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MASTER'S THESIS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF 360-DEGREE DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY AND ITS KEY TOUCHPOINTS: THE CASE OF AUTHENTIC BEAUTY CONCEPT BRAND

Ljubljana, November 2023   TJAŠA ZVER SIJEČIĆ

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI – Artificial Intelligence

AIDA model – Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action

AR – Augmented Reality

B2B – Business to Business

B2C – Business to Customer

COMPETE – Current Operators, Offering, Market Share, Price, Expertise, Target, Employees

CPM – Cost per thousand impressions

CRM – Customer Relationship Management

D2C – Direct to Consumer platform

DDM – Data-Driven Marketing

EKB model – Engel Kollat Blackwell Model

eWOM – Electronic Word-of-Mouth

KPIs – Key Performance Indicators

OGSM – Objective, Goals, Strategic Priorities and Measures

O2O – Online to Offline

PESTLE – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental

PPC – Pay-Per-Click

PR – Public Relation

ROI – Return on Investment

SaaS – Software as a Service

SEA – Search Engine Advertising

SEM – Search Engine Marketing

SEO – Search Engine Optimization

SMM – Social Media Marketing

STP – Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The 4Ps – Product, Price, Place and Promotion

The 7Ps – Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical Environment

UGC – User-Generated Content

UTMs – Urchin Tracking Modules

VIRO – Value, Rarity, Imitability and Organization

VR – Virtual Reality

1   INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the world has undergone a profound shift due to digital transformation. This transformation has created considerable changes in how we work, how we live, how we entertain ourselves, how we engage with information and most importantly how we make purchases (Kohli, 2020). A significant majority of people worldwide use the internet today, emphasising the importance of understanding new digital consumers and digital marketing (Kemp, 2023).

Consumer decision-making has become complex, social media and online word-of-mouth have changed present-day customer journey drastically, reflecting the digital world. (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022). Emerging technologies have substantially transformed the way people make purchases and created an expectation of instantaneous information. Creating a new era, the Social Mobile Marketing Era, of always-on, mobile and on-the-move consumers, who anticipate streamlined and immediate purchasing experiences at their fingertips (Tiffany, 2021). Due to the pandemic willingness to purchase online has drastically increased, leading to more customers buying on e-commerce platforms (Kemp, 2023). Customers' patience and attention have drastically decreased, leading to company messages being missed or not creating the envisioned outcome (Tiffany, 2021).

These rapid changes have created considerable consequences for businesses and drastically changed digital marketing, therefore it is vital for businesses to understand how to effectively utilize the digital realm. As it is vital for amplifying the company's visibility, securing sales, and fostering long-term growth (Kohli, 2020). To be successful in this ever-changing and dynamic world, it is important to carefully structure a digital marketing strategy (Tiffany, 2021).

Digital marketing is described as using several digital channels, touchpoints and strategies to connect with customers online (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). To optimize marketing efforts, make effective campaigns and better understand customer needs, digital marketing strategically uses emerging technologies and multiple digital touchpoints in the customer journey (Chaffey, 2022; Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Due to the rising importance of understanding comprehensive and customer-centric digital strategy, the concept of 360-degree digital marketing is key. However, in spite of the increasing popularity of digital marketing, 360-degree digital marketing and its components still remain under-researched in the literature. Therefore, comprehensive and structured research is necessary. The key goal of this master's thesis is to bridge the current gap by exploring 360-degree digital marketing strategy to enhance brand visibility and conversion. I start with defining 360-degree digital marketing and developing an overview of all components, based on an in-depth literature review.

I continue to provide practical insights and suggestions helping digital marketers in developing comprehensive digital marketing strategies that foster both growth and profitability. Supporting the insights by providing guiding examples and integrating gained findings into a 360-degree digital marketing strategy for the brand Authentic Beauty Concept, which can support the brand to gain brand awareness, create holistic massaging through multiple digital touchpoints and effectively connect with their target group. The insights and findings were developed based on comprehensive primary data collection, using a case study analysing Authentic Beauty Concept, interviews with the employees of Henkel and questionnaires with customers. Furthermore, future research directions and limitations conclude the master thesis.

2   MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing is a dynamic and evolving field. This field does not follow strict rules and principles, it requires flexibility and adaptability to ever-evolving market conditions, technological advancements, and consumer behaviours. Marketing strategies need to be constantly updated and adjusted to stay relevant and meet the rapidly changing needs of customers, as well as to respond to the competitive and ever-changing business landscape (Kotler, 1997).

2.1   Evolution of the Marketing Strategy

During the 1860s to the 1920s, the Production Era was characterized by the rise of new production methods that drove market expansion and enabled manufacturing brands to thrive. However, after about six decades, the demand became saturated due to excessive supply, resulting in a shift towards the Sales Era, from the 1920s to the 1940s. By then companies encountered challenges in easily selling all their products, leading to the emergence of salesmen, creating new marketing approaches like billboards and sales teams.

After World War II, during the timeframe spanning from the 1940s to the 1960s, many soldiers left the military and ventured into entrepreneurship, creating a post-war business revolution. Starting the Marketing Department Era, which was modelled after the team-based military structure (Tiffany, 2021). During this period, numerous marketing concepts have evolved to adapt to the changing business environment. Neil Borden's concept of "Marketing Mix" was introduced in the 1950s and Jerome McCarthy's marketing tactic of "The 4Ps" (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) in the 1960s (Kotler et al., 2010).

During the period spanning from the 1960s to the 1990s, the marketing concept gained widespread acceptance, leading to the emergence of the Marketing Company Era. (Tiffany, 2021). In the 1970s, global economies were impacted by oil shock-driven stagflation creating uncertainties. Demand for products became scarce and competition among products increased, with consumers becoming wiser buyers. According to the classic theory of

marketing evolution, this is the final phase, which is still relevant in today's business landscape (Tiffany, 2021).

As services became an integral part of the marketing landscape in the 1990s, the field of marketing strategy underwent a significant transformation, going from "The 4Ps" to "The 7Ps" leading us into a new Relationship Marketing Era (Tiffany, 2021). Pushing marketing to evolve from tactical to strategic, putting the focus of marketing activities on customer-centricity. This era represents a significant shift in marketing, moving away from a mindset centred solely on competition but instead embracing cooperation, understanding the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to provide value to the target customers (Kotler, 2003). Leading to the introduction of customer management strategies such as Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) (Kotler et al., 2010).

Nowadays, we find ourselves in the Social Mobile Marketing Era, where "always-on" communication and constant engagement with mobile customers are required (Tiffany, 2021). The evolution of marketing strategy is visually depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The evolution of marketing strategy
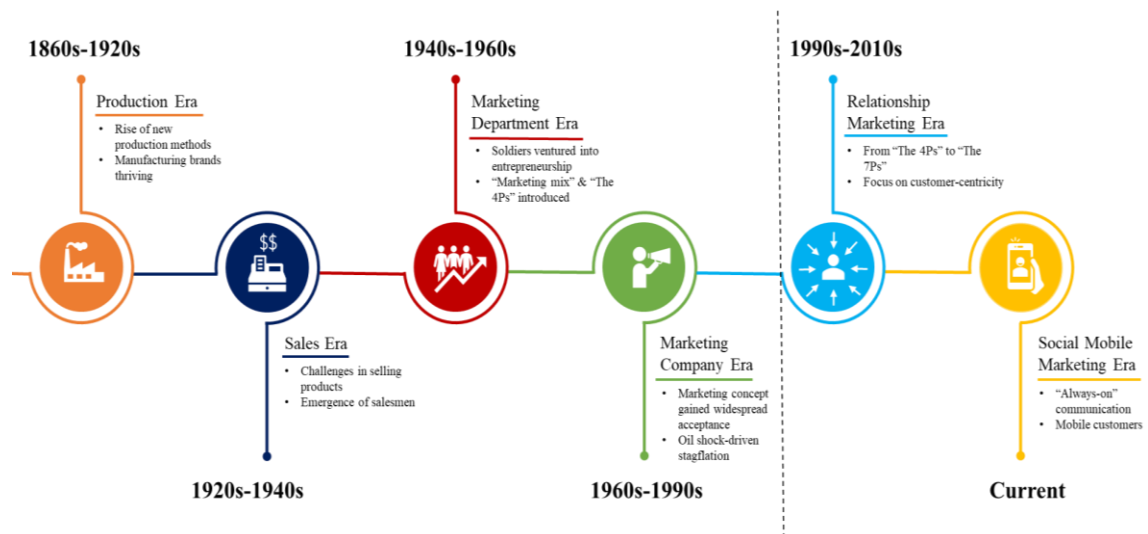
Source: Own work based on Kotler et al. (2010); Kotler (2003); Tiffany (2021).

2.2 Definition of Marketing Strategy

Until the 1950s, marketing was largely synonymous with management (Lafley & Martin, 2013), and has struggled to establish its position within an organization due to its multifaceted dimension, including culture, strategy, and tactics (Webster, 1997). Oftentimes, companies tend to prioritize tactics, without establishing a solid foundation, which can overshadow the significance of developing marketing strategies. However, it is necessary to adopt a long-term strategic planning approach in order to ensure the effectiveness of tactics (Tiffany, 2021), showing the importance of defining the marketing strategy.

To differentiate between marketing strategy and marketing tactics, Tiffany (2021) simplified Sun Tzu's (1964) thoughts stating, that strategy serves as the guiding map that leads you to your intended destination, answering "who, what, where, when, and why", which addresses the overall purpose. Tactics are the tools with which you implement the strategy and reach the goal, answering "how".

Philip Kotler (2003), renowned as the "father of modern marketing", asserts that marketing strategy serves as the glue that creates a consistent and unique value proposition to the target market. It should be a comprehensive plan that outlines the path to achieving your goals (Tiffany, 2021). A company can only establish a sustainable and long-lasting competitive advantage over its competitors by deliberately selecting a distinct combination of activities that deliver unique value compared to its competitors (Porter, 2004).

The key to a successful strategy is making choices with the express purpose of winning, rather than just competing. Only a competitive mindset (Lafley & Martin, 2013) and an understanding of customer preferences can lead to success. A strategy that mirrors competitors and is easily replicated lacks originality and is weak. A distinctive and sustainable strategy needs to have a clear target market with valued customers, a compelling value proposition, and a tailored value network. Such strategies are difficult to replicate due to their unique alignment of business activities (Kotler, 2003).

Marketing strategy incorporates a series of decisions that a company makes to effectively respond to the dynamic marketing environment, by identifying market segments and strategically positioning offerings for those target marketplaces (Hooley et al., 2020). It involves a comprehensive set of decisions made by a company related to marketing activities, including which markets and market segments to target, how to perform marketing activities in those markets, and how to allocate marketing resources to create, communicate, and deliver a valuable product to customers in order to achieve specific companies' objectives (Varadarajan, 2015).

The marketing strategy is constructed upon the concepts of segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP). The development usually starts with segmentation, where the market is divided into homogeneous groups based on various factors such as demographics, geography, psychographic and behavioural characteristics. After segmentation, the next step is targeting, where one or more segments are chosen based on their brand fit. Segmentation and targeting are crucial for efficient resource allocation and positioning (Kartajaya et al., 2016). Positioning helps you distinguish your product or services from competitors in the perception of your target audience. The development of marketing strategy is in the context of constant change, and assuming a static definition of the market for a company is unreasonable. Marketing strategy should strive to develop effective responses to the evolving market by defining market segments and positioning offerings for those target markets (Hooley et al., 2020).

According to Hooley et al. (2020), the marketing strategy process can be viewed at three main levels, presented in Figure 2:

- Implementation of core strategy; assessing company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).
- Creation of the company's competitive positioning through a selection of target markets; defining how and where to compete.
- Implementation of the strategy is carried out through marketing efforts with elements of marketing mix, organization and control. (Hooley et al., 2020).

Figure 2: The marketing strategy process

Source: Hooley et al. (2020).

While a lot of authors believe marketing strategy is constructed upon the concepts of STP and its components, Lafley and Martin (2013) believe that strategy is about making the correct decisions to win in the market, more specifically by making five distinct choices: winning aspiration, target markets, how to succeed in those markets, set of capabilities needed to win and required management system with modifications made based on feedback. This set of choices can uniquely position the company in its industry to create a competitive advantage. This approach, known as the waterfall strategy, involves answering these five interrelated questions in a cascading manner, as shown in Figure 3.

In smaller companies, the strategy-making process may involve a single choice cascade, while in large companies, there may be multiple interconnected cascades with choices made at various levels. Regardless of the size of the organization, it is essential to ensure that the strategy is aligned and reinforces the overall direction of the company (Lafley & Martin 2013).

Figure 3: An integrated cascade of choices - Waterfall strategy
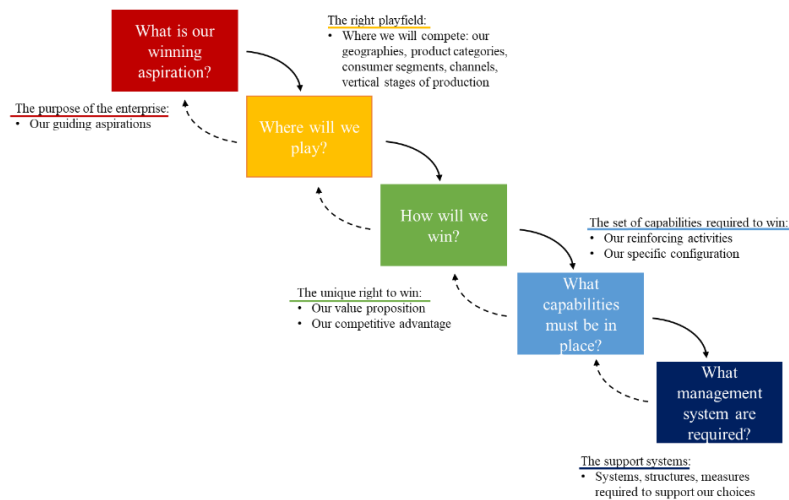
Source: Own work based on Lafley & Martin (2013).

A successful strategy is thoroughly researched, provides business with clearly defined goals and serves as a roadmap to make your tactics successful, enhance performance, cultivate trust with your audience, and obtain valuable data. To identify the key tactics in strategy building, Tiffany has developed an acronym from the word strategy. This framework includes most of the concepts I have discussed before. In the S-T-R-A-T-E-G-Y framework, each letter represents the steps to take when creating a strategy, as shown in Figure 4 (Tiffany, 2021).

Figure 4: S-T-R-A-T-E-G-Y framework

Source: Own work based on Tiffany (2021).

The framework starts with a Scenario; the scenario is focused on analysing the existing state of the company by assessing both internal and external factors. Micro factors, such as patents, team skills, reputation, and financial stability, have a direct influence on the company's internal operations and resources that enable it to respond to these factors. We can use the SWOT analysis to identify and leverage these factors. In contrast, macro factors, which are outside influences like the present-day economic events, have an indirect influence on the company and are mostly uncontrollable. We can analyse these factors using PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) analysis. Failing to closely monitor the marketing environment puts the company at risk of being taken by surprise by market changes that could impact the company´s viability. Additionally, it is crucial to analyse the company's competitors to maintain competitiveness (Tiffany, 2021).

Targets, setting goals is a crucial step in strategy development as they provide a sense of guidance and purpose. Objectives also serve as benchmarks for control and guide the rest of the strategy development process, aligning with the purpose and aspiration of the company as mentioned by Lafely and Martin (2013).

Continuing with Reach, the pivotal component of a strategy is understanding and researching the consumer. It is important to identify both existing and target customers while keeping up with their rapidly changing behaviours to avoid losing customers' attention. When communicating with customers, information should be portrayed in a way that captures the customer's attention, and getting this right can lead to value-added relationships, resulting in high customer Lifetime Value.

Awareness, the success of a marketing campaign begins with awareness and careful planning.

Tactics, it's crucial to identify the right channels to drive awareness, placing your message where your target customers are most likely to be found. Tactics should not be defined before the overarching marketing strategy is in place, as they should align with and support the strategic objectives (Tiffany, 2021).

Execution is a critical aspect of strategy, where the VIRO framework (Value, Rarity, Imitability, and Organization) can be applied to evaluate different decision tree areas and understand the sustained competitive advantage of the company.

Generating desired results and tracking the outcomes is essential to measure the success of the marketing strategy. Choosing the right Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) enables informed budgeting decisions and ensures that the strategy is on track.

Finally, conducting a thorough post-mortem analysis, or Yield, is essential to assess the overall success of the strategy. A comprehensive review should be conducted to determine what worked well, what underperformed, and why, to make informed adjustments for future campaigns (Tiffany, 2021).

Business is an ongoing, infinite game that requires a focus on sustainability, flexibility, and long-term success (Sinek, 2019). As a result, marketing strategy has to be founded on a deep understanding of the marketplace, aiming to define a defensible competitive position supported by continuous learning and improvement of customer value (Hooley et al., 2020). Starting with a strong value proposition as part of a customer-centric marketing strategy is crucial for attracting the right customers, increasing leads, and boosting sales (Sinek, 2019).

Marketing strategy requires effective understanding and response to the demands of new and diverse customer types, focusing on effectiveness rather than just efficiency. A useful starting point in strategy formation for many organizations is defining their mission and vision, determining the business they are in and the business they want to be in (Hooley et al., 2020). This highlights that communicating the "why", the purpose, is crucial as it inspires action and engages the limbic brain, responsible for emotions like loyalty, trust and most importantly decision-making (Sinek, 2019). Defining a company's mission and purpose involves asking critical questions about its business, strategic intent, values, competencies, customer targets, and market position (Hooley et al., 2020). A strong vision is crucial for a successful strategy, as exemplified by Steve Job's unwavering commitment to Apple's vision, making it a success. Many businesses compromise their brand, values, and vision due to sales pressure, while we need to remember that vision is the lifeblood of a company, providing direction to the strategy (Tiffany, 2021).

2.3   Digital Marketing

Digital marketing has been rapidly and dynamically changing in the last few years due to technological advancements, shifts in consumer behaviour and changes in the business environment (Kohli, 2020). Terms Internet Marketing, Web Marketing, Online Marketing and Network Marketing are often used interchangeably with Digital Marketing. However, in recent years, digital marketing has become more commonly used (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). Digital marketing encompasses not only online channels but also extends to non-internet channels (Bala & Verma, 2018).

With the internet being used by over 64% of the global population and projections showing that nearly two-thirds of the world's population will be online by the end of 2023, the importance of digital marketing cannot be overstated. Furthermore, there is a notable shift in consumer behaviour towards e-commerce, with 4.11 billion people now purchasing consumer goods through online channels, indicating an increased willingness compared to pre-pandemic levels (Kemp, 2023). We are seeing exponential growth in daily online spending, with more than 17% of Americans checking their emails first thing in the morning (Tiffany, 2021).

The swift transformations carry significant implications for companies. Therefore, it is imperative for companies nowadays to possess a strong understanding of how to effectively harness the digital world to enhance their brand awareness, ensure future sales and the

sustainable growth of the company (Kohli, 2020). Companies in this economy need a marketing approach that combines offline and online communications (Kartajaya et al., 2016). Therefore, to navigate through this dynamic, rapidly evolving world, it is key to develop a well-defined digital marketing strategy (Tiffany, 2021).

Digital marketing is the marketing of services or products using digital tools connected to the internet, but also including advertising, mobile and any other digital methods (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). With its roots in the early days of the internet, digital marketing has been shaped by the revolution of information access and communication brought about by the global network of interconnected computers known as the Internet, which has surpassed all previous channels in terms of scale and reach (Phillips & Young, 2009). By bridging the fields of marketing and the internet, we can apply marketing principles within the digital realm. Digital channels and strategy help digital marketers connect with customers where they spend most of their time (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

In a world driven by high-tech advancements, people crave high-touch experiences, seeking personalized products and services that are supported by big data (Parsons et al., 1996). Digital marketing encompasses the strategic utilization of new technologies to optimize communication efforts, with the goal of enhancing customer understanding and aligning with their unique needs (Chaffey, 2022).

It goes beyond just internet marketing. It also involves the use of traditional marketing methods in a digital format (Kartajaya et al., 2016). With technology convergence, digital and traditional marketing must seamlessly integrate to meet customers' needs for business success (Parsons et al., 1996). Leveraging multiple channels in message campaigns can result in more effective outcomes (Kartajaya et al., 2016). This requires leveraging the power of the internet and other digital tools to revolutionize decision-making processes related to customer-centric strategies. This combined approach to marketing will undoubtedly reshape the way businesses interact with and cater to their customers (Parsons et al., 1996).

Based on the comprehensive literature review the key definitions of the concept of digital marketing are summarized in Table 1. The table lists (a) the authors, with (b) the year of the paper being published, followed by (c) the definition of digital marketing and (d) mentioned key components of digital marketing in the definition.

Table 1: The literature review of conceptual definitions of Digital Marketing

Author(s)	Year	Definition	Key Components
Parsons et al.	1996	Digital marketing transforms the way businesses engage with and serve their customers, necessitating the utilization of the internet and other digital tools to redefine customer-centric strategies. It serves as a company's online persona, enabling it to present itself to a vast audience in the digital world. It entails promoting brands or products through various electronic channels.	
Phillips & Young	2009	Digital marketing has evolved due to the internet's revolution in information access and communication. It has surpassed all previous channels in terms of scale and reach, transforming the way businesses engage with customers.	
Yasmin et al.	2015	Digital marketing is a widely used marketing approach that utilizes various digital channels to promote services or products and to connect with consumers. It encompasses not only internet marketing but also extends to channels that operate independently of the internet.	Email marketing, online advertising, social media marketing, affiliate marketing, text messaging, SEM, and PPC.
Todor	2016	Digital marketing is the strategic use of digital technologies to effectively market services or goods, aiming to attract, convert and retain customers. Its key goals are preference shaping, brand promotion and sales boosting through different digital marketing techniques. It follows the customer-centric approach.	
Kartajaya et al.	2016	Digital marketing goes beyond internet marketing, it connects the use of traditional marketing methods in a digital format. Traditional and digital marketing should coexist, with interchangeable roles along the customer journey. Traditional marketing generates awareness, while digital marketing fosters stronger customer relationships.	
Sawicki	2016	Digital marketing uses digital technology to create channels for reaching potential customers, effectively fulfilling their needs, and achieving the company´s objectives. It is not only limited to the internet as a medium; it includes various channels of reaching customers such as different video devices, audio devices and household appliances.	

Table continues.

Table 1: The literature review of conceptual definitions of Digital Marketing (continued)

Author(s)	Year	Definition	Key Components
Kannan & Li	2017	Digital marketing is a technology-driven and agile process where companies cooperate with partners and customers to communicate, create, deliver, and maintain value for all stakeholders. Using digital touchpoints, it creates value in new digital environments by utilizing digital technologies in novel ways.	Consumer behaviour, social media, UGC, platforms, two-sided markets, and search engines.
Bala & Verma	2018	Digital marketing is strongly connected with the quick development of technology and the internet, incorporating non-internet channels as well. It has evolved from text-based websites to a variety of activities like advertising, software development, product details, auctions, and more.	Content marketing, content automaton, social media marketing, influencer marketing, e-commerce marketing, campaign marketing, email direct marketing, display advertising, e–books, games, optical disks, SEM, and SEO.
Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick	2019	"The application of digital media, data and technology integrated with traditional communication to achieve marketing objectives. Digital marketing focuses on managing different formats of online company presence... integrated with online communication techniques... However, for digital marketing to be successful there is still a need for integration of these techniques with traditional media." (p. 9)	Social media marketing, online advertising, websites, email marketing, partnership agreements with other, SEM, and CRM.
Desai & Vidyapeeth	2019	Digital marketing includes all marketing activities of services or products that leverage digital technologies, primarily the internet, electronic devices, or any other digital medium. It is characterized by the use of various digital channels and tactics to engage with customers where they invest the majority of their time online much of their time online.	SEO, SEM, content marketing, influencer marketing, content automation, campaign marketing, data-driven marketing, e-commerce marketing, social media marketing, e-mail direct marketing, display advertising, e–books, and optical disks, games, SMS and MMS, call-back, and on-hold mobile ring tones.
Veleva & Tsvetanova	2020	Digital marketing is a vital aspect of digital business transformation, including novel marketing methods aligned with the latest market conditions, and leveraging communication technologies and information. It helps companies with advanced CRM tools, enhancing customer satisfaction.	Website, SEO, social media, email marketing, blogs, big data marketing, online advertising, visual marketing, mobile marketing, wearables, internet of things, and games.

Source: Own work based on Bala & Verma (2018); Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019); Desai & Vidyapeeth (2019); Kannan & Li (2017); Kartajaya et al. (2016); Parsons et al. (1996); Phillips & Young (2009); Sawicki (2016); Todor (2016); Veleva & Tsvetanova (2020); Yasmin et al. (2015).

2.3.1 Emergence of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is closely intertwined with the internet and the rapid advancement of technology. As the internet has grown, internet marketing has gained widespread popularity. It has evolved from text-based websites to diverse activities like product information, software programming, advertising, auctions, and more (Bala & Verma, 2018).

The first email was sent in 1971, setting the foundation for file sharing across machines. By the 1980s, computers had sufficient storage capacity to hold vast amounts of customer information, leading to the adoption of online techniques such as database marketing. This enabled more efficient tracking of customer data, transforming the dynamics of the buyer-seller relationship (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

In the 1990s with the rise of personal computers and the Internet, the term Digital Marketing was introduced, facilitating human-to-human interaction, quick information sharing and increased connection among people. As consumers became well-informed and well-connected marketers worldwide expanded the concept of marketing to focus on human emotions (Kotler et al., 2010).

This led to the emergence of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). New concepts like experimental marketing, emotional marketing and brand equity were introduced, targeting not only the customer's mind but also their heart (Kotler et al., 2010). This led to the first clickable banner ad in 1994, as shown in Figure 5, which was for the campaign "You Will" by AT&T. Over the first four months of it going live, it had a click rate of 44%. (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

Figure 5: The first online banner ad

Source: Drum (2016).

In the 2000s, the rise of internet users and smartphones created new challenges for marketing departments. As digital platforms integrate into daily life and people start to rely on digital

devices, digital marketing has become more prevalent and efficient. In 2007, marketing automation was introduced to help with customer segmentation and personalized campaigns, but it was not adaptable to consumer devices. In the 2000s and 2010s, digital marketing became more sophisticated due to the proliferation of devices and social media platforms. Consumers have become highly dependent on digital devices, expecting seamless experiences across channels (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

In the current era of Social Mobile Marketing, between 2010s and 2020s, communicating with always-on mobile customers is crucial (Tiffany, 2021). There are 5.44 billion people now using mobile phones, while social media usage has reached 4.76 billion users, representing almost 60% of the world's population (Kemp, 2023). The development of social media, artificial intelligence, and other digital innovations presents opportunities and challenges for marketers. Therefore, it is fundamental that companies are agile and creative in responding to new challenges in the modern digital era (Tiffany, 2021).

2.3.2 Traditional Marketing vs Digital Marketing

The effectiveness of traditional marketing tools is weakening, as customers increasingly mistrust brands and corporate messages (Bala & Verma, 2018). Modern strategies should combine traditional and digital methods to reach consumers in an ever-changing business landscape (Tiffany, 2021). Segmentation and targeting have evolved from a one-sided interaction between companies to customer communities, as customers have become immune to irrelevant messaging areas (Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Seth Godin has introduced permission marketing, which emphasizes the need for companies to obtain customer consent and act as helpful friends. Technology convergence has led to the convergence between digital and traditional marketing, leveraging big-data analytics for personalized products and services (Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Digital marketing is becoming more advantageous compared to traditional marketing in several areas (Bala & Verma, 2018). Therefore, digital marketing and traditional marketing should coexist, with interchanging roles across the customer path.

