



Integrated Marketing Strategies of German Companies – Start-Ups vs. Global Brands

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures	IV
List of Tables	V
1 Introduction	1
2.1 Brand Purpose/ Goal of Integrated Marketing Communication	6
2.2 Advertisement Design	7
2.2.1 Signs of a Good Campaign	8
2.3 Budgeting.....	10
2.4 Media Selection.....	11
2.5 Digital Media, the Internet and Online Marketing	14
2.5.1 Website and E-Commerce	14
2.5.2 Email Marketing	16
2.5.3 Social Media and Social Networks	18
2.5.4 Blogs.....	22
2.6 Traditional Media.....	24
2.6.1 Broadcast.....	25
2.6.2 Print	25
2.7 Face to Face Marketing And Events.....	27
2.7.1 Instore experience.....	27
2.7.2 Events.....	29
3 Sustainability	31
4 Methodology	38
4.1 Research Framework.....	38
4.2 Findings 1: Start-Up Labels.....	41
4.3 Findings 2: German Global Brands	47
4.4 Discussion.....	56
5 Results.....	76
List of References	79
Appendix	88

A Interview Guideline	88
B Interview Nr.1: Label "Insaint"	90
C Interview Nr.2: Label "Second Skin Studio"	96
D Interview Nr.3: Label "Kluntje"	106
E Interview Nr.4: Label "Jour"	112
F Interview Nr.5: Label "Armed Angels"	120
G Interview Nr.6: Label "The Sept"	126
H Interview Nr.7: Label "Too Hot To Hide"	131
Sworn Declaration	136

Table of Figures

Figure 1: How Clothes Are Sold	59
Figure 2: Budget-Allocation of Start-Ups	60
Figure 3: Marketing Budget	61
Figure 4: Social Media Activity Number 1	62
Figure 5: Social Media Activity Number 2	64
Figure 6: Social Media Activity Number 3	67

List of Tables

Table 1: Interview Label Participants.....	39
Table 2: List of Big German Companies	40
Table 3: Possible Competitors.....	72

1 Introduction

“Integrated marketing communication, [...] is less an innovation than a response to the fracturing of old rules and reality.”

This quote by Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1994, p.2) says it all in just one simple sentence: Integrated Marketing Communication is not something that was invented overnight, it was a process that was years in the making. Had the Second World War not happened we might live in a totally different age of marketing than we do now. In the decades before the war individuality started to evolve throughout lifestyle and fashion. Consumers wished for nicer things, with special details and unique attributes. Women and men began putting more time and effort in the idea of dressing themselves well. Everyone envisioned a certain life for themselves. And then the war happened and everything changed. All the companies and manufacturing sites, as well as the marketing channels focused greatly on the war. There was no other topic around. A nation only worked and lived for this one cause: war. Manufacturing of battle equipment, and supporting the troops was all that was on the screen at that time. Nothing else mattered.

When the war finally ended, people had the chance to go back to their regular lives. After the longtime of exceptional circumstances, the population wished for goods and a nice life. Factories were turned back into their initial state. Just as the manufacturing sites produced war equipment on the conveyer belt, they carried on by mass producing for the consumers. There was no need for extravagant marketing campaigns to pitch the goods and services to the population, because the demand was already there. No need for specialization and gimmicks, because the people did not care for that. The only thing that mattered was to supply the masses (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994). This is when the 4P marketing mix theory by McCarthy was developed. Here it says that the marketing efforts should concentrate on product, price, place and promotion. The theory puts the attention on production. It is not particularly necessary that the customer is asked for his opinion, essentially the main focus lies in the benefits for the seller (McCarthy, 1981).

“The manufacturer decided to make a product because it could, priced it to cover costs and to yield as much profit as possible, placed it on store shelves through the distribution chain it still dominated, and promoted it shamelessly” (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994, p.5).

As long as the numbers were in the black, the companies did not waste their time with the consumers. But with time came change.

The consumers satisfied their needs and filled their homes with mass products. And then they stopped buying in excess, and sales plummeted. But still the marketers did not want to think that anything was wrong with the approach they were taking. Nevertheless, people altered their view of life and did not want to be told what to buy anymore. They expected to be wooed by the marketers. Instead of them going to a store to buy something, they awaited the companies to come to them and show them what they had to offer. This put a lot more pressure on the companies and marketing departments, as they actually had to work hard to sell their products and services. On top of the invention and manufacturing of the products, they now needed to worry about the right selling mechanisms as well. The shift in perspective went from the 4P model to the 4C (consumer, cost, convenience, communication) model (Lauterborn 1990). Instead of just producing any product that was convenient for the organization, now came the time when they had to regard the customer's wants and needs if he or she wanted to generate profits. Pricing to achieve the best option for the company was not profitable anymore, the marketers had to find a price, that is competitive and that the customer is willing to pay. But even money was not the most important attribute for consumers. What was more relevant were the consumer's costs. Now it was crucial to send out products that were worthy of the consumer's time. What was a customer willing to give up to purchase a product and what benefits would he or she receive instead? The businesses had to start paying attention where people like to shop for certain goods and that all the products could be purchased in their convenience. And probably the most important of the 4C's is the shift from promotion to communication.

In its definition, communication is the process of information exchange between individuals that is underlined with a shared meaning (*Merriam-Webster*, n.d.). Initially this signifies, that customers and companies need to be on the same page value wise and the topics they address, or otherwise the message will not be understood and it will lead to miscommunication, waste of effort, time and money. The prime factor in a conversation for a company to have in mind is to talk with the consumers and not at them. Communication only works both ways (Chitty et al. 2011). It takes place when the message that was sent reaches its destination in a form that is understood by the intended audience (Clow & Baack, 2007). Even better communication in marketing will result from a common background of both the advertiser and the customer. This will guarantee that the message will be decoded correctly by the receiver (customer). So, the shift in the marketing history occurred from product focused to customer focused marketing. Since the 1990's until this day in time, and probably many more years into the future, marketing took the place of an investment instead of being a necessary evil and element of cost (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994).

With the advance in technology came the personal computers and with them the worldwide web. People had access to an abundance of information and became more self-educated on many topics.

“[...] technology collided with society and human wants and needs. Suddenly consumers, who now had more information than ever before, began to demand specialized products, distribution systems, and communication. What once had been a mass market splintered into hundreds if not thousands of separate, individual markets driven by lifestyle, ethnic background, income, geography, education, gender, and all the other things that make one person different from another” (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994, p.18).

Mass marketing was no longer the winning strategy. Advertisers who wanted to come out at the top had to listen to the consumers, as they were the ones who took over the lead (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994). And with every passing year the technology industry revealed new facets of the online world and today we are in the middle of a “digital information revolution” (O’Connor, 2012, p.14).

It’s not only the personal computers anymore, not even the laptops, today we have the internet always with us. With our now portable devices such as smartphones and tablets we are connected with and to everyone at all times. With one wrong post or bad review of a product a company could lose a lot of business and it could not stay hidden. Social media works as a link between people. Every little aspect of their lives can be shared with the rest of the world (Ahmad et al. 2015). Today a consumer is not helpless. Today “they talk back and have the means to make themselves heard” (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994, p.8). Especially the Generation Y (born during 1977-1994) is very comfortable with the use of technology, as they grew up during the development and rise of social media and the transcendence of worldwide limitations. This generation thrives on information and is interested in the wellbeing of the human race as well as the earth we live on. They want to preserve it as long as possible. They demand transparency and honesty from brands. This is the only way trust and relationships can be built. They need to know that they associate with something worthy. An organization that only regards the money aspect of the business will not be seen as a suitable investment source (Williams & Page 2011).

Mass media is slowly stepping into the background and giving way to the digital media. This is definitely not the choice of the network or the magazine publisher, but of the consumer. For them the internet with its many facets and endless opportunities is more convenient. Instead of watching a TV program that others picked for them, they can go online and choose a series or movie of their own liking on Netflix. Instead of going to the store to buy a magazine or newspaper, they can search for one of hundreds of websites that give them the breaking news and the latest trends much faster. It is not said that traditional media

should not be used at all anymore; it definitely contributes to the overall reach of customers, but now it is necessary to know which target group is better affected by a certain type of media.

Therefore, the marketing communication today is much more integrated. Brands and companies try to combine as many marketing channels as necessary to reach the consumers. The overall goal is to obtain a multichannel or even an omnichannel marketing strategy. And the advertising industry is on a road to success. "Internet technology is constantly evolving new tools, from blogging to tweeting and from social networking to link sharing, that enable us all to produce and distribute diverse streams of news and information" (O'Connor, 2012, p.14). Integrated Marketing communication would not work today without the social media platforms. People have the opportunity to voice their opinion on about anything and start a conversation. They will find thousands of fellow online users with a similar outlook on life and group together. Social network sites became an integral element in our private and business life. It is complicated to imagine a functioning lifestyle without them. Through the exponential growth of social media, brands will go bust if they do not tailor their concept to more integrated processes.

The change in the fashion marketing also had a rapid progress. Usually fashion editorials are colorful, glossy and very opulent and cost a tremendous amount of money, so the uprising of the internet and the social media was a great opportunity for the industry in terms of cutting marketing costs. With the worldwide bank crisis in 2008, the apparel industry struggled like many else (Ahmad et al. 2015). Fashion is all about changing trends and being seen and noticed. A lot of advertising in this industry is achieved with the help of fashion shows and magazine spreads. A fashion show only takes place twice a year and is not much help if not all the consumers can participate, since the guest list is exclusive to trade press and celebrities. It is necessary to talk about the runway trends and spike the attention of the audience. This is where the magazines are a big player in the industry. But with the crisis not all the brands could afford advertising space in a magazine, as these are one of the most expensive marketing investments. The fashion brands saw the uprising of the internet and the social media as a great opportunity to spike customer awareness and save money at the same time. Online marketing was more affordable and much faster. The companies could reach their audience directly and conveniently interact with them as soon as now. Customers could follow their accounts and comment on new posts right away. This was and is a great way for the companies to see how people react to changes in the industry and the company. They receive feedback in milliseconds and can counter react as soon as the comment is out. Never was it so easy to engage with the customers as with social media and the internet. And now, since the smartphone, and with it all the different social media

platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, people can follow their brand every step of the way.

So today there is absolutely no chance for a brand to win in the eyes of the customers and the whole industry if they are not present on the internet and social media platforms. The best way to reach as many different customers as possible is to know who they are and how and with what channel to reach them best, and then apply those processes in your marketing mix.

In this thesis paper I wanted to find out if the German brands, start-ups or established ones, also changed with the pulse of time, and if their strategies became more integrated and developed to a more personal level with their customers. I was curious to figure out if both types of brands market similar or if they have complete different views of the industry. Since mass marketing is an invention of the past, my research also revolves around the question if traditional channels are still used at all, or if the industry gave into the internet completely. One topic of particular importance to younger and higher educated people is the impact on the environment. The question is if the fashion industry only helps to destroy it, or if they take action in bettering the situation.

2 Integrated Marketing Communication

But what is Integrated Marketing in general? How can the concept behind it help brands to create brand awareness? Why is it necessary these days to be active on many channels at the same time? And what are the most used and helpful channels for fashion brands?

Integrating Marketing Communication (IMC) is a concept of taking every form of communication around a brand into consideration that affects customers directly or indirectly, i.e. from advertising over to public relations, just to name a few. It organizes all communication channels so they can work seamlessly together in projecting the same message and thus creating synergy. If done right, the alignment of different media should add value in their combined impact than in their individual state. Customers are informed, influenced, motivated and enlightened by a “flow of information from indistinguishable sources” (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn, 1994,p.xvii). (Caywood, Schultz and Wang, 1991; Clow and Baack, 2007; Keller, 2001; Moorman, Neijens and Smit, 2011; Oancea, Diaconu and Duțu, 2014; Percy, 1997).

In forming a perfect integrated marketing plan the fundamental part of it is and should be communication. Communication signifies the shared meaning between individuals and in our case the conversation that is made between the brand and its customer (Chitty et al. 2011). To get a customer talking, advertising is one of the key drivers in an IMC plan because it symbolizes the hook that grabs the audience. And the bate should be designed after the consumers liking (Oancea, Diaconu and Duțu, 2014). A vitality is to see IMC as an investment and not as a waste of money (Clow & Baack 2007). “[Even] top managers do not see symbols, brands and names simply as icing, but as yeast that contributes to the cake’s growth” (Urošević and Završnik, n.d.). For this cake to rise to its expected size, it is relevant for the entire organization to work in unison on the IMC process. It is not just the marketing department that carries all the responsibility. Since IMC is all about the communication, it has to work on the inside as well as on the outside of the company walls (Clow & Baack, 2007).

2.1 Brand Purpose/ Goal of Integrated Marketing Communication

For an organization to start and develop an IMC plan into their business actions it is of utmost importance to be absolutely aware of who they are and what story they want to tell with their marketing mix and products. In the fashion industry this would be most likely

clothes. Furthermore, they need to form a vision of who they want to become or grow into. To have a vision, it also needs a strong and inspiring mission statement to how the brand plans to achieve their goals. This is where a marketing strategy comes in handy to define the roadmap to success. Preferably the strategy aligns with the marketing objectives and contains steps that can be achieved somewhere in the near future (Clow & Baack, 2007). It is essential for a brand to find a unique positioning amongst the competition so it stands a chance to drive sales. Since IMC is based on the interplay between consumer and brand, the organization needs to make sure that the customer will benefit from the purchase (Chitty et al. 2011). Although a company cannot start a business without a marketing plan, it is still only a snapshot of a certain moment in time. Since technology and the market are continuously changing, it is crucial to evolve the brand and the processes to fit the environment (Dalla Pozza, 2014; Groom, 2008). But this does not mean that the overall brand message can be switched. Once the organization decides on the message they want to transfer, it has to become a part of their image. This message has to be transported to the customer through everything that the organization does (Urošević and Završnik, n.d.). Image changes are giving the audience a negative impression of the brand. If the company itself cannot stick to their decision, why should the customer stay loyal. Rapid image shifts break consumers' trust, because change is always hard for people. If a company has decided on an image change, they should incorporate their customers in it.

2.2 Advertisement Design

If the organization has decided on the type of message to be transmitted, it is time to think about the way an advertisement will look like. The type of ad has to fit the brand, the consumer, and the channel. It is essential to know the different kinds of consumers that shop your brand. If the age group or lifestyle of the customer groups is extremely different, the advertisements need to be differentiated as well, so they can speak to the customers on various levels. Some of the bigger fashion brands have more than just one segment group. Each of these segments are given another clothing line or sub-brand. This way the company makes sure to cater to a wider audience and to extend their product range. The crucial part in marketing here is to keep the overall message of the brand but slightly change the approach in selling the clothes to the market. Also, it is of high relevance to be aware of the different channels, that are chosen by the audience, because the advertisement design has to fit them all (Clow & Baack, 2007). The consumer should be engaged into a conversation with the brand through the advertisement. This way they are pulled into the brand world,

instead of being pushed. The advertisement push occurs if brands advertise too aggressively and talk at the customers, rather than with them. Push advertising is a concept that was used before information technology came to stay. It is never good if consumers feel that they are forced by the brand to purchase a product through the ad. The best way to achieve brand awareness is by making it so interesting that consumers cannot resist. A good and memorable campaign incorporates written and visual attributes and is one that elicits emotions. Another way to consolidate awareness is by reiterating the ad so that a mental connection can be formed (Chitty et al. 2011).

2.2.1 Signs of a Good Campaign

As mentioned above, a good campaign calls for an attention-grabbing and memorable message and an array of appropriate media channels to transfer the idea to the public. It should ignite interest and add excitement. A person needs to see the campaign and notice it. Then the campaign must spike attention and curiosity to an extent that the consumer wants to purchase the product. Of course, the campaign is forced to lead the customer to a channel that actually sells that particular product. Striking advertisements come to life if emotions work well together with logic (Clow & Baack, 2007). The best way to help a person to complete a purchase is to take meaning from the current events and surroundings; like for instance to pull trends from the streets or the catwalk and put them on the sales floor (Chitty et al. 2011). In fashion this can be seen all the time. Websites and magazines portrait fashion-conscious women and men that are walking the streets of cosmopolitan areas, like New York, London or Stockholm, in glorious outfits. Marketers take those pictures, research them and try to apply those styles to the following collections. If not from street style, the inspiration is taken from celebrity outfits or the trends that are seen on the seasonal runway shows. A good approach to a great campaign would be Robert Cialdini's six rules of persuasion, because in the end a campaign has to convince a person of the purchase (Cialdini, 2006). The first rule is the one of reciprocation. It is a very valuable part of IMC. It describes the principle of giving and getting something back in return. If a brand is engaging with the consumer and gives out benefits, e.g. in the form of customer promotions, like price off markings or rebates, the customer is more likely to return the favor to the company in the form of brand recommendation to others through word of mouth communication (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). The second rule would be peer pressure, which explains that people would rather follow like-minded people than an organization itself. Therefore, it is an advantage if the organization has a big customer support group that likes their products and recommends them to others. Another source for social acceptance are celebrities, if they endorse

the company, or bloggers, who are regular people with a big online presence. They are still normal people but have a slightly better reach to consumers because their online life has a stronger influence. Sometimes these influencers have a bigger impact on the public than celebrities because they seem more reachable. The next rule is commitment and consistency, and it states all there is to know in those two words. People like it if a company follows a message in a streamline direction and sticks to their word. A company should attract the public with their attitudes, values and actions and include them at all times during the campaign. This can be achieved through information, entertainment and participation. The fourth standard to follow is liking. Make your customers like your brand and the idea you are realizing and get them on board. Do not save on emotions. Connect consumers to your brand through advertisement and communication. The fifth item on the list is to have a strong authority. This could be shown in the way of having a CEO to vouch for good quality or expert opinions that stand one hundred percent behind the brand. Have a website with all the important information and documents to show the customers who they are buying from. And lastly a concept that works very well is scarcity. This is a phenomenon for itself. People always want what they cannot have or there is only a small amount of it available. Therefore, for apparel brands it is a good system to sell certain products on an exclusive level. This might be a clothing item that only can be bought online, or a product mark-down that is available for a short amount of time. One example is the Inditex daughter-brand *Zara*, who instead of having two or four collections a year, takes a design from drawing to store in just two weeks. Its system is following the fast-fashion trend and *Zara* was the first to perfect it. The clothing company manufactures clothes every two weeks in a small amount, which means that styles are limited. Once an item is sold out, it will not come back in stock (Tiplady, 2006). The consumers are given an incentive to buy items as soon they are released, because if they wait too long, the products might be gone for good. It is also a great opportunity to drive store traffic, because store merchandise changes quickly and that guarantees a new exciting shopping experience every other week. For the fashion industry in general, marketing needs a more selective system how to attract the consumer, because there is a lot of competition on the market and many trends are similar to each other. Therefore, branding is crucial for companies. They have to find a way to lure the customers into their world instead of letting them go to the competition. The ultimate goal for a brand is to gain their consumers loyalty. To achieve said goal, they have to help consumers understand the product benefits that are unique to their brand, such as an impeccable quality, or a competitive price, or simply a contribution to a certain lifestyle. They have to accomplish that the consumer feels the need for the incorporation of those benefits with his or her individual value (Urošević and Završnik, n.d.). The best way is managing to sell the product not as a tangible item but as more of a lifestyle. This shows that people do not want to revolve

their lives around things, but need them as a help for communication (Groom, 2008). On the fashion plateau only brands stay afloat that manage to choose the right channel mix and shape the brand message to fit those channels and continue to work on them and adapt them to current market situations (Urošević and Završnik, n.d.). Another skill that puts your brand in the forefront is to have a feel for the duration of the campaign. It does not matter how good or bad your campaign is, if it is present for too long, or too short in the market. The wrong campaign length will ruin even the best idea. A usual campaign has a duration of one to two months. Here the aim is to grab the attention of a person and keep the interest alive, which can be achieved with repetition. Let your advertisements have similar attributes that will tie all the channels together, for instance with a hashtag. It is better if a single person is exposed to the advertisement more than just once. A good number to form an opinion about a brand would be around three times. If the brand is already a successful and known one the media exposure can be lower, because opinions already exist in the consumer's mind. Do not make the mistake and keep the campaign on the market for too long or the customer will get bored and annoyed by the advertisements, which can form a negative opinion about the brand. On the other side, if a campaign is too short-lived, it will not have sufficient time to make the consumers aware of the brand (Clow & Baack, 2007).

2.3 Budgeting

To top of the complication of the right media selection, marketers have to crunch their numbers. Even if the perfect mix exists, it does not necessarily mean that the organization has the budget to realize their idea. Especially now that the advertisement time and slots clearly have risen. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that it is not about the cost of the advertisement in the forefront. It is about the strategic distribution of the dollar among the different channels and the way how good they work in combination together with the customer and brand (Clow & Baack, 2007). Organizations usually allocate seven percent to twelve percent of their total revenue for marketing expenditures. The trend in the business is that the marketing budget that used to be taken for conventional media, such as television and newspaper, is now migrating into the account for search, email and social media marketing and it is supposed to stay that way for the following years. So we can detect that traditional media marketing investment decreases slowly while the digital marketing expenditures grow fast and exponentially (Leone, 2016). Statistics show that Germany has a total communication budget of 17.5 billion euros in the year 2015, with an increase of online marketing investment from 2.67 billion euros to 3.62 billion euros. This is a growth of almost one billion euros in the course of just one year (Forschungsgruppe g/d/p, 2016). Worldwide, the digital

marketing spending is forecasted to rise from 200.8 billion dollars to 306 billion dollars in the year 2020 (TechNovio, 2016).

2.4 Media Selection

We do not live in a time anymore when customers have to physically enter a store to receive the products they want. Today consumers can get in contact with an organization through the reach of many different channels. Some of the channels are brick-and-mortar retail stores, salespeople, mail-order catalogs, email, telephone calls, online websites, and social media networks, like Facebook and Twitter (Dalla Pozza, 2014). The important task for brands and their marketers is to find out what media is preferably used by their audience and see if this particular media works with their brand message and their actual product. A thorough scan can help in choosing the adequate channels. A choice is necessary because a brand will not have enough resources, be it human or monetary resources, to be active on all marketing channels (BOF Team, 2013). So, evidently, media is chosen in regard of the cost of the ad for a certain channel, the message type that needs to be getting across to the consumers, and what type of customer needs to be reached. Sometimes it is also recommended to change up your channels, depending on the product and message you need to deliver. Channels that are known for maximizing reach are television, billboards, magazines, the internet and as part of it social media and direct mail (Clow & Baack, 2007). The use of just one single medium is not generating the best benefits for a company. Cross channel usage at the same time is believed to be the next best thing. If you use many channels for your customer communication, your chances of reaching your audience increase, because each channel regulates different benefits. Single channel use will put a limit on the company's overall achievement. Especially online operations should never be planned as isolated. It is always best to let digital and conventional marketing channels work together (Gené Albasa, 2007).

“The most successful fashion brands will embrace a blend of both traditional and new media to communicate a consistent and authentic message across multiple channels in a manner that both piques customer interest and creates long-term brand value” (BOF Team, 2013).

This new way of taking to your business in integrated marketing is labeled as multichannel marketing. The goal for this strategy is to involve the customers into the overall business activities and let them be part of everything. The realization is that consumers get in touch with brands in a lot of varied ways and over more than just a single media, and it is best to “grasp the inherent challenge this creates in term of ensuring consistent experience”

(Pophal 2015). Many multichannel users are generated from a relatively younger audience, such as the generation Y, or the generation after that. That customer group grew up with technology rise and inventions and is looking constantly for alternatives to traditional retail and marketing channels. Traditional media does not do the trick for them anymore, sometimes they are even immune to advertising they see anywhere apart from the web. Since these millennials are one of the largest groups to advertise to, it is important for brands to recognize them as a target group that expects more attention. To be brought up in a society where communication is by far the most used attribute, the youth awaits marketers to construct an integrated marketing communication where they can reap the most benefits from, be connected to the brand and other consumers and receive an abundance of information. To have that consumer group commit to your brand is a huge success, because the consumers are still young and have a lifetime to follow and trust that brand. Many of the young people learned to do everything fast in life and that "time is money". Multitasking became one of their strong suits (Williams & Page, 2011). This is another reason why brands should offer more than just one channel for their customers. Being able to multitask means, that individuals can surf the internet while listening to music and having the television on in the background. This is a chance for brands to reach customers on three different levels simultaneously. The expectation level of multichannel users is therefore more elevated. It is a customer group that is insisting on more service. Because they shop on more than just one channel, they also have more money to give to companies; and most of the time they shop more often than people who only use one channel. Multichannel shopping raises the frequency of purchase because the variety is bigger as well. Each channel triggers consumers' awareness of the brand and the products to buy on a different level. Ultimately, they do not care for a certain channel more than for others, it is more the question of convenience for them. Every consumer prefers a different channel for a certain moment of their purchase behavior. Consumers can spot a clothing item in a magazine, locate the store online, try it on in the actual store, then compare prices of different suppliers and finally purchase it from the winning website. It is not about using as many channels as possible for multichannel or young consumers but score as many benefits as there are. Therefore, a clear marketing strategy with the same message is absolutely indispensable. It helps to combine two or more channels in a multi-media approach to boost the other channel respectively. This gives all the channels the opportunity to work in synergy and power each other up. People who use many channels of the same brand are said to be more loyal to them. They like the marketing effort that is consistent over all channels and do not see a reason to strive to other brands. If companies start to see that they can only win from multichannel marketing and providing their customers with the right assortment of media to market their brand, they will earn more revenue from each customer. And the success will be even bigger, if the

channels are connected. Let me tell you a story how cross channel marketing can be applied to a consumer. An individual, a woman for our time being, is out and about, and a billboard captures her attention. Now there is not enough time to study that advertising, because first of all there is not a lot information there, and secondly, it is time consuming. She might take a look at it, acknowledge the print and the label, and if the image has captured her interest, she will take out her smartphone and go online to surf the web and look for the website that should be linked on the poster. Then she will look at all the products online and check out the content the company has managed to put together on the website. If the website is as good as the billboard the customer might even purchase something from their online shop or post something positive on Facebook or share the content with her friends and the online community on Twitter. And then, she will go about her own day and check her emails, WhatsApp messages, her Instagram feed and Snapchat. The fact that the individual started her actions following a domino effect after looking at the billboard just shows how important it is for a company and brand to construct an IMC program. The person not only formed brand awareness but also purchased something and informed friends and other prospect customers about it. Now that is the perfect opportunity for brands to have an online presence. It is different nowadays. People do not only get in touch with advertising when they turn on the television, open up a glossy magazine or see a poster on their walk outside. With their mobile devices they have access to advertising no matter what they do and where they are, so marketers have to construct an IMC that generates synergy through the coordination of all channels in a consistent program (Oancea, Diaconu and Duțu, 2014). Another helpful way to stimulate multi-media usage is to have each channel informing the consumers about another. Salespeople in brick- and- mortar stores should tell their customers about the website and the online store, just as the website should have store locations apparent and inform about events that will go on in the store.

For the sake of this thesis, I will only review the marketing channels that are most likely relevant for the brands and businesses in the fashion industry, from the areas digital media, traditional media over to promotion. For example, I will not touch upon the channel of radio, because it is rarely used for promoting fashion brands these days. From the presentation of the following channels it is recommended for the apparel brands to choose the proper combination for their IMC.

2.5 Digital Media, the Internet and Online Marketing

Digital media and therefore the internet is the youngest channel group of this bunch; and it is also the most affordable one. Having the internet on their display, companies have the possibility to conserve 10-20 % of their marketing budget, if they invest more in digital media rather than in traditional channels (Clow & Baack, 2007). This would be a very wise move, since the internet is the channel with the most rapid growth in the industry. And even though it is the cheapest channel out of all, it is also the one with the highest reach. Websites, online shops, emails, blogs and most of all social networks give way to new opportunities and a complete restructuring of traditional marketing strategies. Everything is faster online. The internet contains a huge pool of information and data and opens up a world of endless possibilities, especially for children and young people. It is there to offer products, services, knowledge, entertainment, and most of all, the chance to communicate with all the people in the world, no matter where you or they are with the only need of an internet connection. In principle, there is no need for other media besides digital, because everything can be obtained with the help of the internet and it is also the channel that resonates the best with consumers. In addition, sources have shown, that the users of traditional media, such as television and newspaper, migrate to the internet for their fix. The online world, though very complex, is a medium that can reach the consumers much easier. Online advertising can monitor the online path of the user and offer individualized ads just for its interests. Businesses that find their way online also have a better reach to consumers on their other channels.

The fashion industry, in particular, has undergone a massive change with the rise of the internet. It appears as a big player in the digital world. Apparel is the third most sold online commodity after travel and electronics (Kim & Park, 2005). Nowadays, fashion is with a quick click at the disposal of every fashion lover and trendsetter. Social networks are buzzing with pictures and news from the runways and fashion magazines keep their devotees entertained with everyday articles on their online outlet. Never was it that easy to connect with customers and prospects as in this era.

2.5.1 Website and E-Commerce

A company website is the online flagship of the brand. This is the main landing page a customer goes to, when he or she wants to look for information about the brand, get inspiration about outfits, buy apparel, or contact the brand about queries or other matters. Especially for a fashion label it is absolutely crucial that the website transports the same vibe of

the brand as the clothes, as well as the brick-and-mortar store, if one exists. A website is the online congruent to the actual store. It has to deliver the same benefits a customer would get if they would step a foot in the store. The in-store feeling needs be realized in the online environment. What would be achieved through sales personnel, visual merchandising, window displays, smell, music and the overall atmosphere in a brick-and-mortar store needs to be transported to the website. All these experiences should be found in a digital form. The overall marketing message of the brand should be recognizable. A fashion website creates emotions and should already portrait the lifestyle of the brand. If a brand wants to transmit a minimalistic and clean feel, it usually has a black and white theme. Those brands are more elegant and classic. Younger brands on the other hand work with a lot of vibrant colors to transmit a fun and playful feeling. Usually a company changes its website each season when a new collection comes around the corner and switches up the campaigns, to keep the consumer interested and entertained. The website does not have to fill itself up with information and directories, but it is very convenient for the consumers if most of their questions about the brand can be answered if he or she surfs the website. Just like a store, the website should be inviting through its design and visual aspects, as well as being easy to handle. Many fashion websites try to make the experience as interactive as possible, with the music and the layout. The most important attribute of a fashion website is the showcasing of the actual products: the clothing. The visual content cannot be missing. It is great if the consumer has access to the latest look books with models that are wearing the items of the current collection and he or she can imagine how the clothes would look like on. If the company also wants to sell the clothing online, it is necessary to link the online store on the website. Smaller businesses have store and website together, bigger organizations have a separate website for the online selling, because it would most likely bring the server to collapse, if to many actions would happen at the same time. Many different options on a website require extensive IT-knowledge. Small businesses do not necessarily need to divide those online activities because they usually do not have an extensive assortment of different items and only sell a small amount of styles and do not have that much traffic on their site. For the online store prices and product descriptions form an all-round picture. Plus, it is nice if the company takes their time and talks about terms of payment and delivery and has a 24/7 customer service online. For the main page, it is always interesting for the customers to read about the philosophy behind the brand and the history how it came to life. The latest events and product offers should always be displayed on the landing page, so the customer is informed right away. For instance, if the brand wants to drive traffic to the website and online store, it is helpful to offer incentives, such as discounts and free shipping periods. Additionally, it is recommended to give out the opportunity to register for a newsletter. Some companies, mostly bigger ones also have investor information on their site, as well as a

section were the press can get their hands on the latest press releases. In the last couple of years, the trend evolved for fashion brands to have a separate category with their own lifestyle blog on their website. There they can inform the visitors about the latest trend and what goes on back stage at a fashion label. And one link that is absolutely necessary is the connection to social media and social networks, so the visitors can connect with other customers and ask questions about the brand or leave comments. And usually news travel faster through the social networks.

Magrath and McCormick (2013, p.115) stated in their research that the internet, of all retail marketing outlets, is the most accessible and global. That is because it can be reached at every day and every hour of the week. The internet never takes a break, only if the website is relaunching or the online store faces some technological difficulties.

People started to see online shopping as their hobby. Many consumers love shopping but due to their working hours, many stores are closed when they leave the office. Nevertheless, people do not want to miss out on the products or the experience and go online to get their fix of retail therapy. Although apparel is one of the most bought product categories online, fashion was one of the slowest industries to start properly with e-commerce. Since clothing is a product that needs to be experienced and touched, it was a very long process to succeed in converting the brick-and-mortar store into an online experience. And now the business is facing a similar problem with the mobile internet. Since the smartphone, the mobile internet usage is growing each day and the marketers need to find a way to make it happen that the consumers have the same experience with mobile as with online shopping. Not all marketing elements can be applied in a mobile environment. This is the next challenge for the fashion industry, to try and make the website interesting even on the small screen, or even better to launch a mobile application, so the experience is more convenient and fun.

2.5.2 Email Marketing

Email marketing is the online equivalent to the traditional marketing form of direct mail and a part of the online communication strategy of companies. Instead of receiving something from the company via mail, the customer receives the electronic version into his or her email account. This established method of marketing is very direct and can and should be individualized. A company seeks the direct path to a customer and starts a personal conversation. Although getting in touch with a customer over a social network is most of the time faster and more convenient, it shows great effort if marketers take their time and write

a more personalized message. People appreciate it more if brands take customer service to the top level. Like I already mentioned, personal contact is also possible via social media, but if the matter that needs to be dealt with is more private and should not generate too much attention, it is better to work it out through email. Internet direct marketing is a fast media and can be used to offer consumers products based on their latest buys or their click-stream behaviors. That basically means that the organizations track the online path of a person and suggest products via email that he or she would most likely be interested in. Unfortunately, this is not accepted lightly by many people and is seen as a breach of privacy. Therefore most emails that enter the account go straight to spam and will not even be looked at. To reach a better acceptance with consumers, it is better if the brand asks for the customer's permission to receive emails. This way, a person confirms with the opt-in method that the company can send advertising. The latest system is a double-opt-in option where the customer confirms the registration, e.g. for a newsletter, but then in addition receives an email where he or she has to reconfirm the registration. Only then the company is allowed to send out advertising. If the customer does not reconfirm in the email, the registration will not go through (Bucher et al. 2016).

