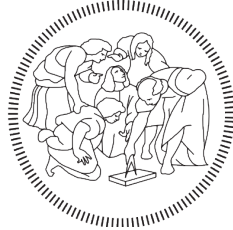Politecnico di Milano
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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR FASHION TECH STARTUPS

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CONTENTS

0. ABSTRACT

Inside the complex scenario of startups, many people make the mistake to think that the success is based only on a brilliant idea, but they are not aware that the idea does not have any value if it is not communicated at its best. One of the most important moment in a startup's cycle of life is the research of financing and investors that will support the beginning and the growth of the company, because usually founders do not have all the essential resources. So, to convince investors and capitalists, communicate the work behind a startup in a concise and efficient way is even more important than the idea. During few minutes, in fact, a founder has to tell an interesting and engaging story with all the most relevant characteristics of the service product, why it is different from the competitors, what are its innovations, possible earnings in the future, and much more. Everything must be clear, fast, and organized because competition is extremely high, and the first impression can determine success or failure. For this reason, communication has to be also coordinated, with a strong brand identity that make the startup solid, professional, and trustworthy in front of the audience. Sometimes it is very difficult to design such a complex communication, but the cases that succeeded in this are leading the market. It can be though because this scenario is evolving very fast, since innovation and technology are the basis, but also because founders cannot be expert in every field, and communication is usually the part of the work that is sacrificed. This thesis wants to be a support for everyone who is facing this amazing journey inside the world of startups, from a communicative point of view. Each chapter, in fact, analyse an essential aspect for a good communication strategy and the main aim is to develop guidelines to boost this work. In particular, all the research is focused on Fashion Tech, because it is a new area and there are no books, essays, or other studies that go in deep inside this field. So, it is important and urgent to stay abreast with fast innovation that is transforming this market.

All'interno del complesso mondo delle startup, molte persone commettono l'errore di pensare che il successo sia basato solamente su un'idea geniale, ma non sono del tutto consapevoli che, a meno che essa venga comunicata nel miglior modo possibile, la sola idea non ha valore. Uno dei momenti più importanti all'interno del ciclo di vita di una startup è la ricerca di finanziamenti e investitori che supporteranno la nascita e la crescita dell'azienda, dato che solitamente i fondatori non hanno tutte le risorse necessarie. Per questo motivo, riuscire a progettare una corretta ed efficace comunicazione per convincere investitori e promotori per la propria startup è uno step essenziale e di vitale importanza, ritenuto da alcuni addirittura più importante dell'idea stessa. Durante una presentazione di pochi minuti, infatti, una persona solitamente deve riuscire a raccontare una storia interessante e accattivante, che sappia mettere in evidenza le principali caratteristiche del prodotto-servizio, la ragione per cui è diverso dagli altri investitori, quali sono le sue innovazioni, i possibili ricavi futuri, e molto altro. Tutto deve essere chiaro, veloce e ben organizzatori poiché la competizione è estremamente alta e la prima impressione può già determinare un futuro successo o fallimento. La comunicazione, inoltre, deve essere coordinata con una solida brand identity, la quale è in grado di far apparire la startup professionale e affidabile di fronte al proprio pubblico. Spesso è difficile riuscire a progettare una così complessa comunicazione, soprattutto nelle prime fasi di vita, ma le aziende che sono riuscite in questo lavoro sono le stesse che ora stanno dominando il mercato. Può essere complicato anche perché questo mondo sta evolvendo davvero velocemente, proprio come le innovazioni e le tecnologie che rappresentano la base di molte startup, e i fondatori non sempre hanno le giuste competenze a livello comunicativo per rimanere al passo con questi cambiamenti radicale. Questa tesi vuole essere un supporto per chiunque si trovi ad affrontare questo viaggio all'interno del mondo delle startup, da un punto di

vista della comunicazione. Ogni capitolo, infatti, analizza aspetti essenziali per la progettazione di una buona strategia di comunicazione e l'obiettivo principale è di creare linee guida per migliorare questa fase del lavoro così essenziale per determinare il futuro successo di una startup. In particolare, tutta la ricerca è focalizzata sul campo Fashion Tech, dato che si tratta di un nuovo ambito così innovativo da non avere ancora libri, saggi o altri studi che affrontano nel dettaglio questo argomento. È importante e urgente, dunque, sviluppare questa analisi al passo con la veloce ondata di innovazioni che sta trasformando questo mercato.

1. INTRODUCTION

During these years, Fashion Tech is growing very fast and with it also the number of startups in the sector. This innovative scenario moves forward with technology, research, and social changes, and gives new opportunities and resources for both companies and customers. For this reason, many studies and analysis are still in development, and communication represents a huge part of the system. In the last years, people were used to work with communication of consolidated company, mainly oriented to the customers, but this is not the only type of communication that needs to be designed in order to create a successful business. The final goal, in this case, is different. Corporate communication has mostly been concerned with bigger, more established companies and little research has been conducted on the communication function designed specifically for young technology companies. Communication function is something that is developed once a corporation reaches a certain growth, but for startups communications plays a large part from the beginning.

Behind technology, also the way of communicating is changing and now there are new formats of communication, especially for raising startups, which need money and resources to start. Before going on the market, startups have to build their presence and identity, in order to present them to various pitches and audience, and get founds or investments, essential for its growth. So, the main aim of this work is to make people aware of the importance of communication in this context, and help them to create a solid, adequate, and efficient communication strategy. These new formats of communication are becoming quicker and quicker. People have few time to catch the attention of the audience and make a good impression, so communication is the key element to present all the information without wasting opportunities. It something that happens during pitches, which usually last three

minutes, and also with the customers, who usually have attention threshold of nine seconds for contents online. The founder of the startup in this short time should present his main idea, but also his organization, his values, his team and their skills, his future perspective, and much more. It is very important because what emerge from a presentation is not only what the speaker says, but also a general impression of his personality and identity of the company, which is the main element that usually remains impressed in the mind of investors. According to many professionals and entrepreneurs that work in this field, the idea is not enough anymore. People decide to bet on a team for many reasons and one of the main ones is because it is able to share emotional engagement, confidence and enthusiasm.

This challenge can be very difficult for startups, also because there are no guidelines or manuals about that. Both online and offline, there are many books, researches and studies related to the foundation of startup, how to organize it, its business plan, how to manage founds, and so on. But there are not materials focused on communication. This is a problem that usually is not considered and often is that part of the work that takes less time, when all the rest of the project is already done, and this is a mistake. Communication should support the growth in each step, otherwise the company will appear confusing or not well structured, and no one will trust the founder and his idea.

To buttress the complex process of the communication's design, I highlighted some guidelines that are the essential steps for an efficient communication strategy. These are the result of a work that has lasted some months, within which I collaborated with Tinker Design LTD, a British startup that gave me the opportunity to deal with the problem first-hand, and many analysis and researches that I developed through

interview, conversations, calls and survey with experts, investors, and successful entrepreneurs. I compared my experience with these case studies, this was very important to understand common problems and find solutions based on real cases. For this, I want to thanks Thushara Sabreen, Marco Dal Lago, Alessandro Lovisetto, Alessandro Fellaco, Giorgio Finzi, Francesca Colombo, Manfredi Pedone, Germano Lanzoni, Luca Molinari, Michele Stefano Altieri, Raffaele Boiano, Fabio De Martino, Jodi Goodfellow, Francesca Colombo, Julie Lampard, Barbara Vannin, Stefano Perrone, Naomi Kohashi Catella, Gianluca Marzulli, Gabriele Lunati, Ciro di Lanno, Marianna Ronzoni, Alessia Camera, Francesco Bottigliero, Dante Fenice, Edoardo Iannuzzi, Giuseppe Barretta, Tommaso Puccioni, Krystyna Lennon for sharing with me their experience and knowledge. Most of them are experts of fashion, entrepreneurship, investments, business, teaching or communication, but I wanted to also explore some cases outside world of Fashion Tech, because it was a good opportunity to analyse better the differences with other fields and compare heterogeneous information.

To be more specific, the main phases that I want to point out and analyse are:
- internal communication;
- brand identity;
- pitch deck;
- content creation;
- testimonials;
- website.

2. STARTUP

2.1. WHAT IS A STARTUP?

Before delving into the guidelines, it is good to have a clear idea of what is a startup, why this communication problem is so urgent, and what is the category on which I focused my research, analysis, and work.

A startup is a company or project initiated by an entrepreneur to seek, effectively develop, and validate a scalable business model. Startups refer to the new businesses that intend to grow large and fast beyond the solo founder, or few co-founders, who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is a demand, with focus on innovation. The term usually refers to a company in the first stage of its operations, with a business model which is not fully developed.

These companies generally start with high costs and limited revenue which is why they look for capital from a variety of sources such as venture capitalists. This is one the most important phase of their life, because often the founder is very young and he does not have the fund to develop all the project, so the chance to succeed usually depends on fundraising and investors. Many startups, in fact, face high uncertainty and fail within the first few years. That is why this initial period is so important. Entrepreneurs need to find money, create a business model and business plan, hire key personnel, work out intricate details such as equity stakes for partners and investors, and plan for the long run. They can use this seed capital to invest in research and to develop their business plans. Market research helps determine the demand for a product or service, while a comprehensive business plan outlines the company's mission statement, future visions, and goals as well as management and marketing strategies.

According to the typology of startup, these companies can decide to work online,

in an office/home office or in a store. The location depends on the product or service being offered, but it is very often that founders work online or inside their house, especially during the first months. This is a smart way to reduce important costs and save money, which is the one of the most difficult element to obtain, as previous explained. In addition, a startup's founder has to decide what is the legal structure that best fits their entity, because nowadays there are a lot of regulations focused on startup and innovation, or very useful subsidies for young entreprenuers. It is not always easy to understand what is the best category for a new company, but a right decision can make the difference when it will grow up. For example, a sole proprietorship is suited for a founder who is also the key employee of a business. Partnerships are a viable legal structure for businesses that consist of several people who have joint ownership, and they're also fairly straightforward to establish. Personal liability can be reduced by registering a startup as a limited liability company (LLC).

Startups are "optimal" vehicles to validate and bring new innovations to the markets. Especially more disruptive innovations. They encapsulate all but only relevant things for what is needed to build new innovations with minimum "wasted resources" combined with maximum drive & motivation. Startups create most of new jobs, attract international talent and foreign direct investments. According to a study developed by Kauffman Foundation and the Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, over the last twenty-five years, almost all of the private sector jobs have been created by businesses less than five years old. Between 1988 and 2011, companies more than five years old destroyed more jobs than they created in all but eight of those years.

2.2. INCREASING PHENOMENON

The phenomenon of startups is quite recent, but numbers are growing very fast and it is more difficult than ever before to get the attention of investors or customers. Around the world, in the last year, people opened 100 million of startups, so the competition is tough and only thousands of them manage to be accelerated. That is why communication is one the most important competitive asset to find someone who will trust and support a business. Today, there are many new and encouraging developments: would-be entrepreneurs are much younger, including many women, and it has become possible to market ones ideas to potential investors instead of traditional bank loans, which are more complex, difficult to obtain, and risky. This is even more relevant if a founder do not hail from a well-to-do family background, which is something very different from the past. Besides, more and more startups plan to enter the services sector, which is of course a logical development in all knowledge-based economies. Few would go into large-scale manufacturing as this of course requires tens of millions in venture capital per business and most things people can manufacture are already manufactured someplace else, in contrast to innovative services. But things can still be innovated, new product ideas may eventually hit the shelves; it all depends on what you plan to make and in what numbers.

To understand the dimension of this scenario, it is enough to think that in Italy the first time that a media talked about a startup was in 2011 and now, just nine years later, the amount of startups in Italy is more than eleven thousands. In addition, during these years, also some important trends related to Fashion Tech are becoming more and more important for people. In consequence, startups that works in this field are on the top of most-rated companies worldwide. In 2018, for example, beauty and fitness startups increased by 34%, and healthcare startups between 2012 and 2017

grown of 316%. Artificial intelligence, which is a strictly related with Fashion Tech, a topic that we will deepen in the next paragraph, grown of 463% in the same period. In 2019, the size of this market was $228 million, but it is expected to growth and reach $1260 million in 2024. Key growth factors for the market include customer's demand for a personalized experience, increasing need for inventory management and the growing influence of social media in the fashion industry. Also, identifying future fashion trends in advance with customer's buying behaviour analysis and growing fast fashion retail to boost the adoption of artificial intelligence in the fashion industry marketing to create many opportunities for vendors of AI in fashion solutions.

About the revenue, Equidam, which is a digital valuation platform, did a very useful analysis to understand the size of the opportunities a startup can generate. It took into account the financial projections for a sample of more than 25,000 early stage ventures across the globe. In the analysis, people who work at Equidam looked at the latest year of financials (YTD) plus the next three years of forecasted revenues. From these, they were able to study the annual revenue growth coefficients for the upcoming 3 years. The average company forecasts a growth rate of 178% in revenues for their first year, 100% for the second, and 71% for the third. This means that a company that grossed $500.000 Year to Date (YTD) will forecast $1.390.000 for the next year, $2.780.000 for the following and $4.753.800 for the third one.

Growth rates for startups however vary widely by industry, country, and stage of development of the venture. Companies that start from scratch will of course find it easier to grow their revenues at higher percentage rates. One of the reasons for it is that a smaller number is easier to grow compared to a large one. And moreover

is bigger the percentage of startups that fail during the first months or years, than the number of them that have this income. But this research is very interesting because is the evidence of the limitless potentiality of a startup, thanks to its particular features and its innovative contribution to the world progress.

There is a specific term to point out the startups that achieve this incredible success, which is unicorn. A unicorn in business world indicates a privately held startup company valued at over $1 billion. The term was coined in 2013 by venture capitalist Aileen Lee, choosing the mythical animal to represent the statistical rarity of such successful ventures. It is very common to talk about unicorns this field and this neologism is just an example to explain how much is chaning the business environment.

2.3. SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS

As explained before, it is very often that a startup needs helps and resources from other people, or other companies. Money are the most evident example, but there are a lot of other cases, such as support for business plan, validation of the idea, co-workers research, places to working, educational materials, and so on. All these elements are essential for the growth of a startup, and in particular I am talking about venture capitalists, business angels, incubators, and accelerators. These are the more common, but there a many resources, even if most of them have different prerequisite to access.

Venture capitalists and business angels are more connected to money and funds. The first one (VC) is a form of private equity financing that is provided by venture capital firms or funds to startups, early-stage, and emerging companies that have been deemed to have high growth potential or which have demonstrated high growth (in terms of number of employees, annual revenue, scale of operations, etc). Venture capitalists take on the risk of financing risky startups in the hopes that some of the firms they support will become successful. The startups are usually based on an innovative technology or business model and they are usually from the high technology industries, such as information technology (IT), clean technology or biotechnology. Venture capital can also include managerial and technical expertise. Most venture capital comes from a group of rich investors, investment banks and other financial institutions that pool such investments or partnerships. This form of raising capital is popular among new companies, or ventures. Sometimes it could be difficult to obtain attention, because they might see hundreds of business plans and ideas each year. However, they end up choosing just a few of them. Google Inc, for example, is a major venture capitalist. Its division, Google Ventures, focuses on venture capital. Google Ventures also has a large European arm, which the company

set up with an initial investment of $100 million. Europe, Google says, is teeming with good ideas and it would like to get in there to support interesting startups. Other examples are Kohlberg Kravis & Roberts (KKR), one of the top-tier alternative investment asset managers in the world, or Pepperfry.com, whic is the India's largest furniture e-marketplace. But probably the most popular is Sequoia Capital, which is an American venture capital firm. The firm is headquartered in Menlo Park, California and mainly focuses on the technology industry. It has backed companies that now control $1.4 trillion of combined stock market value. Sequoia manages multiple investment funds including funds specific to India & Southeast Asia, Israel,and China. The firm has offices in Menlo Park, Singapore, Bengaluru, Mumbai, New Delhi, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, and Tel Aviv.

Business angels are usually private person, instead of companies or firms, and the definition is not completely defined, even if the main function is the same as venture capitalists. The typical profile of a business angel is a middle aged male with an above average education and a professional or business career background. Most have experience either in running their own companies or managing businesses and organisations. They also have high personal net worth. Usually they take this risk because they have already worked and now, when they are retired, they want to make available their resources to improve the environment and help new entrepreneurship. It is obvious that one the main reason to invest is still to make profits, but in this case it is very important also the passion and the emotional engagement. Among the features that distinguish business angels from more formal venture capital investors is the personal nature of their investments. Business angels invest their own money and therefore take more significant personal risks with their investments than the managers of venture capital funds. They also tend to invest

close to home, with most investing in ventures that are within their local community, typically within a distance of 1 to 2 hours of driving time from their home. Business angels also prefer to invest in privately held business ventures that have not been quoted publicly on the stock market. The high risk nature of their investing is fraught with potential failure and they are usually keen to keep any investment activities private. They generally invest around 5% to 15% of their assets into new businesses and seek rates of return of between 20% and 30% from their investments. A study by Andrew Maxwell, Scott Jeffrey and Moren Levesque, three narrators and business coach, published in the "Journal of Business Venturing" in 2011, it was found that business angels make investment decisions based on a set of heuristics. These tend to eliminate proposals based on eight broad criteria. The first four of these include the willingness of the market to adopt, the status of the new product's development, how protected the intellectual property is, and how likely the customers will be to engage. The second four factors are the route to market for the business model, the potential of the market for growth, the relevant experience of the management team within the venture and the soundness of the financial modelling. The most popular examples are Jeff Bezos, Paul Buchheit, Jeff Clavier, Paul Graham, David Lee, Max Levchin, Benjamin Ling, and other important founders that have worked - or are still working - as CEO or founders of big companies.

Incubators and accelerators are different from the first two typologies, because they are not focused only on money. Incubators, for example, are companies that helps new and startup companies to develop by providing services such as management training or office space. The National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) defines business incubators as a catalyst tool for either regional or national economic development. NBIA categorizes their members' incubators by the

following five incubator types: academic institutions; non-profit development corporations; for-profit property development ventures; venture capital firms, and combination of the above. In other words, a startup incubator is a collaborative program designed to help new startups succeed. Incubators help entrepreneurs solve some of the problems commonly associated with running a startup by providing workspace, seed funding, mentoring, and training (see list below for a a more extensive list of common incubator services). The sole purpose of a startup incubator is to help entrepreneurs grow their business. The most common services provided by business incubators are: help with business basics, networking opportunities, marketing assistance, high-speed Internet access, accounting/financial management assistance, access to bank loans, loan funds and guarantee programs, help with presentation skills, connections to higher education resources, connections to strategic partners, access to angel investors or venture capital, comprehensive business training programs, advisory boards and mentors, management team identification, help with business etiquette, technology commercialization assistance, help with regulatory compliance, and intellectual property management and legal counsel. According to Forbes, the top examples of incubators are: Y Combinator (supported Dropbox and Airbnb); 500 startups; TechStars; Excelerate Labs; and Capital Factory. The important aspect is that most of them have mentor programmes, with expert business coaches.

Startup accelerators, or seed accelerators, are fixed-term, cohort-based programs, that include mentorship and educational components and culminate in a public pitch event or demo day. While traditional business incubators are often government-funded, generally take no equity, and focus on biotech, financial technology (FinTech), medical technology (MedTech), clean tech or product-centric companies,

accelerators can be either privately or publicly funded and focus on a wide range of industries. Unlike business incubators, the application process for seed accelerators is open to anyone, but highly competitive. There are specific types of seed accelerators, such as corporate accelerators, which are often subsidiaries or programs of larger corporations that act like seed accelerators. Also for this category there are some examples of successful accelerator, that helped very important startups, such as Le Camp, Creative Destruction Lab, DMZ, Extreme Accelerator, Ideaboost, and Launch Academy.

2.4. FASHION TECH STARTUPS

The fields in which startups can raise and work are infinite, because innovation can affect every part of our lives. But there are some categories that are the most common worldwide. In particular, they are IT & Cibersecurity, Fintech, Artificial Intelligence, Health Tech, HR & Recruitech, Edtech, Legal Tech, Travel Tech, Martech, and Fashion Tech. Sometimes it is very difficult to understand the tipology of a startup, because there divisions are not compartmentalizes, but they can influence each other and a company can be two, three, or more, of them togheter. Artificial Intelligence, for example, is one of the most used technology and, as we saw in the previous paragraph, it is growing exponentially. This technology can be used for every startup, so there are some lines, but borders are very blurred and not defined. I focused my work especially on the field of Fashion Tech, which is a new hot topic, very discussed during this period. Inside the next chapter we will go in deep with the analysis of Fashion Tech, because it is essential to understand the revolution that is happening in the market, its product, its cluster, and their main features. But now, in this moment, it is useful to point out the difference between this kind of startup, and the others, because there are some characteristics that make Fashion Tech companies unique and studying these differences it will be possible to use them as advantage during the communication strategy.

In the first stage, Fashion Tech services are based on emotions, more than any other product, and this is the most important driver that we have to keep in mind during the communication strategy. Inside the main body of the thesis, at the beginning of the guidelines, there is a whole chapter focused on emotions, because every part of the project needs to be designed in order to create feelings. This is so evident in this field, because, compared to other areas, Fashion has influences on our mind and what we wear, both clothes than accessories, can condition different aspects

of our mind. First of all, these objects can influence our state of mind and make us more energic, dynamic, or sad and unproductive. Then, they can affect also what people think about us. Sometimes this is pointed out as stereotyped, but it is always extremely true. People generally buy clothes also because they want to feel them part of a group. It is a way to define the identity. A person who want to improve his athleticism, but has lack of willingness, can buy sportive clothes to stimulate himself. Or, if we talk about athletes, they can buy particular product to externalize their passions and their style. Our mind always makes associations between different worlds, and Fashion brands are very powerful in this sense. Vans, for example, is easily connectable to skaters, Prada to elegance, Adidas to dynamism, and so on. It is something very common with brands, but for Fashion this reasoning is more and more powerful. So, in general, the biggest element that make the difference with Fashion Tech startups is the emotional engagement.

More than other fields, it is very important the connection between product and service. Some startups are based only on services, others just on products, but in Fashion Tech the relation between product and service is essential. The product is not enough anymore, so people who design a strategy have to reflect about the importance to show this relation. For this reason, contents are fundamental and, if possibile, founder should always keep in mind to develop prototype in parallel with the rest of the project, in order to show them during the pitch and make their presence stronger. Contents are very important also the create that emotional engagement just mentioned, and in other fields animations, renders, or video are not so relevant.

Another difference between Fashion Tech and the rest of the market is the

importance of ambassadors and testimonials. This is something very importance since many years, but nowadays that information can circulate very fast and social networks are the basis of our social life, influencers, ambassadors, and so on, can make the difference. They can influence the perception of a product, create more demand, stimulate interest, because they use their strong personalities and create some styles that people would like to have. Groups like skaters for Vans, or athletes for Nike, have a strong connection with these kind of people and they are very useful also to show to investors and audience that the startup already have a strong identity. Also in this case, such as for influence of clothes, psychology is an essential factor and people can have a key role for that.

