

Experimental learning as a method to develop go-to-market strategies for start-ups.

*Designing the product launch strategy for the pre-seed stage
start-up ,Athlete Development'*



Jann Meinzer

MSc Strategic Product Design

Chair

Erik-Jan Hultink

Mentor

Jeroen Coelen

Company supervisor

Timo Kirchenberger

Preface

Acknowledgements

Dear reader,

you are looking at my final project as a student right now. I started this project in February 2022 as the highlight on top of my international master's studies experience. This project only was possible with the help of the people contributing to it.

Firstly, I want to thank Timo, for trusting me to work on his start-up so invasively. Developing the strategy for your brand was extremely insightful and I hope you can utilize this project to elevate Athlete Development to reach your goals. Special thanks to Melissa for connecting me with Timo and therefore initiating this project in the first place.

I also want to thank my supervisory team, who allowed me to pursue this unique project and trust the structure I set up. I appreciated Jeroen for always pushing me to question the assumptions I have in my head and go out to experiment in practice. I also want to thank Erik-Jan for giving me the most useful feedback on how to work more scientifically accurately. This team of supervisors perfectly fits the nature of this project being in between marketing and entrepreneurship, and therefore being exactly where Erik-Jan and Jeroen's expertise is. The coaching sessions were always giving me what I needed in moments when I was stuck.

Enjoy reading!

24-06-2022



Experimental learning as a method to develop go-to-market strategies for start-ups

Designing the product launch strategy for the pre-seed start start-up Athlete Development

Master Thesis

*MSc. Strategic Product Design
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering
Delft University of Technology*

Author

Jann Meinzer

Client

Athlete Development represented by Timo Kirchenberger

Supervising chair

*Prof. Dr. Erik-Jan Hultink
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering
Department of Design, Organization and Strategy*

Supervising mentor

*MSc. Jeroen Coelen
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering
Department of Design, Organization and Strategy*

June 2022

Executive Summary

This project lives in the intersection between marketing and entrepreneurship. The client company is Athlete Development, an early-stage start-up that creates digital strength & conditioning training plans for team sports athletes. They sought external expertise in the field of branding and the commercialization of their product. As a start-up using bootstrapping as their method of financing, they face many challenges related to managing limited resources. Thus, the minimal means they have cannot facilitate the application of established go-to-market strategies. This project aims to explore how a start-up like Athlete Development can design a go-to-market strategy, using principles from experimental learning while only operating with internal financial resources.

Goals

Firstly, the project objective is to answer the research question:

How can bootstrapped start-ups use experimental learning methods to develop go-to-market strategies?

Secondly, this project aims to supply the start-up Athlete Development with a **brand identity, launch proposal, and implementation plan.**

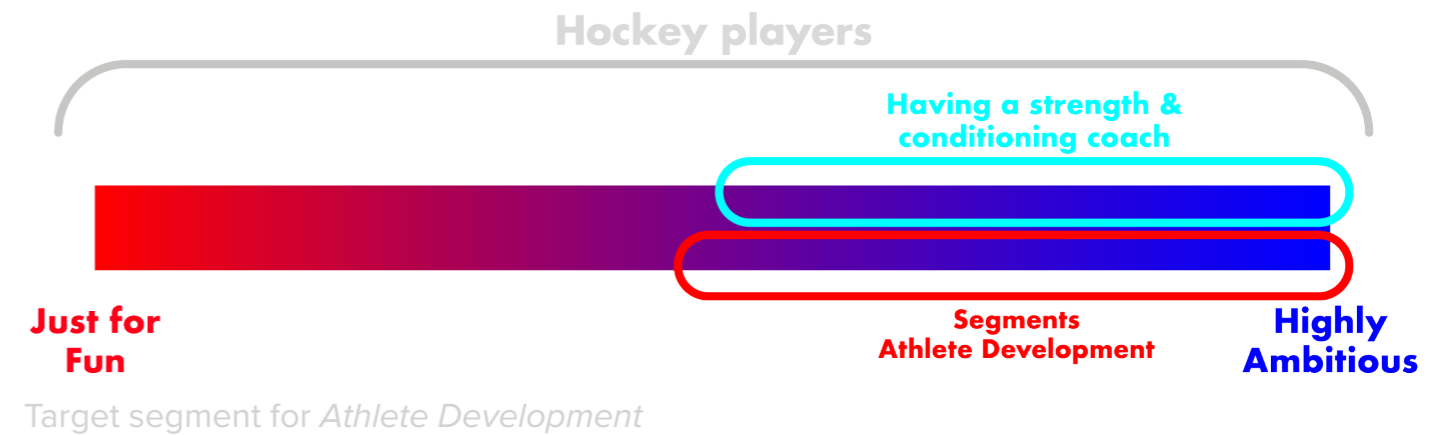
Method

This project uses experimental learning as the guiding working principle. After analyzing the frameworks of customer development (Blank, 2013), lean start-up (Ries, 2011) and simultaneous experimentation (Andries et al., 2013), the principles of experimental learning merged into one approach.

The core concept is to avoid large investments in one direction before critical assumptions about that concept are validated. Instead, those methods suggest conducting quick validation experiments that aim to test the riskiest assumptions, prove product-market fit, or identify business models.

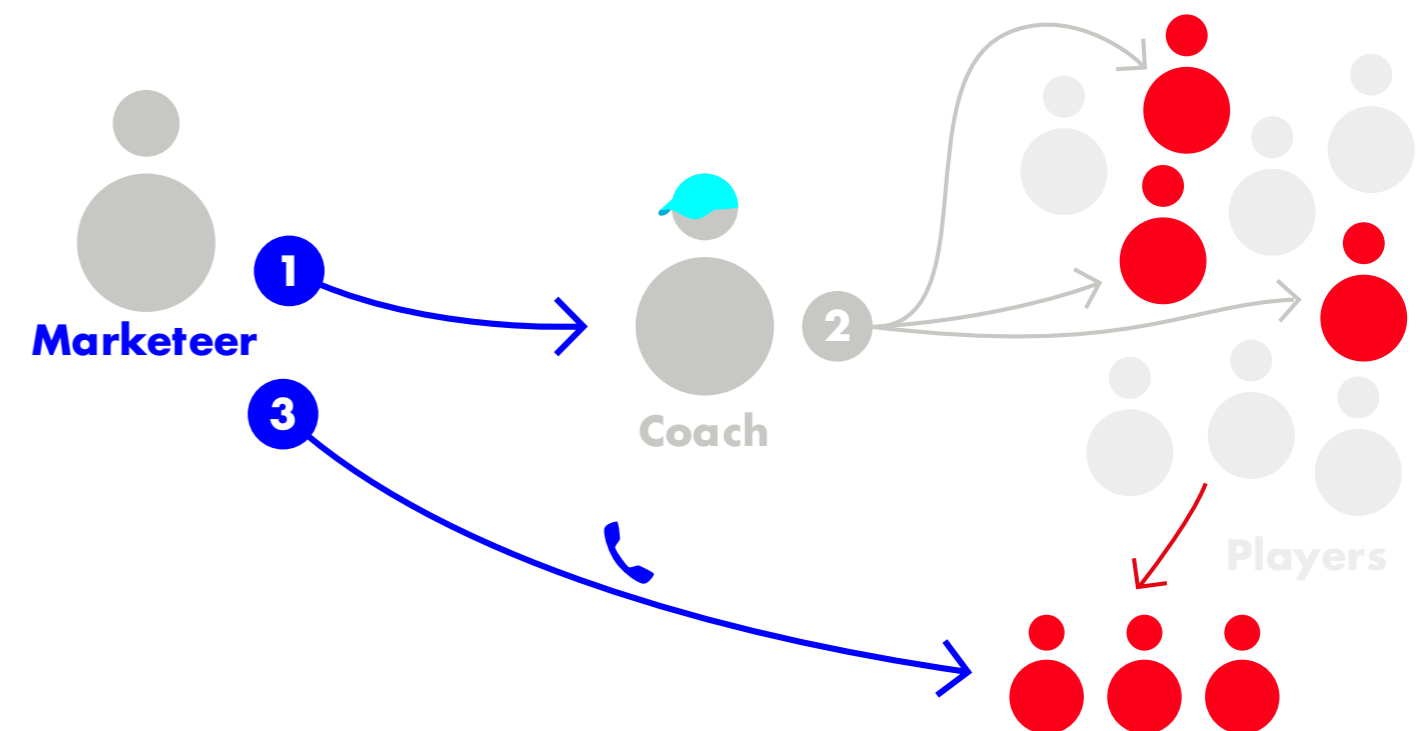
Experiments

Several experiments (described in chapter 3) aim to identify the best-suited market segment for Athlete Development, validate the choice, and test marketing channels to comprise the launch proposal.



Results

The selected target segment for Athlete Development is **ambitious hockey players**, that do not have access to a strength & conditioning coach. They are contacted by extending Athlete Development's marketing reach and **contacting field hockey coaches** that can identify the fitting players and connect them with Athlete Development. That way, the marketer can directly address the small niche in which they position themselves and has a high conversion rate.



Sales channel scheme | Extending the reach through coaches

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction Page 10-23

1.1 Case Initiation 12

Introduction
Challenges
Background

1.2 Overview 18

1.3 Project Brief 20

Approach
Project Scope

Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundation Page 24-37

2.1 Literature Review 26

Start-ups
Go-to-market strategies
Experimental learning
Connecting the literature streams

Chapter 3: Experiments Page 38-75

3.1 Segmentation Experiments 40

Customer research
Segmentation filter: Ambition level
Segmentation through sport
Segment 1: Hockey players
Segment 2: Football (Soccer) players
Segment 3: Tennis players
Segment 4: Handball players

3.2 Targeting Experiments 50

Criteria
Targeting decision

3.3 Validation Channel Experiments 56

Social media advertisement
Results
Decision

3.4 Sales Channel Experiments 60

Experiment structure
Strategy 1: Social media advertising
Strategy 2: Cold calling
Strategy 3: Live product showcase
Strategy 4: Business-to-business proposal

Contents

Chapter 4: Design Results Page 76-101

4.1 Brand DNA 78

Contrarian Positioning
Fulfilling the promises
Resilient positioning
Positioning statement

4.2 Launch proposal 84

Strategic launch
What to launch? (Product strategy)
Where to launch? (Market strategy)
When to launch? (Competitive strategy)
Why launch? (Firm strategy)

4.3 Implementation Plan 90

Company capabilities
Conditions for successful implementation
Strategic Roadmap
Tactical Roadmap
Financial forecasting
First Steps

Chapter 5: Closing the Loop Page 102-109

5.1 Conclusion104

Client expectations

5.2 Limitations107

5.3 Reflection108

References Page 110-117

Appendix Page 118-141

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the *Athlete Development* case and gives an overview of the project brief and structure. It also poses the research question and defines the scope of results.



1.1 Case Initiation

Introduction

This first chapter introduces the case that is the subject of this paper. It explains the initiation of the project and why it requires the work that is outlined in this report. Furthermore, this chapter connects the case to scientific literature to establish a research topic and question.

Timo Kirchenberger, the sports scientist (Ketelhut et al., 2020; Kirchenberger et al., 2021) and founder of the early-stage start-up *Athlete Development*, has the core expertise in strength & conditioning training. As the strength & conditioning coach of the German hockey national team (Deutsche Damen Hockey-Nationalmannschaft | hockey.de, n.d.), the first league hockey team *Berliner Hockey Club* (1. Herren, n.d.) or the German volleyball champion of 2022 (BR Volleys Trainer, n.d.), he has high amounts of expertise and experience in this field. Thus, the competence level in the product sector of the young venture is exceptionally high. However, even though *Athlete Development* has that skill, other organizational abilities are less advanced. Therefore, to successfully bring the high-quality strength & conditioning training plans for team sports players (Figure 02) to the market, the founder sought external brand development and marketing expertise. This is how the case in this work came to existence.

The start-up *Athlete Development* is at a pre-seed stage, which Salamzadeh and Kawamorita Kesim (2015) also describe as the bootstrapping stage. Start-up founders aim to turn an idea into a business at this stage. The monetary investment is low, and the level of uncertainty is high. The objectives are proving the unit of business to be feasible, and testing the product for recognition by customers (Salamzadeh, Kawamorita Kesim, 2015).

Athlete Development has built a minimum viable product and therefore proved the feasibility of the product. Figure 02 shows that the MVP is strength

& conditioning training plans in several PDF files that include each exercise's training content and videos. Those PDF files comprise the training structure, noticeable particularities about the training concept and each training session as one section. As shown in figure 01, strength & conditioning training consists of the five elements strength, endurance, speed, mobility, and stability. Figure 01 also shows the three gradations of the minimum viable product with the features for each. Furthermore, a video library consisting of more than 500 videos (Athlete Development, n.d.-b) is where the founder put in the most development effort. The start-up founder developed the training plans initially in three variations. Firstly, there is the 'Foundation' plan: This plan consists of 3-5 sessions per week and requires no equipment. It aims at athletes that have no experience with strength & conditioning training. The second variation is 'Advanced': This plan takes 4-5 sessions per week and asks for essential training equipment. The exercises are more challenging for the athletes and therefore aim at players that already have experience with strength & conditioning training. The third and last variation of the plans is the 'Professional' version: This requires 5-7 training sessions per week and a fully equipped gym to perform the exercises. Those plans are the most challenging and on the level of professional athletes.

The pricing of the plans is the same graduation as the exercises' difficulty.

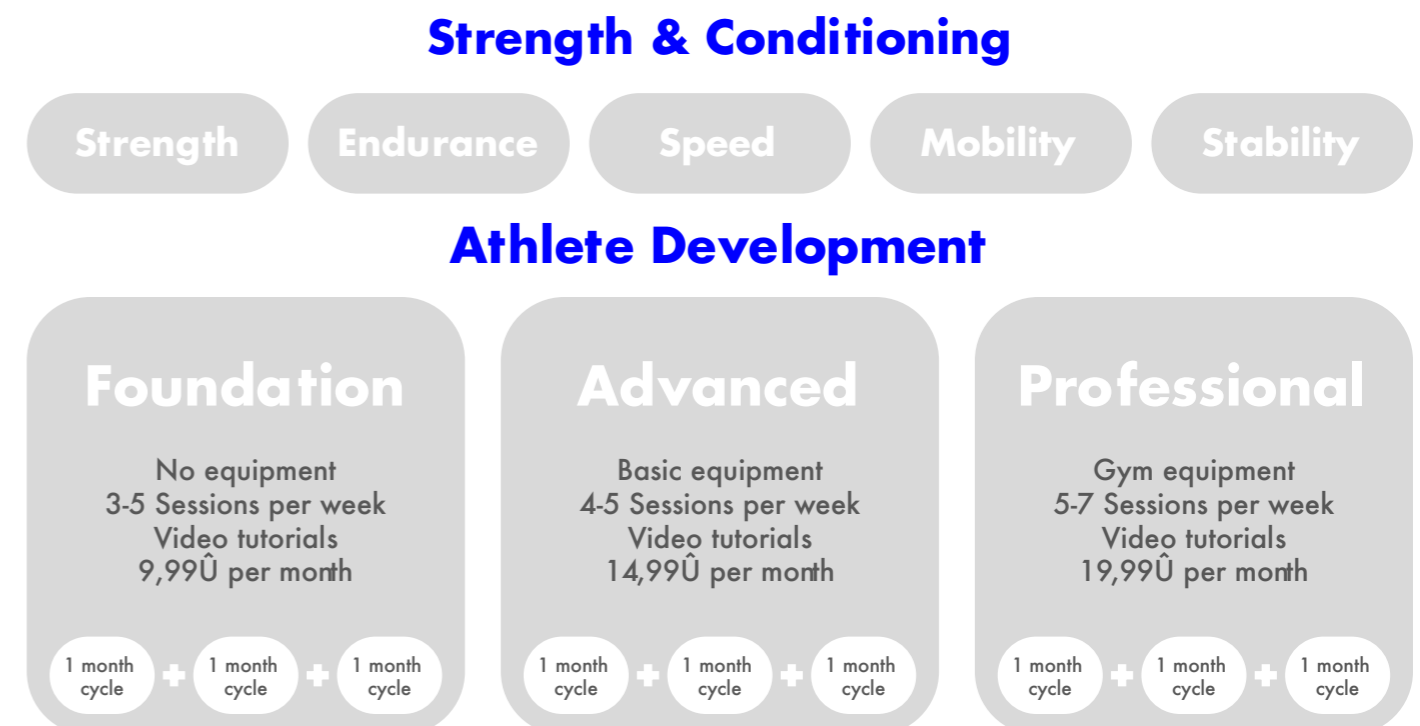


Figure 01: The concept of strength & conditioning training consists of five basic components. *Athlete Development* uses those in the three variations of the product.

TRAININGSPLAN

Advanced

Ziele: Physiologische Adaption und Hypertrophie, Technik Antritt und linearer max. Speed; Entwicklung der aeroben Grundlage

Umfang: 4 Wochen – Woche 1

Inhalte: 1x Speed; 2x ESD; 2x Kraft

Equipment: Kurzhanteln, Kettlebells, Minibands, Superbands, Box, Klimmzugstange

WOCHENPLANUNG

MONTAG	DIENSTAG	MITTWOCH	DONNERSTAG	FREITAG	SAMSTAG	SONNTAG
Kraft 1	ESD 2	Aktive Regeneration / Mobilität /frei	Schnelligkeit 1	Kraft 2	ESD 1	Aktive Regeneration / Mobilität /frei

Hinweise zum Training

#1 Quality First
Lerne und beherrsche erst die korrekte Ausführung und steigere dann Quantität & Intensität.

#2 Deliberate Practice
Um den maximalen Erfolg aus deinem Training zu ziehen, musst jede Übung bewusst und mit dem richtigen Purpose ausführen. Sei bei jeder Bewegung präsent! Arbeite nie ein Training einfach nur herunter sondern versuche durch jede Übung 1% besser zu werden.

#3 Intensität & Progression
Bringe Intensität in jede Wiederholung. Wenn du einen Satz beendet hast, darf nicht noch eine Wiederholung möglich sein. Steigere im Zweifel die Wiederholungszahl oder die Geschwindigkeit in der Ausführung. Mit kleinen Haltephasen, oder höheren Geschwindigkeiten maximalen

#4 Rest & Recover
Halte die empfohlenen Ruhelagen ein. Für einen langfristigen und nachhaltigen Erfolg ist es wichtig das Spiel zwischen Training und Erholung perfekt auszuloten.

Kraft 1

5-10' Bike/ Run/ Row

Mobility - Aktivierung (siehe Slides)

Übung	Bild	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Tempo	RPE	Pause
A Dips - supported		8-15	8-15	8-15	8-15		3111	9,5	1'
B1 Step Up + Lunge		6/ Seite	6/ Seite	6/ Seite	6/ Seite		Explosiv	9,5	1'
B2 Hand Release Push Ups		6-10	6-10	6-10	6-10		3111	9,5	1'
C1 Frog Jumps		8	8	8	8		Explosiv	9,5	1'
C2 1- Arm Row Superband		10/Seite	10/Seite	10/Seite	10/Seite		2121	7-8	1'
Giant Set									
D1 Shrimp Squat		8 / Seite	8 / Seite	8 / Seite	8 / Seite		Langsamer Wechsel		
D2 Face Pull		12	12	12	12		2121		1 Set – then 1-2' Pause
D3 Nordic Hamstrings		8	8	8	8		langsam		

The ‚Foundation‘ plans are priced the lowest (9,99€ per month) and the ‚Professional‘ plans have highest price (19,99€ per month). The ‚Advanced‘ version is in between the other plans (14,99€ per month). Each plan comprises three cycles with a one-month duration. Consequently, one program lasts for three months. The specifications of the plans are not firmly fixed and therefore open to changes based on findings in customer research.

Tim Brown (2009) argues that there is always a balance between viability, feasibility, and desirability in product development. This balance is distinct to every product and characterizes the product strategy. Since the *Athlete Development* product is a minimum viable version, the desirability by consumers and viability of the business model still requires validation. However, those are crucial aspects of building a start-up and bringing the product to the right market since start-ups fail to have no product/market fit (Cantamessa et al., 2018). Therefore, the proof of product-market fit is the content of the experiments that this work outlines as well as the development of a launch campaign as the outcome of the experiments. The target customer or the product might need adaptation to reach product-market fit.

Challenges

The start-up *Athlete Development* has high expertise in the product sector, with the experienced and knowledgeable strength & conditioning coach *Timo Kirchenberger* as the founder. The main challenge is to get from the bootstrapping stage to the last start-up stage, which Salamzadeh and Kawamorita Kesim (2015) define as the creation stage. There, companies have entered the market, made sales, and acquired human resources—the primary missing skills for *Athlete Development* in reaching this lie in business development and marketing. So the objectives are to:

1. identify the most fitting target group,
2. determine the marketing mix that reaches the target group best, and

Figure 02:
The minimum viable product of *Athlete Development* is a set of PDF documents that comprise a strength & conditioning training regime.

3. design a launch campaign that captures the value that *Athlete Development* can create for the customer.

Scholars researched experimental learning methods such as „simultaneous experimentation“ (Andries et al., 2013), „lean start-up“ (Ries, 2011), or „customer development“ (Blank, 2013) as valuable strategies to develop business models, products, or ventures, in highly uncertain, entrepreneurial environments (Andries et al., 2013; York & Danes, 2014; Ries, 2011; Bhide, 1992; Weinrauch et al., 1991). However, this theoretical knowledge can be difficult to translate into the daily practice of small business owners.

Background

Launching a new product requires critical resources in time, finances (Hultink et al., 1997), and multiple tactical launch activities (Benedetto, 1999). Small businesses that use bootstrapping as their financing strategy do not have the means to gather that knowledge because they launch without external monetary resources (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

There are multiple approaches to designing entrepreneurial business models, with Andries et al. (2013) discussing focused commitment versus the method of simultaneous experimentation. They argue that for business development in an uncertain environment, simultaneous experimentation can increase the chance of being successful in the market in the long term. This approach focuses on business model development, not specifically on go-to-market strategy development.

The approach Steve Blank (2013) brings up is customer development. He argues that it is vital to conduct high amounts of customer research in the field to understand them better and therefore develop a product according to the customers. He describes the critical principle of cycling through the four steps of customer discovery, customer validation, customer creation, and customer

building. In his model, the customer discovery step is equivalent to finding product-market fit and requires high amounts of direct customer research and interaction.

The third experimental learning approach analyzed is the lean start-up, introduced by Eric Ries (2011). It is about conducting small-scale experiments, setting up minimum viable products to establish a baseline, and tuning the product based on validated learning. This part of the lean start-up is called innovation accounting and guides the pivots or preservations in product development.

Nevertheless, there is little literature on experimental learning approaches for developing go-to-market strategies specifically in non-funded small businesses. This project aims to explore this intersection by adopting experimental learning procedures to design a go-to-market strategy for the bootstrapped start-up *Athlete Development*.

1.2 Overview

Chapter 1 Page 06-19

Case Introduction

Introducing the *Athlete Development* case and outlining the background and challenges of the start-up. Furthermore defining the brief and research question.

Chapter 2 Page 20-33

Theoretical Foundation

A review of scientific literature explores existing knowledge and frameworks in the three literature streams *start-ups*, *go-to-market strategies* and *experimental learning*.

Chapter 3 Page 34-71

Experiments

A series of experiments aiming to collect information about the market with the goal of identifying the most fitting target segment and validating it. Eventually collecting insights on the target segment by conducting four sales channel experiments in the target segment.

Chapter 4 Page 72-97

Design Results

This chapter shows the outcomes of the experiments in the form of a brand identity, suitable marketing channels and a launch strategy that includes strategic and tactical activities for *Athlete Development* to implement during launch.

Chapter 5 Page 98-105

Closing the Loop

Connecting the results back to the theoretical insights found in literature. Besides that discussing the work and reflecting on it.

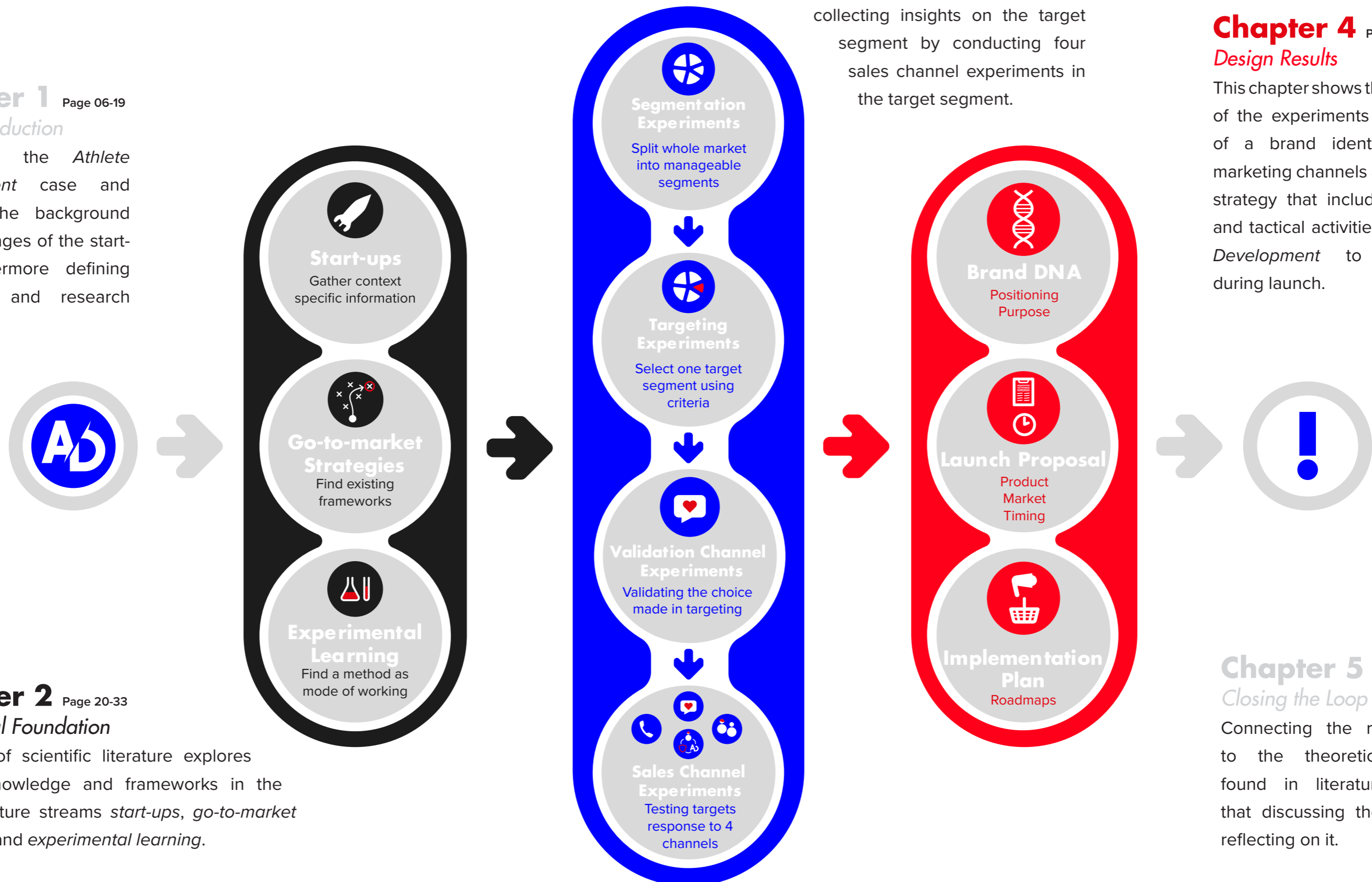


Figure 03: Chapter overview

1.3 Project Brief

Research Question

The following research question intends for future entrepreneurs and marketers to have guidance on implementing experimental learning strategies into their strategy development process, especially when they finance their business through bootstrapping.