Traditional marketing builds awareness, while digital marketing builds closer relationships with customers, (Kartajaya et al., 2016) as it enables interaction with customers, creating opportunities for engagement and feedback that drive advocacy. Digital marketing allows for real-time responses from customers, making it easier to track and adjust campaigns, while traditional marketing lacks this flexibility (Bala & Verma, 2018). The focus of digital marketing is to drive results, while traditional marketing focuses on initiating customer interaction, see Figure 6 (Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Figure 6: The interchanging roles of Digital and Traditional Marketing
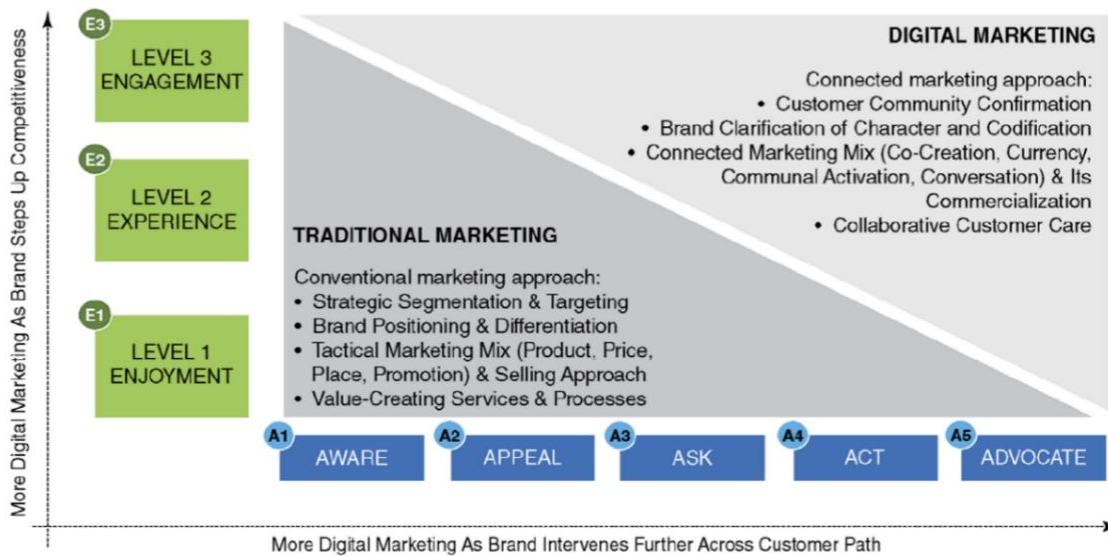
Source: Kartajaya et al. (2016).

Furthermore, there are other notable benefits of digital marketing when compared to traditional marketing. Digital marketing is more cost-effective, as it requires lower costs compared to traditional methods such as television, radio, magazine advertisement and print media. Additionally, it has a wider reach allowing companies to target audiences globally at a smaller cost. This also creates potential for viral promotion through social media, email, etc. allowing communication to be shared efficiently and quickly (Bala & Verma, 2018).

2.3.3   Overview of Digital Marketing Channels

Digital marketing channels encompass the online platforms and methods that companies utilize to promote their products or services to their target audiences. These channels are crucial for reaching and engaging with customers, building brand awareness, generating leads, driving traffic, generating leads, and achieving the overall goals of the company.

The evolution of digital channels started with email as the first commercial digital channel, followed by websites, social commerce, and now new realities. Email, created over 50 years ago, remains a widely used direct-to-desk mechanism in business. In just 30 years, over 1 billion websites have been created, transforming traditional views of commerce (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022). Digital marketing has evolved beyond the traditional internet channels and now includes non-internet channels that offer digital media, such as mobile phones with features like text messaging marketing, digital advertising, call back services, electronic billboards, radio advertising, digital television and many more (Bala & Verma, 2018; Manoharan & M, 2021).

Most mentioned digital marketing channels are Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search Engine Advertising (SEA), Content Marketing, Digital

Advertising, Social Media Marketing, Mobile Marketing, Email Marketing, Interactive Marketing, Viral Marketing, Affiliate Marketing, Inbound Marketing, Digital Media Planning and Buying, Online Public Relations, Viral Marketing, Marketing Automation, Video Marketing, Website Marketing and Analytics (Bala & Verma, 2018; Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019; Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

In a 2022 survey among B2C and B2B marketers in multiple countries, social media emerged as the top digital marketing channel, with 44% of respondents utilizing it. Website and email marketing were also commonly used, with 36% and 35% of respondents employing them, see Figure 7 (HubSpot, 2022).

Figure 7: Key digital marketing touchpoints according to marketers worldwide
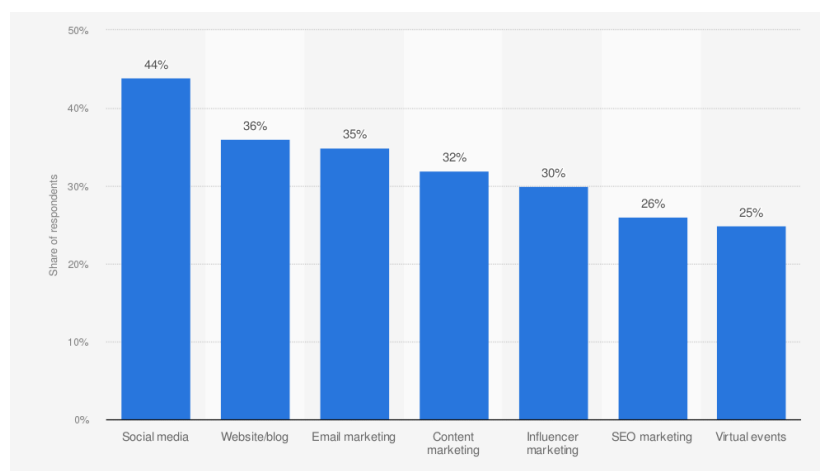
Source: HubSpot (2022).

Looking into the future, in a 2020 survey conducted among leaders of major e-commerce retailers in Europe, 52% of respondents identified influencer marketing as the digital marketing strategy with the highest return on investment (ROI). However, 67% of the respondents projected that by 2030, social media advertising would become the most effective channel (Yotpo, 2020).

This emphasises the core concepts and channels of digital marketing. Digital marketing is essential for companies to connect with customers, open new sales channels, and meet customer needs in this era social media plays a crucial role in communication and customer loyalty. Companies should recognize the importance of a multi-channel approach to cater to all customer groups and adapt to ever-changing customer needs (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

2.4   Importance of Data Driven Digital Marketing

In today's fast-paced business environment, planning and strategizing have become challenging due to the ever-changing technological landscape and fluctuating consumer expectations (Tiffany, 2021). This has made marketing analytics indispensable tools in the

field of marketing and should be considered an equally important component of modern marketing (Hauser, 2007). Data-driven marketing (DDM) has gained increased significance in marketing due to its ability to track customer behaviour in the digital realm (Bhandari et al., 2014; Järvinen, 2016). This customer-centric approach allows for the development of personalized products and services (Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Marketing strategy and user behaviour are operating independently, highlighting the urgent need for alignment between them. It is imperative for the marketing function to gain a deeper understanding of the target audience by analysing their digital engagements (Grandhi et al., 2020).

Data plays a key role in understanding target customers, guiding a company's strategic decisions, and refining its marketing efforts. By analysing real-time data, marketers can gain insights into customer needs, wants, interests, requirements, and behaviours enabling them to effectively reach and engage with their target audience (Tiffany, 2021), at the right moment. DDM has the potential to revolutionize marketing by identifying customer needs and influencing factors throughout the consumer decision-making process (Grandhi et al., 2020).

Data analysis can reveal areas of concern or focus that should inform decision-making. Ignoring or not leveraging data insights can leave a company vulnerable to failure. (Tiffany, 2021). Ineffective decision-making and biases from decision-makers' perceptions are major causes of managerial failure, surpassing lack of expertise in predicting company success, and highlighting the importance of decision-making in business (Grandhi et al., 2020). Reliable and credible data is essential for effective strategy, as it helps identify trends, understand seasonality, and anticipate challenges, providing a solid foundation for success and better decision-making (Tiffany, 2021).

DDM involves gathering and analysing extensive offline and online data to understand consumer behaviour and create personalized marketing strategies. Data analytics is widely recognized as the most effective method for gaining comprehensive insights into current trends and prevailing sentiments (Grandhi et al., 2020). Data serves as a critical part of performance tracking allowing companies to experiment with different marketing strategies and shape the most effective ones that better align with their target customer preferences (Setiasih & Dandono, 2022). According to studies conducted by O'Sullivan, Abela & Hutchinson (2009), the ability to measure marketing performance has a significant impact on a firm's performance and profitability, meaning data analytics should be an integral part of 360-degree digital marketing strategy.

Companies can leverage user-generated data from customer journeys to activate their known audience through data-driven programmatic media. Data can be collected from various digital channels, including websites, emails, and mobile apps, as well as real-world customer feedback, CRM and sales datasets. DDM enables brands to identify loyal customers and

deliver highly personalized communication in real-time, tailored to each customer's moment and actions (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

Today companies face three major data challenges: addressing incorrect or incomplete customer data, integrating data from both physical and digital sources, and leveraging AI-driven modelling to unlock digital intelligence (Drenik, 2022).

3 CONSUMER JOURNEY

The concept of Customer Journey originated in service design and is now widely used in marketing to describe the stages consumers go through when making decisions (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022). As per various authors, the concept of the customer journey typically refers to the process that a customer undergoes to utilize or access a product or service provided by a company. It encompasses the customer-centric nature, involving a series of touchpoints and encompassing all activities and events related to the delivery of the service from the customer's perspective. In essence, the customer journey is seen as a process, path, or sequence through which a customer accesses or uses a service (Følstad & Kvale, 2018). It illustrates how customers experience and perceive a company over time and helps us understand how customer goals, expectations, and behaviours change throughout their interactions with a company (Tueanrat et al., 2021). The growing emphasis on customer experience is given that customers now interact with companies through various touchpoints across different channels, resulting in more complex customer journeys (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

Consumer decision-making in the digital era is complex and has traditionally been influenced by supply perspectives. Social and technological influences, such as eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) and social media, play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour and today's customer journey, reflecting the participatory digital culture. User participation in the customer journey goes beyond purchase to include product usage, care, and repair and should be recognized in consumer behaviour models. Additionally, alternative, and conscious consumption behaviours, such as product care, second-hand purchasing, and renting, should be further integrated into theoretical models. (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

3.1 How Consumer Behaviour Has Changed in a Post-Pandemic World

The world that we live in has drastically changed in the last few years due to digital transformation and the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers have changed their lifestyles, values and how they consume information (Kohli, 2020). New technology has significantly changed purchasing behaviour and raised expectations for real-time messaging, creating always-on, mobile consumers who are continuously on the move. Due to competition for customer attention and the diminishing patience of consumers, companies' messages may

not be received as expected. Nowadays, consumers expect one-click shopping experiences, immediate email confirmations and deliveries (Tiffany, 2021). The new consumer behaviours span all areas of life, from how we work, to how we entertain ourselves and how we shop (Kohli, 2020).

We can notice some key changes that have emerged in consumer behaviour in the post-COVID-19 world, see Table 2. During the pandemic abrupt government lockdowns led to panic buying and revenge buying behaviours among consumers. At the start of post-Covid-19 consumers were showing signs of increased spending, with 51% of consumers reporting a desire to indulge in shopping (McKinsey & Company, n.d.). Consumers engaged in revenge buying activities such as increased travel and purchasing luxury and hedonistic products to improve negative emotions caused by COVID-19. Research has identified psychological factors like scarcity, uncertainty, regret, and anxiety that contribute to panic buying, fuelled by social media. While revenge buying behaviour is driven by negative emotions and the need to improve them through shopping.

As the threat of the pandemic has diminished, and the governments have lifted all restrictions we can see a shift towards delayed or reduced spending due to financial caution. Recent consumption patterns have shown a shift towards more environmentally sustainable consumption, with a 10% increase in consumer spending on pro-environmental products. However, less attention has been given to trends towards reduced consumption and pro-environmental consumption. It is unclear whether these patterns will result in long-term or short-term changes in consumer behaviour (Gupta & Mukherjee, 2022). Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, consumers were already shifting towards online shopping, and the pandemic accelerated this trend which had irreversible effects on consumer behaviour (Gupta & Mukherjee, 2022). Consumers are saving time by shopping online, moving towards a more hybrid lifestyle between the digital and physical worlds (Drenik, 2022). As they have more freedom to choose between online and offline channels. In 2021, 92% of baby boomers are shopping online for a wide range of products, including personal care items, health care products, home goods, and electronics (McKinsey & Company, n.d.).

Research shows that online channels claimed a greater share of retail spending in 2022, with an increase of 8.3% in the number of people purchasing consumer goods online compared to 2021. This includes a rise in mobile purchases, accounting for 59.8% of e-commerce purchases made via mobile phones (Kemp, 2023). Additionally, click-and-collect has become the new normal for retailers and restaurants during the pandemic, with consumers expecting this service in the post-pandemic world (McKinsey & Company, n.d.). Existing research has identified factors such as fear of COVID-19, herd behaviour, and socio-demographic factors that influence online shopping behaviour (Gupta & Mukherjee, 2022).

The stay-at-home economy is rebalancing, and consumers are now eager to spend on dining, entertainment, and travel outside the home. The last key change that has emerged due to the

pandemic is a disruption in brand loyalty, with 75% of consumers in 2021 trying new shopping behaviours driven by convenience and value (McKinsey & Company, n.d.).

This rapid change has impacted various industries, forcing companies to adapt to stay competitive. In this ever-changing world, data intelligence can play a crucial role in helping businesses understand and meet consumer demand. As the post-pandemic world rapidly evolves, consumer behaviours that were once normal for most people, such as grocery shopping, were replaced with overnight delivery services and have since bounced back to the "new normal" with many people adopting a more hybrid approach. Today, business leaders must take a data-driven approach to understand how to react to changing consumer behaviour patterns, connecting the digital and physical world to face adversity and maximize results (Drenik, 2022).

Table 2: Pre-Pandemic vs Post-Pandemic Consumer Behaviour

Consumer Behaviour	Pre-Pandemic Consumer	Post-Pandemic Consumer
Hybrid Lifestyle	Primary physical world focus.	Widespread adoption of hybrid lifestyle.
Online Shopping	Increasing trend	Greater share of retail spends with increased mobile purchases.
Delivery Services	Limited use of online delivery services, especially in online grocery purchase.	Explosive growth in online delivery services, especially grocery delivery.
Click-and-Collect	Not typical service	Expected service from retailers and restaurants.
Panic Buying	Not notable	Emerged during pandemic with psychological factors.
Revenge Buying	Not notable	Increased spending on luxury and hedonistic products.
Reduced Spending	Not notable	Shift towards delayed or reduced spending due to financial caution.
Pro-Environmental Consumption	Less attention given	Increase in consumer spending on pro-environmental products.
Stay-at-Home Economy	Not notable	Rebalancing with increased spending on dining, entertainment, and travel outside the home.
Brand Loyalty	Stable	Disruption in brand loyalty with consumers trying new shopping behaviours driven by convenience and value.

Source: Own work based on (Kemp, 2023); Drenik (2022); McKinsey & Company (n.d.); Gupta & Mukherjee (2022); Kohli (2020); Tiffany (2021).

3.2   Non-Linear Customer Journey

Existing research on customer journeys has mainly focused on understanding the stages of pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase, as well as how customers transition between these stages and their decision-making processes. Recent research indicates that the traditional linear form of the customer journey is evolving due to increasing connectivity. Scholars are now incorporating digital channels, considering cross-channel effects and dynamic interactions between offline and online channels. In spite of these advancements, the customer journey is still primarily structured around pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase activities (Schweidel et al., 2022).

In order to comprehensively grasp consumers shopping behaviour and their interactions with different touchpoints, it is imperative to define and differentiate between the term's customer journey and consumer decision-making. Consumer decision-making models typically outline the general stages that consumers are believed to go through in order to make or refuse purchase decisions (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

There are various consumer decision-making models, to mention a few, see Table 3. One is well known AIDA model, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, and has been widely used in marketing to guide the process of attracting and engaging customers. The stages of the model include grabbing the customer's attention through promotions, building their interest with product benefit communication, creating desire by providing solutions, and ultimately leading them to act and use the service or make the purchase. However, this model has been criticized for being too simplistic and not accounting for the complexities and ever-changing modern consumer behaviour (Edelman, 2010).

Another example of a consumer decision-making model is the Hierarchy of Effects. The Hierarchy of Effects model assumes that consumers first learn from advertising, then form feelings about the product, and finally act. It has been used in advertising for over a century, with different names like the AIDA model, but the model differs from the AIDA model suggesting that consumers go through non-sequential stages of awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. It emphasizes the affective, cognitive and behavioural responses of decision-making (Barry, 2012).

Howard and Sheth's buying behaviour model explains rational brand choice behaviour within the constraints of limited individual capacities and incomplete information. It identifies three stages of decision-making: extensive problem-solving, limited problem-solving, and routinized response behaviour. The model includes four sets of constructs or variables: inputs (stimuli from the environment), perceptual and learning constructs (internal states of the individual that process and interpret stimuli), outputs (observable behavioural outcomes), and exogenous variables (external influences) (Prakash, 2016).

One of the most cited and known consumer buying process models is the five-stage Engel Kollat Blackwell Model consumer decision-making process, which consists of five stages:

need recognition, information searches, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase. It highlights the cognitive efforts consumers go through in making decisions, considering the understood risk involved. However, some decisions may be more impulsive or habitual. While this model provides a holistic view of the customer purchase process, the customer journey model is more relevant in understanding consumer behaviours across different devices, channels, and platforms (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

Table 3: Various consumer decision-making models

Consumer Decision-Making Models	Key Points
AIDA Model	- Sequential stages of attention, interest, desire, and action. - Too simplistic and not accounting for complexities of modern consumer behaviour.
Hierarchy of Effects Model	- Non-sequential stages of awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. - Emphasizes affective, cognitive, and behavioural responses.
Howard Sheth Model	- Three stages: extensive problem solving, limited problem solving, and routinized response behaviour. - Explains rational brand choice behaviour within constraints of limited capacities and incomplete information.
Engel Kollat Blackwell Model	- Five stages: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase. - Highlights cognitive efforts in decision-making.
Customer Journey Model	- Evolving due to increasing connectivity and digital channels. - Considers cross-channel effects and dynamic interactions. - Focuses on understanding consumer behaviour across different devices, channels, and platforms. - Complementary to consumer decision-making models.

Source: Own work based on Barry (2012); Edelman (2010); Hanlon & Tuten (2022); Prakash (2016); Schweidel et al. (2022).

The rise of mobile technologies and social media has made customer journeys a complex journey where customers define their own path. The customer journey concept is relevant in contemporary multi-channel contexts due to its recognition of nonlinear structure, interdependence of actors, and inclusion of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional processes (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

Five Characteristics of Customer Journeys:
- Nonlinearity: Customer journeys are not linear but rather dynamic and can involve online and offline channels and touchpoints. Customers may seek different benefits at different

stages of the journey and have the flexibility to repeat, skip, or analyse each stage of the shopping process according to their preferences and needs.

- Interdependence and integration of actors: Customer journeys extend beyond immediate retail experiences and involve the integration of multiple touchpoints encountered by consumers. This means that each company or actor has less overall control of the customer experience, and the customer journey extends beyond the dyadic customer-provider relationship into the wider service system. This is exemplified by how opinion sharing on social media has simplified decision-making processes for consumers in the digital world.

- Recognition of cognitive, behavioural, and emotional drives: Customer experiences are formed based on perceptions of all moments of contact between the customer and various actors in each customer journey, including affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Customer experiences can vary significantly, even when customers go through similar stages and encounter the same actors in their customer journey. Individual perceptions can lead to different emotional, cognitive, and behavioural outcomes the outcome such as customer satisfaction, advocacy, or product return.

- Representation of social and technological influences: Social influences, such as eWOM, and technological influences, such as the online environment and mood, can impact customer decision-making and behaviours during the customer journey. For example, customers may seek inspiration from friend's social media, taking on roles such as influencers. While, other actors, like retailers, may shift roles and provide services beyond traditional product offerings.

- User participation in the post-purchase customer journey: The customer journey concept goes beyond the conventional start-to-purchase model and highlights the importance of user contribution in the post-purchase phases, including ownership, usage, maintenance, sharing, and long-term care. Additionally, alternative consumption behaviours need to be included in the consumer journey, such as opting for second-hand purchases or renting instead of buying (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

When comparing the consumer decision-making model and the consumer journey model, it becomes clear that they are two separate approaches that are utilized to gain insights into the process through which consumers make their purchasing decisions, see Figure 8.

The consumer decision-making model follows a linear structure and focuses on discrete stages within the consumer's decision-making process, while the consumer journey model has a non-linear structure that considers external touchpoints, the always-on nature of shopping, and the importance of user contribution in post-purchase phases. Additionally, the consumer journey model recognizes that consumers are not always rational and solitary decision-makers, and their decision-making process can be influenced by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural factors, as well as social and technological influences. Combining both models can provide a holistic understanding of consumer behaviour and inform marketing strategies accordingly (Barry, 2012; Edelman, 2010; Hanlon & Tuten, 2022; Prakash, 2016).

Figure 8: Comparison of the Consumer Decision-Making model and the Consumer Journey model

Consumer Decision-Making Model	Customer Journey Model
– Has a linear structure – Lacks external touchpoints – Focus is on discrete customer buying stages – Solitary and rational decision makers	– Has non-linear stages – Actors are interdependent, creating touchpoints – Showcasing always-on nature of shopping – Reflect cognitive, emotional and behavioral drives – Technological and social influences – Highlights the importance of user contribution in the post-purchase phases

Need recognition → Information search & processing → Factor valuation → Decision → Purchase → Purchase evolution

IN STORE · ONLINE · OUT OF STORE

LOCATING · EXPLORING · DREAMING

Source: Own work based on Hanlon & Tuten (2022).

McKinsey & Company conducted empirical research and recommended an alternative loop model for the customer journey, deviating from the traditional linear approach of awareness, purchase, and loyalty. Despite its widespread adoption and referencing by brands and agencies, many companies continue to use the traditional linear approach in a non-linear digital marketing world (Court et al., 2009). This loop model has also inspired other customer journey models, such as Google's ZMOT and The Loop from the Pedowitz Group.

In 2015, McKinsey & Company revised the concept of the consumer decision journey, due to the company's increased investment in new technologies aimed at regaining relevance with customers and shaping their buying decisions, see Figure 9. They have identified four connected capabilities that enable companies to deliver value to customers. Automation streamlines processes to create simple and engaging experiences, such as allowing customers to deposit checks through a mobile app. Proactive personalization uses customer information to customize experiences, from remembering preferences to optimizing the next steps. Contextual interaction delivers relevant interactions based on the customer's journey, such as showing order status on a retail site. Journey innovation extends interactions to new sources of value, such as offering new services based on customer data and insights. Companies that excel, can streamline the buying process and create customer loyalty,

resulting in improved comprehension of the customer journey by companies (Edelman & Singer, 2015).

Figure 9: The new consumer decision journey by McKinsey
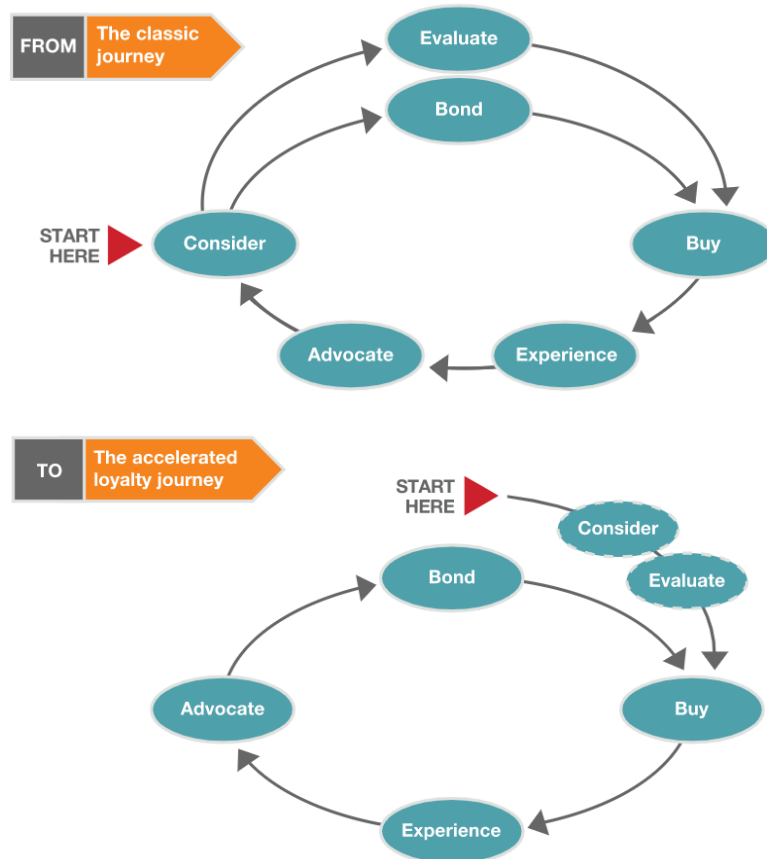
Source: Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik (2009); Edelman & Singer (2015).

As traditional funnels are built from the perspective of sellers and only focus on the customer's journey up to the point of purchase, can lead to a shortage of revenue, strained relationships between marketers and customers, and often overlook existing customers. To address this, a customer-centric infinity Loop model was proposed by the Pedowitz Group, which represents the entire customer experience and extends into the relationship between the customer and the company. The Loop model represents the idea of perpetual, changing, and renewing relationships, as shown in Figure 10.

It has two sides, the right side is the Customer Acquisition side, which highlights customer-centric and customer acquisition actions, which include five stages:

- Unaware: Potential customer is not aware of their needs and companies need to create awareness through brand building, education and storytelling.

- Aware: Potential customer becomes aware of their need and companies need to prioritize creating content and actions that cater to each involved persona.
- Consideration: The customer starts researching and companies need to support them by asking questions about their concerns and how to make the process easier for them.
- Evaluation: The customer is analysing and making definitive decisions, at this stage companies need to focus on helping them with thorough information and presentations.
- Purchase: The customer makes the purchase, and the company needs to provide an excellent buying experience, ensuring customer satisfaction.

And on the left side is the Customer Expansion side, which explores the post-purchase steps, which includes five stages:

- Adoption: The customer starts using the product or service and companies should focus on onboarding and providing support to ensure successful adoption.
- Loyalty: The customer becomes a repeat customer and starts developing loyalty towards our brand, at this stage company needs to build a long-term relationship through rewards, personalized communication, and exceptional customer service.
- Advocacy: The customer becomes an advocate for the company and recommends it to others. The company should leverage their advocacy through testimonials, referrals, and UGC.
- Expansion: The customer may have additional needs; thus, the company needs to focus on identifying and fulfilling those needs.
- Retention: The customer remains loyal and continues to use products or services, therefore companies must focus on retaining their business through ongoing relationship building and customer retention programs (Pedowitz, 2021).

Figure 10: The Loop model by Pedowitz Group

Source: Pedowitz (2021).

3.3 Digital vs Physical Touchpoints During the Consumer Journey

Touchpoints are distinct points of interaction that consumers encounter during their customer journey with the company. They encompass digital touchpoints like websites, social media, email, mobile apps, online advertising, shopping assistants and smartphones or physical touchpoints like physical store visits, phone calls, direct mail and many more (Vannucci & Pantano, 2019).

Hybrid touchpoints are essential in the consumer journey, with digital touchpoints offering accessibility and speed, while physical touchpoints provide tangible experiences and personal connections (Vannucci & Pantano, 2019). The crucial aspect is not only to offer customers multiple touchpoint options but also to ensure a seamless transition as they switch between channels. It's important to understand that customers are not tied to specific channels, but rather seek a cohesive and uninterrupted experience as they progress towards making a purchase (Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Recent studies show an increasing trend in digitizing in-store service with digital touchpoints replacing physical touchpoints. Retailers use digital touchpoints to provide product information, support shopping, and enhance the customer experience (Vannucci & Pantano, 2019). The choice between digital and physical touchpoints depends on the company's objective. For example, e-commerce companies may prioritize digital touchpoints, while luxury retailing may prefer physical touchpoints to provide a premium experience (Schüller et al., 2018). Companies need to integrate both digital and physical touchpoints to create a seamless and consistent consumer journey.

