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FOREIGN CUSTOMER ACQUISITION FOR MAC HKB ÚJBUDA

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Työn keskipisteenä on verkkokyselynä toteutettu kysely joka tarjoaa dataa sekä näkökulmaa MAC:n paikallisista sekä ulkomaalaisista sidosryhmistä. Vastaavanlaista dataa ei aiemmin ole ollut olemassa yhteisöstä, joten tutkimus toimii myös pohjatyönä kehitykselle. MAC:n voi sanoa saavuttaneen vähintäänkin vankan statuksen unkarilaisessa jääkiekkoilussa ja mikäli organisaatio tahoo jatkaa kasvuaan, tällainen tutkimus on hyödyllinen välietappi jotta ymmärretään mikä on asiakashankinnassa toiminut ja millaista strategiaa olisi hyödyllistä laatia tulevaisuuteen.

Ulkomaalaisten segmenttiä ei ole aiemmin MAC:n toimissa juurikaan otettu huomioon ja voidaan väittää että aihe ei yleensääkään ole saanut juurikaan huomiota jääkiekko-organisaatioiden liiketoimissa NHL:lää lukuun ottamatta. Täten ulkomaalaisten segmentti omaa paljon lunastamatonta potentiaali ja onkin osa-alue jonka kautta voi saavuttaa kilpailullista etua.

Kyselytutkimus laadittiin Google Forms – työkalua käyttäen ja jaettiin toimeksiantajan sosiaalisen median kanavissa, Instagramissa sekä Facebookissa. Unkarin jääkiekkoliiton sekä MAC:n pitkäaikaisia vaikuttajia haastateltiin jotta saavutettaisiin laajempi käsitys organisaation ympäristöstä.

Työn tulisi tarjota MAC:lle edellytykset laskea markkinointikustannuksia ja tavoittaa ulkomaalaisia paremmin muun muassa ohjaamalla ristipromootio-ratkaisuja juurikin ulkomaalaisten suosimille alustoille.

Asiasanat: asiakashankinta, ulkomaalais-segmentti, kyselytutkimus

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ABSTRACT

By means of an online research form this work will provide data and insight from MAC's stakeholders, both local and foreign individuals in the community, like never before and ,thus, serve as sort of groundwork for development. Since MAC has already established, as some would state; rather robust status in Hungarian hockey and aims to expand, such a research as this is essential waypoint to learn what has been successful and whereto aim focus when creating strategy for the future.

The foreign segment is something which has not been taken into consideration earlier in MAC's operations and one could plausibly state that it has neither gained that much recognition in hockey business in general, apart from the NHL. Therefore foreign segment possesses unredeemed potential and it sure is a sector wherefrom a competitive advantage can be gained.

The survey form was made via Google Forms and it was shared through mandator's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram). To gain valuable standpoint regarding MAC's overall circumstances, interviews with two long-term members of the organization were done as well as discussions with personnel in the Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation.

After this study MAC should have enough requirements to decrease its marketing costs and attract more foreigners by concentrating e.g. on cross-promotion and using it precisely in those channels which appear to be the most popular ones among foreign fans.

Keywords: customer acquisition, foreign segment, questionnaire

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1 INTRODUCTION

The choice of topic for this study was heavily influenced by personal experiences and thoughts, as well as discussions with other parties in this field both amplified the idea about covering customer acquisition, especially regarding foreigners. Also, the lack of data from stakeholders was a driving force for this survey. Marketing operations and especially proper customer acquisition aimed directly towards the foreign segment is a matter which hasn't been capitalized or even considered that much in hockey business apart from the NHL. One can understand and verify that by simply scrolling through European club teams' marketing content, which apart from few exceptions, is only in their native language. In this study, the term *foreigner* refers to all non-Hungarian individuals among MAC's stakeholders, no matter if inhabited in Hungary or not.

The purpose of this work is to carry out a survey which will provide data from MAC's stakeholders. The sample groups will be divided in two segments: foreign and local. MAC's stakeholders in this study were fractioned into two segments, local and foreign – based on the nationality, in other words Hungarians and non-Hungarians. The data gained from these segments will be examined in order to learn which ways have been proved efficient in the past when reaching out for people. Also, this study aimed to define the usage of social media applications and other services were divergent between the two segment. This study concentrates on foreign segment and uses locals rather as a point of comparison.

The following questions are considered the most important in this thesis:

- What are the main social platforms used by foreigners?
- What are the main services used by foreigners when in Budapest?
- Does the behaviour of locals and foreigners differ substantially from each other?

In the last question the term *substantial* refers to the degree to which if it is reasonable and justifiable to target foreigners with divergent methods based on received data – and if so, how?

The majority of the funds for MAC comes from the owners and the Hungarian government. In order to achieve more solid financial stability and reliability,

multiple income sources is something that should be aimed at. One source which have not been seized yet is the foreign segment.

2 MAC HKB UJBUDA

MAC HKB Ujbuda, previously MAC Budapest (2015-2018) and MAC Ujbuda (2018-2020), is a professional ice hockey team located in Budapest, Hungary. The team's roots reach as far back as 1963 when the Központi Sportiska (Central Sports School) added ice hockey into its program. Eventually, it led to the creation of Népstadion Szabadidő Egyesület which merged in 1993 with Magyar Athletikai Club. In 1988, MAC Népstadion hockey team was brought to life. (MAC HKB Ujbuda)

The MAC pro-team played the three first years in the Erste Liga (previously MOL Liga) making it to the finals each year and won the championship in 2018. For two years following the championship the team entered and participated in Slovakian Extraliga. (Eliteprospects.com)

Due the COVID-19 outbreak the MAC Ujbuda and KMH Budapest organizations were merged and used KMH's license for participation in the Erste Liga season 20-21. (Huikuri, S. 2020.)

