Marketing tactics used by early stage start-ups, an analysis of the Viennese start-up scene.

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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Abstract

This thesis provides insights related to the topic of marketing tactics used by early stage start-ups, the Viennese start-up scene is investigated. The study aims to analyze the development of start-ups in their early stages and how marketing tactics have an influence on their future growth and success. Overall, the purpose of this thesis was to highlight these marketing tactics and give an objective view on how they affect the performance of the start-up.

Through, both primary and secondary sources, data was collected and evaluated. The secondary data, which is the theoretical part of this research, was collected from multiple sources, such as articles and books and is stated in the literature review. The primary data was collected by gathering knowledge from interviews, which provided a qualitative look into what marketing tactics are used in early stage start-ups and how they influence their growth and profit. In the interviews ten respondents were asked to elaborate on how they form their strategies, how they deal with competition and what their future objectives are.

Based on the findings, the research provides an extensive overview into start-ups with different areas of expertise and shows how these tactics are utilized supporting the theoretical part of the research. The results show that Vienna has become a start-up hub and has many features that are very attractive to early stage start-ups. The ten interviews that were conducted have shown a detailed insight into the importance of marketing in the first few years of a start-up, whether it is to understand the marketplace, raise awareness, position the product or attract customers marketing tactics that enhance sales and growth of a start-up are utilized by every start-up.

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List of Abbreviations

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

CLV – Customer Lifetime Value

ROI - Return of Investment

Ltd. – Limited Company

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

PESTEL – Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal

AWS – Austrian Wirtschaftsservices GmbH

B2C – Business to Customer

1 Introduction

1.1. Background information: start-ups and their challenges

The challenges early stage start-ups face when trying to get their foot in the door should not be underestimated. Of course it matters how convinced a founder of a start-up is in the idea that he or she wants to implement, but if the message is not brought across properly, the potential of the business might get lost. Convincing other people to believe in a business is a hard task and often the quality of a product/service is not the only important aspect, it also relies on the way the product/ service is communicated to a potential customer and the impressions that consumers gets from its promotion. The main aim of every entrepreneur is to generate revenue and introduce a new idea to the market that might create waves, and in order to do so is of critical importance to build brand awareness. Gathering feedback about how the product/service is received by customers is a must for any business. Especially in their early stages where no prior knowledge of a product of any sort exists the entrepreneur should seek feedback to obtain a feeling of how the introduction of that product/service was perceived by the public in order to know how to best position it on the market and reach the target customer (Anderson & Narus, 1998).

Gathering information about how the product is perceived and how it could be improved is crucial. It is essential for the founder of the start-up to consider customers objections before continuing not only with the production of the product but how best to implement a marketing strategy. Especially nowadays where market demand is very high and competition is strong, having a form of assurance is beneficial and gives the opportunity of forming a strong marketing campaign or strategy that goes into the right direction and targets the right people. This process lays the complete foundation of the business and an aggressive and goal oriented marketing approach can lead to a profitable business (Kittaneh, 2014).

Of course challenges, like impressing investors is a crucial part in the early stages as well since they are the ones that need to be convinced of the product/ service

before investing the business. After making sure that there was a strong positive response of the product/service and there is believed to be sufficient demand for, the founder should develop a strategy of how to implement an idea into an actual product/service. Especially in early stages of a business this strategy has to be well thought- trough to enhance the chances of success and keep that start-up on track to reach future goals. A realistic campaign that outlines all of these future goals and objectives has to be created as well since it stats the expectations for the business and can show whether these were met. Conducting a strategy and a campaign is an essential part of the start-ups marketing since it prevents failure of a business before it even had the chance to grow (Entrepreneur.com, 2003).

Marketing, in addition to its role in advertising and sales, is responsible for how a company is perceived by the public and is therefore critical to its overall success. It challenges creativity while at the same time requiring theoretical skills for testing theories. The varied aspects of marketing are crucial to consider in any form of business. Marketing not only plays a role in developed companies or areas that need more focus within established firms, it is also important to consider marketing in the early stages of a start-up. Strategies have to be developed and tested; a proper marketing plan has to be set up and the process that is achieved by marketing has to be evaluated in order to know who the target customer is and to attract new clients. Having a good product alone is not sufficient to succeed. In order to generate hype around a newly introduced product the marketing strategy has to be consistent and powerful as well.

1.2. Research Objectives

The challenge that this thesis is tackling is how to combine early stage start-ups and marketing. The main objective is to elaborate on a detailed marketing strategy that can provide the best possible outcome for an early stage start-up. It sets up a business for future growth and profit. Especially in the early stages, in which a start-up should make a name for itself, one of the most important factors as mentioned above is how people will perceive it. It should awake curiosity and attract potential customers by providing something that the market does not offer combined with a

strong marketing strategy and an objective driven marketing campaign, which enhances a business's performance.

The delicate question of how to embed marketing into the product calls for tactical approaches. The ways the product is implemented into the market matters severely since first impressions are crucial for the business. Primarily it is important to understand the marketplace in order to strategically place the product, avoid that it gets lost in the masses and attract the target customer. Knowing the demand for the product is of significance as well. Creation of demand leads to steady and long-term interest to generate profit over a long period of time. Then a fitting marketing strategy can be implemented to enhance a product or services reputation and create more buzz, which aims to attracting more customers.

Every business is displayed to all of the above listed aspects of marketing, which are an essential part of this thesis. Marketing identifies itself through thorough market and customer-oriented thinking. Thus, the objective of this paper is to support the theory of marketing strategies by examining concepts, which have lead to successes for start-ups in Vienna in their early stages. The paper aim to evaluate the main difficulties that early stage start-ups face when confronted with marketing and how best to develop a marketing strategy that enhances success. Hence, the research question central in this thesis is:

How do early stage start-ups based in Vienna design marketing strategies and which challenges do they face?

The researched context will provide a detailed insight into how start-ups in Vienna where confronted with this issue in their early stages and how they developed a thorough understanding of the market and how to place their business for a maximum outcome.

The thesis is divided into the literature section, where secondary data for the topic was collected and explained, then an overview of Vienna as a destination for start-ups is listed, what tactics where used to conduct research for this thesis can be found in the methodology and finally the results of the interviews with start-ups from Vienna are described and then concluded to give a closer insight into the topic.

2 Literature Review

Three streams of literature are discussed in this review; i) marketing, ii) start-ups and marketing and iii) Vienna as a start-up scene.

2.1 Marketing

Marketing is a term that defines itself in so many different directions. It is understood as a salesman, a TV commercial, pricing of a product but also as the development of strategies in order to successfully implement, promote and distribute an idea or a concept. The most crucial aspect however is probably that marketing "creates an exchange that satisfies individual and organizational objectives" (Soloman & Stuart, 2003). As mentioned before marketing evolves itself in many different directions and has different targets. For example, a costumer is the most important target since this is the person that is believed to be the most likely to need and thus also to purchase the product or service. Targeting customer's demands different and specific marketing tactics as well since these can be identified as individual and organizations such as a company, a government and more. With that said, marketing primarily deals with customers to a greater extend than any other business department. The highest priority is to achieve customer satisfaction and the focus should lie in analyzing the needs of the consumer who buys the end product or service. However, a marketer should not solely focus on the customers' aspects when developing a marketing concept since it is almost as important to acknowledge what the sellers need as well. Marketing is not a one-way street; rather one needs to focus on both the customer and firm in order to achieve the maximum output and the greatest results. Overall, the goal is to increase profit for an organization by identifying the target customer (Soloman & Stuart, 2003).

Value creation

In order to build customer relationships from with a business can profit, it is important to create value in marketing. Various authors state that creating value and capturing value is essential in the field of marketing (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013). But why is creating value so important in marketing? Simply put, if brands identify themselves with a set of clear value it is easier to develop a well-

known brand identity, reach out the customer and convince to buy the products or services. Therefore, a clear value can also be seen as a great set of benefits and helps to differentiate the product or service from others (Egelhoff, 2018).

However, which brand values to focus on remains a struggle for many companies. We can see that one of the most prominent issues between customers and businesses is the lack designing values from the customers' point of view. This results often in feelings of annoyance from the customers and switching behavior to competitors (Roger, 2016). Thus, companies need to understand what the customers wants, but also know how to reach them and communicate with them. As Egelhoff (2018) states, if customers are not given the right message, the business will not pull in the profits that they were expected and thus it will drive it into the ground. Therefore, a solid understanding of the marketplace and customer demands is needed; the next section will explain this.

2.1.1   Understanding the marketplace and customer demands

When commencing with a marketing strategy the first step should be to understand the marketplace. Even the best strategy can fail if the marketplace is not distinguished. Thus, recognizing the strength of the targeted market is important not only to find the right strategy for positioning a product or service but it is also essential to identify the target customer and if there is a need for the marketed item in the first place. (Anderson & Narus, 1998)

Exchanges and relationships are formed in a market. A market consists of a place with potential and actual buyers of goods and services, it is a gathering of buyers and sellers for livestock, provisions and other commodities, also known as an area where commercial dealings are done. Whether intangible or tangible, in the world of trade a marketplace allows economic activity. A market has the purpose of facilitating the exchange of goods and services and can be virtual, over the Internet or physical, where people come together and the exchange is done in person (Mu et al., Love, 2018).

Marketing means pushing these markets to achieve the best possible customer relationship as well as the most profitable. In a marketplace it is not enough to offer the goods and services, sellers have the responsibility to identify the needs and

wants of their buyers, have the best possible offers, set the price that not only attracts the customer but also is profitable for the seller, promotion, storage and delivery and if needed search what the customer is looking for. All the above listed facts play a close role with communication, distribution, product development and consumer research which form the core marketing activities (Kotler et al., 2013).

Consumer demands play a very big role in the game of marketing as well. The primary marketing rule is to understand the concept of human needs. A marketer cannot create the needs of humans; they are a normal part of humans. Whether it is a physical need, such as food, safety or clothing, or a social needs, such as affection, acceptance and belonging, - a marketer has to identify these needs and provide a concept that fulfills these customer demands (Kotler et al., 2013).

To meet these demands and develop a fitting concept, research has to be conducted in order to determine what the consumers needs are. It is important to recognize consumer's wishes before, after and while introducing a good or service into a marketplace (Kittaneh, 2014).

Spotting these expectations is not an easy task since consumer's wishes cannot be generalized. Consumer behavior is based on a list of random elements such as a gut feeling, others only go after facts and some are a mixture of both. The best ways to figure out what attracts a customer and satisfies their needs is to gain insight from a conversation. To uncover motivations for buying, the most important step is to listen to what the customer is searching for and then asking specific questions. While asking the right questions it is important to understand the difference between need and want. Some customers may need a new notebook and some may want a new notebook. It is important to listen closely to these details in order to continue with the right marketing strategy. For sellers the difference between need and want may invoke using a different approach to get the customer to buy their product (Sven, 2016).

Categorizing feedback is also a very good step toward creating customer satisfaction. It helps to identify patterns and makes assumptions about the likelihood of a company and whether the customer decides to approach them again or not.

There are different possibilities to gather feedback:

- Feedback surveys
- Conducting interviews, - which also helps with customer contact
- Comment boxes for free and anonymous expression
- Polls on social media
- On- site activity

Social media is known to be one of the most effective channels to gather honest, quick and real customer insight that helps identify demands. It is easy to share information online but also to responds and communicate. This virtual relationship between a seller and a buyer is essential to create value and meet the wants and needs of potential and actual clients. Social media listening, getting personal with customers, create advocates and using the right tone when communication with clients is facilitated thanks to social media. Through the great effects of social media platforms, the relationship between buyers and sellers became a two way street, which lets customer think they are a part of the company but also support to meet the demands and subsequently create value and loyalty (Sukhyani, 2017). These feedback channels are the fastest way to directly identify potential marketing problems but also to form, adapt or completely change the way a customer's demand is met (Leary, Vann & Mittelstaedt, 2016). The next section will explain how a firm can strategically plan its marketing and why this can help reach desired objectives.