4 COMPONENTS OF 360-DEGREE DIGITAL MARKETING

As digital marketing evolved and became more common in the 2000s, the concept of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy emerged. It is difficult to determine when the phrase 360-degree digital marketing strategy was first mentioned. However, the concept of using numerous touchpoints to effectively engage with the target audience and create a cohesive brand experience has existed for a considerable period. The concept of integrated marketing communications emerged in 1989 to bring together all marketing efforts, e.g., sales promotion, advertising, direct response, and public relations. With the goal of presenting a consistent and clear brand message across all channels for the greatest impact (Kerr, 2008).

4.1 Previous Research on 360-Degree Digital Marketing Strategy

At the time of writing, the search term "360-degree digital marketing" has 11 results and "definition of digital marketing" has 469 results in Google Scholar. While the search term "digital marketing" has approximately 163,000 results. This demonstrates that while there is

an increasing amount of research literature on digital marketing, almost none have defined 360-degree digital marketing or digital marketing.

Looking at the current literature available we cannot find a holistic definition supported by scientific literature on 360-degree digital marketing. But there is some research available on the topic, according to Hossain (2020), 360-degree digital marketing stems from the concept of digital marketing, which involves using internet-based digital technologies, including desktop computers, mobile phones, and other digital platforms, to promote products and services. The 360-degree marketing strategy should refer to a marketing campaign that reaches customers at all possible points of contact. Successfully implementing such a strategy is crucial as it enables businesses to increase their chances of discovering new potential customers and engaging them in a variety of ways.

With the rise in mobile device usage, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for digital marketing. It enables businesses to establish strong relationships with their customers. The literature suggests that 360-degree digital marketing involves various components such as social media, email marketing, video marketing, SEO, and content marketing (Gawali & Shitole, 2022).

Due to a lack of literature on 360-degree digital marketing, it is important to look at other interconnected concepts within the realm of digital marketing, which could be important for developing the definition of 360-degree digital marketing strategies, like 360-degree marketing, full-funnel marketing approach, customer lifetime value, digital data analytics and other digital marketing reviews. To support this research, a literature review encompassing the definition of the 360-degree digital marketing concept and its associated concepts has been presented in Table 4.

The term 360-degree marketing refers to an inclusive marketing approach where the customer is exposed to company messages across various platforms, such as mobile devices, TVs, magazines, and point-of-sale locations. This marketing concept is prevalent and has been driving the marketing profession for several decades (Wolf, 2015). If we connect this to 360-degree digital marketing, it means that you have developed a comprehensive strategy that covers all possible areas, ensuring that there are no loopholes for potential customers to slip through.

If we look into the concept of digital marketing strategies, it includes a range of digital channels and touchpoints to engage with target audiences. These may include content marketing, social media marketing, digital advertising, email marketing, SEO, affiliate marketing, marketing automation, online public relations, inbound marketing, and more (Bala & Verma, 2018). Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) propose that digital marketing should also adopt a channel marketing approach. This approach involves establishing specific goals for each channel and developing a competitive advantage while integrating

the different components into the overall strategy. By adopting this approach, businesses can better target their audience, increase their reach, and achieve their marketing objectives.

360-degree digital marketing should also take into consideration the full-funnel marketing approach, which is designed to generate awareness, drive purchases and boost loyalty. By breaking down the buying process into distinct stages, companies can tailor their marketing strategy for each stage, effectively moving customers from one stage to the next. The funnel begins with a broad consumer market at the top and narrows down to a smaller group of customers at the bottom. (Setiasih & Dandono, 2022).

Marketers can deliver tailored and relevant content that caters to the customer's behaviour, expectations, and needs, therefore creating informed decision-making, building customer trust and enhancing customer lifetime value (Lane, 2022). Enhancing customer lifetime value is a key driver of profitability and growth and it should be part of each digital marketing strategy for brands to thrive in the long term (Dandis et al., 2021).

To create a comprehensive overview of the components that should be considered in 360-degree digital marketing strategy, I have looked at the components of digital marketing, 360-degree marketing, full-funnel marketing approach, customer lifetime value and digital data analytics. By considering these components alongside other crucial elements of marketing strategy, we can obtain a holistic understanding of the different aspects involved in effective 360-degree digital marketing. To visualize this comprehensive overview of components of 360-degree digital marketing, please refer to Figure 11.

Table 4: A literature review of definitions of the 360-Degree Digital Marketing and its interconnected concepts

Author(s)	Year	Concept Category	Definition
Wolf	2015	360-degree marketing	It is a comprehensive marketing approach where the customer is subjected to the company´s messages across different platforms and touchpoints.
Bala & Verma	2018	digital marketing strategies	It encompasses a variety of digital touchpoints to engage with target audiences, which may incorporate SEO, email marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, digital advertising, affiliate marketing, marketing automation, online public relations, inbound marketing and many more.
Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick	2019	digital marketing strategies	It should implement a comprehensive channel marketing approach, this entails setting distinct goals for each channel and cultivating a competitive edge, while integrating various components into the overall strategy.
Hossain	2020	360-degree digital marketing	It comes from the broader concept of digital marketing, which utilization of internet-based digital technologies to promote services and products. The 360-degree digital marketing should refer to a marketing campaign that aims to engage customers at every conceivable touchpoint.
Dandis et al	2021	full funnel marketing approach	Increasing customer lifetime value is the main driver of growth and profitability.
Gawali & Shitole	2022	360-degree digital marketing	It involves various components of digital marketing, including SEO, email marketing, social media, video marketing, content marketing and more.
Setiasih & Dandono	2022	full funnel marketing approach	It aims to create awareness, stimulate purchases, and boost customer loyalty. This is accomplished by tailoring the strategy for each stage of the customer journey, enabling a smooth progression of customers from one stage to the next.
Lane	2022	full funnel marketing approach	With this approach we can provide relevant and personalised content that addresses unique customers' needs, thereby encouraging informed decision-making, cultivating customer trust, and improving the customer's lifetime value.

Source: Own work based on Bala & Verma (2018); Dandis et al. (2021); Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019); Gawali & Hossain (2020); Lane (2022); Setiasih & Dandono (2022); Shitole (2022); Wolf (2015).

Figure 11: Components of 360-degree digital marketing

Source: Own work.

4.2   Search Engine Optimization

Search marketing is experiencing significant growth beyond social media advertising. Advertisers have increased their spending on search ads by 7% at the end of 2022, compared to the same period in 2021. Moreover, the number of search ad impressions served at the end of 2022 has surged by over 30% compared to the previous quarter (Kemp, 2023).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), is the practice of optimizing a website to achieve a higher ranking in search engine results pages, resulting in increased organic traffic to the website. SEO can be applied to various channels, such as websites to improve their visibility and attract more visitors from search engines (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). This is usually measured by page rank and appearance on the first few pages of search engine results. It involves strategies and techniques, both technical and content-related, that require expertise and ongoing optimization (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). Investing in SEO involves addressing technical aspects like content, spidering, query matching, indexing, and interpreting non-text content on websites. It is a cost-effective marketing strategy that can drive organic traffic to the company (Bala & Verma, 2018). Research indicated that websites claiming first positions in search results receive a higher number of visits due to instilling more user confidence (Palos-Sanchez & Correia, 2018).

4.3   Social Media Marketing

The increasing prevalence of mobile devices has made social media a powerful platform for digital marketing, allowing businesses to cultivate strong customer relationships (Gawali & Shitole, 2022). Social media marketing is a cost-effective digital marketing tool that offers advantages such as increased brand visibility, targeted traffic, eWOM, SEO and lead generation (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). It can be effective for branding and driving sales. (Bala & Verma, 2018). Social media marketing channels include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Google+ (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019), TikTok, YouTube, Reddit, WhatsApp etc.

These platforms have experienced significant growth during COVID-19 lockdowns, with global user totals increasing by almost 30% since the pandemic began, equivalent to over 1 billion new users in the past three years. Social media usage has reached record levels, with the average working-age internet user spending over 2.5 hours per day on social platforms, while TikTok has experienced significant growth in users spending an average of 23.5 hours per month on the app in 2022. Social media has now surpassed traditional TV in terms of daily usage, with platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok leading the way. These platforms are reshaping how we consume information, entertainment, and influencing our worldview (Kemp, 2023).

Social media analytics deliver valuable competition and customer insights. It involves strategies like content marketing (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). As good quality content is king, sharing good content and customizing it for each social media platform to engage with users ideally more than four times per day is key (Bala & Verma, 2018). With community building, we build relationships and foster meaningful interactions (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

4.4   Online Public Relations

Online Public Relations (online PR) involves obtaining earned coverage on digital publications, blogs, and other content-based websites, like traditional PR but in the online realm. To optimize your PR efforts, you can utilize channels such as reaching out to reporters via social media, responding to online reviews of your company, and engaging with comments on your personal website or blog (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

The goal of online PR is to effectively engage organizational stakeholders using digital tools, including content marketing and social media (commonly known as social media relations). Additionally, there are specialized marketing automation solutions that can be employed in online PR processes. Content formats that may be utilized include blogs, media statements, dedicated landing pages, and newsletters (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

Public Relations (PR) is a crucial component of modern marketing that companies cannot afford to overlook, as it can impact customer retention. While it may be challenging to measure the exact impact of PR compared to internet advertising, well-executed PR efforts always yield benefits. Online PR offers advantages over traditional PR due to the potential for rapid and interactive communication on the internet. Companies engaged in online business can enhance their PR by publishing articles in online PR catalogues, press releases in online media, sharing videos or music with commercial messages, or participating in relevant discussion forums (Bala & Verma, 2018).

4.5   Content Marketing and User Generated Content

Content marketing is recognized as a potent strategy for building a brand, fostering customer trust and loyalty, and generating targeted leads through valuable content (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). Channels like blogs, eBooks, whitepapers, infographics, and online brochures can be part of a content marketing strategy. For example, a product brochure distributed offline is also a form of content, but it is challenging to measure its effectiveness as we cannot determine how many people engaged with it. (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

Content can be presented in various formats, such as blogs, whitepapers, e-books, case studies, how-to guides, forums, images, podcasts, webinars (Bala & Verma, 2018), videos, online events (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021), infographics, online brochures and many more (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). Recent changes in Google's algorithms highlight the significance of content in search results. Creating creative content on any topic and indirectly linking it to your business can be effective. Customizing content for different platforms, such as mobile phones, is crucial (Bala & Verma, 2018).

User-generated content (UGC) plays a significant role in content marketing, leveraging the power of user-generated content to engage with audiences, create eWOM, build trust, and drive brand awareness. With the rise of intelligent web services, users now can actively contribute to content creation and interact with other users. UGC is characterized by a degree of personal contribution, where users add creative effort rather than just passively consuming, receiving or forwarding content. This can include activities such as commenting on online, researching and preparing information on platforms, and uploading comments, images, audio and videos. Furthermore, UGC must be published to a specific group or the public to allow wider engagement and discussion. This criterion ensures that UGC is shareable and allows for broader participation and interaction among users. UGC reflects content creation by non-professionals, contributing to a more diverse and democratized media landscape (Naab & Sehl, 2017). Literature suggests that UGC has a more far-reaching effect on consumer trust and behaviour than content or information created by platforms (Zloteanu et al., 2018).

4.6   Email Marketing

Email marketing is a strategy of sending commercial messages via email to potential customers (Bala & Verma, 2018). Companies usually use email marketing as a way of communicating with their audiences. It is often used to promote content, promotions and events, as well as to direct people toward the company's website (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

Email marketing involves using software to maintain segmented email lists based on customer preferences and behaviours. Personalized emails can help build trust. However, it is important to be mindful of anti-spam laws (Bala & Verma, 2018). Email marketing, despite being one of the oldest and most cost-effective marketing channels with high response rates, has experienced a decline in recent years due to consumers ignoring email campaigns and the negative impact of aggressive email tactics such as spam on an organization's reputation (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

4.7   Digital Advertising

Global digital advertising spending has increased by 27.7% since 2019, growing from 57.4% to 73.3% in 2022, indicating a significant shift to digital due to the effect of COVID-19. Social media platforms have benefited the most since the COVID-19 outbreak, as spending on social media ads has more than doubled, reaching 226 billion $ in 2022 (Kemp, 2023).

4.7.1   Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is a form of performance-based advertising where an affiliate partner earns a commission for promoting products or services on the company's website or generating leads (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). Publishers offer advertising space on their websites to promote companies and compensation is based on an agreed-upon model (Bala & Verma, 2018). This can be done through various channels, such as posting affiliate links on social media accounts or YouTube channels. Essentially, an affiliate partner earns a commission for driving traffic and sales of other companies through promotional efforts on social media platforms or websites (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). For startups, this type of marketing is particularly advantageous, as it can increase traffic to their company through already-known websites. It's a mutually advantageous agreement for sellers and publishers, with examples like eBay, Amazon, LinkShare and many more (Bala & Verma, 2018).

4.7.2   Influencer and Content Creator Marketing

Influencer marketing is an effective branding strategy that targets consumers who engage with brands on social media (Jin et al., 2019), to leverage their distinct assets to promote the company, with the objective to improve the company's performance. It has become a

worldwide phenomenon, becoming a key component of the company's marketing strategies. In 2021, the estimated spend on influencer marketing was forecasted to reach 13.8 billion dollars (Leung et al., 2022). Influencers can be more effective in reaching consumers compared to traditional celebrity endorsement. Social media platforms provide opportunities for self-branding, as influencers with millions of followers are not necessarily part of the professional entertainment industry. This trend encourages users to post more content on Instagram with the hope of gaining influence and popularity (Jin et al., 2019). As organic reach is decreasing on social media, companies use Influencer marketing to maximize reach potential, foster close community feeling, and increase authenticity and credibility.

4.7.3 Search Engine Advertising and Pay-Per-Click

Search Engine Advertising (SEA) is often considered a part of Search Engine Marketing (SEM), which encompasses both SEA and SEO. SEA is a crucial tool for building brand awareness and driving website traffic. It primarily consists of text-based online ads that are displayed to users based on keywords and other criteria matching their search queries on a search engine. Due to its many targeting options, SEA is a popular digital marketing tool. Some authors also refer to it as paid search or pay-per-click (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

Pay-per-click (PPC) is a pricing model in digital advertising that involves paying a publisher each time your ad is clicked, driving traffic to your website. One popular platform for PPC is Google AdWords, where you can bid for top positions on Google's search engine results pages and pay for clicks on the links you place. Other channels where PPC can be utilized include on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and LinkedIn. With PPC, advertisers have control over their budget and can target specific keywords, demographics, and interests to reach their desired audience (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

4.7.4 Display and Programmatic Advertising

Display advertising is a common and cost-effective digital marketing channel that uses visual ads to drive user engagement and promote marketing messages. They offer an interactive channel between advertisers and consumers. Newer forms of online advertising include video marketing and games (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). It goes under the umbrella of SEM, where you can leverage various display advertising formats like banners, images, text or video ads to reach the company's target audience. They are designed for brand awareness and conversion, encouraging users to click on the ad. However, it's worth noting that digital display advertising can come with higher costs and may require specialized expertise to achieve a favourable return on investment (Bala & Verma, 2018).

Programmatic advertising is a rapidly growing and technology-driven system that enables real-time and cost-effective distribution of targeted marketing materials via the internet. It has become one of the crucial communication tools for consumer-centric companies,

especially in retail. By utilizing data from web user's digital footprint companies are able to identify and deliver ads to specific customers. It has changed the traditional advertising world by replacing mass communication advertising with personalized online ads, resulting in cost-effectiveness and improved targeting, providing companies with a distinct competitive advantage (Samuel et al., 2021).

4.7.5   Remarketing

Remarketing enables marketers to display tailored ads to specific audiences, which are categorized based on their previous visits, search behaviours or interests. It helps marketers re-engage with these audiences by showing them relevant ads as they continue to browse the internet. This targeted approach increases the chances of conversion as the ads are shown to users who have already shown an interest in the products or services. It can be a highly effective tactic in digital marketing, helping marketers reach their intended audience and drive more conversions (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

4.7.6   Native Advertising

Native advertising refers to a type of advertising where the content of the ad is designed to blend seamlessly with the non-paid content of the platform on which it is featured. This means that native ads are created in a way that makes them look like they belong and are not disruptive to the overall user experience. Additionally, many people also consider social media advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to be native, as the ads are designed to appear seamlessly within users social media feeds. Native advertising can be more engaging and less intrusive compared to traditional display ads, and it allows brands to connect with their target audience in a more organic and authentic way. (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

4.7.7   Video Advertising

Video advertising utilizes video content to promote businesses and is considered one of the most effective methods of advertising due to the ease of recall for moving images compared to static images or text. The first five seconds of a video are crucial, due to the skippable ad option. Successful video ads often tell a compelling story and capture viewer attention in the first few seconds without relying on aggressive selling tactics. Advancements in technologies like Smart TVs and virtual reality offer new opportunities for video ad placements. When measuring the success of brand awareness campaigns, key performance indicators (KPIs) often include impressions, unique views, and ad viewability (Adobe, 2021).

4.7.8   Viral Marketing

Viral marketing, also known as viral advertising, is a marketing strategy that capitalizes on word-of-mouth marketing and leverages the user's personal social media network or email list to share a brand's message with the aim of creating hype. This marketing approach often involves creating compelling content in various formats such as images, text, or videos, with video being recommended by some experts due to its narrative capabilities (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021). The goal of viral marketing is to encourage users to share the content with their own networks, leading to exponential growth. Viral marketing relies on the power of social sharing and can be a relatively inexpensive and highly efficient way to raise brand awareness and increase engagement (Bala & Verma, 2018).

4.8   Website Marketing

Website is a vital digital tool that promotes companies and attracts customers by enabling customer interaction and communication, information distribution, sales generation, brand building and customer service. Onsite marketing involves optimizing the company's website to drive traffic and achieve digital marketing goals (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021).

Web analytics is a critical component of it, as it involves collecting, measuring, analysing, reporting and understanding the web activities of companies. It goes beyond basic reporting and provides in-depth insights on customers to make informed decisions. It is essential for advertisers to leverage web analytics to gain a comprehensive understanding of their business and enhance ROI. A very popular web analytics tool is Google Analytics (Bala & Verma, 2018).

4.9   Website and Mobile Optimization

On average, mobile users spend more than 5 hours per day on their phones, with a year-on-year increase of 2.4%. This amounts to around 30% of waking hours if they have 7-8 hours of sleep per day. If this trend persists globally, it will accumulate to a staggering 10 trillion hours per year. Ownership of tablets and laptops has been declining, indicating that mobile usage will continue to increase in 2023 (Kemp, 2023).

You can see the exact number of people who have viewed your website's homepage in real-time by using digital analytics software, available in marketing platforms like Hub Spot. Additionally, how many pages they visited, what device they were using, and where they came from, amongst other digital analytics data. This intelligence helps you to prioritize which marketing channels to spend more or less time on, based on the number of people those channels are driving to your website. For example, if only 10% of your traffic is coming from organic search, you know that you probably need to spend some time on SEO to increase that percentage (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

4.10 Marketing Automation

Marketing automation refers to the software that serves to automate basic marketing operations. Many marketing departments automate repetitive tasks, which they would otherwise do manually, such as contact list updating, email newsletters, social media post scheduling, lead workflows, campaign tracking and reporting (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

Marketing automation, driven by artificial intelligence and data, is a key component of digital marketing transformation. It involves using software systems that automate marketing tasks, such as lead management, personalized communication and customer profiling. These systems are typically offered by vendors on a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) pricing model and can be integrated with other marketing technologies. The marketing automation sector is estimated to be worth over 25 billion by 2023 and includes technology giants as well as independent firms (Hanlon & Tuten, 2022).

4.11 Customer Relationship Management

Companies prioritize building long-lasting customer relationships for market stability, using a concept called customer relationship management (CRM) (Meena & Sahu, 2021). It is described as a combination of technology and company processes to understand target customer, by looking into who they are, how they behave and what their preferences are (Onut et al., 2008) CRM is a critical area of research, evolving into a key ingredient for a company's success. It strengthens customer relationships, reduces costs, and boosts productivity and profitability. However, the failure rate of CRM projects is over 50-55% due to deficiencies in current methodologies that lack integration of CRM's strategic and technological aspects (Meena & Sahu, 2021).

4.12 Augmented, Virtual Reality Marketing and Metaverse

The metaverse refers to an augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) realm that goes beyond the boundaries of the physical world. It can be accessed through various devices such as AR devices, computers, game consoles, tablets, or mobile phones, providing users with immersive digital experiences beyond the confines of the physical realm (Kemec, 2022).

The term "metaverse" was coined by Neal Stephenson, he describes the metaverse as a vast virtual universe that exists parallel to the real world. It has gained significant attention due to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's recent announcement to rebrand the company as Meta (Joshua, 2017).

Metaverse represents an evolved form of online gaming, with a heightened connection between reality and virtuality. In the metaverse, users have greater freedom to participate and create their own stories, as opposed to traditional online games that follow predefined

narratives such as role-playing and drama (Han et al., 2021). The Metaverse concept envisions a dynamic environment where digital users interact with each other socially and economically within immersive 3D virtual worlds and online communities. This concept bridges the gap between the physical and virtual realms through meta store transformations, creating a seamless connection between real-world spaces and virtual spaces (Lee, 2021).

4.13   Artificial Intelligence-Powered Marketing

Artificial Intelligence-powered marketing uses artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to automate tasks, write copy, analyse data, personalize content, optimize campaigns, translate and create better customer experiences and drive more efficient digital marketing strategies. The implementation of AI in marketing offers various benefits. One is creating better insights, as AI algorithms can analyse large amounts of data to identify patterns, trends, and customer behaviours that may not be apparent to human marketers. Additionally, it can improve ROI by leveraging AI-powered analytics and predictive modelling, businesses can optimize their marketing campaigns for better ROI, as it can help identify the most effective channels, messages, and targeting strategies to maximize marketing effectiveness and minimize wasted resources. It can create personalized content, as AI can analyse customer data to create highly personalized and relevant content for individual customers, enhancing their experience and increasing engagement. AI can provide instant responses and faster response times, due to AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants. Another advantage of AI is higher sales rates, it can analyse customer data to identify potential upsell opportunities and enable companies to offer personalized promotions. Additionally, it increased efficiency, as it automates repetitive marketing tasks, such as content creation, data analysis and campaign optimization. Lastly, it enhances productivity and improves data (Diamond, 2023).

4.14   Data and Analytics Driven Marketing

Companies can leverage data generated by users throughout their customer journey to activate their known audience through data-driven programmatic media buying, without compromising customer privacy. This data can be collected from various digital channels, such as emails, websites, and apps, as well as from real-world customer interactions in stores and CRM. Data-driven marketing (DDM) enables brands to identify their loyal customers within their audience and deliver personalized communication in real time that is highly relevant to each customer's moment and actions (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

5   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Despite the growing popularity of digital marketing, there remains a neglected area in the literature concerning a holistic and customer-centric definition of 360-degree digital

marketing. This would encompass the concepts and create a comprehensive understanding of the term. A major challenge faced in this field is the under-researched area of clear guidelines or best practices for implementing and measuring the effectiveness of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy. This is why a comprehensive research design was needed.

5.1　Research Design and Approach

Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the definition and development of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy that leverages key touchpoints to significantly drive brand awareness and sales. Building on the authors insights into the various components of a 360-degree digital strategy and digital strategy, the first objective is to define the concept and create a comprehensive overview of its components, while identifying the most effective strategies and tactics for creating a cohesive and engaging customer experience that drives brand awareness and sales. The second objective is to provide actionable insights and recommendations to help marketers develop effective and holistic digital marketing strategies that drive profitability and growth. Integrating the gained insights into the development of a comprehensive 360-degree digital marketing strategy for Authentic Beauty Concept, to enable the brand to effectively connect with its target audience, delivering consistent messaging across all channels, at the right place and time. The research design is visualised in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Research design
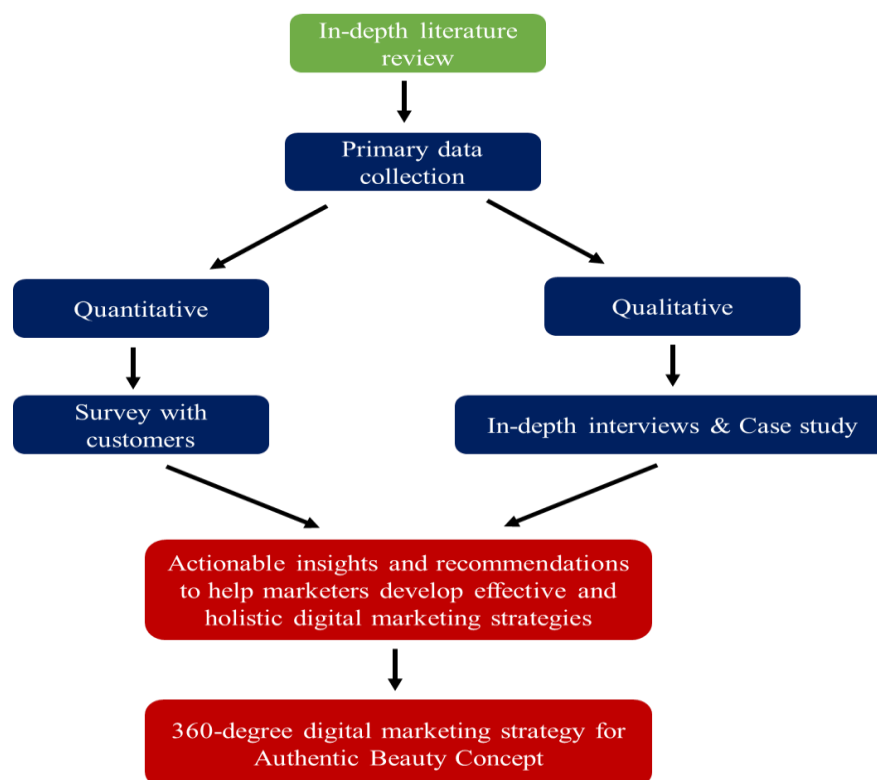
Source: Own work.

5.2 Main Research Questions

The research will be guided by the following key research questions:

- What is the importance of 360-degree digital marketing strategy and its key components and touchpoints?
- What are the most effective digital touchpoints to include in a 360-degree digital marketing strategy and how should they be integrated for optimal performance?

These research questions will be supported by supporting research questions and hypotheses adapting to the primary data collection method, to allow for more comprehensive and in-depth research, these questions are developed more in detail in the methodology section.

Ever-changing technology has created a new mobile customer with new buying habits, seeking quick, real-time information and digital experiences. Amidst fierce competition, company messages might not land as intended (Tiffany, 2021). As quick transformations create considerable consequences for companies, it is crucial for businesses to recognise the importance of the digital landscape, to allow them sustainable growth (Kohli, 2020). To confirm new customer habits and indicate relevancy for a strong online presence and comprehensive digital strategy, the below hypothesis will be tested.

H_1: Consumers frequently conduct online research before purchasing products.

When researching the concept of digital marketing strategies, commonly mentioned touchpoints were social media marketing, content marketing, digital advertising, affiliate marketing, email marketing, website marketing, SEO, marketing automation, online public relations (Bala & Verma, 2018) and many more. It is important to determine specific goals for each touchpoint and leverage competitive advantage while integrating the different components into the overall strategy (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to understand where to focus your efforts and which are the key touchpoints that should be part of every digital strategy to better target, growth reach, and achieve company goals.

H_2: Digital touchpoints like social media, digital advertisement, influencer marketing and online reviews play relevant roles in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

5.3 Methodology

To begin with, secondary data was collected through an in-depth literature review of published literature, scientific papers, and articles, followed by a synthesis of the main findings. This part was analysed using descriptive methods to bring together different authors in the fields of traditional marketing, digital marketing, and customer behaviour.

