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NÁVRH ROZVOJE NOVÉ ZNAČKY

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Abstract

The bachelor's thesis develops on the issue of strategic brand development of classic men's clothing. The work is divided into three parts. The theoretical part defines the theoretical basis, which are used to create and build brand strategy. After defining the theoretical knowledge, then the analytical part. This section can participate in market and customer research. The results of market analysis are processed in the work. These results serve as a basis for the creation of the proposal part.

Keywords: brand, brand identity, brand value, brand development, strategy, brand building, marketing, customers, competition

Abstrakt

Bakalárska práca sa zaoberá problematikou strategického rozvoja značky klasického mužského obliekania. Práca je rozdelená do troch častí. V teoretickej časti sú vymedzené teoretické východiská, ktoré slúžia na vytvorenie a budovanie stratégie značky. Po vymedzení teoretických poznatkov, nasleduje analytická časť. Táto časť sa zaoberá prieskumom trhu a potenciálnych zákazníkov. V práci sú spracované výsledky analýzy trhu. Tieto výsledky slúžia ako základ pre tvorbu návrhovej časti.

Kľúčové slová: značka, identita značky, hodnota značky, rozvoj značky, stratégia, budovanie značky, marketing, zákazníci, konkurencia

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ČESTNÉ VYHLÁSENIE

Prehlasujem, že predložená bakalárska práca je pôvodná a spracoval som ju samostatne. Prehlasujem, že citácia použitých prameňov je úplná, že som vo svojej práci neporušil autorské práva (v zmysle zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o práve autorskom a o právach súvisiacimi s právom autorským).

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Podpis študenta

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Table of Contents

Introduction	10
1. Goals and methodology of the Thesis.....	11
2. Theoretical part	12
2.1. Brand meaning and its elements.....	12
2.1.1. Brand definition	12
2.1.2. Brand equity.....	13
2.1.3. Brand personality.....	13
2.2. Branding.....	15
2.2.1. Meaning of branding.....	15
2.2.2. The importance of branding	15
2.2.3. Brand poitioning.....	16
2.2.4. Brand identity prism	22
2.3. Communication	25
2.3.1. Definition of communication	25
2.3.1. Promotion mix	25
2.3.2. Buyer readiness stages.....	26
2.3.3. In-store communication.....	27
2.3.4. Multi-sensory communication	28
2.3.5. Personal selling	29
2.4. Competition	30
2.4.1. Definition of competition.....	30
2.4.2. Identifying competitors.....	30
2.4.3. Assessing competitors.....	30
2.4.4. Customer value analysis.....	31
2.4.5. Differentiation.....	32
2.5. Conclusion of the theoretical part.....	33
3. Analytical part	34
3.1. Expected vision of the investor	34
3.1.1. Value proposition.....	34
3.2. Market analysis	35

3.2.1.	Competition	36
3.2.2.	Competition comparison	37
3.2.3.	Key brand characteristics of selected competitors.....	39
3.2.4.	Brand identity prisms of the competing brands	42
3.3.	Customer segments	47
3.3.1.	Customer requirements based on interviews.....	47
3.3.2.	Shopping behavior based on desk research.....	48
3.3.3.	Summary of customer requirements	48
3.3.4.	Suppliers.....	49
3.4.	Possible tactics for differentiation	50
3.4.1.	Summary of differentiation tactics	52
4.	<i>Solution proposal</i>	53
4.1.	Brand identity.....	53
4.2.	Customer persona	55
4.3.	Brand elements	56
4.3.1.	Brand name.....	56
4.3.2.	Logo.....	56
4.4.	Communication of the brand	58
4.4.1.	Store design	58
4.4.2.	Employee branding	60
4.4.3.	Other store branding activities	61
4.5.	Evaluation of proposals	62
5.	<i>Conclusion</i>	63
	<i>References</i>.....	64
	<i>List of Figures</i>	66
	<i>List of tables</i>	67
	<i>List of Appendices</i>.....	68

Introduction

Creating a fashion brand in today's market is a task that can bring on many challenges. As a highly competitive market, the fashion industry can be difficult to dominate. There are many established brands on the market with a heritage that helps them to support their brand identity and values.

The fashion industry brings on more challenges as it is an industry which can be changing quite rapidly and this is a difficult challenge for companies, as they might not have resources and capacity to keep up with the trends. Such companies must therefore focus on building a strong brand, which will provide them with a strategic advantage, that will help them retain customers.

Fashion is a form of a self-expression for many people. They can showcase their values, ideas or creativity through clothing and accessories. Thanks to such expression, it can become clear of what the person stands for and how they want to present themselves.

The company is in a pre-startup phase. This means, the company is not established legally and does not have any business model or clear definition. It is just an idea coming from the mind of the owner, as he sees big flaws in the branding of companies providing classic menswear and products similar to it.

Company is facing a problem of no clear brand strategy. The investor would like to come up with such brand, which can compete for the leading position in the Czech and Slovak market. Furthermore, the investor would like to raise the standards of shopping experience through a set of branding activities, which are currently not defined clearly.

As the company is not yet established, neither does it have a clear business model, multiple factors have to be analyzed and monitored. The company is facing a problem of unclear brand and image.

1. Goals and methodology of the Thesis

The thesis contains the theoretical frameworks, on which the analysis, and further the proposal of the solution builds up. The application of theoretical background in the analytical and proposing part is the base for creation of the solution for the company's problem. The main goal of the thesis is to create a brand development framework on the base of theoretical review and market analysis. The proposed framework will differentiate the brand from its competitors and bring a competitive advantage for the future of the company.

In order to propose such framework, my bachelor thesis will use multiple methodologies and practices so it can clearly analyze the current situation of the market. These methodologies include:

- Competitor analysis based on mystery shopping done by myself and concluded on the base of my own experience with the shopping in competitor stores. The comparison of the competitors has been concluded based on the mystery shopping experience.
- Analysis of the Brand Prism of the competitors. Kapferer's Brand Prism defines what the brand represents and how it positions its brand personality towards the customers.
- The customer shopping behavior. The shopping preferences of customers have been concluded through series of qualitative interviews of the customers, who already seek a similar product range. The shopping preferences of the customer are further analyzed through secondary data available online, which supported the customer preferences.
- Summary of analysis concludes the current situation in the market and identifies if the possible tactics and challenges which have to be solved in order to succeed in the market.

The proposal of the activities is based on the outcomes of the analysis and suggests what the company can do to build a memorable brand personality through set of activities in store and brand creatives which are included in the proposal.

2. Theoretical part

2.1. Brand meaning and its elements

2.1.1. Brand definition

In the field of marketing and business development, the term brand is defined in multiple ways. There is no single definition that could clearly define a brand. Despite the fact that by different authors, the term brand can have different meanings, it generally builds on the same idea.

“A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors. Consumers view a brand as an important part of a product, and branding can add value to a consumer’s purchase. Customers attach meanings to brands and develop brand relationships. As a result, brands have meaning well beyond a product’s physical attributes.” (1, p. 250).

Brands however are more than just a name, symbol, or logo. People create emotional connections to brands. Through brands, companies look for ways to connect with their customers to generate strong feelings when the customers come to contact with a brand. (2)

According to Kapferer, the brand is an asset of a company that is created in the mind of a customer through emotional connections, values, and beliefs. (3)

Based on the multiple interpretations by multiple authors about the meaning of the brand, we can conclude that a brand can be a set of creatives such as logo, name, or design. However, most of the authors agree on the fact that brand is a representation of values which a company represents, and customers can relate to these values while creating emotional connection with the company.

According to Karen Leland: „Phase One is all about developing a solid platform on which you can build your brand and market your business. It requires defining, articulating, and declaring your brand and then translating that into places (online and off) where people can effectively engage with your business.“ (4, p. 15)

While developing a brand, the business should focus on building brand on multiple platforms (online and offline). Often businesses come across problems while branding their company. These problems are as follows:

- *Sloppy (bad writing, grammar, and spelling)*
- *Poorly designed (ugly and/or not user-friendly)*
- *Badly branded or lacking any brand feel at all*
- *Inconsistent in message and look*
- *Unclear in their brand message (vague, confused, unclear)*
- *Not using marketing best practices (4, p. 15)*

For a brand to succeed, it is important to keep these factors and mistakes in mind. Through the right brand strategy, online branding is an essential part in the digitalized world as well.

2.1.2. Brand equity

The term brand equity is described in Principles of Marketing as: *“The differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product and its marketing.”* (6, s. 264)

Moreover, brand equity captures the consumer’s preference any loyalty. A brand has created a positive brand equity in case the consumer is more in favor of choosing o product of the given brand, rather than other similar unbranded product. (1)

Making the product memorable and recognizable for the consumer creates a positive brand equity for the company. A positive brand equity can be also supported through marketing activities of the company. In case a company creates positive brand equity, the customer is willing to buy a more costly products because of the recognized quality and reliability of the brand. (5)

2.1.3. Brand personality

„Personality refers to the unique psychological characteristics that distinguish a person or group. Personality is usually described in terms of traits such as self-confidence, dominance, sociability, autonomy, defensiveness, adaptability and aggressiveness. Personality can be useful in analysing consumer behaviour for certain product or brand choices.” (6, p. 140)

A brand personality is a set of particular human traits. These human traits can be attributed to the brand and with a mix of multiple traits, brand can become relatable to a customer based on similarity between customer's personality and brand's personality. (6)

There have been defined 5 personality traits of a brand:

- *sincerity* (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful);
- *excitement* (daring, spirited, imaginative and up-to- date);
- *competence* (reliable, intelligent and successful);
- *sophistication* (upper-class and charming);
- *ruggedness* (outdoorsy and tough). (6, p. 140)

“The positioning is what you get; the personality is what you feel.” If a brand establishes a strong brand personality, it can have much greater influence on the buyer behavior than functional aspects. (8, p. 64)

2.2. Branding

2.2.1. Meaning of branding

The term branding originates in the word brand, the Germanic or Nordic meaning for this word comes from burning signs onto cattle which shows who is the owner of the cattle. Therefore, for companies, branding is a connection in the customer's mind to the company. The branding then leaves a permanent mark behind the brand's concept in the mind of a consumer. (9)

2.2.2. The importance of branding

As with the cattle, the brand was meant to differentiate one cow from a cow of another farmer, the same goes for branding of companies. The companies build their brands in order to differentiate from other companies and through their identity, customers are able to distinguish between one company and the other. Often, the branding helps customers choose the product they can relate to over the unbranded product or company. (3)

According to Kotler: „Branding helps buyers in many ways. Brand names help consumers identify products that might benefit them. Brands also say something about product quality and consistency—buyers who always buy the same brand know that they will get the same features, benefits, and quality each time they buy. Branding also gives the seller several advantages. The seller's brand name and trademark provide legal protection for unique product features that otherwise might be copied by competitors. Branding helps the seller to segment markets.” (1)

With branding the company does not only create emotional connections in the minds of customer, but also through this process, the company can ensure that their products will not be copied and provide them with legal protection. Of course, that is in case the company registers their brand as a trademark. (3)

„Brand power to influence buyers relies on representations and relationships. A representation is a system of mental associations. We stress the word 'system', for these associations are interconnected. They are in a network, so that acting on one impacts some others. These associations (also called brand image) cover the following aspects:

- *What is the brand territory (perceived competence, typical products or services, specific know-how)?*

- *What is its level of quality (low, middle, premium, luxury)?*
- *What are its qualities?*
- *What is its most discriminating quality or benefit (also called perceived positioning)?*
- *What typical buyer does the brand evoke? What is the brand personality and brand imagery?“ (3)*

2.2.3. Brand poitioning

„Branding poses challenging decisions to the marketer. **Figure 1.** shows that the major brand strategy decisions involve brand positioning, brand name selection, brand sponsorship, and brand development.“ (1)



Figure 1 - Major brand strategy decisions

Source: Own elaboration based on Kotler and Armstrong

Marketers can position the brands on three levels:

1. Product attributes
2. Benefit
3. Beliefs and values (1)

Product attributes

Product attributes can involve product quality, style, or features. This positioning however does not differentiate the company enough from the competitors as these attributes are easily copied by competitors. Moreover, customers are more interested in what these attributes will do for them rather than the attributes themselves. (1)

Benefit

The positioning based on the benefit is more appealing to a customer as they get a clear picture of what the product can do for them and why it is better than competition. Some of these benefits can be guaranteed on-time delivery from Fed Ex or capturing and sharing moments from Instagram. (1)

Beliefs and values

These are most appealing to a customer since the positioning on this level creates a deeper connection. When a customer buys a product from a certain brand, they do not only see it as a product or what it can do for them, it has a deeper meaning. Customers build an emotional connection in their minds to the products. As an example could be kitchen appliances that do the work for them, but also take care of the people we love by providing us with the features that these products offer.