This project aims to answer the research question by using experimental learning methods in the strategy design for *Athlete Development*. *Chapter 05* assesses the extent to which the project answers the research question.

How can bootstrapped start-ups use experimental learning methods to develop go-to-market strategies?

Structure

Figure 03 visualizes how the project is structured into five chapters. **Chapter one** introduces the *Athlete Development* case and develops the research topic and question. It provides relevant background information about the case and its context.

The literature review in **chapter two** acts as a foundation that provides knowledge about the start-up context, scientifically proven frameworks from marketing to inform about go-to-market strategies and the mode of working with methods from experimental learning. Based on this foundation, a sequence of experiments in **chapter three** explore the insights necessary to provide content for the design result presented in **chapter four**.

The experiments in **chapter three** follow the process of segmentation, targeting and validation. Segmentation aims to divide the whole potential market into manageable pieces, while targeting has the goal to select the most suitable segment(s) for the business. The validation aims to prove the decision made in targeting. The result of this process is one target segment selection. Sales channel experiments following up the sequence aim to get insight into that target segments' response to different marketing channels. Besides that they have the goal to gather deeper insights into the target segments' behaviour.

Chapter four synthesizes the insights made in the experiments from chapter three into the launch proposal for *Athlete Development*. This synthesis includes the brand DNA, which comprises positioning the brand in the mind of the consumers and defining its purpose. Furthermore it includes the appropriate marketing mix, including the fitting channels identified in the experiments prior. Finally, the proposal contains the launch strategy, consisting of product, market and timing strategy. All the design results synthesized in chapter four are eventually compressed into an actionable implementation plan accommodating a strategic and tactical roadmap that explain the launch activities in chronological sequence.

To come full circle, **chapter five** answers the research question, referencing back to the theory from literature. Besides that, it assesses the project results in relation to the clients goals and reflects on the process.

Project Scope

As *figure 04* exhibits, the project scope locates in the seed stage of the start-up. This project spans from committing to the venture until creating first traction. This includes the milestones of problem-solution fit and product-market fit up to the launch. The literature review in chapter two explains how the fit-framework contributes to the project.

The project results include the answer to the research question based on the findings from the case. Also, they define a go-to-market strategy for *Athlete Development*. This comprises a launch strategy (what? where? when? why?) that is coherent with the accompanying launch activities. Strategic and tactical roadmaps explain those activities in detail and visualize them. Furthermore, the roadmaps incorporate the product strategy, market strategy and marketing plan. To validate the assumptions, experiments test the solutions proposed to the start-up to prove their feasibility, desirability, and viability throughout the development.

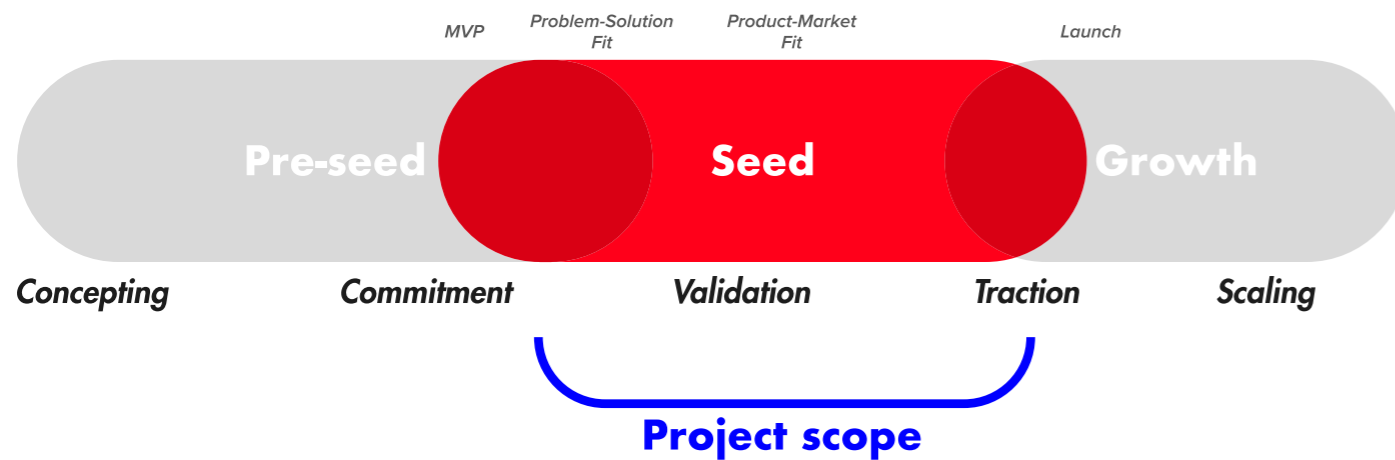


Figure 04:
Cateorization of the project into start-up stages

Expectations

Considering the clients' needs is an essential step toward starting the development process because the ultimate goal of a designer is to satisfy the clients' expectations. In this case, start-up founder *Timo Kirchenberger* disclosed his goals for the project in a brief note before kicking off.

He formulated the goals as questions he wanted to answer through this project. Therefore, they are presented here and assessed in *chapter 6*. The questions are based on the start-up status before the project began. The product was at an MVP at that stage, and no market segment or marketing plan was defined. Consequently, the questions focus on the market, advertisement and commercialization. Therefore, they constitute three themes: *market*, *advertising*, and *business model*.

Market

What is the most fitting market for the product?

What is the best positioning for the product?

Advertising

What kind of advertising is most fitting for the brand?

What channels are most efficient?

What frequency and intensity of advertising are ideal?

Business model

What product is selling the best and how?

What are the best pricing and promotional strategy?

What business model is the most suited for the company?

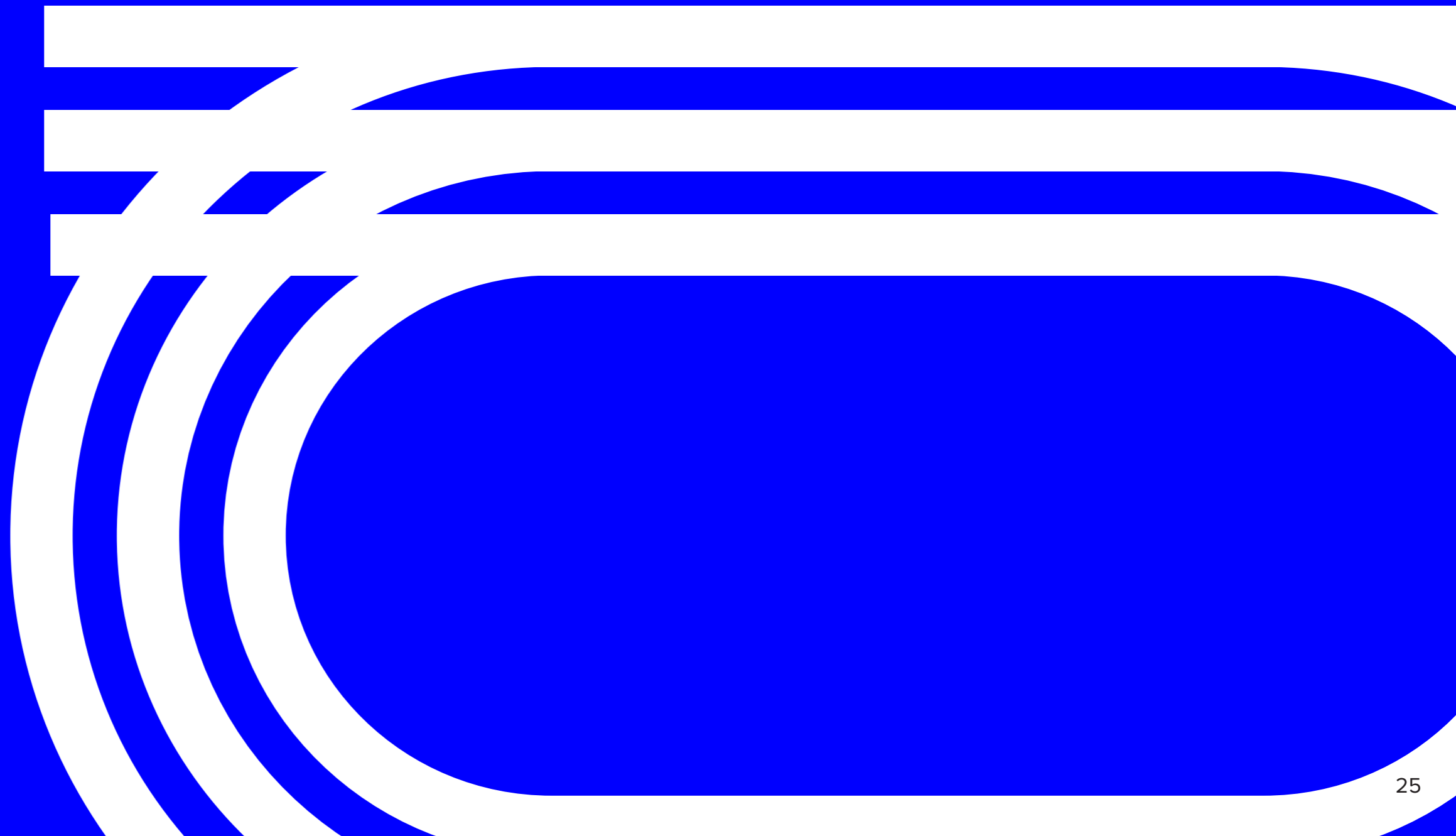
Chapter 6 assesses if and to what extent this project could answer these questions.

After introducing the project topic, research question and the *Athlete Development* case, *chapter two* reviews three streams of academic literature. The literature acts as a foundation for developing the launch strategy for *Athlete Development* and determines the requirement of further research.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Foundation

This chapter explores three streams of scientific literature. The fields start-ups, go-to-market strategies and experimental learning merge into the knowledge foundation for the project and set methodological frameworks.



2.1 Literature Review

The review comprises three streams of scientific literature. The literature stream ,start-ups‘ describes scientific knowledge about small businesses, their challenges, and the bootstrapping method. Next, the literature stream on ,go-to-market strategies‘ outlines scientific frameworks and models established in marketing and go-to-market strategies. The last stream of ,experimental learning‘ reviews three identified concepts: customer development, lean start-up, and simultaneous experimentation.

Start-ups

The literature on market entry and product commercialization has a connection with this project because the main objective is to develop a go-to-market strategy. Nevertheless, the case of *Athlete Development* deviates from this theoretical body of knowledge because it is a non-funded start-up in a pre-seed stage. Thus, the company has different demands and available resources, where they cannot necessarily apply those methods. Therefore, this literature review recognizes the relevance of the established marketing and business development theories but focuses on start-up-specific literature to fit the case.

Researching the nature of such a venture expands the knowledge in the company’s context. A literature review on start-ups identifies the particularities that occur in such organizations.

Fit-framework

A widely adopted framework in the start-up community is the value proposition design established by Osterwalder et al. (2015). This method aims to achieve ,fit‘ in three stages to create value propositions for the customer that have beneficial effects on the start-up’s profitability and its survival in the market. As visualized in *figure 05*, the first stage is the problem-solution fit, where there is a solution that solves a customer problem that a company identified.

The second stage is the product-market fit, which, when achieved, validates the market need for such a value proposition. The third and last stage is translating the value proposition into a viable and scalable business, achieving business-model fit. This paper uses this model because of its strong focus on validation, aligning with the explorative learning methods that the section ,Experimental learning‘ explains later.

Start-up challenges

Scientists (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita Kesim, 2015; Cantamessa et al., 2018; Giardino et al., 2014) extensively explore the challenges that start-ups or small businesses (Weinrauch et al., 1991) face. Those challenges mainly are the management of limited financial resources, having problems achieving product-market fit, or not having the needed human resources. Besides those, there is also the lack of a business development process, including a business strategy (Cantamessa et al., 2018). Academia examines another issue relevant to the case of *Athlete Development*, the marketing with limited amounts of monetary resources (Weinrauch et al., 1991). For start-ups, this results in marketing not being one of the top priorities. As a result, they cannot design quality advertisements and conduct no extensive marketing research to get insights into the market (Mohan-Neill, 1995).

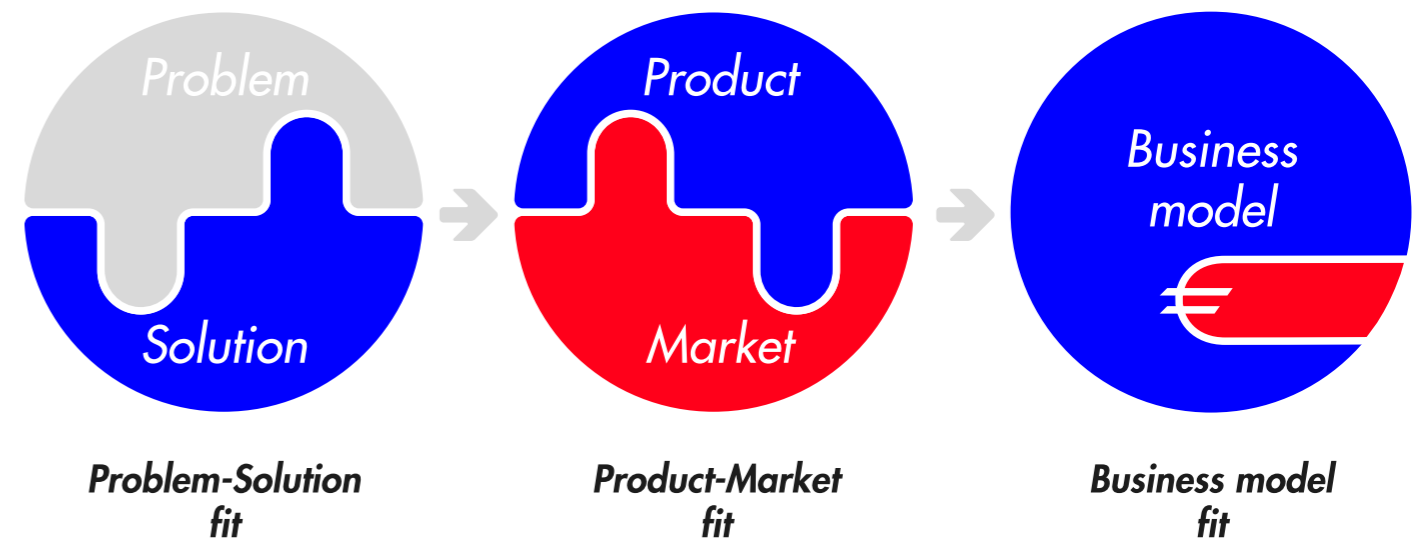


Figure 05:
Fit-framework (Osterwalder et al., 2015)

All those challenges suggest that small business owners that act in such high-risk, low-certainty environments (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita Kesim, 2015) need to be aware of those objections or have the skills to avoid them. Literature advocates for having external support mechanisms. Without them, start-ups are more likely to fail (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita Kesim, 2015). This substantiates the widely adopted opinion in academia that entrepreneurial ventures require resources from external partners like venture capitals or accelerators (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

Bootstrapping

Amar Bhide (1992) on the contrary, argues that an entrepreneurs' nature and the venture capitalists' requirements are challenging to match. Meaning, that start-up founders often lack the properties that investors seek. Another approach to deal with those limited resources is bootstrapped financing. There, a start-up is not collecting external financial resources but is applying different (mainly) internal resource management strategies. Those strategies are, for example: using the owners' money, minimizing costs, or collecting government subsidies (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

The financing strategy of bootstrapping also applies to this case of the start-up *Athlete Development*.

In conclusion, the fit-framework, established by Osterwalder et al. (2015), provides a structure as milestones in start-up development. Furthermore, it gives assurance about when to pivot and when to persevere. This is especially important in a bootstrapped venture with limited resources (Winborg & Landström, 2001).

Go-to-market strategies

This case aims to design a go-to-market strategy for the start-up, which requires literature research to identify frameworks that guide the development process. A major portion of academic literature on market entry or go-to-market strategies focuses on established companies or intrapreneurial start-ups (e.g., Dibb, 1998; Benedetto, 1999; Schuhmacher et al., 2018). For example,

Benedetto (1999) shows that factors like a multi-functional team or contracting pieces of work out to experts positively affect the launch success. However, a company with limited financial resources in a pre-seed stage can hardly apply those strategies, because they often require monetary resources and organizational structure.

Kuester et al. (2018) give strategies specifically for e-innovation start-ups to enter the market. They use signaling theory to establish the insights that trust by customers in the start-up can increase by sending out trustworthiness signals. The customers' uncertainty about a new e-innovation can decrease by sending out signals that convey the usability of the innovation. Furthermore, they describe go-to-market-strategy elements as the 7P framework (Booms & Bitner, 1981) that their results extends by certain aspects. For example, include freemium or subscription pricing options, launching with „small scale advertising campaigns“ instead of high-investment ad campaigns (Kuester et al., 2018), or using alternative promotion channels like blogs and testimonials. The go-to-market strategy, in this case, can utilize those insights because *Athlete Development's* unit of business has similarities with the described e-innovations by Kuester et al. (2018).

The book **„Go-to-market Strategy“** by Friedman (2012) gives a general approach on developing go-to-market strategies. There, the author explains the steps of designing a go-to-market strategy, not specifying any form or size of an organization. Friedman proposes ten commandments that are essential for going to market. These include focusing on customer research as the primary source of information and highlighting the importance of selecting the proper channels. This guideline on developing go-to-market strategies explains the selection of a target market and the selection of the channels. However, the process of segmentation and positioning a brand is left out. Literature (Dibb, 1998; Camilleri, 2018; Dickson & Ginter, 1987; Friedman, 2012) researched this segmentation, targeting, and positioning process.

Segmentation, targeting, and positioning

Scientific literature broadly researched the process of market segmentation, segment targeting, and brand positioning is. For example, Dickson & Ginter (1987) use economic theory to define the notions of market segmentation and product differentiation in comparison to each other. They define market segmentation as „Heterogeneity in demand functions exists such that market demand can be disaggregated into segments with distinct demand functions“ (Dickson & Ginter, 1987). This essentially means that there are multiple characteristics within a market, so it is logical to split up the market into parts with similar characteristics. *Figure 06* visualizes the process of how segmentation splits a market into small segments, companies select one segment to target and eventually position themselves there. In practice, Sally Dibb (1998) explains the steps before, during, and after the segmentation make the segmentation successful. Those are to understand the success factors of segmentation in advance, making the segments measurable, substantial, accessible, actionable, and stable, and assessing the segments' attractiveness afterward. Camilleri (2018) discloses the different kinds of segmentation, being demographic, geographic, psychographic, behavioral, and product-related.

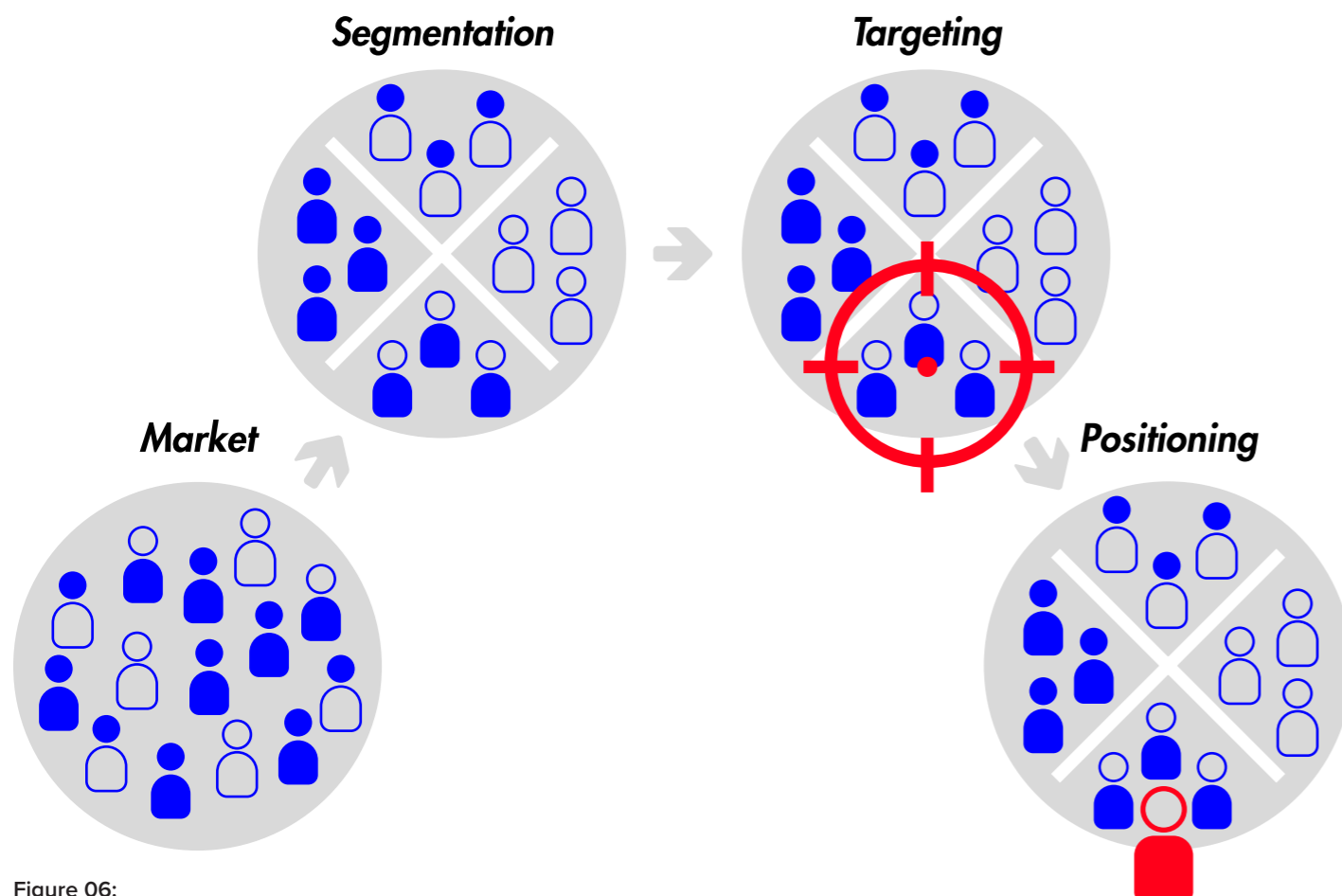


Figure 06:
Segmentation, Targeting & Positioning

He also goes into undifferentiated, differentiated, and concentrated targeting strategies and how those work, and the step of positioning the brand in the targeted segment (Camilleri, 2018). According to Camilleri (2018), positioning is done to place the brand inside the target customer's mind. Formalizing positioning statements and building positioning strategies can achieve this positioning. Dibb (1991) also states that it is crucial in positioning to understand what consumers desire and consider important in buying decisions and then building a brand around that.

Pre-announcements

Schatzel & Calantone (2006) explore the behavior of firms that use pre-announcements as a tool for new product launches. They conclude that pre-announcements can positively impact market anticipation, which is the curiosity and interest in the firm's environment and industry. They define pre-announcements as a firm's open communication about an upcoming activity, which is, in this case, the launch of a new product. Especially in the business-to-business market, pre-announcements can increase new product success. Lilly & Walters (1997) describe the benefits and downsides of early and late pre-announcements. Early ones are suited for new and complex products that need time to get familiar with. Late pre-announcements are suited for products that are supposed to take revenue from existing ones on the market or when product development is still in process. The pre-announcement suggestions for the launch strategy of *Athlete Development* utilize this research and furthermore adapt to case-specific properties of the consumers.

As shown before, start-up literature explores the relationship between products and the market by achieving product-market fit as a goal and stage-gate (Osterwalder et al., 2015). Achieving this fit is a prerequisite for designing a go-to-market strategy. Furthermore, the literature shows why it is essential to do segmentation and how to conduct the process of segmentation targeting and positioning. However, there is little academic literature on designing a go-to-market strategy for the particularities of bootstrapped start-ups. Therefore, this work aims to explore this intersection.

Experimental learning

Methodologies that enable venture development with limited resources explore the 'bootstrapping stage' (Salamzadeh & Kawamorita, 2015), in which *Athlete Development* is. Those methodologies essentially are about learning through experiments continuously to avoid high investments before assumptions are validated (Andries et al., 2013). Like *figure 07* shows, it is about the variety of assumptions tested in a small scope instead of heavily investing in one direction. York & Danes (2014) describe the learning and discovery-driven process of customer development to make decisions initiated by Blank (2013). They mention the 'Lean Start-up' method, which first surfaced in Eric Ries' book 'The Lean Startup' (2011). This method has a similar approach to the 'simultaneous experimentation' method established by Andries et al. (2013).