The central focus of the study contains primary data collection using both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. I have designed a case study aimed at testing various components of the current digital marketing strategy employed by Authentic Beauty Concept and conducted in-depth interviews with Henkel employees and an online questionnaire with customers. By using these techniques, I have gained valuable insights from the company, customers and marketing professionals, which led to a more balanced and accurate analysis of the data.

First, I conducted a case study. According to Piekkari et al. (2009), the case study method is a research strategy that involves examining a concept in its real-world setting. This method is helpful in identifying concepts and explaining how different methods and causes fit together. One of the advantages of this method is that it allows researchers to study complex, real-life situations in their natural settings, providing them with rich and detailed data that enhance their understanding of the concept under study. However, it should be noted that the case study method also has some limitations, such as potential subjectivity in data analysis and difficulties in ensuring reliability. This method is best suited for exploratory research questions and theory development. Therefore, it is appropriate to use this method to define the concept of 360-degree digital marketing. To achieve this goal, I have analysed data from a variety of sources, including Google Analytics, META Ad Manager, Instagram Insights and the cloud-based customer experience platform Sprinklr. Specifically, I focused on identifying which channels and touchpoints of the current digital marketing strategy for Authentic Beauty Concept are successful and measurable and should be included in a future 360-degree digital marketing strategy.

Secondly, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 9 Henkel employees from different departments and levels. From my experience as a digital manager, I found that there is a lack of consistent goals and effective communication in many departments. This observation underlines the importance of consistent massing and strategy across the different consumer touchpoints. Since employees' goals and visions for the brand should be in line with the brand's goals and visions, I realised the importance of conducting interviews with employees from different levels and departments. This approach recognises that people within the organisation have valuable knowledge about the topic. Instead of coming up with preconceived theories, I focused on the perspectives of Henkel employees. The goal was to identify new concepts, not to confirm existing ones. By conducting semi-structured interviews, I was able to gain valuable insights into the concept from the perspective of those with first-hand experience. This method allowed me to capture both retrospective descriptions of the past and real-time descriptions of current experiences by using a general set of questions that provides flexibility and adaptability to explore new ideas that may emerge during the interview (Gioia et al., 2013). The questions from the in-depth interview with Henkel employees can be found in Appendix 2. I was particularly interested in:

− How do departments collaborate?
− What is the employees' perspective on the brand and its future?

- What do they believe are the current strengths and weaknesses of the digital strategy and how could it be more efficient?
- What do they see as the most important touchpoints of digital strategy?
- How do they currently measure the success of digital marketing efforts?

Thirdly, to gain a better understanding of customer behaviour and digital journey, I have analysed data collected from the questionnaire with 139 respondents from different age groups, backgrounds, and counties. Online questionnaires offer several advantages, such as simplicity in administration, consistency in data obtained due to limited response options, higher quality, speed, and affordability. They also eliminate interviewer bias and error and provide access to a larger sample that may be otherwise difficult to reach. Additionally, respondents have the time to provide thoughtful answers. However, online surveys may have validity issues due to sample selection, lack of interviewer quality control and poor survey design, which may lead to lower response rates (Kumar et al., 2018). In my research, I have used online questionnaires with multiple choice, open-ended questions, and close-ended questions, including a Likert Scale to gain nuanced insights into customers' perceptions and attitudes. The questionnaire was designed with the aim of identifying a distinct and cohesive cluster of consumers for hair products, the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3. I will be particularly interested in:

- Do respondents buy premium hair products, and if so, where?
- Where do consumers conduct research before buying hair care products?
- Do customers use social media to interact with hair care brands?
- Which digital touchpoints do customers engage with and which lead to conversion?
- What kind of digital content do customers like to interact with?
- How do customers see Authentic Beauty Concept and what is their digital experience with the brand?

5.4 Qualitative Research: A Case Study

The first qualitative research method I used was a case study. The case study presents an analysis of the current digital strategy implemented by Authentic Beauty Concept, a premium professional vegan hair care and styling brand. Supporting insights from employee interviews to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the brand's current digital approach. I delved deeper into specific aspects of the digital strategy, such as website activity, social media marketing, content marketing, influencer marketing, digital advertising, and which components of 360-degree strategy are currently missing.

5.4.1 Data Collection

In the data collection process, I have analysed data from various sources, including Authentic Beauty Concept´s current digital marketing dossier, the brand's website, social media

channels, META Business Suite, Google Analytics, Sprinklr cloud-based customer experience platform and META Insights. To help identify which touchpoints and channels of the current digital marketing strategy for Authentic Beauty Concept are successful, measurable, and should be included in a future 360-degree digital marketing strategy.

5.4.2 Findings

Brand and Company Background

Henkel was founded in 1876 by Fritz Henkel in Germany. The company started with laundry detergent production. Building on over 146 years of legacy, Henkel pioneers' innovation for a better future, creating sustainable brands and technologies globally. With a portfolio spanning industrial and consumer sectors, Henkel excels in hair care, adhesives, laundry detergents, coatings, and sealants. With the recent merger, Henkel restructured itself into two business units, Adhesive Technology and Consumer Brands, which is a multi-category platform that covers laundry, home care, and hair care (Henkel, 2023).

In 1947, TheraChemie introduced Poly Color liquid hair colorants to the market. In 1950, Henkel made its entry into the cosmetics industry by acquiring TheraChemie. Since then, Henkel broadened its hair care portfolio to encompass shampoos, conditioners, styling products, and more, establishing itself as a significant industry player. The hair care category under Henkel extends to both professional haircare and consumer goods. The pivotal acquisition of Schwarzkopf in 1995, cemented Henkel's global prominence in the hair category (Henkel, 2016).

In 2019, Authentic Beauty Concept was born, reflecting Henkel's commitment to holistic, vegan premium hair care and styling. The brand was a collaboration co-created with hair professionals and was inspired by hairdressers, artisans and in general people who share the same values. Authentic Beauty Concept is an advocate for purity and simplicity, carefully selected ingredients, vegan formulas, honesty, sustainability, and the enhancement of natural beauty. This haircare philosophy fosters authenticity, integrity, and embodies a holistic approach to personal care (Professional Beauty, n.d.).

"It´s not just another brand, but a movement creating a new culture of beauty. It´s a community. Professional vegan hair care and styling, sustainable storytelling. The brand is about authentic beauty with character, effortless just like the modern women of today." – Interviewee A

Website

When looking into website activity, I first looked at the strategic approach the brand currently uses and looked at metrics available in Google Analytics, focusing on traffic, new

users, page views, bounce rates, duration, and user engagement. This can offer valuable perspectives on the effectiveness of the digital strategy in facilitating online interactions.

The brand sees the website as a content hub for all relevant brands, products, educational information, and local news. Brand's website is structured into a global website, 20 countries websites, 2 conversion websites in the United States and Japan, 2 smaller microsites with only one page and a Salon Finder tool, and a newly launched direct to consumer (D2C) platform in Poland. Looking at the global website, navigation is well organized, allowing seamless customer navigation and information retrieval. However, an abundance of content and pages experience minimal traffic. Brand values are clearly visible already in navigation, which are community, mindful experience, sustainability, authentic hair, products, and education. The website focuses on brand awareness and being a source of information. It is packed with easy-to-read and unique texts, product descriptions include relevant keywords, which help with the SEO ranking. Additionally, it has some conversion features, like Salon Finder, where you can find the salons near you. Some local websites, like Germany and Canada, have a Buy Now button, which connects them to an e-commerce partner website. Pages load swiftly, and its full responsiveness ensures seamless adaptation to diverse devices and screen sizes, thereby significantly enhancing the user experience. It is optimized for mobile, but you can see that some additional optimization would be needed in the navigation, like the size of images and videos. The layout is clean with enough white space for easy reading comprehension, but some parts have too much white space. The colour scheme is consistent with the brand colours, in nice pastels. Regarding typography the font is consistent, and headlines are appropriately sized. The product pages have detailed descriptions, mentioning the key benefits and high-quality images, but more engaging video content is missing. All product pages have call-to-action with a Buy Now button or redirect to a Salon Finder.

Based on Google Analytics data, spanning from 1st of January 2023 to 1st of July 2023, I discovered that the most of website visits originate from United States (30%), France (8%), Spain (5%), Canada (5%), Germany (5%), Netherlands (5%), United Kingdom (5%), Brazil (4%), Argentina (3%) and Japan (3%).

In the mentioned timeframe websites received 492,916 pageviews, and 109,865 users, leading to an average of 4,542 users per week out of which 83.6% were new users. The average session duration of the user is 2 minutes and 15 seconds, with a bounce rate of 31%, telling us that users come to quickly consume specific content and engage with multiple pages and products. The most visited pages are the home page, the Salon Finder page, and the product detail pages. The majority of users access the website through organic search, accounting for 60.3%, while others arrive via direct links (19.2%), referrals (14%) and social media (5.8%), as presented in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Primary traffic sources to the Authentic Beauty Concept website

5.8% **1%**
14%
19.2% **60.3%**

■ Organic Search ■ Direct ■ Referral ■ Social ■ Other
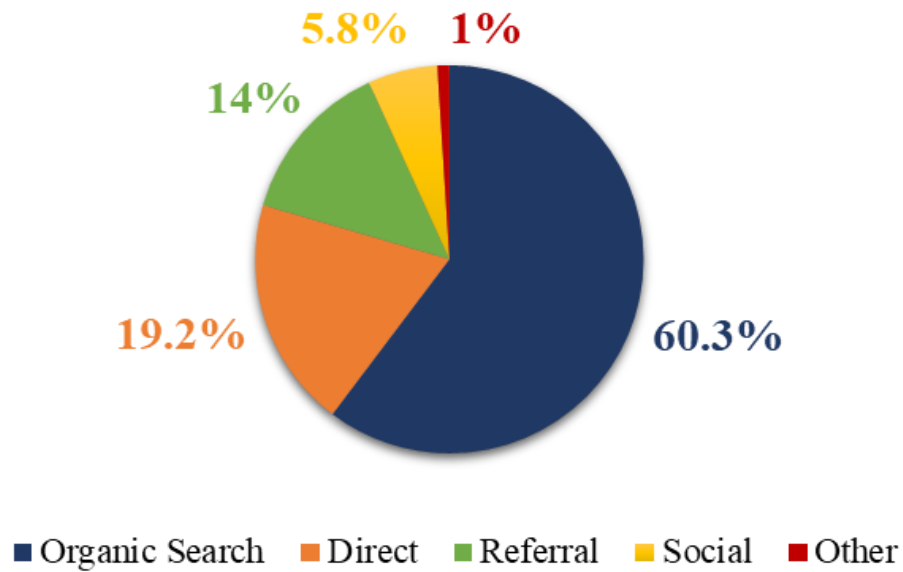
Source: Own work.

As you can see in the Figure 14, the predominant share of website traffic originates from mobile (75.5%), followed by desktop (23.5%) and tablets (1%).

Figure 14: Device distribution of the Authentic Beauty Concept website traffic

1%
23.5%

75.5%

■ Mobile ■ Desktop ■ Tablet
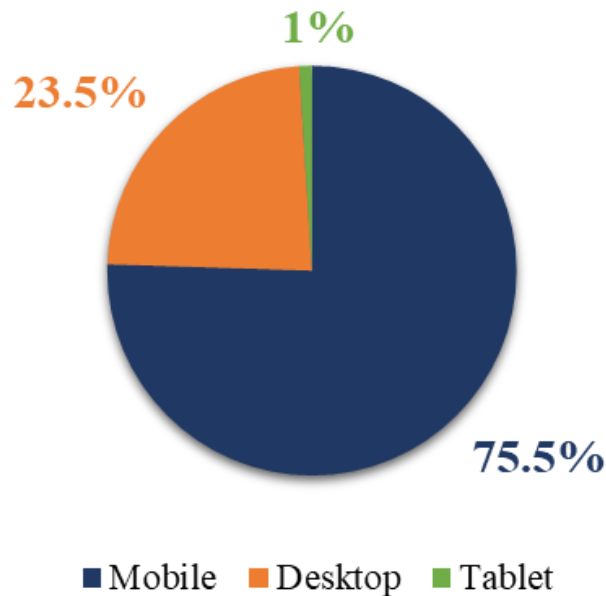
Source: Own work.

When it comes to media campaigns linking to the website, the campaign cannot be properly tracked as UTM parameters or META pixels are not fully set up, meaning the customer journey on the website is not being tracked.

Social Media Marketing

When examining social media platforms, my initial focus was on which platforms the brand has and what is their channel strategy. I investigated the followership demographics of Instagram to gain a deeper understanding of their characteristics, preferences and behaviours, particularly focusing on how these factors influence their engagement with the brand's content. Looking into performance metrics of the channel, like reach, follower growth, engagement rate, sentiment of channels, and hashtag analysis to assess their effectiveness in engaging with the target audience and creating brand awareness.

Authentic Beauty Concept is present on different social media channels, like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Pinterest. The brand is not leveraging TikTok yet. The primary focus of the brand's digital strategy is Instagram, driven by its strong alignment with the target demographic and being a visually driven platform.

Instagram is also the strongest community the brand has on social media with more than 80,000 followers on a global channel and an engagement rate of 2.1%. Between January 1st and July 1st, the follower count rose by 27.7%, as shown in Figure 15, gaining 48,800 likes and reaching an impressive 50.5 million users organically. With the growth of followers on Instagram, there is also a noticeable decrease in engagement rate, as the channel becomes bigger the brand should strategically focus more on reach than engagement. Organic reach is high due to the strong community approach for the brand, two-sided conversations, leveraging new celebrity faces and trending formats, showing in strong focus on vertical video.

Figure 15: Follower growth of Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram channel
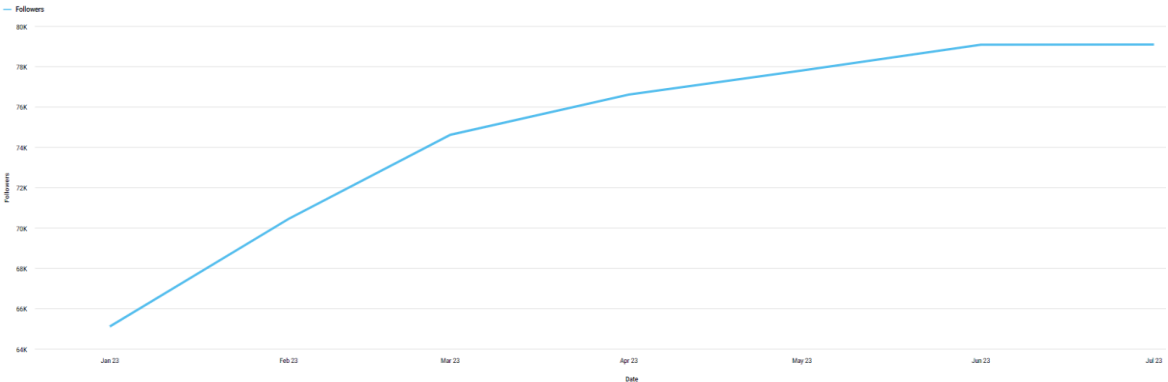
Source: Sprinklr (2023).

As mentioned by employees there is quite a strong complexity of the Instagram channel, as the brand has 24 local Instagram accounts, most of which are under 10,000 followers and gained below 1,000 followers in half a year, as shown in Table 5. Most accounts are using more than 80% of global content that is available on the global channel.

Table 5: Instagram follower growth of Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram accounts

Account	Instagram followers (1.1.)	Instagram followers (1.7.)	Follower growth
Global	62.3K	80K	14 709
Brazil	25.6K	39.6K	13 950
United States	35.7K	38.2K	2 430
Argentina	21.6K	23.5K	1 933
Japan	16.3K	17K	495
France	12.1K	16.3K	4 164
Spain	14.4K	14.8K	410
Colombia	9.7K	11.3K	1 599
Poland	9.1K	9.5K	436
Germany, Switzerland, Austria	8.4K	8.7K	312
United Kingdom	7.7K	8.2K	533
Mexico	5.6K	7.2K	1 662
Croatia	6K	6.4K	448
The Netherlands	5.7K	5.9K	214
Czech Republic and Slovakia	5.1K	5.7K	515
South Afrika	5.3K	5.5K	155
Tukey	5.5K	5.5K	-53
Canada	4.3K	5.3K	1 010
Hungary	4.5K	4.7K	276
Portugal	3.7K	4.1K	390
Greece	3.9K	4K	88
Belgium	3.4K	3.5K	141
Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman	1.9K	2.3K	400
Finland	1.5K	1.5K	37
Spain education	1.1K	1.2K	65

☐ Number of followers bellow 10 000 followers ■ Follower growth below 1 000 followers

Source: Own work.

Based on employees' insights, the target group of Authentic Beauty Concept are hairdressers and end consumers. The end consumer target group is focused on women between the ages of 25-44, who value a premium lifestyle, performance and are conclusion consumers. Looking into Instagram audience insights into the Authentic Beauty Concept in Figure 16, we can see that the channel is targeting and communicating to the correct target group.

Figure 16: Audience insights of Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram channel
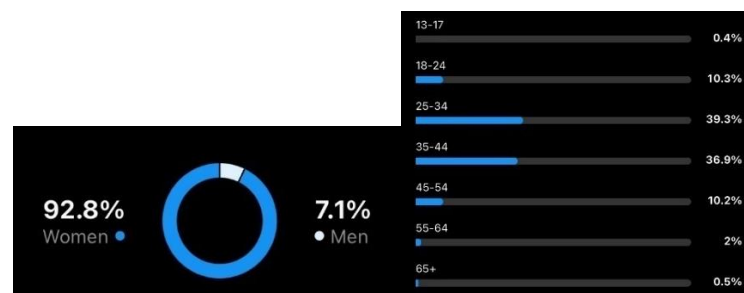
Source: Instagram (2023).

Facebook is used mostly for target ads, as organic content is the same as on Instagram. With no additional investment into the channel, the community is quite small with only 8 350 page likes and steady growth of 3% between January 1st and July 1st. Additionally to the global channel, there are also 24 local Facebook pages, with even fewer page likes and growth lower than 1%. The brand is still using Facebook, as the channel is still reaching 39 million users organically. YouTube is used as a centralized video hub, where they inconsistently post content, and the channel is lacking in both content and engagement, with only 800 subscribers. What is interesting is that most of the YouTube videos are being watched on Smart TVs (73%) and mobile (21%). With a recent spike in views, bringing views to a total of 2 million between January 1st and July 1st due to paid media activation. Pinterest is primarily used for brand awareness purposes and for cross-linking to websites to increase SEO relevance.

The main goal of social media channels is to grow the community of end consumers and hairdressers. In their current strategy, they would like to significantly increase brand awareness for the end consumer target group via effective media investment and use authentic content to engage and leverage UGC. As mentioned by interviewees, the brand adopts a community-driven approach, a characteristic exemplified by the hashtag #authenticbeautymovement boasting an impressive count of over 119 000 posts contributed by their community.

Content Marketing

The digital content strategy focuses on social media channels with channel-first thinking, which means no content reusing from other social media channels, looking at all social media channels, unfortunately, this is not the case due to limited resources, leading also to lower engagement on channels outside of Instagram. A key component of the strategy is performance-driven content to grow the community as well as brand equity. Additionally, one of the key priorities is leveraging UGC for both target groups via influencers and advocates. As Instagram is the primary channel for the brand the frequency of posting is quite high, 1 to 2 posts per day at 12 pm and 6 pm to receive the highest engagement. The brand is focusing on leveraging UGC and trending content, like Reels, as a visual representation in Figure 17. High-quality production content does not necessarily work better than mobile-quality content, seeing the importance of creating content dedicated to the platform.

Figure 17: Most common types of content on Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram
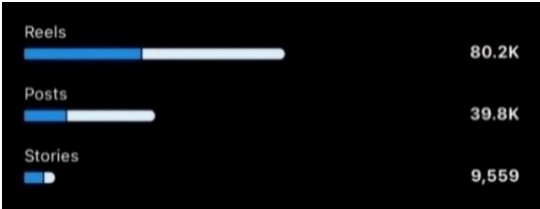
Source: Instagram (2023).

Content that performs well in terms of engagement rate are, as shown in Figure 18:

- Video content receives the most reach and engagement on the platform, with an average of 230 likes per video.
- Short do-it-yourself hair tutorial videos and customer testimonials, reach over 500 000 users.
- Short hairdresser tutorials, showing each product and final beautiful results, reach over 470,000 users.
- Celebrity collaboration announcement posts, with an engagement rate of over 11.4%
- Announcement of new posts.
- Short colourful moving videos of products in lifestyle settings.
- Images of carefully selected salons with Authentic Beauty Concept products.
- UGC, increases social proof as people ultimately trust other people more than brands.

Figure 18: Content that performs well on Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram
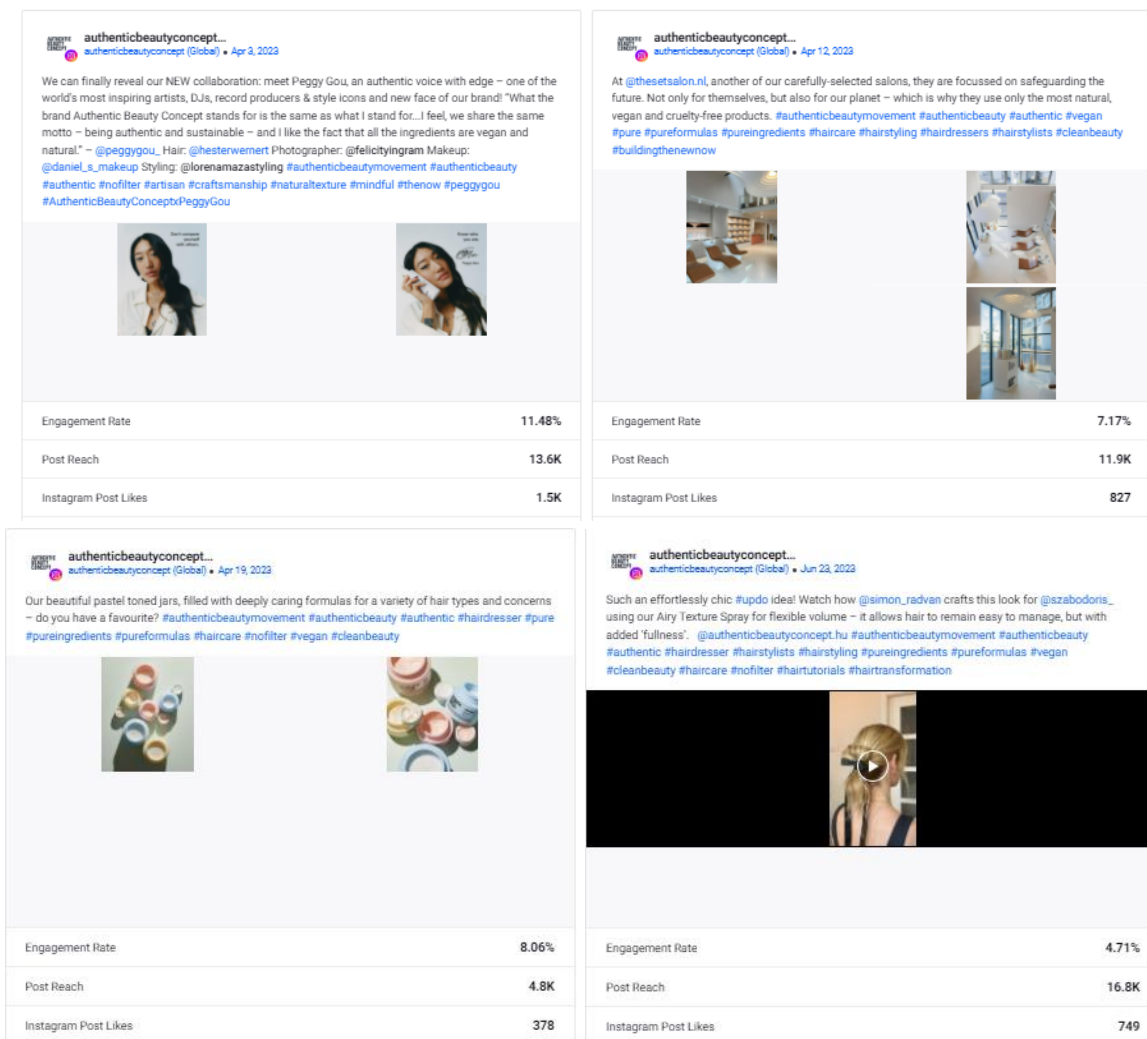
Source: Sprinklr (2023).

Content that is the worst performer:
- Editorial images of the model's asset, with a low engagement rate of below 1.5%.
- Text-heavy content focusing on sustainability and social initiatives.

Looking at the media assets, the content for advertising campaigns is the same as organic content that is posted on social media, meaning there is no dedicated content created for media activation purposes, with 3s hooked at the beginning, designing for sound off, using recognizable branding, highlighting key reasons to buy and CTA at the end. This decreases the success of media activation campaigns. Additionally, most content is focused on brand awareness, meaning no content is supporting the conversion part of the funnel that should lead to D2C.

Online Public Relations and Influencer Marketing

Community management is a priority for the brand, all messages and tags from their social media community are replied to in less than 24 hours. The community management team checks comments and messages every day maintaining a friendly and helpful tone, additionally, they immediately brand handle negative comments or crises on social media, but sometimes replies take up to 3 days, due to many stakeholders needing to check the accuracy of the reply. Responses were empathetic and provided clear instructions, earning positive feedback.

The brand is using celebrity faces to authentically amplify the reach and increase brand awareness, with the recent collaboration with Peggy Gou, they leveraged her massive 3 million follower base to provide a wider audience reach and tap into the younger end consumer target group. With this collaboration the celebrity authentically integrated products into her narrative, presenting a real connection with the brand, which resonated with higher positive sentiment, building trust and credibility with her followers. During the period of the campaign, the collaboration led to an increase of 14.5% in engagement rate and a 100% increase in reach. The announcement of collaboration was also the most successful post in brand history with an engagement rate of 14% and 1 120 post likes received within the initial 24 hours.

There is a general trend of positive sentiment across all brand channels, with positive comments peaking during the launch of a new product or new celerity collaboration. But Social Listening tools are currently not being used. To support UGC creation team regularly sends out PR boxes, especially for new product launches and campaigns, where they invite them to create content, leading to a lot of UGC creation showcasing positive experiences with products. The brand is receiving positive mentions, gaining beauty awards and positive reviews and further building awareness by staying on top of mind in online press, like Marie Claire, Vogue, In Style, and ELLE, reaching year-to-date 2.6 million readers. Utilizing online platforms such as websites and social media to complement print media. Recent PR initiatives, which combined online and offline press were a recent event in support of the

Peggy Gou campaign, inviting influencers and premium press, like Vogue and Marie Claire, to the event. Press then created a social presence, with interactive videos for Instagram on the day spent with the brand. Every corner of the Authentic Beauty Concept tent was optimized for Instagram ad-creating content. A lot of influencers created content and posted in Stories and Reels about the event, creating positive sentiment and building brand awareness alone. The activation led to a peak in reach during the event and the day after the event, as presented in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Peak in reach due to event activation
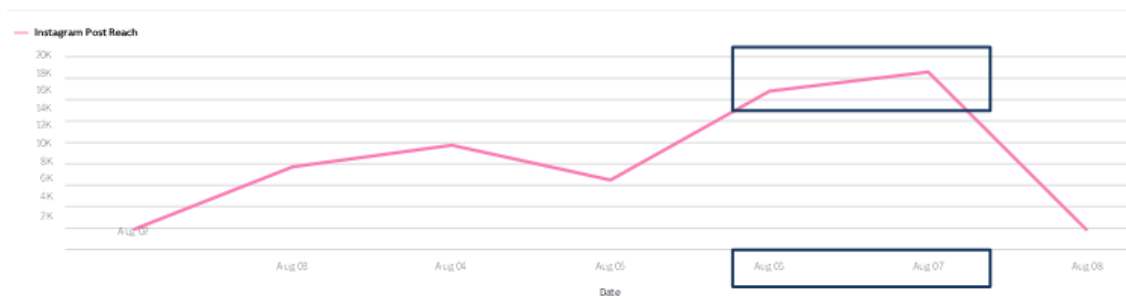
Source: Sprinklr (2023).

