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**CREATING CONTENT FOR CONSUMER JOURNEY ACROSS  
DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS: THE CASE OF THE SPORTS INDUSTRY**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 DIGITAL CONTENT AND NEW BUSINESS ERA.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 Digitalization of business, marketing, and media .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2 Big data .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.3 Defining digital content .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 CONSUMER JOURNEY AND CROSS-CHANNEL INTEGRATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 From linear to non-linear consumer journey .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 Omni-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3 Cross-channel synergies .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.4 Data-driven personalization.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3 DIGITAL ECO-SYSTEM: CHANNELS AND TOUCHPOINTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.1 E-commerce.....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1.1 Homepage.....	16
3.1.2 Gender landing page.....	16
3.1.3 Category landing page .....	17
3.1.4 Campaign page .....	17
3.1.5 Product listing page .....	17
3.1.6 Product detail page .....	18
<b>3.2 Mobile applications.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3.3 Email .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3.4 Social media.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.4.1 Customer-initiated social media dialogue .....	21
3.4.2 Firm-initiated social media dialogue .....	22
3.4.2.1 Social media advertising .....	23
3.4.2.2 Retargeting.....	24
3.4.2.3 Influencers.....	24
<b>3.5 CRM.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN.....</b>	<b>25</b>

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Research questions .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Sample companies.....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.3.1	Adidas.....	27
4.3.2	Nike .....	28
4.3.3	Under Armour .....	28
<b>5</b>	<b>MODEL DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Analysis.....</b>	<b>29</b>
5.1.1	Channels' and touchpoints' structure .....	29
5.1.1.1	<i>E-commerce</i> .....	29
5.1.1.2	<i>Mobile applications</i> .....	35
5.1.1.3	<i>Email</i> .....	36
5.1.1.4	<i>Social media</i> .....	41
5.1.2	Integration of content .....	43
5.1.3	Data-driven personalization .....	48
5.1.4	Case of a "Brand Moment" .....	51
5.1.4.1	<i>Boston Marathon 2017</i> .....	52
5.1.4.2	<i>Oceans Day</i> .....	53
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Limitations and future research.....</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>REFERENCE LIST .....</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>APPENDIXES .....</b>	<b>67</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Examples of Facebook and Instagram advertisements.....	23
Figure 2: Oceans day campaign page extract.....	54
Figure 3: Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model.....	56
Figure 4: Personalization opportunity .....	4

Figure 5: Homepage .....	5
Figure 6: Gender landing page .....	6
Figure 7: Category landing page .....	7
Figure 8: Campaign page.....	8
Figure 9: Product listing page.....	10
Figure 10: Product detail page.....	11
Figure 11: Connection of mobile application and social media .....	13
Figure 12: Social media posts about new collection by Nike's sponsored athletes .....	13

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison of homepage structures .....	30
Table 2: Comparison of gender landing page (men) structures.....	31
Table 3: Comparison of gender landing page (women) structures.....	31
Table 4: Campaign page structure .....	32
Table 5: Comparison of category landing page structures (Running).....	33
Table 6: Comparison of product listing page structures (Running and Football) .....	34
Table 7: Comparison of product detail page structures .....	34
Table 8: Comparison of product launch emails structure.....	37
Table 9: Comparison of special price offers emails structure .....	38
Table 10: Comparison of seasonality emails structure .....	39
Table 11: Comparison of sports moments emails structure .....	39
Table 12: Comparison of social media posts' structures .....	42
Table 13: Integration of e-commerce touchpoints.....	44
Table 14: Integration of email touchpoints.....	46
Table 15: Integration of social media touchpoints. ....	48
Table 16: Timeline of activities and observations.....	14

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

sl. – Slovene

**CTA** – (sl. poziv k dejanju); call to action

**HP** – (sl. domača stran); homepage

**LP** – (sl. pristajalne strani); landing pages

**GLP** – (sl. glede na spol specifična pristajalna stran); gender landing page

**CLP** – (sl. pristajalna stran kategorije); category landing page

**CP** – (sl. stran kampanje); campaign page

**PLP** – (sl. stran z naštetimi produkti); product listing page

**PDP** – (sl. stran s podrobnostmi izdelka); product details page

**BR** – (sl. stopnja zapustitve spletne strani); bounce rate

**CTR** – (sl. stopnja klikov na naslednjo pristajalno stran); click through rate

**CVR** – (sl. stopnja konverzije, tj. nakupa); conversion rate

**AOV** – (sl. povprečna vrednost naročila); average order value

## INTRODUCTION

Digital environment is a diverse place of infinite possibilities, which requires a diverse set of tools, to be mastered and used accordingly. It provides numerous business opportunities, as well as challenges. In the past decade, the internet connectivity has risen significantly. On one hand, it is enabling people to obtain information, engage in economic and social exchange, social activities and online communities (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016, p. 304), while on the other hand, it is transforming the economics of marketing, turning the traditional strategies and practices upside-down, making the old way of doing business unsustainable (Edelman, 2010, p. 2).

Today's digital technologies provide personalized and immersive environment which allows interactive and rich information exchange between the brand and consumer, who wants to receive content, expertise and personalized solutions in real time during their shopping experience. In order to deliver efficient, relevant (at the right time and the right place), and engaging experience, companies must rely on a deep knowledge of the consumer – who they are, devices they use to connect with the company, and the content they want to see (Stone & Woodcock, 2014, p.4). It is no longer sufficient to think of strategies for each channel separately – different touchpoints, especially digital, can change how consumers interact with a brand, their products and services (Parise, Guinan, & Kafka, 2016, p. 412), and as Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015, p. 112) stated: “No channel should stand alone”. Due to digital interactions, a consumer journey has changed from simple awareness-consideration-purchase to a more iterative and less reductive journey, which includes four stages: (1) consider, (2) evaluate, (3) buy and (4) enjoy, advocate, bond, whereas linear characteristics are being replaced with non-linearity. In digital aspects, it includes owned, paid and earned media (Edelman, 2010, p. 2), the three sets of providers of digital content.

Digital content, the main subject of present the thesis, is defined as “bit-based objects distributed through electronic channels” (Rowley, 2008, p. 517). It has to be characterized by: information recombination, accessibility, navigation interaction, speed, and essentially zero marginal cost (Koiso-Kanttila, 2004, p. 45) and created, repurposed or curated for different drivers and different digital touchpoints (adidas AG, 2017). It is widely used as a part of marketing and digital strategies in different industries, including the sports apparel and footwear industry, among many others, also by adidas Group.

adidas Group is a multinational corporation, headquartered in Herzogenaurach, Germany, where Adolf Dassler and his older brother Rudolf (who later established a home-town-rival Puma) began to manufacture their first pairs of sports shoes in 1924. In the late 1940s, adidas got its name and three stripes logo and became an innovative leader in athletic footwear (*adidas Group AD – Company profile, Information, Business Description, History, Background information on adidas Group AG*, n.d.). In 2018, adidas is a global player, maintaining its position and incorporating the following core belief: “Through sport we have

the power to change lives”. One of the adidas Group results, significantly marking last couple of years, was the outstanding e-commerce growth by 59% in 2016 (adidas AG, 2016, p. 93). According to the report on the first quarter of 2017, e-commerce was the fastest growing channel with 53% increase in sales (Rorsted, 2017). Consequently, digital has its place in the agenda for every Board meeting from then on (adidas AG, 2017) and has continued the momentum with 39% growth in Q3, which means, that e-commerce is still outperforming every channel in every region (Seeking Alpha, 2017a). Digital, with strong emphasis on e-commerce, is also one of the pillars of the “Creating the new”, which was the acceleration plan for 2017. Financial ambitions reflect the acceleration plan and as the sales growth is set to 10%-12% (from 2015 to 2020), the ambitions for e-commerce are even higher – € 4 billion in 2020 (Seeking Alpha, 2017b).

In response to increasing need of joining all digital under one roof, which appeared already in previous years, a new business unit – Digital Brand Commerce (hereinafter: DBC) – was formed in 2016 (adidas AG, 2016, p. 54). DBC is a new horizontal business unit, of which main purpose is to provide a holistic digital support to all vertical business units. As the name states, it combines marketing and technological aspects of e-commerce and is composed by various teams, one of them being Consumer Experience Marketing, strongly focusing on Global Digital Content (adidas AG, 2017), of which working emphasis is also the key subject of the present thesis. Great content leads to short- and long-term goals, which is purchase on one hand, as well as advocacy and brand loyalty on the other hand. The goal is to make an online equivalent to the adidas flagship store on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in New York City, to provide a seamless consumer journey and ultimate support for purchase behaviour, based on informed decision making. adidas, along with its main global rivals Nike and Under Armour, can therefore be used to extract and expose best practices to form managerial implications and guidelines for practitioners.

The main purpose of the thesis will be to explore **what** content needs to be created (for individual channels within structure) and **how** it needs to be integrated (internally connected and personalized) to provide a premium consumer journey across touchpoints of a digital eco-system; in case of adidas, as well as main competitors (Nike and Under Armour) and sports apparel and footwear industry in general. To contribute to a “premium” consumer journey, every piece of content must meet the following criteria:

- it either draws attention and inspires (serves advertising goals) or supports information-based decision making (serves e-commerce goals) and
- offers fluent experience across digital eco-system.

The research questions of the thesis will cover areas of structure, connections, and personalization:

[R1]: How does the content need to be structured across different touchpoints of digital eco-system?



[R2]: How does the content need to be integrated to create: [R2a] consistent and unified brand experience? [R2b] cross-channel and cross-device synergies?

[R3]: How can data-driven personalization be used to optimize path-to-purchase?

Findings and implications will be used to develop a *Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model*, i.e. guidelines for practitioners and potential improvements for adidas.

We will begin the thesis with a literature review on business in digital era and defining digital content, clarifying its position in marketing and e-commerce. In the second chapter, we will explore the other theoretical frameworks which can be applied to digital topics, such as omni-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications. The third chapter will explain diverse touchpoints of digital ecosystem, the benefits they offer and challenges they bring, with emphasis on structure of online stores and usage of social media, email campaigns, and mobile applications. We will continue with development of the empirical design – research questions and methodology, and short overview of adidas' competitors which will be used for comparison. We will thoroughly define structures of channels, links among the corresponding touchpoints, how the content is integrated into the eco-system as a whole, and how data-driven personalization is used to enhance the premium consumer journey across digital touchpoints. We will end the thesis with discussing and summarising answers to the research questions and providing managerial implications.

## **1 DIGITAL CONTENT AND NEW BUSINESS ERA**

Broadly defined, digital content is every bit-based object, which is distributed through electronic channel (Rowley, 2008, p. 517). As an object of infinite reproduction, delivered through world of networks, algorithms, and automated systems, it is widely used as a part of marketing and digital strategies in different industries. The digital revolution is following the same patterns as the previous industrial revolutions: interruption, frenzy, synergy, and maturity, and is transforming business, as well as everyday lives (Mulhern, 2009, p. 85).

John Hayes, the CMO of American Express, once stated: *“I have not met anybody ... who feels they have the organization completely aligned with where this digital revolution is going, because it is happening so fast and so dramatically. Marketing is touching so many more parts of the company now. It touches on service; it touches on product development. We need to organize it in a way that starts to break down the traditional silos in business”* (Hayes, 2011, p. 1). Worldwide digital innovation is causing a disruption in business, and emergence of new technologies is revolutionizing the way companies interact and engage with their internal and external stakeholders (Straker & Wrigley, 2016, p. 277). The gap between the accelerating complexity of markets and the capabilities of most marketing organisations to understand, face, and cope with it, is widening. It is believed that the main driver behind the widening gap is usage of internet and the growing challenges of digital environment which is infusing every area of the world we live in (Day, 2011, p. 183). Online

world changed the way consumers communicate and learn about product offerings, how they shop and buy products and services. Already a decade ago (Kim & Lennon, 2008), internet has been recognized as the fastest growing retail channel and a crucial advertising channel.

Furthermore, it is not only about the digital channels expanding marketing opportunities, but rather about the need for whole business organizations to adopt certain changes and redesign themselves to fit into the digital environment. The digital revolution can therefore be embraced and exploited by, for example, implementing cross-channel strategies, or handled with a more defensive approach, such as increasing the level of existing, non-digital channels (Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlstrom & Freundt, 2014, pp. 2-4).

## **1.1 Digitalization of business, marketing, and media**

With business infrastructure becoming characterized by numerous interconnections among products, processes, and services in the past decade, digital technologies are fundamentally transforming business models, strategies, processes, capabilities, and key interfirm relationships in extended business networks. To better operate in the new environment, IT strategy should no longer be inferior to business strategy, but rather create a fusion of IT and business strategy and form digital business strategy (Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou & Venkatraman, 2013, p. 471). As information systems nowadays collect data from all stages of the supply chain, this data should support critical processes for managing corporation's partners, suppliers, and customers (Stone & Woodcock, 2014, p. 7).

According to an IBM study, based on interviews with more than 1,700 Chief Marketing Officers, the four biggest challenges in business already in 2011 were (IBM Institute for Business Value, 2011):

- the explosion of data (also known as “Big Data”),
- social media,
- proliferation of channels, and
- shifting consumer demographics.

Three out of four biggest challenges listed above, are connected to developments in the digital marketing sphere. For majority of companies, marketing nowadays is getting increasingly interactive and “always on”. Every aspect of marketing is being affected: both in terms of how customers are affected, as well as how marketers work with each other, cross-functionally with other departments, with distributors, suppliers, and partners. On one hand, website and mobile advertising is significantly usurping advertising in conventional media, which allows better assessment of ROI and leads to a blurred distinction between advertising and other communications methods. Systems are executing marketing processes, improving effectiveness, and speed, while market research is being carried out online and getting a whole new dimension through customer-initiated feedback (Stone & Woodcock,

2014, p. 6). On the other side, customers are taking more active role as market players: they can reach (or are reached by) almost everyone, anywhere and anytime. The rise of new – digital – media is enabling real-time information exchange and user-generated content (hereinafter: UGC) became a mass phenomenon. As consumers are moving from print to digital media, more and more printed magazines and newspapers are facing crises; there is a decline in effectiveness of TV advertising. These changes illustrate how digitalization requires a shift in marketing thinking (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010, p. 311).

Three potential challenges for marketing in digital environment come from areas of customer insights, brand reputation in era of social media, and defining the effectiveness (Leeflang et al., 2014, p. 2) and are addressed cross-functionally:

- *The ability to generate and leverage deep customer insights:* Big data, providing enormously valuable information about consumers will be explained in subchapter 1.4. Generating customer insights is relevant because if marketing practitioners can measure it, they can manage it and furthermore, know more about their business to directly translate this knowledge into improved decision making (McAfee, Brynjolfsson, Davenport, 2010, p. 64).
- *Managing brand health and reputation in a marketing environment where social media plays an important role:* Word of mouth (hereinafter: WOM) is being replaced by “word of mouse” and product reviews are playing a more and more important factor (Stone and Woodcock, 2014, p. 6).
- *Assessing the effectiveness of digital marketing activities:* One of the main challenges in this area is the availability of numerous metrics (Mintz & Currim, 2013). Marketers need to determine, which metrics are relevant, which data they should collect, and which data can really be used.

By providing communication abilities and online connectivity, digital channels have played a major role in the digital revolution, especially as mobile internet and social media created new communication channels between a company and its customers (Straker & Wrigley, 2016, p. 276). From content perspective, digital channels can be defined as technology-based platforms, which use internet to connect with customers via digital technology, provide a range of different content and purposes, and facilitate communication with a range of various interaction levels (Straker et al., 2015, p. 113). Traditionally, customers stayed with one channel until buying the product or service. Nowadays, Magnini and Karande (2011, p. 545) explain, customers use one channel to get information about product or service, another one to make the purchase, and the third one to retrieve the product or service. Various digital channels, along with their increasing popularity, are leading consumers to exploit resources in different channels for different parts of buying process, and to expect to be able to interact with the company at any point of the process. Customers, who search, enquire, interact, complain, buy and pay through digital channels, are referred to as “always on” customers (Stone & Woodcock, 2014, p. 5).

Already at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, companies were adopting increasingly complex concepts of marketing channels. Media planning, which used to be practice of allocating a media budget across channels, is now becoming a dynamic automated process and advertisements are based on data streams about consumer online behaviour – their actions and intentions (Mulhern, 2009, p. 85). There are new issues emerging, such as disintermediation or reintermediation, multichanneling and new specializations (Musso, 2010, p. 24). Stone and Woodcock (2014, p. 15) state, that digital channels are still approached in isolation, rather than connecting, supporting and triggering communication across each other, to offer a fluent experience across digital eco-system. As too many companies still employ vertical management, departments are often separated which is causing inconsistency in channels strategy. A crucial strategic concept, which needs to be adopted, to make a multi-channel strategy successful, is that “*no channel should stand alone*” (SAS Institute, 2012). With rapid growth and high accessibility of digital channels, lack of control can cause excessive and uncoordinated online presence of a company, with little or no overall digital shannel strategy.

Despite strong connection to marketing, Chaffey (2015, p. 187) explains how digital channels need to be integrated into e-commerce, supply chain management and broader digital business strategy. He proposes a concept of “*multichannel (omnichannel) digital business strategy*”, and explains it as defining the integration of different marketing and supply chain channels and how they support each other to provide business efficiency and effectiveness. Term “*omnichannel*” became widely used in retail. It also refers to the relevance of customer touchpoints on mobile platforms and social media, and will be explained and further developed in chapter 2.2.

## **1.2 Big data**

The world-wide popular concept about delivering the right message to the right customer at the right time, has never been more reachable than now, in the era of big data. At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the biggest challenges which marketing managers were facing, was lack of credibility and trust in their abilities to generate sales and enhance customer conversion. Recently, however, it became evident that using big data to drive marketing decisions might change this perception, but the explosion of data from several different digital sources (e-mail marketing, online content, social networks, internet and mobile ads) has made it difficult to identify which sources matter and how the data can be used (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 330, 331).

Due to gap between the supply and demand of analytically trained people in marketing (Leeflang et al., 2015, p. 2), big data is a work in progress and effective use of data in decision-making in marketing is still lagging behind. Furthermore, 39% of marketers feel unable to turn their data into actionable insight (Rogers & Sexton, 2012, p. 5). In fact, many companies have gone from being starved for data to being overwhelmed by it. Some of the common excuses for inefficient use of data are: “It’s too expensive”, “I don’t know how”,

“My program is so different that it can’t be measured”, “Public relations is squishy”, and “There are no standard methodologies” (Spiller & Tuten, 2015, p. 115). Nevertheless, a study from 2012 shows that marketing leaders and CMOs, employed by large companies and various industries, believe that companies have to make data-driven decisions to be successful. The biggest challenges in area, and the percentage of agreement among marketers, are (Rogers & Sexton, 2012, p. 5):

- the lack of sharing data across organization is an obstacle to measuring the ROI of marketing (51%),
- not using data to effectively personalize marketing communications (45%),
- inability to link data together at the level of individual customers (42%),
- data is collected too infrequently or is not real-time enough (39%),
- too little or no customer/consumer data (29%).

When it comes to turning data into actionable insight, the problem usually lies in the way in which departments (marketing, sales, public relations, customer service etc.) have their own datasets and manage them individually. The solution is promised by big data analytics, which should be able to provide links between these datasets and help explain connections among them (Rogers & Sexton, 2012, p. 5). Data-driven services (defined as use of data to inform and optimize the ways through which marketing activities are carried out) therefore link data and metrics to create strategic and tactical business insights. They integrate various metrics into a forward-looking dashboard, in order to measure ROI and to guide future spending in marketing. When the survey was carried out, 57% of companies in sample were not allocating their marketing budgets on any ROI analysis (Rogers & Sexton, 2012, p. 10) and 22% were using brand awareness as their sole measure to evaluate their marketing spend (Rogers & Sexton, 2012, p. 16). The traditional data usually consisted of methods such as focus groups, structured and unstructured interviews; later on, the methods became slightly connected to digital areas (surveys, experiments, transactions, observations and product reviews), while nowadays, the following methods are considered Digital Data (Kumar et al., 2013, p. 330-333):

- search queries,
- clickstream,
- social media,
- blogs,
- community forums, and
- incentivized referrals.

Big data provides opportunities to track consumers’ journeys: from awareness to purchase and even becoming loyal to the brand (Leeflang et al., 2014, p. 5). According to the estimates, around 2.5 petabytes (1 petabyte equals 1,000,000 gigabytes) of information about transactions, customer behaviour – their location and devices – are collected by Walmart

every hour (McAfee, Brynjolfsson, Davenport, 2012, p. 64). Data that comes from tracking and mapping consumers' journeys across touchpoints is crucial in optimization processes (Leeftang et al., 2014, p. 5). In retail industry, dimensions of big data are: customer, product, location, time, and channel. The key to success is to track new customers and to link transactions over time – to add more “*rows*”, which are unique IDs. Furthermore, companies can have higher number of “*columns*”, which are measures (in retail, these are usually demographic data from credit cards, survey data via email address, etc.). When data is about individual-level behaviour, it becomes extremely nuanced and valuable for the company, and if used correctly, information such as past-purchase history, promotional-response history, and click-stream and browsing history can help determine better micro-segmentation, dynamic pricing, and personalized promotions (Bradlow, Gangwar, Kopalle, & Voleti, 2017, pp. 80-84). A new area in marketing (and business), which emerged along with big data, is Customer Relationship Management (hereinafter: CRM) and will be further described in subchapter 3.5.

### **1.3 Defining digital content**

Digital content is considered one of the key elements of e-commerce. Along with interface, navigation, reliability, and technical aspects, it forms an evaluation framework and criteria groups of e-commerce website (Van der Merwe & Bekker, 2003, p. 333). Digital content is every image, video, animation, copy ... distributed through electronic channels.

When analysing digital touchpoints (functional, social, community, and corporate), Straker, Wrigley, & Rosemann (2016, pp. 116–121) used a broad definition of content, observing all types of elements, such as store locations, opening hours, contact details, and also customer created content. They collected the content from 100 international companies and categorized it according to its purpose into the following four groups: information, support, promotion, and revenue. Their results suggest that retail industry mainly implements the functional and social touchpoints, with prevalently promotion- and revenue-oriented content.

Digital content, therefore, must not be randomly selected, but rather strategically dealt with. The number one reason to have a well defined digital content strategy are the current statistics, showing that good content keeps consumer for 37 seconds, which is half a minute more than the usual attention span (7 seconds). Quality content therefore engages, connects, and differentiates (adidas AG, 2017).

Depending on the industry and type of digital channel or touchpoint, the content also needs a clear purpose and must meet certain criteria. In retail industry, digital content must draw attention and inspire to serve promotional goals on one hand, and it must support information-based decision making to help achieve e-commerce sales goals on the other hand; but overall, it must offer a fluent, premium experience across digital eco-system.

Digital content must be aligned with the corporate strategy – in case of adidas, it states that “*Every day, we work to inspire and empower people*” (adidas AG, 2016, p. 52).