2.1.2 Strategic planning in marketing

Strategic planning enables to position the product or service in the minds of the targeted market (Egelhoff, 2018). The importance of creating a market-driven strategy should have a great emphasis for a marketer. The objectives are to understand and identify problems that a company may face, implement a strategy that exceeds the traditional textbook marketing approach and for critical thinking in order to apply knowledge and create a well thought through business plan (Ioannou, 2010).

A marketing strategy should set the overall goal of the marketing approach. It should be well though through, informed and should include a mission, vision and goals of the company. It is an outline, which affects the way a business will operate in the future and decides on the direction it will go. Strategic planning is not done overnight, it should be consulted with colleagues and set the direction and aims of your marketing perspectives. Strategic planning consists of the following components:

- Description of the business plan
- Detailed marketing tactics
- A list of targets customers
- Set of competitors identified
- Marketing plan
- Positioning strategies to enhance profitability

(Adeyoyin, 2005)

The above listed components should help a company make the most of their marketing investments and steer them in the right direction. A marketing strategy should not be set in stone as the business may change over time and the strategy should develop with the business in order to get the most profitable results.

In order to write a successful marketing strategy the following point should be taken into consideration:

- Identify the businesses goals
- Set the marketing goals
- Conduct a thorough research of the market
- Profile target customers
- Profile main competitors
- Test the ideas before implementing them

(Adeyoyin, 2005)

A marketing strategy should outline the main game plan in order to reach the main goals of a business and make the most out of all the efforts that where put into marketing the business (Duermayer, 2017).

The following section will consist of a detailed explanation of a marketing campaign and why setting up a campaign is important for future success.

2.1.3 Setting up a marketing campaign

A marketing campaign consists of marketing activities the clearly outline a businesses objectives that should be met within a specific timeframe. Whether the goal is to get new customers, introduce a new product or to increase brand awareness, professional marketers think in terms of a campaign. (Entrepreneur.com, 2003). Successful marketing campaigns should be well thought out and take time and effort and a lot of research to perfect them. It is a well thought out and detailed screening of the whole business and does not focus on just one single objective but rather on the big picture. However it is important to emphasize that a marketing campaign should not be set in stone, leaving room for changes as the business develops is essential as well since the businesses grow and develop over time. Adapting over time is a good thing for the marketing campaign however having the ground concept right and implementing it like planed is of great impotence for the future vision and growth (Entrepreneur.com, 2003).

In order to achieve steady results, it is advised to develop one marketing campaign for every single marketing activity. It is the master plan of the entire business and should have a start and end date. Before constructing a marketing campaign it is important to know what the business is going to be about, identify the target audience of the business and set specific and realistic goals (Durepos, 2015).

The focus of the next section lays on the 7 P´s of marketing and their impact on each business.

2.1.4   The 7 P´s of marketing

In marketing a heavy emphasis is on communicating value. The factors that influence this value are called the marketing mix. The combination of the traditional four P´s, which are product, place, price and promotion continuously evolve and expand into more factors that influence the value of a product or even an entire business. While still remaining very important, the original four P´s are not enough to sum up the current- day marketing. For this reason three more P´s where added to the mix, these are people, packaging and positioning (Kareh, 2018).

The reason why these seven factors of the marketing mix are so important is because they recognize marketing tactics, which are used in combination to improve customer satisfaction and reputation of the business. The goal of marketing is always to meet the customer's needs and wants and through the tactics marketing mix this can be achieved in the most precise form (Fennell, 2004)

After planning the marketing strategy the marketing mix formula should continuously be evaluated and revaluated. Keeping track of these seven P´s is an important way of continuously getting the most of the business by achieving the maximum results possible in the field of expertise (Tracey, 2004).

Product	A product is what the business is selling; including all the benefits it has to offer such as features, advantages that might attract a customer to buy the goods and services. The most important fact is to highlight all of the benefits it has to offer and show the key features that might differentiate themselves from other products (Išoraitė, 2016)
Place	Place involves channels from where the product is sold. The place where customer and salesperson meet and exchange goods and services. Deciding on a place should be a very well thought through process. A change in location can affect sales in large amounts (Tracy, 2004).

Price	Prices should not be fixes. If possible it is important to evaluate and revaluate the prices the business sets since they need to be appropriate for the good or service. It is important to know how the competition is setting their prices and always aim to keep the competitive advantage, it is important to lower but also sometimes to increase your prices. This is one of the P´s that heavily affects if the customer might return to the business or even purchase in the first place (Kareh, 2018).
Promotion	Refers to the activities that should be undertaken in order to achieve a well-known name for the goods and services. Small changes make big waves and affect the way customers might perceive the goods and services offered. Word of mouth, advertising, press, etc. all influence promotion (Tracy, 2004).
People	People are a salesperson, staff or someone that is a representative of the company. Customer service is a big part of this particular factor. This is one of the most important aspect of any business and should be carefully selected. The recruitment of a professional staff can give a competitive advantage and is the face of any business (Akroush, 2011)
Packaging	The first impression counts. Packaging is the first impression that a customer is confronted with and thus a very up to date and important factor in the marketing mix. It refers top the way the product appears. Ever visual aspect is a part of packaging. From the way a waiting room or an office looks to the design of brochures, it is all a part of packaging (Tracy, 2004).

Positioning	How to position a business in the minds of the customer is crucial. The important aspects here are to emphasize the distinguished benefits that the company has to offer. What sets a business apart from its competition and in what way to the customers perceive that is the main question of positioning (Tracy, 2004).

Table 1. 7 P's (Entrepreneur.com, 2004).)

2.1.5 Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

A key performance indicator is used to measure the effectivity of a company and how well it is reaching its key objectives. Often a KPI is used at various stages of the business in order to keep track of how a company is performing and if it is at the predicted level of success and whether it is reaching its target in the desired time. There are to different forms of KPIs, high-level and low-level. While high-level focuses on the overall achievements, low-level focuses on the processes which each department is making individually. An example of a low-level KPI would be measuring the overall process of a marketing department and investigating its effectiveness over the years (Klipfolio, n.d.). KPIs are quantifiable measures that show whether the strategic and operational goals are met (Investopedia, n.d).

2.1.5.1 KPIs in Marketing

Key performance indicators are an important measure in marketing. Spending money for a marketing campaign which is not generating profit is an absolute red flag and thus tracking KPIs are a good technique to see where the business is strong and which strategy might need more focus in order to obtain the maximum outcome (Edgecomb, 2017).

Many marketers tend to focus on the most commonly used KPIs, which are sales revenue and cost per lead.

Firstly, measuring *sales revenue* is immensely important to understand whether the inbound marketing tactics of a company are effective. The question here is how much revenue the inbound marketing produced for the company, which can be calculated by subtracting the total sales for the year from the total revenue that was

generated through customers who came from inbound marketing (Edgecomb, 2017).

Secondly, measuring the KPIs for *cost per lead* is a very popular measure of a lot of marketers as well. An average cost per lead is the total amount of money that was spent on a marketing campaign divided by the total leads that were acquired (Klipfolio, n.d.).

The aim is to measure how cost-effective a campaign is when generating leads. Generating a lead means winning the interest of an individual. The main aim of conducting KPIs for cost per lead is to provide the marketing team with a numerical figure to help estimate how much money should be spent on acquiring new leads (Klipfolio, n.d.).

The final objective of measuring the KPIs of cost per lead is of course to minimize the costs per lead since a low cost per lead is an indicator that campaign is achieving the hoped objectives (Klipfolio, n.d.).

Thirdly, another important KPI is customer lifetime value (CLV), which measures how much the customer is going to spend on the business during his or her relationship with it. It is a way of overseeing weather the strategies of binding a customer or investing is different acquisition channels is paying off and is resulting in a profitable long-term customer relationship (Elkind, n.d.).

Ever marketer has the crucial task of providing ROI (return of investment). ROI is a KPI that is often used to determine the profitability of a certain spending and is useful to measure the success during a greater period of time (Hawkins, 2016).

If money is spent for generating revenue then it is important to find out how much of it is exactly generating business. ROI is an important measure in a lot of departments in a business but for marketers it is essential. There are two primary metrics that are used when calculating the ROI. Firstly, the cost to do something and secondly the outcome that is generated as a result (Leone, 2018).

After all, being aware of how much money flows in and out is crucial knowledge to understand, strengthen and grow any business (Hawkins, 2016).

2.1.6   Competitive Marketing Intelligence

In marketing it is important to focus on the benefits that a product has since this might attract a customer. Every marketer should focus on the different aspects that a product/service has to offer in order to increase the attractiveness for the merchandise or service. Generally speaking, marketers are responsible for implementing, promoting and distributing a goods and services. In order to do this it is essential to understand the competition and what a potential customer gets offered elsewhere and how this power to choose from an alternative company may influence future profit (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013). Being aware of the marketing strategies of others and how they are implementing and attracting their customers is crucial to know. Thus, understanding what competitors are doing is fundamental for the strategy that a marketer has to take. For example, a marketer always needs to be aware of the competitions prices, whether they are introducing a new product, if they are targeting new customers and through what kind of distribution channels they are expanding or whether they have a strong presence in social media with a lot of followers, a website that stands out or the advantage of a strong brand name. All these issues are key to be aware of who you are dealing with and to differentiate yourself in order to get ahead of them (DeMers, 2016).

However, not only knowing what the competition is up to is an important factor in marketing, thinking like the customer, gathering information and customer insight to implement a successful marketing strategy. This is needed to create a good relationship with potential clients and it creates value and customer satisfaction. Gathering information about customers is important but can be challenging. It does generate a competitive advantage but obtaining the correct information about the wants and needs of a customer can be challenging at times, since they do not always know themselves want it is they are looking for. In todays industry a number of information can be obtained through technology where great amounts of insights to people can be gathered. This can lead to an overwhelming amount of data that needs to be processed and sorted out before making an executive decision how the target customer is and what his or her needs and wants are (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013).

Competitive marketing intelligence is the process of collecting and analyzing data, which is publicly available of competitors or customers and thus being able to make an educated decision to achieve the target audiences. Through competitive intelligence it is possible to expand the knowledge that the company has and think more outside of the box and thus staying ahead of competition (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013).

Intelligence seekers have the ability to go through thousands of databases that provide information online, some even free of charge. An example of this would be the European Patent Offices activities, which involve providing patent information, even examining and evaluating patent applications. Over 70 million patent documents are free to access. In exchange for a fee, companies have the ability to subscribe to more than 3,000 online databases and search engines. Kompass, Hoover´s and LexisNexis would be an example of databases that provides useful information (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013). Nowadays, marketers have the ability to gather the information, which is relevant for them to decide on a marketing strategy that achieves competitive advantage in masses. Due to this, the continuous investment in technology that provides this advantage angle, which improves organizations efficiency is made often by marketing managers (McGonagle & Vella, 2002). Marketing managers who obtain this insight have the possibility to make fact- based decisions which make sense based on the marketing data and transform these into a tactical strategy to improve competitiveness (Heinrichs & Lims, 2005).

However, organizations, which are in competition, have the same access to this intelligence, which gives no one a competitive advantage. If an organization decides on proceeding with the investment to gain amore detailed insight into the potential benefits that might occur through this information, the intelligence they acquire may be the same as their direct competition. The real competitive advantage is obtained when using this information the right way. Solely obtaining the access to this intelligence is not difficult. The real difficulty is how they use it and what they do with this intelligence (Maltz & Kohli, 1996).