According to Floor: "Based on the focus on positioning a distinction can be made between range brands, price brands, convenience brands and experience brands" (8, p. 77).

As brands could focus only on one of these attributes in the past, it is not sufficient enough for the consumer anymore. Despite the fact, a brand cannot excel in all of these attributes, is trying to find the right mix between these. Therefore, the right mix of these must be set according to brand's priorities. (8)

Buying decisions of a consumer depend on multiple factors. Depending on the place, time, or price. A successful brand must be able to identify these factors among their target customers. Based on the criteria of shopping, there are four different kinds of shopping behaviors.

- Speedy low-cost replenishment shopping

- Solution-driven shopping
- Self-expression shopping
- Sense of discovery shopping (8)

“In retail a distinction can be made between range brands, price brands, convenience brands, and experience brands by focusing on different positioning attributes. Brands that have no clear focus and are a little bit of everything to everyone miss clarity in their positioning, and therefore do not give their customer a clear offering” (8, s. 83)

Range brands

Range brands differentiate themselves from competitors by providing consumers with a wide range of products in one place. The stock offer is often superior to competition and therefore customer can buy big range of products in one place. This positioning can be supported through pricing strategy as well as they offer the same products at lower prices. Furthermore, if the consumer can get more products in one place, they choose this brand because it fulfills not only the functional need, but also the emotional need as they save time buying more products at the same store. (8, p. 83).

Price brands

Low prices are for retail brands also an important attribute in decision buying process of a customer. If the retail brand does not offer fair prices in comparison to the competitor, the consumer will not consider such brand as an option during the buying process. This attribute can also be connected to an emotional need. People with lower income have to shop at the stores with lower prices as they struggle to make the ends meet. On the other hand, people with enough money to spend can shop there in order to gain a status of a smart shopper for their own satisfaction or to gain this status among others. (8)

Convenience brands

Making life easier for a consumer can be also a good ground for positioning a brand. Stores that offer convenience as one of their main advantages can save customers time as they are more reachable to their homes. Saving time is a functional need that can be fulfilled through positioning a brand as a convenience brand. (8)

Experience brand

As the above-mentioned attributes are mostly fulfilling the functional need, customers love buying products from the experience brands. The whole buying process is based on the emotional need of a customer. When buying at the store that provides experience rather than just a function, customer can relate to a brand and leave satisfied with their emotional need. Whether it is a great customer service or some features the store offers that can entertain a customer based on its environment, this positioning gives customer a reason to come for a repeated purchase. Simply the customer chooses to spend time in the store because of an emotional satisfaction. (8)

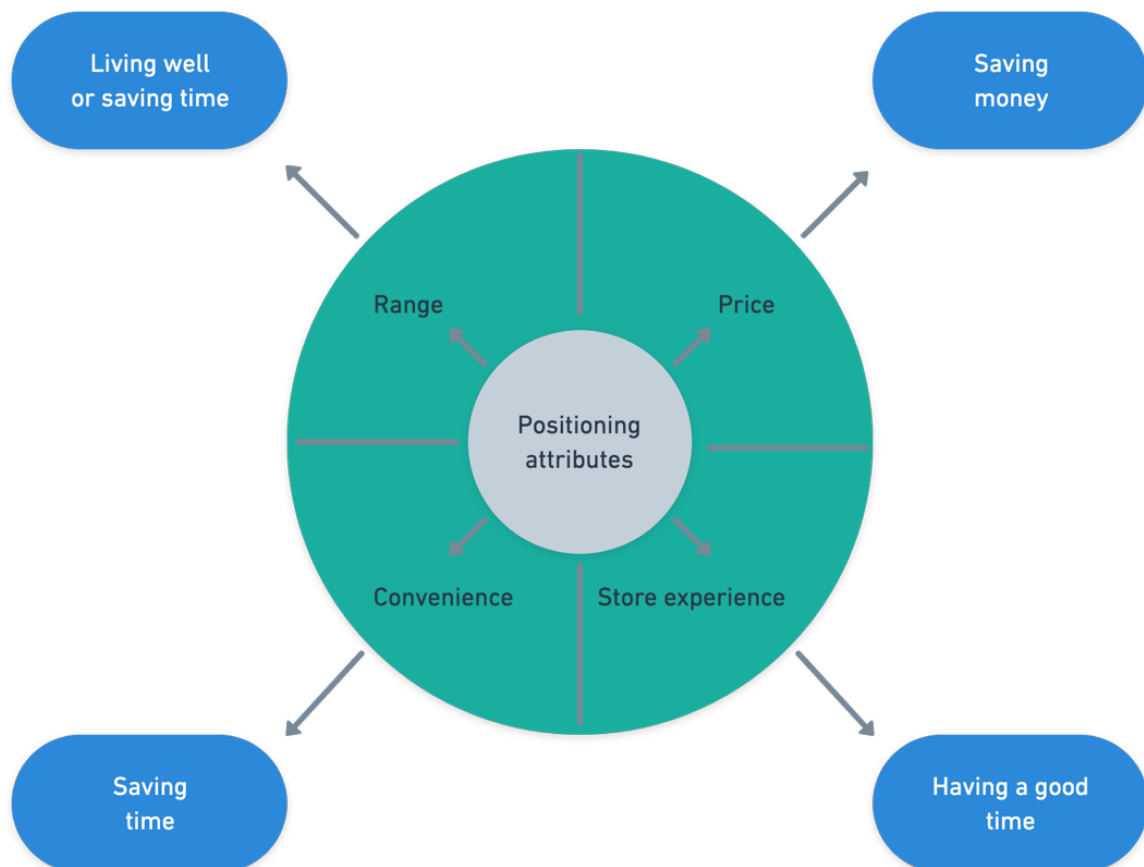


Figure 2 Positioning attributes

Source: own interpretation based on Ko Floor

Retail brand circle

“The three rings of the retail brand circle rotate, as it were, around each other. With a certain brand positioning, some brand personalities fit better than others, and the brand positioning mix and the brand personality also call for a specific type of brand communication. Consistency is of the utmost importance: not only in timing, but also between all touch-points of the retail brand.” (8)

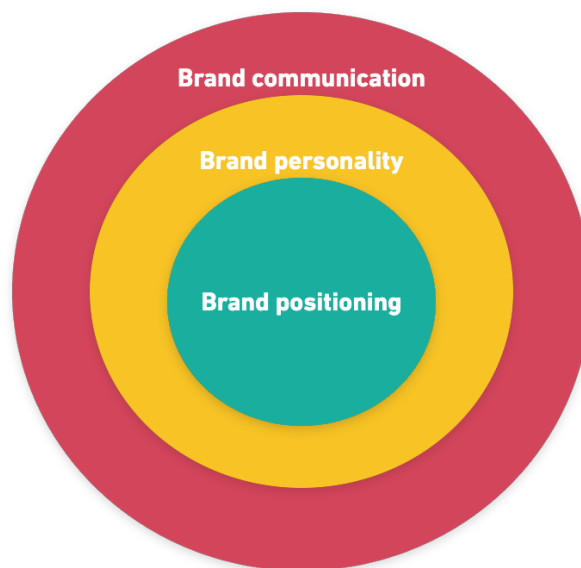


Figure 3: The retail brand circle

Source: own interpretation based on Ko Floor

The inner brand of the circle represents the brand positioning of a retail store. The brand needs to have a clearly defined attributes that differ it from competitors. The brand has a set of touch-pints throughout the whole store which creates a buying experience for a customer. No store can do everything for every type of customer; therefore, the brand positioning has to have a clear picture of their ideal customer in mind and serve their needs. With the ideal customer’s beliefs, values and needs in mind, the brand will be able to serve the experience that fit these attributes and differentiate it from those of competitors’. (8)

The middle circle represents the personality of a brand. As the brand personality has been mentioned previously in the thesis, personality is a set of human traits that a brand has been given. Many brands stop at the positioning part of the brand development, however, creating a brand personality for their brand will provide their customers an option to relate to a brand with similar values as their own. *“Very distinctive brand personality can further strengthen the positioning, because an emotional bond will develop between the brand and the consumer.”* (8)

The outer part of the circle is brand communication. Through the brand communication in and out of the store, the brand can deliver the attributes covered in the brand positioning and brand personality. All communication channels whether online, offline, in-store or out of the store must communicate the same message and values the brand stands for and why it differs from the competitor. As online communication has to bring clear picture of the overall brand personality and positioning, also the sales representatives in the store must be able to communicate these attributes to the customer in the store in order to convert them into a buying customer. (8)

Breakthrough positioning strategy

Some of the most popular brand positioning strategies that a brand could use for company or product include strategies like owning an attribute, being the leader, and having a special ingredient or a new process fall into the "benefits and consequences" camp. Owning a target market, being a maverick, or having a celebrity connection all fall into the "identity" camp. A company can try each one on to see which one has the best chance of successfully positioning itself in the marketplace. (11).

“When you discover a game-changing positioning strategy, your brand will be revealed to be:

- *Superlative: better than competitors in an important way*
- *Different: not a copycat of competitors*
- *Believable: authentic and true for the brand*
- *Memorable: fresh and interesting in some way”* (11)

2.2.4. Brand identity prism

Engaging brands must have a deep inner inspiration in order to become 'passion brands.' They must also have personality and their own beliefs, and as a result, they must be able to assist customers in their daily lives as well as in discovering their own identity. (3).

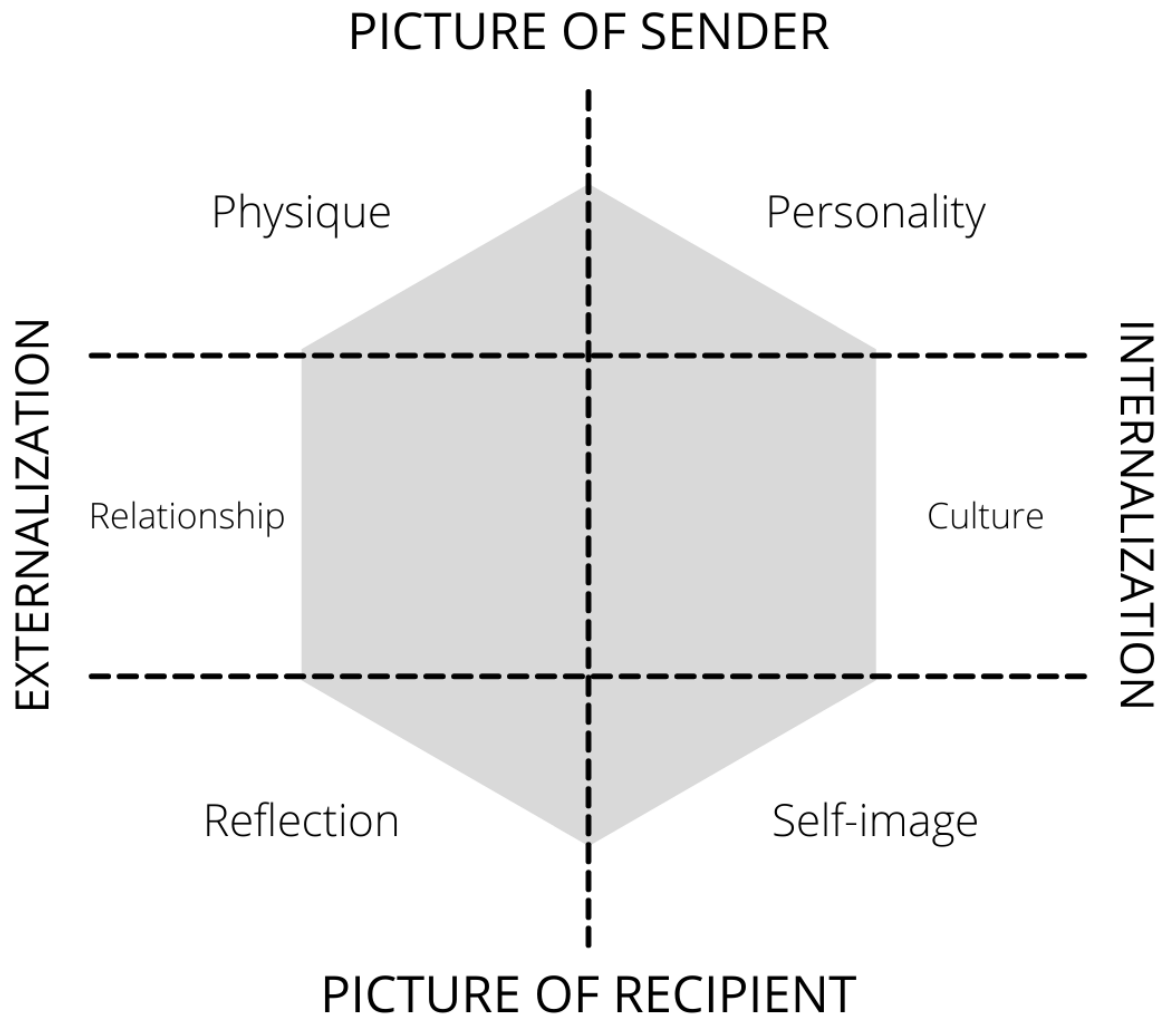


Figure 4 - Brand identity prism

Source: Own interpretation based on Kapferer

“In fact, leaving the classical stimulus–response paradigm, modern brand communication theory reminds us that when one communicates, one builds representations of who speaks (source re-presentation), of who is the addressee (recipient re-presentation), and what specific relationship the communication builds between them. This is the constructivist school of theorizing about communications. Since brands speak about the product, and are perceived as sources of products, services and satisfactions, communication theory is directly relevant. As such it reminds us that brand identity has six facets. We call this the ‘brand identity prism’.”