2.1 ENVIRONMENT

There are three rival hockey clubs in Budapest, Ferencvárosi TC, Opten Vasas HC and UTE, who all participate in the Erste Liga. MAC's home arena, Tüskecsarnok (which served also as Ferencvárosi TC's home arena during 2020/2021 season) has the most central location compared to its local rivals. The capacity for hockey events in Tüskecsarnok is 2540. (Eurohockey.com).

The International Ice Hockey Federation has World Ranking tool to depict the long-term quality of countries' national programs. In the 2020 ranking, Hungary holt the 21st place among 54 ranked countries. (IIHF, 2020.) This provides a standpoint on Hungarian ice hockey on global scale.

The popularity of ice hockey in Hungary is in general rather low compared to sports as soccer, handball and water polo. The average attendance in Erste

Liga during season 2019/2020 was 675, including the three Romanian teams. The average among the Hungarian teams during that season was only 450. However, as was mentioned above, MAC was playing in the Slovakian Tip-sport Extraliga at time, where the average attendance for the Hungarian teams (MAC and DVTK Jegesmedvék) was 912. In the 2019/2020 season, MAC home games reached twice the attendance of 1,100, both against DVTK Jegesmedvék. The lowest recorded attendance in that season was 298, against HK Dukla Michalovce. (Ice Hockey Attendance Stats).

For comparison, the Hungarian national football league's (OTP Bank Liga) average attendance was 3,155 in the 2019/2020 season. Ferencvárosi TC football team had the highest average of 9,175 . (Transfermarkt.com).

In European hockey teams' attendance ranking Hungarian teams stay far from the top. In the 2019/2020 hockey season, Swiss SC Bern reached the highest attendance, 16,237 on average. Sary-Arka Karaganda from Kazakstan holds the 100th and last place on that list, yet reaching 3,760 on average. (Merk, M. 2020. IIHF.)

3 SURVEY

The survey form used in this study was built by online-based Google Forms. After running two test rounds, the final form was shared through commissioner's social media channels, Facebook and Instagram. The questions were almost the same for both segments, with the exception that the locals were asked about the frequency of attendance at MAC's home games on average.

The number of answers stood at 116 when the form was closed after being available for circa 2 weeks. In total 94 of the responses were from locals and the rest, 22, from the foreigners. Even though this is considered relatively good turnout for this study, compared to the number of people MAC reaches through its social media, it turned out to be quite a low percentage who fulfilled the form. This just strengthens the conclusion made earlier, that the activity of followers is something which should also be taken into consideration in the future.

The purpose was to learn what social media channels and other services local and foreign stakeholders use in their daily lives, so that in the future MAC could use those channels more efficiently to promote their brand. The survey participants were also asked how they first heard about the brand and how they keep up with news and updates. This provided valuable information and supported the choice of research.

3.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative method is used to designate a phenomenon through data that can be gimmicked into statistics to measure numerous variables, such as behavior and attitudes. The aim is to generalize conclusions drawn from statistics and uncover patterns. The idea of measurable reality is a necessary presumption for quantitative study. (Hackett, 2018, 26.)

Hackett (2018, 2-7) discusses the essential status of quantitative research when examining consumers from psychological point of view. It allows the researcher(s) to study results in statistical means even though one should acknowledge this method lacks more delicate aspects, such as emotions. Keeping this in mind, the survey form used in this study included a box at the end where respondents were allowed to share any thoughts they might have regarding the questions – or any other matters the commissioner deals with.

There are various methods for quantitative data collection for example numerous survey forms to be carried out online or printed out and handed over, or targeted at selected groups (Hackett, 2018, 26.). Such methods make analyzing the results more convenient and since the aim in this study is to gain relatively large sampling it was obvious decision to use exactly a questionnaire.

Quantitative research was proved to be a useful to examine the differences between the two segments. Rather than harshly comparing the segments only between each other, should be examined if the locals' experiences were in line with those of the foreigners and what could be adapted from locals' experiences when targeting operations at foreigners.

3.2 SEGMENTATION

The core idea of segmentation is to categorize a market into different groups whose members mirror each other more than members from other groups. Dividing these groups can be based on demographic, geographic or social factors, for example. (Lyhne, K. & Riley, C. 2004, 273).

When a product or service is marketed for different cultures, the marketer inevitably faces a question if one should focus on localized or globally standardized versions of its offerings (Peñaloza, Toulouse & Visconti. 2020, 54).

One disadvantage for various sport marketers is that they have not properly identified their consumers and their media behavior (Lyhne, K. & Riley, C. 2004, 4; Burnett et al., 1993.). Dividing a mass market into separate segments and targeting those segments with individual versions of one's offerings is a pivotal principle of marketing theory. This often provides ampler comprehension regarding users' mind and allows marketers better to match demand. (Lyhne, K. & Riley, C. 2004, 271.)

4 CUSTOMER ACQUISITION

Customer acquisition refers to the functions which bring in new customers and convinced them to buy products or services (Ehrlich, 2019). Policella (2020) discusses the importance of customer loyalty and the conclusive goal of the whole customer acquisition process which, according to Decker (2020), is creating a standardized and sustainable strategy that can grow up among the evolution of trends.

According to Harper (2020), the complexity for various businesses is remaining dependent on outdated and expensive customer acquisition channels which prevents businesses from reaching their peak-profitability and thus decreases the impact they could have in their field.

Despite how magnificent the customer experience might already be or how active current customers are, one should never stop marketing to new customers. A key factor in order to grow is adding new customers to the brand community (Policella, 2020).