Marketing research and, thus, competitive marketing intelligence is the foundation of any marketing strategy and of any business plan. With the insight that is collected

and analyzed organizations can not only adopt their existing marketing plan, implement a new plan for new products or acquire insight on how the competition is doing but also have to stay up to date with the ever evolving technology changes. Adapting to the new digital resources that change and develop so quickly over time is essential for any organizations since it goes hand in hand with consumer demand. (Park, 2017).

Even though the tactic of collecting valuable data from competitors or customers is a helpful strategy, a lot of companies nowadays take steps to protect the information that is public and could potentially be obtained from the competition, Although it is legal to collect intelligence the question of ethics arises (Kotler & Armstorng & Harris & Piercy, 2013). The question about how this data can be obtained without disrespecting a customer's privacy is also a very big issue in the marketing area. Finding the balance in protecting privacy but also retracting public information is crucial in the field of marketing (Heinrichs & Lim, 2005).

The next chapter will focus on an in-depth look into the differences between online and offline marketing and explain which marketing tactic is useful for a specific business.

2.1.7 Online vs. offline marketing

The demand for online marketing has significantly increased a lot year by year and continues to grow rapidly. Even though this rapid growth was booming in the last couple of year and drew a lot of attention, a great deal of business owners still think that online marketing exists of commercial sites displaying banner ads and customers get overwhelmed with email spam campaigns. In reality however, there is a lot more to it. Internet marketing is a very broad area which can reach from creating a website until the placement of Google ads and analytics (Raude, 2017).

The different forms of creating an online identity, which the company is known for, are very extensive. *Search engine optimization* is a way of ranking a website in the unpaid "organic" search of customers. Having a higher ranking in the search engines can lead to a better visibility of the website and therefore is a good tool for online marketing.(Walker, 2010). All the significant search engines like Google, Bing or

Yahoo entail primary search outcomes, which are based on what the previous search of the user consisted of and is considered most relevant for the operator (Search Engine Land, n.d).

Email Marketing is considered as one of the most common ways of online marketing. It is under the top tools that are seen as most effective for increasing sales. It is an effective way of targeting the email subscribers and binding them to the company a little more by giving them the feeling of being more special than just regular customers. It is personalized; offers special deals or insider tips that non-email subscribers would not get access to (Walker, 2010).

Blogging, a marketing tactic that is uprising and booming because of its simple way of putting a business more into the spotlight by a third party. Not only online visibility is increased but also the company's product or service is pushed through so many different social media channels and reaches customers who would have otherwise not been reached that it is a very popular form of online marketing nowadays (Wainwrite, 2017).

Network marketing focuses on building relationships with potential customer targets. It is basically taking a step further and aiming to connect a business and a customer (Walker, 2010). A social networking site is a platform, which enables users to interact with other users through a public profile. It creates a connection through shared interests and is an ongoing circle of connecting people. It is not to be confused with a social media site even though they share a few similarities. A social networking site has a public of semi-public profile and established connections while social media can additionally share a lot of different content (Techopedia,n.d).

There are a lot of benefits that can be accomplished when using online marketing. It is a cost-efficient method of promotion with cheaper advertising methods that can contact customers faster and more effectively. Tracking results is also a huge benefit when it comes to online marketing because it gives the business a feeling of how the product or service is doing and have honest direct responses first hand. It is also a form of global marketing that reaches areas and people that with traditional

methods would never have been reached and thus has a broader reach to send a message and evoke the interest of new potential customers (Blunt, n.d).

Relying solely on online marketing tactics might be the wrong approach as well (Red Evolution ltd., 2015). Offline marketing tools target the customer using traditional media, which a lot of people feel more comfortable with. There is a broad choice when deciding on a offline marketing tactic which depends on which customer the company wants to target and how the message should be brought across. Awareness for a product demands a different approach than the aim to bring in direct sales. Awareness of a product or service can be generated through *PR, advertising, television or the radio or by an announcement in the press*. Offline sales are mostly generated through mailing, print campaigns, announcements of special offers, flyers, telemarketing or through word of mouth marketing (Red Evolution ltd., 2015).

To sum it up, both online as well as offline marketing tactics have their benefits and drawbacks. Of course it always depends on the customer and the business to find the best fit in order to generate the most profit (Red Evolution Ltd., 2015).

After the closer look into online and offline marketing tactics the next section aims to show how social media marketing influences a business and how marketing has grown because of it.

2.1.7.1 Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a commonly used marketing tactic used in the 21st century of conducting day-to-day business. Understanding the role of social media is crucial for marketers and managers. Its role is to increase brand awareness, drive up sales, improve the image of a brand, facilitating information flow, reducing costs for marketing and change the way customers and businesses interact with each other. It´s benefits spread out widely since it also gives business the chance of following and monitoring conversations and impressions that customers say first-hand about their product or service and then react in a thought through way and gives the

chance to change their strategy based on the immediate feedback that was given (Reto, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017).

Social media draws in almost every business nowadays. Having a somewhat active presence on social media is very critical to staying ahead of competition. Building up real relationships can also occur through social media since it is the fastest, easiest and nowadays most popular way to connect people. It gives customers the feeling of belonging and having a say in the company witch might not only increase sales but also builds up customer loyalty. Marketing on Facebook or Twitter might come in as a huge benefit for a business since the posts their might not be seen as direct adverting from a company but way more a source of information without being directly pressured (DeMers, 2014).

The following chapter describes the importance of marketing in smaller sized firms and how the approaches to a successful marketing tactic have to differentiate themselves from the approach of a marketing tactic in a well-established firm.

2.1.8   Marketing in smaller sized firms

The increasing significant of marketing over the past years is an important aspect of a firm's growth and performance. Marketing, in addition to its role in advertising and sales, is responsible for how a company is perceived by the public and is therefore critical to its overall success. (Morgan & Feng & Whitler, 2018)

The varied aspects of marketing are crucial to consider in any form of business. In smaller scale industries marketing is of great importance for generating revenues and is essential for the product production and promotion.

Finding the right marketing strategy for larger organizations and micro enterprises is difficult to obtain since well established firms rely on their reputation, their brand identity and mostly on an external professional marketing agency while for smaller scaled enterprises it is crucial to have a well thought through marketing strategy not only promote themselves but also to differentiate themselves from larger scale organizations and create their own identity. (Sadiqua, 2017)

In order for smaller sized businesses to survive, it is essential to include a good but also fitting marketing strategy into the firm's concept. The theory of marketing and the way it is taught does not fit for every business and if the aim is to get the best possible result out of the business, and individual strategy has to be applied and always adapted as the firm enters different stages (Carson, 1985).

Creating an identity is important. What does the company stand for, what is the target customer and what should the general thinking of the company be? Then going a little more in depth is important. What results are expected from the marketing strategy that was applied for the company? Do they meet the firm's expectations or even exceed them? And what content of the firm should be marketed, where are the strength that will attract the customer and thus should be pushed into the spotlight and where are weaknesses that should be downplayed? (Sester, 2018). All of the above listed questions should be taken into account before creating a marketing plan. Especially for smaller businesses that often feel the pressured by well-established firms, it is important to keep asking those questions and adapting their marketing plan in their different life stages. As Sester (2018) states, the competition never sleeps and thus it is crucial to always stay ahead of time in order to attract the targeted clientele.

Looking at what the competition is doing can be useful if the businesses are similar. What works for them and most importantly what is not working for them. Finding that gap and then creating an own strategy, which goes into the right direction but still differentiated itself from the competition is worth a lot (De Silva, 2018). Thus, learning from the competition but then digging a little deeper to improve a strategy can aid in standing out (De Silva, 2018). When aiming to stand out, especially for a smaller sized company, building a strong online presence it crucial. Especially in the early stages of the business it is key to stand out on social media or with a website because that is what attracts the most clientele. Customers nowadays are overwhelmed with offers and thus are searching for something that stands out and is different to the rest. The goal is to make your customers have that "wow" effect (De Silva, 2018).

2.2 Start-ups and marketing

Starting new ventures nowadays is considered as economic growth and forms new and innovative horizons for regions and nations. Not only does the creation of new jobs play a big role because of start-ups, it also allows competition to be challenged by creating new ideas, visions and setting a faster pace (Baraldi et al. & Havenvid & Linné & Öberg, 2018).

The following sections will go a little more into detail about influences that a start-up faces such as how a founder´s personal attributed help a start-up grow, how funding is generated, a start-ups theoretical lifecycle and finally what role marketing plays in a start-up in its early stages.

2.2.1 The founder´s personal attributes and ambition to grow

When someone decides on commencing a start-up, there is a high likelihood of personal interest that influences the decision to dive into a new field. The high personal interest and commitment of a founder is a key factor when comparing the new venture to an already established business and its manager. This has a very high importance because the effort put into a newly founded business stands in combination with its growth and performance. The drive that an entrepreneur might have has a great effect on the businesses future success, which is why the founder's personality plays a key role in the start-up field (Barringer & Jones, 2004).

The growth rate of a start-up also depends on the founder's ambition to grow as well as the environment, which they find themselves in is important for success. In 2011, a study was conducted where a closer look was taken at growing and non-growing start-ups investigating the reasons behind it more detailed. The study was conducted by Hansen and Hamilton, and measured an owner's ambition to grow when taking a closer look at their personal investment into the star-up as well as the time and effort they put into their work drive. Flexibility, optimism, strategic planning skills all where important factors taken into close consideration. The study showed that growing firms had different attributed than non-growing firms. They tended to be more flexible, innovative and personally invested with a drive of ambition that also led them into the international playing field (Blackburn, Hart & Wainwright, 2013).

Long-term success cannot be explained through luck, it reflects the hart work, long hours and dedication that is put into a company. There are several traits which entrepreneurs of successful start-ups share (Kittaneh, 2015). Firstly, these are *passion,* which is important since the sole thought of making money will not accomplish anything, often it is passion for a company, if someone likes what they are doing everyday and they are burning to make new connections and grow with time that successfully build up a reputation. Secondly, *calculations* are a crucial factor of being profitable. Planning and estimating what may work for the company is just as important as being motivated and passionate. Reaching the companies goals can only be met when calculating what is possible and always having a good overview of what is going on. Thirdly, *education.* If the owner of a business thinks he or she has all the answers, problems will occur. Continuously educating oneself is the key to success. The economy never stands still, technology never stands still, and adapting to changes is one of the most important attributes when wishing for permanent success (Kittaneh, 2015).

2.2.2 Funding for a Start-up

Converting an idea into a thriving business it not an easy task. Producing capital with this idea can be even harder but the goal of every new venture is to have a revenue-driving business. The challenge of finding funding for a start up is a very big issue for a lot of new businesses. It is continuously getting harder to find funding for a start up since competition is getting more and more intense. Investors have a higher expectation since they want to invest and park their money securely with the promise of revenue in the future (Newlands, 2017).

An angle investor who wants to invest personal funds and expect a percentage in return or part of the ownership is also a popular possibility when looking for funding. Banks also tend to fund in new ideas, lending money to upcoming start-ups. When considering a loan from a bank, it is important to have a good business plan and present a well thought out strategy. Whereas with personal investors who can be family or friends, trust plays a bigger role. Trust in the business and the ability to turn an idea into a start-up. It is still advised however to professionally set up a contract and define terms and conditions clearly (Ahmed, 2017).