(3).

Physical specificities and qualities

These are the qualities that need to be described when creating a brand. As a brand develops these physical specificities and qualities it creates the physical image of their main product, while describing exactly what the brand does, what it concretely is, what does it look like, etc. With the physical look of the representative product, the company can create an image in the mind of a customer which represents the brand and build a connection with the customer. An example of such product could be a glass bottle of Orangina which is the symbol for the brand.

(3)

Brand personality

“Brand personality fulfils a psychological function. It allows consumers either to identify with it or to project themselves into it. Brand personality is also the main source of tone and style of advertising.” (3)

Brand culture

Hyperconsumption creates emptiness in developed countries: we know that accumulating goods does not create happiness. That is why brands must serve as cultural ambassadors: they must promote and support a dream. Brands must respond to this new demand for significance. Opportunities abound. Therefore, brands will need to uncover insights that go beyond those gleaned from focus groups or questionnaires.

The cultural aspect of a brand's identity draws attention to the fact that the brands are engaged in ideological competition. It's something that top management needs to understand. (3)

Brand relationship

Brand is a relationship. Indeed, brands are frequently at the heart of the transactions and exchanges that take place between people. This is especially true for brands in the service industry, as well as for retailers. (3)

The importance of the relationship aspect for brands and services in general cannot be overstated. Service is, by definition, the establishment of a relationship. This characteristic defines the manner of conduct that most clearly distinguishes the brand. This has several ramifications for the way the brand acts, delivers services, and interacts with its clients and customers. (3)

Customer reflection

A brand reflects a customer. When asked about certain car brands, people immediately respond in terms of perceived clientele: that's a young person's brand! fathers! seniors! show-offs!

They are often confused. Potential buyers or users of the brand are the target. The customer should be reflected as he/she wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand. The confusion between reflection and target is quite common. So many managers still insist on showing targeted buyers as they really are, ignoring the fact that they want to be shown as they want to be – because of buying a certain brand (or shopping at a certain retailer). Brands do help consumers build their identities. Improving one's appearance should be a priority in the ready-to-wear industry. (3)

Self- image

Finally, a brand communicates with our sense of self. If reflection refers to the target's external mirror (which they are...), self-image refers to the target's internal mirror (I feel, I am ...). It is true that our attitudes toward certain brands lead to the development of a particular type of inner relationship with ourselves. (3)

The prism of brand identity demonstrates how these facets are all connected and create a well-structured entity. One facet's content echoes that of another. The identity prism is derived from

a single fundamental concept – that brands possess the ability to communicate. Brands cannot exist without communication. Indeed, they become obsolete if they remain silent or unused for an extended period of time.

2.3. Communication

2.3.1. Definition of communication

The positioning and personality of a retail brand are communicated by the brand. The majority of retailers have consistently underestimated this influence. The majority of retail brands are virtually identical in appearance, with little difference in design, visual merchandising, and employee behavior. (8)

The most important goals of a retail brand's communication are to increase store traffic, increase the amount of money that existing customers spend, and strengthen the brand's relationships with customers. Every communication tool has a specific role to play in the achievement of these goals.

Additionally, businesses must engage with customers and communicate their value propositions to them, and the content of what they communicate should not be arbitrary. Everything that is communicated must be carefully planned and blended into carefully integrated programs. In the same way that effective communication is critical in the development and maintenance of any other kind of relationship, it is also critical in a company's efforts to engage customers and develop profitable customer relationships. (1)

2.3.1 Promotion mix

The total promotion mix is the combination of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing tools used to engage consumers, communicate customer value, and build relationships. Here are the five major promotion tools:

- **Advertising**
- **Sales promotion**
- **Personal selling**
- **Public relations**

- **Direct and digital marketing (1)**

When it comes to new media formats, marketers can reach smaller groups of consumers in more engaging ways than they can when they use traditional marketing communications methods that interrupt customers and force them to consume mass messages. Likewise, the role of marketing communicators will change as the marketing communications environment changes. Rather than focusing solely on the creation and placement of TV ads, print ads, or Snapchat branded story ads, many marketers now consider themselves to be "content marketing managers," rather than "marketing managers."

Content marketing

“Creating, inspiring, and sharing brand messages and conversations with and among consumers across a fluid mix of paid, owned, earned, and shared channels.” (1)

Integrated marketing communications

“Carefully integrating and coordinating the company’s many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products.” (1)

2.3.2. Buyer readiness stages

The steps that customers often go through on their path to making a purchase are as follows: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and, eventually, the actual purchasing decision are called the buyer readiness stages. (1)



Figure 5 - Buyer readiness stages

Source: Own interpretation based on Kotler and Armstrong

As the marketed product might not be clearly defined and recognized by a potential customer. The communicator must build first the Awareness and knowledge stages in order to bring th customer further through the funnel to complete the process by purchasing the product.

2.3.3. In-store communication

Many buying decisions take place in the brick and mortar stores. As these decisions are important for the retailer, there is a need to support these decisions through multiple processes in the store which can help convert the customer. Many brands fail to create a clear concept and use these processes and communication tools to their advantage. The stores can achieve this through visual merchandising as well as stimulating all the senses of a customer. (8)

A retail store can affect the way the customer shops and experiences the brand in-store. Through communication tools, the retailer can guide a customer through the whole buying process and create an experience that the customer will not receive in a store of a competitor. On the other hand, the online retailer cannot clearly define the way the customer shops and there is only so much he can do to affect his buying process. (8)

Store design and visual merchandising can fulfill not only emotional function for a customer, but also a rational function. The emotional function gives the customer the experience and brings out the feelings while shopping in the store. Through the rational function, the brand can make it easier for a customer to shop at the store as it can provide him options of saving him time through the right visual merchandising. (8)

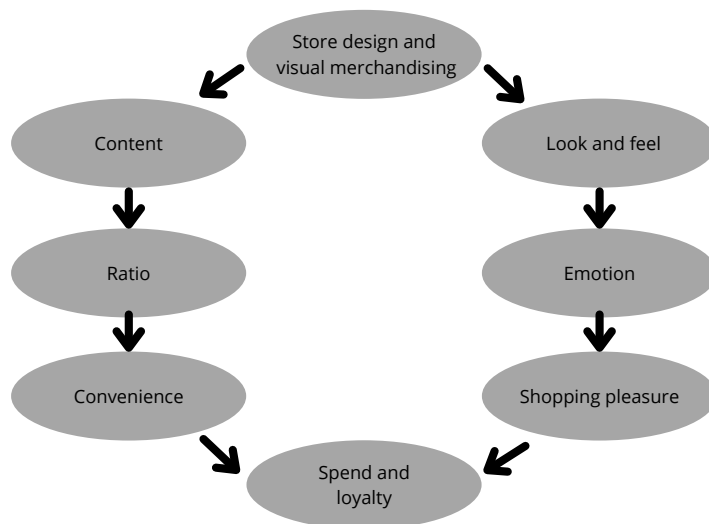


Figure 6 – Functions of store design and visual merchandising

Source: Own interpretation based on Ko Floor

2.3.4. Multi-sensory communication

Stores need to find the balance between emotional and rational functions of the store. For some brands it might be more about the experience and having fun in the store, for others it can be more rational and helping customers save time while shopping. The emotional function is brought out by the five senses:

- Sight
- Touch
- Sound
- Smell
- Taste

Through these five senses, the brand can create an experience which is associated in customer's mind only with this particular brand. (8)

Sight

The visual appeal of the store is the first thing the customer notices before entering the store. The sight captures everything from colors of the store, typography, allocation of products, spaciousness of the rooms, etc. Through all these objectives, the brand can clearly communicate its message and values. The visual of the store should be corresponding to a whole brand identity. (8)

Touch

Whether it is the feel of the fabrics used in the products or the materials used for the furnishing of the store, the touch sensors can be stimulated in a store as well. If the temperature of the store is too cold or too warm, the shopping time might shorten. Customers walk slower on more rugged floor surfaces, rather than smoot floors. (8)

Sound

Sounds played in the store can affect the customer behavior. On one hand the selection of the music can help the customers strengthen their emotions about the product, on the other hand a music from a French region can help sell more products from France rather than products from England. Furthermore, if the music genre through all communication platforms is the same or similar, it can help build the brand recognition in the mind of a customer. (8)

Smell

Walking into a store because of an irresistible smell can help converting the customer and making the store more attractive for them. Many retailers use the scents associated with their brand identity in their stores. Cosmetics brands can create fresh flowery scents which are used in the stores and showing the cleanliness of their brand personality. (8)

Taste

Stimulating the taste sensors through a restaurant or a coffee shop that are located in the store directly can also help increase shopping time in stores. Furthermore, offering free food or drinks in a store can help to increase the shopping time even further. Other more luxurious brand might serve more expensive alcohol beverages in order to create a feeling of being taken care of and to help customers relax. (8)

2.3.5. Personal selling

Personal presentation by a member of the firm's sales staff with the goal of engaging clients, closing sales, and developing long-term customer relationships. This presentation and a communication tool is essential for a great customer experience. With knowledgeable staff with great communication and presentation skills, the whole shopping experience can become much more pleasurable than an experience with a competitor. (1)

2.4. Competition

2.4.1. Definition of competition

“To plan effective marketing strategies, a company needs to find out all it can about its competitors. It must constantly compare its marketing strategies, products, prices, channels and promotions with those of close competitors. In this way, the company can find areas of potential competitive advantage and disadvantage. Competitor analysis involves first identifying and assessing competitors and then selecting which competitors to attack or avoid.”

(1)

2.4.2. Identifying competitors

Identifying a competitor is an essential task for companies in order to be able to survive in the market. As companies often identify competitors as companies with similar product offering, similar price or similar values, they can be easily overrun by other companies. With the fast development the market experiences, the companies need to take into consideration also the companies which offer not only similar products, but also class of products. (1)

For a classic menswear clothing brand, a brand with sports apparel can be identified as a competitor. Companies need to identify company from industry point of view or a market point of view. From the industry point of view, the competitor of clothing brand is any competitor in the clothing industry: manufacturer, retailer, fashion designer, etc. From the market point of view the competitor can become a company that offers same values or fulfills the same needs of their customer. For such example, a brand that offers self-expression through their products in any form, can become a competitor. (1)

2.4.3. Assessing competitors

The brand needs to clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors. Through secondary data, word of mouth or social media, the marketers can analyze and evaluate the performance of the competition and what the competitor does to gain bigger shares of markets.

(1)

Furthermore, the brand wants to evaluate the responsiveness of the competitor to changes on the market. Some competitors are better at responding to new trends and competitor's "attacks," some do not have the resources to adapt quickly, therefore it is easier to compete against such companies. A brand must adapt their strategy accordingly, so they can gain a competitive advantage and gain a market share in their industry. (1)

In case the companies attack each other with targeted advertisements or other marketing practices, the competition can help customers gain great information on the products the companies offer. On the other hand, if such competition gets out of control, it can bring a negative impact on the whole industry. (1)

2.4.4. Customer value analysis

*"A useful tool for assessing competitor strengths and weaknesses is **customer value analysis**. The aim of customer value analysis is to determine the benefits that target customers value and how customers rate the relative value of various competitors' offers. In conducting a customer value analysis, the company first identifies the major attributes that customers value and the importance customers place on these attributes. Next, it assesses its performance against competitors on those valued attributes."* (1)

Marketers from various companies compete in providing the right value for their customers. The customers have many options to choose from and companies try to win these customers over. Therefore, it is important for a brand to analyze the customer value of a different company and adjust their own value accordingly. It is therefore necessary that the marketers do not create big expectations in the customer's mind that the company fails to deliver. On the other hand, if the promises of the give value are too small, the company might fail to attract enough customers. (1)

To gain a competitive advantage, the company must provide higher value for customers in some attributes that the competitor cannot. Customer value analysis is: *"An analysis conducted to determine what benefits target customers value and how they rate the relative value of various competitors' offers."* (1). If the company wants to gain a higher market share, it has to meet customer's needs in a way that the competitor can't. (1).