Moreover, the world of Fashion Tech combines two areas that generally are very different, which are engineering and creativity. This is something innovative that do not happen with other startups, but new technologies allow experts in this field to study and implement new solutions to improve the results. Engineering and technology are usually analytical, scientific and rigorous, while Fashion is usually lyrical and extravagant, so the way of work and plan project is completely different, but when the two opposite poles find an understanding, the product services can have limitless potentiality. It is not always easy to decide the right balance between technology and fashion, because investors and users generally are not experts in these subjects, so a startup has to plan the right communication strategy in order to show both aspects, without losing the attention with complex and too thorough details about technical parts or fashion process to design the product service. The risk is maximise one aspect, forgetting that in this case the competitive assets depends on both: creativity and engineering. Other startups do not have this problem, because with IT & Cibersecurity or Fintech, for example, the design

process is vertically focused on one field, such as computer technology or economy, without the influence of creativity. In general, it is good to keep in mind that the audience usually do not have all the knowledge to understand in deep complex process, so it is very important to show fashion creativity with focus on emotion, and simple details of technology, presented in some ways that create interest and engage people who are listening the speech. For this, in the next chapter I will analyse in deep what Fashion Tech means, with insights on the differences, and then the analysis will be dedicated to the best method to achieve interest during pitch and product service presentation.

For other aspects, especially for pitch structure, or team organisation, Fashion Tech startups are very similar to other startups, especially in the first phase of their lifes. The main aim, in that moment, is to show that the idea sastify a problem, because an idea without a good validation is useless. For this, it is not really important the category of the startup, but is important the tools to achieve that result, and, as I explained before, content creation is just an example of a way to obtain good results creating something unique and relevant for this innovative area.

3. FASHION TECH

3.1. WHAT IS FASHION TECH?

Technology on human skin, natural fibres that become refined textiles, smart clothes that react to light, water or electrical stimuli, but also digital platforms that create a relationship between companies and customers, or between objects and users, and much more. Fashion industry is exciting and ever-changing, but now it is also incredibly complicated due to technology innovation, even if it is already integral part of our life. When fashion meets technology, the result is Fashion Tech, which is an innovative way to joins fashion, fitness, wellness, and health, also combining technology, engineering, and digital. Investors are swamped with business pitches from thousands of entrepreneurs who want to transform the fashion industry, so it is extremely important to make an impression and tell a compelling, memorable, and interesting story that shows your passion and expertise in the business. There are innovations in software, which can be used to improve design processes, but also in products and materials. The interaction between human and machine is more alive than ever, AI and machine learning are two essential components of this world and companies are not focused only on fashion. A business needs collaborations withing different fields and a team has to cover many skills with several experts.

This scenario is complex and interesting, his potentiality is huge, because it is placing near two subjects that have never met before. Tech is rational and empirical, fashion is inspirational, lyrical, and creative. Fashion Tech will see the two worlds collide. It is not easy to create a collaboration between them, because the approach to the work is very different, and the professional experts usually have different perspective of the industry. But precisely for this reason the result is something that is capable of permeating so deeply many levels of the human life. The product is important, but what makes these companies really different from the past and progressive are the experiences that they can give to the user. Product development and design is not

enough anymore, because what people want is a service that is able to share values, emotions and innovative. Fashion Tech, in fact, together with the product also invests in new production processes, virtual shopping experience, online digital retails, virtual fitting, customized platforms, data-analysis, user experiences, and much more. Some clusters of service product can be identified, but each category has something in common.

The market, during these years, seems ready to embrace these important innovations and the result is already satisfying. This change is not only in manufacturing, but also in many aspects that concern social life, because with technology and the support that comes from, has also changed the way in which people approach common actions and daily life. They want to spend more money in wellness, fitness, and healthcare, because they are aware this can influence and improve life's quality.

3.2. WEARABLES

In the world of Fashion Tech, a category of products that has became very popular is definitely wearable devices. Wearable technology, also known as wearables, is a category of electronic devices that can be worn as accessories, embedded in clothing, implanted in the user's body, or even tattooed on the skin. The devices are hands-free gadgets with practical uses, powered by microprocessors and enhanced with the ability to send and receive data via the Internet. The growth of mobile networks enabled the development of wearable technology. Fitness activity trackers were the first big wave of wearable technology to catch on with consumers. Then, the wristwatch became a screen and more robust mobile applications were added. Bluetooth headsets, smartwatches, and web-enabled glasses all allow people to receive data from Wi-Fi networks. The gaming industry adds more wearables, with virtual reality and augmented reality headsets. They have grown exponentially and are still growing today. In 2018, between 18 and 44 years old, 31.4% of people have at least one wearable device, but in 2019 sales grew of 94,6%, so nowadays numbers are even bigger. From 2015 to 2022 its market will pass from $19,633 million to $57,633 million. It became double in the first three years. Wearables are on body products such as clothing, footwear, accessories and jewellery designed to create a communication/interaction enabled by technologies (such as digital and virtual) to amplify and extend natural ability and performance of the human body, or add new functions to the user connecting him with his body, with other persons or objects and with the environment. Usually, they use technologies like AI and connections with the smartphone through Bluetooth or wireless, to monitor and collect useful data for the customized service. The areas of use are manifold, starting from health care, to fitness, business, lifestyle or just comfort. The most popular kind of wearable is earbud, but there are also smart watches, smart bands, glasses, headphones, and so on. Some products are FitBit band, Garmin smart watch, Asus ZenWatch,

Sennheiser headphones, Bose frames, or Embr Wave bracelet. Just from these example is possible to understand how large this market is: FitBit band is focused on monitor of physical data during training, Bose frames are sunglasses with integration of little speaker, Embr Wave is a bracelet that helps people to modify body temperature. This variety of features allows to cover many customers needs from the market.

Image 3.1. FitBit Band

Image 3.2. Garmin Smart Watch

Image 3.3. Asus Zen Watch

Image 3.4. Sennheiser headphone

Image 3.5. Bose frames

Image 3.6. Embr Wave bracelet

3.3. SMART TEXTILE

Smart textile is a cluster very close to wearable, because also in this case the experience starts from a physical product. They are are knitted, woven, non-woven fabric systems designed to sense and response to external stimuli (mechanical, thermal, chemical, biological, magnetic and electrical) enabled by advanced, physical and digital technologies. Compared to the first cluster, products of this category are not so popular, but the growth in terms of statistics is even bigger. Its market size is expected to reach $5,369 million by 2022 from $943 million in 2015. Smart textiles are knitted, woven, non-woven fabric systems designed to sense and response to external stimuli (mechanical, thermal, chemical, biological, magnetic, and electrical) enabled by advanced, physical, and digital technologies. One of the leaders of the market in this moment is Wearable X, yoga pants connected to the smartphone that can vibrate and guide the user through the difficult movements of yoga. Also in this case, other technologies concerns sport and training, health care, preventions, or comfort. Some examples are Athos cloths, Supa powered bra, Siren Care socks, or Xenoma VR. Most of them work in order to improve training and physical benefits, but some of them are very useful also for health and medical reasons. The platform is always extremely important.
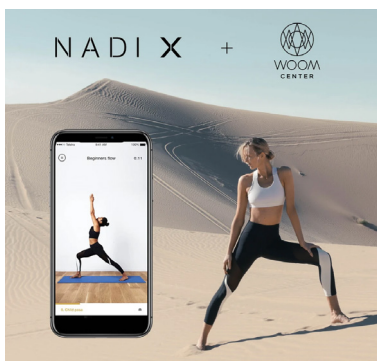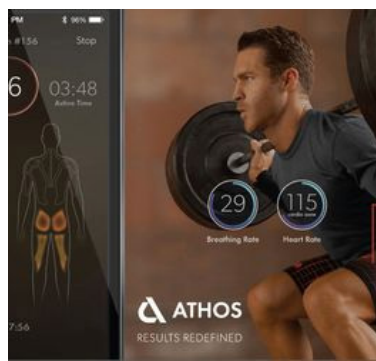
Image 3.7. Wearable X
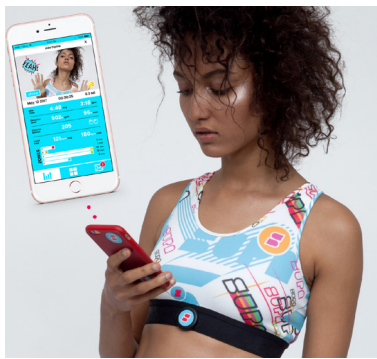

Image 3.8. Athos

Image 3.9. Hexoskin

Image 3.10. Supa powered bra

Image 3.11. Siren Care

Image 3.12. Xenoma

3.4. DIGITAL PLATFORMS

This cluster, compared to wearables and smart textiles, is more different and for some features is the most innovative. The most impressive feature is related to the fact that, in this case, the physical product is not necessary. Thanks to technology, it is possible to create digital platforms that are able to transform our traditional habits in terms of shopping and retail. They can add values to our experiences and give us new opportunities to test, choose, adapt, and improve fashion products, according to our needs. The market size is huge: it is expected to reach $767,8 million in 2025, starting from $263,9 million in 2019, and this is a clear evidence of the unprecedented potentiality.

Digital platform is an integrated approach to manufacturing that is centered around a computational system using tools such as 3D technologies, robotics, AI and AR and the integration between digital technologies for manufacturing processes and embedded digital technologies in products-services (IoT) to enable open and distributed manufacturing that can reshaped design, production, distribution and retail processes. The extent of applications ranges from large scale industrial systems, industry 4.0 and DIY/mini and microfactory up to digital service platforms and bottom up innovation processes, on-demand manufacturing, collaborative and on-site manufacturing (fab-lab and maker space), and repairing and remanufacturing systems. Most of these platforms are regards the connection between influencers and brands, two new worlds that are still in development thanks to our society that nowadays is based on sharing and interactions through social networks and digital devices. Others are focused on brand identity, customer engagement, smart showrooms, or virtual reality. A good example is Obsess, a VR application that allows the customer to visit the shop using his smartphone. The physical room is duplicated in VR and this innovation breaks every barrier in terms of distance and

time. BigThinx is another startup that uses VR. In this case, it is possible to scan the body of the user, analyse him through the platform and create advices or test for outfits. Aoiship, Gfaive, SKMMP, or Staiy, are just other examples of successful ideas that Startupbootcamp FashionTech, an important startup accelerator, promoted during its programme. Also in this case, like wearables and smart textile, AI is essential and indispensable.
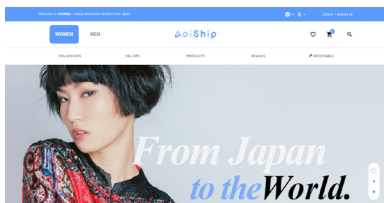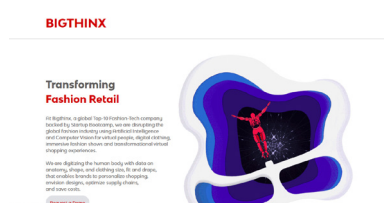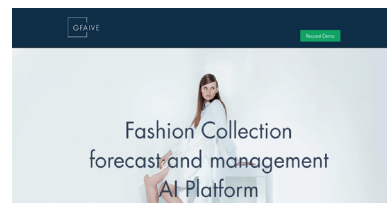

Image 3.13. Aoiship

Image 3.14. BigThinx
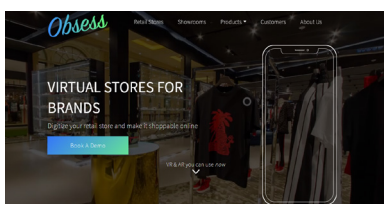

Image 3.15. GFaive

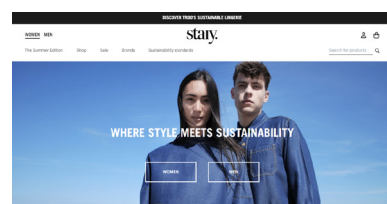
Image 3.16. Obsess

Image 3.17. SKMMP

Image 3.18. Staiy

4. RESEARCH METHOD

The research, which is the basis of whole thesis, is the most important aspect of this work, because everything is analysed in relation to a real context. It is very important, in fact, to create guidelines with clear references to existing cases. These are the evidences that make the thesis valid and efficient, because it is not just a theoretical study, but a more thorough analysis of what is real happining in the world of startups, and Fashion Tech startups in particular. Guidelines can be useful only if they are studied in relation to professionals and working enviroments. This is the only way to abstract the most successful methods and path to follow.

I decided to divide the research process in four different steps:
- private research of formal aspects of startups, such as definition, their features, hot trends that are leading the market, and so on. It was very useful to create a geneal idea of this complex world and improve my knowledge about the subject;
- collaboration with a real startups, which is Tinker Design LTD based in London;
- conversations and interviews with many experts, such as CEO, startup founders, investors, business coaches, and so on;
- creation and analysis of two different questionnaires that I sent to blogs, forums, and groups on social networks.

In particular, I want to focus on the last three steps and analyse in deep the method that I followed to do this research through these channles.

4.1. TINKER DESIGN LTD

Starting from march, for six months I had the opportunity to know the founder of Tinker Design LTD and work with her and the team, which was composed by other two designers. I have worked as Digital Design Visual Communicator, that means that I collaborated closely with the CEO for the implementation of a fashion tech product communication strategy. In particular my role was to: to clearly visually translate the idea and experience of the product for the consumer impactfully, deliver creative content and digital editorial and any other digital creative solutions briefed from business stakeholders, interpret graphic design and illustration needs and to develop creative and responsive design concepts quickly. The other two designers worked more contents, such as graphic and visual style of the pitch deck, and product design with renders and animation.

This was a great opportunity to go in deep with topics related to Fashion Tech startups and test in first person the difficulties and the issues of the process useful to design a communication strategy. Tinker Design LTD, in fact, was the perfect case to analyse in order to begin with this research, because it has all the features of Fashion Tech startups. The CEO and the founder, who is Thushara Sabreen, a young woman from London, represents the classical example of young entrepreneur that is facing the complex world of startup. She is young, but at the same time very talented and during her study she went in deep with subjects like fashion, innovation, product design and she won also important awards. Thushara's background in Product Development and career training was gained working with brands as The Limited – Victoria's Secret (US), ethical manufacturers: Brandix (Sri Lanka) to working with one of the largest retail suppliers as Li & Fung (UK). Working internationally offered extensive understanding and insights into diverse multi cultural environments and markets gaining skills and experience in business development, project

management, off-shore sampling procedures, factory sourcing, garment and fabric technology and critical path management. But, like many other founders worldwide, even if she is very skilled and determined, she doesn't have enough time and resources to design each aspect of her company. It was impossible for her to design and create a visual identity, with contents, renders, and pitch decks, while she was working on other essential parts of the project, like business model, idea validation, financials, and so on. This is a very common situation, because most of the founders need helps to develop the project and cover all the requirements. For this reason she decided to enlarge her team, and so our paths crossed. Since it is very complex for a startup to pay professionals experts or high salary, one solution is to give to students the opportunity to work with this kind of company, and it is an advantage for both. From the founder's point of view, the person can have an essential help to develop parts in which he is not skilled and it could also save a lot of time. On the other hand, the student can start his professional experience with a real company and improve his knowledge that will accompany him into the future.

Thanks to her focus on technology and innovation, Thushara designed a new shoe that is able to massage the feet of the user and influence his mood, state of mind, and energy during the day. Like many other startups, also in this case the product is not enough, so she designed also a service through an application that monitors body parameters. Product design, or engineering, can not work alone in such a complex project like this, so our work covered many aspects and some of them they were not just aimed at creating visual contents, but were also moments of brainstorming, research, choice of materials, branding, and so on. The emotional engagement was essential, because this product is focused on wellness, body and mental benefits, and comfort, so it was very important to create a communication

that used emotions and feeling as competitive advantage. Everything was designed in this direction, from the colour palette, to the animations. A big part of the project was dedicated also to create a valuable brand, because it is something that nowadays must be designed very carefully. Branding activities are connected to perceptions, so only with a strong brand identity it is possible to create also feelings and emotions.

During this intense path we organised the work in different phases, with a meeting per week in which the whole team discussed about what we have just done, how to improve it, and what we needed to do. I kept track of all the path, with summaries of each weekly meeting, in order to have a clear idea of the progresses and highlight issues and problems. Starting from the beginning, first of all we planned some meeting just to know each other and understand our backgrounds. It was very important to divide the work and perform at best, according to our skills. Then, the following period was dedicated to the alignment. During the first days, in fact, was difficult to share a common idea about the project and so we needed a certain time to align our ideas on a common point of view. We did different meetings for brainstorming, we reflected about keywords, and we researched some references using social networks like Pinterest or Behance. Pinterest, in particular, was very useful because it gave us the possibility to share a common board and search references linked to the ones that we agreed togheter. Once this process reached a good level, we started with the analysis of the competitors and choice about the information to insert in the presentation. Thushara had a huge amount of information and it was impossible to think to present all of the in just a pitch, so it was essential to select certain information and create a strategy for the pitch. Then, we moved to the visual contents. The most important elements we designed were visual identity

(with fonts, colour palette, and typography), structure of the slides, two versions of the pitch deck according to the audience, renders, animations, two video (one for the presentation and one for the landing page), and a structure for the website.

At the end of the process, we designed different contents and the output were quite satisfing, even we faced some issues during the work. We will see better these contents during the development of the guidelines, as examples.

About the obstacles we encountered, I was surprised because at the beginning I did not consided the possibility to have issues about these topics, but then I realized that this part is extremely underrated. I am referring to the alignment about common ideas and team organisation. This was, in my experience, the most difficult part to organise and plan. We took for granted some point of views and in consequence we started to design visual contents that were not aligned to the mood and the brand identity that Thusara had in mind. With fonts, for example, the first proposal was adequate for a Fashion Tech startup, but very far from this particular Fashion Tech startup, that is more focused on wellness than other cases. For this reason, we needed to come back to the first phase, we did again brainstorming and analysis, and then we proceeded with the materials.

Another important issues, as just said, was related to the team organisation. We decided to use a tool called Slack because it allows co-workers to share information very fast and discuss into some channels create ad-hoc for the startup, and it was very useful. The problem was connected to the division of the work, because it was not clear from the beginning how to split to parts and then how to mix all the materials designed from the team. Even in this case, the first try to join all the works

was a failure because the perception was like a collage of different contents, and not a whole and structured unit.

To make the flow of the work clearer and more efficient, we could have organised the first parts more carefully, because when the alignment was done, the rest of the process was more and more precise and fast. For this, for instance, we could have spent more time to know each other, especially our professional background. A common mistake is to work very fast and forget about the importance of the human being in each design process, but spend more time to human relationship is essential to make better the work in the next phases. Presentations of previous projects, educations, personal interests, these are just few examples of what everyone should know about his teammates, because it allows everyone to address the tasks in the right direction and to the right person. In addition, especially with startups, all the process is based on passion because it is the drive that pushes a person to give the best of himself and working without any human relations often often takes away motivations and determination.

To perfom best during the aligment, we needed to share more contents, both visual and informative, about references and styles that everyone had in mind. Like the previous point, it is essential to spend time to do research and discuss about this research, and this is something that we could have done in a better way. We experienced the results of a superficial research and this is a mistake that it also affects the later stages. A solution, in this case is to save more time to work alone and choose materials that are the visual translation of what the person has in mind, in order to discuss them with the team and abstract the common element that compose the first draft of the brand identity.

4.2. CASE STUDIES

During the months in which I worked with Tinker Design LTD, I started to design some guidelines and some essential points that must be present in each effective communication strategy for Fashion Tech startups, but they were not enough to complete the analysis. To validate the contents and the information that I abstracted from my experience, I needed other researches to cross with what I have elaborated, in order to understand if the issues and the obstacles that I faced with Tinked Design LTD are really common problems of most Fashion Tech startups.

For this, I divided the research in two phases that I did in parallel. I asked to many experts in the fields for interviews and conversations, such as founders, investors, business coaches, and so on; and I shared online two questionnaries in different forums, blog, and groups on social networks. For the first method, I mainly contacted these professionals through Linkedin and the results were more satisfying than what I expected. Most of the people that I asked for an interview were very willing and helpful, and they gave me the opportunity to talk with them for half an hour or an hour. For the second method, it was very useful to analyse the environment from the intern, without any influence on the person. With interviews, in fact, the speaker could be influenced by the context and the answers could be vary according to the impression that the person wants to communicate about his experience. On the other hand, with an internal research in which I propose myself as common user, and not as communication student, the research gave me another complementary point of view about the problem.

All the experts that I talked with are:

- Thushara Sabreen: CEO and founder of Tinker Design LTD;

- **Marco Dal Lago:** CEO and co-founder of CLARA Swiss Tech SAGL;
- **Alessandro Lovisetto:** CEO and founder of Artknit Studio;
- **Alessandro Felaco:** CEO and founder of Epoché ;
- **Giorgio Finzi:** CEO and founder of 4Gifters;
- **Francesca Colombo:** co-founder of MITO International Festival of Music, and startups director;
- **Manfredi Pedone:** co-founder of Plan Be srl, and teacher at Talent Garden, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Università degli Studi di Bari, Politecnico di Milano, IED Istituto Europeo di Design, of soft skills and public speaking;
- **Germano Lanzoni:** founder of HBE Human Business Entertainment, well-know as "Il Milanese Imbruttito", and communication expert;
- **Luca Molinari:** co-founder and community manager at Service Design Drinks Milan, teaching tutor at Politecnico di Milano, and Corporate Transformation Strategist at Talent Garden;
- **Michele Stefano Altieri:** CEO and co-founder of Hypermynds;
- **Raffaele Boiano:** CEO and co-founder of Fifth Beat, and adjunct professor at Politecnico di Milano, Scuola Holden, IULM University;
- **Fabio De Martino:** startup mentor and business advisor at Startup Geeks, and business angel;
- **Jodi Goodfellow:** co-founder of FASH PR, founder of Startup Fashion Week, and Fashion Forward, professional speaker, and teacher at Toronto District School Board, EduTravel Inc;
- **Francesca Colombo:** co-founder of The Powderoom;
- **Julie Lampard:** business advisor;
- **Barbara Vannin:** startup analyst and coaching manager at AGIRE Foundation, Program Manager at Boldbrain Startup Challenge, co-founder of Tipiù;

- **Stefano Perrone:** startup mentor at Techstars and Intesa San Paolo Innovation Center, and professor of fundraising and pitching in Master of Digital Business Development at SdM University of Bergamo;
- **Naomi Kohashi Catella:** CEO and co-founder at ELIGO Milano and SATOR Milano Bespoke;
- **Gianluca Marzulli:** startup mentor at Startup Geeks, and tutor & facilitator at Talent Garden;
- **Gabriele Lunati:** chief marketing and innovation officer at Missoni s.p.a., and startup mentor at it's campus and Fashion Technology Accelerator;
- **Ciro di Lanno:** co-founder at MIRTA and investor;
- **Marianna Ronzoni:** startup growth at Intesa San Paolo Innovation Center;
- **Alessia Camera:** founder and independent growth marketing consultant at ACE Marketing Consultancy, and growth & digital strategy consultant at Uqido;
- **Francesco Bottigliero:** iCEO at Brunello Cucinelli s.p.a.;
- **Dante Fenice:** CEO and founder at Startup Vincente;
- **Edoardo Iannuzzi:** CSO and creative director at ACBC, and professor at Politecnico di Milano;
- **Giuseppe Barretta:** digital business coach, co-founder growth manager at WEA Academy, international mentor at Startupbootcamp, growth advisor at Nembi – Neuromarketing Business Innovation;
- **Tommaso Puccioni:** co-founder at Banale;
- **Krystyna Lennon:** professional speaker and executive coach.