2.2.3 Start-up lifecycle

From the moment an idea is developed into a business, the businesses lifecycle commences. As the business grows and develops, it is important to be award in what stage it currently is in order to meet objectives, set priorities and form strategies (Petch, 2016). The 7 stages of a business lifecycle are (Shah, 2016):

a) Idea: The initial stage is coming up with an idea or even just a thought.

b) Start-up: In this stage the idea is tuned into a legally existing start-up with goods or services in production.

c) Growth: The business developed itself through the early year and is starting to generate revenues with increasing opportunities coming its way.

d) Established: Start-up is now a thriving company with a secure place in the market and customer satisfaction. Operations turn more into a routine.

e) Expansion: Increasing growth determines the life cycle. New markets and a broader target of customer categorized this stage. Larger distribution channels and revenue are streaming in.

f) Mature: Stable profit and sales over the years but stating challenges with the threat of falling sales. The decision of exit or expansion has to be made.

g) Exit: Cash out the start-up or shutting down the start-up

2.2.4   The importance of marketing in the early stages of a start-up

Having a solid marketing strategy for the early stages of a start-up business is crucial. Early-stage start-ups should have a very precise and well thought out strategy that goes more in depth and wakes up the interest of potential customers. It is necessary to put a start-up on the right path and to keep it there as well, there is nothing worse than when a business starts out strong and wakes a lot of interest but then in the end effect cannot deliver its promises. This is why a strong marketing strategy needs to be implemented, where the message of the start-up is highlighted. Especially in the early stages, the marketing strategy should be strong and evolve as necessary (Duris, 2011).

Market research should be conducted in order to make sure that there is a lack in the market and to secure that the targeted market is ready. A marketing plan should also be implemented that incorporated several marketing tactics that help reach business goals, such as a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats) or PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) analysis, analyzing the competition and budget (Duris, 2018).

While developing and testing the marketing goals that are set, the most important factor is to examine to what the target audience responds to the most. Online or in-person surveys, reviews and other questionnaires help determine where the strength of the start-up lies and where the focus should be. Making the product stand out to attract interest is key for the early stages. The product must make a wave and impress people, because word of mouth and creating hype around the product makes or breaks future start-ups (Manning, 2017).

Thus, having a strong social media presence and an outstanding website also helps with the way the start-up is perceived. It should be clearly structured and not overwhelm the customer with information, but giving them enough to make them curious and satisfied (Duris, 2011).

Another important activity is to develop a retention strategy to bind customers. Thus, developed high levels of customer satisfactions to turn into loyal customers are crucial. Therefore, giving them the service that they expect is very important,

because it is easy for them to go to the competition and not return (Duris, 2011), also it is cheaper to keep existing customers and attain new ones.

The next section focuses on the start-up scene in Vienna and how the city itself is perceived as an upcoming hub with its features shaping how it is viewed for start-ups.

3 Start-up scene in Vienna

For a founder of a start-up, finding the right location is of critical importance. Before even commencing the journey of developing a business the first main question that needs to be asked is where to start the business.

When someone has that lightning idea or the solution to a problem that could target a niche in the market, the decision of where to put down roots is not an easy one. There are many factors that influence a big step like this, for example: whether the right target customer lives there, if there are networking possibilities, whether there is support from the government, office costs, access to funding or staffing needs. All these factors need to be clarified before deciding on a location (Edgecomb, 2017). The objective of this thesis is to examine the Viennese start-up scene and what marketing tactics would be beneficial for early stages start-ups.

Vienna, a city that characterizes itself with culture and tradition might not be the first city that comes to mind when thinking about an innovative, driven and ever-changing start-up center. However, in 2015 there were approximately 190.000 students in Vienna with a lot of nationalities that form a big pool of potential co-founders (Bursuk & Wallner, 2017). A high purchasing power in the population of Vienna also increases its attractiveness as well as the entry to the DACH market (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), which is the largest single language market in Europe (Bursuk & Wallner, 2017).

Vienna has the huge advantage of location. The city is situated ideally since many European cities and capitals can easily be reached from Vienna. Less than two-hour

flights and short drives to other thriving cities make Vienna an ideal connection to other European countries. The geographical location is a big part why the Viennese start-up scene is increasingly growing (Venionaire Capital, 2015).

Even though some of the big start-up capitals like London, Chicago or Berlin do have a lot of features that attract start-ups, Vienna can keep up and prove itself with Europe´s biggest start-up and innovation hub (Edgecomb, 2017). The 900 square meter hub defines itself with a unique and thriving ecosystem and each year is home to 100 of the most thriving start-ups in various fields. In encourages start-ups to join because of its unique offer of mentoring, networking, workshops, and individual coaching as well as offers free working space. This makes Vienna a rising destination for start-ups and shows a lot of existing and growing potential.

It also characterizes itself with a strong start-up ecosystem, which provides easy access to knowledge and financial support for every stage of the business. Austria holds a lot of conferences and lecture that provide the possibility of further education and to gain the know-how of starting a business. In term of financial support, Austria offers a comprehensive system of public funding that is generated through taxes and supports measures of start-up and innovation projects. Two of the biggest funding sources of Austria are the Austria Wirtschaftsservices GmbH (aws) and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), which offer loans or non-repayable grants (Reiter- Braunwieser, n.d).

Every fifth founder with a potential start-up idea launches his or her business abroad. A survey was conducted by the European Start-up Initiative (ESI) – Start-up Heatmap Europe 2016, 700 founders where asked about their past experience in the start-up sector. Each of them got up to five votes from a list of thirty cities for the question of where they would launch their start-up now if they had the chance to start all over. Out of 2,393 total votes for establishes founders Vienna was ranked 10th. They were also asked to rank Vienna out of five starts in terms of different features whereby ecosystem got 3.8 stars, talent 3.2 stars, burn rate 3.2 stars and capital 2.9 starts out of five. When asked how many percent of founders would start

over in Vienna if they had the chance, 19% of Western Europe founders said yes (Kavan, 2017).

Thus, it can be stated that over the last 25 years Vienna has developed itself as a city of enterprises attracting investors and founders by offering structure, financial support and the drive to actively work with new businesses that strive for innovation (Preveden, n.d). Vienna is not a city that is easily overlooked and is forming to be a very attractive destination to develop and launch a new business idea because of its high quality of life, abundance of talented labor and high-level research (Kavan, 2017).

4   Methodology

Generally researchers either chose to utilize primary or secondary sources or they even use both. Primary data is collected for a specific project or thesis, where no other literature in this context exists. This data can be collected via interviews, surveys, questionnaires or case studies when the results and findings are primary data that can either support the literature review or prove it wrong. On the other hand secondary data is collected from already existing researches, which can be found in journals, books, reports or official statistics and should also support the results of the findings. This thesis makes use of primary as well as secondary support the reasons of conducting this research and therefore makes the methodology of particular interest.

4.1   Interviews as a primary source of data

One of the most flexible and commonly used methods of collecting qualitative data is through interviews. An interview basically is a guided conversation between the researcher and an expert (Malhotra, 2006).

This paper used interviews as a source for primary data and the purpose is to investigate how marketing tactics can be applied to support early stage start-ups narrowed down to the location of Vienna. The decision to use interviews as a primary source of data was made to intensely investigate a more qualitative approach. The fundamental elements of qualitative research approaches give a

closer insight to the question "why". Understanding the research problem is a typical characteristic of qualitative research. The aim is to go a little more in-depth through obtaining emotions, opinions, behaviors, etc.

There are a number of reasons why obtaining primary data through interviews is a beneficial approach. First of all, it allows flexibility to adapt the questions and leaves room to support the argument with logical thinking which allows different perceptions that might influence each individual start-up and avoid generalizing all marketing approaches. Second, a more in-depth explanation of each individuals´ perception can be examined through interviews and it also has the advantage to understand unexpected results (Malhotra, 2006).

The next section will explain the design of the interviews.

4.2   Design of the interview

Since the research of this thesis is based on interviews with founders and experts in the start-up sector, the results will be collected on a document and analyzed in the later following results chapter. For the most accurate results, all individual experts are asked to answer honestly and in detail to obtain results as precise as possible. Since interviews are not advised for gaining a large number of information ten experts of the start-up field will be asked to answer the questions to the best of their abilities.

The Interview consists of fifteen questions that allow a detailed insight into marketing in early stage start-ups. All interview questions plus the answers can be found written out in the appendix A.

First of all the experts are asked to list their name and quickly explain their profile before going a little more into detail about their start-up and the role they have, how many employees are working in the start-up, the reasons why it was founded and what attracted them to the start-up scene. Then they will be asked to elaborate on the growth of their start-up and how fast it has developed since day one in terms of profit and customer numbers. After this is clarified, the last question for the start-up itself is about their competitive environment and how competition either inspires

or influences them on their daily activities. After these five questions the focus will turn to marketing.

The questions in regard to marketing ask them to elaborate what marketing means to them, how they developed their marketing strategy in the early stages of their start-up and how marketing tactics are adapted to customer demand or competition.

Then marketing intelligence is questioned and if they made use of marketing intelligence approaches and how these influence their marketing strategy. The next question is how big of a role the marketplace plays before going into a market and how the marketplace is evaluated before attracting customers. Then time will play an important factor and they are asked whether they adapt their strategy over time and how much effort goes into an early stage start-up. Then the interviewees were asked whether they reach out for any support to enhance their marketing strategy and to list the biggest challenges that evolved while developing their marketing strategies in the early stages of their start-up. The last question related to the future of marketing and sales, what they think it will consist of and what it will bring. Also, interviewees were given the opportunity to make any other points, which they think are relevant to add for this research.

4.3   Sample of the start-up

In order to obtain sufficient practical information that supports the theoretical part of the thesis ten interviews were conducted with start-ups based in Vienna. Out of these ten interviewees, two were experts in the field; established investors on different start-ups and start-up owners themselves and eight were founders of different start-ups or marketing managers in the start-up. Many of the start-ups are already up and running so in the interview the participants were asked to reflect back on the early stages of their start-up in order to collect correct data. Having the mix of two experts and eight working intensely in the start-up field provides a closer look into different perspectives. Having participants from different positions answer the questions ensures accuracy, validity and reliability of the findings. A summary of each interview, which was conducted personally or over the telephone, can be found attached in Appendix A.

4.4 Snowball Sampling

Interviews are very time consuming and therefore the experts were selected carefully in order to obtain the most suitable outcome for this research topic. In the start-up scene of Vienna, a lot of deals run over word of mouth and connections. This can also be said for the research of this thesis. Interviewees recruited other participants to take part of the study and through communication more willing founders of start-ups were found that participated. For this thesis snowball sampling (also called non-probability or non-random sampling) was the right method since participants that came over personal recommendation were willing to provide a closer insight and elaborate on their answers in more detail. The method provided more advantages for this thesis than simple random sampling since it overcame lack of participation, detected start-ups that would have been overlooked and was a time efficient way of conducting the interviews.

5   Results

5.1   Profile and Start-up of the Interviewees

This section will consist of a detailed look into each start-up that was investigated in order to provide better insight how marketing tactics where best applied and where they have been proven most effective in the early stages of a start-ups lifecycle.

The ten start-ups that were interviewed give different perspectives and a closer insight which marketing tactic have been proven most effective to them and which decisions have increased the growth of their start-up.

The following section will state a brief overview of each start-up including who the interviewee is and what role he or she plays in the start-up, as well as a quick summery of what the purpose of the start-up is will be provided.

Name: David Mirzaei

Position: Marketing Manager at Byrd

Start-up: Byrd was founded in July 2016 in Vienna and provides a solution for online shops, facilitating outsourcing through the use of a web-application. The ultimate goal is to turn shipping into a stress-free experience. The growth of this start-up was tremendously increasing since the start, now in 2018 an expansion to Germany has been made and approximately 1000 registered customers with about 100 shipping regularly have been counted as clients of the start-up. Especially the German market shows high interest for the start-up and demand in very high.