MAC does not have a firm marketing budget thus it is infeasible to calculate customer acquisition costs. Nonetheless, to enlarge the foreign customer base but meanwhile keep expenses low, social media and cross-promotion will be examined more precisely later in this work. By seizing those marketing ways and linking them with each other already existing partnerships and practise can be utilized to achieve larger brand awareness and community with lower investments and in best case – maybe even with less work.

“Work smarter, not harder”

Morgenstern, A. circ. 1930. (Physical Solutions).

According to Bukstein and Harrison (2016) there are two ways to increase purchase power of fans, expand the fanbase and learn more from the current fans. The best strategy is a hybrid of those two.

4.1 BRAND COMMUNITY

Brand community is a notable form of relationship between consumers and brand. The community is composed from brand's customers who share interests and gather together in social group. The community is not bound geographically, it is based on social relationships between the consumers. Crucial building blocks for such a community is the sense of emotional participation among users and strong reputation of the brand (Humphrey, Jr., Laverie, D. & Rinaldo, S. 2015, 2-6.).

The distinguishing factor between brand's community members and average consumers is the connections the community members' share with each other plus the connection with the brand and its evolution. To achieve loyal brand community, the brand has to provide versatile possibilities of identification and offer possibilities to construct relationships

between other customers. Brands who wish to create appealing marketing strategy for certain culture, have to first study e.g. beliefs, ideology and rituals that segment has. In sports world there are numerous factors that connect fans to their favorite team. For instance residence, ideology about the game and many even adhere behavioral manners like keeping up with the scores during games – no matter where (Peñaloza, Touluse & Visconti. 2020, 190-201).

The goal should be to get foreign and local segments in touch with each other, offer them opportunities to connect for example via MAC's social media channels so that stronger and more homogenous community could be built around the brand. Hence it is important to study the integrative elements the two segments share in order to bring them together.

Individuals without proper knowledge of Hungarian language for example most probably have difficulties to take part in discussion e.g. in MAC's Facebook and that might cause such an individual feel left behind and detached from the brand community. Especially since there are currently no platform for brand community where non-Hungarian conversation is uphold.

4.2 ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVATING STAKEHOLDERS

Engagement refers to stakeholders' transformation from viewers to participants. Evidently it signifies that an individual is willing to sacrifice and dedicate time and energy to you, in a social sense (Cothrel, J., & Evans, D. 2014.).

Mahoney & Tang (2016) state that the ultimate goal in the process of transforming audiences into users is to make one's brand a part of people's daily life.

According to Charlesworth (2017) people's participation in social media is driven by several attributions. However one of the most common reasons is simply people's desire to socialize. Charlesworth also introduces Nielsen's study in 2006 which suggest that participation follows more or less the follow-

ing rule where 90 percent are so-called lurkers who observe but won't contribute, 9 percent contributes occasionally and the remaining one percent is the most active and tiniest fragment, which participates a lot. On some platforms the ratio for participation is even more diminutive.

5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Since social media has become the most vibrant and used way of communication for people in our time, it is advisable to any business to master that channel (Gordon, I. 2013, 108).

Social media marketing, also known as digital marketing, refers to the use of social media websites and networks to market deliverables or services (Kenton, 2018). Also according to Kenton, thanks to the detailed data provided by various networks, audience in social media can be segmented better than in traditional marketing channels, thus, businesses are one step ahead on focusing their resources to the exact audience(s) they desire to target. Among that social media campaigns have advantage and vast possibilities to appeal to broad audience at once.

People use social networks primarily to connect and learn from people. To accomplish a working social media strategy, a business has to fit itself into sociable process and help people to fulfill that need (Butow, Herman etc. 2020, 2a).

Social media is basically the only way to keep in touch with people abroad, so the functions with foreign segment should primarily be aimed into social media. Thanks to various broadcasting parties, games - which might be the single most important occurrences in hockey community, can be seen both live and rerun basically anywhere as long as there is a working internet connection. All in all, due perpetually nascent social media and technology one is able to provide most of the goods and services via internet – just without the physical contact.

Especially while the world is still being affected by COVID-19, it's not only advisable but in some cases mandatory to find alternative solutions for gatherings like hockey games, as example. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2020), COVID-19 has changed online behavior for good, particularly online shopping and hastened the shift towards digital world. The UNCTAD research *COVID-19 and E-commerce* (2020) had samplings from 9 nations and points out that since the outbreak of the virus, digital entertainment category holds the 2nd place on popularity of product categories, cosmetics & personal care just slightly bypassing it.

The same research also suggest that partnerships are key factor for businesses to achieve their digital potential. Partnership topic will be discussed later in both *cross-promotion* and *conclusions* chapters.

5.1 MAC'S PRESENCE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

MAC currently has presence on two social media channels, Instagram and Facebook. Facebook holds exclusive top-position in MAC's social media and currently (on 21st of January 2021) has 9861 followers, ranking it the 3rd most popular Facebook page among Erste Liga teams – and most popular from Hungarian teams. (Figure 1.) It has established a prominent status as the prime-communication channel. It is aimed towards Hungarians and posts are without exception in Hungarian.