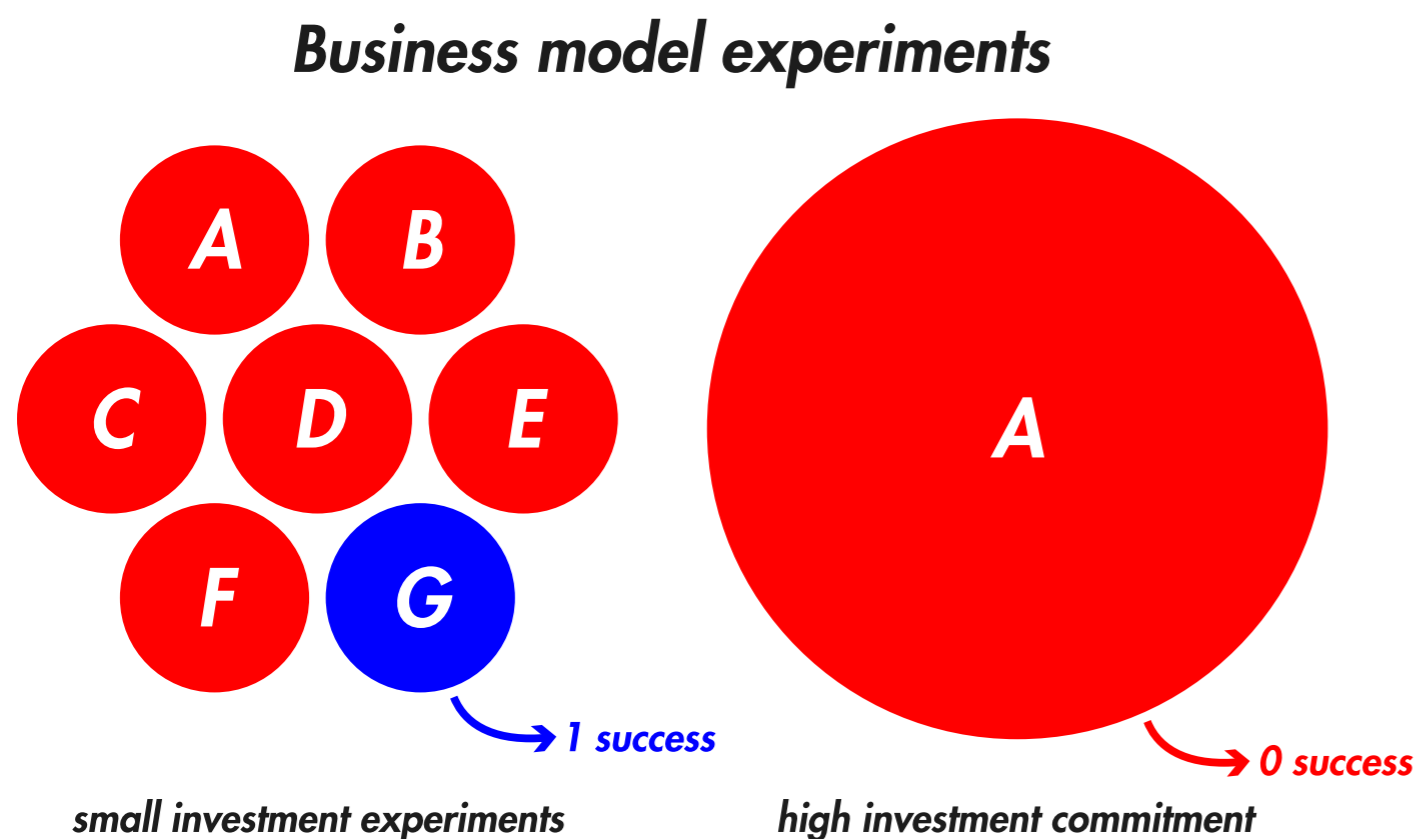


Figure 07:
Experimental learning

Customer development (Blank, 2013)

The customer development method focuses on extensive out-of-the-building work, researching the consumers, and having multiple product development iterations to reach product-market fit and only make an investment afterward. Especially in the first step of customer discovery, it is vital to get close to potential customers to have insights into their characteristics. Furthermore, before proving product-market fit, it is crucial to avoid any significant investments into the venture—customer development guides decision-making in the venture development process by continuously testing hypotheses and eliminating biases (Blank, 2013). This literature review explores this experimental learning method because of the intense focus on direct customer research. In addition, this approach complies with the undefined customer segment of *Athlete Development* at the project kick-off that this paper needs to develop first.

Lean Start-up (Ries, 2011)

Eric Ries (2011) outlines this approach for start-up development, which is about continuous validated learning in cycles of build-measure-learn—essentially validating the riskiest assumptions regularly to decrease uncertainty. Ries outlines that the characteristics occurring in a start-up require constant steering and pivoting. First, the 'build' step requires building minimal products to test in experiments. Then, the prior assumptions are measured in the experiment results, and the learnings are implemented in an adjusted new strategy. Due to its recognition in the scientific community (Blank, S., 2013a) and the start-up scene, this approach is suitable for the *Athlete Development* case.

Simultaneous experimentation (Andries et al., 2013)

Andries et al. (2013) compare the method of simultaneous experimentation with focused commitment. The latter meaning to decide on one business model and then commit to that strategy. On the other hand, simultaneous experimentation advocates for experimenting with multiple possible solutions for business models simultaneously and on a small scale to identify the most fitting business model for the case. This enables resource-efficient development and mitigates risks.

Andries et al. (2013) did a longitudinal case study where they observed and analyzed different ventures' business models over time and see if and how they change. Then they coded the business models to map the differences according to the business model components listed by Morris et al. (2005). This business model topology, introduced by Morris et al. (2005) and adapted by Andries et al. (2013), is also classifying the changes in business models in the different experiments *chapter 3* covers.

Because this business model topology bases on the established model by Morris et al. (2005) but adapts to fit the research structure of the cases, the work of Andries et al. (2013) is suitable here. As they research ventures that are at an early stage, like *Athlete Development* (pre-seed), their results are, to an extent, even transferable to this case.

The following section shows the business model topology established by Morris et al. (2005) and adapted by Andries et al. (2013):

Offering (How does the company create value?)

- product /service
- standardized / some customization / high customization
- internal manufacturing or service delivery / outsourcing / licensing / reselling / value-added reselling
- direct distribution / indirect distribution

Market (Who does the company create value for?)

- type of customer (b2b / b2c)
- local / regional / international
- position of customer in the value chain: upstream supplier / downstream supplier / government / institutional / wholesaler / retailer / service provider / final consumer
- broad market/niche market
- transactional / relational

Internal capabilities (What is the company's source of competence?)

- production / operating systems
- selling/marketing

- information management / mining / packaging
- technology / R&D / creative or innovative capability / intellectual
- financial transactions / arbitrage
- supply chain management
- networking/resource leveraging

Competitive strategy (How does the company competitively position itself?)

- image of operational excellence / consistency / speed
- product or service quality / selection / features / availability
- innovation leadership
- low cost / efficiency
- intimate customer relationship / experience

Economic factors (How does the company make money?)

- pricing and revenue sources: fixed / flexible
- operating leverage: high / medium / low
- volumes: high / medium / low
- margins: high / medium / low

Personal / investor factors (What are the company's ambitions?)

- subsistence model / income model / growth model / speculative model

Customer development, simultaneous experimentation, and lean start-up guide the development of the go-to-market strategy for the case of Athlete Development. Using those principles reduces the risks the start-up takes with every decision because they validate all assumptions at an early development stage. Thus it also decreases uncertainty by verifying the most critical assumptions for the business first.

Insights from literature

The subject of this explorative study is the bootstrapped start-up *Athlete Development*. The objective is to develop a successful go-to-market strategy for it. The approach is to work with the lean start-up principles, similar to simultaneous experimentation because those best fit the properties at the current state of the business. *Figure 08* shows how experimental learning as the method ties the streams of the rather practical field of start-ups and the theoretical field of go-to-market strategies together. That is how those three streams of literature can merge into one valuable foundation of knowledge.

The *Athlete Development* case requires further research in go-to-market strategy development because it is in such an early stage, where the uncertainty is high, and unvalidated assumptions entail high risk. Literature gives frameworks and methods to guide the process, but especially the product and target market are highly uncertain aspects. They require case-specific knowledge that can only be gathered by researching the field. According to Blank (2013), getting as many insights into the consumers first is crucial to start-up development. Therefore, proving product-market fit is the stage-gate and foundation for designing a go-to-market strategy.

The next chapter describes a series of experiments that aim to gather market specific knowledge with the goal to divide the market into segments and identify the most suitable segment(s) for Athlete Development. Further experiments intend to validate the target segment and collect deeper knowledge on it.

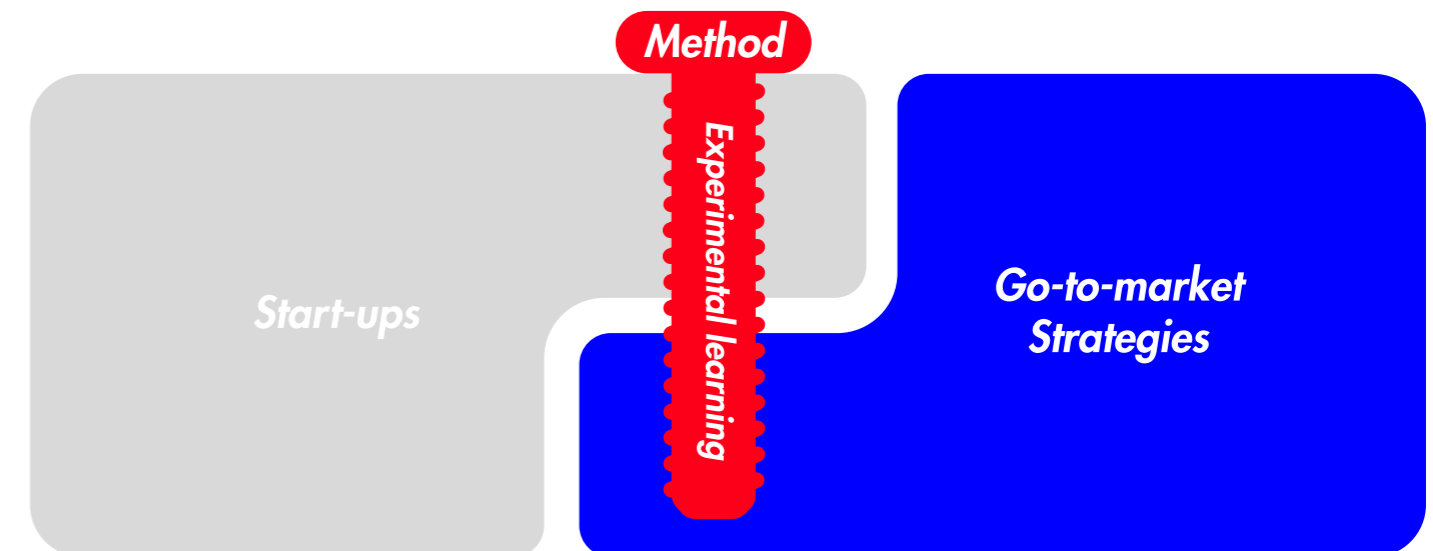


Figure 08:
Connecting literature streams

Chapter 3

Experiments

A series of experiments, aiming to collect information about the market with the goal to identify the most fitting target segment and validating it. Eventually collecting insights on the target segment by conducting four sales channel experiments with consumers.

3.1 Segmentation Experiments

The process of segmentation and targeting, identified in the literature review in chapter two, requires further information about the consumer landscape in the context of this product. Therefore, chapter three, inter alia, describes the customer research done to conduct the segmentation.

The start-up *Athlete Development* developed a minimum viable product. This MVP is strength and conditioning training plans for team sports players in different adaptations (*Figure 01; Figure 02*). Those plans are practically applicable for any team sport and any athlete in those sports. They have the functional benefits of **increasing the performance** in the sport like speed, strength, or endurance and **reducing the risk of injuries** through increased stability (Faigenbaum et al., 2009). Since 'any player that does a team sport' is a market that is too broad to target for a start-up of this size, segmentation needs to break down the target market into manageable elements. Dibb (1998) describes the process of segmentation as threefold. This process first segments the whole market into smaller pieces and then targets the most valuable segments for the business. Finally, it positions the product in the customer's perception by having an appropriate marketing mix.

First, the segmentation for Athlete Development requires information about the markets and potential customers.

Customer research

In the research interviews, the main **goal** was to identify if and how the interviewees do strength & conditioning training additionally to practicing their sport. This initial examination aimed to explore if and in which cases a

problem-solution fit is achieved. Specifically, the goal was to determine if the athletes get the additional strength & conditioning training done and if it is satisfactory. This level of satisfaction also needs distinguishment. Furthermore, unique insights about the athlete's profiles were drawn from the interviews to identify possible characteristics for segmentation.

This research aligns with the out-of-the-building work, as Blank (2013) stresses with customer development. To disclose the customer for *Athlete Development*, research in the field guided the process. This research entails one-to-one customer contact to collect information and develop the business and marketing strategy. Conducting interviews with potential customers with different characteristics was the method gathering the majority of information necessary for the case of *Athlete Development*.

The interviews took place in person (n=7) and on phone calls (n=20). An **interview guide** approach was used to structure the interviews but still keep it conversational (Patton, 2002). This interview guide enables adaptation to the different characteristics of the interviewees. The interviewer first asked the participant to describe their athlete profile. This means asking for their age, club, team, and the amount of training they do. Then, they described their athletic ambitions, meaning what their individual goals and their teams' goals are. Afterward, strength & conditioning-specific questions identified their current training situation in this field and their satisfaction level. Finally, they should describe if and how they do strength & conditioning training.

The extensive network that the start-up founder *Timo Kirchenberger* has in the hockey community helped recruit interviewees. Furthermore, cold emails to players and coaches recruited participants. *Figure 06* shows an overview of the interviews conducted in each sport. There were 31 interviews with two in rowing and two in tennis, 18 in field hockey, six in football, and three in handball. This selection of sports formed due to *Timo Kirchenbergers* experience in hockey, rowing and handball. Adding football and tennis to this selection has the reason of them being large federations in Germany.



Figure 09:
Consumer interviews overview

Segmentation through sport

According to Camilleri (2018), product related segmentation depends on product specific variables such as reason for purchase, customers background and context-related motivations. In this case, product-related segmentation can refer to the type of sport, since different sports have different athletic requirements, the product needs to differ for each sport. For example, interviewees in hockey and handball mentioned the value of sport-specific strength & conditioning training (HB.03; H.17) over generic resistance training. Also, segmenting into different sports is beneficial from a marketing perspective because players from the same sport usually gather at similar places. That is why focusing product marketing on a segment with a high level of accessibility is valuable (Camilleri, 2018).

The following sport-specific insights from the interviews show what different characteristics occur in the different sports of hockey, football, tennis, and handball.

Segment 1: Hockey players

Market size

Hockey is a niche sport in Germany with only 84.000 people being member in the German hockey federation (Statista, 2022a). However, the Netherlands as a neighboring country almost have 250.000 members in their field hockey association (Statista, 2021).

Consumer benefits

During the interviews with the different hockey players, the benefit of strength and conditioning training became apparent for most players. Interviewee H.03 for example explained that „we would play better if my whole team would follow a (strength & conditioning) plan“. Also interviewee H.05 described that strength & conditioning training helps improve their hockey performance. Clustering the interviewees into their ambitions and their use of strength & conditioning reveals that once the ambition exceeds the just-for-fun attitude and focuses on performance, strength & conditioning is a widely used tool. The majority of hockey players and coaches mentioned it to have beneficial effects on the **performance on the field** (e.g., H.01; H.02; H.03; H.10), and several are aware of the benefit of **reducing the risk of injuries** through strength & conditioning training (H.01; H.03; H.10).

Application in practice

In large and successful clubs with first league teams, where several interviews happened (H.01-H.08), strength and conditioning is a standard tool from the youth teams upwards. Nonetheless, mainly the first and second league teams in large clubs have access to it. Which interviewee H.12 confirmed, who explained, that the club she plays and coaches, a comparatively small club, has no access to a strength & conditioning coach. In youth hockey, primarily the first teams of the clubs have access to a coach like the large club in Hamburg that was mentioned by interviewee H.11.

The smaller clubs like the one from interview H.12 or H.14 do not have the means to afford coaches and therefore cannot offer strength and conditioning to their members. However, there are still players in those clubs that want to

improve their athletic capabilities, like interviewee H.13. In order to improve his performance, he wants to invest more time in strength training.

Consumer properties

The age of the athletes is also decisive for their need for strength and conditioning training. There are adolescent players in the lower youth that want to increase their performance to climb into the first youth or adult team (H.11). Those sometimes have the opportunity to train with the higher teams to increase their level of training. However, the coaches mostly make this decision based on the players' previous performance, as explained by interviewee H.11, who is a coach in a well-known club. Once the players reach a certain age without leaping onto their dream level, ambitions go down, and the just-for-fun aspect of the sport increases (H.14).

Segment 2: Football players

Market size

Football is the most popular sport in Germany. With more than 127,000 teams and more than 1,8 million players (DFB-MITGLIEDERSTATISTIK 2020/2021, n.d.), it is the largest market of any German sports and is highly competitive on a player level (F.01).

Consumer benefits

In the conversation, interviewee F.06 mentioned the benefit as an injured player. He needs to regain strength and endurance after an injury or is afraid of getting injured again after an extensive injury history. Besides the ambition to become a professional, this is a motivation of football players practising strength & conditioning training. The benefits of strength & conditioning training for many football players is that it increases their performance on the field (F.01; F.03; F.04; F.05; F.06). They use it to improve their effectiveness while playing football with the goal of ascending to higher teams or leagues (F.01; F.04). Players even train beyond the (potentially high quality) offer the club has to be competitive and make the jump to professionalism.

Consumer motivations

The interviews with football players, coaches, and club officials gave valuable insights into the players' goals, motivations, and concerns.

In football, many adolescents have the goal of becoming professional players (F.01; F.04). Players invest a lot of time and money into their football career to improve their performance, be promoted to a higher team, switch to a better club, or get scouted by a first league club. Interviewee F.04, for example, has the goal of becoming a professional player. He has a personal coach only for strength & conditioning training that designs a custom plan for him every week. Interviewee F.01 made statements reflecting this high level of commitment. He has seen many players in his function as 'Deputy Head of Football' in a large club in Berlin. According to his experiences, there is a high willingness to „even spend money“ to leap to become a professional football player.

Consumer properties

Players in Germany can still make a living off playing on a lower level and even earn money playing up to the seventh league (Milliardenspiel Amateur-Fußball | Sportschau, 2022).

In the career of a young football player, there are several decisive moments where ambition levels can either increase or tip into a steep decline (F.01). Interviewee F.01 explained the tensions in the adolescence of a football player. When teenagers are around 12 years old, they switch from primary to secondary school. There, the focus and time often shift towards their academic career, also as a decision the parents make. Then, the ambitions in sports either rise by investing more into it or decrease rapidly through investing more time into school. The same happens when they are around 16 years old and switch from B to A youth teams. They already had to play in the highest youth league (Bundesliga) in the A-youth to jump into professional sports. Thus, there is another tipping point in their ambition levels, which repeats when they transition from A-youth to the adult teams.

Segment 3: Tennis players

Market size

In Germany, more than 1,4 million players are in the tennis association (Daten & Fakten, n.d.), making it the third-largest sports association.

Consumer benefits

Interviewee T.01, a young player who wants to become a professional, explained that he invests much time and money into that goal. He has a high-profile strength and conditioning coach and trains multiple times daily. Interviewee T.01 describes the archetype of high-performance tennis players.

The other end surfaced in the conversation with interviewee T.02, a coach and coordinator that has insight into many players' minds. In his opinion, strength & conditioning training is beneficial for tennis, but „the sport is mainly done as a hobby and just for the fun of playing.“ The majority of the people he knows want to spend their time playing on the court and not training in the gym or weight room.

Consumer properties

T.02 described that most tennis players are in the age group of 41-60 years, followed by the 60+ age group, which confirms the seldom desire to do strength and conditioning (Deutscher Tennis Bund, 2021). Furthermore, interviewee T.02 points out that „Tennis is a boomer sport,“ confirming that many tennis players are in the ,baby boomer generation born from 1946 to 1964.

Qualification as segment

In conclusion, according to the interview insights, tennis does not comprise many players with the need or desire to do additional strength & conditioning training in the form that *Athlete Development* can offer it. Either the player plays as a leisure activity in their free time and has low ambitions, or they are highly ambitious and invest in personal coaches. Consequently, there is no problem-solution fit apparent in tennis and it is therefore disregarded to qualify as a segment for *Athlete Development*.

Segment 4: Handball players

Market size

There are almost 730,000 people organized in the German handball association (Statista, 2022), which makes it a comparably large sport in the country. However, interviews only happened with two Handball players and one team supervisor due to practical reasons.

Consumer benefits

Every interviewee pointed out that strength and conditioning training is essential for handball players (HB.01; HB.02; HB.03). This is because they need a high speed, strength, and stability to excel in their sport. However, as the one interviewee mentioned, the clubs have to organize themselves by consulting experienced parents or the regular handball coach (HB.2; HB.3). This self-organization suggests that the players need and desire to get the job of strength and conditioning training done.

Consumer properties

Out of the two athletes interviewed, one wants to try such a product and is committed to spending money on it (HB.03). However, because the price was too high for him as a student, interviewee HB.02 relies on his knowledge about training. Therefore, handball can be considered as a potential segment to target but needs further research on the customers if chosen as a target segment.

Segmentation filter: Ambition level

The interviews conducted with the athletes from various sports showed that one crucial factor for athletes to need the product is their level of ambition. For example, according to interviewee H.14, a hockey player and coach, only „players who have ambitions to play better in the future are willing to invest more time into additional training.“ Various other interviewees (H.10; H.13; F.02;

HB.01) confirmed this insight. For example, interviewee H.13, a hockey coach, explained that the second team in his club is solely doing the sport for fun and is not highly ambitious. Therefore, they do not want to put more time into extra training. Those insights suggest that to need strength & conditioning training, players have to be ambitious, meaning having goals in their sport exceeding the ‚just for fun‘ attitude.

Figure 09 shows the perceived spectrum of ambitions that are present in sports that surfaced in the athlete interviews. As shown in figure 09, the interesting segment for Athlete Development exists on the right end of the spectrum. It is players parallel to those with access to a strength & conditioning coach that do not have the offer. The interviewer also subjectively perceived this ambition level during the interviews. The way the athletes talked about the sport could quickly determine whether they were ambitious or just doing it for fun.

Nevertheless, the player’s general level can also be too high to need the product. Exceeding the segment occurs when they have the offer of a strength & conditioning coach in their team. The majority of interviewees brought up this issue (R.01; R.02; T.01; H.01; H.02; H.03; H.04; H.05; H.06; H.07; H.08;

H.09; H.10; H.11; H.13; H.16; F.01; F.03; F.04). Interviewee F.03 explained: „I think that’s very good. If I didn’t get a plan from my assistant coach, I would think about it. If the plan does not work, I will get back to you.“ Also, the club is a factor that contributes to this matter. Interviewee H.04 even pointed out that he switched clubs to increase his performance because his ambitions were high. After his switch, he had the offer of a strength & conditioning coach on his team. Therefore, he needed such a product before his switch but not in the more recent club. The same situation also occurred for interviewee H.01. Consequently, only athletes in between the ‚just for fun‘ ambitions and the professionalized setting with access to a strength & conditioning coach reach a problem-solution fit.

After identifying the segments emerged from customer and desktop research, determining what segment is the best to target for Athlete Development is the next step.

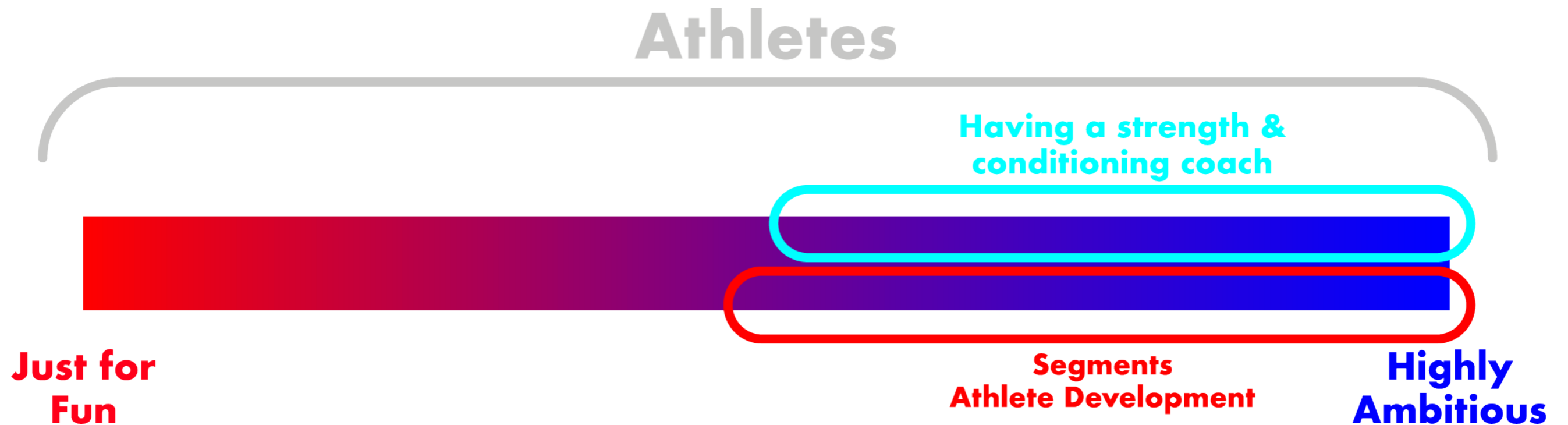


Figure 10:
Perceived scope of ambitions in sports

3.2 Targeting Experiments

After exploring different segments in the research experiments, the next step in the process of segmentation, targeting and positioning is to select one segment to target. This aims to have more focused communication to the consumer and simplify the marketing activities (Camilleri, 2018). To assess which segment is the most fitting, different criteria conforming to the businesses goals evaluate them.