As you can see, the list of names is very heterogeneous with people who work in different area and this is very important in order to have many perspectives and point of views about the topic. I asked, for example, information about the pitch

deck to founders that succeeded in their work, but then I asked also for what elements investors prefer to see during a presentation, and it what very useful to compare information and undertand if they overlap. Founders can give some tips and strategy to improve the performance of the work that investors do not know, because they do not work with them, but at the same time investors can give information about the elements that they evaluate most when they choose a startup to support. In addition, business coach can give new perspective about the education and the formation that nowadays is helping new startuppers, so everyone has his important perspective to consider in order to develop the guidelines.

I talked also with experts in soft skills, like public speaking, because the communication is not just related to the visual elements that are presented during a pitch, but it is a complex system of self confidence and right organisation of the speech that must be planned as other parts of the project. It was very important to talk also with some founders that work in other fields, like IT or culture, because they helped me to point out the differences between their fields and Fashion Tech. Culture, in particular, is based on emotion like Fashion, so it was very good to had the possibility to understand what problems they usually have during the project.

Before the first conversation, I planned a path to follow with some main questions, according also to the field of action of the person. I started with a quick presentation of myself and my thesis, so the context was always very clear and the interview could proceed in the right direction. I decided to do not talk about my experience with Tinker Design in the first part of the conversation, because I did not want to influence the answers of the speaker with references to my case. I dediced to make connections between their answers and my experience only when the person

have finished his explanation. With founders the first question was always general and focused on the communication problems that they faced during the first period of their experience. Then, I usually asked about the elements that, in their opinion, was the basis of their success. They could, for example, point out three main steps that were essential and without them they would not have success. This was very usueful to have a general idea about the startup and its history. After that I proceeded with more detailed questions about the phases of the startup, such as alignment for ideas, identity, and values; research of co-workers, team organisations, and personal relationship during the project; research, amount of the information, and structure of the pitch; contents of the presentation, visual contents like videos or animations; importance of emotions in their experience; and features of the website. The main aim was to understand how many obstacles they found during each step, and the path they followed to solve the issues. With Tinker Design LTD, for example, we found many difficulties with the team organisation and the alignment, but I wanted to discover if these problems are common and how other experts solved them. About the structure pitch, it is possible to find a lot of information online even if they are very different. So, I used that question to analyse the structure that better summarise all the different information that everyone can find online and understand the one which generates better results. It was similar also for the website. Everyone, in fact, agree on the fact that a website is a must-have during the growth of a startup, but I wanted to create a clearer path of the growth of the website, in parallel with the development of the company. For the emotions, I was sure about their importance in this context, but I needed some evidences about how the founders created the right emotions throught different contents. That is why I asked very precisely about the visual contents and how they developed them. I asked also about the technical details of videos, or animations,

because the time available for a presentation is always short and it could be not easy to design contents that really fit a pitch. About the time, one of the main problem with Tinker Design LTD was the amount of information and researches that Thushara did, so this was another aspect that I investigated during the conversations. Once everything about these topics was clear, I asked also if all this work was done by one or few people, and how many co-workers there are in each team. This was an essential information to support my hypothesis about the importance of the team, even more the idea itself.

For investors, I planned a different flow of the presentation with focus on the elements that convince them to support one startup instead of another. At the beginning I was very concrete with many questions about the elements that they usally want to see during a presentation, such as what is the best opening for a pitch; what is the element that gives the perception of a strong identity; what is the best structure to catch the attention and avoid distractions; and so on. But then, thanks to the detailed answers, I discovered that for investors soft skills are as important as the presentation, so I started to asked also information about this part. I asked, for example, the mood that the speaker should have, the tone of voice, and the complexity of the speech. Often these information overlapped with the answers of the most succesful startuppers, but sometimes they gave me also new tips.

About the business coaches, I decided to divide the conversation in two parts: the first one in which they presented me what they think about problems of founders, so all the issues that they have, but they do not know to have or they do not want to say. In the second part I investigated more precisely which are the questions that founders asked to the coaches and it was very useful to understand the topics that

most of the startuppers would like to analyse better.

In parallel, for the surveys, I used mainly Facebook groups, and blogs and forums that I found online. I chose the best one according to the creation date, the response rate of each one, and the numbers of users. It was good to avoid obsolete or passive groups. Some examples of Facebook groups are: Business Startups (120.167 users), IDEAS by Entrepreneurs, Start-ups & Small Business Owners (48.668 users), Startup Digitali (3589 users), Start- ups, Entrepreneurs, and Business Owners (8479 users), Start-up company (6938 users), Fashion START UP Network (201 users), Business Owners, Entrepreneurs and StartUps (90.649 users), Entrepreneurship / StartUp (6829 users), Success Mindset - Small business Owners, Start-ups & Entrepreneurs (51.091 users), Start-up Entrepreneur Success (1513 users), Fashion Up (1091). I each of them I presented myself as private user, and not as student, and I did the same work also with blogs and forums, such as finanzaonline.com, investireoggi.it, startup-forum.com, and community.startupnation.com.

The questionnaires that I used were two because I sent one of them also to some investors, so the typology of questions was different. Starting from the first one, focused on startuppers, the main structure is similar to the conversations and the interviews. The flow of the questions was aimed to investigate mainly the problems that they faced during each phase and, thanks to format of Google form, I had the possibility to quantify from 1 to 10 the difficult that founders had related to each topic. The second one was more focused on the perception that investors have during a presentation, and, also in this case, I decided to use the format with numerical indicators. The amount of answers was around fifty people and, compared to the other conversations, I was able to create an adequate statistic

sample. Thanks to this I could have a general overview of the startup context, from different point of views.

For startuppers, to the first question "How much do you consider communication fundamental for a start-up?" most of them replied 8 (44%) and a big percentage replied 10 (33%), so it is an evidence of how a good communication strategy can be the competitive asset to achieve success. The worst vote was 6, but it was just 11%. The total amount of people (100%) affirmed to have a team, even if in the first period is just of 2/3 co-workers (56%), and the 44% declares that they had to solve all the problems related to internal communication and organise it before start to work on project. Thanks to this first important phase of team organisation, the 89% was able to easily align everyone on values, brand identity, and perceptions. Sometimes (50%) it is difficult to align new co-workers when they join the team later, but with an efficient team organisation only 12% have real problems. All of them (100%) spent much time to market and target analysis, and more than 66% decided to include buyer personas in their presentation. 78% of the startuppers have designed a visual identity in the first period, before starting with the pitch deck, and only 22% have not already done it, but they are planning to do it before the presentation. A big percentage (89%) is afraid to do not have time the show the total amount of information they researched, and everyone has at least one media contents inside the pitch (video, render, animation, or prototype). The website is always present in each case, even if it is complexity varies according to the stage of the startup (early, medium, or advanced). These are the most interesting insights that I analysed after the survey and it was very useful to cross them with the interviews, because in many times they were completely aligned. Moreover, with conversations could be difficult to quantify the total amount of percentage, while with this method the

research is more analytic.

On the other hand, about the survey for investors, it surprised me that most of them pointed out visual aspects as a priority (with vote of 9) during a presentation. Also in this case people think that communication is as essential aspect for startups (50% voted 10) and all of them think that a startup managed by only one founder can not have future. Media contents, such as video or renders, and the team presentation are indicated as the two most important elements during a pitch, and they can increase their importance with a skilled speaker. Most of the investors (72%) want to see also the website if they are interested in the project, but some of them (28%) use it only to search contacts of the founder or to see again media contents. Another important aspect is the "wow effect", as they called it using the box for open questions inside the survey, that is the effect that people create when they design an emotional content. They are not interested in technical contents, but they are impressed by something that is able to engage them with feelings.

From these results, I dediced to analyse in deep some aspects, like the team and the dynamics that can happen during the organisation, the alignment about the identity of the startup, the design of emotional contents able to create the effect of astonishment and surprise, and some aspects that sometimes are taking for granted, but investors think are relevant, such as the slide of the team or the website. In general, I used these case studies to validate what I planned in each guideline, and every tips, path, method, or tool that I will indicate in this thesis is something tested and proven by experts in the field.

5. EMOTIONS IN UX

COMMON PROBLEMS.

It happens often that startuppers work so much about their idea, that they take for granted its value and the fact that it must be designed and communicated in a specific way in order to be engaging. In consequence, they do not reflect enough on the emotions that are related to it, but it is not always true that the idea can arouse to the audience the same feelings that founders feel for it. People should keep in mind that in the startup environment the main driver is the passion and the instict, so emotions are the basis of every contents that will be designed and of the project itself, since the first phases of the birth of the idea.

MAIN AIM OF THIS PHASE.

This is the first essential step to design an efficient communication strategy. The first basis of the guidelines, and the feature that will be a constant throughout the project. So, the main aim is to make startuppers aware about the importance of emotions in this context, since the approach to development of the idea. Starting from the moment in which a founder decide to develop his idea, he has to work on his project with an approach of user-centered design, which is the important for the growth of the idea, but also for the design of the media contents for the pitch, the website, and so on. Also the presentation itself should be focused on the user, because to have a competitive advantage in front of investors is essential to create an experience for the audience, and not just a traditional speech. This is even more important now, because the companies that are leading the market do not have only a product, but a product service customised on the user, which creates an intangible, but limitless value for the customer.

Analysing the three main clusters that make up the world of Fashion Tech, the element they have in common is the emotional engagement of the user. This is the essential aspect of these new categories of products and what really makes the different between a company and its competitors inside the market. If the customer perceives the right feelings, he will identify with the problem and will feel the benefits of the solutions, which is the product, as his own. It is very important for a startup to create this sensation of relief that comes from a real demand and this foreword is necessary, since emotional engagement will be a constant element during the analysis of these guidelines. This market is based on emotions and there is a connection between human feelings and wearable technologies for interactive fashion innovation. Smart clothing and digital platforms should satisfy the technical functions and human emotional expression simultaneously, but also investigate the way artistic design perspectives and engineering methods can combine effectively. Clothing, wearables, and accessories are like an extension of ourselves, they impact how we think and feel, the way we perform and act, and what other people think about us. It is more than fabrics because have the power to make you comfortable, stronger, or uneasy, empty, and people can even fell angry if they are forced to wear something that does not fit their personality. In addition to mood and self-perception, fashion products can affect also human performances. This effect is called "enclothed cognition": by slipping into a certain type of clothing people subconsciously slip into the identity associated with it. It is, therefore, very clear that in Fashion Tech, more than other fields, most of the success depends on the emotions, impressions, and perceptions that investors and users will detect and fell.

5.1. USER-CENTERED DESIGN

In this context, in which emotions are one of the main drivers of the market, the user must be at the centre of the design process and it is possible even to talk about human-centered interactive clothing design. Many people make the unintentional mistake to focus on the left part of the brain, which is responsible of rationality, thinking that is enough to have a perfect technology to obtain results. But the situation is different, because people usually make decisions using the right part of the brain, which is responsible of visual processing and image perceptions, so this new approach to the innovation is really important. More precisely, human-centered design is an approach to problem solving and interactive systems development that aims to make systems usable and useful by focusing on the users, their needs and requirements, and by applying human factors/ergonomics, and usability knowledge and techniques. This approach enhances effectiveness and efficiency, improves human well-being, user satisfaction, accessibility, and sustainability; and counteracts possible adverse effects of use on human health, safety, and performance. It develops solutions to problems by involving the human perspective in all steps of process and typically takes place in observing the problem within context, brainstorming, conceptualizing, developing, and implementing the solution. Sometimes, this approach is also called participatory design, because focuses on people's everyday thinking, emotions, and behaviour. Putting the customer first, and taking the time to understand their real needs, problems, desires, dreams and goals, especially with startups and Fashion Tech, is essential to create a deep connection that will lead to the creation of products that will solve people's problems and help them lead easier, more productive lives. The idea of fashion shifted from mass to individual, designing systems of product-service based on the person and customizable. Peter Drucker, well-known economist and essayist, said that "The customer rarely buys what the business thinks it sells him. One reason for this is, of course, that nobody

pays for a product. What is paid for is satisfaction".

Usually, the initial stages revolve around immersion, observation, and contextual framing where professionals become deeply involved with the problem and the community. The following stages focus on brainstorming, personas (representative users of the product), customer journey maps, prototyping and iterating on designs via continuous user-testing. Once the solution is integrated, the human-centered design process usually employs system usability scales and further user testing and feedback in order to determine the success of the solution. The importance of this process cannot be underestimated. It is a key element, which leads to better products that solve real-world problems for people, so it reflects one of the main features of startups. Companies and teams that create products in isolation without considering the people who are actually going to use them are doomed to fail. In addition, when they design a solution or a service for people, they should be always aware that it must be easy to understand and friendly to use. According to FtAccelerator, the sixth most popular reason for startup failure is that people are frustrating when the company does not have a clear and strong user-based interface and communication, and it does not focus on interactive experience than the user will have with the service.

A good example of successful human-centered design, which focused on emotions and problem-solving, is the Oak Fitting Room. An interactive dressing room mirror and connected mobile app, it enables clothing retailers to create magical and meaningful customer experiences. In Healey Cypher's mind, who is one of the founders, retail fitting rooms were a problem: "They are the place of the highest conversion in-store (2/3 of fitting room sessions convert to purchase) from the best

customers (who spend 80% more than shoppers who don't make it into the fitting room). Yet, it is the place of highest dissatisfaction in the retail store."

Employing a human-centered design process, they built an interactive dressing room mirror that could display merchandise in different sizes and colors, make stylist recommendations for accessorizing a look, and more. As this case demonstrates, with close customer involvement, products are more likely to meet users' expectations and requirements, which leads to an increase in sales and lower costs for customer services. It is a good way to create empathy.
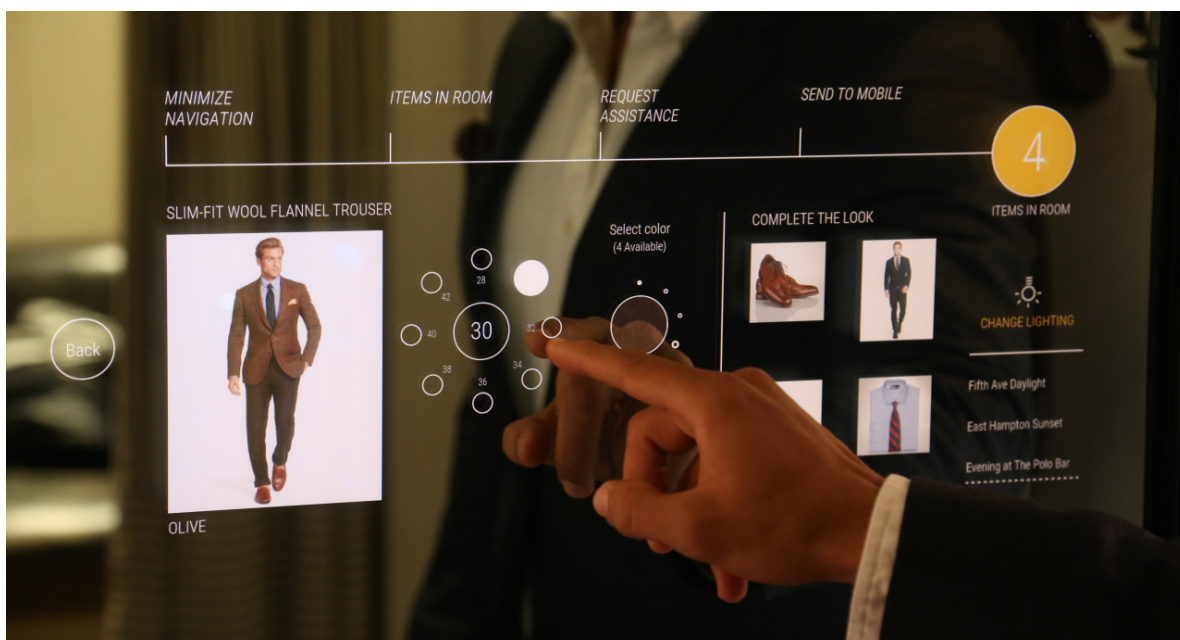

Image 5.1. OAK Fitting Room

5.2. PRODUCT SERVICE SYSTEM

In Fashion Tech, emotions are essential also for another reason. Comparing again the three main clusters, it is clearly that a product is not enough anymore, but every successful case in the market implements a service in its solution. So, nowadays, it is not truly correct to talk about "product", but people should talk about "product-service", because the market is dominated by complex system of technology, platforms, experiences, and values. Wearables and smart clothing, for example, have both physical product and digital application, like FitBit, Embr, or Hexoskin, which monitors health and body parameters throught a customised platform. It is a marketable set of products and services capable of jointly fulfilling a user's needs. In cases of digital platform, such as Obsess, BigThinx, or Aoiship, the physical product is not present at all and everything is based on a service. Having this kind of solutions connected to the product is almost a must-have, especially during this period in which AI is improving more than ever. The market has changed very fast and in the fashion field a product-service has to be immersive in each level.

Communication, in consequence, becomes even more important because a service is intangible. It could be a challenge to create emotions, good experiences, and engagement with something that is not physical, but the guidelines of this research are focused precisely on this topic. Communication is the competitive asset that is able to create all these feelings and the next principles can be a support during the process of design this immersive experience, which has to be presented to investors
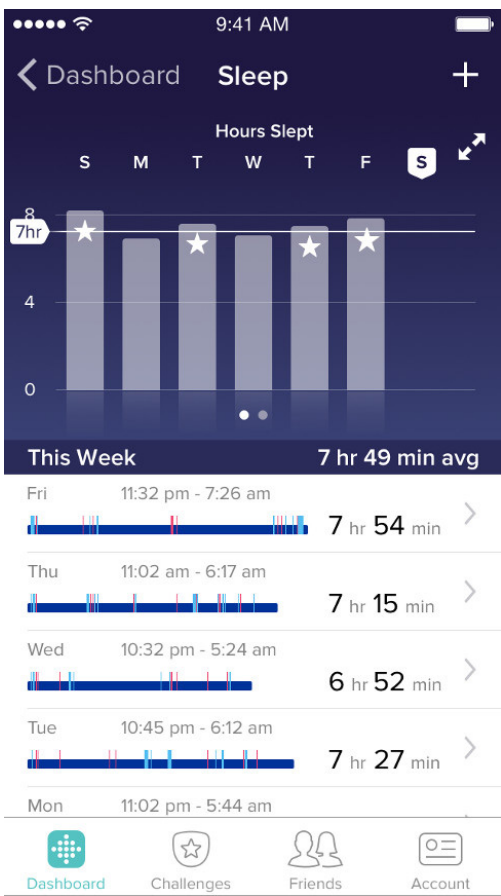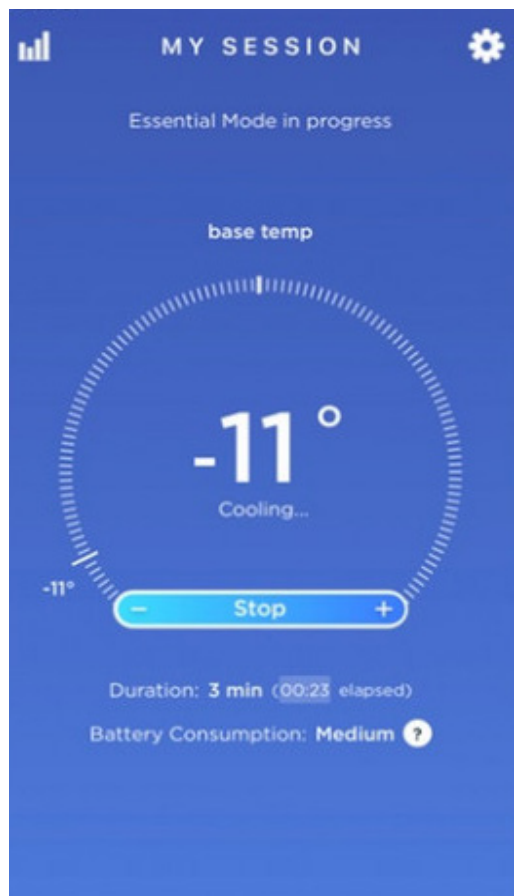
Image 5.2. FitBit application

Image 5.3. Embr application

6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

COMMON PROBLEMS.

Most of the times internal communication is not seen as a priority on the contrary, it is considered as a waste of time and something easy to organise. But it is impossible for a startup to communicate a strong identity, if this identity is not strong even inside the team, which do not share common values. It happens very often that human relationships are neglected because there is not enough time to work and people are always in hurry, and workers do not know the background of their teammates. This is a huge mistake, because create difficulties with the division of the tasks and, at the same time, make people unproductive and not creative. This problem is even more urgent during this period, in which smartworking is becoming more and more popular, because the phsyical sharing of a place in some ways forced people to relate, so it is essential to follow the common path that a described in this guideline, in order to create an efficient internal communication.

MAIN AIM OF THIS PHASE.

Starting from the team creation, I want to point out why the research of co-workers is so important and what are the main points that everyone should consider during the research. It is not easy, because the aspects are many, but with startups there are some elements that are more important than others, like motivation, complementary skills, or dialogues. The second part represents a series of tips that have to be followed in order to create a working system of people. Nothing should be left to chance, so it is essential to implement a series of actions that have to be repeated daily, monthly, or weekly, and will generates good results in the future.

Before delving into the design of the strategy directed to the investors, it is really important to organise internal communication and build a strong team. In my experience, and during my analysis of successful cases, I noticed that this part is not always coordinated and get ready for the work. Arrange an efficient internal communication make the activities easier and avoid obstacles during important phase of process.

6.1. TEAM'S CREATION

First of all, a strong and heterogeneous team is essential. It is a key element to achieve success. According to Fortunly, agency that handles news, reviews, and market analysis, almost 80% of US small businesses employ only the founder and often it is a problem. Tomasz Tunguz, popular venture capitalist at Redpoint, analysed different startups that have a value higher than 1 billion and he discovered that the average of founders is 2.4. Both investors and startup experts agree about the importance of the team. Founders, thinking about their past experiences, confirm that it would be impossible for only one person to manage all the work. It is a matter of time and energy, but also skills and knowledge. A startup requires high abilities in many fields, such as engineering, business, public relations, and so on. For this reason, is fundamental to incorporate people that come from different background and with different perspective. From investors point of view, they need to perceive a feeling of confidence from the team, because often they choose to bet on a company thinking about the possibility that the team will be really able to perform an high level, more than the idea itself. They want to see good skills in each field, because even one weak link could be a reason of failure, and the prefer startups with co-founders than solo-founder. The crucial role of your support team was emphasized by a recent study from Rotman School of Management. It reveals that the success of a new venture often depends on the ability of the founder to attract a great team around him or her.

During this phase, the founder (or the co-founders) should be aware that the team will work together for long time, so it is good to spend time to really know and understand the personality of potential co-workers. Determination is specified as most important characteristic, together with commitment and work ethic, because the team has to be willing to work also in difficult moments, during nights

or weekends. In addition, they need to share the common vision of the company, otherwise it will be difficult to create a strong corporate identity and good emotions. It is really important also inclination to have personal relationships with other people, because each phase will be built in collaboration.