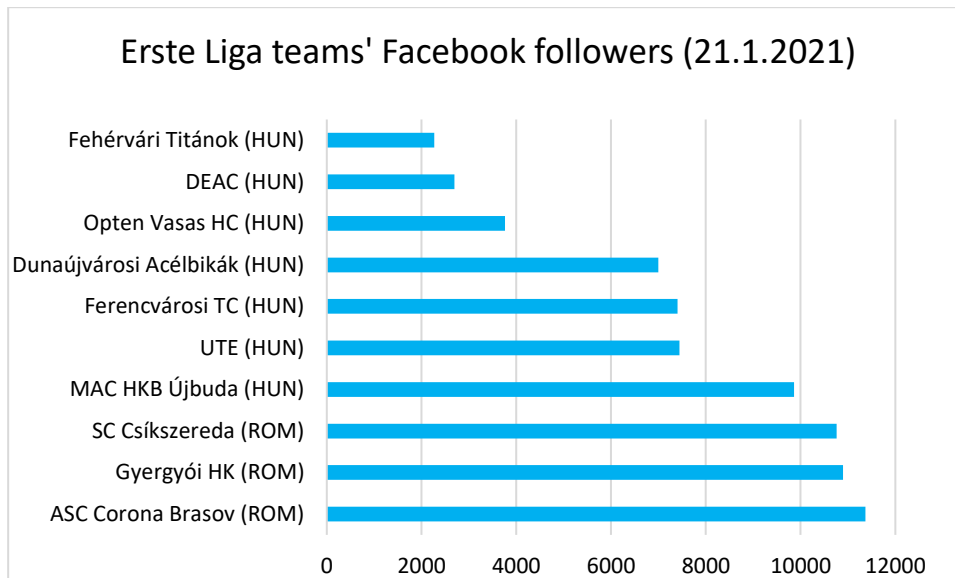


Figure 1. Erste Liga team's Facebook followers (21.1.2021).

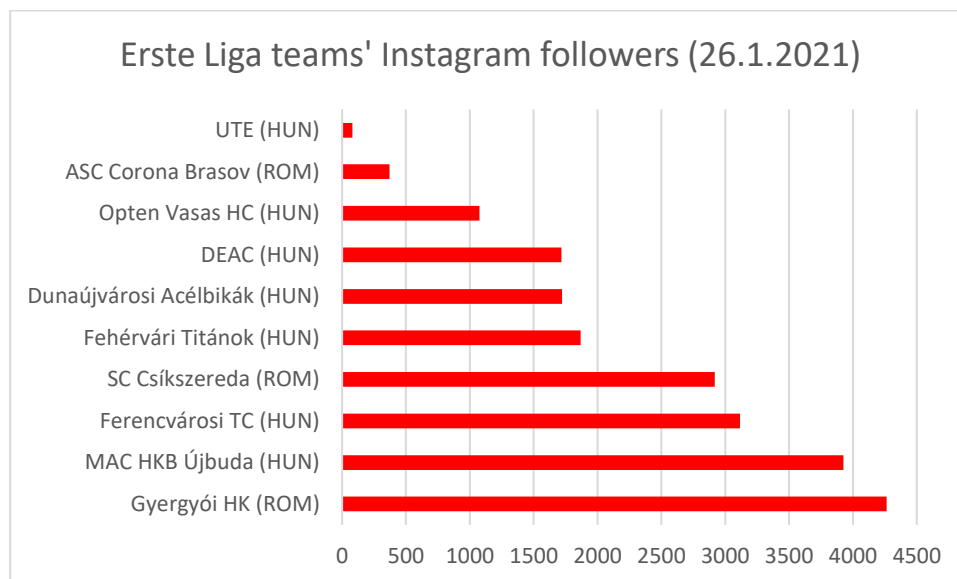


Figure 2. Erste Liga teams' Instagram followers (26.1.2021).

Even though MAC doesn't have as big follower quantum on Instagram as on Facebook, it holds quite uncluttered 1st spot among Hungarian teams and only Gyergyoi HK from Transylvanian region bypasses MAC's popularity on Instagram. (Figure 2).

According to MAC's Instagram account (on 26th of January 2021) during the last 30 days 70,9% of the audience is from Hungary, wherefrom 33,6% located in Budapest. Romania comes second with 7,9% and Slovakia as third,

overtaking 7,1%. Other countries as UK and Canada are far behind, attaining just 2% tops.

Within similar time span 38% of audience fit in age group between 25 and 34 years. Users aged between 18 and 24 years old come second, holding up slice of 28,7%. During that time 51,9% has been identified as male and rest, 48,1% as female. Based on the survey the ratio between genders among the foreigners was more divergent, males filling up 77,3%.

6 CROSS-PROMOTION

Cross-promotion is a form of a marketing partnership in which two (or more) companies promote one another or they do joint marketing activities that benefit them both (Siewierska 2020.).

Cross-promotion can be high-yielding and convenient way to advertise goods. During a cross-promotion collaboration parties exchange resources and knowledge between each other to help build the audience for example by mentioning and introducing each other on social media channels. The ultimate goal is to establish greater brand awareness (Sendpulse, 2021.).

According to Nichols (2018) Partnerize-research points out how partnerships are seen as the main path for growth by businesses. 54% of the respondents reported that over 20% of their total company revenue is result from partnerships. The most frequent number of partners for a brand was between 50 and 99.

Wiley & Tang (2016, 154) discuss the collaborative nature of the Internet and how it should be used as a forum for like-minded people to connect rather than as a platform to broadcast one's message, per Halligan & Shah (2009).

Collaborative activities are necessary to achieve marketing and business goals and it is a path which will lead into social business brand (Cothrel, J., & Evans, D. 2014.).

7 RESULTS

The survey was able to provide reliable data and answers to the main questions presented for this study. Even if the study can be considered as reliable because of strictly composed question patterns, one should acknowledge that trends and for example popularity of social media applications varies a lot and in two years can be totally different. Same applies to the services since e.g. the nature of shopping is transmitting more and more online.

However the elements these segments value the most can be expected to be more permanent, especially when all of them are not physical but immaterial. Therefore the marketing strategy should be based on those elements, so that practical execution can be adapted easily and modified to different and new marketing channels, without changing the salient marketing message.

7.1 SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

What are the main social media platforms used by foreigners? To answer the first main question set for this study: Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter. Figure 3 reflects the differences and distribution in locals' and foreigners most used social media applications.