2.4.5. Differentiation

“Actually, differentiating the market offering to create superior customer value.” (1)

Differentiating a brand personality can be a tool to add emotion to the functional attributes of the brand. Furthermore, it can help develop better relationships with a customer. To differentiate the company from competitors, the brand personality can be used as a tool to achieve this objective. A brand that is able to differentiate itself through strong brand personality and strong positioning foundation can become favorites in the minds of the customer. (1)

2.5. Conclusion of the theoretical part

The theoretical part of the thesis has defined multiple terms connected to branding and marketing. The brand has multiple definitions and according to some authors it represents symbol, design or any other visuals that represent the brand. According to Kapferer, the brand can be an added value to a customer which is created in customer's mind through shared values and emotions perceived by a customer when experiencing the brand.

Furthermore, the term branding has been defined and the processes that it includes while creating a brand. Branding helps to distinguish one brand from another by creating set of values and other factors that belong to the one particular brand. Branding process includes a creation of strategy that differentiated the brand from competition. As it can be through experiences the brand provides, or through emotions it creates in the mind of a customer. Through Kapferer's brand identity prism describes a way of how brand communicates its branding.

Communication is an essential part of the brand and has been defined in the thesis as a tool that is used to show customers the brand and to increase the traffic of the store on an online store. All of the means of communication must be carefully selected so the customer receives the right idea of the brand and does not exchange it with the one of the competitors.

As the company chooses to enter the market and become profitable, it needs to know its customers and the market they want to operate in. Competition are not only the companies that provide exactly same product or service. The competitor is also a company that operates in the same industry or offers same values. Through the analysis of these competitors, the company must decide which of them to attack and which of them rather ignore. Some companies might be able to adapt quicker to market changes and can respond to the attacks quickly. Such competition can harm the whole industry.

In order to build a brand development framework, I am going to apply the theoretical knowledge in my analytical part as well as in the proposal. In the proposal, the framework will be presented through set of branding activities and visual elements of the brand.

3. Analytical part

As the company is not established in any formal or informal state, I do not have any data about the brand or company. The vision of the company is, however described below. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the investor would like to consider multiple brand development frameworks. My analytical part serves to provide base for proposal. The analysis provides the information about the market and its current state. Moreover, it gives me a clear picture of the possibilities for the brand framework development.

3.1. Expected vision of the investor

In terms of what the brand should represent, the firm does not have a well-defined vision. The basis of the vision is to provide customer with high level of service while shopping in-store and furthermore provide high quality products. The vision of the investor is to create a brand where the customer returns for his everyday pieces of clothing as well as less frequent purchases, such as suit or a tuxedo. While experiencing these, the customer can gain knowledge about the products and the style they build with the brand. The company does not only want to sell but wants to help customers create better image of themselves. (13)

3.1.1. Value proposition

The investor has come up with a value proposition which will represent the brand and will help to differentiate it. According to his vision, the company should be strongly focusing on adding value through education of customer about what they are buying and what they should buy in order to build their personal style. Furthermore, he would like to differentiate the brand through unconventional services provided in the store, such as in-store tailor, who alters the clothing according to customer's needs. Investor believes the business model is sustainable while keeping mid-range prices and ensuring the quality of the products will not be compromised. The idea behind the business model builds a strong base for a brand. All the elements included in value proposition can become a large support for the brand and its identity. (13)

3.2. Market analysis

The market which the brand would like to enter is a market with products for men. Especially formal clothing and accessories. The target customers are men in their 30s to 60s, who wear more of a formal clothing style on a daily basis. They are men who care about their looks and would like to present themselves also through their appearance.

The analysis is made on the market of Czech Republic and Slovakia. As the investor's idea comes from a bad experience in stores selling formal clothing, the analysis is also concluded on such stores: this means after the interviews with the investor, I have chosen 5 companies which offer formal clothing and sell products targeted mostly at men in our desired age group.
(13)

Analysis of the market will provide us with insights into all the subjects of the market which are competitors, customers, and suppliers. The focus is mainly aimed at the formal wear, which is the main product of the company.

3.2.1. Competition

There are stores with similar product offer as the analyzed brand. The product offer consists of formal and casual menswear with higher attention to quality and natural materials. Another objective while selecting the competition is that it offers a variety of ready to wear products which is supported by made-to-measure services. All the competitors offer similar experience and similar product offer. (13)

The difference between these categories is explained in the table below.

Table 1 - Difference between product offerings

Ready to wear	Offering of the products that are ready to be worn without any additional or small adjustments to the original product. Often the products are in stock of the company and are not meant to be ordered for specific customer's needs.
Made-to-measure	The products are based on a universal size of the clothing and adjusted in more detailed to the certain customer. After the measurements have been taken, the products is ordered from the supplier and delivered to the store, or customer's address of choice. There is a medium level of personalization.
Bespoke	The measurements are taken by a specialist and are measured according to customer's exact body composition. There is a high variety of fabrics and other personalized elements of the clothing. Bespoke clothing is typically made from scratch and the delivery time is usually 6-8 weeks. Often such clothing is made by hand.

Source: Own elaboration

This explanation is important to define in order to select the right competitors for the company. As the investor initially wants to create a ready to wear classic menswear brand, the other clothing producers will not be included in the analysis. (13)

3.2.2. Competition comparison

The analyzed product of the chosen competitors is a suit, which is a core product for these brands and the business models are built around the suit as a main product. The analysis is based on the elements of branding which these brands offer. This comparison has been concluded through my own experience with the instore shopping.

Blažek		Ozeta		Alain Delon		Le Premier		Bandi		
Description	Points	Description	Points	Description	Points	Description	Points	Description	Points	
Positioning										
Product range	The brand offers wide range of suits which in some cases look a little outdated and uniformal. The products lack creativity and variety in fabrics and cuts.	3	The brand offers medium range of suits which tend to look similar and lacks variety in fabric and design. The natural fabrics are often mixed with unnatural ones.	2	Wide range of suits including different colors than competitors. The fabrics are mostly blends of natural fibers with unnatural ones.	3	Lower product range. Main focus is shifting towards their made-to-measure solution. The products offer high quality and natural fabrics.	1	The product offer is wide and offers the most affordable suits from competitors.	3
Price	320€ - 399€	/	167€ - 489€	/	399€ - 699€	/	350€ - 430€	/	270€ - 470€	/
Shopping Experience	The experience lacks emotion and the buyer does not recognize the values of a brand as soon as they enter the store. There are no elements of experience in which the brand would excel.	2	The experience is simple, however sufficient. The brand builds on the tradition and the fact, that they make their products in slovakia.	3	The brand builds on its name it has established on the Slovak market and the famous presonality, Alain Delon, which is an actor that is often pointed as a fashion icon.	3	The brand's business is based on made to measure clothing in which they offer great experience and high level of personalisation.	4	The brand lacks personality, however the experience is improved by offered drinks while a customer is shopping. Their main values are representing success in carrer.	3
Convenience	The brand does offer high quality of convenience epecially with the e-shop experience. They offer in-house tailoring services for cheap prices.	3	Convenience is on a high level supported with in-house tailoring, which has higher pricing. The convenience is supported by a wide range of stores in Slovakia and Czech Republic.	4	The convenience is on lower level as the brand does not have many store locations. The online e-shop is medium quality.	2	The level of convinience is lower as the product offer is not as wide as competitors' and the made-to-measure solution includes long delivery times.	2	The brand does not offer online shopping of suits, which is inconvenient. This is partly compensated with 11 stores in Czech Republic and Slovakia.	3
Extra services	Made-to-measure suits with affordable price.	/	Made-to-measure tailoring. Corporate made-to-measure	/	Made-to-measure and In-house tailoring. Corporate	/	Made-to-measure, in-store alterations.	/	In-store alterations Drinks for customers in store	/
Personality traits										
	Range brand	/	Convenience brand	/	Range brand	/	Experience brand	/	Price brand	/

Communication										
External	Activity on social media and communication of products and services is on a good level. There is a magazine section on the website which helps educating the customer.	3	High quality of online communication and Influencer marketing. The brand communicates its values through series of videos and content on social media, where they value tradition and the fact they produce products in slovakia.	4	High level of information in the journal section on the website. It includes interesting and good quality content. High level of social media communication.	4	Good level of communication on social media. No extra communication as a blog or other means of educating the customer.	2	The communication of the brand is on a good level through social media and educational videos and blog that serve as a resource for the customers.	4
Internal	The design of the store is clean and modern. The staff is helpful and looks representative, however there is a lack of initiative and selling techniques, which could be used for increased sales. The store does not offer any extra experience.	3	Internal communication is again clean and modern. There is not much differentiation from competitor. The staff looks representative, however lacking the initiative, and in some cases, the knowledge about styling and products.	3	As well as the competitors, there is a lack of initiative from the sales force. The store sends a more extravagant message and is more colorful.	3	The store communicates the luxury and experience from their made-to-measure offering. There is a clear message of what they offer. The staff is friendly and willing to help with shopping.	4	The stores offer luxurious feeling. The staff is educated in the field of fashion advice and does a good job.	4

Table 2 - Competition comparison

Source: Own elaboration based on mystery shopping

Explanations:

- Mark 1 is the lowest mark
- Mark 5 is the highest mark

Based in the comparison of the competing brands, we can conclude that there is a competitive market, and the competition has many advantages as strong communication or price offering. Nevertheless, each of the competitors lack a higher level of shopping experience, which is a factor where the brand could excel and win the customers through the activities creating a better experience.

3.2.3. Key brand characteristics of selected competitors

This part contains deeper analysis of branding of the competing companies. An emphasis has been put on the core activities supporting the brand and its development. These objectives have been defined through online research of the competitors and through the interviews with customers of the competing brands. For the interviews, one customer for each competing brand has been chosen to respond to the questions about their opinions of the given brand.

Blažek Praha a.s.

Blažek builds their brand identity mostly on quality and tradition as they have been on the market for 20 years. The main inspiration and brand personality is built around the Italian style of suits and clothing, from which they take their inspiration for their products. The shopping experience of a customer is quite simple and the stores offer modern look, attractive display of products and representative looks of the sales people.

On the other hand, the brand does not represent their values clearly and the customer does not recognize what it stands for as soon as they enter the store. The brand elements are plain and quite simplistic, and they do not differentiate from competition to much extent. The brand does not offer any extra elements which would tempt the customer to spend more time in the store, and therefore improve their chance to cross or upsell the customer. The brand does not communicate their values through any slogan or through a story telling from the salespeople in the store.

Ozeta s.r.o.

Ozeta focuses on quality and tradition in their branding activities, and they try to communicate these values through the communication channels online and offline. As the company has been established, nationalized, and then further privatized, they pride themselves in the strength of what they have achieved and, in the experience, they have gained throughout the year. They offer some of the cheapest products from the selected competitors, however this is reflected in the exclusivity of the products.

The brand elements are simplistic and quite plain as they use only two colors and they do not stand out from the competition in this area. Their branding activities in the store are represented

through visual merchandising representing the affordability of the products. The values like tradition are not communicated enough and are therefore often not recognized. The brand and the staff put emphasis on the production which is based in Slovakia. The slogan of the company further strengthens the brand's personality and values.

L.W.S. Spol. s.r.o.

Alain Delon is a brand, which unlike the competitors mentioned above, does not build the brand personality on tradition or experience. Their main branding objective is a famous French actor, Alain Delon who the brand is named after. The name should represent the elegance and style of the fashion icon. Furthermore, the brand differentiates itself from the competition by offering more extravagant products which target a specific audience of customers, who want to stand out from the crowd. The stores represent this goal to a certain extent, while being more colorful and using their brand color red in the visual merchandising or as a curtain for their dressing rooms. The red color branding is inspired by the red carpet, which is used on multiple occasions in the movie industry and represents the exclusivity of famous people and stars, who walk on this carpet.

The brand's logo is again simple and easy to recognize, using 3 colors. The personality of a famous brand person may not be recognized by some customers, especially younger audience, which is not familiar with the celebrity. Other than the name, the brand fails to represent their values through other activities, especially in-store. Besides the visual merchandising, the store does not offer much in terms of values or experience for the customer.

IMAGE CARE s.r.o.

Name of the brand Le Premier does not have clear origin and does not clearly represent what the brand stands for. The name might represent exclusivity through the word "premier", however it is not completely clear to a customer. Their visual merchandising of the store represents the exclusivity they offer and the personalization which is provided in made-to-measure services. This brand is focused on this field of business and does a good job sharing their story through the staff and other communication channels. They pride themselves in quality, experience, and the level of personalization they offer. The salespeople in the store are very welcoming and are often building relationships with the customers.

The brand falls behind the competition in the online communication, especially their website, which feels outdated in some sections and not as responsive as competitors. The brand has been reducing their store locations and has only one at the moment which might be inconvenient as their main product requires the attendance in the store.

BANDI VAMOS a.s.