According to interviewees and the brand's digital marketing dossier, the brand wants to maximize reach potential, foster close community feeling and increase authenticity and credibility with influencer marketing. Due to organic reach decreasing on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, investment in influencer marketing is needed. The brand has recently just started working on a global campaign with influencers. Current influencer strategy is quite scarce and primarily focuses on only the end consumer target group. Brand is collaborating with micro influencers with 10,000 to 50,000 followers on Instagram, that fit the 4 pillars of the brand and represent at least one of them. Most of the content is focused on do-it-yourself tutorials or images featuring the influencer with products. The key selection process of influencers is not aligned.

Digital Advertising

The full-funnel digital advertising strategy is not yet developed for the brand, the key goal of media activations, according to their digital strategy dossier is brand awareness, focusing on reach, engagement rate, view rate and Cost Per Thousand (CPM). The brand's benchmark of a good campaign is CPM under 0.50 €. The most relevant social ad platforms for Authentic Beauty Concept are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. An important part of their strategy is boosting Instagram posts that perform well organically, as it is a cost-effective way to generate awareness and increase the follower base. 99% of the reach created on Instagram is supported by boosting media investment, as shown for the last 90 days in Figure 20. The most successful boosting content are Reels, showing products in use by hairdressers or end consumers, with a low CPM of 0.25€. Most of the follower gain peaks are on Sundays, as weekdays show higher engagement rates than weekends. Images have

much more expensive CPM. According to interviewees global media investment has recently gained more focus, but unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness on how important digital budget is in the countries, leading to small digital activations in local markets.

Figure 20: Increased reach of Authentic Beauty Concept Instagram attributed to boosted investment in 90 days span
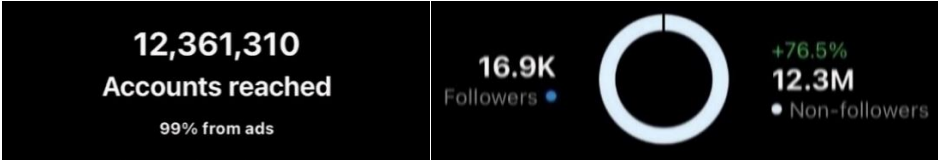
Source: Instagram (2023).

With the recent media campaign with new celebrity faces, they are taking a more globally steered approach, where they focus on activating 10 top countries. A higher budget and continuous weekly refining allowed them to respond to higher CMP at the beginning and help optimise and stabilise all KPIs. An important benchmark in this campaign was to reach high-quality users, which was achieved as 53 % of the people who watched 3 seconds of the videos also watched 100 % of the videos. But the CPM benchmark of 0.50€ was not achieved, this is probably due to media assets not being optimized for media activation purposes. They achieved this by refining the placements, focusing more on high-quality placements and A/B testing of copy and creatives. When testing the copy, a creative language test tested if local languages work better compared to using English copy, which showed local copy works better. A/B creative variation test looked at 2 different lengths of the videos and revealed that shorter 13-second video creatives with product integrated and celebrity performed better than the longer 55-second mood videos with the celebrity. Best performers receive the rest of the budget to help optimize the CPM. Video ads generated higher engagement than stills. The campaign showed the importance of correct targeting, the target group for this campaign was changed a bit compared to the usual targeting group, focusing more on festival goers and lovers. In the campaign ad creative is also updated and changed every 2 months to sustain engagement and ad frequency fatigue.

Data and Analytics

Currently, the brand is using Google Analytics as a data collection source for website information and Sprinklr for social media data collection. Mentioned analytics tools provide detailed insights across different channels, but certain data may face accuracy issues. For example, Sprinklr predominantly displays organic data, making it challenging to distinguish organic from paid data and therefore making it difficult for some KPIs to present accurate information. Currently, no tool is being used for sourcing relevant data from email marketing platforms, CRM, and e-commerce platforms. Additionally, there is an absence of Urchin Tracking Modules (UTMs) and Pixels on the website, which have implications for accurate attribution, incomplete user journey tracking, and missed retargeting opportunities. This limits data-driven decision-making, campaign assessment, and ROI analysis. Currently, no

conversion tracking is possible, but there is a potential with the new D2C platform. Additionally, the brand is not consistently monitoring competitor's digital strategies through data analysis.

Missing Components

Comparing the literature review with the case study findings, the current digital strategy is missing some components of 360-degree digital strategy, such as the absence of an e-commerce strategy, D2C strategy, mobile optimization, CRM implementation, email marketing, SEO, SEA, and tests with AI. Additionally, while there is a base set up for data and analytics, there are some additional components that are missing still, like UTMs, Pixels, and data alignment with business goals to gain a better competitive advantage in the market.

5.5   Qualitative Research: Interview

With in-depth interviews, I seek to bridge the gap between employee perspectives and brand objectives, to understand the relevant touchpoints of 360-degree digital strategy to strategically focus resources for maximum impact. Through conducting comprehensive interviews with employees spanning diverse levels and departments, the goal was to provide actionable insights and recommendations to help marketers develop effective and holistic digital marketing strategies that drive profitability and growth.

5.5.1   Data Collection

The data collection process started with writing a semi-structured interview guideline with a set of 29 guiding questions. This gave me the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to encourage a more detailed response. As all interviewees do not directly work with the brand Authentic Beauty Concept, the questions were structured in three categories: background questions, brand questions and digital marketing strategy questions. It was important to inquire about the background and brand to better understand the brand's history and current standing, this provides a unique look into opportunities and challenges the employees are facing. Additionally, digital strategy should be aligned with the brand goals, values, and long-term vision. It is important to understand the brand's target audience, personas, and preferences.

The process continued with conducting the interviews. I have conducted 9 in-depth semi-structured interviews. I have conducted interviews with employees from different levels and departments to better understand how departments are working together, gain different perspectives from different points of view on digital strategy and gain insights on what touchpoints are relevant for different departments. It was important to gain a deeper understanding of different perceptions of digital strategy and brand goals. Interviews were conducted either in person or via Teams video call. Each interview took around 45 minutes.

Finally, this leads to analysing the results. After collecting the primary data, I started by thoroughly reviewing and creating transcripts of the 9 semi-structured interviews, looking for recurring patterns and themes. I have combined and categorized these themes, to help me derive meaningful findings. To identify the patterns and trends in the data collected I have used visualization tools, such as quotes, tables, figures, word clouds and comparison matrix. I employed descriptive statistics to present and identify patterns, providing a comprehensive overview of the data (Fisher & Marshall, 2009).

5.5.2   Sample Characteristics

The sample contains 9 Henkel employees. The overview of the interviewees and their professional backgrounds in the company can be seen in Table 6. In terms of demographics, the interviewees were between the ages of 32 and 42. The average time employees have worked in Henkel is 6.4 years, showing the credibility of their expertise. The selection of interviewees spans various departments, to attain a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the brand.

This approach aims to understand the dynamics of interdepartmental collaboration and communication, while also shedding light on diverse viewpoints regarding digital strategy. Furthermore, to comprehend whether the interviews align with their overarching objectives. The overview of the set of 29 guiding questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 6: Sample Characteristics of Interview Participants

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Years in the company	Title	Tasks
Interviewee A	Female	42	13 years	Global Head of Authentic Beauty Concept	Responsible for managing all aspects of Authentic Beauty Concept identity and strategy.
Interviewee B	Female	36	12 years	PR & Digital manager Poland	Local marketing & PR in Poland for Henkel Consumer Brands Hair Professional.
Interviewee C	Female	37	10 years	International Marketing Manager	Globally overseeing brand management, trade marketing & PR for Authentic Beauty Concept.
Interviewee D	Female	40	8 years	Corporate Director Brand Tech & Ecosystems	Globally leading tech & ecosystem topic for Henkel Consumer Brands.

To be continued.

Table 6: Sample Characteristics of Interview Participants (continued)

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Years in the company	Title	Tasks
Interviewee E	Female	32	6 years	International Senior Digital Communication Manager	Global digital marketing steering for Henkel Consumer Brands Hair Professional brand STMNT.
Interviewee F	Female	32	4 years	International Senior Digital Manager Tech & Data	Globally drive digital transformation, platform owner & managing ecosystems of Henkel Consumer Brands.
Interviewee G	Male	42	2 years	Head of Digital Campaigns & Social Media	Globally overseeing online campaigns & social media for Henkel Consumer Brands Hair Professional.
Interviewee H	Female	37	2 years	Manager Global Data & Analytics - Sales	Lead for data and analytics workstream & integral part of global sales in Henkel Consumer Brands.
Interviewee I	Female	39	2 years	Senior International Brand Manager	Strategizing brand initiatives tailored for direct to customer platform for Authentic Beauty Concept.

Source: Own work.

5.5.3 Findings

For developing a 360-degree digital marketing strategy it is crucial to understand the collaboration and coordination efforts among different departments within the company. Gaining insights into what are the goals of each department, the effectiveness of their communication and differences between global-local perspectives. All departments should share a common overarching goal, encouraging alignment between the digital marketing strategy and the brand's objectives, ultimately contributing to the brand's success. The interviews revealed that a common theme is the challenge of aligning common goals of differing departments. The smaller global teams work much closer together, with digital and brand closely aligned, while a connection to sales is notably missing. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding of the significance of digital marketing globally and locally. The following quotes provide insights into this dynamic:

"ABC is very entrepreneurial and requires a hands-on mentality. Not all departments live like this every day." − Interviewee A

"I think in a huge corporation, it's a bit hard to coordinate, because we have different goals and different departments in this process." − Interviewee C

"In the digital team, the collaboration between the different departments was good, we were very close to the brands. Not always so close to sales." − Interviewee D

"Sometimes limited resources and the lack of understanding for the relevance of digital marketing and its processes hinder a better cooperation between the two departments and also a better outcome for the brand." − Interviewee G

"Overall, they work in silos and the synergies are not utilized to their full potential." − Interviewee H

Regardless of the mentioned challenges there are some efforts to improve collaboration:

"I am in constant contact with the brand manager who provides information on what is happening in the brand. In addition, together with the brand manager, we meet with sales to learn about the challenges that sales must face, and we check with them the planned communication activities that we plan for the brand." – Interviewee B

"Taking the ABC brand team and the social media team as examples, the corporation works well. A lot of the cooperation happened on a daily operational level." − Interviewee G

"Regular meetings between departments are helpful." − Interviewee D

To better understand and gain insights into the brand goals, brand vision and employees' perspective on it and its future, I posed the following questions "How would you describe the brand Authentic Beauty Concept?", "What are the key values of the brand?" and "What are the key messages and communication aspects of the brand?". These guiding questions are the basis for the successful development of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy, as they form the foundation upon which the digital strategy can be built. It is important to align digital efforts with the brand strategy and brand identity, to make sure the massaging on all channels is consistent. Gained insights guide the selection of appropriate touchpoints, content, massaging and channels to effectively reach the brand's target audience. Which allows me to create a full, 360-degree and unified brand experience online and offline. These questions also help me understand if employees in different departments have the same understanding of the brand's goals, vision, and massaging.

When analysing interviewees' responses on their perspective on the brand and its future I noticed quite unified and similar answers. They described the brand Authentic Beauty Concept primarily as a premium haircare and styling brand that goes beyond hair and being

just another brand; it is perceived as a movement. The key values of the brand mentioned in interviews are authentic hair, mindful experience, sustainability, pure formulas, and community. They highlighted the use of carefully selected ingredients, vegan formulations, and the free from sulphates and silicones as key features of the brand. The participants also note the premium design and packaging as an important part of the brand, with a focus on delivering outstanding results for hair care. The interview answers are visually presented in Figure 21 and Figure 22.

Figure 21: Interviewees descriptions of the brand Authentic Beauty Concept
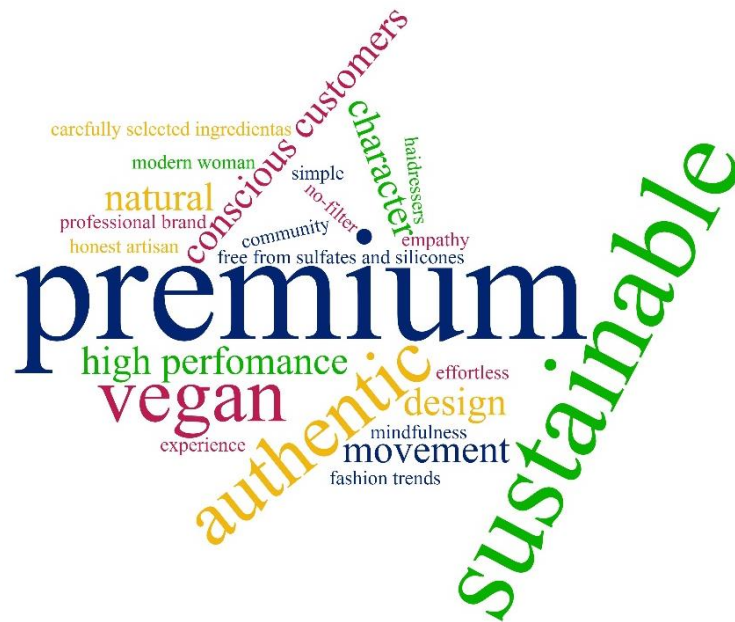
Source: Own work.

Figure 22: Interviewees insights on brands values

Source: Own work.

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Based on the conducted analysis, the key messages that the brand is using are strongly connected to how interviewees describe the brand and its key values. I believe it is crucial to align key communication messages with brand values, to maintain credibility, consistency, and build brand equity. This helps to build trust, authenticity, and identity, which connects with customers, builds positive sentiment, and builds long-lasting relationships. The following quotes support these findings:

"The key massage we talk about is joining the authentic beauty movement. We are not just a brand, but a movement." − Interviewee A

"We are a global community that connects people who care about authentic looks." − Interviewee B

"We believe in authentic beauty." − Interviewee C

"It´s super important to have not only content creators or influencers that have beautiful hair only, but to have people that have a character and have something to tell." − Interviewee C

"So, for me this is the authentic beauty movement definitely. And it's also the premium aspect." − Interviewee D

"Key messages are of sustainable and environmental nature." − Interviewee E

"It's about being your true to self. Beauty and hair care products can be sustainable. Enjoying the haircare moment and making it a ritual (mindfulness)." − Interviewee G

When analysing the question "What do you believe are key goals for the brand?" I have noticed that interviewees share a consistent focus on achieving growth, aiming for growth in sales and expanding brand awareness. They emphasize the importance of building strategic distribution in selective premium retail outlets and professional premium salons.

On the other hand, based on an analysis of the question "Where do you see the brand in 10 years?" I can say that interviewees envision the brand in 10 years as a leading premium community and lifestyle brand that aligns with sustainability, mindfulness, professional heritage, and authenticity. They anticipate growth in interest in the end consumer target group with strong penetration into premium retail stores and building on the D2C platform. While the professional heritage aspect is seen as one of the key strengths.

Comparing interviewees' perceptions of the current brand goals and long-term vision for the brand, I have found that current goals mostly align with long-term visions for the brand. Both current and future goals focus on the importance of broadening the distribution to selective premium retail outlets, to position the brand as premium. Increasing the brand awareness in the end consumer target group with D2C and selective premium e-commerce partners. The comparison matrix is visually presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison matrix comparing vision for the brand with the current brand goals

Interviewee	Vision for 10 years	Current key goals
Interviewee A	- The authentic go to brand in key premium hair care markets in the world.	- Increase sales. - Build more brand awareness. - Seen as professional premium brand. - Having a selective premium distribution in key markets.
Interviewee B	- Lifestyle brand. - Offering holistic solutions for conscious customers. - Highest quality of products.	- Providing end customers with beautiful and natural-looking hair. - Providing clients with an experience that will go beyond hair.
Interviewee C	- Number one lifestyle and community brand with professional hairdresser heritage. - Penetration the right channels. - Building a new culture of beauty.	- Increase sales. - Going into premium selective retail. - Using right e-commerce partners. - Big communication campaign with known faces.
Interviewee D	- Brand with professional heritage. - Strong premium selected retail store distribution.	- Increase sales.
Interviewee E	- Well-established within hairdresser and end consumer target group. - Strong D2C distribution. - Available in biggest premium selective retail stores.	- Tremendously increasing sales, while ensuring great profitability. - Growing awareness in end-consumer target group. - Higher focus on D2C strategy.
Interviewee F	- Leading brand in the premium haircare segment.	- Respond to the increasing demand for natural hair products. - Become a more diverse and inclusive brand.
Interviewee G	- Big growth potential as it is tackling three mega trends: sustainability, mindfulness, authenticity. - Increasing awareness in premium target groups.	- Growth within the premium care segment.
Interviewee H	- Still player in the market due to sustainability aspect. - D2C and brand awareness will increase popularity in end consumer target group.	- Promote sustainable lifestyle, natural looks, easiness and perfectly imperfect.
Interviewee I	- Premium retail brand with professional hairdresser heritage.	- Increase sales. - More selective distribution. - 360-degree customer experience.

Source: Own work.

Knowing the brand's target audience and persona is crucial for building customer-centric digital strategy. Communication messages need to align with the brand's persona and values to be able to authentically connect to customers and encourage strong relationships. To be able to create a competitive 360-degree digital strategy you need to understand your customer preferences, demographics, psychographics, behaviours, and pain points.

Built upon analysing the interviews brand has two key target groups, end consumers and hairdressers target group. Hairdressers are invested in premium, high-quality, natural products. End-consumers are conscious beauty seekers aged 25-44, valuing a premium lifestyle, authenticity, proven performance, and seeking clean, sustainable options. The findings are visually presented in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Interviewees insights on Authentic Beauty Concept´s target group

Source: Own work based on Authentic Beauty Concept (n.d.).

Through the analysis of the questions "What are the key touchpoints in your customer journey?" and "Where do you invest and focus your advertising budget?" most interviewees emphasise the importance and central role of digital touchpoints and the corresponding importance of investment in digital advertising.

They highlighted social media platforms, specifically Instagram as a key channel for brand awareness and engagement. This shows us that nowadays we can find most of our consumers interacting with digital touchpoints. The favourite strategies for gaining awareness and visibility for the brand are investing in influencer marketing and digital advertising. But looking outside of the digital touchpoints, interviewees highlight the value of offline

touchpoints, particularly community events, premium hair salons and premium selected retail stores.

Combining the offline and online approach with premium and end consumer press. Emphasizing a mix of both physical and digital touchpoints to ensure a seamless, yet premium online-to-offline experience, fostering customer engagement and brand loyalty across the customer journey. As shown overview in Table 8.

Table 8: Matrix of key touchpoints in customer journey and advertising focus of the brand Authentic Beauty Concept based on interviewees insights

Key insights	Examples from interviewees
Central role of digital	Reach via social media and influencers and prioritizing investment in digital advertising.
Premium hair salons experience	Creating holistic mindful experience in salons.
Premium selected retail engagement	Pop ups, lifestyle hotels, spas, stores in line with brand position and values to create additional visibility for end consumers.
Events to create community storytelling	Participating at fairs, Fashion Week, Pleasure Garden and Community Gathering.
Premium end consumer press	Creating reach and seamless online to offline experience.

Source: Own work.

I continued with the analysis of the following 5 questions, "Where to reach your customers digitally?", "What are the key components or touchpoints of digital strategy that are impactful?", "Which ones have the potential to be impactful?", "Are there any touchpoints or components that you believe should receive more attention or investment to enhance digital strategy?" and "Which touchpoint you believe should not be part of digital strategy?".

Interviewees emphasized the significance of social media platforms, primarily Instagram and the potential for growth on TikTok. On the other hand, traditional channels like Facebook might be organically less relevant and should not be invested in in the future. They see e-commerce and online premium retail partners as valuable touchpoints. Then, influencer marketing and collaboration with hairdresser advocates were commonly mentioned as an important touchpoint, as it seamlessly incorporated the brand's products with influencers and advocates narratives, creating a relatable connection with the brand. Additionally, paid media advertising including SEA was identified as an important investment to drive traffic and create awareness. The website and SEO are still seen as components of digital communication, but they see potential in a D2C platform combining online shop and content hub for all relevant brand information. The importance of content marketing, especially

UGC and educational content was mentioned, to support community engagement and inspiration. Some noted the importance of leveraging online press to gain additional visibility for the brand. Overall, the insights underscore the need for a well-coordinated 360-degree digital strategy to engage both hairdressers and end consumers effectively. None of the interviewees mentioned VR, AR or AI as a touchpoint in digital strategy. In Table 9 you will see presented with the green checkbox interviewees mentioned digital touchpoints.

Table 9: Key digital touchpoints mentioned by interviewees

Digital touchpoints	Interviewees								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
SEO			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Social media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online PR	✓		✓						
Content	✓	✓			✓		✓		
Digital OOH						✓			
Email						✓			
Paid media	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Podcast				✓					
SEA					✓	✓		✓	
Influencer marketing		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Website			✓	✓			✓		✓
D2C	✓				✓		✓		✓
e-commerce partners	✓		✓				✓		✓
CRM				✓	✓		✓		
VR and AR									
AI									
Data and analytics							✓		

Source: Own work.

When developing a new, more efficient 360-degree digital strategy it is important to understand what strengths and weaknesses of the current digital strategy are. The consensus among multiple interviewees is that a notable strength of the current digital strategy lies in a strong focus on social media and consistent storytelling massaging that aligns with the brand's values and builds brand equity. With their communication, they focus on targeting

both end consumers and the hairdresser target group. The brand also prioritizes engaging with its community through interactive and consistent two-way conversations. Part of the strategy is consistently leveraging engagement and reach data to develop more performance-driven content. Nevertheless, the interviews mentioned several weaknesses and areas for improvement. A repeatedly referenced weakness is the complexity of managing multiple social media channels across various local markets, leading to repetitive content and lower engagement. Within brand communication, striking a balance between catering to both target groups, end consumers and hairdressers, poses challenges. Additionally, most of the interviewees mentioned that there is a lack of trackability and understanding of the importance of digital advertising investment in the local markets. Interviewees mentioned that the e-commerce partnerships are not being successfully supported, nor is the potential of TikTok's explosive global reach being leveraged. Due to budget limitations, there appears to be a deficiency in the utilization of measurement tools, meaning they cannot properly measure efficiently of the campaigns efficiently and make data-driven decisions. Current digital strategy is not looking enough into topics outside social media, like SEO and D2C with tracking of UTM parameters to follow the full user journey funnel. An overview of the SWOT analysis is presented in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Overview of SWOT analysis of the current digital strategy

Current digital strategy	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
- Strong social media focus. - Consistent storytelling massaging aligns with brand´s values. - Targeting both end consumer and hairdresser target group. - Engaged community with consistent two-way conversations. - Developing performance driven content.	- Big channel complexity across different countries. - Lack of understanding and traceability of media investment in countries. - Channel gaps with underutilization of TikTok and YouTube. - Due to lack of investment in measurement tools data-driven decisions are not possible. - Not prioritizing topic like SEO, D2C and tracking of UTM parameters to follow the full user journey funnel.
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Amplifying reach with launching a new global channel on TikTok. - Higher global media to expand reach, target effectively, optimize campaigns and securing premium placements. - Bigger focus on tracking to provide more insights into campaign effectiveness. - Building investment tracker to accurately measure campaign effectiveness and better understand local media investment. - Combining smaller local channels to use resources more efficiently.	- Limited local resources in terms of expertise and budget. - Changing Algorithms: Algorithms on platforms like social media can change, affecting organic reach and the effectiveness of marketing efforts. - The hybrid model of communicating to both end consumers and hairdressers might lead to fragmented messaging.

Source: Own work.

To really understand the performance and success of a digital campaign or a digital strategy it is important to have proper measurement systems in place as it helps us to understand what is currently working, what should be improved and what is the financial impact. By using a proper measurement system and understanding benchmarks set for key KPIs, you can be flexible and optimize based on data-driven decisions to create a more successful digital marketing campaign. Looking into interview answers most noted that the ability to measure sales performance across different touchpoints is a challenge due to activities occurring in parallel. While campaigns on the brand's D2C and e-commerce partner's platforms are believed to be easier to measure. The current digital strategy is measuring the success of digital marketing efforts using a range of KPIs, including the growth of social media followers, engagement rates, reach, conversion metrics on the website and D2, and click-through rates. The next quotes confirm these findings:

"It is the hardest part to measure performance because we have so many activities in parallel that it's hard to judge if an effect is just due to campaign X or campaign Z. It can be the new product innovation that brought the attention, it can be the press that happened in parallel or texture launch event in France." – Interviewee C

"This is a little bit of a problem, if you are not directly selling yourself, you can't measure direct sales performance." – Interviewee D

"D2C and e-commerce partners are instrumental to gather new consumer insights on shopping behaviour." – Interviewee A

"Once we have a fully established e-com shop (incl. pixel) we can hopefully tell the performance of every channel based on ROAS." – Interviewee G

"For website this are visits, pageviews, bounce rate, duration. On social media key are reach and engagement rate. And for media CPC, CPM, and conversion if possible." – Interviewee D

"Based on the objective, reach within the relevant target group is the most important KPI in combination with a low CPM. The more we move down the funnel, the link clicks and low CPCs are relevant. If an online shop and media budget is involved, return on ad spend is super relevant." – Interviewee G

"Overall NES generated from digital marketing, ROI, CPC, CTR, CPA, ROI, Reach, Impressions, and Engagement. Website: conversion rate, traffic." – Interviewee F

5.6 Quantitative Research: Questionnaire

Quantitative research focuses on gaining a better understanding of customers, their behaviour and their experiences on their digital journey. Based on the findings from the in-depth interviews, I was able to develop a more comprehensive questionnaire and compare

the perceptions of employees and end users, helping me to determine whether their views were aligned. This allowed me to understand what are the key digital touchpoints that end consumers interact with daily that led to conversion. Additionally, I investigated if consumers are influenced by the same touchpoints that employees consider relevant to a 360-degree digital marketing strategy. Allowing me to develop a strategy and make data-driven decisions with real customer feedback, enabling tailored strategies with a better user experience.

5.6.1   Data Collection

The data was collected through an online survey platform 1ka, which allowed for a quicker and more affordable way to collect data. Additionally, online questionnaires reach quicker a larger number of respondents, creating more efficiency in primary data collection. It also gives respondents anonymity and more time to provide thoughtful answers at their preferred time, which makes respondents more comfortable sharing personal and honest information.

The questionnaire was created in English to reach people from different counties and backgrounds. The flow of a questionnaire begins with an introduction page that explains the context and the research topic. It continued with general and easier questions to engage with the respondents, continuing with more specific questions focusing on their behaviour and digital journey. The Questionnaire was structured into 6 focus areas: hair product purchase, purchase research, influential channels, digital engagement, Authentic Beauty Concept insights and demographics. Dividing questionnaire questions into different focus areas helped organize the questionnaire into specific topics, improving respondent understanding, engaging the questionnaire experience and creating a more logical flow. In the Authentic Beauty Concept focus area, questions were focused on respondents' digital experience with the brand. Followed by demographic questions, like age, gender, country, education, household income, and employment status, to understand respondents' characteristics. The questionnaire was concluded with a thank you page. The online questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3.

The questionnaire includes yes and no questions, multiple choice, close-ended questions, and Likert Scale questions designed to obtain different insights into customers' perceptions. It was shared on online channels that are relevant to the target audience via Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Reddit. Participants were encouraged to refer the questionnaire to their acquaintances, also called a chain-referral or snowball sampling, broadening the potential reach of the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire link was shared within relevant discussions in hair beauty communities on Reddit and Facebook. Out of 331 participants who accessed the questionnaire, only 42% proceeded to answer it, resulting in 139 valid answers. Presently, individuals are more likely to engage with a questionnaire when a clear incentive is provided. Consequently, this questionnaire encompasses 112 fully completed answers and 27 partially completed answers. There are partially completed

answers due to branching questions being added to the questionnaire, to assess the participants' familiarity with the brand.