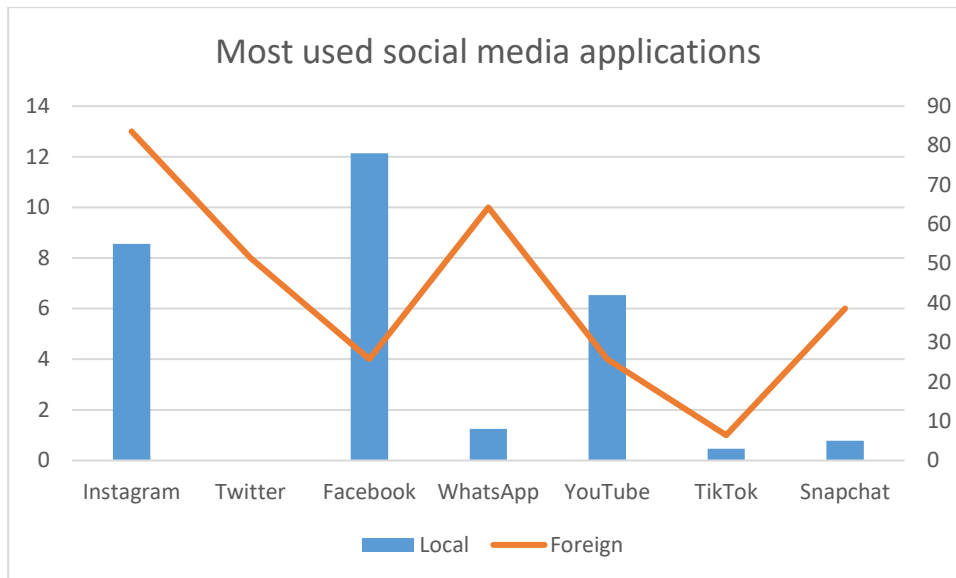


Figure 3. Most-used social media applications.

Even though foreign sampling was notably more narrow, one can still look at the dispersion between the answers and draw somewhat reliable conclusions from that. No foreigner marked Twitter as their primarily used apps, for example. Also the locals' usage of WhatsApp (8), TikTok (3) and Snapchat (5) all share less than 10 votes which is rather diminutive. According to Omnicore (2021) 41% of TikTok's users are aged between 16 and 24. Majority of Snapchat's users, 69%, for its part are aged between 13 and 17. (Chen, J., 2020). Over 50 years old group possesses the greatest percentage, 38,5, in local stakeholders (Figure 4.) and this could partly explain the barrage to Facebook among locals and the minor popularity of applications preferred by youth.

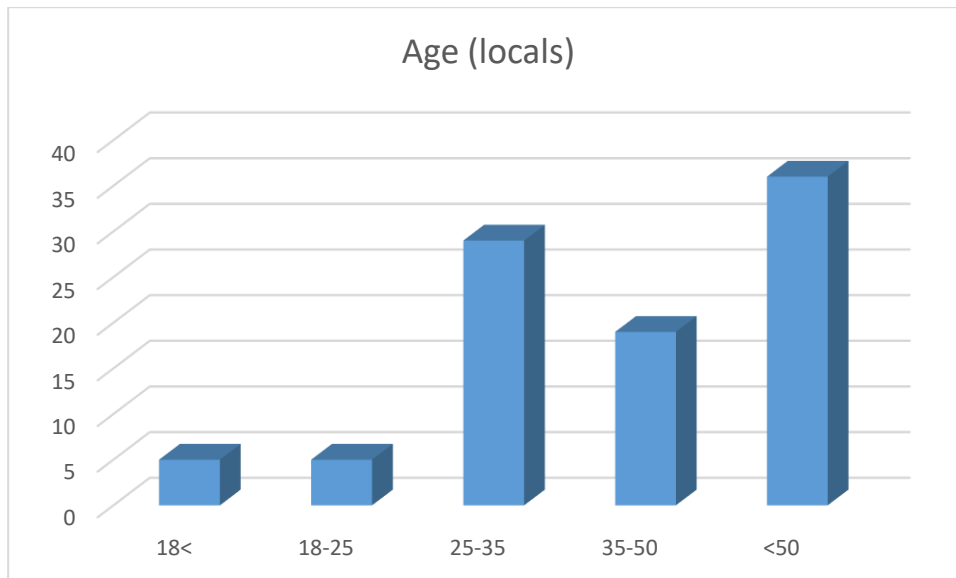


Figure 4. Locals' age groups.

63,6 % of foreign sampling is aged between 18 and 25. Altogether it seems that younger age groups are using more wide range of apps in social media. Figure 5 depicts how the Facebook truly is preferred way to stay updated and in touch with MAC among locals.

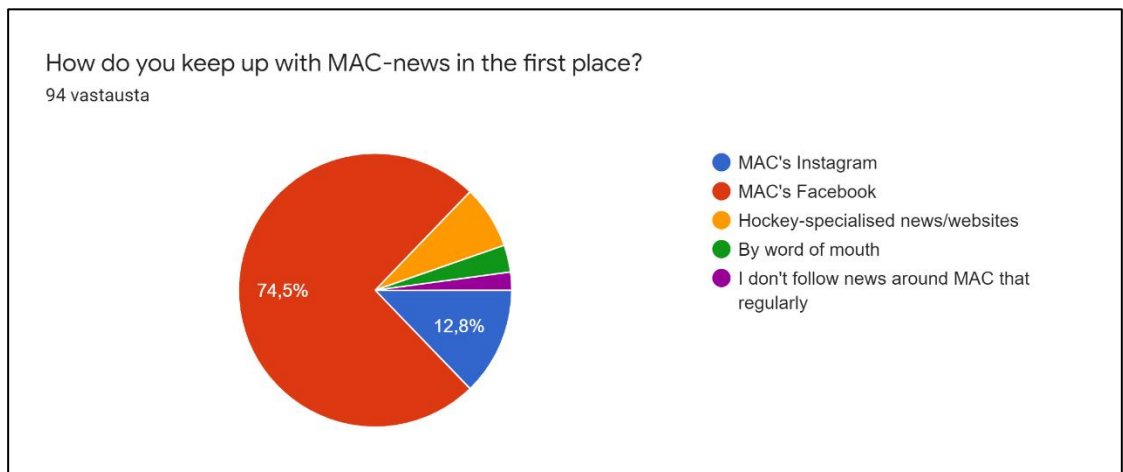


Figure 5. Locals' preferred news channels.