Criteria

Friedman (2012) proposes the following criteria to classify segments:

- Market size
- Market growth rate
- Ability to exert brand leadership
- Cost of market entry
- Cost to serve
- Channel availability
- Competitive density
- Strategic fit

Business goal	Market size	Market growth rate	Ability to exert brand leadership	Cost of market entry	Cost to serve	Channel availability	Competitive density	Strategic fit
Brand buiding			✓✓			✓	✓	✓✓
Long-term market resilience	✓✓	✓	✓✓		✓✓			✓
Short-term market entry				✓✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓
Long-term market expansion	✓✓		✓✓	✓	✓		✓	✓✓
Very important criterion ✓✓	Secondary		Core	Secondary	Secondary		Secondary	Core
Important criterion ✓								

Figure 11: Assessment classification criteria (Friedmann, 2012)

He suggests establishing those measures to assess the market segments based on the business's individual goals. In this case, classifying the importance of each criterion ensures the best fit for *Athlete Development's* needs.

Figure 11 shows the business goals of *Athlete Development* in the first column and the different criteria in top row. The relevance for each business goal rates each criterion. There, they can get two checkmarks as a very important criterion, one checkmark as an important criterion and no checkmark as an irrelevant criterion. After evaluation, adding up the checkmarks on each criterion generates a ranking of the importance of each. According to Friedman (2012), it is valuable to split the criteria into ,secondary' and ,core' criteria. Therefore, being the top two criteria classifies them as core criteria. Having less than those assigns them as secondary. To keep the amount of criteria manageable, the two lowest ranked ones disqualify.

Business goals

The evaluation of those criteria according to the businesses goals is shown in figure 11. The figure shows that the main goals for *Athlete Development* are brand building, long-term market resilience, short-term market entry, and long-term market expansion. Those goals comply with the founders' expectations and the available financial resources. For example, goals focused on top-end growth would not be realistic with the resources available in the bootstrapped start-up.

Evaluation

The evaluation of importance for the business, disqualifies market growth rate and channel availability. The market growth rate is not crucial to reaching the start-up's objectives because it focuses on high revenue and growth. Because existing channels are not crucial for a solely digital product with niche target segments, the evaluation ignores channel availability. The secondary criteria are market size, cost of market entry, the cost to serve, and competitive density. The most important ,core criteria' for the targeting are the ability to exert brand leadership and strategic fit. Those are crucial to reaching the company's goals

of entering the market successfully and building a resilient brand to have long-term market dominance.

Those criteria help assess each segment and compare it to the other segments. While the customer research insights can answer some criteria, others are assumptions that need further validation through experiments.

Assessment

Figure 09 shows the performance of each segment on the core and secondary criteria.

The **market size** of football in Germany alone is extensive, with more than 1.8 million players (DFB-MITGLIEDERSTATISTIK 2020/2021, n.d.). Due to the interview insights suggesting that many young players want to become professionals, the percentage of those 1.8 million players fitting the ambition criteria is high. However, the criteria of ‚high ambitions without the offer of a strength & conditioning coach‘ impede the ability to estimate accurate market numbers.

In hockey, the total **market size** in Germany is smaller than in football because there are fewer players overall that play hockey in Germany. Although with only 84.000 players, the German market is small (Statista, 2022a), the number of hockey players in neighboring countries like the Netherlands, with almost a quarter-million players (Statista, 2021), is high. Therefore the Netherlands can be a market extension as soon as the German market is saturated.

In football, the **ability to exert brand leadership** is relatively low because multiple competitors have an equally established position in the market. Several interviewees (F.01; F.02) mentioned football-specific training apps like Kroos Academy (tonikroos-academy.com, 2021) or physical providers like Schnelligkeitszentrum (schnelligkeitszentrum.de, 2005). Those companies have high expertise and could decelerate the brand leadership.

The **ability to exert brand leadership** in hockey is evaluated very high due to the exceptional expertise the *Athlete Development* founder has in that segment. Specifically with *Timo Kirchenberger* being knowledgeable and experienced in hockey’s strength & conditioning space as described in *chapter 1*. There is no other player in this market that has more expertise. This deep knowledge about hockey-specific strength & conditioning training is a unique capability that others cannot replicate.

The **cost of market entry** for hockey and football is high. There is no existing market for strength & conditioning training that is hockey specific because there are no equivalent products. The target segment only uses product alternatives like *Freeletics*, *Youtube*, or *personal trainers*, which

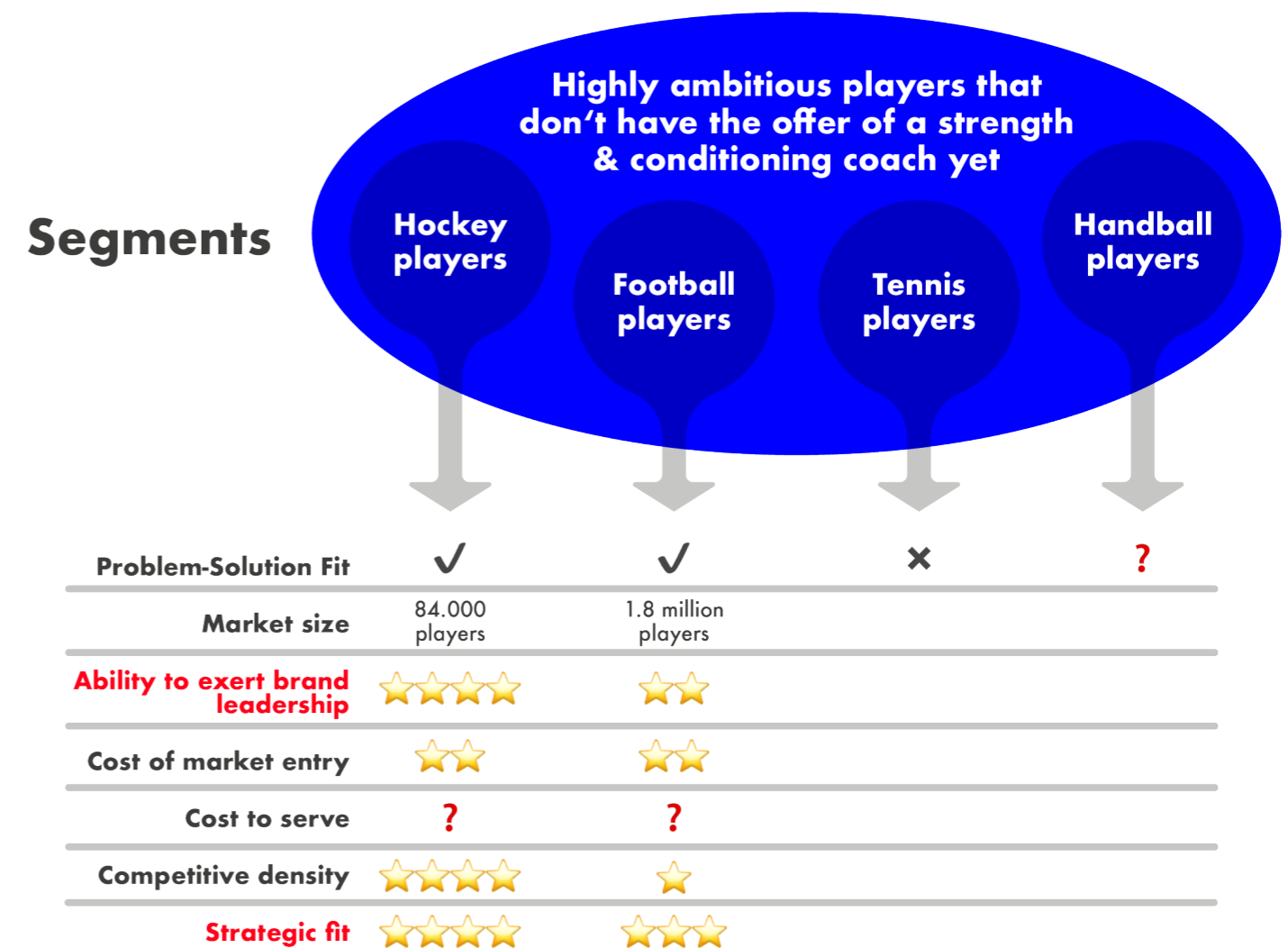


Figure 12: Assessment of market segments according to criteria (Friedmann, 2012)

are therefore the competitors. Thus, a market has to develop and establish first. This development includes costs to create awareness of the product's existence in the hockey community. For example, marketing activities have to reach the target group. In football, a crowded market with established brands exists. Therefore, the firm needs resources to install and stand out from the competition.

The **costs to serve the customers** are hard to estimate at this early stage of the start-up, considering there are no numbers to compare the cost to serve from past experiences. Therefore, experiments need to examine this criterion after launching the product.

The **competitive density** in hockey is remarkably low. As a result, no companies offer hockey-specific strength & conditioning training online. Seven interviewees (R.01; R.02; H.02; H.04; H.03; H.08; HB.03) described *Youtube* exercise videos as an alternative source of information, and two (H.02; H.04) mentioned generic online services such as *Freeletics*.

In football, the **competitive density** is high. Various training apps offer training plans and videos (source in appendix), and multiple locally-oriented companies in different areas all over Germany offer strength & conditioning training for prices lower than personal trainers (source in appendix).

There is a **strategic fit** in hockey because of the credibility that start-up founder Timo Kirchenberger establishes in his experience. Furthermore, he has high-profile credentials coaching the women's national team and a first league team. This foundation can leverage markets in neighboring countries. Ultimately, the founder also has the specialized knowledge to a greater extent in hockey and therefore slightly prefers that market.

In football, the **strategic fit** is decent due to the overall large market in Germany and Europe overall. Moreover, there are vast opportunities to expand in other geographical directions. Nevertheless, the product-related competence is comparatively low, set side-by-side with hockey. Thus, the strategic fit of the company with the market of football is lower than in hockey.

Targeting decision

Altogether, considering the core criteria that conform to the business goals of *Athlete Development*, which are 'Ability to exert brand leadership' and 'Strategic fit,' **hockey players** potentially are the most fitting target market segment. Also, the results of the secondary criteria suggest that hockey is better suited as the target than football. Furthermore, the segmentation filter of ambition level applied to the sport defines the target consumer profile. However, experiments need to validate this targeting strategy.

Since detecting the target segment for Athlete Development, the next step is to validate that decision and collect supplementary information about the consumers in the segment. Besides that, discovering the most suitable marketing channels and testing them with consumers follows the targeting. Section 3.3 shows how a social media advertisement aims to validate the target segment before section 3.4 explains the different sales channel experiments.

3.3 Validation Channel Experiment

The decision to target hockey players in section 3.2 needs supporting evidence. According to the experimental learning approach guiding this project's process, every assumption needs proof through validation.

Social media advertisement

A social media campaign aims to confirm the targeting by comparing the performance of ads in hockey in comparison to football. Due to the ability to test similar business models against each other quickly, social media advertising fits this purpose.

The hypothesis for the experiment is that hockey players respond to the offer the ads present more than football players. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed when the results of the campaign clearly show higher link clicks and conversion numbers in hockey.

The advertisements target people with age 18-24 that are interested in hockey or football. Two advertisements that only differ in their focus on sport compared the advertising performance of hockey with football. Figure 13 displays those advertisements.

The advertisements address two different archetypes of athletes identified in the customer research. Figure 13 shows that the first archetype is injury-prone players that were injured in the past or want to prevent injuries in the future. This archetype addresses the target audience with the claim: „Never miss a game because of an injury!“

The other archetype is the player who wants to increase their performance to get into a higher team, league, or club. There, the claim: „Make the jump into the higher team!“ addresses the target audience. The ads used those two archetypes for both hockey and football. Instagram displayed the commercials for two days each in German cities with a high density of football and hockey clubs (Berlin, Hamburg, and Cologne).

The interviewees fit the archetype of performance increase more frequent than the injury prevention archetype. However, several interviewees mentioned their use of strength & conditioning as an injury prevention tool. Therefore the experiments include this archetype of consumer. Consequently, a sub-hypothesis is that one archetype of athlete responds more to the advertisement than the other.

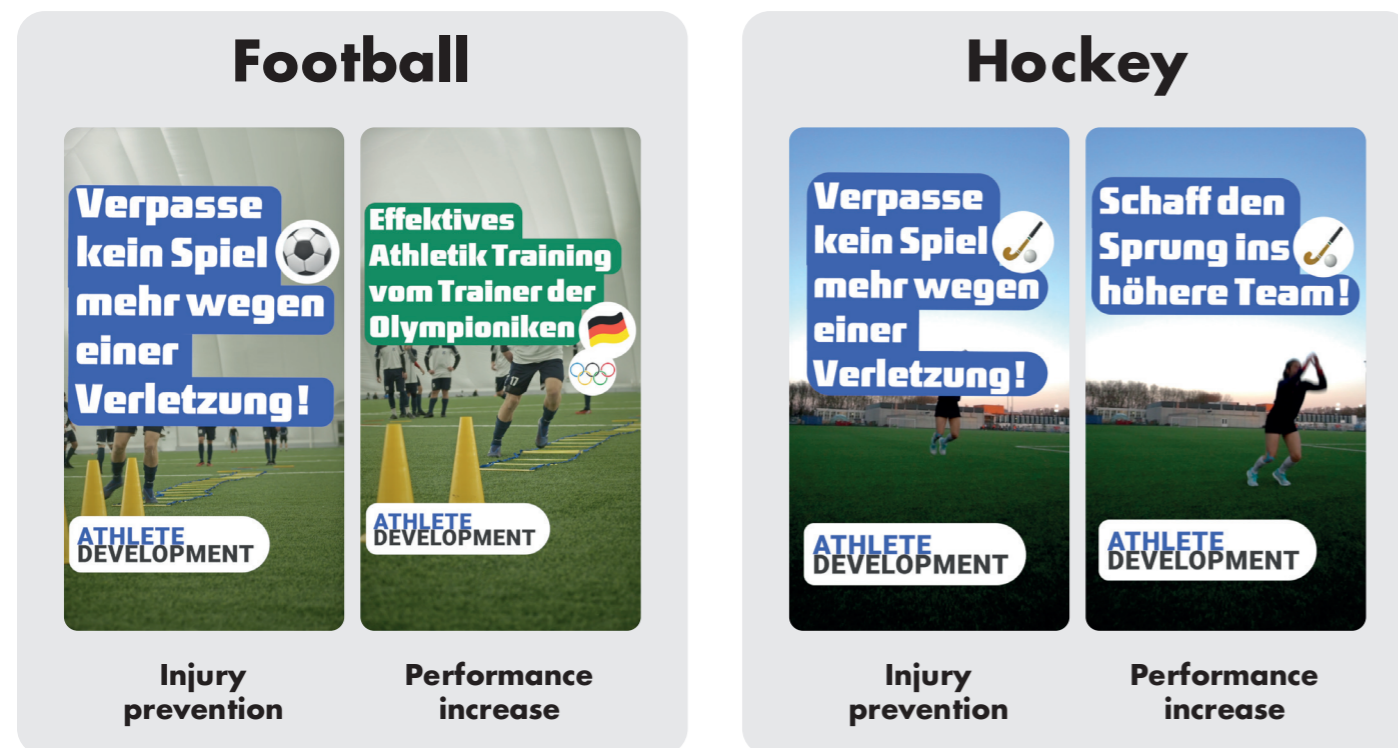


Figure 13: Social media advertisements 1.0

Results

The **campaign results** (figure 14) show that the overall performance of the advertisements was low. Even though it reached more than **21.000 people** in two days, only **15 people clicked on the link** to the company website. When comparing the two sports, hockey performed slightly better regarding the 3-second video play (Hockey: 1.052 people; Football: 615 people). In conclusion, the initial social media advertisements do not show a tendency of which sport is suited better. The ads performed poorly overall and therefore cannot confirm the hypothesis of the experiment.

The results, displayed in figure 14, furthermore do not clearly confirm the sub-hypothesis that one archetype responds better to the advertisements than the other. In football, the injury prevention archetype generated six link clicks versus one link click on the performance increase one. However, the link clicks are on such a low level overall, that no generalizability can be concluded from the results.

In hockey, injury prevention generated three clicks and performance increase generated five. Those results are not indicating the superior performance of one archetype either.

Advertisement	Reach	Impressions	Link clicks	3-second play	Cost / Result
Football	12.304	16.244	7	615	0,04€
Injury	7.998	9.441	6	297	0,05€
Performance	6.102	6.803	1	318	0,03€
Hockey	11.252	15.315	8	1.052	0,04€
Injury	7.740	9.367	3	565	0,03€
Performance	5.356	5.948	5	487	0,04€
Total	21.136	31.559	15	1.667	0,05€

Figure 14:
Results of social media advertisements

Decision

The results of the social media advertisements do not confirm the experiment hypotheses. After a consultation with the client, *Timo Kirchenberger*, his personal preference for hockey in comparison to football became apparent, even though the uncertainty in this assumption is high. He reasoned a better fit in hockey due to his coaching experience and connection to the community.

The ongoing sales channel experiments that section 3.4 outlines target segment of hockey players. They aim to explore the target groups' response on four different marketing channels and furthermore confirm the assumption that hockey is the most fitting target.

3.4 Sales Channel Experiments

According to the simultaneous experimentation approach proposed by Andries et al. (2013), four experiments aim to explore the target groups response and collect deeper insights into their mental models. Those experiments are small-scale and cost-effective to test different solutions simultaneously. Testing similar business models at the same time, discovers particularities of the situation before investing more resources into one direction (Andries et al., 2013). Experiments classify as different business models as long as one element in the business model topology (See: ,Chapter two‘; Section ,Experimental learning‘) differs from each other (Andries et al., 2013). The section below defines the business model characteristics.

The experiment aims to confirm the target segments‘ desire to spend money on the product. Therefore, experiments market the product as if it had been launched. The secondary goal of the experiments is to test different marketing strategies to identify the most appropriate marketing mix for the business.

Experiment Structure

The business model topology that Andries et al. (2013) adapted from the initial one created by Morris et al. (2005) classifies the business model tested in the experiments. In between the experiments, only the market component differs. The components: offering, internal capabilities, competitive strategy, economic, personal, and investor factors stay consistent throughout the experiments.

The following section defines each of the component for the sales channel experiments in section 3.4:

Offering (How does the company create value?)

- product

- some customization
- internal manufacturing or service delivery
- direct distribution

Internal capabilities (What is the company’s source of competence?)

- creative or innovative capability/intellectual
- networking

Competitive strategy (How does the company competitively position itself?)

- product quality/availability
- low cost
- intimate customer relationship

Economic factors (How does the company make money?)

- pricing and revenue sources: fixed
- operating leverage: high
- volumes: high
- margins: medium

Personal / investor factors (What are the company’s ambitions?)

- income model

In every following channel experiment, the passage: **Business model**, defines the market component according to the business model framework (Andries et al., 2013).

Channel 1: Social media advertising

Business model

According to the business model topology (Andries et al., 2013), *figure 11* shows that the categorization of this experiment in the business to consumer market on a regional level and targeting the final consumer in the value chain. Due to the nature of social media marketing, it targets a broad market and is therefore somewhat more transactional than relational.

Channel benefit

Social media advertising is suited well to test a scalable marketing channel that reaches a high number of potential customers cost-effectively. In addition, social media marketing can also build brand-consumer relationships, creates awareness for the brand, and is helpful in marketing research (Tuten & Solomon, 2018). Especially since the customer segments of Athlete Development are specific consumer niches, social media marketing enables focused advertising on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok.

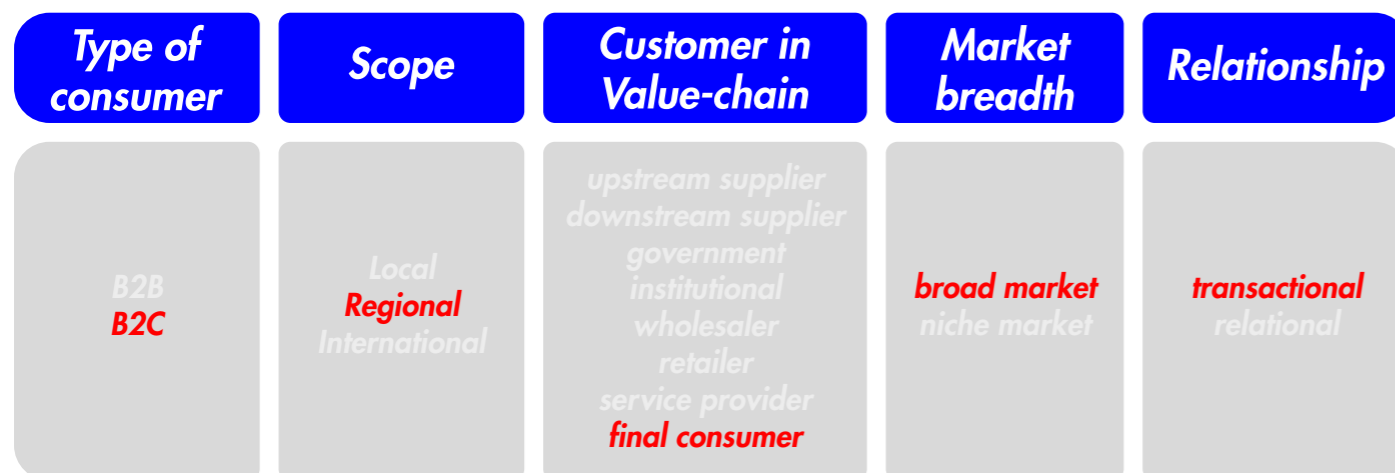


Figure 14:
Market categorization - Social media advertising (Andries et al., 2013)



Figure 15:
Social media advertisements 2.0

Experiment

As shown in *figure 15*, a social media campaign implemented the learnings from the first commercials. After obtaining experience in social media advertising in section 3.3 (Validation Channel Experiments), several elements of the advertisement are varied in the second campaign. One perceived point of improvement from the initial campaign is that the advertisements can be of higher quality regarding video and editing. The quality in the first campaign is not reflecting the quality of the product *Athlete Development* endorses with the training plans. Moreover, the actual product exhibits its actual context of use so the consumer can better visualize the solution to their problem. Furthermore, a clear call-to-action must activate the consumers in the second campaign.

The storyling in the advertisement (Figure 15) is: „No matter whats your background, everyone can push their limits! The hockey national team trusts my expertise, and now it's your turn: Jump on to the next level! With the training plans by Athlete Development.“

The campaign targeted people living in Germany between the ages **18-24 years** old. It aired for **48 hours** on **Instagram** stories and reels with a **20€ daily** budget. The interests *hockey, olympic sports* and *hockey sports* defined the target group.

Results

The results of the second social media advertisement show an increased performance in terms of link clicks on people reached compared to the initial social media campaign described in section 3.3. As the funnel in *figure 16* displays, the overall campaign impressions were 5.084 with **4.252 individual people** reached in 48 hours. Out of those people, **87 people** clicked on the link. The *Athlete Development* website analytics reveal that out of the 87 website visits, **one person signed up** to purchase the product.



In conclusion, the results of the campaign do not confirm social media as a strong channel to convert consumers into customers. However, the overall reach and website visits suggest the usage of social media marketing with the goal of raising awareness for the brand and product within the hockey community.

Advertisement	Cost / Result	Reach	Impressions	Link clicks	Purchases
Hockey 2.0	0,46 EUR	4.252	5.084	87	1

Figure 16:
Results of social media advertisements 2.0 in marketing funnel

Channel 2: Cold calling

Business model

Figure 17 outlines the experiment's characteristics on the business model topology (Andries et al., 2013). The experiment has a business-to-customer type, the scale is local because of the contact through a field hockey coach, and targets at the final consumer in the value chain. The contact with the hockey coach makes it local and relational rather than transactional because it builds a connection with the consumer.

Channel benefit

Having one-on-one conversations with players can establish a personal and intimate connection compared to social media advertising. Reactions and questions are unrestricted in direct communication, and hearing a voice builds a deep connection with the brand. Besides that, it is possible to directly communicate the value proposition to conform to the players' problems. The disadvantage of cold-calling consumers is that it requires high amounts of time to discover whom to call and how to get their contact details. Also, the call itself requires time.

Experiment

Figure 18 visualizes the communication between the marketer representing the brand, the field hockey coach, and the players, who are the final consumer. To be resource-efficient, the consumer acquisition strategy for this experiment

Type of consumer	Scope	Customer in Value-chain	Market breadth	Relationship
B2B B2C	Local Regional International	upstream supplier downstream supplier government institutional wholesaler retailer service provider final consumer	broad market niche market	transactional relational

Figure 17:
Market categorization - Cold calling (Andries et al., 1013)

used hockey coaches as the medium. The coaches' contacts are accessible on the internet, and it is therefore easy to reach out. After presenting the product to the hockey coaches, a call-to-action asked for players that fit the segment. The players scheduled a phone call after receiving an initial message explaining the product roughly. Every conversation was question-based and structured, starting with questions about the current situation, the past, and lastly, about their future goals and expectations. After understanding the product's value proposition, they could decide to purchase it.

During the contact acquisition procedure, an essential insight was that the coaches are an exceptional, effective medium to identify players that fit the target segment. They know which player has high ambitions and wants to improve. They also know which player is injury prone and could use the product. Furthermore, the coach identification process determines if a club already has strength & conditioning coaches.