Although marketers only send out emails to those who want to receive them, the opening rate in the fashion industry accounts for a lousy 14,3% in Germany. Just like with the online-stores and websites the organizations should optimize their email sendings into a mobile format, because more and more people open emails on the go via their smartphones. The problem that everyone is facing here is that a lot of the email content cannot be opened or looked at over the phone, because the systems are not compatible. This is where many marketing dollars are spent for nothing. Consumers who open an email over their phone and cannot access it often delete it and most likely will not take their time to open it on their computer, once they have the chance (Lammenett, 2015).

The most widely spread form of email marketing is the newsletter. A customer has to subscribe to the newsletter on the website and then receives weekly or monthly news about the brand or company. The newsletter is a form for the marketer to keep the consumers informed about everything that goes on within an organization. If a new product is being launched, or a new store is opening, the consumer will be informed via the newsletter. It is best if the newsletter is personalized, even if it is just the name or the subject line. People feel more connected to the brand if they are treated individually (Bucher et al. 2016). Companies that give out incentives on customer birthdays and take their time to send an email score brownie points in the customer department. For online businesses in the apparel industry it is good to know to always keep the customer in the loop, at all time of their purchase. Send a confirmation email about the purchased items, tell them when the package

left the warehouse and thank them for their transaction and business once everything worked out fine. The constant contact will build a trust bond between customer and brand, which is very important for retaining customers.

2.5.3 Social Media and Social Networks

Social Media came into the marketing communication world, like a whirlwind for most of the companies and changed how business is conducted, but it was more like a tornado for all the other traditional channels, such as television, radio, and print. People settle into the online world and slowly but increasingly venture away from traditional media. Social media is the easiest and most convenient form of communication and advertising (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). People include it into their everyday life and get used to it more day by day. Almost every person is active on at least one social network, even if it is just passively. People trust online advertising more than on traditional media, because they can immediately find out more about it and therefore create more trust. For a business in the 21st century it is absolutely crucial to have an online presence of some sort. It is the channel with the biggest audience. Even if an organization is happy with the number of customers they have, they need to think about the future, when they will need to acquire new and younger customers, who most likely will be found on the internet. It is simple to start with a social media presence. Every child can open an account on a social platform. The difficult aspect is to make the content on your profile as valuable as possible for the consumer, so he or she will come back time and time again (Straker & Wrigley, 2016).

Fashion and social networking are a match made in heaven. Both of them are surrounded by constant change. Technology is always evolving, as is the fashion industry with its many trends that are booming today and are out of style the following morning. What better way than merging those beautiful two worlds together and let them nurture and help each other grow (Ahmad et al. 2015)? Social media gives fashion fans new topics to talk about and contribute something new to the industry. Companies and brands need to connect to their followers through the content that they are generating. Before posting, marketers should be aware what actions can be triggered by that message. One wrong post and the reputation can implode. Good content needs to be authentic, beneficial, pleasing and motivate user participation (Buchenau & Dominik, 2015). A post is like the start of a conversation and the customers decide based on the post, if the brand is worth their time. Usually fashion brands use social media to keep their followers and fans in the loop about all their happenings. A new campaign launch is announced, or a certain product is back in stock, a new store opening or the time the runway show will be live-streamed on their website. If the brand keeps

feeding a customer with information and is transparent with current events, the customer will most likely be thankful for that and feel more connected to the brand, which in turn will raise awareness and loyalty (Kilgour et al. 2016). Another great opportunity to embrace is having a customer service team on social network sites. Customers nowadays contact brands directly on these platforms to express praise or dissatisfaction, because the response time is shorter than with emails. Email responses are also pretty good, but they are more private. A complaint on a social platform can be seen by all users, which means a fast response is necessary, or more people will mark the service as bad. Social media customer service generates more awareness from both sides. A social media environment is also a great place to have giveaways or offer incentives for the consumers. Many host polls on their channel, where the customer has to decide between two outfit possibilities, and when the participation, in the form of likes, is high enough, the brand will, e.g. offer a coupon code for the next purchase. If enough people get attracted by the brand, the awareness will rise and most likely also the sales. A domino-effect or in other words, electronic word-of-mouth can be generated through a like or comment of a single customer, if only enough of his or her followers see it. If a consumer likes something that a brand sets out on the internet or even shares that content on their own social feed, he or she ultimately builds their own self-identity and how they will be perceived by their friends. If a consumer gets involved with a brand it also says a little bit about their character and personality, because someone who often wears the same brand, in the end becomes a part of that brand and its ideology. So in an overview the person has to agree with the brand on a lot of levels to become a part of it (Bernritter, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary for the label to know their customers well, so their posts can appeal to them (Stone & Woodcock, 2014).

Social networks are a phenomenon that is different from all the other marketing channels out there in the industry now. They thrive from interconnection and interactivity. The goal of a brand should be to build a following that participates actively on the conversations, likes the posts, and sees the platform as a great place to be. A marketer should never obviously push a product onto a customer via a social platform. The customer should always believe that it was their idea to make the purchase. The marketer is merely there to steer the audience in the right direction (Kilgour et al. 2016). A social network was not invented to sell products, but to connect people and the industry. Brands go online to reach their customers faster and on a more personal level. If a person is contacted by a brand via a social network, it feels more familiar than via email or phone call. The barriers are breached and there is no suspension from the customer side (Hamilton et al. 2016). It feels like talking to a friend or family member. Even the choice of words can be more colloquial than usual. Never was it so easy for companies to reach their customers as now with the social networks apparent.

And customers enjoy their new elevated position in the market. Because on social platforms, consumers drive actions and conversations. Brands are merely the motivators and initiators.

In fashion, it was not always this way. Before social media has risen to its present status, fashion magazines and designers decided how much a customer got to know about the brand or the product. The audience was always held at arm's length and kept on distance. This way the fashion houses could keep their high standards in the business. The average consumer did not feel comfortable to contact a more established designer, because they seemed untouchable. But since the social media revolution every consumer with the nose for fashion has a say in the industry. Outfit of the day contributions of customers on the Facebook and Instagram pages of big fashion brands are highly appreciated. Consumers are the new trendsetters. Everyone with a social media account and a big enough following can help to make or break a trend (Gates, 2014; Kim and Ko, 2012). Designers and fashion houses conceptualize a trend, but it is in the hands of the consumer, if it actually will latch on in the industry and brought to life by the wearer.

Through social media applications, such as Instagram and Pinterest, which are based on visualization, many beautiful and appealing product pictures and outfit posts float around on the internet. Fashion influencers, such as bloggers and celebrities, and even laymen can help distribute those images and create hype around certain things. This way trends can be developed faster and become viral in a short time period. In the last couple of years, the internet helped to revive the fashion era of the 80's and even more so of the 90's. Dungarees, pinafore dresses, velvet, and platforms are back in style. Then, there are certain products of brands that reach a very high demand, such as the "Superstars" sneaker by Adidas, the "Drew" purse by Chloé, or this fall the Gucci "Jordaan" leather loafers. If you like fashion and take a look around the social platforms, these products are everywhere to be seen. Fashion survives on it-pieces, and social networks help the brands formulate them. This is exactly the reason why customers need to be engaged. And even though companies already start to bet on social media for advertising and increase their marketing budget by 59% in that area, it is said to still not be enough (Barger & Labrecque, 2013). Social marketing should form the main sector for fashion companies and all the other channels should help push the brand further. Many see it the other way around and think that social networking is just helping the other channels reach their success, but if we look at the bigger picture we can see that without social media no channel would survive on their own anymore. It should be the main source where most of the money is allocated. Another way to win in the social media lottery is to pick the right platforms to promote your brand and connect to your customers. It is no use to be on all the different networks if your customers are not there.

For fashion the most successful networks from experience are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. In Germany, specifically, Pinterest and Twitter have not found their way around yet. Facebook is most likely chosen and always on the list of platforms to use. Mostly because it has the largest following of them all. In the second quarter of 2016 Facebook had 1,128 million daily active users and the number is constantly climbing upwards (Facebook, 2016). Therefore, Facebook is the network where most people can be reached online, although it is not easy for fashion brands to maneuver themselves through the big mess of advertising clutter, that is apparent there. Jason John, the senior director of marketing at the Gilt Group (Indvik, 2011) suggests to experiment with the right strategy for your brand. It is possible to change up your communication style, as long as you stay true to the brand core message. The most important part is being honest and open with the communication and then the fans will nudge you in the right direction. Instagram and Pinterest are two platforms that are a wonderfully perfect fit for the fashion industry. Both networks consist of highly visual content, and fashion lives of images. Brands post product pictures, lifestyle images, and behind-the-scenes happenings. Sometimes the best strategy is to develop the right mix. Many labels do not push their products on the customers' screens in an obvious way but make it more subtly by showcasing them, while being worn and the places they are being worn at. It is tried to transmit the vibe the ownership comes with. People latch onto those lifestyle posts more often, because they look like being picked up right out of someone's life. They see what they want as well, and purchase the item and hopefully the emotions with it. "Sometimes the best content strategy may superficially have little to do with the brand. Rather it centers on what inspires the brand" (Raghaven, n.d.). Additionally, on Instagram many posts are completed with hashtags that make it easier to connect products and people to other users with the same interests. Hashtags facilitate user generation and finding followers. Often a hashtag transports you to another profile that otherwise would not have been found. Pinterest is a little different from the rest of the social networks as it is not there to connect people and start conversations but more so to find products saving the favorite images and creating mood boards (St.Amand, 2016). Twitter, as I mentioned above, is not established enough in Germany, although it is a great network to connect people and brands. It is often used to re-post news and information, and it is a very fast-paced network, where messages are no longer than 140 characters (Dalla Pozza, 2014). News and information travel very fast on this platform. The English-speaking world and fashion influencers already realized the importance of it and hopefully, soon, even German fashion brands will understand, that it is a great opportunity to be connected on a more global level.

But no matter which channel, they all help marketers to establish their brand in the industry. Since last year, Facebook and Instagram introduced the purchase button on generated ads. Users are directed to a site where the product can be bought by the click of the button. Personally, I feel that those generated ads are more disruptive on Facebook than on Instagram. Since Instagram is already about images, sometimes it does not even look like an advertisement but more like a regular post. Another social channel advertisers and brands discovered for themselves is the video-sharing network YouTube. Since technology is evolving, many young people prefer to spend their time online and watch movies on Netflix or videos on YouTube. As of July 2015 400 hours' worth of footage are uploaded to the platform every minute and generated by over a billion people (Satista, 2015). It would be foolish not to launch a brand channel with commercials and campaign launch videos online. Customers could be reached with behind-the-scenes videos of fashion shows and product creation processes. And, in addition to their own videos, they can place short advertisements in front of other videos that users have to watch before being able to watch the actual video. Thanks to YouTube online advertising is on a roll. 70% of users actually tolerate the advertisements and 40% of those even like to watch them. Online commercials raise brand awareness and recognition even more than television and magazine advertisements (Lammenett, 2015). The latest trend in the social media world is the smartphone-only application Snapchat with its auto-disappearing messages. It is a perfect channel for quick news and to create buzz around the time of fashion shows and new product launches. The advantage for brands with Snapchat is that it is less noisy there, because fashion brands just started to discover that medium for them. There is still enough space to unfold their brand and build an organic, rather than paid following (Indvik, 2016). Ultimately everything in advertising or in the marketing message needs to be connected to social media. The networks are the hubs, where everybody ends up and comes together for help and information. It's like a collection point, a gossip circle, a self-help group, a community!

2.5.4 Blogs

With the rise of the social media a new interest group came to stay in the fashion industry: bloggers. Fashion-bloggers are everyday people that have a huge interest in trends and lifestyle and want to share their feelings, beliefs, ideas, opinions and inspirations on their blog and talk about them with people who are interested to chime in on the conversation. A blog is nothing other than an online diary, an outlet for the blogger to share with people who want to listen. And over the years more and more people liked what these bloggers had to say. Their voice was more candid and raw than what fashion editors had to say about trends

and fashion. Readers and consumers found more trust in the everyday person than in the people who worked on the inside of the million-dollar industry for decades. Bloggers made the industry seem more tangible than ever; an industry that rarely gave out information to outsiders. Designers started to notice how positively people reacted to bloggers and started inviting them to their fashion-shows, and again bloggers gave the outside world a glimpse into the world that everyday people were shut out from. The rule of no photography or videos of the runway shows stopped existing for the bloggers and they shared live-images with their followers. With the help of bloggers even big designers seem more tactile to everyone. They pushed sales for many design houses, by showing of their products on their blogs. Designer luxury fashion is not that exclusive anymore. Even the fashion editors understood with time how important it is to keep their readers in the loop with what goes on in the industry behind-the-scenes (Givhan, 2014). Hence, blogging changed from being a unique way to talk to people to a mainstream movement in the apparel industry. Today every designer and fashion magazine has their online websites with a link to a company-owned blog that keeps the conversation flowing with their customers. What started out to be more like a hobby for some turned out to be a full time job for many (Hsu et al. 2013). Since bloggers have such a big impact on the industry, they were embraced by it and are now a vital part of it. Every fashion show and every important event has always some bloggers invited to talk about it to their followers. It is one more channel for the companies to be advertising on. And blogging is a very unique kind of marketing.

Bloggers give their readers a chance to be part of their life and lifestyle. They write about their day, about what they eat, what they wear, and what they think. The blogger becomes an online friend to the reader. Some of those bloggers even started a YouTube channel and take their viewers with them almost everywhere they go. It seems like the blogger invites their viewer into the inner circle. The blog and its community become like a little online family that support each other (de Lassus & Mercanti-Guerin, 2013). Many consumers do not like it if companies try to market their products directly. It seems pushed onto them and forced. In the new social media generation, it is far more beneficial for the company to place their product into the hands of a blogger and ask them to promote it on their blog (Bernritter, 2016). This way of advertising is much more affective with the consumers. People who already follow the blog, trust the opinion of the blogger, understand their view on things and so it is much more influential on the consumer. "The fact that the blogger personalizes her experiences with the product by inserting them into her life may be the source of a stronger wish to buy the product" (de Lassus & Mercanti-Guerin, 2013). It seems less like an advertisement and more like a friendly recommendation (Kulmala, Mesiranta and Tuominen, 2013; Hsu, Lin and Chiang, 2013).

Today another problem occurs in the blogger world. The new generation of bloggers is all about self-promotion. This makes it harder for the reader to trust them. Many of those bloggers promote products, because they are paid a substantial amount of money for the advertising. Here it is necessary for the blogger not to accept every offer they get. If they promote everything that comes their way, whether they like the product or not, at some point, they will lose their credibility. This is the part where the decision needs to be made if honesty goes above money. It is better to only accept the products that the blogger also believes in and stands behind the company message (Kilgour et al. 2016). If these two do not go together, the blogger will lose followers. For consumers, it is absolutely crucial to believe the blogger what they are endorsing. In a way, a blogger is like a celebrity, but far more approachable. But even that might change someday in the future, since bloggers nowadays make a lot of money with product placements and promotions and are also treated like famous people by the fashion industry. They do not market the products for the company for free anymore, especially the influential ones. With more fame, they can pick and choose their collaborations and get more expensive for companies, but are still more affordable than celebrities. Nevertheless, it is crucial for everyone in the fashion business to be some sort of influencer on social networks. Many fashion directors only book models, photographers and so on, only if they have a large following. Otherwise the final product will be less valuable to the brand (Katie, 2016).

2.6 Traditional Media

Traditional media are all those channels that have been around for decades and held up the business with advertising, before the internet came around the corner. We are talking about television, newspapers, magazines, radio and so forth. Since the technological shift occurred, traditional media slowly but steadily regressed into a state that is less dominant than the digital media. Many companies start to turn their back on traditional channels because they feel social media and the world wide web bears more benefits. This might be and most likely is true, but it still may be a decision that is hastily made. Traditional media have been around for many decades and accompanied many generations. For these generations that did not grow up with social media like the Generation Y and X did, traditional media still is the most trusted form of media. Many older people cannot maneuver themselves through the internet yet the way younger people do. And even though the internet is very accessible these days, traditional media still have a larger reach, because they market to everyone. If advertisements are placed on the right medium, it could be even more effec-

tive, than the internet in some ways. Additionally, it can be used to promote the social networks as well, e.g. to the older generations. This type of media is bringing the product to the customer, instead of making them look for it. Traditional marketing helps to create emotions with their audience mostly through images. And since an image says more than a thousand words, a missing visual advertisement would mean to miss out on influencing the consumers (Stone, 2012). As long as there are people who do not use social media, traditional media should be around.

2.6.1 Broadcast

With the broadcasting in traditional media, we talk about television, the movies, and the radio. For fashion, directly, I would argue that the radio is less important, which is why we will only touch upon the other two. Just as mentioned above, television has the highest reach, with the lowest cost per contact. It is true that TV advertisements are very expensive, especially during prime-time broadcasting and even more so in movie theaters before the actual film. But because that advertisement is seen by more people, the cost is worth its price. People are very impatient and rarely stay tuned on the same program while the commercials are running. This means that the ads that are positioned right at the beginning or the end of a commercial break have the highest chance to be seen by the audience, and therefore are the most expensive time slots. Since TV advertising has gone down a lot in the past decade or so, it is not necessarily used to a high extent by the fashion industry. There are some brands who here and there release an ad for their new campaign on television, but mostly they use the internet as a medium for that. The only product that many brands still use TV commercials for is perfume advertising. Perfume ads are popular because they are always beautifully made and trigger many emotions in the audience, and it is widely known that emotion marketing resonates best with viewers (van der Goot et al. 2016). An even better way to reach the fashion customer is to subsidize apparel on movie and TV-show sets or, in other words, through product placement. Many viewers see the products on the bodies of celebrities and fall in love with the garments, which triggers the need to buy them (Shephard et al. 2016; Wolbers, n.d.).

2.6.2 Print

One of the traditional media for fashion is print, which is still a very big player in the industry. There is even more than just one outlet of print apparent and I will be talking about the three

most important ones for fashion. Magazines, out-of-home campaigns (OOH) and catalogs. It is said that visual advertising is the most helpful way to attract attention from the consumer, since pictures turn into words and images in the human brain, which again lets both brain-sides work together. An advertisement in a glossy fashion magazine is in most cases of a very superb quality and has a strong team behind the making of it. In comparison, social media visuals are more simple and candid and live rather from momentum than professionalism. The prints in the fashion magazines are very beautifully made and nice to look at. This advertising outlet is still very important for the industry, since this is where most of the apparel brands position their advertisement. If you flip through a magazine, at least one third of it is filled with brand images. The special significance in magazine advertising is that it has a very long life span. A fashion magazine is nice to look at and is usually retrieved more often than let's say a newspaper or an online article that might be looked at only once. A magazine can be a nice coffee table book for people to browse through, or it can also be lent to friends and family. Sometimes, people do not throw them straight away and so they can be around for a longer time period, which means advertisements and clothes inside will be looked at more often and reread. Here it is crucial that the images evoke dreams of lifestyle, love and beauty and overall positive feelings (Oh, 2005; Hsu and Mo, 2009). Another positive aspect for print advertising in magazines is that people who decided to read the magazine and like apparel will pay better attention to the ads and form a more useful brand awareness than by looking at a fleeting banner ad online. The only downside for magazine advertisement is that it is very expensive and needs to be planned months before the actual issue. Because of the high-quality color usage and size of the advertisement, many small businesses cannot afford to expose their brand there. But all the big names in fashion know how important it is to keep the consumers engaged and always have an ad in all the fashion leading magazines. There is no spontaneity with magazine advertising, everything has to be planned in advance, which means that marketing teams have to start to think about the autumn campaigns in spring (Clow & Baack, 2007).

Another way of marketing to the audience with print is through fashion out-of-home campaigns. Here we talk about the huge billboards and posters that are distributed throughout big cities and towns, sometimes even on taxis and the side of busses. The best example for OOH display is the Time Square in New York City that is lit up with the help of giant advertisements all year around non-stop. It is always helpful to have posters outside, reminding consumers about the latest products that are in store. For example, *Zara* and *Mango* often have products displayed on posters at bus stops in big cities, which can make a customer desire the portrayed product, even more so, if it pops up in more than one place in the city. This way the consumer is constantly reminded of the product.

The third print medium is the catalog. There are few fashion houses left that use catalog direct mail for their marketing strategy, e.g. *H&M* and *Klingel*, because most of the others rely on the online store these days. It is certainly a question of budget and kind of apparel brand that distributes catalogs, but I feel that it is still a nice form to advertise. A mailed catalog is a low-pressure tactic to advertise brands products. The receiver is not forced to open the magazine and look at the products, it is their choice what to do with it. Just like with a magazine, it is a long-term impact on the consumer. For me personally, I still prefer receiving a catalog via mail. It is nice to look at it in my leisure time and see the variety of clothes combined in different ways. I do not order the garments via mail or telephone, but the catalog gives me the incentive to go online and order clothes from the internet. So catalogs can still be used for brand spiraling (Anderson and Brynjolfsson, 2005; Clow & Baack, 2007).

2.7 Face to Face Marketing And Events

Face to face marketing and personal selling are all the point of sales (POS) as well as outlets, where the brand stands in direct contact with the customer. Direct contact, not in the means of email or social media contact, but directly talking to and influencing the consumer. Personal selling asks for high quality sales people who understand their craft. These people are the direct influencers when talking and trying to sell to a customer. It is one of the more important media because the consumer is present. There are two fundamental areas of personal selling in the apparel industry that we will touch upon. For once the brick-and-mortar store, where sales are the main incentive and of course the numerous fashion events that are more for networking and advertising reasons.

2.7.1 Instore experience

A brick-and-mortar store is the physical flagship of a fashion brand and the main contact point between label and consumer. Although there is a substantial movement towards online shopping in this digital age, the physical retail store is still the more acclaimed route of purchasing clothes with all the generations. Baby boomers and digital natives alike enjoy the experience of purchasing fashion and the triggered satisfaction that comes from owning something desired right away. With physical buying, it is all about the connection of the human senses in gaining gratification. With the somatic purchasing process, a person engages four of the five human senses: see, feel, smell, and hear. Fashion enthusiasts savor

the overall experience. They desire looking at the garments and touching and feeling the fabric. The other two senses come from the music that plays in the background of the store and also sets the right mood and of course not to take for granted the odor. There is nothing worse than coming into a store where it reeks of the chemicals that are used in the manufacturing process. This can often be experienced in stores where extremely cheap clothes are sold that are produced in low wage countries. Some more expensive stores even offer a celebratory glass of champagne with the purchase of an item. Here even all five senses would be incorporated. In comparison to online-store experience, most of the time only one or a maximum of two senses is used. The eyes are the most important instrument here. Some brands could also have some music on the website, but it is rarely used. This is the reason why a lot of online apparel purchases are being returned. The fit and feel of the fabric does not comply with the look and expectation of the item. The haptics are maybe the most favorable advantage of the brick-and-mortar store. To bring out the best experience possible for the customer the design of the store is crucial. It should be appealing from the outside with a nice entrance and appropriate window displays to lure the consumers in from the street. The store windows have to showcase the most exciting items from the clothing range or tell an interesting story so that the people feel the need to step inside the store and check out what else is offered. Coming inside, the story from the window display should be continued. The layout of the store should follow a concept. The environment should be inviting and have a happy and welcoming atmosphere. The visual merchandise, as well as the products, need to complement each other perfectly. The customer should feel breezy rather than stuffed in a physical store. The clothing selection should be well chosen and have a wide range for every taste, but not be overpowering. As mentioned before, the music is an important aspect for the shopping experience and sets the mood. If the brand has a younger target audience, the tunes can be hip and play music from the current charts, whereas a more elevated audience in a more expensive store could listen to lounge music or jazz tunes. Next to the music, the lighting and display of articles plays also a fundamental role. A well-lit store with spotlight on the main products is very inviting and directs a person to the purchase (Blázquez, 2014). Nevertheless, there are still some brand concepts, e.g. Hollister and Abercrombie & Fitch, that go for a darker ambience, but set spotlights on their products. Their strategy also has their very heavy signature scents diffused instore. With this idea they want to attract a younger crowd. Overall, the store should try and achieve a feel-good oasis for its customers. It benefits to also think about the shopping entourage that might just come for support and does not want to browse. For them, it would be nice to have a seating area available with magazines and maybe even tea or coffee. Everything around the actual products, the atmosphere, also plays a vital role

in influencing the customer to purchase, like a brand more and come back again (Newman & Patel, 2004).

And the most essential aspect in physical shopping is the customer service and social contact between employees and the customers, as well as the contact among shoppers themselves. Especially women like human interaction while they are on the hunt for fashion (Shephard et al. 2016). Humans look for the entertainment factor when they go shopping, either on-, or offline. And the sales people are the ones that push the brand to the customer. They talk to them, engage them in the process, advice, and influence them (Hammann, 1979; Newman and Patel, 2004). The in-store personnel should always be helpful and friendly and should never make the customer feel unwanted there. If the consumers enjoy the service they receive and on top of that like the clothes, they most likely will return and start bonding with the sales people, which ultimately will form a brand awareness and brand relationship. It is also said that if a shopper experiences a positive shopping trip, he or she will give six word-of-mouth referrals. If the experience is bad, the news will travel to eleven other people (Clow & Baack, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to make the trip worthwhile. And if the sales people manage to make the time enjoyable for the consumer, they can take the hesitation of some to use other marketing channels as well, e.g. social media and the online store. Another perfect example for brand spiraling (Kumar & Venkatesan, 2005).

2.7.2 Events

Events are a very special kind of advertising in the fashion industry. They are mainly there for networking reasons and bringing professionals and, or customers together. The marketing strategy should always think about having events in the mix to achieve a stronger stance in the industry, especially in the case of trade fairs. Trade fairs are huge exhibitions where many fashion brands come together and present their business and clothes. They are usually targeted at retailers, distributors and wholesalers, as well as other professional workers from the fashion industry. A trade fair brings together many different companies and strengthens the bonds of the market members. It is a condensed environment. Knowledge about competitors can be collected, new clothing ranges presented and sold to other businesses. And most importantly, business ties can be formed. A trade fair is a place with many influencers and top quality sales people who can benefit from each other (O'Hara & Herbig, 1993).

Another kind of events are parties for product launches, campaign launches or store openings. Those events are used to come together with brand spokespeople, employees and

invited guests, such as celebrities. Parties are always important in the fashion industry for networking reasons and to expand ones' business, as with a new store. Before and after the event, social media is a great medium to stimulate interest for the brand with posts. The supreme discipline in marketing in the fashion industry is, and always has been, the fashion show. It is the event every big and well-known designer contributes to the most. In the fashion calendar, there are two big fashion catwalks for each luxury designer. One is the presentation of the spring/summer collection, and the other the showcasing of the fall/winter runway styles. The new collections are revealed for the first time to the industry, the press, and the influencers. Many fast-fashion houses take their inspiration from the big runways of the world, which are Paris, London, New York, and Milan. Usually only the big designers show their collections on the main fashion shows. But in recent years even fast-fashion houses started to prepare shows as well, like the British brand Topshop. In Germany, the most important event of the year is the *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week* in Berlin, where German designers show their hard work to the world. Even some young designers and fashion start-ups receive the chance to showcase their art.

3 Sustainability

The fashion industry today is one of the most competitive business fields in the world. There are so many companies and brands that try to sell their products either online or offline, if not on both channels. Every label wants to be the best and most successful; and to achieve that, marketers try to generate as many benefits for their customers as possible and push sales. A very successful field is the fast-fashion movement in the industry. Global companies, such as *H&M*, *Zara* or *Forever 21* produce affordable, if not cheap, and stylish clothes and accessories with a speedy turnaround. Many consumers turn to these brands because they copy the current fashion trends directly from the catwalks of the fashion metropolises. Customers are promised products that will be in store shortly after seen at the fashion shows of big designers. The fast production routines make it possible for the companies to stock their stores with new inventory as often as in a three-week rhythm. This guarantees the consumer more purchase alternatives, because the looks are permanently updated and collections are constantly renewed. On top of that, they can produce more styles and sell them quite cheaply because of the outsourcing production sites into low wage countries. To say it in other words, the industry is supporting obsolescence (Joy et al. 2012). Since the fast-fashion industry routinely offers consumers low priced and trendy products, people buy more. (Fulton and Lee, 2013; Perry and Chung, 2016). Consumers do not see a benefit to pay a bigger sum for items that will be in style for only one season. For them it is more appealing to purchase more trends for less money (Joy et al. 2012).

The chain reaction that follows is a high revenue for the business, which allocates enough money to feed it into the marketing purposes of the company, which again leads to attracting the consumers and selling even more merchandise. The outcome is that a throw-away trend comes to stay. Consumers cannot stay stylish with clothes they bought one year ago. They are socially forced to upgrade their wardrobe constantly, which in turn cannot hold all the clothes. People start discarding old or out-of-style apparel. It might be the industry with the fastest “invention-acceptance-dissatisfaction-invention [-cycle]”(Fletcher, 2012). People purchase clothes without having a need or a function for them (*ibid*). “Apparel products often act as a vessel of self-expression” (Hill & Lee, 2012). People buy garments to stand out as an individual and to be part of a group (Fletcher, 2012). They want to express a certain air about themselves. It plays into the superficial society that can be detected today.

The sad part in this system is that people purchase and throw away the clothing mindlessly. Not one thought is wasted on the processes behind each item and what it means for the

environment, the economy and the people that work for the industry. The resources of the earth cannot support the fast-fashion trend and its obsolescence and wastefulness (Joy et al. 2012). The world is not made for constant exploitation. And the fashion and textile industry has one of the highest environmental impacts in terms of resource depletion and pollution (Da Giau et al. 2016; Pedersen and Andersen, 2015). Most of the fast-paced companies move their production offshore. This single strategic move disconnects the consumers from the actions that happen abroad. Out of sight out of mind. What consumers do not see cannot affect them in any way. Some people close their eyes to what is happening, others are unaware of the situation due to lack of knowledge and information (Henninger et al. 2016). Few are aware of the pesticide usage and water consumption in cotton crop growing, the toxic chemicals that are being used for dyeing the fabrics, the landfills that are overflowing with waste, the carbon dioxide emissions that rise due to the transportation necessities, and, even more important, the horrible working conditions at the manufacturing sites and the cruel treatment of animals that are being tortured for fabrics and padding (Clark, 2008).

And then to the horror of the industry, as well as the consumers, the inevitable happened. Because the industry was only interested in the monetary aspect and not the safety of their workers, the worst incident in the textile world happened. On the 23rd of April 2013 the Rana Plaza Building in Bangladesh that housed the production of numerous fast-fashion and cheap-fashion companies, collapsed due to structure deficits (Faigle and Pauly, 2014; Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2016). This day marks the death of many textile-workers that did not have to die, if safety would have been one of the top priorities. This incident was broadcasted all over the world and opened the eyes of many consumers that purchased their clothes blindly, without thinking about the origin. Since that time, people try to buy more sustainably.

Today it can be definitively said that a trend towards green, sustainable fashion can be noticed. Not only start-up labels that build their companies on sustainable ground from the beginning, but also fast-fashion companies realized the demand for more sustainable clothing. Due to customer concerns and pressure from the society they incorporated more ecological product ranges into their product offers, as can be seen by the Swedish fashion house of *H&M* and their 'Conscious Collection' that is made with organic cotton (Da Giau et al. 2016; Hill and Lee, 2015).

Sustainability has many faces and definitions, but the one that can always be used is by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) that states that "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*Our Common Future*). This aspect is

very important for the industry because “the Earth is not able to support the current level of production and disposal of apparel due to depletion of natural resources and quick filling of landfills”(Shen, 2014).

For a company to be successful in a sustainable way it is crucial to follow the ‘Triple Bottom Line’ when it comes to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Goworek, 2011; Perry and Towers, 2013). The Triple Bottom Line states that organizations should not only consider the economic side of a business, but incorporate the social and environmental aspect as well. Consumers are becoming more aware daily, but they need also to be constantly reminded of what is important. The CSR is a guarantee to the customers that the company makes its best effort to guarantee a sustainable future. It is also a good PR tactic and contributes to the positive image of the company. Therefore many started to bring out a social report of their achievements in sustainability. This social report includes sustainable effort in social, environmental, and economic fields. Since the supply chain of a fashion product is very long, and most of the time globalized, it is fundamental that every link of the chain is covered and looked after. Because they are contributing to social and ecological shortcomings, the companies are often made responsible for the whole production chain (Da Giau et al. 2016; Juretzek, 2014). Due to that reason, they should be in constant contact with their suppliers and partners and have an open communication with them.

There are many aspects to consider for a company in the different fields of sustainability. To guarantee everyone who has a part of your business the environmentally wellbeing, many boxes need to be ticked on a very long list. Let’s start with the reduction of emissions. Transport management optimization should be upfront to guarantee less consumption of carbon dioxide. And it does not stop here. Even the workers in headquarter offices have a responsibility to reduce the carbon dioxide levels by flying less and having a car-share network. More renewable energy sources should be used in production sites and office buildings. Water saving technologies need to be applied and new methods of irrigation found. Ways need to be invented to reduce waste and find a way to reuse it (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). Generally, recycling should be applied throughout the whole business. Another big part of the industry that drastically needs to become more sustainable are the materials. More businesses started to use organic cotton instead of regular grown cotton. The difference between the two is, that organic cotton is grown without the use of pesticides. Toxic chemicals that are used for dyeing the materials should be reduced or eliminated, as they pose a large risk for the workers and the environment. Also, companies and consumers need to be educated on the animal treatment in the fashion industry. Many brands already eliminate exotic leather, fur and angora wool to free animals of unnecessary suffering. Others started to use only the leather from the byproducts of the food industry to ensure that

no more animals must give their life than necessary. For the down padding of jackets brands work on using only the feathers of not force-fed and not live-plucked birds; and as for the wool, they try to use only the wool from animals that did not have to undergo the horrible procedure of mulesing that is done to prevent deadly flystrike infestations. The materials that are used for the products must be labeled correctly so they can be traceable by the consumer (Parker, 2011; Turker and Altuntas, 2014). Something that consumers mostly lose sight of is that the unsustainability does not just come from the manufacturing sites and the company itself. A big part of the product life-cycle takes place in the homes of the consumers themselves. The maintaining of the clothes, such as washing, drying, ironing and dry-cleaning, as well as the disposal has to be considered, too (Pedersen & Andersen, 2015). Most consumers also believe that the environment is the only source that suffers in a supply chain of a clothing item, which unfortunately is wrong (Hill & Lee 2012).

The social aspect is just as important if not even more. Here, the organization needs to make sure that all basic human rights are fulfilled for each employee. This is especially crucial for those who work at the manufacturing site. Guarantee of ethical and safe working conditions, adequate payment that is high enough to meet basic needs, no child or forced labor, and a maximum on allowed working hours per week. The personal wellbeing is a number one priority. There need to be equal opportunities for everyone; a diverse working environment without discrimination. The company also needs to give their workers the chance to training and education and become involved with social projects around their manufacturing sites to ensure a good work-life-balance and incorporation of the society (Parker, 2011; Shen, 2014; Turker and Altuntas, 2014).

