essential advice on the different tools have been given. In further research each of the mentioned tools could be analyzed deeper with the company's targets in mind.

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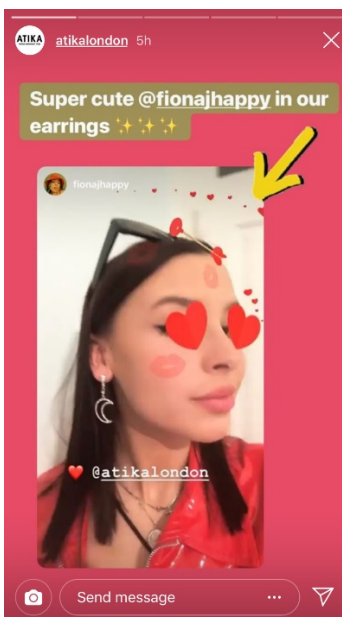
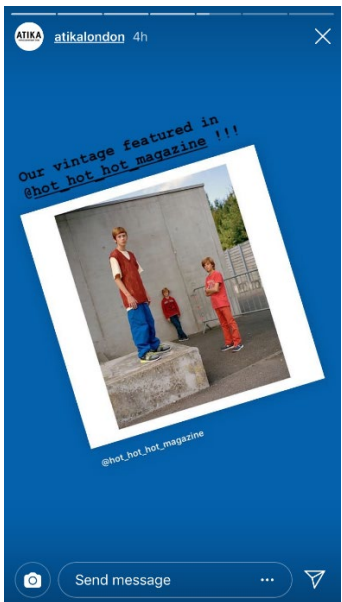
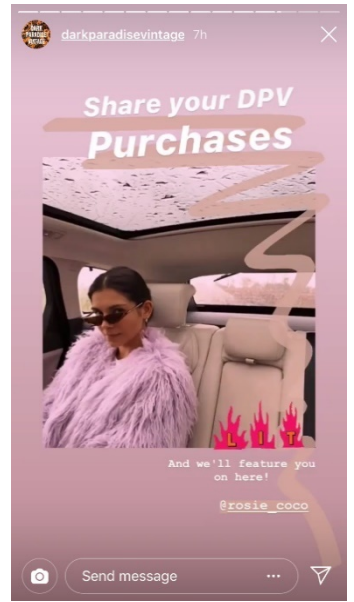
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Appendix 1

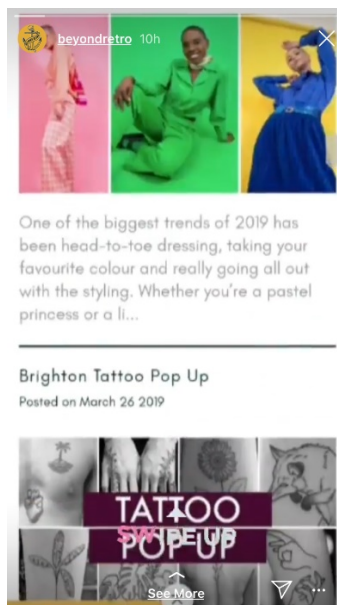
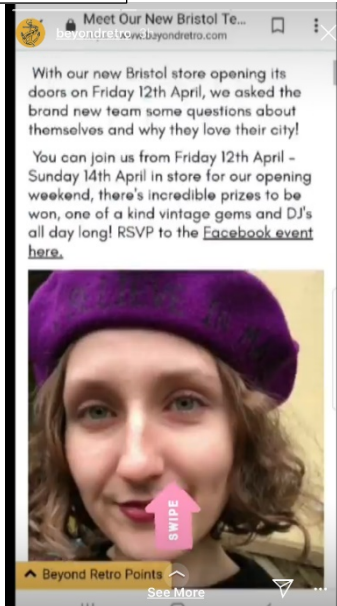
Moodboards