## **2 CONSUMER JOURNEY AND CROSS-CHANNEL INTEGRATION**

Based on the availability of new data, recent studies about consumer journey suggest that consumer journey is losing its traditional, linear form, due to the overall interconnectedness. Consumers now have endless options of researching and buying at their fingertips 24/7, and many marketers nowadays struggle to offer a seamless cross-channel experience (Van Bommel, Edelman, & Ungerman, 2014, p. 1). Synergies between channels had already been explored among omni-channel management. According to Melero, Sese, & Verhoef (2016, p. 32), the key ingredient of a successful omni-channel strategy is a consistent, seamless, and personalized experience across channels and touchpoints. In this context, touchpoints can be defined as “*episodes of direct or indirect contact with the brand*” (Baxendale, Macdonald, & Wilson, 2015, p. 236).

Although omni-channel management refers to both offline and online channels, we will use some of the basic concepts to better understand digital channels: how they can independently or jointly impact brand experience, improve path-to-purchase and conversion-to-sales, form profitable relationships, and create cross-touchpoint unity (Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017, pp. 188-191) to provide a premium consumer journey across digital channels.

### **2.1 From linear to non-linear consumer journey**

In the digital era, AIDA marketing model – which stands for awareness, interest, demand, and action – despite its wide acceptance, no longer applies (if it ever did). It was designed for traditional media planning, when consumer journey was still considered to be linear (Carlin, 2005, p. 2). Edelman (2010, p. 2) explains how due to digital interactions, a consumer journey has changed from simple “*awareness-consideration-purchase*” to a different one, which is more iterative and less reductive. He proposes four stages: consider, evaluate, buy, and enjoy, advocate, bond; but as it still proposes a linear progression, it fails to acknowledge the non-linearity of current trends in consumer journey.

Nowadays, customers start their journey anywhere, anytime, and from any advice – personal computer, smart phone or tablet. They jump back and forth, skip a step or two, and then completely abandon the process. When they get back to it, they expect to be able to continue from where they left, regardless of channel or device (Melero, Sese, & Verhoef, 2016, p. 21). Before mentioned statistics show that the number of users who seek information about products online is increasing drastically – some of them complete the purchase online, some of them go to a physical store, and others do not continue with their journey at all. Based on big data, analytics have recognised two types of new shopping behaviour: *showrooming*,

which means that customers search in the offline channels and buy online, and the opposite – *webrooming*, which means that customer search information online, but buy the product in physical store (Rapp, Baker, Bachrach, Oglivie, & Skinner Beitelspacher, 2015, p. 358). Besides the non-linearity, there is another customers' characteristic emerging: empowerment. Customers now play a central role and are becoming more empowered and demanding during the whole purchase journey (Higgins & Scholer, 2009, p. 139).

A frequent consumer behaviour trend which is creating an important challenge regarding the non-linear consumer journey nowadays, is “*abandoned basket*”. It is a term that describes consumer online shopping activities, when they choose the products and put them into basket (also known as shopping cart), but then leave online store (Close & Kukar-Kiney, 2010, p. 986). Companies are coping with it in different ways, which will be explored, tested, and presented in the empirical part of the thesis. Abandoned basket is a typical example of a situation, where company's content is needed to optimize path-to-purchase: to embrace this non-linearity and create a journey across digital touchpoints, to lead the consumers back to e-commerce site (or to a physical store) and to encourage them to complete the purchase – either by email, or retargeting on their social media.

## **2.2 Omni-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications**

As a consequence of consumers' ability to choose the channel they use and the widely present UGC, there is a magnified need for investigation on how can diverse communication channels be leveraged to create an “*omni-channel*” approach to brand engagement. An omni-channel strategy should be a result of a holistic approach to integrated marketing communications (Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017, p. 186).

Omni-channel marketing has theoretical background in two interrelated disciplines: multi-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications. The first one, multi-channel marketing, is a predecessor of omni-channel marketing and can be defined as “*the design, deployment, coordination, and evaluation of channels to enhance customer value through effective customer acquisition, retention, and development*” (Neslin et al., 2006, p. 96). The crucial idea is to communicate and deliver products or services via two or more synchronized channels, such as printed catalogs, telephone, direct mail, retail stores, e-commerce, and mobile platforms (Kushwaha & Shankar, 2013, p. 69). Empirical evidence explains that, in comparison to uni-channel consumers, multi-channel consumers have higher lifetime values and show more loyalty towards the brand (Venkatesan, Kumar, & Ravishanker, 2007, p. 130). The second interrelated discipline is integrated marketing communications. Kliatchko (2008, p. 140) defined it as “*an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs*”. Although strategic approaches to integrated marketing communications differ in certain specifics, the core principle remains the following: information consistency across messaging platforms (Moriarty & Schultz, 2012, p. 491). Key marketers' task is to create unified messaging



solutions, define changing channel communication priorities, and optimize path-to-purchase (Cao, 2014, p. 71).

Omni-channel marketing therefore follows a holistic approach, smooth and seamless shopping experience, and a fluent consumer journey, regardless of the channel used – the most critical interaction therefore is not with the channel but with a brand as a whole. Key components of an omni-channel integrated approach are: consumer touchpoints, brand engagement, and customer profitability (Manser Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017, p. 189). To improve the customer experience in an omni-channel environment, Melero, Sese, & Verhoef (2016, pp. 27-32) suggest focusing on:

- customer-centric approach (building, developing, and maintaining long-term relationships),
- unifying all touchpoints across all channels (consistently and satisfactorily managed, bearing in mind a 360-degree view of customers' behaviour),
- delivering personalized customer experiences (putting one-to-one marketing into practice),
- cross-channel integration (coordinating and integrating channels),
- delighting customers across channels (exceeding their expectations, e.g. with discount coupons for their next purchase),
- the role of physical store (it is still premature to consider physical channels dead), and
- embracing mobile channels (mobile devices are nowadays playing prevalent role).

Similar principles are being adopted in digital areas: Straker et al. (2015, p. 112) claim that companies must aim to implement a multi-channel digital strategy, in which “*no channel should stand alone*”. The complexity of communication possibilities across the multi-dimensional digital touchpoints, heightened by diffusion of company-created and user-created content, is causing numerous challenges of engaging consumers and forming relationships with them. Research shows that more than 75% of consumers use at least two different channels when they browse for, research and buy product or services online. The same study states that 85% of online shoppers expect the experience across multiple channels to be consistent and personalized. They want consistent features, offers, and experiences (Oracle, 2011).

### **2.3 Cross-channel synergies**

Managing omni-channel environment demands decisions about how to combine channels to create cross-channel synergies (Cao & Li, 2015, p. 198), which are a result of successful integration. The concept is similar to omni-channel management theory, and defines it as “*the extent to which online and traditional channels interact with each other and cooperate with advertising and promotion*” (Yan, Wang, & Zhou, 2010, p. 434). Berger et al. (2002, p. 46) add the necessity that channels and communication vehicles have to be synchronized

and complementary. The level of coordination can range from zero to full coordination. The first level, where retailers use more than one channel (operating independently), is called “*silo mode*”. It is followed by “*minimal integration*” (with collaboratively linking marketing activities) and “*moderate integration*”, where retailers are optimizing channels collaboratively and are emphasizing activities to link transactions and consumers. The last level is “*full integration*”, which focuses on activities which create a seamless shopping experience (Cao & Li, 2015, pp. 9-11).

At the level of full integration, cross-channel synergies have significant impact on sales growth. One might argue that additional channel can cannibalize others (or limit use of their features) (Verhoef, 2012, p. 135), whereas existing literature proves four mechanisms, which support sales growth: improved trust, increased loyalty, higher conversion rates, and greater opportunities to cross-sell (Cao & Li, 2015, p. 3). In this aspect, cross-channel synergies are achievable through well defined practices. Cross-device synergies, on the other hand, still need further exploration. From digital content perspective, it will be vital to explore the combination of using desktop and mobile devices (e.i. personal computers and smart phones). Implementing the concept of unified brand experience and consistent content has to meet different criteria when it comes to mobile – adidas Group follows “*mobile first*” approach to deliver fresh and exciting consumer services to smart phones (adidas AG, 2016, p. 63). Another aspect, which needs to be acknowledged is that digital content and consumer journey are otherwise primarily focused on e-commerce, but it does not mean that digital touchpoints were not successful, if the person abandons online shopping and goes to the physical store to complete the purchase process there. Researchers agree that higher number of touchpoints develops closer relationships (Melero, Sese, & Verhoef, 2016, p. 26)

## **2.4 Data-driven personalization**

Data-driven personalization can be defined as one-to-one marketing, which is the extreme form of segmentation – when a company decides what communication is suitable for an individual consumer, based on previously collected data. The first popular examples of personalization were Amazon’s filtering to define what music or books should be recommended to their consumers. Google, on the other hand, uses search engine to analyze the types of searches in order to respond faster and more efficiently. Generally speaking, personalization is done in three steps: collecting data, turning it into insights, and operationalizing it (Arora et al., 2008, pp. 1-6).

The practical advantage of personalization lies in higher satisfaction among consumers or, the way practitioners like to simplify it: “*one size fits none*”. Just as segmentation had been a crucial element of marketing communications in past, personalization will be driving the digital communications forward. Taken Smith (2012, p. 5) claims that personalization is increasing levels of loyalty among consumers, especially millenials, towards retailers. In a study which she had conducted, 53% of respondents chose personalized messages as the

attention grabbing element in digital communications, and 46% of respondents claimed that personalization is a reason for them to repeatedly visit a certain website. Another study showed that personalization and communication are the two key variables determining consumers' loyalty towards a brand (Halimi, Chavosh, & Choshalye, 2011, p. 37), whereas Sahni, Wheeler, & Chintagunta (2016, p. 1) confirmed that personalized content, i.e. consumer-specific information – even if it's only a recipient's name within the subject line – increased possibility of the recipient opening it by 20%.

Despite these advantages, there are also two issues behind personalization. The first one is privacy, as consumers are often concerned what kind and how much data about them are companies collecting and saving. And the second one comes in terms of costs – personalization requires data and software to implement it (Arora et al., 2008, p. 6).

In context of sports apparel and footwear industry, personalization can be implemented in terms of personalized communication, which is in accordance with their interests, shown and recognized through their browsing (and purchase) history. If a consumer had already made several orders of apparel of S or XS size, the company definitely shouldn't have sent them an email about new plus size collection. The example in Appendix 2 shows how certain content could be targeted on individual level. For majority of consumers, this email is an example of irrelevant content (also a reason to unsubscribe), while for a person, who ordered last year's swimwear collection in size XXL, this could be a very well targeted information.

While size is a great criterion for targeting in underwear and swimwear industry, adidas has even more opportunities to do so – especially regarding categories (football, training, basketball, yoga ...). Besides personalized communication, e-commerce offers another form of personalization, which is not data-driven, but is based on digital platforms: trying to answer as many individuals' wants and needs as possible, e-commerce nowadays enables a consumer to get a personalized (or even customized) product. In adidas, personalized, for example, means a consumer can add their name or football club logo on their new football boots, while customized means that a consumer is free to choose color and fabric of each part of a shoe, including soles and laces. It is the digital platforms that provide tools which enable customers to gain personalized and customized experience.

### **3 DIGITAL ECO-SYSTEM: CHANNELS AND TOUCH POINTS**

The core of digital content strategy is to provide consistent and premium content across all touchpoints in the digital eco-system. While at first, the emphasis of digital presence was only on corporate websites and emails, it is now clear that marketers should exploit the variety of channels and touch points, which can be used to communicate a message to consumers. A study from 2014 showed, that among all available digital media and tools, companies (both B2B and B2C) mostly use company homepage and e-mail communication, and that in the next 2–4 years, they will shift the focus to social media sites and mobile

applications (Leeflang et al., 2014, p. 3). A more recent study by Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann (2015) confirmed the expected shift and identified 34 digital touchpoints, which are used by companies in 16 different industries. The most frequently used digital channels were (Straker, Wrigley, & Rosemann, 2015, p. 116):

- website (100%),
- social media: Twitter leading (with 96%), followed by Facebook (94%), YouTube (87%), LinkedIn (83%), Google+ (61%),
- emails (68%), and
- mobile applications (55%).

The industries with highest average number of used digital touchpoints were technology (20), non-profits (16.3), and retail (15.3), which will also be a focus industry of present thesis. As the linear decision-making process is abandoned and the consumer journey doesn't proceed step by step, but rather goes back and forth and jumps over a few, it is crucial to look at the touchpoints with a holistic approach, as a digital eco-system, rather than individually. In the next subchapters, we will present each digital channel, and how it can contribute to the overall premium consumer experience.

### **3.1 E-commerce**

Electronic commerce, known as e-commerce, can be defined as “*all electronically mediated information exchanges between an organisation and its external stakeholders*” (Chaffey, 2015, p. 47). Another definition, narrower, states that e-commerce is using Internet to facilitate, execute, and process business transactions, involving a buyer and a seller and the exchange of goods or services for money (DeLone & McLean, 2004, p. 32). Kalakota & Whinston (1997) suggested four different perspectives:

- *Communications perspective* refers to the delivery of information, products or services or payment by electronic means.
- *Business perspective* is represented by the application of technology towards the automation of business transactions and workflows.
- *Service perspective* is about enabling cost cutting at the same time as increasing the speed and quality of service delivery.
- Last, *online perspective*, refers to the buying and selling of products and information online.

The present thesis will focus on a combination of last two perspectives of e-commerce: buying and selling products online with support of quality of service delivery, based on the right content, at the right time and the right place.

The numbers about e-commerce growth are impressive. In **2003**, it was indicated that almost 75% of Internet users are browsing or searching for a product online, but 64% of the visitors

have never bought anything online (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2004). A little more than a decade later, 80% of those who do a research online actually make a purchase (Tikno, 2017, p. 105). In terms of order values, in **2007**, online consumer spending in the United States exceeded USD 100 billion (Albuquerque, Pavlidis, Chatow, Chen, & Jamal, 2012, p. 406). On November 26<sup>th</sup>, **2012**, Amazon's customers ordered 26.5 million items, which is 306 items every second (Clay, 2012).

According to Hong & Kim (2012, p. 2129) a crucial precondition for purchase on online store is trust, which is based on information quality, system quality, and service quality. New online stores appear every day and it is becoming a fiercely competitive market. Furthermore, an important aspect of e-commerce is that clients or visitors of websites are rarely loyal to one individual site, when looking for a product: in comparison to the offline world, consumers are able to compare offers from several companies in an instant's notice. Choice behaviour on Internet is significantly more dynamic (Van den Poel & Buckinx, 2005, p. 558). The consequence of this dynamics is often low conversion rate, i.e. many consumers leaving website without purchasing anything, which is one of the major problems for e-commerce marketing managers and will be addressed in the present thesis.

Looking from consumer journey perspective, a vital factor in e-commerce is a precisely defined structure of landing pages across online store. Ash, Ginty, & Page (2012, p. 28) define landing page as any page a consumer lands on, as a result of traffic acquisition efforts, and propose the following typology: main site, micro site, and stand-alone site. According to the attention span, perceived risk in online shopping, and other factors, which influence one's shopping behaviour online, the content must be strategically positioned through the consumer's journey from first landing page, i.e. homepage, to the last – to payment. The goal of structure and correct content placement is to provide best possible results in the following key metrics: bounce rate (the lower the better: indicates share of visitors who close browsing window without proceeding to any further landing pages), click through rate (the higher the better: indicates share of visitors who click on call to action (hereinafter: CTA) buttons and proceed to next landing pages), conversion rate (the higher the better: indicates share of visitors who complete purchase) and average order value (the higher the better: indicates the average value of all items that consumers buy within one purchase order).

In case of adidas (i.e. [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com), not a retailer, such as Footlocker or Zalando), these are the landing pages which constitute online store: homepage, gender landing page, category landing page, campaign page, product listing page, and product detail page. All of them have standardized top and bottom rows, leading to basic navigation, search window, company information etc. In the next subchapters, we will explain the role and purpose of each page, typical positioning for assets (stacks, i.e. imagery, animated images etc., and tools).

### 3.1.1 Homepage

Homepage, i.e. the first landing page that opens when a consumer lands on the e-commerce website, in sports apparel and footwear industry typically consists of carousels, feature cards, and different types of mid-navigation or personalized blocks. It combines a balance of imagery, informational copy, and numerous paths to conversion. An example is shown in Appendix 3.

Carousels are content sliders at the top of the page, which are introducing the new products or collections, and are in case of adidas updated on – at least – weekly basis (Ilić, 2017c). Each has at least one CTA, usually two, offering to “explore more”, i.e. lead to a campaign page (see subchapter 3.1.4), or to “shop now” to go directly to a product listing page (see subchapter 3.1.5). The carousels are normally followed by feature cards, which are composed of an image and a CTA, leading to four different categories or collections. The next type of content leads a consumer directly to products and options for purchase; showcasing the products which are at the moment most popular or have been browsed by the consumer in previous session (e.g. “best of adidas” and “recently viewed items”).

The overall purpose of a homepage is to lead a visitor further – inviting him to view new collections, browse for a specific product they need, and be inspired by the brand itself. The typical metric, which is used to define success of a homepage is bounce rate, i.e. a percentage of visitors’ browsing sessions that end without visiting any further landing pages. Another metric is click-through rate, which stands for the percentage of visitors who not only viewed the content but also clicked on the offered CTA. Opposite to bounce rate, which measures landing page as a whole, this metric is used to determine success of a certain piece of content.

### 3.1.2 Gender landing page

Considering that male and female collections of sports apparel and footwear industry are significantly different in their essence, the distinction presented by separate gender landing pages (even main navigation) for men and women is a standardized structure of e-commerce websites. The composition of content is similar to homepage – begins with carousels (or static blocks, also known as mastheads), continues with mid-navigation for different product categories and feature cards. An example is shown in Appendix 4.

The carousels of gender landing pages are usually consistent with the ones on homepage, but have certain adjustments. If image of the homepage carousel included both male and female model, the gender landing page carousel will only have one – female or male, according to landing page. On the other hand, when there are new football boots, even if they are all over homepage, they will never be showcased on the women gender landing page because they are only relevant to the male part of audience.

### 3.1.3 Category landing page

Category landing pages exist for major product categories (in terms of company structure, these are usually the main vertical business units), such as Football, Training, Running, Basketball, and Athletics. Unlike homepage and gender landing page, the category landing page includes more animated and dynamic content. The navigation is purpose related – in adidas Football, for example, the purpose navigation offers product according to the type of ground where it's played (stadium, cage, or street), whereas adidas Running introduces styles which refer to collections. Certain categories also include related mobile application (e.g. which helps track running).

It is updated on biweekly-monthly basis (Ilić, 2017c), according to the new collections within the category. Some category landing pages tend to include also block about related community: in Football category, it is clubs or national teams and their new jerseys, in Running category it is invitation to join adidas runners – a CTA “Run with us” leads to a new landing page with information and UGC (see subchapter 3.4.1). An example of a category landing page is shown in Appendix 5.

### 3.1.4 Campaign page

Campaign pages are not a standardized type of landing page among the leading brands of sports apparel and footwear industry – Nike and Under Armour don't showcase them, whereas adidas uses them for all major new collections. Similar to category landing pages, campaign pages are composed by dynamic content, animated rather than static images. A typical stack is a feature flat, a type of content which includes an image, copy, and a CTA.

Campaign pages are meant to introduce more than just a product – they show the inspiration behind it, stories of the athletes wearing it. The design is more innovative and usually different from the – otherwise consistent – design of other landing pages. An example of campaign page is presented in Appendix 6.

### 3.1.5 Product listing page

As the name tells, product listing page is the type of landing page with products listed in rows – sometimes a limited number of products per page, sometimes new rows load as the visitor scrolls down. Typically, there are filters on left side of the page which enable consumer to narrow down the showcased products. Filters can be only about gender or footwear vs. apparel, but also about product type, collection, brand, sport, colour, size, and price range. According to the use of filters, the number of products showcased on a product detail page can vary enormously.

If a product listing page belongs to a certain collection, it sometimes includes a related masthead. Otherwise, it is rather simple and mostly serves functional goals – supporting

consumer to find an array of products that fit into their criteria. An example is shown in Appendix 7.

#### **3.1.6 Product detail page**

The last type is a product detail page. It is the landing page that leads to the conversion, which is in case of sports apparel and footwear industry a purchase. The standard content is imagery and tools for making an order – selecting size, adding to shopping cart or wishlist etc. After the main visuals and tools, there is a block of copy, providing information about the products, i.e. features, materials, characteristics which cannot be seen on the photos.

The advanced content which is appearing on product detail pages recently, is a 360 degrees view or even a short video of a model wearing the product. In case of adidas, there is also a block of user generated content (see subchapter 3.4.1). An important aspect of product detail page is also the dynamic block of items, which are shown based on visitor's prior browsing or behaviour of other visitors, who viewed this item. It is there to lead to further items, in case the opened one isn't exactly what visitor wants or needs something to complete the look. An example of product detail page is shown in Appendix 8.

### **3.2 Mobile applications**

Along with other technological developments in communications area, mobile applications are appearing as another important channel in every sector. They are a part of computer based automation systems, imbedded in business processes (Gulbahar & Yildirim, 2015, p. 453), turning the traditional business model of mobile industry upside down and creating new opportunities for mobile market. Mobile applications present a new source of revenue in the communications sector (Wang, Liao, & Yang, 2013, p. 11).

Sports apparel and footwear industry uses mobile applications in different ways. One is the way a retailer would use them and the other is based on sports activities. The retailer types of mobile applications are focusing on products, new launches, and exclusive access. They enable consumers to reserve a product in the nearest store or even to buy it. On the other hand, mobile applications supporting sports activities are aligned with brands' overall strategy but do not explicitly include promotional material or address the path-to-purchase.

### **3.3 Email**

According to Budac (2016, p. 1), email campaigns are a way of maintaining close relationships with consumers. They create and increase engagement at low costs – email marketing is considered one of the most accessible and effective forms of communications. It has short term impact in terms of immediate sales, as well as long term effects in terms of brand development.



Email marketing is heavily based on data (contacts, which gave permission to be added as subscribers) and as subscribers have different interests and expectations, it is important to use segmented lists. Besides knowing who the subscribers are, using clear and concise subject lines, the crucial element appearing in the email area – as everywhere else – is the concept of “mobile first”. The emails need to be compatible with mobile devices, optimized to different types of devices so that the emails can be easily viewed, instead of becoming a reason to unsubscribe (Budac, 2016, p. 2-3). Zhang, Kumar, & Cosguner (2017, p. 2-4) exposed that although email campaigns are widely used in marketing by both B2C and B2B companies, it is not sufficiently studied from the perspective of distinction between email-active and buying-active consumers. Their research shows, that in order to reach long-term profitability, the vital factor is sending the right number of emails.

What prior research did not address yet, is how emails should be integrated into e-commerce purchase processes and into digital eco-system in general. At this point, again we can use the concepts from related areas, such as integrated marketing communications and omni-channel marketing, to understand that emails can only reach maximum level of success if they are included into the broader set of communications. Another area lacking research is the composition of emails in terms of blocks – how many content blocks can be considered optimal structure, what are the benefits of using countdown pre-blocks in product launch emails and similar.