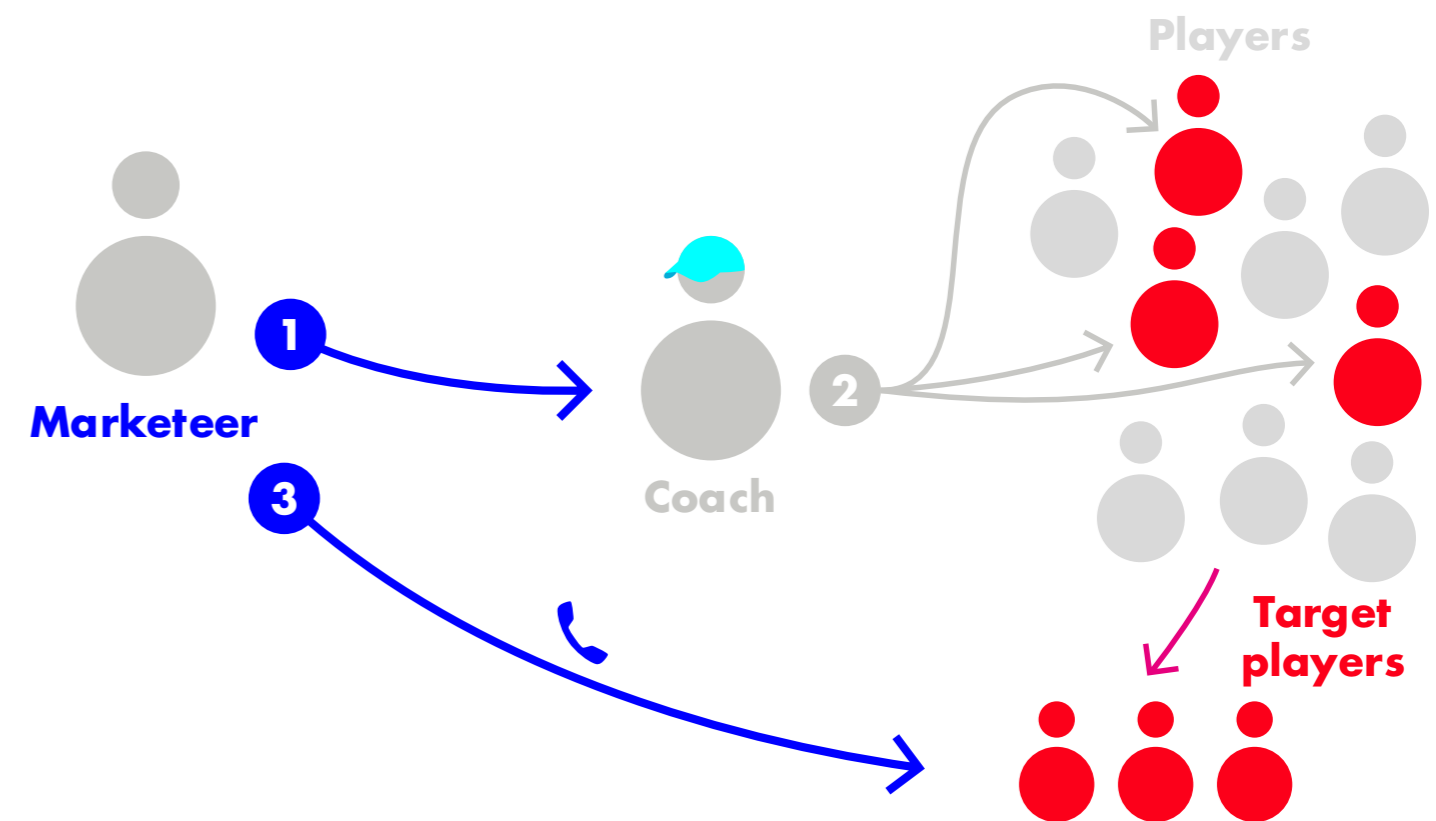


Figure 18:
Cold calling scheme

Results

Figure 20 shows that **eight out of eleven** contacted players scheduled a conversation. Furthermore, out of those eight players, **three converted** to purchasing the product's subscription, confirming the effectiveness of personal conversations with the players. Figure 20 visualizes the marketing funnel in this channel. This funnel describes the number of consumers who drop out going through the steps from brand awareness until purchase. Figure 19 gives an overview of the hockey players that scheduled an interview in the second step of the funnel (figure 18).

Furthermore, figure 19 shows their current strength & conditioning training and where they see room for improvement to reach the goals they set for themselves. The figure also shows the reasoning if they did not purchase the product. This reason was solely the lack of time. In chapter five, the section Launch proposal explains what this reasoning implies for the product.

In conclusion, cold calling is an effective channel to reach the target group. This is especially valuable because of the segmentation filter of ambition level, that creates a non-tangible niche segment.

	A.D.	A.K.	M.S.	B.	M.H.	M.Sch.	E.G.	M.V.
Current Training	3 x / week with strength & conditioning incl.	More endurance before season starts - little strength	More endurance before season starts	Not enough endurance training	High amounts of endurance in season prep Stability	Not enough endurance Not enough strength	In season prep more strength & conditioning	Additionally 3x running per week Some endurance Stability Strength Stability
Room for improvement	Endurance Strength Better scooping	Become more athletic Speed Catching up with teammates	Endurance	Endurance Strength	Strength Staying fit	Endurance	Speed Strength	
Goals				Play in 2nd league	Win gamesH	ave funP	lay in a bigger club	
Purchase	No	YesY	No	es	No	No	No	Yes
Reason given	Not enough time		Not enough time		Not enough time	Not enough time		

Figure 19: Cold calls overview

Player contacts

11 players

Calls scheduled

8 players

Purchases

03 players

Figure 20: Marketing funnel of cold calling

Channel 3: Live product showcase

Business model

Figure 21 presents the categorization of this experiment in the business model topology. The live product showcase is a business-to-consumer type. Furthermore, it targets people locally, specifically the final consumer in the value chain because it directly speaks to them in their context. Therefore the target is a niche market and rather relational than transactional. This relation comes due to the strong connection that developed through direct conversations.

Channel benefit

Besides the experiment of calling players, another personal experiment was to physically showcase the product by attending training sessions of hockey teams and presenting the product before or after the session. Contacting the coaches like cold calling initiated this contact. The goal of this experiment was to collect email addresses that can be converted into subscriptions afterward. That is why the call-to-action at the end of the conversation was to ask players for their email addresses if they were interested in using the product.

Results

Interestingly, the dynamic of speaking to the whole team at once evokes the team to act as one entity. For example, when asked what they think about the past strength & conditioning training, the team mostly agreed with the

first person answering. Thus, there was no differentiated discussion, and one opinion on the topics dominated. Additionally, being on the training field sets a high threshold for the players to commit on the spot to buy a product. After sending a follow-up email, only one player decided to subscribe to the product, substantiating this point.

A striking insight from the physical experiment was that various coaches were interested in having such a product. A coach wanted to integrate it into his training because most hockey coaches are „just former hockey players without special education in strength & conditioning training“ (H.18). The coaches are aware of the importance and benefits of the training but often lack the knowledge to execute it with their team. Therefore, the following channel experiment presents a business-to-business proposal directed at hockey clubs.

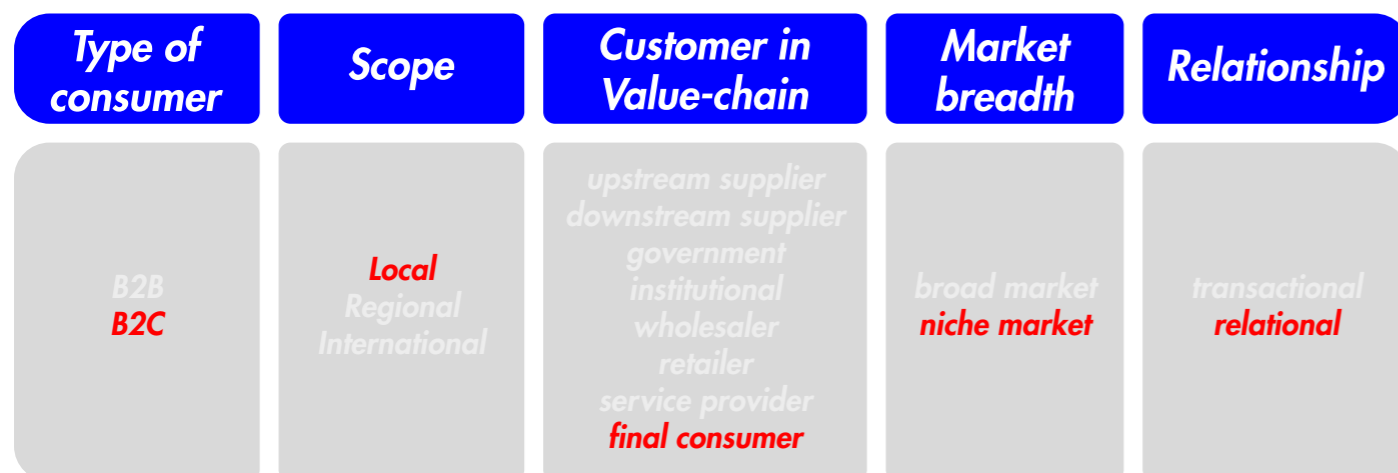


Figure 21:
Market categorization - Live showcase (Andries et al., 1013)

Channel 4: Business-to-business proposal

Business model

The last experiment categorizes as a business-to-business transaction, as *figure 21* displays the business model topology (Andries et al., 2013). Besides that, it is local, and the customer is a service provider in the value chain because it is the hockey club that provides the product as a service to its coaches. The market is small and therefore categorizes as a niche market. Due to the direct contact with the hockey club, it is not a transactional but a relational connection.

Experiment

Figure 22 shows the novel proposal that reacted to the coaches' needs identified during the live product showcase. The business model targets the club and implicates a new value proposition tailored to the coaches' needs. Additionally to the supplied training plans, the product includes the exercise library, from which the coaches can draw. Finally, it includes coaching tips for the trainers that supplement the training plans and explain the exercises to make the training maximally efficient. This proposal has a price point of 300 - 400€ per month for the clubs. This price developed out of the experience the start-up founder *Timo Kirchenberger* has and through the lower number of customers in this business model compared to the business-to-consumer one. Due to that, the price needs to increase compared to individual purchases to form a viable business.

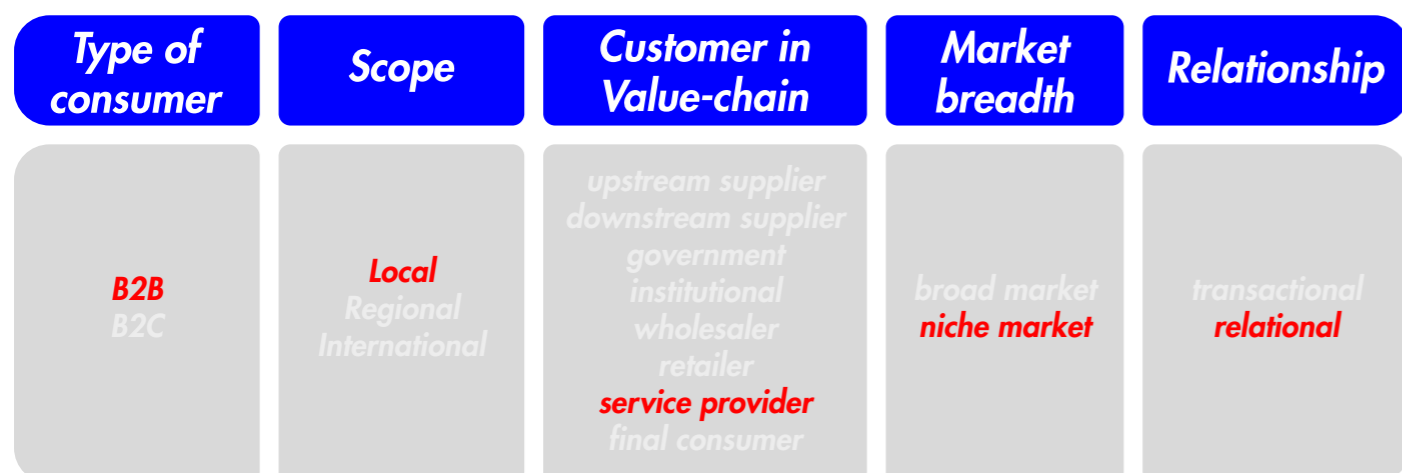


Figure 22:
Market categorization - Alternative business model (Andries et al., 1013)

The reactions to the proposal differed between the clubs. Every club contacted mentioned the desire to have such a product. *Figure 23* illustrates the spectrum of budgets in hockey clubs with several example clubs on it. The limiting factor for many hockey clubs is their budget because a broad spectrum of financial situations is prevalent in hockey clubs. On the lower end, some clubs can barely keep themselves alive and do not have the means (300-400€ per month) to afford such a product. On the other end are clubs with high budgets and teams playing in high leagues. The segment that is interesting for Athlete Development lies in between those poles. Clubs with a decent budget but do not play in the top leagues like the one from H.18.



Figure 23:
Product proposal to hockey clubs

Results

When writing this paper, no club showed interest in participating in research or negotiating a unit of business for a coaching product. Consequently, no results validate the strategy of an alternative business model, and therefore, it does not qualify for the go-to-market strategy for *Athlete Development*. Furthermore, it shows no interest in supporting the coaches in their strength & conditioning education.

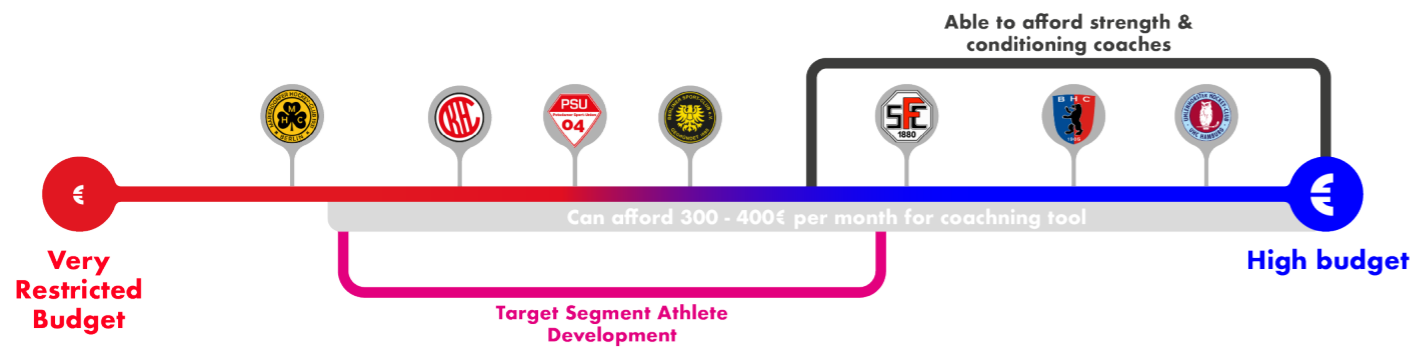


Figure 23:
Perceived budget spectrum in hockey clubs

To **conclude** chapter three, the results of the sales channel experiments show that cold calling is the most efficient one to reach the target segment. This is because it utilizes the hockey coaches as a marketing extension to narrow down the number of consumers who reached the niche with the most need for the product. With three out of eleven consumers converting to being customers with cold calling, the numbers support this assumption. Chapter four uses those experiment insights to design the go-to-market strategy for *Athlete Development*. Along with knowledge from literature and consumer research, the experiment results comprise the content of the strategy.

Chapter 4

Design Results

This chapter shows the outcomes of the experiments in the form of a brand identity, suitable marketing channels and a launch strategy that includes strategic and tactical activities for *Athlete Development* to implement during launch.

4.1 Brand DNA

Synthesizing the observations in chapters two and three, from reviewing the literature to researching the consumers and testing marketing channels, chapter four outlines the design of the go-to-market strategy for Athlete Development. This includes the brand identity, the launch strategy, tactics, and an implementation plan for the start-up to use as a guideline to implement the design in practice.

Positioning

After segmentation and targeting, the product's positioning in the head of the target consumers is the next step. Again, the goal of positioning is to build a foundation for the content of the identified marketing activities. Furthermore, Beverland (2018) emphasizes the importance of internal brand building. This means, the brands values in the positioning statement need internal support to have a beneficial effect on the strength of the brand message.

Camilleri (2018) proposes a positioning framework that consists of four characteristics that have to consider when writing positioning strategies:

1. The strategies need to be centered around the **product's value** for the customer.
2. The product must be **differentiated from its competition**.
3. The company needs to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to **fulfill the claim** they make to the customers with their product.
4. The **position has to be so stable** that a competitor cannot easily take over that position or neutralize the company's position by taking on another one.

Product value

As the consumer interviews in chapter three describe, each interviewee found a positive value in the effects strength & conditioning training has. The two

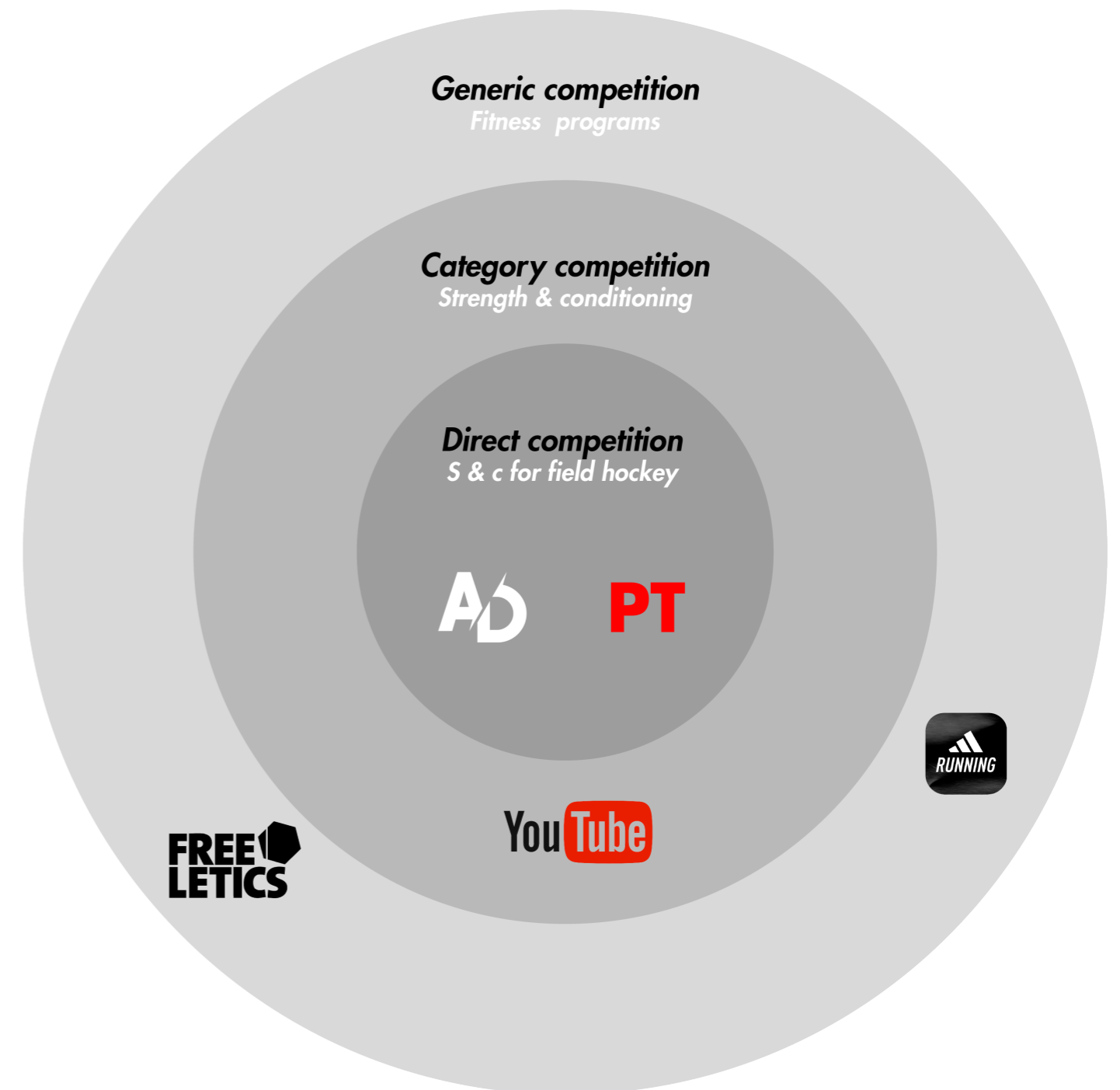


Figure 24:
Competition circle

archetypes of benefit they explained are **(1) improving the performance** on the hockey field and **(2) reducing the risk of injuries**. Consequently, the products value for the customer clearly lies in those two benefits.

Differentiate from competition

A company's goal of positioning itself in a market is to be the choice of customers in that market. Standing out from the competition is the core capability to become the ,customers' choice successfully. *Figure 24* explains

where the *Athlete Development* competitors are in terms of their products concerning the *Athlete Development* one.

In the case of *Athlete Development*, there is little direct competition. The competition in the market of ambitious hockey players that need to improve their athletic performances is indirect competitors that act in broader markets. The goal of hockey players is to get fitter and stronger and perform better on the field. Besides the performance aspect, a superficial benefit of strength & conditioning training, which is ‚looking fitter,‘ was mentioned by interviewees as a reason to do the training.

The alternative **Freeletics** also fulfills this job-to-be-done. It is a bodyweight training app that gives daily high-intensity workouts and costs from 80€ a year to 32€ for three months.

The second alternative mentioned multiple times by interviewees is **Youtube** videos. Youtube is a platform that hosts videos about any topic and niche imaginable. There are virtually thousands of videos for any part of strength & conditioning training. The athlete’s effort to complete in advance of the training is to research which videos work best for them. Besides being spoiled for choice, they also have to structure their training themselves daily.

The last competitors that get the job done are strength & conditioning **coaches**. While having the highest value for the customers’ training, they also have the highest value in price. Quality strength & conditioning coaches cost from 70€ up to more than 150€ per hour.

Athlete Development has to stand out from those competitors to be the customers’ choice. A strategy to stand out from the competition is the approach of contrarian branding (Vorst, 2017). In contrarian branding, a brand unites opposites of the competitors’ disadvantages and therefore gets favored by the customers. Tripolarity means combining at least three seemingly contradictory qualities in one brand.

Athlete Development can apply this tripolarity strategy by combining the absolute contradictions of the three competitor fields, as *figure 25* exhibits. *Athlete Development* sets itself apart from the competition because it is hockey specific instead of offering generic training. Furthermore, it is conveniently packaged in a monthly plan instead of chaotic content loads and is offered at an affordable price instead of being a high investment.

Those benefits create a positive value for the target group and, therefore, also fit the first characteristic Camilleri (2018) proposed.

Fulfilling the claim

Athlete Development’s core promise to its customers is that they offer the highest possible quality of strength & conditioning training. To fulfill this promise, the level of expertise on the product side has to be exceptional. The founder can confirm that claim by being one of the most relevant figures in hockey-specific strength & conditioning training. In addition, having the credentials of coaching the women’s national team and a successful first league men’s team substantiates this promise and builds trust in the product.

Stable position

Because of the lack of direct competition in this particular niche, there are only less appropriate alternatives to this product. Consequently, those alternatives miss specific characteristics to be able to compete with *Athlete Development*. The hockey market in Germany is small, and once an established player is active, that creates a barrier for any other brand. Being the first on the market is a crucial aspect of a resilient positioning. Besides that, others had to make high investments. For example, Freeletics had to acquire field hockey-specific

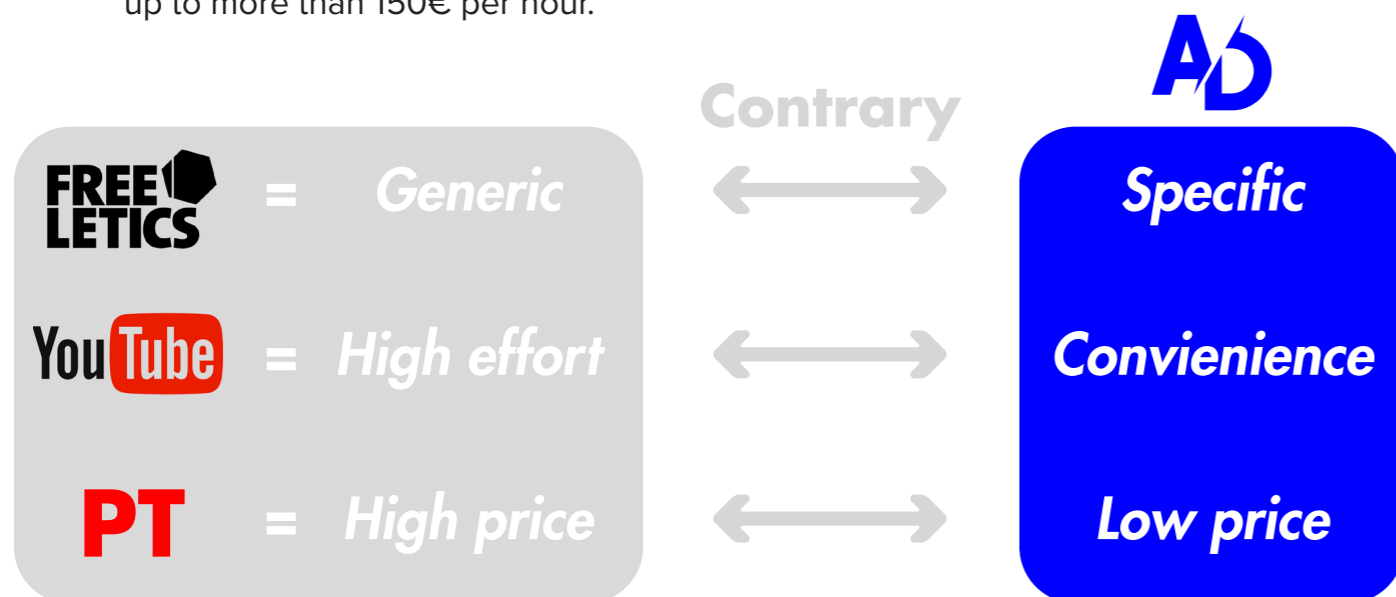


Figure 25:
Contrarian positioning

knowledge and pivot their value proposition. Personal coaches had to offer their services for a bargain which would take away the foundation of their business model. Youtube content creators had to additionally offer structure to their output to match the convenience aspect.

Purpose

As described earlier, Beverland (2018) stresses the positive effect of internalizing the brand identity in the organization. According to him, this is the first step of brand building. Consequently, besides the brand positioning, the purpose a start-up founder has with the brand also has an effect of the internal brand image. Thus it is logical to define what the purpose is, so the other elements in the brand DNA can align with it.

According to the start-up founder, *Timo Kirchenberger*, his purpose for creating the *Athlete Development* product is to **„enable everyone, no matter where they live or how much money they have, to have access to the highest quality training plan. So they can unlock their maximum potential and do the sport they do long-term“**.

Positioning statement

A positioning statement summarises the insights taken from the contributing elements positioning and purpose:

For highly ambitious field hockey players without a strength & conditioning coach, Athlete Development is a hockey-specific online coaching service that supplies players with affordable, high-quality strength & conditioning training plans to perform better on the field and stay healthy.

Identity

Positioning and purpose mainly characterize the brands identity. As figure 25 shows, the brand positioning, which consists of the four step framework by Camilleri (2018) and the brand purpose defined by start-up founder *Timo Kirchenberger* merges into the brand identity. It is supposed to be internalized inside the organization, so every signal sent to the outside is coherent. Furthermore, it can directly guide the content of the marketing signals that the launch campaign comprises.

The launch strategy needs to reflect this positioning statement. Therefore, chapter 4.2 and 4.3 outline a launch strategy proposal and a detailed tactical plan that covers the launch activities grounded on the evidence from validation experiments described earlier.

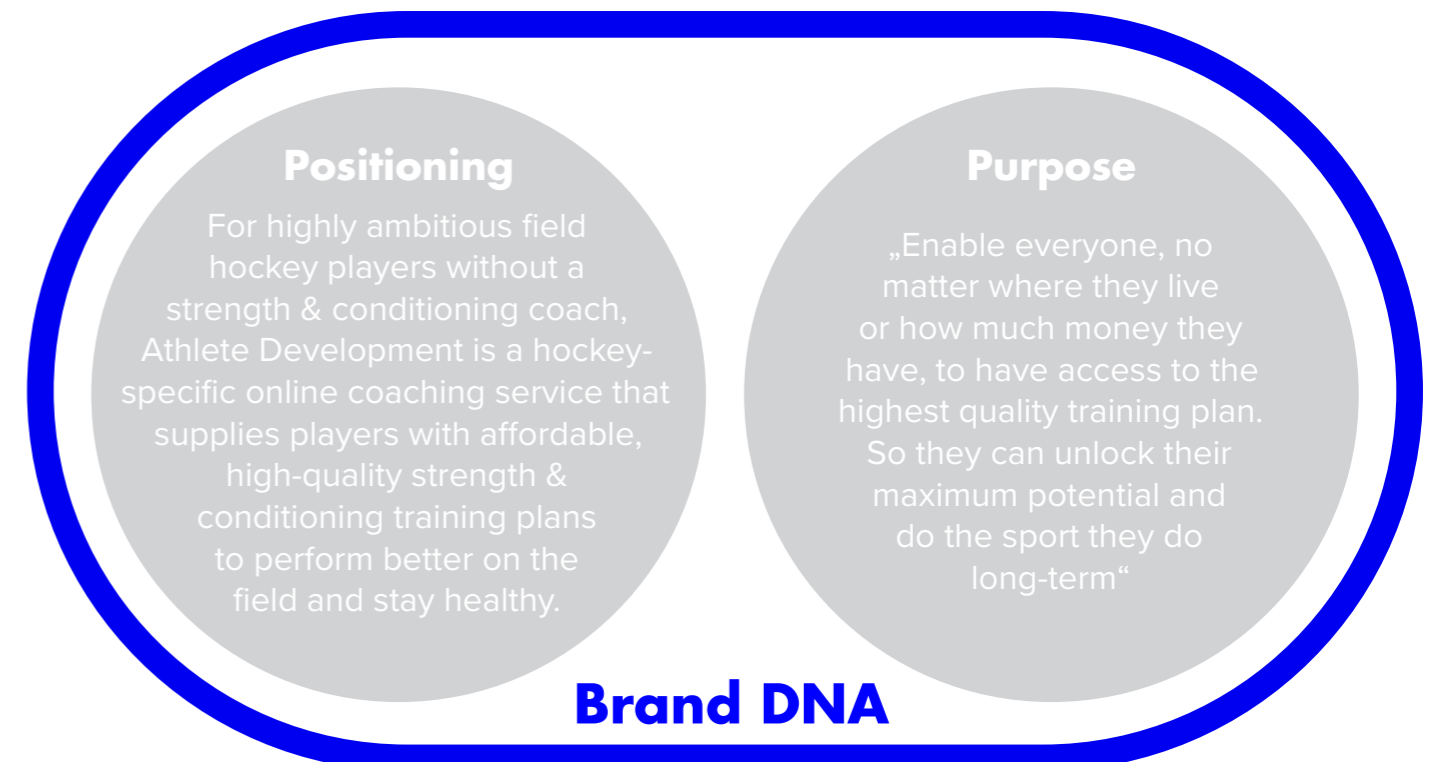


Figure 25:
Brand positioning and purpose merge into the brand DNA

4.2 Launch Proposal

Strategic Launch

Hultink et al. (1997) explain that strategic launch decisions comprise the questions of what, where, when, and why to launch. Although they researched an industrial product development, this launch strategy adapts its structure. According to them, defining the strategic aspects early on can increase the launch's success. It is vital because tactical launch decisions align with it after defining the strategy, which is advantageous according to the research. Thus, this section describes both strategic and tactical launch decisions to be coherent. This section answers the w-questions in product, market and timing strategy.

The following concept guides the launch strategy for Athlete Development. The process of the sales channel experiment ,cold calling' is the marketing channel that mainly characterizes the launch. Contacts with hockey coaches extend the reach of Athlete Development and focus the marketing on players in the target segment.

Decreasing the distance to the target segment through hockey coaches

Product strategy

A product strategy is a crucial part of the launch strategy. It includes the innovativeness, the product's technology, and the time it takes to be developed and brought to the market (Hultink et al., 1997).

Since Hultink et al. (1997) refer to new product development in industrial settings, the product strategy in the case of a start-up differs in terms of

,product newness' because pre-launch, there is no product on the market. Therefore, the newness is inevitably an entirely new development. However, in this case, the product strategy refers to developing the final product for the launch with the experiences gained from developing the minimum viable product prior.

The suggested product are the training plans for individuals in the gradations ,Foundation' and ,Advanced' in the form of a web app. The Foundation plan requires no equipment and the least training sessions per week (three sessions). The Advanced plan requires essential training tools that the athlete can easily store at the home and at least four sessions per week. In conversations with the consumers that fit the identified segment during the ,cold calling' experiment (see chapter 3, Strategy 2: Cold calling), they revealed that even 3-5 training sessions might be too much for some players. *Figure 26* visualizes the balance between the players' ambitions and the time they want to invest in their training. As depicted, as soon as the

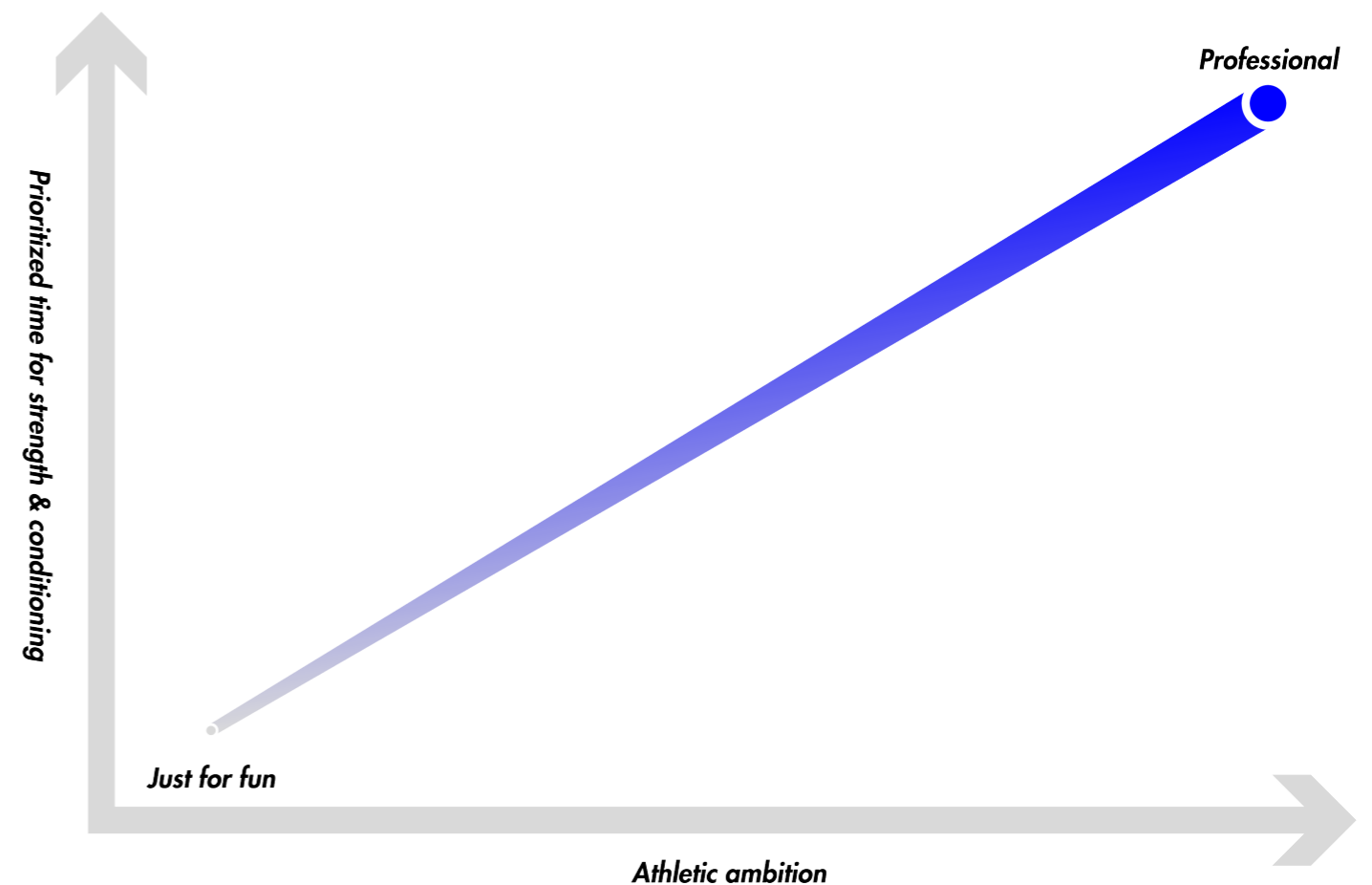


Figure 26: Perceived time available in relation to priorities

ambition decreases, the time they are willing to spend decreases. Therefore, the products should be adaptable in the number of training sessions per week, so players can individually choose how much time they want to prioritize for the additional strength & conditioning training.

Another option is that the general training volume in the plans is lowered to 1-4 sessions and the element that differentiates ‚Foundation‘ and ‚Advanced‘ is only the amount of equipment.

Furthermore, it is recommended to ignore the level of ‚Professional‘ for the launch because it requires a gym membership for the athletes. It also demands the investment of five additional training sessions per week. The ambition level found during the segmentation that is crucial to achieving problem-solution fit says to be highly ambitious but not having the offer of a strength & conditioning coach yet. There was no intersection between this range of ambitions and players doing more than three additional training sessions per week in the research. Consequently, the ambition to require a minimum of five training sessions per week exceeds the range of ambitions identified in the segmentation. It also exceeds the amount of time the players from the cold calling experiment want to prioritize for this matter. Many of them do not „have the time to do four extra training sessions per week because of school“ (see Chapter 3: Channel 2: Cold calling). Not enough time being the reason for them not to purchase the product suggests that they have other activities that they prioritize higher than the strength & conditioning training and therefore do not want to purchase the product (*Figure 26*).

To keep product development efforts low, it is beneficial not to invest resources in developing the ‚Professional‘ training plans since the target segment did not show the need for them. Rather focus the resource deployment on developing timewise adaptable ‚Foundation‘ & ‚Advanced‘ plans.

The time to market the product is not a decisive aspect since it is a solely digital product and therefore has a short time of product development compared to the amount of time an industrial product needs, up to >3 years (Hultink et al., 1997). The tactical roadmap outlines the details of product development.

Market strategy

The substantial choice of the beachhead market is based on the segmentation, targeting, and positioning explained prior. The beachhead market is the segment of highly ambitious hockey players that do not have the offer of strength & conditioning coaching yet. As the section ‚Segmentation‘ outlined, those players have the goals of increasing their performance to play better on the field, get into a higher team, equalize with their teammates or stay injury-free. Hockey players value the benefit of having a sports-specific plan tailored to their needs and particularities (see Chapter 2; Strategy 2: Cold calling). Furthermore, the core expertise of the company’s founder lies in strength & conditioning training for hockey players. A vast network exists and high-profile credentials that can act as a marketing tool.

Besides the benefits in this customer segment, there is a deserted competitive landscape in hockey. The only competitors that can act as alternatives for the players are non-hockey-specific training services like Freeletics or high-priced personal coaches (see 4.1; *Positioning*).

Another essential aspect of the market strategy is the inclusion of hockey coaches in the marketing plan. The insights gained in the marketing experiments show the value the hockey coaches have as an extension of the reach *Athlete Development* has to the players. Therefore, the market strategy includes marketing directly to the players and their coaches in the first place to identify who requires additional training. Furthermore, it creates a sense of ownership of the additional training for the coach and gives them an indication of individual players’ improvements.

Timing strategy

Figure 25 displays how the seasons comprise in fieldhockey and indoor hockey. According to this structure, the ideal time to launch the brand *Athlete Development* with the proposed product is at the end of the field hockey season. This point is the time right when a season is over and before the next season begins. In field hockey, the outdoor season occurs in spring until late autumn with a break from July until September. The indoor season takes place in winter. In the off-season phase, hockey players focus less on training with the hockey stick and more on strength & conditioning training. The customer research identified that for most teams without a strength & conditioning coach, the hockey coach does strength & conditioning training, consisting of running and endurance exercises (see Chapter 3; Strategy 2: Cold calling). Therefore, when *Athlete Development* launches right when the season ends, the players have less hockey training and more time and energy to focus on their athletic development to start the next season with improved capabilities. This assumption derives from interviews only and was not tested in experiments yet. The actual launch will show if and how practice validates the assumption.

Summarizing the launch strategy consisting of product, market and timing, it is vital for *Athlete Development* to limit product development efforts to the essentials demanded by consumers, which are adaptable ‚Foundation‘ and ‚Advanced‘ plans. Furthermore, creating a coach network to ideally reach the niche market simplifies the marketing process and reduces the expenditures. Finally, launching the brand at the right time, when the hockey season ends and players focus their training more on their athletic capability improvement, can be valuable for both the company and the customers.

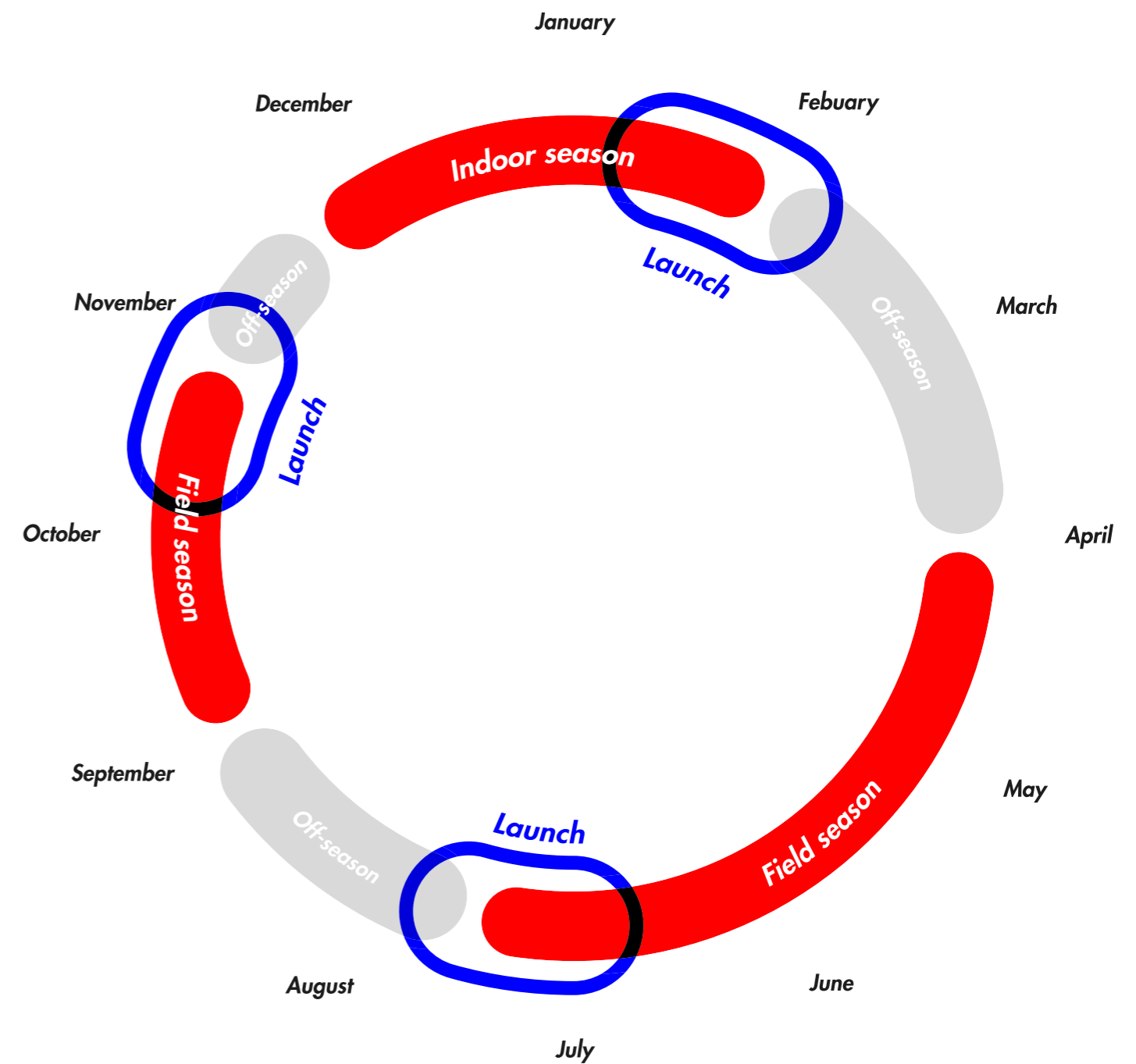


Figure 27:
Hockey season milestones including launch timing suggestions

4.3 Implementation Plan

Company capabilities

Athlete Development is in a stage where only the company founder *Timo Kirchenberger* is a permanent workforce. Therefore, examining the company's current and missing capabilities to perform the launch as planned benefits the implementation.

At the moment, the core capability present in the business is product expertise. Meaning the training plans' content is on an exceptionally high level.

Besides that, essential activities in operations and marketing like website building, marketing content creation, and bookkeeping are within the current capacity. Anything that exceeds those tasks demands too many resources in time and knowledge.

Further capabilities are needed to execute the product launch as outlined in the tactical roadmap below.

Capabilities needed

Product development

Additional product design and development expertise supports developing the web app that functions as the product with which the customers connect with the brand. This expertise can be an external freelancer, an internal employee, or a co-founder. The first planning horizon that finishes shortly after the product launch demands most of this expertise.

Marketing & Sales

For the creation of marketing materials and also to execute the marketing and

sales process in the first and second horizon of the planning, additional human resources contribute to the launch quality. Marketing and sales employees or a co-founder can bring this expertise. However, since those tasks involve managing a high amount of internal information, the external workforce is less suited but needs a lower effort in terms of administration.

Conditions for successful implementation

Athlete Development must set certain conditions to implement the proposed launch strategy successfully.

Ongoing customer research

Although customer experiments validate the launch strategy and tactics, this validation has its limitations too. For example, the experiment could not generalize for the whole market segment. Therefore, it is essential to continuously keep testing the assumptions made in the launch plan and questioning their validity. Besides that, continuously collecting new consumer insights holds value for product and operational improvements.

Continuity

The following strategy aims at long-term goals besides the objective of launching successfully. The expectations should focus on continuous and steady growth to build a stable business with available resources. That is why it is an essential skill to acquire the endurance and patience to reach long-term goals and stay sustainable as a business. This continuity should be cultivated as a general principle of working.

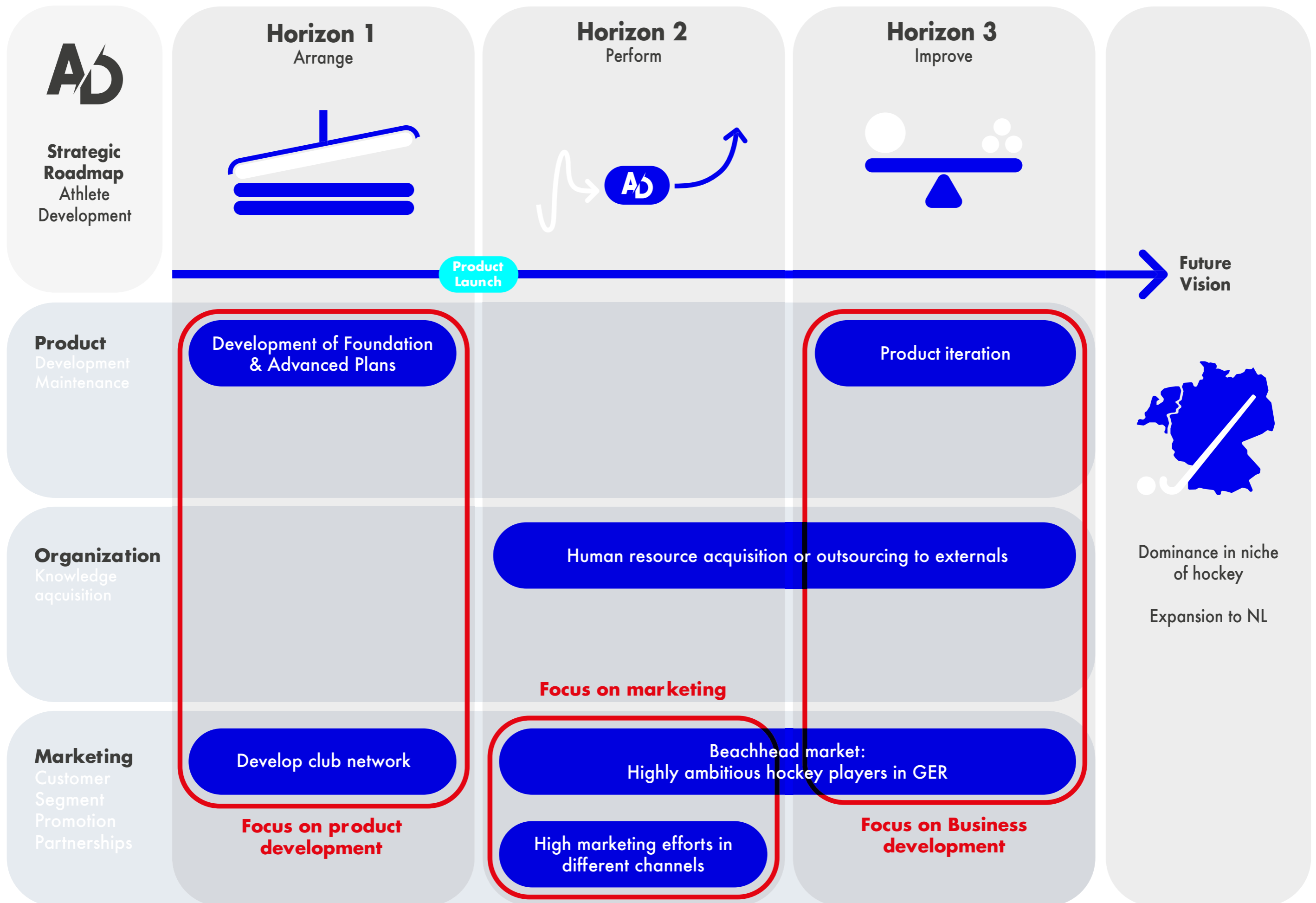


Figure 28:
Strategic roadmap

Strategic Roadmap

The strategic roadmap featured in figure 28 shows the three horizons and future vision according to the launch strategy. The time horizons are displayed vertically, and the horizontal axis contains the different activity categories.

Future Vision

The company strategy aims to work towards reaching the objective formulated in the future vision. The goal is to be the leading player in European, especially in Germany and Netherlands, in field hockey strength & conditioning training. Complying with the name of *Athlete Development*, the goal is to develop the athletics of a wide array of young hockey players in Europe. The strategy is to stay in the niche of hockey but expand across country borders.

H1: Arrange

The first horizon focuses on preparing the product and the organization for the upcoming launch. It is supposed to set the strategic foundation so the operations during the initial product launch work as frictionless as possible. This horizon involves the development of the *Athlete Development* product and the construction of a strategic network within the hockey clubs to utilize that later.

H2: Perform

The second horizon concentrates on marketing. Time-wise, it is right after the product launch. Therefore, the company strategically reduces its activities in this stage to only marketing and sales. This reduction has the reason to save resources and maximize sales efforts. Therefore, most marketing and sales activities happen in this stage, and additional sales forces might have to be acquired.

H3: Improve

The last step toward reaching the future vision is to establish a position in the niche of hockey. At the end of that stage, the compact segment of hockey in Germany should be satisfied. The focus on this horizon lies in business development, meaning the further development of the product and the acquisition of human resources to develop reliable operations and internal business structures.