Bandi is a company named after the founder and does not have any other deeper meaning that would represent the values. The company focuses on improving the customer service and keeps customer's needs in mind. The stores offer a nice experience as they are built in a gentleman's lounge style and while the customer is shopping, they can enjoy a drink. This is a branding activity which provides more convenience while shopping. The salesforce is also welcoming and does a good job in customer service, while representing the values of the brand, such as success. The visual merchandising provides the feeling of exclusivity. The brand elements such as logo are quite simplistic, and they do not show much of what the brand stands for. Their slogan "With the right clothing, you can get respect in work" clearly states what they want their customer to feel and expect when they buy their products.

The brand lacks convenience in online shopping, where the website is outdated, offers 2 versions and there is no possibility to order a suit online. Customer can only order other products such as shirts or trousers, etc. Their products are relatively cheap, and they try to focus on younger audience as well, however, the products lack exclusivity and they do not match the personality of their stores.

In conclusion, the competing brands have similar approach to their brands and each of them is based on some objectives. However, most of the brands fail to create a complete image of their brand personality through brand elements and services they offer. Whether it's the customer service, communication, or products, each of the brands falls behind in one of the categories. The fashion market is highly competitive, however there is a enough space for improving each of these categories through a brand building and a high quality brand strategy.

3.2.4. Brand identity prisms of the competing brands

Each of the competitors has some brand personality they try to present to their customers, however, in many cases it is not clear what the brand stands for and the brand personality is not communicated sufficiently.

For further understanding of these identities, I have analyzed these brands through Kapferer's Brand Prism model. The brand prisms have been concluded on the base of a desk research. Each brand analysis is included in the Appendix 3.

Blažek Praha a.s.

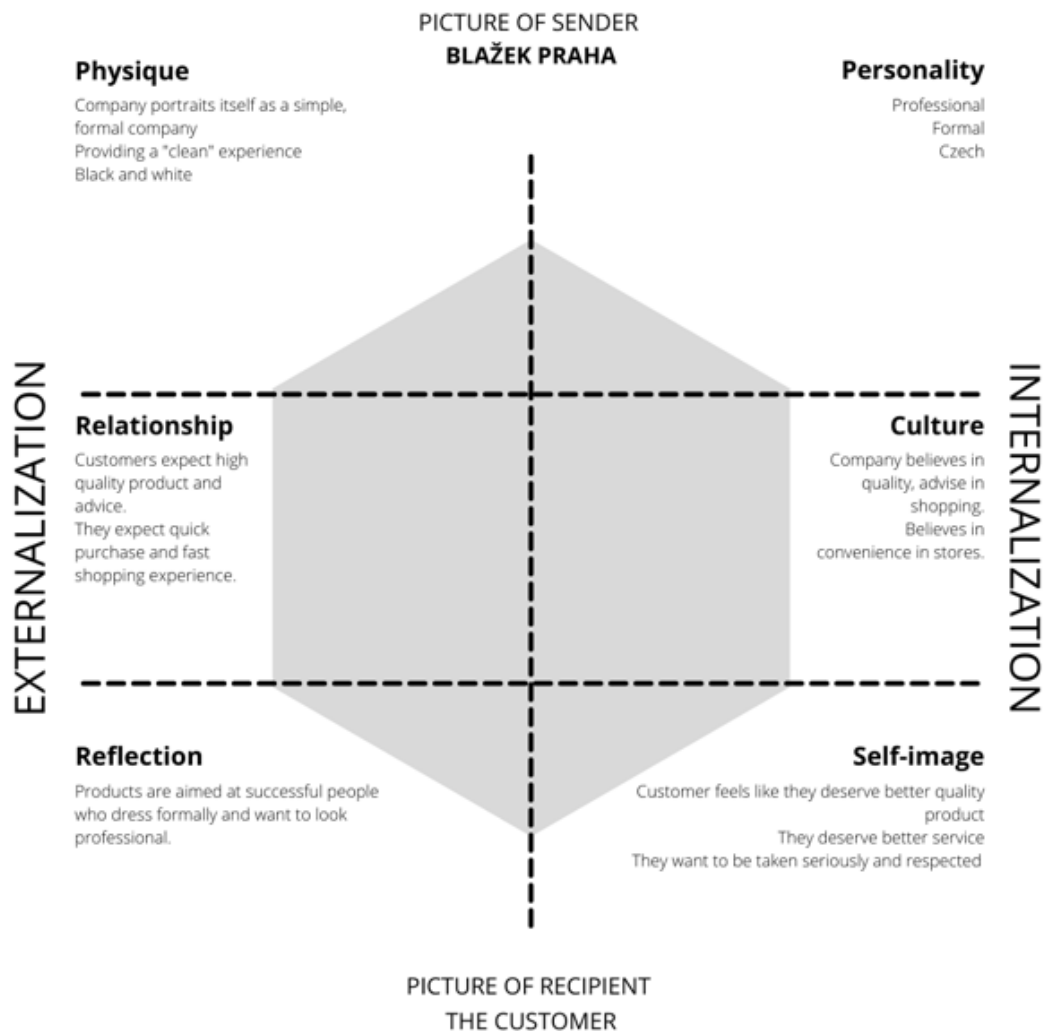


Figure 6 – Blažek identity prism

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

Ozeta s.r.o.

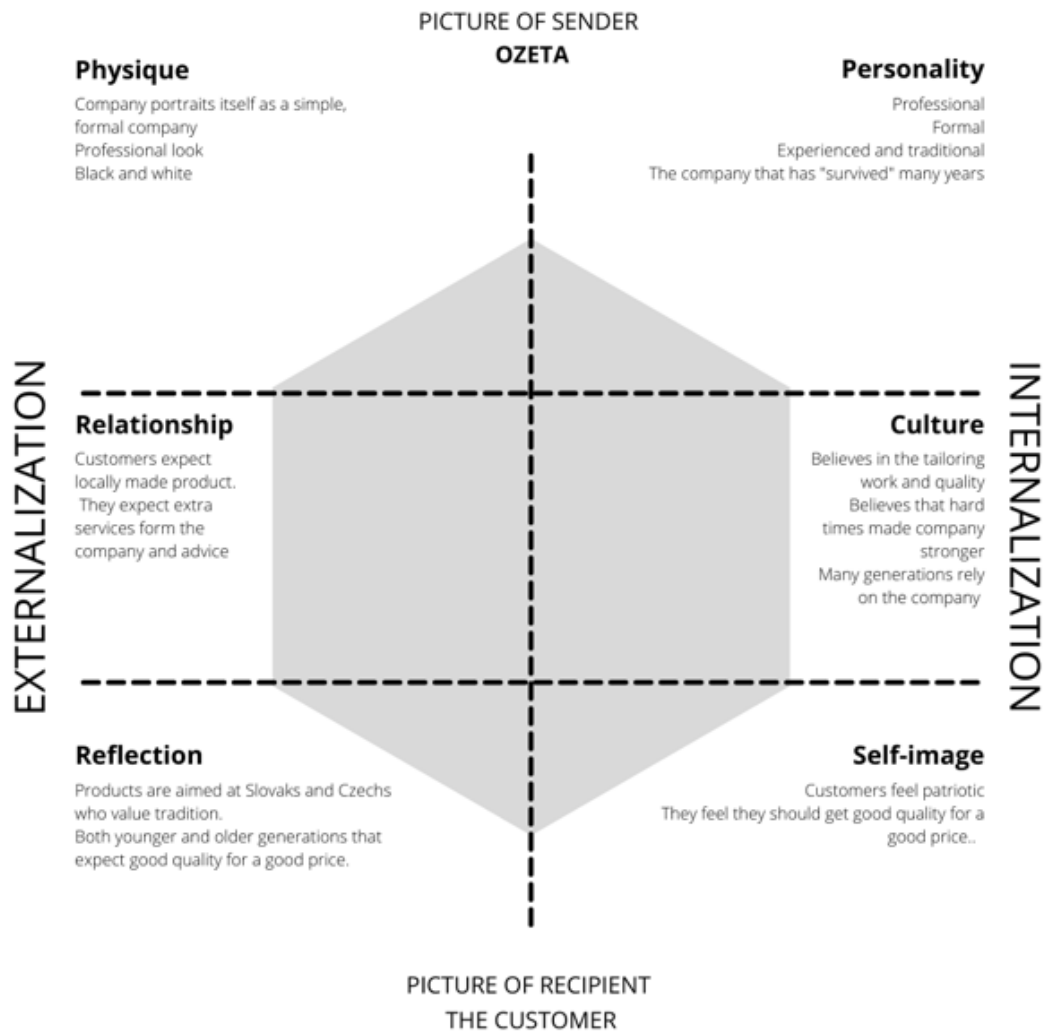


Figure 7 - Ozeta brand identity prism

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

L.W.S. Spol. s.r.o.

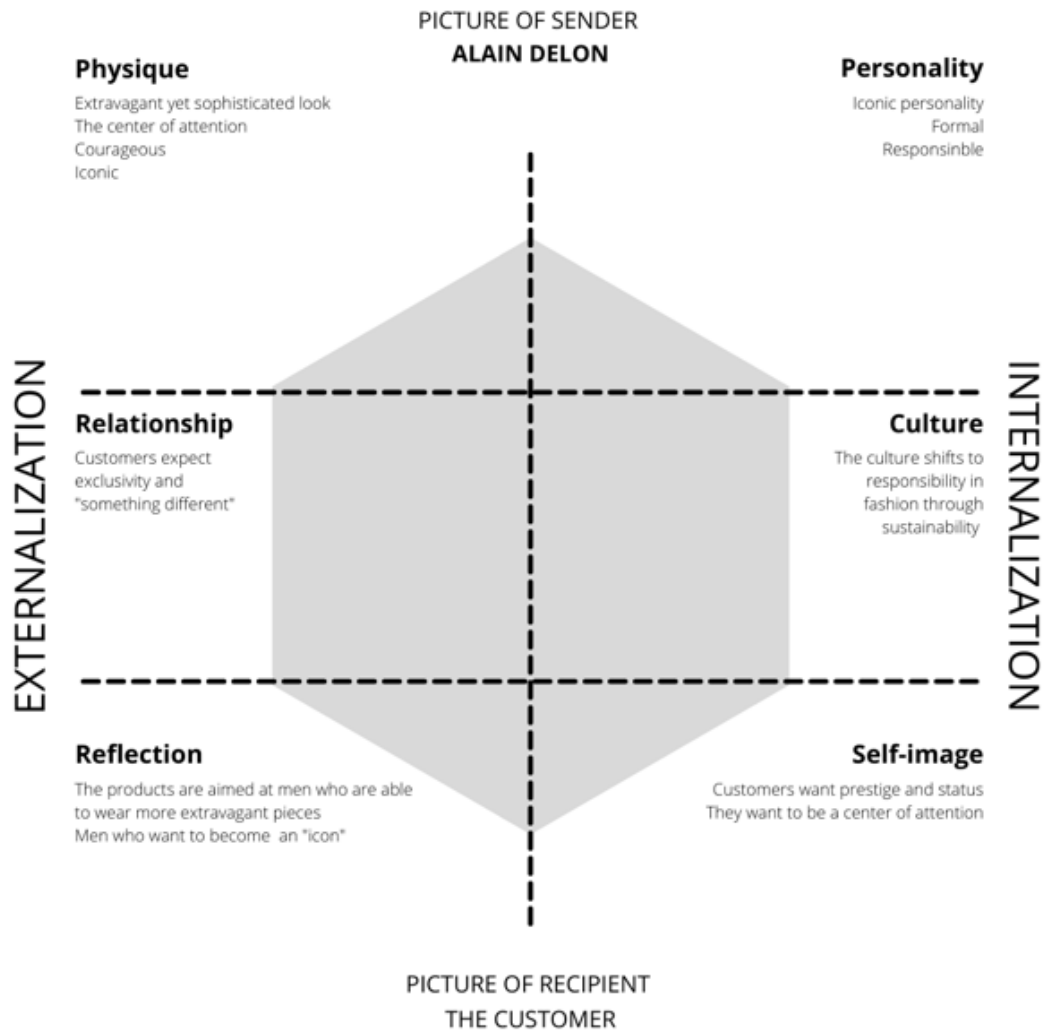


IMAGE CARE s.r.o.