Through this research descriptive statistics was used to present and identify patterns, observing means, modes, standard deviations, and frequency of answers (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). In contrast, I utilized inferential statistics to draw conclusions about a larger population based on a sample of data, allowing me to test hypotheses, and ascertain whether there are notable variances in customer perception of the digital marketing strategy across different customer segments (Allua & Thompson, 2009).

5.6.2   Sample Characteristics

The sample consists of 139 respondents of which 95% were female and 5% were male. The sample consisted of diverse participants representing various demographic backgrounds. Respondents were between the ages of 25 and 65, as presented in Figure 25, with a mean of 34.9 years old and a median of 32 years old. Most of the respondents are single (54%), while 40% are married, 4% are divorced. With the average number of 2.2 people living in the household and an average monthly net income of your household of 4708 €. 45% of respondents spent between 20 € to 30 € on hair care products per month, while 36% spent up to 20€ per month.

Looking at the educational background of the sample, 1% have completed a doctoral degree, 54% of respondents have a master´s degree, 33% have a bachelor´s degree, 8% have a college degree and 4% have finished high school. 86% of all respondents are employed, 5% are self-employed, 5% are students, and 4% are retired. Many participants work in the field of marketing (27%), digital marketing (8%) and sales (7%). Geographically, participants were spread across different European countries (82%), United States (6%), United Arab Emirates (6%), Mexico (5%) and The Philippines (1%), with the highest concentration in Germany (27%) and Slovenia (25%).

Figure 25: Respondents divided by age group (in %)

Source: Own work.

66
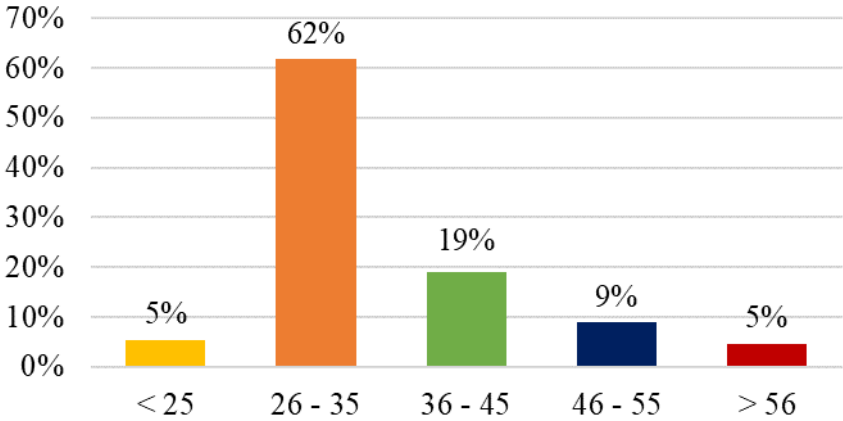
Analysing the personal values of respondents provides insight into customers' priorities and preferences. To find the average importance of each value to participants I have calculated the mean. To understand the variability of answers for each value I have calculated standard deviation, as presented in Figure 26.

Figure 26: Personal values of respondent analysing mean and standard deviation

1	2	3	4	5
Not important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Important	Very important
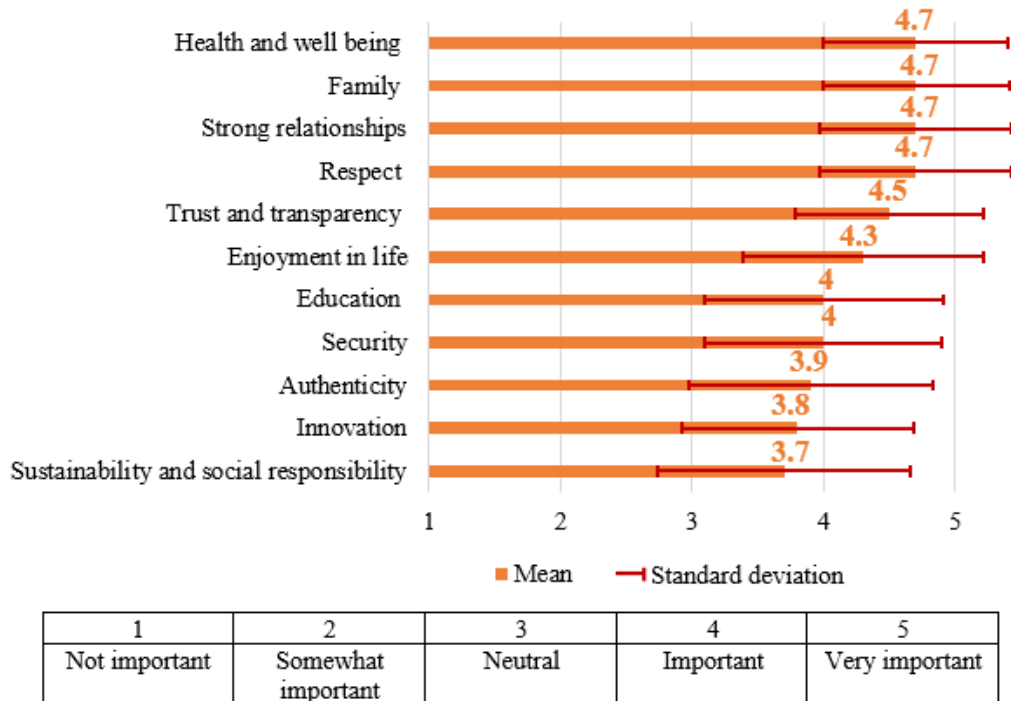
Source: Own work.

Health and well-being, strong relationships, respect, and family have the highest mean of 4.7, indicating these values are very important to respondents. Trust and transparency, enjoyment in life, education, and security have a mean between 4.0 and 4.5, indicating importance to the respondents.

Sustainability and social responsibility, innovation, and authenticity have a mean between 3.7 and 3.9, implying that participants consider these values as important, but would not prioritize them over health and well-being, strong relationships, family, security, education, enjoyment in life, trust, and transparency. The analysis shows that values like health and well-being, strong relationships, family, respect, trust, and transparency have smaller standard deviations, demonstrating that the answers are consistent among respondents and close to the mean, signifying that there is a relatively high level of agreement among participants regarding the importance of these values. Sustainability and social responsibility, authenticity, education, enjoyment in life, security, and innovation have larger standard deviations which show a wider range of responses about the importance of these values, indicating that participants have different priorities for these values.

54% of participants know of the Authentic Beauty Concept brand and 45% have already bought the products from the brand. 43% would definitely recommend, and probably recommend the brand. When asking participants what the best words are to describe the Authentic Beauty Concept, the most common words were premium, high-quality, and sustainable. Answers are visually presented with a word cloud in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Participants description of Authentic Beauty Concept

Source: Own work.

To better understand customers' digital journey, participants were asked "Do you use digital channels to engage with your favourite brands?", revealing that 61% use digital channels to interact and engage with their favourite brands and 39% would occasionally recommend hair brand's digital platform to other based on their experience. Additionally, it is important to understand where your customers are digitally present, 81% of respondents answered they use social media, and which social media channels you should invest in. Therefore, participants were asked "How often do you use following social media platforms?", creating an overview in Figure 28.

Concluding that Instagram has a high mean of 4.5 implying respondents very frequently use the platform, with a medium standard deviation of 1.16 there is less variability, indicating a consistent pattern of high usage between respondents. TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp have a mean between 3.9 and 3.1 indicating respondents frequently use these platforms, but less often than Instagram. YouTube has a lower standard deviation of 1.06 implying consistent answers of frequent usage of respondents. While TikTok and WhatsApp have much larger standard deviations of 1.64 for TikTok, the highest variability among all platforms, and 1.37 for WhatsApp, indicating participants have a wider range of responses therefore usage for TikTok and WhatsApp varies among participants.

Facebook and LinkedIn have a mean of 2.5 showing occasional usage of these platforms between respondents, both have high standard deviations of 1.43 and 1.39 which shows that usage of Facebook and LinkedIn substantially varies among respondents. While Twitter and Snapchat have the lowest mean of 1.5 and 1.3, and a low standard deviation of 0.92 and 0.75, implying less variability in usage patterns among respondents, showing that most respondents use Twitter and Snapchat at similarly low levels. The concluding key channel for the brand is Instagram, supported by TikTok and YouTube. While WhatsApp is not as relevant as it is not a visually driven platform.

Figure 28: Social media usage frequency of respondents: mean and standard deviation
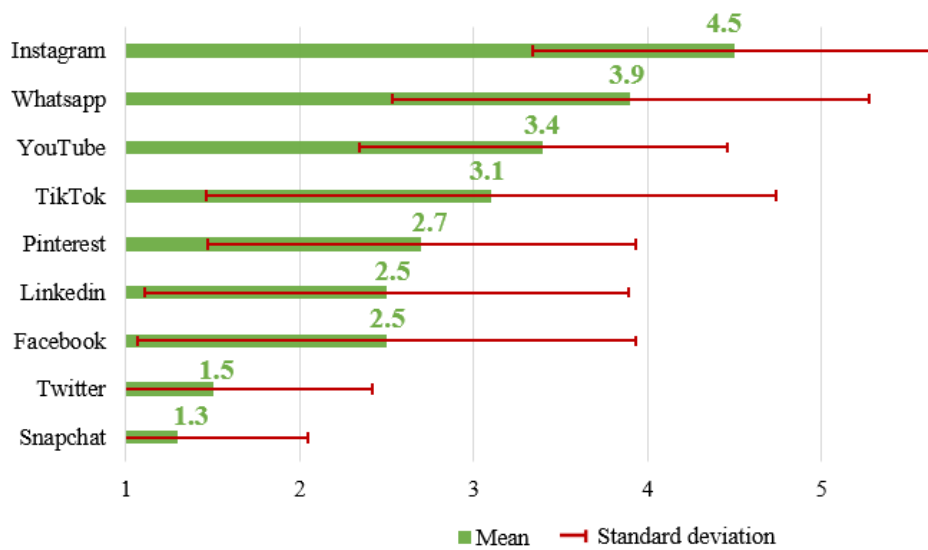
1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently

Source: Own work.

5.6.3   Data Analysis of the Hypotheses

H_1: Consumers frequently conduct online research before purchasing premium hair products.

With this hypothesis, the main goal is to understand customers' online behaviour and the need for a strong online presence and show the relevancy of 360-degree digital strategy. Using two sub-hypotheses:

H_{1a}: Consumers frequently conduct research before purchasing premium hair products.

H_{1b}: Consumers conduct online research before purchasing.

To analyse the first hypothesis the next questions were included in the questionnaire "Do you buy premium hair products?" and "Do you typically conduct research before making a

purchase?" First, we will be testing if customers conduct research before purchasing premium hair products. Dividing respondents into two groups, based on if they purchase premium hair care products or not. Out of all participants 73% buy premium hair products, as shown in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Percentage of respondents who purchase premium hair products
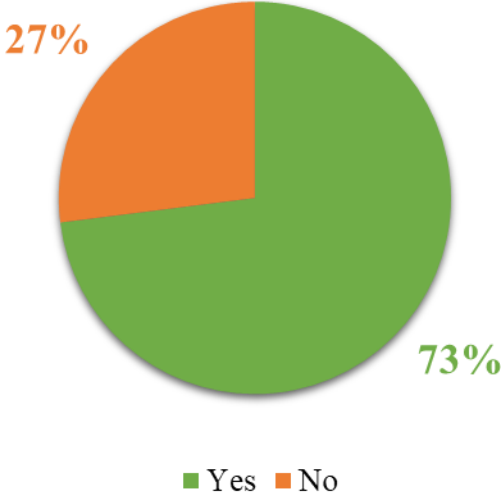
Source: Own work.

40% frequently conduct research before making a purchase and 24% of respondents conduct research very frequently before making a purchase, while 24% conduct it occasionally, as presented in Figure 30. The mean is 3.7 and the mode is 4, telling us most respondents frequently conduct research before purchase.

Figure 30: Frequency of respondents research before making a purchase
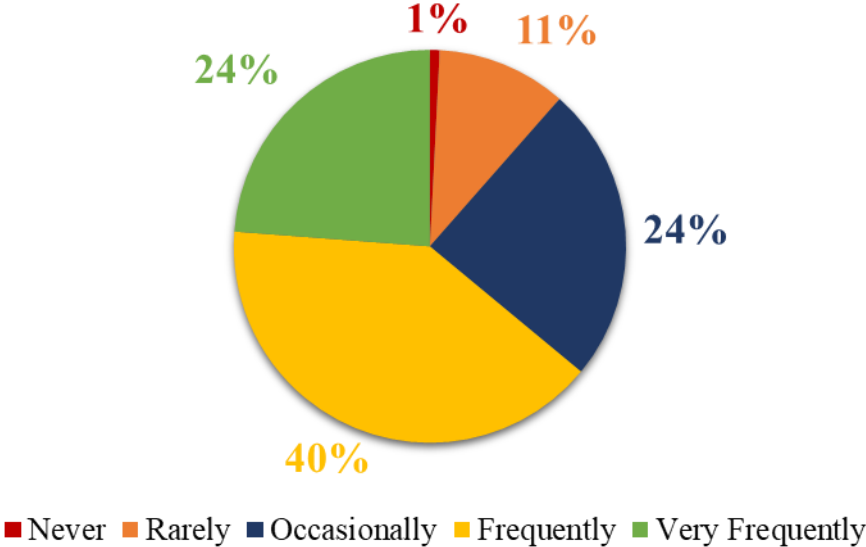
Source: Own work.

For analysing H_{1a} Inferential statistics was, such as an independent samples t-test to derive a conclusion about a population based on a sample of data, specifically looking at if there is a difference between two groups.

The test variable was the frequency of conducting research before buying products and the grouping variable was purchasing behaviour. One group was Group NO, where respondents stated they do not buy premium hair products, the second group was Group YES, where respondents stated they buy premium hair care products. The H_0, null hypothesis, is that there is no difference in research behaviour between the two groups.

First, I needed to test the assumption of equal variances across the two groups, therefore I used Levene´s test. Levene´s test H_0, null hypothesis, is that the variances among the two groups are equal. F-ratio of 2.666 suggests that there could be some differences in the variances between the compared two groups, the p-value of 0.105, is higher than the commonly used significance level of 0.05, therefore I do not have strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and reject the assumption of equal variances among the groups.

Next, I wanted to test the assumption of normality, therefore I used The Shapiro-Wilk test. Two groups have p-values lower than 0.05, which indicates that the data in both groups significantly deviates from a normal distribution. Given that the test showed that data does not meet the assumptions of equal variance nor normality, the Mann-Whitney U test had to be used.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U-statistic (reported as W since it is an adaptation of Wilcoxon's signed rank test) were W=878.500, a p-value of less than 0.001. Showing the result is highly significant and there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The small p-value suggests that there is a significant difference in the distribution of the "frequency of conducting research" scores between the two YES and NO groups.

The Hodges-Lehmann Estimate shows a result of -1.000, which indicates that the median "frequency of conducting research" score is lower for the group YES compared to the group NO. Additionally, the Rank Biserial shows a value of -0.530 indicating a moderate negative correlation between the YES and NO grouping variable and the ranks of the "frequency of conducting research" scores, all data is presented in Figure 31. The median "frequency of conducting research" is lower for YES groups, meaning those who purchase premium hair products, which suggests that they are more likely to conduct research before making a purchase.

Therefore, I have enough evidence to confirm hypothesis H_{1a}, Consumers frequently conduct research before purchasing premium hair products.

Independent Samples T-Test ▼

Independent Samples T-Test

	W	df	p	Hodges-Lehmann Estimate	Rank-Biserial Correlation
frequency of conducting research	878.500		< .001	−1.000	−0.530

Note. For the Mann-Whitney test, effect size is given by the rank biserial correlation.
Note. Mann-Whitney U test.

Assumption Checks ▼

Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk) ▼

		W	p
frequency of conducting research	No	0.887	0.001
	Yes	0.836	< .001

Note. Significant results suggest a deviation from normality.

Test of Equality of Variances (Levene's)

	F	df	p
frequency of conducting research	2.666	1	0.105

Descriptives

Group Descriptives

	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE
frequency of conducting research	No	37	3.027	1.013	0.167
	Yes	101	3.990	0.806	0.080

Source: Own work.

To deepen the understanding of customer behaviour that will support us in developing digital strategy descriptive statistics were used to analyse participants' answers to "Where do you typically conduct research before making a purchase?"

Looking into where they typically conduct research before, they make a purchase, 70% of respondents choose social media as a touchpoint for conducting research before making a purchase. Showing that social media is the most common online touchpoint respondents interact with. Additionally, 58% choose Google or another search engine, 48% choose family and friends, and 45% choose influencers, as shown in Figure 32. Most mentioned touchpoints by respondents were digital touchpoints, except for family and friends, showing the importance of the online customer journey.

Figure 32: Percentage of respondents who selected each source option
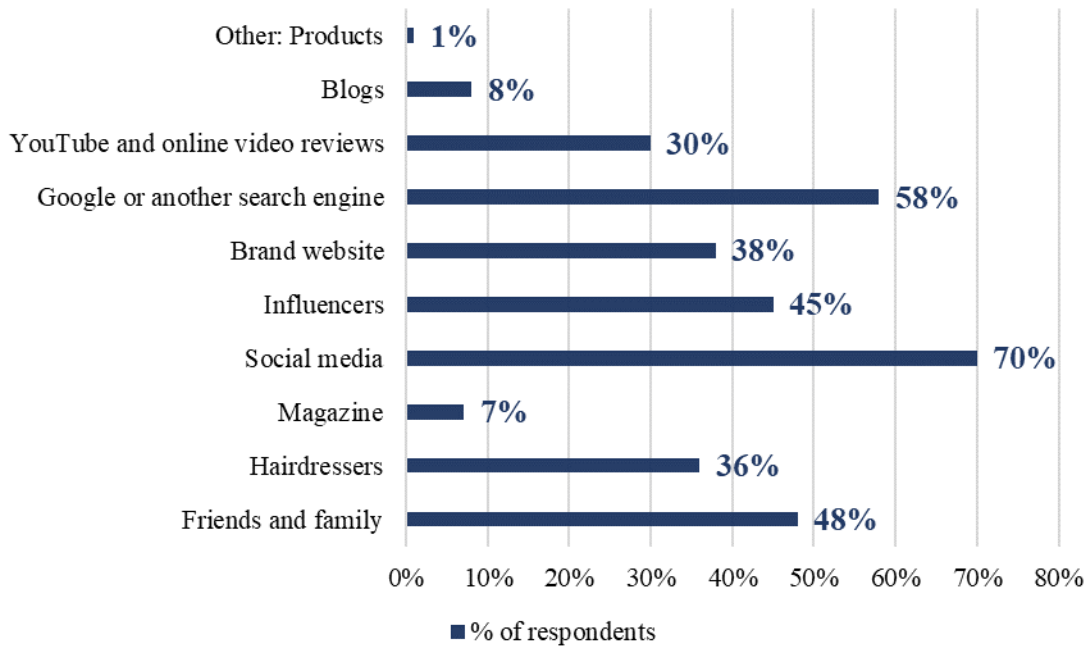
Source: Own work.

To analyse the H_{1b}, I divided respondents into two groups based on their answers to the initial question "Do you buy premium hair products?" Group YES consists of respondents who answered YES, and group NO consists of respondents who answered NO. To be able to analyse the hypothesis, the Chi-squared test was used as shown in Figure 33, to measure whether the observed frequencies in the table are significantly different from what would be expected under the assumption of independence. In the Chi-squared test H_0, the null hypothesis is there is no association between the "purchase of premium hair products" and the choice of "research sources". I have created a contingency table that shows the distribution of respondents' "research sources" by the two groups YES and NO, and frequencies for each "research source" to find out if there is a significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and conducting research through different sources.

The results of Chi-squared test are:

- Friends and family: The p-value is 0.071, which is greater than the common significance level of 0.05, therefore is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the observed association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "friends and family" locations could be due to random chance, and there is no statistically significant association between the two variables.
- Hairdressers: The p-value is 0.842, which is greater than the common significance level of 0.05, suggesting therefore that the observed relationship between "purchase of premium hair products" and "hairdressers" locations is not statistically significant.

- Magazines: The p-value is 0.229, which is greater than 0.05, therefore that the observed relationship between "purchase of premium hair products" and "magazines" locations is not statistically significant.
- Other (products): The p-value is 0.438, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no strong evidence of a significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "other".
- Social media: The p-value is 0.078, while the p-value is not below the typical significance level of 0.05, it is close to this threshold. This suggests that there might be a tendency toward an association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "social media" but is not statistically significant based on the chosen significance level.
- Influencers: The p-value is less than 0.001, which is below the common significance level of 0.05. This suggests strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and indicates a statistically significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "influencers".
- Brand website: The p-value is 0.674, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no strong evidence of a significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "brand website".
- Google and other search engines: The p-value is 0.079, which is slightly above the 0.05, that there might be a tendency toward an association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "Google and other search engines" but is not statistically significant based on the chosen significance level.
- YouTube: The p-value is 0.206, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no strong evidence of a significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "YouTube".
- Blogs: The p-value is 0.534, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no strong evidence of a significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "Blogs".

Figure 33: Contingency table and Chi-square test analysing association between "purchase of premium hair products" and the choice of "research sources"

	Friends and family	**Hairdressers**	**Magazine**	**Other**
YES	39	33	9	1
NO	20	11	1	1

Figure 33: Contingency table and Chi-square test analysing association between "purchase of premium hair products" and the choice of "research sources" (continued)

	Social Media	Influencers	Brand website	Google and search engines	YouTube	Blogs
YES	73	55	38	57	31	9
NO	20	7	12	14	7	2

		Value	df	p-value
Friends and family	X^2	3.261	1	0.071
	N	138		
Hairdressers	X^2	0.04	1	0.842
	N	138		
Magazine	X^2	1.447	1	0.229
	N	138		
Other	X^2	0.602	1	0.438
	N	138		
Social Media	X^2	3.105	1	0.078
	N	138		
Influencers	X^2	12.783	1	< 0.001
	N	138		
Brand website	X^2	0.177	1	0.674
	N	138		
Google and search engines	X^2	3.076	1	0.079
	N	138		
YouTube	X^2	1.598	1	0.206
	N	138		
Blogs	X^2	0.387	1	0.534
	N	138		

Source: Own work.

The analysis indicates that while there is a potential trend of association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "social media" the evidence for a significant relationship is not strong. Additionally, while there is a potential trend of association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "Google and other search engines" the evidence for a significant relationship is not strong. This indicates that the consumers' online research behaviour may not be strongly linked to these specific platforms when purchasing premium products. The analysis indicates that there is a statistically significant association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "influencers" indicating that consumers engage in online research, particularly through influencers, before making purchases.

H$_2$: Digital touchpoints like social media, digital advertisement, influencer marketing, and online reviews play relevant roles in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

With this hypothesis, the main goal is to show the relevancy of 360-degree digital strategy and digital touchpoints and to understand which the key digital touchpoints that help customers convert are. According to employees' insights the key digital touchpoints were chosen as social media, digital advertising, influencer marketing, and online reviews, therefore I would like to test the relevancy of these touchpoints to the consumer's perspective. The following questions will help me analyse this hypothesis "Do you buy premium hair products?" and "Do the following channels ever influence or inspire you to purchase hair products?". Analysing this question directly assesses the impact of digital touchpoints on consumers purchasing decisions. I again divided respondents into two groups based on their answers to the initial question. Group "purchase" consists of respondents who answered yes, and group "not purchase" consists of respondents who answered no. To be able to analyse the hypothesis, the Chi-squared test was used, as shown in Figure 34. The Chi-squared test H$_0$, null hypothesis, tells there is no association between the "purchase of premium hair products" and the choice of "specific digital touchpoint".

The results of Chi-squared test are:

− Family and Friends: The p-value is 0.143, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant association between this "family and friends" touchpoint and consumer purchase decisions.
− Hairdressers: The p-value of 0.813 suggests that there is no significant association between this touchpoint and consumer purchase decisions.
− Magazine articles: The p-value of 0.629 indicates that there is no significant association between "magazine articles" and consumer purchase decisions.
− TV advertisement: The p-value of 0.583 implies that there is no significant association between "TV advertisement" and consumer purchase decisions.
− Brand reputation: The p-value of 0.163 implies that there is no significant association between "brand reputation" and consumer purchase decisions.
− Social media: The p-value of 0.004 for the "social media" digital touchpoint indicates a statistically significant association between this touchpoint and consumer purchase decisions, showing that social media plays a relevant role in influencing customer decisions to purchase premium hair products.
− Influencer reviews: The p-value of less than 0.001 for the "influencer review" digital touchpoint indicates a statistically significant association between this touchpoint and consumer purchase decisions, showing that influencer marketing plays a relevant role in influencing customer decisions to purchase premium hair products.
− Celebrity mentions: The p-value of 0.008 for the "celebrity mentions" digital touchpoint indicates a statistically significant association between this touchpoint and consumer

purchase decisions, showing that influencer (celebrity) marketing plays a relevant role in influencing customer decisions to purchase premium hair products.

- Website: The p-value of 0.097 means that the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, therefore there is not enough significant evidence to conclude that there is an association between "website" and consumer purchase decisions. Suggesting that websites may not play a relevant role in influencing consumer purchase decision.

- Online ads: The p-value of 0.481 implies that there is no significant association between "online ads" and consumer purchase decisions.

- Online reviews: The p-value of less than 0.001 for the "online reviews" digital touchpoint indicates a statistically significant association between this touchpoint and consumer purchase decisions, showing that online reviews play a relevant role in influencing customer decisions to purchase premium hair products.

Figure 34: Contingency table and Chi-square test analysing impact of digital touchpoints on consumers purchasing decisions

		Value	df	p-value
Friends and family	X^2	6.871	4	0.143
	N	138		
Hairdressers	X^2	1.578	4	0.813
	N	138		
Magazine articles	X^2	2.587	4	0.629
	N	138		
TV advertisement	X^2	1.948	3	0.583
	N	138		
Brand reputation	X^2	6.522	4	0.163
	N	138		
Social media	X^2	15.422	4	0.004
	N	138		
Influencer reviews	X^2	22.514	4	< 0.001
	N	138		
Celebrity mentions	X^2	13.907	4	0.008
	N	138		
Website	X^2	7.845	4	0.097
	N	138		
Online ads	X^2	3.482	4	0.481
	N	138		
Online reviews	X^2	24.847	4	< 0.001
	N	138		

Source: Own work.

Based on the Chi-Square Test findings, I can confirm that out of tested physical and digital touchpoints, the analysis provides sufficient evidence that influencer (celebrity) marketing, social media and online reviews play a relevant role in influencing consumer purchase decisions for premium hair products. While for digital advertising there is a potential trend

of association between "purchase of premium hair products" and "online ads", the evidence for a significant relationship is not strong.

6 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 360-DEGREE DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR BRAND AUTHENTIC BEAUTY CONCEPT

Based on the empirical finding, case study, employee interviews and questioner with customers, I have developed a comprehensive 360-degree digital marketing strategy for the brand Authentic Beauty Concept, to support the brand in elevating their current digital strategy, help the brand create a strong relationship with their community and creating consistent messaging across all relevant digital touchpoints.

6.1 Objective, Goals, Strategic Priorities, and Measures (OGSM)

The key objective is to position the brand as the number one authentic and purpose-driven community brand in the category, driving sustainable growth, premiumization for the customer base, deeply connecting with customers and brand awareness through aggressive digital strategy and influencer endorsements and advocates. All components of OGSM are presented in Figure 35.

The first goal is to globally prioritize brand awareness, employing a full-funnel digital advertising approach, keeping the balance in mind based on local market needs and supporting local conversions. Focus on expanding reach and engagement growth with end consumers instead of just follower count due to changing social media dynamics. The second goal is to create a seamless brand experience online to offline (O2O) ensuring a consistent brand experience. The third goal is cultivating strong community relationships with the target audience through social media channels by creating two-way communication with customers, making them active participants in product development and relevant content development. The fourth goal is creating organic performance-driven content per target group and dedicated media-optimized content while utilizing digital advertising effectively. The fifth goal is community building by collaborating with influential celebrities and influencers to help create a powerful and approachable connection with our consumers and enhance the brand's awareness and credibility, capturing the attention of a wider audience.

