



A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics



Individual Report



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A project under the supervision of: PhD Professor Carlos Marques

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Introduction

This individual report aims to summarize the personal experience gained throughout the performance of this thesis, highlighting my contributions as well as the key learnings and main challenges I faced.

This thesis was developed as part of NOVA SBE Field Lab - Connect to Success, a program developed in partnership with the United States Embassy in Portugal, led by Ambassador Mrs. Kim Sawyer. For the development of this thesis, the contribution of Teresa Martins, CEO of TM Collection, was also crucial. The work carried out was a consulting project for TM Collection, in which the problem presented was "How to increase sales?".

Individual Contribution

During the elaboration of the project, and although meetings were held on a regular basis, to define the following steps to take, all the topics were divided by the members of the group and carried out autonomously.

Regarding my contribution to this project, I was completely in charge of accomplishing the analysis of the company, through which I was able to understand the business structure of this Portuguese SME. Once I got to know the company completely, I developed the Business Model Canvas. As a result, it became faster for others to become familiarized with the whole business and, at the same time, with the surrounding operations. Furthermore, I analysed the problem of the company and each distribution channels that TM uses, identifying the ones with potential to be optimized. Additionally, I contributed to this project by performing the E-Commerce analysis, as well as identifying potential markets that could be reached by TM. I consider that this part of the job was essential: on one hand, to evaluate if the E-Commerce is the best channel to use and, on the other hand, to understand if the sales in the industry segment where TM operates are increasing. It was also crucial to investigate and analyse the potential markets for TM, in order to delineate the best strategy to be developed. Following this, I have also performed a more exhaustive analysis of the US market. Its PESTEL analysis, as well as the future sales forecasts, are essential points to be taken into account in the final decision of choosing this country to expand online sales. I have also individually performed the financial feasibility analysis where three plausible scenarios of both market behaviour (expected growth rates and sales) and different investments were tested. In addition, I found vital to carry out a payback-period analysis as well as a recommendation of control techniques of cost-efficiency, on a quarterly basis, with the aim of ascertaining whether

the investments made are succeeding. In collaboration with my colleague Catarina Teixeira, I have also carried out the TM Collection consumer analysis - crucial to understand the target customer - as well as the STP analysis.

Key Learnings

During this thesis, I had the opportunity of improving myself, in a personal and professional way. In addition, I acquired practical methods to carry out an efficient research, together with techniques to synthesize the researched materials, even with strict deadlines.

Additionally, I realised that group work is essential, once it increases the pool of knowledge and allows the conjugation of distinct skills, giving rise to diverse possibilities to undertake the main issue of TM.

Moreover, given the small size of the company, I had the possibility of having a higher degree of influence near the CEO, the marketing manager and the sales manager. As a consultant, I was able to recognize the problems of a real Portuguese SME that faces a competitive world market, especially when the access to capital is extremely limited. Besides, in a certain way, I was responsible for the accomplishment of a project that would have an impact on the company workers' lives. With this, I learned to work with a psychological pressure.

Lastly, I also acknowledged that a brand with a well-developed internal structure and a high performance in product quality was not controlling its costs efficiently, despite the reasonable revenues. From this point on, I am aware that in order to develop an efficient comprehensive strategy, managers must never lose control of their business costs.

Main Challenges

During this project, I faced two main challenges: (1) the lack of knowledge concerning the assigned industry and market; (2) the business owner's resistance to change and her deficient focus on the main issues of the brand.

Being a 'man' consultant, my adaptation to the market environment did not occur promptly. With the aim of being aware of the entire setting of the industry, I felt the need to profoundly research the market, as well as the behaviour of women when purchasing these luxury products. Thus, the gained expertise allied with the theoretical research on the overall retail industry, allowed the drawing of the most accurate conclusions.

Despite always presenting a friendly position, the business owner has a strong personality and a lack of management vision. As a result, some barriers arose and grew further due to her emotional engagement, which prevented her from making rational decisions.