Figure 8 - Alain Delon brand identity prism

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

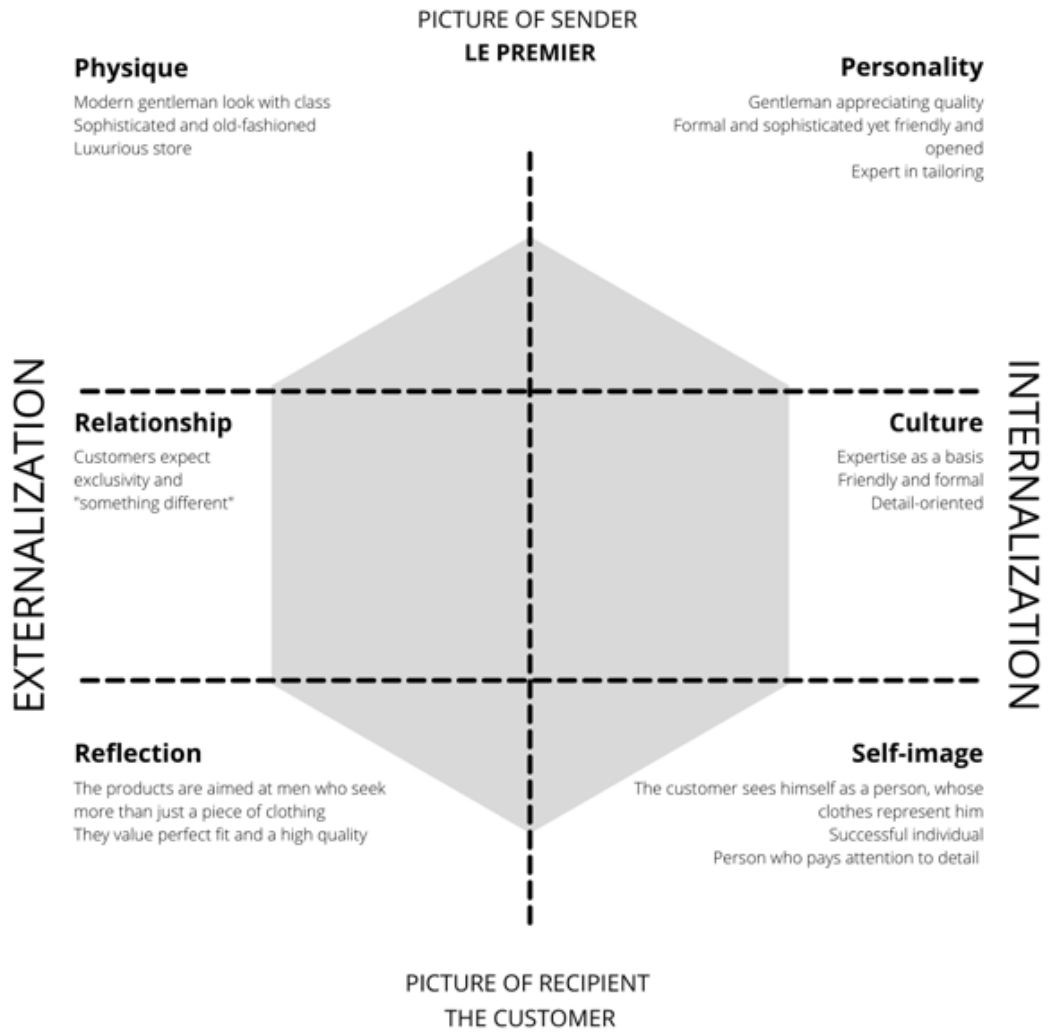


Figure 9 - Le Premier brand identity prism

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

BANDI VAMOS a.s.

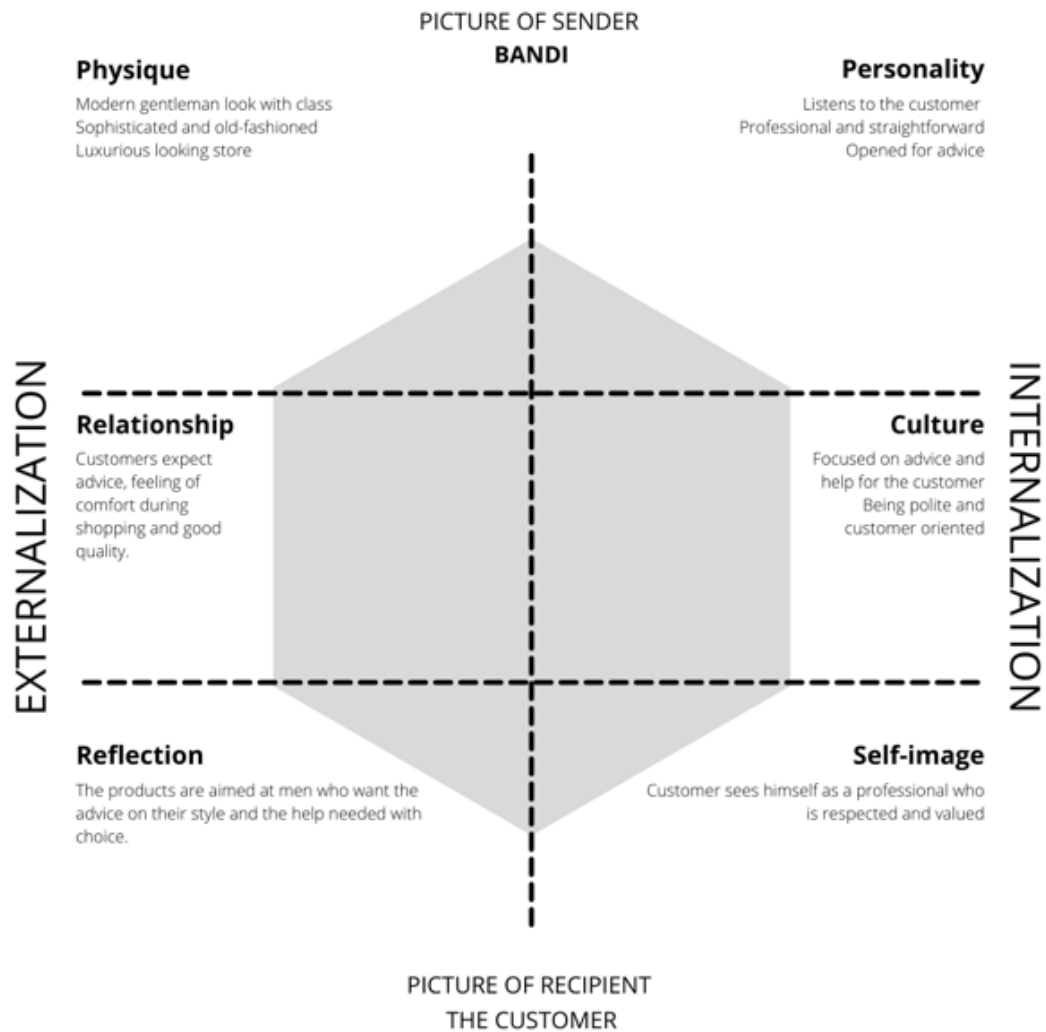


Figure 10 - Bandi brand identity prism

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

Based on the brand identity prisms of the competing companies, I have concluded that most of the companies focus on some parts of their brand personality, and they can communicate some of them to the customer. However, there is no brand that creates such a mix of attributes, that would combine all the positive traits. Almost all the companies fail to communicate their brand personality effectively. Most of the findings about the brand identities come from deeper search for what the brand wants to represent. The companies have failed to communicate it clearly from the first contact with the customer.

3.3. Customer segments

Customer is a male willing to buy the products of the company. The ideal customer has been analyzed through series of interviews with the investor of the company. Furthermore, the ideal customer is determined by interviews¹ with men in desired age group, who shop with the brands that offer similar products. These products include suits, shirts, formal trousers, informal trousers, leather goods, etc. (13)

To begin, consider this a beginning point, a fundamental first definition for the sake of analysis. It will be feasible to establish client segments with more precision when additional research has been conducted. In the proposal section of this thesis, an exact and accurate characterization of the customer segment will be carried out.

3.3.1. Customer requirements based on interviews

The main goal of this analysis is to figure out the main needs and wants of the customer seeking such product. Through qualitative interviews with potential customers of the brand, I have conducted a reasearch and analysis, which provides me with such information and helps to define what such customer values while choosing to shop with a brand. This analysis is focused on what the customer expects from the shopping experience in the store and what do they consider as an added value in this scenario. The interviews have been conducted with 5 males in the age group of 28-55 years old. The questions included in the interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

These individuals were chosen because it is a desired age group of the company, where there is a higher probability that men in this age group dress in more formal manner and require more than just a good-looking product. The choice of respondents is also dependent on the fact, that they shop products of brand that offer similar products.

¹ Appendix 2

3.3.2. Shopping behavior based on desk research

According to Vilčeková and Sabo, the customers in Czech and Slovak market recognize brands and decide on their purchases based on the brand. Younger shoppers prefer international brands more than brands that are based in domestic environment; however, the older audience does prefer the domestic brands. The younger audience also is more interested in the origin of the product, whereas the older audience does not consider that as often while making a purchase. (12)

The respondents with lower achieved education care more about the brand itself and care less about what is the origin of the brand. The respondents with higher achieved education care more about where the brand comes from. (12)

Men are more likely to buy from international brands, rather than domestic, while women care more about the country of origin and usually chose domestic brands. (12)

3.3.3. Summary of customer requirements

Based on the interviews and desk research, the outcomes of the analysis states that the interviewed customers require high quality of products as well as the better shopping experience. The respondents often fail to recognize brand values and personality clearly.

Furthermore, the customers prefer better service in-store and often appreciate when the staff members are helpful during the process. This could bring an opportunity of training the staff members that offer more clear shopping experience and relationship building with the customers.

Based on the desk research, the customers' requirements differ based on their demographic factors such as age or gender. As above mentioned, the male audience, which is a target customer for the brand does not primarily chose the brand based on whether its domestic or a foreign brand. This creates an advantage for the brand as the production is not based in Slovakia or Czech Republic.

Key conclusions of customer requirements include:

- Customers prefer higher level of customer service in the buying process
- Presenting the brand as “domestic” could become a positive factor in a mind of a customer
- Customer expects high quality of products with high quality of service

3.3.4. Suppliers

The company is currently negotiating the terms of a cooperation with an agent that represents multiple suppliers in Portugal. UNUA Global is a company that closely cooperates with multiple factories supplying classic menswear products ranging from made-to-measure suits, ready-to-wear collection through accessories such as leather goods, footwear, and eyewear.

UNUA Global, Portugal

The investor is negotiating the terms of the cooperation with the UNUA Global, therefore the company will use only one supplier for the whole product offer. The supplier is located in Portugal, which is part of European Union and there will be no extra charges for custom duty. Supplier is cooperating with multiple factories in Portugal and negotiates the deals and minimum quantities for the products. The initial investment for the product offer the investor has in mind is quite expensive and will require a larger capital. On the other hand, UNUA connects all the suppliers and the company does not have to deal with multiple factories at once. This is an important factor for the investor as he has had bad experiences with some suppliers.

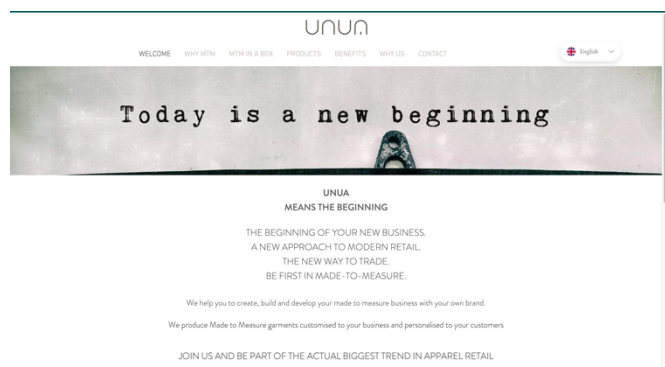


Figure 11 - Website of the UNUA Global

Source: unua.global²

² Unua Global [online]. Portugal: Unua global [cit. 2022-05-07]. Dostupné z: <https://www.unua.global/>

The supplier offers sample production and product development partnership. UNUA is willing to cooperate throughout the whole R&D process. However, there is a high risk of losing the investment if the supplier does not fulfill the expectations. In case they do provide high quality services, they can become a strong partner for the company and ensure fast growth.

3.4. Possible tactics for differentiation

In order to summarize the outcomes of completed analysis in my bachelor thesis I have concluded a summarizing list of tactics that will differentiate the brand and support my goal. Furthermore, the second list includes potential key challenges on the market as the competitors have a strong position in these aspects.

The summarizing analysis is focused on the brand my bachelor thesis is about, and it serves to summarize and conclude the outcomes of other analysis in order to create a proposal for brand development framework that can allow the company to compete on the current market.

Tactics – external factors affecting the possibility of reaching the goal

- Service of the staff of the store – this is an opportunity, on which the company is ready to build their brand and can become a market leader through the right activities.
- Personalized shopping experience – creating an experience where a customer feels like they are the center of attention is an opportunity for the brand.
- Brand identity – well defined brand identity in which the customer can find relatable values
- Education of customers – insufficient education of the competitors' staff leads, in some cases, to no education of customers about their products. This can become an opportunity with sufficient training of the staff.