Based on employees' interview findings and customer questionnaire findings referring to TikTok as a frequently used social media channel, with a mean of 3.9, there is a need for a new TikTok channel. Therefore, the first strategic priority is to add a new global channel to the social media channel mix, leveraging TikTok´s explosive global reach while expanding into younger target audiences and geographical boundaries. As research findings show that celebrity influencers play a relevant role in influencing customer decisions to purchase premium hair products while increasing engagement rate and reach, the second strategic

priority is building credibility and trust within the end consumer target group by leveraging the strong trust the celebrity and influencers hold with their followers by seamlessly integrating the product into their narrative, leading to enhanced campaign effectiveness and reputation. Due to a lack in the current strategy of reporting, the third strategic priority is to create a monthly content reporting shared with a full team to support the creation of performance-driving content. The fourth is to support the D2C local markets with a new strategic conversion-driven approach. The last strategic priority is globally steered media activations allowing for flexible strategy and data-driven decision-making based on real-time performance metrics to maximize impact.

Key measures are increasing reach by 10%, keeping the CPM of the priority campaigns under 0.50 €, keeping the engagement rate above 2.5% on Instagram and above 5% on TikTok, gaining 100,000 likes on TikTok, launching a global celebrity campaign with dedicated media optimized assets.

Figure 35: OGSM for Authentic Beauty Concept

Objective	Position the brand as the number 1 authentic and purpose-driven community brand, driving sustainable growth, premiumization for customer base, deeply connecting with customers and brand awareness				
Goals	Globally prioritize brand awareness, employing a full-funnel digital advertising approach	Seamless brand experience O2O ensuring a consistent brand experience	Strong community relationships with the target audience	Organic performance-driven content per target group	Community building with collaborating with influential celebrity and influencers
Strategic Priorities	– Add a new global channel to the social media channel mix, leveraging TikTok´s explosive global reach – Create credibility for the brand with celebrity and influencers by seamlessly integrating product into their narrative – Create a monthly content reporting shared with full team to support creation of performance-driving – Support the D2C markets with new strategic conversion driven approach – Globally steered media activations allowing for flexible strategy and data-driven decision-making to maximize impact				
Measures	Increasing reach by 10%	CPM under 0.50 €	Engagement rate on Instagram above 2.5%	Gaining 100 000 likes on TikTok	Launching a global celebrity campaign with dedicated media assets

Source: Own work.

6.2   Target Group

Brand and customer archetypes help us build a stronger connection to the customers, a stronger emotional relationship with them, build brand awareness, and increase conversion (Woodside et al., 2010). Based on 12 brand archetypes the brand Authentic Beauty Concept´s first archetype would be the Lover, as the brand portrays preimmunises, indulgence and self-care. Second would be the Creator as it supports expertise, connection of community, innovation, and artistic expression. (Mark & Pearson, 2001)

Therefore, the key to building an effective digital strategy lies in understanding your key customer. According to employee interviews and case study findings, the key target groups for the brand are hairdressers and end consumers. Therefore, the focus should be customer centricity while building strong connections with premium hairstylists and conscious premium beauty end consumers, reaching a younger & beauty-savvy end consumer target

group, but keeping the core target group up to 45 years in mind. Based on the insights from the questioner answers, I have built 2 customer archetypes:

Hairdressers: Carefully selecting premium hair experts

- Age: 25−50
- Gender: Man and Woman
- Experience Level: Mid to high level of experience in the industry.
- Interests: Premium lifestyle approach, looks for inspiration in fashion and trends, premium beauty, sustainability, clean beauty, interested in vegan and natural products and on top of recent innovations.
- Behaviour: Has passion for hair care and styling, is an expert in its field, appreciates proven performance and seeks clean and sustainable options, consistently following trends and seeking new opportunities to learn, wants to create a mindful experience for their clients, influenced by fashion and beauty experts and wants to be part of a bigger community.
- Possible job titles: Hair salon owner, hairstylist, hair specialist, session hairstylist, scalp specialist, styling assistant, hair salon manager, salon owner, hairstylist, assistant hairstylist, hair & make-up artist, hair colourist, hair cutting.
- Communication channels: Digi savvy, strong social media ambitions, and building a strong community on Instagram.

End consumers: Conscious premium beauty seekers

- Age: 18−50
- Women
- Income medium to high.
- Education: Bachelor's degree and above.
- Lifestyle: Urban lifestyle and indulges in premium experiences, high-end premium minimalist, values self-care, living in her authentic values, mindful of her choices, always chooses quality over quantity.
- Interests: Fashion, premium beauty, beauty brands, design, yoga, pilates, art, sustainability, health & wellness, facial, skin, scalp care, cosmetology, beauty salons, hair care, vegan and natural products, and well-being.
- Behaviour: Engaged shopper, invests in premium self-care, enjoys salon treatments, conscious shopper, and seeks quality, digital savvy, highly influenced by lifestyle and beauty influencers and loyal to brands she loves.
- Brands she loves: Elle, Harper´s Bazaar, Vogue, InStyle, Jil Sander, Acne Studio, Edited, Closed, Celine, Isabel Marrant, Kérastase, Davines, Aveda and Kevin Murphy
- Possible job titles: fashion designer, stylist, editor, sculptor, pilates instructor, marketer.
- Communication channels: primary Instagram, conducts research about brands online and loves to receive expert recommendations from hairdressers.

6.3 Brand Persona

A convincing brand persona is key for impactful branding and the strength of the brand. It creates a recognizable and memorable character that shapes an emotional link with the customers, ensuring consistent two-sided communication. Customers always resonate more with a consistent and honest brand persona, developing loyalty and trust. Usually, brand personas create emotional connection by tackling the unexpressed needs of the customers, creating a strong bond and relatable storytelling (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010).

Based on employee insights and key repetitive messages, like authentic hair, sustainability, mindful experience, community, sustainability, pure formulas, carefully selected ingredients, and vegan formulations, I have elevated the brand persona that presents the main character of the Authentic Beauty Concept.

A woman with authentic character in her mid-thirties, open-minded, conscious buyer, modern woman of today, not exchangeable, gives the edge, lives authentically to herself, and knows what she wants. She has finished her master's degree and has a higher level of income. Always making conscious decisions that fit her urban and vegan lifestyle. She is interested in beauty, clean eating, fashion, design, art, museums, photography, lifestyle blogs, and is digitally driven. Always eating fresh locally sourced food, with international flare in trending food places. Less is more for her as she chooses quality over quantity, loving natural clean aesthetics and pure beauty. She likes honest conversation and international lifestyle and beauty magazines. She prefers a natural look and likes to wear reduced luxury in and effortless cool style, a Scandinavian minimalistic look with a pastel colour palette. She does yoga and goes to art shows. She is a fashion and beauty editor. She loves working with creative people, in different surroundings, like café houses, at home, while travelling. She has high expertise in her job field but does not only focus on work but has additional creative outlets, she loves creating art. In her free time, she loves exploring and travelling, playing tennis, doing yoga, researching local hideouts, and avoiding overcrowded places. She always takes time for her self-care beauty routine, where she likes to test new innovations. She cares about making sustainable lifestyle choices and cares about nature, this is why she is interested in brands with purpose. She loves to shop in premium beauty department stores, online, and loves to support smaller local businesses. She loves pastel colours. To help you visualise the brand persona see Appendix 4.

6.4 Key Digital Touchpoints

Based on the case study, employee insights from the interview and consumer insights from the questionnaire, it is crucial to understand what are the key digital touchpoints that are relevant to the brand. With the lines beginning to blur between online and offline, it is crucial to understand the key components of 360-degree digital strategy. The communication between different digital touchpoints and offline touchpoints, should be seamless and have a consistent massaging, so the consumer experience is convenient and informative. In most

cases, customers will use multiple digital touchpoints in parallel. It is important to understand that all companies and brands will not have the same 360-degree digital strategy components, due to priority and strategic focus.

According to my research, the most emphasised digital components mentioned by consumers and employees were social media with 81% of customers using social media, influencer marketing and online reviews, while some others were mentioned as well.

For Authentic Beauty Concept, the key digital touchpoints are social media, content marketing and UGC, digital advertising, influencer marketing, website, CRM, SEO, SEA, AI testing, e-commerce partners, D2C with email marketing and analytics, while for the brand VR and AR are currently not relevant. This also aligns with the literature review from the first part of the thesis, except for e-commerce and D2C. Based on responses in the interview all emphasized the importance of digital advertising and social media which are the key components of the brand.

6.5   Social Media Marketing

Social media as visually driven platforms are one of the key components of a brand's 360-degree digital strategy. The key social media channels are Instagram and a launch of a new channel on TikTok, as according to questionnaire findings customers use Instagram very frequently and TikTok frequently. When developing content for each channel the channel-first approach needs to be used, meaning content should not be recycled for other platforms.

As brands want to move closer to end consumers, Instagram is a perfect platform to directly connect to them, therefore target groups should be split into 80% end consumer communication and 20% hairdresser communication. For this platform trending formats, like Reels, need to be leveraged, as it is a visually driven platform. The content should focus on Influencer content, UGC and community-building content. As the current structure of global and 24 local channels is quite complex and inefficient, as most have had low growth in recent years, the closer of all local Instagram accounts under 10,000 followers is needed. The followers need to be informed about the consolidation of the account into the global account, post and story explaining that the brand is consolidating accounts and encouraging them to continue to follow global accounts. Local content will be available to upload to the global channel, creating a global community on one channel, which allows counties to focus their efforts on advertising and content creation.

The launch of a new global TikTok channel is needed. No local accounts should be open as a global presence needs to be built through one account. The focus of the channel are younger end consumers, meaning the key communication goal of this channel is 100% end-consumer communication. 50% of the content should be created by TikTok creators, to create a word-of-mount feeling and build credibility on the channel. Starting with 3 assets per week in the first 2 months, then continuing to build to everyday posting. The key to success is supporting

content with a digital advertising budget, to make sure the content is reaching the target audience. Leveraging TikTok ads with ad-dedicated content that aligns the style and preferences of the platform needs to be used. Localized content should be gradually introduced to build a global community feel and show the diversity aspect of the brand. Channel copy, as it is not a key focus of TikTok, should be very short and in English, to start building community and to ensure a consistent global brand message reaching a broader audience and building a strong foundation. To support the local countries and their community growth use of trending local hashtags that connect to the content is needed.

Facebook is a channel that should receive less focus, especially regarding organic content, the primary focus of the platform should be targeted ad campaigns, as according to case study findings this channel is not seeing any recent growth in engagement or page likes. As the complexity of the local and global channels is similar to Instagram, all local channels need to be combined into the global channel, to increase the efficiency of the resources used. As YouTube is a centralised video hub and differs from META platforms and TikTok, therefore the communication should be hairdresser-centric, meaning the target group is 100% hairdressers. One global account approach should be used, with no local accounts being opened.

YouTube is a great platform for exploring ads, like Smart TV ads, Bumper ads and geo-targeted ads. As it is an edutainment hub, content should focus on education for hairdressers, delivering premium educational content focussing on salon-relevant inspiration, e.g., from fashion week to high street with Anna Cofone, from back bar to business with Michelle Tanner. A monthly content plan needs to be developed, where at least 3 videos need to be posted per week to start building community and growing subscribers. In each end screen, a Call-To-Action button needs to be integrated, to support subscriber growth. Community management on the platform needs to be set up, where the community manager checks everyday comments, and every comment is replied to in 24 hours.

On Pinterest the primary focus should be the end-consumer target group, focusing on supporting SEO, currently, the channel is not being leveraged, and all titles and descriptions need to be SEO-optimized and linked to the website. A consistent posting schedule needs to be set up for daily posts. Content dedicated to the most searched hairstyles and brand products should be in focus. Shopping integration connecting to D2C needs to be integrated to increase conversions.

The overview of the social media strategy for Authentic Beauty Concept and its strategic approach for each channel is visually presented in Figure 36.

Figure 36: Authentic Beauty Concept social media channel strategy

Brand awareness
- Visually appealing content
- Inspiration
- Targeted campaigns
- Community building & UGC
- Leveraging new formats

New global channel
- Entertainment & inspiration
- Unpolished, engaging video content
- D2C + e-retailing campaigns
- Hoping on trends
- Ad campaigns

Targeted ad campaigns

CHANNEL-FIRST THINKING
No content reusing from other social media channels

Inspiration & SEO
- UGC
- Product benefits
- Pinterest shopping connection to D2C

Edutainment hub
- High quality, informative & engaging video content
- Digital education, tutorials & lives

Source: Own work.

6.6   Content Marketing

With content marketing the primary emphasis needs to be on focused communication, to maximize impact and reduce message dilution, carefully crafting content that aligns with the 4 content pillars and the brand's key messages. According to findings, 36% of consumers very frequently engage with customer testimonials, 52% engage with hairdresser expert tips, and 27% with influencer reviews. Therefore, one of the key components for content marketing should be generating UGC, influencer and advocate content to help the brand build authenticity, trust, and create a sense of community.

Content should be performance-focused, leveraging data insights to track the effectiveness of content and optimize it accordingly, ultimately leading to community growth and brand equity building. As the brand has 2 target groups, there needs to be content developed per target group to enhance audience engagement. As the digital landscape is undergoing constant changes, fast adaptation to content trends is needed to keep content engaging and new, the brand can achieve this by actively monitoring industry trends and experimenting with emerging formats. The important point of content should be quality and consistency, maintaining a consistent brand voice and focusing on producing quality content that is visually appealing, informative, entertaining, and according to global social corporate identity. Additionally, content should be developed based on the platform's needs, as most content for social media is primarily mobile-first, content should be also filmed in most cases

with mobile in mind. To forge deeper connections with the target group, emotional connection and storytelling should be included, sharing relatable stories, and highlighting the human side of our brand. Based on interview participants' responses and survey responses the key communication topics should be community (35%) – showing UGC, customer testimonials, advocate tips, advocate hair tutorials and influencer reviews. The next one is product and campaign focus (35%) – talking about product benefits and celebrity collaborations. Continuing with sustainability topics (10%) – continuing to build the perception of a sustainable and conscious brand, mindful services (7%) and carefully selected salons (5%) – to build the professional heritage of the brand. And last behind the scenes (5%) and fashion shots (3%) – to build brand edginess. The overview is shown in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Communication pillars of Authentic Beauty Concept
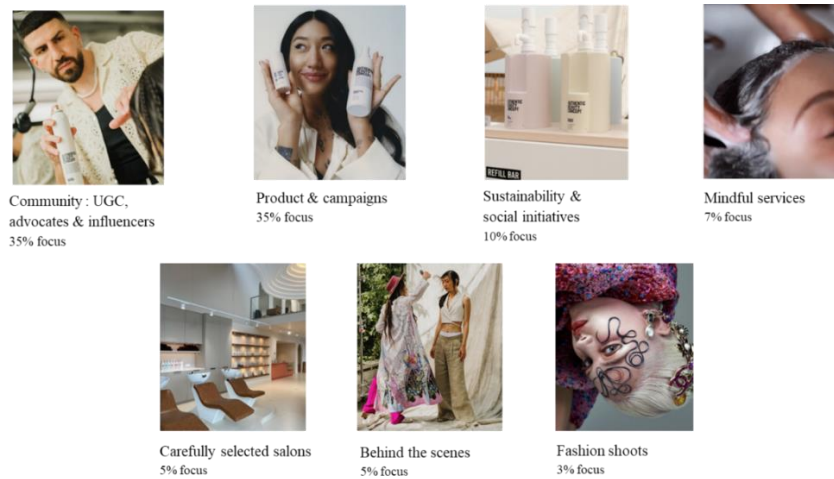
Source: Own work based on Authentic Beauty Concept (n.d.).

6.7   Marketing Automation

To support marketing automation and optimization of resources, Sprinklr should continue to be used for content posting, community management, campaign tracking and gathering data to generate automated reports to analyse performance.

6.8   Digital Advertising

Even the most remarkable content needs a strategic push to reach the right target audience, without allocating an adequate ad budget, it may not reach the intended audience or achieve the desired impact. According to research findings, there is a lack of digital investment and digital expertise in local markets, therefore local markets be recharged at the beginning of the first quarter and the beginning of the third quarter, to create a globally centralized steered budget for priority campaigns of the year. Creating more successful advertising campaigns by leveraging flexibility, higher budget, high-quality media placements, targeting, and

ability to respond and adapt for maximum impact and amplifying campaign visibility on a global scale. Campaigns should use adapting strategies and continuously refine them based on real-time data and performance metrics to drive better results. Due to the low traceability of local media activation for smaller digital advertising investments global investment tracker is key, which allows for effective tracking and analysis of the investments made in digital advertising across different markets worldwide.

One of the key objectives is brand awareness, but a holistic global media view is needed, countries should consider the entire customer journey, full-funnel approach, from awareness to conversion. Ad assets should use a video and mobile-first approach, optimizing video content for various formats and devices, especially mobile devices, to maximize reach and impact, as the research findings suggest that this kind of ad generates higher engagement and conversion. While optimizing assets for media performance by leveraging a data-driven creative approach and focusing on commercially telling the story to maximize performance. Ad assets need to adapt to local needs, meaning using local copy to resonate with local markets.

Conducting A/B testing of creative's right from the campaign start is crucial, this approach allows brands to allocate resources towards better-performing content, ad format and massaging, optimizing budget allocation for optimal results. Keeping in mind retargeting, for example, target a video with tips for curly hair to a very broad target group and then re-target based on engagement and view rate. SEA increases online visibility and allows reaching target audience searching for products. Therefore, keyword research needs to be done, bidding on the most relevant ones. Ad copy should be optimized, especially with conversion campaigns with a CTA. Additionally, integration of pixels into the website and UTM links is needed. The key objectives and ad channels relevant to Authentic Beauty Concept are presented in Figure 38.

Figure 38: Focus channels and targets for Authentic Beauty Concept advertising

	Paid Social		Referrals	Paid Search & Performance Max
Objective	AWARENESS: Branding, inspiration, reach, community growth CONVERSION: D2C	AWARENESS: Edutainment, reach CONVERSION: Global campaigns liking to D2C	AWARENESS: Create word of mouth and credibility CONVERSION: Discount codes with linking to D2C	CONVERSION: Lead generation, expanding the customer base, building a target audience, selling products
Target Group	20% hairdressers 80% end consumers	100% hairdressers 100% end consumers only for campaigns	50% hairdressers 50% end consumers	50% hairdressers 50% end consumers
Ads	AWARENESS: Vertical video ads, dynamic CONVERSION: Link ads, carousel ads, lead ads	Inspirational bumper ads, in-Stream ads	Brand dark ads, whitelisting, video testimonials and product usage	SEA search ads, ad extensions, responsive display ads, strong CTA

Source: Own work.

6.9 Influencer Marketing

Recognizing the need to compensate for lower organic reach, the brand needs to work with influencers as it helps create a close community feeling, social proof, word-of-mouth feel, and maximize reach potential therefore getting closer to the end consumer target group. As there is a big demand for content, influencers help to fill that gap and create standing-out content. People rather follow people than brands nowadays and as findings show 45% of customers use influencer reviews to conduct research before making a purchase. Therefore, authentic integration of products into influencers' everyday lives creates credibility for the brand. The influencer marketing process starts with influencer selection, continues with global check, contacting influencers, content planning, negotiation, briefing and finishes with reporting and evaluation, as shown in Figure 39.

Figure 39: Authentic Beauty concept proposed Influencer marketing process
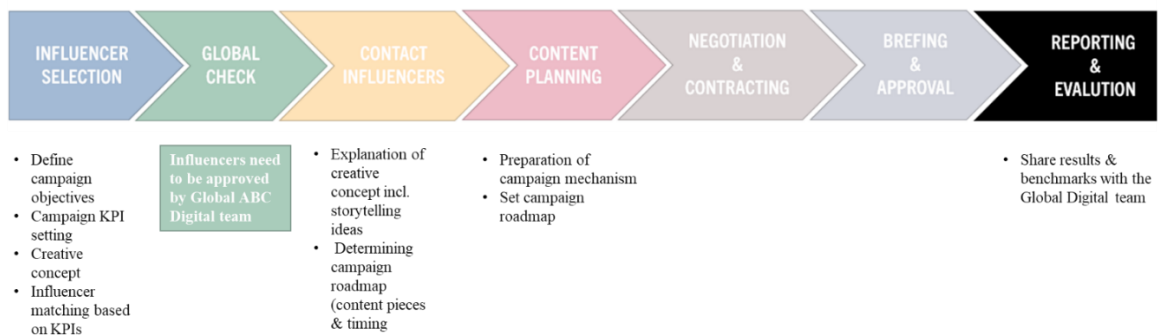
Source: Own work.

When it comes to the size of influencers opening the communication with at least 3 medium-sized influencers is needed (50,000–500,000 followers), then continuing communication with more micro influencers (10,000–50,0000 followers). Selecting influencers can affect the overall result of the campaign, therefore they need to fit into the authentic community of the brand. First, the brand needs to check the quantitative data of influencers, for example number of followers, reach, engagement rate, and % of followers located in the market. Continuing with qualitative checks such as: do they have beautiful hair, does personality match the brand, are they a storyteller, do they fit the 4 pillars of the brand, does the language they use seem okay and what kind of content do they post?

After it is important to again look at the quantitative data calculating estimated CPM based on the pricing and then renegotiate until the brand benchmark is met. When deciding on an influencer it is important to think of long-term contracts to build a trust icon. The key to success is measuring with KPIs, enabling a more data-driven influencer marketing approach, key KPIs should be reach, impressions, reach-follower ratio, number of likes, number of comments, engagement rate and CPM. Influencers should also be part of the D2C strategy as they have as they can be used for conversion purposes as well as brand awareness, therefore influencers should link to D2C eShop and promotional codes with a 10% discount

should be set up. Preferred content should always be video content, focusing on how-to videos, showing the hair care routine in the bathroom, showing products in use while mentioning the benefits of the products, before and afters, and unboxing of the PR packages. All videos should be dynamic, high-quality, premium and playful.

6.10   Website

The goal of the website is to create an enhanced user experience, wherever the consumer is directed from. I found out most of the users come from mobile, so it is crucial to optimize the website for mobile users. The layout needs to be responsive and easily navigable. According to questioner findings, product pages need to be optimized by adding hair care tutorials for each product as well a review tool where all reviews regarding the product are shown and allows you to add a review. Additionally, all local websites need to integrate a Buy Now button to support in conversion. A new additional feature should be added to the website to increase engagement, and personalized recommendations for each user based on a quiz and customer reviews. To ensure the website increases visibility, optimization of content for search engines is needed, which will improve discovery by the target group. Performance is key; therefore, all videos need to be optimized for fast load time. Tracking the traffic and data is crucial therefore monthly website report needs to be created to support optimization in the future. Content updates need to be optimized focusing on new product innovation and campaigns, smaller topics should be only part of social media communication.

6.11   SEO

Search Engine Optimization is for increased visibility and tracking. According to the findings, 58% choose search engines to conduct research before making a purchase, showing it is important to have a high ranking in search engines. Therefore, a keyword list must be created with high-value words connected to the brand, industry, target audience and its products and benefits. SEO optimization pilot needs to be started by checking the pages and suggesting edits to existing content and which part of the page should be updated, like metadata, body text, and headline structure. Additionally, checking if new pages are needed to help support SEO is key. Regular keyword performance checks need to be part of monthly reporting, allowing for optimization.

6.12   CRM and Email Marketing

CRM is key for leveraging centralized customer data, it helps the brand understand its customers better while enhancing the conversation with customers leading to customer loyalty. CRM and email marketing should be a key part of the D2C strategy as they enable

targeted communication, create personalized offers, and continue customer engagement. Therefore, the launch of both is needed.

6.13   Online Public Relations

Online PR is important to build positive sentiment, therefore effective community management and crisis management are extremely important. The benchmark should be that all comments, messages are replied to in less than 24 hours. Additionally, crisis messages need to be replied to and provided with a solution in less than 4 hours, this should always be a priority. Here dedicated community managers are key to success, having 2 community managers that alternated every 12 hours. Additionally, PR boxes supporting a message encouraging content creation should be sent out for every new campaign and product launch. Finally, all events need to have a digital presence and all behind-the-scenes content should be shared on social media, like backstage action from Fashion Week with brand advocates, to continue to build excitement and community.

6.14   E-commerce Partners and D2C

For conversion objectives, creating strong relationships with online e-commerce partners that align with brand values is important to create a smooth shopping experience to generate conversion and support brand awareness. E-commerce partners should be premium-selected retailers with social following that cater to the brand's target audience, for example, Sephora, My Theresa, and Niche Beauty. It is important to keep in mind the premium image of the brand therefore dedicated e-commerce content packages need to be developed and need to be continuously updated based on key relevant activations: new campaigns, new product launches, Christmas seasonal activation, and Valentine's activation. All e-commerce partners need to be regularly reviewed, to make sure the premium image and global content are being used. As e-commerce partners are also active on social platforms dedicated ads focused on conversion need to be developed to support e-commerce partners in executing advertising campaigns.

When it comes to D2C the key goal is creating a professional and unique online shopping experience to engage end consumers as it helps to expand awareness and drive conversion. D2C is a great platform for Gaining data insights by getting directly in touch with end consumers and tracking their buying journey. For D2C a full-funnel approach to advertising is crucial, therefore optimizing the digital campaign for brand awareness and product sales should be included, as shown in Figure 40.

Key priorities are paid media activation, which is relevant to drive traffic, lead generation and retargeting of users with interest in brand and buying, focusing on paid social, paid search, performance max and referrals. The second priority is influencer marketing to maximize the reach potential and drive conversion successful implementation of influencer

campaigns focusing on promotional offers. The third priority is D2C dedicated communication, meaning developing content with conversion focus and CTA, for example, product benefits with the "shop now" button or how to use a product with the "learn more" button.

Figure 40: Authentic Beauty Concept D2C key priorities
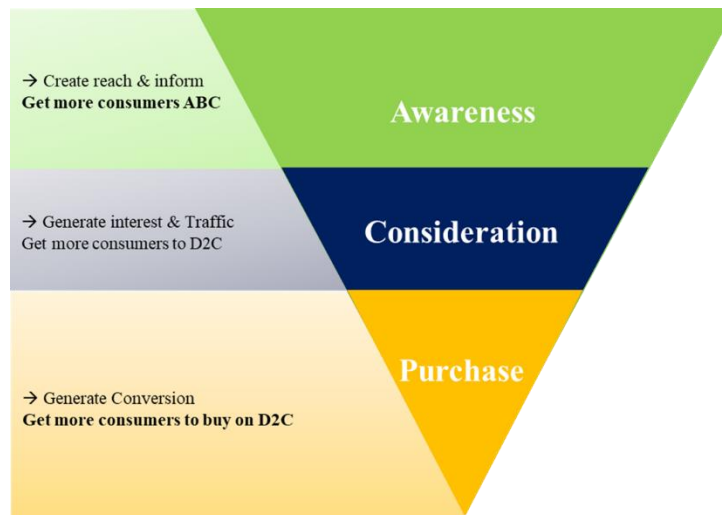
Source: Own work.

6.15   Data and Analytics

Data and analytics are key for optimizing and maximizing the impact of the brand, therefore monthly reporting on content performance, website performance, influencer marketing and digital campaign is key. In the Sprinklr system the upgrade to ad campaign data is needed and should be invested in, to also provide more accuracy to data. Implementation of UTM and META Pixels on the website is a priority to gain data on user journey tracking and create retargeting opportunities. Setting up D2C tracking allowing for conversion tracking will help with ROI analysis. Based on the interview responses and case study key measures on the website are pageviews, number of users, bounce rate, and duration of session. On social media reach, engagement rate and follower growth should be in focus. For advertising campaigns, CPC, CPM, and sales of products are the crucial measures. For e-commerce partners is sales, CPA, repurchase rate and CRM registrations, CTR, and engaged customers.