### **3.4 Social media**

Social media can be defined as “*a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content*” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61) and is fundamentally changing interactions between companies and their customers (Gallaughier & Ransbotham, 2010, p. 197). From marketing perspective, it is considered “*an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept which uses media to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders*” (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017, p. 123). It provides platforms for users to publish their personal evaluations of purchased products, which is a relevant aspect due to low levels of trust towards advertising. Although the effects of social media networks had been examined in numerous studies, companies still struggle to measure its real impact (Leeftang et al., 2014, p. 6) and it was emphasized, that “*one must not overestimate the power of social media*” (Schultz & Peltier, 2013, p. 86). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that using social media creates valuable increase in consumers’ insights – it provides information about their decision-making, shopping behaviour, and post-purchase behaviour (Onishi & Manchanda, 2012, p. 221); it is a connection with other stakeholders and ultimately, it generates sales (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014, p. 708).

Less than a decade ago, Mangold & Faulds (2009, p. 357) believed that the proliferation of social media caused a switch in control: consumers expected the brand to interact with them in a medium where the consumer controls every aspect of it. The timing, channel, frequency,

and content were considered to be outside of managers' control. Although social media amplified the power of consumer-to-consumer conversations and enabled one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands other consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 361), nowadays, we can argue that the control is on both sides. *Firstly*, social media channels can be created by companies and “*ran by an administrator with ability to delete and block users*”, as well as their posts (Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann, 2015, p. 117). *Secondly*, if using the right technology, company can use social media platforms (e.g. Facebook or Instagram) to show consumers an ad that is in accordance with their interests, or even an ad of the exact same product(s), which they were browsing on a company's online store earlier, and direct them back to it. The technology known as *retargeting* is a powerful tool, connecting social media with e-commerce. It can provide significant improvements in path-to-purchase management and will be further explained in the next sections.

A recent study shows shift in popularity of certain social media sites. **Facebook** is still leading with a huge margin – it reached 2 billion users already in July 2017. It now has 2,070,000,000 monthly active users. **YouTube** (on 2<sup>nd</sup> place) has 1,500,000,000, and **Instagram** on 3<sup>rd</sup> place has 800,000,000 users (Kallas, 2018). Although **Twitter** was most frequently used social media site by companies (96% out of 100 companies from 16 different industries use it as a number one social media site) (Straker et al., 2015, p. 115), it only has 330,000,000 monthly active users. **LinkedIn** is on 12<sup>th</sup> place with 106,000,000 users (Kallas, 2018). It was primarily created for B2B purposes and despite its low popularity in terms of mass users, it was 4th most frequently used social media site by companies a few years ago (Straker et al., 2015, p. 115) and was in 2017 rated 2nd most valuable social media site by companies (83%); closely following **Facebook** (89%) and followed by **YouTube** (81%) and **Twitter** (80%). **Instagram** is still lagging behind with only 56% (Herhold, 2017), but has more than doubled the number of users since 2012 (Kim, Seely, & Jung, 2017, p. 536) and made a significant leap from 2015, when less than 35% of the companies were using it (Straker et al., 2015, p. 114). These numbers prove that businesses follow consumers and Instagram is becoming popular among marketers due to features, similar to Facebook, e.g. sponsored posts, ads, dynamic remarketing/retargeting, but also because of a new half blogging, half vlogging trend of so called *influencers* (more in subchapter 3.4.2.3). Also, two factors, which influence impact and determine ways of using social media marketing, are type of industry (B2B vs B2C) and type of product (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017, p. 119). When 236 companies were asked about ways, in which they aim to manage brand health with social media (and forums) they emphasised the following five areas (Leeflang et al., 2014, p.7):

- creating value-added content or services (49%),
- monitoring brand mentions and addressing negative messages (44%),
- identifying influential discussions about the brand and participating in them (25%),
- reaching out to opinion leaders to serve as brand advocates (22%), and
- hiring a third-party service provider to manage brand interactions (14%).

Areas stated above relate both to content created by companies, as well as the content generated by consumers. According to this distinction, Gallagher & Ransbotham (2010, p. 199-201) proposed basic typology: **firm-initiated social media dialogue** and **customer-initiated social media dialogue**. Both will be further discussed in the next two subchapters.

#### 3.4.1 Customer-initiated social media dialogue

Customer-initiated social media dialogue, often referred to as “*earned social media*” is based on what consumers say about the company. WOM no longer stands for “*word of mouth*” but rather for “*word of mouse*” and in an environment, where social media plays an important role, managing brand health and reputation is getting more and more challenging (Leeflang et al., 2014, p. 2). To better understand the role of online WOM, Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden (2011, p. 8) identified five types of social media users, who generate it: creators, critics, collectors, joiners, and spectators. For companies, it is therefore relevant to establish a relationship especially with creators and critics, for they are the ones who generate most of the content.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter were seen as platforms for individual expression. Later on, customer-initiated social media dialogue was being monitored to derive consumer insights from WOM, and in the period from 2011 and 2014, research showed that information and UGC spreading via social media affect sales. Furthermore, consumers are not only creators of WOM and UGC, but rather opinion makers, who have the ability to amplify or undermine marketers’ activities (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016, p. 152-159). Stephen and Galak (2012, p. 624) proved, that earned social media dialogue can have a stronger positive impact on sales (in long term) than traditional earned media, such as mentions in newspapers; and a more recent study showed that brand-related UGC on Facebook activates emotional and cognitive response, which consequently influences behavioral responses (Kim & Johnson, 2016, p. 98).

Following this idea, companies have started to encourage customers to post experience with their products on social media and use a certain hashtag, to trace themselves back to the company. adidas, for example, has a special area on their PDPs, which is dedicated to UGC: users are invited to share how they wear it (a product which they purchased) using a hashtag #3stripesstyle (the invitation and hashtag are sometimes also included into product launch emails). The company then uses an array of photos, shared by customers, to feature them on the e-commerce website – on a PDP of the product. As shown in Appendix 8, UGC from social media, namely Instagram, is included into e-commerce landing page. It is used to enrich the product presentation, to illustrate how the product looks like in everyday life, not just on a model. Not only it is an example of earned social media dialogue, but it also links two digital channels of a consumer journey: e-commerce and social media.

Another example of encouraging consumers to generate products-related content is Nike’s mobile application *Sneakrs App* – on a PLP of products, there is an option to share the

observed product. A simple icon is giving consumers a chance to share it with their network to, for example, ask for their opinion. Suggested platforms include the ones, which are most frequently used by the owner of the smart phone – Facebook, Instagram, Gmail, Messenger, Snapchat ... As shown in Appendix 9, such features connect two different touchpoints of a digital eco-system.

### 3.4.2 Firm-initiated social media dialogue

Firm-initiated social media dialogue was usually considered a channel that is controlled and used by the company, sometimes simplified as “*owned social media*”. With latest development, firm-initiated social dialogue needs a further distinction (borrowed from traditional media typology) into *owned* and *paid* social media dialogue (Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden, 2011, p. 7). With new technologies offering more and more advanced social media tools and trends every day, we will further explain *paid* content in separate subchapters (3.4.2.1, 3.4.2.2, and 3.4.2.3).

When creating social media content for consumers, companies are advised to use a framework of seven functional building blocks, which are common to all social media platforms: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011, p. 241). From firm-initiated perspective, companies use social media as a communications tool to push content to consumers, community, and employees, usually pursuing objectives, such as stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, creating user interactivity, and generating traffic to other online platforms (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017, p. 121), which is considered an important aspect when creating a consumer journey across digital touchpoints. As a part of strategic social media management, guidelines should include points on how to use social media to *facilitate customer interactions*, and how to *integrate social media into a firm’s overarching marketing communications strategy* (Killian & McManus, 2015, p. 2). In sports apparel and footwear industry, an example of lack of strategic thinking and uncoordinated online presence in using social media was Reebok. In 2012, they had more than 600 social media accounts, created by the company and consumers: 232 Facebook pages, 30 Twitter accounts for different product lines and 100 YouTube channels. More than 50% of those accounts were created by fans and a lot of them were established by the company for their seasonal ad campaigns and different markets. After a thorough audit, they now have three Facebook pages, two Twitter accounts, and one YouTube channel. All of those are created and controlled by the company (Zmuda, 2012).

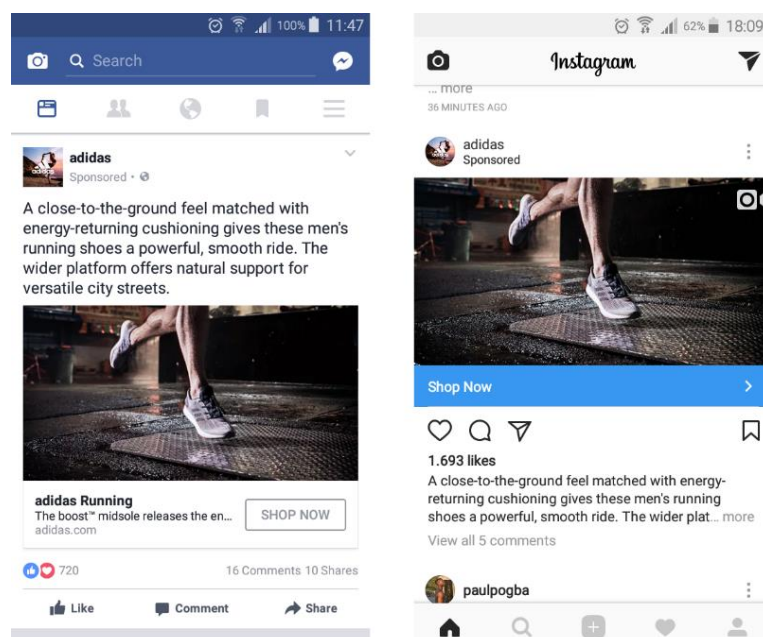
To create a cohesive brand personality in terms of cross-platform integration strategies, content on social media (although they differ in purpose), must follow the **four C’s**: *consistency, customization, commitment, and caution* (Killian & McManus, 2015, p. 3) and when it comes to execution, social media managers must bear in mind the fine line between consumer engagement on one side and consumer enagement on the other (Leeflang et al.,

2014, p. 4). As mentioned before, companies on these sites can use widely generated general and sponsored posts, as well as paid targeted ads, even more narrowly targeted, personalized ads for consumers, who had already visited their e-commerce site, and form paid cooperations with the recently established influencers. When monitoring social media channels of the current leaders of sports apparel and footwear industry (adidas, Nike, and Under Armour), we can notice all these methods. Each of them has different purpose and serves different objectives.

### 3.4.2.1 Social media advertising

The main reason for emergence and rapid development of social media advertising is its highly relevant targeting techniques, which are based on users' personal information (Jung, 2017, p. 304). Academic literature has a rather holistic approach: Dehghani and Tumer (2015, p. 598) propose a theoretic framework which suggests, that social media advertising drives sales through brand image and brand equity. They emphasise the opportunity to interact actively with the adverts on their social media newsfeed, namely by liking, commenting, and sharing, as well as the ability to see which friends had already interacted with the ad. Based on examples from adidas, Nike, and Under Armour, we can argue that social media advertising has a narrower effect, because it links social media with e-commerce. In comparison to general posts on social media, ads include not only engagement (likes, comments, and shares) but more importantly, a CTA (such as “*Shop now*”) which leads consumers from their personal social media newsfeed directly to the landing page of a product or a collection advertised, on e-commerce site, as shown below.

*Figure 1: Examples of Facebook and Instagram advertisements*



*Source: Personal Facebook and Instagram feed (2017).*

### 3.4.2.2 Retargeting

Retargeting (also known as *dynamic retargeting* or *dynamic remarketing*) is one of the most innovative ways of targeting messages according to consumers' online behaviour. It refers to exposing a consumer to an advertisement, which includes a particular piece of content that the consumer searched for online or saw on a previously visited e-commerce site (Zarouali, Ponnet, Walrave, & Poels, 2017, p. 157). The form of ad is similar to product-related content on e-commerce (basic image of a product from a PDP) and is inviting consumers to go back to the PDP of a product they were checking. Research shows, that using retargeting on social media sites is a fruitful and relevant area (Knoll, 2016, p. 267). A study conducted across different industries proved that in terms of generating traffic, affecting conversion and contributing to revenues, retargeting works especially in fashion and sports/leisure industries (De Hann, Wiesel, & Pauwels, 2016, p. 501). The reason why retargeting in these industries works better might be the fact, that consumers have well-defined preferences already at the beginning of their decision journey (Lambrecht & Tucker, 2013, p. 17).

The crucial consequence of dynamic retargeting is that it is improving and simplifying the path-to-purchase. A portfolio of products (based on their codes) is connected to social media and therefore providing automated link between platforms. When executed correctly, it can lead to purchase in several different scenarios: when a consumer has been looking at a certain PDP, when they have put the product on a wishlist, or when they have put the product in a basket and then abandoned it. Dynamic retargeting does not only work cross-channel, but also cross-device – if a consumer opened a PDP on mobile, they will most likely be exposed to a targeted ad both on mobile and desktop, as well as vice-versa, i.e. if they browse PDPs on desktop. The empirical evidence of it will be presented in chapter 5.

### 3.4.2.3 Influencers

Influencers are a hybrid between consumer-initiated and firm-initiated social media dialogue – according to the typology by Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden (2011, p. 8), which we explained in subchapter 3.4.1, influencers are mainly creators: they create content, but they are paid to do so. Their accounts are consumer-initiated (with 100,000 or more followers), but as the brands send them products and pay to post about the experience (which also makes them critics, another group according to the before mentioned typology), the content which makes them influencers is initiated by a company and paid for, therefore we can classify them as paid firm-initiated social media dialogue.

In sports apparel and footwear industry, the influencers are people with athletic and healthy life-style, therefore in accordance with general strategies of brands. Some strategic concepts in this area are similar to sponsorship, e.g. influencers only collaborate with one company from industry and are strictly forbidden to promote competitors' products. An example of adidas' influencer is Zanna van Dijk. She has 207,000 followers on Instagram and her posts

include training, healthy nutrition, active life-style etc. Each time she posts about sports, she is wearing adidas products (both footwear and apparel), if she is given something from a new collection the post is about the product, and her stories (i.e. not a post, but a story which is live 24 hours) include events, such as meeting at the adidas London store (Zanna van Dijk, 2018).

### 3.5 CRM

The last element of digital eco-system is not a channel nor a touchpoint, and yet it presents one of the greatest benefits: the possibility to create better client relations. *Customer Relationship Management* (CRM) is providing personalization of customer treatment (Beasens et al. 2004, p. 508) and with the proliferation of relevant technologies, it is becoming increasingly complex (Park & Lee, 2017, p. 1398).

It includes building relationships and is based on systems, which collect and analyze data. The core role of CRM is to integrate activities across companies, link them to customer value chain and create value for shareholders, whereas it is only as beneficial as it is connected to objectives and performance of a company (Boulding, Staelin, Ehret & Johnston, 2005, p. 156). An issue which can occur, however, is the unethical and destructive use of this data – practitioners must always bear in mind that in relation to consumers, it is crucial to maintain trust, privacy and security (Yadav, Joshi, & Rahman, 2015, p. 341), which are otherwise a fragile topic all over the digital channels and touchpoints.

## 4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

The overall purpose of empirical part of the present thesis is to analyze the digital eco-system of global leaders of the sports apparel and footwear industry, and to create best practice implications, which will be presented in shape of a *Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model*. Firstly, we will explore **what** content needs to be created for individual channels and their corresponding touchpoints within structure. Secondly, we will define **how** it needs to be integrated to provide a premium consumer journey across touchpoints of a digital eco-system – how it needs to be internally connected to offer consistent and unified brand experience on one hand, and cross-channel and cross-device (i.e. desktop and mobile) synergies on the other hand.

To suffice to the concept of a “premium” consumer journey, every piece of content must meet the following criteria:

- it either engages and inspires (serves advertising goals in terms of imagery, videos, different animations and stacks, see subchapter 3.1.2) or supports information-based decision making (serves e-commerce goals, i.e. helps consumer obtain all the information needed to choose the right product for their wants and needs) and

- offers fluent experience across digital eco-system – seamless and consistent from consumer perspective, and profitable from company perspective.

If managed successfully, such content should provide an equivalent of a physical flagship store, but despite adidas' ambitions and goals about e-commerce growth, the path-to-purchase should count as completed even if along the journey across digital touchpoints, consumer abandons digital platforms and purchases the product in a physical store. The overall goal is optimization of path-to-purchase with a conversion as the final outcome.

#### 4.1 Research questions

Due to heavily lacking theoretical background on the topic, in order to develop research questions, we have borrowed certain concepts from other related areas: omni-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications (Payne, Peltier, & Barger, 2017), consumer experience in omni-channel environment (Melero, Sese, & Verhoef, 2016), cross-channel integration (Cao & Li, 2015), and multi-channel digital strategies (Straker, Wrigley, & Rosemann, 2015). The research questions of the thesis will thus cover areas of structure, connections, and personalization:

**[R1]: How does the content need to be structured across different channels and their corresponding touchpoints of a digital eco-system?**

**[R2]: How does the content need to be connected to create:** [R2a] consistent and unified brand experience? [R2b] cross-channel and cross-device synergies?

**[R3]: How can data-driven personalization be used to optimize path-to-purchase?**

Findings and implications will be used to develop a *Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model*, i.e. guidelines for practitioners and potential improvements for adidas. The model will provide answers to the above stated research questions. Deriving from borrowed theoretical frameworks and research questions, the **three basic concepts** of evaluating content, its structure and integration, in combination with data-driven personalization, will be the following:

- No channel should stand alone (i.e. integration).
- Every piece of content must contribute to path-to-purchase (i.e. purpose).
- One size fits none (i.e. personalization).

#### 4.2 Methodology

The research will be a combination of two methods: an observational study and an experiment. The first research question [R1] will be covered with observations of existing channels, their structures and connections between the correlating touchpoints; the third



question [R3] will be answered using results from a 4-weeks-long experiment – everyday activities of a fictional persona (26 years old running enthusiast, in need of new gear for the upcoming season), whereas the second research question [R2] will be answered by combining findings from both methods. All content will be observed and analysed from consumer perspective (i.e. without internal analytics reports or similar material).

We will begin the analysis with identifying structures of content on e-commerce websites, email, social media, and mobile applications. Next, we will add linkages to these structures and draw the path-to-purchase and variations of it. Thirdly, we will conduct an experiment to see how the journey is actually implemented. We will compare three brands and carry out several types of buying behaviour: browsing, adding to wish list and basket, abandoning the purchase process on different stages, registering, etc. Activities will be carried out primarily on e-commerce sites, whereas observations will be taken from other channels as well: social media and email. All observations will be monitored and analysed specifically from data-driven personalization point of view. The results will be interpreted in form of a timeline, too see how the brands follow different shopping activities, as well as from individual usage of personalization features: how do the brands use data about our fictional buyer – do they learn? Ask? Use? What are the automated features that optimize path-to-purchase on individual level?

Lastly, we will conduct short case studies of two, so called, brand moments. The identified content, journey, and personalized features will be used to consider enhanced quality of consumer journey across digital touchpoints with innovative approaches, which are otherwise not yet adopted by either of the analysed brands.

### **4.3 Sample companies**

To collect data about best practices, we have chosen three companies to analyse: adidas, as the main case, and Nike and Under Armour, adidas' two main competitors on global scale, to compare and find best possible examples from the sports apparel and footwear industry. For further comparison and discussion of certain touchpoints and features, when needed, we used Puma as another example, although they cannot be considered a rival anymore.

#### **4.3.1 Adidas**

adidas Group is a multinational corporation, headquartered in Herzogenaurach, Germany, where Adolf (Adi) Dassler and his older brother Rudolf (who later established a home-town-rival Puma) began to manufacture their first pairs of sports shoes in 1924. After global breakthrough in Olympics 1928, where German athletes wore Dassler shoes, the athletic spirit would continue with the famous Olympic victory by American track and field athlete Jesse Owens, wearing Dassler shoes in 1936. In late 1940s, adidas got its name and three stripes logo. The company became an innovative leader in athletic footwear but was marked

by Adi Dassler's death in 1978 and began losing global dominance in early 1990s, mostly due to North American entrants Nike and Reebok, which was later on, in 2005, bought by adidas and is still a part of adidas Group nowadays (*adidas Group AD – Company profile, Information, Business Description, History, Background information on adidas Group AG*, n.d.). In 2018, adidas is a global player, maintaining its position and incorporating the following core belief: "Through sport we have the power to change lives".

The most recent focus points of adidas include digital and e-commerce, with Digital Brand Commerce (hereinafter: DBC) as crucial business unit. DBC creates the digital future by delivering a premium digital experience, which is centered around consumers. The aspiration is to define and build global eco-system which will provide a consistent digital strategy to lead to a seamless consumer experience across all digital touchpoints. DBC aims to identify, drive, and deliver innovations and added value with tangible impact (adidas Careers, 2018).

#### 4.3.2 Nike

Nike, Inc. is an American multinational corporation, headquartered in Oregon, USA. They produce a wide range of sports equipment, everything from footwear, apparel, accessories, and services for various sports, such as track and field, baseball, basketball, ice hockey, football, and tennis. The first shoes released by Nike were Nike Air Max, back in 1987. As a company, they employ approximately 44,000 people worldwide. In 2014, Nike was valued \$19 billion, which was enough to be the most valuable brand among sports businesses (Mahdi, Abbas, & Mazar, 2015, p. 4).

Their strategic growth is build by continuously interacting with consumers through engagement platforms. These interactions are used in innovation processes and value creation – either improving or customizing products via Nike ID, which enables consumers to create their own unique sneakers (Ramaswamy, 2008, p. 9-12).

Nike Digital aims to create personalized experiences that inspire athletes to move faster, push harder, and achieve their personal best. They embrace open source and build digital solutions which work on global scale. The investments are a leverage to UI development, evolving data science and e-commerce capabilities, and refining services infrastructure. Their vision is to build and deliver extraordinary Nike platforms, services, and products, directly to athletes around the world, where "athlete" means everybody who has a body (Nike Digital Careers, 2018).

#### 4.3.3 Under Armour

Headquartered in Baltimore, US, a new-comer from 2000, Under Armour quickly established presence in the sport performance apparel market, building authentic relationship with target consumers and creating strong brand equity. They began as an entrepreneurial

sport venture, focusing specifically on high endurance and professional sports apparel. With emphasis on product seeding and athletes' endorsement, product placement, WOM marketing, popular culture and free media exposure, Under Armour quickly developed in its niche market (Miloch, Lee, Kraft, and Ratten, 2012, p. 42-47).

In e-commerce, with emphasis on analytics, they want to deliver proactive and actionable insights across a variety of functional areas including marketing, merchandising, product management, UX, operations, retail, and customer service. The areas of focus are website performance, customer analytics, A/B testings, analytics feature tagging requirements, and overall site performance (Under Armour Careers, 2018).