Economic sustainability means that brands must look out for the consumption level of their consumers. Levels of consumption, wealth, utility, and welfare also have to be guaranteed for the future. We cannot drain the earth of its resources and live in excess so the generations after us have nothing to live on anymore (Daly & Cobb, 1989). Right now, the consume is unsustainable and cannot be maintained to this extent. The challenging task for a more sustainable world is navigate and reduce the consumption level of the Western society and simultaneously improve the living standard in the developing countries without maximizing resource usage and ecological implication (Ruffing, 2007).

As you can see, there is a lot to be considered for a company that wants to be successful in the fashion business but also keep a good face and consciousness about their actions. Ethical production and processes are not only positive for the society, the economy, and the environment, but also have a favorable effect on the CSR and the overall image of the brand. A good sustainability or social report shows the consumers that a brand cares about

the effects it has on the environment and is willing to change for the better. The report makes it possible for the people to read about the achievements towards good practices and the overall goals a company has for the future.

One of the problems that can be detected in the industry is that many consumers do not believe the words a company prints in its reports. It is true that it is not always easy to find out which companies are telling the truth when they put a green label on their clothing and which is just “greenwashing” the audience for marketing reasons. Many marketers that take society and the environment for granted and only look at the monetary outcome of their business use fake ecological labels to trick the consumers into buying their brand. This is a very shameful process and deceives many customers to an extent that they even stop believing in the actual sustainable players in the industry. These devious companies honestly need to think about their actions and what they are contributing to. They are the ones who do not waste thoughts about future generations and the wastefulness of today (Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2016; Hill and Lee, 2012).

To help the audience learn to trust a company, it needs to inform the consumers about every step it takes. Transparency is a virtue. Tell them where your raw materials are coming from, who the supplying farmers are, how the materials are woven, and what chemicals are or are not used for refinement. Inform them how the animals are treated that are used for the products, as well as the workers who transform the fabric into a piece of clothing. Let the audience form their own opinion about the brand, and if it is worth to associate with it. “Communication is necessary to raise awareness for sustainability by not only informing consumers about options available to them, but also educate them on environmental issues” (Henninger 2015). Transparency creates a vibe of tangibility with the company, which means that consumers can access and view information about the brand openly. The five aspects of transparency are access, comprehensiveness, relevance, quality, and reliability. It is fundamental to be as transparent as possible with your audience to construct a good image and build loyalty (Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire, 2011; Wagner, Lahme and Breitbarth, 2014). Many sustainable companies form cooperations with ecological and ethical labelling organizations, such as Fairtrade and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). They let the organizations audit their procedures, and if all compliances are met, they certify the clothes and label them accordingly (Aakko and Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013; Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2016; Hill and Lee, 2012). Some consumers put more trust in those labelling organizations since it is their most important goal to achieve a sustainable business environment.

As mentioned above, it is difficult and most likely not attainable to achieve a complete sustainable supply chain because there are too many links to consider, and there are too many construction sites that need to be attended to. Nevertheless, it is important for a business to try its best and achieve as many good deeds as possible. Sustainability is still a very broad subject. For different people it means different things and this is okay, as long as you incorporate it in some ways into your business processes. Most companies start attending sustainability by using organic instead of regular cotton (Fulton & Lee, 2013). Others concentrate on using only natural fibers instead of polyester. Yet another brand is concerned with the animal wellbeing and does not use animal fibers and only synthetic fibers, but tries to win them from recyclable sources to not contribute to landfills. Many eliminated the use of real fur and only use leather from the byproducts of the food industry. As can be seen, there are many ways to achieve a more sustainable business. "Each fiber might have its virtue in terms of sustainability, yet each has its problem" (Aakko & Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013). There is no right or wrong, as long as the steps are made towards a positive future.

The only problem that still poses is that too much clothing is produced way too fast. The fast-fashion trend sends the society into a wastefulness future. Even if the clothing is sustainable, our natural resources will still decrease. Therefore, one of the movements which starts to clasp on in the industry is the opposite of fast-fashion, or rather a different approach. It is based on philosophical ideals and does not have competition in mind (Henninger et al. 2016). It is the movement of slow-fashion. The brands that follow that mindset believe that less is more (Perry & Chung, 2016). They place their cards on natural and organic materials, stray away from the 20 collections a year and go for durability (Clark, 2008; Henninger, 2015). Their goal is quality over quantity by producing quality clothing that survives several years and is simple in its design, so it can work over many seasons. A durable product can also make a product appeal more positive, due to the better quality of the material (Fletcher, 2012).

Although consumers are made aware of the procedures in the fashion industry, it is still "difficult to convince [them] to forgo personal cost benefits, product benefits, or emotional benefits to support ecology and consume green products" (Perry & Chung, 2016). Simply said, consumers are of a selfish nature. Just green clothing will not do it for them. Aesthetics need to be pleasing and need to be marketed right (Fletcher, 2012). The best solution would be if sustainability became an implicitness and customers did not even realize that the clothing is eco-apparel. Environment-friendly clothing should be a hidden bonus. When every fashion brand will start considering quality over quantity, consumers will jump on that trend as well. It is difficult for people now that pretty and cheap clothing is so much easier to

attend than sustainable clothing. The industry and the brands need to help the customers make the switch, by

“making [the] sustainable alternative more attractive [...] will encourage them to embrace it. Although ethical and ecological values are important to some consumers, by far, most people look first for aesthetic value, such as style, color and fit” (Aakko & Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013).

Many people only see the shell of it all, the look and the price point and stop right there with making the connection that good products and ethical working conditions demand a higher price on principle (Henninger, 2015).

Nevertheless, there is still one question that is visible throughout this whole sustainability discussion. Is sustainability in the fashion industry not an oxymoron? The problem here is that fashion and trends live of change which happens frequently. The fast-paced purchasing rhythm is a vocal point for the industry. Fast-fashion is not durable; it is rather made to be discarded. “Durability [...] is the kiss of death” (Joy et al. 2012). The sustainable development asks for a slower life-cycle and clothing that should be used over many seasons. “[...] slow fashion aims to eliminate fashion and clothing from consumers’ lives but to change the way it is realized” (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). The other discussion point is that even if every single brand will become sustainable, the purchase of ethical clothing is still driving demand, which in turn drives production, which again uses up resources (Aakko and Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013; Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2016). That is why “buying less and more ethically, could be the only ecologically sound way to shop” (Thomas, 2008).

Overall, it is a very difficult topic that needs to find solutions, but if we keep mindlessly purchasing clothes and never think about the consequences, our children must pay for our mistakes, our selfishness and inconsideration. We need to share the planet with many more generations that will follow, and it would be human to leave the earth behind as clean and healthy as possible.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Framework

For my thesis and research design I chose to combine two different approaches to achieve my goals for this paper. The aim of this research thesis paper is to find out the marketing strategies of German fashion companies and to what extent they have changed over the years. Due to this reason, I wanted to have a comparison between established big German global players that are in the industry for a long time and young and fresh start-up labels that just recently entered the fashion industry with a new business. I concentrated on four hypotheses for this paper:

1. Every fashion company implements an integrated marketing strategy.
2. Social media takes over the dominant part of the marketing procedures of fashion companies.
3. Traditional channels are of less importance to the fashion companies.
4. More marketing budget is spent for online purposes.
5. Fashion companies go the extra mile and make an effort toward a more sustainable product life-cycle.

Therefore, my first approach was to collect primary data for my research. My goal was to interview young start-up companies about their marketing strategies. The collection of the test persons was not as easy as one would have thought, and I met with some difficulties along the way, which is the reason why I had to prolong my thesis process for one month. I started right at the beginning of my thesis with contacting fashion colleges and universities and asked for names of alumni who started their own fashion label. Weeks passed with no answers, so I had to change my approach. I went online and looked up German start-up companies in the textile business. Here it was difficult to actually find labels and businesses that fit my research description. Nevertheless, I found one small business that seemed perfect for my research and that agreed to help me. Still lacking interview partners, I started my second round of emails that I sent to more fashion colleges. Here I also found a design network in Düsseldorf that supports artists and asked them for help. At the same time, I decided to look for labels that want to help on social media and posted a request on Twitter that I accompanied with some hashtags, so the post could be found more easily. I decided to take this approach because I was curious to see if it would work out, since social media approaches are also a big part of my thesis. To my surprise, my post was re-posted just a couple hours later by an account of a small fashion festival that led me to their website and

ultimately to some start-ups that participated at their retail fair. I immediately wrote emails to the companies that fit my bill. Three companies answered me back, and two of them agreed to help me with my research, although, in the end, one backed out again. At the same time the fashion network from Düsseldorf answered me and recommended some start-ups that I also contacted. One label replied. Through the social media of this label I found a connection to yet another fashion event, a small retail fair for start-up labels. Here I found the rest of my interview partners.

In total, I interviewed seven German fashion labels of which six were very young start-ups and one label was still young but more established. Table 1 lists all the start-up companies with their brand, their founding year and their Unique Selling Proposition (USP). My approach was a semi-structured interview that I conducted over the phone with the interview partners. For the semi-structured interview I designed an interview outline with a total of sixteen questions. For some questions I had predesigned answers that the test persons needed to choose from; others were rather open and my interview partners could elaborately answer to their liking. Each phone interview had a duration of approximately fifteen minutes and was recorded. Immediately after, I transcribed the interview and wrote down my thoughts about it. To help understand the companies better, and to receive even more information, I also looked up their websites and social networks. One company sent me some company flyers for additional information.

Table 1: Interview Label Participants

Label	Founding Date	USP
Insaint	February 2016	Unisex Fashion/ dark colors
Second Skin Studio	September 2016	Minimalistic leather designs
Kluntje	December 2015	Sustainable fashion/ wordplay with tradition
Jour	April 2015	Contemporary Basics
Armed Angels	January 2007	Germany's leading fair fashion company
The Sept	September 2015	Minimalistic Basics and Essentials
Too Hot To Hide	September 2015	Tights

My second approach was to research the big global German companies. I chose seven companies to have an even number between the start-ups and the big companies. I tried to find companies that can be directly compared to each label. Unfortunately, this was only possible in some cases, because many start-ups planted themselves in niche markets, which cannot directly be compared to the big players. Nevertheless, I found a collection that

I was happy with in the end. This research was solely secondary, which means that I collected the data from their global websites, their social and sustainability reports, their social media networks, and from articles I found about them online. In addition, I let myself be influenced by their advertisements I saw online, out on the streets, on television, the radio, and in magazines. Table 2 lists the seven companies I chose to review with all their different brands and their USP.

Table 2: List of Big German Companies

Company	Brands	USP
S.Oliver Group	S.Oliver Red Label	Wearability
	S.Oliver Black Label	Modern Luxury
	Q/S by S.Oliver	Young, urban
	Triangle	Feminine Casual Chic
	Comma	Metropolitan Fashion
	Liebeskind	Mainly leather accessories
Hugo Boss Group	BOSS	Authentic, understated Luxury
	HUGO	Progressive Contemporary
	Boss Orange	Urban Casualwear
	Boss Green	Modern Sportswear
Tom Tailor Group	Tom Tailor	Everyday Fashion
	Tom Tailor Denim	Modern Urban Young Wear
	Tom Tailor Contemporary	Innovative Design and Quality
	Bonita	Women/Men 40+
CBR Fashion Group	Street One	Contemporary
	Cecil	Sporty Casualwear
Esprit Holding AG	Esprit	Casual Wear Women/Men
	edc by Esprit	Young Fashion
	Esprit Home	Home Textiles
Gerry Weber International AG	Gerry Weber	Sporty and Feminine
	Taifun	Feminine Business Look
	Samoon	Feminine Look for bigger sizes
	Hallhuber	Stylish and modern
Falke KGaA	Falke	Socks and Tights
	Falke ESS	Active Wear
	Falke Luxury Line	Luxury Materials
	Burlington	Brit Style

4.2 Findings 1: Start-Up Labels

All the start-up companies I interviewed are relatively young, with only one being somewhat more established than the rest. The *Armed Angels* label was founded in 2007 and has a solid nine years in the business. It is already one of the leading ethical and eco apparel brands in Germany. The company started out, because they wanted to print t-shirts and donate the money from the proceeds to a good cause. But when the two founders realized that the fashion and textile industry is not really a glamorous and beautiful place behind the facade, they decided to make more than just t-shirts and start their own label, where organic materials and fair working conditions are guaranteed throughout the whole supply chain, from the design to the finished product. In comparison to the other start-ups, *Armed Angels* concentrates almost fully on sustainability and lives and breathes it. Since it already is a substantial business and has many fans and supporters and grows bigger every year, the order numbers are bigger than for the other start-ups. *Armed Angels* is not afraid to out-source their production. They work together with 16 partners in five different countries, four of them are high risk. The manufacturing processes are very important. Strong and long-lasting relationships between label and partners are crucial. A constant communication is taking place. The responsible employees do not leave the partners to themselves but also visit the manufacturing sites yearly and offer support wherever possible. Since ethical, fair and sustainable clothing and processes are the greatest asset of the company, they work together with three external independent organizations that constantly audit the working conditions, the materials, and the environmental impact of the company on-site. *Armed Angels* is Fairtrade certified since the founding of the company. In the year 2011 the clothes were additionally GOTS-certified and this year they became a member in the Fair Wear Foundation. With these organizations the company receives help to implement even higher standards. Quality is also fundamental and so it is guaranteed that only sustainable, renewable and recyclable materials are used for the products. *Armed Angels* wants sustainability to become a mainstream movement and does everything possible in their power to reach as many consumers with their message. To help consumers understand, and show them a transparent business supply chain, they constructed a social report where everything about their business and their processes is explained in detail. They want to show that eco-apparel does not necessary mean ugly, baggy, shapeless clothes, but beautiful, stylish and timeless pieces that are in no disadvantage to the fast-fashion of today. Since they want to construct a contrary motion, they work with four collections a year with a lead time of twelve to eighteen weeks and ten delivery dates to balance out the workload for the factories. For their marketing strategy, they concentrate on trade fairs to market their clothes to retailers and online-retailers. This method seems to receive great success, since the label is sold at over

800 POS in eighteen countries. As the label is already a consolidated part in the German sustainability fashion world, it has great seasonal campaigns, that can be found on the website and on the re-targeting banners online. The main focus still lies on the online marketing. The weekly newsletter is a very important tool for the company, as well as the social media outlets Facebook and Instagram. There they keep up constant appearance and activity, with up to three posts per week on Facebook and a little more on Instagram. On both social networks they answer and react to comments fast; and on Facebook the customer service is impeccable. The communication is very friendly. Everything new that happens with the company is immediately posted on the online platforms. This makes the company very transparent. The latest social media campaign that was started by the label was the “Made by Humans” campaign. Here the farmers and sewers that work as partners with the label are personally introduced on the social networks. This campaign makes the product even more tangible and transparent. Bloggers are used as a marketing tool as well, as they can reach the masses faster. Here *Armed Angels* concentrates not only on green bloggers, but also on the mainstream lifestyle bloggers that have a wider reach. Nevertheless, it is important that each blogger understands the message the company wants to transport and reflects it in the right way. The message and the blogger both need to be authentic and believable.

The other six labels are still at the beginning of their journey, with founding dates in 2015 and even 2016. The label *Kluntje* is a young start-up which, similar to *Armed Angels*, concentrates on sustainability as one of their main marketing messages. The company was formed through a college project of fellow students who realized that they wanted to keep working on the project after they graduated. The clothes of the label are all made from GOTS-certified materials, or are recycled or upcycled from second-hand clothes or residual materials. Material is never thrown away, but rather patched together to new pieces. The other USP are traditional old low German words, from a language that is mostly forgotten and only is used by the older generations. The founders of the label want to remind people again of that heritage and play with those old words by printing them on their unique clothes, as well as stickers, postcards, and gym bags. A very interesting approach is their guerilla marketing with sticking their “Löppt” sticker everywhere throughout the city Hamburg. People can see it and find the label online, as the website information is also printed on the sticker. The label has a very nice website, where the customers can purchase the clothes through the linked *Avocadostore*, an online store that sells eco-apparel. At the moment, they do not own their own online store. On the website, they have a small blog where the latest news is posted, such as their new store opening. The label does not believe in competition, but in support, and shares a pop-up store with other local labels. As for the other

marketing channels, the label was already featured in newspapers, magazines, online blogs, the radio, and even on television, but the focus still remains on the online channels. Here Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and bloggers are important. Facebook has more likes than Instagram, although the posts are less frequent there. Facebook is used more for news and information about other labels and Instagram is more about their own brand. Here you can find e.g. posts about the stickers that are distributed throughout the city. The sustainability aspect, as mentioned above, is very important for the label. They want to make cool and stylish clothes that are fairly made under good working conditions. Since the label is producing locally, they also put a big emphasis on the fact that everything has to be transparent in the business. They want to show that fashion can be fair and cool.

The next label has some parallels as far as the founding is concerned. Here the two founders also met in college and founded their label *Insaint* together. This label is specializing on timeless unisex-fashion that can be worn equally by men and women. With good quality and deconstructive and androgynous clothes, they want to show the consumer that durability is what counts. With good quality and clothes from mainly natural fibers and recycled leather from the remaining stock of wholesalers, they offer an alternative to the fast-fashion movement of the industry. *Insaint* believes that clothes should be an investment. Every scrap of material they buy is processed. Some ideas even form after they see what they have to work with. They do not throw away their materials either, as they do not believe in the wastefulness of the industry. Therefore, they are sustainable in terms of durability. *Insaint* carries two clothing lines. One of them is in a streetwear style and very wearable. The other is very detail oriented, and has a more prêt-a-porter vibe to it. These articles are rather custom-made. Marketing wise, the label is still on its starting blocks. Social media is of course a very important tool for them, with their Facebook page slightly better visited than their feed on Instagram. Nevertheless, after looking at their social media activity, I must say that it is not taken care of very well. The posts are very rare on both channels and nothing new is offered at the moment. They are currently building their website, which also still needs to be completed. Another finding of mine is that neither the website nor Instagram is linked on Facebook, which ultimately means that it is very difficult to find the label, if you do not already know about it. The website can only be found through the Instagram account. At the moment, the girls do not have bloggers who they are working with, but they gave some of their clothes to a friend that is a make-up artist and travels a lot to the fashion metropolises of the world and promotes their clothes through social media. The last tool that is used by the label are small fashion events, such as retail fairs and small fashion shows in local stores.

The next label of the bunch is *Second Skin Studio*, which was founded by a girl straight after college. She always wanted to start a business of her own and rather work for herself than for others. This way she can fulfill her ideas. She designs contemporary avant-garde menswear and leather accessories. Her products are all innovative and of high quality with materials such as Plexiglas, vinyl and leather. The style of the brand is very purist and minimalistic. It is also carried over to all her marketing channels. She has a very enticing website, which shows a promotional video at the landing page right away. Product placement and text are clean and the color scheme is kept monochrome. The look is very modern and yet different. On Facebook and Instagram, the same posts are posted, but very rarely. She posts only twice in three weeks and mostly only about events. This is the strategy she wants to use for her label. Even on the social networks it should feel like an exclusive label. Here she also posts only on peak times for the industry, such as Thursdays, Fridays and during off-work hours. *Second Skin Studio* can be found on every consumer trade fair in the area around Düsseldorf and it is in the process of researching for fashion bloggers that fit the style of the brand and have enough reach in the industry. The marketing approach is very clean and selective just as the fashion itself. The label does not work with the seasonal rhythm of the industry but produces one new piece per month. The accessory products can additionally be embossed with individual initials, which makes the product even more exclusive. Her latest marketing tool was placing an advertisement in a fashion trade magazine. In contrast to most of my interviewed labels, she ventured out into the traditional channels, although she could not tell me the outcome of that placement yet. *Second Skin Studio* was the only label that addressed sustainability as not so important for her business, with the explanation that it is built on innovation and juxtaposition of non-commercial materials that are not sustainable at all. Her idea of innovative fashion does not conform with sustainability in terms of material, although she wanted to point out that she only uses good leather from European sources that is not treated with pesticides. So, *Second Skin Studio* would, just as the label *Insaint* be seen as sustainable in the field of durability and high quality clothing that is long-term and timeless and only produced on demand.

The next label is again one that placed itself into a complete niche market. The label *Jouur* is a total online business that sells the perfect timeless contemporary basics that are of good quality and can be kept for years. The difference with this label is that it has a unique approach. The label is a strategic partnership of a production and product manager (Pia Thole) and a very popular German lifestyle and fashion blogger (Jessie Weiß). While Pia takes care of the production and design side of the business Jessie caters to all fields that have to do with marketing. And since the idea of the label rose from the already existing

lifestyle and fashion blog *Journelle* of Jessie, *Jouur* already has a very big marketing platform and audience to source from. Many of the customers who purchase their basics are readers of the blog and found the products through the outfit-of-the-day posts of Jessie. The *Jouur* website and the blog are very closely connected, but they are two different companies. And since the company is one hundred percent online based, social media is very important for it. *Jouur* posts daily on the social networks. For them, it is very important to stay connected with their following, which means that posting contributions is not enough. A very good online brand also must comment and answer to comments of the followers, customers and fans. Due to this, both of them hired a person who is just responsible for the social media appearance. Although relatively young as a label, *Jouur* has a relatively big following on both Facebook and Instagram, which of course is also connected to the blog. Because of their own blogger background, they like to work together with other German, Austrian and Swiss bloggers. Traditional media is also used but rather inactive. They never place ads in the magazines, but are mostly featured in them. Just like with *Second Skin Studio*, *Jouur* offers to print individual initials on some of their clothes to make them more personal and more specialized. *Jouur* as well wants to be an alternative to the fast-fashion movement and wants to sell durable good quality clothes. In opposition to most of the fashion industry, *Jouur* does not concentrate on seasons and therefore does not see the need to take part in trade fairs. As an online business, it creates a small variety of new items each month. The shop only carries clothes that the blogger Jessie would also wear herself. So, the articles are chosen after her liking. Sustainability is very important for the brand, firstly in terms of durability, and secondly it only produces the clothes with sustainable raw materials and does not use polyester.

The second to last label on my interview list is the Munich-based label *The Sept* which just like *Jouur* concentrates on modern, simple, and minimalistic basics and essentials. The founder wanted a label that could become the go-to label for a person, with everything that one needs, but still be something special. She does not want to become part of the mainstream. As a solely online business, it concentrates on durability and wants clothes to be an investment rather than a momentarily indulgence. The label joins the start-up labels that do not believe in fast-fashion and the seasonal system of the fashion industry, and wants to build one single big collection that should constantly grow with all the essential pieces a woman is supposed to have in her wardrobe. The idea behind this label is to reduce the wardrobe and emphasize the natural and minimalistic beauty with few timeless pieces. The look is understated, monochrome and effortless. In terms of marketing, this label is very good connected. It uses off-, and online channels; although the offline channels are more featured articles in fashion magazines that they do not have to pay for and customer trade

fairs. They do not believe their understated clothing would work on the big industry trade fairs. This label is absolutely grand with social media. It is active on almost all the social networks that one can think of. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, and the mobile only network Snapchat. Every two to three days *The Sept* posts something on Facebook and daily twice on Instagram to reach all the international masses. It is the start-up label with the most Instagram posts, although it launched the account only March 3rd last year. The Instagram theme is very minimalistic, just as the products themselves. The label posts product pictures, lifestyle posts, architecture, art, and incentives. It has its own hashtags to connect each post to one another and to other interesting posts. For the label, it is crucial to be on all social media platforms, as it firmly believes that if a person likes the work and products, they will follow on all possible platforms and it would be sad not to take the chance to be present everywhere. Their website is very clean and minimalistic as well, with a big percentage of pictures. *The Sept* hosts their own company blog, which can be accessed through the website, where the label also posts interesting contributions about minimalistic design and products and about people, bloggers and models who wear their clothes. This way, they can also generate more traffic to their site. Bloggers are a very fundamental part of their marketing tactic, as they are the influencers of the online generation. But the label is very selective about their picks, as the bloggers have to fit to their product and style. They prefer to choose loyal bloggers who also would wear their items in their private life. Most of the influencers they work with are rather models with a blogger background. Sustainability is very important for the label, but they try not to incorporate it into their marketing because it is an implicitness to them. They produce in Germany and Portugal and take fair working conditions for granted, as well as certified materials. To them it is very important that they know where their materials come from. They only source carefully selected materials, such as cotton, viscose and cashmere. But I would only put them as a sustainable label in terms of durability and quality, because in the end I did not see any certificates on their website.

The last label I interviewed strays away a little bit from the rest, as they do not produce overgarments but are in the business for pantyhose and knitted tights. The founder of the label *Too Hot To Hide* always worked in the textile industry and always wanted to mix up the market of tights that is surrounded by old, traditional brands that had made their products the same way for many years. It starts with the name of the label. It is young, modern, and a little sassy, just as the product itself. The products offered are manufactured after an innovative method that produces seamless tights which are far more comfortable than the regular ones known by every woman. It is the only label that offers this innovation also for the knit version. The products even have a new and easy sizing system that fits all. The brand positions itself in direct contradiction to the traditional competition. The marketing of

the brand is very young. The campaigns and pictures are very sassy and contemporary. You see a lot of streetstyle. It is modern and raw. The packaging is very interesting as well. The product is packed into an organic packaging which can be reused as an envelope or be recycled, since it is biodegradable. Marketing wise, the company made its best effort to distance itself from what already exists in the business. Nevertheless, the label decided to take part in the conventional season order cycle of the fashion industry and designs two collections each year. Accordingly, trade fairs are an important tool to market their products to retail outlets and gain brand awareness. In addition, the founder travels around Germany and markets her products from store to store. But online marketing is fundamental for the brand, as it is young and needs to gain more awareness. The label is very active on Facebook, especially at the moment, as it posts all the different and new retail outlets that offer the products in store. On Instagram, unfortunately there is only one post per week; although, with a following of 306 people and their visual imagery and the right hashtags, they could receive far more awareness, if they posted more often. To come back to the traditional marketing channels, the label was featured twice in the fashion trade magazine "Textilwirtschaft" and their image campaign was used as a lead picture for the tight section, and another feature was printed in the women magazine "Brigitte" which helped the brand immensely with sales through their online shop. For the label, it was surprising that the traditional media helped more than online features. In the field of sustainability, the label can only partake because of the good quality and the organic packaging. As for the next autumn/winter collection one organic cotton design is planned and one that is made from recyclable polyamide.

4.3 Findings 2: German Global Brands

For the second approach to my research, I reviewed seven German Fashion companies that are very established in the fashion business and have been around for as long as I can think. I grew up with those brands myself and have always been surrounded by their names. For this approach, I do not have interviews to back up my findings but the materials I found were gathered from the company websites, the online stores, sustainability reports, social networks, and German online trade magazines.

The first company on my list is the *Esprit Holding AG*, which technically has its roots in San Francisco, California, but based its headquarters in Germany and Hong Kong. Over the years, the company faced many troubles as it became older in the eyes of the consumers and could not compete with the big vertically integrated fast-fashion companies, such as

H&M and *Zara*. With the strategic placement of a new CEO amid the operation, the company hopes to flourish once again. *Esprit* is a clothing and lifestyle brand that offers casual wear in two in-house lines, of which one is targeted to a slightly younger audience (*edc. Esprit*). Next to this, it also gives out licenses to many products, like interior materials and perfumes. Since the company fought with failures in previous years, the new distribution strategy is to minimize the clothing to six collections per year and 40% less items in each collection. This way it can be better guaranteed that the produced stock is sold. The brand is sold in 40 different countries, in 900 company-owned retail stores, and around 7.800 franchise and shop-in shop surfaces, and can be purchased through the online-store and the mobile app. The goal of the company with its new advertising approach is to speak to a much younger audience that distanced itself from the brand. The brand is aiming for a target group that is younger than 30 and wants to stray away from the momentary 40 to 50 target group. The new campaign style for the last two autumn/winter campaigns is very different to the campaigns found in other fashion houses. The bold campaign centers around the hashtag slogan #ImPerfect and plays with imperfection versus perfection. Both campaigns have strong colors in the background and feature everyday people that are normal and beautiful. Individuality is the key in this approach. Last year the background color was yellow and the people were dressed in 70's inspired clothing. This season it is a saturated red and the theme of the advertisement is dance. Ten characters, one of them a plus size model, dance in the campaign video to the beat of Mc Hammer's "Can't Touch This". The campaign encourages to let go of all inhibitions and celebrate natural beauty and self-expression. It invites people to feel confident in their skin and clothes. The feel is young, fun, electric and energetic. This year's autumn/winter #Imperfect campaign was launched in September and can be viewed and seen in a series of TV and Web TV spots, digital, print, and OOH-advertisements. In addition to this, it has a social media presence on networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, Pinterest, Google + and Snapchat, where the brand is very active (Daschinger, 2016; Müller, 2016). On Facebook, a great customer service can be detected and a collaboration with many bloggers. Another push into a younger brand movement is the collaboration with the New Yorker designer label *Opening Ceremony*, which is worn by stars, such as Rihanna and Drake. The collection is supposed to be a heritage collection that will revive the 80's and 90's with print fusion and bold colors and should remind the customer of the old Californian days of the brand. It will consist of 40 apparel and accessory styles of which some designs will be unisex and will spot the old colorful *Esprit* logo. This collection will only be available in selected Opening Ceremony stores.

As for sustainability, the company puts a lot of effort into the implementation of good and responsible processes. In the environmental field, it tries to only concentrate on materials that have the smallest environmentally impact in concern of production, use and disposal. It works towards the implementation on more sustainable methods of cultivation of cotton and viscose. Transport wise, it tries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with more efficient transport routes and managed to transport its clothes in reusable plastic boxes instead of cardboard. The treatment of the animals used for material sourcing is very dear to the company and it follows the five freedoms of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, which guarantees that the animals are free from hunger, thirst, discomfort, pain, illness, fear, and suffering, and can live a normal life. *Esprit* is part of the fur free retailer program and does not offer angora wool. As for regular wool, they use only the one that is sourced from farms that do not use the torturing procedure of mulesing. And since this autumn season, all outdoor wear is made of responsible sourced downs. The brand offers vegan and regular items in their collections, but the leather is always sourced from the byproducts of the food industry. For the social aspect, the company has a code of conduct that all partners have to follow. If one of the regulations is breached, the company tries to manage it together with its partners through communication, rather than to eliminate them right away. The company works with several organizations and initiatives who also help to improve ethical procedures. Since last year, *Esprit* started to bring out sustainability reports where everything that the company believes in and wants to achieve is written down for the interested consumer to read. This way the brand offers transparency to their audience (Esprit Global Image GmbH, n.d.).

The second brand I reviewed is the Hamburg based *Tom Tailor Group* with an assortment of two brands and four fashion lines. The company is home of the *Tom Tailor* brand and additionally acquired the now subsidiary brand *Bonita*. Each of the four lines produces twelve collections each year to guarantee a great selection for every taste. The lines are *Tom Tailor*, *Tom Tailor Denim*, for a younger crowd aged 15-25, *Tom Tailor Contemporary* for fashion forward customers and the brand *Bonita* that speaks to customers over the age of 40. The brand is sold in 1486 retail stores and online shops in 24 countries. In addition, it also sells the clothes in franchise, shop-in shop and multilabel stores, and gives out licensing for 21 product groups. Just as *Esprit*, *Tom Tailor* needs to transform the brand presence into something younger. The company wants to become more vertical and react much faster to customer requests than before. To achieve this, it started investing more into the online marketing, because that is where all the desired customers are these days in our digital culture. For the brand, it is very important to be integrated on all channels and connected to their customers. There is no difference between brick-and-mortar and online store. Everything is one big interchangeable experience. The highest priority for the brand

is to integrate marketing and sales in the digital world and give the customer a 360-degree brand experience across all channels. To incorporate more online activities in the marketing actions and the corporate culture makes the brand seem younger and gives an illusion of a start-up company. *Tom Tailor* decided, just like its competitor *Esprit*, to choose a campaign that has a hashtag slogan at its focus. #EVERYWEARYOUGO was already used as a slogan in the spring/summer campaign and is now brought back to life for the autumn/winter campaign. The product group that is mainly targeted this season are jackets in all their colors and styles. The brand decided on four different TV-spots that should be shown on the German and Austrian channels of the ProSiebenSat1 media group, in the months of September and October. To support the television advertisement a OOH-campaign is launched in selected German cities; and from August on, the campaign should be present in all international POS and store windows. Next to the traditional channels, the brand relies heavily on online channels, such as social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. On Facebook, *Tom Tailor* shows many collaborations with fashion and lifestyle bloggers who help the brand to a younger appearance. Sustainable and responsible corporate governance is a vocal point in the company policy. The company's code of conduct includes regulations of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN) Global Compact and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. As for the environment, it sources most of its cotton from GOTS-certified and Organic Exchange 100 certified suppliers and plans to increase the use of organic cotton. Also, it is part of the Carbon Performance Improvement Initiative (CPI2) to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the supply chain. *Tom Tailor* follows sourcing regulations or even bans the use of animal hair, certain downs, fur, leather, shell, silk from India, cotton from Uzbekistan, wool from sheep that have undergone the mulesing method and sandblasting methods during production (Tom Tailor Group, n.d.).