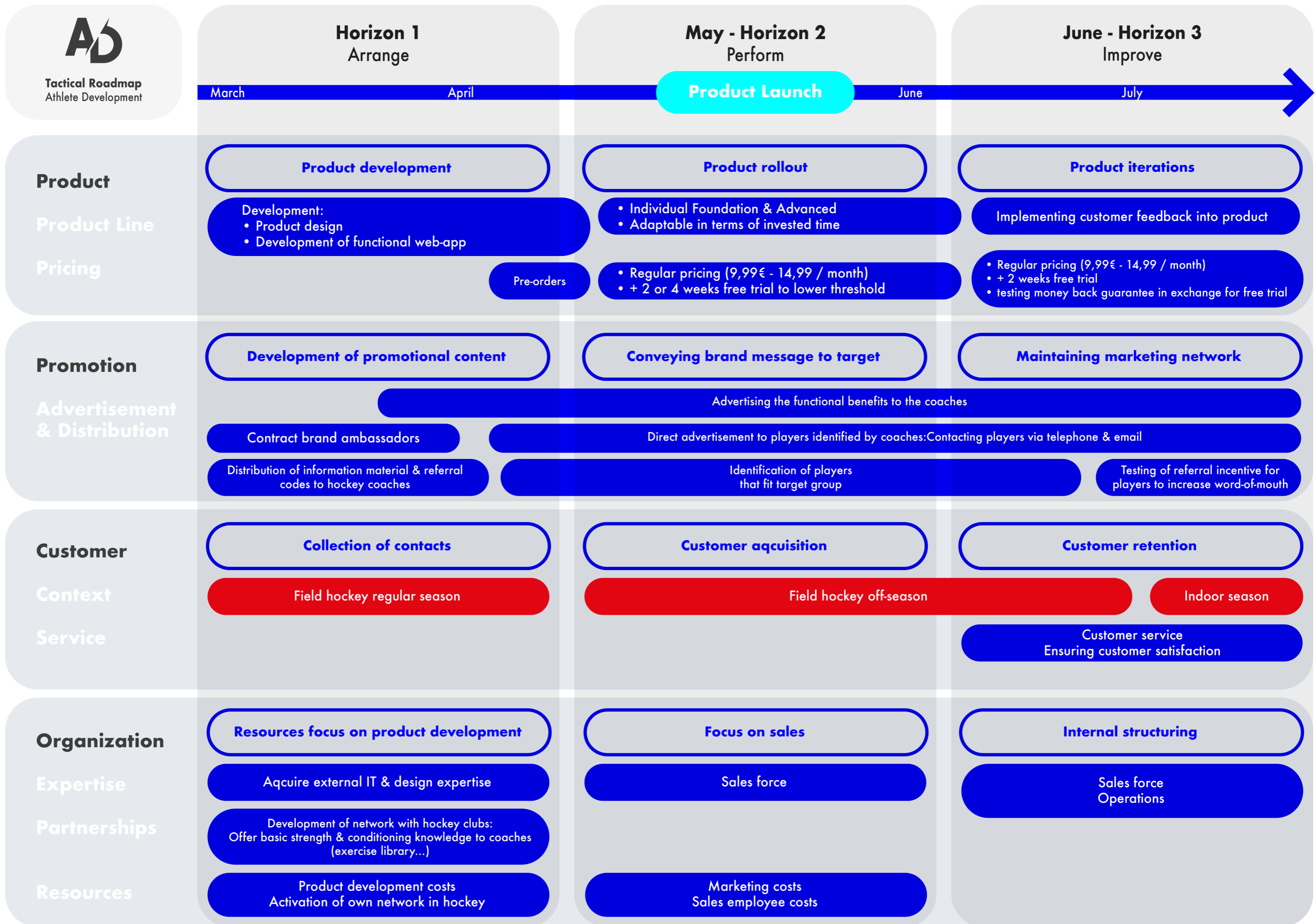


Figure 29:
Tactical roadmap

Tactical Roadmap

The tactical roadmap in figure 27 structures similarly to the strategic roadmap. The time horizons are vertically, and the activity groups are horizontal. A headline in a blue frame summarises each category of activity. The blue elements below those headlines describe the activities. The cyan color highlights the product launch, and the red color highlights the field hockey season.

Horizon 1: Arrange

Time-wise, this horizon is pre-launch. Therefore it happens in the latter half of the regular field hockey season or the latter half of the indoor season. Here, *Athlete Development* should focus efforts on designing and developing the web app. Furthermore, crucial networks with coaches need form by creating content and distributing it to hockey coaches to make them aware of the problem, potential, and brand. Those coaches have to coach ambitious youth teams but do not have a strength & conditioning coach. Besides that, they have to be aware of the importance of strength & conditioning training. They get information about the product and what the target group exactly is. The call-to-action for the coaches is that they should identify players in their team that need additional training in parts of strength & conditioning or highly ambitious players that have the goals to improve to get into a higher team or national squad. If they identify those players, they ideally can forward their contact to *Athlete Development* or recommend the product to the players by giving out discount codes. Directly following this, the first players identified by the coaches are addressed directly via email or, preferably, telephone. An informational email can establish the initial contact with the players. Afterward, phone calls and follow-up messages intensify the relationship and aim to convert the players into pre-orders. Collecting those pre-orders as a pre-announcement of the product before the actual launch. It is made approximately two months in advance, which is early and therefore fits the literature suggestion for a new product that needs time to get familiar with (Lilly & Walters, 1997). Besides the players, emails sent to the coaches create awareness of the product.

Horizon 2: Perform

The second stage of the roadmap takes place right at the end of the season. Players transition into the off-season, a phase where training focuses less on hockey and more on strength & conditioning in general. That is when *Athlete Development* launches the product. A base of customers should have already pre-ordered the product, and further sales effort in emailing and calling players is converting more players into customers. Email advertising to the coaches still takes place, intending to identify more players in the segment. The ‚Foundation‘ and ‚Advanced‘ plans are rolled out to the customers via the web app. A two-week free trial lowers the customers‘ threshold to buy the product. Furthermore, the coaches get referral codes to recommend the product to players in their teams. Those referral codes substitute the free trial in those cases and give a discount (the discount details needs exploration in experiments).

Horizon 3: Improve

The third horizon begins after the regular season has started. The focus here is to maintain the customers by asking for feedback and implementing that in further product iterations. For example, a money-back guarantee potentially substitutes the 2-week free trial because that can have higher revenue. Less effort than in the second stage can go into marketing and sales to coaches and players, but marketing still needs to activate the coach network to convert further players into customers. Furthermore, it is crucial to research the word-of-mouth effect and how to multiply that since the hockey community is a tight network. For example, referrals as incentives for players could enhance that effect (Bowles et al., 1982). Conducting post-launch experiments with a player-to-player referral model can test this. Additionally, acquiring human resources in administration can improve the business’s operations. This acquisition strives to enhance internal structures to work more efficiently long-term.

Financial forecasting

To ensure the implementation conforms with the start-up's financial situation, a grim forecast of product development and launch costs hints at the minimum investment.

- Web-App development: 900€ - 5.000€ (Fiverr - Freelance Services Marketplace for Businesses, n.d.)
- Freelance Marketing & Salesforce (20h per week): > 960€ / month

Assuming the cost of product development is as low as possible (for a limited function web-app), and there is one additional freelance sales and marketing employee, the cost for the launch (terminated for approximately three months) is 3780€. Hence 105 people purchasing the average product (12€) have to subscribe to the product for three months. Alternatively, 27 people purchasing it for a year also covers the costs, assuming the product needs no adjustments after launching. Similarly, assuming the marketing efforts after the initial launch do not require external workforce.

First steps

The ten first steps that company founder Timo Kirchenberger needs to take are:

- 1. Prepare a product development brief based on pilot customer feedback**
- 2. Source product development expertise**
- 3. Commission web-app development**
- 4. Create a product proposal/product benefit outline for coaches**
- 5. Identify suitable hockey clubs & their coaches' contact data**
- 6. Distribute information materials to coaches, including call-to-action (which players fit?)**
- 7. Create a contact list of identified players**
- 8. Contact players, including call-to-action (pre-order)**
- 9. Collect pre-orders**
- 10. Product rollout once product development is finished and tested**

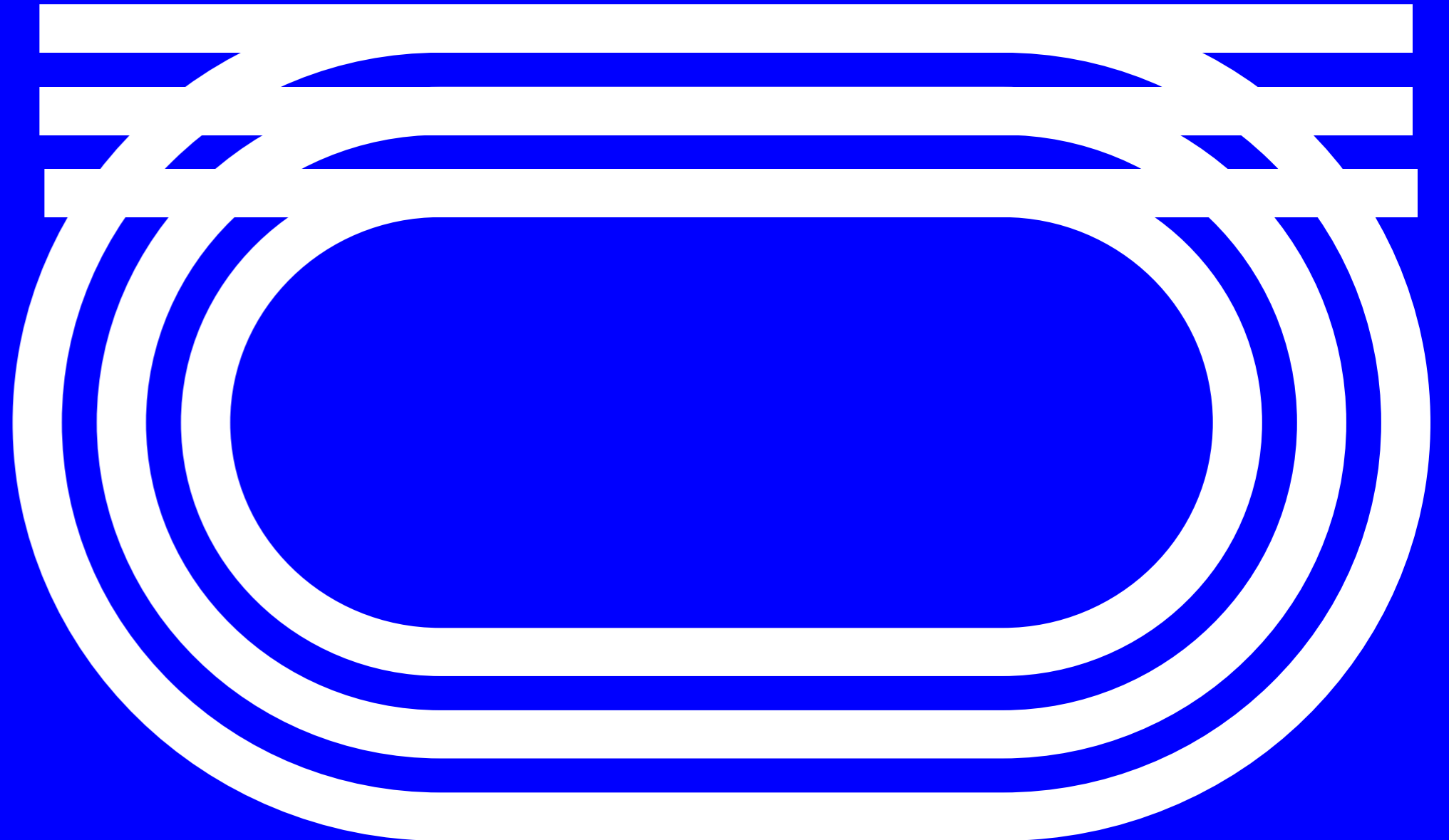
Concluding chapter four, the start-up Athlete Development is advised to utilize the information presented here to launch their product on the market. The chapter synthesized the insights made before developing a foundation of evidence for the go-to-market strategy. This strategy acts as a guideline for launching the Athlete Development product in practice.

Chapter five answers the research question and assesses if the clients' goals were met with the go-to-market strategy presented in chapter five to go full circle back to the theory.

Chapter 5

Closing the Loop

This chapter connects the results back to the theoretical insights found in literature. Besides that it concludes on the work and reflecting on it. Finally, it assesses if the clients expectations are met.



5.1 Conclusion

After describing the content of the launch strategy and campaign, connecting the findings back to the research question concludes this work.

How can small businesses like Athlete Development use experimental learning methods to develop go-to-market strategies?

The results suggest that small businesses can benefit from combining different experimental learning approaches like simultaneous experimentation, lean start-up, or customer development. Furthermore, being resource-efficient in a bootstrapped business is essential, not spending resources on strategies that do not work. Finally, adopting the abovementioned approaches reduces the uncertainty about assumptions made during segmentation, targeting, positioning, product strategy, or marketing strategies.

Start-ups can use those experimental learning methods to test the different elements of a go-to-market strategy. For example, segmentation, targeting, and positioning can be resource-efficient by having customer research centered around out-of-the-building work (York & Danes, 2014). This work can identify the accomplishment of problem-solution and product-market fit. Gathering those insights without extensive financial means is fruitful for avoiding many start-up failure factors, such as the lack of product-market fit, the wrong positioning, or the wrong customer development (Cantamessa, 2018). For example, in the case of *Athlete Development*, extensive customer development helped during segmentation. It identified that the exact niche segment that is most suitable for the specific business is a combination of the level of ambition and the type of sport.

Also, the design of a product strategy can be made more efficient by adopting customer development principles. The out-of-the-building work helped to identify that there is no need for the *Athlete Development* plans in

the ‚Professional‘ Version but for an adapted version of the ‚Foundation‘ and ‚Advanced‘ plans. This insight reduces the investment needed for product development.

Predominantly marketing strategies work well in small-scale experiments on customers identified with the customer development approach. Because a reason for start-ups to fail relates to bad marketing (Cantamessa, 2018), adopting the simultaneous experimentation method proposed by Andries et al. (2013) can avoid this error. Correspondingly, simultaneously conducting multiple experiments, in the case of *Athlete Development*, helped to identify that, for example, social media marketing is not ideal but a combination of other marketing methods like cold calling with insights retrieved from live showcasing.



Ultimately, small business owners planning to launch their product on the market can adopt the principles of experimental learning to explore the opportunities they have before committing to one strategy. This enables go-to-market strategy development without external funding.

5.2 Limitations

Clients expectations

Figure 30 displays the founders' goals and expectations for the project, as shown at the end of chapter one. This paragraph assesses if and to what extent the results of the project answer those questions.

Concluding on the *Athlete Development* case, the paper answered the founders' goals of having insights into the market by conducting the research outlined in chapter three. The small-scale experiments chapter four detailed, showed advertising strategies to fit the business. Those were valuable for identifying the proper positioning and advertising channels without exceeding the limited budget a small business such as *Athlete Development* has. The go-to-market strategy also gives answers to the questions regarding the business model, with the product suggestion and the business model that includes financial forecasting to enable implementation in practice. The project's spectrum included all relevant aspects to satisfy the clients' expectations, scoping from minimum viable product to product launch. Only the pricing of the product is an assumption because testing different pricing options with consumers was not possible.

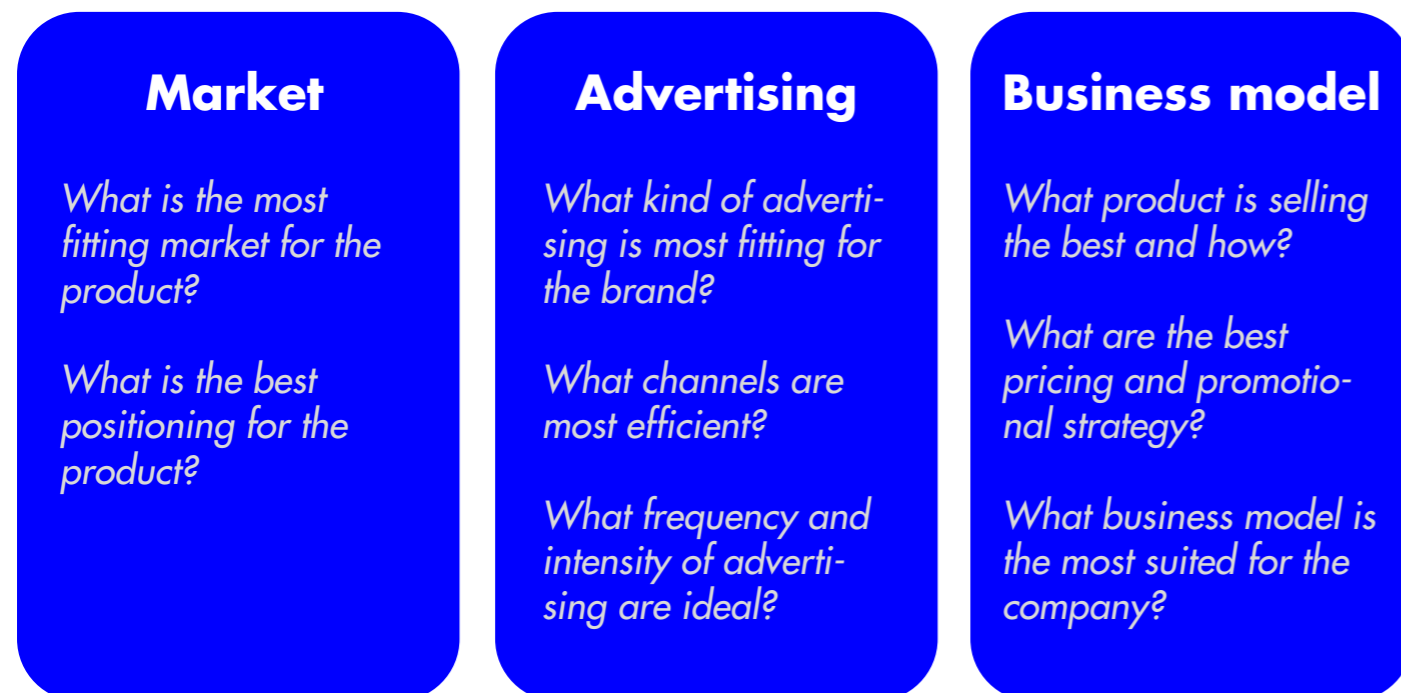


Figure 30:
Clients expectations

Increasing the **sample size** in the initial customer research outlined in chapter three and in the validation experiments in chapter four can improve this study. An increased sample size leads to higher generalizability from the participants to the entire segment.

Furthermore, including athletes from **more types of sports** like basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, lacrosse or rugby can improve the customer research in chapter three. This can lead to a wider range of insights and open up the potential target segment to more sports, which can increase the validity.

Besides that, the results are very **case specific** to the *Athlete Development* brand and product. Therefore, the insights drawn in the customer research and marketing experiments hardly transfer to other start-ups, even though the method of reaching the insights, being customer development, is transferable.

Another point for improvement is experimenting with **different pricing options** for the product. Those experiments can test how consumers react to different subscription prices and other options like one-time purchases or freemium options. Those experiments can improve the study by validating a pricing strategy and therefore defining the business model to achieve a higher grade of viability.

Finally, **launching the brand** according to the launch proposal in a small scale experiment in advance of the actual launch can increase the validity of the design results. This potentially has the consequence that issues in the strategy and tactics surface and facilitates another iteration loop.

5.3 Reflection

In today's age of **online marketing**, social media advertising can quickly be the go-to channel for any digital product or service. However, for this brand, I learned that social media marketing is not a well-suited channel, because of the size of the niche and the specifics of the target group. As a channel, social media is not relational enough to build a connection that consumers in the target segment can trust. It can be a potential channel once the brand is established on the German market and expands to larger-sized markets like the Netherlands. But in conclusion, when designing a marketing strategy, social media advertising is not the holy grail.

As a designer coming from a background with a Bachelor of Arts, **working scientifically** can be a challenge. In this project, I consulted and reviewed scientific literature when the design process already started and not simultaneously with the other streams of research. In hindsight, reviewing the scientific literature earlier on would have shown proven frameworks and processes to implement in the method created for the project. The learning from this is that even though scientific literature is theoretical, there are large amounts of practically validated studies that are beneficial for such a practical project from the start.

While working on the project, scheduling feedback meetings with the supervising team was sometimes coming short. In retrospect, having more **frequent feedback loops** with the supervisors would have streamlined the process and avoided or mitigated the effects of learning plateaus. Learnings from the midterm milestone improved this point and showed the beneficial effect of bi-weekly feedback meetings with both supervisors in the second half of the project.

Finally, a learning from conducting qualitative research in the field is that **personal conversations** always bring deeper insights than online or telephone interviews. Even though they require more time and energy, interviewees

bring up valuable insights that can also go beyond the interview guide and therefore introduce unknown topics. Because researching qualitatively is about gathering deep information about personal experiences of participants, a researcher cannot always know every topic with relevance. Therefore, themes that are discovered while researching are crucial to understanding the interviewees' mental models and motivations.

References

A

Andries, P., Debackere, K., & van Looy, B. (2013). Simultaneous Experimentation as a Learning Strategy: Business Model Development Under Uncertainty. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 7(4), 288–310. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1170>

Athlete Development. (n.d.-b). Home. Retrieved May 17, 2022, from <https://www.athlete-development.org/>

B

Benedetto, C. A. (1999). Identifying the Key Success Factors in New Product Launch. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 16(6), 530–544. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5885.1660530>

Beverland, M (2018). *Brand Management. Co-creating Meaningful Brands*. SAGE Publications

Bhide A. (1992). Bootstrap finance: the art of start-ups. *Harvard business review* , 70 (6), 109–117.

Bland, D. J., & Osterwalder, A. (2019). Testing business ideas: A field guide for rapid experimentation. John Wiley & Sons.

Blank, S. (2013). *The Four Steps to the Epiphany* (2nd ed.). K&S Ranch

Blank, S. (2013a). Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything. *Harvard business review*, 91(5), 63-72.

Brown, T. (2009). *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation*. HarperBusiness.

Bowles, M. D., Malott, R. W., & Dean, M. R. (1982). The evaluation of an incentive program used to recruit health club memberships through friend referrals. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 3(4), 65-72.

BR Volleys Trainer. (n.d.). BR Volleys. Retrieved May 30, 2022, from <https://www.berlin-recycling-volleys.de/team/trainer>

C

Camilleri, M. A. (2018). Market segmentation, targeting and positioning. In *Travel marketing, tourism economics and the airline product* (pp. 69-83). Springer, Cham.

Cantamessa, M., Gatteschi, V., Perboli, G., & Rosano, M. (2018). Startups' roads to failure. *Sustainability*, 10(7), 2346.Chicago

D

Daten & Fakten. (n.d.). Dtb-Tennis.De. Retrieved March 28, 2022, from [https://www.dtb-tennis.de/Partner-und-Sponsoren/Fakten#:~:text=Tennis%20ist%20eine%20der%20beliebtesten,Tennis%20Bund%20\(DTB\)%20organisiert.](https://www.dtb-tennis.de/Partner-und-Sponsoren/Fakten#:~:text=Tennis%20ist%20eine%20der%20beliebtesten,Tennis%20Bund%20(DTB)%20organisiert.)

Deutsche Damen Hockey-Nationalmannschaft | hockey.de. (n.d.). hockey.de. Retrieved May 30, 2022, from <https://magazin.hockey.de/nationalmannschaften/damen#Kader>

DFB-MITGLIEDERSTATISTIK 2020/2021. (n.d.). Dfb.De. Retrieved March 28, 2022, from <https://www.dfb.de/verbandsstruktur/mitglieder/aktuelle-statistik/>

Dibb, S. (1998). Market segmentation: strategies for success. *Marketing intelligence & planning*.

Dibb, S., & Simkin, L. (1991). Targeting, segments and positioning. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*.

Dickson, P. R., & Ginter, J. L. (1987). Market Segmentation, Product Differentiation, and Marketing Strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251125>

F

Faigenbaum, A. D., Kraemer, W. J., Blimkie, C. J., Jeffreys, I., Micheli, L. J., Nitka, M., & Rowland, T. W. (2009). Youth resistance training: updated position statement paper from the national strength and conditioning association. *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, 23, S60-S79.

Fiverr - Freelance Services Marketplace for Businesses. (n.d.). Fiverr. Com. <https://block.fiverr.com/?url=aHR0cDovL2RlLmZpdmVyci5jb20vc-3Bpcm9nb3YvZW50d2lja2x1bmctdm9uLWlvcy11bmQtYW5kcm9p-ZC1hcHBzP3Bja2dfaWQ9MSZyZWY9c2VsbGVyX2xvY2F0aW9uJTNBREUmZml2ZXJyX2Nob2ljZT10cnVlJmNvbnRleHRfcmVmZXJyZXI9c-3ViY2F0ZWdvcnlfGlzdGluZyZwb3M9MyZzb3VyY2U9Y2F0ZWdvcnlfZmlsdGVycyZmdW5uZWw9ZGFkZDFiNzZhMWlwYjVmOGY4NDc4Y-TU3NmRiOTZhZTkmaW1wX2lkPWM1MjQ3OTI0LTQzZGYtNDA5Yi1iM-GU0LTg4MjgwOWYwZmRkZCZyZWZfY3R4X2lkPWRhZGQxYjc2YTFiMGI1Z-jhmODQ3OGE1NzZkYjk2YWU5JmNvbnRleHRfdHlwZT1yYXRpbmc=&uu-id=c363e936-d517-11ec-a41c-5151586c7757&vid=>

Framework for Innovation: Design Council's evolved Double Diamond. (2019, May 17). Design Council. Retrieved June 7, 2022, from <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/skills-learning/tools-frameworks/framework-for-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond/>

Friedman, L. (2012). *Go to market strategy*. Routledge, Chicago

G

Giardino, C., Wang, X., & Abrahamsson, P. (2014, June). Why early-stage software startups fail: a behavioral framework. In *International conference of software business* (pp. 27-41). Springer, Cham.

H

Hultink, E. J., Griffin, A., Hart, S., & Robben, H. S. (1997). Industrial new product launch strategies and product development performance. *Journal of product innovation management*, 14(4), 243-257.