The foreigners however appreciate Instagram as the prime communication channel but value MAC's Facebook-site to second lowest as news / communication channel, just slightly bypassing hockey-specified news sites. Should be noted that 22,7 percentage of the foreigners don't follow news regarding MAC too often in their daily lives. (Figure 6.) This outcome can be consequence of various reasons and this phenomenon could use more proper examination than this study affords. However, media coverage for example doesn't cross

Hungarian borders too often. And when it does, it often reaches people only via niche market – through Slovakian or Romanian hockey medias in most cases.

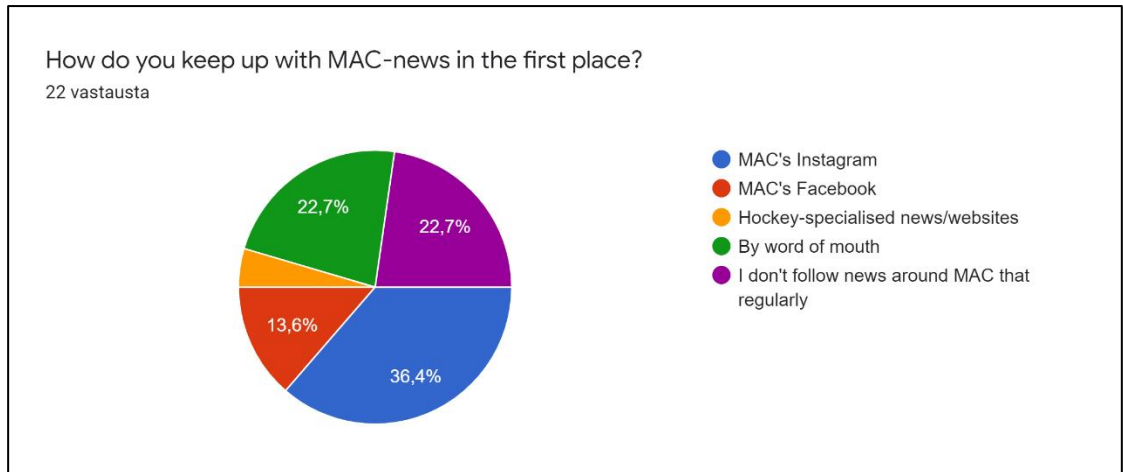


Figure 6. News channels used by foreigners.

Where Facebook seems to play an important role among locals both in general and related to MAC, unlike with foreign segment – both segments share quite high utilization on Instagram.

Both segments were asked for which channels they would wish the most content in future. As Figure 7 portrays, foreigners' desire for Twitter-content whereas locals show no signs of decreasing interest towards Facebook.

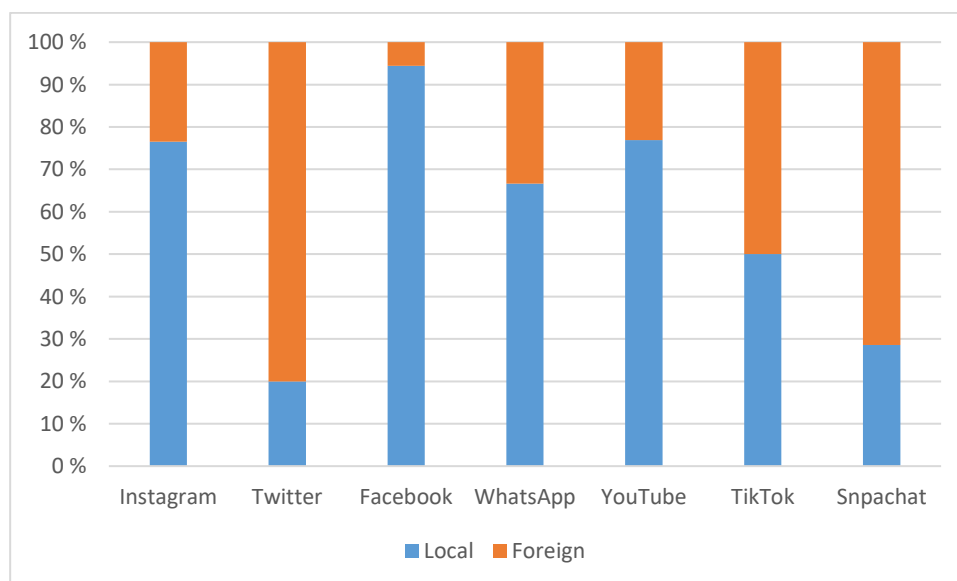


Figure 7. Segments' desire for content.

7.2 SERVICES

“What are the main services used by foreigners when in Budapest?” was the second main question this study was aimed to provide an answer for. As discussed earlier, cross-promotion can be efficient marketing strategy and not only online. It can not only decrease marketing costs by utilizing partners’ media coverage, infrastructure, professionalism or customer base but also strengthen the brand community by offering new services for its members. Being able to offer benefits for belonging in such a community obviously increases community’s social value.