## **5 MODEL DEVELOPMENT**

To present a holistic framework of managerial implications, we will develop a model, which will include concrete guidelines on what content to create for each channel, how to structure it, integrate into the digital eco-system, and how to use data-driven personalization to provide premium experience. Development of the model will be based on adidas, and where needed – also on practices of its main competitors Nike and Under Armour.

### **5.1 Analysis**

The three companies, global leaders of the industry will serve as a basis for collecting data about best practice. We will begin analysis with structure of channels and touchpoints, continue with recognizing links and integration features among them, and finish with personalized content.

#### **5.1.1 Channels' and touchpoints' structure**

To fully understand what content needs to be created to provide a premium consumer journey across digital touchpoints, we will first define the structures of channels and touchpoints. In accordance with assessment, based on three before explained principles and two content criteria, for each channel there will be touchpoints chosen for further analysis in subchapter 5.1.1.2 (marked with bold).

##### **5.1.1.1 E-commerce**

The first channel to be analysed is e-commerce. The structures of the three brands' e-commerce sites, belonging to UK market, were monitored on weekly basis, from May 24<sup>th</sup> to August 30<sup>th</sup> (Ilić, 2017c). The chart below shows the state of structure at the time, when the biggest amount of content at each of the sites was live. Note that structures among markets may differ (e.g. adidas' European vs. US female gender landing page).

Table 1: Comparison of homepage structures

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<b>Top row navigation and search</b>	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
Carousel 1	Block 1	Carousel 1
Carousel 2	Block 2	Carousel 2
Carousel 3	Block 3	Half-block new arrivals
Carousel 4	Block 4	
<b>Feature cards 1 and 2</b>	Block 5	Feature cards 1 and 2
<b>Feature cards 3 and 4</b>	Block 6	Feature cards 3, 4, and 5
<b>Best of adidas</b>	Block 7	Middle navigation
<b>Recently viewed</b>		Most popular new arrivals
Newsletter sign-up form		<b>Newsletter sign-up form and apps</b>
<b>Bottom navigation</b>	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.

Table 1 above presents content of the selected three brands' homepage. The highlighted areas indicate similarities, whereas the bold represents the content which is considered best practice and will be taken into further exploration (in subchapter 5.1.2) to answer the second research question. Gray areas present content gaps. As explained before, adidas will be taken as a primary case for model development and where there will be better practice noted within other brands' content, it will be added. The gray areas indicate that the brand doesn't have any content at a certain point of landing page.

In analysis of homepages, we have only spotted one additional feature, which could enhance adidas' structure: by the newsletter sig-up form, Under Armour always has icons connecting to mobile applications. Another piece of content which seems unlike adidas' or Nike's practice, are the ones promoting new arrivals. We have not chosen these to take into further exploration, because while adidas and Nike update a lot of content on at least weekly basis (Ilić, 2017c) and therefore do not need separate content to lead to new arrivals, it makes sense for Under Armour to have those, because the rest of the content is not updated often, i.e. even upper part of homepage stays the same for a month. Top and bottom navigation are very similar and, as we will see in next tables, are used in all landing pages.

Surprisingly, as Table 2 and 3 below indicate, gender landing pages for men and women are not entirely unified within brands. Also, the first glimpse tells us that Under Armour is lagging behind in terms of upper landing page content – there is only one main story before the feature cards. Similarities between adidas and Nike suggest that there are certain trends (carousels and feature cards), at least on upper parts of a landing page. On the other hand, the main difference between the two is the dynamics of content – Nike is using more unified and monotone blocks, while adidas uses more diverse stacks and tools, such as different kinds of navigation in the middle of the landing page.

Table 2: Comparison of gender landing page (men) structures

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<b>Top row navigation and search</b>	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
<b>Carousel 1</b>	Carousel 1	Block 1
<b>Carousel 2</b>	Carousel 2	
<b>Carousel 3</b>	Carousel 3	
<b>Shop by product navigation</b>		
<b>Middle navigation</b>		
<b>Feature cards 1 and 2</b>	Feature cards 1, 2, and 3	Feature cards 1 and 2
<b>Feature cards 3 and 4</b>		Feature cards 3, 4, and 5
<b>Best of men's</b>	Latest shoes	Middle navigation
	Block 1	Most popular new arrivals
	Block 2	
	Feature cards 4, 5, and 6	
	Block 3	
	<b>Apps and social</b>	
Newsletter sign-up form		<b>Newsletter sign-up form and apps</b>
<b>Bottom navigation</b>	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.

For further exploration (marked with bold), again, will be mostly taken the structure of adidas, with minor additional stacks: the section of mobile applications by the newsletter sign-up form (from Under Armour, which will be the same for every next landing page), and Nike's block for mobile applications and social media. The next table (i.e. Table 3), shows the women's version of a gender landing page.

Table 3: Comparison of gender landing page (women) structures

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<b>Top row navigation and search</b>	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
<b>Carousel 1</b>	Block 1	Block 1
<b>Carousel 2</b>	Block 2	
<b>Carousel 3</b>	Block 3	
<b>Shop by product navigation</b>	Block 4	
<b>Middle navigation</b>	Block 5	
<b>Feature cards 1 and 2</b>	Feature cards 1, 2, and 3	Feature cards 1 and 2
<b>Feature cards 3 and 4</b>	Apps	Feature cards 3, 4, and 5
<b>Best of women's</b>		Middle navigation
		Most popular new arrivals
Newsletter sign-up form	Newsletter sign-up form	<b>Newsletter sign-up form and apps</b>
	<b>Social</b>	
<b>Bottom navigation</b>	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.

The structures presented in Table 3 shows the before mentioned two trends: Under Armour only uses one major story in the upper part, and Nike is using the static blocks. Again, adidas proves the most diverse set of content, in terms of both stacks and tools, which – especially “Shop by product navigation” and “Middle navigation”, better meet the concept of optimizing path-to-purchase, because (in comparison to Nike’s static one-themed blocks) it offers more diverse options for page’s visitor to continue. The content in bold, therefore, is adidas as a whole, Nike’s block for social, and Under Armour’s mobile applications. The next landing page to be analysed, is a campaign page.

Table 4 shows that adidas is the only of the three brands which uses campaign pages. Surprisingly, we found campaign pages also on Puma’s e-commerce website, but with significantly less content. As explained in subchapter 3.1.2.4, campaign pages are used to enhance the new collections.

*Table 4: Campaign page structure*

<b>ADIDAS</b>	<b>NIKE</b>	<b>UNDER ARMOUR</b>
<b>Top row navigation and search</b>		
<b>Animated block 1</b>		
<b>Half-block</b>		
<b>Animated block 2</b>		
<b>Animated block 3</b>		
<b>Block 4</b>		
<b>Category newsletter sign-up form</b>		
<b>Newsletter sign-up form</b>		
<b>Bottom navigation</b>		

*Source: own work.*

There is at least one campaign page live on adidas.com at a time (Ilić, 2017c) and it is a landing page that most exquisitely offers a premium user experience. The structure is more dynamic and pieces of content are diverse and animated, very often including videos. These are the stacks and tools that are usually not used on other landing pages. The campaign pages are also rich in terms of integrations, such as direct separate gender CTAs and sign-up forms for newsletter of a certain category, that the new collection belongs too (adidas Running, adidas Athletics etc.).

In terms of the purpose of content and landing page as a whole, i.e. Reason to believe vs. Reason to buy (adidas AG, 2016, p. 58), campaign pages, in comparison to other landing pages, lean more towards the Reason to believe. As adidas is unfortunately the only brand with this type of landing page, its structure will be taken into further analysis (5.1.2) without additional features of Nike or Under Armour. The next landing page, taken into analysis, is category landing page.

Table 5: Comparison of category landing page structures (Running)

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<b>Top row navigation and search</b>	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
<b>Block 1</b>	Animated block 1	Half-block
<b>Half-block</b>	Middle navigation	Products listed
<b>Animated block 2</b>	Block 2	
<b>Animated block 3</b>	Block 3	
<b>Category newsletter sign-up form</b>	<b>Feature cards 1 and 2</b>	
	Block 4	
	<b>Feature cards 3 and 4</b>	
	<b>Social</b>	
Newsletter sign-up form		<b>Newsletter sign-up form and apps</b>
<b>Bottom navigation</b>	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.

Table 5 shows the before noted adidas' and Nike's precedence over Under Armour (except for the half of a masthead, there is nothing more than a simple product listing page). Similar to campaign page, category landing page includes more animated elements (adidas), but still we see Nike using feature cards in a way that is evident in their gender landing pages. The selected pieces of content for further exploration (bold) are mainly adidas, Under Armour's mobile applications section and Nike's feature cards, which will – in order to keep page in reasonable length, i.e. no more than 6 or 7 blocks – be suggested to replace one of the animated blocks. Another trend, which can be recognized in Table 5, is significantly smaller amount of highlighted rows – the only common content is at the top and at the bottom of the pages.

According to the content evaluation criteria, the landing pages analysed above lean more towards the first dimension, which means that the content engages and inspires (serves advertising goals in terms of imagery, videos, different animations and stacks, see subchapter 3.1.2). the next two landing pages which will be analysed are product listing page and product details page. Both of them lean more towards the other dimension of content evaluation criteria, which is supporting information-based decision making (serves e-commerce goals, i.e. helps consumer obtain all the information needed to choose the right product for their wants and needs). Table 6 below shows this evident shift in content. It also indicates that main purpose of product listing page is consumers' ability to navigate and filter to narrow down the offer to a smaller array of items they are interested in. A higher number of rows is highlighted again, indicating unified structure of product listing page among brands.

Table 6: Comparison of product listing page structures (Running and Football)

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
Mid-blocks for sole type	Ground type navigation	Half-block
Side navigation and filters	Side navigation and filters	
Products listed	Products listed	Products listed
	Upcoming animated product	
Newsletter sign-up form		Newsletter sign-up form and apps
Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.

However, there are two additional features in case of adidas and Nike. The first one is imagery based navigation according to certain types of products within category, that go beyond size, colour, sport etc., and are specific for a category. In case of running shoes, adidas has middle blocks to help consumers to narrow selection according to type of sole. In case of football boots, Nike offers immediate distinction to filter boots according to the surface, where football is played. Another such example are sports bras (low, middle or high support). An interesting feature, used only by Nike, is upcoming animated product – consumers can sign up to be notified about the launch via text message. After the product listing page, there is only one more landing page on the journey before actual conversion – product detail page.

Table 7: Comparison of product detail page structures

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search	Top row navigation and search
		360 degrees view
Imagery	Imagery	Imagery
Video - product on a model		
Complete the look items		
Ordering	Ordering	Ordering
Further info about product	Further info about product in new window	Further info about product
Delivery info	Delivery info	
Suggested items based on product		
UGC		
Reviews	Reviews	Reviews
Suggested items based on others'	Suggested items based on product	
Recently viewed items		
Newsletter sign-up form		Newsletter sign-up form and apps
Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation	Bottom navigation

Source: own work.



Table 7 shows that adidas' product detail page has – by far – richest content. Generally speaking, there is a standard in industry, presented by high number of highlighted rows. But then again, there are certain pieces of content that are missing from Nike's and Under Armour's structure, but are highly correlated to two of our three basic concepts about integrating channels and optimizing path-to purchase. The first such example is a block of suggested items, based on the product (e.g. if the product is a running tank top, there will be other tank tops shown or products which are used in similar activities, such as a pair of tights). Similar to this one, there is a block of suggested items based on other consumers' behaviour ("Others also bought"). Both of these can reduce bounce rate, if the product which is primarily shown on the product detail page, isn't exactly what the consumer expects. It means that instead of leaving the page (closing the browsing window), the consumer might open several other product detail pages before leaving the website, which increases the click through rate.

Another relevant content in adidas' structure is UGC. It means that there is an array of photos of the product, which were posted on social media by buyers, and then linked to website. As shown in subchapter 3.4.1, these images enrich the imagery of a product. For consumers, it is easier to imagine what it will look like on them and in their environment, if they do not only see a product on a model or blank background, but also on other buyers and in everyday life. Furthermore, the UGC block corresponds to the concept which states that no channel should stand alone – it combines e-commerce website and social media networks.

The last feature we need to emphasize here is the 360 degrees view of the product. Surprisingly, it is only implemented by Under Armour. This type of content is useful because it shows every angle of the product; including angles that are not covered by the general static imagery. While it might seem like an amazing feature from consumers' aspect, highly improving the consumer experience, it also presents a minor problem: it slows down page loading. Generally speaking, page load time is crucial in optimizing path-to purchase, which means that considering which content to include on a certain landing page can be extremely complex and needs constant monitoring and analytics insights.

#### *5.1.1.2 Mobile applications*

Mobile applications are the next channel which will be analysed. It is the most challenging part to analyze due to its unavailability in our geographic region. Each of the brand has several mobile applications: adidas and Nike have one major app, which serves as a highly optimized mobile version of e-commerce, with various features to engage the consumers and help them get the product they want and need, including the purchase process itself. Besides the major one, adidas has an application called adidas Confirmed, which offers exclusive reservations of sneakers, along with notifications once the product is launched (adidas Confirmed, 2018). Similarly, Nike has an application called Sneakrs, which is focused on sneakers and the releases (Sneakrs application will be analysed into details). The third type

of mobile applications by adidas and Nike are fitness applications, which is also the only type of Under Armour's applications (UA Record for tracking sleep, fitness, activities, and nutrition, MapMyRun is a running application, MapMyWalk has similar features as the previous one, and there are a few more). Nike is known for its Nike+ Run Club and adidas recently acquired the Runtastic – both of these are running applications and offer integration with social media and email, but are not primarily meant to drive their users to conversion.

The only product-focused mobile application, which is currently available in our geographic region is Nike Sneakers. It has a simplistic structure – three major tabs in top row (feed, in stock, and upcoming) and three other in bottom row (discover, inbox composed of notifications and messages, and profile). Besides offering valuable information about new releases, it also enables highly personalized features: saving filters (gender, size, collection), notifications for product releases, and adding items to wishlist. Although consumers can sign-in with the same account as on Nike's e-commerce website, the wish list doesn't sync. Users can even choose whether they want to be notified one week, one day, or 15 minutes before the release. While the content itself is very appealing, offering high-quality images and special copy about the products ("heritage" with a bit of historic hint), it has its disadvantages: the prices are only available for products once they are already released and it is rather difficult to figure out where to press to get to the purchase process (Ilić, 2017).

In terms of our three major concepts about integrating channels, optimizing path-to-purchase, and personalization, this mobile application fails in two of them. It is only connected to social media platforms (user can share a product via personal social media profiles, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, or using messaging applications, such as Viber, WhatsApp, Gmail ...) and the path-to-purchase seems more like a treasure hunt than optimized. It does, however, include certain features which are not provided on e-commerce. Due to its lack of cross-channel integration, mobile applications will therefore be skipped for further analysis in 5.1.2, and will be again considered in context of data-driven personalization.

#### *5.1.1.3 Email*

After subscribing to the newsletter in May 2017, browsing all of the websites, and pretending to be a random consumer, we have identified two groups of emails received: **general promotional emails** and **individually targeted personalized emails**. General promotional emails can be further divided into three groups: **product launch** (new product or collection), **seasonality** (e.g. special offers or new collections for holidays, such as Christmas and Valentine's day, back-to-school etc.), **special price offers** (mid-season sale, end-of-season sale), and **sports moments** celebrations (e.g. UEFA Champions League in football, Roland Garros in tennis).

The individually targeted personalized emails are the ones being sent to only one person at a time and are based on individual consumer's activities. These are cases such as after

registration, browsing certain products, leaving full basket without purchasing anything, and especially when a purchase is made: order confirmation email, notifying if product is on the way, and encouraging to write a review of a purchased product. Although we signed up for newsletters on UK sites, most of the emails presented in group of individually targeted personalized emails were in german (due to our geographic location at the time and buying items from the german online store).

Similarly to the analysis of e-commerce websites structure, we will define the structure of emails of the brands, find common pieces of content (highlighted areas), and select the best practice example for different types of emails (bold content). We will begin with general promotional emails and its types, and continue with individually-targeted personalized emails.

Table 8 shows structure of product launch emails. The content characteristics are both attention-grabing (e.g. animated image by adidas) as well as informative, especially the adidas' blocks with further information about materials and technology in product. There is an evident common usage of certain pieces of content (highlighted areas), such as image-title-copy-CTA, although Under Armour implements different order than adidas and Nike.

*Table 8: Comparison of product launch emails structure*

<b>ADIDAS</b>	<b>NIKE</b>	<b>UNDER ARMOUR</b>
<i>The UltraBOOST All Terrain launches today</i>	<i>Next-Degree Warmth: Therma-Sphere Jacket</i>	<i>Our 2 Newest Football Boots Have Arrived</i>
<b>Header</b>	Header	Header
<b>Animated image (main story)</b>	Image (main story)	Title (main story)
<b>Title</b>	Title	Copy
<b>Copy</b>	Copy	CTA
<b>CTAs</b>	CTA	Image
<b>Info block 1 (image + copy)</b>	Image (secondary story)	Title (secondary story)
<b>Info block 2 (image + copy)</b>	Title	Copy
<b>Info block 3 (image + copy)</b>	Copy	CTA
<b>Info block 4 (image + copy)</b>	CTA	Image
<b>CTA</b>	<b>Image (secondary story, mobile app)</b>	
<b>Title (secondary story)</b>	<b>Title</b>	
<b>Copy</b>	<b>Copy</b>	
<b>Feature card 1, 2, and 3</b>	<b>CTA</b>	
<b>Footer</b>	Footer	Footer

*Source: own work.*

The structure for further exploration will be the one of adidas'. Although there are bold cells in Nike's structure for promoting mobile applications, which enriches email content from "no channel should stand alone" point of view, we will later (in other types of emails) see a more appropriate version of including mobile applications into emails.

Whereas product launch emails tend to be more dynamic and rich in content, special price offers emails, as seen in Table 9 below, tend to be significantly more simple – small number of content blocks and less emphasis on imagery.

*Table 9: Comparison of special price offers emails structure*

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
Save up to 50% on selected styles	Final Chance. Extra 25% Off.	IT ALL STARTS NOW: 30% Off!
<b>Header</b>	Header	Header
<b>Image</b>	Image-title	Image-title
<b>Title</b>		
<b>Copy</b>	Copy	Copy
<b>CTAs</b>	CTA	CTAs
<b>Half-block apps</b>	Half-block apps	Image
<b>Footer</b>	Footer	Footer

*Source: own work.*

Table 9 indicates simplistic and unified design of emails which offer discounts and special promotions. While adidas still uses the usual type of image, Nike and Under Armour do not use imagery of products but rather implement the title in a shape of image. Besides the image-title, emails are almost identically structured.

As mentioned before, we notice a less heavy, yet noticable way to promote mobile applications – adidas and Nike in case of these two emails implemented half-block with direct connections to an e-commerce landing page with all apps presented. On the other hand, applications block in Nike’s analysed product launch email had direct connections for Apple store or Google play store, which reduces bounce rate, otherwise caused by additional landing page.

The next type of emails, i.e. seasonality, exposes greater differences among brands again. Table 10 shows how Under Armour keeps it simple, similar to special price offers email, whereas adidas and Nike implement richer content strategy.

The comparison of seasonality emails structure shows how Nike’s email had one main and three secondary stories – although more CTAs in most cases indicate more points of possible cross-channel integration, this email had the same theme over all secondary stories (having separate blocks for women, men, kids), which means it might as well have one image and title and three different CTAs: for women, men, and kids. In adidas’ example there is again a new version of implementing connections to mobile applications, this time the CTAs – the same as in Nike’s product launch email, lead directly to Apple store or Google Play store.

Table 10: Comparison of seasonality emails structure

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<i>The adidas Originals Valentine's Day Pack is out now</i>	<i>Top Picks for Your Gifts</i>	<i>Ready For The New School Year?</i>
Header	Header	Header
Image (main story)	Copy	Title
Title	Image (main story)	Copy
Copy	Title	CTA
CTA	Copy	Image
Image (secondary story)	CTA	Footer
Copy	Image (secondary story)	
CTA	Title	
App block (title + image + CTAs)	CTA	
Half-block apps	Image (secondary story)	
Footer	Title	
	CTA	
	Image (secondary story)	
	Title	
	CTA	
	Half-block apps	
	Footer	

Source: own work.

The last type of emails to be analysed is the sports moments. In Table 11, the structure shows the simplistic style of Nike and Under Armour, whereas adidas included more content.

Table 11: Comparison of sports moments emails structure

ADIDAS	NIKE	UNDER ARMOUR
<i>Tennis auf die australische Art</i>	<i>El Decimo - Rafa Makes History in Paris</i>	<i>What's Andy Murray Wearing On The Clay?</i>
Header	Header	Header
Animated image (main story)	Image	Image
Copy	Title	Title
Title	Copy	Copy
CTA	CTA	CTA
Double image	Footer	Footer
CTAs		
Title		
Block 1 (image + title + copy + CTA)		
Block 2 (image + title + copy + CTA)		
Footer		

Source: own work.

One element that we haven't commented before, is the subject line. In case of sports moments emails, as Table 11 above shows, brands implement a completely different approach, which is from the subject line further expanded into the email – Nike focuses on the sponsored athlete's incredible success, while Under Armour only implicates that it is about Roland Garros (word "clay" refers to type of ground, where Roland Garros tournament is played on), but otherwise emphasizes gear. On the other hand, adidas celebrates both the sponsored athletes' success (referring to Kristina Mladenović, the French champion, and Alex Zverev, the German tennis star, in the email copy), as well as the products (in Block 1 and 2, with image, title, copy, and CTA leading to product listing page). Either way, brands use sports moment to send emails which are not only about products, but have a deeper story.

The next group of emails, which will be analysed, are the **individually-targeted emails**. These kinds of emails have a simple structure with less content, usually informative, and are sent automatically, as a consequence of a certain behaviour or activities executed by consumers, regardless of time when these activities occur. According to these characteristics, we will not analyse their structure and compare it among brands, but rather try to recognize and collect as many different examples as possible, to find points where these emails support a consumer on individual level and optimize the path-to-purchase. Unlike general promotional emails, which had more advertising-oriented content (the first content criteria – inspiring and engaging), the individually-targeted personalized emails primarily serve e-commerce (sales) goals. They support conversion and accompany consumers through purchase process; in terms of optimizing path-to-purchase, they target the latest steps. Both groups of emails therefore provide a balance of content which meets the criteria: it either engages and inspires (serves advertising goals in terms of imagery, videos, different animations and stacks) or supports information-based decision making (serves e-commerce goals, i.e. helps consumer obtain all the information needed to choose the right product for their wants and needs), and also provides fluent experience through the purchase process.

The individually-targeted personalized emails were recognized and collected in the following situations: when browsing, signing up, and registering, and when making a purchase (click and collect type of purchase, i.e. ordering to the nearest brand store, and general online purchase). As explained before, the ones related to purchase activities were in german language.