K

Ketelhut, S., Kirchenberger, T., & Ketelhut, R. G. (2020). Hemodynamics in young athletes following high-intensity interval or moderate-intensity continuous training. *The journal of sports medicine and physical fitness*, 60(9), 1202-1208.

Kirchenberger, T., Ketelhut, S., & Ketelhut, R. G. (2021). Effects of Moderate-versus Mixed-Intensity Training on VO₂peak in Young Well-Trained Rowers. *Sports*, 9(7), 92.

Kuester, S., Konya-Baumbach, E., & Schuhmacher, M. C. (2018). Get the show on the road: Go-to-market strategies for e-innovations of start-ups. *Journal of Business Research*, 83, 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.09.037>

L

Lee, Y., & O'Connor, G. C. (2003). New Product Launch Strategy for Network Effects Products. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(3), 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009207030303031003003>

Lilly, B., & Walters, R. (1997). Toward a model of new product preannouncement timing. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 14(1), 4-20.

M

Milliardenspiel Amateur-Fußball | Sportschau. (2022, January 19). [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTfJ8MahyqE>

Mohan-Neill, S. I. (1995). The influence of firm's age and size on its environmental scanning activities. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 33 (4), 10.

Morris, M., Schindehutte, M., & Allen, J. (2005). The entrepreneur's business model: toward a unified perspective. *Journal of business research*, 58(6), 726-735.

O

Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Bernarda, G., & Smith, A. (2015). *Value proposition design: How to create products and services customers want*. John Wiley & Sons.

P

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative interviewing. In: *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed., pp. 339-380). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

R

Reis, E. (2011). *The lean startup*. New York: Crown Business, 27, 2016-2020.

S

Salamzadeh, A., & Kawamorita Kesim, H. (2015). Startup companies: Life cycle and challenges. In 4th International conference on employment, education and entrepreneurship (EEE), Belgrade, Serbia .

Schatzel, K., & Calantone, R. (2006). Creating market anticipation: An exploratory examination of the effect of preannouncement behavior on a new product's launch. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(3), 357-366.

Schnelligkeitszentrum. (2005). Start - Das Schnelligkeitszentrum. Schnelligkeitszentrum.de. Retrieved May 11, 2022, from <https://www.schnelligkeitszentrum.de/>

Schuhmacher, M. C., Kuester, S., & Hultink, E. J. (2018). Appetizer or Main Course: Early Market vs. Majority Market Go to Market Strategies for Radical Innovations. *Journal of product innovation management* , 35 (1), 106-124.

Statista. (2021, September 23). Number of members Royal Dutch Hockey Association (KNHB) 2010–2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/946724/number-of-members-royal-dutch-hockey-association/#:%7E:text=As%20of%202019%2C%20the%20KNHB,total%20added%20up%20to%20250%2C255.>

Statista. (2022a, January 21). Deutscher Hockey-Bund: Mitgliederzahl bis 2021. Retrieved March 30, 2022, from <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/216648/umfrage/mitgliederzahl-deutscher-hockey-bund/#:%7E:text=Im%20Jahr%202021%20hatte%20der%20Deutscher%20Hockey%2DBund%20%C3%BCber%2084.000%20Mitglieder.>

T

Toni Kroos Academy. (2021, August 7). Toni Kroos Academy | App. Toni Kroos Academy. <https://www.tonikroos-academy.com/en/app/>

Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2018). *Social Media Marketing* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

V

Vorst, R. V. D. (2017). *Contrarian Branding: Stand Out by Camouflaging the Competition*. Laurence King Publishing.

W

Weinrauch, J. D., Mann, O. K., Robinson, P. A., & Pharr, J. (1991). Dealing with limited financial resources: A marketing challenge for small business. *Journal of Small Business Management* , 29 (4), 44.

Winborg, J., & Landström, H. (2001). Financial bootstrapping in small businesses. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 16(3), 235–254. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883-9026\(99\)00055-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883-9026(99)00055-5)

Appendix

Appendix A: Research Interviews

Rowing

R.01 | Rower

- Athlete profile
 - 16 years old
 - Rowing for 2,5 years
 - Strength & Conditioning from the start (of doing it ambitious)
 - Highly ambitious: Goal (short term) is to qualify for the world championships (U18)
- Training
 - Trains according to plans
 - 1-on-1 coaching once a week
 - When new exercises → personal coaching
 - Strength & conditioning crucial for the sport
- Alternative:
 - Youtube videos

R.02 | Rower

- Athlete profile:
 - Rowing for 4 years - never without strength & conditioning
 - Highly ambitious: Goal (short term) is to compete at the world championships (U19)
 - Strength & Conditioning twice a week
 - Always follows the plans
 - 1 on 1 coaching once a week → “not possible without the personal coaching because of difficult technique”
 - Plans on his phone during workout
 - Sometimes watches videos
- Alternatives:
 - When on holiday or not in the gym → Youtube Videos (from various channels)

- For the plans without 1-on-1 coaching → detailed exercise descriptions included + their benefit

Tennis

T.01 | Tennis player

- Athlete profile
 - Plays tennis since early childhood
 - Strength & conditioning for 1 year
 - Has a personal coach 3-4x a week (1,5h per training)
 - Strength, mobility, speed
 - Complex training structure
 - Tennis specific training / exercises
 - Does video calls with his coach when physical is not possible
 - Benefit is clear!
- Before having a coach
 - Less structured
 - No real plan just occasionally training
 - There is a basic offering of a coach that you could make use of once a week in the club
- Tennis clubs in general (Berlin)
 - “There is potential” for improvement
 - Group training “reminds me of school sports”
 - Not many people use the offer that's present in the clubs
 - → The awareness of the benefits is not there
 - → High costs for personal coaching

T.02 | Tennis Coach & Coordinator

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - Coach / coordinator city tennis
- What are the athletic ambitions of the players?
 - Strength & conditioning training general (for the majority)
 - Are they doing it? Why? With which goals? Perform better? Avoid

injuries? What are they doing? What are they investing time wise / money wise? Do they want to do more? Do they follow a plan?

- Strength and conditioning awareness is widely not there
- Club has to offer it or players have to be very performance oriented
- Parents decide if their kids do it
- Need is not really there
- Training is focused on the sport Tennis
- It has more attention in Team sports
- Sport is free time hobby and doesn't have to be optimised everywhere
- In the width its a free time activity
- There are a lot of older players
- What alternatives do they use? Any website, app, medium, program? What job does the alternative need to do? How would an ideal training situation/design look like?
 - Youtube
 - Train like the professionals
 - Technique training is widely used
 - Associations also offer low quality education on this

Hockey

H.01 | Hockey player

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - 18 years old, BHC
 - Still in youth team
 - before SCC → BHC focus on performance
 - Sports school
 - Also in course for Germany squad
- Athletic ambitions and goals
 - Ambitious
- Strength & conditioning training general

- Goal: Increase performance
- 2x/ week strength + upper body
- At SCC he did more speed and endurance training
- athletics training in school
- With the mens team → also sports specific strength training
- With Timo: Also injury prevention
- Gets a training plan
- Also does self-sufficient training

H.02 | Hockey player

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - 25 years old
 - Always played at BHC
 - Played in Spain for 1 year
 - Played in England for 1 year
 - U16 - U21 national team
- Athletic ambitions
 - In the past: Goal to play Bundesliga (1st league)
 - National team is the goal now
 - Does sport every day
 - Social aspect is important too
 - Being fit
 - Focus on performance
- Strength & conditioning training general
 - Since he was 13 years old
 - Played Tennis twice a week
 - U18 at Hockey
 - Always had a good offer of the foundations of athletics training
 - Since then - intensity increased
 - Always newest training methods
 - Science based
 - Crossfit additionally
- Goal of strength and conditioning: periodisation, middle term performance gains, personal interest

- Plan: Hockey strict plan (Team), Crossfit gets adapted to that
- Priority is always Hockey
- Alternatives to a coach
 - Freeletics as holiday alternative
 - Youtube videos
 - Rombot (focus on mobility)

H.03 | Hockey player

- Athlete profile:
 - 21 years old
 - Hockey since 5 years old
- Athletic Ambition
 - Highly ambitious
 - 1st league
 - Focus on performance
- Strength & conditioning
 - Strength & conditioning since older youth teams
 - But not much and not highly functional (or scientific)
 - Does strength individually (for herself)
 - Goal: mainly to improve hockey performance, and a little bit to prevent injuries
 - Sometimes looks at videos
 - 4x/week strength with own plan (from own knowledge)
 - Wants to reach her maximum potential (not yet reached)
 - Awareness for S&C in the whole team or league is not there
 - “My team would play a lot better if everyone would follow a S&C plan”
 - Unlock hidden potential!

H.04 | Hockey player

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - 26 years old
 - BHC since 2015
 - before SCC

- Hockey since 9 years old
- Germany championship in youth
- Switch to BHC to increase performance
- Tennis on the side (Rot-Weiß)
- Athletic ambitions
 - Focus on performance
 - Improve
 - Sports every day
- Strength & conditioning training general
- Are you doing it? Why? With which goals? Perform better? Avoid injuries? What are you doing? What are you investing time wise / money wise? Do you want to do more? Do you follow a plan?
 - Plan every day
 - On the side: crossfit, strength, tennis
 - Individual sports do more strength and conditioning because they have to invest more to play better
 - Ambitious sport (tennis):
 - Athletics comes in later
 - When it doesn't work anymore no extra training anymore
 - 16 years could be a critical point
 - Puberty plays a role
 - In football they don't do strength and conditioning, even in the Berlin Liga where they earn a little money
- Alternatives to a coach
 - Youtube videos (home workout)
 - Crossfit workout
 - Freeletics

H.05 | Hockey player

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - 17 years old
 - Hockey for 9 years
 - BHC MJB (first youth league) championship U16
- Athletic ambitions

- Doing sports
- Mostly for fun
- Goals: be as good as possible
- Strength and conditioning training in general
 - Strength and conditioning: twice a week one on one training in the BHC (endurance, coordination, speed, stability)
 - Once a week online: zoom with coach
 - Before in in other clubs: extra training once a week
 - Strength additionally at home with self-made plan
 - More for himself
 - Since corona
 - Also helps with hockey
 - Homegym
 - Online training sometimes including plan holidays
 - Sonja: strength and conditioning coach
- What alternatives do you use? Any website, app, medium, program? What job does the alternative need to do? How would an ideal training situation/design look like?
 - no alternatives for him

H.06 | Hockey player

- Athlete profile:
 - 16 years old
 - Plays hockey for 12 years
- Ambitions
 - Ambitious
 - Wants to play in the first league
 - Strength & conditioning
 - Uses clubs offer
 - Does individual training additionally
 - to gain performance
 - like a lot of people do

H.07 | Hockey player

- Athlete profile:
 - Youth (16 & 17 years old)
- Ambitions
 - Highly ambitious
 - Play in youth A right now but → soon will already play at the mens team
 - Have special coaching
- Strength & conditioning
 - Special S&C coaching with Timo once a week
 - 4 times a week additionally to training
 - Possibilities in the club are not great
 - Only a small strength room
 - Only s&c training on the pitch → no or few equipment
 - Coaches switch often → no continuous plan which can lead to non structured training
 - No basic structure of the plan because of that
 - They pay money for their gym membership to do their training (others in their club don't have to pay for this gym)
 - There is a certain offer in the team → combination with the external plan would be difficult
 - B2B so you sell it to the coach or club???

H.08 | Hockey player

- Who are you? What do you do?
 - 16 years old
 - BHC MJB
 - Hockey for 9 years
- Athletic ambitions
 - Focus on performance
- Strength & conditioning training general
 - 2 times a week one on one coaching
 - Once a week online
 - 2x individual strength with own plan

- Coaches have the plan
- Goal: get better at hockey
- Has a homegym
- Alternatives to a coach
 - Videos: youtube
 - Youtube: Sascha huber

H.09 | Hockey Coach

- Strength and conditioning coach in the club
 - “Has a surprisingly high effect”
 - 2 x a week from U12 before the training a short session
 - Once a week a coaching for everyone
 - Offer is there for everyone in the club
 - Liz from Brasil is the coach in the club
 - Players are satisfied with the offer and don’t do additional stuff
 - Surpassed smaller clubs through that

H.10 | Hockey Athletic Director

- Cooperation with Motion Matters for the adult teams
- Strength and conditioning in youth
 - Motion Matters created a concept for youth coaches to implement
 - Age groups <7 y11 15-17 : more Hockey oriented
 - from U14 1x / week s & c with additional payment of the parents (Parents have high willingness because of health aspects)
 - Sometimes kids don’t have high motivation
- Hockey has a complex load in legs and back
- High coordination
- Their club has strength and conditioning as a unique selling point
- Should advertise that more to potential members
 - Health as an offer to the parents

H.11 | Hockey Athletic Director

- From u18 they can already train with the women teams 3 times a week
- Coaches decide who can train with the higher team

- Be next program
- WJA is a bit fragmented because of the players that train in the higher teams
- WJB is a more closed team
- Who wants to train more in the U14 can train with the second U16
- If they want they can train more and better
- Should also have a day break and not train or play seven days a week
- U14, U16 once a week have selection training with the Hamburg squad
- People who don’t make the jump up to the higher teams don’t have the offer

H.12 | Hockey Player and Coach

- no strength & conditioning coach
- Coaches do the training themselves
- Squad players do strength and conditioning in their squad training
- She could give me player contacts

H.13 | Hockey Coach

- They have a strength & conditioning coach (co-coach)
- Do twice a week training in off-season
- During regular season they do it before the training
- Don’t have more time to do something
- Second women’s team just doesn’t want to do more training

H.14 | Hockey Player and Coach

- 2. mens is a “fun team”
 - mainly older players that do the sport just for fun
 - some younger players from the second train with the first mens team (30-45min before training)
 - in season preparation mainly strength and conditioning
- Younger teams:
 - depends on coach
 - some coaches do a lot of strength and conditioning (30-45mins)
 - Do a lot of stability

- From easter: strength and conditioning coach for all youth teams from 12 years old
- Younger mens players would like to do more
 - Also ambitions to play in the first league

H.15 | Hockey player

- Athlete profile
 - 21 years old
 - plays in second league
- Strength and conditining
 - Season prep: 6 x / week
 - Every day is different
 - Endurance, mobility and strength
 - Plans workouts directly before session
 - Has a rough plan for the week
 - Would you like to perform better?
- Goals: be strong and stable, be fit, build muscles
- Are you afraid of getting injured?
 - Not much
 - Rather off the field in other activities
 - Does a long warmup
- Have you been injured before?
 - Torn ligament once
- Would you like to do more training?
 - More strength training

H.16 | Hockey strength and conditioning coach

- Strength and condition at first and second women team
- In the third and fourth women team there is less focus on performance
- The ones who perform accordingly or the ones that want to can train with the higher team
- For example the third team can do additional training with the second
- It serves as a youth support system
- He offers strength and conditioning twice a week

- But there are also players that want to do even more
 - 20% of the players do extra training individually
 - Like yoga
- He mainly does very hockey specific coaching
- A basic endurance is prerequisite
- Focus: sprints
- Speed strength
- Core training
- Frequent injuries in hockey are:
 - Ankle issues (from stopping or getting hit by the ball)
 - Back pain through the posture
 - Knee issues

H.17 | Hockey Coach

- He is interested in such a product
- His players are comparatively young (U12)
- Can it also work for such young players?
- It would be interesting for him as a coach to have the plans
- It is intriguing because there is no hockey specific strength & conditioning training
- As a coach he also wants to have a say in what training the players do and wants to check how they perform

H.18 | Hockey Coach

- He is highly motivated because he sees the importance of strength & conditioning training
- Wants the plans as a guideline for his own training
- Would also pay more ("The club has money now") to improve the training
 - less money than a coach costs
- Some individual players could use the plans (according to the coach)

Football

F.01 | Football Deputy Head of Football

- Where and how is strength and conditioning training happening in your club?
 - Strength and conditioning coaches in 1. Mens, A-Youth, 1. D-Youth and 1. C-Youth
 - In the higher leagues
 - 3x a week A-youth
 - Mens 1 x / Woche
 - In season preparation more often than in regular season
 - They employ a strength and conditioning coach for 20 hours in their club
 - Below the mentioned teams only by the football coach themselves
 - They do movement coaching
 - Speed, coordination, movement patterns
 - Strength only with rehab
 - Stability training for injury prevention
 - Weight training only individually
- Schnelligkeitszentrum (competitor) is used by some people
- In the ambitious youth there is the need
 - Tipping-point of ambitions when they change schools in the C-youth
 - Parents decide mostly
 - Transition B to A youth
 - older B-youth players had to play 1st league to have possibility
 - Transition A to mens
 - A-youth is critical area because they still have ambitions but less hope
 - Even other countries like Czech Republic are used as entry to professional sports
- It is extremely hard but many have the wish
 - A lot of people make use of personal trainers
 - Need is there

- Also willing to send money
- Still few people can afford it

F.02 | Football Coach

- In the Berlin Liga its unrealistic to think they would to strength and conditioning
- “They don’t want to”
- Rather the younger players are motivated
- Could be a comeback tool after injuries → quickly build strength endurance again
- Has to be easily integrated in daily life
- But how do the players measure their progress?
- How can you individualise the program → everyone has different weaknesses
- What do you do when you have small injuries
- In US college sport they do a lot of strength and conditioning → that could be an interesting parallel
- Teams or clubs don’t spend money on such a product → they rather have a coach as ‘trophy’ for their best team
- How could you adapt the product to the development of youth players → you have early and late bloomers
- The players don’t want to do workouts at home → Where would the training take place?
- Go-to-market strategy → offer it to one or two teams and then have word-of-mouth to spread inside the leagues

F.03 | Football Player

- Reaction to the offer:
 - „I think that’s very good If I didn’t get a plan from my assistant coach I would think about it. If the plan doesn’t work then I would come back to you.“
- Athlete profile
 - 20 years old
 - Does more strength and conditioning in the beginning of the sea-

son

- In regular season 3-4 times athletics before training
- Also trains with weights
- Without plan
- Goals:
 - To be more stable in duels
 - Speed
 - Sometimes also does endurance or mobility
- Are you afraid of injuries?
 - “Not really, because I was never injured”

F.04 | Football Player

- Athlete profile
 - 20 years old
- How do you do strength and conditioning?
 - 1x / week one-on-one with Kagan Yildirim (Runbase)
 - Kagan makes an extensive plan for whole week
 - Matches and training are integrated in the training load
 - Sometimes also football specific
 - Sometimes at the Runbase
 - He doesn't pay because he has a special relation to the coach but normally you have to pay for him
 - Strength, stability, endurance / speed, mobility
- What's the goal of the training?
 - Increase performance
 - Train to become professional
 - Injury prevention is integrated either way by doing a warmup
- Are you afraid of getting injured?
 - Not really because not much history with injuries
 - Were you injured before?
 - 1 time with rehab

F.05 | Football Player

- Reaction to the offer:
 - “I like it, I would definitely try it. I especially like the videos and tutorials that are included, especially if you do it alone”
- Athlete profile
 - young player with a lot of injuries
 - 23 years old
- How does he do strength and conditioning?
 - Currently injured
 - 1-2 times running per week
 - 1-2 times in personal training gym
 - Strength and stability
 - Started with the training because of injury prevention
 - Increased performance in fitness
- Are you afraid of getting injured?
 - yes
- Would you like to do more additional training?
 - If I had the time
 - Some rather younger players do more individually
 - The ones that study or are all-in on football

F.06 | Football Player

- Reaction to the offer:
 - “Basically, I find the whole thing interesting, but at the moment I would rather do individual training for myself instead of paying money for it.”
 - Because the level that he plays on is not so high that he wants to spend money
 - And through his past rehab he has a certain knowledge
 - Performance is not his to priority but more having fun doing the sport
- Athlete profile:
 - 20 years old
 - Strength and conditioning

- Individual strength and stability two to three times a week
- but not really training
- Would you like to perform better?
 - yes → main focus of the training
- Are you afraid of getting injured?
 - Yes, because he was injured before a couple of times
 - Cruciate ligament, meniscus, outer ligament

Handball

HB.01 | Handball coordinator

- Strength and conditioning is very important
- Every coach does it different
- In the lower teams its less
- From C-youth its important
- They don't have a designated strength and conditioning coach
- The handball coach is supposed to implement that
- Depends on the coach
- They have less coaches because of the pandemic
- A-youth
 - Speed, coordination, endurance
 - Athletics integrated in training
 - Running for endurance
 - Also performance focus in hobby (except 1st mens)
 - Not the means of qualification in the coaching team
 - Low ambitions
- Other clubs that could be interesting:
 - SG Narva
 - Pfeffersport
 - Lichterfelde
 - Füchse

HB.02 | Handball Player

- Ambitions and goals
 - 18 years old
 - A youth (Oberliga)
 - Also plays in Verbandsliga mens
 - Finishes school at the moment
- Strength and conditioning
 - For a while a dad from one of the teammates did strength, mobility and stability
 - No possibility to work with machines
 - Right now: strength, strength endurance, circuit training
 - Additionally: gym
 - Strength and conditioning is essential in handball
- Has not looked at alternatives yet
- Main goal is to improve performance
- Reaction to offer:
 - The product is very interesting
 - Price is too high for him as a student
 - He has a foundation of knowledge in the field

HB.03 | Handball Player

- Athlete profile
 - 17 years old
 - Plays in the second highest league for youth
- Strength and conditioning
 - 3 times a week
 - 2 years ago they had a coach including strength
 - Right now its less
 - More playing
 - From a certain age you are old enough to do strength on your own
 - Has a gym membership
- Goal: increase performance → be stronger, be more stable
- Other sources: videos, previous experience
- Produkt feedback:

- interesting because its sports specific
- Good to have videos
- Price is alright for him
- “I could imagine spending the money for a while”

Appendix B: Graduation Brief

IDE Master Graduation

Project team, Procedural checks and personal Project brief

This document contains the agreements made between student and supervisory team about the student's IDE Master Graduation Project. This document can also include the involvement of an external organisation, however, it does not cover any legal employment relationship that the student and the client (might) agree upon. Next to that, this document facilitates the required procedural checks. In this document:

- The student defines the team, what he/she is going to do/deliver and how that will come about.
- SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs) reports on the student's registration and study progress.
- IDE's Board of Examiners confirms if the student is allowed to start the Graduation Project.

! USE ADOBE ACROBAT READER TO OPEN, EDIT AND SAVE THIS DOCUMENT

Download again and reopen in case you tried other software, such as Preview (Mac) or a webbrowser.

STUDENT DATA & MASTER PROGRAMME

Save this form according the format "IDE Master Graduation Project Brief_familyname_firstname_studentnumber_dd-mm-yyyy". Complete all blue parts of the form and include the approved Project Brief in your Graduation Report as Appendix 1 !



family name _____
 initials _____ given name _____
 student number _____
 street & no. _____
 zipcode & city _____
 country _____
 phone _____
 email _____

Your master programme (only select the options that apply to you):

IDE master(s): IPD Dfl SPD

2nd non-IDE master: _____

individual programme: - - - (give date of approval)

honours programme:

specialisation / annotation:

SUPERVISORY TEAM **

Fill in the required data for the supervisory team members. Please check the instructions on the right !

** chair _____ dept. / section: _____
 ** mentor _____ dept. / section: _____
 2nd mentor _____
 organisation: _____
 city: _____ country: _____

comments
(optional)
 :
 :

! Chair should request the IDE Board of Examiners for approval of a non-IDE mentor, including a motivation letter and c.v..

! Second mentor only applies in case the assignment is hosted by an external organisation.

! Ensure a heterogeneous team. In case you wish to include two team members from the same section, please explain why.

APPROVAL PROJECT BRIEF

To be filled in by the chair of the supervisory team.

chair _____ date ____ - ____ - ____ signature _____

CHECK STUDY PROGRESS

To be filled in by the SSC E&SA (Shared Service Center, Education & Student Affairs), after approval of the project brief by the Chair. The study progress will be checked for a 2nd time just before the green light meeting.

Master electives no. of EC accumulated in total: _____ EC

YES all 1st year master courses passed

Of which, taking the conditional requirements into account, can be part of the exam programme _____ EC

NO missing 1st year master courses are:

List of electives obtained before the third semester without approval of the BoE

name _____ date ____ - ____ - ____ signature _____

FORMAL APPROVAL GRADUATION PROJECT

To be filled in by the Board of Examiners of IDE TU Delft. Please check the supervisory team and study the parts of the brief marked **. Next, please assess, (dis)approve and sign this Project Brief, by using the criteria below.

- Does the project fit within the (MSc)-programme of the student (taking into account, if described, the activities done next to the obligatory MSc specific courses)?
- Is the level of the project challenging enough for a MSc IDE graduating student?
- Is the project expected to be doable within 100 working days/20 weeks ?
- Does the composition of the supervisory team comply with the regulations and fit the assignment ?

Content: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

Procedure: APPROVED NOT APPROVED

comments

name _____ date ____ - ____ - ____ signature _____

introduction (continued): space for images

image / figure 1: _____

image / figure 2: _____

PLANNING AND APPROACH **

Include a Gantt Chart (replace the example below - more examples can be found in Manual 2) that shows the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings, and how you plan to spend your time. Please note that all activities should fit within the given net time of 30 EC = 20 full time weeks or 100 working days, and your planning should include a kick-off meeting, mid-term meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony. Illustrate your Gantt Chart by, for instance, explaining your approach, and please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any, for instance because of holidays or parallel activities.

start date _____ - _____ end date _____

MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL AMBITIONS

Explain why you set up this project, what competences you want to prove and learn. For example: acquired competences from your MSc programme, the elective semester, extra-curricular activities (etc.) and point out the competences you have yet developed. Optionally, describe which personal learning ambitions you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project, such as: in depth knowledge a on specific subject, broadening your competences or experimenting with a specific tool and/or methodology, Stick to no more than five ambitions.

Vertical dashed line on the left side of the page.

FINAL COMMENTS

In case your project brief needs final comments, please add any information you think is relevant.

Vertical dashed line on the left side of the page.