For this essential stage, the most important steps to consider are:
- **Identify your weak spots.** Most people have particular strengths and weaknesses. For instance, if you are a technical person, it might be wise to consider bringing with you people with business or operational skills. Try and identify the skills you have, and the skills you need as early as possible.
- **Identify time commitments.** Ideally your co-founders would be full-time, but it might not be possible, so try and identify early on whether you need them full-time or not. A part-timer you are confident in is often better than a full-timer you are not.
- **Identify potential candidates.** Try to think of their experience and whether this compliments what you already have on board. As we will analyse in deep later, investors want to see people with different skills and experiences in many areas, so it is important to select potential co-workers that come from heterogenous realities.
- **Have the conversation.** As you are bringing people with you, it is likely that you already know them well, so a formal interview is not required, but you will still need to make a formal offer to them, so think through how you can persuade them of the merits of joining your team.
- **Assess continuously.** As with most processes, you will then need to assess how well your needs are being met by your founding team and plug any knowledge gaps that may have materialized.

This could seem obvious or far from the field of communication, but everyone should

always keep in mind that communication is not just directed from the company to the audience, but to work fast and well the first communication that must be perfect is inside of the team. For this reason, the recruitment process is part of the communication process, because this work is always shared and the first step to have a good communication is to choose people with the right personality and communicate with them since the first meeting.

6.2. TEAM'S ORGANISATION

Once the team is formed, the following step is to coordinate the work within the co-workers and organise a good internal communication. It is difficult, in fact, communicate a clear and strong identity if there are problems with internal communication. Another problem is connected to the sharing of common values, both visual than ideological, of the company. Especially when the founder embraces new people, it could be difficult to line up them on the right direction. As John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia, two executive directors of corporate, wrote in their book "Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication", this kind of communication is the function that aligns the hearts, minds and hands of the employees in the company by engaging and discussing with them (Doorley & Garcia 2007, 129). Many studies confirm the importance on employee communications. A study entitled "Connecting organizational communication to financial performance – 2003/2004 communication ROI study" from Watson Wyatt, a global consulting firm, confirms that effective internal communications boost market value and return on investments for shareholders. Good internal communications also affect the company's retentions, engage employees, and greatly impact the atmosphere and the productivity within the company if the culture is negative or positive. In particular, it is defined as the way people inside the organization communicate, how they interact, how decisions are made and conveyed.

For this phase, I highlighted four main points:
- **Each person is the centre of the business,** not only in the sense that was described with user-centered design, but also during the work inside the company. Personal relationships and human beings come first than skills and knowledge. It is good to have a nice environment, in which people care first of the human side and then the professional side. Startup Geeks, which is a community for Italian startups, for

example, focus its recruitment on the person and not on formal documents, like CV, and then they try to carry on and improve these human relationships during each day. Having this kind of connection between co-workers creates many advantages. Above all, it helps the process of recruiting and on boarding, and make easier the visual and ideological alignment. Then, it improves people's passion and willpower, that will reflect on the productivity.

- **It is important to always give stimuli** to the team because this will contribute to improve passion and, especially for startups that are based on enthusiasm, emotions, and desire, it is one of the keys for a great internal communication. More specifically, a good method could be to assign credits and recognitions to the team, so each person will feel as essential part of the company and his motivations will increase exponentially.

- **It is necessary a constant updating and sharing** of the project within the team, to improve the flow and the speed of the work. To make communications functions run smoothly, everyone needs to be aware of all the decisions and to be part of the most important choices. Each person should always know everything is happening and at the same time share his progress during the work. Some startups organise daily meeting with the team, that could be at the beginning or at the end of the day, while others prefer to share contents and updates gradually during each phase. In any case, it is essential that all the team moves forward together, otherwise there is the risk that someone moves away from the right direction and then will be a waste of time to re-align him.

- **Creation of high-quality materials** for whole team, such as presentations, visual contents, and so on, is very good to support these constant updates of information. The more the information is visually translated, the faster will be the sharing. This makes the flow of the data much more fluid. In addition, it is also an efficient way to test if everyone is aligned on the corporate identity because the rest of the team

can verify if the content is adequate. A common mistake that can happen during this phase is to create shallow and superficial draft to avoid wasting of time, thinking that the best contents will be developed only for the final audience, such as investors or customers. This error will make difficult to really understand the right information and will distract the team from the style and the identity of the company.

7. BRAND IDENTITY

COMMON PROBLEMS.

This is probably the most difficult phase for the communication strategy, because it works with many ideas and perceptions which are not always visibile and they must create defined perceptions and feelings through a series of visual elements. The worst mistake is to proceed with the project without a clear and strong identity, colours, fonts, and so on. The result will be only confusing and dangerous for the success of the company. Another risk is to create something that do not reflect the ideas of the founders, and in this case the perception of the audience will be distorted from what the product service really is.

MAIN AIM OF THIS PHASE.

Inside this chapter it is essential to explain better what it the brand identity and why it is so important, in order to give the right time and space to design it. After this, I want to provide some tools that can help the process of brainstorming and idea generation, making it clearer, faster, and more order. I want also to present the most important elements that compose the brand identity and the visual identity, which are not the same thing, and show a path with a series of tips very useful to make the right choices. The possibility are limitless, so it is very common to have difficulties to select the adequate element to create the desidered perception. That is why I want to explain some of the main possibiliy, with their features, in order to have all the knowledge and awareness to obtain a satisfactory result.

After the team, the first step for an efficient communication strategy is to plan the main points that define a brand identity. Founders and CEOs confirm that communication is at the top of the priority for a startup, especially nowadays that pitches and presentations are very quick and there is few time to impress investors and make a good impression. It is like a personal identity that makes a person unique and for many experts is the best way a startup, small business, established business, agency, or nonprofit can gain a competitive advantage. It is a set of tools or elements used by a company to create a brand image. A brand image, which is quite different, because is the result of brand identity, is a users' perception of the brand consisting of various associations related to it and memories about interacting with it. A brand identity and its elements stem from a company's mission, brand value proposition, long-term goals, competitive position on the market, and relevance to the values and interests of the target audience. These factors have a foundational nature and, in the branding process, describe what a company wants to communicate. Meanwhile, a brand identity describes how these foundational elements are communicated.

This step is not just designing the graphical elements that characterize the brand, but also the set of values, principles, and images that the audience will perceive. They are strictly related. Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, says that the brand is what people say about you, after you leave the room. Starting from some tangible elements, such as logo or colour palette, they will reflect on the feelings connected to the company. It also implicates reputation and mental associations that people will link with the product-service. So, in this phase, there is the need to create a visual style that is aligned to the vision of the team, but to define it is important to reflect on the question "how we want the brand to be perceived?" because each

action has a consequence on the emotional engagement and the passion transmitted, that were already presented as two key factors to achieve success.

Many companies that were unable to communicate the value of their products and services to investors or consumers have failed in the past to their competition. The ability to communicate a distinct and recognizable image through various elements of brand identity and deliver this message to the audience becomes more vital nowadays when people are overloaded with information and are unable to hold their attention on one subject for extended periods of time. Ideally, a brand identity should have the power to give a quick presentation of a company or a product to prospective customers, or, in other words, serve as an analog of the elevator pitch that explains what a company offers, how it is different from what is already out there in the market, and why users should try or continue using this product or service. The common rule is that the clearer and easier to understand this messaging is, the higher chance of success it will have on forming a positive and desirable brand image in customers' perception. The flipside to this is that brand identity and the messaging it is delivered through is not the end-all-be-all to define a brand's success. Overpromising or not being fully congruent with what you actually have to offer to your customers may be even worse than failing to communicate it. In the best-case scenario, a brand identity that is disconnected from the actual positioning of the brand gets ignored by the audience; in the worst, it undermines trust and damages the reputation.

Creating a strong identity, the result will be the "halo effect", which is a term for investors or consumers favouritism toward a line of product-services due to positive experiences with them or their presentation. The halo effect is strictly correlated to

brand identity and brand image. The opposite of this effect is the "horn effect", named for the horns of the devil. When people have an unfavourable experience, they correlate that negative experience with everything associated with the company or startup.

7.1. BRAND IDENTITY PRISM

Before you know what tangible elements you want to make up your brand identity, you need to know who you are as a brand. There are some questions that can help during this analysis, such as: what is your "why?" (your mission), what beliefs drive your company? (your values), if your brand was a person, what kind of personality would they have? (your brand personality), how do you differentiate yourself from the competition? (your unique positioning), and if your brand was a person, how would it communicate? (your brand voice). These elements are what define the brand, and before you start building your brand identity, it's important you have a clear understanding of each, but it could be difficult to plan just one clear idea that is shared from all the team members. For this reason, an efficient tool to organise all the point of views about the brand's perception is the "brand identity prism".

PHYSIQUE   RELATIONSHIP

PERSONALITY   CULTURE

REFLECTION   SELF-IMAGE
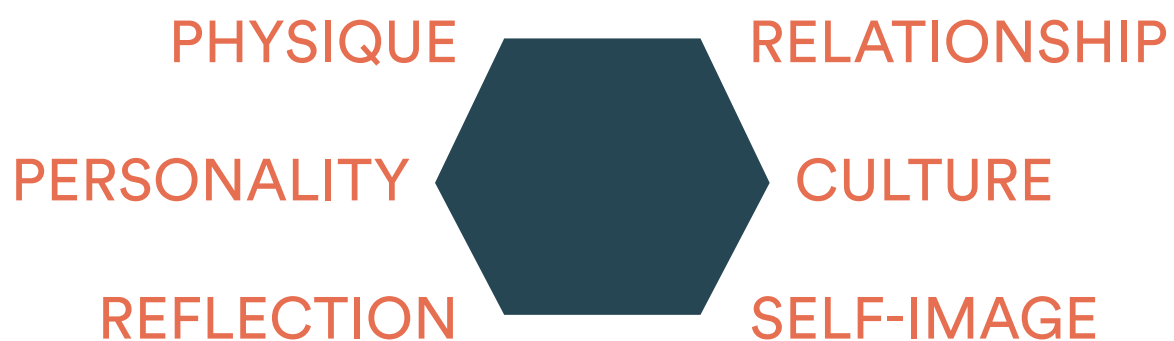
Elaborated by Jean-Noel Kapferer, sociologist and consultant to leading international corporates, the brand identity prism is a model that helps businesses build strong, enduring brand identities that reflect their core values. It helps to communicate clearly and transparently and be easily remembered and recognized. It proposes

- PHYSIQUE: the physical characteristics and iconography of your brand, such as the design of the products, the logo, the quality of the materials and so on. Kapferer said the physique should be considered the basis of the brand, it is the clearest visual representation of your brand's aspirations and how you wish it to be perceived, all the part of the company values that can be expressed in a tangible way. In determining your brand's physique, you should consider what your products or services look like, what emotions they inspire and how that might look like in their physical form. Even if shapes, colour palette, fonts, and other visual elements are not fully designed, it would be good to define the main characteristics of them.

- PERSONALITY: how a brand communicates with the outside world, which is expressed through its tone of voice, its design, and its copywriting. This is like the nature and the mood typical of a human being. A new startup needs to define its tone of voice and its design assets and then integrate this into all communication touchpoints: website, apps, direct mail, emails, internal communication and so on. The main questions that could help the writing of a good list are: what kind of person would it be? Young or old? Funny or serious? Reserved or passionate? Athletic or classy? Humble or rich? These are just few examples of what characteristics have to be decided. A lot of work goes into developing a personality for a brand, and to that end the words and images associated with it are essential. Otherwise, the effect of the company's presentation to the audience will be confused, messy, not reliable and, in general, very negative.

- REFLECTION: the stereotypical user of the product-service. A brand is likely to have several buyer personas, which are detailed examples of the perfect person that can be interested about the startup. It is good to go in deep with this analysis, creating real profile with name, pictures, gender, age, needs, habits, behaviours, job, salary, education, family's situation, and passions. Each additional information

can be useful in this phase to create a clearer report. In addition, according to the category of product-service, can be important to analyse also habits in terms of devices' usage and social networks.

- RELATIONSHIP: the relationship between the brand and its customers, and what the customer hopes they are getting from the brand beyond the actual product or service. For a young and vibrant startup this can mean being the friend who is always available on all social media, no matter how big or small question the at hand might be. The kinds of interactions that occur between a brand and its customers say a lot about the brand's identity, but also about its target audience. Meeting the customer where they expect you to be is essential to build and maintain the right kind of brand identity. So, in this phase, in addition to the typology of relation can be also useful to define where this rapport will happen.

- CULTURE: the value system and the principles on which a startup bases its behaviour. Country or region it operates in have a large influence on that. This generally comes naturally when one develops a brand in the same environment they themselves were raised in, but it can cause a great deal of confusion when a company looks to go international and assumes that the same attributes which projected a certain brand identity in one culture will work in another. An important example is Google's culture, which recently voted as the best in the tech industry, promotes flexibility, creativity, and a fun environment – all things that it wants to be known for outside of its colourful and inspirational offices.

- SELF-IMAGE: how the user sees their ideal self. It is the feelings that a person wants to feel while using this product-service. To understand that, the company has to analyse the target audience and focus on the "ideal identity", which is how they want to look and behave, and what they aspire to. Then, the brand identity will be designed according to this research, in order to tap into these emotional values to

further enhance the brand identity and build on the customer experience. This part is mostly based on emotions because it is all about how consuming a certain brand makes the customer feel. It is important to be always aware of the idea for what kind of feeling the brand is supposed to provide its consumers.

To better understand this concept, it is possible to apply this tool on a real successful company that works in the Fashion Tech field. Nike, for example, is a good case because it started with fashion, but then has also developed some product-service like wearables.
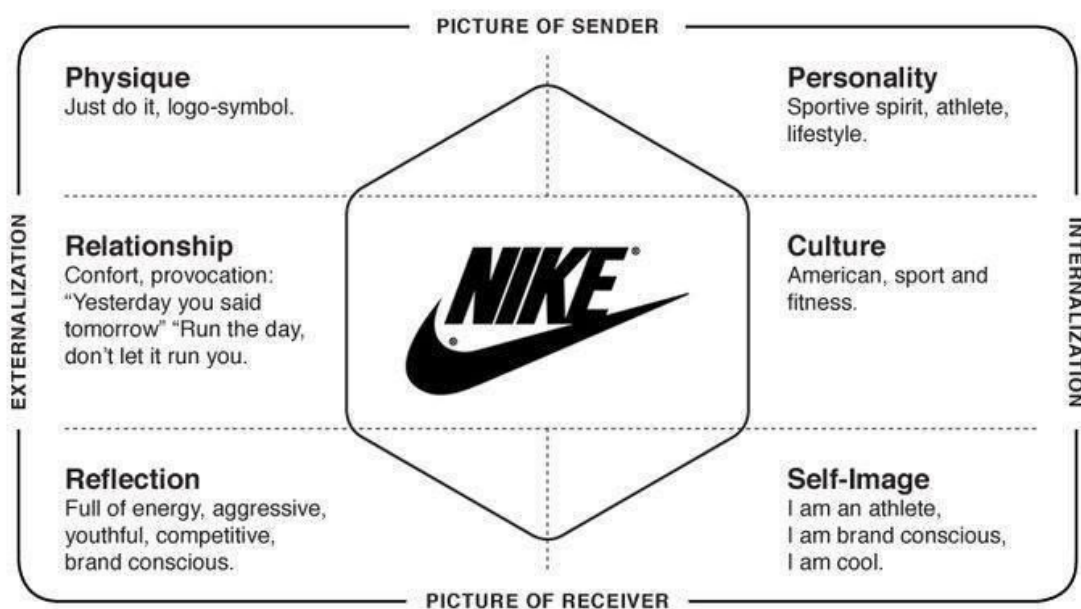
Image 7.1. Brand identity prism Nike

This company focused its brand identity on sport and athleticism, and this is clear since the claim, which is a physical element like the dynamic logo. The claim affirm explicitly that the main values of the brand are energy, movement, dynamism, willpower, and so on. This concept is reflected also in the relationship with the users, which is provocative in order to make them active, and not passive, in front of new challenges. This idea is enclosed in two main sentences, that are like a summary of this principle. To deal with this strength and vitality, the perfect user of Nike is a person that feels young, full of energy, and competitive. Strictly connected, the brand personality is sportive and athletic, focused on lifestyle. This is very important to talk the same language of the typical customers. The culture, in this context, needs to be based on sport and fitness, which are on the top of the priorities for a great and enviable life. According to these values, people who are engaged from Nike feel themselves like professional athlete and it is a good method also to stimulate who would like to be like this but does not have enough energy or willpower.

Most of this analysis, anyway, it is a work that has to be done as internal evaluation. It is counter-productive starting to present an idea without planning all these elements, especially because some accelerator programmes or investors do not give second opportunities. The final outputs, usually, it is one or more documents that will be shared internally, but it is essential to set up a solid base and design other contents useful to impress financiers or customers.

7.2. NAME, CLAIM, AND LOGO

About physical and tangible elements of the brand identity, the most important elements are name, claim, and logo. These are what is usually on the cover, which is the first general impression of the company. Some investors declared that from this impression, they have already understood if the startup can catch their attention or not, so it is essential to take the right time to design this part. In particular, there are some characteristics that are common to successful cases.

- NAME: this is the element that links a startup to associations and memories stored in the minds of the audience. Using language as a means of communication and processing information is an intrinsic trait of all human beings that is not typical for other species. There are some particular words and names that allow us to access a wide variety of meanings, emotions and associations related to objects, events, and people. From the marketing and branding perspective, a brand name is a word or a phrase that personifies all information and knowledge your target customer has about your company and its products. On the other hand, for those who don't know about your brand, its name gives the cues necessary for customers to relate it to their needs or a specific industry and to be able to recognize it in the future. Functionally, a brand name may serve many different purposes which determine a set of requirements that should be considered when naming a company or a product. The most common features of a good brand name are: easily pronounced and memorable; relevant to a specific industry or a need of the brand's target audience; relates to customer expectations and evokes strong positive associations. It is possible also to choose wordplays or mix different words, in order to make the association clearer. This is very common.

Great examples that illustrates how these functional requirements work come from

some of the startups that I analysed during my research. 4Gifters, Artknit Studio, and The PowderRoom are names that combines two different terms to communicate immediately their field of action. Artnik Studio, in particular, uses this combination to create a good association in the mind of the audience. Comparing handcraft to art, they want to generate a sense of luxury and opulence from hand-made clothes and this is an added value for their products. Others, like Banale or Epoché, have chosen a specific term to clearly connect a set of values and perceptions. The first one, in fact, wants to communicate a feeling of facility and ease using their products, while the second one comes from ancient Greek and means "suspension of the judgement" because they want to communicate that people's opinions are not definitive until they see the smart display, which makes them astonished. These are good cases that evidently show how the name is used to create connections with the product, its main values, and competitive assets. Another important possibility is to think, if possible, acronym or short memorable names that are easy to remember and to share. General director of Biblioteca Alberi Milano, for instance, as a first action during her work decided to change the name of the project and now it is called BAM. This is a nice evidence of the importance of a concise name and this way of thinking could be applied in Fashion Tech even if BAM works the field of literature and culture, since both are subjects based on emotions. In this situation, it was a simple change, but the significance was very strong because now the name is more memorable, modern, catchy, and easy to write on social networks, e-mails, and other communications like reports, flyers, and so on.

CLARA

THE ULTRA BRIGHT TURN SIGNAL VEST FOR CYCLISTS AND RUNNERS.

Image 7.2. Claim and logo CLARA

4GIFTERS

There's always a reason to gift!

Image 7.3. Claim and logo 4Gifters

/RTKNIT STUDIOS

LA QUALITÀ DEL LUSSO DIRETTAMENTE DAL PRODUTTORE.

Image 7.4. Claim and logo ARTKNIT

THE POWDEROOM

Image 7.5. Logo ThePowderoom

epoché

Il Tempo oltre le Apparenze

Image 7.6. Claim and logo Epoché

BANALE.

Image 7.7. Logo BANALE

BAM
BAM
Biblioteca
degli Alberi
Milano

Image 7.8. Logo BAM

some of the startups that I analysed during my research. 4Gifters, Artknit Studio, and The PowderRoom are names that combines two different terms to communicate immediately their field of action. Artnik Studio, in particular, uses this combination to create a good association in the mind of the audience. Comparing handcraft to art, they want to generate a sense of luxury and opulence from hand-made clothes and this is an added value for their products. Others, like Banale or Epoché, have chosen a specific term to clearly connect a set of values and perceptions. The first one, in fact, wants to communicate a feeling of facility and ease using their products, while the second one comes from ancient Greek and means "suspension of the judgement" because they want to communicate that people's opinions are not definitive until they see the smart display, which makes them astonished. These are good cases that evidently show how the name is used to create connections with the product, its main values, and competitive assets. Another important possibility is to think, if possible, acronym or short memorable names that are easy to remember and to share. General director of Biblioteca Alberi Milano, for instance, as a first action during her work decided to change the name of the project and now it is called BAM. This is a nice evidence of the importance of a concise name and this way of thinking could be applied in Fashion Tech even if BAM works the field of literature and culture, since both are subjects based on emotions. In this situation, it was a simple change, but the significance was very strong because now the name is more memorable, modern, catchy, and easy to write on social networks, e-mails, and other communications like reports, flyers, and so on.

- CLAIM: this is the sentence that usually accompanies the name. It should contain what the startup does, the problem that it solves and completes the identity of the brand, in order to make it unique and memorable. Sometimes it is confused with

the pay-off, which is more general for the company and not for the functions of the product. To be clearer, it is like a promise addressed to the users and it needs to be interesting. The audience, usually, begin to feel emotional engaged from the problem since this first approach with the claim. If this perception is well designed, investors or customers will feel the need for the benefits that come from the product and this is a huge advantage. Emphasis, excesses, exclamations, questions, and figure of speech are the most common strategies to create a good claim. The problem is the main point of this short and very powerful sentence, but in parallel the startup needs to appear as professional, expert, and self-confidence. To be focused on a particular issue, it is good to think about this when the analysis of the problem is already clear and well-structured. In addition, is very important to keep always in mind also the target analysis because, to be more memorable, it should contain expressions or terms that are generally used from the target. CLARA's claim, for examples, says: "The ultra-bright turn signal vest for cyclist and runners". This is the simplest and easiest summary of what the company does, with a clear reference to the product and the target. It does not use complex terms and has the emphasis on "ultra-bright", which is the competitive asset that makes unique this vest. In other case, it could be even quicker and more musical to pronounce. "There's always a reason to gift!" is the claim from 4Gifters and, compared to the first example, it is an exclamation. The term "gift", in particular, is very important to point out the typology of the service and the expression "there's", which is colloquial, makes the whole sentence down-to-earth and easy to remember. It also reinforces the brand identity because the perception is of something non-formal. The last example that I want to report is "La qualità del lusso direttamente dal produttore", whose translation is "The quality of luxury directly from the manufacturer". This is the claim of Artknit Studio and also in this case is clear the reference with the competitive asset of the

service, which is the quality of the luxury that usually is not present in multinational corporations of clothes. Apart from this, the main point is the problem that they solve. The luxury, in this case, comes from the manufacturer, so they are affirming that the quality is the highest possible and the prices do not have the common increase of production line, distribution, and so on. In general, what other successful startups do, is to reflect on the main competitive asset of the service and design a claim using that unique characteristic as the centre.