6.16   Artificial Intelligence Testing

As AI is still a new tool, testing is needed. Therefore, an optimal opportunity is to test SEO keyword search and translation of articles for implementation on local web pages. Therefore, an AI tool should be utilized to prepare the local transactions, followed by a quality check of the translation by local markets, to see if this process offers additional optimization of resources.

7 DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, the first objective of this master thesis is to define the concept of 360-degree digital marketing strategy and to create a holistic overview of all components, based on an in-depth literature review, a case study, an interview with employees and a survey with customers.

The second objective was to develop examples and practical suggestions to help marketers develop 360-degree digital marketing strategies that will help them engage with their target audience, build brand equity, create holistic massaging through multiple digital touchpoints and increase sales.

The research was guided by two main questions. The first question "What is the importance of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy and its key components and touchpoints?" was underpinned by the hypothesis "Consumers frequently conduct online research before purchasing premium hair products", confirming the relevance of a strong online presence and a comprehensive digital strategy in an ever-growing digital environment. By testing the hypothesis, I was able to confirm that consumers frequently research online before buying premium hair products.

The second question, "What are the most effective digital touchpoints to include in a 360-degree digital marketing strategy and how should they be integrated for optimal performance?" was supported by the hypothesis "Digital touchpoints such as social media, digital advertising, influencer marketing and online reviews play an important role in influencing consumer purchase decisions", as it is crucial to understand where to focus efforts and what are the most important touchpoints that should be part of the digital strategy to better achieve the company's goals. Based on the hypothesis testing, I can confirm that the analysis of the physical and digital touchpoints tested provides sufficient evidence that influencer marketing (celebrities), social media and online reviews play an important role in influencing consumers buying decisions for premium hair products, suggesting that these are important touchpoints that should be included in the 360-degree digital marketing strategy.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

There is a large amount of research literature on digital marketing, but most of them do not define the concept of 360-degree digital marketing. This shows that more than ever, well-defined and customer-centric 360-degree digital marketing is needed to drive growth, profitability and minimise message dilution. Therefore, this thesis contributes to define and create a theoretical model for the concept of 360-degree digital marketing and provide an overview of all its components. The thesis addresses the concepts of marketing strategy, customer journey and digital marketing.

Firstly, this thesis shows that digital marketing involves the strategic use of new technologies to optimise communication efforts, with the aim of improving understanding of customers and aligning with their unique needs. It not only includes online channels, but also extends to offline channels and the use of traditional marketing methods in a digital format.

Secondly, this thesis defines 360-degree digital marketing as a comprehensive digital marketing strategy that uses technology and innovative approaches to create value, generate visibility, build community, support conversion, and engage with customers at every stage of their digital customer journey, keeping the customer at the centre of the process. Achieving this requires skilful collaboration between traditional touchpoints and digital touchpoints fostering a seamless customer journey. This entails variety of digital touchpoints that complement and support one another, creating a cohesive customer experience throughout the purchase and post-purchase phases of customer journey. Since not all digital strategies are right for all businesses, it is critical to prioritise the digital touchpoints that contribute to the overall goals of the business and achieve maximum impact.

Thirdly, it includes an overview of all relevant touchpoints and components that should be part of a 360-degree digital marketing strategy when managers develop a comprehensive digital strategy that is universally applicable to digital marketing efforts. These touchpoints are foundation to any digital marketing strategy and can be adapted to different companies and industries. These touchpoints are:

− SEO, which is the optimisation of a website to achieve a higher ranking on search engine result pages, resulting in increased organic traffic to the website.
− Social media marketing is a cost-effective digital marketing touchpoint that uses social media platforms to interact with customers to build brand visibility, drive targeted traffic, eWOM, SEO and increase sales.
− Online PR involves achieving coverage in digital publications, blogs and other content-based websites, similar to PR, but in the online space.
− Content marketing is considered an effective strategy for building brand equity, engaging and fostering customer trust. UGC is a powerful tool for companies to increase engagement with their audience and can be used to create valuable content for marketing purposes.
− Email marketing is a strategy for sending, potentially personalised, promotional messages by email to potential customers.
− Digital advertising encompasses various strategies such as affiliate marketing, influencer marketing, SEA and PPC, display and programmatic advertising, remarketing, native advertising, video advertising and viral marketing. These touchpoints are currently seen as critical touchpoints to improve business performance and visibility, especially when it comes to influencer marketing.
− Website marketing is the optimisation of a company's website to drive traffic and achieve digital marketing goals.

- Mobile optimisation is the optimisation of websites for mobile users.
- Marketing automation is software that automates basic marketing processes.
- CRM is a combination of technology and business processes to understand target customers by studying who they are, how they behave and what their preferences are.
- AR, VR marketing and Metaverse refers to the domain that extends beyond the boundaries of the physical world where digital users interact with each other and with brands.
- AI-powered marketing uses AI technologies to automate tasks, write copy, create content, analyse data, optimize campaigns, translate and create better customer experiences.
- Data and analytics-driven marketing is gathering and analysing data to better understand consumer behaviour, helping managers make data driven decisions and personalized marketing strategies.

Lastly, while this theoretical model and its touchpoints remain consistent, it can be adapted to the unique characteristics of each business. For example, a brand like Authentic Beauty Concept might prioritise Instagram as a visually driven platform and influencer partnerships, while a B2B company might prioritise CRM to track sales and provide personalised recommendations.

7.2 Managerial Implications

This master thesis provides an overview and guiding examples based on case study of brand, inputs from employees and consumers for marketers to help marketers develop a comprehensive and effective 360-degree digital marketing strategy that drives sustainable growth and profitability. It helps marketers identify the most effective touchpoints and tactics to create a cohesive and engaging customer journey that drives brand awareness and conversion for their business. In doing so, managers must be careful to stay informed of current trends and keep the unique characteristics of their business and customers in mind when prioritising the digital touchpoints that are critical to their digital strategy.

To effectively develop and implement a 360-degree digital marketing strategy, it is important to first conduct a comprehensive digital inventory of the current digital strategy to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company. This involves looking at all digital touchpoints currently in use, comparing them to the 360-degree digital marketing strategy overview and assessing where there are gaps in the current digital strategy. Detailed alignment between departments is then required to build a consistent OGSM structure that serves as a foundation and supports the overarching vision for the digital strategy. To develop an effective digital strategy, it is important to understand key target customers, their behaviour and digital journey. Next, managers should prioritize digital touchpoints based on company's and target audience's goals. The digital marketing strategy should be flexible enough to adapt to new technological innovations, changing consumer behaviour and

industry changes. Table 10 provides managerial recommendations for developing 360-degree digital marketing based on key components.

Table 10: Managerial recommendations

360-degree digital marketing components	Managerial recommendations
Alignment between departments	Managers need to encourage alignment between digital marketing, marketing, sales and other relevant departments, as all departments should have common overarching goal.
OGSM	Building an OGSM structure is critical as it serves as a foundation and supports the overarching vision for the digital strategy. This means that all departments understand what the company is working towards and have a common direction.
Target group and brand persona	Target audiences and brand personas help build a stronger connection with customers, increase brand awareness and sales. When considering target customers, managers should know their age, gender, income, education, lifestyle, interests, behaviour, brands they love, professions and the communication channels they use. Additionally, managers should develop a compelling brand personality because it creates a recognisable and memorable character that creates an emotional connection and trust with customers.
Key digital touchpoints	Since customers often use multiple digital touchpoints simultaneously, managers must create a seamless O2O customer journey. By using the provided overview, they can determine which components of their 360-degree digital strategy should be prioritised and in strategic focus for their business.
SMM	Nowadays, social media is one of the most important digital touchpoints, as it allows two-way interaction with customers and strong community building. Therefore, platforms should provide daily content and community management to build continuous engagement with customers. Social media activities should align with brand values to build credibility and strong relationships with the target audience. Managers should take a channel-first approach, meaning content should not be reused from other platforms. Current formats must be used and tested to keep up with the ever-changing digital world. They should also continuously analyse channel success, focusing on engagement rates and reach.

360-degree digital marketing components	Managerial recommendations
Content marketing	Content should focus on customer testimonials, influencer content, UGC, and community-building content. Managers should be performance-driven and use data to track the effectiveness of content and optimise it accordingly. Therefore, they need to actively monitor industry trends and experiment with new formats without losing sight of quality and consistency. Content should be developed based on the requirements of the platform. Since most content is primarily intended for mobile devices, content should in most cases also be created with mobile format in mind.
Digital advertising	From awareness to conversion, managers should create dedicated messages for each stage of the funnel. Ads should be video and mobile-first to maximize reach and engagement. Managers should tailor advertising to local needs, using local copy to resonate in local markets. I recommend using A/B testing to allocate budgets towards better-performing content to maximize budget potential. Additionally, SEA should be used to reach prospects who search for products online. For a greater impact, campaigns should incorporate flexible strategies to continuously refine based on real-time data.
Influencer marketing	Managers should include influencers in their strategy to increase brand visibility, generate word-of-mouth and build credibility. They should select influencers who share the brand's values, as well as they should examine the number of followers, reach, engagement rate, and percentage of followers in the market. It should be focused on video content that highlights product benefits, product reviews, routines, and unboxing experiences.
Website	The website should be a hub for relevant company information, but managers should also keep the sales aspect in mind, therefore conversion features such as the Buy Now button are recommended. To build trust, managers should include customer reviews, which will also improve SEO. Tracking traffic and data is crucial. Therefore, pixels, UTM links and monthly website reports need to be created to support optimisation in the future.
SEO	To support discovery by audience, content should be optimised for search engines. Managers should consistently create SEO-optimized articles and create keyword lists with high-quality words related to the company's industry, competitors, brand, target audience, and product benefits. This will improve the search ranking and bring more visitors to the website.

To be continued.

360-degree digital marketing components	Managerial recommendations
Mobile optimization	As most of the traffic on the website is from mobile devices, managers need to optimize the website for mobile users. Therefore, the layout needs be responsive and easy to navigate.
Marketing Automatization	Managers should use automation tools for content posting, campaign tracking, community management and automated reports.
CRM and Email marketing	Managers should utilize CRM and email marketing to drive targeted communications, create a personalized user experience and enhance customer loyalty.
Online PR	Managers should have dedicated community managers to build positive sentiment and deal with crisis management. All massages and comments should be addressed in less than 24 hours. They should also consider appropriate online PR outlets.
E-commerce partners	Managers must consciously select and build strong relationships with e-commerce partners that align with brand values to create a seamless shopping experience and generate sales. Specific conversion-focused ads need to be developed to help e-commerce partners execute ad campaigns.
Data and Analytics	Managers need to continuously analyse and monitor performance to refine their digital strategy and adjust campaigns in real time.
AI, VR and AR testing	These are still new technologies, therefore they should be continuously tested. Currently, managers can test AI with content development, copy development, SEO keyword search and translation of articles for implementation on local websites.
Continues learning	Digital marketers must remain informed of the latest trends and developments, therefore, constant trainings and workshops are necessary to re-evaluate which components must be part of digital strategy.

Source: Own work.

7.3   Future Research Directions and Research Limitations

Digital strategy is an ever-evolving field that requires consistent upskilling, as it is crucial to stay informed and carefully evaluate which trends and innovations are worth following when developing it. Therefore, there is no plan that can be consistently used and applied to all companies, but it requires consistent refinement and adaptation. Current potential areas where further research could contribute to the understanding of 360-degree digital strategy is possible implications for AI and AR technology, and how will it affect our daily lives as a consumer, but also as digital managers. These tools are creating optimizations in what we

do in digital marketing, like writing copy, creating content, translation, creating campaign messaging and so much more. Additionally, these tools also support optimizing user experience and creating personalized approaches through digital touchpoints, which will affect the main measures like conversion rate and engagement. Furthermore, the topic of data protection and security is becoming more important with the changing data protection laws, the evolution of cookieless digital world, can impact our understanding of customer behaviour and development of personalized user experience. Connecting to this note, the development of data and analytics is one of the key components to understanding consumers, how methods of measurements will develop, as well as tracking and the accuracy of information are key for digital strategy.

The limitation of this research is the current lack of already-existing literature on the topic of 360-degree digital strategy, as the scope of 360-degree is big and the digital realm is an ever-changing field, there is a possibility that some components were left out. Additionally, the components of CRM, AI, and email marketing could not be analysed in the case study as the brand's digital strategy is currently not focusing on them. When it comes to the survey, a sample questionnaire size of up to 200 participants, cannot represent the full segment of customers therefore research has a moderate level of accuracy. It is important to consider the possibility that participants may have provided answers that were socially accepted rather than completely honest, despite the anonymity of the questionnaire. Furthermore, some of the questions were structured as close-ended questions, limiting the possibility of responses, which may lead to not fully accurate choices of responses.

8   CONCLUSION

The world has drastically changed in the last few years, quickly changing how we live and consume. It is essential to understand that digital marketing is a flexible and ever-evolving discipline that requires constant refining based on what is happening in the market and the changing customer behaviours. The purpose behind actions is key to creating a strong vision for digital strategy. Therefore, static marketing strategies will no longer support the growth of companies. During the after-pandemic life, customer behaviour has drastically shifted, which created a new mobile customer that lives combining a mix of offline and online worlds. Customers now expect a personalised approach and constant engagement with the brands that goes outside the purchasing experience and prolongs the customer's journey. Post-purchase engagement has become key for building community-driven brands. Consequently, the digital and traditional worlds need to collaborate and create a seamless customer experience.

In today's ever-changing landscape, a customer-focused 360-degree digital marketing approach is crucial for growth, profitability, and effective messaging. This strategy leverages technology across various digital touchpoints to engage customers throughout their journey. It involves collaboration with traditional channels, ensuring a seamless customer experience.

Prioritizing the right digital touchpoints is essential for achieving specific company objectives and reaching target audiences effectively. These digital touchpoints are social media marketing, website marketing, SEO, email marketing, online public relations, content marketing and UGC, digital advertising, CRM, mobile optimization, marketing automation, data and analytics, VR and AR, and AI-powered.

Therefore, an overview of 360-degree digital marketing components was developed, based on an in-depth literature review and case study, to support digital marketers in developing a thorough digital marketing strategy that supports effectiveness and growth. Additionally, creating a guiding example by developing a 360-degree digital marketing strategy for the brand Authentic Beauty Concept, providing real-world insights and proposals for effective strategy, that focuses on including key digital touchpoints, brand awareness, and building a community of customers within their target group. It was key to understand the people behind the brand and current strategic approach but also their target customers in order to develop an effective, elevated, and comprehensive 360-degree digital marketing strategy. Thus, development was based on findings from an in-depth literature review, interviews conducted with employees of Henkel, a case study of Authentic Beauty Concept's current strategy, and a customer questionnaire, to get a thorough overview of all necessary digital touchpoints. As Authentic Beauty Concept, is still quite a new brand on the market, the brand was not leveraging all digital touchpoints and missed some potential opportunities for growth, like SEO, SEA, CRM, website optimization, D2C strategy, email marketing, digital marketing, and e-commerce. Employees understand the importance of knowing the market, their target customers, and combining online and offline journeys, but there is still a lack of understanding the significance of digital advertising investment, especially in local markets when it comes to new brands that have brand awareness as a goal. This was kept in mind when developing the digital marketing strategy for the brand, focusing on creating value for the company and helping them be more impactful in their digital touchpoints. As a result, the set goals, and objectives of the master's thesis were successfully attained.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)

Zaradi digitalne transformacije je svet v zadnjih letih doživel velike spremembe. Ta preobrazba je povzročila precejšnje spremembe v tem, kako delamo, kako živimo, kako sprejemano informacije in kar je najpomembneje, kako kupujemo (Kohli, 2020). Danes ljudje po vsem svetu uporabljo internet, kar poudarja pomembnost razumevanja novega digitalnega potrošnika in digitalnega trženja (Kemp, 2023).

Potrošniško odločanje je postalo zapleteno, družbeni mediji in elektronska ustna priporočila so drastično spremenili nakupovalno pot potrošnikov (Hanlon in Tuten, 2022). Vstopili smo v novo dobo socialnega in mobilnega trženja, kjer so potrošniki vedno aktivni, mobilni ter pričakujejo poenostavljeno in takojšnjo nakupovalno izkušnjo na dosegu roke (Tiffany, 2021). Zaradi pandemije se je spletno nakupovanje drastično povečalo in spodbudilo porast e-trgovin (Kemp, 2023). Prav zaradi naštetih djeavnikov se je potrpežljivost in pozornost potrošnikov zmanjšala (Tiffany, 2021). Zato je komukacija s potrošnikom ob pravem času na pravem mestu kritičnega pomena.

Hitre spremembe so povzročile precejšnje posledice za podjetja in drastično spremenile digitalnega trženjo, zato je ključnega pomena, da podjetja razumejo, kako učinkovito in celovito izkoristiti digitalno področje (Kohli, 2020). Da bi bili uspešni v tem nenehno spreminjajočem se in dinamičnem svetu, je pomembno ustvariti skrbno sestavljeno strategijo digitalnega trženja (Tiffany, 2021).

Digitalno trženje je opisano kot uporaba več digitalnih kanalov, stičnih točk in strategij za povezovanje s strankami na spletu (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019). Za optimizacijo trženjskih prizadevanj, učinkovitih kampanj in razumevanja potreb strank mora digitalno trženje strateško uporabljati nastajajoče tehnologije in številne nove digitalne stične točke (Chaffey, 2013; Kartajaya et al., 2016).

Zaradi naraščajočega pomena celovite in na stranke osredotočene strategije digitalnega trženja je koncept 360-stopinjskega digitalnega trženja ključen. Vendar kljub vse večji priljubljenosti digitalnega marketinga ostajajo 360-stopinjski digitalni marketing in njegove stične točke v literaturi še vedno premalo raziskane. Zato je bila potrebna celovita in strukturirana raziskava. Ključni cilj tega magistrskega dela je zapolniti raziskovalne praznine z raziskovanjem 360-stopinjske strategije digitalnega trženja, ki izboljšanje prepoznavnosti blagovnih znamk in prodaje. Prvo je bilo potrebo definirati 360-stopinjski digitalni marketing in razviti pregled nad vsemi komponentami na podlagi poglobljenega pregleda literature.

Drugi cilj pa zagotoviti praktične vpoglede in predloge, ki bodo digitalnim tržnikom pomagali pri razvoju celovitih digitalnih strategij, ki spodbujajo rast in dobičkonosnost. Poleg tega sem ustvariloa primer priprave 360-stopinjske strategije digitalne strategije za blagovno znamko Authentic Beauty Concept, ki lahko podpre blagovno znamko pri pridobivanju prepoznavnosti, ustvari celovito digitalno kupčevo pot skozi več različnih

digitalnih stičnih točk. Vpogledi in ugotovitve so bile razvite na podlagi obsežnega zbiranje sekundarnih podatkov in primarnih podatkov, z uporabo študije primera, ki analizira Authentic Beauty Concept, intervjuju z zaposlenimi v Henklu in vprašalnikom za kupce.

Appendix 2: In- depth Interviews with Henkel Employees

Background questions:

1.   What is your position in the company?
2.   How long have you been working in Henkel and with the brand Authentic Beauty Concept?
3.   In your opinion, how do different departments collaborate and coordinate their efforts?

Brand questions:

1.   How would you describe the brand Authentic Beauty Concept?
2.   Where do you see the brand in 10 years?
3.   What are the key values of the brand?
4.   What are the key messages and communication aspects of the brand?
5.   If the Authentic Beauty Concept were a person, how would you describe it?
6.   What do you believe are the key goals for the brand?
7.   Who is the target audience of the brand? How would you describe Authentic Beauty Concept customers?
8.   Why does the customer purchase the brand?
9.   Why do they repurchase the brand?
10.   What makes Authentic Beauty Concept different from other brands?
11.   What are the key touchpoints in your customer journey? Where do you want to reach your customer?
12.   Where do you invest and focus your advertising budget?
13.   Where to reach your customers digitally?
14.   On which marketing touchpoints can you measure sales performance? Which one is the most successful in terms of sales performance?

Digital marketing strategy questions:

1.   What do you believe are the strengths of the current digital strategy?
2.   What are the weaknesses or areas for improvement in this digital strategy?
3.   What steps must be taken to optimize and make digital strategy more efficient?
4.   Are there any specific challenges that hinder the efficiency of digital strategy? If so, how are you addressing them?
5.   What are the key components or touchpoints of digital strategy that are impactful? Which ones have the potential to be impactful?
6.   Are there any touchpoints or components that you believe should receive more attention or investment to enhance digital strategy?
7.   Which touchpoint do you believe should not be part of digital strategy?

8.   How do you measure the success of digital marketing efforts? What metrics and key performance indicators are important for you?

9.   How do you stay informed about the latest trends and developments in digital marketing and the hair care industry?

10. How do you see augmented, virtual reality and AI as part of digital marketing strategy?

11. What role does innovation play in the evolution of digital strategy?

12. Do you recall any interesting or extraordinary story related to the topic discussed in the interview?

Appendix 3: Customer Questionnaire

1.   Do you buy hair products?

a) Yes
b) No

2.   Do you buy premium hair products?

c) Yes
d) No

3.   Where do you buy hair products? (Several answers are possible.)

a) Retail store
b) Online
c) Beauty supply stores
d) Hairdresser salon
e) Brand website
f) Other (please specify)

4.   Please indicate how often you buy hair products at the following sources:
        (Please rate the frequency with which you make purchases using the scales from 1
        to 5, Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Very frequently
        (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row)

	1	2	3	4	5
Hairdresser salon					
Online					

5.   How much money on average do you spend on hair products per month?

a) Up to 20€
b) 20€−30€
c) 30€−50€
d) 50€ and more

6.   Do you typically conduct research before making a purchase?

a) Never
b) Rarely
c) Occasionally

d) Frequently
e) Very frequently

7.   Where do you typically conduct research before making a purchase? (Multiple answers are possible)

Friends and family	
Hairdressers	
Magazine	
Social media	
Influencers	
Brand website	
Google or another search engine	
YouTube and online video reviews	
Blogs	
Other (please specify):	

8.   When conducting research before making a purchase, what aspects do you consider to be the most important to research?
(Please rate the importance of different aspects you consider when conducting research before making a purchase using the scales from 1 to 5, Not important (1), Somewhat important (2), Neutral (3), Important (4) and Very important (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Brand reputation					
Pricing and value for money					
Product benefits					
Product variety					
Sustainable practices					
Ingredients					
Vegan & PETA					
Availability online					
Availability in a retail store					
Reviews					

9.   Do the following channels ever influence or inspire you to purchase hair products?
(Please rate the extent to which each of the following channels influences or inspires

you to purchase hair products using the scales from 1 to 5, Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Very frequently (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Friends and family					
TV advertisement					
Magazine article					
Online ads					
Website					
Social Media					
Influencer reviews					
Celebrity mentions					
YouTube and online video reviews					
Hairdresser recommendation					
Beauty Blogs					
Brand reputation					
Beauty subscription boxes					
Online reviews					

10.　How likely do the factors below encourage you to repurchase from the brands? (Please rate the likelihood of each of the following factors encouraging you to repurchase from brands using the scales from 1 to 5, Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Very frequently (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Price					
Product quality					
Brand reputation					
Social media community					
Convenience					
Customer service					
Free shipping					
Discounts					
Gift with purchase					
Loyalty reward program					
Personalised recommendations					
Product samples					

11. Do you use social media platforms?

a) Yes
b) No

12. If the previous answer is yes, how often do you use the following social media platform?
(Please rank your usage of each of the following social media platforms using the scales from 1 to 5, Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Very frequently (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook					
Instagram					
TikTok					
YouTube					
Pinterest					
Twitter					
Snapchat					
LinkedIn					
WhatsApp					

13. Do you use digital channels to engage with your favourite brands?

a) Yes
b) No

14. If the previous answer is yes, which digital channels do you use to interact and engage with brands?
(Please indicate your usage of each of the following digital channels for interacting and engaging with brands using the scales from 1 to 5, Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Very frequently (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Brand website					
Social media					
Live chats					

Online reviews and ratings				
Podcasts				
Webinars				
Mobile apps				
Online advertising				
Influencer content				

15.   How frequently do you visit the brand's website or engage with their digital content?

a)   Never
b) Rarely
c) Occasionally
d) Frequently
e) Very frequently

16.   What type of content do you like to engage with from your favourite hair brand? (Please rate your engagement with different types of content from your favourite hair brand using the scales from 1 to 5, Strongly dislike (1), Dislike (2), Neutral (3), Like (4), Strongly like (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainability & social initiatives					
Product benefits					
Expert tips					
Hair tutorials					
Before and afters					
Influencer reviews					
Customer testimonials					
New product announcements					
Special offers					
Interactive pools and quizzes					
Behind-the-scenes content					

17.   How likely are you to recommend the hair brand's digital platforms to others based on your experience?

a) Never
b) Rarely
c) Occasionally
d) Frequently

e) Very frequently

18. What are your favourite hair care and styling brands? (Multiple answers are possible.)

Authentic Beauty Concept	
Kérastase	
Kevin Murphy	
Moroccanoil	
Schwarzkopf Professional	
Orible	
Aveda	
Davines	
Retail store brands	
Other (please specify):	

19. Do you know the Authentic Beauty Concept brand?

a) Yes
b) No

*Please answer the next questions only if you answered Yes in 19. question.

20. Have you ever bought an Authentic Beauty Concept product?

a) Yes
b) No

21. Based on your experience with the Authentic Beauty Concept, how likely are you to buy their product again?

a) Definitely will not
b) Probably will not
c) Neutral
d) Probably will
e) Definitely will

22. Please write or select the word(s) that best describe the Authentic Beauty Concept brand:

Community	
Innovation	
Sustainable	
High-quality	
Authentic	
Trendsetting	
Natural	
Premium	
Trustworthy	
Recognizable	
Responsible	
Expensive	
Other (please specify):	

23.   Have you recommended Authentic Beauty Concept to others?

a) Yes
b) No

24.   How often do you interact with Authentic Beauty Concept´s social media channels?

a) Never
b) Rarely
c) Occasionally
d) Frequently
e) Very frequently

25.   Have you ever seen an online ad from Authentic Beauty Concept?

a) Yes
b) No

26.   How would you rate the overall user experience of Authentic Beauty Concept´s website - (e.g., ease of navigation, loading speed, visual appeal)?

a) Poor
b) Below Average
c) Average
d) Good
e) Excellent

27. Are there any specific digital tools you would like the Authentic Beauty Concept´s to offer? (Select all that apply)

Virtual consultations	
Personalized recommendations	
Online product finder	
Hair care tips and tutorials	
Exclusive online promotions	
Online appointment booking	
Live streaming and Q&A	
Chatbot	
Review tool	
Other (please specify):	

28. Please rank the importance of the mentioned values in your life:
(Rank the importance of values using the scales from 1 to 5, Not important (1), Somewhat important (2), Neutral (3), Important (4) and Very important (5). Please do not select more than one answer per row.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Strong relationships					
Family					
Health and well being					
Sustainability and social responsibility					
Authenticity					
Security					
Education					
Innovation					
Trust and transparency					
Enjoyment in life					
Respect					

29. Gender:

a) Female
b) Male
c) Prefer not to say
d) Other (please specify)

30.   Please provide your year of birth:

        _____

31.   What is the country you are living in?

         _____

32.   What is your marital status?

a) Single
b) Married
c) Widowed
d) Separated (married but living separately)
e) Divorced

33.   How many people live in your household, including you and your children?
        Please type numeric answer in the text box below.

         _____

34.   What is the highest level of education you have completed?

a) Less than High School
b) High School
c) College or associated degree
d) Bachelor's degree
e) Master's Degree
f) Doctoral degree

35.   What is your current employment status?

a) Student
b) Homemaker
c) Employed
d) Unemployed
e) Self-employed
f) Retired Divorced

36.   What is the monthly net income of your household (in EUR)? Consider the income
        of all members of the household together.
        Please type in numerical answer in the text box below.

         _____

Appendix 4: Brand Persona of Authentic Beauty Concept

Source: Own work based on Authentic Beauty Concept (n.d.).