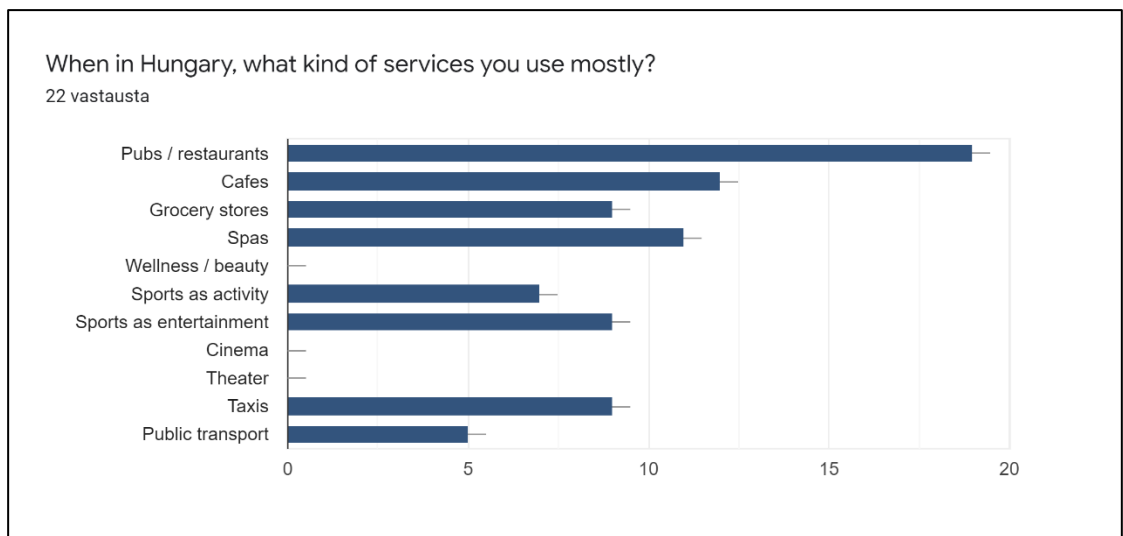


Figure 8. Services preferred by foreigners when in Hungary.

Figure 8 shows the nature of services foreigners prefer while located in Hungary. Pubs and restaurants are clearly in charge of this diagram by reaching 86,4% popularity. It is in line with locals’ predilections as they placed pubs and restaurants for the shared 1st spot with grocery stores and sports as activity, when asked about their daily habits and consumption.

7.3 FIRST TOUCH

77,3% of the foreigners had their first touch with MAC-brand through family or friends. It’s in line with locals’ experiences, where 46,8% had similar first encounter. Over 20% of locals first became in touch with the brand through media, unlike the foreigners – none of them had the first encounter with the brand

via media, as a note worth mentioning. Based on the data one could state that hearsay has been the most efficient and powerful way to expand brand awareness.

18,2% of the foreigners have some sort of background from ice hockey (player, staff or similar) and became familiar with MAC that way. The percentage is quite descriptive among entire community since 18,1% of local stakeholders also have background from the game. Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation has been the third most active path leading to encounters with foreigners.

7.4 MEANINGFUL ELEMENTS

The foreigners approved social media content as the most essential element around MAC's brand. For locals game events are the most fundamental factor around the brand. Due the importance of game events locals also value facilities (home arena, stands etc.) remarkably high. Foreign segment also ranked games in top five.

Both segments seem to appreciate chiefly same elements. Logo holds extremely dear stature and it gathers over 40% of votes from both segments. Other essential elements the segments appraise are the communications, fan products and sense of community. Quite surprisingly neither segment values success of the team in their top five, it only reaches around 20%. This can be seen as somewhat unexpected since the community is built around sport which is score-orientated. Success obviously defines and affects all operations run in the organization both business and sport-wise, for example success in playoffs increases the ticket sales since there are more home games.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Does the behaviour of locals and foreigners differ substantially from each other? To answer the third and last main question of this study: yes. Regardless the unitive factors the two segments share, foreigners' social media usage and behaviour indicates that it is at least desirable to compose a distinct customer acquisition plan for that segment. Based on social media usage sta-

tistics, both locals and foreigners seem to spend time mostly on different platforms which – if not strictly prevent, at least decreases the chances to build relationships beyond segments, which in turn creates less homogenous brand community thus harming the brand.

Since word of mouth within the brand community has been proven efficient, consumers should be approached with service/product solutions that can be experienced together and easily shared. The shared experiences shall be emphasized which goes hand in hand with the idea of creating more solid brand community, as one of the key factors for that is relationship between consumers, as discussed earlier. Thus additional marketing costs could be decreased if the consumers are almost forced to reach out for people themselves, doing the marketer's job.

The study was able to provide answer for all the survey questions and also compiled valuable data for MAC regarding its stakeholders. The data can be seized for marketing operations. Could be beneficial to execute a sequel for this survey at least once in three years to keep track on community's social media behavior. The work could serve as base for further examinations concentrating on the activity of community members and empowering it, as example.

Based on this study, MAC should have more adequate qualifications to compose marketing strategy for foreign, as well as local segments in the future.

9 DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

The absence of strictly specified marketing costs inside the organization is problematic and makes it difficult to compose any sort of calculation regarding the financial benefit this survey could provide. That being said, a development idea for the future is to keep track of all the marketing costs and also follow the stream of fans and the expansion of the fanbase. As a hindsight, it would have been more useful to examine those topics before jumping into this one. Therefore one could argue that rather than financial benefit this survey provided first and foremost guidance whereto aim when targeting especially foreigners. That could save time and redundant workload. Even though exact

sums can't be pointed out, when utilized properly, the survey results can be used to decrease expenses.