- LOGO: this is the summary of the brand identity and the element will always represent the startup. This graphic sign is really effective when successfully expresses the visual synthesis of the idea. It will become the emblem of the brand, the symbolic face of the startup, and set the tone of the business. It is essential for the communication of the project and for making it recognizable in the blink of the eye. The success of a business depends also this because in a world of frenetic alternation of continuous solicitations and multidirectional visual stimuli it has the power to catch the attention and create interest. The design process of a logo is often long and complex because it also requires decisions about typography, shapes, and colours. For this reason, this step is not mandatorily before other steps in chronological order, but it is something that needs drafts, sketches, and revision in parallel to the design of other visual elements. One of the main obstacles in this stage, in fact, is that not many people are aware of the business, since they have just started out, so they could have difficulties to really understand the components of the brand identity that they have in mind. It is important, before the logo design, to reflect precisely on what would be the company's most fundamental purpose, how do you envision the company five years down the line, the mission, vision, and aim of the company act as the guiding force through time. In fashion, for

example, could happen that at the beginning the brand needs to be known, but in future it wants to become a luxury brand, so the process has to consider these kinds of perspectives. Another part that must be planned before the logo design is the personality because the tone of the startup will strongly influence the process and the decision of typography and colour palette. It is important to choose if the audience will perceive the startup as minimalist, elegant, luxury, cheap, sportive, and so on. For Fashion Tech, in particular, it could be very good to think about a typographical logo, or logotype, which is different from the classical idea of logo. In customers' minds a logo is usually an icon or a pictogram, but this is not the only possibility. Sometimes, using a particular lettering for the name, it is possible to create interesting logos that are clearer than drawings. This is more common in the field of fashion especially for the company that want to design different products in future, because do not create confusion between the company and the series of products. Nike, for example, is the most popular case to explain this concept. They have the logo of the company, but then each series of shoes, such as Air Force, Air Max, or Blazer, has its typographical logo to avoid mistakes with the brand identity. This is exactly what happened also with my experience in Tinker Design LTD with the creation of the brand identity for the shoes. The company already had a classical logo and we designed a typographical logo for SOULE, which is the name of the shoes, to keep clear the difference between the product and the company. This is good also because keep open the possibility to add other series of products in future, just like Nike or Adidas. Apart from this, it is essential the logo is strong enough to be understood also in small size and in black and white. It could happen, in fact, that someone will resize or print it, so this element needs to be designed in such a way that will maintain its power in all conditions. Too thin lines, bad contrast, or too similar colours are usually something to avoid. A business logo, in fact, would

be displayed on smallest of surfaces to the largest.

SOULE

Image 7.9. Logo SOULE

As well as being typographic, it is the perfect summary of the brand also for other aspects, such as the main colour that represent wellness and calm, and the clean and soft shapes.

7.3. VISUAL IDENTITY

In parallel with name, claim, and logo, it is important to design the visual identity, which will be the central theme between all the elements useful to communicate a startup. It is quite different from the brand identity, because this one is more focused on the physical elements that must be used, while brand identity is more connected to the message and impressions that the startup wants to create. Visual identity is how you shape perception and create an impression through the visible elements of your brand. Images are a powerful form of communication, specifically because they do not communicate with words. They speak on a primal, emotional level and are thus more persuasive. But with great power of communication comes great responsibility: it is important to be extra cautious and not send the wrong message. In other words, it describes everything customers can physically see. Often, this process culminates in the development of a brand style guide which provides consistent instructions on how the brand should be visually represented at all times and in any situation. As already said, the logo is based on these decisions, but also every other content that is required, such as slides for pitch, mock-ups, interfaces of the service, website, and so on. The whole system must appear as coordinated, otherwise the first impression of the company will be confused, not structured, and not organized. In consequence, also the result will be disastrous because no one will trust a company that is not able to build a solid identity. Both founders and investors, in fact, affirm that communication is one of the most important assets to obtain a competitive advantage.

According to many founders of successful startups, there is a common path that can be followed in order to create an efficient visual identity and it is divided in four main steps.

7.3.1. REFERENCES AND WORDS CLOUD

This is the preparatory phase and is very useful to make order in each mind. At the beginning, in fact, each person has a different perspective and even if they are similar, there are always some differences and shades between them. For this reason, it is good to search other contents and materials that reflect the main ideas. It is possible, for example, to search the style for the slides from a popular brand, the style of the website from another project, the colour palette from a similar case study, and so on. These elements can be very different and can come from various sources, such as social networks, university projects, or real cases, but the important thing is that each reference has at least one characteristic that can inspire the team. This helps to visualise the complex ideas in each brain. In parallel, it is helpful to create a words cloud with all the key terms that are connected to the brand and its perception. In this stage all the team should take part to the process, because the more information there is, the better will be for the next phases, even if they are not homogenous and practicable. It is fundamental to keep always in mind the target because each reference must be aligned with the final users and customers.

7.3.2. BRAINSTORMING AND COMPETITORS

This is the preparatory phase and is very useful to make order in each mind. At the beginning, in fact, each person has a different perspective and even if they are similar, there are always some differences and shades between them. For this reason, it is good to search other contents and materials that reflect the main ideas. It is possible, for example, to search the style for the slides from a popular brand, the style of the website from another project, the colour palette from a similar case

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study, and so on. These elements can be very different and can come from various sources, such as social networks, university projects, or real cases, but the important thing is that each reference has at least one characteristic that can inspire the team. This helps to visualise the complex ideas in each brain. In parallel, it is helpful to create a words cloud with all the key terms that are connected to the brand and its perception. In this stage all the team should take part to the process, because the more information there is, the better will be for the next phases, even if they are not homogenous and practicable. It is fundamental to keep always in mind the target because each reference must be aligned with the final users and customers.

7.3.3. ABSTRACTION

Once that references are copious, words cloud is ready, and competitor analysis is well developed with differentiation in clusters and trends, it is the right moment to abstract the guidelines for the visual identity. Starting from the words cloud, the team has to choose few terms or adjectives, like four or five, that describe the perception of the brand. These keywords will be the main identity for the rest of the project and each visual element will be designed according to them. Then, using both references and benchmark analysis, it is essential to decide some unavoidable components as minimum aim to reach. For example, one video for the opening of the pitch, some renders, or mock-ups to show the service product, or the main part that will make up the website. In parallel it is important to also decide some of the references that are closer to these decisions, in order to have cleared ideas. This is the moment to make homogeneous all the case studies and remove the examples

that are too far from the visual identity that is being planned. Before skip to the next stage is essential to do a revision of these materials. When all the parts are decided and everyone agrees on them, putting together all the elements is a way to check if everything works and there are no pieces or decisions that are in contrast with the identity. A tool for this last revision is the mood board, which is a type of visual presentation or a collage consisting of images, text, and samples of objects in a composition. It can be based upon a set topic or can be any material chosen at random. A mood board can be used to convey a general idea or feeling about a particular topic. They may be physical or digital and can be effective presentation tools. Graphic designers, interior designers, industrial designers, photographers and other creative artists use mood boards to visually illustrate the style they wish to pursue. However, these boards can also be used by design professionals to visually explain a certain style of writing, or an imaginary setting for a story line. In short, mood boards are not limited to visual subjects, but serve as a visual tool to quickly inform others of the overall "feel" (or "flow") of an idea. In creative processes, mood boards can balance coordination and creative freedom. According to my experience with Tinker Design, it is very important to involve all the team in these three steps, otherwise will be difficult to work together with a unique perspective. I have already told about the importance of the communication within the team and especially in this first part everyone should be aware of all the decisions.

7.3.4. ELEMENTS OF VISUAL IDENTITY

Now that the idea is quite structured and everyone is aligned on perceptions and

style, the last step is to design and choose the physical elements that will compose the visual identity. The main graphic elements are fonts, typography, colour palette, icons, and everything that can be used as recognizable component.

Starting from the fonts and the typography, it is the shape or styling of the text used in the branding. There are many different types of fonts and each one can have a different effect on the viewer, including different degrees of legibility. For the purposes of visual identity, the basis to consider is the wordmark to your logo, a headline font, and a body copy font (which should be the most legible).

The main groups of fonts are:
- **Serif fonts** (like Times New Roman or Garamond) are the most classic, original fonts. They have what look like an anchor (or to some people, little feet) on the end of each letter. This timeless typography is great if you want the brand to appear trustworthy, classical, and just a little old school. These fonts are ubiquitous in our day to day life in nearly every book we read or document we open. They are often used for logos and print copy and are generally considered to be the most trusted (or conservative) fonts on the planet. Our eyes love them for everything from short titles to long pages of text. A fashion startup that works with innovative services or modern product hardly uses this kind of typography. It is elegant, but very traditional.
- **Sans serif fonts** (like Arial or Franklin Gothic), in contrast with "serif" with foot, are letters that have smooth edges and lack the anchor of their serif counterparts. In the mid-century German designers ran away with the footless forms and created some of the fonts that remain popular and iconic forever, like Futura and Helvetica, but these two fonts in particular are overused and nowadays it is more suggested to

choose different sans serif fonts. They started popping up in the mid-19th century but truly hit the big time in what is known as the "Modern" era, in the twenties and thirties. They were considered new and flashy. That is the reason why they could give a more sleek, modern feel to brands. They are still considered the most economical, efficient, clean, and modern choice. They are also readable at a large range of sizes and their less-detailed shapes have lent themselves incredibly well to digital screens. Sans serifs perform at best in larger uses like headlines and logos, and short paragraphs or text.

- Script fonts emulates cursive handwriting. These fonts (like Allura or Pacifico) can be a great way to add a luxurious, elegant, or feminine feel to your brand, but also a perception of casual and handy. They are, in fact, divided in two categories: formal and casual. Formal scripts, as the name implies, are the very fanciest scripts. They evoke the incredible handwriting of masters of the 17th and 18th century. They are immediately recognizable for their over the top curls and flourishes that extend from the serif, known as swashes. These are to be handled with care. Using them for extended amounts of copy can lead to your design resembling a classical manuscript or unreadable. Casual scripts developed in the twentieth century and resemble less the work of calligraphers and more of sign painters. These scripts have far less swashes and are more legible. The work well for anything with a more casual, homespun feel including logos, posters, and pamphlets, and tend to feel timeless. Script fonts, usually, are not used for texts that need to be very readable, but more for small sentences of titles because they can catch the attention very well and clearly communicate a particular feeling.

- Display fonts are kind of in a league of their own. Each display font has a specialized element, whether it is an unusual shape to the letters, outlines, shadowing, or a more artistic/hand-drawn edge (think Metallica's lightning bolt font). They often

have more eccentric and variable designs than the simple, relatively restrained typefaces generally used for body text. They may take inspiration from other genres of lettering, such as handpainted signs, calligraphy or an aesthetic appropriate to their use, perhaps ornamented, exotic, abstracted or drawn in the style of a different writing system A display font is a great choice if you want to make a bold statement and create a brand identity people will not soon forget, but this high potentiality has also a huge responsibility because the risk to create something flashy or difficult to read is present. This kind of typography, like script fonts, is a good choice to give a vivid identity to the startup. Otherwise, other two categories are more traditional. This does not mean that it is a mistake, it depends on each case if it is better to create a lively brand or a quieter brand.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Examples of Serif fonts

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog
The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Examples of Sans serif fonts

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Example of Script fonts

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Examples of Script fonts

In general, it is good to choose two or three fonts. More than three fonts will create confusion and the identity of the brand will not appear solid and clear. Another characteristic to keep in mind is the number of weights. A font with different aspects like regular, italic, semi-bold, bold, bold italic, and so on, could be better than a font with few differences within the family. Having more variety, in fact, gives the possible to create more engaging contents. Most fonts have a range of weights and spacings so one font can be used in a variety of different ways in the same design. Condensed and heavy for a headline, regular light for body copy. Never underestimate how versatile a single type of font can be. But this decision sometimes could be difficult because it is not just about choosing some fonts with a big family and that work well, but also fonts that work well together. A quick search brings up a myriad of specific suggestions for combining different types of fonts. The most important characteristics in this context is the contrast. For example, a common combination is all-caps sans serif with an italic serif. The lightness of the italic balances the heavy, dark weight of the sans. To verify if the fonts are good, it is very helpful to also create some examples of typography, which are short part of texts or titles similar to real cases that explain how to use the fonts chosen and their sizes. This will be a reference for the future, but also a great test to understand if the research is complete or not.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Example of Spartan, font for Tinker Design LTD

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Example of Georgia, font for Tinker Design LTD

Image 7.10. example of guideline for typography

The second important decision is for the colour palette, which is the range of colours that will be used for every kind of contents related to the startup. Each element will take the colours from this palette and other colours will be avoided in order to do not create confusion and reinforce the brand identity. A common mistake is to choose too many colours for the palette, but often just four or five colours are enough for the project. People, included investors and potential customers, have psychological ties to different colours, and using branding colours and logo colours strategically can have a serious impact on how your brand is perceived by your

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Red is the colour of passion and excitement. It is the perfect choice if the brand identity is loud, youthful, and exciting.

Orange is another high-energy colour and is great if the brand wants to appear friendly and playful. It is used less commonly than red, so will make you stand out.

Yellow is the colour of sunshine, is all about happiness. The cheerful vibe makes it a good choice if you want to feel fun, accessible, and affordable.

Green is incredibly versatile colour and can be used for just about any brand. Culturally, though, when people see green, they think two things: money or nature. If your brand is tied to either of those things, green is an especially good choice.

Blue is the most universally appealing colour in the spectrum. It can help the brand to appear more stable and trustworthy, so if you are looking to appeal to a wide demographic, and get them to trust you in the process, this is a good choice.

Purple is the colour of royalty, so it is very adequate if the brand is going for a luxurious feel.

Pink is culturally tied to femininity, even if this can be stereotypical and socially retarded. So, if the brand is targeted towards women, pink should be a definite

contender for your brand colour. It is also a great colour for brands with a soft, luxurious identity, or connected to wellness.

Brown is perhaps the least use colour in all of branding, but that could actually work in some cases. Any time you do something different, it helps you stand out. Brown can also help people to view your brand as rugged or masculine.

Black is the colour if the brand wants to appear as modern or sophisticated. For that, it is the most classic and effective.

Sometimes a good idea is to choose two or three shades of the same colour, in order to make the perception of that colour stronger. It is important to keep always in mind that the tone of a colour can influence the experience of the user. A vivid red, for example, is very different from a pastel red, even if they are the same colour. In fashion and wellness are often used pastel and soft colours because they are trendy and elegant, but when the fashion startup is more dynamic or linked to sport, these kind of colours are not adequate and it is better to have strong tone. In general, each case is different, so these suggestions can be applied in many ways according to the keywords chosen for the perception of the brand.
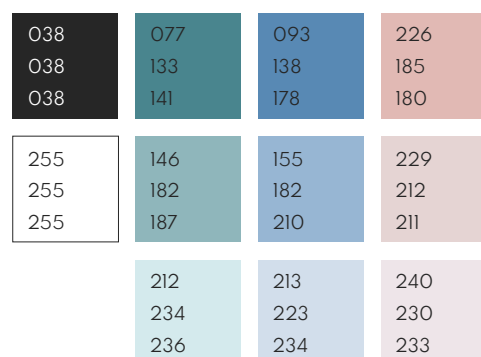
038 038 038	077 133 141	093 138 178	226 185 180
255 255 255	146 182 187	155 182 210	229 212 211
	212 234 236	213 223 234	240 230 233

Image 7.11. example of colours palette

Another important part for the visual identity of a brand are forms and shapes. This subtle but effective element that can be used to reinforce the desired reaction from your customers: so, for example, a logo that is all circles and soft edges will inspire a very different reaction from a logo that is sharp and square. In particular:

Round shapes like circles, ovals, and ellipses, are all about the warm and fuzzies. Brands that incorporate round shapes can create feelings of community, unity, and love. The rounded edges, sometimes, can also be viewed as feminine.

Straight edged shapes like squares, rectangles, and triangles, make people think strength and efficiency. They create a feeling of stability and trustworthiness, but if the shapes are not balanced out with something fun, like dynamic colours, they can feel impersonal and fail to connect with your customers. It is always important to connect a decision with the previous.

Straight lines also have their own implications. Vertical lines, for instance, suggest masculinity and strength while horizontal lines are more connected to sense of tranquillity and mellow vibes.

But it could be difficult to take these decisions about forms in the visual identity before the creation of concrete contents. For this reason, a useful suggestion is to create an internal document that will not circulate outside from the startup, in order to summarise all the typography, fonts, and colour palette and test the shapes with the layout of this document. This is a good way also to make clear the idea of visual identity, share it very fast when someone will enter in the team, and keep a reference for the future. In my case it was very useful to design also some icons connected to the main features of the product. Icons, in fact, are graphic elements that are used often in pitch, presentations, and also in interfaces of application or website because they communicate clear message in short time, without using

words. It is important to think about these icons as a collection, always using the same thickness for lines, rounding for angles, and so on.
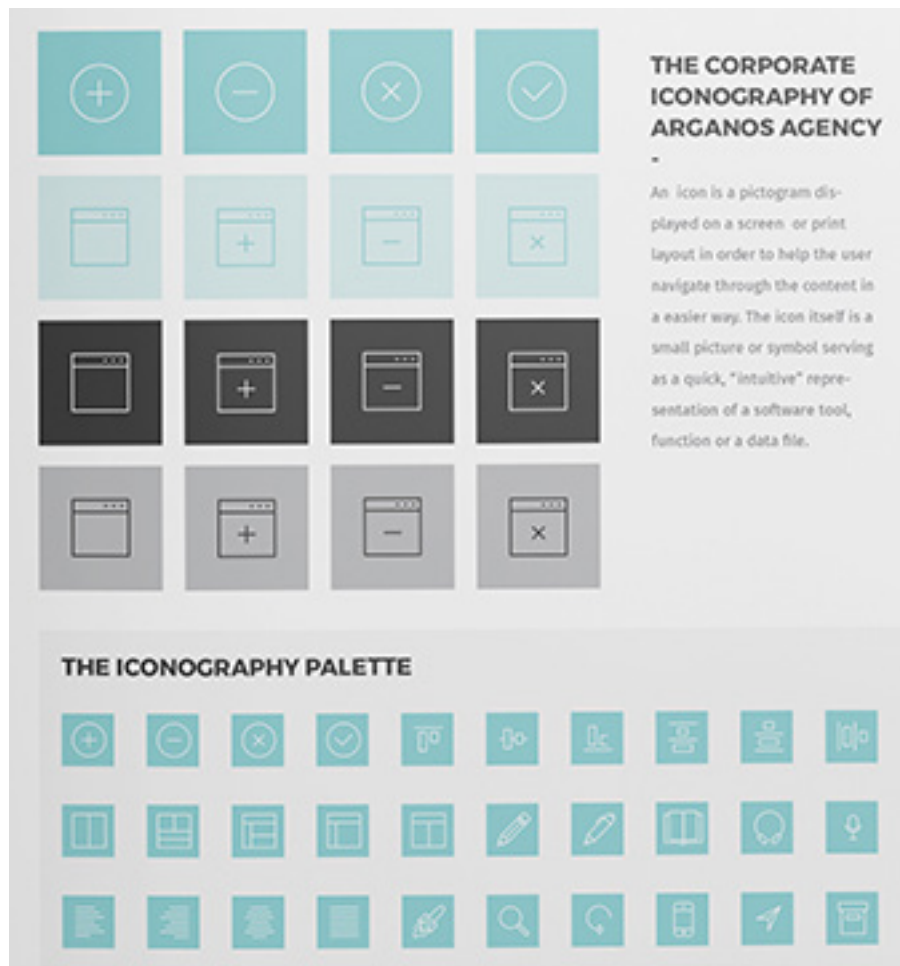
Image 7.12. example of shapes and icons

SOULE
BRAND
ELEMENTS

Fonts

SPARTAN

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GEORGIA ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Colours

038 038 038	077 133 141	093 138 178	226 185 180
255 255 255	146 182 187	155 182 210	229 212 211
	212 234 236	213 223 234	240 230 233

Icons

Image 7.13. SOULE brand document

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8. PITCH DECK

COMMON PROBLEMS.

About the pitch deck, which is one of most important resources to obtain funds and investments, it is very common to create confusion with the structure of the presentation. Usually startuppers have too much information and without a clear structure is impossible to present everything and highlight the important parts. Add as much information as possible, in fact, do not make the presentation more complete, but on the contrary make it only more complex and annoying. Another important issue is to focus only about the idea, forgetting the importance of the solution. What investors, and also the customers inside the market, want is a service product that can create benefits to solve their problem, so the speech needs to be focused on the problem and the idea has to presented as solution to that problem. If the idea is not related to the problem, it does not have relevance. Inside the pitch many founders make also the error to design technical contents, because they think is the technology the elements that impress the audience, but this is not true. Investors generally do not have all the knowledge to understand in deep the technology behind a product, so complex and detailed contents are difficult to understand and very annoying for the audience, who lose the attention.

MAIN AIM OF THIS PHASE.

Inside this chapter I want to present the best structure to plan a pitch, according to many analysis and research of succesful case studies. I will analyse in deep each slide in order to help the reader to select the specific information that fit the presentation. It will be a support also for the speech, because the its flow will follow the flow of the presentation. In addition to the structure, I want to mention a very useful tool

to validate the idea and check if it overlaps the needs and the expectations of the customers. About the contents inside the presentation, I want to focus on the contents that must be present, with some suggestions for contents to open or close the speech, and to support the presentation during important phases. I want to explain also the features of these contents and how to create emotional engagements, with some examples. The final part is focused on testimonials, in parallel with the media contents they can make the presentation stronger and improve the perception of the startup in front of the audience.

Pitching a business to an investor is one of the most important moments in an entrepreneur's professional life. In a short and concise presentation, an entrepreneur must convince investors that their startup is worth the attention and investment. The task becomes even harder due to high pressure and highly competitive arena. Investors are swamped with business pitches from thousands of entrepreneurs who want to transform the fashion industry, so it is extremely important to make an impression and tell a compelling, memorable, and interesting story that shows your passion and expertise in the business. Some experts affirm that the main aim of the first period of a startup is to create a good deck of slides that will follow the company also in future competitions, pitches, and presentation. So, this is a very important moment for the life of startups. The brand identity designed in the previous part is essential for this stage because when the startup does not have any physical element, the pitch is the whole identity that the founder will use to express his idea to the world.