These are the emails (and subject lines in brackets) which were received as a consequence of signing up, registering, activities on e-commerce websites:

- Welcome email to confirm successful sign-up (*"Welcome to adidas!"* from adidas; *"One Click To Savings - Please Confirm Email Address"* from Puma; *"It's Official: You're On the Under Armour Team"* from Under Armour)
- 15% discount code for birthday (*"Happy Birthday from adidas!"*)

- Reminder for abandoned basket (*“Forget Something?”* and *“Your Cart's Loaded & Ready To Go”* from Under Armour; *“Don't forget your Speed IGNITE NETFIT Women's Running Shoes”* and *“We saved your Puma Basket”* from Puma)
- After signing up for out-of-stock size (*“We will find it for you”* and *“Sadly, we couldn't find your product”* from adidas)
- After browsing (*“Thanks for dropping by!”* from adidas)

For general online purchase (all from adidas):

- Order confirmation (*“Deine adidas Bestellung ist bei uns eingegangen”*)
- Receipt (*“Deine Rechnung von adidas”*)
- Product on the way (*“Deine mi adidas Bestellung ist unterwegs”*)

For click and collect purchase (all from adidas):

- Reservation confirmation; for click and collect type of online purchase (*“Kristina, dies ist deine Reservierungsbestätigung”*)
- Reserved products are on their way to the store; for click and collect type of online purchase (*“Kristina, deine Reservierung ist unterwegs ...”*)
- Reserved products in store to be collected for click and collect type of online purchase (*“Kristina, deine Reservierung ist im Store angekommen und bereit zur Abholung”*)
- Review writing encouragement in exchange for 15% discount for next purchase (*“Kristina, schreib eine Bewertung und erhalte 15 % Rabatt”*)
- A code for 15% discount for having submitted a review (*“Kristina, danke für deine Bewertung. Hier findest du deinen Gutscheincode.”*)

The types of emails stated above are automatically generated, based on collected data, and sent to individual recipients. They can be considered personalized as they are generated based on consumers' personal activities. The examples stated in bullet points above show, how the emails are sent on every step and how they support the path-to-purchase, as well as post-purchase activities, such as writing a review of the product, which is then posted on a product detail page of the product. We will explore and describe the personalization features into details and how these personalized emails are connected within other touchpoints, in subchapter 5.1.3.

#### 5.1.1.4 Social media

The last channel to be analysed is social media. In this subchapter, we will analyze firm-initiated social media dialogue (see subchapter 3.4.2), whereas usage of customer-initiated social media dialogue will be described in context of Brand moments (subchapter 5.1.4). The social media networks are similarly used among the three selected brands. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are regularly used and will be analysed; YouTube is only used in certain campaigns or as a mean of adding video content to homepage or campaign page on

e-commerce website, whereas LinkedIn is used for corporate communications, presenting company as employer, and will therefore not be analysed in terms of consumer journey.

Although we described the issue of too many channels in subchapter 3.4.2 (case of Reebok), it seems that all three brands use several channels on each network site: the “master” profile (i.e. adidas, Nike, Under Armour), as well as separate channels for certain business units (i.e. adidas Football, Nike Women, UA Running) and markets (i.e. adidas\_de, NikeNYC, underarmourUK). To compare structures and content of posts, we will analyze the master profiles and use examples of other profiles if needed for better visuals and the more innovative approaches to social media content. We will include both owned and paid posts.

*Table 12: Comparison of social media posts’ structures*

			adidas	Nike	Under Armour
Facebook	Owned		Copy	Copy	Copy
			Hashtag #HereToCreate	Athlete tagged	Athlete tagged
				Hashtag #justdoit	Hashtag #WEWILL
			Image/video	Image/video	Image/video
	Paid		Copy	Copy	Only retargeting
			Image	Image/video	
			CTA/link to PLP	CTA	
Instagram	Owned	Post	Image/video	Image/video	Image/video
			Copy	Copy	Copy
			Athlete tagged	Athlete tagged	Athlete tagged
			Hashtag #HereToCreate + others	Hashtag #justdoit + others	Hashtag #WEWILL
		Story	Animated images/video	Animated images/video	Images/animated images
			Up to 5 stories	Up to 5 stories	Up to 6 stories
			Swipe up to e-comm or Apple/Google play store	Swipe up to e-comm	Voting feature
					Swipe up to e-comm
	Paid		Image	Image/video	Only retargeting
			CTA to PLP	CTA	
			Athlete tagged	Copy	
			Hashtag #HereToCreate		
			Copy		
	Twitter			Copy	Copy
Hashtag #HereToCreate + others				Hashtag #justdoit + others	Hashtag #WEWILL
Athlete / other adidas profile tagged				Athlete / other Nike profile tagged	Athlete tagged
Link for tickets				Link to e-comm	Link to e-comm
Image/video				Image/video	Image/video

Source: own work.



Table 12 shows that brands implement rather similar strategies, especially adidas and Nike, while Under Armour, for example, does not invest in paid posts on Facebook or Instagram, but – as it will be evident in subchapter 5.1.3 – invests more in retargeting after a consumer has already visited product detail pages on their e-commerce site.

The presented structure also exposes advantages and disadvantages of specific channels; on Instagram, for example, links cannot be added to posts. The problem is usually addressed with additional copy, such as: “shopping link in bio”. An opportunity provided by the same social media platform, except in a shape of story, not a post, is successfully coping with this by inviting consumers to “swipe up” and land on an e-commerce landing page, usually product landing page. Instagram stories are especially convenient in combining sponsored athletes and pushing sales of certain products, collections, or categories. Company-initiated social media dialogue is often celebrating the company’s sponsored athletes’ success stories and a recent example was the Australian Open, the famous tennis tournament held in Melbourne. adidas celebrated the athletes on Instagram stories of the adidas Tennis profile, by featuring five images with the “Swipe up” option on the last one. The link lead from Instagram to e-commerce – product listing page of the Melbourne collection. As already used in our e-commerce and emails analysis, highlighted areas indicate similar structures and bold cells tell, which structure will be used for further exploration in subchapter 5.1.2. Not every post includes every piece of content in table, but the posts tend to follow the above presented strategy.

This analysis above confirms that our three selected brands are very thorough in the area of social media usage, which was most emphasized, by Leeflang et al. (2014, p. 7), described in subchapter 3.4. – creating value-added content or services. An example by Nike, using influencers, such as world-class level football players when introducing new collection (see Appendix 10), confirms another commonly used social media usage – reaching out to opinion leaders to serve as brand advocates. In terms of pursuing objectives, defined by Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch (2017, p. 121), which we explained in subchapter 3.4.2, the analysed brands create content reach all of them. They are increasing brand awareness with general posts, create user interactivity with the voting feature on Instagram stories, stimulate sales with retargeting on Facebook and Instagram, and generate traffic to other platforms (especially to product listing pages on e-commerce websites) with posts on all of the analysed social media platforms, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### 5.1.2 Integration of content

In this step, we identify the connections among channels and their corresponding touchpoints. The pieces of content that were in structure analysis marked with bold, as the best practice examples and in accordance with the content evaluation criteria and three core principles, will now be taken under further exploration to define how and to which other channels and touchpoints are they connected. Integration analysis of all channels was carried

out in two steps. In the first step, we identified all possible landing points, one by one. In the second step, we combined them based on the type of landing page or channel (some landing pages were too specific to categorize and were simply marked as “LP”). Also, to narrow the selection in e-commerce analysis, we merged best practices of male and female gender landing page into one, combining structure of both. The extracted and simplified version, showing integration of touchpoints on e-commerce channel, which will serve as a basis for model development, is presented in Table 13.

*Table 13: Integration of e-commerce touchpoints.*

Page type	Content type	Possible landing points				
HP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	Carousel 1	PLP	CP			
	Carousel 2	CP	PLP			
	Carousel 3	Video	PLP			
	Carousel 4	PLP	CP			
	Feature cards 1 and 2	PLP (x2)				
	Feature cards 3 and 4	PLP (x2)				
	Best of adidas	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)	
	Recently viewed	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)			
	Newsletter sign-up form and apps	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			
GLP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	Carousel 1	PLP	CP			
	Carousel 2	CP	PLP			
	Carousel 3	PLP	CP			
	Shop by product navigation	PLP (x4)				
	Middle navigation	CLP (x4)				
	Feature cards 1 and 2	PLP (x2)				
	Feature cards 3 and 4	PLP (x2)				
	Best of men's / women's	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)	PDP (x4)		
	Apps and social	LP (x4)	TW	FB	IG	YT
	Newsletter sign-up form and apps	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			
CP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	Animated block 1	PLP (x2)				
	Half-block	nothing				
	Animated block 2	PLP (x2)				
	Animated block 3	PLP				
	Block 4	PLP				
	Category newsletter sign-up form	LP	Email			
	Newsletter sign-up form	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			

(to be continued)

(continued)

Page type	Content type	Possible landing points				
CLP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	Block 1	PLP				
	Half-block	nothing				
	Animated block 2	PLP (x4)	CP (x2)			
	Animated block 3	PLP (x2)				
	Category newsletter sign-up form	LP	Email			
	Feature cards 1 and 2	PLP (x4)				
	Feature cards 3 and 4	PLP (x4)				
	Social	IG	FB	TW		
	Newsletter sign-up form and apps	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			
PLP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	Mid-blocks for sole type	nothing				
	Side navigation and filters	Filtered PLP (x13)				
	Products listed	PDP (x48 or 120)				
	Upcoming animated product	LP	SMS			
	Newsletter sign-up form and apps	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			
PDP	Top row navigation and search	HP	GLP (x3)	CLP (x2)	LP (x6)	Email
	360 degrees view	nothing				
	Imagery	nothing				
	Video - product on a model	nothing				
	Complete the look items	PDP (x3)				
	Ordering	LP				
	Further info about product	nothing				
	Delivery info	nothing				
	Suggested items based on product	PDP (4x)	PDP (4x)			
	UGC	IG	FB	G+	TW	Pinterest
	Reviews	LP (x2)				
	Suggested items based on others	PDP (4x)	PDP (4x)			
	Recently viewed items	PDP (4x)	PDP (4x)			
	Newsletter sign-up form and apps	Email	Apps	Apps	Apps	Apps
	Bottom navigation	CLP (x3)	LP (x3)			

Source: own work.

Different colours indicate different channels – green for e-commerce pages and touchpoints, blue for emails, amber for social media, and red for mobile applications. Table 13 shows that gender landing page, category landing page, and product detail page are best integrated into the digital eco-system, as their content includes connections to emails, social media, as well as mobile applications.

Also, most pieces of content lead to another landing page, providing rich spectre of possible steps in path-to-purchase. Besides the evident links which suffice our concepts of cross-channel integration and optimization of path-to-purchase, product detail page offers a high number of personalized suggestions for further exploration of products, altogether up to 27 products. Mobile applications were the next channel analysed in previous chapter but will be due to lack of its integration, skipped in this subchapter. We continue analysis with emails.

Table 14: Integration of email touchpoints.

Email type	Content type	Possible landing points					
Product launch	The UltraBOOST All Terrain launches today						
	Header	HP	GLP (x3)	LP (x2)			
	Animated image (main story)	PLP					
	Title	PLP					
	Copy	nothing					
	CTAs	PLP (x3)					
	Info block 1 (image + copy)	PLP					
	Info block 2 (image + copy)	PLP					
	Info block 3 (image + copy)	PLP					
	Info block 4 (image + copy)	PLP					
	Feature card 1, 2, and 3	PLP (x3)					
	Footer	LP (x3)	IG	FB	YT	TW	Pinterest
Special price offers	Save up to 50% on select styles						
	Header	HP	GLP (x3)	LP (x2)			
	Image	PLP					
	Title	PLP					
	Copy	nothing					
	CTAs	PLP (x3)					
	Half-block apps	LP					
	Footer	LP (x5)	IG	FB	YT	TW	Pinterest
Seasonality	The adidas Originals Valentine's Day Pack is out now						
	Header	HP	GLP (x3)	LP (x2)			
	Image (main story)	PLP					
	Title	PLP					
	Copy	nothing					
	CTA	PLP					
	Image (secondary story)	LP					
	Copy	nothing					
	CTA	LP					
	App block (title + image + CTAs)	Apps					
	Half-block apps	LP					
	Footer	LP (x5)	IG	FB	YT	TW	Pinterest

(to be continued)

(continued)

Email type	Content type	Possible landing points					
Sports moments	Tennis auf die australische Art						
	Header	HP	GLP (x3)	LP (x2)			
	Animated image (main story)	CLP					
	Copy	nothing					
	Title	CLP					
	CTA	CLP					
	Double image	CLP (x2)					
	CTAs	CLP (x2)					
	Title	PDP					
	Block 1 (image + title + copy + CTA)	PDP					
	Block 2 (image + title + copy + CTA)	PDP					
	Footer	LP (x5)	IG	FB	YT	TW	Pinterest

Source: own work.

Table 14 shows how different content types in emails are integrated into the digital eco-system. It is evident, that the main purpose of emails is driving traffic to e-commerce website, either because of a new product or collection, or due to certain season-specific price offerings (mid-season sale, end of season sale, special gear for the beginning of new school year, before major holidays etc.). Although footer always includes icons to connect with social media channels, most CTAs and possible landing points are product listing pages or category landing pages.

As we will describe later, in subchapter 5.1.3, emails might not have the best cross-channel integration in terms of structure (even the points leading to other channels are integrated only in top or bottom rows, as a mandatory part of every email), but can be innovatively used to deliver personalized messages according to consumers' activities on individual level. The last channel to be analysed from integration perspective is social media.

Table 15 on the next page shows linka and possible landing points of posts of different social media channels. Similar to mobile applications (explained in subchapter 5.1.1.2), social media channels aren't much integrated in terms of structure.

The recent popular feature, i.e. Instagram stories, is solving this issue by integrating animated imagery with e-commerce sites, but the proper value cannot be extraceted from social media structure analysis without experimenting, which will be done in the following subchapter. Another benefit, brought by Instagram stories is the ease of celebrating results of sponsored athletes and connecting the content with produt listing pages of collections, worn by these sponsored athletes.

Table 15: Integration of social media touchpoints.

Channel			Content type	Possible landing points		
FB	Owned		Copy	nothing		
			Athlete tagged	FB		
			Hashtag	FB		
			Image/video	nothing		
	Paid		Copy	nothing		
			Image	nothing		
			CTA/link to PLP	PLP		
IG	Owned	Post	Image/video	nothing		
			Copy	nothing		
			Athlete tagged	IG		
			Main hashtag + others	IG		
		Story	Animated images/video	nothing		
			Up to 5 stories	nothing		
			Voting feature	IG		
			Swipe up to e-comm or Apple/Google play store	PLP	CLP	Apps
	Paid		Image	nothing		
			CTA to PLP	PLP		
			Athlete tagged	IG		
			Hashtag	IG		
			Copy	nothing		
TW			Copy	nothing		
			Main hashtag + others	TW		
			Athlete / other adidas profile tagged	TW	TW	
			Link to e-comm / for tickets	PLP	LP	
			Image/video	nothing		

Source: own work.

### 5.1.3 Data-driven personalization

In order to find opportunities for personalization and how it deepens the cross-channel and cross-touchpoints integration, we have conducted a separate analysis in form of a 4 weeks long experiment. It was carried out in Germany, which is one of the most relevant markets of Western Europe for all of the brands. As a consequence, the digital platforms (except mobile applications) and algorithms connecting them are well defined and implemented. The main character of experiment was a fictional consumer: female, 26 years old, primarily interested in running gear, but also looking for some general training outfits. Not loyal to one brand (considering explanation by Van den Poel & Buckinx, 2005, p. 558, as noted in subchapter 3.1, that due to low comparison costs, consumers are rarely loyal to one individual site), but rather looking for high quality products and taking time to make the correct purchase decision, while observing all communication by the brands she is interested

in. The timeline of experiment with detailed descriptions of activities and observations is in Appendix 11.

The key components of execution of experiments were shopping activities and observations of content on different digital channels: e-commerce, email and social media. The activities went as follows:

- browsing on e-commerce websites,
- signing up for newsletter,
- becoming a registered user,
- adding products to wishlist,
- adding items to shopping cart and abandoning it,
- starting payment process and abandoning it.

By executing these activities, we were trying to follow natural shopping process as it was described in subchapter 2.1 – cross-channel and cross-device: beginning in the middle, doing a few steps, abandoning, continuing after 3 days on a different device, almost buying an item, and dropping out again. All along, on daily basis, we were carefully observing what we received back – content, messages, everything. The overall observations showed that for personalization purposes, companies use two types of data: what they ask and what they learn.

The first type refers to the information about consumers once they sign up for newsletters and become registered consumers. Surprisingly, none of the brands seemed to acknowledge the gender in promotional emails content and the products they were about (a reason behind it might be the widely accepted statistics about adult women buying more for their families, i.e. partners and kids, rather than for themselves). What the companies did use, was first name in subject lines and a very thoughtful gift by adidas: an email saying “Happy birthday from adidas!” and a code for discount for birthday which was valid 2 weeks. There was even a follow-up email after a week reminding there is not much time left to use it. Besides these two observations, there were no more usages of data obtained by asking questions within registration process.

More interesting features were noticed in the group of “learnt” data. They were based especially on our browsing activities and later on, also adding items to wishlist or shopping cart, and imitating payment process. After the first browsing session (8<sup>th</sup> May 2017), within 24 hours we noticed a sponsored retargeted post with a browsed item on Facebook (by Under Armour) and soon after there was another one by adidas. First, it was only on desktop, whereas during the next few days, also the cross-device synergies were noted – i.e. if browsing was done on desktop, the retargeting was noted both on desktop, as well as mobile. Under Armour proved to be the best in retargeting also over the next few weeks, being the only brand with retargeted adds on Instagram. As already explained in subchapter 3.4.2.2,

retargeted posts include an image of a product and CTA which leads directly to a product detail page.

After signing up for newsletter, we tested the further connection between e-commerce and personalized emails. Adding to wishlist without being registered user was only possible on adidas and it didn't result in an email, but it did stay on wishlist despite closing the browser and opening it again (device-based; didn't sync from desktop to mobile). After becoming a registered user, wishlist reached a whole new level: Under Armour sent an email about items on wishlist after only 3 hours. The retargeting continued, but only by adidas and Under Armour. Nike (and Puma, added into sample in case further comparison would be needed) did not show any retargeting adds on social, but we did notice a sponsored post from Nike Running on Instagram.

The items – running shoes, tights, and bra, one item of category of each brand – were last added on the wishlist on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (no visiting e-commerce sites for a while) and there were still retargeted posts by Under Armour and adidas on Facebook and Instagram on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017. We continued shopping behaviour by moving items from wishlist to shopping cart (also known as basket) on 29<sup>th</sup> May from 18:10 to 18:25 pm and there were emails about abandoned basket already on the same evening: from adidas at 19:00 (bra and tights), from Puma at 19:09 pm (shoes), and from Under Armour at 20:21 pm (all three products). Once again, Under Armour proved to have the best automated process for bringing consumers back to where they abandoned their purchase journey across digital touchpoints.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, we went further with payment process (entering random data) to see if anything else happens. At the time of experiment, there were no more related emails, only retargeted posts on Facebook by Under Armour. A minor imperfection here is the fact, that not all of the products in retargeted posts were connected to our browsing behaviour – the timeline (Appendix 11) also includes information about which products were shown: S stands for running shoes, T for tights and B for bras. X's mean that a retargeted post included a product that we did not browse or open on e-commerce website, nor any product of this category.

To summarise the observations of personalization based on “learnt” data, we can claim that Under Armour is a leader in the industry, by most precisely bringing consumers back to their journey based on their browsing, adding to wishlist, and abandoning basket, and can be considered a role model for best practice. Later on, when experiment was officially concluded, we also noticed the products (running shoes, bras and tights) on Google Display Ads, e.g. inbetween paragraphs of an article of online newspaper.

There were another two interesting types emails, received outside of experiment time. First was received from adidas – “Thanks for dropping by” (on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017). The email begins with rather informative copy:



“not sure what size? we offer 100 days free return\*  
not sure what colour? create your own with mi adidas  
want something fresh? check out our new arrivals”,

and continues with “you might like” block with 8 items (half of them the same as we were browsing before) and direct connections to their product detail pages. The dynamic block of content was therefore highly personalized, and in the same way as Under Armour was taking consumer back to the journey at the time of our experiment, adidas managed to target the consumer with an email which was composed solely based on browsing (no wishlist or abandoned basket). The second type was by Nike – a code for 20% discount for everyone, who ran at least 5 kilometres in the certain period and had it recorded by Nike+ Run Club mobile application. This case is an example of a highly innovative way of combining mobile applications with email.

#### 5.1.4 Case of a “Brand Moment”

A special occurrence of enhanced consumer journey across digital touchpoints are so called “Brand Moments”. We will analyse two of those moments, and the content that was created by adidas: Boston Marathon 2017 and Oceans Day 2017. Both moments were celebrated through various channels and touchpoints, incorporating innovative techniques – one on national, the other on global level. Although ROI and further benefits of creating such content are not yet explored and confirmed, the innovative approach of engaging consumers can be disassembled into several techniques, which can serve as examples of best practice for usage of certain features.

Brand moments, also known as reactive moments, are a great opportunity for a brand to use relevant events, in case of adidas it means sports and cultural moments, to be present and push sales of a certain product/category. Previously, it was only celebrated on social media, whereas in 2017, adidas began creating extensions across other channels as well, especially e-commerce and email, and in case of Oceans Day, also mobile application.

Objectives of creating such content are to reach audience, engage consumer (encourage advocacy), and make them buy related product(s). The key criteria of decision making for brand moments is ability to push sales, which means that the brand moment content is only created when the brand is contextually involved in the event. In certain cases, it is difficult to prepare for an event (e.g. sponsored team wins Champions League), in other cases, it is clear for months, that something relevant will be held (marathons, such as London, Boston ...). Talkability and predictability are crucial dimensions in understanding brand moments. When it is evident, that event will take place (i.e. it is predictable), and that it will engage audience at large scale (i.e. it suggests high levels of talkability), it can be a valuable opportunity to engage customers through digital, and create a relationship with them.

#### *5.1.4.1 Boston Marathon 2017*

In 2017, Boston Marathon was held on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Besides having new collection, designed and produced specifically for the event, there was content created for the event on e-commerce site, on social media, other adidas owned sites, and there were two emails sent out.

The channels and touchpoints were connected and integrated into a holistic journey. The core content was the event hub on e-commerce site. It was designed as a campaign page (see 3.1.2.4), based on various imagery, UGC content (selected based on consumers' usage of the hashtag #whyirunboston), linking other pages ("Some last-minute advice to help you run Boston at your best" with a CTA "Read the tips"), stories of renowned Boston Marathon runners ("Three siblings. Three stripes. The Cipollettis tell their story" with a CTA "Read their story"), and on the bottom there was a product selector stack with the main products, which were made for the event: a pair of running shoes (CTA "Shop now", which leads to a PDP of the shoes) and official Boston Marathon jacket (image shows both male and female, whereas the CTA is only one – "Shop now"). A potential improvement here would be separate CTAs based on gender: "Shop men" and "Shop women".