As discussed, the cost-efficiency of cross-promotion solutions is the pivotal motive when considering different marketing operations. The key is to find proper partners for cross-promotion solutions. Obviously it requires strong business and soft skills to find and attract suitable partners. However, in optimal scenario the only expenses the organization should cover is the labor cost. Partner for its part should cover all the other costs and in return get visibility and coverage through MAC. Thanks to MAC's profound status and identified level of professionalism on its field, also immaterial benefits like consultancy could be offered for the partners. Assumably such would increase the brand's value and just feed other companies' interest towards MAC.

For illustration during 2019/2020 season MAC carried out two video projects with local businesses. MAC took care of the whole process of contemplation; script and launching the projects on its Instagram and in return the partner businesses covered the costs of filming and editing. A note worth mentioning: one post from those projects is still the 9th most viewed post on MAC's Instagram. Other project even led to more extensive partnership which included cross-promotion also in game events until the end of the season.

Ergo such a project has somewhat proven potential and similar schemes, just in larger scale could be advantageous in the future also for foreign customer acquisition. It provides both entertaining and informative content at the same time for the stakeholders but can be also lucrative for new customers.

Currently MAC communicates about daily operations only in Hungarian. For future it would be beneficial to allocate communications to broader audience. Facebook – which has been functional could keep its role as prime communication channel for Hungarian speaking audience whereas Twitter could be tamed as an English information channel. Instagram for its part would stay and even strengthen its role as linking platform between the segments.

To emphasize the importance of brand community, the stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in discussion and transactions on various platforms. In a nutshell: news channels would be separate on the ground of language but engaging activity would be routed on a platform where members of both segments would meet and get together, e.g. Instagram.

If the organization would like to launch a new account for example on Twitter to reach the foreigners better, one should offer certain content or information exclusively and only through that channel. It would generate more traffic into that channel if e.g. line-ups for the games would be published only on Twitter.

Obviously well-written news releases work as marketing material alone for example in case of informing about player signings. However, the content in social media should not only be informative but also entertaining. In addition to briefing would be advisable to create entertaining content for example on YouTube, which is quite popular among MAC's stakeholders and both segments desired content for that platform. Obviously such a content requires resources but those can be tackled to minimum via cross-promotion and partnerships where businesses could benefit from co-operation for example through social media coverage on MAC's channels and advertisement opportunities in game events.

To gain more physical visibility in city scene and appeal to foreigners MAC should target pubs and restaurants and negotiate about cross-promotion opportunities. Since public advertisements and banners are rather expensive and ecologically dubious, cross-promotion solutions could solve the financial issue by utilizing partner-restaurant's presence in city scene.

MAC's personnel is rather thin compared to its rivals and currently there are no individual marketing manager, for example. A individual's widespread job description hampers time management and simply steals time from marketing operations. To improve the situation local universities and students could be contacted and offer them a vast internship opportunities on marketing and analytic fields.

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10 ATTACHMENTS

10.1 Attachment 1. Survey form

Research

Research to find out MAC's stakeholders' habits and their experiences with the brand. A part of Joonas Kuutsa's thesis. The answers will be used for MAC's development.

E-mail address*

I wish to participate in the lottery:*

Yes

No

Are you Hungarian?*

Yes

No

FOREIGN

Do you live in Hungary?*

Yes

No

Gender?*

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

How old are you?*

18<

18-25

25-35

35-50

<50

When in Hungary, what kind of services you use mostly? (Tag at least 3 but not more than 5!)*

Pubs / restaurants

Cafes

- Grocery stores
- Spas
- Wellness / beauty
- Sports as activity
- Sports as entertainment
- Cinema
- Theater
- Taxis
- Public transport

What are your 2 most-used social media applications from the followings? (Tag only 2!)*

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Snapchat

Do you follow MAC on any social media platform?*

- Yes
- No

How do you keep up with MAC-news in the first place?*

- MAC's Instagram
- MAC's Facebook
- Hockey-specialized news/websites
- By word of mouth
- I don't follow news around MAC that regularly

For which social media platforms you would wish the most MAC-content in the future? (Tag max. 2 !)*

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- TikTok

Snapchat

What are the most essential elements in your opinion when thinking about MAC-brand? (Please tag 3!)*

Logo

Social media content

Fan products

Facilities (e.g. Tüskecsarnok's stands)

Locality

Sense of community

Communication

Game events

Success

Certain individual player(s)

How did you become familiar with MAC-brand for the first time? Through:*

Media

Family / friends

Employer

Background from the game (e.g. playing for / against the team in juniors)

Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation

LOCAL

Gender?*

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

How old are you?*

18<

18-25

25-35

35-50

<50

How many MAC's home games you visit per season on average?*

1-5

6-10

More than 10

I don't attend the games regularly

What kind of services from the followings you use most in your daily life? (Tag at least 3 but not more than 5!)*

- Pubs / restaurants
- Cafes
- Grocery stores
- Spas
- Wellness / beauty
- Sports as activity
- Sports as entertainment
- Cinema
- Theater
- Taxis
- Public transport

What are your 2 most-used social media applications from the followings? (Tag only 2!)*

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Snapchat

Do you follow MAC on any social media platform?*

- Yes
- No

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- Instagram
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- TikTok
- Snapchat

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- Logo
- Social media content
- Fan products
- Facilities (e.g. Tüskecsarnok's stands)
- Locality
- Sense of community
- Communication
- Game events
- Success
- Certain individual player(s)

How did you become familiar with MAC-brand for the first time? Through:*

- Media
- Family / friends
- Employer
- Background from the game (e.g. playing for / against the team in juniors)
- Hungarian Ice Hockey Federation

EXTRA

Thank you for your answer, we do appreciate it. If you have any feedback or thoughts you would like to share, do it into the box below:
