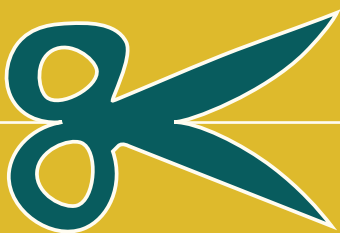


# How to make Maki fly?

How can early-stage startups obtain their first 1000 customers?

A case study for the sewing startup Maki



# Executive summary

Maki was founded by my co-founder Laura Looijen and myself with the aim to inspire people in their twenties to sew their own clothing. In its first six months, we developed a product and put it on the market. It gained promising traction, with only some intuition-based promotion. But to scale Maki, gaining traction is vital. This thesis describes the way forward to make Maki fly:

## *How can Maki obtain its first 1000 customers?*

Figure 0 shows a schematic overview of this thesis. First, to decide how to approach the challenge to drive traction, relevant literature was explored. Where definitions and models showed overlap, these were 'untangled' and reorganized, to eventually distill the 6 most important elements to gain traction, not only for Maki but basically for any startup.

With these ingredients, experiments were done to make Maki fly:

- **Segmentation.** Deep dive interviews were held revealing the interviewees' 'jobs to be done' (e.g. deep motivations or drivers), for example 'I want clothes exactly to my taste', 'I want to buy less fast fashion', 'I want to feel creative freedom'. Also, shared interests were found to target them better, such as music, sustainability, cooking, tattoos and vintage.
- **Positioning.** Of the 'jobs to be done', the 3 that could make Maki best stand out from competition were tested. First their traction was tested using Instagram ads followed up by an email campaign directed at interested respondents. The job of the ad with the best results was then chosen: 'I want to feel creative freedom'.
- **Core message:** to build the most fitting one for Maki, a brainstorm was held, taking all findings into account, also some additional 'jobs' as discovered in the interviews. This resulted in: 'Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there.'
- **Channels & content.** Multiple content forms (mostly short videos telling various stories) were posted on several channels (Instagram posts, Reels, Ads and Tiktok). Based on these findings, an AIDA-based marketing plan was created.
- **Branding.** To test which brand personality traits and visual style work best for Maki, three personality traits were chosen and matching visual styles were created: playful & inspiring, radically cool and accessible. They were tested in a survey, showing that the 'accessible' style was the most effective.
- **Revenue model.** To test if a subscription model or selling single patterns was preferred, both options were offered on Maki's webshop. As demand was proved equally for both, Maki's best option was found to be offering both in the future.

All found most effective ingredients were combined in an implementation plan that will help Maki fly.

Finally, all ingredients, combined with the tips and tricks discovered, were translated into a practical manual to also help other startups obtain their first 1000 customers, along the lines of the metaphone of how to bake the perfect cake.

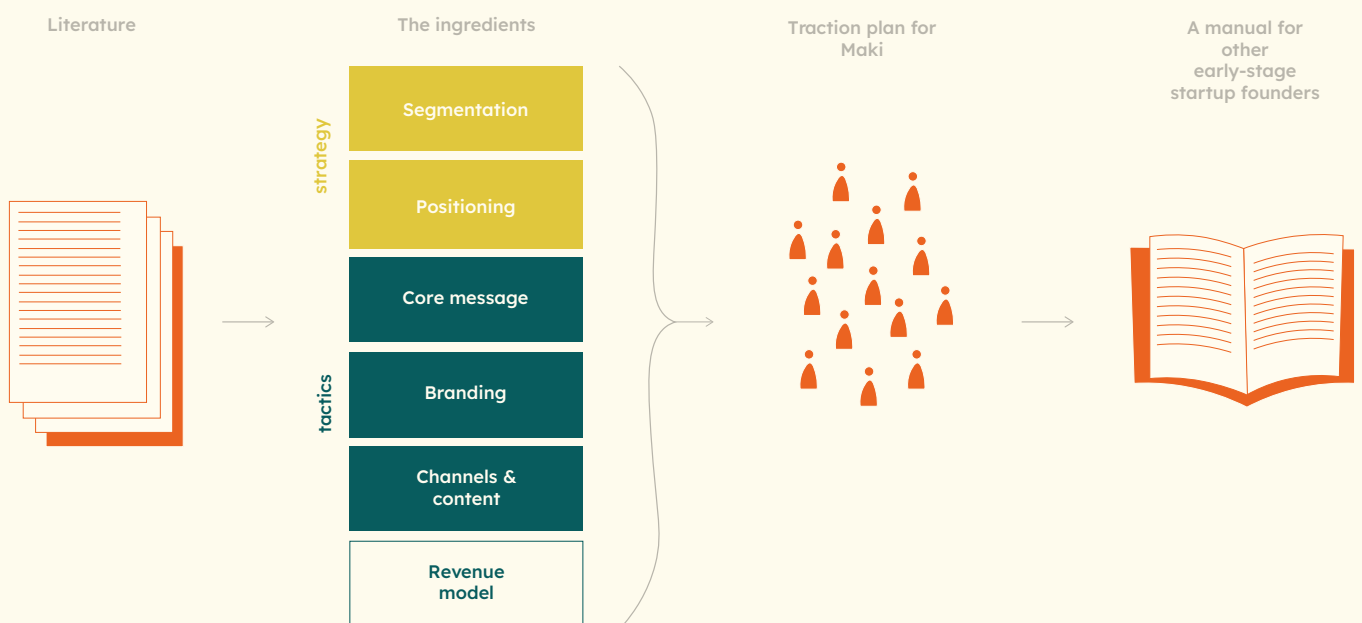


Figure 0. The overview of this thesis

# Introduction

Dear reader,

This master thesis is the deliverable of my graduation on my own startup Maki. With Maki, my co-founder Laura Looijen and I want to inspire people in their twenties to sew their own clothing. As two enthusiastic sewers with a passion for spreading this interest, we founded this startup 6 months prior to the start of this thesis, in the Build Your Startup course of our Industrial Design Engineering master's studies. With our product, the ultimate beginner sewing patterns, we took away many of the frustrations a sewing beginner faces. Promising traction was generated. To grasp its full potential, my co-founder graduates on optimizing the product. In this graduation, I address the challenge of gaining Maki's first 1000 customers.

This graduation seemed the perfect opportunity for me as a strategic design student, to combine my passion for Maki with my interest and curiosity for business strategy.

Let me tell you a bit about my passion for sewing. During the first Covid lockdown, I asked my beloved grandma if I could borrow her sewing machine: it seemed so cool to make my own clothes. As an impatient and stubborn person I thought: ah, this can't be so hard right? So I just started. And failed. Many times. Eventually, I started using sewing patterns to help me and learned many things along the way. It calmed me and my thoughts. As I became skilled, I became more creative in what I could make. As it was a complex skill to learn, during the process I gained the feeling that I could do anything. If you have never sewn yourself and experienced this, I hope you now understand my passion and my motivation to make others experience this too.

Another of my interests was business strategy. I developed this interest after getting my bachelor's degree in Industrial Design, which was primarily product-focused. I felt that there was more than the product alone that attracts people. That, no matter how great the product or service designed, it would not reach anybody, unless accompanied by a compelling story and great brand design that would create interest in a new and surprising way. To learn more about this, I applied for the master Strategic Product Design. Here I learned about how companies can prepare for the future, how to adapt to the marketplace, how to make products and brands stand out from competitors but especially how to translate complex problems into simple solutions.

After starting Maki, I soon felt rather lost. I had interesting master's knowledge, but the terms still sounded abstract and confusing. Terms like business strategy, how could I actually apply that in real life to my startup? Many of the theories seemed too big for our tiny but promising startup. Therefore this graduation seemed the perfect opportunity to bridge this gap and put my master's learnings into practice.

Looking back, I applied many learnings gained during my 5 years of studying Industrial Design to this project, especially about creating solutions for complex challenges. I simplified the complexity of business knowledge into manageable chunks for Maki and by experimenting with these, obtained valuable learnings on how to drive traction for Maki in the future.

But next to the importance for Maki, I realized along the way that my findings could also help other founders, and therefore I created a manual called the 'how-to-make-your-startup-fly-recipe'. Just like Maki aims to simplify sewing for sewing beginners, this booklet aims to simplify business strategy for startup founders. It seems like I have found my theme as an industrial designer! And with that, I hope I sparked your interest.

Before you start reading this, I want to thank my supervisors. I want to thank Jeroen Coelen for always being there for answering Whatsapp questions, reading late-night report drafts and 7am train calls. He always sparked and inspired me with new ideas on how to make my results better. Erik-Jan Hultink was the perfect supervisory combination next to Jeroen as he helped me bring these ideas down to a solid and strong story. It really felt like we were in it together as a team.

Of course, I also want to thank my co-founder and best friend Laura Looijen, for always being by my side in the process and for inspiring me with her creativity and passion for sewing and the many many chocolate breaks. Then a special thanks to my mom who, with her experience in the field, always made time for a brainstorm when I couldn't see the forest for the trees anymore. Last but not least, I want to thank my dad, Wouke, Peter, Ceres, JP, Valerie, Beer and Toos for their endless patience and invaluable support.

Enjoy reading.

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# A brief overview

As said in the introduction, this project addresses the challenge of gaining Maki's first 1000 customers and in this way, spreading our love for sewing. The scope of this project is not to obtain all 1000 customers, but rather outline the most relevant steps to gain traction, eventually leading to the desired 1000.

In this project, my roles have been those of a designer, startup founder and researcher at the same time - with three different aims. This is interesting because many say that there is a substantial gap between theory (for and by researchers) and practice (by entrepreneurs) and theory is not always interpreted as relevant by practitioners. To take advantage of these overlapping roles, this project takes an action research approach. This means that the researcher chooses a challenge, uses theory to plan and execute actions, and reflects on their implications in order to generate valuable learnings (Mertler, 2009). In this way, action research "produces practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives" (Reason & Bradbury, p.4).

The aim of this project is twofold:

- To improve Maki's business model in order to drive traction and obtain customers, which will support Maki's further development (this aim is met in chapter 4, The implementation plan)
- To generate learnings as inspiration for other early-stage startups on how to approach this challenge (this aim is met in chapter 5, Learnings for founders).

The following chapters work up to meeting these aims.

**Chapter 1** introduces Maki and lays the foundation for this project by describing the starting point (1.1) and the challenge addressed in this project (1.2). The situation is thoroughly assessed using the Business Model Canvas (1.3) which revealed interesting opportunities and risks. It also revealed that the production activities needed a closer look to be prepared for the desired traction (1.4). Afterwards, the plan addressing the main challenge of gaining traction and eventually customers is created (1.5).

**Chapter 2** lays out literature with regard to the main challenge of gaining traction and obtaining customers (2.1). Successively, the findings are discussed; how they overlap and connect to each other within literature (2.2). This discussion formed the basis of untangling the ingredients and creating an effective overview of business elements (2.3). As this overview also tapped upon multiple elements that were not relevant for Maki and other startups, the most important elements for startups were distilled into 6 simple elements as a basis for further tests (2.4). This section also discusses everything needed for each element before starting the experiments: the chosen definition, approach, aims & requirements.

**Chapter 3** zooms in upon each of these 6 elements in order to create Maki's traction-recipe: segmentation (3.1), positioning (3.2), core message (3.3), channels & content (3.4), and branding (3.5). Although the literature did not explicitly reveal the revenue model to be vital for traction, it was an uncertain aspect of Maki and therefore addressed too (3.6). These ingredients are explored and experimented with in order to learn what works and doesn't work. Every improvement round

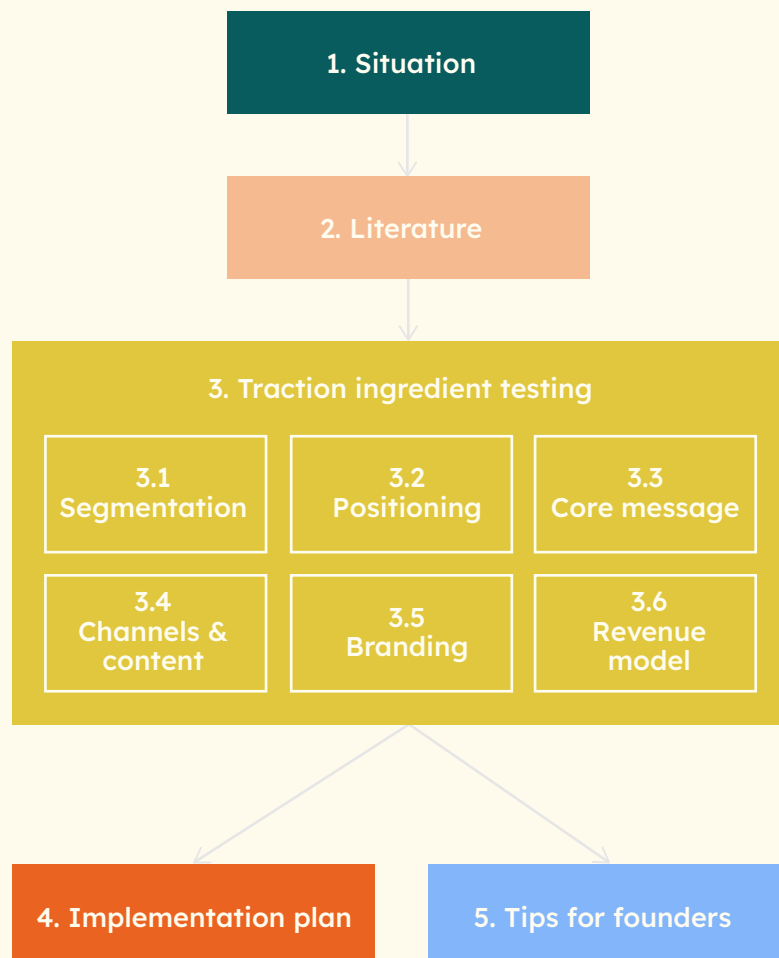


consists of a description of Maki's initial element state, the approach of the experiment, findings, limitations and concludes with an improved version based on the findings.

**Chapter 4** combines the improved business elements in an implementation plan for Maki.

**Chapter 5** captures recommendations for other founders who face the challenge of obtaining their first 1000 customers in a manual: the 'how-to-make-your-startup-fly-recipe'.

Below the structure of this report is illustrated.

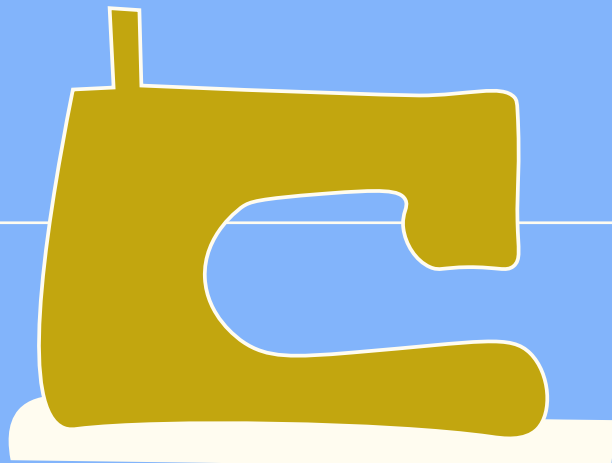


# 1. Situation

This chapter introduces Maki and lays the foundation for this project by describing Maki's founding story (1.1) and the challenge addressed in this project (1.2). The initial business setup is thoroughly assessed using the Business Model Canvas (1.3) which revealed interesting opportunities and risks. It also revealed that the production activities needed a closer look to prepare Maki for the desired traction (1.4).

## Contents

- 1.1 Maki's founding story
- 1.2 This project's challenge
- 1.3 Situation assessment
- 1.4 Preparing for traction
- 1.5 Key takeaways



# 1.1 Maki's founding story

In September 2021 Laura Looijen and I founded Maki, a startup to inspire people in their twenties to sew their own clothing. We dove into the problems sewing beginners face and developed a product that gained promising traction. But to grasp its full potential, my co-founder is

graduating on product optimization and I address the challenge of gaining the first 1000 customers. This section covers the context in which Maki was founded, the process of developing Maki's product, and its gained traction before the start of this project.

## Context

There is a movement amongst people in their twenties who want to slow down, get away from their screens, and do something practical and creative for themselves next to their often busy and online lives: the Maker Movement (Papavaslopoulou et al., 2017). One of the activities they get into, is making their own clothing. Other reasons to sew include expressing individuality, wearing more sustainable clothing, and wearing clothing that fits them better. According to Martindale & MicKinney (2020), underneath is a need for simple personal fulfillment that they did not experience in other aspects of their lives. Sewing gives them creative satisfaction, stress relief, and a sense of accomplishment.

This is exactly what Laura and I also experienced, especially when the world locked down due to COVID (in March '20). We both started sewing and found that it made us feel wholesome and satisfied. We felt this is an amazing skill and we wanted to encourage others to experience that. But we found that most available beginners tools and resources are outdated and overcomplicated; a gap in the market.

With our designers' skills and mentality, we feel we can fill this gap because we have learned to approach the process of learning to sew in a user-centered way - which we feel hasn't been done before in this market. As we aren't tailors ourselves, we understand the mindset of beginners and the struggles they encounter. This is a completely different approach than most of our competitors take.

For this reason, Laura and I started a startup called Maki ([www.maki.nl](http://www.maki.nl)) in the Build Your Startup course (Sept '21 - Jan' 22). Our mission was to inspire and teach this group to sew their clothes.

## Developed product

We started by researching the problems beginning sewers encounter in the process. 25 of them were interviewed and this showed us that current sewing patterns, and other tools which guide the sewing process, often made them feel discouraged, uninspired, and intimidated. Our talks with sewing schools and pattern print shops (Plotgemak, Sew Delft, Naaierij) confirmed our findings.

To solve these problems, experiments were done that eventually led to Maki's product. In the try-out phase, we developed and tested 5 product versions, under which a monthly paper magazine with multiple basic patterns and instructions. Users tested them and this gave us valuable insights, for example, that the outdated style offered by existing sewing magazines and websites was eventually a less important cause of frustration than the complexity of the instructions. Another insight was that people rather wanted to choose one Maki pattern themselves than receiving multiple pre-selected ones as a bundle - even if they were basic in style. This was contrary to what we had expected and therefore vital for creating a product that these people really value.

These tests and learnings led us to the current digital-physical solution combination (see figure 1): Maki offers physical patterns with online instructions that explain every (sub)step extensively using text, illustrations, and videos, so people don't have to do any prior research. They learn by doing. None of our competitors offer anything like this. This product was offered as a subscription: our makers got to choose 1 of 3 new patterns every month.

## Traction

We gained promising traction with our product offer: after 4 months of development, we gained 57 pre-subscribers in the last 2 months of the Build Your Startup course and only got feedback from our pilot customers that was positive. Some of them are shown in figure 2.

Concluding, in Maki's first 6 months a product was developed that gained promising traction. After laying out the context, the process of this development and the gained traction, the next

section lays out the challenge which is addressed in this project: obtaining the first 1000 customers.

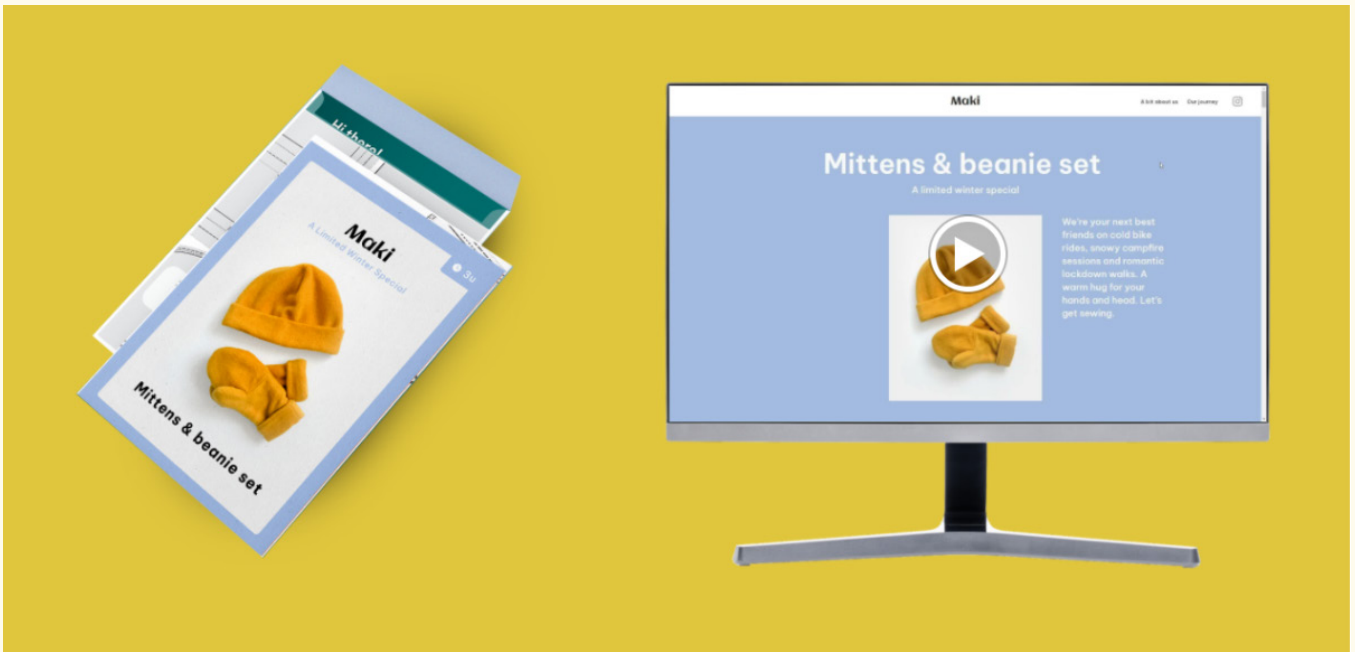


Figure 1. Maki's final product consists of a printed pattern and online instructions with video, illustration, and text



Figure 2. Some of the makers that participated in the pilots

# 1.2 This project's challenge

After the product was developed as laid out in the previous section, the challenge arose of gaining traction and obtaining customers. This section covers the lead-up to this challenge and my, as a founder, intuitive view upon it.

During the Build Your Startup course, multiple approaches were taken to gain traction such as running advertisements on Instagram and distributing flyers around the faculty. These approaches were selected and executed based on our intuition as founders. This worked well enough for the first months and resulted in our first 57 pre-subscribers. But to scale Maki, gaining traction is getting increasingly important and should be approached in a more serious manner. Therefore the main challenge of this project is to obtain Maki's first 1000 customers. This results in the following main question:

*How can Maki obtain its first 1000 customers?*

As a founder, I intuitively felt that there was a problem that was holding back traction: a lack of foundation of our business decisions. For example, as founders, we decided to use English as the main language from the start to enter the European market at an early stage. On the one

hand this felt logical because it could help Maki become financially sustainable sooner. But on the other hand this global approach felt a bit off our initial mission with Maki. We wanted people to experience the joy of making stuff yourself - going back to our human roots of creating with your own hands and the pleasure of local versus mass production. This would argue for Dutch as the main language. Dilemmas like this prevented us from making bold choices and left us feeling unfocussed instead of consistent. I felt that a foundation was missing to create consistency. This made us wonder; how should we develop business aspects, next to the developed product? Are there tools available to help with this? Is the foundation even important? How do other founders approach this challenge?

The Project Brief, in which this project setup is approved by the Board of Examiners before the start of this graduation, can be found in Appendix A.

Concluding, the challenge addressed in this project is how to drive traction and obtain customers. As a founder, I intuitively felt that there was a problem that was holding back traction: a lack of foundation to steer our business decisions.

This intuitive problem is kept in mind throughout the next sections. The next section assesses Maki's initial situation as the starting point of this project.

# 1.3 Situation assessment

This section assesses Maki's initial situation as the starting point of this project. To do this, the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) is used, as it is the most renowned and commonly used business model (Aarntzen, 2016).

Although multiple business model frameworks are available (e.g. Hamel, 2000; Alt & Zimmerman, 2001; Weill and Vitale, 2001; Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002; Gordijn & Akkermans, 2003; Morris, Schindehutte & Allen, 2005; Keen & Qureshi, 2006; Johnson et al., 2008; Al-Debei & Avison, 2010; Gasman et al., 2014; Amit & Zott, 2015), the most renowned and commonly used (Aarntzen, 2016) is the Business Model Canvas of Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), see figure 3.

Therefore this framework is used to assess Maki's initial situation. More research about business models can be found in section 2.1.

Maki's initial business model is assessed in figure 4 on the next pages and this reveals which blocks entail the most prominent risks and opportunities.

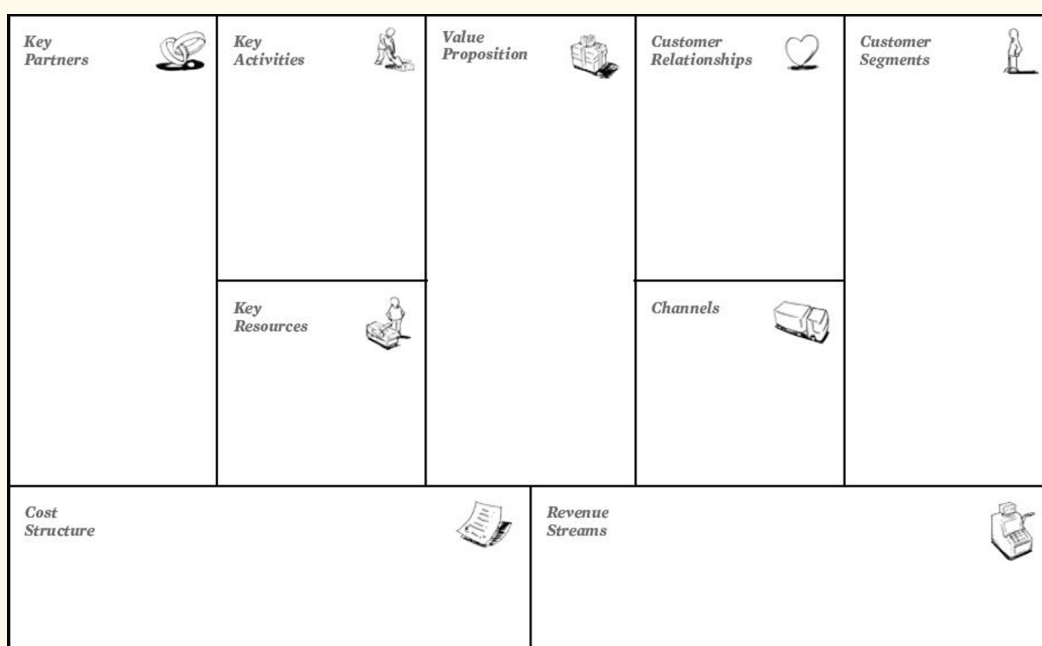


Figure 3. The 9 blocks of the business model canvas (Osterwalder, 2010)

Business model canvas block	Short block description (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010)	A description of Maki's initial situation within the building
Customer Segments	The different groups of people or organizations an enterprise aims to reach and serve	Maki's chosen segment covers sewing beginners, mostly Dutch, studying.
Value Propositions	The bundle of products and services that create value for a specific Customer Segment	Developed product: physical sewing patterns with a basic instructions that explain every (sub)step extensively, so no prior research; they learn by doing.
Channels	How a company communicates with and reaches its Customer Segments to deliver a Value Proposition	Some intuitive marketing is done. Instagram is the main chosen target group by using both advertisements and posts focused. The branding is formed organically, expressing the brand. The website is used to clarify the product and sell the patterns.
Customer Relationships	The types of relationships a company establishes with specific Customer Segments	Community, power of the maker. Maki family. Can be in the role of a customer (customer) or ambassador (on- or offline fan).
Revenue Streams	The cash a company generates from each Customer Segment (costs must be subtracted from revenues to create earnings)	The patterns are sold as a subscription where subscribers pay for 9 euros. They get to pick 1 of 3 new patterns every month because the production shipment can be done in bulk so and customers are locked-in.
Key Resources	The most important assets required to make a business model work	Human resources: creators for patterns, creators online content (printer, internet provider, bookkeeping, designer). Financial resources: Investments needed to run the business to reach an even point.
Key Activities	The most important activities a company must do to make its business model work	Production: making patterns and instructions. Platform: community building and gaining traction. Support activities (web hosting, accountancy, etc.) are left to external providers.
Key Partnerships	The most important assets required to make a business model work	The production activities: some are done internally (web hosting and instructions, packaging, labeling) and some outsourced. The platform activities are done internally.
Cost Structure	All costs incurred to operate a business model	All costs are analyzed and planned in a financial model at the Startup course (see Appendix I). This included fixed costs: marketing app, bookkeeping, insurance & variable costs: materials, costs, and delivery.

Figure 4. Maki's initial business setup described per business model canvas block and accompanied by their risks



ing blocks	The most prominent risks involved in the blocks
females, 20-30 years old,	The customer segment is broad and defined weakly. This hampers effective targeting and therefore generating traction.
c info-card and online people don't have to do any	Competition could potentially create a similar service (left out of scope for this project, see graduation Laura Looijen).
channel of choice to reach the costs. These are mostly product an open style and happiness. patterns to customers directly.	Maki might miss traction and spend too much if communication and marketing are done without clear focus and evidence if the approach works or doesn't work. Evidence is lacking on the scalability of these marketing efforts.
ne form of becoming a maker	People may not want to commit, they may want to feel independent and free.
s receive 1 pattern a month month. This model is attractive the product can be cheaper	Maki might miss conversions when only offering a subscription. There is no evidence most people really want this and for what price.
content, business administration ness until and beyond break	Maki is now run by the two founders alone. May hinder growth.
ft out of this overview.	Maki is not skilled at creating more advanced patterns. Community building and gaining traction is an opportunity, therefore the focus of this thesis.
shop tracking, making patterns ed (printing patterns, delivery).	These activities can be performed by the stated partners/persons during launch but from a certain point, outsourcing is necessary. This up-scale point of production activities is unknown and may cause feasibility problems to hold up with demand.
ready in the Build Your s: website host, bank account, packaging material, printing	Insufficient revenue.

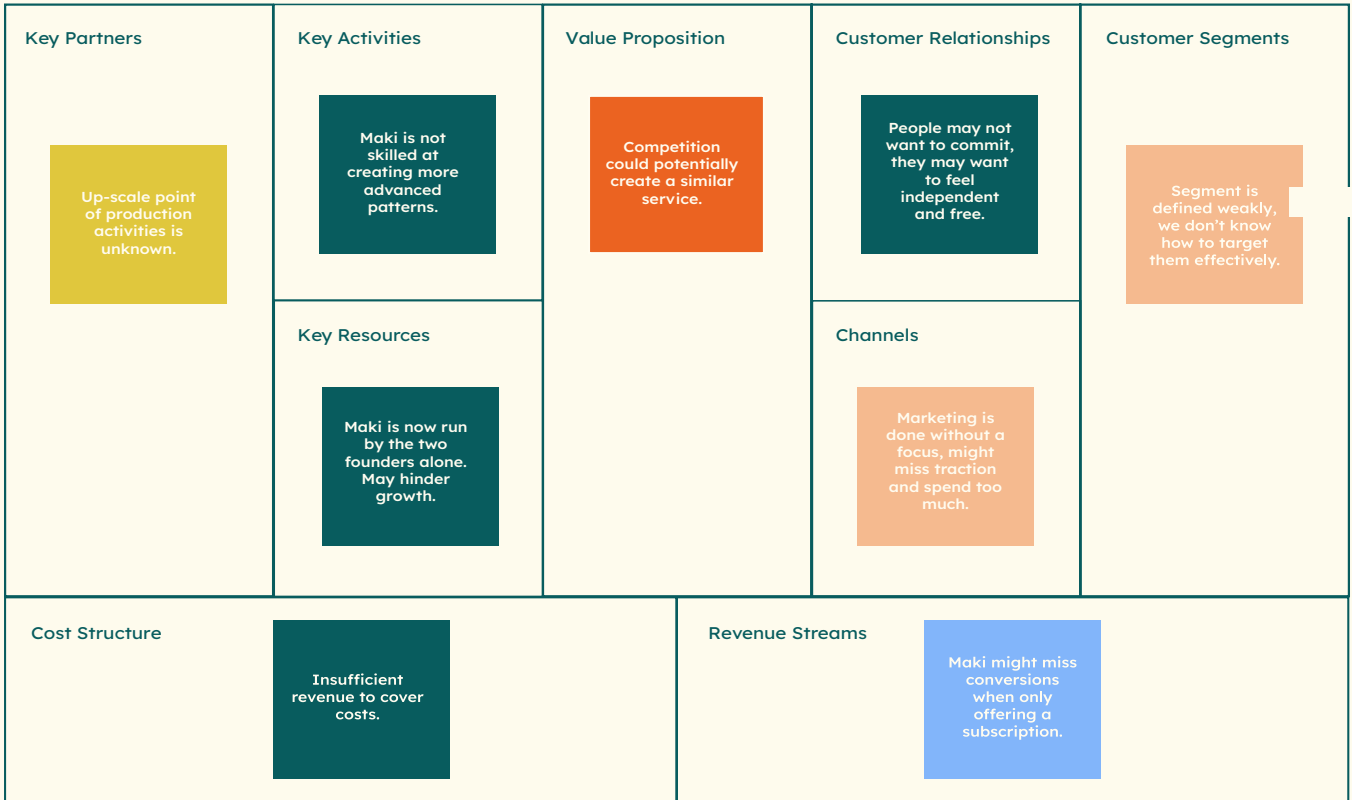


Figure 5. Maki's initial business risks presented in the business model canvas

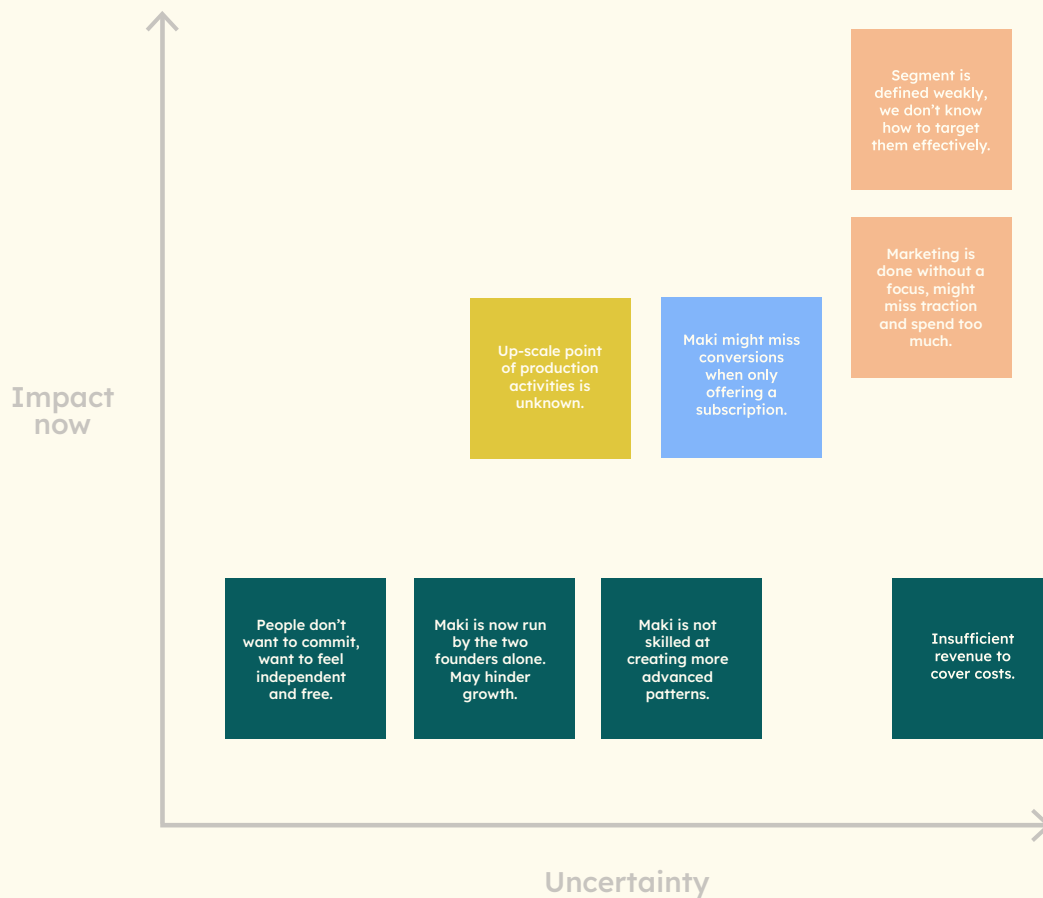


Figure 6. Risk assessment matrix

In figure 5 a short version of the risks are shown within the model to see how they connect. Now the risks are revealed, they are prioritized on impact and uncertainty using the impact-uncertainty matrix (Bräutigam et al., 2003), see figure 6.

The matrix (figure 6) created insights about which elements within this business model have the most priority to tap into in the short term. It revealed that:

- The risks involved in the blocks of segments and channels (including communication and marketing) (pink) entail the highest uncertainty and impact in this early startup phase for growing the business. These risks at the same time represent the greatest potential to gain traction.
- The revenue model (blue) is connected to generating traction too, as the choice of buying our product depends on the pricing and type of sale.

- The risk of the production activities (yellow) has a high impact as it hypothetically can fail the business; if Maki cannot keep up with demand, the business will fail.
- The risks from customer relationships, key resources, key activities and cost structure (green) are uncertain and impactful too, but represent less opportunities in this early startup phase.

Reflecting on the Business Model Canvas as a means to assess the situation, it showed interesting insights that can help direct business efforts. Yet the full canvas is focused on business implementation rather than on the foundation; the key principles defining the business. In this way it did not directly address the lack of foundation as intuitively experienced by us as Maki's founders (as explained in the previous section).

Concluding, the Business Model Canvas showed interesting opportunities and risks, most importantly in the blocks of Customer Segments and Channels. Although these insights are helpful, they are focused on the business implementation rather than on the foundation. Therefore the search for tools and approaches to gaining traction next to this business model canvas

continues in chapter 2. But before doing that, since the canvas also reveals that we need to take a close look at the production activities set-up, we also need to address the question; is Maki even ready for 1000 customers? Therefore the next section covers assessing the production activities to prepare Maki for traction.

# 1.4 Preparing for traction

Maki's business model assessment revealed that we need to take a close look at the production set-up: is Maki even ready for 1000 customers? This is vital for keeping up with demand once traction is successfully gained. Therefore this section covers preparing the production for traction. First the

initial production plan as developed in the Build Your Startup course is assessed, whereafter the scale-up points are revealed in order to know as from which number of customers the activities need to be scaled (by outsourcing, finding another partner, adding employees or automating).

The logistics of the product as developed in the Build Your Startup course are relatively simple as most activities can be done internally and only a few have to be outsourced at this initial stage. Figure 7 shows an overview of these activities and of who is responsible for which activity. The scale-

up points marked in red were not determined yet. Therefore activities were done to discover these points, which are shortly explained in the figure too. The full process is explained in Appendix B. We now established the earlier still unknown scale-up points.

Activity	Done by	Done to discover scale-up point	Scale-up point
Tracking order choices	Maki founders	A web design was made in Wix to track the chosen orders (when people choose 1 of the 3 patterns in a subscription). It suffices but is not optimal as it requires manual steps, which leaves room for errors. Therefore it is decided that the web design must be redesigned by a professional from 1000 customers.	1000 customers
Making the patterns & instructions	Maki founders	-	Sufficient until proven otherwise.
Printing	Plotgemak	Contact with Plotgemak	4000 customers
Packaging	Maki founders	The packaging time was calculated, and up to 1000 orders, it can be done in one day by two persons. This is decided to be a cut-off point as we as founders need our time to develop the patterns and run the business.	1000 customers
Delivery	PostNL	Read their business rates and services document	5000 customers

Figure 7. Table of activities and responsibilities

Figure 7 shows that the riskiest (thus, the lowest) scale-up points are dependent on Maki (ourselves); for tracking orders and packaging. These scale-up numbers of 1000 customers are our own estimated guesses based on the chance of errors and time problems. Although the estimation of 1000

customers is based on facts, it is still a guess and so, a risk. Therefore revision rules are set up to keep an eye on during the first period after launch, in order to not get caught by logistic errors and problems, see Appendix B.

Concluding, the scale-up points for the different production activities were revealed. It was shown that the riskiest scale-up points are dependent on Maki (ourselves), for which the scale-up point is set to 1000 customers - by chance the same number as aimed for in this project's main

question. So from this number of customers, the production activities have to be revised again. Now the production activities have been assessed and prepared for traction, the next section introduces the plan for gaining traction.

# 1.5 Key takeaways

To summarize this chapter:

- Maki's narrative was laid out as the starting point for this project. In Maki's first months, a promising product was developed and it gained promising traction. But in order to scale the business, the challenge of optimizing traction needs to be faced.
- The specific key challenge that is addressed in this project is how to gain traction to eventually obtain Maki's first 1000 customers. As a founder, I intuitively felt that there was a problem that was holding back traction: the foundation of our business decisions. This intuitive problem is kept in mind throughout the next sections.
- To assess Maki's starting point more extensively, the Business Model Canvas was filled out for Maki's initial situation. This showed interesting risks and opportunities, but it did not touch upon the intuitively experienced problem: lack of business foundation.
- The canvas revealed that we needed to take a close look at the production set-up: is Maki even ready for 1000 customers? Because this was uncertain, the production activities were assessed and the scale-up point was determined to be 1000 before outsourcing or automating is necessary.
- After this production risk was taken away, the rest of this report is devoted to addressing the main challenge of gaining traction and eventually clients.



# 2. Literature

The previous chapter introduced Maki, stated the main challenge of this project and prepared Maki for traction and scaling up. This chapter explores existing literature that touches upon the challenge (2.1) in order to decide how to approach this challenge for Maki. Many tools and theories are found, of which many overlap. This is discussed in 2.2. After, this pool of knowledge is untangled and reorganized (2.3) and eventually 6 important elements are distilled for gaining traction for startups (2.4). In other words, if Maki's traction were to be a cake, the ingredients are discovered to bake it.

## Contents

- 2.1 Exploring literature
- 2.2 Discussing literature
- 2.3 Untangling literature
- 2.4 Plan for Maki
- 2.5 Key takeaways





# 2.1 Exploring literature

This section explores existing literature that touches upon the challenge of gaining traction for Maki and other startups from several angles (e.g. business, marketing, communication and startup literature) in order to decide how to approach

Maki's main challenge of gaining customers. We dive into the most imminent theories and explore how they relate to one another and often tend to overlap.

In literature, many terms touch upon the main challenge of gaining traction, e.g. business model, new venture success, go-to-market plan, strategy, marketing, strategic marketing, communication and market plan. The number of terms indicates the amount of literature and knowledge available on the topic. Following, relevant literature for startups facing this challenge is laid out.

## Strategy versus tactics

According to Hultink (1997), a go-to-market plan consists of two types of decisions:

Strategic decisions: covering the what, where, when, and why-questions. This includes for example targeting, positioning and segmenting.

Tactical decisions: covering the how questions. This for example includes the 4 Ps of product, price, promotion, and place.

This distinction gives such a plan direction: first strategic decisions must be made before heading to the tactical aspects. This distinction gives words to the intuitively experienced problem of the lack of foundation described in 1.3: Maki lacks a strategy.

## Inspiration

Organizations often feel compelled to tell us 'what' they do, without first explaining 'why' they do it (Straker, 2019). However, an organization's 'why', if well defined, can inspire employees and customers to connect in the long term, by resonating on a deeper, emotional level. Simon Sinek created a model for communicating from the inside out using the three levels of why, how, and what (Sinek, 2009). Straker (2019) states that clear 'why' and a corresponding value proposition are integral to the success of an organization, as explaining 'what' and 'how' alone will not create a sustainable competitive advantage for the organizations of the future (Straker, 2019). The definition of Sinek's 'why' corresponds with the definition of strategic decisions as described by Hultink (1997) in the way that they both offer foundation for business implementations.

## Business models

Business models are commonly used tools by businesses. The most renowned one, the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder, 2013) was already used to assess Maki's initial business setup (see

section 1.3). This section more extensively reveals what literature states about business models.

No generally accepted definition of the term “business model” has emerged which leads to confusion in terminology. The terms business model, strategy, business concept, revenue model, and economic model are often used interchangeably (Morris et al, 2005). They circle around similar ideas, often related to the way an organization captures and delivers value, well summarized by Osterwalder (2013):

*‘A business model describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value.’*

Although multiple business model frameworks are available (e.g. Hamel, 2000; Alt & Zimmerman, 2001; Weill and Vitale, 2001; Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002; Gordijn & Akkermans, 2003; Morris, Schindehutte & Allen, 2005; Keen & Qureshi, 2006; Johnson et al., 2008; Al-Debei & Avison, 2010; Gasman et al., 2014; Amit & Zott, 2015), the most renowned and commonly used (Aarntzen, 2016) is the Business Model Canvas of Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), see figure 3. Osterwalder defines nine blocks as the pillars of any business. Because of its simplicity and clarity, this model is a valuable tool for brainstorming and communicating. Apart from the Value Proposition Canvas, an additional model to further define the value proposition (Osterwalder, 2013), no further sub-elements are described, which limits the use of the model for the purpose of gaining traction.

Interestingly, as already intuitively experienced (see section 1.2), the difference between tactics and strategy (as described by Hultink, 1997) is not part of Osterwalder’s Business Model Canvas. Osterwalder and Pigneur (2002) state that business models are seen to bridge the gap between strategy (the positioning, objectives, and goals of the company) and business processes (involving the understanding and implementation

of strategic information). However, since the Business Model Canvas does not address strategy directly, it is an insufficient model to define Maki’s strategy.

## Testing Business Ideas

The book *Testing Business Ideas* (Bland & Osterwalder, 2019) explains methods to experiment and innovate business model canvasses. This suggests that users of the business model canvas had a need for instructions. The book proposes experiment forms and instructions with a focus on the phases discovery, validation, and execution. In this way, the book makes a plea for any business undertaking to experiment first before implementing to minimize risks and maximize results. This is exactly what this project entails. However, this is a practical rather than a strategic approach.

## Marketing

Literature on marketing does provide with interesting leads on business strategy, specifically so for all business aspects concerning traction. The basic function of marketing is to manage customer relationships. The AMA (American Marketing Association, 2013) defines it as:

*‘Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.’*

Marketing has two goals: attracting new customers and keeping and growing the current customer base by keeping them satisfied. It is the process of creating value for the customers and building a strong relationship with them to gain value from them in return (Armstrong 2012: 8).

Philip Kotler's definition of marketing management (1967):

*'Marketing management is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value.'*

## Market plan aspects

According to Armstrong (2012) the foundation of a market plan consists of 4 aspects: segmenting the market, choosing a target segment, positioning the product and deciding on the marketing mix factors.

## Segmentation

People do not have identical preferences, so a company cannot satisfy everyone. Therefore, many companies adopt a strategy that is known as target marketing. This strategy involves dividing the market into segments and developing products or services for these segments. This process of dividing the market is called segmentation. One of the many definitions of a market segment is given by Camilleri (2018):

A market segment is a group of individuals, groups or organizations who may share the same interests, traits, and characteristics. The consumer segments may have similar needs, wants and expectations. Therefore, businesses should ask themselves which segments should they serve?

The phenomenon of segmentation is used and described by many authors. Some statements on why segmentation is important:

- Camilleri (2018) states that a specific segment focus is essential to use market resources more efficiently.
- This segmentation is the foundation of Aulet's (2013) book 'Disciplined Entrepreneurship's 24 steps', which is one of the few books outlining

specific steps needed for startup success. This book is mostly devoted to obtaining a higher understanding of one's customers, to lay the foundation for all other business aspects. This is an interesting insight as it can give a founder a direction on what to focus on.

Some statements on how one can do effective segmentation:

- Armstrong et al. (2012: 200) states that the way to achieve effective segmentation is to use segments that are measurable, accessible, substantial, differentiable, and actionable. The traditional variables that may be used for market segmentation can be grouped into four main categories: demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral (Camilleri, 2018). However, the problem with such segmentation schemes is that, with the exception of behavioral aspects, they are static and thus poor indicators of customer behavior. Customers' buying behaviors change far more often than their demographics, psychographics, or attitudes (Christensen, 2007). Demographic data cannot explain why a man takes a date to a movie one night but orders pizza to watch a DVD from Netflix Inc. the next.
- Christensen (2007) presents a more profound basis for segmentation: jobs to be done. When customers find that they need to get a job done, they 'hire' products or services to do the job. The focus of a business is then not to offer superior product attributes (which can be easily copied by competitors), but to meet a need on a higher level and focus all business efforts to do that. This will help to differentiate the brand in the mind of the consumer in a more differentiated way by effectively communicating the value it can deliver to meet that need (Christensen, 2007).

Concluding, according to this literature segmentation has three main goals:

- Developing a strong positioning (Christensen, 2007),
- Tailoring products (Aulet, 2013; Christensen, 2007),
- Tailoring marketing efforts (Camelleri, 2018).

## Targeting

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010), market targeting is the process of evaluating each market segment's attractiveness and selecting one or more segments to enter. This definition shows a difference between segmentation and targeting.

Contrastingly, in explored literature (e.g. Hultink, 1997; Aulet, 2013; Christensen, 2007), the words targeting, segmentation, market segment, target segment are often used meaning the same thing: the group of people a company chooses to serve. These can be the people the company chooses to serve as a whole or for individual products or services.

## Positioning

Customers continuously compare products or services. Positioning entails a company's efforts of shaping their position in their target customers' minds, relative to other competitors' products or services (Camilleri, 2018). Through positioning, a product or company differentiates itself from the competition in order to stand out from other similar products or services (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). There is a distinction between product and brand positioning; a company has one company positioning but can have several product positionings for different products.

## Attribute positioning

Traditional positioning focuses on outperforming competitors on product attributes, often visualized by positioning axes (Christensen, 2017).

For example, GoPro as a company has the smallest cameras with the best resolution: this is the brand positioning. Though, one camera targets amateurs, so it is positioned as easier to use than other cameras. Another of their cameras targets professionals, so it is positioned to have the most functionalities. These are two examples of product positioning. But the risk of this attribute-based positioning is that other competitors can (easily) copy these attributes and communicate that they are easier, higher in resolution or have more functionalities.

## Job to be done positioning

Linking segmentation and positioning together, Christensen (2017) states that there's a problem with this type of positioning: even when marketers find market opportunities in this way, customers often don't value the differentiation, and competitors find it easy to copy. Christensen suggests a better basis for positioning (for both the company as a whole or a specific product): 'jobs to be done' (JTBD). A focus of a business is in this view not based on superior product attributes offering, but to meet a need on a higher level and focus all business efforts to do that. This helps to differentiate the brand in the mind of the consumer in a more differentiated way by effectively communicating the value it can deliver to meet that need (Christensen, 2007).

In the GoPro example, following this approach, GoPro could hypothetically do the job of 'capturing and sharing sports experiences'. It could then be positioned as:

*We are experts in capturing all of your sports experiences so you can share them with others in the most realistic way possible. We know what*

*you want and we will meet your needs.*

This approach offers a simple positioning which cannot be easily outvoiced by competitors. Also it ensures that people value what you do - which is unsure when you just launch a product that delivers better attributes than those of competitors as they can easily copy those. Thus, JTBD positioning is context and time independent in the minds of customers.

Also, with this job in the core of the company, the company has a direction for future product development: it alerts GoPro to keep an open eye for technological developments to capture and share sports experiences, such as VR or tactile experiences - rather than expanding to capturing family memories for example, which might have been a logical step with positioning on attributes.

Concluding, positioning has several goals:

- Creating products that create value for customers,
- Creating customers perception (e.g. in the form of marketing and communication),
- Offering future direction.

## Marketing Mix

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010) the marketing mix covers the last elements of a market plan. It traditionally consists of the factors product, place, price, and promotion. These factors are shortly described below.

### Product

The goods and service combination the firm offers to the target market. This includes the product mix, features, branding, designs, packaging, sizes, services, maintenance contracts, warranties and return policies (Londre, 2007).

### Place

The company's activities that make the product available. This includes distribution and trade channels, roles, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory and transportation characteristics and alternatives (Londre, 2007).

### Price

All aspects regarding pricing. This includes the investments a consumer is willing to do to obtain the product, which includes wholesale/retail/promotional prices, discounts, trade-in allowances, quantity discounts, credit terms, sales and payment periods and credit terms (Londre, 2007).

### Promotion

How the brand and products are communicated to the people. This includes phenomenons such as messaging, advertising, sales, marketing, channels, public relations (Londre, 2007).

Traditionally advertising played a large role in a company's promotion (Armstrong, 2012). But since 2015 commercial advertising has lost importance because it doesn't have the sensitivity, adaptability, flexibility and ability to capture the market's reaction that modern forms of promotion do have (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Traditional advertisements are considered a monologue by the younger generations. The promotion has increasingly become a dialogue where the public actively participates (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012), for example using social media. But studies on the impact of social media as a marketing tool for small business are scarce (Hassan et al., 2015).

A widely applied model in marketing (both traditional or online) is the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model. It represents

the steps customers pass through while going to purchase (Belch and Belch, 2004). The model can be used to direct marketing efforts.

## Branding

The visual identity of a brand is often the thing that catches the eyes of consumers. It helps to differentiate a company amongst the competition and can build consumer trust. Oftentimes, people tend to form their opinions about a company even before they know what it is about. Therefore it is important to focus on developing a unique and meaningful brand identity (Jain, 2017).

According to the American Marketing Association (2017):

*“A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors”.*

The topic of branding knows many terms and definitions, such as:

- Brand identity: the outward expression of the brand, including its name, logo, tone, tagline, symbols and visual appearance (Jain, 2017)
- Brand image: how customers perceive the brand; their set of beliefs based on their associations. These can be attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller, 1993).
- Brand equity: the value customers attach to a brand. If a consumer behaves more favorably to one branded product compared to a generic product, then a brand has positive brand equity (Jain, 2017).

One tool that connects these phenomena is the Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (Keller, 2009), which describes 3 levels of a brand:

- Brand identity: describes the ‘who’ of a brand with the goal to create brand awareness.
- Brand meaning: what does the brand mean? This includes product performance and visuals (or imagery, including e.g. user profiles, personality, values, history, associations).
- Brand response: how do customers perceive the brand? In terms of judgements and feelings.

Ruzzier (2015) states that branding is done by expressing the company’s story through visual elements. He also states that startup failure is often caused by their narrow understanding of brands as it is one of the core tools to position a company in a competitive market (Janonis & Virvilaite, 2007), especially under the conditions of globalization.

To develop startup brands, scholars have suggested various other approaches, such as Le Chernatony (2001) and Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2012). Ruzzier (2017) states that these models are static so they can’t work effectively in a dynamic market. Therefore he developed the startup branding funnel model which incorporates market dynamics, which includes for example vision, context understanding (amongst which is competition), minimum viable brands to test with, implementation (internal and external communication, channels) and maintaining customers’ perspective.

Another tool to develop a brand is the Brand DNA tool as used in the Brand & Product Commercialization course at the Technical University of Delft. This model is a triangle showing a brand’s purpose, positioning and personality traits.

# Communication

Patenaude-Gaudet (2012) states that communication is especially important for startup success because it drives initial traction from customers and investors. She states:

*'Communications can make or break the startup. It can make the already bumpy road that the startup already travels smoother or it destroys the vehicle.'*

The core message is a one-liner that expresses the positioning and explains the mission of the startup. It should follow the one-breath rule and it should be memorable (Patenaude-Gaudet, 2012). It is the basis of a company's communication.

Concluding, literature reveals a big pool of knowledge. Various instructions and ingredients were revealed that are useful for baking the traction-cake, but many of them overlap or have different focuses. In my view as a founder, this is

overwhelming and difficult to put into action. In order to make sense of the literature to be helpful to early-stage startups like Maki, the next section discusses the findings from literature.

# 2.2 Discussing literature

This section discusses the pool of literature from the previous section (2.1) in order to converge it in the next section (2.3). This is essential for creating a plan for Maki on how to gain traction and obtain the first 1000 customers.

Osterwalder & Pigneur's Business Model Canvas (2002) suggested their 9 blocks as the pillars for a business, in other words broad 'ingredients' for a 'traction recipe'. Yet these ingredients focused on business implementation rather than on the foundation. In other words, they focused on tactics rather than strategy (as highlighted by Hultink, 1997). In this way it does not touch upon the lack of foundation as intuitively experienced (as explained in 1.2). Other literature suggested specific instructions, such as the 24 steps of Aulet (2013) and the experimentation steps (Bland & Osterwalder, 2019). Furthermore Bland & Osterwalder's experimentation steps (2019) are inspirational for doing experiments, but as a practical rather than a strategic approach.

Other literature revealed various ingredients (segmentation, positioning, marketing, communication, branding to name a few) and for some of them instructions and tools to develop it (for example attribute segmentation and brand DNA). But many of these phenomena and tools overlap and therefore they cannot be connected easily and cannot be used next to each other. Aulet (2013), Hultink (1997) and Straker (2019) hinted that the actions should be done in a specific order:

starting with understanding the customers, a strategy or the 'why', respectively. Other tools (e.g. the Brand DNA, TU Delft and SBFunnel, Ruzzier, 2017) tried to connect ingredients but in my view, created confusion instead. These overlaps and connections are explained below.

## Lenses of literature fields

Something that applies to all insights below, is that literature from different fields applies different lenses to the topics. An example is segmentation. According to marketing literature, segmentation's goal is to tailor marketing efforts, while communication and product design literature state that its goal is for their fields, respectively.

## Terms used interchangeably

Segmentation is the action of separating the market into segments. Targeting is choosing a segment as a brand, or for specific products. These are two different actions with different implications. Yet the words are used interchangeably (market segment, customer segment, target market, target segment). In practice, the terms market segment and target segment are used in the same way.



Another example of term entanglement includes the terms positioning and differentiation. The definitions of the words are different but still the terms are used meaning the same thing.

## Positioning in brand DNA

The Brand DNA tool (TU Delft) also states positioning as a pillar for branding, while positioning as framed before has more fields of implication than just branding, which might create confusion.

## Levels of positioning

Segmentation/targeting is the basis for both product positioning and brand positioning. These two have different implications but can both be done using product attributes or jobs to be done.

## Levels of promotion

There are basically two types of promotion: overall company promotion and specific campaigns, which for example can promote a product. Both include deciding on channels and content. Choosing channels depends on the chosen target segment (for the full company or a specific product): where can you find them? But the choice of channels also influences how you as a brand want to come across. For example, if a company uses TikTok it will directly get a more informal image. This connects to positioning decisions.

Concluding, many of the traction ingredients overlap or have different focuses. In my view as a founder, this is overwhelming and difficult to put into action. Therefore, the next section aims

to 'untangle' this pool of knowledge into a clear overview, to eventually create a plan for Maki on how to gain traction.

# 2.3 Untangling literature

This section aims to 'untangle' the pool of overlapping theories and knowledge as described in the previous sections into a clear overview, in order to create a plan for Maki on how to gain traction (described in the next section).

To 'untangle' the ingredients and tools from literature, the division of strategy and tactics worked clarifying. Using this division, the other elements could be arranged within these 'boxes'. Naturally, the strategic elements should be used as a basis for the tactics, to give direction and consistency to all business decisions.

Figure 8 shows the overview of the untangled business elements from literature. Positioning is split up in brand/company positioning, which is a strategic decision, and product positioning, which is a tactical decision. The same applies to targeting. Within promotion, a distinction is made between overall company promotion and specific

campaigns. Both include channel decisions, but with a different aim, so they are used differently.

Although figure 8 shows an effective overview of the found business elements, not all of the elements are equally important for early-stage startups. For example the product positioning and product targeting; for startups these often coincide with the company-wide positioning and targeting, as they often start with one main product. Also, their main goal of promotion is often to gain a place in the market as a company, rather than promoting specific products or other specific deals, which comes at a later stage.

Concluding, this section presented an overview of the untangled elements as discovered from literature. This offers an effective overview for any company, but also taps on multiple elements that

are not especially relevant for startups. Therefore the next section distills the most important elements for early-stage startups from this overview.

### Strategic

- Segmentation (Camilleri, 2018) (Aulet, 2013) (Armstrong, 2012)
- Targeting (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)
- Positioning (company, not brand for clarity) (Chtistensen, 2007) (Camilleri, 2018) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)

### Tactical

- Product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)
  - Positioning (product)
  - Targeting (product)
- Place (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)
- Price (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)
- Promotion (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010)
  - Overall company promotion
    - Communication (Patenaude-Gaudet, 2012)
      - Channels (Londre, 2017)
      - Messaging (Patenaude-Gaudet, 2012)
    - Brand identity (Jain, 2017)
  - Campaigns (for specific products or promotions)
    - Channels (Londre, 2017)
    - Content (Londre, 2017)
    - Visual style (Jain, 2017)

Figure 8. An organized overview of the elements discovered from literature

# 2.4 Plan for Maki

The previous section revealed an effective overview of business elements for any company, but taps on multiple elements that are not especially relevant for startups in their quest of gaining traction. In this section, the most important elements to explore for Maki are distilled from this overview as the basis elements

for any startups' traction recipe. First an overview is given of these ingredients and explanations are given how they were distilled from literature. Then, per element, everything that's needed for starting the experiments is discussed: the chosen definition, approach, aims & requirements.

## Overview of the 5 ingredients

The 5 distilled elements from the overview in figure 8 are shown in figure 9, together with a short explanation of why each element is distilled from literature and so, what it covers. The strategic elements are stated on top because they form the basis for the tactics. These aim to give direction and consistency to all business decisions. The tactical elements are all outings of the strategic elements. Within the strategy, positioning should be done after segmentation because it depends on it. It is not necessary to stick to the order of the tactical elements as they do not build on each other directly, but the order is chosen intuitively. For example, the core message is placed above channels and content, as this element can take the core message into account.

Next to the 5 elements that were distilled from literature around gaining traction, the business model assessment (1.3) revealed the revenue model to be an uncertain element too. Also, it is closely related to traction as the choice of buying a product also depends on the pricing and type of sale. Therefore it is treated as the sixth element.

The next section covers per ingredient what definition is chosen, the approach taken for the experiments, the aims of the ingredient and requirements for an effective form of the ingredient.

	Ingredient	Explanation for distillation
Strategy	Segmentation	This ingredient also includes targeting, in literature often used interchangeably. Segmentation is the definition of the segment and targeting the aiming on that segment. Here, segmentation is used for the full company, not for a specific product. It is the basis for positioning and together these two ingredients form the strategic foundation for all tactical decisions.
	Positioning	This ingredient covers the company-wide brand positioning, the direction of all business efforts. This is different from product positioning, which is left out of this ingredient list as it is not relevant for startups as they often launch with one product.
Tactics	Core message	This ingredient covers the basis of all company messaging.
	Channels & content	Channels and content are the basis for all means to get in touch with customers: communication, marketing and promotion.
	Branding	This ingredient is chosen to cover brand identity, defined by the personality traits and matching visual brand style (symbols, logo, colors, typefaces). Together they have the goal to express the company positioning. Other, messaging-related aspects (tone of voice, and tagline) are implicitly covered by the core message ingredient. Although an element of any brand identity, the brand name is not covered here, as it is often already chosen at the very start of a startup, as was the case for Maki. This brand identity is company-wide, and used for all promotions.

Figure 9. The 5 basis elements for any startup's traction recipe

# Chosen definition, approach, aims & requirements per ingredient

The previous section introduced the 5 distilled elements from literature and the extra sixth element (revenue model). To be able to experiment with these ingredients in order to improve Maki's business plan and to explore possibilities, the literature from 2.1 is reorganized per ingredient, discussing the following aspects:

- The chosen definition (based on the definitions from literature)
- Aims (why it is important)
- Requirements (when is it good)
- The suggested approaches by literature
- The chosen approach for the experiments

From all literature, the most effective elements were distilled as described in the following sections.

## Segmentation

### Chosen definition

Segmentation is dividing the market into smaller segments to meet their specific needs and preferences in order to satisfy them. The more specifically described the segment, the easier it is to target them (Armstrong, 2012).

### Aims

It helps to tailor products (Aulet, 2013; Christensen, 2007).  
It is essential for developing a strong positioning (Christensen, 2007).  
It helps tailoring marketing efforts (Camelleri, 2018).

### Requirements

For positioning and product tailoring, it is important to have a crisp understanding of the segment's deep jobs to be done (Christensen, 2007).  
For marketing tailoring, it is important to find characteristics that are helpful for reaching the segment, such as their interests and where they go (online/offline) (Narkiemi, 2013).

### Summary of suggested approaches

Using traditional segmentation variables that can be grouped into four main categories: demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral (Camilleri, 2018) (Armstrong, 2012).

Using 'jobs to be done' to find the segment's deeper motivations and drivers. These can be uncovered using interviews, surveys, observations or coevolution (Christensen, 2007).

### Chosen approach

For improving Maki's segmentation, interviews are chosen because these allow for the deepest understanding of the situation in the least demanding way for the customer. A downside of interviews is that they can only reveal 'knowable' jobs to be done, in contrast to observation for example. However, the latter approach requires a location where the customers can be observed without intruding on the situation, which is not possible as sewing is an in-home and private activity.

## Positioning

### Chosen definition

Through positioning, a product or company differentiates itself from the competition in order to stand out from other similar products or services (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

### Aims

It helps to create products that create value for customers (Christensen, 2017).

It helps to communicate the value the brand can deliver (e.g. in the form of marketing and messaging).

It can offer (future) direction for other business efforts.

### Requirements

For all three aims, it is important to have a crisp understanding of the chosen segments' core motivations and to choose one to focus on primarily (Christensen, 2007).

This positioning should be crystal clear (Van der Vorst, 2017).

### Summary of suggested approaches

Attribute positioning: outperforming competitors on product attributes, often visualized by positioning axes (Christensen, 2017).

Job to be done positioning: do a job (there is evidence that people value) in a superior way and focus all business efforts to do that (Christensen, 2017).

### Chosen approach

All theories overlooked, the conclusion is that the JTBD-based approach serves any business best and is therefore the most complete and promising for both Maki and other startups.

## Core message

### Chosen definition

The core message is a one-liner that expresses the positioning and explains the mission of the startup (Patenaude-Gaudet, 2012).

### Aims

It helps to strongly communicate the value the brand can deliver for the customers.

### Requirements

When it expresses your positioning clearly.

When it sparks your target segment and gets them on your side.

### Summary of suggested approaches

No suitable approaches were found, so the chosen approach is based on the overall theory.

### Chosen approach

As it should be a short text, preferably a one-liner, a brainstorm is chosen to find the best wording.

## Channels & content

### Chosen definition

Channels & content are the basis for all means to get in touch with customers: communication, marketing and promotion.

### Aims

Optimizing channels & content can drive optimal traction and conversion rate.

### Requirements

This ingredient, contrasting with previous ones, is too broad to 'improve' fully in one test. Also, it should be a continuous development as it should be used regularly and evolve with the brand over time. Therefore this element is effective when learnings have been gained about which channels work best and about what content drives most engagement and conversions.

### Summary of suggested approaches

One tool to plan marketing and promotion is the AIDA tool, as explained in 2.1. This practical tool is said to give directions for effective use of both content and channels.

### Chosen approach

Because literature including AIDA did not suggest an approach to explore the possibilities of channels & content, additional research was done to find guidance (see the next section). This research reveals interesting channels to explore for Maki and what is important in terms of content to address the targeted generations. These insights are used to guide the approach of the experiment, which is further explained in 3.4. Interestingly, the AIDA model has been found useful to define both content and channels in the implementation phase (see 3.4 and chapter 4).

## Additional literature about channels & content

### About channels

Traditional advertising is considered outdated as it is a monologue (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012). Marketing has increasingly become a dialogue where the public actively participates. Generation Y and Z actively favor the online environment in terms of communication channels (Constantinescu-Dobra, 2021). 70-95% of the 18- to 29-olds use Youtube and Facebook (this is roughly similar to other generations). But a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds say they also use Instagram (71%) or Snapchat (65%), while roughly half say the same for TikTok (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Gen Z does not have one preferred online platform as was observed for Generations X and Y but consists of multi-channel users (Response Media, 2020).

### About content

Gen Z reacts positively to visually pleasing content. Examples are images, Gifs, memes (MTA Martech, 2019), behind the scenes videos, and product demonstration videos (Business Clan, 2019). Generation Y and Z respond positively to user-generated content and have opportunities to take the lead in creating and sharing content (Fietkiewicz et al, 2016). As digital natives, Millennials and Generation Z have been found to have an extremely short attention span for digital marketing communication and advertising (Nielsen, 2017).



### **About tone of voice**

The emotional dimension of the company-consumer relationship has become especially important (Constantinescu-Dobra, 2021). Emmons (n.d.) states that recent years have seen a shift in the approach of social media channels from “us versus them” to a “we” relation, for all channels. Furthermore, generation Z prefers brands that reflect independence and realism (e.g. Free People) and generation Y brands that are idealistic (e.g. Abercrombie & Fitch).

### **About TikTok specifically**

As TikTok is a relatively new and young platform, some more research is done to explore its potential. Brands play an important role in the TikTok experience, and its community enjoys

engaging with the brands they love. The experience is not about advertising, it's connection, inspiration, co-creation, and entertainment. This allows brands to be real and part of the culture creation happening on TikTok because they show up as members of the community (Nielsen Custom Authenticity Study, 2021).

TikTok is about storytelling showing joy, humor, courage, and honesty. While a part of TikTok still is about dances, outfit changes, and special effects, there's a development going on showing more 'authentic' or 'realistic' stories. This results in trends including vulnerability, realistic day-in-the-life, behind-the-scenes, everyday struggles, and insecurities (Hootsuite, 2021).

# Branding

## Chosen definition

Brand identity here is defined by a brand's personality traits and matching visual style (including symbols, logo, colors, typefaces). Together they have the goal to express the company positioning.

## Aims

Branding is an opportunity to underline and express the company positioning (Ruzzier, 2017).

Branding can cause consumer preference and loyalty (Kotler, 2013).

Branding aims to communicate a feeling that people value (Kotler, 2013).

Branding can differentiate the company from competitors (Janonis & Virvilaite, 2007).

## Requirements

The chosen visual style should align and underline the company positioning.

The chosen visual style should have evidence that it attracts the most people in the most attractive way.

The chosen visual style should be based on distinct personality traits.

The chosen visual style should positively differ from that of competitors in the minds of the target consumers.

## Summary of suggested approaches

Keller's CBBE Model (2009) including brand identity, brand meaning and brand response.

Other traditional approaches by Le Chernatony (2001) and Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2012) which are nowadays seen as too static to work effectively in a dynamic market, according to Ruzzier (2015).

Using emotional attributes for creating a brand image in order to convey a feeling (Keller, 2003). These emotional attributes are used as the basis for branding by the next two approaches.

Ruzzier (2015) developed a dynamic tool to develop several 'minimum viable brands' to test with and perceive customers' reactions.

Another tool to develop a brand is the Brand DNA tool (used by the TU Delft as described in 2.1).

This model is a triangle showing a brand's purpose, positioning and personality traits.

## Chosen approach

This ingredient is chosen to cover brand identity in terms of personality traits and visual brand style, while other aspects, that are sometimes perceived as part of branding, are implied elsewhere (e.g. core message and starting point). Therefore, the following approach is distilled from the approaches suggested by literature:

- A competitor analysis is done to gain insights into how differentiating can be done amongst competition (based on Ruzzier, 2015).
- Minimum viable brand variations are tested (based on Ruzzier, 2015)
- The positioning is chosen to represent the 'story' of the brand (Ruzzier, 2015), or in other words 'purpose' (Brand DNA tool, TU Delft).
- Emotional attributes (Keller, 2003) or personality traits (Brand DNA tool, TU Delft) are used as a basis to create visual styles from the positioning.

## Revenue model

### Chosen definition

Because this element did not come forward from the literature in 2.1, additional literature is introduced on the topic here.

Casadesus-Masanell & Zhu (2010) define a revenue model as the monetization approach by which a firm derives sales from its products. Revenue models are part of the broader concept of business models. By business model, we mean the system of activities performed by a firm to create and capture value (Massa et al., 2017; McDonald & Eisenhardt, 2019). McDonald & Eisenhardt (2019) state that choosing the right revenue model for a business is essential for optimally capturing value, and thus, superior financial performance. The optimal revenue model choice depends largely on the company, market, and product.

Revenue models in practice entail many variables, such as the revenue model type (e.g. subscriptions or selling single products), pricing, in the case of a subscription model whether or not period deals would be appreciated (for example “if you subscribe for a year, 20% off”) and combination deals (e.g. paying less if you subscribe for more patterns per month).

The chosen definition is:

A revenue model consists of all the aspects of making revenue: revenue model type, pricing, period deals and combination deals.

### Aims

Achieve superior financial performance by capturing the value that is created by the company optimally (Eisenhardt 2019).

### Requirements

A good revenue model captures optimal value in terms of money and the number of customers.

### Summary of suggested approaches

No approaches were found on how to test revenue model decisions.

### Chosen approach

Because all the revenue model variables are too many to test in one experiment, the most relevant and risky one was chosen: which revenue model type works best. The pricing variable is easier to test in a later stage and subscription-specific variables are only relevant when a subscription would be preferred, which is still unknown. Specific price variants could be tested in a follow-up experiment.

Concluding, from the untangled literature overview, 5 simple elements were distilled to be valuable to startups specifically (see figure 9), as the basis elements for any startups' traction recipe. The revenue model was treated as the 6th element because it was closely related to driving traction. For each of the elements, the

chosen definition, aims, requirements, suggested approaches and chosen approach were discussed. This forms the basis for the next chapter, where experiments are done for every of these ingredients with the goal to improve them and explore what works and doesn't work for Maki in order to drive traction.

# 2.5 Key takeaways

To summarize this chapter:

- This chapter laid out literature around the main challenge of gaining traction and obtaining customers. Various instructions and ingredients were revealed that are useful for baking the traction-cake.
- Many of the discovered elements and tools from literature showed to overlap or have different focuses so they could not be combined. In my view as a founder, this is overwhelming and difficult to put into practice. The overlaps were discussed in order to untangle these elements.
- This discussion was the basis for the development of an effective overview of business elements for any company. Yet it tapped upon multiple elements that were not all equally relevant for startups.
- From this extensive overview, the most important elements for startups in their quest of gaining traction were distilled into 5 simple elements: segmentation, positioning, core message, channels & content and branding. These elements are the basis for any startups' traction-recipe.
- A 6th element was introduced to improve for Maki because it is closely related to gaining traction and because it was an uncertain aspect for Maki as pointed out by the assessment and 1.3: the revenue model.
- After they were distilled, their definitions were chosen, their aims listed and their requirements created. Finally, approaches to test them were chosen.
- These ingredients can be used to improve and explore what works for them in order to drive traction. This is done in the next chapter for Maki.



# 3. Ingredient testing

The previous chapter concluded with 5 simple elements that are important for driving traction, distilled from literature. This chapter zooms in upon each of these 5 elements in order to create Maki's traction-recipe: segmentation (3.1), positioning (3.2), core message (3.3), channels & content (3.4), and branding (3.5). A sixth one was introduced because it was another uncertain aspect for Maki: the revenue model (3.6). These ingredients are explored and experimented with in

order to learn what works and doesn't work with the goal to create Maki's traction recipe. Every improvement round builds on the Plan for Maki described in 2.4 (including the definition, aims, requirements and approach of every ingredient) and consists of a description of Maki's initial element state, the approach of the experiment, findings, limitations and concludes with an improved version based on the findings.

## Contents

- 3.1 Segmentation
- 3.2 Positioning
- 3.3 Core message
- 3.4 Channels & content
- 3.5 Branding
- 3.6 Revenue model
- 3.7 Key takeaways

# 3.1 Segmentation

The first ingredient tested is market segmentation, because it is the first of the strategic elements and the positioning depends on it. Together segmentation and positioning are the basis for all tactical business elements. The customer segment was initially based on static and broad characteristics. To tailor marketing efforts better to the customers and to understand them better in order to differentiate Maki in their minds and communicate with them more effectively, deep-dive interviews are held. These revealed many of their interests and a surprising variety of 'jobs to

be done'. The new segment is defined better in terms of interests and characteristics, which helps to reach them more effectively. The findings of their deeper and more emotional jobs-to-be-done form the basis for improving the positioning (3.2).



## Maki's initial segmentation

Maki's product and marketing originally targeted one segment. This segment was defined by the demographic characteristics (mostly females aged between 20 and 30 years old, living in bigger cities of the Netherlands), psychographic characteristics (higher educated), and behavioral characteristics (have some sewing experience). The original plan was to target a bigger European market after launch and to possibly later target people without any sewing experience.

This segment was based on 25 interviews that were held in the Build Your Startup course between September '21 and November '21. These interviews focused on the interviewee's experience with sewing and their frustrations around it; at the time we did not dig into what was their job to be done.

Looking at the requirements listed in 2.4, this initial segment is insufficient in two ways:

- It does not include a crisp understanding of our customers' jobs to be done.
- It does not entail characteristics that are helpful for reaching them.

The goal of this experiment is to improve the segment in these two ways.

## Approach

To do the interviews well, an expert was consulted and some tips were gathered. Social media strategist Jan Maarten in 't Veld works at Business Models Inc. He gave me valuable tips, such as:

- You need to keep an open view. Don't assume someone will fit in a certain profile because you'll test your assumptions and don't really listen to the person.
- Take quotes, not notes. When you take notes, you're interpreting already. Also, take quotes if they don't seem useful now, they might be valuable later.

All these learnings were taken into account in the protocol.

## Protocol

13 of Maki's Instagram followers were asked through a direct message to be interviewed and 8 of them replied that they wanted to participate. They were all female, Dutch-speaking, and living in the Netherlands.

The following questions were used to guide the interview:

- Was there something that inspired/triggered you to start sewing?
- When you started sewing, did you have other hobbies that sewing replaced?
- In the beginning of your sewing adventure, did you have a sewing dream? What did you want to achieve?
- Did sewing change your mindset in some way?

## Findings

The interviews were recorded and notes were made during the conversations. To distill the quotes into valuable and representative findings, multiple rounds of interpretation were needed. These rounds can be found in Appendix C. The final interpretation overview is shown in figure 10. In this figure the quotes are clustered, each cluster representing a JTBD. These are again grouped based on their focus.

The clusters as shown in figure 10 are explained below per focus group.

### Before sewing

- 'I want to learn safely': Underneath this job is a fear of failure, not wanting to struggle in this leisure activity. Multiple interviewees said that they made their first garments with a friend or in a sewing class because they weren't confident enough to start on their own.

- You told me you sew because ... Do you have an idea which of those was most important to you or was it really the combination?
- What other pass-times do you like to do? (hobbies)
- What interests do you have next to sewing? (youtube videos you watch, magazines, cool accounts on social media)

These interview questions were used to guide the conversations, with the goal to anatomize their situation. More specific questions were asked based on their individual answers.

### During sewing

- 'I just want to make things'; a rather shallow JTBD. It indicates that they feel an internal drive but this doesn't say much about that drive. The other three JTBDs may be underneath this job.
- 'I want to challenge myself'; wanting to outdo yourself.
- 'I want results'; doing something fun yet useful.
- 'I want creative freedom'; imagining in a childlike way, playing, and improving skills to be able to live out these ideas without feeling the white-canvas fear (when for example painting - that appears to be too much creative freedom).



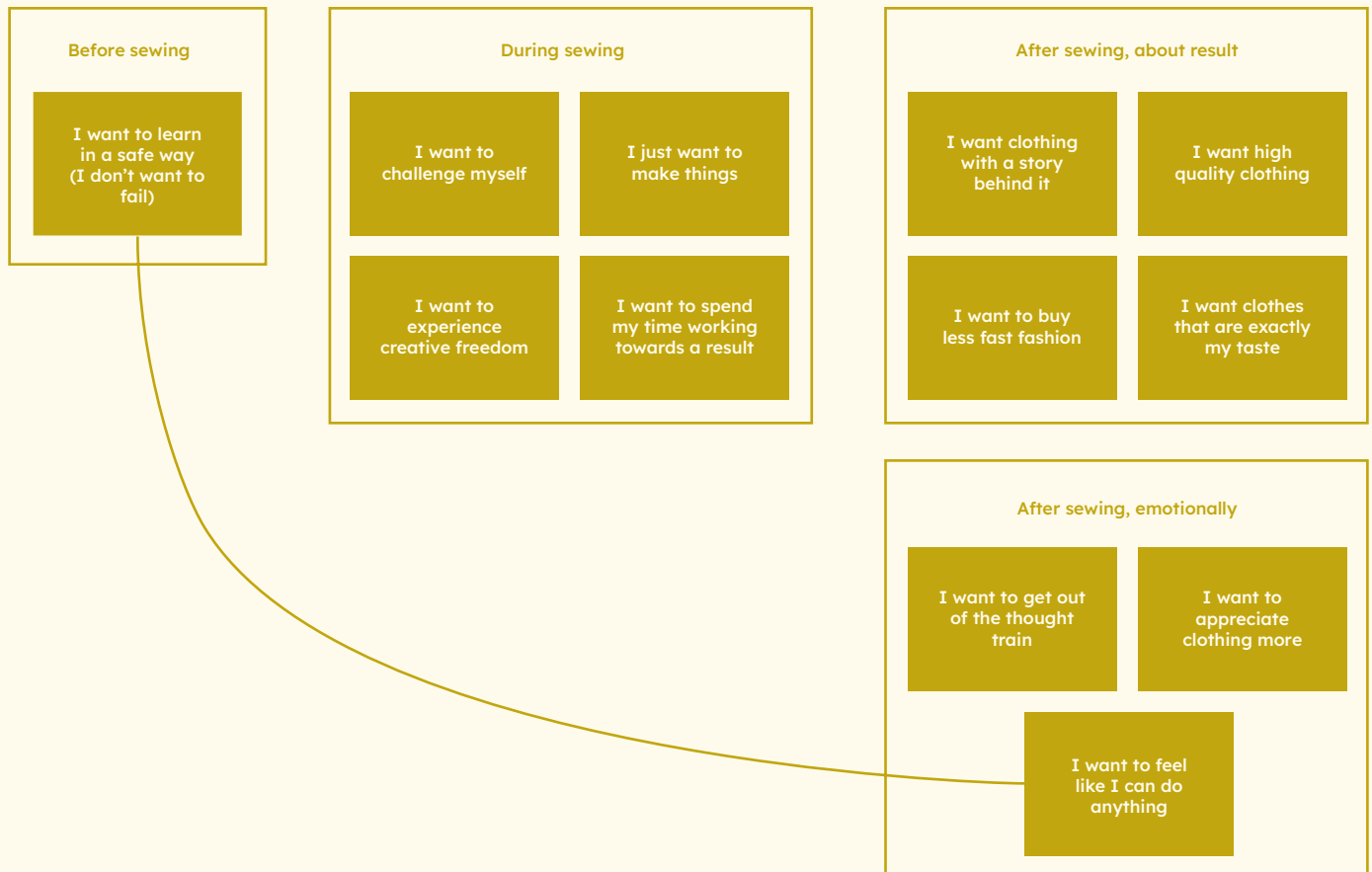


Figure 10. The overview of the jobs to be done, based on the interview quotes

## After sewing, physical result

- 'I want clothes with a story', wanting clothes that feel special and unique.
- 'I want to make qualitative garments', the respondent's sewing goal was to be able to make very detailed, professional looking pieces.
- 'I want to buy less fast fashion', their sewing goal was to make their clothing so they don't have to buy from fast fashion brands anymore.
- 'I want clothes that are exactly my taste', their sewing goal was really about the clothing style; thinking of a specific design and being able to create that. Make a piece of clothing that feels like home.

## After sewing, emotional

- 'I want to stop my thoughts', getting in a flow-state, being forced to slow down and take your time for it.
- 'I want to feel empowered', sewing made them feel like they could do anything.
- 'I want to revalue my clothes', another side effect of sewing was that it made them look differently at clothes in general; their value and quality.

# Limitations

The findings may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- Interviewing can only reveal 'knowable' jobs to be done. The interviewees might have even more or more nuanced jobs to be done that they were not conscious of, therefore could not articulate.
- Interviewing is a subjective way of researching. The interviewer always steers the conversation in one way or another so the answers would be different depending on who asked the questions.

- Interpreting the answers is another subjective part of interviewing. People tend to interpret data in a way that seems attractive or logical to them to prove their point. This I experienced myself, even when I tried hard not to do it.

# New segmentation

To conclude with the new segmentation, the aims and requirements are repeated, together with a summary of the findings and the implications, see figure 11.

Aims	Requirements	Findings	Implications
<p>It helps to tailor products (Aulet, 2013; Christensen, 2007).</p> <p>It is essential for developing a strong positioning (Christensen, 2007).</p> <p>It helps tailoring marketing efforts (Camelleri, 2018).</p>	<p>For positioning and product tailoring, it is important to have a crisp understanding of their deep jobs to be done (Christensen, 2007).</p> <p>For marketing tailoring, it is important to find characteristics that are helpful for reaching them, such as their interests and where they go (online/offline) (Narkiem, 2013).</p>	<p>A surprising variety of jobs to be done was discovered, all focussing on different aspects of sewing; safety, creativity, results, expressing, mindfulness and feeling empowered. Surprisingly, many of the interviewees brought forward the same JTBDs, only in different proportions.</p> <p>Interestingly many interests of the interviewees overlapped: music, arts, knitting, sewing, painting, fashion and style, pottery, sustainable clothing, cooking, tattoos and vintage clothing.</p>	<p>These insights help to develop a strong positioning in the next section. We understand the customers well now.</p> <p>Optimizing the product for this market segment is left out of scope for this project, as Laura Looijen is focussing on that.</p> <p>These characteristics are helpful for reaching potential customers, especially for targeted social media advertising.</p>

Figure 11. The overview of this experiment (aims, requirements, findings and implications)

Concluding, in contrast to Maki's initial weakly defined segment, the new segment is specified more specifically. The deep-dive interviews firstly helped to reveal characteristics that are essential to reach the segment more effectively, such as for example music, arts, painting, pottery, and vintage

clothing. Secondly a better understanding of their motivations is gathered, including for example wearing more sustainable clothing, feeling empowered and mindfulness. This is useful for creating the positioning, which is done in the next section.

# 3.2 Positioning

The second ingredient tested is positioning, as it depends on the chosen segment as defined in the previous section. Maki's initial positioning was based on the product attribute of accessibility (in other words, ease). This tapped into a negative motivation for beginning sewers (a solution for a frustration) rather than a positive motivation. Therefore, tailoring product designs, communications and other (future) business efforts was difficult. Also it was not inspiring for us as founders. In this section, four 'jobs to be

done' (JTBDs) are chosen from the segmentation interviews to test in terms of traction and conversion rate and one clearly comes out the best: feeling creative freedom. As the second and last strategic aspect, this positioning serves as the basis for all of the next (tactical) sections (3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6).



## Maki's initial positioning

Before this project, Maki's positioned itself using the product attribute of accessibility - in both the practical sense (no hassle of searching, printing, tracing) and the mental sense (easy to understand instructions). This was expressed in the messaging:

*'Printed patterns with the clearest instructions, the ultimate beginner sewing patterns.'*

Using Christensen's argumentation, this is not a strong market position as competitors can easily improve on these attributes and so outcompete the company. Also, it did not give us, as founders, strong direction for making business decisions such as product design and communication. This was logical after comparing this initial positioning to JTBD positioning. This showed that positioning should be based on a positive motivation rather than a negative one - in our case, a solution for a frustration.

Therefore the goal of this experiment is to create a positioning that touches upon a positive JTBD

by the target customers that they care about (so it cannot easily be copied by competitors) and generates traction and customers (this means it attracts people).

Looking at the requirements in 2.4, this initial positioning lacks in three ways:

- The initial positioning was based on the attribute of accessibility, which was not a core motivation so tailoring product designs and communications is difficult (as experienced, see 1.2).
- Because of this it also could not be used as a direction for other (future) business efforts.
- It was not engaging and inspiring for us as founders, so it's logical that it was hard for us to communicate our passion to the customers.

The goal of this experiment is to improve the positioning in these three ways.

# Approach

In the segmentation interviews, an overview of the JTBDs of the target segment was already created (3.1). Because multiple JTBDs were discovered, the ‘best’ one should be chosen for the positioning. The ‘best’ one is defined as the one that drives most traction and conversions. To test these two elements, two experiments were set up; one testing traction rate for each JTBD and one testing conversion rate.

## Experiment 1. Traction rate

Four of the JTBDs were chosen to test (one was chosen from every focus-group). To shape the experiment of measuring traction, the social media strategist In ‘t Veld was consulted for advice. He recommended running various social media advertisement tests to measure their effects. Draft advertisements were made, each representing a job to be done (see Appendix D). The process of running such tests turned out as complex and nuanced as In ‘t Veld had predicted. An example of the draft advertisement texts to illustrate In ‘t Veld’s feedback:

JTBD: ‘I want clothing that is exactly my taste.’

Ad text: *Make exactly what you want. Are you always on the search for that one specific cool piece of clothing? If you make it yourself, everything (everything!) is possible. Our sewing patterns guide you step-by-step.*

In ‘t Veld reflected that the drafts were too safe to be impactful. He suggested they needed to be more distinct:

*‘You actually need to exaggerate them. You need to find the ‘edges’ of the JTBD to get the most valuable insights. Take the 10-minute grocery delivery company Gorillas as an example: they didn’t address the need “I want whatever I feel like having right away” but “I want A BEER, NOW!”. It’s exaggerated, almost a childish immature core need.’*

Additionally, he gave some practical tips which can be found in Appendix D. Because of this feedback, brainstorming was done to exaggerate the jobs (Appendix D). The improved texts can be found in figure 12 and were used in the test.

Job to be done title	Job to be done full	Exaggerated text to test (English)	Exaggerated text to test (Dutch)
Creative freedom	I want to feel creative freedom (that I can make whatever I come up with in my fantasy)	I just want to make all the cool stuff that I can imagine!	Ik wil gewoon alle coole dingen maken die ik verzin!
Specific taste	I want clothes that are exactly my taste	I hate all store clothing! I want to wear something that I like!	Ik vind alle kleren stom! Ik wil iets wat ik leuk vind!
Empowerment	I want to feel empowered, like I can do anything	Wow, how cool. I can do this!	Wow, wat vet. Dit kan ik gewoon!
Intimidated	I want to learn in a safe and low-effort way	Wow, I want to be able to sew too! But how am I ever going to succeed..	Wow ik wil ook kunnen naaien. Maar oef, hoe ga ik dat ooit doen?

Figure 12. The exaggerated JTBDs for the advertising experiment

## Procedure

To track the traction of the advertisements, a smokescreen was created on Maki's webpage where people could leave their email addresses to be kept updated. Every ad was run for 2 days for 20 euro per day. They were run one by one so the registrations on the website could be tracked better. The advertisement was run through Facebook Advertisements, posted to Instagram. The location was set to Amsterdam (+30 km), Utrecht (+30 km), Rotterdam (+30 km), The Hague (+30 km). The age was set to 20-30, the gender to female and interests were set to (as developed in the segmentation chapter): music, tattoos, arts and music, knitting, sewing, painting, fashion and style, vintage clothing, pottery, sewing pattern, fashion design, embroidery, music videos, sustainable clothing, sustainable fashion and cooking.

## Experiment 2. Conversion rate

After running the advertisements and measuring the traction, an email campaign was sent to everyone who signed up for updates through the ads in the last experiment. A new product was created to be able to sell it to them, the slip dress, as shown in figure 13.

Four email lists were made using Emailoctopus that included the people who signed up through the four different key message advertisements. The email can be found in Appendix D.

After people made a sale, they were sent a message asking them about their sewing experience and why they bought the pattern.



Figure 13. The newly developed pattern to sell through the email campaign in order to test conversion rate

# Findings

The results are shown in figure 14.

After a sale was made, a Whatsapp message was sent asking the respondents about their experience and why they bought this pattern, these answers can be found in Appendix E.

Looking at figure 14, the first two JTBDs interestingly drove significantly more traction and conversions than the last two jobs. The JTBD touching upon the need for a solution to wear clothing in their specific style (JTBD 2) generated the most traction. This means that most target customers feel attracted and inspired by this one. However, the JTBD touching upon the need for creative freedom (JTBD 1) generated the most conversions, relatively. This difference suggests that although more people are inspired by the 'specific style' one, the 'creativity' one is a stronger motivation to really take action. Therefore the JTBD of wanting to experience creative freedom is chosen as a basis for positioning Maki.

# Limitations

## Experiment 1. Traction rate

The results may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- All the ads targeted the same segment, so people might have seen multiple of the ads and clicked on the first they saw, making the results of the later ads less reliable. In 't Veld told me that I don't have to worry about it when testing on this scale, but there would be a small chance that it would affect the results. Multiple people I spoke to who saw a Maki ad, saw multiple.
- The first ad showed the text: "I just want to make all the cool things I imagine! But how?"; which also hints on the problem of the high threshold (ad 4), but in a more positive way. This might make the results less distinct. Still the results are useful because they tell us that the first ad works better as the basis for positioning.

Job to be done title	Reach	Clicks	Email signups	New Instagram followers	Number of sales
Creative freedom	5644	70	21	19	5
Specific taste	7187	65	23	32	1
Empowerment	4851	23	8	11	0
Intimidated	4153	29	5	7	2 (1 forwarded by a friend)

Figure 14. The traction and conversion numbers of the four 'job to be done' advertisements

## Experiment 2. Conversion rate

The results may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- The number of orders depends on the specific offer: the slip dress pattern. More than 8 people might be interested in any Maki pattern but some might have dropped out because they didn't like the garment itself.
- 8 orders is a low number. 5 of 8 orders is a relative high number of orders but one could argue the significance of this experiment.
- People logically replied that they bought the product for its functionalities - which was our starting point before this full iteration round, so one might argue the importance of the message used in the ad.
- They had a week to order the pattern, and due to sloppy communication between Laura and me, Laura posted her pilot in that week as well - making the exact same dress but then for free. This offer was only live on our Instagram for a few hours, but that might have interfered with this experiment.

## New positioning

To conclude with the new positioning, the aims and requirements are repeated, together with a summary of the findings and the implications, see figure 15.

Because a positioning's primary goal is to differentiate the company from competitors in the minds of customers, an axis is visualized showing Maki together with competitors on the chosen positioning axis, see figure 16.

Because a positioning's primary goal is to differentiate the company from competitors in the minds of customers, an axis is visualized showing Maki together with competitors on the chosen positioning axis, see figure 16.

Concluding, Maki's initial positioning was based on the product attribute of accessibility (in other words, ease). This tapped into a negative motivation for beginning sewers (a solution for a frustration) rather than a positive motivation. Therefore, tailoring product designs, communications and other (future) business efforts was difficult. Also it was not inspiring for

us as founders. In this section, four JTBDs were chosen from the segmentation interviews to test in terms of traction and conversion rate and one clearly comes out the best: feeling creative freedom. As the second and last strategic aspect, this positioning will serve as the basis for all of the upcoming (tactical) sections.



Aims	Requirements	Findings	Implications
<p>Creating products that create value for customers.</p> <p>Communicating the value the brand can deliver (e.g. in the form of marketing and messaging).</p> <p>Offering (future) direction for other business efforts.</p>	<p>For product creation, it is important to have a crisp understanding of the targeted consumers deep JTBDs and to choose one to focus on primarily (Christensen, 2007).</p> <p>For communication and future direction, this one JTBD should be crystal clear.</p> <p>In my view, it should also be engaging and inspiring for the founders and employees as the 'bigger picture'.</p>	<p>The JTBDs of creativity and specific taste drove most (and more or less the same) traction, while the creativity-based JTBD drove significantly more conversions. Therefore this one is chosen as the basis for positioning. The positioning statement is:</p> <p><i>We want people to experience creative freedom by engaging with Maki and using our products.</i></p> <p>Also, this JTBD excites both my co-founder Laura and me.</p>	<p>The influence of this positioning on product development is left out of scope, but one can imagine that future designs should offer more possibilities to explore 'creativity', in contrast to for example facilitating 'a steep learning curve' (which would be a logical step if the primary JTBD would be that people wanted to learn sewing).</p> <p>This JTBD positioning offers a crystal clear basis for communications.</p> <p>This JTBD positioning offers a crystal clear (future) direction for other business efforts.</p>

Figure 15. The overview of this experiment (aims, requirements, findings and implications)

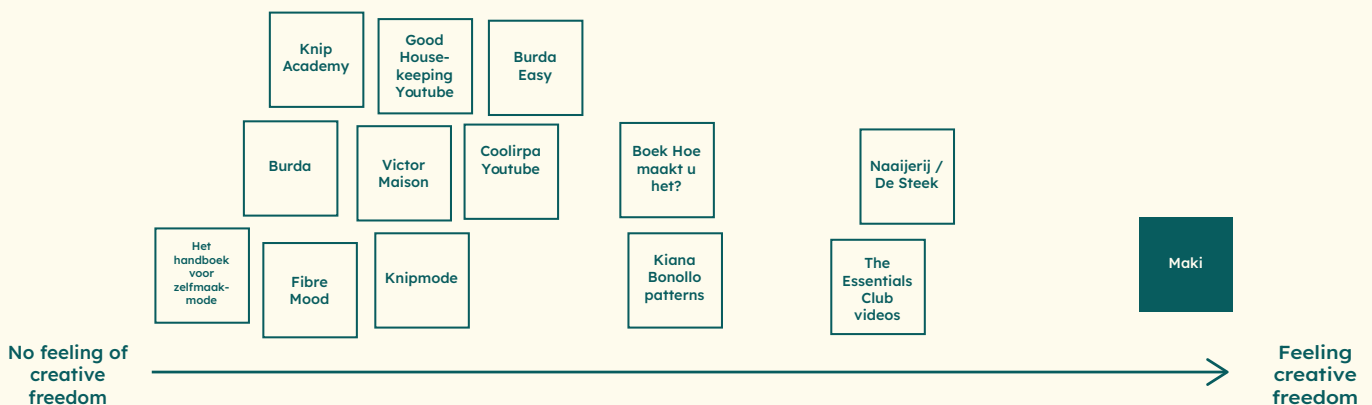


Figure 16. The positioning axis of Maki expressing the JTBD of feeling creative freedom in contrast to competitors

# 3.3 Core message

The previous sections covered the strategic ingredients segmentation and positioning, which form the basis for all of the next, tactical, ingredients. This section covers the first tactical ingredient, the core message. The core message is a direct outing of the positioning and the basis for all communication and messaging. With its positioning now improved (section 3.2), the core message is also changed to fit the new positioning. This automatically strengthens the

effectiveness of the core message. Since the positioning is already experimented with and proven to be attractive, the new core message is not tested.



## Maki's initial core message

As the core message is a direct outing of positioning, Maki's initial core message fitted the initial positioning of differentiating on the attribute 'ease':

*'Printed patterns with the clearest instructions, the ultimate beginner sewing patterns.'*

This was insufficiently memorable and not attractive. With its positioning now improved (section 3.2), the core message should be changed to fit the new positioning.

## New core message

To create a better core message, it was adjusted to the new positioning. The new positioning is based on the need for 'feeling creative freedom'. But next to this finding, the interviews (3.1) also revealed other JTBDs. Although they proved to drive less traction than the chosen one, two of them were chosen as an inspiration to nuance the core message and to make the message fit the product (as the product is not changed according

to the new positioning). As these other jobs came forward from the interviews, they are important for sewing beginners too and so, should be taken into account. The JTBDs that served as inspiration:

- I want to feel empowered,
- I want to not feel intimidated.

This resulted in Maki's new core message:

*'Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there.'*

The new core message is expressed in new messaging on Maki's Instagram and website as shown in figures 17, 18 and 19.



Figure 17. The final core message was implemented on Maki's Instagram



Figure 19. The final core message implemented on Maki's website



Figure 18. The final core message implemented on Maki's website

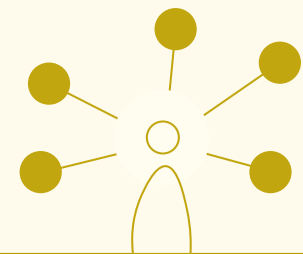
Concluding, the core message was changed to fit the improved positioning, taking the other found JTBDs into account. This resulted in the core message: "Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do

it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there." This core message was implemented on the website and Instagram. After this first tactical ingredient, the next sections cover the other three tactical ingredients, starting with channels & content.

# 3.4 Channels & content

After the strategic ingredients were tested with and improved (3.1, 3.2), this section covers the second tactical ingredient: channels & content. Although previous promotion efforts (using mostly Instagram) have driven Maki's initial traction, it was crucial to experiment with other channels and content forms in order to establish the highest impact in terms of traction and conversion rate. Therefore multiple content forms were created (a poster and multiple videos with different storylines) and tested through multiple channels

(including TikTok, Instagram Ad and Instagram Reels). These tests resulted in useful learnings to use for future marketing efforts. A simple and short marketing plan is created for Maki implementing these learnings.



## Maki's initial channels & content

With the goal of driving early-stage traction and obtaining our first customers, the first promotional activities were done online. This was because sewing is an in-home hobby, Maki's customers' generation is highly active online, and other options were limited during COVID-19. During the Build Your Startup course, the interviewees said that they mostly only use Instagram, so this was chosen as the main promotion channel during the course. The only other way of promotion used were posters which were hung all around the IDE and Architecture faculty in Delft. This resulted in around 10 followers (a rough estimation, the included QR code wasn't tracked), which was significantly less than the followers gained by Instagram advertisements.

In terms of content, mostly stock images, product mockups, and promotions were shared on Instagram at the beginning of Maki. The page was mostly functionality and brand-focused: we focused to make Maki known as a trustworthy company (see figure 20). At that point in time, we felt more shy and insecure and we wanted Maki to show businesslike confidence. After a few months we started to get more personal; show our faces more and ask for participation and our followers' input. People felt more empathetic with us and this created a sense of community (they told us in casual conversations) (see figure 21).

Although Instagram has been a useful tool in previous experiments in order to make strategic decisions and the content has driven traction, it is crucial to experiment with other channels and content forms targeting the same target segment

in order to establish the highest impact in terms of traction and conversion rate.

Looking at the requirement in 2.4, the goal of this experiment is to explore channels & content possibilities and to gather learnings into what drives traction for further use.



Figure 20. First posts on Instagram

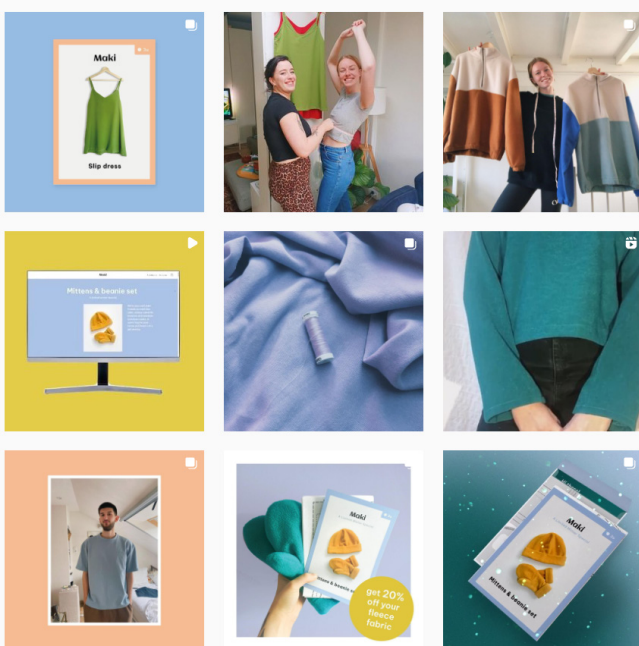


Figure 21. Later, more personal posts on Instagram

## Approach

The extra literature research done in the section ‘channels & content in short’ brought forward many elements that have proven to be important for promotional efforts. These cannot all be taken into account in the context of this project. Therefore multiple small experiments were done with the aim of generating learnings about what channels and content forms work well in terms of engagement and conversions. To choose which contents and channels will be created and tested, the extra literature from 2.5 is discussed here further.

For the central purpose of entertainment on social media, storytelling is getting more important than ever. The importance of storytelling within communication is underlined by Patenaude-Gaudet (2012). Therefore, different ways of storytelling are tested across different channels. TikTok and Instagram were chosen as the main channels because according to Chaffey et al (2019) traditional advertising doesn’t work for Generation Z, as it’s seen as a monologue and not flexible and engaging enough. As a base experiment, a poster was tested as well.

TikTok and Instagram have a completely different nature. TikTok has a strong algorithm that pushes videos based on individual preferences, only part of accounts that are followed. Therefore it does not make sense to pay for TikTok ads: the videos themselves just have to drive engagement. Instagram on the other hand shows regular posts only to followers, which can make posting similar content videos unlogical and even annoying for them. Only advertised posts were shown to non-followers. Instagram Reels, on the other hand, were shown on Instagram’s Reels tab, to non-followers with similar interests too.

Four videos with different storylines are tested using Tiktok, Instagram advertised posts, and Instagram reels. The Instagram ad was run for 2 days for 20 euros per day targeting the same

group in the positioning experiment. The popularity of TikTok was used to decide which videos to post as Instagram Reels and Instagram ads, which resulted in the following tests (see figure 22).

Test	Content	Channel
1	Poster	Fabric shop & school
2	Video showing the problem	TikTok
3		Instagram Reel
4	Video showing the solution	TikTok
5		Instagram Reel
6	Video showing problem and solution	TikTok
7		Instagram Ad
8		Instagram Reel
9	Video showing movement	TikTok

Figure 22. The content and channel decisions of every test

The content concepts are explained below.

## Poster

As a base experiment one physical form of advertising is tested. The only physical locations that are known to attract sewing beginners are fabric stores and sewing schools. From the BYS interviews we found out this group doesn't always know what to make before going to a fabric shop - it may depend on what fabrics they come across. Therefore a poster was created addressing this customer state, see figure 23. The posters were placed in one fabric store Papestraat Den Haag and the sewing school Naaierij.

## Realism: video showing problem

Hooking in on the trend on Instagram and TikTok to show realistic situations and problems instead of

idealistic polished results, the choice was made to film the problem beginning sewers face extensively and convey the feeling and frustration of sewing beginners. In this video, the problem is shown and Maki is left out. This might be most relatable and less promotion-like. The risk is that it entertains people but drives less action.

The video shows the frustrations of finding an easy and modern pattern (in magazines and on the internet), having to print, cut, paste and trace it, and the difficulty of understanding instructions. The video can be found using [this](#) link.

## Replication: video showing solution

There are two reasons to show the product. Firstly people then better understand what the product entails, this informs and might activate them to buy the product. Secondly, replication is a phenomenon at the roots of TikTok trends. This suggests that people feel most entertained when there's a possibility to replicate or interact with the video.

This video shows me showcasing the package which is delivered, unpacking it, showing the instructions, the pattern itself, me cutting it, sewing, and finally the end result. It ends with Maki's logo, website, and Instagram. The video can be found using [this](#) link.

## Activation: video showing problem + solution

This video combines the problem and the solution, which results in a 'closed story'. On the one hand, one would assume this video activates most as it combines the realistic emotions of the problem with an actionable suggestion. On the other hand, it doesn't stimulate replication.

# Jij kan alles maken wat je wil, zeker weten.

Maar weet jij nog niet zo goed hoe en wat je wil maken? Kijk je op tegen al het gedoe?

No worries, wij kennen dit probleem.



Onze patronen doen stap voor stap met je mee.

**Maki**



Maki | Utieme naaipatronen  
www.timetomaki.nl  
@timetomaki

Maki | Utieme naaipatronen  
www.timetomaki.nl  
@timetomaki

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Maki | Utieme naaipatronen  
www.timetomaki.nl  
@timetomaki

Figure 23. The design of the poster that was placed in a fabric store and a sewing school

The video shows me suggesting 'sewing beginner do's & don'ts'. The don't-part starts with showing outdated and difficult options, endless only searching, printing, cutting, and tracing it, and showing unclear instructions. The do-part includes me showing the Maki pattern, me looking very happy with it, sewing, and showing the finalized dress. The video can be found using [this](#) link.

## Pride: video showing movement

Some trends on TikTok are about showing pride such as the I am Woman-trend where girls post videos of them where they feel most powerful and beautiful (Sheppard, 2022). Hooking onto this trend, the idea of showing the power of makers was developed; what makes them special and cool.

The video shows two makers in their sewing process where they are unstoppable by bumps on the road, happy with tiny accomplishments, perseverance, and their ability to do anything they want. The video can be found using [this](#) link.

## Findings

The results of the experiments are shown in figure 24 including content, channel, traction measurements (views, likes, comments, saves, extra followers), conversion measurement (sales), and the costs. Some question marks and approximate signs are inserted where the numbers are uncertain because they could not be tracked distinctively.

Some interesting insights from this experiment:

- None of the buyers said to have heard of Maki via the poster, so this suggests a poster is not the most effective way to promote Maki. It could not be tracked how many of the website visitors knew Maki because of the poster.
- Digitally, many learnings are gained. In terms of content, times are changing and preferred content is changing from more stylized and

idealistic content to faster, story-like emotional content. Channels are evolving with this trend, from Facebook (more formal and professional) to Instagram (more visual and personal) to TikTok (even faster, more engaging, and more emotional). This trend allows brands to hop on the train too - Tiktok's algorithm is ideal to show your brand to a larger pool of people than current followers. The content here should be extremely entertaining and not too obvious promotion.

- Although TikTok has great potential for gaining traction for startups, a downside of TikTok is that the pool of people might be different from Instagrammers - they are supposedly younger and less easily satisfied because brands target them even more. Also, they typically have less money to spend.
- Instagram Reels are based on the same principle as TikTok but shown to a slightly older segment. Both Tiktoks and Instagram Reels keep being shown to people days or weeks after being posted, which is attractive for Maki, in contrast to Instagram posts or advertisements.
- Instagram advertisements cost more than posting Reels and TikTok but drove significantly more action in terms of new followers and conversions, therefore it's the most effective way of promoting Maki but the other ways should be taken into account too.



Test	Content	Channel	Sales	Views	Likes	Comments	Saves	Extra Insta followers	Costs (EUR)
1	Poster	Fabric shop & school	0	?	n/a	n/a	n/a	?	0
2	Video showing the problem	TikTok	?	10,3K	~600	22*	12	~20	0
3		Instagram Reel	?	2,1K	133	12	n/a	?	0
4	Video showing the solution	TikTok	?	1,5K	63	3	4	?	0
5		Instagram Reel	?	2,0K	55	0	n/a	?	0
6	Video showing problem and solution	TikTok	~4	9,5K	519	18**	96	~50	0
7		Instagram Ad	3	4,8K	n/a	n/a	n/a	~160	40
8		Instagram Reel	?	0,5K	55	2	n/a	?	0
9	Video showing movement	TikTok	?	1,3K	158	3	3	?	0
Ref.	Insta ads & email campaign from positioning test		8						160

Figure 14. The traction and conversion numbers of the four 'job to be done' advertisements

\* The commenters gave me tips, such as "there are way easier patterns available", "you should follow sewing classes!", "try it without patterns, there are youtube videos guiding you through the process of drafting easily".

\*\* Asking Maki-related questions such as what sizes are available and how to buy it.

## Limitations

The results may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- The videos were different in quality, which might have influenced their popularity. Experience in shooting and storytelling lead to ever better videos.
- The same footage was used in multiple videos. If people have seen multiple of them, they might have become bored as they've seen it already.
- The Instagram Reel showed the problem and solution and the Instagram ad was run during the same time, so the gained Instagram followers and sales could not be tracked properly. Therefore the numbers cannot be interpreted specifically, but they still resulted in valuable insights.

# New channels & content

To conclude with the learnings on channels & content, the aims and requirements are repeated, together with a summary of the findings and the implications, see figure 25.

Aim	Requirement	Findings	Implications
Optimizing channels & content can drive optimal traction and conversion rate.	Explore what works and doesn't work in terms of channels and content.	Interesting insights have been gathered about what works and doesn't work to drive traction.	This will help to direct future marketing efforts.

Figure 25. The overview of this experiment (aims, requirements, findings and implications)

As stated in figure 25, the gathered learnings will help to direct future marketing efforts. To do that, a simple and short marketing plan is created for Maki using the AIDA model (as discussed in 2.1). Maki should use a combination of the following:

<p><b>Attention, Interest, Desire</b></p> <p>Tiktok to gain attention from the younger segment within the target group and try out which videos work better than others to post as Instagram reels.</p> <p>Instagram reels to reach non-followers (attention) but also to inspire followers (interest, desire). We assume Instagram will push to the full target segment instead of a younger part of it.</p>	<p><b>Desire, Action</b></p> <p>Instagram posts for more stylized posts and user-generated content of people who have sewn with Maki. We'll use Maki's Instagram page to build the brand, keep them updated, build desire and finally incite them into action.</p>	<p><b>Attention, Interest, Desire, Action</b></p> <p>Every now and then an Instagram ad should be run with the content that drove the most engagement as Tiktok or Reel. These should be carefully chosen as advertising costs money in contrast to TikToks, reels and posts but will pay off in followers and conversions.</p>
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Concluding, although previous promotion efforts using mostly Instagram have driven Maki's initial traction, it was crucial to experiment with other channels and content forms in order to establish the highest impact in terms of traction and conversion rate. Therefore multiple content forms were created (a poster and multiple videos with different storylines) and tested through

multiple channels (including TikTok, Instagram Ad, Instagram Reels). These tests resulted in useful learnings to use for future marketing efforts. A simple and short marketing plan is created for Maki implementing these learnings. The next section covers the third tactical ingredient, branding.

# 3.5 Branding

This section covers the last tactical ingredient distilled from literature: the brand identity. This includes the brand personality traits and matching visual brand style in order to catch people's eyes and create customer loyalty. It is also an opportunity to differentiate from competition. Maki's initial brand identity was created intuitively without defining personality traits. To improve this, a competitor analysis is done first and after, three visual styles are developed, based on three different emotional attributes: playful & inspiring,

radically cool and accessible. These are tested and the accessible style is seen as the most attractive. Some changes are made based on the participants' comments to result in Maki's final brand identity.



## Maki's initial branding

The initial brand identity was formed organically, based on our own gut feeling of what Maki should express. This also applied to the name choice: it was chosen because it seemed fitting to the product; simple, joyful and hinting to the word maker. The visual style was designed to be playful and creative yet basic, in order to allow for people to put their own creativity into their Maki projects and not feel ruled out. Brands we took inspiration from included Lucy & Yak (a conventional clothing brand but with expressive prints and extremely happy content), Hara the Brand (underwear brand hooking into the movement of feeling free and happy with any body), Sculpd (a clay supplier that shows many creations), Alder (outdoor brand for the cool kids). Brands that lacked in their brand identity in our opinion were Skillshare (too formal for their inspiring concept), existing sewing magazines (outdated or romantic, targeting one style), and Puff & Pencil (a new sewing pattern concept that aims to be very cool, risks of people dropping out because they don't feel cool enough) - this inspired the formed style in an inverted way.



Figure 26. Initial brand style as expressed on Instagram

Figure 26 shows Maki's first Instagram posts using the initial brand identity.

Looking at the requirements, Maki's initial brand identity lacked in four ways:

- There is no evidence that this visual style attracts the most people.
- The visual style is not consciously based on distinct personality traits, although it is done intuitively.

## Approach

As stated in 2.4, the approach to create a strong brand identity is inspired by the suggested approaches from literature.

### Competitor analysis

First a competitor analysis is done to gain insights into how differentiating can be done amongst competition (based on Ruzzier, 2015). Some competitors mentioned in the segmentation interviews were:

- Traditional sewing magazines such as Burda, Knipmode and Victor Maison
- Younger sewing magazines such as FibreMood and Burda Easy
- PDF patterns from Etsy accounts like Kiana Bonollo
- Sewing books such as 'Hoe maakt u het?' by Bomb, Het Grote Naaiboek by Stuvell & van Leverink or Hét handboek voor zelfmaakmode by Smit
- Youtube tutorials for sewing beginners such as The Essentials Club, Cool Irpa, and Good Housekeeping
- The innovative sewing pattern shop Puff & Pencil which allows people to mix & match pattern pieces to create their own 'design'.

- No research has been done looking at the competitors if the style differentiates from theirs.
- And, of course, now the positioning is defined better, the brand style can be improved to fit it better in a focused way, rather than intuitively.

The goal of this experiment is to improve the brand identity in these four ways.

These competitors were compared based on their functional pros & cons (to put their brand into perspective), their messaging (another expression of their positioning), personality traits (as experienced by the author) and visual elements. The full analysis can be found in Appendix F.

### Model to create visual styles

Based on the literature (2.1, 2.4), a simple model is constructed. Figure 27 shows that a visual brand style is an expression of the positioning, but this can be done in different ways through different personality traits. Multiple personality trait-visual style combinations are created to test which is most attractive to Maki's target segment.

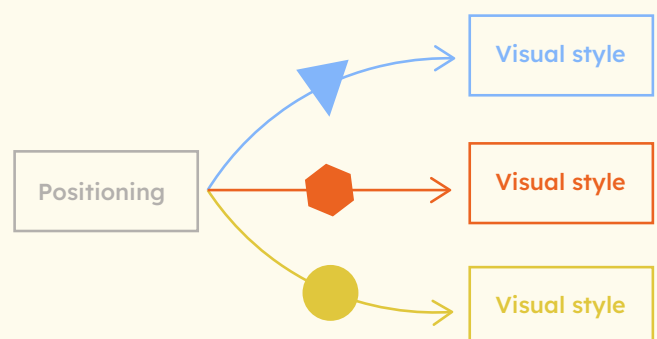


Figure 27. Created model illustrating how positioning, personality traits and visual style versions connect

## Differentiation axes

Multiple personalities were possible to use for Maki's brand identity, but in order to choose a few to test, differentiation axes are made to see which personality traits allow for high differentiation. Examples are serious-playful (see figure 28) and traditional-new. All emotional attribute differentiation axes can be found in Appendix G.

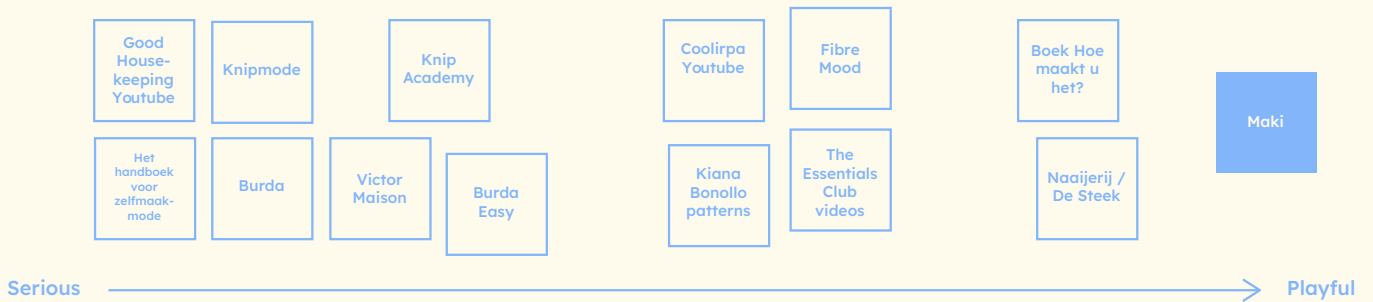


Figure 28. A plot of Maki's competition based on their expressed personality on the serious-playful differentiation axis

## Visual brand style versions

Three of the axes were chosen to base visual styles on to test. This choice was made based on which attributes seemed most distinct and powerful. To test the different styles well, the styles were slightly exaggerated to be more distinct. First a brief style book was made deciding on the logo, fonts, colors, buttons and photo & symbol treatment, after which a style card was created to show how it would look on a simple webpage - in 'action'. In the style book you can find a short description of the reasoning behind the choices. The three emotional attribute-visual style combinations are shown and explained on the next pages.

## Style 1. Playful & inspiring

### Personality traits

This style was based on two axes: serious-playful and lame-inspiring. The competitor analysis showed that hardly any of the competitors expressed themselves in a playful way, which leaves an opportunity for Maki to stand out. I think this works well in combination with inspiring, as more traditional competitors take a 'lame' approach, to use the words of our interviewees.

### Visual brand style

To express these personality traits, inspiration was found in the brands Lucy & Yak and Baggu, which use bold colors and expressive prints. The tested style visual can be found in figure 29.



Figure 29. The style book and visual style card based on the attributes 'playful & inspiring'

## Style 2. Radically cool

### Personality traits

This style was based on the axis of traditional-radically cool. This is a style mostly expressed by the competitor Puff & Pencil.

### Visual brand style

To express this personality trait, inspiration was found in the brands Puff & Pencil and Weekday, who use cool facial expressions and urban style garments and pictures. The tested style visual can be found in figure 30.

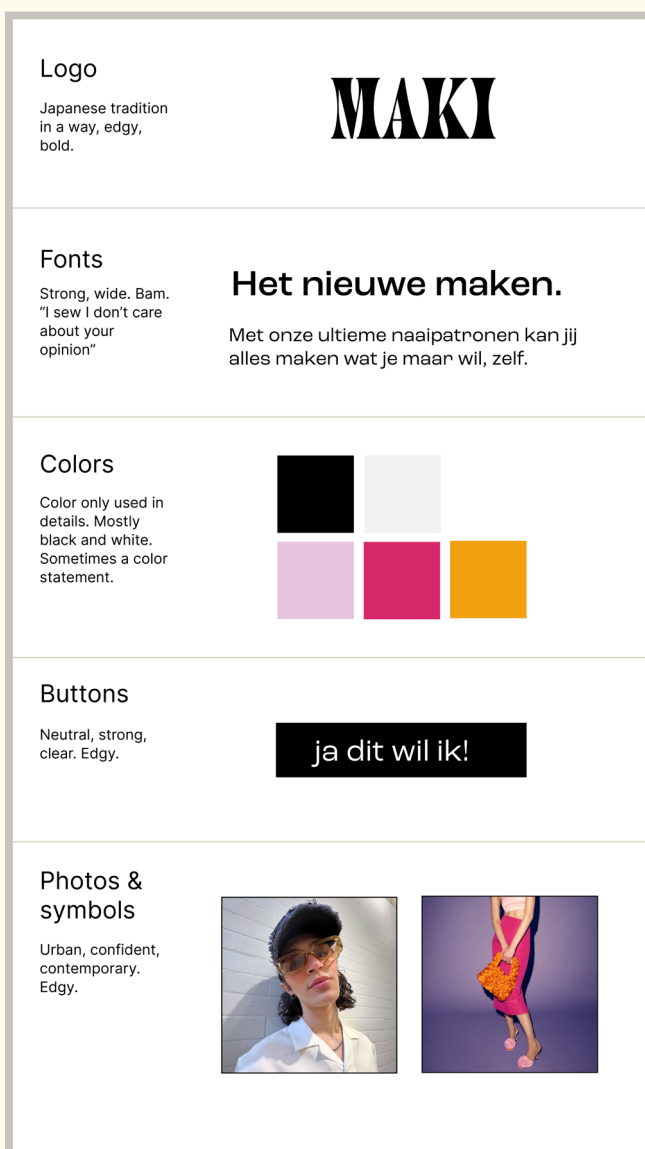


Figure 30. The style book and visual style card based on the attribute 'radically cool'



### Style 3. Accessible (open style)

#### Personality traits

This style was based on the axis 'specific style-accessible (open style)'. This axis was insightful because all of the 'younger-focussed' competitors were found to have chosen a specific style that people could love or hate, for example, the romantic style of FibreMood or the cool style of Puff & Pencil. The interviews told us that people want to express their own style and creativity and don't want to be led by the brand, although they also don't want to be discouraged by an outdated style. The only competitors that were open in

style were the Good Housekeeping videos and Het Handboek voor Zelfmaakmode, but these were technical-focussed concepts, more meant as reference materials than the main tool in making a garment.

#### Visual brand style

To express this personality trait, inspiration was found in our initial branding which fitted this story already. The tested style visual can be found in figure 31.

**Logo**  
Japanese traditional influences, shows craftsmanship.


# Maki

**Fonts**  
Round, neutral, but a bit playful. Don't take sewing too seriously.

## Het nieuwe maken.

Met onze ultieme naaipatronen kan jij alles maken wat je maar wil, zelf.


**Colors**  
Neutral but interesting, but not childish, unisex, a bit vintage. Analogue background, like it's paper.



**Buttons**  
Flat, square, analogue.

ja dit wil ik!

**Photos & symbols**  
Happy, colorful, but not too cool. Bit dorky. Line around it for analogue flat feeling. Symbols not needed, it's about the people.



# Maki



## Het nieuwe maken.

Met onze ultieme naaipatronen kan jij alles maken wat je maar wil, zelf.

Wij doen gewoon met je mee, dan sta je er niet alleen voor.

ja dit wil ik!

Maki



Slip dress



Figure 31. The style book and visual style card based on the attribute 'accessibility (open style)'

# Findings

54 people filled in the questionnaire giving their opinion on the style cards. All the answers can be found in Appendix H. One of the most interesting results can be found in figure 32: 50% of the people preferred the visual card of the open style.

To understand the reasons for the choices the people made as shown in figure 32, the written answers are summarized per style in figure 33 to show the reasoning behind the statistic.

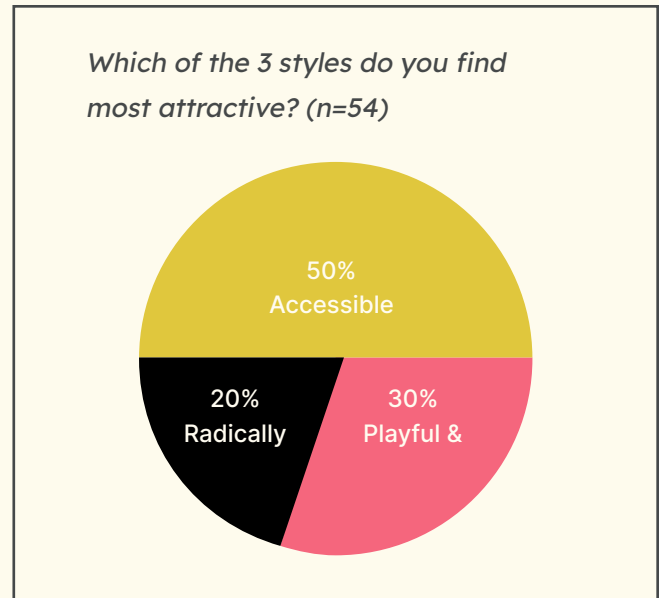


Figure 32. Chart of preferred visual style cards

	Why people like it	Why people don't like it
Playful & inspiring	Shows creativity Happy, energetic, funky Inspiring Young Beautiful colors Trendy Expresses the DIY spirit well	Looks amateuristic, not so serious Can be funny once but can get childish when shown more often A bit too playful Too busy and chaotic Too hippie, I think it's cool to make clothing Too young
Radically cool	Clean & modern Professional Classy Fresh Timeless Minimalistic, so the designs pop No atmosphere	Doesn't express the DIY spirit as much as the first one Too edgy and clean Boring, too basic Too static for a young company Doesn't attract me Not inspiring Feels distanced I'd prefer more color
Accessible (open style)	Feels warm & inviting Expresses calm, sustainability and happiness The same happiness from the first one but less chaotic The colors make it pop Feels familiar & trustful, makes me think of Maki Clean with a bit vintage Shows more personality & uniqueness than the other two	Don't like the color combinations A bit boring The second is more modern Good mix of the two above Doesn't pop Don't like the blue Chaotic Less inspiring than the first one

Figure 33. Summary of written answers why they liked or didn't like the visual style card

## Limitations

The results may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- The developed styles are based upon an interpretation of the emotional attributes but might be interpreted by the viewers in a different way.
- 54 answers is a relatively small sample.
- Might be a specific type of people that already follows us, watched the story, and clicked the link. This test is not done with unprejudiced non-followers.
- No follow-up test is done to see if the concluded visual style has the desired effect.

## New branding

Based on the results as shown in figure 31 and the reasoning in figure 32, the third visual style is chosen as the basis for Maki's branding style but a few changes are made because it is seen by some as a bit boring, not popping and less inspiring than the first one. Therefore some decorative shapes are added that fit the style and make it more unique without making it childish or girly - which is a fine line. As founders, we wish Maki to express playfulness as sewing is a form of play, you don't have to take yourself too seriously otherwise it will be a frustrating learning curve. This new style card is shown in figure 35 on the next page. To wrap up this section, the aims and requirements are repeated, together with a summary of the findings and the implications, see figure 34.

Aim	Requirement	Findings	Implications
Branding is an opportunity to underline and express the company positioning (Ruzzier, 2017).	The chosen visual style should align with and underline the company positioning.	The chosen approach used the positioning as the foundation of the visual styles.	The new visual brand style can be used throughout all company graphic design; for product design, website design, social media posts, posters, etc.
Branding can cause consumer preference and loyalty (Kotler, 2013).	The chosen visual style should have evidence that it attracts the most people in the most attractive way.	Multiple visual styles were tested and one clearly showed to be seen as the most attractive.	
Branding aims to communicate a feeling that people value (Kotler, 2013).	The chosen visual style should be based on distinct emotional attributes.	The chosen approach used emotional attributes to base the tested visual styles on.	
Branding can differentiate the company from competitors (Janonis & Virvilaite, 2007).	The chosen visual style should positively differ from that of competitors in the minds of the target consumers.	A competitor analysis was done and differentiation axes were used to see how Maki would differentiate from competitors.	

Figure 34. The overview of this experiment (aims, requirements, findings and implications)



Figure 34. Improved visual style for Maki based on the experiment

Concluding, this ingredient covers the brand style. Maki's initial visual brand style was created intuitively without a clear strategy on what it should express. After a competitor analysis, three visual styles were developed to test, based on three different emotional attributes: playful & inspiring, radically cool and accessible. These were tested and the accessible style was seen

as the most attractive. Some changes were made based on the participants' comments. Interestingly it does not differ much from the initial brand style, but now it has a strong foundation and evidence that it indeed attracts people. This was the last tactical traction ingredient distilled from literature. The next section covers an ingredient that also needed improvement: the revenue model.

# 3.6 Revenue model

The previous sections covered the ingredients that were distilled from literature because they were said to be important for gaining traction. Although the literature did not explicitly reveal the revenue model to be vital for traction, the business model assessment (1.3) revealed it to be an uncertain element. Also, it is closely related to traction as the choice of buying a product also depends on the pricing and type of sale. Therefore addressed in this section.



## Maki's initial revenue model

Maki's initial offer was a Pattern of the Month - a subscription model of €9 per month with the option to cancel anytime. For this money, Maki's subscribers could choose 1 of the 3 fresh patterns available every month. With this revenue model, 55 pre-subscribers were gained.

This revenue model was chosen because potential customers told us they would like to sew more often but it costs too much effort to initiate the sewing process regularly, during 'normal' workweeks. On average, people sew or would like to sew once a month minimally - because they just like it, but also to keep the learning process going. The upside for Maki is that costs are minimal when ordered and sent in bulk. The first trial patterns were sold as singles for 10 euros.

Although 55 pre-subscribers were gained with this revenue model type, there is no evidence that this is the best revenue model and price for the target group. Some might drop out because they don't want a subscription but a single pattern or it may be too expensive for them. To address as many people as possible and prevent them from dropping out, tests need to be done to find out what is the most attractive revenue model and pricing.

# Approach

The goal of this experiment is to find out whether people prefer to buy single patterns for 12 euros instead of committing to a monthly subscription for a lower price per piece of 10 euros.

## Procedure

Three alternatives were tested:

- The single slip dress pattern for 12 euros
- A pre-subscription (after launch) for 10 euros per month, including the slip dress for 10 euros
- A pre-subscription (after launch) without the slip dress pattern.

This part of the homepage is shown in figure 36.

This renewed homepage was promoted on Maki's Instagram Stories, in an Instagram post, and through the advertisements run in the channel & content- experiment.

# Findings

The results of the experiment can be found in figure 37. Additionally, throughout other experiments, some messages were received regarding the revenue model, see figure 38.

What	Number of sales
Subscription (without single dress pattern)	2
Single dress pattern (without a subscription)	4
Subscription with single dress pattern	4

Figure 37. The number of sales per offer

**Het allereerste patroon is af!**  
3 opties...

**The Slip Dress**  
Een heerlijk zomerpatroon. Als je 'm lost koopt kan je gelijk testen of Maki iets voor jou is.  
€12  
Kopen

**Pre-subscription**  
Is dit patroon nou niks voor jou maar wil je wel een Maki abonnementje zodra we live gaan? Dan is deze voor jou.  
Check hieronder welke items eraan komen!  
€10 / maand  
Kopen  
Bij de abbo sturen we je iedere maand 1 patroon, kies zelf welke van de 3 je wil. Iedere maand 3 verse opties.

**The Slip Dress + pre-subscription**  
Zodra we live gaan start jouw abonnement, maar voor nu ontvang je alvast dit eerste patroon.  
€10 / maand  
Kopen

Figure 36. The three offerings on Maki's homepage



Figure 38. Received messages about the subscription

6 of the sales included a subscription and 4 of them only bought the single pattern. These results show that there is a market for a subscription model, which is more attractive for Maki as it allows for cheaper bulk printing and shipping and simpler logistics. However, multiple leads (the sales and messages) show that a number of people prefer to buy single patterns at a slightly higher price. Therefore we can conclude that there is a demand for both revenue models.

## Limitations

The results may not be fully reliable and distinct, because of a few reasons:

- The results might be influenced by the specific offered pattern.
- 8 sales is a small number to draw conclusions from.
- 2 options included a subscription, and only 1 option included just a single pattern, the slip dress pattern. One might argue that more people would've chosen a single pattern if it was not this specific one.

## New revenue model

To conclude with the new revenue model, the aims and requirements are repeated, together with a summary of the findings and the implications, see figure 39.

Aim	Requirement	Findings	Implications
Achieve superior financial performance by capturing the value that is created by the company optimally (Eisenhardt 2019).	A good revenue model captures optimal value in terms of money and the number of customers.	This experiment proved there is a demand for both revenue models, subscription and single patterns.	Maki will offer both so there is something for everyone. This will cause slightly more complex logistic activities but this is compensated by the extra revenue.

Figure 39. The overview of this experiment (aims, requirements, findings and implications)

Concluding, initially a subscription model was chosen primarily because of production benefits, but there was no evidence if this was the optimal choice for Maki. This experiment proved there is a

demand for both a subscription model and single patterns. Maki can offer both in the future. This was the last tested ingredient of this chapter.

# 3.7 Key takeaways

To summarize this chapter:

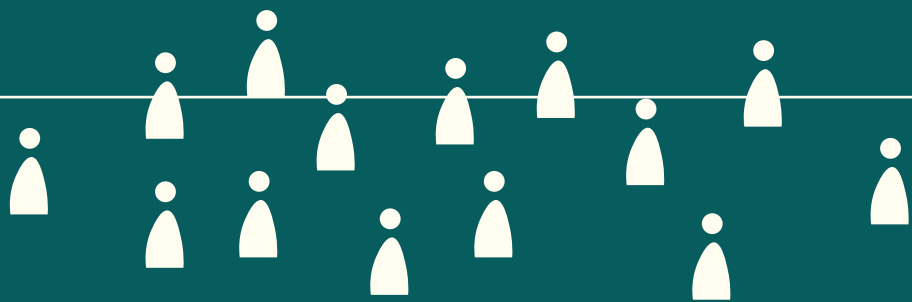
- This chapter zoomed in upon each of the 5 elements distilled from literature: the traction recipe ingredients. These ingredients were explored and experimented with in order to learn what works and doesn't work with the goal to create Maki's 'traction recipe'. This resulted in improved ingredients and important learnings.
- The first two ingredients were the strategic ones, meaning they formed the foundation for the other, tactical ingredients.
- **Segmentation.** Deciding on a specific defined segment has multiple benefits, such as being able to tailor marketing efforts and to create better products. Maki's segment was initially weakly defined. The deep-dive interviews firstly helped to reveal characteristics that are essential to reach the segment more effectively, such as for example music, arts, painting, pottery, and vintage clothing. Secondly a better understanding of their motivations is gathered, including for example wearing more sustainable clothing, feeling empowered and mindfulness.
- **Positioning.** The positioning is the basis of all other business elements. Through positioning, a product or company differentiates itself from the competition in order to stand out. Traditionally companies differentiate on product attributes, but 'jobs to be done' (JTBDs) form a stronger basis. Maki's initial positioning was based on the product attribute of accessibility (in other words, ease). This tapped into a negative motivation for beginning sewers (a solution for a frustration) rather than a positive motivation. Therefore, tailoring product designs, communications and other (future) business efforts was difficult. Also it was not inspiring for us as founders. As the segmentation interviews had already revealed our customers' JTBDs, four were chosen to test in terms of traction and conversion rate and one clearly comes out the best: feeling creative freedom.
- After this strategic foundation was established, the other tactical ingredients were tested with.
- **Core message.** This ingredient is the basis of all company messaging. As Maki's initial positioning was weak, the core message was too. Therefore the core message was changed to fit the improved positioning, taking into account the other found JTBDs. This resulted in the core message: "Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there."
- **Channels & content.** This ingredient represents the basis for all promotions, communication and marketing efforts. Although previous promotion efforts using mostly Instagram have driven Maki's initial traction, it was crucial to experiment with other channels and content forms in order to establish the highest impact in terms of traction and conversion rate. Therefore multiple content forms were created (a poster and multiple videos with different storylines) and tested through multiple channels (including TikTok, Instagram Ad, Instagram Reels). These tests





# 4. Implementation plan

The previous chapter zoomed in on the traction ingredients distilled from literature to explore what worked and didn't work in order to create a traction recipe for Maki. The overall project had two aims: to improve Maki's business model to drive traction and obtain customers, and to generate learnings for other founders. This chapter is devoted to the first aim by combining all the improved ingredients and learnings of chapter 3 into a brief implementation plan for Maki in the coming year, see figure 40.



	Element	New version	Implementation plan
Strategy	Segmentation	<p>Mostly females, aged between 20 and 30 years old, living in bigger cities of the Netherlands, higher education.</p> <p>Interested in music, arts, knitting, sewing, painting, fashion and style, pottery, sustainable clothing, cooking, tattoos, and vintage clothing.</p> <p>Having the following JTBDs: wanting to learn safely, just wanting to make things, wanting to challenge oneself, wanting results, wanting to feel creative freedom, wanting to have clothes with a story, wanting to make qualitative garments, wanting to buy less fast fashion, wanting clothes of exactly their taste, wanting to stop their thoughts, wanting to feel empowered, wanting to value their clothes more.</p>	<p>Using the characteristics and interests to target the segment using social media advertisements.</p> <p>Using these insights for future product designs and other business decisions.</p>
	Positioning	<i>'We want people to experience creative freedom by engaging with Maki and using our products.'</i>	Using this as the basis for all business implementation and future business decisions.
Tactics	Core message	<i>'Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there.'</i>	Using this as the basis for all messaging.

Figure 40a. Brief implementation plan

	<p><b>Channels &amp; content</b></p>	<p>Interesting insights have been gathered about what works and doesn't work to drive traction.</p>	<p>Maki should use a combination of the following AIDA elements:</p> <p><b>Attention, Interest, Desire</b></p> <p>Tiktok to gain attention from the younger segment within the target group and try out which videos work better than others to post as Instagram reels.</p> <p>Instagram reels to reach non-followers (attention) but also to inspire followers (interest, desire). We assume Instagram will push to the full target segment instead of a younger part of it.</p> <p><b>Desire, Action</b></p> <p>Instagram posts for more stylized posts and user-generated content of people who have sewn with Maki. We'll use Maki's Instagram page to build the brand, keep them updated, build desire and finally incite them into action.</p> <p><b>Attention, Interest, Desire, Action</b></p> <p>Every now and then an Instagram ad should be run with the content that drove the most engagement as Tiktok or Reel. These should be carefully chosen as it costs money in contrast to the other channels but will pay off in followers and conversions.</p>
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Figure 40b. Brief implementation plan



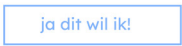

Branding	<p><b>Logo</b></p> <p>Japanese traditional influences, shows craftsmanship.</p> 	<p>Based on the schematic brand identity overview here on the left, a detailed and practical one book should be developed to use for all future graphic designs (product design, website design, social media posts, posters, etc.).</p>
	<p><b>Fonts</b></p> <p>Round, neutral, but a bit playful. Don't take sewing too seriously.</p> <p><b>Het nieuwe maken.</b></p> <p>Met onze ultieme naaipatronen kan jij alles maken wat je maar wil, zelf.</p>	
<p><b>Colors</b></p> <p>Neutral but interesting, but not childish, unisex, a bit vintage. Analogue background, like it's paper.</p> 		
<p><b>Buttons</b></p> <p>Flat, square, analogue.</p> 		
<p><b>Photos &amp; symbols</b></p> <p>Happy, colorful, but not too cool. Bit dorky. Line around it for analogue flat feeling. Simple paper-cut symbols.</p> 		
Revenue model	<p>Offering both a subscription model for 10 euros per month and single patterns for 12 euros.</p>	<p>Implementing these options on the website after producing the next patterns.</p> <p>Occasionally, experiment more with the pricing, deals and amount of patterns per month.</p>

Figure 40c. Brief implementation plan

Concluding, the tests to explore and improve the 6 traction ingredients (chapter 3) resulted in an improved strategic foundation for Maki and a clear tactical path for Maki to gain traction and thereby its first 1000 customers in the foreseeable future. The next step will be for Maki to make a full fledged, detailed implementation plan including an agenda and budget. The available resources will determine the speed in which Maki will be able to realize its first 1000 customers. A rough

estimation, based on similar financial and human resources as Maki had in its first six months of existence, would lead to a prediction of 1000 customers reached in 1 year, provided all learnings are implemented as here described. In this way, one of the two aims of this project is met: improve Maki's business model to drive traction and obtain customers. The next chapter meets the second aim of this project: generating learnings for other early-stage startup founders.

# 5. Tips for founders

The overall project had two aims: to improve Maki's business model to drive traction and obtain customers, and to generate learnings for other founders. The previous chapter combined all the learnings to meet the first aim. To meet the second aim, the previously described 6 ingredients and learnings to gain traction for startups were combined into a manual for other founders. This chapter describes the rationale behind the booklet and framework that together form the manual. The manual itself is presented in Appendix J.



The moment startup founders who knew about my project for Maki, approached me for tips, I realized how valuable my learnings could be for them. Along the way of writing down this information, it soon became clear that the original envisioned chapter with theories, sources and models would be too academic, abstract and unexciting to be helpful for enthusiastic founders who want to make their startup fly. This is when I decided to translate all learnings into an accessible as well as actionable manual full of steps, tips and tricks. A comprehensive and at the same time compact tool that would help startups in their own challenge to gain traction and obtain customers.

To enhance practicality, the sources given in this thesis were left out and some personal experiences and observations were added that seemed valuable, although not science-based.

To make the manual easy to understand, accessible and unpretentious, a metaphor was chosen to guide readers: the cake recipe. Therefore the booklet is called 'your how-to-make-your-startup-fly recipe' and the framework the 'recipe sheet'.

For the visual style, a variation of Maki's final brand style was chosen.

**Concluding, In chapter 4 and 5 all aims of this project were met with a traction plan for Maki to gain its first 1000 customers and clear cut tips for other startup founders. The next chapter covers the reflection on the process.**

# Reflections

Combining my passion for Maki with my passion for business strategy turned out the perfect combination for my thesis, even more so than I had anticipated. Indeed, I was able to apply many of my master's learnings, and found that many theories and models, although often aimed at bigger companies, were also applicable to our tiny but promising startup. Nonetheless, the process turned out to be a bumpy road, as you will read below.

With my master's knowledge, I was convinced that I would be able to rather easily dig through existing knowledge on how to gain traction and find a way to make Maki fly. But in the beginning of the project, the theories, definitions, models and scientific reflections around startups and business success in general completely overwhelmed me. The huge variety of terms (strategy, business, go to market strategy, launch plan, positioning, tactics, economics, traction, conversions, customer relationships, activities, startups, new ventures, etc.) formed a tremendous challenge for me as they sometimes seemed to contradict each other or overlap or were simply confusing. It took weeks, even months and various iteration rounds to get out of the woods and into the sky again.

I even lost track of my initial goal several times; at one point I for example thought Maki's problem was not having a strategic direction. At another point I completely left out strategy and only focussed on the tactics. In this way I spent a good part of my time problem-finding. Even though this is a classic design phenomenon, it still took me by surprise.

Now that I'm writing these reflections, the report has taken shape and makes real sense. Even

though my starting question was not completely clear as from the very beginning, it eventually became apparent which question I had been trying to answer all along. It is hugely gratifying to see that the complexity I experienced myself has finally landed in a clearly structured report, illustrated by the simple and unpretentious cake-metaphor (Jeroen, thank you for this helpful suggestion) and translated into a clear recipe framework for others. Of course this would not have been possible without the continuous support and help of my amazing supervisory team and the many others mentioned in the introduction that I feel I can not thank enough.

Although the process of untangling complex literature into a crisp and practical methodology taught me a lot, so did the experiments undertaken, and maybe even more so. I've learned so much by just doing and trying. I learned the hard way how easily prejudice and assumptions steer the way, no matter how hard I tried to be open to any result, for example during the interviews (especially after the fourth round of interpreting these). I've laughed at myself making the TikTok videos and was surprised to see them running so well. I have been surprised in many ways - which eventually is the core of really learning. I could never have generated these learnings by only digesting (reading and hearing) information.

Looking back, I had to learn when to stay in the role of researcher (interviews, listen well, rationalize data) and switch to the role of designer (creatively translating the findings into strategies, tactics and implementation). Both roles were needed but it was way more difficult for me to switch between these roles than expected.



Last but not least, I want to make a bridge to the beginning of Maki. Laura and I started Maki because we were frustrated about the impressive amount of knowledge and struggle needed to make a simple garment. We wanted to develop a product that could take away the struggles so enthusiastic people could just start and enjoy the process of sewing and learning to sew by doing, without the overwhelming aspects. This resulted in simple and practical patterns for sewing beginners.

In a way, this project is the same. It started with a complex challenge and I am proud to have distilled the amounts of literature and other existing knowledge into a simple and practical recipe for Maki and other startup founders that will help them on their way to success. Because of the academic basis, I know for sure it has a strong foundation and that my advice for other founders makes sense, as simple and straightforward as it may be.

So, did we obtain the first 1000 customers for Maki? Not yet, but now we have a recipe in hand that definitely can get us and many others there.

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# Appendix A. Project brief

DESIGN  
FOR OUR  
future



## 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 to 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 van 't Klooster  
initials RE given name Rosannna  
student number 4600312  
street & no. \_\_\_\_\_  
zipcode & city \_\_\_\_\_  
country \_\_\_\_\_  
phone \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

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

IDE master(s):  IPD  Dfl  SPD

2<sup>nd</sup> non-IDE master: \_\_\_\_\_

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

honours programme:  Honours Programme Master

specialisation / annotation:  Medisign

Tech. in Sustainable Design

Entrepreneurship

### SUPERVISORY TEAM \*\*

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

\*\* chair Erik-Jan Hultink dept. / section: MCR  
\*\* mentor Jeroen Coelen dept. / section: MOD  
2<sup>nd</sup> mentor \_\_\_\_\_  
organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
city: \_\_\_\_\_ country: \_\_\_\_\_  
comments (optional) With Erik-Jan's knowledge of marketing and Jeroen's experience with startups and entrepreneurship, the supervisory team fits this project well.  
.....

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 Erik-Jan Hultink date - - signature \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK STUDY PROGRESS**

To be filled in by the SSC E&amp;SA (Shared Service Center, Education &amp; 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 1<sup>st</sup> year master courses passed

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

 NO missing 1<sup>st</sup> 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Prototyping a go-to-market strategy for the sewing startup Maki \_\_\_\_\_ project title

Please state the title of your graduation project (above) and the start date and end date (below). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

start date 07 - 02 - 2022 \_\_\_\_\_ end date \_\_\_\_\_

### INTRODUCTION \*\*

Please describe, the context of your project, and address the main stakeholders (interests) within this context in a concise yet complete manner. Who are involved, what do they value and how do they currently operate within the given context? What are the main opportunities and limitations you are currently aware of (cultural- and social norms, resources (time, money,...), technology, ...).

There is a trend amongst people in their twenties who want to learn how to make their own clothing for various reasons, such as: getting away from their screens, gaining a new skill, wearing more sustainable clothing, making clothing that fits them better or expressing individuality through clothing. But we found a gap in the market: many of those beginners find the tools and resources available on the market outdated and overcomplicated.

For this reason me and my business partner started a startup called Maki ([www.maki.nl](http://www.maki.nl)) in the build-your-startup course. We want to inspire and teach this group to sew their clothes by offering modern-day, struggle-free sewing patterns. With this, we want to contribute to the makers-revolution.

In the past six months we quickly iterated between problem-finding, solution-finding and market fit. We did research and have evidence we found a gap in the market: current sewing patterns aren't accessible for sewing beginners in their twenties (based on interviews with 25 beginning sewers, our talks with sewing schools and pattern print shops). After 5 product versions, we developed a digital-physical solution combination: we sell physical patterns with online instructions that explain every (sub)step extensively, so people don't have to do any prior research; they learn by doing. None of our competitors offer anything like this. We gained quite some traction with our current product offer: we got 57 pre-subscribers and only got positive feedback.

Although we launched our brand and product already, we need more time to optimize the product and properly develop the strategy. My business partner is graduating on optimizing the product, and I would like to dive into the go-to-market strategy.

We believe that the makers-revolution has only just started. Our fast-paced society is getting increasingly overwhelming and people are seeking for ways to slow down, get away from their screens and do something practical. This is a huge opportunity and if done right, we believe Maki can be a success and become market leader in the future.

space available for images / figures on next page

introduction (continued): space for images



Struggle-free sewing patterns

image / figure 1: The product we designed after many iterations



image / figure 2: Competitive products, showing their outdated and complicated appearance



**PROBLEM DEFINITION \*\***

Limit and define the scope and solution space of your project to one that is manageable within one Master Graduation Project of 30 EC (= 20 full time weeks or 100 working days) and clearly indicate what issue(s) should be addressed in this project.

We've already created a strong product for Maki and we're confident we can fill a gap in the market. But to become market leader, we need to grow fast. In this way we can achieve a competitive advantage. So the main question is: how to gain as many customers as fast as possible? While answering this question, I will find out what's the best angle for Maki to enter the market.

The current market angle is not sufficient due to several critical points. For example the key message. As people have different key motivations to start to learn sewing (such as sustainability, sizing, learning a hard skill and creative outlet) highlighting different product benefits and key messages of Maki can have different effects on sales. This market strategy has to be developed, just as the product was, in order to make Maki a success.

**ASSIGNMENT \*\***

State in 2 or 3 sentences what you are going to research, design, create and / or generate, that will solve (part of) the issue(s) pointed out in "problem definition". Then illustrate this assignment by indicating what kind of solution you expect and / or aim to deliver, for instance: a product, a product-service combination, a strategy illustrated through product or product-service combination ideas, ... . In case of a Specialisation and/or Annotation, make sure the assignment reflects this/these.

Develop a go-to-market strategy to make Maki fly. I want to do this as a holistic design project, in an iterative way by prototyping & experimenting in every step. After all, you can't enter the market from behind a design desk. These iterations will each have 1 single focus, answering this question: At this moment, what is the most critical point that keeps customers away from Maki and how to improve that?

In this way, I will use the Lean Startup method (normally used in reaching a problem-solution fit), to reach a product-market fit. In other words, I will use the principle of co-evolution (as we learned in the course DTM) to find a better fit between market and value proposition by changing the way we offer our product. In this way I will use knowledge from the course DTM (co-evolution) combined with my branding and commercialization knowledge (from BPC). My startup experience (from BYS) will allow me to properly balance the technology-people-business triangle. As my co-founder is focusing on the technology, I will focus on the connection between people and business.

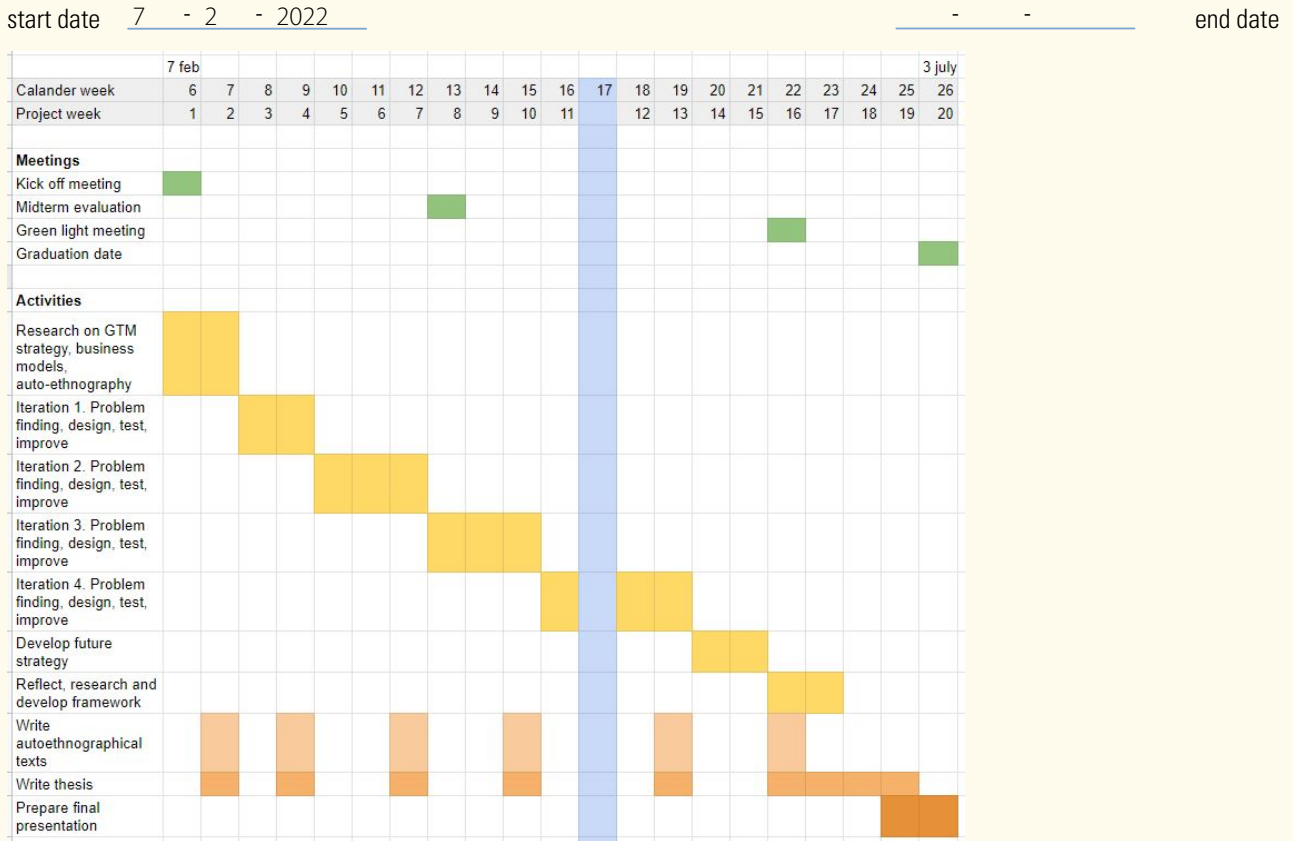
To give the project structure, every iteration will be framed within a single business element. For this I will take inspiration from the blocks of the Business Model Canvas or go-to-market strategy frameworks.

In the awareness-trial-repeat-model, his project focuses on the first two, that's most important in the beginning. In the future, the challenge of keeping customers for a longer time will rise. I will tap into that at the end of the project.

While I'm developing Maki's go-to-market strategy, I plan to reflect on my practice and translate this into a framework for other people who want to prototype their go-to-market strategy in a co-evolutionary way.

**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.



Starting this project, I will dive deeper into the theory behind go-to-market strategies, business models, and autoethnographical analyses to create an outline for the full project, so the project remains structured throughout this semester.

After that, this project will follow the quick iterations of the startup method, but I cannot describe the content of these iterations yet as they influence each other. At the beginning of every iteration round, this question will be asked to work from: At this moment, what is the most critical point that keeps customers away from Maki and how to improve that? So, every iteration will start with analyzing what's the most critical point.

Examples of possible experiments/iterations:

- Develop a MVB (minimal viable brand) to test with users, just as a designer would with an MVP. With this I can gain valuable insight into what works and what doesn't work.
- Create multiple visual identities and/or key messages and test with customers qualitatively or A/B test quantitatively.

During these iterations I will write autoethnographical texts to reflect on later and to develop the practical framework.

In the last 2 weeks I round off the project with finishing the thesis, presentation and other mandatory deliverables. The deliverables:

- 1) A go-to-market strategy, including iterations (based on research and experiments) to find the optimal: targeting, positioning, messaging & branding, pricing strategy and sales plan.
- 2) The practical framework for further use.

## 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.

This project is set up due to my desire to proceed with Maki in the future. I want this startup to be a success because I believe in its cause and I have a great passion for sewing clothing. Sewing gave me a sense of confidence and patience - to slow down and pause for a moment during my fast-speed life. But most of all, it's just a great feeling to make something from nothing. As it really helped me to grow personally, I hope Maki can inspire and encourage others to do the same.

I am sure that a good go-to-market strategy will have huge impact on any business success. This belief is the reason why I decided to do the master SPD in the first place. I think it's amazing that I can use my graduation project to dive deeper in this topic and even apply this to my own startup, that I'm passionate about.

In my MSc programme, I was mostly intrigued by BPC and the elective BYS. Branding & Product Commercialization sparked something in me, especially the How to stand out-part by Roland van der Vorst. In the course we did two group projects in which we touched upon these topics, but I'd love to dive deeper into this and learn what's behind it - I think this will be an extremely helpful skill to have in the future as a designer, to make concepts fly.

The elective BYS was the first course where we got the freedom to choose our own path, but more importantly, where we learned to test, test, test. You know nothing if you have no feedback from users to know in which direction to go. I'm driven about following this path in my graduation, as I think it's a pitfall for designers to stay behind their desk. This is ironic for me as I (a perfectionist) tend to do that as well, and therefore it is important for me to learn to step into the world and let users guide the way.

## FINAL COMMENTS

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

# Appendix B.

# Improving the production

Firstly, the initial state is described more extensively. Afterward, the scale-up point is determined by contacting partners, calculating packaging time, and designing an online tool to track the customer's orders. Finally, the scale-up point is estimated to be 1000 subscribers, but because this is a hypothesis, variables are selected that need to be tracked during launch to avoid production lacks.

## Goal & method

The red parts are the gaps that need to be filled in order to know when scaling is necessary to hold up with demand. This can be in the form of outsourcing that activity or teaming up with a new partner. The four activities will be researched to find out the number of customers from which scale-up is necessary.

## Results

### Scale-up number of delivery

In the business rates and services document from PostNL, they talk about small batches up to 5000 pieces. Up until this amount, you can just sign up for the batch online and deliver it in special yellow bags at PostNL-points. Concluding, no problem with shipping in the launch period.

### Scale-up number of printing

They can print around 750-1A 000 A0's per hour, so delivering up to 4000 customers definitely won't be a problem for them (contact with Jarno from Plotgemak).

### Scale-up number of packaging

In the launch period, packaging was planned to do ourselves. To get a grip on the effort and time it would take, a list was made of all the steps we need to take for every batch.

1. Put all the addresses in an excel file and print them with a label printer (estimated time: 60 minutes)
2. For every order: (estimated time: maximally 1 minute)
  - Grab both the chosen pattern and front page
  - Put them in the envelope
  - Find the right address and paste it onto the envelope
  - Stamp the 'PostNL port betaald' stamp on it
3. Put all of them in a yellow bag (specifically for delivery at the PostNL point) (estimated time: 10 minutes)

4. Deliver at the PostNL punt.

Concluding:  $60 + 1 \cdot \text{orders} + 10 =$  amount of minutes needed to pack everything. For 1000, we'd need 1070 minutes = 18 hours, so 9 hours per person. This is a conservative estimate. Packing 1000 orders can be done in around one day per month with two people, but from 1000 up we would need more than a day. This is decided to be a cut-off point as we as founders need our time to develop the patterns and run the business. So from a 1000 subscribers, the packaging needs to be outsourced.

## Scale-up number of tracking order choices: design

The online solution for choosing the monthly pattern had not been designed and developed yet and is crucial for launch. That is done in this section.

Design objectives are listed, the design must:

- Make the monthly pattern choice as low-effort as possible for the user
- Create a list of names, addresses, and choices for Maki (as automatic as possible to avoid mistakes)
- Send mails to the users confirming their choice (whether they did or didn't choose)
- Avoid the possibility of people choosing when they don't have a paid subscription.

### Final design

#### *Step 1. Sign up & pay*

People need to make an account and arrange for the payment. The designed website screens can be found in figure B1.

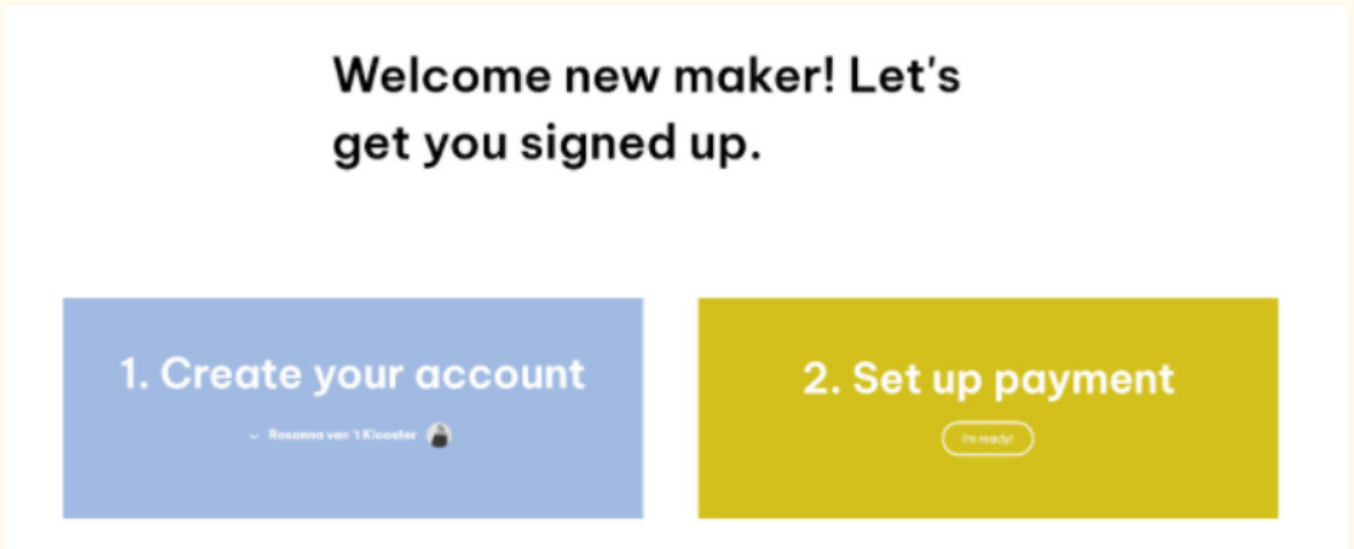


Figure B1a. The designed website screens for signing up & subscription payment

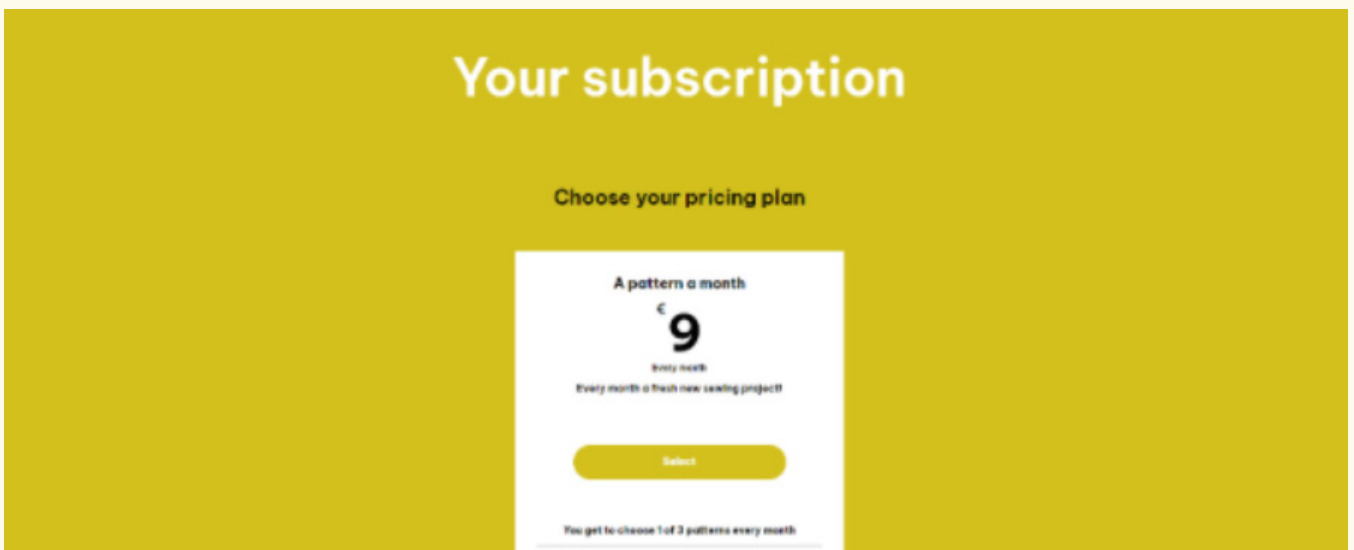


Figure B1b. The designed website screens for signing up & subscription payment

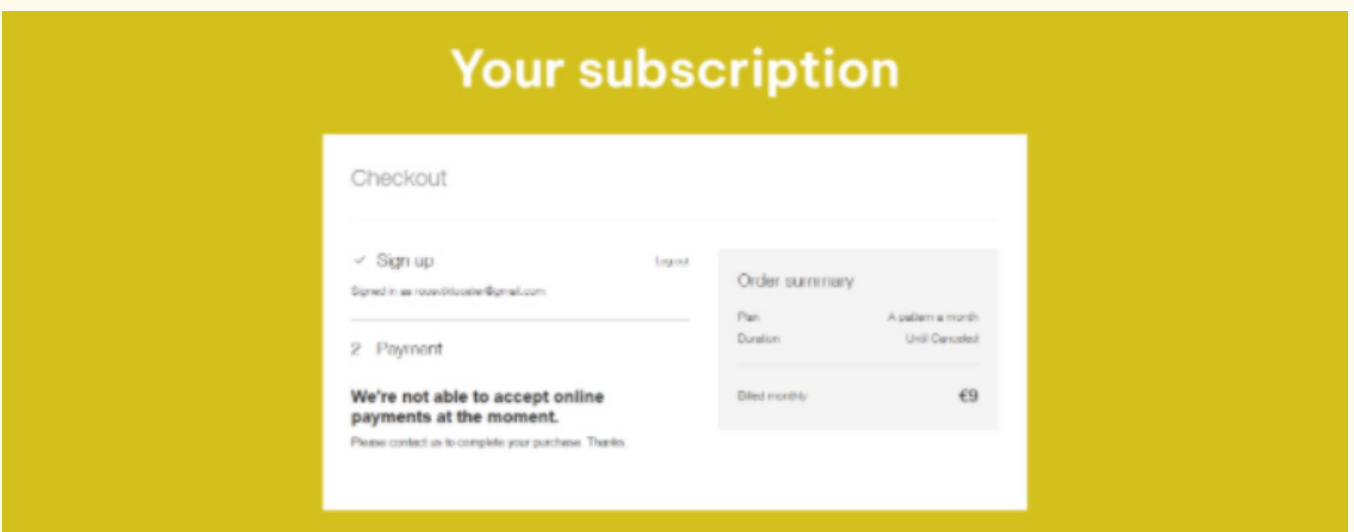


Figure B1c. The designed website screens for signing up & subscription payment

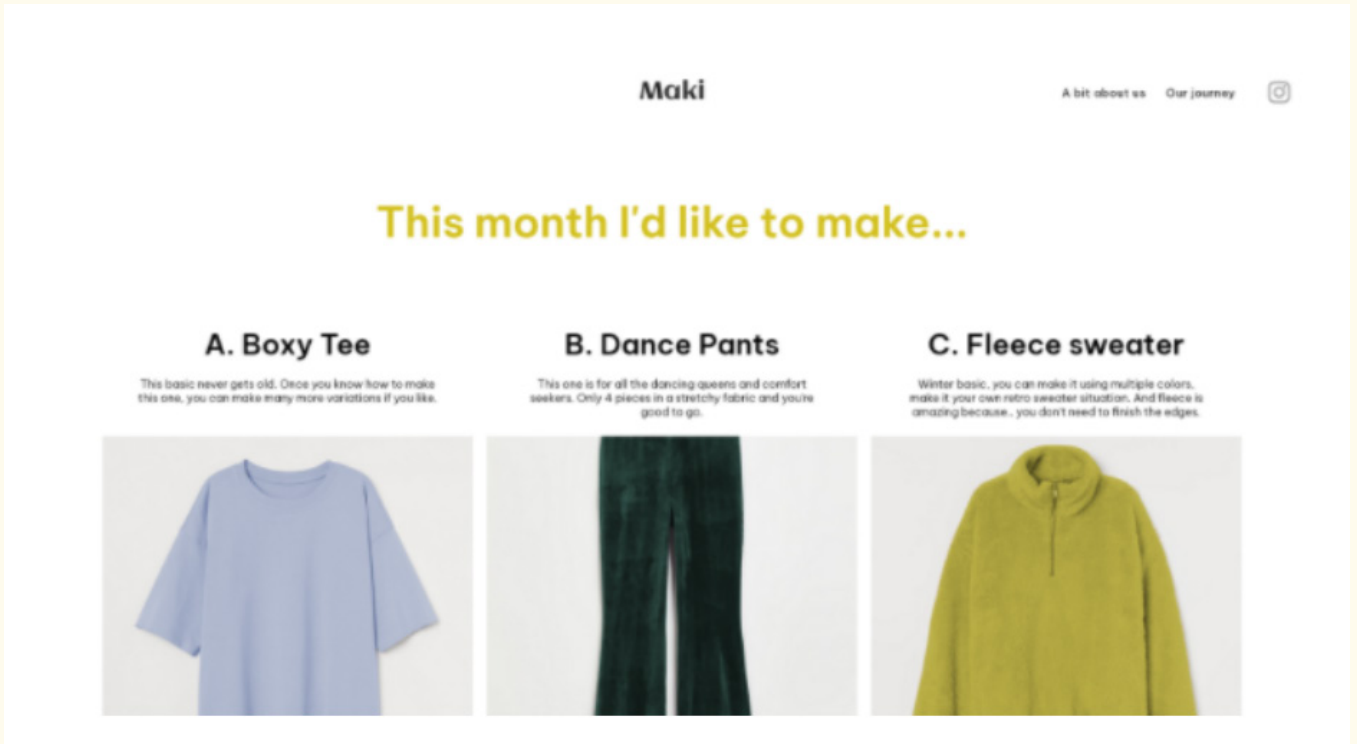


Figure B2a. The designed website screens for making their monthly pattern choice

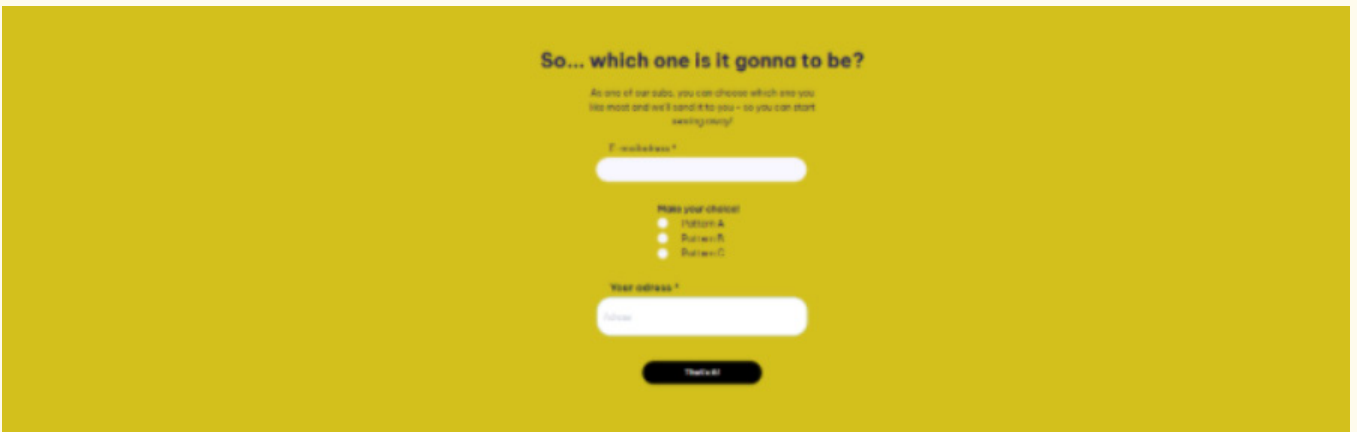


Figure B2b. The designed website screens for making their monthly pattern choice

### Step 2. Monthly pattern choice

People need to choose which pattern they want that month, the designed website screens can be found in figures B2.

Wix was chosen as a means to set up this choice-prototype as it's the most affordable and easy option. It's not the most professional and slick, so it does need to be improved when the means are available or when this prototype doesn't suffice anymore.

A protected webpage on Maki's website was used where you can only enter with an account. Here the subscribers will find the options and a form where they can send their choice to us, with only their email address. This isn't optimal (it costs them more effort than when their choice would be automatically linked to their account) but a more optimal method isn't possible using Wix. For starters, this method will suffice. The subscribers who made a choice will receive an automatic "great choice!" email.

### *Step 3. Check if all people who chose have a subscription*

This step is needed to prevent people from getting free patterns.

### *Step 4. Mail when people didn't choose*

Also, people who haven't made a choice, need to receive an email saying they'll receive Maki's choice.

## Limitations

- Users can't check or change their choices in their accounts, only check through email and change by contacting Maki directly.
- Because the pink steps will be semi-manual, this might result in mistakes.

## Conclusion & discussion

The partners can deliver their activities up to around 4000 subscribers, the trickiest activities will be the two that are done internally:

1. Packaging. It may take more hours than intended.
2. The choice method. In principle, the designed method can suffice until 1000 subscribers, but if many people have questions or want to change their choice after they chose, we need to automate the choice method sooner, because it will cost a lot of man-hours to change this manually. Also, because the pink steps are now done semi-automatically (part manually), shipping might go wrong for the users who didn't make a choice. If this happens too much, this will cost many man-hours. Then we also need to automate the choice method sooner.

The packaging and choice method will seemingly suffice up until 1000 subscribers,

but this cannot be tested well before launch. What can be done is tracking the hours it takes and choosing the maximum amount of time that can be spent on these activities before we need to step up our game and invest to outsource/automate.

### **When to revise the production activities again?**

- When packaging takes us more than a day, outsource.
- When processing the choices of the subscribers takes us more than a day, automate.
- When we make shipping mistakes for users who didn't choose a pattern over 2% of our customers, automate.

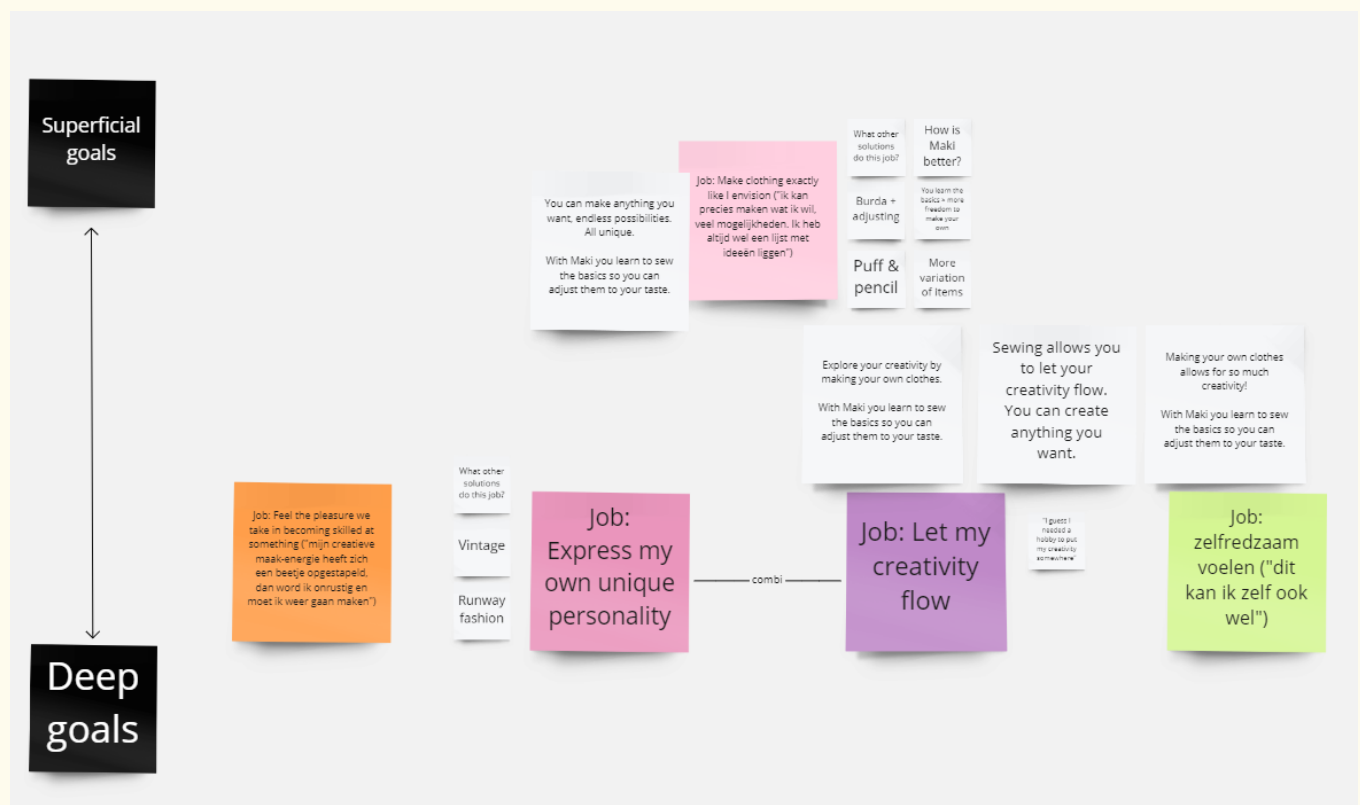


# Appendix C.

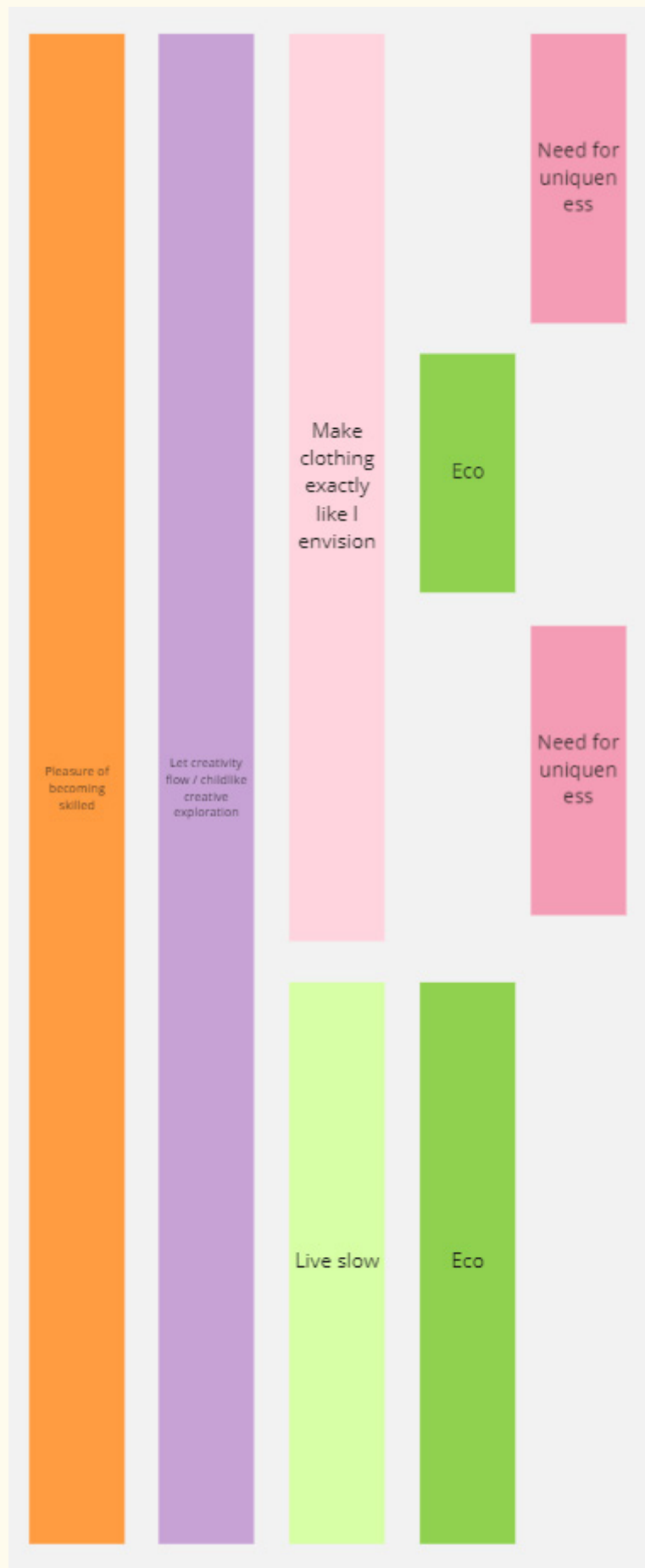
# Interpreting the interviews

In the process of interpreting the interview data, multiple interpretation rounds were needed. These are explained below in chronological order. All the interpretation rounds with all the quotes and postits can be found on the Miro board: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share\\_link\\_id=587282834410](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share_link_id=587282834410).

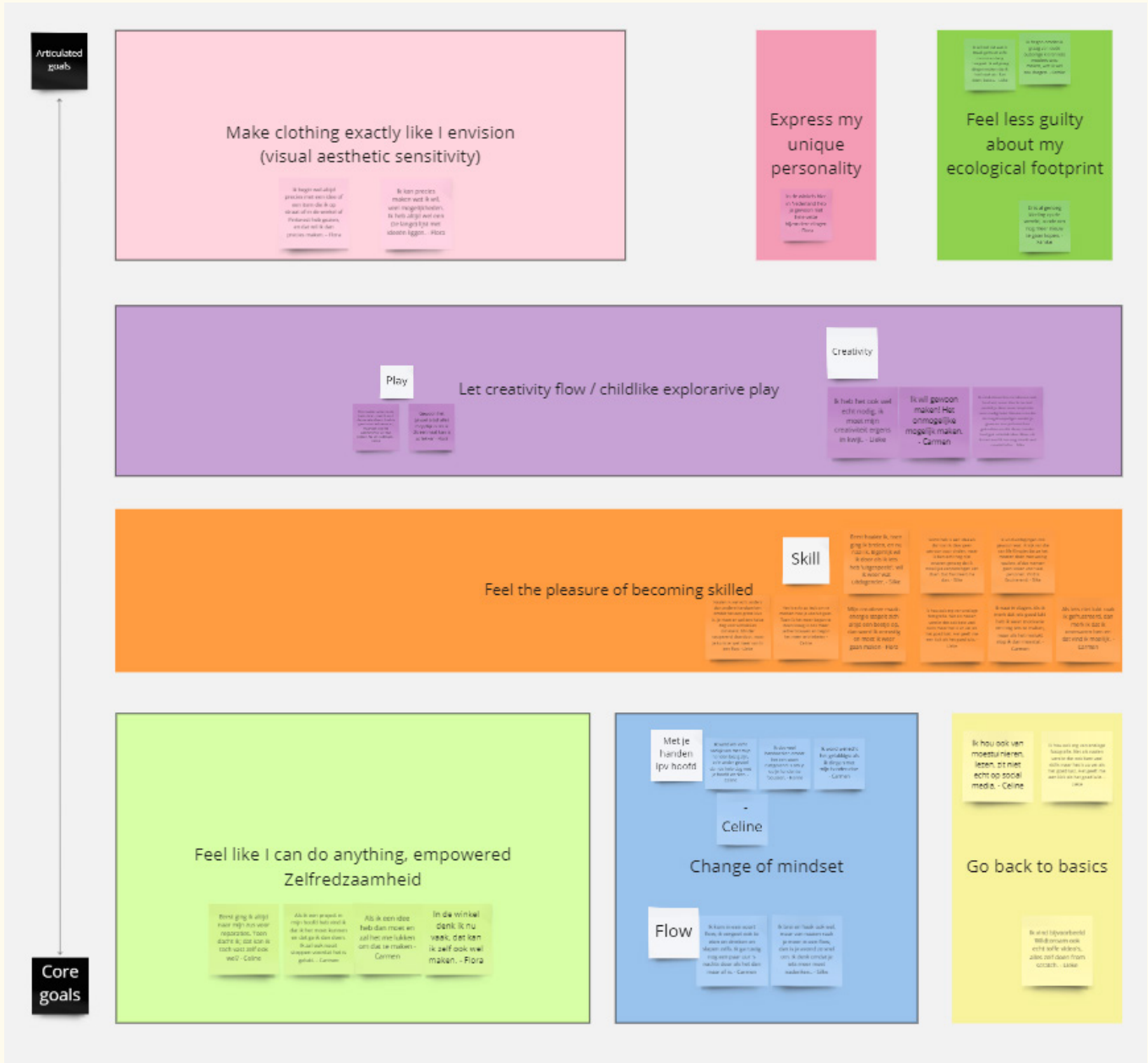
First I interpreted the 'jobs to be done' (JTBDs) after every interview without using the raw quotes but started labeling them as 'jobs' right away and started ordering them from superficial to deep, for example one interviewee, this looked like:



I thought I got their JTBD's and made a (quick) overview but got stuck and confused once I tried to write ad texts for these. This meant they were not crystal clear yet, but open for interpretation. The overview:



So I tried searching for quotes which explained these jobs and achieved more nuance. It turned out some elements in the jobs were overlapping before. Afterwards, I have to admit I did a bit of force fitting there. The new overview:



Encouraged by Erik Jan Hultink I went back to all the interviews once more to look at them from scratch and see if I could find even more nuance. This time I wrote down only raw quotes and only afterwards colored them to cluster them. For example:

Je komt in een soort flow. Het eindresultaat is wel het belangrijkste. Prima een uurtje in de nacht, dan ben ik gewoon bezig.