Despite the effort, which was invested into creation of the event hub, most links from other channels lead to a PLP of Boston Marathon collection of apparel and shoes, not to the event hub. A very integrated channel here were the emails sent – one before the marathon, and the other after the marathon. The first email was a balance between three types of content, which is rarely seen in general product launch or awareness emails: promotional (first block; official collection, no gender-specific CTAs), informational (third block; map and location of info booth), and introduction to a blog story (second block). The fourth block was again promotional and as the CTA lead to a PLP, the same PLP as the CTA of the first block, it could had been arranged differently: the first CTA could have led to the event hub. The bottom block was universal, including support services, managing profile and email preferences, social media icons, and store finder. The second email, i.e. the email sent after marathon, was merely of promotional nature – first block leading to the collection and the second block leading to the event hub. A minor mistake, which emphasizes how details matter, was in the bottom block – the social media icons lead to adidas Originals' channels. In case of Boston Marathon, it would be suitable to have them linking to either general adidas channels (as in the first email) or to adidas Running, but definitely not to Originals (Ilić, 2017a).

Social media had a strong content coverage, both in terms of firm-initiated social media dialogue, as well as customer-initiated social dialogue. The latter, for example, resulted in 1.271 public Instagram posts with the official hashtag #whyirunboston. The company owned profiles had three themes: adidas Running focused on the official pair of running shoes and the story of three sisters (story from the event hub) and adidas Women profiles were about Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to have run a Boston Marathon back in 1967. The general

adidas profiles had no Boston Marathon content at all. While the emails and event hub were well connected with other channels and touchpoints (heavily leading to PLP of official collection), social media posts – surprisingly – did not link to any other channel. Even the imagery of official running shoes only had the two hashtags (#whyirunboston and #adizero) and no link to PLP or a PDP, which created a gap in path-to-purchase.

Key learning of the brand moment content is that event hub and emails can be thoroughly integrated into digital eco-system. Points of potential improvements are a more strategic approach to defining emails' CTAs (does it make sense to have two CTAs in the same email, leading to the same landing page?), more detailed preparation of social media icons on bottom block (leading either to general adidas profiles or to the business unit, which is related to the event) and sharing options: the images of UGC content on the event hub had four options for sharing, but two of them were offering sharing of the UGC image, and the other two were to share the event page link. These different outcomes for clicking on share buttons are contrary to the principle of consistency, described in subchapter 2.2, as one of the main drivers of a fluent consumer journey across digital touchpoints. An important channel was skipped in this brand moment, i.e. mobile application, but was thoroughly exploited in the next one: Oceans Day.

According to the three concepts of assessing the content, we can interpret Boston Marathon as a successful brand moment, but yet it has lots of space for improvement. The first concept ("No channel should stand alone") was met in most cases, but widely missed in social media content. The second one ("Every piece of content must contribute to path-to-purchase") might have been working in terms of inspiring consumers, but the connections from social media posts again created gaps. The third concept ("One size fits none") is not applicable, as there were no signs of personalized content or features.

#### *5.1.4.2 Oceans Day*

Oceans Day was widely celebrated by adidas in collaboration with two other entities: Parley and Runtastic. On one hand, it presented challenges due to increased complexity of entities involved, but on the other hand, it created opportunity to engage with consumers in a new, innovative way. Parley is an independent organization, which is raising awareness of fragility of the oceans, specifically due to plastic pollution. The collaboration with adidas is based on using plastic bottles (collected from the oceans) to produce selected products, such as running shoes and football jerseys. Runtastic is a mobile application, which was acquired by adidas Group and is primarily used to track running.

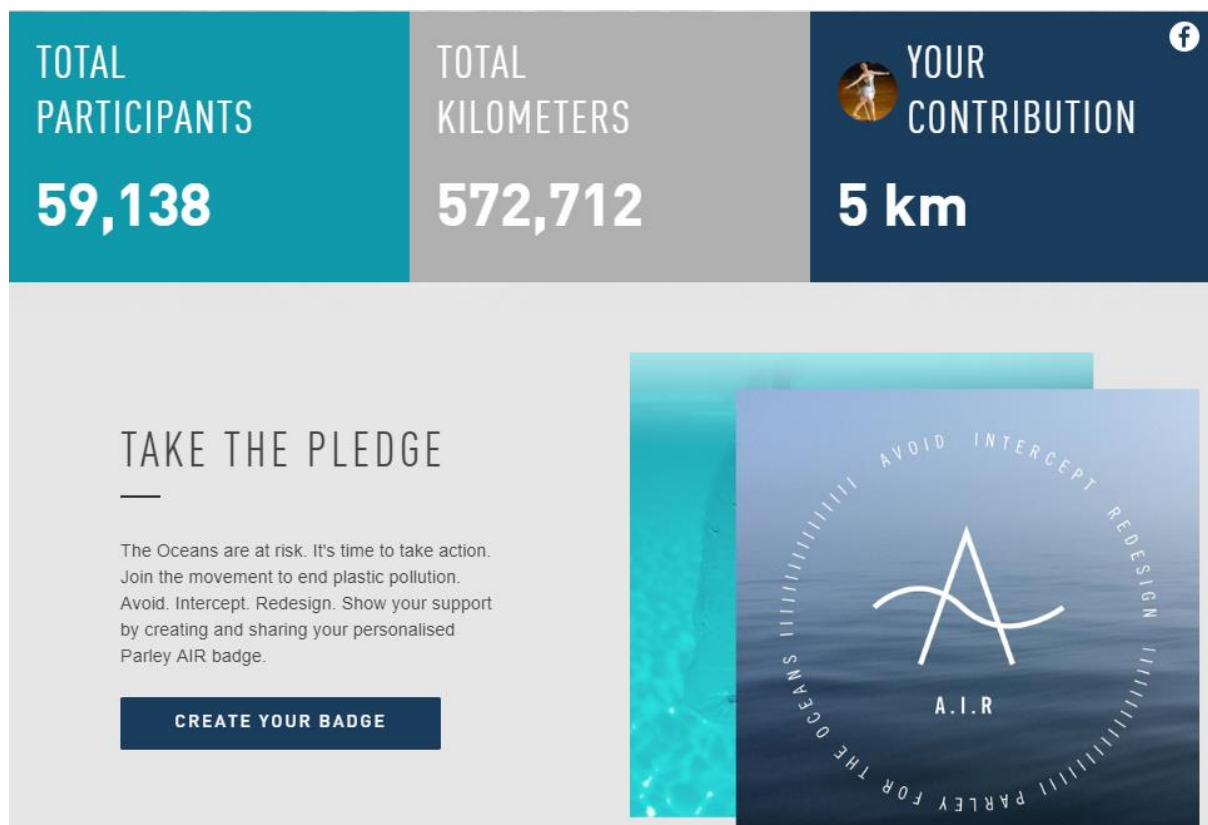
The brand moment was celebrated along with launch of two models of high quality running shoes, created using oceans plastic components: Ultraboost X and Ultraboost Uncaged. As in the case of Boston Marathon, there was an event hub, email campaign, social media coverage (including high quality videos on YouTube), push of sales of Ultraboost running shoes, but what made it one-of-a-kind, was the collaboration with mobile application

Runtastic. To help raise awareness about plastic pollution which jeopardizes the oceans, there was a running event in New York city (“Run for the Oceans”), and for everyone, who could not be in New York, there was a so called digital run – in the week of Oceans Day and physical event, anyone anywhere in the world was able to participate and run for the oceans using their cell phone and contribute kilometres to raise awareness of oceans plastic pollution.

Besides educating about new running shoes (noting that unlike in Boston Marathon email, CTA did not simply say “Shop now” but “Explore adidas X Parley”), first email was inviting subscribers to register online and become part of a global movement. Anyone who registered and ran using the Runtastic app in that week, contributed to the common counter. Altogether, more than half a million kilometres on locations worldwide had been ran in that week.

The campaign page, created in collaboration of adidas and Parley was – among showcasing other visual content, i.e. imagery and video – monitoring participants’ activities and offering linkage with social media, as well as personalized badge, in order for consumers to show their support to avoid, intercept and redesign plastic.

*Figure 2: Oceans day campaign page extract*



*Source: Runtastic, 2017.*

Figure 2 shows the interactive monitoring of participants of digital run – the number of them, sum of kilometres they had altogether run by then, and individual participant's contribution, which can be directly shared on their personal Facebook profile. Also, a feature flat (see subchapter 3.1.2) was inviting website visitors to take their personalized badge and add the AIR framework (avoid, intercept, redesign plastic) to their photo and use it, e.g. as their profile picture on social media.

In comparison to Boston Marathon, Oceans day example adds a few more features to the best practice collection. Firstly, in terms of pushing sales of a specific product or category, which is key element of a brand moment, there were two products which were substantially involved in the Oceans day moment, and unlike in case of Boston Marathon (where products were only promoted), the pre-block of email (see subchapter 3.3) included countdown function, creating excitement among consumers and making the product launch more remarkable.

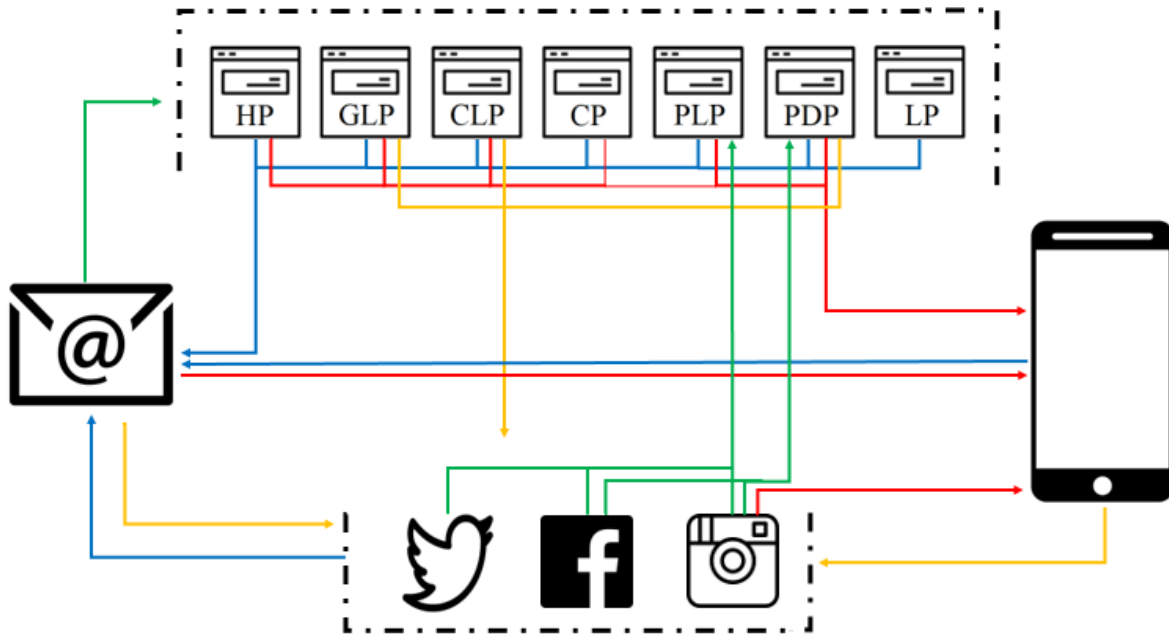
Secondly, there was highly innovative use of Runtastic mobile app – not only was it used to engage consumers on global level and help increase awareness of a higher cause, it also encouraged new downloads among digital run participants, who have previously not used the Runtastic application yet. Thirdly, use of website platform and mobile application enabled the interactive way of monitoring and reporting participants' activities, raising the collective emotions element. Lastly, it offered a personalized feature – adding AIR framework to consumers own photo. A very conclusive implication is that such practice integrates high-quality product launch, collective movement that fits into company's core belief ("Through sport we have the power to change lives") and an environmental cause.

To interpret the brand moment from our three principles, we must emphasize that the content outperforms the Boston Marathon especially in terms of personalization and better integration of channels. As there was no minimum amount of kilometres ran demanded from digital run participants, the moment also engaged people, who are otherwise not specifically involved in running. This means that the content engaged a more various audience, including consumers who primarily haven't been buying adidas Running products before, but might now – it extended the path-to-purchase to a new segment.

## **5.2 Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model**

The best practice model will be presented in form of a diagram, an overview of beforehand analysed integrations between channels and corresponding touchpoints, to better visualise the digital eco-system as a whole. Colours of arrows indicate the same channels as in the integration analysis in subchapter 5.1.2.

*Figure 3: Consumer journey across digital touchpoints model*



*Source: own work.*

The model above (Figure 3) is summarizing the basic structures and integration points, discussed previously. First glimpse tells us that all four major channels are somehow internally connected. Best integrated touchpoints are product listing and product details pages on e-commerce, Instagram as a social media touchpoint and email as a channel. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as it seems – the content must not only provide further steps at each point, i.e. opportunity to proceed with the journey, but also consistent imagery and information, offering a unified brand experience regardless the channel and device – mobile or desktop.

Furthermore, very often can we notice that the connections, although suggested, simply do not work. Such examples are especially Instagram stories, where consumer is invited to “Swipe up”, but the landing page doesn’t work. Similar, perhaps even worse because they are paid for, are the Google Display Network advertisements – it is well positioned and targeted, but after clicking on the advertisement, all we could open was “Error 404”. A key learning at this point is, that it is not only about the strategy and creation of content, but also about correct execution.

Although the content strategy of analysed brands might not include the demand for every piece of content to be internally connected and lead to a purchase, the communications which serve solely to build awareness, could be reconsidered from this aspect. It is not only about digital integration, but rather about application the integrated marketing communication concepts into the digital channels strategies.

### 5.3 Limitations and future research

Due to the nature of digital environment, there are several limitations of our research that might have had effect on the results. The *first* limitation we need to expose is the difficulty of recognizing and monitoring all channels of digital presence. With the vast area coverage, it is nearly impossible to notice everything, especially the social media sites and posts. *Secondly*, the experiment to explore data-driven personalization was carried out in an environment which was difficult to control and all the activities, as well as observations, might have been influenced by human factor. *Thirdly*, e-commerce websites are updated on such a regular basis, that it is impossible to keep on track – not only in terms of content, but also in terms of structure. A/B tests results are coming every day and a certain piece of content can be deleted or replaced on the main website in an hour, and on all the markets' websites in the next 48 hours. It is completely possible, that the structure analysis described earlier in this chapter is already out of date. And lastly, certain mobile applications are only available in the strongest markets, especially the ones connecting digital to retail. We could not have analysed them properly which means that the model might be missing some connections with regards to mobile applications.

For future research in the area, there is definitely the analytics aspect needed. All the assumptions in thesis are based on what global leaders of sports apparel and footwear industry are doing, but even if they are incredibly successful, there is always room for improvements, even for adidas, Nike, and Under Armour. The first emphasis for analytics insights would be to figure out which internal connections are creating highest click-through rates. The second step should explore what kind of content is implemented at the touchpoints with highest click-through rates, and check if the concepts of this content also works for other touchpoints, which previously didn't show good results in metrics. A specific area which seems to have little research done is the retargeting on social media. Whereas it is proven to work in certain retail areas, it is – again – up to analytics to determine for which product(s) it is worth investing and especially how long should the potential buyer be exposed to the ad on their social media feed. In our experiment, it already felt a little bit annoying, which means that the crucial information in area of retargeting would be the time – i.e. how long does it make sense to show someone the product they browsed, before it is clearly just an unnecessary expense for the company and disturbance for the consumer.

## CONCLUSION

The present thesis addressed the relevance of creating content across all digital touchpoints that constitute consumer journey. After a thorough literature review, which helped uncover the concepts from other areas, that can be implemented in digital challenges, we analysed the structures of major channels of digital eco-system, defined their touchpoints and integration among them, and conducted an experiment to explore the data-driven personalization features.

To develop research questions and empirical design, we borrowed several concepts from areas of omni-channel marketing and integrated marketing communications. The key learning from these areas was that the digital strategy should offer a consistent and seamless user experience. Digital channels and touchpoints should reinforce each other and provide a fluent path-to-purchase – even if the consumer skips a step of the journey across digital eco-system, or even completely abandons it right before finishing the purchase, it is the digital platforms and recently developed technologies, which enable companies to address consumers on individual level and support their path-to-purchase as thoroughly as possible, creating cross-channel and cross-device synergies.

Our first research question addressed the structure of content across digital channels and their corresponding touchpoints. Analysis showed a standardized approach by all of the brands – adidas, as well as Nike and Under Armour. There were minor differences among content positioning across touchpoints of certain channels, but it was evident that they follow relatively similar strategies. The integration of channels and touchpoints (which was the subject of our second research question) was well defined among e-commerce websites and social media network, whereas emails and – above all – mobile applications still lack the connections, which would enhance the mutual reinforcement of digital eco-system as a whole. In terms of consistent and unified brand experience, we noticed that content, which was primarily created for e-commerce purpose, was often curated and repurposed for all other channels (the high-quality imagery from e-commerce website was used for emails, social media posts and even in the mobile application). Cross-channel and cross-device synergies are consequently noticeable, but could still be improved; e.g. synchronisation of wishlists from e-commerce to mobile application and vice versa, or from e-commerce on desktop to e-commerce on mobile and vice versa. From data-driven personalization aspect, which was our third research question, we discovered some very intriguing features among specific brands, which could serve as best practice examples within industry. In literature review about personalization, there were two issues exposed: costs and privacy. During our experiment, another one occurred – annoyance. While retargeting and personalized emails are indeed supporting path-to-purchase, sometimes it becomes slightly disturbing.

From our three major concepts' perspective, we can conclude that global leaders of sports apparel and footwear industry have a strategically defined and implemented digital eco-system. Clearly, “**no channel stands alone**”, which means that on whichever touchpoint consumers find themselves, they can always continue their journey either within the same channel or within another one. Also, most pieces of content “**contribute to path-to-purchase**” either with imagery that inspires and engages, with information that helps making better purchase decision, or with offering a fluent connection to another touchpoint. And lastly, they apparently constantly take into account the fact that “**one size fits none**”, which is why all of the analysed companies offer several types of personalized content – on e-commerce by keeping the wishlist without having registered, and on emails by reminding of abandoned basket.



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## **APPENDIXES**

## LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language).....	1
Appendix 2: Example of personalization opportunity .....	4
Appendix 3: Example of homepage .....	5
Appendix 4: Example of gender landing page .....	6
Appendix 5: Example of category landing page .....	7
Appendix 6: An example of campaign page .....	8
Appendix 7: An example of product listing page .....	10
Appendix 8: An example of product detail page.....	11
Appendix 9: Direct connection from mobile application to social media.....	13
Appendix 10: An example of social media posts by sponsored athletes .....	13
Appendix 11: The experiment timeline of activities and observations .....	14

## **Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)**

Digitalni kanali in vsebine so prostor neskončnih poslovnih priložnosti, ki jih je potrebno skladno s tem uporabljati in koristiti njihove prednosti. V zadnjem desetletju smo bili priča neizmerni rasti rabe interneta. Na eni strani to omogoča ljudem, da pridobivajo informacije ter se neomejeno vključujejo v ekonomske in družbene menjave, aktivnosti in spletne skupnosti, na drugi strani pa je prišlo do preoblikovanja ekonomije in predvsem marketinga, kar je tradicionalne strategije in prakse postavilo na glavi, obstoječi poslovni modeli pa so postali neobdržljivi.

Današnje digitalne tehnologije omogočajo personalizirano in poglobljeno okolje, ki ponuja interaktivne in bogate izmenjave informacij med podjetjem in potrošnikom, ki želi prejeti vsebine, strokovno pomoč in presonalizirane rešitve v času nakupne izkušnje. Da pa bi zagotovila učinkovito, relevantno in vključujočo izkušnjo, se morajo podjetja opirati na temeljito poznavanje potrošnikov – kdo so, prek katerih naprav se povezujejo s podjetji in kakšne vsebine želijo videti. Ni več dovolj, da podjetja o strategijah razmišljajo ločeno za različne kanale. Raznolike točke stika, še posebej digitalne, spreminjajo načine, kako potrošnik vzajemno deluje s podjetjem, njegovimi produkti in storitvami. Poenostavljeno povedano, noben kanal ne bi smel obstajati sam. Zaradi digitalnih interakcij se je potrošnikovo potovanje spremenilo iz preprostega zavedanje-premislek-nakup v bolj iterativen in manj izločajoč proces, ki ima kot zadnji korak predpostavlja tudi uživanje, povezovanje in zagovarjanje.

Digitalne vsebine, ki so glavni predmet magistrskega dela, lahko definiramo kot na bitih temelječe objekte, distribuirane prek elektronskih kanalov. Poenostavljeno povedano, so to vse slike, animacije, posnetki in besedila na spletu. Zaznamujejo jih naslednje lastnosti: informacijska rekombinacija, dostopnost, navigacijska interakcija, hitrost in nični marginalni stroški, lahko pa so ustvarjeni, prilagojeni in ponovno uporabljeni za različne digitalne kanale. Je glavna sestavina marketinških in digitalnih strategij v različnih panogah, vključno s področjem športnih oblačil in obutve, med katerimi izstopa adidas Group.

adidas Group je multinacionalna korporacija s sedežem v Herzogenaurachu v Nemčiji, kjer sta Adolf Dassler in njegov starejši brat Rudolf (ki je kasneje v domačem mestu ustanovil tekmeča Puma) leta 1924 začela ustvarjati prve športne copate. V poznih 40. letih je adidas dobil svoj logotip s tremi črtami in postal inovator na področju športne obutve. V letu 2018 je adidas eden izmed globalnih vodij v panogi in žanje svoj uspeh na podlagi ključnega prepričanja, ki pravi: »Skozi šport imamo moč, da spreminjamo življenje.«

Eden izmed adidasovih rezultatov, ki so pomembno vplivali na podjetje v zadnjih letih, je izjemna rast spletne prodaje, ki je v letu 2016 znašala 59 %. V prvem četrtletju leta 2017 je bila spletna prodaja najhitreje rastoči kanal s 53 % rastjo prodaje. V tretjem četrtletju je bila rast sicer nižja, a s 39 % še vedno dosegala večji uspeh kot katerikoli drug kanal na kateremkoli regijskem trgu. Digitalno področje, z velikim poudarkom na spletni prodaji, je

bilo eden izmed glavnih stebrov širšega aktivacijskega načrta za leto 2017. Finančne ambicije za spletno prodajo so visoke, in sicer 4 milijarde evrov do leta 2020. V odgovor na vseprisotno potrebo po združevanju vseh digitalnih področij pod eno streho je bila leta 2016 ustanovljena nova horizontalna poslovna enota DBC (ang. *Digital brand commerce*). Namen nove poslovne enote je zagotavljati celostno digitalno podporo vsem vertikalnim poslovnim enotam (adidas Originals, adidas Running, adidas Football ...). Kot pove že ime, DBC združuje marketinške in informacijsko-tehnološke vidike spletne prodaje. Oddelki znotraj DBC so digitalne inovacije, zasnova ekosistema, digitalna strategija in implementacija, digitalna analitika ter digitalno načrtovanje in aktivacija. Del slednje je tudi ekipa za globalne digitalne vsebine, katere glavni fokus je tudi predmet tega magistrskega dela. Dobre digitalne vsebine vodijo tako do kratkoročnih kot do dolgoročnih ciljev, kar pomeni nakup na eni strani in zvestoba glabovni znamki na drugi strani. Cilj digitalnih vsebin je ponuditi spletno različico glavne večnadstropne trgovine s 5. avenije v New Yorku, zagotoviti brezhibno potovanje potrošnika po točkah stika in podporo pri nakupnem odločanju, ki temelji na točnih informacijah. adidas ter njegova glavna tekmeca Nike in Under Armour so torej lahko obravnavani kot primeri dobre prakse, na podlagi katerih se da oblikovati smernice za širšo rabo v praksi.