The third company I chose is the multi-brand corporate group *S.Oliver*, which is located in the South of Germany and has worldwide 10.500 points of sales. This company is different in its marketing approach, as it has far more brands under its umbrella. This year, they changed their approach in branding the different brands. There are the *S.Oliver* Red and Black label, which house casual wear and a more formal business look. For this campaign the star photographer Nagi Sakai was hired and shot beautiful fresh autumnal images that mirror the valence of the brand and have the typical "twinkle in the eye" feel to it. The marketing mix will consist of a big international traditional and media campaign online, as well as in all POS. The new *Triangle* brand, which makes clothes for strong authentic women who are confident, opened its first store in Munich this autumn and has a very clean and minimalistic appearance on campaign posters and with its clothes. Next to these three lines

are three other brands that are either subsidiaries or have an autonomous marketing appearance. *Q/S designed by* is the younger line of *S.Oliver* that used to be *S.Oliver Denim*. Here the group decided to go a complete different route than usual and designed a separate brand portfolio for this brand. Another star photographer was recruited to shoot a young campaign that feels like a mix of courtyard romantic and basement party. The pictures were taken in the very cool and hip Berlin scene, which make the clothes stand out even more. The feel of the campaign is very progressive and urban and speaks to a younger audience. The idea for this line is to create awareness with help of interchanging international brand ambassadors and brands, and create individual partnerships. The first brand ambassador is going to be the DJ Robin Schulz that will go on tour with *Q/S designed by* in March 2017. The marketing mix for this brand will predominantly be an online campaign on the brand's own website with a huge focus on social media with Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Spotify; and of course some traditional media like fashion magazines and at the POS. *Comma* has also a more digital marketing approach with own social media outlets. This brand is one of the fastest growing women's wear brands in Germany with a revenue that increased fivefold since the year 2008. The clothes are inspired by the big designers and the fashion metropolitan areas of the world. This autumn's campaign is inspired by a Parisian style, very feminine but fun. *Liebeskind Berlin* is a very young brand that sells mostly accessories and is very popular with the fashion-conscious customers. Just like *Comma*, it has its own marketing presence online. Every brand has its own hashtag that makes it easier to find their products and connect them to the customers. Each line works together with bloggers, who post on their own blogs, as well as on the company's social media accounts. On top of all the great marketing, *S.Oliver* functions as a sponsor in many sports events. It is the main sponsor of the basketball team of the city Würzburg and sponsored the football team FC Würzburger Kickers. Last year, the company was the fashion-partner of the German women's national soccer team. After this great and elaborate marketing presence, it was very sobering not to find information about the transparency of the group. It is unfortunate that a company this size chooses to disclose most of their sustainable actions, which makes it seem less responsible in the eyes of sustainable customers. The only thing I could find was that the brand is part of the Fair Labor Association and formed an alliance for sustainable textiles to improve the social and environmental conditions in the production of clothes in the supplying countries (s.Oliver Bernd Freier GmbH, n.d.).

The *CBR Group* is home of the two brands *Cecil* and *Street One*, and it is one of the five biggest women's apparel brands in Germany. The group has over 8.800 points of sales with 3.200 stores and shop-in-shops, and 5.700 multilabel surfaces in 19 countries across Europe with locations in small towns and big metropolises. The company is a very fast working

one, with twelve collections a year and a lead time of 90 days from idea to product. *Cecil* is a very down to earth brand which has a casual sporty and slightly bohemian vibe that is effortless. The *Street One* brand has a more contemporary style with more of a feminine touch. Both brands are very mainstream focused and have the customer at their cores and concentrate on omni-channel marketing, with an emphasis on social media and e-commerce to strengthen the brand further. A very good find were the company blogs on their online shops that show the interest of the brands for the industry and the customer. The company is not only interested in selling good quality clothes but also employs sustainable actions towards a better working and natural environment. The group follows a code of conduct that relies on the principles of the ILO and the UN regulations on human rights and the UN convention against discrimination and child labor. The brands want to offer quality that is not built on harmful substances. The products and materials are regularly tested and certified after the "Öko-Tex 100 Standard". Socially, the group looks after fair and ethical working conditions, and visits production sites to keep up the good communication and partnership with the suppliers. The company is also part of the fur free retailer group (CBR Fashion Group, n.d.).

The next company is the global player and lifestyle brand *Gerry Weber International AG* that is home of four brands. *Gerry Weber* is the main focus line of the company, with clothes that are very feminine. It consists of *Taifun* which speaks to a younger audience, *Samoon* that carries clothes for connection sizes, and the independent brand *Hallhuber*. *Hallhuber* was acquired in 2014 and caters to widening the brand portfolio of the group. It is the modern brand of the group that is oriented at the pulse of time and offers a new collection every two weeks. Since it is autonomous, the approach and the style of the brand is slightly different, more modern. It has its own online shop that also spots its own styling blog, where it offers customers the latest trends and more inspiration and works together with numerous bloggers. *Hallhuber* is the only brand from the portfolio which is currently not struggling. The other three brands share one online shop together. The online store just as the company website deserve a relaunch to make it more modern. The current look is very old and stiff. Each brand has its own online presence with different approaches and looks that fit the feel of the brand. The online marketing is good but could be more interactive. Next to the online presence the brands can be visited in 1270 own stores, in 2300 shop-in-shops and 270 franchise stores. The group has sales structures in 62 countries and each brand brings out twelve collections each year, except for *Hallhuber*. For the group, it is important to not only be a fashion leader but also be part of a lifestyle brand. This is why it owns a stadium, a driving range for golf, a sports park hotel, and an event and convention center. At the starting point of the brand, it was the sponsor of the German tennis pro Steffi Graf, who pushed

sales for the company in earlier years. It also housed the Gerry Weber Open event in 1993. The group wants to be a part of something bigger and with that said, it puts great effort into becoming a transparent, sustainable, and open company. A step towards this is the social and sustainability report, which is accessible online on the website. The group is also a participant of the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) and follows their code of conduct, so social standards and working conditions can be maintained on a level that everyone can be guaranteed the basic human rights. The materials that are used by the company are all very sustainably sourced and do not pose as a threat to the human health. For the environment, the group only uses natural gas in their headquarters, and apply the Blue-box system in their retail stores to save energy. The company also rejects the application of real fur and angora wool, thus it only uses leather from the food industry and ethically sourced down (Gerry Weber International AG, n.d.).

Hugo Boss is the only premium and luxury brand on my list. It has 1113 direct operated stores, over 6000 shop-in-shops and 11 online stores. The group still relates heavily on traditional marketing instruments, such as print and OOH-campaigns, but is responding to customer expectation and is building its omnichannel activities. For the expansion of the online segment, social media is at the front line. Under the umbrella brand, the sub-brands *BOSS*, *HUGO*, *Boss Green* and *Boss Orange* can be found. Every brand has a different vibe to it, from casual, over to sporty, and of course, luxurious. *Boss* and *Hugo* have each their own Instagram account, but Facebook is shared by all together. YouTube is used to show all the campaign videos and making of's, as well as the behind-the-scenes of the big fashion shows. Since it speaks to a slightly different clientele, it has somewhat different marketing approaches. The core brand *BOSS* receives the most marketing attention and it prides itself on the big fashion shows and the sponsorship activities. Here it sponsors beautiful and agile sports, such as Formula 1, soccer, sailing, and golf. For 34 years, *Boss* has been a Formula 1 sponsor and is currently supplying the Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula One Team with its special racing suits. In sailing, *Boss* supports Alex Thomson with a beautiful black *Hugo Boss* yacht on all his races and world crossings. Currently, the company is following him on his round-the-world race, the Vendée Globe, and reports every step of the way on social media. In the field of soccer, it is the official fashion sponsor of the Germans' national soccer team, in terms of casual and business wear. Next to sports, the corporation also has a strong sponsorship relation with art. The modern, contemporary art movement is very important for the brand and serves as an inspiration source for many designs of the women's wear designer Jason Wu. *Boss* has a long-standing cooperation with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York, where every two years an event is hosted together and the HUGO BOSS PRIZE is awarded to an artist. This is a very important event for the

company and brings together celebrities, artists, ambassadors of the brand and many more. In addition, the company also hosted the new HUGO BOSS ASIA ART Award in 2013. Alongside the events, it collaborates with many more art installations and exhibitions which are beneficial to the look of the brand. Since *Hugo Boss* is a very traditional German brand, it could sometimes be seen as too stiff and out of reach for the overall audience. Therefore, next to its always clean suits and clothing collections, it launched the Reversed Collection with sweatshirts that have a bold Hugo print in reverse on them. Many stars, celebrities and bloggers were already spotted with the simple and comfortable sweaters that seem casual and cool. The print is interesting, raises questions to why it is printed in reverse, and it is a great way to achieve more awareness with the brand and push it into a more modern direction. The hashtag that is used by Hugo on social media is #iamhugo, which sets a very strong message and makes the customer a part of the brand, if they link and tag their pictures with it. The latest marketing action is the BOSSbots Christmas collection, which spots small metallic robots that give the otherwise traditional and clean brand a playful touch for the cold season. The Christmas collection runs under the hashtag #yourtimetoshine. It seems like *Boss* launches many collections yearly for every product group. The perfume advertisements are very popular with the audience and are shown on television all year around. They are very appealing and always play with seduction. The company also runs an online magazine that writes about all the latest news regarding the brand. Besides, *Hugo Boss* is very concerned about sustainability and took over an important role to act responsibly towards this cause. The corporation brings out a sustainability report yearly to be as transparent as possible to the audience and talk about their achievements and goals for the future of the company in terms of social, environmental, and economic engagement. Sustainability is an integral part of their mission statement and their overall strategy, and consists of six action areas: we, environment, employees, partner, product, and society. The group wants to guarantee that it is responsible for every action that happens during the supply chain and that it has a very strong communication with its stakeholders. The environment is tried to be preserved by *Hugo Boss* by only using renewable and energy efficient technology for its office buildings, such as photovoltaic systems. Additionally, even the employees at the headquarters started to lower emissions by car-pooling to work. In terms of water and waste, a new irrigation system is used to save water; and waste is systematically sorted to find possible recycling materials. The carbon dioxide emissions are lowered also by using rail freight instead of road transport. Through new IT systems the company has achieved an 80% transparency rate across the whole supply chain. In terms of employees, the corporation follows a code of conduct that guarantees good and ethical working conditions. In compliance with the ILO and the Fair Labor Association it upholds human rights and fair remuneration. It helps workers with vocational training and

development and gives them the opportunity to work on different assignments all over the world. Diversity is also crucial for *Hugo Boss*, who fight for an equal treatment of men and women, and tries to give their employees the chance of a good work-life-balance. Health and safety is also a top priority for the company. The suppliers along the supply chain are carefully chosen and stand in a long-term relationship of trust and commitment with the brand. It is ensured that only the best materials are selected for the apparel of the brand. Together with the organization Partnership for Sustainable Textiles, it manages the use of harmful substances for product safety. In terms of animal welfare, the brand could do a lot more. Although they are trying to be ethical in that aspect, they still have a long way to go. Engagement for the society is much better attained by the brand. It works closely together with UNICEF to assure children all over the world a school education (Hugo Boss Group, n.d.).

The last company of my list for global German players is the German traditional family brand *Falke*, which is known all over the world for its superb quality socks and pantyhose. Of course, the company and its product range have grown over the years and now it also offers bodies for women and tops for men and women, as well as t-shirts and sweaters of good quality materials. In 2005 the line *Falke Ergonomic Sport System* enriched the product portfolio and invited the company into the world of sports. The biggest plus of the brand is that it works with licensing partnerships with international designers that all use *Falke* socks and tights on the runways. I could not find an overly big marketing mix of the brand. Usually the brand is sold in its own Flagship stores and in shop-in-shop installations. The designer collaborations help enormously. *Falke* also sponsors many sports teams. In the year 2014, the brand dressed the ski-national team with functional underwear and ski-socks, and now one can see on Facebook that they sponsor German soccer teams with the new *Falke 4 Grip* sports socks. Talking about social media, *Falke* is apparent there and publishes outfit posts and many news from the industry. The customer service on the platform is very good, as it answers to customers and engages with them. On Instagram, the brand markets its products very interactively with hashtags and company collaborations, such as the automobile brand Audi, where the new 4 Grip socks were tested against the 4-wheel drive of Audi. Campaigns like that spike the customer's attention even more. Part of the marketing of the sports socks collection is the mobile application of the brand *Falke GPSies* that offers running tracks. Another good strategic move of the brand was the acquirement of the sock brand *Burlington*, which now is also part of the *Falke* portfolio. The British inspired brand fits perfectly into the brand philosophy. *Falke* also engages with its customers by offering a company magazine that shows interesting people and places in the world and generates

traffic for the site. And the latest marketing coup is the collaboration with the British traditional house *Liberty*. *Falke* and *Liberty* brought out a collection of *Falke* socks for men with the legendary *Liberty* prints. This collection fits perfectly into the holiday season. As for sustainability, I could only find that the brand won the environmental protection price for environmentally friendly products in 1994. Since the time span is so long ago, I cannot say for sure that sustainability is still an important factor for the brand (Falke KGaA, n.d.).

4.4 Discussion

In the discussion part of my thesis I will evaluate and analyze both of my findings and compare them to each other to find out similarities and differences between the marketing strategies of big global players that are in the fashion business for a long time, in comparison to young start-ups that just recently ventured out into that field. I have one company in a total of 14 which I still count as a start-up but that is on a good way to become a staple in the German fashion field. The company I am talking about is the ethical and fair fashion company *Armed Angels*, which has been working on its success for the past nine years. All the other start-ups on my list are not older than two years, so there is a slight difference. All of the brands, either global player or start-up, are in the middle price segment, except for *Hugo Boss*, which can sometimes go up in the premium segment, and *Second Skin Studio*, which moves up to the premium and luxury price segment, due to the high quality and innovative materials that are used in the production. So almost every brand has the same conditions price wise to start with.

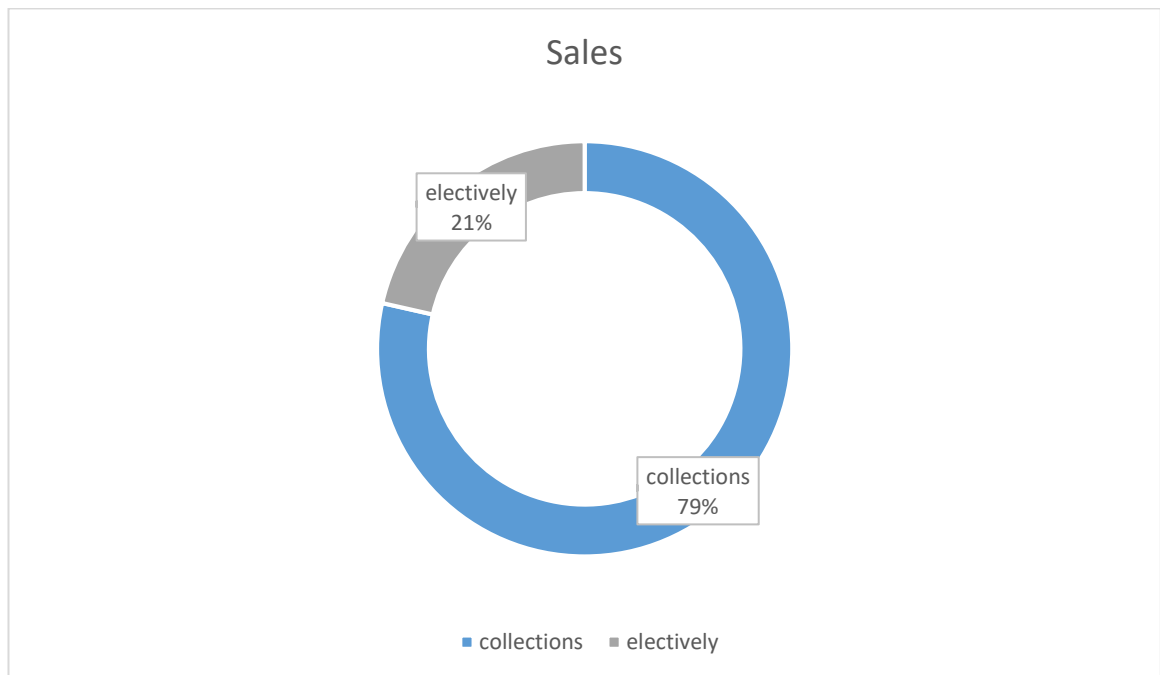
One difference lies in the founding years of the brands. Most global players are brands that have been established for many years and that have built a substantial number of customers and fans who like their brand and always come back to it. The start-ups on my list on the other hand are very young and have a maximum of two years in the business, some just started out a couple of months ago; most of them completely from scratch, except for the label *Jouur*, which had a stepping stone to help kick-start the business. This business idea is one of a kind amid all the other companies that I reviewed for this paper. As mentioned above, bloggers are a relatively new phenomenon in the online marketing world. After the millennium, random people started to journal random things online. Instead of keeping private information to themselves, they started writing everything down in an online journal, which is called a blog, and shared their opinions with the world. Many of those blogs were by girls and boys, who were writing about their lifestyle and the clothes they wear; a fashion or lifestyle blog. What started as a hobby turned out to be a full-time job for many

of these young people. Nowadays, it is not only the celebrity and the model, who is important for the industry. Most of the times it is the blogger who has the most say in the industry. It is explained that a blogger is a normal everyday person just like everybody else, who simply chose to share his or her story online. People like to follow their lives and they become a source of inspiration for the readers and followers. The fashion industry caught up to that trend and collaborates with these bloggers to market their clothes. They let them choose clothing from their brand and send it to them and then the influencer combines and styles these items after their liking with other brands and/or clothes from their own wardrobe and makes an outfit out of it. Then they make a blog post about the finished outfit and put it up on their blog. The fashion brand links this blogpost on its social media and creates traffic. It is a win-win situation for both sides. Usually the brands choose bloggers who fit into their company's message and let them market their products. What the brand *Jouur* did was different. They turned the process around. One of the two brand creators already ran an existing popular blog. So, what they did was form a label that was fueled by the blog and that already had a customer base to start with. Simultaneously, the blog became the most important internal marketing tool of the company. It is a very clever and creative idea to grow something on fertile ground. This method brings the brand great success, which can be seen in Diagram 3, where *Jouur* has the most Facebook likes and is second best on Instagram. This kind of strategy is singular in Germany and is only known from bloggers from other countries. This means that the two creators found a niche market for their brand. Said niche markets are the main marketing strategy start-ups strive for to stand out between all the existing brands. Otherwise it would be difficult to keep up with companies that have years of experience in their field. But it is not a disadvantage these days to be a start-up. Many people and customers demand new and interesting things and want to distance themselves from the mainstream, and with products from a start-up that is exactly what they can do. The start-ups on my list have many unique attributes they want to share with the market, as can be seen on the Table 1.

Armed Angels and *Kluntje* both market with fair and trendy ethical fashion, which is a strategy that fits perfectly into our zeitgeist. People demand more sustainability and these two brands are willing to fulfill that. On top of sourcing their materials mindfully and producing them locally, *Kluntje* raised the bar even higher and prints funky designs on its clothes and old low German words that are almost forgotten by the young generations. They want to revive this tradition, which is still rooted deeply in the peoples' minds and bring it back to life. They want to remind people of what is important in life with the whole idea behind their clothes: Be mindful of what you purchase. *Insaint* and Second Skin Studio work with unique and custom-made designs. *Insaint* specializes on apparel that is unisex and works well for

men and women. *Second Skin Studio* designs innovative works of art with the juxtaposition of interesting materials, such as vinyl and Plexiglas, which are normally not incorporated in regular clothes manufacturing. *The Sept* is, just like *Jouur*, a label that offers basics in their simplest form. They want to attract their customers with inspirations from their blog and Instagram posts. *Too Hot To Hide (2H2H)* is a young and modern label that sells tights to the audience. What the creator wants to offer here, is a possibility to present products which are good and innovatively made seamless, and stand as a choice to the otherwise very old and traditional label *Falke*. *Falke* is a very good and successful German company and has a lot that speaks for it, but the marketing and look of the brand has not changed for the longest time. The branding here seems as if it is for older people. If you go and buy *Falke* socks and tights, you do so because you need them and you know they are high quality. What Eva from *2H2H* offers, is a brand and product that you want to have, even if you do not need it. She completely dismisses the traditional way to market tights. No matter to what store you go, you always have a naked woman's legs in tights and weird angles on the packaging. It is boring and does not really animate to buy. *2H2H* has a cool brand name which on its own stirs up interest. The packaging is made from natural materials and can be reused as an envelope makes a customer look twice; and quirky product and campaign pictures remind you of the cool Berlin urban hipster vibe. She managed to take an otherwise boring product and formed it into a lifestyle piece through her marketing. This brand and *Armed Angels* are the only two start-ups from my list that use traditional marketing in the form of going to company trade fairs and presenting their products to the industry. This might be due to the fact that the other labels concentrate more on a smaller audience or on online sales. Since for these two start-ups point-of-sales are important, a big chunk of their marketing budget flows into client acquisition. This way they, want to mimic the big companies and offer their products next to the usual offer in stores. Both start-ups, especially *Armed Angels*, want to become a part of the mainstream with their marketing and product offering. For *Armed Angels*, it is important to show the wide audience of people that there is another way to buy beautiful clothes without exploiting the environment and the workers. If we take a look at the traditional marketing approach, we can detect in Figure 1 that 79% of the 14 companies design their clothes after a seasonal rhythm or in separate collections.

Figure 1: How Clothes Are Sold

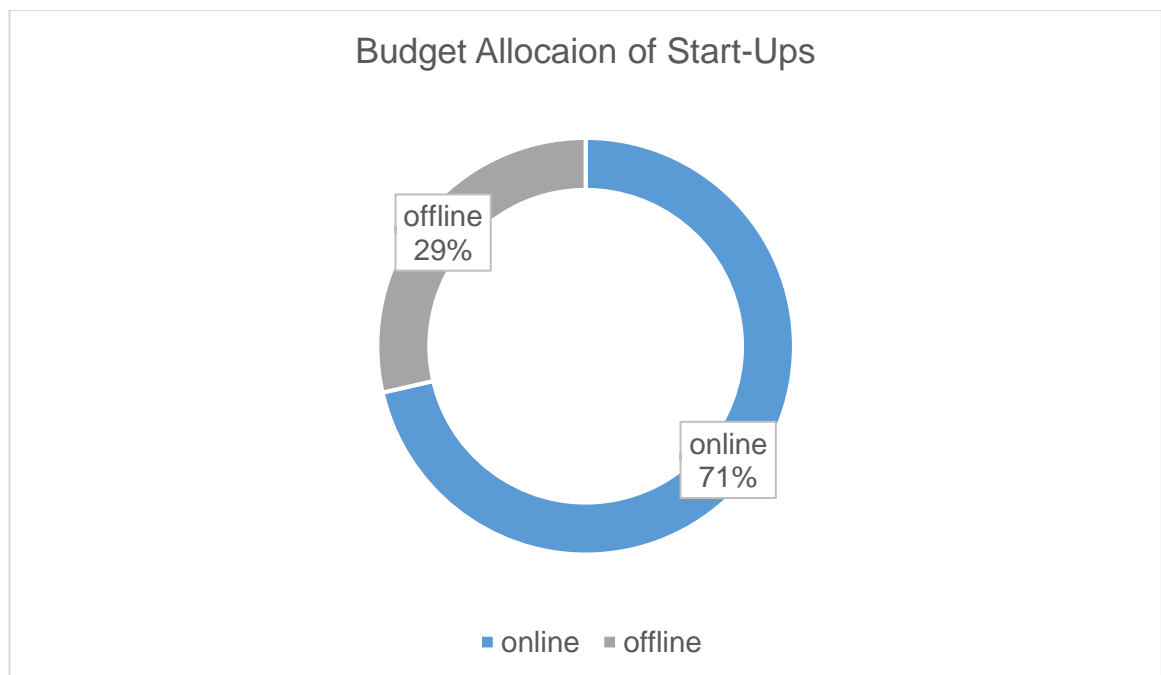


The big global players almost all offer twelve collections each year for all their brands, except *Hugo Boss* that goes the high fashion route and designs two collections a year for each brand. Esprit minimized the collection number to six per year to guarantee better sales figures. As for the other 21%, the start-ups *Second Skin Studio*, *Jour*, and *The Sept*, decided to stray away from the fast-fashion aspect of the industry and offer only one big collection where new pieces come in every once in a while. Laura from *Second Skin Studio* follows her idea of designing one new piece each month. With this method, they also try and ask the consumer to buy their products mindfully. Since there is not a large offer of clothes and they are basic and minimalistic, people will think more about their needs in terms of clothing. Consumers need to be shown that there is another way to buy than participating in the fast-fashion trend and purchasing a load of new shiny, trendy items that will be out of style the next month and thrown out regardlessly to make room for new clothes.

Another interesting finding was the budget allocation of the labels. Within this topic, I can only give out information about some of the start-ups that could name me numbers. As for the big global players, I unfortunately did not find any numbers to work with. But nevertheless, it is known that big companies always use a big chunk of their capital and revenues to invest into marketing, as marketing is the business field that generates sales, which in turn brings in more money. But most of the time traditional marketing, like television, print, and radio advertisements take up most of the budget. Since start-ups do not have as much

money as the big players to keep their business running, they concentrate more on the online channels, because they are cheaper and most of the time even for free. In Figure 2 you can see that 71% of the start-ups choose to invest their marketing budget online and only 29% invest more money in offline media. Only *Kluntje* spends more money offline. They are print flyers and postcards to market their brand and *2H2H*, because they go on trade fairs and sales trips which take up a lot of the money.

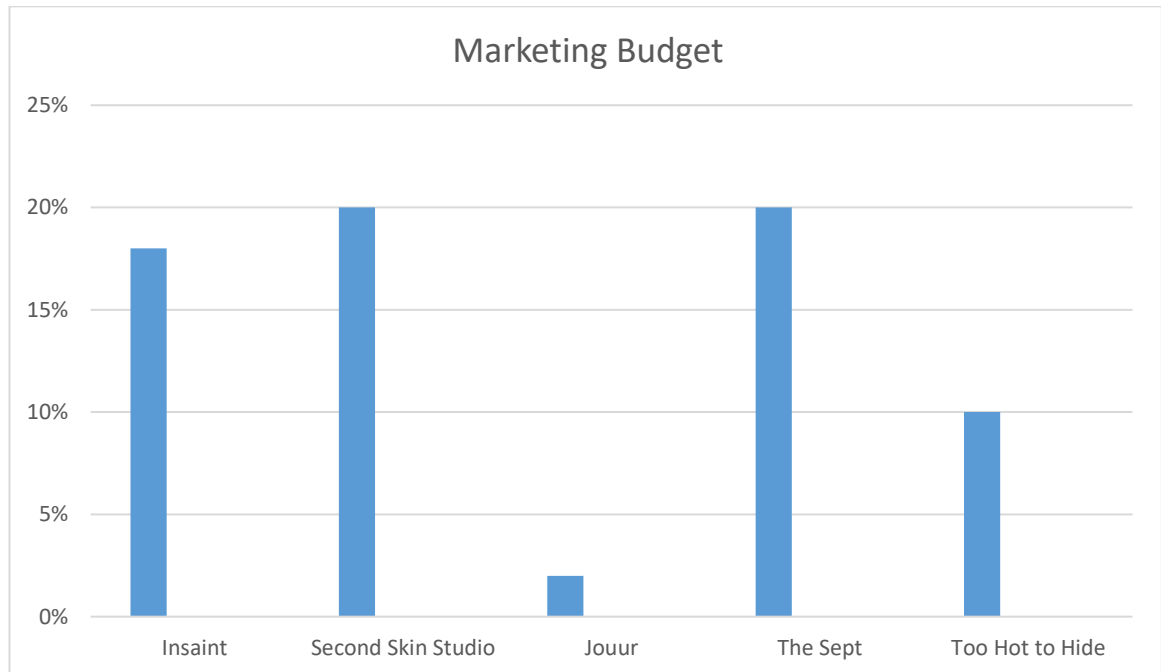
Figure 2: Budget-Allocation of Start-Ups



The rest of the start-ups invest all their marketing budget, which is not a lot to start with, in online media. For online media, it depends on what they are trying to achieve there. Social media for starters does not take up money at all, if you do not go for payed advertisements, re-targeting campaigns or search engine optimization, such as Google AdWords. Most of the start-ups use up their budget for their website and newsletters, as well as for paying the bloggers to post about their clothes, since they are not free advertisement anymore. Being a big part of the online fashion marketing world, their remuneration counts to the online marketing budget. As you can see in Figure 3 the marketing budget for the start-ups ranges between 2% and 20%, which still lies in the average range. Most of them do not even have a real budget but use the money they can allocate. *Jouur* being the brand with the smallest marketing budget, which can be explained with the fact that it is a 100% online business, it

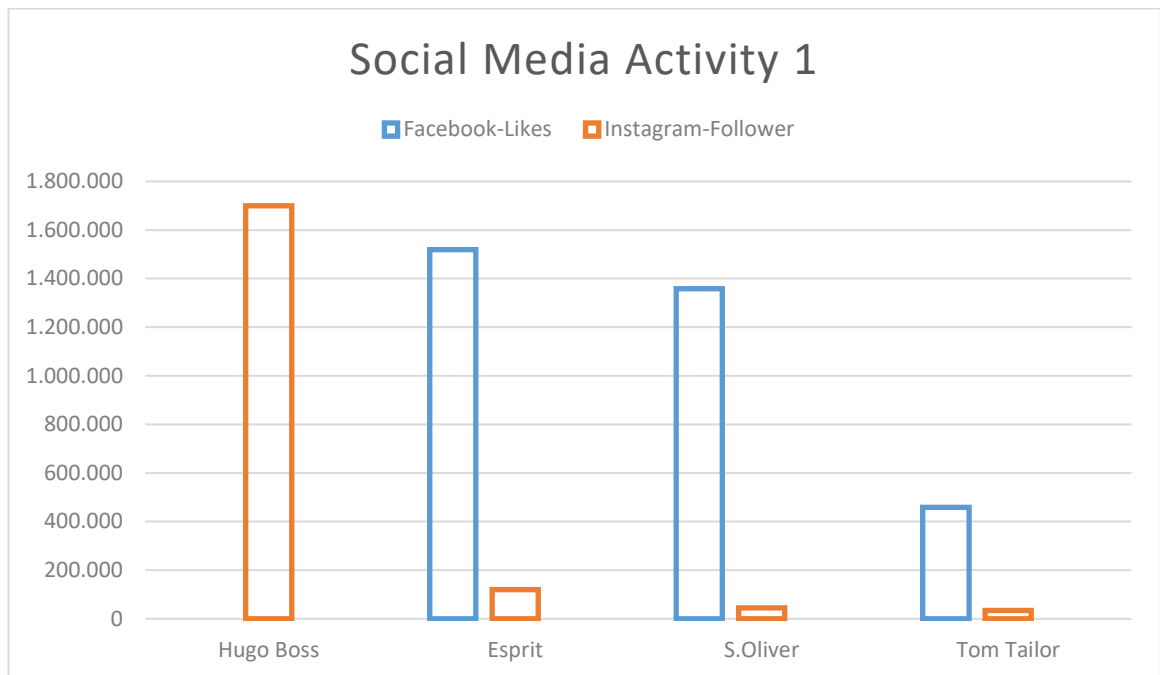
does not venture out into traditional marketing at all. The only thing they do that costs money in terms of marketing is running their own events for their customer base.

Figure 3: Marketing Budget



Since we already ventured out into the online world, let's take a look at the online activities of the 14 companies on my lists and how important it is for them to be present on the social media platforms. For this topic, I constructed three separate diagrams about the social media activities on Facebook and Instagram to better analyze the differences. It would have been hard to see the differences between each brand on one single diagram, because there is a huge gap between the most and least successful brand. First of all we will take a look at the social media presence of the four biggest brands on the list. The list of brands is slightly longer than the one of companies, because, as already could be seen on Table 2, some of the big companies have more than just one brand under their umbrella. Now not every brand has its own social media accounts, but most of them do. Some brands are bundled together when they are still too small to stand on their own, like the *Triangle* brand in the *S.Oliver* family.

Figure 4: Social Media Activity Number 1



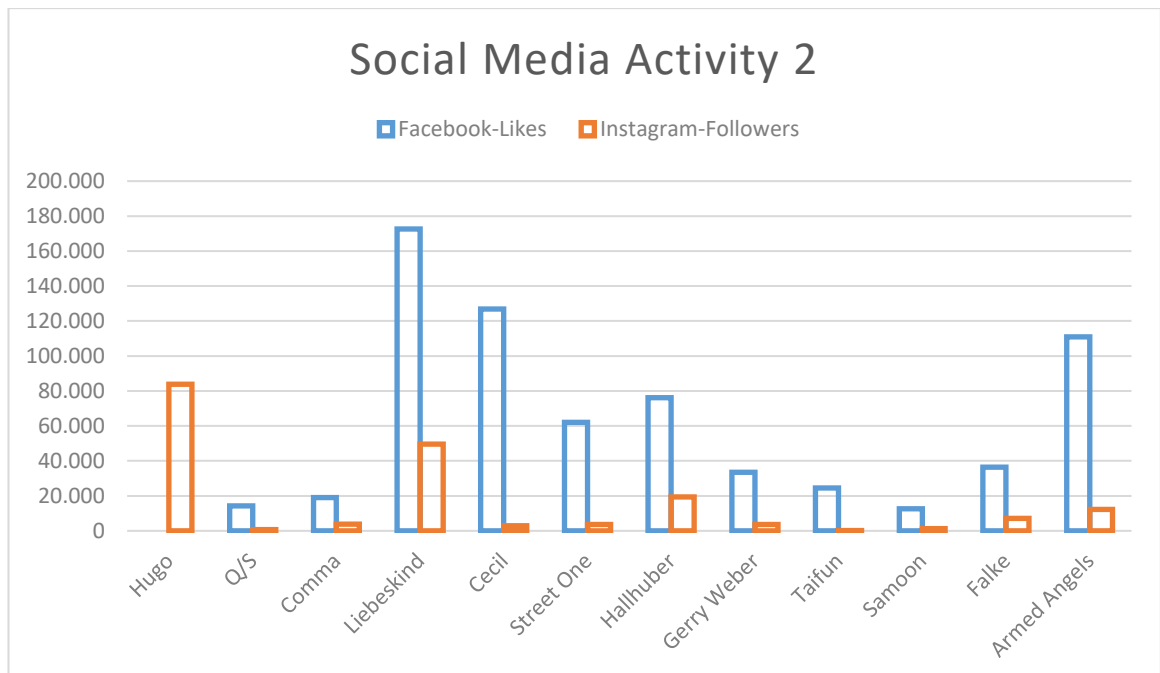
Even with the four biggest brands it is difficult to see the exact difference, because *Hugo Boss* is much more noticed in the online world than all the others. First, I will explain the diagram. I left out the Facebook-Likes of *Hugo Boss* on the diagram because they were too high for comparison. *Hugo Boss* has, believe it or not, 7.743.993 likes on their main official brand page. And with 1,7 million followers on Instagram, it is also the most visited on this platform. It does not necessarily mean that *Hugo Boss* makes a better job by attracting fans on social media, with their activities online, but just shows that it is a brand which lies in another price segment than the rest and is a premium designer label that is renowned all over the world and takes part in fashion shows. It is a more prestigious brand. Nevertheless, the other three big brands are doing a great job in staying afloat in the online world. In my opinion *Hugo Boss* and Esprit are best at what they do, which can also be seen based on the numbers on Figure 1. Both brands post daily on Facebook and Instagram and always give their fans something new to read about. For *Hugo Boss* its art and sports sponsorships are very important on Facebook. The social media team constantly posts something new from exhibitions or art events or, at the moment, it is mainly focused on the preparation of the British skipper Alex Thomson for the global sailing race. On the company's Facebook, the audience can track the skipper's success on the Hugo Boss yacht on his trip around the world. In addition, product and promotion posts can also be found on their Facebook. The Instagram theme is not uniform, but the posts mainly focus at the momentarily campaign or product that is important for the company. This time of year, their Instagram is Christmas

themed, as they launched their Christmas BOSSbots campaign 2016. *Hugo Boss* does a great job with pulling everything together with the hashtag #iamhugo. I like that it is a little bit different and gives the feeling to be a part of the brand. On their second Instagram channel for the younger brand *HUGO* which is slightly less visited the hashtag is often used by bloggers and customers who post pictures of themselves, wearing the logo sweatshirt from the Hugo Reversed collection and tagging the company in it. Fun and interesting hashtags invite customers to participate online and create more brand awareness than simple hashtags that only state the brand name, as used by many. *Esprit* also decided to give the brand a new shine and launched the #ImPerfect campaign, which was continued this autumn/winter in a new light. This season, they chose ten fun and everyday characters to dance for them to the legendary music of Mc Hammer's "Can't touch this". The campaign wants to show diversity and that everybody is beautiful no matter what shape, size or look. The hashtag plays with the words in an ideal manner. It can be read as "I'm perfect" as well as "imperfect" and wants to show that everyone is perfect with their imperfections and should celebrate being unique. This campaign was catapulted through every possible channel; a great omnichannel effort. TV spots, online spots, huge OOH-campaigns in cities, Spotify radio advertisements and an immense online presence on Facebook and Instagram. Every post is complemented with the hashtag. I think that *Esprit* won a lot of new followers and likes through the new marketing effort they applied. There is just not one channel this autumn that did not show the brand. No matter when I turned on the TV or opened a magazine the #ImPerfect campaign was there.