8.1. PITCH STRUCTURE

According to Guy Kawasaki, a Silicon Valley investor, author, and marketing expert: "People are going to make an instant decision about your pitch. They are not going to want to see your entire background, they are not going to want to get to know you, they do not want to be your friend. You are either hot or not, interesting, or not. It's that quick." For this reason, the structure of the pitch is essential to meet the duration and length criteria, but also to create an efficient and interesting story that will follow a logical order engaging the audience. Analysing different decks from successful cases of startup, investors, experts like Francesco Inguscio from Officine Formative or Guy Kawasaki, and companies like Docsend or Sequoia Capital, the structure of the pitch is quite standardised. There are not many differences from a Fashion Tech pitch or pitches from other fields, but there are some differences inside the deck, especially for the visual contents that need to be designed. I would like to point out that the following order that I am going to present is not mandatory. Each presentation, in fact, can be different in order to highlight one part rather than another. This is important when a startup has a big competitive asset and the presentation can be designed to emphasize that element. There are no universal rules about that, but this structure that I abstracted from the analysis of case studies is a guideline that encloses many points of views and real experiences. In addition, it is very good to have also various versions of the same presentation because the research and work of a startup are huge, and it is quite impossible to present all the materials in just one pitch. Having multiple types allows the founder to present the right part of information according to the audience, avoiding waste of time and loss of concentration. This is, in fact, a common problem reported from the most people that work with startup. Usually they have enormous amount of data to show, but they have to select which part is more interesting. This is a crucial moment because is essential to understand the type of investors and audience that will follow the

presentation. If they are technicians, they could be more interesting in listening information about the technology, otherwise they could be more engaged from the idea and the solution for a real problem. In this second case, therefore, to keep the attention it would be good to avoid deep explanation of technical research. With Tinker Design, for example, we created a general deck, but then we created another version with more detailed slides about scientifical and medical research because the audience of the pitch changed. This is just a quick example to clarify how is important to understand that the deck sometimes needs to be modified and revise the structure helps to design efficient speech and to be ready for every kind of competition or presentation.

The common structure that I analysed follows this order:
- **COVER.** This is the first slide that contains the important parts that I presented before, that are name, logo, claim (or USP, which means "unique selling proposition"). Successful companies always have a strong reason why they exist, and investors take their first instant decision from this. It is good, especially when the audience is following many presentations one after the other, to design a quick element that will break the ice. It could be a short animation, a video, a sound, a noise, or every other content, but is important that it is short and vivid to catch the attention. One of the mentors that I interviewed, for example, remembered the founder of a startup of antitheft that played an alarm before start with the speech. This fast noise woke up the interest in the audience, and then the presentation was enthusiastic. This is a case that explains well how much is important to go off the grid, keeping always in mind that time is essential.
- **PROBLEM AND TARGET.** The second step shows the impact of your business. Before the solution, it is good the clearly explain which is the problem and why.

Some of the best service products, in fact, are painkillers, something that people need to solve a real issue of their lives. So, the main question is what the problem is and how that problem is translated into customer pain. In this stage is important to show the pain in both significant and monetizable, using also amount of resources wasted to try to solve it. If the audience will identify with the issue, this will create engagement and the huge opportunity will be immediately evident. From this part it should be clear also the target that is the centre of the startup, because they are the group of people who suffer most this problem. The target usually takes up a lot of space and it is important, so it is better to divide this piece of presentation in two different slides. What should emerge from the target is the visual translation of the personas designed before, using images and few keywords.

Image 8.1. Example of target slide for Tinker Design LTD

- SOLUTION. This is the concrete explanation of the method you are designed to solve the previous problem. It can also be called as value proposition, which is a promise of value to be delivered, communicated, and acknowledged. It is a belief from the customer about how value (benefit) will be delivered, experienced, and acquired. Make sure to include clear and concise explanation of what the company does, as well as the main differentiation points, and the value of the pleasure the product provides. This is the step where you can show-off your strengths and explain how you stand out in competitive arena, but without analysing the competition. You want to highlight why it is a feasible solution and why customers are going to use it instead of whatever is available to date. In other words, what makes this service unique in the market.
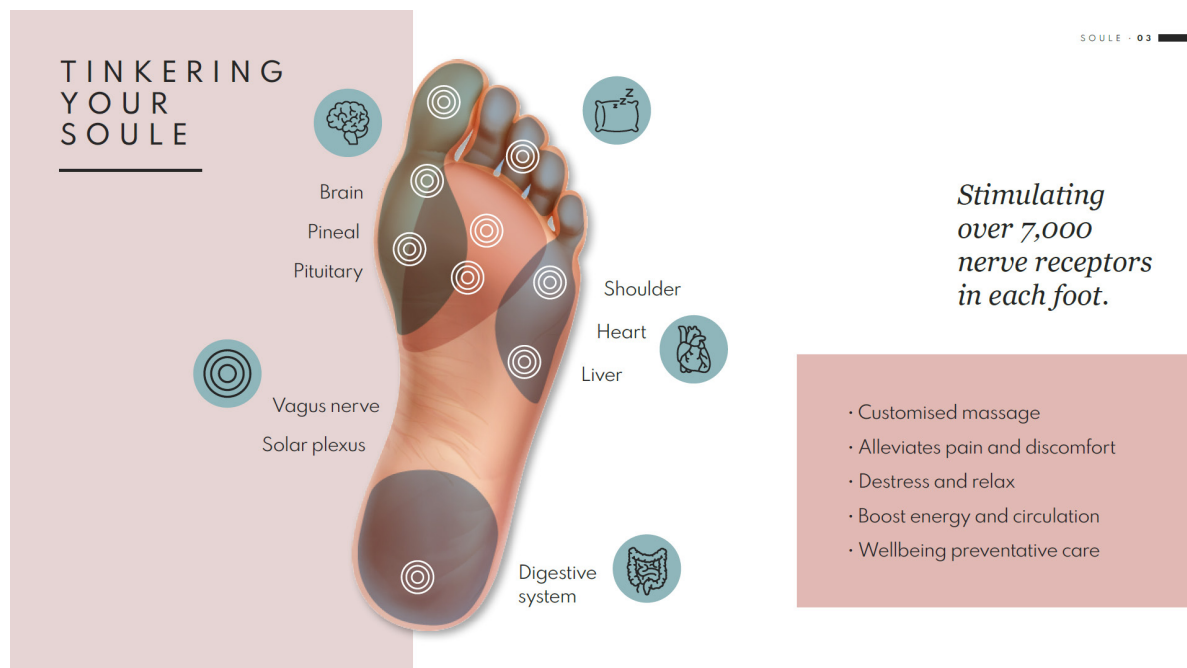

Image 8.2. Example of solution and benefits for Tinker Design

- WHY NOW. Once it is defined the main problem, the target customer, the solution, why their life is hard without the service product, and why the product is going to make things better, it is important to explain why now is the right moment. This part reinforces a lot the storytelling because it is an evidence that the market is ready for the product, trends are growing up very fast and the customer not only wants this service in future, but actually they need it now. The more credible and concrete this strategic story will be, the more investors will feel the urgency of this solution. "Why now", in fact, is not based only on the product, but on the complex market that already exist and is changing, or on the society that is always in evolution. Some reasons related to the market, for example, could be changes in societal norms, preferences, or behaviours, including new uses of technology; shifts in population demographics; shifts in the customer's industry dynamics; changes in customer's competitive landscape (including recent, widespread disappointment with competitor products); newly available technologies or data; or regulatory changes that spur demand for your offering. This part, in general, is something that founders omit because they are so focused to make the service product perfect, but investors are very interested about these explanations.

- MARKET. The main aim of this slide is the show to the audience that the product is not only a great solution for a real problem, but there is also a huge demand inside the market and a big space that can be occupied. Usually there is a deep research behind this slide because there are multiple variables to keep in mind. How many people suffer the problem? How many of them can be reached? How many can spend or want to spend a certain amount of money for the service. These are examples of questions that should be the basis of the market research. In particular, TAM (total achievable market), SAM (serviceable available market), and SOM (share of market) are common acronyms for a specific way to break up your market

size that have been used by some well-known startups in their pitch decks. They are also terms that many investors (especially institutional investors) will understand. TAM is a number that represents the total demand for a product or service. This is the top-level number. The TAM might be geographically bigger than your business can reach right now, the number may cover people only mildly interested in the product or service or whom you identified as possible target groups based on demographics alone. It is important to do not use this number as evidence for the number of possible customers, because it is different having interest for a product than being willing to pay for that. SAM is a portion of the TAM that is targeted by your product your service. Usually this is in a more immediate geographic reach, or with some other level of targeting to make it a focused segment of your market. This is where we start to narrow things down. SOM is the portion of the SAM that it is actually/feasibly to capture. This can be shown in a % of the SAM, for example: we can win 10% of the market share in the next 2 years. This is an interesting number because it takes into account the fact that the product is not the only solution your customer has for your product or service. No company in the world (except for monopolies) have 100% of the market, so to make it seem like you expect to get 100% of a market would be completely incorrect. A bottom-up analysis is very efficient in this case because it determines the individual spend-level of a customer or a group of customers and use it to determines how many of those potential customers there are. There are many ways to examine in depth this research. There are online reports that explain market trends during the last years, but an efficient method is to analysis the market from inside with survey, conversations, interview, and monitors of forums, pages on social media, and so on. It is possible, for instance, to have online chat in specific websites and send forms or questions presenting themselves as independent user. When the statistic sample analysed is big enough

to be considered as trustworthy, observing the behaviours from the user without being noticed is very good to obtain real impressions, comments, and data. This is important also because having only third-party analyses is a risk. They are very variably and if they are inaccurate, the result will be not convincing. In addition, there are some common mistakes that founders make during this phase. A common expression, for example, is that the market is very huge, so the startup needs to capture just 1% of it to have good revenue. But, without a good SOM analysis, it is not certain that even 1% of the market will be willing to pay for the service. So, in general, it is important to be always specific and doubtful about numbers and statistics.

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- COMPETITORS. Before the planning of the pitch, competitors' analysis was already important to create the visual identity, but now it is a little bit different. During this phase it is essential to understand other companies that solve the same problem and present them to show that the competitive asset of the startup is something that everyone does not have. The main aim is not to present them as weak or bad, but to show that the new service product has something innovative that they are forgetting, or they are doing in a way that can be improved. One common mistake is to focus only on competitors that have a similar product. The most important aspect, also in this case, is the solution of the problem. Ryanair, for example, is a competitor of Trenitalia, even if they work with different kind of transportation,

because the first one implemented some routes similar to Trenitalia (like Milano-Roma) with cheaper prices. Competitor analysis is an essential component of corporate strategy. It is argued that most firms do not conduct this type of analysis systematically enough. It is important to conduct the competitor analysis at various business stages to provide the best possible product or service for customers. One common and useful technique to create a benchmark analysis is constructing a competitor array. The steps may include: define the industry (scope and nature of the industry); determine who the competitors are; determine who the customers are and what benefits they expect; determine the key strengths (for example price, service, convenience, inventory, etc.); rank the key success factors by giving each one a weighting; rate each competitor on each of the key success factors; multiply each cell in the matrix by the factor weighting. Moreover, one element that is very clear and helpful for the pitch is the positioning. It consists in a Cartesian diagram with opposite characteristics in the extremes of the axes that allows the founder to arrange other companies according to their identity and show the free space in which the new startup will work. It is good to choose main features for the extremes, which are relevant and essential to explain the competitive assets.
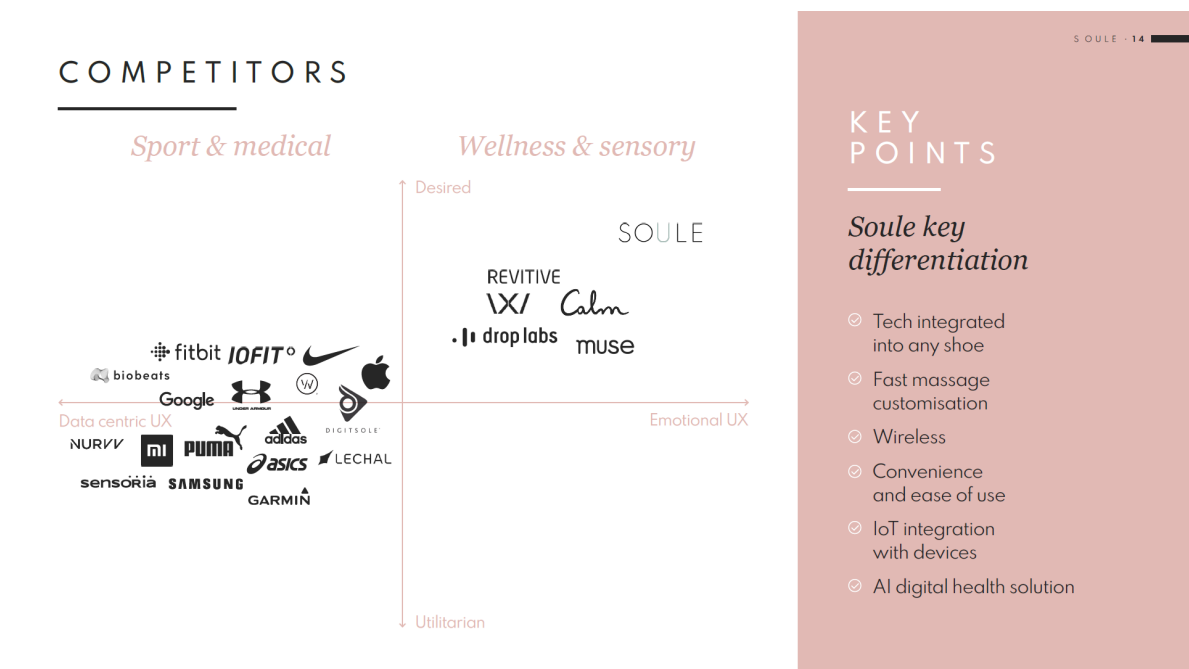
This the example from Tinker Design:

COMPETITORS

Sport & medical   *Wellness & sensory*

Desired

SOULE

REVITIVE
\X/   Calm
.|| drop labs   muse

☐ fitbit IOFIT°   ✓Nike
biobeats
Google   UNDER ARMOUR Ⓦ   ●   🍎
Data centric UX   Emotional UX
NURVV   mi   PUMA   adidas   DIGITSOLE
asics   LECHAL
sensoria SAMSUNG
GARMIN

Utilitarian

S OULE · 14 ▬

KEY
POINTS

Soule key differentiation

⊘ Tech integrated into any shoe

⊘ Fast massage customisation

⊘ Wireless

⊘ Convenience and ease of use

⊘ IoT integration with devices

⊘ AI digital health solution

Image 8.3. Example of positioning

For this product is very important to create emotional experience for the user, so we decided to put these characteristics on the X-axes and, on the contrary, the opposite of emotional on the other extreme. For the Y-axes we chose desired because the target of the shoe is elegant and luxury, so we wanted to create something exclusive. On the contrary, we put utilitarian to point out a casual product. According to this division, it is possible to notice that SOULE is the unique shoe that combines

emotional UX and grace. It is common to also add a short table with the main key differentiations, which will reinforce the explanation of the competitive assets.

- PRODUCT. Up to this point, you have introduced yourself and the value of your business, so now is the time to put words into practice. Use diagrams, schematics, flow charts, renders, images, and every kind of content that can create engagement. Words are not enough. It is possible to show particular cases of people benefiting from your product, prototypes or demos, if available. The goal is to show why the audience should fall in love with the startup. This is a very important step because is the part that can create to most powerful engagement, but also annoying the audience with useless details that are not relevant. I am going to go in deep with this important issue later, explaining also which kind of contents are more helpful.
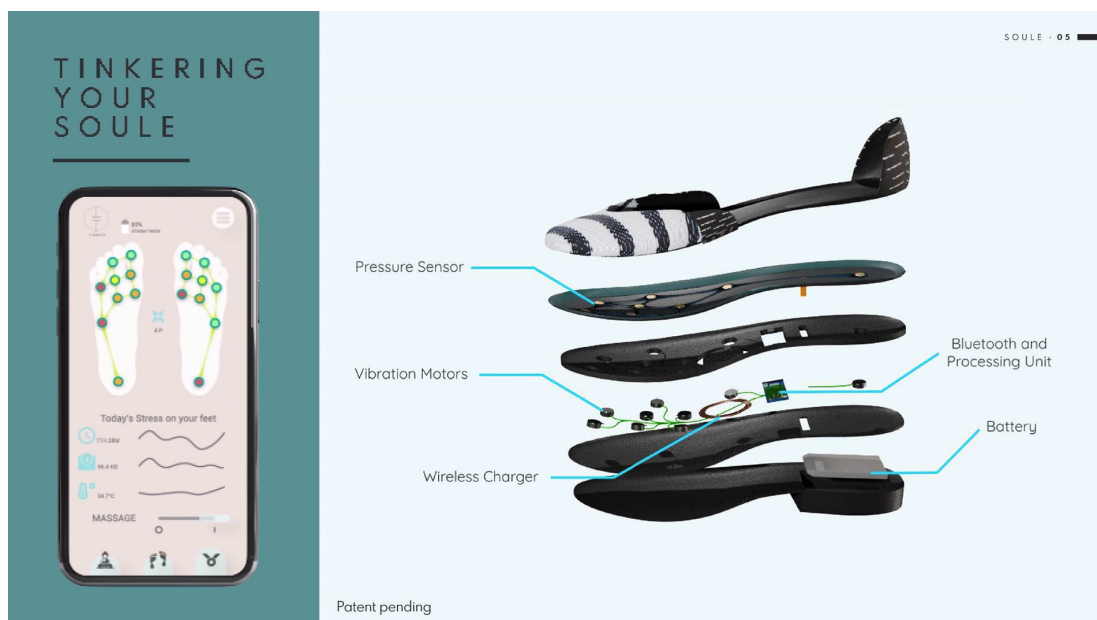

Image 8.4. Example of product presentation for Tinker Design LTD

- BUSINESS MODEL. Failing to find the right business model is the reason why most startups eventually fail. There are several things that need to be demonstrated here. How are you going to make revenue and what is the pricing? What makes you think you can charge that price? What is your metrics to date? When explaining your revenues, make sure to differentiate fixed and variable fees and show who is involved in the process. You might want to add potential additional revenue streams for the future. But the amount of information is big, and the risk is to create a complex puzzle that will confuse the investors. The best way to present the answers to these questions are graphic visualization, like graphs or bulled lists with icon and few keywords. Dividing the slide in different phases helps to keep the focus on each year and show the growth during that period. In general, a common mistake is to concentrate too much information here and waste useful time. The main goal is to explain the real growth, not all the details. Investors, in fact, will be convinced mainly from emotions generated from other contents, instead of numbers.
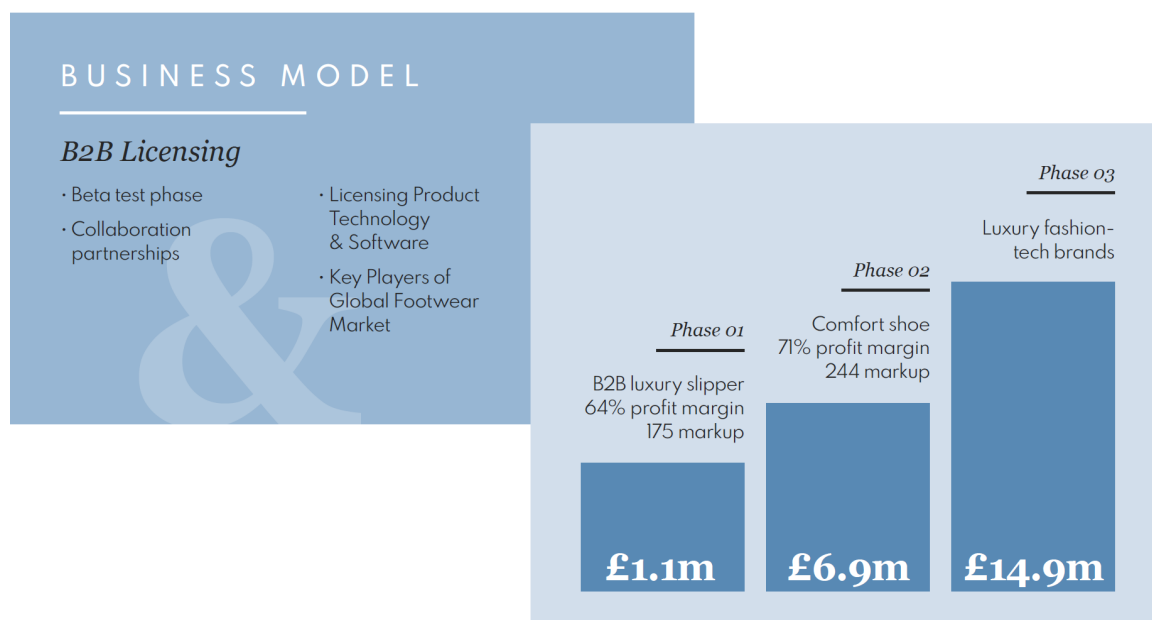
BUSINESS MODEL

B2B Licensing

· Beta test phase
· Collaboration partnerships

· Licensing Product Technology & Software
· Key Players of Global Footwear Market

Phase 03

Luxury fashion-tech brands

Phase 02

Comfort shoe 71% profit margin 244 markup

Phase 01

B2B luxury slipper 64% profit margin 175 markup

£1.1m £6.9m £14.9m

Image 8.5. Example of business model slide for Tinker Design LTD

- TEAM. One important part that is usually underestimated is the slide dedicated to the team presentation. Many investors affirm the team is one of the most impressive elements and they consider it on par with the originality of the idea. A person who invests on a startup, in fact, is giving his trust to a group of people, rather than just a product. That is the reason why the team must impress the audience and appear as professional, expert, and reliable. Even the greatest idea cannot work without a solid group of people behind it. The team slide is a unique chance to showcase why you are exceptional and why other people should bet on your team. It is a good

opportunity to kick off the meeting, but this is not as simple as it first appears. Obviously, there are three potential outcomes from this slide: a positive bias, when investors see the team as exceptional on its own and that they should invest in you almost regardless of your idea. Or, that your team is perfect for this idea and building this particular company. A neutral stance, when investors conclude that the team will not be the sole reason, they would do the deal, but it is not a barring factor either. And finally, a negative bias, when the team slide makes an investor question you and your team's fit for your idea, or your ability to execute. This is most likely because they learn nothing from the slide due to a lack of information, or your team appears to be extremely homogenous or lacking relevant experience. In particular, investors are looking for a strong and diverse team with relevant domain expertise, so it is important to present heterogeneous skills and knowledge of each member, in order to show that all the huge work can be covered, even if it will be variegated and complex. Some investors, for example, are convinced that a team of software engineers cannot survive in this competitive environment and it would be better to have at least one person for each field. World of startup, in fact, requires a constant work in many different areas, from business, to marketing, engineering, or public relations. Also, information about the experience are relevant for this slide. It is good to report main experiences in the field, awards, cases of success, or accomplishments. In general, heterogenous skills and experiences are the most important elements to show in this slide, even more than education and training. Other information not relevant with the field could be confusing and distracted for the audience, also considering the time available. The last thing to remember is to highlight different roles and hierarchy, because this will make the presentation clearer and the team perception stronger. I believe the right moment to present the team is not at the beginning, because in the first slides the attention span is still

high, so it is better to take advantages of that presenting innovative and smart ideas, which could have the power to engage more the audience and keep the attention high even after.

- FINANCIALS. The best thing you can do to convince investors is to demonstrate traction. In other words, this the evidence that someone on the market wants the service product. In cases like product, they could be paying customers. In other cases, like social networks, it could be the number of users. If you have traction, use it to create a foundation for your growth goals and projections. If you do not, you have to rely on some key assumptions or on industry benchmarks. Investors will be excited about how much margin you are making and the customer base. They are primed to see the details of your cash flow and your financial forecasts. In general, the best way to communicate this kind of data is to keep them as simple as possible, using graphs or charts. Words are not enough even in this case, and graphics visualisations are the best method to explain them. A common mistake, in fact, is to add too many numbers, like market's slide. The financials slide will contain critical numbers from balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and cash flow statement, but write them will not help to give the real impression of the dimension. Visualise data will help to understand the size of the opportunity just at a first glance and to do this are very helpful even simple charts, like histogram that divide well the period in years. This division, in fact, is essential for this slide. A simple but good element that is suggested from experts is a bulled list. It helps to avoid sentences because the audience will not listen if they have to read the slide, so just few words from a list (or graph, as already said) support the speech without distract investors.
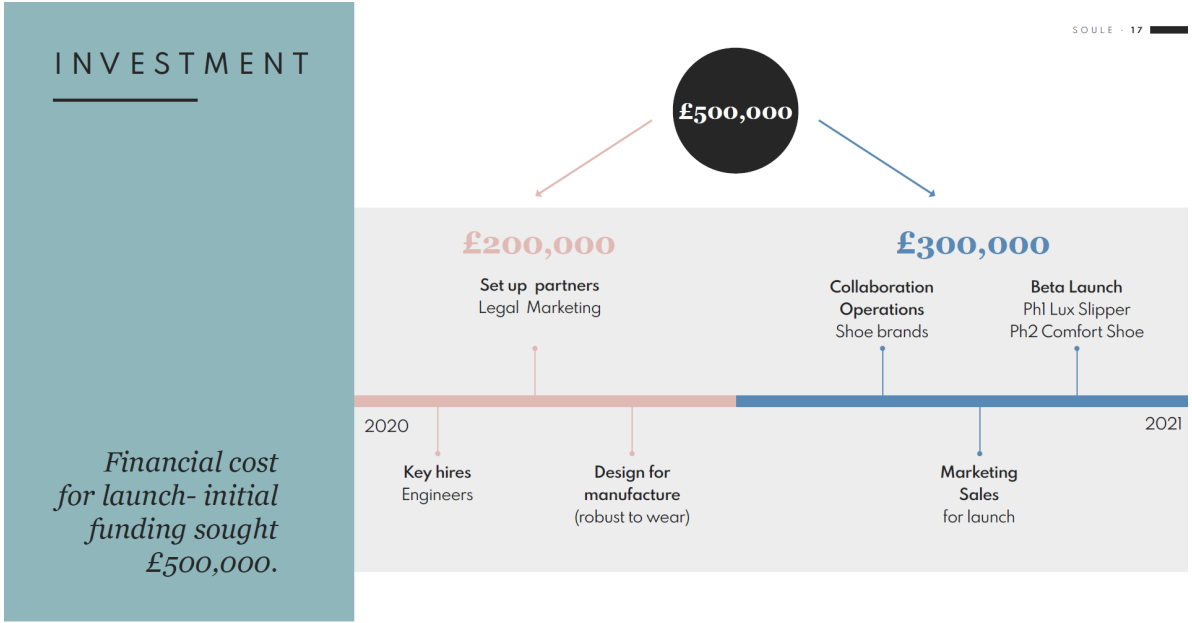
INVESTMENT

Financial cost for launch- initial funding sought £500,000.

£500,000

£200,000

Set up partners
Legal Marketing

£300,000

Collaboration
Operations
Shoe brands

Beta Launch
Ph1 Lux Slipper
Ph2 Comfort Shoe

2020

2021

Key hires
Engineers

Design for
manufacture
(robust to wear)

Marketing
Sales
for launch

Image 8.6. Example of financials slide for Tinker Design LTD

8.2. PROBLEM - SOLUTION

Once the structure of the pitch is clear and we have understood some suggestions for each slide, it is important to clarify some aspects related to specific part of the presentation, its contents, and some common mistakes. One of these errors, which could be very disastrous for the success of the startup, is connected to the explanation of the problem and its solution. Sometimes founders are so focused on the product that they do not care about the problem, taking it for granted, but this is a huge risk because startups are not just about ideas, but issues that must be solved. Investors want to see immediately that there is a real demand, otherwise the presentation of the idea will lose immediately its appealing because there is not a solid basis. Successful startup that got good results started by solving a problem, not seeing a gap in the market. And in consequence the product will appear as interesting only if it is the solution for this problem. According to investors and startup mentors, this is something entrepreneurs usually forget, but in a communication strategy they must keep always in mind this duo problem-solution. One of the most important questions you should be asking yourself is whether you are solving a real problem with a great and unique solution and what you need to do to keep that solution relevant as you grow. And the solution can be a radical innovation, which is a new service on the market, or a radical innovation, which is a new method to do something. There is always a better way to make something better, find a simpler way to get that task done efficiently, or provide tools to make work easier for you and everyone else who would find them useful. Whatever you do, make sure your startup idea solves a problem now and tomorrow. No business is ever safe, ask yourself if you will still be around in the next five, ten or twenty years. There are lots of business viability questions you need to ask yourself. For example, are you solving a need or want? Do people really need what you intend to provide or what you are currently offering? Validate your startup idea to make sure it solves a problem real people have. Make

sure you gather data that can prove that people are willing and ready to use your new product now not just people who could see themselves using it one day. Do not just build what somebody will want but satisfy a need. Paul Graham, founder of Y Combinator (one of the most popular startup accelerators in the US) about this topic said: "Why is it so important to work on a problem you have? Among other things, it ensures the problem really exists. It sounds obvious to say you should only work on problems that exist. And yet by far the most common mistake startups make is to solve problems no one has." So, in conclusion, it is possible to affirm that, from a communication point of view, put efforts in identify and reflect about the problem-solution will be one of the key elements to create a successful presentation.
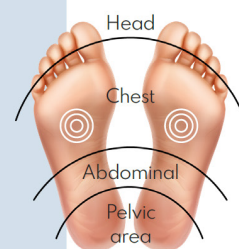

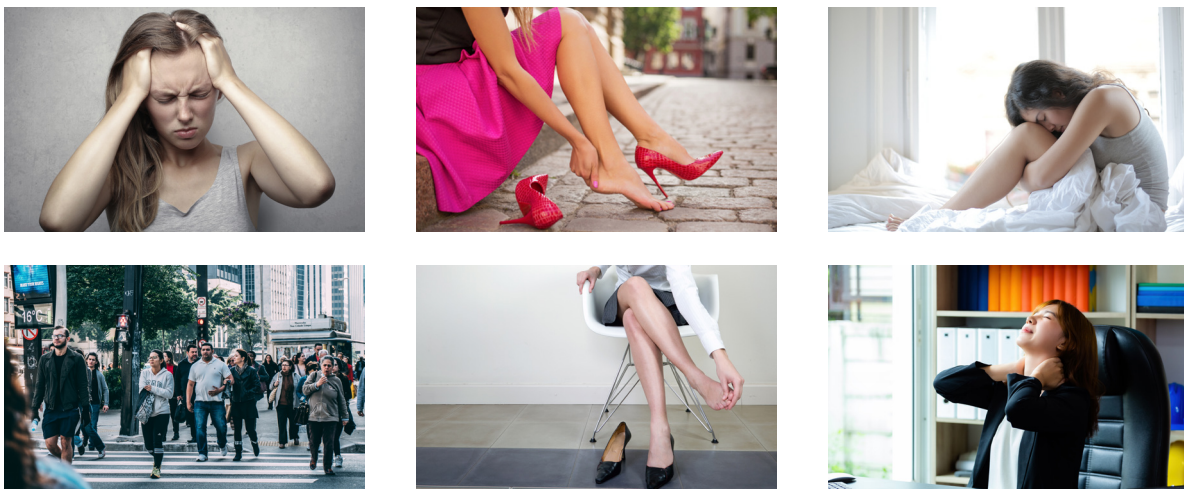Image 8.7. Example of problem focus of Tinker Design LTD

Image 8.8. Screenshots from the video focused on the problem of Tinker Design LTD

This example from SOULE is very explanatory, because it shows how much is important to focus on the problem, in this case pain and stress, and identify the audience with it, even if the product is not presented in phase. I will use this example also in the next paragraph, to explain the importance of opening contents.

8.2.1. VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS

VALUE — USER

Image 8.9. Value Proposition Canvas

To test if the idea of the service product is something that really meets the customers' needs, the best tool is the value proposition canvas. If you want to really understand your customers, the value proposition canvas, which was develop by Alex Osterwalder, begin from them in order to validate the idea and demonstrate the real relation between problem and solution. To do this, it is taking for granted that the team already had an internal conversation about the target and already built some personas, as explained before, to focus on. It is essential to be more precise with the analysis. For instance, when you consider to design a value proposition around shoes, is your customer someone who needs to cover a long distance with them? Or is your customer someone who loves fashion and prefer luxury accessories? These are different people, with different needs, requiring different products to get their job done.

The structure of this tool is divided in two parts. Since this is a scheme focused on users, the first one is the right, which is also divided in three parts: job-to-be-done, gains, and pains. Each part has a main question that needs to be answered.
- Job-to-be-done: what is the job the customer wants to get done in works or life?
- Gains: what would make the customers happy? What would make their life and the job-to-be-done easier?
- Pains: what is annoying or troubling the customers? What is preventing them from getting the job done?

Pains are usually the easiest part to list. On the contrary, gains are not simply the opposite of pains. Instead, gains are the hidden ambitions people have, their goals in life, things that make them happy.

Once it is completed the right side of the canvas, move over to the left side. First, list some options potentially address the job-to-be done that come to mind. You combine these ideas into a clearly defined product service that creates gain and relieves pain such that the job-to-be-done is addressed in a unique way that resonates with your customer. Using this canvas makes you think differently about your customers and what you offer to them.

Also this half is divided in three parts: products and services, gain creators, and pain relievers.
- Products and services: what are the elements that are offered to the customers, so they can get their task or activity done?
- Gain creators: what is the offering and the benefit that the customers will have in order to help them to achieve their gains?

- Pain relievers: how can this product help the customers to relieve their pains? What problem can you eradicate?

After listing gain creators, pain relievers and products and services, each point identified can be ranked from nice to have to essential in terms of value to the customer. A fit is achieved when the products and services offered as part of the value proposition address the most significant pains and gains from the customer profile. Identifying the value proposition on paper is only the first stage. It is then necessary to validate what is important to customers and get their feedback on the value proposition. These insights can then be used to go back and continually refine the proposition. It is essential to know who your customers are, what their lifestyle looks like, and what their real needs are. If you do not know who your customers are, there may be a misfit with your product service. Make sure the right side of the canvas matches with the left side of the canvas. This will help to validate the idea and to create efficient slides for problem and solution that are really based on a concrete demand. In general, this document is just an internal analysis to guide the process of ideation and it is quite never reported inside the presentation. Moreover, an additional step could be to investigate the extent to which a company has a competitive advantage in those areas to ensure that the value proposition is unique and sufficiently differentiated. A matrix can be used to plot each aspect of the value proposition with respect to its value to the customer and the competitive advantage the company has in offering that product or service.

8.3. CONTENT CREATION

Once the problem is well developed, a good method to communicate it is the creation of visual contents because, as already said, words are not enough, and these contents are the best way to create emotional engagement. In the previous chapters I also affirmed that the structure of the presentation is quite standardised and there are no big differences between decks from different fields, but what is really unique in this case is the creation of specific contents inside the presentation. Emotions for Fashion Tech, in fact, are the basis of the audience engagement. For this reason, when contents like videos, animations, renders, or sounds are designed with focus on user feelings, they are a very good method to improve the efficiency of the speech. This is the main advantage, but there are many other reasons to spend time and resources to produce creative contents. It happens especially when the pitch is during a long day of presentations and investors are tired or annoyed from the first hours of listening. This more common that you think because often founders take part to competitions like many other startups. What the audience will remember after these long days is not the technical details of the service, but the experience that the pitch generated during that short time. That is the reason why an interesting story is so important in the field Fashion Tech. On the other hand, spending to much time for videos or animations could be a risk. People have to always keep in mind that a pitch is something very fast and quick, like many other forms of communication nowadays, so these contents cannot be last the whole time for the pitch and need to be concise since the first seconds. Otherwise the result will be the opposite and the audience will be annoyed or, even worse, there will be no time for the speaker to impress investors with his personality. And this is important, since I already explained that the personality of the founder with his team is one the key element to succeed. So, in general, the main challenge is to balance creative contents to always keep high the attention and the speech of the

founder, who will have the opportunity to earn the trust of investors demonstrating to be a confidence, professional and smart person.

In particular, I decided to split the typology of contents in two, separating contents for the opening and closing of the pitch, and contents inside the pitch, useful during the presentation of the main parts of the idea. In addition, before going in deep with these two categories, I highlighted five main characteristics that each content must have, regardless its moment and category.

- **Be concise:** make it short, sharp, and to the point. Time can be your best partner, but also your worst enemy. If you can keep the content quick, it will be good the avoid loss of concentration, annoyance, and there will be time also for the rest of the presentation.

- **Be clear:** use simple, compelling language that everyone can understand without thinking too long or hard. Usually investors are not experts in technical details, science, or others. In addition, during a day they are swamped by too much information. So, in consequence, they just want to understand the concept without efforts. To do that, you cannot take any part for granted because the audience could not have the right knowledge to get the information, and try to avoid useless facts.

- **Have passion:** If you are not passionate about your topic, you cannot expect anyone else to be. Share this passion inside each content and make it as cool as possible, taking care of each aspects like graphic, sounds, and so on.

- **Be visual:** use keywords that have a clear reference with pictures in the audience's mind and translate every words in excess with visual elements. The best elements to impress people are contents that do not require much reading.

- **Tell stories:** a story is the best way to engage people and create a rapport with them, so it is good to create situations in which everyone can identify. For this, each

content cannot be designed separately, but they must be planned as a whole unit.

8.3.1. OPENING/CLOSING

Taking a cue from the case study of the startup the used a sound to open the pitch, which I mentioned before, the importance of contents in the moment of opening or closing is maximum. If they are strong enough, the audience will remember mostly what is showed in these phases. A good opening, in fact, will create interests for the whole pitch and a great closing will make investors more willing to go in deep with the idea. A common error is to begin the speech with traditional sentences like the presentation of the speaker. This is very standardised, and it will not communicate a feeling of innovation, originality, and creativity. Analysing better the characteristics of the contents in this phase, they have to be totally based on emotions, even more than other parts. We have already understood the importance of emotions, but in this case everything that is not designed to create feelings will be annoying or distracting. A good example is what Clara, a Swiss startup focused on smart cloths to improve security on the streets, did at the opening of its pitch. To make the audience really aware of the problem and explain the urgency of the situation, they used a video in which the product was not present, but there were only crashes, and information about deaths and injuries. The speaker, in fact, with the slogan "The best way to survive a crash, is not to crash" created a certain kind of feelings and everyone understood that the situation was real. We did the same work also for Tinker Design. In this case, the focus was on stress for women, who have to suffer physical pain due to uncomfortable shoes and frenetic days. We designed a short

video in which a fast succession of heavy pictures creates a feeling of anxiety and then, in contrast, a calm and quiet end to compare the world without the product and with it. Also in this video the product is not present, because the main aim is to explain the stressful day of a woman and make clear that this problem is relevant for them. Then, at the end of it, the harmonious part reveals a sense of wellness, which is the benefit that comes from the product. In general, the same can happen also at the end of the pitch deck, but I think it could be more engaging at the beginning in order to catch the attention since the first slide, and present the idea as original and impelling. In other words, this could be a good method to also explain the problem without using words, but perceptions, and in the final slide it could not have the same power.

Image 8.10. Screenshot from opening animation

8.3.2. PRODUCT PRESENTATION

According to many investors and mentors, the audience is not interested in ideas, but in solid realities. For this reason, it is essential to also think about contents for the product presentation, during the pitch. In particular, I am talking about renders, mock-ups, prototypes, or animations. This is very important to demonstrate that the startup is already started and well organised and a real product is more impressive than just a description or a concept. So, if it is possible, the speaker should always show the current status of the service product. The technology is relevant only if it innovative, otherwise it will just be a waste of time, precisely because investors are not experts of the field. In addition, it is good to clarify that the resources are independent and the startup owns everything that is required, because it is difficult for people to trust an idea that is based on other companies. Some investors, in fact, affirm that they are very doubtful about products that need other technologies or other patents. If the company fails or if it raises prices for the license, it will influence also the startup's success. In consequence, the power of the idea will decrease exponentially. Other advantages to present the product during the pitch are that they will support the speaker also helping the audience to get every part of the speech; they break the tradition flow of the presentation and make the speech more original; and they show some qualities of the team with this part of the work already developed. At the same time, the rule of keep contents as simple as possible works even in this case. They, in fact, cannot be too complex in order to do not overlap with the speaker. In my case with Tinker Design LTD we decided to create some renders plus an animated explosion of the shoe, but also some pictures of a working prototype. Another example comes again from Clara. The founder asked to the

audience to try the jacket and this is a good way to stimulate curiosity and create fun.

Image 8.11. Clara's jacket during a pitch

Pressure Sensor

Vibration Motors

Wireless Charger

Bluetooth and
Processing Unit

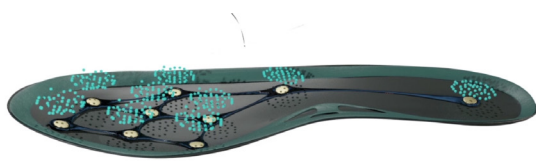Battery

Image 8.12. Screenshot from an animated render

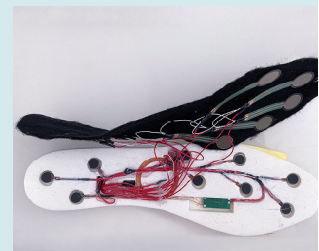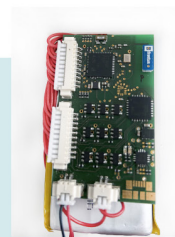*Image 8.13. Screenshot from an animated render*

Image 8.14. SOULE render

Image 8.15. Example of slide for the product presentation with prototypes
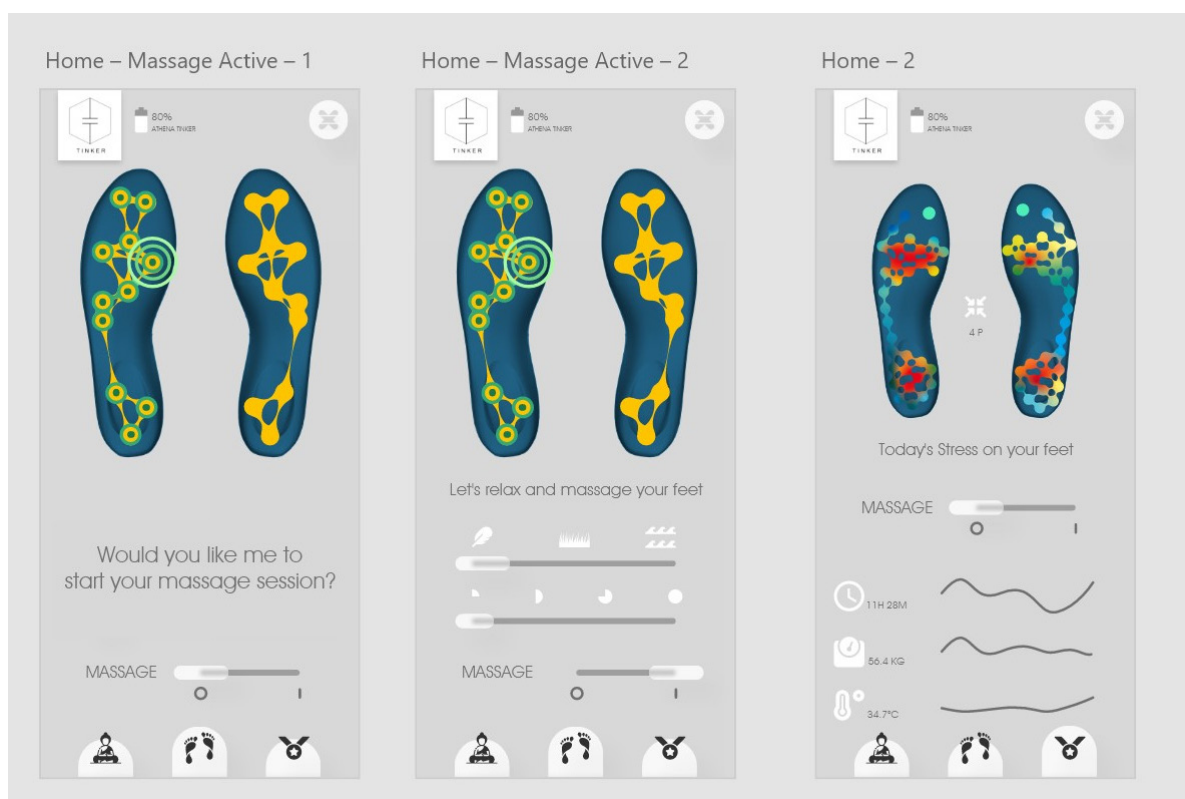
Image 8.14. Example of application mock-ups

The product is not the only element to present with renders or prototype. Since we are talking about service product, it is very good to show also something about the application or the platform. The service is essential and also the user experience designed with focus on the user, so this addition will help to validate the presentation and the pitch.

8.4. TESTIMONIALS

This part is not expressly requested from the structure of the pitch, or from other formal rules of startup competitions, but is highly recommended from mentors and investors, especially in Fashion Tech. Ambassadors and media publications work very well to demonstrated that the idea is already appreciated from possible customers and from other important companies. If the startup can show a possible real demand from the market, or supports from other investors, it will be easier to build a solid impression and improve possibility to succeed. Taking advantage of testimonials, in fact, for your startup is extremely important. They can drastically increase sign-ups and sales for your project. First off, they build trust, your testimonials are your current customers personally telling your audience what is so great about your product or service, in a non-sales pitch way, unlike the rest of your website or presentation's content. In addition, most of us put more trust in a review or feedback from someone who has experience with a product, than other words from the founder. So, testimonials have the power to change the minds of even the most sceptic of customers.

To get them, it is very important to do a deep research before adding this part to the presentation or to the website. Do not be afraid to ask some people from the target to test the product, or to test your user experience, and how they like it, and firstly always ask the authoring customer permission if you can use their feedback as a testimonial wherever it is going to be published. Be sure to ask them at the right time, for example, after you have just helped them solve the big problem, after they have thanked you numerous times with awesome feedback, or after you have delivered it without being late. Additionally, if you want to help your customers write a top-notch testimonial you can ask them questions to inspire great feedback from them like: what are some improvements you have seen in your business since

purchasing my product? How would you describe the effectiveness of our customer support? What are some problems that you had beforehand that encouraged you to purchase our product?

Consider adding a survey or rating widget inside your prototype website or app to make it easier for users to leave their feedback and write testimonials. Some companies have even gone the extra mile by rewarding users that leave feedback a small discount on their next purchase or their next charge.

8.4.1. AMBASSADORS

Testimonials can be divided in two categories: ambassadors and media publications. First case is more related to people, and the second one to newspapers or companies. In particular, an ambassador is a person who represents, speaks for, or advertises a particular organization, group of people, activity, or brand. In the context of brand he is a person who is paid or given free products by a company in exchange for wearing or using its products and trying to encourage others to do so, and this is very common nowadays. To make the most of their presence it is essential to care the form of communication, avoiding un-readable long text or poor frames, which will give the effect of being cheap and unworthy of customers. It is also very important to add a customer's profile picture, which will improve the personal connection between them and your potential customers, and some quick information like the name of the business, website, or social accounts. In some cases, depending on the type of business, even the location of the customer is beneficial. It may sound

silly, but many businesses neglect to add even the customer's basic information, their name. This not only creates an extreme case of a non-personal connection but generally hurts the business more than helps. Two case studies are the already mentioned Artknit Studio and Velasca, an Italian startup of handcrafted shoes. The first one gives a lot of importance to its ambassadors, on the website, in fact, there is a whole section focused on them. They use ambassadors even to create contents for social networks and advertising. In particular, for these contents, they present a well-structured presentation of each person that create a very good connection between the startup and the users. The format is similar to interviews, with questions and personal information that make the ambassadors a real person, before a testimonial. Also the picture, as just explained, are professional and well-finished. Velasca, on the other hand, is shorter with these presentations, but they are on the home page of the website, so it is evident their importance. In addition, even if they are not well-structured as Artknit Studio, they have all the main elements like quote, picture, and name. Inside the pitch deck of Tinker Design, we chose to use expert testimonials, like doctors. In this case is even more important their name and their job. This definitely is a good and efficient way to make the brand more solid and give the impression that there is already an interest from the market.

Hi Guillaume! How are you?

Artknit: Could you tell us a little bit about you, your background and your hobbies? How did you start your journey as an IG?

Guillaume: Hi guys, I'm doing great. Thanks for asking. A short introduction about myself: Contrary to what my French name suggests, I come from the Netherlands, to be more precise the North part called Groningen. I grew up on the countryside not far from the city where I currently live. In September I start my last year of law school and believe me, I can't wait to graduate ;)!

One and a half years ago, I started sharing my passion for minimalist menswear and photography on Instagram. Without any expectations my account grew enormously, and I met great creative people from all over the world with a common passion. Soon I decided to write a monthly blog in addition to my IG posts in order to share some more background information for what I was doing, and which brands were inspiring me. For me, the possibility of 'sharing' has been Instagram's greatest value from the outset.

A: You aim at inspiring others, but where do you find your creative inspiration?

G: A lot of people ask where I get my inspiration from. It is often assumed that I get this from major brands or big influencers. However, this is often not the case. On Instagram I have found many inspirers, some with at

Image 8.15. Example of Artknit Studio's ambassador

Image 8.16. Example of Valesca's ambassadors

BOARD OF
ADVISORS

Dr. Ashan Amarasinghe

PhD Advanced Manufacturing

CEng, BEng (hons), MIMechE

Dr. Melanie Flory

Psychology / Neuroscience

Chris Moller

Engineer & Programme Manager

MA, C.Eng, MIET, CITP

Financial

Strategex Accountants

Legal

ip 21 Ltd

Image 8.17. Example of the slide for testimonials Tinker Design LTD

8.4.2. MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

As previous said, ambassadors are not the only way to make the credibility of the startup stronger, more renowned, and trustworthy. Get the brand featured in major media publications is an essential step to increase the reliability of the company and to earn more value. Blogs, specialised magazines, websites, tv channels, and every other network could be an important resource. Investors affirm that a startup with many publications have more chances to succeed because the perception is totally different. Obviously, the reputation of the media will influence the identity of the startup, but a good channel that give credits to an idea is like a guarantee for the audience. Moreover, when a founder is going to present his idea during a competition or a presentation, it would be great for him if investors have already heard some information about his startup from other media. It is very important also because it gives a new point of view, which usually is more objective, about the company. In general, I highlighted some of the key benefits:

- Brand awareness. Though brand awareness is hard to measure, even indirectly increasing its breadth and depth will usually be beneficial for your brand.

- Reputation and authority. Getting featured on a major publication will earn you bragging rights and authority by affiliation. Merely posting the logos of publishers you have been featured on, in an "as seen on" section on a landing page can increase conversion rates.

- Domain authority. This is strictly connected to the presence of a website, which will be explained in deep in the next chapter. Google measures authority based on the quantity and quality of inbound links pointing to your domain; exposure on a major media publication is often accompanied by a link to your website, which can

help increase your organic-search rankings significantly.

- Referral traffic. Getting a link in a major publication could earn the website a stream of referral traffic that will last for as long as the article remains published (usually indefinitely).

- Ongoing relationship value. As you build a reputation with a publisher, you will get more publishing opportunities, and an improved portfolio that enables you to reach out to even higher-authority sources. You might even get invited to be a regular contributor or columnist at a major media publication.

For these reasons, every founder should spend time to plan a strategy in order to obtain these media publications, and then include them in his deck or website. It is important to start this practice when the startup is quite well developed, and not just an idea, because often media publications are a unique opportunity and the result could be risky if materials are not developed enough to communicate a solid brand identity. Brand identity, in fact, is the first element that must be designed before start to search media publications. In addition, a clear idea of the service product and some images or video, like renders or animations, are a plus to increase to possibility to be featured. Sometimes the most important media search for companies that already has a good online presence, so in parallel with high quality materials, it is important to always be active online with the main social media. They can be different, according to the specific field of the startup. A Fashion startup that focus its competitive asset on youth and design, for example, could be more disposed to use social networks like Instagram, or Pinterest. On the other hand, a Fashion company with strong orientation to innovation and technology could prefer channels like YouTube or Facebook. Then, once you have already worked about these parts, analyse which media are more in line with your identity, starting from

local and niche. Major national publications will probably be beyond your scope for a while longer (until you have some published work you can showcase across multiple smaller publications), so start by aiming for smaller opportunities in your reach. The best way to do this is through local publishers, with whom you might be able to establish a personal relationship, and niche publishers, who cater to your specific industry and demographics; the latter move cuts down your potential competition. Do not be afraid to send messages or ask for meetings: the more you strive for public relations, the more chances you will have to get featured. Remember to address each message to the right person inside the media, with specific name, and avoid standardised communication. It is important to show that you really want to be published on that channel. Use your pitch deck with all the contents developed for the presentation to impress various media and highlight that it will be good also for them, because they will have high quality contents. Another important way to be known is to attend trade show or exhibitions. Many founders, in fact, affirm that they found the right person to get a featured and investments during these events. In this case is even more important the relationship that is created between people. Some case studies that I already mentioned, like Epoché, Obsess, and Wearable X, or Fortunale, an Italian startup of natural clothes, have a section in their websites in which they present the major media that featured the idea. Sometimes there is also the article that can be read, or the main quotes that highlight the competitive assets. Vogue, CNN, Business Insider, The Washington Post, Ansa, Rai2, Radio DeeJay, Il Mattino, Daily Mail, Fast Company, Il Sole 24 ore, are just few examples of the major media that usually are considered as reliable and trustworthy. In conclusion, they are a strength for the startup, and it is essential to always show them, both on website and on pitch deck.
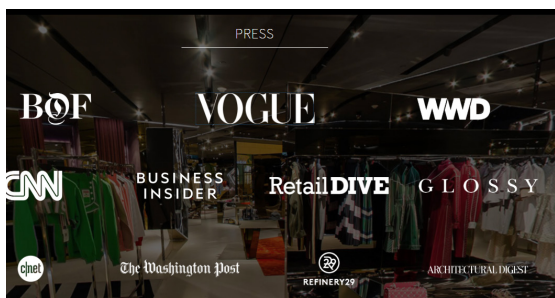
Image 8.18. Example of Obsess media publications

Image 8.19. Example of Fortunale media publications

Image 8.20. Example of Epoché media publications

Image 8.21. Example of WearableX media publications

9. WEBSITE

COMMON PROBLEMS.

The website is one of the most discussed part of the project, because usually it requires technical skills, time, money, and other resources not easy to have. But it is essential when the founder has to pitch in front of the investors. To be more precise, during the presentation it is something that does not appear, but if some investors are interested about the idea, they will check for sure the website in order to see again the contents and search the contacts of the team, with their information, such as skills and background.

MAIN AIM OF THIS PHASE.

Given the importance of the site, I want to analyse in this chapter the differences between its structure during the growth of the startup. Starting from the landing page with few information, in fact, it has to become more and more complex in parallel with the company, but as long as the startup is in its early stage, it is quite useless to waste too much resources on that. I want also to point out a strategy that some founders used as evidence to show the validation of their idea, which is the possibility to pre-book the product service.

The last point that I decided to analyse is the website, because often it is designed once that the other elements of the communication strategy are already present. Like the pitch deck, its visual style is a strong part of the communication and it could give a lot of information only with the graphic, so it is essential to design carefully this platform when the brand identity is solid and clear.

Every point of view that I analysed, from founders, graphic designers, investors, mentors, and so on, agree on the fact that a website is a must-have and it is quite impossible to present a startup without a working site. But its characteristics change a lot during different startup's phases of life. A well-structured website, in fact, require too much work when the startup is in its first stage and it would be a waste of time, because at the beginning it is not required to have this kind of platform. During the first period this is not a priority and some elements, like the e-commerce to shop the service product, can be added later when the startup has already growth. When the company is trying to grow the website should be just a landing page with the right information and contacts. Keep it simple is an approach that has proved its validity in many areas of life and business. Web design for startups makes no exception. It is a sound principle that all startups should embrace if they do not want to pay a fortune for their startup web design and waste important time. There are many benefits of a simple design for your startup site. The most obvious one is its cost-effectiveness, of course, since a simple website is easier to create. But a simple website will stamp on the memory longer and quicker and is also more flexible and daring. When a design is simple, is also mobile-friendly. If you want a startup website with a simple design, you will need to identify the key elements that you want to showcase. A simple design carries a concise, but a strong message, which makes your startup the visible. Do not overwhelm your visitors with a lot of

content because it will only confuse them. Supply a simple, clean, and familiar layout for your startup website, such as a two-column layout with a rightward sidebar and top navigation bar. It is an evergreen layout. Many investors affirm that after a presentation, if interested, go online to search contacts in this landing page and go in deep with the idea. So, the structure should be based on the presentation's structure and here there is the possibility to analyse better some parts because, on the contrary than the pitch, there is no limitation in time and slides. This is what is useful and required at this stage. In addition to the trend of investors to search it after the pitch, it is good to remember that a website is always reachable, so it is an important space in which store media contents and make them sharable. One of the main characteristics of a content, in fact, is to make it always available for the audience, not only during a pitch or a presentation.

During this phase, try to reflect also about other very important characteristics of the website. Spend time to be sure that the platform is optimised for SEO and well done in terms of technical structure (like the code), otherwise i twill be difficult to reach and complex to modify in future. For this, you can use a tool like WooRank, which analyse the technical quality. Keep always in mind that nowadays the most of the traffic comes from mobile, and also for search engine like Google is very important the performance in smartphone and tablet, so use a mobile-first approach, even if you designing the first version of the landing page. Investors, after a presentation, or possible customers, usually search the startup with a mobile device. Another essential parameter is the speed of loading. 53% of users usually leave the website if it requires more than 3 seconds to open. Pingdom, in this case, is a good tool to test the speed and sometimes it is strictly connected to the code of the website or the service used to build and upload the materials. Pay attention to incorporate your social media icons on the startup website. Make icons visible and use also social

networks to create a network of online elements that reflect the brand identity. Each part has to be coordinated in terms of visual and contents, both on the website and on social media profiles.

An important element that is often underestimated from startups is the function to "pre-order" or a section of the website to express interest for the service product. This is very important for two main reasons: it can generate some future selling even if the company is not yet fully developed and the data collected can be used as validation to demonstrate that there is a real demand for the market. Show this kind of information, which is something that comes from the startup and not from third part's market reports, give the impression to investors that the market is already wishful to have this service and the demand presented inside the slide for the market is concrete. It is essential, in fact, focus the presentation also on personal work because, as already explained before, information from other sources can be not very reliable or persuasive. All the suggestions explained in this chapter are perfectly demonstrated from BigThinx, which website is a quick and concise landing page, with the button to request a demo. In addition, it has some animations, its media publications, the contacts, and various link to its main social networks.

BIGTHINX

Transforming
Fashion Retail

At Bigthinx, a global Top-10 Fashion-Tech company backed by Startup Bootcamp, we are disrupting the global fashion industry using Artificial Intelligence and Computer Vision for virtual people, digital clothing, immersive fashion shows and transformational virtual shopping experiences.

We are digitizing the human body with data on anatomy, shape, and clothing size, fit and drape, that enables brands to personalize shopping, envision designs, optimize supply chains, and save costs.

Request a Demo
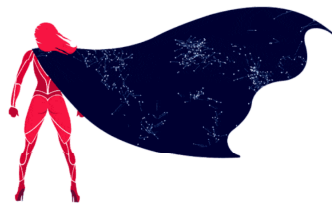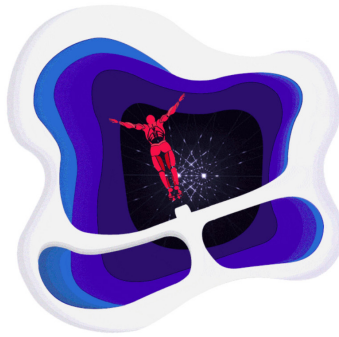
L Y F L I K E

The Lyflike software is an Artificial Intelligence based comprehensive body visualization platform that enables brands to digitize human avatars for virtual fashion shows, photo-shoots, e-commerce and in-store shopping. Product design, development, marketing and sales become digital experiences that allow designers, distributors, buyers, marketers and shoppers to leverage power of human body data for immersive virtualization of fashion

L Y F S—Z E

Lyfsize gets 3D body scans and forty four precise body measurements and ratios from just two smartphone pictures. These measurements can be used for accurate size predictions, mass customisation of clothing, made-to-measure fashion and fitness.

www.lyfsize.me

Email us at info@bigthinx.com

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Image 9.1. Example of BigThinx website

10. SUMMARY

After this long and thorough analysis of the communication strategy, I want to summarise the most important steps in order to make the whole work more usable. So, the content of this chapter is a list of useful points and suggestions for every person who is facing this communicative problem. Since the logical order was very important for each phase of the thesis, I want to preserve this order also in this part.

- **Find the right support and do not try to complete the work alone.**

Even if you are determined and do not want to share your idea with anyone, it is good to keep always in mind that it is quite impossible to achieve success alone. Everyone needs some helps, mainly because of time and knowledge, which generally, when there is not a team, are never enough to perform at best. In addition, I explained in various part how much is important for investors the team presentation, which is considered from some of them the most relevant aspect to evaluate during a pitch. An heterogeneous team is essential and I highlighted some useful suggestions to choose the right support for the project.

- **Rushing, skipping some steps, does not improve the work.**

This sentence could be applied to each phase of the project, but now I specifically want to connect it with the team. It is very wrong to think that relations and dialogues between co-workers are just a waste of time because is more important the work. It is proven by many successfull founders that human relationships and conversations are the basis, because they can improve the flow of the work, the task divisions, the motivations, and the passion that everyone has for the project. At the same time it is very important to keep the team updated of important decisions and progresses, so the alignment will be always good. For this, I analysed and suggested one path, which is a series of actions, that can generate satisfying results. It is important to

create a system of actions all the team members share, with appointments, schedule, and timelines, otherwise if everything is left to chance, the internal chaos will influence also the external communication.

- **Never take the success of the idea for granted.**

A common problem is that founders generally focus their effort so much about the idea, that they forget the the customers. It is always essential, especially nowadays that competition is extremely high, to focus on the users, because the market wants only products and services that can satisfy their expectations and needs. In addition, many investors affirmed that the idea has no value without a strong relation with the problem that it is solving. So, for this reason, I presented one important approach to the project that can generate good results, which is the user-centered design. This is something that everyone should keep in mind during the development of the service product, but during design of the communication strategy for the pitch and the presentation. I also explained why during the years it is common to talk about service products, and not just about products, and why it is so essential to communicate this innovative service, which is often intangible and difficult to see concretely. The last very important aspect related to this point is the tool for the idea validation, which is the value proposition canvas. Using this method, it is possible to check if customers' needs and features of the service product overlap.

- **Design carefully each aspect of the brand identity.**

The process to design a brand identity is often long, complex, and require a lot of time. But at the same time it is extremely important to make it strong and clear. A common problem is to create different contents without a defined identity and this is very dangerous because create confusion. In addition, this identity will be the

element that will accompany the startup also in the future. The guidelines related to the brand identity are suggestions and method that can support a person during this long process, with steps in logical orders, real examples, explanations and analysis of the visual elements in order to make easier each choice. For the decision of the fonts, for example, I made connections between typologies of fonts and perceptions that the audience will fell using that particular kind. It could be very useful, because the design of the brand identity is finalized to create emotions and it is based on perceptions. In addition the tool presented, which is the brand identity prism, is essential to order various ideas and help the team to organise the decisions about the brand that they are designing. This is something that must be complete before proceeding with the physical elements of the visual identity. To support this crucial phase I highlighted also some other steps to improve the quality of the research and the brainstorming, such as the research of references, the competitor analysis, and the target analysis, in order to plan the adequate tone of voice according to the users. It is important also to keep in mind that the competition is extremely high, so it is good to follow hot trends in the market, but is just as good to reflect on some elements that could make the startup unique.

- **Summarise all the decisions into a shared documents.**

Sometimes it is called brand book, and it is essential for the pitch, but also for the future. This document avoid annoying problems of alignment inside the team, because it contains all the decisions made during the design process of the brand identity. There are, for examples, the fonts, how to use them, colour palette, shapes, forms, and so on. This is very good also to have a common perspective of the identity, from a visual point of view.

- **Use an efficient structure for the pitch and adapt it to the audience.**

When the research is huge, and this is exactly what happens with startups, it is very difficult to present all the right information in the right moment, using an efficient logical order that maximise the clarity of presentation. For this reason I analysed the most suggested structure for the pitch and then I analysed the typology of content to insert in each slide. This is useful to make order and present all the information that investors want to hear. This analysis, in fact, is the result of experiences of founders and investors. Since the audience could be different according to the presentation, such as business corporate or technological companies, it is very important to adapt the contents according to it. The time is very short and people will be annoyed if they are obliged to listen information not relevant for them, so keep always in mind to stay stick to the typology of audience.

- **Create an emotional experience that makes your product feel unique.**

Some pitches are focused only on data, technology, statistics, and numbers. This is never good for investors, because the startup world is driven by passions, so no one will trust and choose a project only listening this kind of information. Investors, and also customers, want something that is able to capture and engage them, so, for this reason I presented some suggestions about contents that are essential to create this kind of emotion. What people will remember is the experience, this is the only method to create a real demand for the service product. The audience has to feel the problem as relevant and urgent, and then they will feel the product as essential to solve the issue. If they are not emotionally engaged, and if they do not feel the urgency of the product, they will not have interest for the product. Following some tips in the guidelines, it is possible to create the right content for a perfect pitch.

- **Show that the project is already well underway.**

What happens also with my experience with Tinker Design LTD is that founders are often afraid to show to progress of the service product, and this is a problem from a communicative point of view. With startups, done is better than perfect, so showing a prototype, a mock-up, a render, or other contents is always good to prove that the project is not just an abstract idea. As already said, investors affirm that the idea itself has no value, so every kind of image of the product is useful to engage the audience. Inside the guidelines there are tips about the right moment to insert and how to present them, in order to maximise their potentiality.

- **Make yourself known and talk about you.**

People understimate the influence of testimonials, especially in Fashion. The human relationship are essential also outside the team and in parallel with the project the workers should work in order to obtain testimonials or media publications. The role of this part is extremely important, because it is easier to obtain funds and investments if investors already know the startup, or another popular newspaper has already talked about you. It works like a guarantee. For this, I explained how to organise this kind of information and what elements must be present, such as name, quote, or details.

- **Design your customised space online.**

A website has a key role inside a communication strategy, for many reasons, such as the possibility to customise and adapt it to your style, without any restriction. A common error, in this case is to create a platform that has too much, or too few, according to the phase of the startup, information. A startup, for example, could spend too much time or too many resources during the design process of the

website, because at the beginning it needs only few contents and the contacts to reach the founder. Inside this guideline I analysed the importance of the online platform, accordin to the stage of the startup, and I added some useful tips that could help to valide the idea and demostrate that there is a real interest for the service product.

11. CONCLUSION

Startups are innovative companies characterised from a very fast growth and their features are strictly related to our digital world, which is changing as fast as these businesses. To understand the dimensions of this huge revolution, it is enough to think about the main digital service that are having millions of users, such as Uber, Deliveroo, Air BnB, Strava, and many other startup that in few years have grown exponentially creating services that we couldn't think before. In just a short period, the market changed completely, and the transformation is still progress. Inside this scenario, the digital world is a great opportunity for everyone to build his success, but also the rules and the way of working are altering rapidly, and it is difficult to have an efficient and concise guide. For this reason, I wanted to analyse one the millions of parts of this new digital world, which is Fashion Tech, in order to make order between many experiences, case studies, information online, point of view of experts, and abstract some guidelines common to the main successful cases. The research is difficult, but always open, because with business, communication, and startups there is not just an answer, like a mathematical equation. Each case is different, so it depends on the ability of the founder to take the right suggestion from this thesis and adapt it to his experience. I strongly believe in technology and innovation, so I think that this is not just a trend, but an historical change than ask for analysis, studies, and efforts in order to maximise its development and improvement. This is a step, a little part of this huge research, because the context is limitless and there are no borders to this analysis, which can be always improved. In parallel, I am sure that in this world communication is the power that can make the difference and also its importance is growing exponentially. Modern devices allow us to be closer, to share any kind of contents without problems, and to create new solutions to communicate ideas in a faster and more engaging way. Adding all these things together communication is really the competitive asset to build

something huge and people who understand this situation in advance are the ones who can lead the market and contribute to more and more innovation. In the last stage, it is important to point out that the most successful cases are examples of courage to leave a road already trodden, to explore new roads with obstacles and uncertainty. So, I hope that these guidelines could hope someone to create his path, but I also hope that people will never settle for standardised solutions because the best results come from efforts, experimentations, and ideas out of the ordinary.

12. MENTIONS

With this thesis, I am going to finish my years at Politecnico of Milan, which are five years of efforts, but at the same time a wonderful chapter of my life in which I discovered so much about graphics, photography, design, visual communication, and all the topic that I really like and I hope they will be a huge part of my professional life. I consider this moment a success for me, and there are some special people that are sharing it with me. It is very important to mention them, because they are an essential part of my success and my life.

First of all, I want to thank prof. Maria Rita Canina and prof. Carmen Bruno, because they offered me an opportunity that gave me the possibility to meet new realities and go in deep with a topic that I really love, which is the world of startups. They spent time to let me know important people and to guide me during this long, but very succesfull project. Moreover, during my research I found a great professional opportunity and now I am working for a startup, so if my professional experience will grow, it will be also thanks to this thesis that they offered to me.

Thanks to my family, because they are everything for me and thanks to them I had the opportunity to study what I like, which is the basis for my future. During my whole life they have always supported my choiches and they guided me with love. They gave me all the resources that I needed, both affectionally and economically, and what I can do now is my best in order to make them proud of me.

Thanks to my girlfriend Martina, who is part of family, but deserve a special mention, because she is the most important person in my life and she always support me. If I am full of energy and optimistic about the future, is thanks to her, who gaves me a milion of reasons to be happy, determined, and strong. She is the one that shares

her life with me than anyone else, and me too. She knows all my projects, my passions, my dreams, and I want her with me in all of them.

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