Name: Christopf Hinterplattner

Position: CEO and Co-founder of Bikemap

Start-up: Bikemap is a fast growing community for sports enthusiasts, with a focus on cyclists around the world since 2015. Mr. Hinterplattner had a start-up career from the beginning on. First he worked in different kinds of start-ups before developing his own service. Bikemap can track and share more than 3.5 million cycle routs and has the big advantage of a full offline function as well. With 13 employees the 1st year was used to build the brand and the product. In the years after the product had a steady increase in the market and was running on its own.

Name: Jakob Hofer

Position: Chief Marketing Officer and Co-founder of Anyline

Start-up: Anyline was founded in 2014 and Mr. Hofer is the CMO with 29 employees currently working for the start-up. The Anyline team has worked on its patented optical character recognition technology and has already attracted well-known customers. It takes away the pain of manually typing in details of your passport, license plat, ID, drivers license, etc. With the Anyline SDK, smartphone cameras can process written characters in real time, even when offline.

Name: Sabine Rückeshäuser

Position: Senior Digital Marketing Manager at JobRocker

Start-up: JobRocker is a digital headhunting start-up in Vienna where 60 people are currently employed, since 2016. It had a tremendous growth from the start

and customer numbers as well as profit is steadily increasing monthly. The objective is to find the most suitable fit for a company and connect the two parties through an external platform.

Name: Mag. (FH) Paul Blaguss

Position: CEO and Managing Director of Blaguss Travel GmbH. Founder and CEO of the Vienna Pass.

Start-up: The Vienna Pass is a card that opens all the doors for sightseeing and gives the opportunity to discover Vienna, since 2015. With the free guidebook attached customers not only get the ultimate experience of Vienna but they also can enjoy a stress-free time to enjoy the city. It includes free entry in over 60 of Vienna's must see sights and museums and also gives the opportunity to get a feeling of the city through use of the Hop On Hop Off sightseeing tours. In addition to that a fast track entry is also guaranteed, so customers have the advantage of avoiding long queuing.

Name: Expert X

Position: Co-founder of Journi

Start-up: Journi is a mobile Travel book. It is an App constructed to capture personal adventures and automatically put them in a timeline to avoid forgetting anything. Pictures, videos and even notes can all be kept on Journi. Launched in 2014 Journi has a strong demand. In 2017 Journi had about 500.000 users.

Name: Klaudia Bachinger

Position: Founder and CEO of WisR

Start-up: WisR is a recruiting platform for young retirees with the objective to connect cooperation's and companies with the silver experts, since 2017. The advantages of this platform are to bring different perspectives together and helping silver agers bring their talents and expertise back into the labor market. The goal is to show that cross-generational teams can provide innovation and widen the horizon of every party.

Name: Manuel Zwittag

Position: CEO and Co-founder of rublys GmbH

Start-up: Rublys GmbH was founded in 2013 in Vienna and has the purpose of simplifying engagement between millennials and brand through a gamified mobile marketing channel. The greatest advantages of this process are that the customer target, which are millennials want to communicate with the brands or the company. It is an advanced marketing solution with a performance rate up to 26 times better than a regular mobile app. The start-up has up to 50 employees.

Name: DI Camilla Sievers

Position: CEO and Co-founder of treats. Contemporary snacks.

Start-up: Treats offers 100% healthy snacks. It searches within Europe for the healthiest snacks and drinks and delivers them straight home to their customers. The start-up was founded in 2015 and enables easy and effortless ways of delivering the in-between snack that cannot be found in the

supermarkets. Its goal is to attract customers by promising a healthy lifestyle, boosting their energy and at the same time tasting delicious. Its target customers are individuals as well as companies. It start-up consists of around 10 employees.

Name: Katharina Klausberger

Position: CEO and Co-Founder of Shpock App

Start-up: Launched in September 2012 Shpock is an app that enables users to buy, sell of even give items away for free. Millions of private clients try to distribute their goods on this platform. It brings customer and seller together and simplifies the process of interaction. Its attractiveness defines itself by not charging a fee of customers when a successful purchase or sell has been made. The flea market app attracts up to 10 million users earned the "Android App Excellence" award in 2018. With about 120 employees Shpock is continuously rising and increasing in growth.

5.2   Findings for marketing in early stage start-ups

5.2.1   The role of marketing and sales for early stage start-ups

The first question that was asked in the marketing part of the interview was: "What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?" The purpose of this question was to open up the heavy focus of marketing that this thesis is tackling and to obtain a general feeling how the participants stand towards marketing in early

stages of their start-ups. Out of ten interviewees, eight responses contained the importance of customer approach. Building trust and raising awareness in the targeted market is one of the main challenges that start-ups face right at the start of their launch. Creating noise in the B2C sector and grasping the attention and most important the interest of customers is what marketing is all in the early stages. Marketing plays a key role when trying to attract customers since in the beginning phase of any business that can be one of the most challenging parts. The following quote demonstrates the importance of marketing for the Co-founder of treats:
"Marketing opens up the marketplace and raises awareness of the product."

5.2.2 Designing the marketing and sales strategy

When the question "How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?" was asked, opinions started to go in different directions, which is logical since the investigated start-ups operate in different fields and target different groups.

Two of the start-ups that were questioned gave a pretty similar response. They both stated that designing a marketing strategy was put off in the beginning because first of all it was important to build up the start-up interim and then presenting it to the targeted customers. The Quote by the Senior Digital Marketing Director of JobRocker: "*In the early stage of JobRocker, the main focus was to hire the first employees and build the overall process of how we operate. Marketing just became important a little later on."*

The Chief Marketing Officer and Co-founder of Anyline stated: *"It was important for us to understand, who we need to convince. Target the right developers, the right project managers and the right audience and then we designed the marketing strategy based on the outcomes we had."*

In the literature review, KPIs were looked at more detailed and how these are important measures in marketing to see how a business is performing and where the strengths and weaknesses lie. The results show that KPIs are an important factor to consider when designing a marketing and sales strategy. The CEO and Co-founder of rublys GmbH stated that making a detailed outline, setting up goals and KPI is essential to observe how the start-up is developing and if the growth is as expected or if the strategy should be changed.

For the founder and managing director of the Vienna Pass described the growth of the start-up and how it exceeded all expectations. In the fist year they wanted to make 25.000 passes, in the second year 50.000 passes and in the third year 100.000 passes.

They ended up making 42.000 in the first year, in the second 89.000 passes and in the third 135.000. The growth exceeded every expectation and is increasingly rising.

The growth of this start-up could be explained by the design of their marketing and sales strategy. The following quote briefly explains their approach for designing strategies:

"We have quite a few marketing strategies, but the one proven to be very effective has been the distribution of third parties. Here a third party helps distribute the Vienna Pass and will get a provision for selling it. This is how we rapidly expanded the growth of our product and got the word out. 80% of the Vienna Passes gets purchased online however and thus our presence in very strong on all of our online platforms."

5.2.3   Adapting marketing tactics to customer demand

Adapting marketing tactics is important for start-ups as well. Especially in the early stages where the market is new, start-ups need to take a close look what works and what could be improved. Responding to customer demand fluctuations and gathering feedback is one of the most mentioned actions the interviewees highlighted. Responding to customer needs strengthens the start-up and gathering first hand input is crucial for future growth since it is a way of binding the customer and building up a stable relationship and loyalty. The CEO and Co-founder of Shpock said: "*By analysing their demands we try to fulfil their wishes as best we can.*"

5.2.4   Understanding the marketplace before entering the market to attract new customers

In the theoretical part of the thesis, understanding the marketplace is described as a key factor for future success. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of the market, which is entered important for positioning a product or service and helps identify the targeted customer. The importance of understanding the marketplace

can also be proven by the answers the participants gave. The CEO and Co-founder of Bikemap agreed by stating: *"It is important to launch a test product before implementing the original. We conducted a lot of surveys and gathered feedback, then we adapted to this feedback. We actively communicated with users and answered concerns and questions."*

The senior digital marketing manager at JobRocker stated that understanding the marketplace beforehand is inevitable. It should be the first step every start-up takes; if this is not done correctly it is hard to generate demand and hype around a product.

5.2.5 Competitive environment and marketing intelligence

In the literature of this thesis the importance of being aware of the competition was highlighted. It was stated that being aware of the marketing strategies of others and knowing how they attract and their customers is a key factor to investigate when developing an own strategy.

The majority of the respondents say that they implement their own strategy and that although they know what their competition is up to is important, they still believe in doing their own thing and providing a unique angle that will attract customers.

Two of the interviewees stated that they do have competition but no direct competition, so it would be hard for them to design a strategy based on an already well-established company if they do not have the same unique angle as them.

The Chief Marketing Office and Co-founder of Anyline works on close proximity with his competition because he said that for his start-up they share leads and partnership which helps develop and create a market. This is called healthy competition where both parties benefit from each other.

For a start-up like Bikemap, which had a later entry into the market, competition was high since their main competitor was Runtastic, an already well established start-up in the same field as Bikemap. The CEO and Co-founder of Bikemap however stated that learning from their competition was essential for them in the beginning.

"In the daily marketing strategy we have to be very sharp in focus and position it not as a general sports ad. It is important to stay in the field of biking (the market for that is big enough). Since there is a lot of competition we knew that there was a place for Bikemap in the market and we learned a lot through failures of our competitors. "For this particular start-up, the competition helped them to improve and grow.

5.2.6   The amount of time that early stage start-ups focus on marketing

Time is of great importance, especially in the early stages of a business. According to the interviewees there always seems to be too little and it is challenging to work on every detail of the start-up at the same time. The answers spread out in different directions for this question as well. Some said that marketing took up a quarter of all the efforts and some said at the very beginning marketing was not their main focus so it took up little to no time. *"I think in the early stages it would be a very little amount since the resources in an early-stage start-up are very limited. The focus would rather be on getting to know the market and starting with sales and do PR. I think it would be around 20-30%."* Demonstrated by the senior digital marketing manager of JobRocker.

The Co-founder of treats even went as far as saying that marketing and sales efforts sum up to ¾ of the time invested in the start-up. *"The early stages demanded the most time and effort of our marketing and sales strategies. I would even say ¾ of the time was invested in these areas. "*

5.2.7   Reaching out for support to enhance marketing outcomes

The majority of CEO and Co-founders of start-ups that were asked to provide insights, reached out for support to enhance and implement their marketing tactics. Whether it was through workshops or through in-house marketing departments. External experienced professionals have the job of knowing what exactly is going on in the market and have the right know-how to investigate what strategy would be the best fir for the product or service. Both the Vienna Pass and JobRocker believe in Google ad words and reached out for professional help in this department because

they say positioning the product right is a key factor for success. Even the CEO and Co-founder of Bikemap said:" *I am not the biggest fan of paid channels but the quality of the product might get lost if we don't use it, so yes we did reach out."*

5.2.8 Biggest challenges faced when developing a marketing strategy in the early stages of a start-up

It is difficult to generalize the biggest challenges that start-up face in the early stages since every start-up has their individual angle. The theory in the literature suggest that strategically planning where a business plan, detailed marketing tactics a list of customers and so on, is the most challenging part for successful marketing in the early stages. Some of the respondents gave exactly that answer and elaborated how difficult it was to set up a strategy since the industry might pivot, some said that it was learning from their mistakes as well as learning from the mistakes of their competition and some said it was gathering the resources needed to be creative and come up with ideas how to generate money and resources.

However some start-ups gave responses that the literature did not see as one of the biggest challenges that start-ups might be confronted with. For Vienna Pass the biggest challenge was putting up a contract with the sight of Vienna and negotiate about the provision and for WisR, the biggest challenge was how to use the right wording for seniors, the wrong wording might have had a negative effect on them and this would have hurt the customer relationship and sales.