Another plus for *Esprit* is their mobile store app. *Esprit* and *S.Oliver* are the only brands that have a mobile store app. An app like that is an immense opportunity for the brand and creates even more awareness. Instead of having the Facebook buy-button, *Esprit* linked to the mobile app. This is a great way to compete with big vertical brands like *H&M* and *Zara*, as well as the online shops of *Zalando* and *Asos*, who also can be reached via a mobile application. If customers have the chance to access the online store over an app, it is much more convenient and easy for them. And customers like choices. So, to have yet another brand that offers their products more conveniently is great. *S.Oliver* divided all its brands on social media. Almost each of them has an own Instagram and Facebook account. *S.Oliver* Red and Black label and the brand *Triangle* still post together though. *S.Oliver* is, like *Esprit*, very good online with daily posts on Facebook that have a lot of customer participation. One of the most popular posts are the "One item-3 Style" posts, where the customers have to vote for the best outfit and the winner outfit can be bought with a 10%-off coupon code. Other posts sometimes even offer sweepstakes. On Instagram, more product pictures can be found and many blogger collaborations. In Figure 5 the other brands' online activities

under the *S.Oliver* umbrella can be observed. *Q/S designed by*, *Comma* and *Liebeskind Berlin* are the independent brands of the group. Since *Liebeskind Berlin* is a substantial brand and very popular in the fashion industry it already has a very huge following on Facebook, the biggest if you take a look at Figure 5. And on Instagram it comes right after the *HUGO* brand by *Hugo Boss*.

Figure 5: Social Media Activity Number 2



Even though *Liebeskind* is bigger on Facebook, Instagram is more important for the brand, because it posts more often there. The posts on Instagram concentrate on lifestyle, blogger and product posts. *Comma* is also good on social media, although slightly smaller. *Q/S designed by* just became an own brand this summer and is still at the start of its social media career. At the moment, the posts are very rare and if they appear, they are about the collaboration with the German DJ Robin Schulz, which the brand will accompany on his tour in March 2017. *Tom Tailor* builds the rear end of the four big companies, although its social media campaign has a catchy hashtag slogan as well. With *#EVERYWEARYOUGO* it markets their autumn/winter collection with the main focus on the jacket. They post daily on Instagram with many blogger collaborations there. On Facebook, the posts are more rarely, which is rather sad. A great marketing event that the company did and posted about online was a guerilla campaign in the city of Hamburg on a random day. They had spray painted the streets with the hashtag *#EVERYWEARYOUGO* and had models walk around in giant

clear balls. Banners were hung all over the city just as hangers with postcards that had rebate codes on them. Everywhere you went, *Tom Tailor* was right in front your face. Promotions like this are a very good marketing move, as they attract customers to the brand and the store. The start-up *Kluntje*, also located in Hamburg, does something similar. The brand sticks stickers with old traditional German words and their website all over the city to create interest.

The two brands of the *CBR Group Cecil* and *Street One* show great effort online, especially on social media. *Street One* posts daily on Instagram, *Cecil* irregularly. On Facebook, the brand has a good customer engagement with the weekly fan outfit, where the winner outfit can be bought with 10% off. Although the brands have been in business for a long time they still have more of a start-up vibe to them when you visit their web shops, but not in a good way. The online shops look like from another era, like you would shop at an online catalog for older women. This is very sad, since the clothes of the brands are very modern and stylish. The only positive aspect of the online stores are the company blogs linked on the website with great and inspirational posts on them. It would do the brands good to launch new online shops that look more modern and young, just like their clothing. And they might also need an interesting hashtag and online campaign, and more blogger collaborations that will draw younger people to the brand. This is necessary, because, when I think about *Cecil* and *Street One*, I rather feel that the clothes would be for older people, just by the look of the brand presence.

Gerry Weber is very small on Facebook and Instagram. This could be the case because it is perceived as a more traditional brand for older women, although this is not true anymore. *Gerry Weber* made his brands and collections very young and wants to attract a much younger audience now. But to change this, they to change the feel of their website and online shop just as the *CBR* brands. Also, the brands *Samoon* and *Taifun* need to post more on social networks to grow faster. The brand *Gerry Weber* can actually look up to its own subsidiary *Hallhuber* that does a superb job on the social platforms. With almost daily posts on Facebook and Instagram it attracts many followers with blogger posts, event posts and product display. The last global player is *Falke*, which I chose for my analysis because I can compare it to the start-up company *2H2H*. The brand *Falke* is rather small on social media for being such an important traditional German brand. Even the start-up *Armed Angels* has significantly more followers. The posts are very irregular and concentrate more on the sport-sponsorships they do, than on their products. It does not have a clean look, which does not fit the look of the brand. Here the company has to be cautious not to be overrun by the fresh start-up *2H2H*, who maybe still is very small on the Internet but who also just started her business in 2015. The start-up has a very modern, urban and young feel to it and already

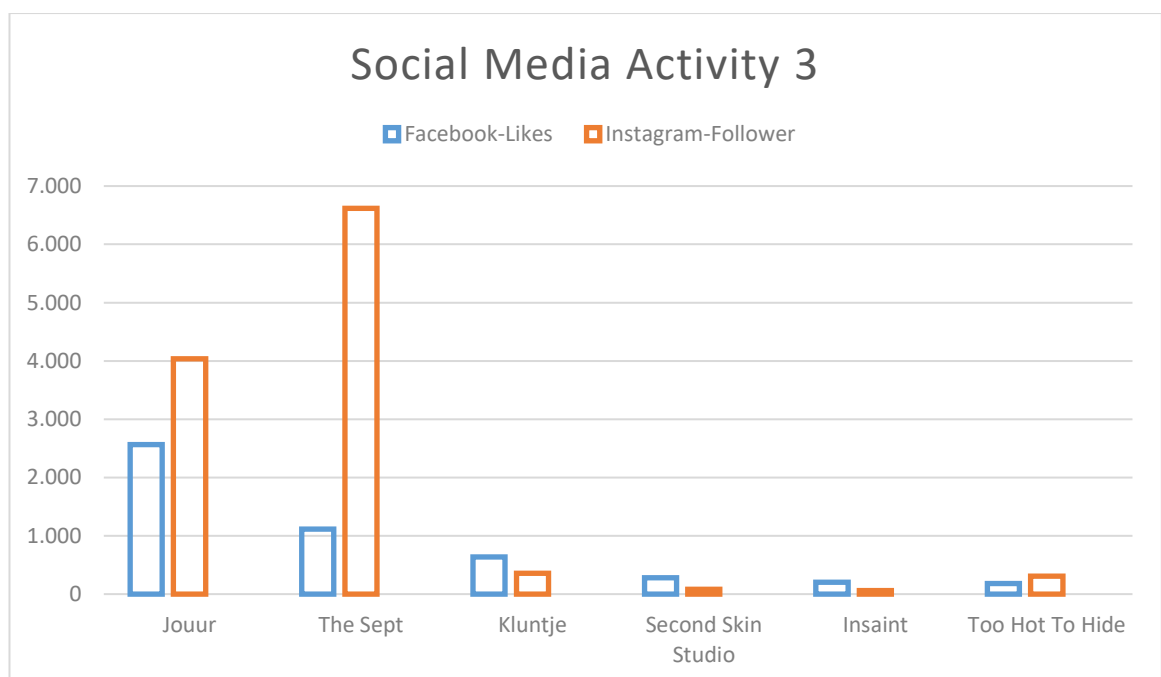
convinced the industry with the packaging and the imagery, which could be seen two seasons in a row, when the campaign pictures were used for the tights special in the German trade magazine "Textilwirtschaft". If young companies are preferred to traditional ones, something must be done right. Of course, *2H2H* can still be more engaged online. Their Facebook presence is perfect at the moment with daily posts, but Instagram is somewhat neglected, although their campaign images fit perfectly into Instagram. The brand does not even have to think about a catchy hashtag since the brand name *Too Hot To Hide* is a sure-fire success. One thing that *Falke* did good is bring out a mobile app that suggests running tracks. This fits perfectly into their campaign for their new 4 Grip sports socks.

I think that even though the numbers of their followers differ a lot, most of the global players try to be on as many social media platforms and engage their customers with an omnichannel marketing mix, some more, and some less. And you can perfectly see, when something works the right way, as with *Esprit*. It engages with its customers on every level and on each channel possible, and it does this thoroughly. This means that the brand posts daily on every channel where it is present. Others want to achieve the same outcome, maybe already have a good hashtag, but do not tie all the channels and actions perfectly together, which disengages customers. A company should be concerned about having a constant information flow for their followers and stay responsive to them, if they have questions. Good brands also do not just post about their products and their work, but also publish inspirational posts to spike interest with the customer.

Start-ups on the other hand, all have different approaches and strategies when it comes to their online activities. Many say that it is very important for their brand to be present on social media, as it is one of the most convenient ways to create brand awareness, but then they only post once a week or even less. This is not enough to keep the customers engaged. Constant posting reminds a follower of the brand and he or she will more likely research the products. If there is only one post per week, in between all the posts of other brands, your online presence will sink and seem unimportant. *Second Skin Studio* said that it only posts when there is a special event happening and that it does not want to post more often. With the scarcity of its posts it wants to create the perfect feel for the business. But what might work for the clothes does not necessarily have to work with social media. Nevertheless, the brand still stands at the beginning, since it was officially launched in September 2016 and still has time and capacity to grow. In my opinion *Armed Angels* (Figure 5), *Jour* and *The Sept* have the best online activities, which can be seen in Figure 5 and 6. But since *Armed Angels* has been in the business a couple years longer and has a different marketing approach I want to address the other two first. Both these labels see themselves as mainly and foremost online businesses, which means that online operations are the fundamental

core activities to them. For *Jour*, as I mentioned above, the strategy is to engage as much with their followers as possible, which they already do with the help of the blog anyway. On Facebook and Instagram, they still post daily to engage with the customers that do not come from the blog. In Figure 6 it can be noticed that *The Sept* is more successful on Instagram than *Jour*, but less so on Facebook. The reason for this could be that *The Sept* only posts every two or three days on Facebook, but twice daily on Instagram. Instagram is very important for the brand and since they have international customers, it is crucial for them to post for different time zones, so everyone can receive a piece of the brand. The posts on Facebook, Instagram and on their company-own blog are very minimalistic and fit the reduced style of the brand. They showcase their own products, art, architecture and lifestyle posts that are all inspired by minimalism. *The Sept* believes that it is fundamental to take part in all social networks, because if one person follows you on Instagram it most likely will follow on Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat as well.

Figure 6: Social Media Activity Number 3



Armed Angels also has a great online presence. They are on Facebook and Instagram, and said they do not need to be on every channel, because this is not the main message they want to transport. The fundamental initiative of *Armed Angels* is to make the customers aware of the processes that happen from sourcing of materials to wearing and disposing them. Their activity on the social platforms is to educate the audience and show them how

it can be done better. Due to that, they have many posts about green events, organizations and initiatives they are part of, but also post product and outfit posts. The outfit posts are introduced by employees of the brand. This way customers get to know the products as well as the people that market them. Another proficient idea is the “Made by Humans” campaign that was launched this year, where they post pictures and stories of the employees that manufacture the clothes. This way the audience gets to know all the workers along the supply chain. With their online presence, *Armed Angels* tries to be as transparent as possible. Just as the big players, and maybe even better, the customer service on Facebook and Instagram answers and reacts to customer posts right away. In my opinion it is better because it seems more colloquially and personal, as if a friend was talking to you.

To the interview question which social network is more important to their brand, most of the brands said Instagram, although the figures show something different. Merely three brands, all three are start-ups, are better on Instagram. I can only explain it with the fact that Facebook is mostly the starting platform of a business, as you can put more information there and Instagram only follows later. But it is noticeable that the following on Instagram grows faster than on Facebook. Images are faster than words. And since the fashion industry is about images, and looks Instagram is the better channel. Also, it is easier to connect and tag everything on Instagram, with hashtags and links.

A similarity that I found in almost all the brands was the work with bloggers and influencers. Even or especially the young start-ups that just started with their business have people they rely on in the industry to promote their clothing to the internet audience. To have one, or even better more of those bloggers on your side is very good for creating brand awareness. The blogosphere online is very connected and even if one blogger posts something, another will most likely see the post and might get interested in that product as well. There are different bloggers and influencers out there. Some are just simply fashion bloggers that follow the trends and post everything they like no matter what brand, and then there are those, who think about what company they are supporting and only promote products they actually believe in; more conscious bloggers, so to say. Green bloggers, e.g. post only products from sustainable and transparent companies, such as *Armed Angels*. There are two ways to get in touch with influencers. Either you as a brand search for the appropriate blogger for your products, or you wait until a blogger asks you if you would like for them to write about your brand. It is actually a great way to see how the industry works both ways. But usually the popular bloggers with the most reach are the most expensive and selective ones. They probably will only promote the brand, if the fee is high enough or if they really believe in what they see. Some start-ups just recently ventured out into this field and are on

the hunt for good influencers to push their brand. And even if it takes more time for start-ups to attract a blogger, it still will be worth it in the end.

I discovered, mainly on Instagram, that very few people comment on brand posts, even though there are a lot of likes; but on posts that are posted by influencers, there are hundreds of comments. These are usually the fans of the bloggers who track their every move and look up to them. So that if the blogger wears a particular outfit, they are curious to know where the person got it from; and if the sweater is one from your brand, you as a company already won. Those blogposts are like the features in fashion magazines, only that they are happening online.

Some brands take it even up a notch from the bloggers and collaborate with other artists, photographers and brands to create more attention and interest for the brand. I believe that it is a very good strategic move to combine forces and create something good that will benefit both sides. Sometimes it is better to share success than to keep it all to yourself. *Esprit* got together with the American brand *Opening Ceremony* to create a modern collection that was inspired by the 80's and 90's and reminds of the earlier *Esprit* time. *Falke* collaborates with the luxury department store Liberty London and incorporates their luxurious fabric prints into their Christmas men collection. *Hugo Boss* uses his elevated look to sync with the Guggenheim Foundation to sponsor art and artists. *S.Oliver* formed a connection with the DJ Robin Schulz to attract a younger crowd for its new *Q/S designed by* brand. The start-up *Insaint* collaborates with a make-up artist friend who promotes their clothes on her travels, and *Kluntje* got together with other young brands and opened a pop-up store together. *Armed Angels* also collaborated with designers in the past and is not opposed to do it again someday in the future. *Jouur* forms the natural collaboration with the blog *Journelle* and *The Sept* mostly connects with other photographers, but believes firmly in utilizing synergies, if it fits into the concepts of both sides.

So, when I take a look at all that, I definitely would say that the online channels are very important these days, especially for reaching the young crowd, which is exactly who most of the start-ups want to reach. And for the global players, online channels are just as necessary, as they too, want to attain a young crowd. For them it is even more important to attract a younger audience, because a brand becomes older with the years, and with them it its customers. Regarding this, a brand needs to reinvent itself every couple of years to stay interesting and to draw in more people. I feel that many of the global players, for instance *S.Oliver*, *Gerry Weber* and *Hugo Boss* try to imitate start-ups with their different brand portfolios. Start-ups usually concentrate on a specific target group, whereas global players target from newborns to elderly people. But since one strategy would not spark

interest with everybody, they have to divide the big brand into smaller brands or acquire already established brands to mix up their brand range to seem more interesting and to offer as much diversity as possible. Because in the end, even if they divide it into different brands, the main goal for the global players is to attract as many customers as possible to become the market leader and be better than the competition. Small start-ups do not frantically try to grow fast, but rather care selectively about their current customers.

Another question that I was very interested in was to what extent brands in the fashion industry still rely on traditional channels, such as radio, print and television. I was not really surprised to see that all the big players still rely on traditional media, as they were always present there. Of course, not every big brand is active on every traditional channel, but I could detect that most of them rely on print advertising in fashion magazines. But even the start-ups told me that print media is important for attracting audience. One label said that even if online channels and online features are fundamental for the business, an online feature is not forever. It is very short-lived. Print features in magazines on the other hand are longer valued. The magazine will stay on your coffee table for two to four weeks until the next one comes, but online the next feature will replace you in a couple of hours.

A plus for the big companies are the stores and POS's, which are a great marketing tool and a place to present what the company has to offer. It is a small look inside the brand lifestyle. This is not the case with all start-ups. Only *Armed Angels* and *2H2H* sell their clothes in concept stores, boutiques and department stores, but this is more a shop-in-shop system where different people who are not part of the brand sell your clothes. They do not really have the connection to the brand the way it is needed. If *Esprit* sells their clothes in a company owned store the Human Resource Management of the company chooses the people who will represent the brand, which is exactly what a company needs: good people that represent the brand. *Kluntje* is the only brand which has a pop-up store at the moment, where they sell their clothes personally. It is a huge plus for the designer to be able to talk to the customer personally and explain to them the idea behind their clothes. Especially for start-ups this is very important, as their ideas are most of the time unique and not always understood by the audience. But the other six start-ups from Table 1 do not just sit behind their computers and manage everything online, they also go to consumer or industry trade fairs to connect with their audience.

Where my interest spiked was that many of the start-ups I interviewed already were mentioned on television, or the radio, and are constantly featured in fashion magazines, print and online versions. I had no idea that fashion magazines and the industry showed that much interest in them, but it is great to see that this way they will achieve more awareness.

For example, *2H2H* was featured in the fashion magazine “Brigitte” right around the time their online shop was launched, which drove her sales up extremely.

Otherwise start-ups are still trying to find the right marketing strategies. But that is fine. They still have time to establish themselves and therefore still have room to make mistakes, as they are not so much in the public eye. To take again the label *2H2H*, who told me they are still playing with a lot of different forms of marketing to see if it were beneficial for the brand. At the moment, they are trying out Google AdWords and Facebook ads. *Second Skin Studio* on the other hand placed an ad in an offline trade magazine to see if it will attract the wanted clientele. This was one of the most expensive marketing efforts of the brand, but they just wanted to see if it was worth it. Next to the start-ups, big players have to be more careful with their marketing activities, because they are already at the center of attention. They need to be alert not to post anything wrong or offensive and to be good with their customer service to not lose customers. Therefore, I would say that the main focus today lies online, because this is where most people are. But to reach absolutely everyone and create a holistic brand experience, a brand must connect as many channels as possible.

Since the fashion industry is such a big agglomeration of different brands and business concepts, competition is a very important topic. Hence I took a look at the companies on my lists and also asked my interview partners who they see as their biggest competition. The answers were very different and every brand had a varied outlook on the industry. First of all, I think that all the big players from Table 2 have the vertical fast-fashion companies as their overall competition. Although they do not play in the same price range, they lure in many customers who maybe otherwise would go to *Esprit*, etc. A lot of the big companies try to mimic the vertical supply chain to gain more customers and achieve more traction in the industry, which is realized with up to twelve collections a year and shorter lead times. Even the start-ups could theoretically see those companies as their competition, because even though they will probably never be able to compete with the production speed and offering, the style of clothes is very trendy and some start-ups also try to sell high quality pieces that are still stylish. Some of my interview partners could name me specific competitors, while others talked more hypothetically. I asked them if they rather see other start-ups, the fast-fashion retailers or premium and luxury brands as their competition. *2H2H* stated that other start-ups are always a competition but that you also can never know when they will pop up out of the blue, so for them the traditional sock and tight businesses *Falke* and *Kunert* are the biggest competitions, as they sell the same products with the same price point. *Insaint* see the fast-fashion industry as the competition and want to offer their products as an alternative for more conscious purchasing. *Armed Angels* know that they cannot compete with the fast-fashion retailers, which is okay, since they want to give off a complete

different message anyway. Nevertheless, they see other brands from the elevated middle price segment, such as the brand *Diesel*, as their competition. *Esprit* and *S.Oliver* lie a little bit lower than their price point, but I believe style wise they can definitely compete with them. *Jouur* believe that they are unique in what they do, so they do not see any direct competitors, but style wise they would name the contemporary brands *Sandro* and *Maje* as competitors and the fast-fashion retailer *And Other Stories*. *Kluntje* do not believe in competition among start-ups. They want to rather work together with other start-ups and help each other grow. *Second Skin Studio* would say that a mix of all three can be a competition for the brand, but nothing on its own and *The Sept* definitely say that other start-ups who sell in the same quality range are competition, thus, all of the start-ups from my list to start with. I analyzed all the brands for myself and compiled a table of who could be whose competition among each other.

Table 3: Possible Competitors

Insaint	Esprit (Open Ceremony Collaboration)
Second Skin Studio	Hugo Boss, Liebeskind
Jouur	The Sept, Hugo, Tom Tailor Contemporary, Street One, Triangle
Kluntje	Armed Angels, Q/S, TT Denim
Armed Angels	Kluntje, S.Oliver Red Label, TT, TT Denim, Esprit
The Sept	Jouur, S.Oliver Black Label, TT Contemporary, Triangle
2H2H	Falke
Esprit	S.Oliver, Tom Tailor, Gerry Weber, Cecil, Street One
Falke	Boss Green
Q/S	TT Denim, Boss Orange
Bonita	Triangle, Samoon
Comma	Hallhuber, Taifun

In Table 3 you can see that, in my opinion, e.g. *Insaint* could compete with the collaboration collection of *Esprit* and *Open Ceremony* because both collections focus on unisex pieces. *Second Skin Studio*, being high fashion and working with innovative materials and leather

could become a competitor of *Hugo Boss* and *Liebeskind Berlin*. *Falke*, even though known for socks and tights, could rival with *Boss Green* with their functional sportswear.

During my interviews, I realized that each and every brand I talked to wanted to achieve a more mindfully purchasing with their brand and products. All of them offer high quality garments in the middle price range. Somehow it is understandable that the price is higher than with the fast-fashion companies, because a start-up cannot begin to sell cheap clothing if they are producing locally. A fashion company's clothing becomes cheaper most of the time if something is not taken care of the proper way during the production and sourcing phase. Cheap materials, bad working conditions, bad manufacturing sites, etc. My interview partner brands all offer apparel that is carefully sourced from the best materials. Some offer organic, others the best quality cashmere, and a couple of them are even certified.

If one is willing to enter the fashion business today, it is important to not lose sustainability out of sight. More and more people are concerned about the environment and what the industry does to it. Of course, the consumers still want to own nice clothes, so they do not want the practices to stop, they rather want them to change to the better. The internet gave many people the opportunity to educate themselves on a lot of topics and although people are not oblivious to what is going on in the fashion industry, they do not always see or understand the connection between their purchase and the effect it has on the environment. Even though people have more information, they cannot know everything that goes on during the supply chain of a product. This is where the company has to show transparency and explain how the process works. The brands themselves have to talk to the consumers and open their eyes. But most of the companies want to make a lot of money and be the market leader in the industry, and do not want to also care about the environment, or even the social side of the industry.

Every start-up company I interviewed stated the importance of sustainability for the industry, except *Second Skin Studio*, which was so honest and explained that their idea for the brand and the innovative materials they work with are beyond ecological standards, but what they can do is look for sustainability in the means of durability. The brand only sources what it needs and not more and their leather is good quality European leather. *Jouur* also believe in durability and high quality pieces that have a long lifespan. For them only sustainable fabrics are considered and no polyester is used. They go for natural resources. *Insaint* takes a similar perspective, and, in addition, they only buy their leather from the residues of a wholesaler. I think it is great that they take the pieces nobody wants anymore, but does a wholesaler really source sustainable? *2H2H* said that sustainability is an important aspect of the momentarily zeitgeist. The brand only packages its products in a natural package that

is recyclable right now but plans to offer organic-cotton tights and tights made from recyclable polyamide for the next autumn/winter collection. *The Sept* reported that in our time, nobody should renounce sustainability as it is an implicitness. They take it for granted that materials should be certified and the working conditions fair and this is the reason why they do not market with sustainability as it is a given. I like that they think it is a given, but most people do not know this, when they visit their website. So, in my opinion, companies should talk about their efforts towards sustainability and not hide them. *Armed Angels* and *Kluntje* pride themselves on their good and fair working conditions and try to be as transparent as possible in their supply chain. Both are GOTS-certified, and *Armed Angels* is part of the Fairtrade Organization and the Fair Wear Foundation. It already is the leading sustainable clothing company in Germany and it should keep up with its great work. It is one of the only start-ups that stated in words that they want to become mainstream, although they market fair and green. They want to show customers that ethical and fair clothing does not have to be ugly and bulky and that it can look stylish, just as every other garment in the fashion industry. But even if they want to become more visible, they still take their time and consider every step they take very carefully. There is no use in wanting to achieve everything at once. Good products and fair working conditions take time. Therefore, they take it step by step.

In my opinion start-ups think more about the environment, the society and sustainability as an interconnected process. There is no way that they believe it to be useless and just a trend that will be over soon. They know the importance behind it, and most of them try and begin to build their business on a sustainable and ethical foundation. This way a good start is guaranteed and the start-ups are already higher up on the sustainable scale for consumers. Big companies are also concerned about the social and environmental aspect of the industry, but not necessarily because they believe in it from the bottom of their heart. For them it is more damage control. Consumers notice occasionally how people and the earth is treated by the fashion industry and demand better processes. Therefore, the big companies start implementing better actions by giving the audience what it wants to see.

Sustainability can mean a lot of things and as one of my interviewees said, it is impossible to implement every positive method, because in the end the product would be unaffordable. There are so many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and initiatives that support the good cause and try to make this world a better place that it is not always easy for the businesses to decide which organization fits best into their processes. The social and sustainability reports of big companies list up to twenty different of these organizations, which makes me think that it must be hard to keep up with all of them. And even with all the supporting organizations, the companies are still not sustainable in the way they want to be.

And this is okay. Sustainability already starts with transparency and when a company is not afraid to post their processes online for the public to see, like *Armed Angels* is doing it. Most of the start-up companies I interviewed are only sustainable in terms of sourcing their materials well and explaining to their customers that it is better to buy less but high quality. It is a small step towards sustainability, but a small step is better than none. For the environment, it would be best if the population would minimize their fashion consume, as the manufacturing of apparel puts a big strain on the world and damages it. I understand that it is difficult for the fashion industry to grasp at that thought, as the goal of it is to reach high profits, attract as many customers with their marketing and sell as many products as possible. To my surprise and even horror, I had to find out that not every of the seven big companies that I review had a social and sustainability report, where they talked about their goals and aspirations for the company in terms of environmental, social and economic sustainability. The *Esprit*, *Hugo Boss* and *Gerry Weber* groups all three had a very detailed sustainability report that explained every step they took along the supply chain and even how sustainable they behave in terms of office workers. The *Tom Tailor* and the *CBR groups* talked shortly about it on their company website. And *Falke* and *S.Oliver* had absolutely nothing to find about their sustainability effort on their websites. I was shocked to find that a multi-brand company, such as *S.Oliver*, does not see it as necessary to talk to their customers about such an important topic. On the website, it just says that both companies work with good and high quality materials, but there is absolutely nothing that says anything about the supply chain. In my opinion this is a no go. Companies that big should make an effort and be as transparent as possible. It cannot be the case, that a vertical fast-fashion company, such as *H&M*, which sells clothes to a much more affordable price and produces many more clothes than *S.Oliver*, seems more sustainable in the eyes of the consumers and the public, because the company does not shy away to tell the truth and open the supply chain up for everyone to see. As we can see in this case, it is enough for the audience to be aware of what a company is doing, and a sustainability report goes a long way. A good corporate social responsibility is not only an advantage for all involved parties but also a huge boost marketing wise. Since next to the fast-fashion trend the other fad of our generation is to become more green in almost all aspects of life, it would be a sure-fire success if companies would combine both trends, even if they stand in contradiction to each other. But even if both trends could work hand in hand I honestly do not think that the industry will ever come to a point where it will be good for the environment. There will always be another battle to fight. But as of now, the companies could at least make an effort to better the production procedures to preserve the environment and work towards good working conditions for the people. Because even if nature is not the top priority for a business, the well-being of people should never be neglected.

5 Results

To my first hypothesis,

H1: Every fashion company implements an integrated marketing strategy.

I can definitely say that the global brands are following 360-degree marketing campaigns and integrate as many channels as possible into their marketing efforts. *Esprit*, *S.Oliver*, *Tom Tailor*, *Hugo Boss* and *Gerry Weber* would be the companies that have the most success. *Gerry Weber* most likely only because of its subsidiary *Hallhuber*, which is generating the most profit for the company. *Esprit* and *S.Oliver* even took it a step further and launched a mobile app, so online purchases could be made on the go. *Falke* and the *CBR Group* could still work on their marketing efforts as it is still far away from being integrated. Sure, *Falke* launched a running app for their athletic range, but all the single channels do not tie together perfectly yet. The *CBR* brands *Cecil* and *Street One* have still a lot of work to do. Their online appearance is not congruent on all different outlets and does not fit to the offline look of the brand. The company blogs and the social media have a very modern and young feel to them, whereas the online and offline stores look very old. The start-ups on the other side do not have a complete integrated strategy, which is in general not possible, because they do not have the necessary budget for it. Most of the start-ups use online channels to market their brand. Website, newsletters, social media networks, blogs and online stores are the main channels that are being used. If they do use offline channels, it is by being featured in magazines most of the time. Actively they only go offline, if the budget allows it. Otherwise I would say that their online appearance is integrated, since the internet itself is a connective medium. Overall the small companies do not really want to reach the entire audience but usually concentrate on a small niche market they want to win over with their unique and different idea. They usually do not want to attract the mainstream but rather small selective groups that understand their idea and message. Therefore, the hypothesis is falsified. For the future, the young brands, as well as the *CBR* brands could learn from the global brands to incorporate more channels with each other while they are progressing.

H2: Social media takes over the dominant part of the marketing procedures of fashion companies.

My second hypothesis has to be verified a 100%. Every single brand and company that I interviewed and reviewed, be it start-up or global player, had a lot, or even the most emphasis on online procedures. As mentioned before, some of the start-ups only exist online and therefore need to excel in the channels that are open to them. The best way in today's generation is to reach the customers via social media, because that is the place where a conversation can happen, especially if your business does not have a physical store. Each brand is active on at least two networks; some brands, predominantly start-ups, use all of them, from Facebook to Snapchat. Here I feel the big can learn from the small to concentrate more on content, rather than on products and sales, as this is a winning strategy.

H3: Traditional channels are of less importance to the fashion companies.

This hypothesis surprised me the most, as I really thought that it would verify itself, but I was completely wrong. The big brands alone still rely very heavily on traditional media to guarantee that every target group can be reached, from young to old. *Esprit*, e.g. took their online hashtag and displayed it in every channel. It is seen on TV, heard on the radio and Spotify, read about in magazines and it is visible in every store. This way the company made the traditional channels younger and integrated the online aspect in it and therefore reminded the people that offline media is still important. After my research, I did understand why I was wrong with my hypothesis, especially after one of my interviewees explained to me how much more a magazine feature helped to attract customers than an online medium, because it is more long-term. Online posts come and go in a really fast manner, whereas traditional media can work over a longer time.

H4: More marketing budget is spent for online purposes.

Here I cannot verify this statement. Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to work with many numbers regarding this topic. The information I received from the start-ups was mixed. Two of the seven companies spend more of their marketing budget offline, whereas the other five use it for online purposes. I only received percentages rather than actual numbers, so I would say that the companies concentrated more around the online world spend it therefore. Companies that try to be present on off-, and online channels probably spend more money for offline purposes, as traditional media is more expensive than online media.

H5: Fashion companies go the extra mile and make an effort toward a more sustainable product lifecycle.

Unfortunately, I have to falsify this hypothesis. Although, you can see a big difference towards a positive change in the industry, some companies chose not to participate in this trend. Each and every company from my list involves sustainability into their business procedures, except *Falke* and *S.Oliver*, who are very quiet on this topic. I believe that the big global brands should learn a lot from the start-ups, who often begin their business activities on a sustainable note. I feel that big companies lose the important aspects of the business out of sight and only concentrate on the monetary aspect, which is sad. If we produce fashion in the speed and manner as it is done right now, we will not have enough resources left for the future and the industry will die.

In my humble opinion, both, big brands and small brands can learn from each other to better their business and simultaneously be perceived as a rewarding brand by the audience. They should strive to improve their businesses but also never let the small things out of sight, because they could form problems in the future. As for the marketing, the start-ups could try to be more integrated on their way up and the big brands could incorporate more uniqueness into their strategy.

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Appendix

A Interview Guideline

1. When was your label founded?
2. What was the inspiration and motivation that drove you to realize your idea?
3. Where do you position your brand?
 - Low price segment
 - Middle price segment
 - Premium price segment/luxury price segment
4. Who is your target audience?
5. Who do you consider as your biggest competition?
 - Other start-ups
 - Fast fashion retailer
 - Premium/luxury brands
6. What is your main marketing objective?
7. What marketing channels do you make use of?
 - TV
 - Radio/Spotify
 - Newspaper
 - Magazines
 - Email-newsletter
 - Website
 - Social media
 - OOH
8. Do you try to stay consistent with your marketing message among all communication venues?
 - To what extent are you trying to connect the different channels?
9. How much of your budget is allocated to marketing (in percent)?
10. How do you divide the marketing budget for the different marketing channels?
11. Are you investing more in on-, or offline marketing?
12. What is the most important channel for your company and why?
13. Social Media
 - How much do you rely on social media for marketing/advertising purposes?
 - On how many platforms/social networks are you present/active?
 - How often do you post?
 - Do you work together with bloggers? Why?

14. Do you participate in fashion events regularly? Trade fairs? Fashion shows?

15. Do you form collaborations with other designers or creatives to achieve more brand awareness?

16. Sustainability

- Do you think sustainability in the fashion industry is important?
- How important is sustainability for your label?
- In how far does that contribute to your brand image? / What steps does your label take to be/ become more sustainable?

B Interview Nr.1: Label "Insaint"

Interview with the founders Alicia Richter and Isabell (28.09.2016)

B1: Hallo.

I: Hi, hier ist die Irina.

B1: Hi, hier ist Alicia.

B2: Und Isabell.

I: Hallo. Danke nochmal, dass ihr mir mit meiner Bachelor Thesis helft.

B1: Gerne!

I: Okay, sollen wir dann loslegen?

B1: Ja klar, sehr gerne. Wir sind bereit.

I: Okay, alles klar dann fang ich mal mit meinen Fragen an. Wann habt ihr denn euer Label gegründet?

B1: Im Februar.

I: Dieses Jahr? Also ganz frisch?

B1: Ja genau.

I: Was war denn eure Inspiration und Motivation, die halt euch dazu bewegt hat, die Idee zu verwirklichen?

B1: Gute Frage. Wir sind der Meinung, dass es sowas wie wir machen noch nicht gibt, oder noch nicht in diesem Maße. Also wir hatten immer eine Vorstellung von Mode die für Mann und für Frau ist und nicht irgendwie geschlechterspezifisch und unserer Meinung nach gibt es das halt einfach nicht in dieser Art. Deswegen haben wir gedacht, wir machen das selbst und hoffen, dass es auch welche gibt, die daran Interesse haben und die das auch vermisst

haben und froh sind, dass es jetzt da ist.

I: Okay. super. Wo würdet ihr eure Marke positionieren? Also würdet ihr sagen niedriges, mittleres Preissegment, oder eher so Premium, Luxus?

B1: Unser Label ist in mehrere Kategorien eingeteilt. Also wir haben Basics, die so ein bisschen Detail raffiniert sind, die sind so im mittleren Segment, würde ich sagen, und dann aber auch im höheren Segment Elemente oder Hosen die dann wirklich schon sehr speziell sind und nur auf Anfrage gefertigt werden, in denen viel Design und viel Arbeit drinsteckt. Das würde ich dann schon im höheren Preissegment einstufen.

I: Okay, super. Was ist eure Zielgruppe?

B1: Männer und Frauen, die für Individualität stehen. Also die keine Sachen von der Stange kaufen wollen und nicht die, die industriell hergestellt werden und in den Läden zu kaufen sind. Sondern wirklich für Persönlichkeit in der Kleidung sind. Also dass sie nicht wollen, dass jeder andere damit rumläuft und dass es nach einer Saison verworfen wird. Sondern es sollen wirklich Leute sein, die sagen: „Der Mantel ist toll, den will ich 6-7 Jahre tragen“. Das sie längerfristig was davon haben. Das ist die Zielgruppe. Und Mann und Frau gleichermaßen.

B2: Ich muss noch sagen, dass wir uns jetzt auf Unisex-Sachen konzentriert, also spezialisiert haben und deswegen Mann und Frau. Es soll einfach Unisex sein, dass jeder die Kleidung tragen kann. Also jedes Geschlecht.

I: Okay. Ihr habt auch kein bestimmtes Alter auf das ihr jetzt eingeht, in welchem Rahmen, das sein soll?

B2: Nein.

I: Okay. Wen zählt ihr denn also eure größte Konkurrenz? Also seht ihr eher so andere Start-Ups als Konkurrenz, dann eher so die Massen-Modemarken, so dieses Fast Fashion Segment, oder dann die Premium/Luxus Marken?

B2: Also ich würde fast sagen, mehr so die Massenkonzerne, die halt auch alles sehr günstig verkaufen. Es gibt immer noch Leute, die leider nicht dazu bereit sind etwas mehr für qualitativ gefertigte Sachen auszugeben und viel im „Primark“ und so einkaufen und sich

gar nicht darüber bewusst sind, was Mode eigentlich ausmacht. Sie schauen lieber auf Geld und kaufen viel und dafür günstig ein, anstatt auf gute Qualität zu achten und weniger einzukaufen für etwas mehr Geld.

I: Okay, und wenn es jetzt um die Marketingkanäle geht, die ihr nutzt, also geht ihr eher so auf traditionelle Marketingkanäle, oder nutzt ihr eher die Neumodernen mit Internet? Also was ihr da so habt, Soziale Medien, Außenwerbung, Zeitschrift, ob ihr mir da so sagen könnt auf was ihr euch da spezialisiert?

B2: Also im Moment ist es nur Facebook und Instagram. Wir sind aber grad auch dabei unsere eigene Webseite zu gestalten und die dann auch zu veröffentlichen, da wir auch grade erst am Anfang sind. Wir wollen jetzt auch eine Art Künstlerkooperation eingehen. Da wird unser Label dann promotet. Da können wir unsere Models auf verschiedene Veranstaltungen schicken und dort unsere Kleidung präsentieren.

I: Okay, und versucht ihr dann auch diese verschiedenen Kanäle miteinander zu verbinden, so, dass wenn man jetzt zum Beispiel auf Instagram euer Label findet, dass man dann sofort sieht, dass man euch auch auf Facebook finden kann?

B1: Ja, genau.

B2: Ja. Das versuchen wir eigentlich immer ständig zu verbinden. Und darauf aufmerksam zu machen. Auch auf unseren privaten Netzwerken. Dort haben wir dann auch noch mal alle Adressen stehen.

I: Wie viel würdet ihr sagen, dass ihr von eurem Gesamtbudget für das Marketing ausgibt? In Prozent?

B2: Fünfzehn.

B1: 15- 20 ungefähr.

I: Also dann seid ihr jetzt im Moment auch nur im Online- Marketing unterwegs und werdet wahrscheinlich dann mit der Zeit, wenn ihr größer werdet, auch noch in Print oder ähnliches gehen?

B1 und B2: Ja.

B2: Aber im Moment ist es Facebook, Instagram und unsere Webseite: Wir kommen ja aus Hannover und da waren wir auf dem „Freaky Fashion Festival“, worüber du uns ja auch gefunden hast. Das war halt auch wie so eine kleine Messe, wo man sich präsentieren konnte und auf sich aufmerksam machen konnte.

I: Okay, und was würdet ihr jetzt sagen ist für euch im Moment dann wichtiger? Facebook, oder Instagram? Womit habt ihr mehr Erfolg?

B1: Facebook, auf jeden Fall.

I: Facebook! Okay. Dann will ich noch ein paar Fragen zu den Sozialen Medien stellen. Wie oft stellt ihr Beiträge rein, also zum Beispiel auf Instagram. Wie oft postet ihr Bilder?

B1: Das ist unterschiedlich. Also im Moment ist es leider ein bisschen weniger geworden, aber ich würde sagen so bestimmt zwei, drei Mal die Woche.

I: Okay. Und in Facebook genauso? Oder dann mehr?

B1: Facebook ist mehr. Auf jeden Fall.

I: Okay. Gut. Ich bin in meiner Recherche sehr oft auf Blogger gestoßen, die oft mit der Mode von Start-Ups werben. Habt ihr da auch irgendwelche Kooperationen, oder sprecht ihr welche an, die eure Klamotten vielleicht tragen und online stellen könnten?

B2: Bis jetzt nicht. Wir haben, wie gesagt diese Künstlerkooperation mit einer Freundin zusammen, die hat ihren eigenen Make-up Shop und sie ist viel unterwegs. Sie macht auch selber Musik und war jetzt in New York und in Amsterdam und in London. Ihr haben wir ein paar Sachen mitgegeben, sodass sie dann sozusagen die Promoter-Rolle übernehmen kann und ein bisschen Werbung dafür machen kann. Sie wurde auch schon im Club darauf angesprochen. Es gab auch Kaufanzeigen, aber an sich haben wir jetzt noch nicht den Weg zu bestimmten Bloggern gesucht. Wird sich vielleicht aber noch mit der Zeit ergeben.

I: Ihr habt gesagt, dass ihr an dem „Freaky Fashion Festival“ teilgenommen habt. Waren da noch andere Messen oder Fashion Shows, die ihr hattet?

B1: Im Juli waren wir auf dem Modepreis, da ist auch eine Internetpräsenz von uns vorhanden. Und da haben wir mitgemacht. Das ist eine Modenschau von der Hochschule Hannover, weil wir auch im Frühjahr unseren Bachelor dort gemacht haben. Und da haben wir halt nochmal eine Kollektion von uns präsentieren dürfen.

B2: Und von unserer Freundin aus, von der wir gerade erzählt haben, die hatte auch eine Veranstaltung vom Luisenhof, das ist hier in Hannover. Sie hat dann auch nochmal Models für uns gesucht und die haben dann auch nochmal Kleidungsstücke von uns präsentieren dürfen.

B1: Und im Herbst wird es wahrscheinlich noch eine kleine Modenschau geben. Es gibt dann hier kleine Modenschauen, die organisiert werden in einem Second-Hand Laden, im Keller, wo man dann die Möglichkeit bekommt sich zu präsentieren. Also es gibt immer so kleine Events, an denen man Teil nehmen könnte.

I: Dann habe ich noch einige Fragen zu der Nachhaltigkeit. Wie steht ihr denn zur Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche? Und wie wichtig ist Nachhaltigkeit für euer Label?

B2: Okay. Also ich denke schon, dass es für uns sehr wichtig ist. Da wir auch langlebige Mode produzieren möchten, weil wir auch nicht so nach dem Trend gehen möchten. sondern Sachen produzieren, die quasi immer in Mode sind. Wir legen Wert darauf, dass wir Naturfasern verwenden. Nicht zu viel Polyester oder Plastik. Wir arbeiten zwar auch mit Leder, was manche etwas kritisch sehen, aber wir nehmen das aus dem Großhandel. Das sind dann immer so Restposten. Also wir recyceln sozusagen Lederreste, die sonst vielleicht in den Müll geschmissen werden würden.

B1: Genau. Und wir schauen anhand der Lederstücke, was man daraus fertigen kann. Einen Rucksack, oder ob daraus ein Gürtel oder Armband oder eine Kette gemacht werden können. Ansonsten mit dem Stoffeinkauf achten wir darauf, dass wir vorher wirklich genau die Schnittteile ausmessen und dann auch nur das nötigste kaufen. Also nicht, dass dann meterweise Stoff liegen bleibt, sondern dass man wirklich schaut, dass man nur das kauft was benötigt wird.

I: Wollt ihr diesen Nachhaltigkeitsgedanken auch weiterhin beibehalten?

B 1&2: Ja.

I: Schneidert ihr eure Entwürfe selber?

B 1: Ja.

I: Jetzt könnt ihr ein bisschen mehr zu meiner letzten Frage erzählen. Wo seht ihr euch mit eurem Label in 5 Jahren?

B1: Wir haben uns da mal ein paar Gedanken zusammengesponnen und wollen zurück nach London gehen, da wir da schon einmal für ein Praktikum waren. Dort würden wir gerne unser eigenes Atelier und Label aufbauen. In unserem Atelier wollen wir dann die Samplestücke entwerfen und diese dann an Shops oder Ateliers verkaufen, wo sie dann ausgestellt/verkauft werden. Dort können unsere Entwürfe dann auf Anfrage von uns gefertigt werden.

I: Super. Dann freu ich mich, dass ihr mir geholfen habt. Das waren auch schon alle Fragen, die ich stellen wollte. Danke, dass ihr mir mit dem Interview für meine Thesis weitergeholfen habt und ich wünsch euch für die Zukunft, dass euer Label ganz groß wird und ihr alles erreicht, was ihr erreichen wollt.

B 1&2: Danke!

C Interview Nr.2: Label "Second Skin Studio"

Interview with founder Laura (05.10.2016)

(Begrüßung und kurzes Gespräch)

I: Wann wurde das Label gegründet?

B: Ich stehe noch ganz am Anfang. Offiziell erst seit dem 1. September dieses Jahres. Davor habe ich natürlich versucht alles in die Wege zu leiten und schon alle Weichen daraufgestellt, auch meine ganzen Social Media Profile upgedated und immer was eingefüttert, aber das ich so richtig aktives Marketing betreibe, das kommt jetzt denke ich erst im nächsten Monat. Wahrscheinlich. Inoffiziell gegründet wurde das Label am Anfang des Jahres. Ich musste jetzt eine ganze Zeit lang warten, bis ich ein Investment bekommen habe, damit ich auch aus den Vollen schöpfen kann. Das, was ich fertige ist sehr hochwertig und da ohne Investitionen auszukommen ist teuer. Jetzt sind meine Voraussetzungen geschaffen, dass ich jetzt durchstarten kann. Das ist vielleicht die beste Formulierung.

I: Was war deine Inspiration und Motivation dafür diese Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Zu Beginn meines Studiums habe ich gleich gesagt, dass ich in die Selbstständigkeit möchte. Bei mir ist es so, ich arbeite super gerne und super gerne viel. Jetzt ist es im Designbereich so, dass ich gerne das produziere und designe was mir selbst gefällt. Also meine Ideologie, meine Vision von Ästhetik und Design. Da ist es natürlich sehr schwer, als junger Ex-Student, frischer Designer, in ein Unternehmen reinzukommen, das deiner Ideologie entspricht und dich dementsprechend auch entlohnt. Sowas findet man erstmal nicht, beziehungsweise, ich habe mich nicht danach umgeschaut, weil mir von Anfang an klar war, dass ich es alleine versuche. So bin ich mein eigener Herr. Ich traue mir auch zu alles was BWL und die Unternehmensführung betrifft in die Hand zu nehmen. Deswegen bin ich auch viel weniger Designer, als vielmehr Realist, würde ich sagen. Deswegen habe ich mich am Ende dazu entschlossen, anstatt für jemand anderen zu arbeiten, dessen Designvorgabe mir nicht gefällt, einfach meine Zeit in mich selber investiere. Das war so die Motivation zu sagen, ich mach mich selbstständig. Auch ist es sehr schwer, wenn man frisch aus der Uni kommt Wertschätzung von anderen Designern oder Labels zu bekommen. Ich hatte Praktika bei Iris van Herten in Amsterdam und habe dort gesehen was ich nicht möchte, bzw. unter welchen Bedingungen ich nicht arbeiten möchte. Dann hatte ich aber

ein absolut positives Beispiel, bei einem Künstler in San Francisco, bei dem ich als Junior-designer arbeiten durfte. So wie er das macht, so würde ich das auch gerne machen. Sein eigener Boss. Seine eigenen Designs. Und kucken, dass das Unternehmen langsam wächst, so dass man am Anfang überall die Hand noch selber drüber halten kann, bevor man sagt, es ist so groß, ich hole mir weitere Leute mit ins Boot. Viele Einflüsse, die mir so den Input gegeben haben zu sagen, ich mache es alleine.

(Zwischengespräch nicht relevant für das Interview)

I: Wo würdest du deine Marke positionieren? Niedriges, mittleres oder Premium/Luxus Preissegment?

B: Auf jeden Fall im Premium/Luxusbereich. Alleine auf Grund vom Preis-Leistungs-Verhältnis, das bei mir jetzt überdurchschnittlich gut ist. Für den Preis, für den ich meine Produkte verkaufe und was für Arbeit dahintersteckt, bin ich eigentlich im Vergleich zur Konkurrenz, sehr, sehr günstig. Jetzt ist es so, dass man als Jungdesigner nicht gleich auf den Markt kommt und sagt: schaut mal, das sind meine Preise. Man muss erst mal versuchen human einzusteigen, bis man ein bisschen Reputation bekommt und Aufmerksamkeit auf die Marke gelenkt hat. Aber auch jetzt schon sind die Preise, auch wenn sie in Zukunft andere sein werden, definitiv im Luxussegment angeordnet

I: Was ist deine Zielgruppe?

B: Ich versuche mit meiner Zielgruppe, einen kleinen gemeinsamen Kern zu finden. Ich will auf der einen Seite Fachpublikum, also wirklich Leute, die in Sachen Design, Architektur, gerade so in diesem Lifestyle-, oder Designbusiness tätig sind. Aber auf der anderen Seite auch Autormalverbraucher oder eher kommerzielle Kunden, die die Funktion, bzw. die Qualität der Produkte schätzen. Ich habe beispielsweise ein Laptop Case im Produktportfolio, das ausschließlich mit der Hand genäht wird. Jedes Produkt, dass aus der Lederlinie gekauft wird, hat seine eigene Nummer und kann zusätzlich mit den Initialen des Kunden geprägt werden. Die primäre Kaufentscheidung der Kunden aus der Lifestylebranche geht über das Design und die kommerziellen Kunden wählen und kaufen eher anhand der Funktion und Qualität. Deswegen sind meine Lederprodukte für die Altersklasse 24 bis 65. Für meine Menswear Sachen, meine zweite Linie, die unter Second Skin läuft, ist die Zielgruppe primär Männer, gleiche Altersgruppe, aber auch zum Teil Frauen. Das sind aber eher so die Ausreißer. Bei beiden sollte ein Bewusstsein für Qualität vorhanden sein. Das Produkt durch die Haptik und Qualität überzeugen. Das ist die Gemeinsamkeit beider Zielgruppen.

Oft werden meine Produkte auf Messen entdeckt. Und dann als Geschenke für die Freunde, deren Stil meiner Linie entspricht, angefragt. Aber gekauft wird grundsätzlich von Männlein, sowie Weiblein.

I: Was ist dein Marketingziel und was möchtest du mit deiner Marketingmessage aussagen?

B: Also mein Kunde soll über das Marketing natürlich das Gefühl bekommen, dass es sich bei dem Brand um etwas super Exklusives und Hochwertiges handelt und dass er sein Geld für Qualität ausgibt. Am liebsten würde ich meine Markenmessage über das Influencer Marketing vertreiben. Da bin ich gerade dabei, die passenden Influencer auszuwählen, weil ich einfach glaube das heutzutage viele Kaufentscheidungen darüber getroffen werden, was andere tragen und welchen Style man gut findet. Was trägt wer? Wo wird gekauft? Das ist so die Variante, die ich am liebsten hätte. Beim Aufbau von Website, Facebook-Profil, und Instagram-Profil, soll eine stringente Linie des Designs, sehr minimalistisch, durchgezogen werden und soll etwas Anderes ausstrahlen. Nichts, dass man überall finden kann. Das ist auf der einen Seite Exklusivität und Qualität, aber auch Innovation. Innovation ist ein ganz wichtiger Faktor bei meinen Produkten. Es soll immer was Neues kommen. Meine Menswear-Linie wird in Vinyl-Kleidersäcken verschickt, also das ist kein handelsüblicher Baumwoll-, oder Plastikkleidersack, sondern es soll immer etwas dabei sein, dass innovativ ist und was meinem Kunden am Ende das Gefühl gibt, er hat sein Geld an der richtigen Stelle ausgegeben. Dadurch, dass ich so klein bin, kann ich es mir auch leisten qualitativ gut einzukaufen. Ich muss nicht, wie jetzt, z.B. irgendein Großkonzern, wie Zara oder H&M, so sehr auf die Preise achten, dass sie so gedrückt werden, dass am Ende was Günstiges dabei rauskommt. Ich kann meine Produkte natürlich so wählen, dass sie qualitativ sehr gut sind, weil ich eine ganz andere Stückzahl hab, als H&M beispielsweise. Das möchte ich meinem Kunden am Ende auch so weitergeben. Das wichtigste ist mir, dass der Kunde aufgrund meiner Marketingaufmachung und den Influencern, die ich für mich auswähle, genau weiß, was für eine Idee und Qualität dahintersteckt. Da es vom Design her eher minimalistisch ist, würde man als erstes vielleicht erwarten, dass da auch nicht viel dran ist, oder das es nicht viel kostet, was aber der ganz gegenteilige Effekt ist. Je weniger, desto mehr, ist mein vorherrschender Gedanke. Dass man einfach weiß, da ist jetzt nicht besonders viel dran, aber das was dran ist, oder das woraus es gemacht wird, davon ist die Qualität super gut. Es soll alles miteinander verschmelzen, was das Thema Kreativität, Qualität und Innovation betrifft. Dass es immer auch was gibt, worauf mein Kunde gespannt sein kann. Ich gehe ja weg von dieser saisonalen Ware. Ich produziere ja ein neues Teil pro Monat und sage dann nicht Herbst, Winter, Frühjahr oder Sommer, sondern jeden Monat kommt ein neues Produkt und wenn jemand die Marke gut findet, dann wird er jeden Monat

gespannt sein, was da Neues kommt. Da ist der Weg über das Social Media Marketing natürlich am geschicktesten, da kann man seine Kunden immer auf dem Laufenden halten. Und das man da halt auch indirekt kaufen kann. Neuerdings kann man bei Facebook ja auf den Kaufen-Button drücken, oder dass man bei Instagram jetzt auch die Marken kontaktieren kann. Mein Wunsch wäre es, dass es bei meinem Endverbraucher so ankommt, wie ich es formuliert habe.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden im Endeffekt jetzt von dir genutzt?

B: Facebook, Instagram und Messen, wie Events, zum Beispiel. Da ist im Moment so eine Welle am Laufen, Pop-Up Now, Fashion Yard, dann gibt es Düsseldorf Finest, wo halt gerade lokale Brands gut gepusht werden und da natürlich auch viel Aufmerksamkeit bekommen, indem halt Flyer verteilt werden, oder wenn die Portale dann Werbung dafür machen. Und da muss ich ganz ehrlich sagen, da war ich auch sehr positiv überrascht. Da bin ich natürlich bei allen mit dabei, weil auch die Wirtschaftsförderung mich da unterstützt. Was ich aktiv steuere ist Facebook und Instagram und was dann auch beispielsweise im Oktober dazukommt, ist eine Anzeige, die ich bei der FC International, einer Fachzeitschrift, geschaltet habe. Jetzt muss ich abwarten wie sich das verhält. Ist wie gesagt das erste Mal, dass ich sowas mache. Aber auch nur, weil ich über Kontakte das reingerutscht bin und einfach mal schauen wollte, wie auch das Fachpublikum darauf reagiert. Danach werde ich ja sehen, ob sich das lohnt oder nicht. Und wenn es am Ende dann so positiv sein sollte, dann kann ich darüber nachdenken, dass ich diese Printmagazine, als weiteren Marketingkanal nutzen werde.

I: Versuchst du deine Marketingbotschaft auch konsequent in allen Marketingkanälen zu übermitteln? In welchem Ausmaß versuchst du diese miteinander zu verbinden?

B: Ich möchte ja nicht diesen Standard, denn jeder hat. Es ist keine Marke, die so gefällig ist. Es soll eine Marke sein, die man nicht gleich einfach so hinnimmt, sondern man soll schon darüber nachdenken. Und so möchte ich auch, dass das alles ineinandergreift. Also die Anzeige, die jetzt zum Beispiel für Sportswear rausgeht, ist ganz anders, als das was sonst immer in den Magazinen drin ist. Das ist eine Anzeige da ist das Produkt schwarz auf schwarz fotografiert und es steht einfach nur im Schriftzug die Webadresse darüber. Und genauso minimalistisch ist alles andere aufgebaut. Die Kommunikation erfolgt ja ausschließlich auf Englisch, also international. Mein Markt ist ja nicht nur Deutschland, weil der deutsche Kunde nicht so sehr extrovertiert, oder avantgardistisch ist. Aber grundsätzlich

greift alles ineinander. Jeder Instagram Post geht auch auf Facebook mit rein. So viel wie möglich wird verlinkt, von Leuten die es entweder tragen, oder die diversen Events bei denen ich bin werden jedes Mal angekündigt und die Kunden dazu aufgefordert vorbeizukommen. Und das gleiche auch bei Instagram. So ein Austausch halt einfach. Aber so grundsätzlich verläuft es alles eher miteinander, parallel, ineinander verschachtelt würde ich sagen. Der Content verändert sich bei den verschiedenen Kanälen aber nicht.

I: Und wie viel würdest du sagen gibst du von deinem Gesamtbudget für dein Marketing aus? In Prozent?

B: Im Moment ist es noch relativ schwierig zu sagen. Also ich würde mal sagen für das erste Jahr, von September, bis nächstes Jahr September, nicht mehr als 20%.

I: Wie verteilt sich das Budget auf die verschiedenen Medien? Gibst du mehr für traditionelle oder Internetkanäle aus?

B: Bei den traditionellen Medien ist es ja so, dass die ja relativ teuer sind.

I: Genau.

B: Deswegen ist der lukrativere Weg auf jeden Fall das Social Marketing, also der modernere Weg, weil es einfach viel, viel günstiger ist. Aber mein Marketing hört ja nicht nur da auf, indem ich irgendeinen Beitrag auf Facebook bewerbe. Was in der Tat auch sehr schwierig ist, weil man meistens nicht an die Leute rankommt, die man eigentlich erreichen will. Wenn man da eine bezahlte Reichweite hat, dann sind am Ende die Likes aus Indien und Mombasa, was man ja eigentlich nicht möchte, weil das qualitativ eher kontraproduktiv ist, ohne dass ich da jetzt irgendeine Wertung mit rein gebe, aber das ist halt nicht das Fachpublikum, dass ich eigentlich erreichen möchte. Das über Facebook auch sehr schwierig zu bekommen ist. Also zumindest wie ich es bisher erfahren habe. Im Moment sieht es prozentual natürlich so aus, dass mich die Anzeige mehr gekostet hat, als das Marketing das ich bis jetzt in Facebook betrieben habe, aber das wird sich irgendwann wieder ausgleichen und ich werde natürlich noch sehen wie viel von der Anzeige zurückkommt. Ich würde auf jeden Fall sagen, dass mehr in Sachen digitales Marketing reinfließt. Im Moment ist es noch anders verteilt, durch die Anzeige, aber ich würde im ersten Jahr sagen 80% für die modernen Medien und 20 % für die traditionellen Printmedien. Wenn jetzt natürlich noch das Influencer Marketing mit beikommt, dann würde ich das auch unter die Social-Media-Kanäle schieben und dann sprechen wir dann vielleicht von 90 zu 10. Weil die ganzen

Influencer lassen sich das mittlerweile auch ganz gut bezahlen, wenn sie die Sachen tragen und posten.

I: Wenn du jetzt über die Influencer sprichst, meinst du damit die Blogger, die deine Sachen tragen?

B: Ja genau.

I: Und da hast du vor mit welchen zu arbeiten?

B: Genau. Ich geh natürlich so vor, dass ich auf der einen Seite explizit Männer raussuche, weil bei mir das Bewusstsein vorherrscht, dass es eine Menswear-Marke ist, da ich Menswear anbiete und die Taschen, sowie das Lederwaren Sortiment, nicht sehr feminin wirkt, auf den ersten Blick. Es sind halt keine Schleifen oder Rüschen dran, was es dann typisch weiblich klassifizieren würde. Es ist eher maskulin. Deswegen liegt mein Hauptaugenmerk auf männlichen Bloggern, die erstens dem Stil entsprechen und natürlich auch eine gute Reichweite haben. Das ist so mein Auswahlkriterium. Und dann natürlich auch was sie dafür verlangen, das wird dann wahrscheinlich alles vertraglich geregelt, für welchen Post und wie lange. Aber auch Frauen würde ich da nicht ganz ausschließen, weil wie gesagt, die Lederware ist komplett Unisex, obwohl sie den maskulinen Touch hat. Und auch für das kommende Jahr, also für Dezember 2017, ist auch geplant, dass ich mit einer Womenswear-Linie einsteige, von daher wäre es ganz gut schon mal ein paar Frauen darauf aufmerksam zu machen. Ob Mann oder Frau, das muss natürlich passen. Reichweite allein reicht nicht, es muss in den Kontext der Marke passen. Ich muss meine Marke in dem Blogger wiedererkennen können. Reichweite ist nicht entscheidend, sondern Stilistik. So dass man es dem Träger am Ende auch abkauft. Und dass man es ihm auch so abkauft, dass nicht der Eindruck entsteht, dass er fürs tragen bezahlt wurde. Es muss passen, ansonsten mach ich mich und meine Marke damit unglaubwürdig.

I: Was würdest du sagen ist im Moment der aller wichtigste Marketingkanal für deine Marke?

B: Instagram.

I: Und warum Instagram?

B: Wenn ich an Facebook denke und sehe mit wem ich da vernetzt bin, dann sehe ich Leute

von früher aus der Schule. Und ich sehe, dass der Content der zurzeit auf Facebook vorherrscht, nicht der ist, den ich für mich beanspruchen würde. Bei mir geht es ja hauptsächlich über die Optik, also über das Design, das heißt über Bilder. Und wo ich die meisten Bilder reinstellen kann ist natürlich Instagram, Dort kann man auch gezielter suchen. Ich kann mein Hashtag eingeben „#minimalistischesdesign“ und bekomme viel in der Liste angezeigt. So funktioniert Facebook nicht. Ich kann da zwar auch nach Hashtags suchen, aber bekomme da von der Masse her Sachen, die nicht dazu passen. Dafür ist Instagram dann eher dieses Lifestyleportal, wo man auch sagt, da sind super viele Marken vertreten, die man auch direkt kontaktieren kann, die man auf Fotos verlinken kann, direkt mit einer Platzierung auf die Kleidungsstücke, auf die Tasche, auf die Schuhe. Das ist für mich eher so der Markt, indem ich sein will. Ich will nicht auf Facebook erscheinen zwischen Hochzeitsanzeigen und Hundevideos. Bei Instagram sieht man schon gleich anhand des Profils, um was für eine Stilistik es sich handelt, ob es passt. Da weiß man sofort in welchem Bereich man sich bewegt. Bei Facebook eher nicht so. Dort kommt zu viel zusammen und der Content ist nicht qualitativ auf hohem Niveau. Auf Instagram suche ich mir aus wem ich folgen möchte und was ich like. Dort kann ich meine Zielgruppe viel, viel besser treffen.

I: Wie oft postest du was auf Instagram.

B: In letzter Zeit war ich sehr verhalten, weil ich auf Budget gewartet habe. Aber so grundsätzlich poste ich zu Events. Die kündige ich auf jeden Fall immer an. Wie jetzt z.B. „Pop-Up Now“, oder „Düsseldorf's Finest“ und dann meistens Bilder von den Ausstellungen. Also das letzte war am 24. September. Und ich kucke auch, dass ich wirklich zu den Stoßzeiten poste, also für Fashion und Brands ist der Freitag ganz gut, Donnerstag ist auch nicht schlecht und meistens in den Zeiten wo nicht gearbeitet wird. Da versuch ich den Kunden ein wenig mit Content zu füttern. Aber ich muss ehrlich sagen, so exzessiv habe ich es derzeit noch nicht betrieben. Ich stelle nicht jeden Tag was auf Instagram, wäre aber auch nicht das Ziel, das ich verfolge. Sondern eher weniger und dafür ausgewählter, also Qualität, statt Quantität. Ich mach lieber einen schönen Eindruck mit platzierter Ware. In Zukunft kommen dann auch „Behind the Scenes“-Bilder, wo man dann sehen kann wie das Produkt gerade genäht wird. Ich würde sagen ich poste im Abstand von eineinhalb Wochen, kann aber auch mal eine größere Lücke dabei sein. Wenn es mit dem Influencer Marketing losgeht, dann ist auch viel mehr da, was man zeigen kann. Was dann auch ein größeres Publikum betrifft.

I: Abgesehen von den Influencern, arbeitest du mit anderen Designern, oder Künstlern zusammen?

B: Nein.

I: Wen würdest du als deine größte Konkurrenz ansehen? Andere Start-up Unternehmen, Die Massenmodemarken, oder Premium und Luxusmarken?

B: Schwer zu sagen. Ich würde sagen eine Mischung. Ich finde es schwer eine direkte Konkurrenz zu benennen. Ich muss natürlich kucken in welchem Preissegment ich mich befinde und dann bin ich eher bei den Größeren angesiedelt. Dann wären meine Konkurrenten natürlich ganz andere, wie wenn ich Start-ups sagen würde. Die verkaufen dann eine Hose für 60 Euro und ich liege halt bei dem Doppelten. Ich könnte jetzt auch niemanden ausmachen, wo ich sagen würde, dass die die gleiche Stilistik, mit dem gleichen Warenangebot haben. Es ist immer so, dass Einer Taschen, der Andere Menswear macht, aber in Kombination eher nicht. Von der Stilistik her würde ich eher zu größeren Marken und Labels tendieren. Da sind wir und von der Stilistik her sehr ähnlich. Aber es sind dann halt schon Global Player und ich bin ja wirklich noch ein ganz kleiner Hase, irgendwo lokal angesiedelt. Ich könnte es nicht so genau benennen. Ich glaube auf jeder Ebene gibt es Konkurrenz, aber wer hauptsächlich, eher die Großen, oder die Kleinen Konkurrenz sind, dass weiß ich nicht.

Ich glaube halt die Art und Weise wie ich arbeite, ich produziere ja quasi nur auf Anfrage und dann halt exklusiv für den Kunden, mit Prägung und Produktionsnummer. Sowas macht jetzt kein großes Unternehmen mehr, weil es einfach viel zu teuer ist, und weil man es nicht mehr anbieten kann. Dann würde ich mich in dem Segment eher bei den Kleineren ansiedeln. Von der Stilistik her habe ich das Gefühl bin ich bei den Großen angekommen, was heißt angekommen, aber das kenn ich halt 2-3 Labels die ungefähr die gleiche, bzw. ähnliche Stilistik haben, sie sind dann aber ziemlich groß. Arbeiten dann aber nicht mehr mit Prägung und es ist nicht mehr handgefertigt, deshalb würde ich mich irgendwo dazwischen ansiedeln.

I: Wie stehst du zu Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche und wie wichtig ist es für dich und dein Label?

B: Super Thema. Ich bin eigentlich jemand der sagt, es ist mir nicht so wichtig. Ausfolgendem Grund. Dieses Phänomen Innovation und die Materialien, die ich bevorzuge zu benutzen, um damit einen Wow-Effekt zu kreieren, oder beziehungsweise diesen Innovationscharakter zu verstärken, sind meistens Materialien, die jetzt nicht nachhaltig sind. So Sachen wie Plexiglas, Silikon, Vinyl, sind schwierig. Aber auf der anderen Seite, benutzte ich natürlich hochwertiges Leder, was hauptsächlich aus Europa kommt. Da ist es mir sehr

wichtig, dass ich da Qualität habe, weil ich möchte nicht, dass meine Kunden am Ende ein Produkt in er Hand halten, bei dem das Leder aus Pakistan kommt und mit tausenden Pestiziden bearbeitet wurde. Ich muss sagen es ist sehr zwiegespalten. Auf der einen Seite arbeite ich mit Materialien, die wahrscheinlich jenseits von ökologischen Standards stehen und nicht sehr nachhaltig sind, aber auf der anderen Seite gehe ich schon sehr nachhaltig mit meinen Ressourcen um. Also gerade was das Leder betrifft. Da jedes Produkt individuell für jeden Kunden gefertigt wird, habe ich keine Produkte, die auf Lager liegen. Ich kaufe keine Lederfelle in Massen ein, die im Endeffekt nicht verarbeitet werden. Hinter der Lederhaut steht immer noch ein Tier. Im Bereich Leder gehe ich nachhaltig um. Es wird nur das verwendet und produziert was tatsächlich benötigt wird. Auf der einen Seite Innovation, auf der anderen eine sinnvolle Nutzung des Leders. Bei mi geht vieles über die Materialität. Viele Stoffe bekomme ich da dann nicht in Bioqualität. Ich versuche den Aspekt im Auge zu behalten, wo ich es als sinnvoll erachte.

I: Und jetzt die letzte Frage: Wo siehst du dich mit deiner Marke in 5 Jahren?

B: Gute Frage. Ich würde auf jeden Fall gerne wachsen. Aber so wachsen, dass ich über allem noch die Hand habe und dass ich mir ungefähr in 4 Jahren eine kleine Produktion innerhalb Deutschlands aufbauen kann und in der Lage bin an viele Abnehmer, so wie Concept-Stores zu liefern und in einer guten Timeline. Es ist dann aber auch vielleicht so, dass wenn Leute bei mir anfragen, dass sie ein individuelles Produkt haben möchten, dass es bei mir dann vielleicht wie bei „Hermés“ eine kleine Warteliste gibt. Vielleicht nicht von 10 Jahren, sondern eher so 3 Wochen. Ich will niemals von Qualität, Exklusivität und der Hochwertigkeit wegkommen. Ich werde nicht irgendwann anfangen und einfach ins Blaue produzieren. Der exklusive Gedanke, der im Moment vorherrscht, soll immer weitergeführt werden. Aber zusätzlich soll mein Produktportfolio soweit aufgewertet werden, dass vielleicht jedes Jahr ein neuer Bereich dazu kommt. Womenswear, Wäsche, Schuhe, Schmuck, Sonnenbrillen, ja sogar vielleicht Möbel, oder alles was den Interiorbereich betrifft. Mein Wunsch wäre, dass alles zu einer richtig großen Lifestylemarke heranwächst, dass ich mich nicht nur beschränke auf Menswear und Lederware. Für mich ist es wichtig, dass ich überall noch selbst bestimmen kann. Ich will mich auch nicht mit jemand anderem zusammenschließen um größer zu werden, sondern möchte schon, dass meine Vision in diesem Brand drinsteckt. Und irgendwann mal vielleicht ein Showroom in Düsseldorf, oder wenn sich das ganze eher international entwickelt und man herausstellt, dass mein Markt ein ganz anderer als Deutschland ist, dann vielleicht auch in Antwerpen oder Amsterdam. Oder temporäre Concept-Stores. Am Anfang hatte ich auch meinen Traum von meinem großen Label mit allem Drum und Dran und dann bin ich an meine Vision hingegangen und

hab geschaut wo es am sinnvollsten wäre zu starten und habe Teile von meiner Vision weggenommen. Und da war es für mich ganz klar der Menswear Bereich, weil der Damen Bereich im Moment total überlaufen ist und in Menswear hatte ich die besseren Kontakte. Mit der Lederware habe ich gleichzeitig gestartet um auch den weiblichen Kunden eine Option zu geben, oder zumindest einen kleinen Übergang zu schaffen zudem was kommt. Und was kommen wird ist natürlich vor aller erst Womenswear, bevor ich weitere Segmente dazu nehme. Das war dann so die Vision, die dann kleiner wurde um einen Anfang zu finden, weil gleich mit allem was mit im Kopf umschwirrt zu starten ist unmöglich.

D Interview Nr.3: Label "Kluntje"

Interview with one of the founding partners, Julia Radewald (18.10.2016)

I: Hallo hier ist Irina.

B: Hallo.

I: Danke, dass du dir Zeit nimmst für mich.

B: Ja, kein Problem.

I: Okay, sollen wir loslegen?

B: Ja gerne.

I: Wann wurde euer Label gegründet?

B: Also, die Idee davon hatten wir schon in der Uni. Also als wir noch an die Uni gegangen sind. Und zwar 2015 im Frühjahr, hat sich die Idee des Labels entwickelt, aber offiziell gegründet haben wir uns im Dezember 2015.

I: Und was war eure Motivation und Inspiration, die euch dazu bewegt hat diese Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Wir kennen uns von der Uni, Lisa, Kathi und Ich. Im 7. Semester haben wir zusammen eine Gruppenarbeit gemacht. Formen- und Flächenkontraste war das vorgegebene Thema und da haben wir uns dazu überlegt Upcycling zu machen. Also Altkleider und Reststoffe zu verwerten, und diese dann sozusagen Patchwork mäßig zusammenzufügen. Und hatten dadurch einen roten Faden. Und haben dann zu dritt diese Kollektion gemacht. Das waren 9 Outfits insgesamt. Wir hatten verschiedene Unterthemen, aber letztendlich war Upcycling was alle 9 Outfits miteinander verbunden hat. Da haben wir erstmalig zu dritt zusammengearbeitet und haben gemerkt, dass das ganz gut klappt und das wir da mehr daraus machen wollen. Und dadurch ist dann auch die Idee entstanden von einem eigenen Modelabel.

I: Wo würdet ihr eure Marke positionieren? Niedriges, mittleres oder Premium/Luxussegment?

B: Mittleres Preissegment.

I: Was ist eure Zielgruppe?

B: Ich würde sagen ungefähr zwischen 20-40.

I: Wen seht ihr als euren größten Konkurrenten an? Andere Start-ups, Massen Modemarken oder Premium/Luxusmarken?

B: Also Massenmode gar nicht, weil wir uns davon abwenden. Es sind eher die lokalen Modelabels, die kleinen würde ich sagen, aber wir versuchen sie eher nicht als Konkurrent anzusehen. Wir sehen es vielmehr als Chance, dass man miteinander kommuniziert und im Gespräch ist und einander hilft. Im November machen wir zum Beispiel einen neuen Pop-Up Store auf mit verschiedenen kleinen Label, dort sind dann auch andere Modelabel dabei. Wir sagen halt, dass wir es alle schwer haben, und alle sozusagen im selben Boot sitzen, und wollen uns deshalb nicht gegenseitig kalt machen, sondern eher gemeinsam hochpushen. Wir wollen, dass Leute über die Mode nachdenken. Zum Beispiel bei der Frage: Was ziehen sie an? Nicht zu „H&M“ gehen, sondern lieber bei lokalen Modelabels kaufen. Da sind wir auch froh, wenn Kunden anfangen bei unseren Konkurrenten einzukaufen, es ist besser als bei „H&M“, oder sonst was.

I: Was ist euer Marketingziel? Was soll eure Konsumenten dazu bewegen eure Produkte zu kaufen?

B: Wir arbeiten ja mit Plattdeutschen Wörtern und lassen diese Plattdeutsche Tradition wiederaufleben. Dass ist unser USP (Unique Selling Proposition/Alleinstellungsmerkmal), sag ich mal. Dass wir eine Sprache nehmen, die fast vergessen ist. Die ältere Generation spricht sie noch, aber der Rest nicht mehr. Und darauf greifen wir zurück, also auf diese Wörter und spielen eben mit denen. So wie 'Löppt', 'Mei Leev' und machen das ein bisschen anschaulich und verbinden das mit Mode. Was auf den ersten Moment gar nicht passt, aber dann doch irgendwie cool ist. Nordisch eben.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden von euch genutzt?

B: Social Media ganz viel. Also Facebook und Instagram nutzten wir am meisten. Wir haben eine Website und ansonsten arbeiten wir mit der Presse. Von Bloggern haben wir jetzt ein

paar Anfragen und wir hatten auch schon ein Fernsehinterview, Im Radio waren wir auch schon. Und wir haben so Aufkleber mit dem Aufdruck 'Löppt' und die kleben wir überall hin. (Lacht)

I: Also ziemlich breit gefächert.

B: Ja genau. Aber das meiste geht über Social Media.

I: Versucht ihr eure Marketingbotschaft konsequent über alle Marketingkanäle zu übermitteln? Also dass ihr die verschiedenen Kanäle miteinander verbindet. So wie jetzt Radio, Fernsehen, Social Media.

B: Nein, nicht so richtig. Bei Facebook zum Beispiel posten wir auch viele andere Labels und viele Weekposts. Und bei Instagram posten wir auch viel, was wir auf Facebook posten, aber dort sind mehr Produkte von uns. Es geht mehr um die Marke. Bei Facebook geben wir eher auch News weiter.

I: Ihr benutzt also verschiedene Kanäle für verschiedene Sachen?

B: Ja schon ein bisschen. Es ist stilisiert. Es ist nicht das gleiche überall.

I: Wie viel Prozent von eurem Gesamtbudget wird für das Marketing ausgegeben?

B: Wenig. Bis lang noch wenig. Also wir arbeiten ab und zu mit Flyern. Aber bis lang ist es noch nicht viel. Es wird noch nicht fest kalkuliert. Wir nutzen einfach jede Mittel, die uns zustehen und geben bis lang noch nicht viel aus. Ich kann die Prozentzahl gar nicht genau sagen, ist aber auf jeden Fall noch nicht so viel.

I: Investiert ihr dann von dem Wenigen mehr in On-oder Offline Marketing?

B: Offline würde ich sagen. Also durch Flyer drucken.

I: Dadurch, dass es teurer ist als Social Media?

B: Ja genau, stimmt. Weil man bei Social Media einfach ohne Geld viel mehr machen kann. Was wir jetzt zum Beispiel machen: Wir bestellen Postkarten die an Blogger verlost werden. Das sind dann Kosten für die Produkte, die wir denen dann zur Verfügung stellen. Und dass

ist dann ja auch irgendwie wieder online. Das sind dann auch Ausgaben für Online. Ist aber bislang noch wenig, wird aber denke ich mehr. Wir werden in Online bestimmt noch mehr investieren.

I: Du sagtest gerade, dass ihr mit Bloggern zusammenarbeitet, oder plant ihr das erst? Oder habt ihr da schon jemanden?

B: Wir haben jetzt gerade eine Anfrage von einer Bloggerin, die über uns posten will. Wir haben schon ein paar Artikel die über uns geschrieben wurden. „mit Vergnügen Hamburg“ (ein Blog, der täglich interessante Dinge in Hamburg empfiehlt), zum Beispiel, ich weiß nicht, ob dir das irgendwas sagt?

I: (Lacht) Nein, leider nicht.

B: Ach ja, du bist ja auch gar nicht aus Hamburg. Die haben auch über uns gepostet, mit einem Foto von einem unserer Produkte. Es ist noch wenig, aber es wird noch mehr kommen.

I: Dann würdet ihr den Bloggern Sachen von euch schicken und die würden das dann auf ihrem Blog veröffentlichen?

B: Ja, aber das ist sehr individuell und es kommt darauf an wer anfragt. Wir schicken jetzt auf keinen Fall jedem Blogger einen Pullover von uns. Das machen wir nicht. Es ist eher spezifisch. Also je nach Anfrage. Wir kucken auch darauf, was das für Blogger sind, was die für Gründe haben, das posten zu wollen.

I: Welchen Marketingkanal ist denn der aller wichtigste für euch?

B: Schwierig, aber ich würde sagen Facebook oder Instagram. Snapchat nutzen wir jetzt auch. Nicht so fleißig, aber ab und zu sind wir bei Snapchat auch zu finden. Ich glaube im Moment am meisten Instagram. Aber die meisten Followers haben wir auf Facebook.

I: Wie oft teilt ihr eure Beiträge auf Instagram und Facebook?

B: Also bei Facebook, im Durchschnitt, 2-3 Mal die Woche. Also eher 2 Mal die Woche. Und Instagram so 4 Mal. Manchmal ist es mehr, manchmal weniger.

I: Nehmt ihr auch an Modeveranstaltungen teil? So wie Messen, oder Fashion Shows.

B: Bislang noch nicht. Es würde kommen. Bislang ist es so, dass Messestände sehr viel Geld kosten. Im nächsten Jahr gehen wir das erst mal an, dass wir die Messen besuchen und uns alles anschauen. Wir gehen auf die Fashion Week und die großen Modemessen und kucken uns alles an. Und schauen dann, wo es sich für uns am meisten lohnt. Es gibt ja auch nachhaltige Messen, zum Beispiel. Da müssen wir halt kucken, wo wir gut reinpassen. Bis jetzt haben wir einmal bei einer Stoffmesse teilgenommen und hatten letztes Jahr an der Fashion Week eine Ausstellung mit unseren Produkten, aber da hatten wir noch keinen Messestand. Das wird aber kommen. Da werden wir uns irgendwann nicht mehr verdrücken können.

I: Da du die Nachhaltigkeit gerade angesprochen hast, komme ich zu meinem nächsten Frageblock, und zwar wie steht ihr denn zu Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche?

B: Wir arbeiten ausschließlich mit Biostoffen, Altkleidern und Reststoffen und verwurschteln die. Auch wenn wir von den Biostoffen einen Verschnitt haben, patchen wir die wieder zusammen und machen daraus wieder Pullover. Für uns ist Nachhaltigkeit sehr wichtig. Es ist auch ein ausschlaggebender Punkt, warum wir unser Label gegründet haben. Es gibt Nachhaltigkeit in der Modeindustrie, aber wir finden die Fashion noch nicht so schön. Wir haben gesagt wir wollen ein cooles, fesches Modelabel gründen, was nachhaltig ist. Und uns ist halt wichtig, dass wir den Leuten zeigen, oder den Kunden zeigen, dass es auch Mode gibt, die nicht nur zu unnötigen Arbeitsbedingungen hergestellt wird, sondern Mode, die fair ist, die transparent ist. Wir wollen dem Kunden jeden Produktionsschritt näherbringen und sogar den Namen der Näherin nennen können. Und vor allem lokal. Wir produzieren ja alles noch in Hamburg. Uns ist es wichtig, dass eine Transparenz vorherrscht. Bei den großen Modeunternehmen, kannst du gar nicht mehr nachvollziehen, wie das Produkt hergestellt wird. Da ist es uns wichtig, dass wir einen transparenten Weg haben und dadurch auch das Handwerk dem Kunden ans Herz legen können. Das jedes Produkt mit der Hand genäht ist. Das ist nicht nur bei uns so, sondern auch bei „Zara“ und „H&M“ so nur, dass die Arbeitsbedingungen unterschiedlich sind.

I: Okay, danke. Dass waren auch schon alle meine Fragen. Dankeschön, dass du dir Zeit für mich genommen hast und euch und eurem Label ganz viel Erfolg für die Zukunft.

B: Danke. Kannst du uns deine Bachelorarbeit zuschicken, wenn sie fertig ist.

I: Wenn sie fertig ist, kann ich das gerne machen.

B: Ja das würde uns auf jeden Fall freuen und interessieren.

I: Dann mach ich das auf jeden Fall.

B: Cool. Vielen Dank. Viel Erfolg weiterhin.

I: Danke. Ciao.

B: Ciao.

E Interview Nr.4: Label "Jouur"

Interview with one of the founders, Pia Thole (20.10.2016)

B: Pia Thole. Hallo.

I: Guten Morgen, hier ist die Irina.

B: Hi.

I: Danke, dass du dir Zeit für mich nimmst.

B: Gerne, bist du wieder gesund?

I: Ja, auf dem Weg der Besserung. Und danke für das Verschieben des Termins.

B: Kein Problem. Von mir aus können wir gerne direkt starten.

I: Ja klar.

B: Ich möchte nur kurz fragen, hast du zwar bestimmt in der Email geschrieben, aber an welcher Uni du bist und für was genau das ist?

I: Ich bin an der Hochschule Heilbronn, studiere IBO und habe meinen Schwerpunkt im Studium auf das Marketing gelegt und habe letztes Jahr mein Pflichtpraktikum in einer Modefirma gemacht und deshalb interessiert mich auch die Modebranche sehr. Deswegen habe ich mein Thema auf die Mode bezogen und habe mit meinem Professor besprochen, dass ich Interviews mit jungen Unternehmen und Start-Ups führe und schaue, wie sie ihre Marketingstrategien aufbauen, um das Ganze an die Kunden zu bringen, und dass mit den großen Firmen, z.B. „Esprit“, „S. Oliver“, ein bisschen zu vergleichen. In wie fern die Strategien sich unterscheiden.

B: Und das Thema deiner Arbeit ist?

I: Integrated Marketing Strategies of Fashion Companies in Germany.

B: Ich habe meine Diplomarbeit damals, ist schon einige Jahre her, auch über den Handel

geschrieben, aber eher über den stationären Handel, und die Abwanderung zwischen stationär und Online, das war nämlich 2008, noch gar nicht so, wie es heute ist, dass jeder online einkauft. Ich habe mir das Zielgruppenspezifisch angekuckt, welche Zielgruppen, kaufen wo ein und vor allem auch in welchem Preissegment. Also so dreidimensional. War auch spannend. Wäre auch spannend das jetzt wieder zu machen, um zu vergleichen, was sich geändert hat.

I: Finde ich auch sehr interessant, ein bisschen so in die Richtung, wie sehr sich das verändert. Wie viel sich im Moment online abspielt.

B: Genau und vor allem auf die einzelnen Zielgruppen bezogen. Die habe ich von den Sinus-Zielgruppen abgeleitet und auf den Modebereich transferiert und dann auch an den verschiedenen Märkten gekuckt. Preismarkt, High-Fashion und der Mittlere Markt. Wie es da so ist. Ich habe vier Gruppen definiert, habe gekuckt, wie kaufen die vier Gruppen ein. Und hab dann noch eine umfangreiche Interviewkette gemacht, hatte auch nochmal verlängert. War ganz spannend damals.

I: Und bei mir habe ich auch noch die Frage nach der Nachhaltigkeit mit einbezogen, weil mir das auch wichtig ist und ich sehen wollte inwiefern es sich da verändert hat. Weil ich in den letzten Jahren festgestellt habe, dass sehr viele Firmen an dem Strang ziehen, dass sie immer grüner werden oder grüner erden wollen. Das sehr arg, damit geworben wird.

B: Ja ist auch spannend.

I: Dann leg ich mal mit meinen Fragen los. Wann wurde denn das Label „Jouur“ gegründet?

B: Gegründet wurde die GmbH im April 2015. Angefangen damit, haben wir deutlich früher. Fast anderthalb Jahre davor, weil wir beide ja noch Vollzeit arbeiten. Die Jessi Weiß, als auch ich.

I: Was war eure Inspiration und Motivation, die euch dazu bewegt hat, die Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Die Entstehungsgeschichte um nicht ganz so arg ausholen zu müssen ist so, dass ich ursprünglich aus der Mode komme und das auch immer gemacht habe dann so einen Exkurs gemacht und arbeite da auch immer noch parallel bei einem privaten Kölner Investor

und wollte eigentlich wieder zurück. Ich habe damals (?) gegründet, wollte wieder ein eigenes Label, aber mit anderen Schwerpunkten und habe mir überlegt, wen ich mir als strategischen Partner suchen könnte, weil sowas alleine aufzuziehen ist immer recht schwierig. Ich kannte Jessie schon über Bekannte, gemeinsamer Freundeskreis, und habe mir überlegt, dass sie eigentlich alles erfüllt was ich nicht mache. Quasi den kompletten Marketingbereich und auch die Möglichkeit, dass das Brand über ihre Seite...Und habe ihr vorgeschlagen, ob sie nicht mal darüber nachgedacht hatte, weil das gab es damals in anderen Ländern auch schon, also Chiara Ferragni, hat damals ihre eigene Kollektion angefangen und dann waren da auch ein paar skandinavische Bloggerinnen. Ich dachte mir, dass es in Deutschland noch keine gibt, die das machen. Jessie war eigentlich immer die Erste, die was neues gemacht hat, in dem Bereich Blog und Fashion-Blog. Dann habe ich sie damals getroffen und habe sie gefragt, wie es aussieht, worauf sie meinte, dass sie diese Idee auch schon hatte und nur noch jemanden bräuchte der sich mit der Produktion und dem Produktmanagement auskennt, sowie Design, weil das nicht ihr Fachgebiet ist und sie nicht aus diesem Bereich kommt. Und so kam das und daraus hat sich dann „Jouur“ entwickelt. Eigentlich hatten wir beide die gleiche Idee, ich habe sie dann angesprochen und sie meinte, perfekt, genau so jemanden wie dich suche ich und dann haben wir angefangen daran zu arbeiten.

I: Wo würdet ihr die Marke positionieren?

B: „Jouur“ ist Contemporary. Und Contemporary liegt so zwischen Mittlerem und Premium/Luxus. Also eher so die Basics im Mittel- Premium.

I: Wer ist eure Zielgruppe?

B: Zielgruppe ist so 25 plus. Das machen auch die Preise, es gibt natürlich immer Leute, die deutlich jünger sind und das kaufen. Ich würde sagen, unsere Kernzielgruppe, wenn man das auswertet, bei uns auf den Shops, das ist ja ganz gut bei Online, da sieht man ja genau wer kauft, ist die so um die 30. Und dann aber zwischen 25 und 45.

I: Wen seht ihr als eure größte Konkurrenz? Andere Start-ups, Massen-Modemarken, oder das Premium/Luxus-Marken-Segment?

B: Konkurrenz ist bei uns wahrscheinlich das falsche Wort, weil wir ein ganz eigenes Konzept haben, dadurch das unsere Marke so stark an Jessie gebunden ist, Jessie's Präsenz

und auch Jessie's Leserinnen. Würde ich fast sagen, dass wir in dem Sinne keine Konkurrenz haben. Konkurrenz sind wenn, eher die Vertikalen, wie „and other stories“, die hochpreisigen Vertikalen, und auch andere Contemporary Marken, Maje, Sandro. Bei Brands ist Konkurrenz ja immer relativ, weil die Leute kaufen ja den Markennamen. Die kaufen ja nicht nur das Produkt. Also im besten Fall: perfekter Schnitt, perfekte Qualität und halt ein Brand, das einem gefällt. Und deswegen würde ich sagen, unsere Konkurrenz existiert so direkt nicht. Das heißt nicht, dass jeder bei uns kauft, aber die Kunden, die bei uns kaufen, würden das Teil(Produkt) jetzt nicht eins zu eins woanders kaufen.

I: Was ist das Marketingziel? Was soll eure Konsumenten dazu bewegen, euer Produkt zu kaufen?

B: Qualität, Preis und Nachhaltigkeit. Nachhaltigkeit in dem Sinne, dass wir Basics machen. Also Contemporary Basics. Sprich Teile, die eigentlich immer gehen, die man immer im Kleiderschrank haben wollte, die jetzt nicht zwei Wochen in sind, dann kommt wieder was Neues, die nicht schnell kaputtgehen. Sondern hochwertige Basics zu fairen Preisen.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden von euch genutzt?

B: Mode- und Fachzeitschriften ja, aber wenig. Eher wenn welche auf uns zukommen, also nicht aktiv. E-Mail Newsletter ganz regelmäßig und Social Media. Wahrscheinlich perfekt die Frage über Start-ups, die passt dann in deine Auswertung.

I: Ja ich habe mir das auch noch einmal angekuckt mit „Jouur“ und „Journelle“, vor dem Interview und ich fand das sehr interessant, weil ihr sehr online präsent seid dadurch, dass es halt durch den Blog begonnen hat.

B: Genau wir sind eine reine Online-Brand.

I: Deswegen habt ihr eure Fühler auch in vielen verschiedenen Bereichen, ich habe Interviews gesehen, auch auf YouTube.

B: Ja genau, aber online halt.

I: Versucht ihr die Marketingbotschaft auch konsequent über alle Kanäle zu vermitteln, dass ihr das miteinander verbindet?

B: Jein. Unsere Marketingkanäle sind ja nur Online und da hast du automatisch eine Verbindung. Wir haben natürlich festgelegte Hashtags, die wir auf allen Kanälen nutzen. Das schon. Ich würde es mal mit Ja beantworten.

I: Und wie viel Prozent vom Gesamtbudget gehen an das Marketing?

B: Zwei Prozent bei uns. Jetzt kommt ja die nächste Frage, wie verteilen wir das Marketingbudget auf die verschiedenen Kanäle, also wir machen ja 100 % online und eigentlich haben wir kein Marketingbudget in dem Sinne. Wir machen selten mal Events, darüber geben wir ein bisschen was aus. Und machen auch zur Frage 11(), 100% online Marketing. Alles was darüber hinausgeht, wir waren schon mal in der „Jolie“, wir waren in der „In Style“, wir waren mal in der „Gala“, das nehmen wir mit, aber das ist nichts wo wir uns aktiv darum kümmern. Zumindest aktuell noch nicht. Wir sind im Moment noch 100% online und zur Frage 12, der wichtigste Marketingkanal ist für uns „Journelle“ (Blog von Jessie Weiß). Weil „Journelle“ hat um die 500.000 Leser jeden Monat, das ist genau unsere Zielgruppe. Also unser Label ist auf die Zielgruppe von „Journelle“ abgestimmt. Das heißt wir machen auch nur Jessie's Lieblingsteile, sprich sie zieht sie an, promotet die dann, dann wird das natürlich rebloggt, von anderen Bloggern, geteilt und wir arbeiten auch viel mit anderen Bloggern zusammen. Bekannten deutschen, Österreichischen, Schweizer Bloggern.

I: Auf wie vielen Sozialen Netzwerken seid ihr aktiv?

B: Wir machen eigentlich alles außer Snapchat.

I: Habt ihr vor mit Snapchat anzufangen?

B: Ich glaub da reicht Jessie's Kanal, aktuell. Das muss man ja auch füllen. Snapchat lebt ja eigentlich davon, dass er wirklich ständig ist und diesen Alltag haben wir einfach nicht, weil wir den Großteil ja outgesourced haben. Wir haben ja jetzt nicht so den „Jouur“- Alltag. Wir machen das vielleicht irgendwann mal. Da muss man jemanden haben, der das richtig pflegt. Da haben wir beide nicht die Kapazitäten dafür.

I: Ist Instagram oder Facebook wichtiger für „Jouur“?

B: Ganz klar, Instagram.

I: Wie oft teilt ihr die Beiträge?

B: Das ist bei uns so eine ganz gute Frage. Am liebsten täglich. Schaffen wir aber nicht immer. Also eigentlich sollte man täglich aktiv sein. Und zwar nicht nur aktiv indem man Beiträge teilt oder veröffentlicht. Sondern auch aktiv, indem man andere Sachen kommentiert, auf Kommentare eingeht usw. Man muss sich schon täglich um diese Netzwerke kümmern und auch nicht zu wenig. Das kommt bei uns im Moment noch ein bisschen kurz. Wir haben jetzt neue Leute eingestellt, die sich nur noch darum kümmern.

I: Nehmt ihr an Modeveranstaltungen Teil? So wie Messen?

B: Gar nicht. Überhaupt nicht. Weil wir ein Hauptkonzept haben. Im klassischen Handel, machst du das ja so: du hast zwei Mal im Jahr die Messe, stellst deine neue Kollektion vor. So war das früher immer, dass verändert sich ja gerade auch im Modehandel sehr. Du hast zwei Mal deine Kollektion vorgestellt, dann wurde die Vororder gemacht für das nächste Jahr. Also im Januar wurde für August/ September, eher Oktober bestellt. Davon haben wir uns ja völlig verabschiedet. Bei uns sind unsere Kollektionen durchlaufend. Wir bringen immer einzelne neue Teile in den Shop und reordern aber auch die bestehenden Teile. Also wenn etwas gar nicht läuft, würden wir es rausnehmen, das hatten wir bisher noch nicht, ansonsten bestellen wir nach und packen neue Teile dazu. Monatlich. Das heißt, wir sind völlig unabhängig von den Messen und da wir ja auch kein Einkauf brauchen, also die Kunden, die ja auf Messen kommen, sind ja wieder Verkäufer, mit denen arbeiten wir aktuell noch gar nicht zusammen. Wir verkaufen ja nur in unserem eigenen Shop, online direkt, das heißt wir brauchen deren Interessen nicht, weil das ist ja nicht der Endkunde, der nachher unsere Ware kauft.

I: Ich habe euch ja aber auch über das „Pop-up Now Festival“ gefunden?

B: Das ist eine Endkunden Messe, da haben wir mitgemacht. Das stimmt. Das war eine einmalige Sache, als Gefallen an die Organisatorin, die eine Bekannte von mir ist. Sie hat mich jetzt drei Mal gefragt. Haben wir jetzt einmal gemacht. Wird auch wahrscheinlich da-beibleiben. Wir machen eher unsere eigenen Events, da sind wir erfolgreicher. Da kommen auch direkt unsere Kunden, die tatsächlich auch Interesse an dem Brand haben.

I: Arbeitet ihr mit anderen Designern, oder Künstlern zusammen, um mehr Aufmerksamkeit für das Label zu schaffen?

B: Aktuell noch nicht, nein.

I: Dann komm ich auch schon zur Nachhaltigkeit. Wie steht ihr denn zur Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche und wie wichtig ist Nachhaltigkeit für euer Label?

B: Ganz wichtig. Also grundsätzlich ganz wichtiges Thema. Wie in allen Bereichen, nicht nur in der Mode, müssen wir grundsätzlich nachhaltiger werden. Unsere verschmutzende Gesellschaft ist eine Gefahr für uns alle, vor allem für unseren Nachwuchs. In der Modebranche, ich komme aus der Produktion, ist dieses Nachhaltigkeitsthema ein echt umfangreich interessantes Thema, weil nicht alle Labels, die sich Nachhaltigkeit auf die Fahne schreiben, sind wirklich nachhaltig. Vor allen Dingen, dass zu transportieren, dass der Endkunde, das auch wirklich versteht, weil es geht nicht darum, in welchem Produktionsort wurde dein Teil gemacht, sondern wo kommt dein Stoff her und wo kommt z.B. die Baumwolle für dein Teil her? Wo wurde die angebaut? Wenn man das in der kompletten Wertschöpfungskette verfolgt, sind das Preise, die kann sich in Deutschland niemand mehr leisten. Das geht gar nicht. Das heißt, was wir machen, wir setzen auf Nachhaltigkeit im Sinne, dass wir nur nachhaltige Rohstoffe verwenden. Wir versuchen auf Stoffe wie Polyester komplett zu verzichten. Wir machen keine schnellen Trends mit. Wir verkaufen Basics, die auch länger halten sollen. Wir sind gegen diesen Fast-Fashion Trend. Dass man zu „Primark“ rennt, sich 30 neue Teile kauft, zwei Wochen trägt, in den Müll wirft und sich wieder neues kauft. Das ist eigentlich unser größtes Problem. Je nachhaltiger und ökologischer, desto besser. Auch recycelte Ware ist ein interessantes Thema. Für uns jetzt aktuell noch nicht. Grundsätzlich aber sehr spannend.

I: Das war's dann auch schon mit meinen Fragen. Ich danke dir vielmals.

B: Wenn du noch irgendwas brauchst, Infos über die Firma, dann kannst du mir nochmal schreiben, so für den Hintergrund, oder als Erklärung.

I: Mach ich. Ich habe ja auch ein bisschen recherchiert über „Jouur“ und „Journelle“. Wenn ich eure Firma mit in meine Bachelorarbeit mit einarbeite, werde ich bestimmt auch einige Quellen von dort rausziehen. Auf der Website steht ja auch ein bisschen erklärt um was es geht.

B: Das einzige was wichtig ist, dass „Journelle“ eine eigenständige Firma ist. Und „Jouur“ auch. Also „Jouur“ ist eine GmbH & Co.KG, die Jessica Weiß und mir gehört und „Journelle“ ist komplett unabhängig davon. Also ich habe theoretisch nichts mit „Journelle“ zu tun. Natürlich, weil es für meine Firma, der Hauptmarketingplatz ist, aber ansonsten ist „Journelle“

ein komplett unabhängiges Unternehmen. Auch finanziell. Die hängen finanziell nicht zusammen, das ist für dich für den Hintergrund vielleicht auch wichtig.

I: Ist auch wichtig. Dankeschön, aber für mich ist ja das Label eigentlich das wichtigste und „Journelle“ werde ich als Marketingkanal erwähnen.

B: Genau du kannst ja sagen, dass es ein interner Marketingkanal, das kann man ja theoretisch erklären, mit Jessi als Inhaberin von Beidem, und im Ende ist es ja in anderen Maßstäben vergleichbar mit einer Chiara Ferragni aus Italien, bzw. LA oder andere skandinavische Blogger, die ähnliche Konzepte haben. In Deutschland gibt es das so noch nicht. Es gibt viele Kooperationen von Bloggern mit Labels, oder da macht jemand eine Kollektion für „Edited“. Aber an sich das ein Blogger eine eigene Marke hat, die promotet wird, sind wir bisher in Deutschland, glaub ich, die einzigen.

(Verabschiedungen)

F Interview Nr.5: Label "Armed Angels"

Interview with the PR-manager, Katia Winter (20.10.2016)

B: „Armed Angels“. Katia Winter. Hallo.

I: Hallo. Hier ist die Irina Kostin.

B: Hallo. Katia.

I: Hi.

B: Dann legen wir los.

I: Ja genau. Wann wurde denn das Label gegründet?

B: 2007 in Köln.

I: Was war die Inspiration und Motivation dahinter die Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Es waren zwei Kölner Jungs. Ich kann dir gleich nochmal im Nachgang, einen Flyer schicken, da stehen auch nochmal ein paar Sache drin. Sie haben sich halt in der Uni kennengelernt und wollten aber auch unbedingt zusammen was anpacken. Und hatten super viele Ideen und wollten gerne was Eigenes gründen. Und sind dann auf T-Shirts gekommen. Wie es anfang war eigentlich so, dass sie eigentlich T-Shirts einkaufen wollten, die dann bedrucken wollten und für einen guten Zweck spenden wollten. Die Erlöse dann. Und dann haben sie angefangen sich in die Modeindustrie, die Modebranche einzuarbeiten und haben gemerkt, dass es gar nicht so cool ist, wie sie dachten. Also es ist gar nicht so einfach an faire, nachhaltige T-Shirts dranzukommen. Weil das war ihnen wichtig. Und so fing es eigentlich an, dass sie gesagt haben, sie machen das jetzt selber. Sie gründen selber ein Label, ein Modelabel und suchen eigene Produzenten. Und so ging es eigentlich los. Reicht dir das?

I: Ja.

B: Also nochmal drei Punkte die wichtig waren. Es war ihnen wichtig wirklich ein Produkt zu haben, also nicht irgendwie eine Dienstleistung, oder irgendwas Digitales. Dann wollten

sie auch, dass es ihnen Spaß macht. Das war wichtig. Und der dritte Punkt, der Wichtigste, war, dass sie was machen wollten, was einen gesellschaftlichen Mehrwert hat. Dass man mit einem Business praktisch gesellschaftlich was verändern kann. Und das bietet „Armed Angels“ ja jetzt.

I: Und wo würden Sie die Marke positionieren? Im niedrigen Preissegment, dem Mittleren, oder im Premium/Luxussegment?

B: Im Mittleren. Mit „H&M“ und „Primark“ können wir nicht konkurrieren. Wollen wir aber auch gar nicht. Aber wir sind jetzt auch nicht „Louis Vuitton“, oder sowas. Aber wir sind durchaus konkurrenzfähig mit Labels, wie jetzt z.B. „Diesel“, oder sowas. Also jetzt eine Jeans, eine GOTS-zertifizierte Bio-Jeanshose kostet bei uns 100 Euro. Ein Basic T-Shirt liegt bei 20 Euro. Günstig ist es nicht, aber hat seine Qualität und faire Produktion hat halt seinen Preis. Wir können aber durchaus mit anderen Mittelklassemarken konkurrieren.

I: Also würden Sie sagen, dass Sie sich schon mit „Esprit“ und „S.Oliver“ in Verbindung sehen?

B: Ja, vielleicht ein bisschen hochpreisiger. Vielleicht ein bisschen mehr. Aber ich weiß jetzt ehrlich gesagt auch nicht was eine Jeans bei „Esprit“ kostet. Aber ich könnte mir schon vorstellen, dass die da auch bei 100 Euro liegen.

I: Was ist Ihre Zielgruppe?

B: Also wir schließen da eigentlich keinen aus. Also jeder der sich für nachhaltige Mode interessiert. Uns ist es aber auch wichtig deutlich zu machen. Wir wollen halt nicht in der Müsli-Nische bleiben, lieb gemeint. Wir wollen halt raus und die Massen erreichen, das ist uns auch wichtig. Wir wollen auch in den Mainstream. Das sagen wir auch ganz bewusst. Wir schließen da aber auch keinen aus. Trotzdem sind das dann eher Leute, wenn man das materialistisch betrachtet, nicht auf 'Geiz ist geil' achten, sondern schon Leute, denen Qualität wichtig ist. Die sich auch in einer gewissen Art und Weise schon mal mit dem Thema Nachhaltigkeit, ob es jetzt ein Lebensmittel oder Textil ist, beschäftigen. Die vielleicht schon ein bisschen weiterdenken, einen bisschen höheren Bildungsstand haben.

I: Was ist das Marketingziel? Was soll die Konsumenten dazu bewegen das Produkt zu kaufen?

B: Ganz klar. Wir sagen das faire und nachhaltige Mode nicht gleich Jutebeutel und gebatikte Haremshosen sein müssen, weil das in den Augen und Köpfen Vieler noch so verankert ist. Und das ist unser größtes Ziel, den Leuten da draußen zu zeigen, dass faire Mode cool aussehen kann und das es da keinen Widerspruch gibt. In schön und modern und fair und nachhaltig. Also wir wollen halt wirklich raus und die Leute für diese Thema sensibilisieren, aber gleichzeitig ein Produkt haben, was für sich steht, was für sich spricht und einfach toll ist. Qualitativ aber auch gut aussieht.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden von Ihnen genutzt?

B: Wir haben Social Media. Wir benutzen eigentlich noch recht wenige. Wir haben unsere eigenen Social Kanäle, dann natürlich unsere Homepage. Wir schalten aber auch Re-Targeting Kampagnen, also so Banner. Wir haben den Newsletter, den wir einmal die Woche verschicken. In ganz kleinem Stil machen wir auch Anzeigen, aber das ist noch so klein, da kann man eigentlich noch nicht so davon sprechen, dass es jetzt so ein großes Marketing-tool ist. Aber die größten Marketing-Tools, sind eigentlich unsere eigenen Social Kanäle. Facebook, Instagram.

I: Versuchen Sie Ihre Marketingbotschaft konsequent in allen Marketingkanälen zu übermitteln? Also verschiedene miteinander zu verbinden?

B: Ja, aber nur die Sinn machen. Also für uns machen manche Sachen einfach keinen Sinn. Beziehungsweise sagen wir ganz Bewusst, dass wir jetzt nicht überall stattfinden müssen, einfach nur um statt zu finden. Wir sind ein nachhaltiges Label und das ziehen wir nicht nur in unseren Produkten durch, sondern auch in unserer Kommunikation. Es muss halt immer Sinn machen. Und deswegen ist so was wie Soziale Medien, Emails und klar PR, das ist auch ein wichtiges Tool, das habe ich gerade vergessen zu sagen. Das ist das was ich mache, deshalb habe ich das vergessen. Das sind auch schon Sachen, mit denen haben wir damals auch schon angefangen vor 10 Jahren. Aber so Geschichten, wie Fernsehwerbung, oder so, da sind wir noch nicht. Also dafür sehen wir keinen Bedarf, oder dafür haben wir noch nicht die Größe. Macht auch keinen Sinn. Im Moment noch nicht.

I: Wie viel Prozent von Ihrem Gesamtbudget wird für das Marketing ausgegeben?

B: Das kann ich dir nicht sagen. Also das weiß ich ehrlich gesagt auch nicht, weil das fängt erst jetzt so alles ein bisschen an. Ich habe da keine Infos.

I: Investieren Sie dann mehr in On- oder Offline Marketing?

B: Bisher in Online.

I: Und welcher ist der wichtigste Marketingkanal für „Armed Angels“?

B: Das kann man so pauschal nicht beantworten. Es kommt ein bisschen darauf an mit was für einem Ziel du das betrachtest. Wenn du auf den Umsatz gehst, dann ist es zum Teil, kann ich aber auch nicht hundertprozentig bestätigen, aber ich weiß, dass es zum Beispiel die Newsletter sind, oder halt auch Marketingkampagnen, so Re-Targeting Sachen. Aber wenn du aufs Brand gehst, um die Marke bekannter zu machen und Brandawareness zu machen ist es auf jeden Fall sowas wie Facebook und Instagram, PR, Blogger. Solche Geschichten. Aber da kann man sich nicht auf einen festlegen, es kommt immer darauf an, was das Ziel ist.

I: Auf wie vielen Sozialen Netzwerken sind Sie aktiv?

B: Wir sind aktiv auf Facebook und Instagram, Pinterest soll jetzt wieder dazu kommen.

I: Und wie oft werden Beiträge auf den Netzwerken geteilt?

B: Also wie oft wir posten?

I: Genau.

B: Zwei bis drei Mal die Woche. Auf Instagram ein bisschen mehr. Kommt immer ein bisschen darauf an in was für einer Stimmung unser Content Manager ist. Aber ja so zwei bis drei Mal.

I: Arbeiten Sie mit Bloggern zusammen?

B: Ja.

I: Das sie praktisch Ihre Produkte an die Blogger weitergeben und sie diese dann auf dem Blog veröffentlichen und darüber reden und ihnen helfen.

B: Ganz genau. Das ist immer ein bisschen individuell. Wir suchen die halt. Entweder die

kommen auf uns zu und dann kucken wir sie uns genau an. Das wichtigste ist halt, dass sie zur Marke passen. Was wir halt nicht machen, dass wir an 80.000 Leute irgendwelche Produkte rausschicken und dann mal hoffen, dass was Gutes dabei rumkommt. Wir machen das sehr gezielt und kucken uns die Leute wirklich ausführlich an. Das ist uns auch wichtig, dass die Leute, nicht so eine Test Fee 1,2,3 ist, die gestern Mülleimer postet, heute ein „Primark“-T-Shirt und morgen dann einen „Armed Angels“ Cardigan. Das wollen wir vermeiden. Da ist uns die Qualität der Blogger auch wichtig. Dass sie auch die Botschaft ein bisschen verstehen, die wir wollen. Wir zielen jetzt aber auch nicht nur ausschließlich auf Fair Fashion Blogger, also auf grüne Blogger. Sondern wir sagen, dass wir mit der Botschaft auch die Massen erreichen wollen, dass wir da so einen gesunden Mix haben. Dass wir grüne Blogger haben, weil die uns total wichtig sind und da kommen wir ja auch her, aber trotzdem, dass wir auch mit Lifestyle Bloggern kooperieren, die auch eine größere Reichweite haben. Und das sind dann individuelle Kooperationen.

I: Haben Sie auch eigene Geschäfte, oder vertreiben Sie nur online?

B: Wir vertreiben online und offline. Mittlerweile gibt es uns an über 800 Point-of-Sales, also Verkaufsorten, aber eigene Läden haben wir nicht. Also das bedeutet, dass es uns hier in Köln bei „Queen Guerilla“, oder „Fairfitters“, oder bei „P&C“, „Breuninger“ gibt. Mittlerweile an 800 POS in 18 Ländern.

I: Nehmen sie regelmäßig an Modeveranstaltungen Teil, wie Messen und Fashion Shows?

B: Ja. Messen. Bei der Premium sind wir, in Berlin. Zwei Mal im Jahr zur Fashion Week. Modefabrik in Amsterdam und ich glaube auch noch irgendeine Fachmesse.

I: Arbeiten Sie mit anderen Designern oder Künstlern zusammen, um mehr Aufmerksamkeit für Ihr Label zu schaffen?

B: Haben wir in der Vergangenheit gemacht und wird auch bestimmt wiederkommen.

I: Und jetzt noch meine Nachhaltigkeitsfrage, das ist ja ganz groß für sie. Wie stehen sie zu Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche und wie wichtig ist das für Ihr Label?

B: Das ist unser höchstes Gut. Das ist das aller, aller wichtigste für uns natürlich. Natürlich immer in Kombination mit einem guten Produkt. Also muss man auch ganz ehrlich sagen, keiner will ein hässliches T-Shirt kaufen, egal wie nachhaltig es ist. Deswegen muss das

Produkt überzeugen und muss toll sein. Aber für uns ist die Nachhaltigkeit das aller wichtigste. So glauben wir auch, dass eine Veränderung stattfinden muss in der Textilindustrie. Dass es einfach noch viel zu wenig ist und deswegen wollen wir die Botschaft mit so vielen Menschen wie möglich verbreiten. Das es am Ende zum Standard wird. Faire Mode. Das man nicht mehr an uns vorbeikommt. Wir sehen auch auf jeden Fall, dass ein Trend in diese Richtung geht. Nicht nur an unseren Zahlen, die pro Jahr immer steigen, sondern man sieht, dass die Textilverkäufe in Deutschland, der Fair Trade zertifizierter Produkte, steigen. Dass die Fabriken die GOTS zertifiziert sind mehr werden, aber es ist halt immer noch zu wenig. Ich glaube wir sind da auf jeden Fall auf einem guten Weg und es gibt ja auch schon Nachzügler.

I: Gut das waren auch schon alle meine Fragen.

(Verabschiedungen)

G Interview Nr.6: Label "The Sept"

Interview with founder, Christina Barho (25.10.2016)

B: Die Christina. Hallo.

I: Hallo hier ist die Irina. (weitere Begrüßungen und Nettigkeiten)
Wollen wir dann direkt loslegen?

B: Gerne.

I: Wann wurde denn „The Sept“ gegründet?

B: Gelauncht wurde es September 2015. Also letztes Jahr.

I: Was war die Inspiration und Motivation, die euch dazu bewegt hat, die Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Der Ursprung lag darin, dass ich immer ein Modelabel finden wollte, dass zu meiner Anlaufstelle wird. Am Anfang geht man immer zu „Forever 21“ und die ganzen Läden und grast alles ab. Ab Mitte zwanzig geht es dann los, dann hast du nur noch „COS“ und dann hast du noch ein anderes Label, dass du richtig cool findest und „Zara“ und darum dreht es sich dann am Ende. Und ich wollte halt auch ein Label, was kein Mainstream Label ist, sondern ein Start-Up, oder was Kleineres. Was aber trotzdem einen Kleiderschrank kreiert, in den du immer mal wieder reinschauen kannst und ein Basic oder Essential findest, dass du richtig gerne hast und was auch in deinem Kleiderschrank bleibt. Das ist der Grobgedanke. Eigentlich habe ich mir so ein Label gewünscht, dass es so schon gibt. Also wenn man es einfach formuliert.

I: Wo würdest du die Marke positionieren? Im niedrigen Preissegment, im Mittleren, oder im Premium/Luxus-Segment?

B: Im Mittleren.

I: Wer ist die Zielgruppe?

B: Also ich würde sagen Frauen um die 25. Also nicht mehr im Teen-Alter oder Jüngere,

sondern 25 bis 40/45. Ist so mein Hauptbereich, weil ab 40 sind die meisten nicht mehr so Social Media unterwegs und unser Business ist ja schon sehr online-lastig. Darum würde ich so sagen 25 bis 40.

I: Und wen seht ihr als eure größte Konkurrenz? Andere Start-Ups, die Massen Modemarken oder die Premium/Luxus- Modemarken?

B: Also ich würde auf jeden Fall sagen andere Start-Ups. Luxusmarken nicht wirklich. Start-Ups mit qualitativ hochwertigen Labels.

I: Was ist das Marketingziel? Was soll die Konsumenten dazu bewegen die Produkte zu kaufen?

B: Bei uns ist es ja so ausgerichtet, dass wir nicht wirklich verschiedene Kollektionen haben, sondern eine Kollektion, die stetig wachsen soll. Im Prinzip so, dass wir in zwei-drei Jahren, eine Riesenkollektion haben, wo alle Sachen vorhanden sind, von denen wir der Meinung sind, dass die ein Mädels in ihrem Kleiderschrank haben sollte. Das ist eigentlich unsere Marketingstrategie, die dahintersteht. Essentials, Basics und das man mehr Wert auf nachhaltige Sachen legt, die etwas schlichter sind. Eben lang investieren und nicht immer nur diese ganzen throw-away Trends, die man zwei Wochen anhat. Das ist so der Hauptgedanke dahinter.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden von euch genutzt?

B: Da hast du ja welche aufgeschrieben. Also bei uns ist es hauptsächlich online-based. Soziale Medien definitiv am stärksten. Email Newsletter machen wir auch. Auf Messen sind wir auch, aber das sind eher so Verbrauchermessen. Also nicht die großen Schauen, oder so, weil dafür unsere Art der Kleidung, eher zu basic ist. Das ist zum Präsentieren nicht so einfach. Ich würde auf jeden Fall sagen, Social Media, Email, Zeitschriften auch, also PR auf jeden Fall, auch auf Online-Magazinen, in der „In Style“ hatten wir schon Features drinnen. PR kannst du natürlich nicht genug haben. Online ist auf jeden Fall unser Steckenpferd.

I: Versucht ihr dann eure Marketingbotschaft konsequent über alle Marketingkanäle zu vermitteln? Dass ihr das so durch Hashtags miteinander verbindet.

B: Ja auf jeden Fall. Wir posten hauptsächlich auf Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook

und Snapchat. Da ist auch immer @theseptlabel und #thesept. Oder wenn auch Blogger mal was posten, dann ist es auch oft #theseptgang. Also auch wirklich Sachen, die man immer wieder findet. Das ist auch echt wichtig. Wie gesagt heute sind alle, ja auch wirklich auf allen Kanälen. Alles andere wäre schade um verlorene Follower. Wenn dir jemand auf Instagram folgt, dann ist es sehr wahrscheinlich, dass er dir auch auf Snapchat und auf Facebook folgt. Wenn die was gut finden folgen die immer gleich auf allen Kanälen. Also wäre das eigentlich schade, wenn man einen Kanal runterfallen lässt, weil das ist auch ein Touchpoint, wo man die Leute immer erreichen kann.

I: Und wie oft teilt ihr eure Beiträge auf den verschiedenen Kanälen?

B: Also Facebook ist so, dass wir alle zwei, drei Tage einen Post machen. Instagram täglich immer zwei Posts. Manchmal einen, manchmal drei. Aber es hat sich uns gezeigt, dass es so am erfolgreichsten ist. Mehr darf man eigentlich nicht machen, aber so um die zwei rum ist eigentlich ideal. Bei uns ist es auch so, dass der Markt sehr international ist. Wir haben sehr viele australische Kunden und auch aus den USA. Das heißt wir posten eigentlich immer morgens was, damit wir sozusagen, alle Zeiten ein bisschen abdecken. Also wenn die Amerikaner aufstehen, wenn die Australier ins Bett gehen. Und da ist es wichtig, dass man auf jeden Fall zwei Posts hat.

I: Arbeitet ihr mit Bloggern zusammen?

B: Ja, aber es ist jetzt nicht so, dass wir jetzt sagen, dass wir mit ganz vielen verschiedenen Bloggern zusammenarbeiten. Wir haben jetzt inzwischen echt ein paar richtig coole, wo wir auch richtig stolz darauf sind. Die Blogger sind auch meistens mehr Models mit Bloggerhintergrund. Also für uns ist es sehr wichtig, dass es genau ins Bild passt. Es muss wirklich sehr minimalistisch sein und die Models sehr natürlich. Das ist natürlich nicht immer der Fall und dann fallen schon viele raus. Wir haben ganz viele Bloggeranfragen, arbeiten aber echt nur mit ein paar zusammen, wo wir auch zahlen. Das ist nicht so typisch nur auf das Produkt bezogen, weil das können ja inzwischen ganz viele, die jetzt diese 50.000 Follower haben, die aber heute die Marke anhaben und morgen eine andere. Das ist für uns nicht so interessant. Wir haben dann lieber loyale Blogger, wie zum Beispiel Andi Csinger, ich weiß nicht, ob du die kennst oder die Joanna Halpin. Die haben unsere Sachen immer wieder auch privat an und das ist dann natürlich viel authentischer. Aber Blogger sind auf jeden Fall das stärkste Tool.

I: Ich habe auch gesehen, dass ihr auf eurer Website auch einen kleinen Blog habt?

B: Genau. Unsere Website ist ja sehr bildlastig, weil wir wollen nur eine Startseite, einen Shop und ein Lookbook haben. Und da ist es für uns auch wichtig, dass wir einen Blog haben, wo wir einfach Themen aufgreifen können. Hat auch den Hintergrund, dass wir erstens eine Plattform aufbauen möchte, wo jeder mal auf die Website gehen kann. Auch mal bisschen rumschauen, aber sich auch ein wenig inspirieren lassen von Sachen, die einen sonst auch interessieren. Es ist schon ein bisschen vorsortiert, das heißt, wenn jetzt einer „The Sept“ gutfindet, heißt es, dass er vielleicht minimalistische Architektur gutfindet, oder ein bestimmtes Beautyprodukt. Und darauf ist es ausgerichtet. Und der Hintergrund ist auch, dass man so Traffic auf die Seite bekommt. Als Marketinghintergrund ist es auch wichtig, dass Wörter auf der Seite sind und als Blog kann man das auch schön steuern.

I: Arbeitet ihr mit anderen Designern, oder Künstlern zusammen, um mehr Aufmerksamkeit für das Label zu bekommen?

B: Ja, aber da sind es hauptsächlich wirklich momentan sehr viele Fotografen mit denen wir zusammenarbeiten. Also da pusht man sich auch gegenseitig. Und die Blogger. Aber mit anderen Künstlern direkt bisher noch nicht. Ist aber auf jeden Fall das Ziel. Wir halten sehr viel davon, wenn man Synergien nutzt. Also da ist zum Beispiel ein Künstler aus England, der Frederik Forrest, da peilt man sich gegenseitig immer an, aber eine Kooperation hatten wir jetzt noch nicht. Aber das ist auf jeden Fall geplant. Der Markt ist ja noch sehr jung. Aber sobald man sich einen Namen gemacht hat, ist es auf jeden Fall toll, wenn man da Synergien nutzt. Sehen wir auch so als Zukunftstool. Ich glaube da müssen wir auch hin, dass nicht jeder nebeneinander her arbeitet, weil ich denke, wenn es schon jemanden gibt, der ins Konzept passt, sollte man es auch nutzen.

I: Wie viel Prozent von eurem Gesamtbudget wird für das Marketing ausgegeben?

B: Also da ist es jetzt so, in unserer Website steckt ein Batzen Geld, weil da ja ein Warenwirtschaftssystem dahinter hängt. Das ist natürlich ein großes Budget. wenn du jetzt aber wirklich sagst: das klassische Marketing, PR, Werbung, Blogger, würde ich mal sagen, so knapp 20%. Wenn du jetzt so Sachen mit reinnimmst, wie Corporate Identity, die Klassisch mit reingehören, oder eine Website, die ja eigentlich auch ins Marketing gehört, dann sind wir schon bei 35-40%.

I: Wie verteilt ihr dieses Budget? Wie viel geht für Online und für Offline drauf? Weil du meinstest ihr benutzt auch Zeitschriften als Werbemittel.

B: Genau. Aber bei den Zeitschriften, da schalten wir keine Werbung. Da ist es bei uns so, dass die meisten echt auf uns zukommen. Die sind halt immer auf der Suche nach Features. Es ist definitiv nicht so, dass wir sagen wir schalten eine Anzeige in der „In Style“, für so zwei Ausgaben, dass kostet dann ein paar Tausend Euro. Das ist für uns natürlich keine Option, da haben wir natürlich mehr Reach, wenn wir jetzt einer tollen Bloggerin einen Pullover schicken und 200 Dollar zahlen für einen Blogpost und entsprechend für Social Media Coverage. Das ist natürlich keine Relation. Darum bei PR ist wirklich so, wer da auf uns zukommt oder Anfragen. Wir schicken Pressemitteilungen raus und da ist unser Budget echt niedrig, oder wir haben wenig. Für Blogger ist es definitiv das meiste. Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter ist ja alles umsonst. Wenn man vor zehn Jahren ein Start-Up gegründet hat ist es ein ganz anderes Feld. Es ist natürlich schon schön für Start-Ups inzwischen. Du kannst echt etwas erreichen, ohne jetzt ein riesiges Marketingbudget zu haben.

I: Dann investiert ihr praktisch mehr in Onlinemarketing?

B: Genau.

I: Dann komm ich zur nächsten Frage. Wie steht ihr zur Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche und wie wichtig ist das für euer Label?

B: Für uns ist es sehr wichtig. Wir promoten das schon ein bisschen, aber für uns ist das eigentlich mehr so eine Selbstverständlichkeit. Wir produzieren in Deutschland und in Portugal. Teils Arbeitsbedingungen und die ganzen Zertifikate, das ist für uns alles eine Selbstverständlichkeit. Ich finde auch heute, wenn du ein Modelabel gründest, dann darfst du eigentlich gar nicht mehr auf(unverständlich), also meiner Meinung nach, ist es gar keine Option mehr, dass man sagt man produziert jetzt irgendwie in Fernost und schickt es dann hierher und kuckt, dass es möglichst günstig ist und bei den Materialien weiß man auch nicht wo die herkommen. Bei uns ist es extrem wichtig. Und wir sind ja jetzt auch im mittleren Preissegment, aber da wir online sind, sind die Margen größer. Da können wir natürlich auch kucken, dass wir auch echt ein bisschen was für die Produktion ausgeben und auch kucken, dass die Arbeitsbedingungen alle richtig sind. Wenn man ein T-Shirt verkauft für 50 Euro, dann ist es auch echt möglich. Das ist dann nicht so, dass da nichts übrigbleibt. Das ist dann glaub ich eine schlechte Entschuldigung. Das kann man heute schon echt gut machen. Gerade in Europa kann man schön produzieren.

I: Okay Dankeschön, das waren auch schon alle meine Fragen.(Verabschiedungen)

H Interview Nr.7: Label "Too Hot To Hide"

Interview with founder, Eva Maskow (26.10.2016)

B: Eva Masko. Hallo.

I: Hallo hier ist die Irina. Dann leg ich gleich los.

B: Ja fang mal an.

I: Wan wurde euer Label denn gegründet?

B: Im September 2015.

I: Uns was war eure Inspiration und Motivation, die Idee zu verwirklichen?

B: Also eigentlich war es so, dass ich mich schon lange selbstständig machen wollte und es war nur noch nicht das richtige Produkt da. Ich habe ja immer im Textilbereich gearbeitet und wollte da irgendwas machen. Hab aber vorher in der Damenwäsche gearbeitet und das war ziemlich schwierig für die Selbstständigkeit, weil man eben so extrem viele Größen hat und dann war ich als letztes eben bei „Kunert“ und da hat sich eigentlich die Idee aufge-drängt. Zum einen ist es ein gutes Produkt, um es auch alleine zu bewältigen, zum zweiten hatte ich eben eine Produktinnovation gesehen, dass man Strumpfhosen ohne Naht herstellt kann. Und der Markt ist einfach von alten, traditionellen Marken umgeben. Es fehlt eigentlich etwas Junges und bisschen moderneres. Und das waren eigentlich so die drei Faktoren, die zusammengespielt haben, dass ich mich dann in dem Bereich selbstständig gemacht habe.

I: Wo würdest du die Marke positionieren? Im niedrigen Preissegment, dem Mittleren oder bei den Premium und Luxusmarken?

B: Eher im Mittleren.

I: Und was ist die Zielgruppe?

B: Eigentlich alle Frauen, die Strumpfhosen tragen und bereit sind für Qualität einen Euro mehr auszugeben.

I: Wen seht ihr als eure größte Konkurrenz an? Andere Start-Up Unternehmen, die Massenmodemarken oder Premium und Luxusmarken?

B: Also eigentlich ist es der Platzhirsch „Falke“, den ich als Hauptwettbewerber sehe, weil der eigentlich überall ist. Klar andere Start-Ups immer, aber die gibt es meistens natürlich noch nicht, die kommen dann auf einmal.

I: Was ist das Marketingziel? Was soll die Konsumenten dazu bewegen eure Produkte zu kaufen?

B: Also alle unsere Strumpfhosen sind nahtlos. Wir haben eine spezielle Verarbeitung und bieten das als einzige auch im Strickbereich an und haben dadurch einen extremen Tragekomfort. Haben auch einen breiten Bund der das Tragen deutlich angenehmer macht, als eine normale Strumpfhose. Wir haben zusätzlich eine Verpackung, die außergewöhnlich ist. Und wir haben eine Bildsprache, die komplett anders zu den bestehenden Marken ist.

I: Welche Marketingkanäle werden von euch genutzt?

B: Also schön wäre es, wenn wir Fernsehwerbung machen könnten, aber das können wir uns noch nicht leisten, nach einem Jahr. Ehrlich gesagt budgettechnisch versuche ich das ganze umsonst zu bekommen. Das heißt, ich versuche in Fachzeitschriften, entweder in der „Textil Wirtschaft“ oder auch in Modermagazinen zu erscheinen. Ich war jetzt in der „Brigitte“. Das versuche ich aber ohne Anzeigen, also durch redaktionelle Beiträge. E-Mail Newsletter natürlich, Social Media klar. Geschäfte und Verkaufsflächen ganz klar. Also ich gehe in den Handel und werde dort auch verkaufen, vertreiben. Und Modemessen auf alle Fälle um die Marke einfach bekannt zu machen. Das ist eigentlich der Hauptposten, wo ich dafür Geld ausbebe, Modemessen.

I: Versuchst du konsequent die Marketingbotschaft in allen Marketingkanälen zu übermitteln, dass du sie miteinander verbindest?

B: Klar, sonst hat man ja nichts davon, wenn das nicht funktioniert. Also es war auch jetzt so, dass ich eben durch diesen Bericht in der „Brigitte“ ganz viele Online Bestellungen bekommen habe, was ich dir ja schon geschrieben habe. Deshalb ist der Onlineshop auch so gut angelaufen. Wir haben auch auf der Facebook Seite natürlich auch den Jetzt-Kaufen Button. Also wenn jemand direkt dort darauf gehen will. Man versucht natürlich alles zu

verlinken, auch Instagram, dass eben alles ineinander spielt.

I: Und wie viel Prozent vom Gesamtbudget wird für das Marketing ausgegeben?

B: Schwierig zu sagen, da kein wirkliches Budget da ist. Also man versucht immer irgendwo was abzuknapsen. Dass was ich momentan ausgabe, eben der größte Kostenpunkt mit den Messen und mit meinen Vertriebstouren, die ich mache. Und ich würde sagen, momentan so um die 10%.

I: Also gibst du dann auch mehr für Offline-Marketing aus und für Online-Marketing versuchst du so wenig wie möglich aufzuwenden?

B: Wir starten jetzt dann auch, dass wir Geld ausgeben für Online Marketing, also für Facebook Anzeigen und Google Advert, da muss man jetzt mal schauen, was das dann wirklich bringt. Da kann man ja gut testen, das ist relativ günstig, wenn man das auch mal testen möchte und da muss man schauen was für Effekte da sind. Bis jetzt kann ich nur sagen, dass ich bei „Page Online“ war, da war ein Bericht über die Marke drin, also auch umsonst. Was halt bei den Online Medien einfacher ist, dass sie halt sehr kurzlebig sind. Also ich war dort total gefeatured und war da auch wirklich auf der Startseite, aber das ist nach 3-4 Stunden vorbei. Und die „Brigitte“ liegt zwei Wochen im Handel und du hast zwei Wochen die Bestellungen. Also das ist schon ein massiver Unterschied, den ich jetzt gesehen habe, obwohl ich nicht gedacht hätte, dass die „Brigitte“ bei mir funktioniert, muss ich ehrlich sagen. Aber sie hat funktioniert. Das ist halt doch was Dauerhafteres. Und jetzt muss man schauen, ob man das mit Online auch irgendwie hinbekommt.

I: Was ist der wichtigste Marketingkanal für die Marke?

B: Eigentlich momentan noch die Messen, um die Marke wirklich bekannt zu machen. Bei den Händlern auch, also die, die sie dann auch verkaufen. Und dann natürlich im Zusammenspiel mit Facebook, Instagram, dass da auch was passiert, dass das zusammenpasst.

I: Und die Messen sind dann für Fachverkäufer und auch Endverbraucher?

B: Ja, aber hauptsächlich für Fachverkäufer. Also wirklich für den Handel, dass sie eben da die Marke sehen und für ihre Läden ordern. ich bin in Berlin in der Modewoche, ich bin in Paris und ich bin dann auch in Düsseldorf. Und da ist es einfach wichtig, dass man erst die Läden bekommt.

I: Und wie sehr verlasst ihr euch auf die Sozialen Medien und Netzwerke, wenn es um das Marketing geht?

B: Also wie gesagt, wir testen da noch ziemlich viel, was ja jetzt auch gerade am Anfang ist. Die Ware ist ja erst seit zwei Monaten im Handel und vorher konnte ich ja noch gar nichts machen, was Online-Medien betrifft. Da muss man jetzt wirklich mal schauen, wie gut das funktioniert und es ist natürlich ein guter Bereich, wo man sich abheben kann von den traditionellen Unternehmen, die es gibt, den „Falke“ und den „Kunert“. Deswegen werden wir da schon einen Fokus darauf setzten, aber man darf die anderen eben nicht vergessen, die Offline Medien.

I: Und auf wie vielen Sozialen Medien seid ihr aktiv?

B: Ich bin bei Instagram, Facebook und Snapchat.

I: Und wie oft teilst du Beiträge auf den Netzwerken?

B: Meinst du damit, dass ich nur teile?

I: Nein, generell posten, teilen, etc. Wie deine Aktivitäten dort aussehen.

B: In der Woche so 5 Mal würde ich jetzt sagen. Momentan relativ aktiv, weil ich auch hier im Laden poste, der meine Ware hat.

I: Arbeitest du mit Bloggern zusammen?

B: Noch nicht. Das ist eben jetzt auch gerade erst im Aufbau. Ich habe jetzt eine, die was gemacht hat und habe noch eine andere angeschrieben, die auch damals auf der Messe bei uns war, mit der ich was machen möchte. Blogger stehen auf alle Fälle mit im Fokus und das kommt eben jetzt erst in Frage, wo auch der Online Shop live ist.

I: Planst du mit anderen Designern und Künstlern zusammen zu arbeiten, um mehr Aufmerksamkeit für das Label zu schaffen?

B: Nein gar nicht, weil ich erst mal meine Marke positionieren muss.

I: Dann komme ich zur Nachhaltigkeit. Und zwar, wie stehst du zu Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche und wie wichtig ist Nachhaltigkeit für das Label?

B: Also Nachhaltigkeit in der Modebranche finde ich extrem wichtig. Ist auch ein Zeitgeist, der sich momentan zeigt. Was man auch an einzelnen Läden sieht. Wir haben auch eine Naturverpackung, die das ganze eigentlich widerspiegelt und wir werden in der nächsten Herbst/Winter Kollektion, also in 2018, auch eine Bio-Cotton Strumpfhose haben und eine aus recyceltem Polyamid. Das Recycelte ist natürlich nachhaltig und (leider unverständlich).

I: Okay gut. Von meiner Seite aus waren das auch schon alle Fragen, die ich auf meiner Liste habe, Ich danke dir dafür.

(Verabschiedungen)

Sworn Declaration

I hereby confirm that I have written the present thesis independently and without illicit assistance from third parties and using solely the aids mentioned. All parts, which were obtained literally or in a general manner from published sources, are marked as such.

Irina Kostin

Wertheim, the 15th of November