Flow

leeft naar resultaat toe

Niet alleen naaien, vanalles oereen. Mosaic, pottenbakken, timmeren etc. Ik word gewoon het gelukkigst als ik dingen met mijn handen doe.

Hou van dingen maken

Het begon met moeder natuurlijk, die deed dat veel voor ons, zo gegeven momenten voor ik zelf kon. Ik zei je moet wel helpen maar ik wil het zelf doen. Het op kamers doen in 2012, en ik heb heel veel fouten gemaakt. In stof knippen eng, moet je maar gewoon doen.

Veilig leren, minder bang zijn voor falen met begeleider

Als je merkt dat je beter wordt, ging ik het meer doen, voor langere periodes. Als ik beter wordt vind ik het leuker worden en kan ik mezelf ook meer pushen.

Ik raak ook gefrustreerd als een stof net niet reageert hoe ik het verwacht. Dan merk ik dat ik onervaren ben, vind ik moeilijk.

Creatief met limitaties: uitdaging

Ik heb in festivals gewerkt, en daar moet je ook wel vaak creatief zijn met wat je hebt, vind ik een uitdaging en echt heel leuk.

Epische ideeën

Start met idee, niet met stof. Zo van: dat zou episch zijn. Themafeesten inspireren me.

Ik werd vrolijk van dat er iets onder je handen ligt, dat draagbaar is, een tastbaar bewijs van dat je iets hebt gemaakt vond ik gewoon lekker.

Tastbaar resultaat / bewijs

Het begon praktisch omdat ik het zonde vond als kleren kapot gingen. Maar toen ik eenmaal achter de naaimachine zat dacht ik: oh maar als ik dit kan moet ik dat ook wel kunnen.

Als ik dit kan, kan ik vast ook wel meer

Ik kan helemaal wegdromen bij mooie plaatjes van jurkjes enzo, in dat opzicht ben ik echt een meisje-meisje. Toen dacht ik: zou ik tot vinden om eigen jurkjes te maken.

Alle mogelijkheden kriebelden

Eerste jurkjes samen met een vriendinnetje gemaakt

Veilig leren, minder bang zijn voor falen met begeleider

ik ben echt niet de beste naaier, maar ik ben er gewoon heel blij mee, en je kan het heft in eigen handen nemen.

Heft in eigen handen nemen

Ik heb in de lockdown meerdere dingen geprobeerd als hobby zoals gitaarspelen, maar alleen naaien bleef plakken. Ik denk omdat het toch makkelijker is en dat je sneller resultaat boekt. Het voelt overzichtelijker.

Relatief makkelijke hobby met veel resultaat

Ik wil graag van oude kleren iets mooiers maken, wat ik veel zou dragen. Zoals kleren die ik van mijn moeder krijg, die zijn toch net te oubollig voor mij. Zonde om die weg te doen, ik wil ze graag een nieuw leven geven. Er zijn al genoeg kleren.

Meer waarde geven aan oude kleding

Ik vind het vooral leuk als kleren een verhaal hebben, bijzonder zijn.

Verhaal

Als ik iets from scratch maak, heb ik wel eerst een idee wat ik wil maken, en dan ga ik zoeken in de tweedehands waarvan ik dat kan maken.

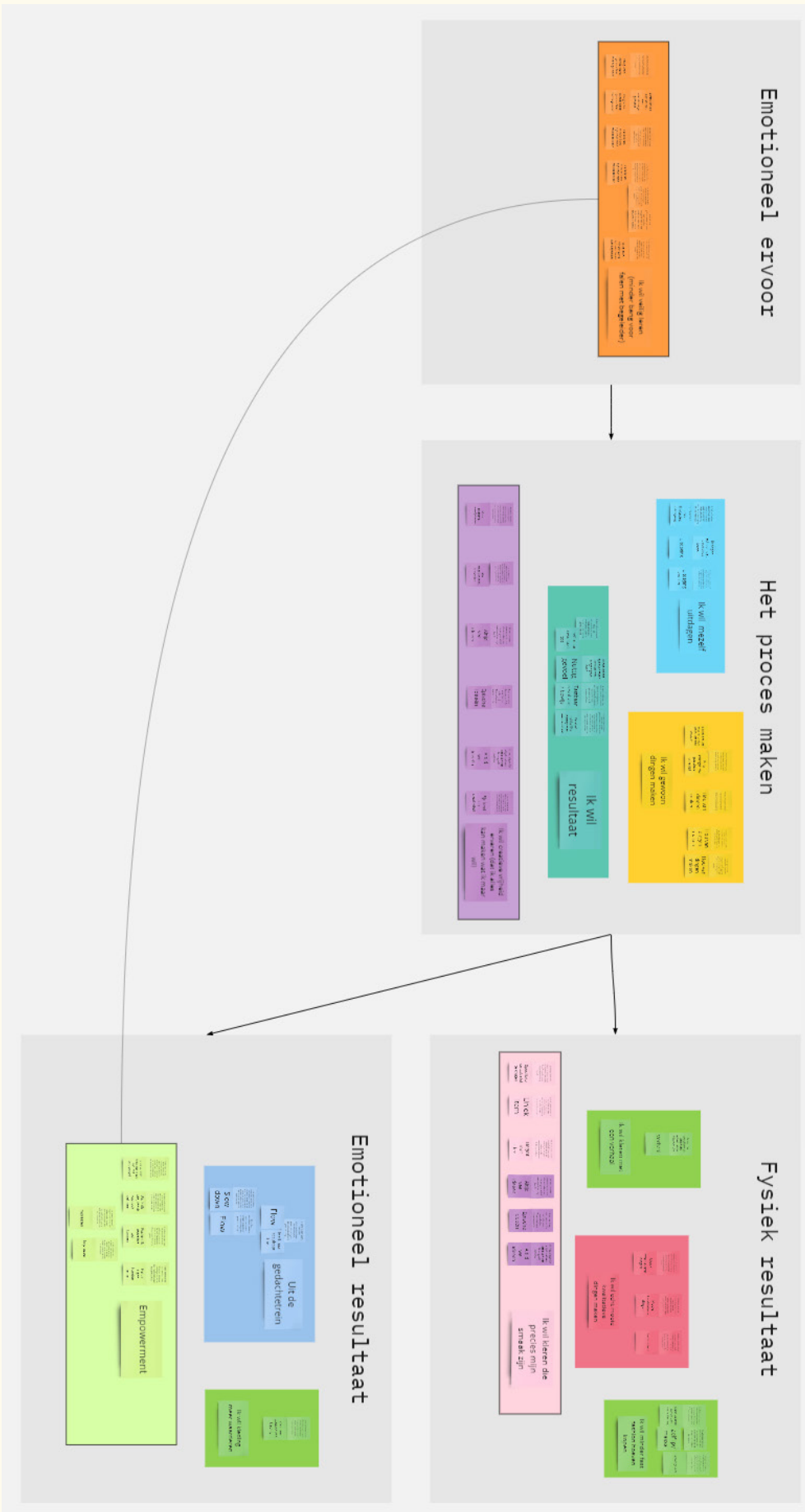
Begint met idee

And I did find more nuance. There still appeared to be multiple elements in some of the jobs. This resulted in the overview below.

The image displays a collection of 15 colorful sticky notes and cards, each representing a different job element or theme. The notes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some overlapping. The colors of the notes include yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, blue, and light green. Each note contains text in Dutch, often with a central theme and several smaller sub-points or related concepts.

- Yellow notes (top left):** Focus on 'Ik wil gewoon dingen maken' (I want to make ordinary things). Sub-points include 'Laten zien dat er nog wat over te maken is', 'Kijk erin en hou vast aan wat je wilt', 'Hou van dingen maken', 'Hou van dingen maken', and 'Hou van dingen maken'.
- Pink notes (top middle):** Focus on 'Ik wil echt mooie kwalitatieve dingen maken' (I want to make really beautiful, qualitative things). Sub-points include 'Mooie kwalitatieve dingen', 'Mooie kwalitatieve dingen', and 'Gedruoid'.
- Green notes (top right):** Focus on 'Ik wil kleding meer waarderen' (I want to value clothing more). Sub-points include 'Ik heb waarde aan mijn kleding', 'Conscious', 'Ik heb waarde aan mijn kleding', and 'Verhaal'.
- Pink notes (middle left):** Focus on 'Ik wil kleren die precies mijn smaak zijn' (I want clothes that are exactly my taste). Sub-points include 'Specifiek smaak heb ik te geven', 'Uniek item', 'Begint met idee', 'Altijd veel ideeën', 'Epische ideeën', and 'Altijd wel ideeën'.
- Yellow note (middle right):** Focus on 'Ik wil dingen ZELF doen (back to basics)' (I want to do things myself).
- Teal note (middle):** Focus on 'Ik wil resultaat' (I want results). Sub-points include 'leeft naar resultaat toe', 'Nuttig gevoel', 'Toetsbaar resultaat / bewijs', and 'Resultaat merkbaar, hebbaar, meetbaar, veel resultaat'.
- Purple notes (bottom middle):** Focus on 'Ik wil creatieve vrijheid ervaren (dat ik alles kan maken wat ik maar wil)' (I want to experience creative freedom). Sub-points include 'Eigen creatieve vrijheid', 'Als mijn ideeën bestaan', 'Altijd veel ideeën', 'Epische ideeën', 'Altijd wel ideeën', and 'Eigen idee dan creatief'.
- Orange notes (bottom left):** Focus on 'Ik wil veilig leren (minder bang voor falen met begeleider)' (I want to learn safely). Sub-points include 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', 'Dit is mijn manier van leren', and 'Dit is mijn manier van leren'.
- Blue notes (bottom right):** Focus on 'Ik wil meer uitdaging in mijn leven' (I want more challenge in my life). Sub-points include 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', 'Ik ben uitgedaagd', and 'Ik ben uitgedaagd'.
- Light green notes (bottom left):** Focus on 'Empowerment'. Sub-points include 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën', and 'Ik wil mijn eigen ideeën'.
- Light blue notes (bottom right):** Focus on 'Uit de gedachtetrein' (Out of the thought train). Sub-points include 'Flow', 'leeft naar resultaat toe', 'Slow down', and 'Flow'.

I felt like some were closer together than others so I tried to find connections and ended up with the following overview (tilted because of the sizing).



# Appendix D.

# Positioning ad

# test details

## Draft advertisement texts per JTBD

I want to feel creative freedom (that I can make whatever I come up with in my fantasy)

Vond jij als kind dingen maken ook zo leuk? Hoe vet was dat: alles was mogelijk en je had geen rem.  
Surprise: je kan het nog steeds, beloofd. Met onze naaipatronen leer je zonder gedoe je eigen kleding maken.

I want to feel empowered, like I can do anything

Maki, jij kan alles  
You can do it. Echt waar. Niks is te moeilijk voor jou, als je het maar stap voor stap doet.  
Met onze naaipatronen leer je stap voor stap om je eigen kleding te maken.

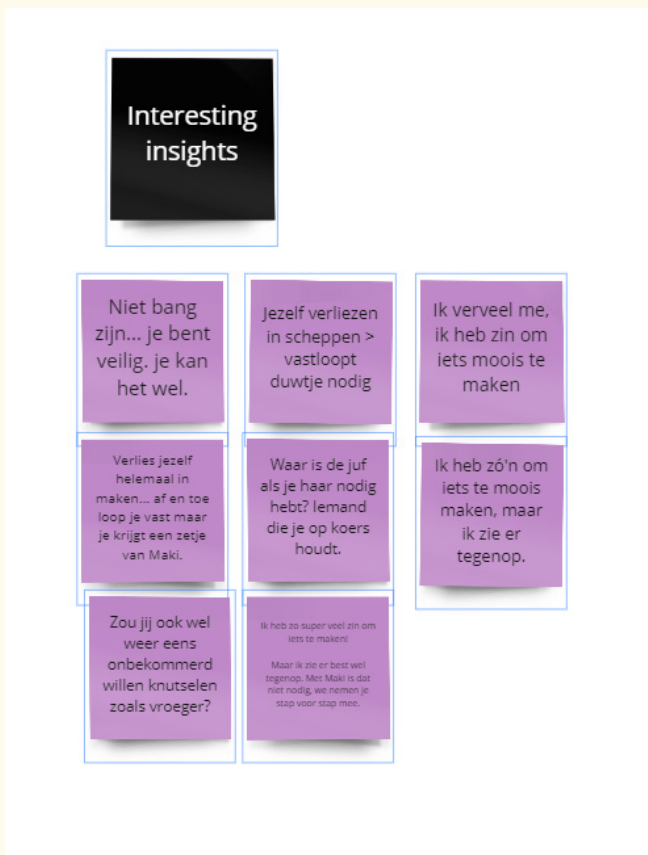
I want clothing that are exactly my taste

Maki, maak precies wat jij wil  
Ben jij ook altijd op zoek naar dat ene specifieke vette kledingstuk? Als je zelf je kleren maakt is alles (echt alles!) mogelijk.  
Onze naaipatronen nemen je stap voor stap mee.

I want to learn in a safe way

Maki, neemt je mee  
Kleding maken is zo'n vette skill maar lijkt zo moeilijk. Maar met Maki is het dat absoluut niet. Stap voor stap komt het helemaal goed.  
Met onze naaipatronen leer je stap voor stap om je eigen kleding te maken.

# Brainstorm example of one JTBD



The full overview can be found on the Miro board:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share\\_link\\_id=587282834410](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share_link_id=587282834410)



# In 't Veld's feedback on draft ads

## Test type

- It depends on your goal of the ad test, but in some cases it works good to test opposites, to test your assumptions. So for example for Maki, if I wanted to test if it works to promote Maki as a way to live more sustainably (use second hand fabric, turn old pieces into modern ones), I also should run a test where Maki is really not sustainable (now you can have even more possibilities than H&M?), not a good example, you get the gist of it.

*But I chose to test 4 different market angles, not opposites.*

## Ads specific

- Use video's, that results in more engagements than photos
- Use the same video for all the ads if possible, just with different texts, otherwise your results can differ because people liked the different video's more/less.
- Use as little text as possible. Really condense it.
- Bake the most important line in the video, so it's clear from second 1 what they need to see. You can put a second line in the description.

## Targeting

- Put in around 20-25 euros per day per ad. Run them 2-3 days, the ad will get worse when you run it longer and this is enough for strong results.
- Target on age and location. Choose the Netherlands or specific cities in the Netherlands.

*I targeted Rotterdam +30km, Amsterdam*

*+30km, Den Haag +30km and Utrecht +30km.*

*The smaller you go, the less chance you'll get bot engagement.*

- DON'T put on automatic adjustments, because then FB will skew your results and push it towards people who are similar to the ones who click the link. You want the ad to be pushed proportionally (evenredig).
- Don't worry about people seeing multiple of the ads, on this scale that probably won't happen, or not often at least.

## Back-end

- Make a smokescreen homepage where people can leave their email address to receive updates so you have an extra 'proof of interest'.
- Make a smokescreen homepage where people can leave their email address to receive updates so you have an extra 'proof of interest'.
- If you want to track this form (which people who signed up saw which ad), run the different ads 1 by 1. So after 2-3 days you run the next.

# Conversion test email

From: Maki <roos@maki.nl>

Subject: Ons allereerste naaipatroon is af! 🍷

Hi <<First Name>>! Wat super leuk dat je je een tijdje terug hebt ingeschreven voor onze updates. Ennn na lang ontwikkelen zijn we trots om te vertellen:

**Ons allereerste patroon is klaar...  
en jij kan hem maken!**



## Het ultieme slip dress patroon

Dan ontvang je het gedrukte patroon (de tijden van zelf printen en plakken zijn einde-lijk over!) en superduidelijke online instructies, zodat jij hem gewoon lekker kan maken, zonder gedoe.

Hij is nog niet te koop op onze site, maar jij kan hem als een van onze eerste geïnteresseerden al wel bestellen! Tot en met 4 april verkrijgbaar voor 10 euro inclusief verzending.

[Jaaa deze wil ik!](#)

Liefs, Roos

Figure D1. The email sent to the four different lists of people who signed up their email through the four different key message advertisements



# Appendix E. Testing conversi

Contact list	Number of slip dress orders	Whatsapp answer on: "What's your sewing experience?"
Creative	5	<p>Medium , ik heb in het verleden veel kleding (van simpel tot complex) gemaakt enige tijd niet meer</p> <p>ik ben ik 2020 begonnen met naaien, ik heb wat tasjes en topjes genaaid zonder (wat best een uitdaging was)</p> <p>ik kan best goed naaien maar heb geen ervaring met patronen tekenen.</p> <p>beginnende/starter. Ik ben begonnen met 1 naai boekje voor een fashion project opleiding (CMD). Mijn interesse voor duurzame kleding en de Indonesische cultuur ik uitzoeken en daar kreeg ik de kans voor om dat te doen voor 10 weken lang. ervaring is dan ook heel weinig, maar ik merk dat ik instructies prima kan volgen</p> <p>Ik heb toen ik klein was op een kleine naaimachine leren naaien. Later voor mij veel op een industriële naaimachine gewerkt.</p>
Specific taste	1	ik denk dat ik basis naai ervaring heb. Ik heb vooral kleine projectjes genaaid (kussenslopen etc.), maar nog nooit echt kleding.
Empowerment	0	
Intimidated	1	Mijn naai ervaring is beginner. Ik heb vroeger veel genaaid en ik heb het geleerd van mijn moeder, maar al een aantal jaar niet meer gedaan dus vandaar beginner
Other	1	Beginner, alleen simpele dingen gedaan zoals een broek korter maken en scrup









# on rates customers answers

	Whatsapp answer on: "Why did you buy this pattern?"
<p>t, nu al</p> <p>er patroon</p>	<p>Hou van jurken, heb een perfecte stof hiervoor liggen en ik vind het geweldig dat ik het patroon toegestuurd krijg op papier ipv digitaal.</p> <p>omdat het al een tijdje geleden is dat ik heb genaaid en ik op zoek ben naar een opstapje terug naar het naaien en dit leek me perfect! Ik was eigenlijk al verkocht toen ik jullie website en designs enzo zag, en dit patroon is ook een kleding item waar ik al langer naar op zoek ben dus vandaar!</p> <p>omdat ik dacht 'leuk, doen we!' Hahah. Het mooie weer komt er weer aan en een slip dress maken lijkt me leuk. Ook lijkt dit patroon me handig om als basis patroon te gebruiken voor weer andere jurken.</p>
<p>ct bij mijn</p> <p>tuur wilde</p> <p>. Mijn</p> <p>en.</p>	<p>omdat ik helaas nog geen slip dress heb. Ik val eigenlijk buiten de maat van dit patroon (XXL), maar heb wel vaker met een naai patroon gewerkt waar ik de inschatting kan maken voor extra centimeters of dat ik passende kledingstukken erbij pak voor guidance. Ik denk overigens ook dat ik dit patroon heel diverse kan inzetten om het volgende te maken: Slip dress, Loose V neck top (of met een kleine aanpassing verschillende neklijnen). Basis voor een rok, een two-piece en noem maar op.</p> <p>Dus in het kort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Een mooie basis patroon</li> <li>+ Een patroon dat ik diverse in kan zetten.</li> <li>- Een basispatroon waar ik voor nu nog even moet afwijken met mijn maat en externe hulpmiddelen of kennis moet inzetten.</li> </ul>
n opleiding	Om mezelf te motiveren om ruimte te maken in mijn kamer en dan eindelijk een nieuwe naaimachine te kopen. En ik vind zelf je kleding maken altijd een interessant concept gevonden. En met jullie patronen wordt het een stuk makkelijker voor mij.
	Zoals ik bij 1 al zei heb ik nog niet echt ervaring met het naaien van kleding, maar lijkt me leuk om te gaan leren. De jurk zag er wel uit als een patroon waar je goed mee kan beginnen. En leuk voor de zomer :)
rd van mijn	Ik wil al een hele tijd graag weer beginnen, maar ik vind het heel lastig om goede en moderne simpele patronen te vinden
nchies.	Leek me goed te doen voor een beginner

# Appendix F. Competitor analysis

Note: for all competitors, language is left out because it can be perceived as both a pro and a con to do it in English or Dutch. Some say it's easier in Dutch but others say it's easier in English because the terms are used more on the internet. Though all of these competitors are active in the Dutch market.

Competitor	Functional pros	Functional cons	Story	Visual elements	Emotional attributes (as experienced by the author)
Burda	Many patterns, cheap per pattern	Outdated style, overcomplicated instructions, not using all patterns	Not really		Traditional, conservative, outdated
Knipmode	Many patterns, cheap per pattern	Outdated style, overcomplicated instructions, not using all patterns	Not really		Traditional, conservative, outdated
Knip academy	Easy approach	Focussed on teaching technical skills rather a means to make clothes, outdated style	For the younger generation of sewers		Traditional, conservative, outdated
Victor Maison	Many patterns, cheap per pattern	Outdated style, overcomplicated instructions, not using all patterns	A community activity		Traditional, conservative, outdated
FibreMood	More modern style, easier instructions	Specific romantic style, more expensive, not using all patterns	Inspiring sewing community		Younger approach, romantic, boring, overly stylized
Naaielij / other sewing classes	Community sewing feeling, help when you need it, inspiring!	More high level, more pressure than working at home. Peer pressure. Expensive.	Sustainability, repair		Funky, sustainable, trendy

Burda Easy	Easier instructions	Outdated style, not using all patterns	Not really		Simple, basic, boring, outdated
Kiana Bonollo	Easy instructions, modern style	Having to print, cut and trace it yourself, uncertain what you buy, specific sexy style	Not really		Sexy, modern
Other PDF patterns on Etsy & google	Some are easier and more modern	Having to print, cut and trace it yourself, uncertain what you buy, long searching time	-	-	-
Hoe maakt u het? - book by Bomb	Easier, modern	Not only for sewing, also other DIY's, not using all patterns, expensive	Making clothing yourself is more sustainable & no fast fashion		Girly, young, trendy
Het Grote Naaiboek	Feeling of buying a skill, not needing to look any further	Expensive, focuses on teaching technical skills instead of making a piece of clothing right away	Learning the skill sewing		Basic, text oriented, overwhelming
Hét handboek voor zelfmaak-mode	Explains all technical skills extensively	Overwhelming, technical-focussed, used more as reference work after multiple fails than as a means learn to sew	Reference book for technical skills		Basic, text oriented, overwhelming
The Essentials club videos	Visual explanation, modern style	You often need to buy & print a pattern to follow it, you need to follow her speed, pause, playback.	Sewing as ethic act		Romantic, girly, modern, accessible, sustainable
Coolirpa videos	Based on self drafting, no need for patterns. Modern style	Using no patterns limits garment possibilities and sewing learnings. You need to follow her speed, pause, and playback.	Not really		Unprofessional, personal, specific glitter style
Good House-keeping videos	Very clear explanations for specific technical skills	More as reference work than a means to learn how to sew.	Housekeeping tips in general		Girly, screamy, technical, boring

# Appendix G.

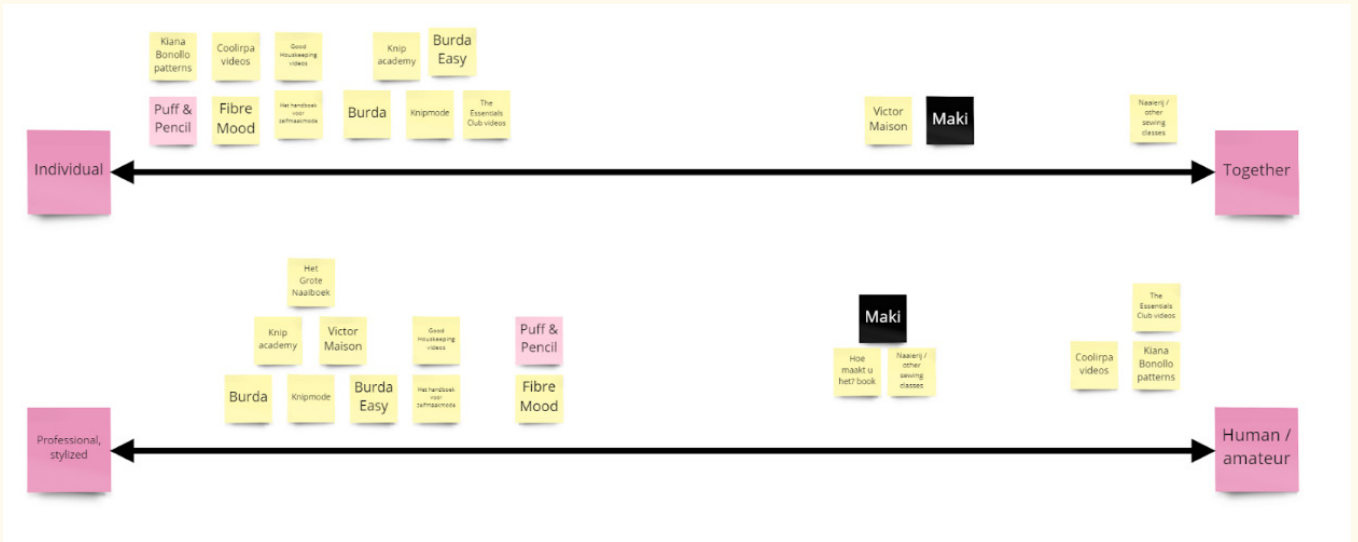
# Brand identity

# differentiation

# axes







The full overview can be found on the Miro board:  
[https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share\\_link\\_id=587282834410](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOF-EyVI=?share_link_id=587282834410)

# Appendix H. Branding

Even kort over jou: hoe oud ben je?	Wat doe je nu dagelijks?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Welke van de 3 stijlen spreekt jou het meeste aan?	Laatste vraag: waarom vind je deze leuker dan de andere?
10	Ik studeer	Ja! Fris en helemaal in de trends van nu	Ik vind hem iets te zwart wit, maar de achtergrond eronder is wel heel mooi!	Frisser dan stijl 2! Daardoor een stuk vrolijker meteen	Stijl 1	Gewoon up my alley met stijl, grafisch erg leuk
20	Ik studeer	Vind het een mooie stijl, zeer speels en kleurrijk	Deze stijl komt chiquer over dan de vorige, zeer cleane stijl	Echt een zeer leuke stijl, ik vind dat deze meer persoonlijkheid toont en unieker overkomt dan de andere	Stijl 3	Het is ietsje rustiger dan de eerste stijl en ik vind ook mooier overkomen. Vergeleken met de tweede stijl vind ik deze minder strak (dit is positief voor mij) De derde spreekt mij het meeste aan, dit is vooral persoonlijk
20	Ik studeer	Het maakt je gelijk vrolijk en voelt heel zomers. Wel een beetje druk, maar weet niet of ik dat erg vind:)	Ik vind dit mooi en schoon maar niet heel spannend en inspirerend. Ik vind het lettertype van maki we heel fijn	Ik vind deze heel fijn om naar te kijken omdat door het kleurgebruik het toch een beetje spannend is maar ook rustig door de stijl en ik vind groen een hele mooie kleur.	Stijl 3	Ik vind dat deze een fijne balans heeft.
20	Ik studeer	Heel leuk! Lekker creatief en opvallend	Saai, ziet er een beetje basic uit	Neutraal	Stijl 1	Het prikkelt mij het meest om zelf creatief aan de slag te gaan en is interessanter om naar te kijken (de andere stijlen zou ik als pagina eerder weg klikken)
21	Werkt halftijds en studeert	Kleurrijk, speels, fris, valt op	Te statisch en niet fris voor zo'n jong bedrijf dat een jonger doelpubliek wilt benaderen	Te eentonig. Flou, valt niet op	Stijl 1	Valt op, kleurrijk, zet aant tot meer te gaan bekijken
21	Ik studeer	De kleuren heel leuk! Springt er uit en creatief, misschien wel beetje girly	Vind het logo hier heel leuk! Bij de 1e zag je wel meer van dit kan je allemaal maken aan de fotos	Vind hier de kleuren wat minder	Stijl 1	Creativiteit springt er meer uit, en aan de foto's krijg je meteen inspiratie
21	Ik studeer	Ik vind het erg vrolijk en zomers, het spreekt mij alleen niet echt aan persoonlijk	Vind dit meer minimalistische maar met een beetje kleur wat mij dan wel weer erg aan spreekt	Dit heeft voor mij ook net als bij de eerste veel kleur wat mij dan niet persoonlijk aan spreekt maar het is wel nogsteeds mooi	Stijl 2	Ik ben toch meer van de minimalistische looks met een beetje kleur erin dan gelijk veel kleur overal
22	Ik studeer	gezellig en vrolijk! een idee van "we gaan lekker aan de slag"	beetje zara vibes of zo? ik vind het wel mooi, maar niet overeenkomen met de vibe van diy	iets professioneler dan de eerste, maar nog steeds wel vrolijk en diy	Stijl 3	ziet er en professioneel en gezellig en diy uit!
22	Ik studeer			Heel erg gaaf! Krijg er een beetje retro en "flower power" vibes van, past in mijn opinie goed bij Maki!	Stijl 3	Een unieke stijl, serieus maar ook vrolijk. Gewoon de vibe spreekt me het meeste aan!
22	Ik studeer	Vrolijk met veel kleur!	Clean en overzichtelijk, maar de kleuren mogen veller	Huiselijk en warm, maar misschien minder tijdloos	Stijl 1	Vrolijk en pakt gelijk je aandacht!
22	Ik studeer	Very fun and funky! Looks young and fresh, a bit 70s	Classy, reminds me a bit of Zara - I feel like it doesn't encapsulate the DIY spirit as much as the first one	I like this logo the best and the colors are nice too! It would be between the first one and this one for me	Stijl 3	It keeps the focus on the clothes and is still warm and inviting

# questionnaire results

Even kort over jou: hoe oud ben je?	Wat doe je nu dagelijks?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Welke van de 3 stijlen spreekt jou het meeste aan?	Laatste vraag: waarom vind je deze leuker dan de andere?
22	Ik studeer	Ja hoor, straalt vrolijkheid uit en is lekker kleurrijk en speels. Alleen vind ik het wel jong overkomen.	Nice! Wat minimalistisch, maar zo komen de ontwerpen wel extra mooi uit. Mijn voorkeur gaat wel uit naar toch iets meer kleur, vind ik ook goed bij jullie merk passen! :)	Leuk, ik krijg er een vintage, retro vibe van. Wat mij betreft niet te veel kleur, maar geeft toch een bepaalde sfeer.	Stijl 1	Ik vind deze stijl goed bij jullie merk passen! Wat mij betreft vind ik het wel iets te tiktok achtig (komt ook door de foto's denk ik) maar dat hoeft natuurlijk helemaal niet erg te zijn als je een bepaalde doelgroep in gedachten hebt. Ik vind het ontwerp over all heel tof en uniek!
23	Ik studeer	Mwah, leuke kleuren maar iets te druk en kinderachtig misschien	Ik vind het onderste deel super mooi en clean, maar het logo zo als het nu is mooier!	Ik vind dit een goede combinatie van en clean maar toch kleurvol, dus mijn favoriet	Stijl 3	Omdat die en kleurrijk en clean is, de andere twee alleen een van die twee
23	Ik studeer	Vrolijk en creatief, spreekt mij aan	Strak en stylish, spreekt mij ook aan voelt stijlvol	Wat simpler, spreekt me minder aan dan de andere	Stijl 2	Door de strakheid van het design
23	Ik werk	Ik vind het leuk maar wel heel erg jong	Deze vind ik erg mooi heel mooi lettertype ook voelt creatief	Deze vind ik ook heel erg mooi voelt een beetje chique aan ook	Stijl 2	Bij deze heb ik het meeste het gevoel dat het gaat over iets wat ik zou kunnen. Dat het past bij de dingen die ik mooi en leuk vind
23	Ik studeer				Stijl 3	
23	Ik studeer	Spreekt mij wel aan voelt beetje hippie en speels, maar kan het ook minder professioneel of goedkoop laten lijken en dat zou mensen kunnen afschrikken	Misschien een beetje te koud, stijlvol maar niet erg toegankelijk gevoel	Goede mix tussen de bovenstaande, speels en vrolijk maar ook nog professioneel. Denk ook dat je het grootste publiek ermee aanspreekt. Tenzij je specifieke doelgroep wil	Stijl 3	Speels maar toch rustig, denk dat wel uit mijn eerdere antwoorden duidelijk wordt. Dit is beste van beide zonder het te goedkoop of te zakelijk te maken
24	Ik studeer	Ja! Heel vrolijk en vrij. Creatief en kleurrijk	iets minder, wat te edgy en strak	Ook leuk, wat simpeler dan 1. Daardoor ook rustiger. Fijne kleuren	Stijl 1	Lekker quirky. Precies wat ik associeer met het zelf maken van kleding. Misschien niet voor iedereen...
24	Ik studeer	Heel vrolijk maar past niet bij mij	Mooi duidelijk clean	Zelfde als vorige maar iets gezelliger door gekleurde letters	Stijl 3	
24	Ik studeer	Kleurrijk/vrolijk	Ziet er professioneel uit	Zowel strak/professioneel als ook wat kleurrijker	Stijl 3	Het heeft het beste van beide, en is daardoor ook niet heel erg extreem of het ene of het andere
24	Ik studeer	De kleuren zijn iets te uitgesproken. Verder zijn de krullen wel vrolijk!	Dit ziet er wel heel strak en modern uit.	Ik vind deze fonts het mooist.	Stijl 2	Omdat het zo strak en simpel is, leiden de kleuren niet af van de foto's.
24	Ik werk	Voelt voor mij erg kinderlijk. Zou mij niet erg aanspreken.	Ja leuk! Fashion en fris	Ja dit voelt vertrouwd. Elke keer als ik die groene kleur zie, denk ik gelijk aan Maki.	Stijl 3	Herkenbaarheid
24	Ik studeer	Gezellig, maar iets te veel Gen Z	Mooi, overzichtelijk, fijn lettertype, strak, toch inspirerend	Yes yes yes, mooie kleuren, niet te standaard	Stijl 3	
24	Ik studeer	Niet zo, het is vrij druk en het kleurrijke komt in dit geval wat kinderlijk over.	Ook niet zo, het is wat kaal en het titel font spreekt me niet aan.	Leuk, het scheelt dat het niet wit is. Die blauwe balk eronder vind ik wel wat minder	Stijl 3	Rustig maar toch kleurig
24	Ik studeer				Stijl 1	Lekker vrolijk

Even kort over jou: hoe oud ben je?	Wat doe je nu dagelijks?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Welke van de 3 stijlen spreekt jou het meeste aan?	Laatste vraag: waarom vind je deze leuker dan de andere?
24	Ik studeer	Kleuren en lettertype mooi maar de kronkelige regenboog valt erg op en leidt af van de contente	Is mis de sfeer	Mooi en rustig	Stijl 3	Rustig, niet afleidend
24	Ik werk	Vrolijk en groovy, maar wel overzichtelijk. Leuk!	Beetje saai, beetje basic.	Ik vind het groen/crème mooi, het blauw vind ik er niet bij passen.	Stijl 1	Vrolijk, leuke kleuren. Beetje retro maak tegelijkertijd ook modern.
24	Ik werk	Vrolijk maar ook kinderlijk. Meer een tijdelijk/trendgevoelige lay-out.	Dit spreekt mij aan. Tijdloos en fris en nieuw	Clean met een vleugje vintage. Mooi	Stijl 2	Valt op, rustig, trekt mijn aandacht het meest
24	Ik studeer	Top! Vrolijk, oogt enthousiast en jong. Deze spreekt mij erg aan.	lets te simpel, maar wel elegant, ik vind dit niet zo spannend.	Ook vrolijk, ben zelf meer fan van de eerste maar ook deze vind ik zelf erg leuk.	Stijl 1	Het kleurrijke karakter past het merk denk ik erg goed. Ik word aangetrokken door creativiteit in product en stijl en dit oogt alsof het merk dat ook komt brengen.
25	Ik studeer	Is wel leuk, beetje hippie achtig	Best wel leuk, geeft een classy idee, alleen het lettertype is een beetje gek	Wel oke, vrij basic maar kan wel werken	Stijl 2	De classy vibe is nice
25	Ik werk	Nee, te jong/hippie	Nee, te saai ^^	Prima!	Stijl 3	
25	Ik werk				Stijl 3	
26	Ik werk	Mooi, vrolijk, wel een beetje kinderlijk	Mooi, maar minder helder dat het gaat over patronen	Vrij keurig, wel mooi	Stijl 1	Liefst een combinatie van 1&2. Het speelse in combinatie met een wat helderder beeld
26	Ik studeer	Ja! Laat vooral de creativiteit zien	Meh,voelt een beetje afstandelijk	Hij voelt warm en uitnodigend aan! Leuk dat er een foto is van iemand die bezig is met naaien	Stijl 1	Ik denk omdat die de diversiteit laat zien van wat je zou kunnen maken. En dus dat iedereen op zn eigen manier creatief kan zijn met Maki
26	Ik studeer	Leuk! Best speels, en ook een beetje 70s vibe	Krijg hier een Arket vine van, wat moderner, misschien serieuzer	Vind deze het meest plain, doet me niet zoveel	Stijl 2	Bij die eerste krijg ik dan het idee dat het vooral bloemetjes en rainbows is en die tweede vind ik wat serieuzer en toch eigenzinniger maar is sws meer mijn smaak
26	Ik werk			Deze spreekt me het meeste aan ! Beetje Hema vibes	Stijl 3	Wel liever de Blauwe kleur van stijl 1
27	Ik werk	Ik vind hem te Hippie en zal daar om niet mij aanspreken. Want ik vind het juist stoer om kleding te maken en niet zweverig	Leuk maar ook wel weer erg jong, zeg ik haha, spreek mij niet aan. Kijk ook op een kledingmerk ofzo, hipsters haha	Heel tof deze ! Simpel want dat is het en mooie kleuren	Stijl 3	Zie mijn antwoorden eronder
27	Ik werk	Vrolijk! Ja!	Hip. Ja, ook	Vind dit een hoog influencer-gehalte hebben. Geen idee hoe ik dat uit moet leggen. Beetje algemeen. Spreekt mij een stuk minder aan	Stijl 1	Blijde en gezellige kleurtjes, niet duizend in een dozijn uiterlijk. Net als de dingen die je maakt
27	Ik werk	Gezellig kleurtjes die in de eerste instantie aanspreken maar op den duur een 'kinderlijk' gevoel geven	Mooi en clean. Maar misschien iets te clean?	Persoonlijke favoriet. Warm en kleurrijk en het heeft een creatieve vibe!	Stijl 3	Warme en creatieve sfeer
27	Ik werk	Mag wat rustiger qua kleur maar verder goed	Oogt rommelig met afbeeldingen	Oogt wat rommelig	Stijl 1	Omdat hij strakker is vormgegeven
27	Ik ben aan het reizen	Niet zo	Simple, wel duidelijk. Ik vind het letter type van de naam niet zo mooi.	Deze vind ik het leukste!	Stijl 3	Hij is kleurrijk, maar ook simpel en niet te veel poespas.

Even kort over jou: hoe oud ben je?	Wat doe je nu dagelijks?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Wat vind jij van deze stijl? Spreekt hij jou aan?	Welke van de 3 stijlen spreekt jou het meeste aan?	Laatste vraag: waarom vind je deze leuker dan de andere?
28	Ik werk	Vrolijk & speels. Foto's spreken me niet aan.	Cool, maar wel iets meer Zara / afstandelijk.	Warm, gezellig. Deze spreekt mij het meest aan!	Stijl 3	Iets gezelligere / knetterige vibe.
28	Ik werk	Ja spreekt me aan! Wel veel rood.	Ik vind het logo niet zo mooi. Het is wel heel clean.	Leuk kleur gebruik!	Stijl 3	Mooie balans in kleuren (niet te schreeuwerig), clean maar niet saai :)
29	Ik werk	Best wel kleurrijk; geeft een impressie van niet-zo-serieus. Persoonlijk spreekt het mij niet aan.	Leuk! Kind of high fashion vibes.	Leuk lettertype. De kleuren (combo's) spreken mij niet zo aan.	Stijl 2	Het oogt serieus. Geen afleiding van drukke kleuren.
29	Ik werk	Is nirt mijn smaak, vindt het er snel oubollig uitzien	Het strakke vindt ik mooi, het lijkt alleen nog geen eengeheel	Deze vindt ik het mooiste, ook het lettertype, ik zou alleen wel een kleur en dan in verschillende tinten aanhouden.	Stijl 3	Is meer mijn smaak het wat moderne maar toch kleurrijk en niet te veel poespas
30	Ik werk	Ja! Vrolijk, energiek, enthousiast en tegelijk speels	Ja, wel wat rustiger en stijlvoller dan de andere. Mist wel wat kleur of speelsheid.	Ja, het speelt straalt rust, duurzaamheid en vrolijkheid uit.	Stijl 1	Ik word gewoon heel blij van de verschillende kleurtjes en de energie die het uitstraalt
33	Ik werk	Kleurrijk en vrolijk	Dit vind ik de meest professionele stijl hebben	Vrolijk en kleurrijk	Stijl 2	Ik vind 1 en 2 de leukste!
37	Ik werk	Meh. Voelt als een beetje 'retro acid trip' aan	Te mager, fit keuze vh logo is niet mijn lievelings	Ja! Fris, tijdloos, maar toch eigen	Stijl 3	Zie toelichting
20	Ik studeer	Ik vind het iets te druk en chaotisch	Ik vind het mooi rustig en overduidelijk. Ik zou sneller op een site klikken dat er rustig en georganiseerd uitziet.	Ik vind het er kleurrijk uit zien maar nog steeds ogerzichtig	Stijl 2	Het is gewoon overzichtelijk en rustig. Ik vind de 3e ook mooi maar ik hou niet zo van allemaal knal kleuren bij elkaar.
	Ik werk				Stijl 3	
	Ik werk				Stijl 3	
	Ik studeer	Modern, maar wel 70's vibes. Vrolijk en spreekt me erg aan	Modern maar ook een beetje standaard en saai	Vrolijker dan stijl 2, maar ook weer een beetje saai	Stijl 1	Hij is vrolijk en dat prikkelt de creativiteit. De andere stijlen vind ik mooi, maar niet helemaal bij jullie concept passen
	Ik werk	Vind ik leuk maar iets té speels	Vind ik Nice, classy!	Goede mix van bovenste 2.	Stijl 3	
	Ik werk	Helder en duidelijk vormgegeven.	Dit is de stijl die ik verwacht bij jullie Brand! Top!!	Nah, die hier boven is meer van deze tijd.	Stijl 2	Modern, clean, duidelijk, overzichtelijk passend bij mijn verwachting van jullie merk.

# Appendix I.

# Financial model

Because of its size, sheets and the fact that it was not created for this project, can find it using this link:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JMft1US8oLf6qM\\_QN5lzn5\\_LBE62x83ulf7BVag2KU/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JMft1US8oLf6qM_QN5lzn5_LBE62x83ulf7BVag2KU/edit?usp=sharing)

# Appendix J. Booklet and framework

# Your how-to-make your-startup-fly recipe



Graduation Report | Roos (Rosanna) van 't Klooster | 4600312 | 7-7-2022

## Hi founder!

If you picked up this booklet, you probably have developed a promising product and you are excited about it. That's amazing. Maybe you've sold your first few, ten or hundred pieces to friends, family and people around you that are interested. These are good signs, but now you're facing the challenge of gaining your first 100, 1000 or 10,000 customers.

Don't you know where to start? Do you feel like there is no real coherency or direction in your decisions around your product? Are you doubting what is the best way to communicate your amazing product and idea? This can be overwhelming, believe me, I've been there. But hold on, I found the recipe.

I was lost too with my startup Maki. That is why I dedicated my graduation to it. I dove into existing theories and models, untangled and reorganized them, and created a recipe with 6 ingredients to bake your 'cake' and make your startup fly.

It all starts with creating the perfect 'batter' that will bake your perfect cake. The recipe contains all the ingredients to do this. Follow all the steps of the recipe and go for it!

Not all cakes are the same. To bake your perfect cake, you'll have to do some experiments: make some test bakes. This recipe and booklet will show you how.



## So, how to do it?

- 1** Open the recipe sheet inside this booklet and read all about the ingredients for your perfect 'cake'.
- 2** For each ingredient, follow the steps to experiment: your test bakes.
- 3** Use this booklet for additional tips, tricks and learnings for each experiment.

## About the recipe

You'll see right away that there is a distinction between strategy and tactics in this sheet. The strategy is the clear and strong foundation for all other business elements - why you do what you do and for whom you do it. Such foundation helps you to build consistency that will make customers trust you. Without, you risk doing things and running around like a headless chicken... That's not what we want, right?

Just like for any cake, you can follow the recipe from top to bottom to ensure the best results. The recipe sheet will guide your way.

## About the booklet

This booklet will give you loads of tips, for instance on how to interview your customers, how you develop a visual style, how you can best approach social media testing and how you can optimize social media advertisements to get the most out of your money. And much more.

Now... grab your recipe and go for it!

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# A. Deep dive interviews

Your potential customers are the basis of your startup. You want to create value for them and capture value in return (in the form of making sales). Therefore it is very important to understand them deeply. You probably have some idea who they are and what defines them, but letting go of your interpretation of them and really diving into their experiences is crucial for creating a valuable product, brand and overall business.

To do this, you can simply interview some of your first clients. Real fun to do: you will find a world of insights and inspiration, for sure! Even when you are sure you understand them well already, like (stubborn) me. But how do you do this most effectively?

First of all: the goal of these interviews is to find out their motivations and desires which your product can tap into. The best way to do this is to find out which 'jobs' your product or service does for them. In literature this is called a 'job to be done', because it is more than just a simple need. We will call them 'jobs' from now.

For example, curtains can fulfill a 'job' like 'making my room dark', or 'helping me sleep better', or 'have a productive day', or even 'feel good about myself in general'. So, people have 'jobs' on different levels and the goal of these interviews is to find the deepest, most interesting jobs for your business.

## Tips

- Try to really not steer the conversation but let the interviewees take the lead.
- Try really to detangle their situation. What they tell you at first is probably not insightful enough. Ask more specific questions to get answers that stretch beyond their 'standard' answer.
- It may seem off-topic, but hobbies and interests tell you a lot about the person, what he or she values and so why he or she chose your brand in the first place.
- My biggest learning: you may be tempted to agree with your interviewees and show this for instance by nodding, to make them feel comfortable and to create a friendly conversation, but that's not a good way to interview. Try, even when you yourself (think you) agree with them, to act surprised:
- 'Oh really? Why do you find that?' Then you separate yourself from the conversation, you steer less. You'll find better insights.
- Record the full conversations. Really do it! In the moment you filter out stuff subconsciously, but sometimes these are the most insightful elements. Therefore it's useful to be able to listen to the interview again.
- Right after every interview, I recommend you to make an overview of the most useful quotes. Please watch out! Although it might be tempting, postpone your interpretation. Try to not tie the dots already between interviewees.
- I'd say around 5-10 interviews do the job.

- You might in the interviews discover multiple 'jobs to be done' per interviewee. The order of importance for them is very interesting. You can discover this by asking questions around it, or just straight up ask them: 'Okay so I heard that you do this because of .. and ... Which of these is more important to you?'

## B. Interpreting interview answers

Interpreting what the interviewees told you seems easy, but in my experience really it is not. It is a delicate task. Here are some tips to prevent you from making the mistakes I made.

- Now brainstorm for every cluster what 'job to be done' might be behind the quotes.
- When you're done with this, you may find connections between them or topic overlaps. You may for example order them from most

### Tips

- From the interviews you probably have made a list of the most insightful quotes. Create short titles for them so you can see at a glance what they are about. NB: Do not tie the dots between quotes yet.
- After this, you can scan them easily to see which have a similar tone or subject.
- Now try to cluster them. You might end up with different versions of clusters, this is okay. You can later decide which version works best.
- In the end, you should feel like you've got a crisp, detangled overview of the underlying 'jobs' and motivations of the interviewees.

# C. Positioning traction test

Your segmentation interviews gave you insights in your customers' jobs'. Of course you can just choose one that feels good for your positioning, but it is extremely valuable to learn which of these jobs spark your target customers most. You can measure this by measuring traction (how much people engage with your brand as an indication of success potential) and conversions (the number of sales). The next two experiments show you which of these jobs is the best basis for your business.

Given that many target groups are on social media nowadays, chances are that you will want to reach out to your potential customers in this way. That's why social media tests are insightful tools to find out which 'job' works best for your positioning.

## Tips for preparing the ads

- The goal of this test is to find which 'job' attracts the most people. This may be different from the 'job' that came forward most prominently from the interviews. To test these motivations in the right way, try to focus on these ads by communicating the 'jobs' rather than your product (that's for later).
- The wording of the ads is the tricky part. You need to exaggerate your wording for each of the ads, to make the effect more extreme than might feel right. The different versions need to differ from each other maximally.

An example of the 10-minute grocery delivery company Gorillas: they didn't address the need "I want whatever I feel like having right away" but "I want A BEER, NOW!". It's exaggerated, almost a childish immature core need.

- To do this, you might need a creative brainstorm. How do you interpret the job to be done? Have you experienced this yourself? What does it entail? How did you feel when you experienced that? What worked surprisingly well for me, was to pretend I was a stubborn little girl: how would she express her feelings?

## Tips for making the positioning test ads

- Use videos, this results in more engagement than photos. You can simply use a stock video.
- Use the same video for all the ads if possible, just with different texts, otherwise you may be testing the effects of the visuals because people liked the different video's more/less, rather than your wording, which was the scope of this test.
- Use as little text as possible. Really condense it.
- Put the most important line in the video, so it's clear in a split second what your audience needs to see. You can put a second line (where you introduce your startup) in the description.

# D. Positioning conversion test

## Tips for running the ads

- Run them through Facebook Advertising, also for Instagram. In my experience running ads through Instagram allows for less optimization and gives incorrect analyses.
  - Put in around 20-25 euros per day per ad. Run them no longer than 2-3 days as the ad will get worse when you run it longer and this is enough for strong results.
  - Target on age, location and maybe interests if you discovered those during the interviews. I targeted Rotterdam +30km, Amsterdam +30km, Den Haag +30km and Utrecht +30km. The smaller you go, the less chance you'll get bot engagement.
  - Do not put on automatic adjustments, because then FB
- will skew your results and push your ads towards people who are similar to the ones who click the link. You want the ad to be pushed proportionally.
- Don't worry about people seeing multiple of the ads, on this scale that probably won't happen, or at least not often.
  - Next to the ad, I'd recommend linking a webpage where people can leave their email address (through a button in the ad). You'll need their mails for the next experiment. Plus, it's just an extra 'proof of interest'. Tips for this webpage:
    - This can be your normal website or an ad-specific page.
    - If you want to track this form (which people who signed up saw which ad), run the different ads 1 by 1. So after 2-3 days you run the next.

## Tips

- After receiving data of the previous experiment, you know which 'job' creates the most traction. But basing your positioning on this is risky, because it might be different from which 'job' drives most conversions (sales). The goal of this experiment is to find that out. Together the data provide a strong basis to choose one positioning.
- Use a tracker service to track who has read your emails. I used Emailoctopus but you can also use Mailchimp for example.
  - Send a test version to some friends to test if the tracker works and if it goes to their primary inbox.
  - Use a private domain email to send from, because a gmail domain might be filtered to the spam inbox. In my case, I sent it from roos@maki.nl.
- To do this, you basically just send an email campaign with your offer to all the people who signed up their email through the ads in the last test.

## E. Core message

- If it's sent to the spam inbox, try to verify the domain of the conversion-button (in my case maki.nl) through emailoctopus. For this I had to change the DNS records through the domain host (in my case mijndomein.nl). In my case, this took a couple of days to verify, but eventually it was verified and the mail didn't go to spam anymore.
- But it did go to the promotions tab, which was an improvement but not optimal. What solved this for me was to create a personal greeting: using their name. Now it went to the primary inbox (finally!).
- So after you're done with these two tests, you've successfully collected data on what 'job' can work best for your positioning - in other words, which sparks your customers most.

You have chosen a position for your startup in the market, great, this is a strong foundation. But now it's time to find the wording that fits this positioning: your core message. The core message should be no more than 1-2 sentences and really spark you and your customers. It connects the positioning to your product/service.

To find these lines, you can just brainstorm freely, but I chose to incorporate some other of the found 'jobs' in my brainstorm and found this very effective. All 'jobs' together are an amazing source of inspiration and by using those, you know for sure that your core message will connect your startup to the people you are targeting.

For example, for my sewing startup Maki the improved positioning was: 'We want people to experience creative freedom by engaging with Maki and using our products.'

And its new core message: *'Making makes you feel creative and free. Being able to make anything you want is a powerful feeling to have. You can do it, for sure. Maki will just be on your side in the process of getting there.'*

# F. Branding competitor analysis

Now it's time to create the look and feel that expresses all that your startup is and that will be appealing and convincing for your customers. Before creating your visual brand style, take a look at how competitors are expressing themselves in order to stand out from them. How I approached this:

I made a table with

1. What competitors offer (how this differs from what you do)
2. Their messaging (are they saying they are sustainable, community based, etc.)
3. Their personality traits/emotional attributes (how will one feel when encountering their brand) and
4. A screenshot of some of their visual elements.

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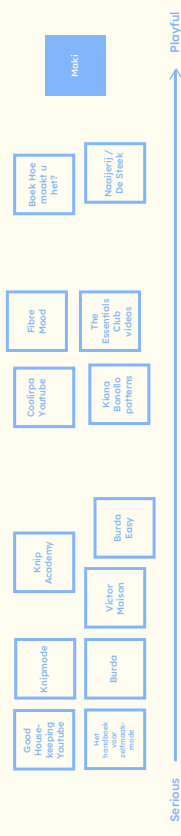
# G. Branding positioning axes

Your brand style should always be an expression of your positioning statement. You can get there in multiple ways, using different personality traits. You can create axes that plot these personality traits to see how these can help you to create your visual style that stands out from competition.

For example, Maki's positioning of creative freedom could be expressed using e.g. the traits cool, accessible, funky, open.

Think of the opposite and create a scale/axis. Plot the competition on these axes to see with which attribute you can best differentiate yourself from them. It then looks something like:

Choose some attributes that you think would express your positioning in a way that fits your brand.



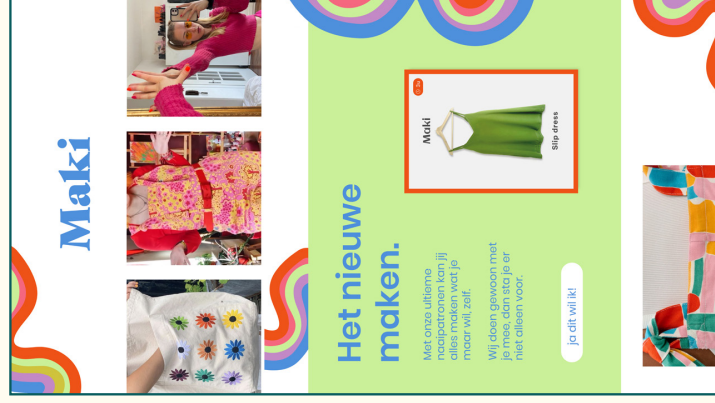
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## H. Creating visual brand styles

You now have set both your positioning statement and multiple potential personality traits. Now start making a few visual brand styles based on the different personality traits to see which one attracts most people.

### Tips for creating visual styles

- Per personality trait, you can search for inspiration on the internet, for example Pinterest. Choose colors, fonts and pictures that express the personality.
- Create a 'style card' that in one view shows the style in 'action'. In Maki's case, one of the style cards looked like:



### Tips for getting feedback

- I personally asked people through an Instagram Story if they could fill out a survey where I showed the 3 styles with after each the question what they thought of it. In the end I asked which one they preferred.
- You might feel vulnerable asking people to think with you but people are VERY eager to give their opinions and think with you. So I'd recommend just doing it. It's interesting to see what people really think of your startup anonymously. Don't forget: today's communication is all about interacting with your community!



# I. Content creation test

Chances are that you have done some promotion already in the form of advertising or social media posts. There is nothing wrong with an intuitive start, but if you want to truly reach your target market in an effective way, it works well to test beforehand to ensure the best results of your efforts and investments. Especially because there are endless possibilities and social media are evolving rapidly. You can easily fall in the pitfall of spending ad money without getting traction and conversions in return. So how do you make the most of this?

For this purpose, social media testing (again) is an extremely insightful tool to use, but it is a delicate job.

I tried multiple options and I learned the following (targeting Gen Z and Y with the main channels Instagram and TikTok):

- Maybe the biggest learning for me was that in the early-startup phase, people feel more empathy and inspiration when you are transparent about just being started. You don't have to pretend that you're an established company already. Be personal, authentic, show your face, ask for input, etc. Don't be shy! This is way more impactful for them than sharing for example 'inspiration pictures' or facts.

- If your target group is on Instagram and TikTok, short videos are the best way to communicate. A weak video can even be more powerful than your best picture.
- Make your content very very entertaining. Avoid anything that looks like a clean slick advertisement. Realism is everything nowadays. Be remarkable, interesting or even funny!
- Use storytelling as a tool. For example: show a problem and frustrations, then a solution.

For inspiration, you can view one of my first TikTok attempts: <https://www.tiktok.com/@makisewing/>

- If you decide to use TikTok, make your videos in TikTok and you can then upload them to other social media. Watch out: once you share your TikTok, you cannot change anything anymore later.

## J. Channels test

- Channels are evolving extremely fast, so staying up to date is a must. As a medium-experienced twenty-something myself, I learned the following things about modern social media in relation to promoting your startup:**
- Instagram is still the most used platform and useful for creating a brand image. Yet, its algorithm only shows your photos to people who already follow you, except for Reels and Ads.
  - This in contrast to TikTok, which algorithm is actually amazing for reaching new people. It pushes your posts to everyone who might be interested, also to people who do not follow you yet.
  - Also TikTok's algorithm is amazing for trying out content. Because people view many videos in a short period of time, TikTok can quickly show you the popularity of a video (if people stay to watch or tap next quickly). This shows you whether a specific content form works well for example using it as an ad. Because it is pushed to so many different people, you don't have to worry to bore people with playing around with storytelling for example. Even when your target group isn't (primarily) on TikTok, I'd recommend you to use it for content testing purposes. You can even do it under a different (made up) brand name.

An example: I shared a few TikToks out of curiosity and when I opened my phone the next day, two of them had 10K views and 10+ comments, and the two others only had around 400 views. These are amazing insights. I used the popular one as an Instagram Ad and got 160 new followers. This video had proven to be effective in telling our story.

- Instagram Reels are a great opportunity as this is the only form of Instagram posts that are shown to other people than your followers. In this way, I still get new followers from one nice Reel I posted weeks ago. Like TikToks, make them entertaining, this will increase popularity.

- Within Instagram, posts and stories are good for keeping your followers interested and loyal.
- Instagram Stories are a great tool to interact with your followers and ask for feedback directly. People love to think with you if you're open about what you don't know yet. Involve your community so it becomes a dialogue instead of a monologue.

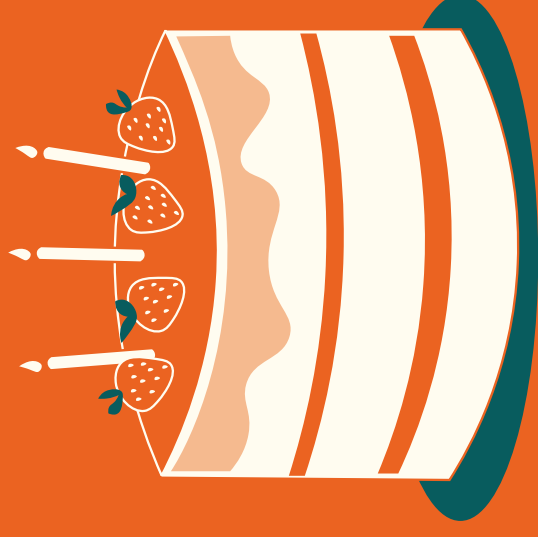
# J. Instagram Ads

Instagram Ads are, in my experience, the most effective tool to create traction. When you know a post or TikTok ran well, I recommend you to use it in Instagram Ads to push it to new people.

An example: I ran one Instagram Ad showing one of my TikToks (that ran best on that there) for two days and it got me 160+ followers!

Again, use tips for running ads from part C.

## Congratulations!



Your best ingredients are now all in one bowl and stirred into the perfect batter. All you need to do now is to bake your cake and make your startup fly. Go for it!