This shines a clear light on the fact that every start-up works in their own ways and has their own strengths and weaknesses that they need to focus on.

5.3 Future prognoses for marketing in start-ups

In the last question of the interview, respondents were asked to give their option about what the future of marketing in early stage start-ups will bring and what they think will be a successful approach when using marketing tactics in early stage start-ups. The opinions parted a little on this specific topic. Both the Marketing Manager at Byrd, the CEO of WisR and the Senior Digital Marketing Manager at JobRocker are convinced that growth hacking will influence early stage start-ups in the field of marketing a lot. They believe that the mix of marketing, analyzing data and the

overview of how the start-up is developing is an essential part for upcoming start-ups. The goal of growth hacking is to achieve growth in the early stages of the start-up in order to awaken awareness. The senior digital marketing manager at JobRocker stated: *"Growth is extremely important in the first years so finding creative ways to gain sustainable growth will always be the challenge. Founders who are looking for marketing talents should definitely look out for analytical and creative thinkers to tackle this challenge."*

Growth hacking is known to be the optimal combination of product, user experience and marketing and takes these three factors as main influencers of a start-ups growth.

The following quotes the Chief Marketing Officer and Co-Founder of Anyline: *"I think for every start-up in the future it is important to firstly know who the customer would be and of there is a place in the market for this product. Listen to your customer."* Understanding the demand of the product first, before implementing a product was also a common opinion. Quite a few respondents were convinced that researching the marketplace beforehand and test a prototype is as important now as it will be in the future.

For the CEO and Co-founder of Shpock and the CEO and Co-Founder of Bikemap the future of marketing in early stage start-ups was quite hard to predict since they are of the opinion that every start-up should focus on their main strengths, which most of the time cannot be generalized. The following quote demonstrated by the CEO and Co-founder of Bikemap: *"Never generalize marketing in start-ups. What works for A might not work for B."*

The CEO and Co-Founder at rublys GmbH criticizes that commonly used marketing tactics where the personal touch to the customer can easily get lost will have a negative effect and raise questions of ethics in social media. He stated that people will be more hesitant to provide their personal details and that will take a toll on marketing of firms.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Final remarks

The research question of this thesis is "Marketing tactics used by early stage start-ups, an analysis of the Viennese start-up scene" and this question opened up a detailed research into the start-up scene in Vienna and how start-ups in that area implemented and used marketing tactics to enhance their chance of success. The research conducted shows that the start-up scene in Vienna is booming (Venionaire Capital, 2015). Although Vienna might not be the first city that comes to mind when thinking about start-ups, it has a lot of advantages for start-ups to form their headquarters in the city. From location until networking opportunities, Vienna is an up-and-coming start-up hub that should not be underestimated (Edgecomb, 2017).

This thesis was able to provide inside into how ten start-ups managed marketing in the early stages and what tactics benefited them most. Overall, the feedback was very positive for marketing. Not one interviewee said that it works without any marketing tactics, but of course the amount of marketing the start-ups use if different from business to business. A fact, they all agreed on was the importance of understanding the marketplace before entering. Each start-up spent intense time on elaborating the market and conducting detailed research on how to position a product. Since a market consists of a place where goods and services are exchanged and potential customers are found it is crucial to understand a market no matter whether tangible or intangible goods are exchanged (Mu et al., 2018).

Marketing research is considered to be a very important feature that needs to be evaluated before developing a strategy. The literature suggests that market research is one of the founding stones that influence any kind of business, especially in the early stages (Anderson & Narus, 1998). The participants agree with the theoretical approach that obtaining insight into a market and conducting detailed market research is of critical importance when designing a marketing and sales strategy.

Developing a marketing strategy, and even calling in external help for the development is also a crucial part of this thesis. The literature review, as well as the practical part of this research, suggests that forming a well thought-trough strategy

is the foundation of any successful start-up that wants to grow (Egelhoff, 2018). The importance of setting up a marketing strategy should be aware to every marketer and a lot of time should be spent on trying to reach the objectives that a company sets itself in their early stages (Ioannou, 2010).

One of the main findings from the interviews is how deep marketing affects early stage start-ups. It is important to raise awareness, position the product, attract customers, bind those customers and keep sales up. A detailed strategy that contains a business plan and a marketing campaign holding all the future objectives structures the start-up. Setting up KPIs is essential to monitor the business and analyze if all goals are met as planned. Marketing spreads itself into the bones of a start-up and is essential for success.

6.2   Limitations and recommendations of the research

Even though the research was conducted with interviews, which gave insight into opinions and facts about marketing in the early stages of a start-up in Vienna, there are limitations to this research.

For the practical part of this thesis, a qualitative research method was conducted through ten interviews. This method is beneficial to gain in- depth knowledge into the investigated area but also comes with limitations. As a qualitative method often provides open-ended results because a lot of personal experience and perception is collected, it gives the participants more control over the end results and over the data that is collected. This means it is hard to prove the results in a different setting and results are not seen objectively.

When conducting interviews, fewer participants are asked to provide their input, which means that generalizing the findings is difficult due to the fact that fewer people were studies. This thesis provides results for ten asked founders of a start-up and thus is only conducted amongst a small sample. Therefore it can be stated that it is limited to explaining something rather than having the possibility of making a decision. It is a less structured research method, which collects information to explain peoples reasoning and motivation. Selecting participants who are able to

support and represent the researched topic correctly is not an easy task. Interviews may have a biased effect due to the mood of the participant or the interaction with the interviewer.

Quantitative methods use numerical analysis to generalize opinions and behaviors and thus provide a deeper insight into results generated from a large sampling pool. A quantitative approach is also less time consuming than a qualitative one and therefore gives the opportunity of reaching a wider range of participants.

The aim and objectives of this thesis are stated quite broad. An improvement would be to specify the research question more in order to obtain more precise and exact results and to increase the level of focus of the study.

Another limitation that may have occurred when conducting this thesis might be that it is limited to the city of Vienna. The start-up field is widely popular all around the world and approaches might be different from location to location. Even though a theoretical plan for conducting a marketing strategy is explained very detailed in a lot of books, how the theory can play out in the practice might be different due to cultural differences, preferences and opportunities that the surrounding area has to offer.

For this research topic face-to-face data was collected and has been proven to be extremely importan (Malhotra, 2016)t since a lot of the respondents gave detailed insight and elaborated on their reasons of their answer. Although accurate screening and capturing the emotions and behaviors of respondents in an important aspect of this for of data collection, there are quite a few downsides to this tactic as well. For example, limited sample size and the attitude of participants' counts a lot. The interviews conducted always took up to 30 minutes and because of this a lot of potential start-ups that were contacted declined to answer the questions, since they did not find the time. A bigger sample size would need more time to find, however might have been an advantage for the research in order to provide more in-depth results and it would be easier to generalize the results and give an objective statement of the findings.

A recommendation to this problem, suggested by one of the start-up founders would be to conduct the research in form of a survey since this is time saving and

thus there might be the possibility that more start-ups would be interested to take five minutes and answer the questions. A survey has the advantage that it is easy to develop using specific software that summarizes all of the results at once and stating a clear outcome. This can easily be done online and could attract more responses. The downside of this would be the fact that respondents could not elaborate on their answers. It would simply be an alternative way of gather more input than with data-collection.

Also since marketing is a widely spread out field, another recommendation would be to focus on one specific marketing tactic instead of diving into the broad topic of it. For example, focusing just on the competitive environment and how marketing tactics are used to obtain a competitive advantage might me of advantage with the sample size that was researched.

Marketing tactics used by early stage start-ups was carried out in the study but a lot of start-ups were already well establishes and thus were asked to reflect back on their early stages. Another advantage for the research would have been if all of the start-ups were established within the last two years and this might have a effect on the results as well since experience is different and marketing tactics change over the years.

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Appendix A

Interview 1 was held on the 8th of Mai at 09.30 with David Mirzaei the Marketing Manager at Byrd.

1. **Profile**
   o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

   David Mirzaei. I am Marketing Manager at Byrd and currently finishing my Master Degree in Marketing.

2. **Your start-up**
   o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

   We provide a complete fulfillment solution for online shops, based on a web-application that makes outsourcing incredibly easy and turns the painful process of shipping into a hassle-free experience.

   o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scence?

   I didn't found it myself. But Alex, our CEO, he was already enrolled in a specialization during his bachelor degree, called entrepreneurship & innovation which reflects his entrepreneurial spirit.

   o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What are your prognoses for the future?

   byrd was founded in July 2016 in Vienna and since then it has already expanded to Germany. We have approx. 1000 registered customers of which 100 are shipping on a regular basis. Especially, in Germany we see a lot of demand and potential for future development as e-commerce is booming.

   o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

   There is a lot of competition out there and this is the reason why we try to point out our USP to potential customers. However, we focus more on our company and the service we deliver to our customers.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

At the beginning, it was especially important approach customers in the context of direct meetings in order to build trust and convince customers. PR is very helpful with regard to brand awareness. Our TV presence in a startup show was incredibly beneficial in order to be regarded as a trustworthy company, which had a positive impact on sales activities.

Due to limited budget for marketing we are focusing on online marketing with the aim of maximizing conversions.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

In meetings with interdisciplinary teams from Sales & marketing on a bi-monthly basis.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

We try to respond to customer demand fluctuations with respective marketing & sales campaigns.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

The knowledge of customer needs is crucial, in order to build required internal processes which helps to fulfill those needs accordingly. Satisfy the customers and promote WOM!

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Yes, a startup evolves over time and this requires changes. In our specific case, we changed our customer segment, which required a reorientation.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

The majority of the tasks were related to daily business, developing internal processes etc. at the very beginning, while outbound sales were done by a rather small sales-team and marketing as well. As the allocation of work varies over time, it is rather difficult to give an estimation.

o   Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

Workshops of investor-ecosystems.

o   What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

It is impossible to plan ahead because the business might pivot.

o   Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

Growth-hacking.

Interview 2 was held on the 22nd of Mai at 8.00 o´clock with Christopf Hinterplattner the CEO and Co-Founder of Bikemap.

1. **Profile**
o   Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Christof Hinterplattner, CEO & Co-founder of Bikemap. I had a classical start-up career and actively always had jobs in the start-up scene to gather experience before starting my own start-up.

2. **Your start-up**
o   Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Bikemap is a fast growing active sports-community of cyclists around the world, which can track and share more than 3.5M cycle routes. Full offline functions as well as outstanding solutions of navigations in more than 100 countries.
13 people work at Bikemap.

o   Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I have always been attracted to the start-up scene and worked as a consultant and communication departments before taking the step if founding a start-up.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

In the 1st year we build the product, which was not really year for active growth. Then took a step back for planning and improvements and then the product was running on its own.

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

The start-up did have a later entry into the market and one of the main competitors that was already well established was runtastic. Up to now still a lot of competition.

In the daily marketing strategy we have to be very sharp in focus and position it not as a general sports ad. It is important to stay in the field of biking (the market for that is big enough)
Since there is a lot of competition we knew that there was a place for Bikemap in the market and we learned a lot through failures of our competitors.

3. **Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up**
o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

Marketing for us is a tool to generate attraction in the B2C sector. We are highly engaged in marketing and especially in the early stages it was important for us to have a strong strategy that differentiated us from the competition.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

Identify existing and potential customers needs and conduct the necessary market research. Highlight strengths and create enough noise that the target audience knows about your product.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

Feedback loops, for example Facebook and actively participating in discussion boards to obtain knowledge about all the possibilities.