Glaven namen magistrskega dela je bil ugotoviti katere vsebine morajo biti ustvarjene ter kako morajo biti medsebojno povezane in personalizirane, da bodo zagotovile kakovostno potovanje potrošnika po točkah stika digitalnega ekosistema. Glaven primer iz prakse bo adidas, za primerjavo pa bosta vključena še konkurenta Nike in Under Armour. Da se digitalne vsebine štejejo za kakovostne, morajo ustrezati naslednjim kriterijem: pritegne pozornost in navdihuje (služi oglaševalskim namenom) ali podpira nakupno odločanje na podlagi informacij (služi prodajnim namenom) ter ponuja neprekinjeno izkušnjo prek celotnega digitalnega ekosistema.

Raziskovalna vprašanja pokrivajo področja strukture, povezav in personalizacije:

[RV1]: Kako morajo biti digitalne vsebine strukturirane po različnih stičnih točkah digitalnega ekosistema?

[RV2]: Kako morajo biti digitalne vsebine povezane, da ustvarijo: [RV2a]: konsistentno in poenoteno izkušnjo znamke? [RV2b]: sinergije prek kanalov in naprav?

[RV3]: Kako je lahko personalizacija, ki temelji na podatkih, uporabljena za optimizacijo poti do nakupa?

Zaradi izrednega pomanjkanja teoretičnega ozadja za obravnavano tematiko smo si osnovne koncepte sposodili od sorodnih področij: iz večkanalnega marketinga, integriranega tržnega komuniciranja, uporabniške izkušnje, medkanalne integracije in večkanalnih digitalnih strategij. Rezultati in implikacije so bile uporabljene za razvoj modela *Potovanja potrošnika po digitalnih točkah stika*. Na podlagi prej naštetih izposojenih teoretičnih ozadij smo izbrali

tri ključne koncepte, na katerih smo ocenjevali digitalne vsebine, njihovo strukturo in integracijo v kombinaciji s personalizacijo:

- Noben kanal ne sme obstajati sam (integracija).
- Vse digitalne vsebine morajo prispevati k poti do nakupa (namen).
- Enotna velikost ni prav nikomur (personalizacija).

Raziskava je bila kombinacija dveh metod: opazovalne študije in eksperimenta. Na prvo raziskovalno vprašanje smo odgovorili z analizo struktur digitalnih kanalov in povezav med njimi. Na tretje raziskovalno vprašanje smo odgovorili s pomočjo rezultatov 4-tedenskega eksperimenta, ki je temeljil na aktivnostih fiktivne osebe (26 let stare navdušenke nad tekom, ki potrebuje novo opremo za prihajajočo sezono), na drugo raziskovalno vprašanje pa smo odgovorili z interpretacijami obeh metod.

Posebej smo analizirali strukture spletnih trgovin, elektronske pošte, družabnih medijev in mobilnih aplikacij. Nato smo iz vseh kanalov in točk stika izpeljali povezave med njimi ter prikazali, kako so medsebojno povezani in prepleteni. Nadaljevali smo s 4-tedenskim eksperimentom, ki je temeljil na brskanju in prednakupnih aktivnostih na spletu. Rezultate smo prikazali na časovnici, ki vsebuje natančno opisane aktivnosti in opažanja. Za še boljši vpogled v integracijo digitalnih vsebin in kanalov smo kot študijski primer vzeli še dva t. i. trenutka znamke. To sta bila Bostonski maraton in Dan oceanov, ki ju je adidas praznoval s posebej ustvarjenimi vsebinami in inovativno integracijo kanalov.

Digitalni kanali in točke stika se morajo podpirati med seboj in zagotavljati tekočo pot do nakupa. Tudi če potrošnik preskoči korak potovanja po digitalnem ekosistemu ali povsem zapusti nakupni proces tik pred plačilom, morajo digitalne platforme in novo razvite tehnologije biti tiste, ki podjetjem omogočijo naslavljanje potrošnikov na individualni ravni in podpora njihovi poti do nakupa temeljito, kot je le mogoče, in sicer z ustvarjanjem sinergij med kanali in napravami.

Glavni zaključki so bili sledeči. Analiza struktur digitalnih vsebin je pokazala standardiziran pristop vseh treh znamk. Med njimi so sicer manjše razlike glede pozicioniranja vsebin, a razvidno je, da sledijo enakim splošnim strategijam. Integracija kanalov in točk stika je dobro definirana med spletnimi trgovinami in družbenimi omrežji, nekoliko manj v povezavi z elektronsko pošto, daleč najmanj pa z mobilnimi aplikacijami. Če bi to izboljšali, bi se kanali digitalnega ekosistema med seboj veliko bolje dopolnjevali in podpirali kot celota. Z vidika konsistentne in poenotene izkušnje znamke smo opazili, da se digitalne vsebine, ki so primarno ustvarjene za potrebe spletnih trgovin, prilagodijo in reorganizirajo za uporabo na drugih kanalih (visoka kvaliteta slikovnega materiala iz spletnih trgovin se uporablja tudi pri ustvarjanju elektronske pošte, objav na družbenih omrežjih in v mobilnih aplikacijah). Sinergije med kanali in napravami so posledično opazne, a bi vseeno lahko bile izboljšane, kot na primer: seznam želja iz mobilne aplikacije bi se lahko sinhroniziral na spletno trgovino (in obratno), in seznam želja s spletne trgovine, ko smo do nje dostopali prek

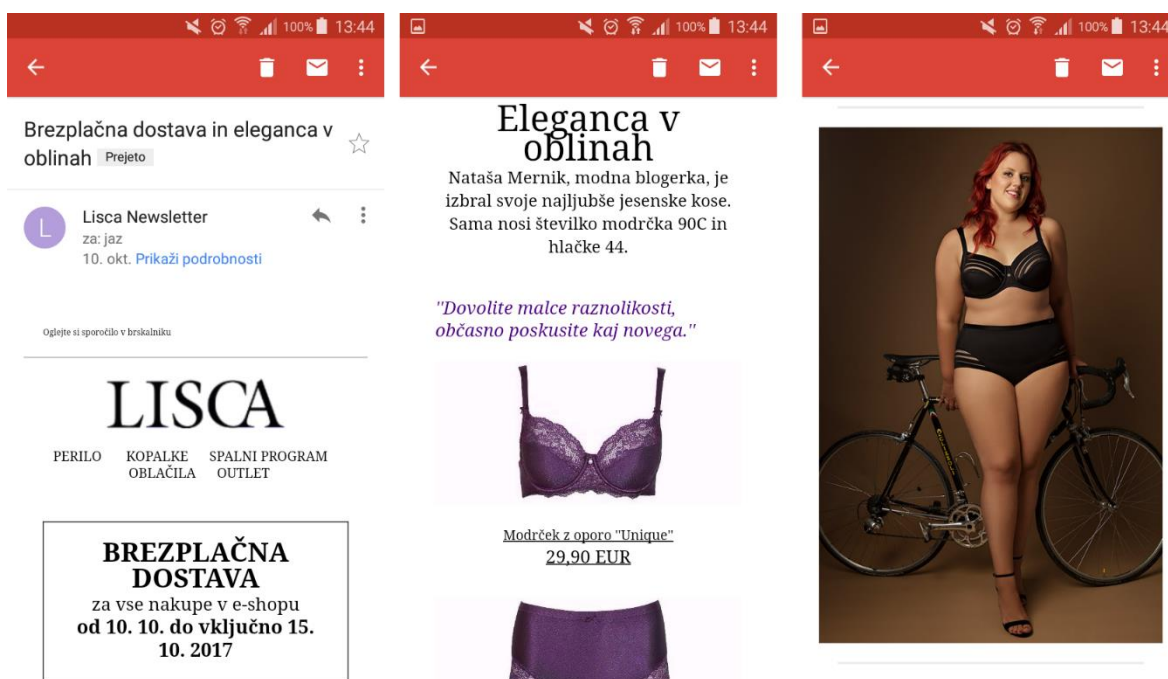
osebnega računalnika, bi se lahko sinhroniziral na spletno trgovino, ko smo do nje dostopali prek pametnega telefona (in obratno).

Z vidika personalizacije smo pri določenih podjetjih odkrili nekaj zanimivih funkcij, ki bi lahko služile kot primer dobre prakse znotraj panoge. V pregledu literature o personalizaciji sta bili izpostavljeni dve težavi: stroški in zasebnost. Med našim eksperimentom smo zaznali še tretjo: občutek nadloge. Čeprav retargetiranje in personalizacija resnično podpirata pot do nakupa, lahko včasih postaneta rahlo nadležna.

Z vidika treh glavnih konceptov ocenjevanja digitalnih vsebin lahko zaključimo, da imajo vodilni v panogi športnih oblačil in obutve strateško opredeljen in implementiran digitalni ekosistem. Kot prvo, vsekakor noben kanal ne obstaja sam, kar pomeni, da ne glede na to, na kateri točki stika se potrošniki znajdejo, vedno lahko svoje potovanje nadaljujejo znotraj istega kanala ali prek drugega. Kot drugo, večina digitalnih vsebin prispeva k poti do nakupa, in sicer ali z vizualnim materialom, ki navdihuje in vključuje, z informacijami, ki pomagajo pri odločanju o nakupu, ali pa ponuja povezano izkušnjo do druge točke stika. In še z vidika tretjega koncepta: vsa tri obravnavana podjetja upoštevajo, da enotna velikost ni prav nikomur, zaradi česar ponujajo več različnih vrst personaliziranih vsebin – na spletni trgovini z ohranjanjem lista želja (tudi če obiskovalec ni registriran uporabnik), prek elektronske pošte pa z opominjanjem o zapuščeni košarici.

## Appendix 2: Example of personalization opportunity

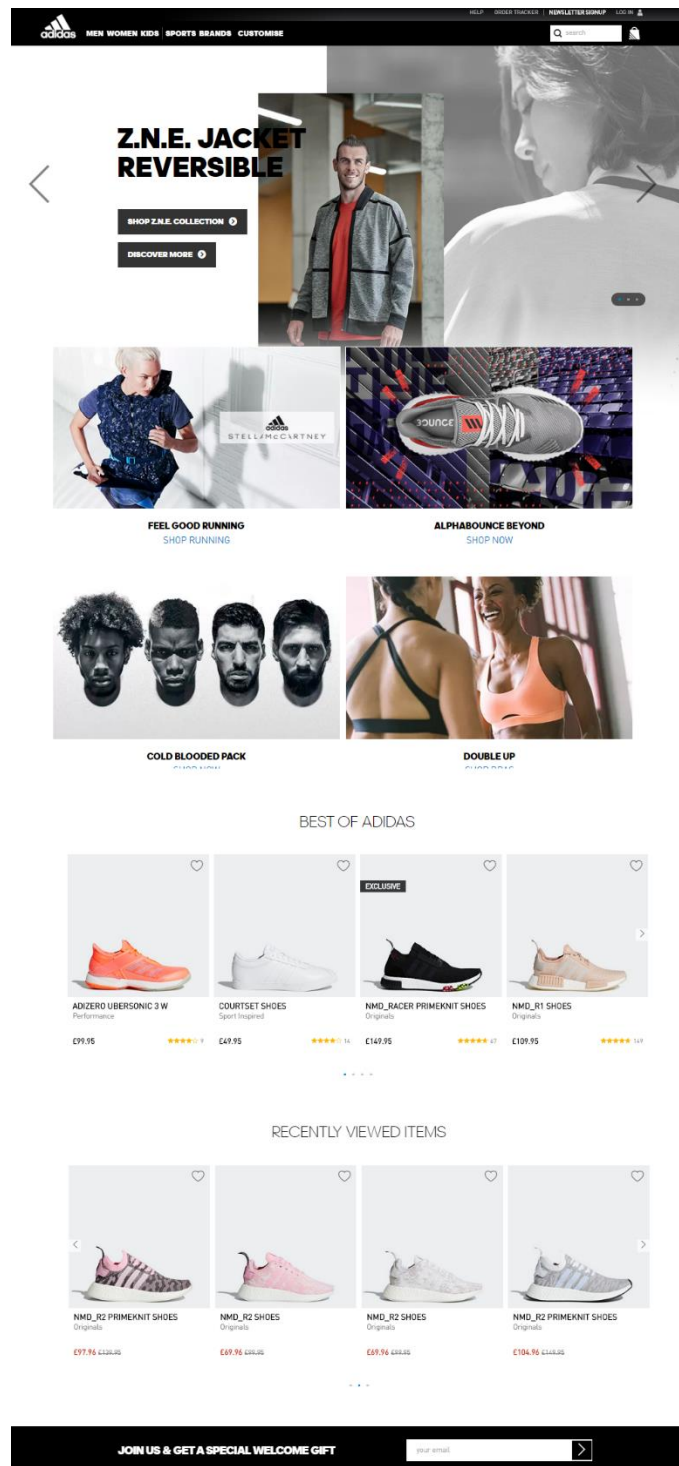
Figure 4: Personalization opportunity



Source: Personal Gmail account (2017)

## Appendix 3: Example of homepage

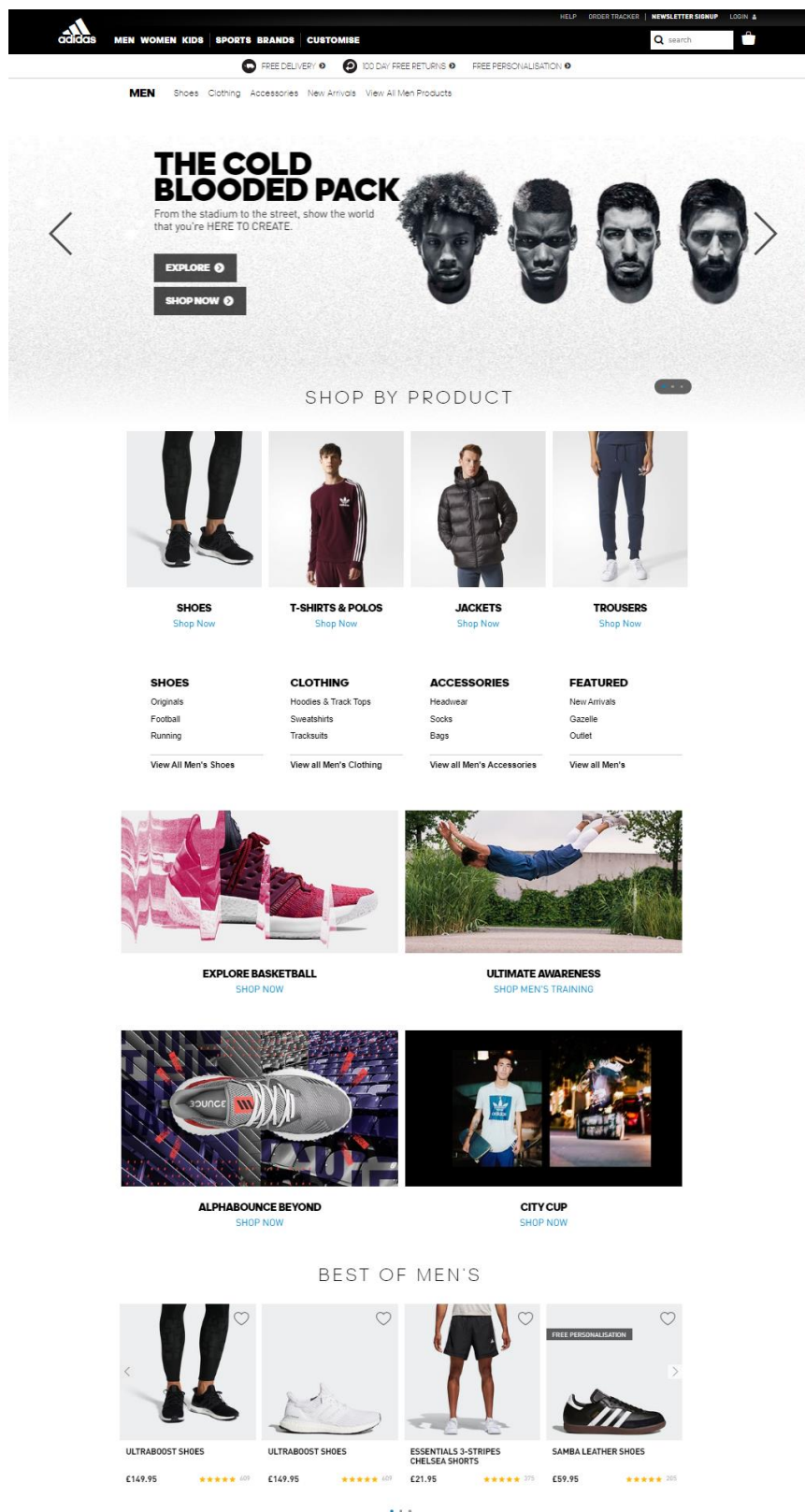
Figure 5: Homepage



Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)

## Appendix 4: Example of gender landing page

Figure 6: Gender landing page

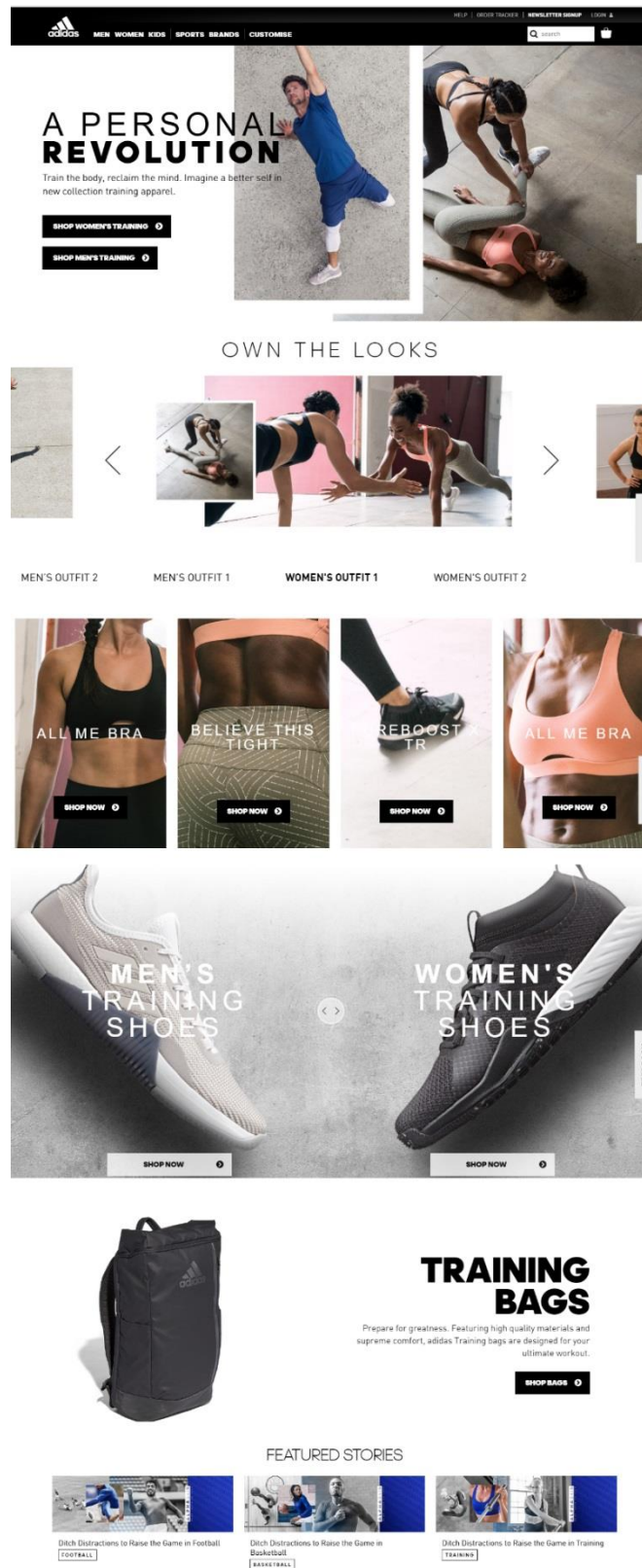


Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)



## Appendix 5: Example of category landing page

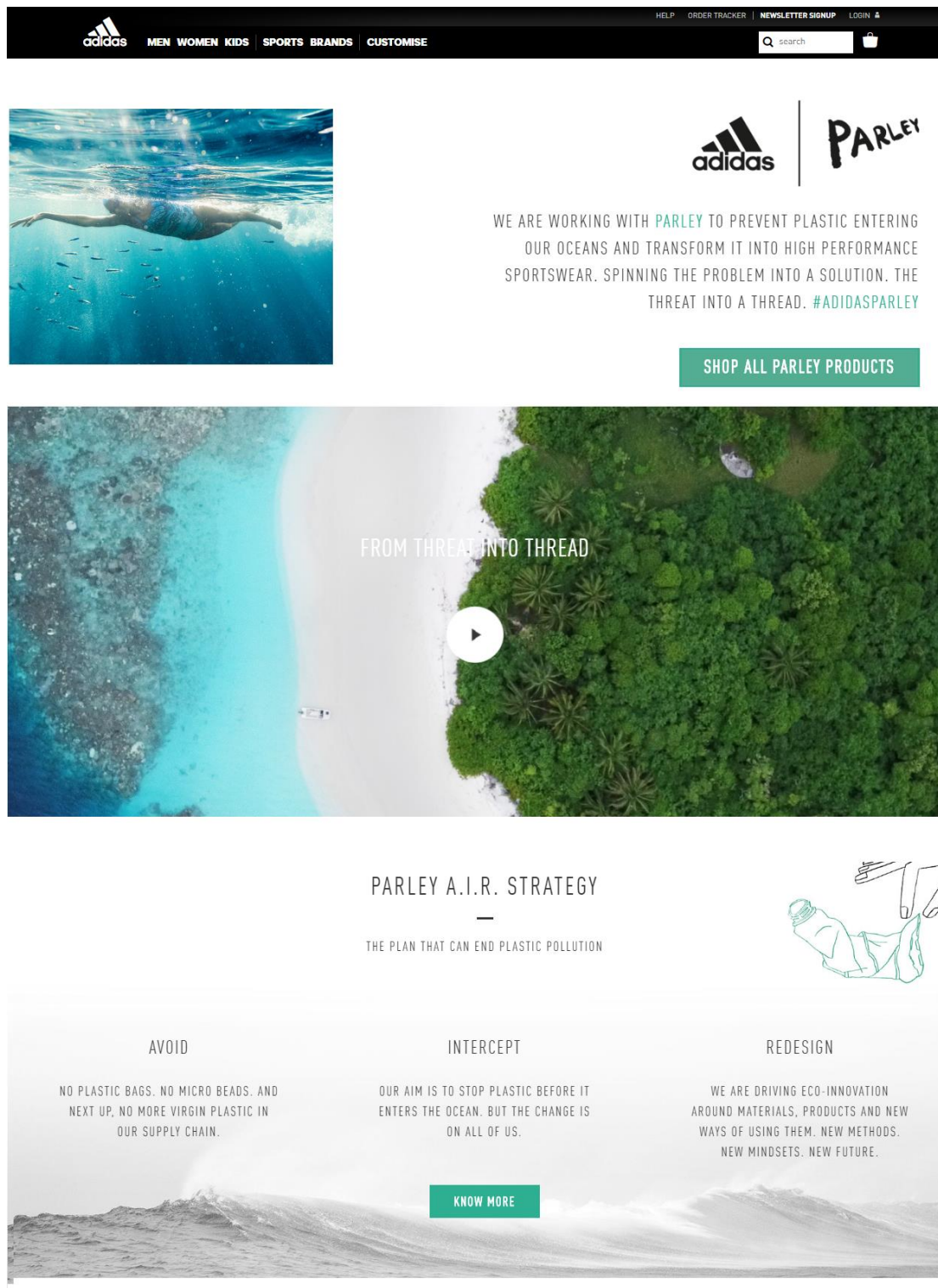
Figure 7: Category landing page



Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)

## Appendix 6: An example of campaign page

Figure 8: Campaign page



adidas MEN WOMEN KIDS SPORTS BRANDS CUSTOMISE

HELP ORDER TRACKER NEWSLETTER SIGNUP LOGIN

Q search

adidas | PARLEY

WE ARE WORKING WITH PARLEY TO PREVENT PLASTIC ENTERING OUR OCEANS AND TRANSFORM IT INTO HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORTSWEAR. SPINNING THE PROBLEM INTO A SOLUTION. THE THREAT INTO A THREAD. #ADIDASPARLEY

SHOP ALL PARLEY PRODUCTS

FROM THREAT INTO THREAD

PARLEY A.I.R. STRATEGY

THE PLAN THAT CAN END PLASTIC POLLUTION

AVOID

NO PLASTIC BAGS. NO MICRO BEADS. AND NEXT UP, NO MORE VIRGIN PLASTIC IN OUR SUPPLY CHAIN.

INTERCEPT

OUR AIM IS TO STOP PLASTIC BEFORE IT ENTERS THE OCEAN. BUT THE CHANGE IS ON ALL OF US.

REDESIGN

WE ARE DRIVING ECO-INNOVATION AROUND MATERIALS, PRODUCTS AND NEW WAYS OF USING THEM. NEW METHODS. NEW MINDSETS. NEW FUTURE.

KNOW MORE

(to be continued)

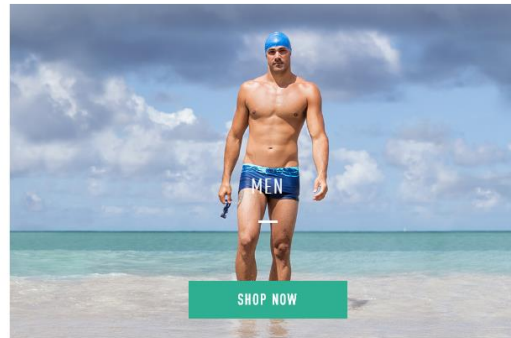
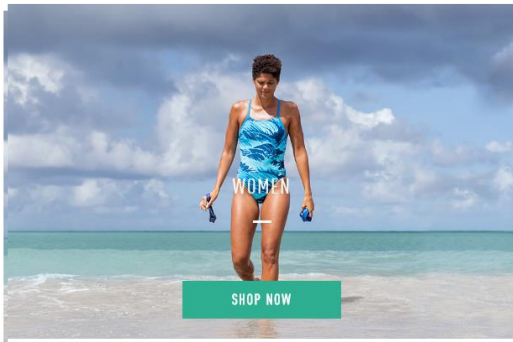
(continued)

## FROM PROFESSIONAL SWIMMER TO OCEAN AMBASSADOR

GROWING UP SURROUNDED BY OCEAN LIFE ON HER HOME ISLAND, OLYMPIC MEDALIST AND OCEAN ACTIVIST CORALIE BALMY DEVELOPED A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH WATER FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE. NOW SHE WANTS TO HELP PROTECT THE OCEANS.

EXPLORE HER STORY

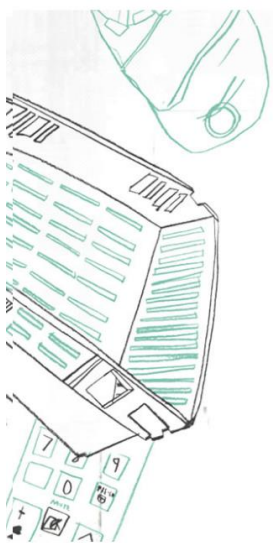
## ADIDAS X PARLEY SWIMWEAR



GARBAGE IN DOES NOT HAVE TO BE  
GARBAGE OUT

SHOP ALL PARLEY PRODUCTS






### SIGN UP FOR THE FUTURE

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PHASING OUT THE USE OF VIRGIN PLASTIC IN OUR PRODUCTS. BUT THIS IS JUST ONE PART OF OUR WORK WITH PARLEY. AS A FOUNDING MEMBER, ADIDAS SUPPORTS PARLEY IN ECO-INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, DIRECT IMPACT, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION. SIGN UP TO FOLLOW OUR ONGOING ECO-INNOVATION MISSION AND FUTURE PRODUCT LAUNCHES.

E-MAIL ADDRESS \*

SIGN UP



Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)



## Appendix 7: An example of product listing page

Figure 9: Product listing page

The screenshot displays the Adidas website's product listing for Women's Originals Shoes. The page features a dark navigation bar at the top with the Adidas logo, category links (MEN, WOMEN, KIDS, SPORTS, BRANDS, CUSTOMISE), and utility links (HELP, ORDER TRACKER, NEWSLETTER SIGNUP, LOGIN). Below the navigation bar, a breadcrumb trail shows the path: Back | Home / Women / Originals / Shoes. The main heading is "WOMEN • ORIGINALS • SHOES (460 PRODUCTS)".

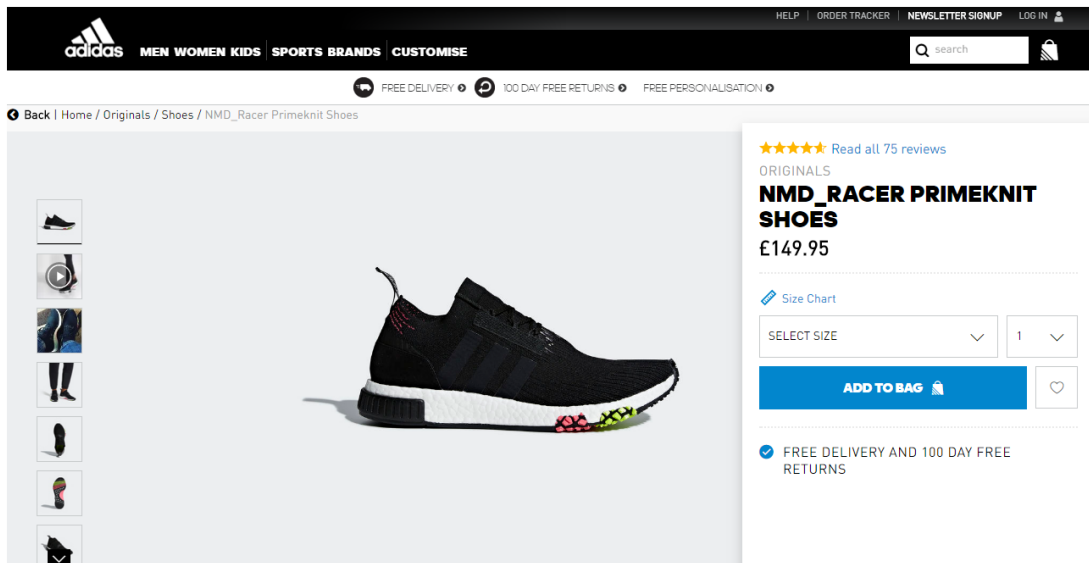
The left sidebar contains a "YOUR SELECTION" section with filters for Gender (Women), Brand (Originals), and Product Category (Shoes). Below this is a "REFINE" section with filters for Size (ranging from 3 to 11.5), Colour (various color swatches), and Closure (various styles). The "NEW ARRIVALS" section lists recent products like ZX FLUX SHOES, STAN SMITH SHOES, and NMD\_R1 SHOES. The "SPORT" section includes checkboxes for Lifestyle, Skateboarding, and Swimming. The "BRAND" section lists various Adidas brands, with "Originals" selected. The "PRICE" section shows a price range from £29 to £170. The "CUSTOMISE" section offers a "design your own" option for 204 products. The "PERSONALISE" section offers a "design your own" option for 1143 products.

The main product grid displays 16 shoes in a 4x4 layout. Each product card includes a shoe image, a "NEW" or "SOLD OUT" badge, a heart icon for favorites, the product name, the number of colors available, and the price. The products shown are: EVERYN SHOES, SUPERSTAR 80S HALF HEART SHOES, NMD\_R2 CNY SHOES, NMD\_R1 SHOES, SUPERSTAR SHOES, NMD\_R1 SHOES, STAN SMITH SHOES, ZX FLUX SHOES, STAN SMITH SHOES, SUPERSTAR FOUNDATION SHOES, NMD\_CS2 PRIMEKNIT SHOES, GAZELLE SHOES, NMD\_RACER PRIMEKNIT SHOES, NMD\_R2 SHOES, NMD\_R1 SHOES, X\_PLR SHOES, and NMD\_R1 PRIMEKNIT SHOES. The prices range from £69.95 to £149.95.

Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)

# Appendix 8: An example of product detail page

Figure 10: Product detail page



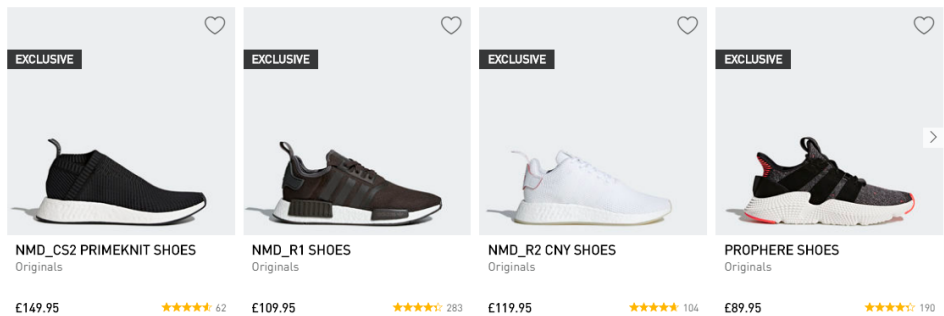
## NMD\_RACER PRIMEKNIT SHOES

### A RACER-INSPIRED NMD THAT'S FASTER AND SLEEKER THAN EVER BEFORE.

Progressive, premium, pioneering. NMD blends pure adidas heritage with advanced, modern materials to create a futuristic look that resonates on the streets. The sock-like adidas Primeknit upper of these shoes follows the shape of your foot for a snug, adaptive fit. Responsive Boost cushioning extends toe to heel for all-day comfort. A signature NMD heel plug unit completes the look.

- Boost is our most responsive cushioning ever
- adidas Primeknit upper wraps the foot in adaptive support and ultralight comfort
- Quickstrike outsole decreases weight and increases flexibility and durability
- Colour-fading embroidery on vamp and medial arch; Welded 3-Stripes; TPU heel welding and suede heel cap; Signature NMD heel pull
- Signature NMD EVA plug at the heel
- Product code: CQ2441
- Product colour: Core Black/Core Black/Solar Pink

### YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



(to be continued)

(continued)

## SHARE HOW YOU WEAR THEM

Share a photo of your adidas favourite and appear in our showcase below. Make sure to tag your image with #3stripesstyle



## RATINGS & REVIEWS

FILTER ON Star Rating SORT ON RELEVANT HELPFUL NEWEST

**4.6**  
75 REVIEWS  
**95%**  
of customers recommend this product

SIZE: TOO SMALL PERFECT TOO LARGE  
WIDTH: TOO NARROW PERFECT TOO WIDE  
COMFORT: UNCOMFORTABLE COMFORTABLE  
QUALITY: POOR PERFECT

**WORTH WAITING FOR**  
Its new and cutting edge, NMD's with a little flair.  
✓ I recommend this product  
DavidC55 - Verified Purchaser

**Response from Adidas**  
These sneakers are amazing. Love them! Thanks a lot for sharing this.

Reply Was this review helpful? Yes [3] No [0]

**THESE ARE A ONE OF A KIND SHOE!**  
My son absolutely loves these shoes! The uniqueness was a good thing for him. We'd definitely buy adidas again!  
✓ I recommend this product  
Metz13 - Verified Purchaser

Reply Was this review helpful? Yes [2] No [0]

LOAD MORE WRITE A REVIEW

## OTHERS ALSO BOUGHT

**EXCLUSIVE** NMD\_R1 STLT PRIMEKNIT SHOES Originals £149.95 ★★★★★ 18

**SALE** NMD\_C2 SHOES Originals £97.96 £139.95 ★★★★★ 58

CREW SOCKS 3 PAIRS Originals £11.95 ★★★★★ 752

**SALE** NMD\_R1 PRIMEKNIT SHOES Originals £104.96 £149.95 ★★★★★ 230

## RECENTLY VIEWED ITEMS

NMD\_R2 SHOES Originals £69.96 £89.95

NMD\_R2 SHOES Originals £69.96 £89.95

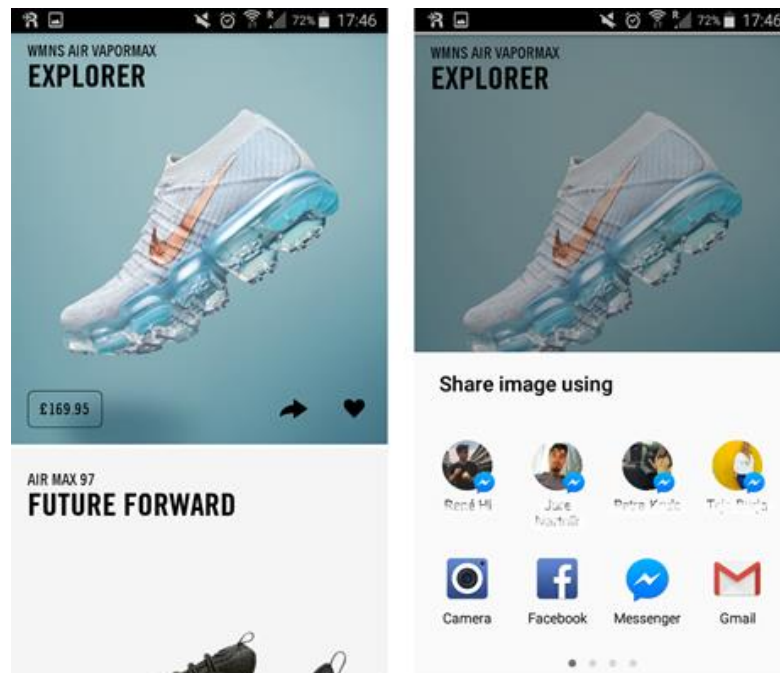
NMD\_R2 PRIMEKNIT SHOES Originals £104.96 £149.95

NMD\_R2 PRIMEKNIT SHOES Originals £104.96 £149.95

Source: [www.adidas.com](http://www.adidas.com)

## Appendix 9: Direct connection from mobile application to social media

Figure 11: Connection of mobile application and social media



Source: personal Nike Sneakers app account (2017)

## Appendix 10: An example of social media posts by sponsored athletes

Figure 12: Social media posts about new collection by Nike's sponsored athletes



Source: personal Instagram feed (2018)

## Appendix 11: The experiment timeline of activities and observations

Table 16: Timeline of activities and observations

Date	Brand	Activity	Observations & comments	
8.05.2017	adidas	Browsing running shoes (5 PDPs), bras (3 PDPs) and tights (2 PDPs)		
	Nike			
9.05.2017	Under Armour		FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 9.5.	Desktop: center 1x (S,B)
	Puma			
	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8.5.	Desktop: center 1x (S,S), side 3x (S,S; S,S; B,B)
10.05.2017	adidas	Checking my social	FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8.5.	Desktop: center 1x (S,S), side 2x (S,S; S,S)
	Under Armour		IG - sponsored post, items browsed on 9.5.	Mobile (S,X,T,T,X,X,X,T,T,B)
11.05.2017	Under Armour		FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 9.5.	Mobile (X,T,S,T,X,X,B,S,S,X)
12.05.2017				
13.05.2017	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8.5.	Desktop: center 1x (S,S,S,S)
14.05.2017	adidas	Browsing ten minutes on each site (open PDPs: 3 for shoes, 2 tights and 2 bras); trying to add things to Wish list; only possible at adidas	FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8.5.	Desktop: center 2x (S,S,S), side 6x (4x S,S; 2x B,X)
	Nike			
	Puma			
	Under Armour			Desktop: center 1x (B,B), side 5x (B,T)
15.05.2017	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8.5.	Desktop: center 1x (S,T) side 2x (S,T; S,B)

(to be continued)



(continued)

Date	Brand	Activity		Observations & comments	
16.05.2017	all	Signed up for newsletter		Welcome emails - seperate sheet	
17.05.2017	adidas	Browsing to see if they send email based on IP (open PDPs: 3 for shoes, 2 tights and 2 bras). Repeat tomorrow and wait if anything happens until 20.5. morning	Added 1 more running shoes to wish list		
	Nike			"you may also like" older kids' running shoes	
	Puma				
	Under Armour			Email with S,T,S,B, browsed on 9., 14. and 17.	CTA in email leading to PDP of browsed shoes
18.05.2017	adidas		Checking my social	Email with slightly relevant content (Climacool)	FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8., 14. and 17.
	Puma			Email with irrelevant content (men's football)	
	Under Armour			IG - T,S,S,B,T,T,B,X,T,T browsed on 9., 14. and 17.	FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8., 14. and 17.
19.05.2017	Puma	Register, no additional info, preferences		Email with irrelevant content (Fenty Jelly Slide)	
	all			Seperate sheet	
20.05.2017	Nike	Added to wishlists (signed in): 4 shoes, 3 bras, 2 tights		Email with irrelevant content (men's football)	
	Puma				
	Under Armour			FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 9., 14. and 17.	Desktop: side 1x (S,T)
	adidas		Checking my social before adding items to wishlist	FB - sponsored post, items browsed on 8., 14. and 17.	Desktop: side 4x (B,B; S,S; S,S; X,X)
			Checking my social after adding items to wishlist	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Desktop: center 1x (T,S) side 1x (S,S)
	Under Armour			FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Desktop: center 1x (T,X) side 1x (B,B)

(to be continued)

(continued)

Date	Brand	Activity	Observations & comments	
21.05.2017	Under Armour	Checking my social	Email with wishlist items 3h after adding!!!!!!	
	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Desktop: center 2x (S,S; S,S) side 4x (X,X; S,S; B,X; S,S)
	Nike		Email with irrelevant content (customize)	"Top styles you may like" X,X,X,X
22.05.2017	adidas	Checking my social	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,S,S,S,S,S,S,S)
23.05.2017	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (T,S,S,S,S,S,S,S)
	Puma		Email with irrelevant content (Suede Platform Satin)	
24.05.2017	adidas		Email with birthday content	15% OFF - valid 14 days
	Under Armour		Email with two items, browsed that day	
				Email with irrelevant content (general best sellers)
25.05.2017	Puma		Email with irrelevant content (Fenty Jelly Slide)	Offering countries, but asked for my country at sign-up
	Nike		Email with irrelevant content (customize)	"Top styles you may like" X,X,X,X
	adidas		Email with irrelevant content (custmizing slides)	Related to weather/season
			Checking my social	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.
26.05.2017	Under Armour	Checking my social	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,X,X,T,X,T,X,B,X,X)
	adidas	Checking my social	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,X,X,X,S,S,T,X,X,X)
			Email with irrelevant content (Nemeziz football boots)	BUT exclusive 3 days access to new product
		Puma		Email with irrelevant content (Clyde Atlanta)
27.05.2017	Under Armour	Checking my social	IG - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,B,T,S,X,X,X,T,X,X)
	Under Armour		FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,X,X,B,T,S,X,X,X,S)
	adidas		FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile 2x same (S,S,S,S,X,X,X,X,S,X)
	Puma		Email with irrelevant content (Arsenal 13 Cup Wins)	13% off Arsenal shirts
			Email with irrelevant content (BVB Cup Final Victory)	

(to be continued)

(continued)

Date	Brand	Activity		Observations & comments		
28.05.2017	adidas		Checking social	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,S,S,X,S,S,X,X,S,X)	
	Under Armour			FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,X,X,X,X,B,X,T,X,X)	
29.05.2017	adidas	Adding to basket: 1 pair of shoes, 1 tights, 1 bra (at 18:10-18:25)	First shoes to each brand's basket, then also tights and a bra	FB - sponsored post, items added to wishlist 20.5.	Mobile (S,S,S,S,X,S,S,S,X,S and S,S,S,S,S,S,S,X,X,X)	
	Nike			Email about abandoned basket at 19:00	Bra and tights only	
				Puma		
	Under Armour					
30.05.2017			Checking social	IG - sponsored post, items added to basket 29.5.	Mobile (T,S,T,T,T,X,T,T,T,T)	
				FB - sponsored post, items added to basket 29.5.		
31.05.2017	adidas	Going to basket & paying process, entering some information etc.		Email about 15% off welcome gift still waiting for me		
			at 21:40			
	Nike		at 21:55	YT - ad for Air Vapormax running shoes		
	Puma		at 21:50	Email with relevant content - basket		
	Under Armour		at 21:45			
1.06.2017	Puma			Email with relevant content (new tech running shoes)		
	Under Armour		Checking social	FB - sponsored post, items added to basket 29.5.	Mobile (X,X,X,T,X,B,X,X,T,X)	
2.06.2017	adidas			Email with relevant content (Join the run, Parley)		
3.06.2017	adidas	Going to basket & paying process, entering fictional city and fictional info about credit card	at 22:55			
	Nike		at 23:00			
	Puma		at 23:05			
			at 23:10			
4.06.2017	Under Armour	Checking my social		FB - sponsored post, ONE item added to basket 29.5.	Mobile (X,X,X,X,X,X,B,X,X,X)	
				FB - sponsored post, items added to basket 29.5.	Mobile (B,B,B,B,B,X,T,X,B)	

Source: own work.