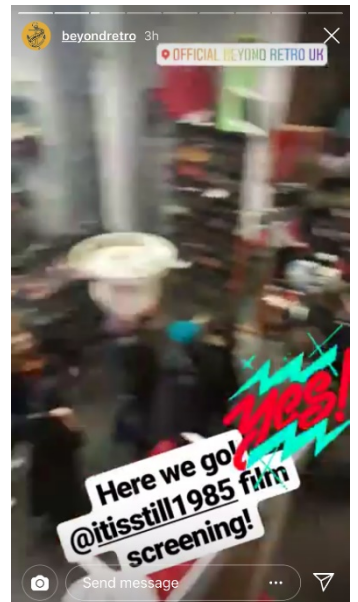
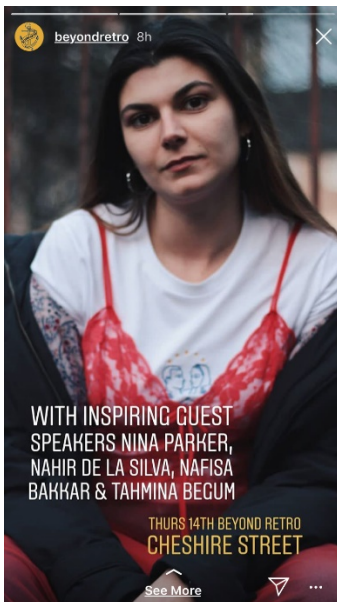
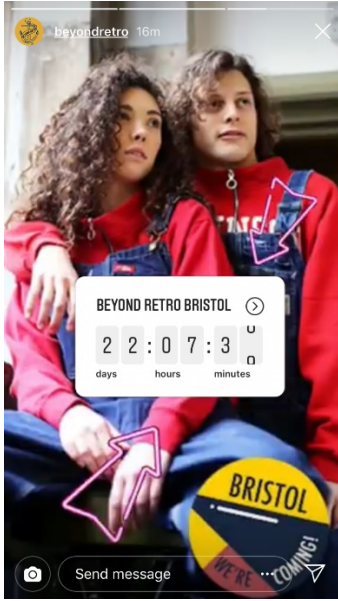
ATIKA LONDON MOODBOARD



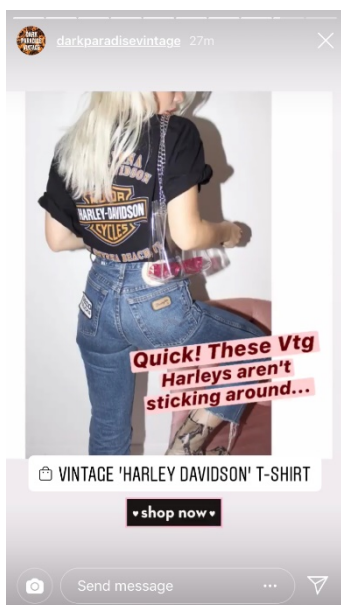
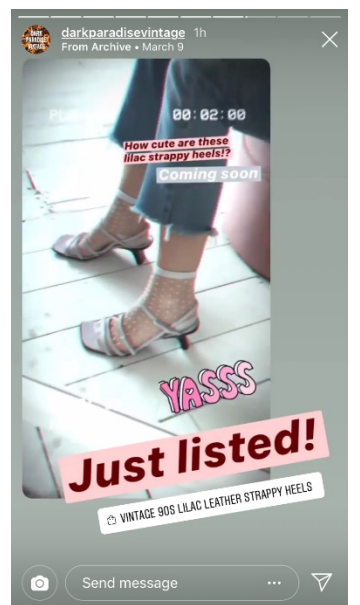