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

Yes it was easy for us since there was already quite a lot of competition. We looked at competition and improved our product.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

It is important to launch a test product before implementing the original. We conducted a lot of surveys and gathers feedback, then we adapted to this feedback. We actively communicated with users and answered concerns and questions.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Yes because there can be no one single solution in an experimental field.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

First 2 years we introduced the product into the market organically and after those 2 years we started adding tracking tools and synchronized it with the right marketing tactics → the growth was faster that way.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

I am not the biggest fan of paid channels but the quality of the product might get lost if we don't use it, so yes we did reach out.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

It was a mixture of learning from failure and learning from competition. It is hard to adapt a strategy if you already have your mind set up to something.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

Never generalize marketing in start-ups. What works for A might not work for B

Interview 3 was held on the 22nd of Mai at 9.30 o´clock with Jakob Hofer the Chief Marketing Officer and Co-Founder of Anyline.

1. **Profile**
   o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

   Jakob Hofer, Chief Marketing Officer and Co.Founder at Anyline. I worked in an advertisement agency until 2012 before I got into the field of Start-ups with Anyline in 2014.

2. **Your start-up**
   o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

   Founded the start-up in 2014 and I am the CMO. We had two and a half investment rounds. 29 people are working in the start-up. With Anyline I build up everything from job organization, hiring people, project management and marketing.
   The Anyline team has worked on its patented optical character recognition technology and has already attracted well-known customers. It takes away the pain of manually typing in details of your passport, license plat, ID, drivers license, etc. With the Anyline SDK, smartphone cameras can process written characters in real time, even when offline.

   o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

   It started with the agency where we had to work closely with the customers and the customers made the decisions, which I did not like so I decided to start my own product and get in charge of how and where I promote it. Out of this product the start-up established.

   o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

   We never had the typical growth of a start-up we had a lot of contacts, which helped us grow.

   o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

   We don't have many direct competitors. We do have one in Croatia but we don't have general competitors in Vienna.
   In our case competitors help develop the market so we are very friendly with our competition and we share leads, we even have partnerships with

some. Competition is not something we are afraid of. There are competitors, but we don't really work against them, we work with them.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

We started in a way that we first developed the product and thought selling it would be easy. Turned out it wasn't that easy and we had to define our product more precisely and communicate what we are actually selling and what the price for that is. Marketing started to be important for us when investor relations commenced, in order to better present what our start-up is all about and getting their interest, then we focused more on HR and other departments with marketing. Our marketing strategy suffered a bit because we always wanted to grow as fast as possible and didn't think about the future a lot we stayed more in the growth phase that we were in. This was a big mistake and we changed it in 2016 and executed a new marketing strategy in 2017.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

It was important for us to understand, who we need to convince. Target the right developers, the right project managers and the right audience and then we designed the marketing strategy based on the outcomes we had.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

We adapt everything to our customers because the needs of the customers are the most important thing for us. We try to take all their feedback into consideration and work out new tactics.

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

Since we work quite close with our competition we always looked at what works for them and how we could improve our product based on what it works for them. We did form a strategy based on our competition and took a closer look into what they are doing and which markets they own. We always looked at their behaviour and thought if something that works for them might influence our strategy.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

Extremely important. We always took a closer look at the different kinds of industries because the government industry works different than the hospitality industry and for us it is very important to understand how the different industries work and how do we tackle our target customers there and what the differences are there. Si I would say knowing the market before going a hundred % in is very important.

- o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

  We do adapt every week. With the fine-tuning, try out new things and see what might work and how we could execute a strategy based on new findings.
  In my opinion marketing is about trying out a lot of stuff.

- o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

  For marketing in 2016 we spent a quarter of the effort into our start-up.

- o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

  We have a marketing department with a head of marketing. We also had externals like a PR agency.
  When we changed our marketing strategy in 2016 we hired an external experienced professional head of sales for a couple of months, who had the job of setting up the start-up in a new way and define us in a more detailed way.

- o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

  Understand what the market was and find the target customers and listen to their wants and needs.

- o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

  What works for us is to really understand the customer first and get to know how they think about our product. I think for every start-up in the future it is important to firstly know who the customer would be and of there is a place in the market for this product. Listen to your customer!!!

Interview 4 was held on the 3rd of Mai at 14.00 o´clock with Sabrina Rückeshäuser, the Senior Digital Marketing Manager at JobRocker.

1. Profile

o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Sabrina Rückeshäuser, Digital Marketing Manager
Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication Studies at the University of Vienna

2. Your start-up

o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Senior Digital Marketing Manager at JobRocker International GmbH. JobRocker is a digital headhunting start-up from Vienna and we are currently about 60 people.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I personally haven't founded JobRocker but I am definitely attracted to the start-up scene. The most interesting and fascinating things for me are the culture and the fast pace of start-ups.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

Since JobRocker started, it has grown tremendously. Our customer numbers and profit is growing monthly

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

The competitive environment is definitely strong in the field of HR. Everyone is trying to hire the best talent right now so it's a crowded market with a lot of headhunters, software companies and … We constantly look out for our competitors and do competitor analysis.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

JobRocker operates on a two-sided marketplace. On the one hand we have to acquire new candidates/job seekers for our platform jobrocker.com. And on the other hand, we have to sell our service to companies. Sales is a very essential anchor for JobRocker. Without Sales, we wouldn't be able to acquire new positions and therefore make any revenue. So Sales is mostly important on the B2B side.
On the candidate side, Marketing is the main driver. In the early stage of JobRocker, the main focus was to hire the first employees and build the overall process of how we operate. Marketing just became important a little later on. In the early stages PR and networking and spreading the word about our product was the main focus.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

We set ourselves goals and KPI's for the upcoming year and break it down to months and based on those we build the strategy and a roadmap for each team individually.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

We do a lot of user testing to see how job seekers use our platform. Furthermore Sales and Marketing department work closely together so Marketing can get input from the Sales team on what the customers need. Furthermore we have a weekly product meeting where we discuss how to develop and promote our product further.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

Understanding the marketplace and the customers is inevitable. It is the first step when building a product. When you step into the HR market, you have to know the pain and problems of people who do HR in companies. You have to understand how you can help them in other ways no one else on the market can. If you know those problems you can build your product and your marketing strategy.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Not adapting a strategy is nearly impossible, at least in a start-up. Like mentioned before, the pace is very fast and every day is different than the other and has other challenges to tackle. If you plan to do a 3-month online banner campaign to generate new leads and notice after 4 weeks that you are not generating any leads, you have to change the strategy and spend the money on different channels or find out how you can generate that number of leads.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

I think in the early stages it would be a very little amount since the resources in an early-stage start-up are very limited. The focus would rather be on getting to know the market and starting with sales and do PR. I think it would be around 20-30%.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

We reached out to an external growth hacking agency to support us with Google ad words. We also had some external advisors that gave us some counsel along

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

The biggest challenges are the resources. Like I mentioned, as an early start-up, most of the times you don`t have the financial and personnel resources. That's why you have to be creative and think of ways that don't cost a lot of money and use methods like growth hacking.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

Marketing in start-ups will shift even more into the direction of growth hacking and analytics. Marketers have to know the numbers of the marketing funnel from acquisition to revenue. Resources are limited and experts who can think outside the classic marketing-box are needed. Growth is extremely important in the first years so finding creative ways to gain sustainable growth will always be the challenge. Founders who are looking for marketing talents should definitely look out for analytical and creative thinkers to tackle this challenge.

Interview 5 was held in the 10th of Mai at 15.30 o´clock with Maunel Zwittag who was the CEO and Co-Founder at rublys GmbH.

1. **Profile**
o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Manuel Zwittag – I am the CEO and Co-founder of rublys GmbH.

2. **Your start-up**
o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Rublys GmbH was founded in 2013 in Vienna and has the purpose of simplifying engagement between millennials and brand through a gamified mobile marketing channel. The greatest advantages of this process are that the customer target, which are millennials want to communicate with the brands or the company. It is an advanced marketing solution with a performance rate up to 26 times better than a regular mobile app.
The start-up has up to 50 employees.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I thought that marketing channels should be more creative and addictive to customers and found this gap in the market.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

Founded in 2013 our start-up has had an increase in demand over the years. The first year was to develop the strategies and the product and find out who the target customer is. We had a marketing push in the fist couple of months in 2014.

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

We consider competition healthy and a sigh that there is actually a place in the market for our idea. The fist years within Austria competition was not that strong, but it developed over time and the strategy caught on and was implemented by others.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

Everyone should take marketing and sales seriously. It forms and develops the entire start-up. In our first couple of months we focused on developing multichannel strategies, which has a deep focus on marketing, sales, target customers and distribution. This was a very important time for us because it builds up the business and put it up for future success.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

We made a detailed outline of all the external factors surrounding our start-up and set up goals, which we want to achieve in the future by setting up KPIs and measuring the overall success that we have achieved until a certain point.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

A customers demand is the most important factor in our start-up. If we do not adapt to their wishes then we would not have a product. The thing we did was to gather a lot of feedback and do a lot of test runs.

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

Yes but we did not lie a heavy focus on that in the early stages.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

Of immense importance. It is important to know what the generation that we were targeting wants since they are drawn to completely others features than other generations. Identifying their preferences was of utmost importance for our start-up-

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Yes because especially with our target customer there are always new trends to come out and if you do not adapt, you drawn.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

In the early stages the most weight was on marketing. It was the most effort we put into the start-up because we didn't have a routine yet. Everything was new, everything had to be research, so the concentration of all of this market research was a lot of work.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

Not in the beginning but over time we realised that we had to if we wanted to expend and grow.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

Drawing attention to our product and convincing our target customer of our idea.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

I think the ethics of social media will be put more into the spotlight and that will have a big effect on a lot of businesses. Scepticism of customers is dangerous in this area so I think in future new ways of marketing will be dominant.

Interview 6 was held on the 25th of Mai at 16.30 o´clock with Klaudia Bachinger the CEO of WisR.

1. Profile
o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Klaudia Bachinger, CEO of WisR.

2. Your start-up
o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

We are a recruiting platform for retired people who still want to work. It is an online marketplace where retired people can find a job and at the same time a service where companies can find experienced but retired personnel. The start-up consists of 8 employees with 3 co-founders and we launched the company in December 2017.

- Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

  I was a documentary filmmaker and I knew that the society has a huge problem with the aging population who still want to find work however. I also know from many sources, even my own family background that people often get depressed that they cannot find a job anymore but still want to work, so we came up with a solution for that. It is a huge burden of society when people feel useless and depressed and lack of appreciation, so we are trying to fill the gap and create something with impact.

- How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

  I have been working on the idea for around 2 years now. It took me almost a year to find the right co-founder, which was probably the biggest challenge. Then I started testing whether there was interest from both sides. (From an organization and a retired potential customer). Then developing of the first prototype started and we have around 350 retirees in the last month, without any marketing tactics. And for testing the companies demand we had customer's development interviews with interview guidelines with around 50 corporates and 5 companies to find out what there pinpoints were and what they would be expecting. And now that we have the budget we can go and do growth hacking and see what profiles come from which marketing technique.

- How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

  General HR solutions are obviously a competition for us but they are a market that is focusing on is very target oriented and is a smaller niche in the market. In Austria there is no direct competition in our field, since it is mostly offline or through organizations. There is one platform in Canada, which is very similar and has been very successful over the past year in Canada. But there is no online solution in Europe.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

- What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

  Marketing for seniors is pretty challenging. The fine line between making them feel old and not accepted and highlighting their potential is very challenging as well. Marketing in this area is a little difficult. Our strategy is going into platforms that are very young or that seen young, like Facebook, Google, Pinterest.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

  We have a heavy emphasis on content marketing.
  We also do cooperation's and affiliate marketing (since a lot of them have the same target group). PR for raising awareness, event marketing and offline marketing are tools we use of the retirees.
  For the company's side, online marketing is our way to go

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

  By talking to people. That is the most important part; it is also our way to gather qualitative feedback. And then of course also through performance marketing and try to track and analyse our KPIs and based on the results we adapt.

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

  Since we have a niche market we can cooperate with others in the area such as karriere.at or LinkedIn and this would be more complementary than competitive.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

  It is very important to understand the marketplace in order to understand if there is even demand for the product or service. As stated earlier we tested and gathered a lot of feedback from both sides and tested our service in order to be sure if we have a realistic chance in this area.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

  It is very important because there is so many offers out there and if you don't pull with the masses, you have a bigger risk of sinking.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

  Now that we started the growth hacking process a lot more effort will flow into our marketing and strategies will be developed and tested.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

  Most of it we developed ourselves but now with the growth hacking we will get help from the joint venture growth base.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

Probably the wording for the seniors, we still have no good word except for silver agers. It is not ideal to used words like seniors, 50+ or retirees, since that does not give them a positive feeling. Getting rid of the bias that everyone has in their heads when they think of elderly people is very difficult.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

I think that performance marketing and growth hacking will definitely be the biggest advantage that start-ups with have against cooperate. It is very effective and has a huge advantage compared to big marketing agencies.

Interview 7 was held on the 28th of Mai at 16.00 o´clock with Mag. (FH) Paul Blaguss the Founder and Managing Director of Vienna Pass.

1. Profile
o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Paul Blaguss. I am the CEO and Managing director of Blaguss Travel GmbH. In addition to that I am the founder of the Vienna Pass.

2. Your start-up
o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Vienna Pass can be ordered to facilitate the planning process of travel in Vienna. It offers a free guidebook and provides the possibility to explore Vienna from all the sights until public transportation without having to pay again after purchasing the Vienna Pass.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I have always been strong in the tourism sector, I found an opportunity and decided to act on it.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

In the fist year we wanted to make 25.000 passes, in the second year we wanted to make 50.000 passes and in the third year we wants to make 100.000 passes.

We ended up making 42.000 in the first year, in the second 89.000 passes and in the third we produced 135.000 passes. The growth exceeded our expectations and is increasingly rising.

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

There are quite a few rising up now. These however do not have a very big share of the market.
For example the Vienna Card, which is not an all-inclusive product though.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

Marketing in the tourism sector is one of the most important factors of how to get the product distributed. It is important to have a strong presence when going into the market.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

We have quite a few marketing strategies, but the one proven to be very effective has been the distribution of third parties. Here a third party helps distribute the Vienna Pass and will get a provision for selling it. This is how we rapidly expanded the growth of our product and got the word out.
80% of the Vienna Passes gets purchased online however and thus our presence in very strong on all of our online platforms.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

We evaluated the market and identified where we had a strong presence and a lot of sales and there we go in more in depth with more marketing tactics and more money. We try to define, as best possible were we have a lot of potential customers

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

Yes we look at our completion in different countries but in the end we pull through our own strategy.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

It is important to understand the marketplace because people from different countries purchase the Vienna Pass on different platforms. Google worked well for us until now but we need to monitor how Facebook is developing.

For Russian customers for example Google is not working at all. So as a result it is crucial to identify the marketplace and what works best for them.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Yes I do but we have a very stable concept were customers' keep flowing in, so we stayed true to our concept until now.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

A lot of time and money flows into our marketing strategies. With the distribution of a third party we have about 20% of provision as well as with the online platforms. If it is positioned right however, these expenses for marketing result in a positive outcome. Quite a lot but it works.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

Yes we reach out to online marketing agencies that know where to use which platform and can identify how to position the product best for different countries.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

The contract with the sight was the most challenging to negotiate.

Interview 8 was held on the 17tzh of May with expert X the Co-founder of Journi.

1. **Profile**
o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

2. **Your start-up**
o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

   The idea is to create photo books. We want to make this as easy as snapping a picture to make memories unforgettable.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

   Since people are looking to facilitate everything we though it would catch on fast.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

   At first people thought it would be very complicated that's why it did not take off right away but with time the easy features were recognized and it started to expand.

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

   Every business faces competition, which I think is healthy because it gives you the drive but we found a gap in the market and had no direct competition. At least not one based in Austria.

3. **Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up**

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

   The better the marketing the higher the sales!

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

   First we taped in the market with a prototype and evaluated the response and then we build up a marketing strategy with an external team.

- How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

  We have the external team for that which knows how to place our start-up and who keeps an eye on the correlation between marketing and sales. They have to present to us every month.

- Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

  Yes it is important to make use of competitive intelligence. It is always good to see where the competition was strong and where they were weak.

- Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

  It is the most important thing. Without knowing if your product has a chance or not it would be a waste of money and time to launch anything.

- Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

  Yes very important. We do not want our customers to see the same strategy all the time. It is good for raising awareness to mix it up from time to time depending on sales and customer satisfaction.

- If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

  At first it was more important to build the prototype, implement it and get a lot of market research before launching marketing ideas. Our early stages consisted of developing our start-up. When we found our customer we put a lot of effort into marketing.

- Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

  Yes we have external support from marketing professionals.

- What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

  Finding the right people that would support the start-up. At first we needed cheap labour and that is hard to come by.

- Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

We have done a lot of good experiences with growth hacking and I believe that will dominate in future as well.

Interview 9 was held on the 8th of June at 15.00 o´clock with DI Camilla Sievers with Co- founder of treats. Contemporary snacking.

1. Profile
o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

DI Camilla Sievers and I was the CEO and Co-founder of treats. Contemporaty snacks.

2. Your start-up
o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Treats is a start-up founded in 2015 and the goal is to provide our target customer with healthy snacks and drinks that are not only a biological product but also satisfy each customers individual taste. We are looking for the snacks the customer wants throughout Europe and then send it directly to the customer's home. Easy and effortless. The treats identify themselves through their healthy, practical and energy boosting attributes and offer a modern ways of getting to the snacks and drinks you want, which might nor even be offered in the supermarket. Treats also offers healthy alternatives to business by offering to deliver snacks and drinks.
The start-up has around 10 employees.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I have always been highly fond of the start-up scene and I dedicated my entire carrier to it. I CEO and Co-founder of treats and until today I love what I am doing. I have also challenged myself and now play a role in IP Austria GmbH, where I support start-ups with that lightning idea and try to give young start-ups the chance to use TV as one of their marketing channels. This process is called "Media 4 Revenue Share".
The start-up scene gives me drive and inspiration and I hope I have the chance of continuing in this field for a long time since I think you can never be too innovative.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

Since we started with the big boom of the wish for a healthy lifestyle we had a very strong demand at first. We often had months where we needed

to step back and define our product better but mainly we had a steady increase in sales.

- How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

  Competitive environment is pretty high for tis area. We try to differentiate ourselves from the competition by offering something exclusive but in this field competition will always have a big impact on our start-up.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

- What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

  It is important that marketing and sales run hand in hand. Marketing opens up the marketplace and raises awareness of the product while sales it important top generate profit. Two have these two aspect of the business up and running is of great importance, to say the least.

- How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

  With detailed information and investigation about our customers and our product. We have an own market research expert on board who knows how, where and what to position. With this we set our future objectives and work hard towards achieving them.

- How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

  We collect a lot of feedback from our customers and try to figure out our next steps or what we could improve based on their opinion. This is how we adapt our marketing tactics as well. We give our customers the feeling like they are part of the start-up and have something to say.

- Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

  Being aware of our surroundings has always been very important for us. I my opinion an idea only forms through influences of many other ideas.

- Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

In my opinion any form of success is not possible to obtain if there is no knowledge about the marketplace beforehand. Researching if there is demand for the product and whether future growth is possible is the most important trait when commencing with a start-up.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

Definitely. Without responding to customers reactions and opinions there would be no future success,

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

The early stages demanded the most time and effort of our marketing and sales strategies. I would even say ¾ of the time was invested in these areas.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

Yes, we reached out for help and hired marketing experts that could provide us with an insight into the market and helped us identify where to place our product and how to advertise it for the highest possible outcome.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

The offer of providing healthy snacks in the last couple of years has been one of the biggest trends. Since their in a high demand for a healthy lifestyle, it has been challenging to stand out.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

I really believe in what I am doing for "Media 4 revenue" right now. I think for young start-ups who have an idea that catches on a TV marketing channel would enhance their performance and get them to the next level. Even though it is a risk and is connected with costs, I think in the start-up scene you have to listen to your gut and taking risks is an unavoidable feature when bringing an idea to life.

Interview 10 was held on the 8th of June with Katharina Klausberger the CEO and Co-founder of Shpock.

1. Profile

o Please briefly write your name and your profile (education, job experience etc).

Katharina Klausberger. Board member, CEO and Co-founder of Shpock. I studied at Wirtschaftsuniversität in Vienna and finished my degree in 2010-

2. Your start-up

o Please explain briefly your start-up and your role, how many people are working at your start-up?

Shpock is a platform that allows people to buy and sell their goods easy online. It is also known as a flea market online. We have a bout 120 employees and are currently also looking to expand.

o Can you elaborate in the reasons why you founded this start-up and what attracts you to the start-up scene?

I saw how people view flea markets and saw how they were dying down and people looked for alternatives so I though why not digitalise it like everything else nowadays and find a solution that might awaken the interest of a lot of people.

o How would you describe the growth of your start-up since you started? (i.e., customer numbers, profit) What is your prognosis for the future?

The idea boomed immediately, we have grown 120% over the last 2 years and my prognosis would have to be that it will keep on steadily increasing with time.

o How is the competitive environment? How much does this influence your start-up, your daily activities and marketing strategies?

Since we offer a cheaper solution than our competitors such as Amazon or Ebay we have never had the direct influence of these big competitors.

3. Marketing and sales in the early stages of your start-up

o What does marketing and sales mean to you and your start-up? What is/was your marketing strategy in the early stages of your start-up?

We have a unique angle that we needed to bring across, so marketing was very important for us. Finding the right angle to position our product and raise awareness for it was not an easy thing to do.

o How do you design your marketing and sales strategies?

A lot of market research, which allows insight into the market. Listening to our customers and approaching they're needs and by offering a unique solution to their pains and needs.

o How do you adapt for example your marketing tactics to your customer demand and competitors?

By analysing their demands we try to fulfil their wishes as best we can.

o Do you make use of marketing intelligence approaches?

Of course we take a detailed look how our competition is doing, but our main focus lies on bringing our uniqueness across.

o Can you explain to me how important it is for you (your start-up) to understand the marketplace before going to market? As well as before attracting new customers?

It is the most important aspect of any start-up. If you don't know the market you arte entering, you will fail. Researching if the idea has potential to grow is the most important aspect of any start-up.

o Do you think it is important to adapt a marketing strategy over time and why?

I think it is important to change over time and not stay still throughout years but so far our concept has worked very well and we have not had any severe changes. We try to change it up with our marketing tactics and the layout of our app but we not with changes in concept.

o If you were to provide me with an estimate on how much effort (time and money) goes into your start-up in the early stages for marketing an sales compared to the total activities of your start-up, what would that be?

A lot of effort goes into this areas. Without marketing the product would not reach our target customer and would not be brought across correctly. We spend a lot of time and money in these departments since there are responsible for our growth so far.

o Did you reach out for support to enhance your marketing strategies? Why and in which way?

Yes we have a professional team of experts that advise us on future steps and potential strategies.

o What were the biggest challenges while developing your marketing strategies in the early stages and why?

Attracting customers and getting the word out in the open. We had to make a lot of noise to awake the curiosity of our customers.

o Lastly, what do you think the future will be for marketing and start-ups?

I think it is hard to say since we live in fast changing times and every start-up needs to find their unique angle to promote their idea.