Tactics	Grade (1-5)	Weight	Σ
Service	4	0.4	2
Personalized shopping experience	3	0.3	0.9
Customer education	2	0.2	0.4
Brand identity	2	0.1	0.2
Total	-	1	3.5

Table 3 – Possible tactics for differentiation

Source – Own elaboration

Key challenges - external factors affecting the failure of reaching the goal

- The strength of established brands – the competition has strong position in the market as they have long tradition and strong customer base
- Domestic production – the brand is not able to produce in Slovakia or Czech Republic while keeping the costs on an acceptable level. This represents a threat as some of the target customers might prefer domestic production.

Threats	Grade (1-5)	Weight	Σ
Established competition brands	-3	0.7	- 2.1
Domestic production	-2	0.3	- 0.6
Total	-	1	- 2.7

Table 4 – Key challenges

Source – Own elaboration

3.4.1. Summary of differentiation tactics

Based on the realized analysis, it is clear that the brand has to focus on creating such set of branding activities in the store, that would improve the shopping experience on a higher level than the competitors.

For better possible outcome to gain a market share and create a recognizable brand, the company should focus on strengthening their position through possible differentiation tactics mentioned above.

On the other hand, as company will face some of the key challenges when entering the market, they should focus on activities that would eliminate the uncertainty in customer's mind. Such challenges give competitive advantage to the competitors. However, through right set of activities and supporting differentiation tactics, the company can reduce the impact of challenges that would weaken the brand identity.

4. Solution proposal

The proposal is based on the theoretical background and analytical part that summarized the position of the company and most importantly the competition in the market. The proposal includes brand elements and branding activities, in order to create more memorable shopping experience, than what the competitors offer.

The proposal directly creates a picture of a brand development framework which the company can possibly use in the future. The proposal is tied to the envisioned business model which is described in the analytical part through investor’s vision. Simply put, the proposal of brand development framework included in my thesis include such set of activities which can help the company build a strong brand identity and satisfy customer requirements.

4.1. Brand identity

The identity of the company is described through Kapferer’s brand identity prism, which represents multiple areas of the identity. Most of the segments of the prism are then reflected in the proposed activities for brand development framework.

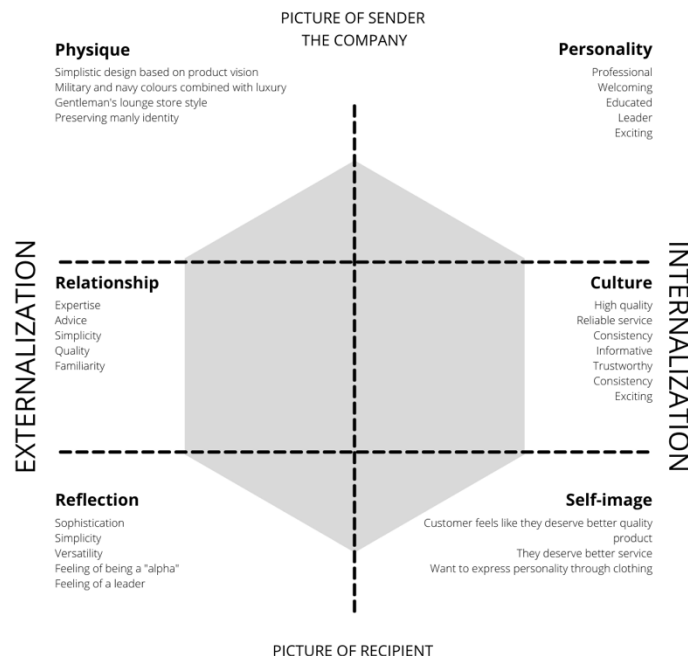


Figure 12 - Brand prism of the company

Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer

Physique

The brand should evoke a simplistic look based on colors that are used in military or navy, which represent the “manhood” the brand wants to communicate. Through the store branding and design the physique of the brand will communicate the luxury and gentleman values which are the core values of the brand. The physique should put attention to the masculine feelings and feelings of being the alpha male. The physique is further projected on the proposal of store design in my thesis.

Personality

The brand personality should focus on sophistication with professional knowledge of what the brand is selling. The brand takes on a form of an educated man who knows how to behave and how to dress properly. However, it does not forget about the rebellious and leading personality that it reflects. This segment is projected in the employee branding part of my thesis and how the employees should present themselves.

Relationship

The relationship with the customers is based on trust and expertise in the field. Not overcomplicating the shopping experience will be reflected in the customer-brand relationship. The brand should become helpful advisor of the customer’s style. This is also a part of how the employees should communicate the brand identity.

Culture

The culture of the brand should project to the outside and the inside of the company and should focus on the expertise and consistent improvement in style and product knowledge as well as reliability.

Reflection

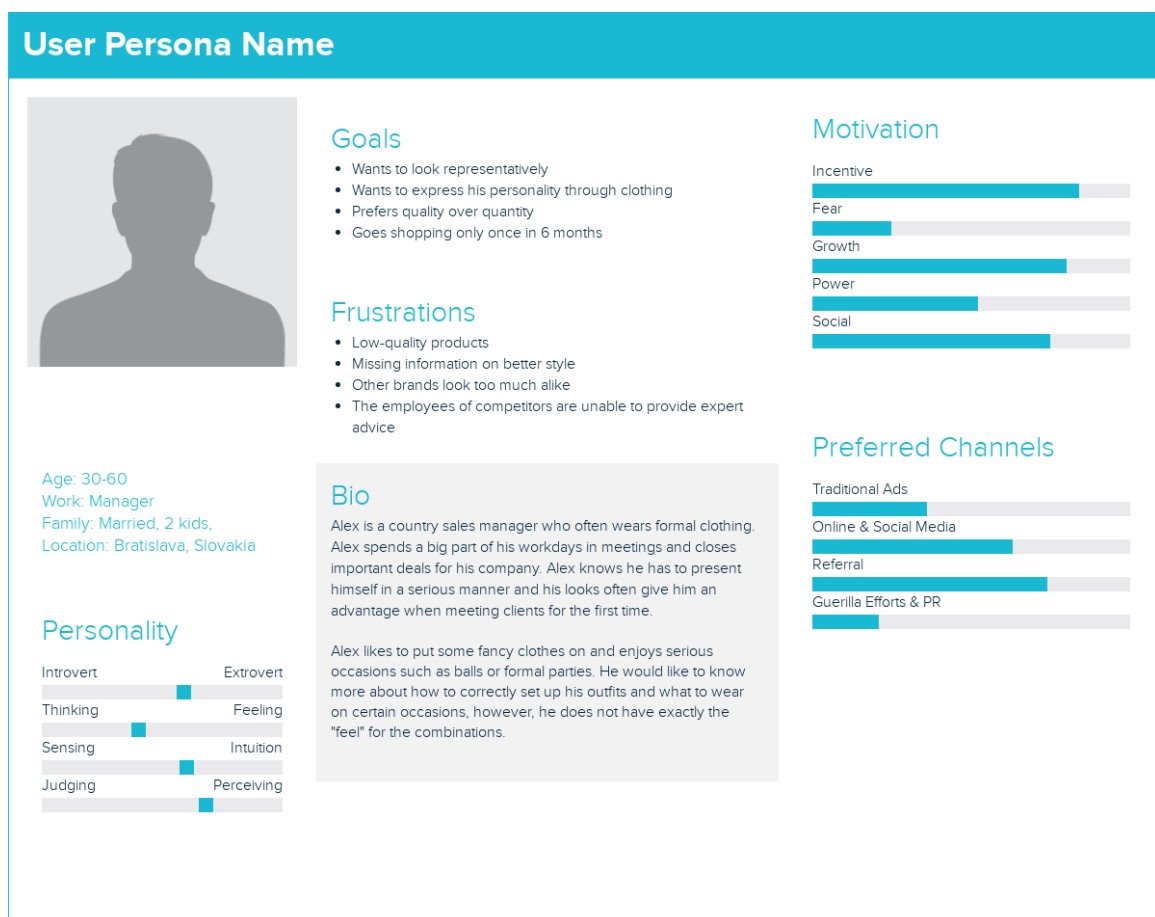
The brand reflects the feelings a customer should feel when buying the products and wearing them. These include a feeling of a leader or an “alpha male” that presents simply to the outside but is sophisticated on the inside. This part of brand identity is a representation of what the customer could feel through the products of the company or how they already portray themselves

Self-image

The customers see themselves as they are worthy of higher service and better experience. They know they deserve quality and that they are important enough to get it. They value their own self and want to represent their personality in the clothing they buy.

4.2. Customer persona

As the investor see their ideal customer as a man in the age of 30 to 60 yeares old, I have defined a customer persona on who the brand could focus their activities and brand communication.



4.3. Brand elements

4.3.1. Brand name

Recommendation: I would recommend a name that suits the brand's vision. This means the brand should be memorable and simple. I recommend the name to contain a story behind as it can become a conversation starter with the customers. Furthermore, the story of what the brand name means creates a connection in a customer's mind.

Proposal: I propose to name the company "Suit Le Mans" as it covers the story behind the brand personality yet is memorable and easy to pronounce for a regular customer. The name refers to a sports car race that takes place in the city of Le Mans in France. This event has been chosen as a reference as some fashion icons of the 70s have raced in the race of 24h of Le Mans. The reason I have chosen this event is because the brand should bring the customer of feeling the manhood and rebelliousness, however, men should keep living their values and be gentleman. Another factor why this story has been chosen for the brand is the differentiation from competition as most of them present just the formal side of the brand and they lack the more casual representation.

4.3.2. Logo

Recommendation: I recommend the company to keep the logo simple and to use color scheme that uses tones of green, black, and white. This way the green color refers to military and earthy, adventurous feelings. I recommend that the font of the brand logo is simple, without any added emblems or pictures that would disturb the logo and discredit the simplicity.

Proposal: I propose to create a logo as seen on the picture. The simple font and simple representation of the brand does not create much distinction from the competition; however, it does raise suspicion. It is clear from the name the brand offers suits, but the rest might be a question in a customer's mind. After the brand is recognized, the logo will serve the purpose of creating a familiarity.



Figure 13 -Brand logo

Source - own elaboration

The color palette

I recommend choosing the colors of the brand that are in shades of green, black and white as they are color of military and that is another aspect representing the “toughness” and “ruggedness” of the brand and how the man should feel. Being an adventurous rebel, while again, retaining his values of a gentleman.



Figure 14 - Color palette of the brand

Source: Own elaboration

4.4. Communication of the brand

4.4.1. Store design

Recommendation: I recommend positioning the brand in an experience brand positioning model. This means the brand should offer such set of activities that would bring a value in the shopping process. This means the brand should offer multiple types of interaction with the customer before they even enter the store. I recommend designing a store with a classic gentleman style furniture, displaying products in a way that they work together as an outfit and the customer does not have to combine the product with other pieces themselves. This will not only provide them with advice, but also will help the brand to sell more products as they display these products together.

Proposal: I suggest that the brand creates an eye-catching window display with currently sold products that work well together. This will serve as a first hook for the customer, where their journey begins. Furthermore, I propose the store uses a scent with a man's cologne, which will create a connection in the mind of a customer that this brand communicates the gentleman's or classic man's values. Together with music from 50s to 70s years of 20th century this could evoke a gentleman-style like experience which will stand out from competition that does not use these elements as a branding activity. The smell and sound of the store can create a more pleasing time spent in the store.

The furniture of the store should be made from darker tones using materials like wood, leather, or steel. The store can contain relax zone with a sofa and a coffee table, where not only customer can rest while the shopping assistant is helping them, but also customer's spouse or people who they came with can wait until the shopping experience is over. Such area can help extend the time the customer spends in the store. Moreover, this style of a store will evoke a true gentleman lounge feeling, while the customer could also be offered an alcoholic or nonalcoholic drink or coffee.

I do not suggest dividing the displays of the products in the product categories, rather mix these products in a way that the customer can easily see the combinations of outfits and how these combinations can build their wardrobe. Through such display of products, the customer will be

more tempted to buy multiple pieces instead of just what they came for. LCD screen in the store can show educational info about classic menswear or about how the outfits can be worn.



Figure 15 - Example 1 of a store design

Source: Suitsupply opens its first shop in Brooklyn [online]. <https://mr-mag.com/>, 2018 [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z: <https://mr->



Figure 16 - Example 2 of a store design

Source: [online]. [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z: <https://www.admagazine.com/lugares/casa-fayette-en-guadalajara-20151104-819-galerias>

4.4.2. Employee branding

Recommendation: I recommend that employees communicate the brand personality and values right from the first interaction with the customer. This requires training of staff that provides sufficient knowledge of the products, selling techniques and relationship building with the customer. Furthermore, I recommend creating a system with the database of existing employees which would be helped by a salesperson that has helped them in the past. I also recommend that the employees dress in formal clothing that would demonstrate the ideal outfit of a customer. The clothing should be different for each employee wearing a suit or combination made of formal clothing.

Proposal:

I propose to use products from each collection as a uniform for employees that are currently being sold in the store. This will represent the brand in a way that customers can directly identify with the outfits of the employees and can shop the pieces that employees are wearing. The employees in the store should also keep groomed appearance.

In terms of communication with customers I propose that employees greet every customer and start the interaction through communicating the brand values and an elevator pitch that would suggest what the brand stands for and what they want to achieve through help they provide to their customers. This should include style advice and communicate the feeling of better confidence achieved through clothing.



Figure 18 - Example 1 of an employee outfit

Source: [online]. [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z:
<https://www.itstuscany.com/en/pitti-uomo-2019-n/>



Figure 17 - Example 2 of employee outfit

Source: [online]. [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z:
<https://bamfstyle.com/2013/05/28/mcqueen-thomas-crown-1st-suit/>

4.4.3. Other store branding activities

In order to strengthen the customer experience and provide customers the best service, the brand is required to provide more than just educated employees and a good looking interior.

In-store tailor

Recommendation: I recommend for the brand to provide altering services in the store directly with the fastest possible time for alterations for the clothes. This way the customer can wait in the lounge and enjoy a drink, or they can come back in an hour or so for their altered clothes.

Proposal: I propose that a brand builds a corner or a tailoring station for the tailor in the store, so the customers can see directly how their clothes are being altered. Furthermore, such activity strengthens the feeling of an exclusivity of the product, which can lead customers to a highly desirable experience. Customers can also gain a feeling of importance and feel valued by the brand.

Internal workshops and events

Furthermore, I recommend that the brand keeps education their customers and share their personality and vision through other supporting activities.

To keep the brand's educational personality, I propose to organize workshops and networking events for customers. These events could include either just networking activities with a theme that would be of an interest of an ideal customer, or the workshop can be enriched by an educational presentation about the history of clothing, gentleman's vales or other topics that can bring value to a customer.

4.5. Evaluation of proposals

The proposal of all of the branding activities in the store will strengthen the position of the brand on the market. These activities will provide a clear brand personality for the brand and will communicate it to the customer, who is looking for such a brand personality. Moreover, through the activities, the brand will gain an advantage over competitors, who do not provide such experience, or do not provide it to such extent.

It is difficult to calculate the predicted incomes based on these activities as the brand is not established and I do not have any insight to their financial information. I am also unable to calculate the costs of the branding activities as all the proposed activities are yet just an idea and the activities must be realized from scratch. This means the startup costs will likely require high number of financial resources, and should be calculated in advance, in order to define the financial risk in the investment. I did not include financial calculations of the activities as this is a bigger scope of the project and that is beyond the scope of my bachelor thesis.

I believe my suggested brand development framework can help the company build a strong brand identity and compete in the market since such activities can be seen in other brands in the world and they create great customer experience. However the company should focus on necessary steps that are needed for the establishment of the brand

Risks of the realization

The risk is mostly financial as the investment will likely require high number of financial resources. The company will have to consider if such risk is worth for them and calculate the return on investment based on predicted sales and costs of other materials.

The company is also in a risk as the competitors are already established brand on the market and have a base of customers that shop with them regularly. Furthermore, finding right employees that would be willing to provide extra service and be willing to take proactivity in day-to-day operations is a high risk as well. The motivation and training of the employees must be ensured to stay on a high level.

Based on these risks I recommend for the company to introduce an e-shop first and create branding activities online, which would build a customer base and bring some revenues in the company that could be further reinvested in the in-store activities and would provide the highest level of shopping experience in the market.

5. Conclusion

My Bachelor thesis is focused on a strategic brand development of a future company that will sell classic menswear products for men. The first part of the thesis defines the theoretical frameworks and definitions related to branding, as well as the definitions of terms such as competition.

The gained knowledge is further applied in the analytical part of the thesis which has provided me an overview of the market and the customer behavior in the area of classic menswear brands. The competitors and their brands have been analyzed and monitored through multiple research methods. The analysis of opportunities and threats provide us with a clear picture of how the brand can use different element to its advantage.

The proposal of my thesis includes activities that are supposed to help the company enter the market and gain customers, through an exceptional shopping experience. These activities can serve as a potential differentiator from the competition and build a strong base for the market entry. I recommend the company also includes other activities concerning marketing and branding which would further improve the experience and strengthen the market position.

By implementing individual proposals, the company can strengthen its position in terms of comfort and experience. Based on the development of the trend of online purchases and increasing the demands of customers for comfort and experience, I recommend that the company develops this area as well. However, with a product like a suit, where the product needs to be seen and worn, the brand should put high attention to improving the experience continuously.

In order for the brand to improve the market standard in an in-store shopping experience, I recommend taking advantage of all the proposed activities.

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List of Figures

Figure 1 - Major brand strategy decisions	16
Figure 2 Positioning attributes	19
Figure 3: The retail brand circle.....	20
Figure 4 - Brand identity prism.....	22
Figure 5 - Buyer readiness stages	26
Figure 6 – Blažek identity prism.....	42
Figure 7 - Ozeta brand identity prism	43
Figure 8 - Alain Delon brand identity prism.....	44
Figure 9 - Le Premier brand identity prism	45
Figure 10 - Bandi brand identity prism.....	46
Figure 11 - Website of the UNUA Global	49
Figure 12 - Brand prism of the company Source: Own elaboration based on Kapferer.....	53
Figure 13 -Brand logo Source - own elaboration.....	57
Figure 14 - Color palette of the brand Source: Own elaboration.....	57
Figure 15 - Example 1 of a store design Source: Suitsupply opens its first shop in Brooklyn [online]. https://mr-mag.com/ , 2018 [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z: https://mr-mag.com/suitsupply-opens-its-first-shop-in-brooklyn/	59
Figure 16 - Exapmple 2 of a store design Source: [online]. [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z: https://www.admagazine.com/lugares/casa-fayette-en-guadalajara-20151104-819-galerias..	59
Figure 18 - Example 2 of employee outfit Source: [online]. [cit. 2022-03-28]. Dostupné z: https://bamfstyle.com/2013/05/28/mcqueen-thomas-crown-1st-suit/	60
Figure 17 - Example 1 of an employee outfit	60

List of tables

Table 1 - Difference between product offerings	36
Table 2 - Competition comparison	38
Table 3 – Possible tactics for differentiation	51
Table 4 – Key challenges	51

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire to define positioning elements of the brand.....	69
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for customers of competing brands	70
Appendix 3: Brand elements of selected competitors.....	71

Appendix 1: Questionnaire to define positioning elements of the brand



Choice of products		
1.	Does the brand offer a wide range of suits?	yes/no
2.	Does the brand offer wide variety of suits?	yes/no
3.	Does the brand offer multiple styles of the suits?	yes/no
Experience		
1.	Does the brand communicate the brand values?	yes/no
2.	Is the staff helpful while shopping?	yes/no
3.	Does the staff initiate the sale?	yes/no
4.	Is the store visually attractive?	yes/no
5.	Is the store clean?	yes/no
6.	Is the exterior of the store visually attractive?	yes/no
7.	Can the customer try the products on?	yes/no
Convenience		
1.	Does the brand offer multiple store locations?	yes/no
2.	Does the brand have an e-shop	yes/no
3.	Does the brand offer extra services as alterations, etc.?	yes/no
4.	Can a customer find the product offer online?	yes/no
Price		
1.	What is the price range of the selected type of product?	

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for customers of competing brands

Q1	How often do you shop with the brand?
1. Blažek	Once every 6 months
2. Ozeta	About 4-5 times a year
3. Alain Delon	Once or twice every season
4. Le Premier	Twice a year
5. Bandi	Every 2 months
Q2	Do you shop in-store or online?
1. Blažek	Mostly in-store
2. Ozeta	Depends on the products. The suits in-store, the other products online.
3. Alain Delon	Usually in-store
4. Le Premier	Usually in-store when its possible
5. Bandi	Usually in-store
Q3	What do you consider important when shopping in-store?
1. Blažek	The product selection/availability and the quality of the product.
2. Ozeta	The price and the quality of the products.
3. Alain Delon	The range of products and the approach of the staff.
4. Le Premier	The knowledge of the staff.
5. Bandi	Price and the product range.
Q4	What do you value the most about the brand?
1. Blažek	The quality of the products and the simplicity it offers.
2. Ozeta	The prices and that they support slovak manufacturing.
3. Alain Delon	Selection of products and the style they offer.
4. Le Premier	Offer of high quality products and premium brands in footwear offer.
5. Bandi	Good prices and good advice on what to wear for each occasion.
Q5	What do you like the most about the shopping experience?
1. Blažek	It is simple and I usually do not have to spend much time in the store as I already know the sizing and what fits me.
2. Ozeta	The products are displayed well and I can have a good look at them while shopping
3. Alain Delon	The staff is always ready to help and provide some style advice.
4. Le Premier	The sales assistants already know me and we often have a little chat about their new products or whats coming up.
5. Bandi	The stmosphere of the store.
Q6	Do you recognize the brand values?
1. Blažek	I have never thought about it.
2. Ozeta	I know that they put a big emphasis on the porduction in Slovakia, so I believe tradition is important for the brand.
3. Alain Delon	No, not really.
4. Le Premier	I believe its quality and personalization of their made-to-measure service.
5. Bandi	I think they focus on success represented through clothing.
Q7	Do your values correspond to the brand's values?
1. Blažek	No
2. Ozeta	I like that they focus on tradition, so they do.
3. Alain Delon	No
4. Le Premier	Yes
5. Bandi	No
Q8	Do you enjoy spending time in the store?
1. Blažek	It is pleasant, however I dont like staying in the store for too long.
2. Ozeta	I try to shop as fast as possible.
3. Alain Delon	It is okay.
4. Le Premier	Yes, it is always a good experience.
5. Bandi	Sometimes I do when I have more time to spare.
Q9	Does the shopping experience provide anything extra/unusual?
1. Blažek	No
2. Ozeta	No
3. Alain Delon	No
4. Le Premier	Yes, the staff relationship.
5. Bandi	Just a cup of water and comfortable chairs to sit in.
Q10	How helpful is the staff while shopping?
1. Blažek	Depends on the sales person.
2. Ozeta	Some of the sales people often try to sell me clothes without thinking if it even fits my style.
3. Alain Delon	Yes
4. Le Premier	Yes
5. Bandi	Yes they are professionals.
Q11	Does the staff communicate the brand's values? (Outfit/Story/...)
1. Blažek	No
2. Ozeta	No
3. Alain Delon	No
4. Le Premier	They do communicate how they started and how the brand has come to be.
5. Bandi	Sometimes they do.
Q12	What would have to change for you to shop with a different brand?
1. Blažek	There would have to be a brand with similar quality and better service.
2. Ozeta	The service would have to become better and the brand would probably have to be interesting in some way for me to try it.
3. Alain Delon	It would have to offer more interesting products.
4. Le Premier	I would like a brand with wider offer of products. I would consider a different brand in case their products would be far superior to this one.
5. Bandi	I would appreciate a betterquality of some products from a different btrand.

Appendix 3: Brand elements of selected competitors

Blažek Praha a.s.

Name	Blažek - Based on the name of the founder - No connection to the brands values
Logo	
Webpage	Simple and elegant design Corresponds to the personality of the brand
Store design	
Colors	Black, gray, white
Slogan	None



Source: Blažek [online]. [cit. 2022-01-30]. Dostupné z: <https://www.blazek.cz/>

Ozeta s.r.o.

Name	Ozeta - Based on the historical name of the factory from before WW2 - Represents the values of tradition and production in the country of origin, Slovakia.
Logo	
Webpage	Simple and elegant with sections for different types of customers (Groom, wedding guest, etc.)
Store design	
Colors	Black, white
Slogan	Štýl overený generáciami



Source: Source: Ozeta [online]. [cit. 2022-01-30]. Dostupné z: <https://www.ozeta.sk/>

L.W.S. SPOL. S R.O.

Name	Alain Delon - Based on the name of a famous actor - The actor is a personality representing the brand
Logo	
Webpage	Different layout of some elements More colorful
Store design	
Colors	Black, white, red
Slogan	None



Source: Alain Delon [online]. [cit. 2022-01-30]. Dostupné z: <http://www.alaindelon.sk/>

IMAGE CARE s.r.o.

Name	Le Premier - No information on the meaning
Logo	
Webpage	More "playful" design Non-uniform product photos
Store design	
Colors	White, dark grey, beige
Slogan	None

Source: <https://www.lepremier.cz/>

BANDI VAMOS a.s.

Name	Bandi - Based on the name of the founder - No connection with the brand's values
Logo	
Webpage	Different websites for e-shop and for the business Outdated design
Store design	
Colors	Black, white
Slogan	Správným oblečením si v práci získáte respekt.

Source: *Bandi* [online]. [cit. 2022-01-30]. Dostupné z: <https://www.bandi.cz/>