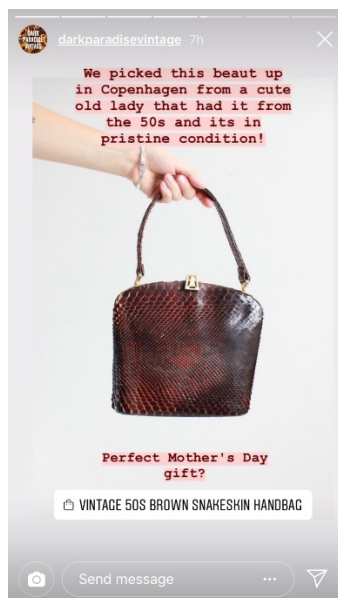
BEYONDRETRO MOODBOARD



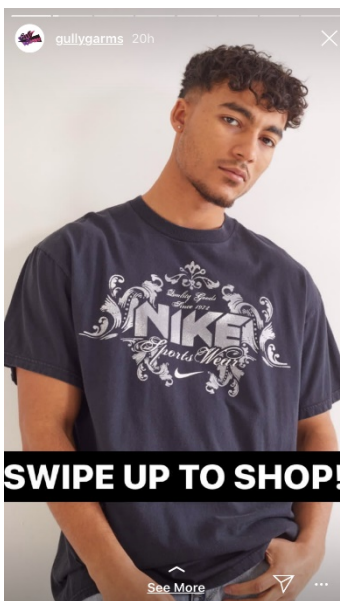


DARKPARADISE VINTAGE MOODBOARD





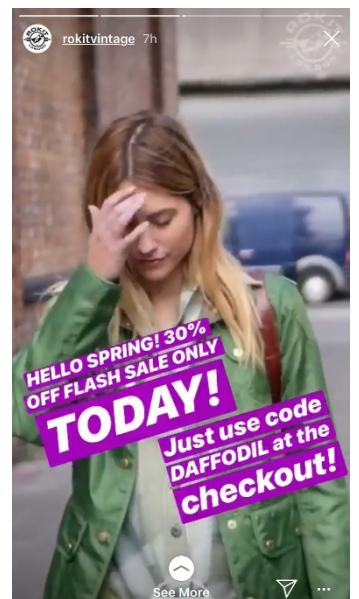
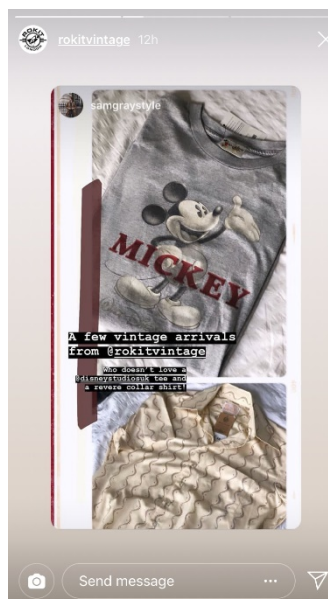
GULLYGARMS MOODBOARD



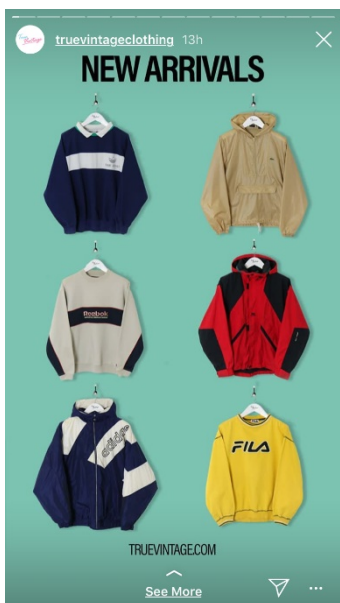
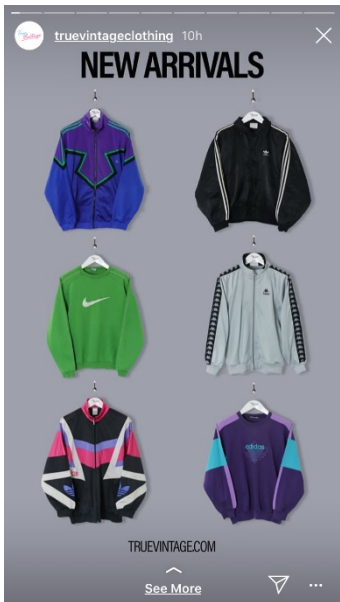


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