



Business Model: FocusHome

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The purpose of this thesis project was to determine how a productivity mobile application could achieve sustainable growth and profitability within the competitive mobile app market. The ultimate objective of the thesis was to create a business model based on these findings.

The theoretical framework for the thesis reviews concepts such as gamification, service design and the business model canvas. The method of research was literature research, with books, articles, and survey data used as research material.

As a result of the literature research, it was possible to identify a gap in the productivity application market. Furthermore, a target audience was identified, and a business model created that would meet that audience's needs. Women download more productivity apps than men but tend to use them for a shorter period. This may be due to there not being enough incentive for continuous usage. Within the past few years there has also been a significant growth in the popularity of a game genre referred to as cozy games. This genre is especially popular with female players. This led the authors to believe that a productivity application created in the form of a gamified simulation game aimed at women aged 16 to 25 could have the potential to occupy the gap in the market.

According to the analysis of the research and financial predictions based on it, the authors believe that this business model could be profitable and achieve sustainable growth.

As a result of this business model, an application could be developed. This would require a comprehensive business plan, an investment, and a partnership with a professional developing firm.

Keywords: productivity, mobile application, gamification, service design, business model

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1 Introduction

Mobile applications have become a natural part of a modern lifestyle. From social media to productivity tools, there are applications to satisfy every need. Despite this over saturation of apps in the marketplace, there are still opportunities for innovative and impactful apps to gain some interest in the market if they can fulfill customer's needs.

Our thesis centers around the business model and creation of a new mobile application called FocusHome. While this is an application that does not yet exist, it has the potential to appeal to an entirely unrepresented niche in the productivity app market. By offering users a unique game-like experience this app concept can fill a gap in the market that customers cannot currently access elsewhere.

Through market research, and a commitment to user-centric design, we have developed a comprehensive business model for this app. In this thesis, we will outline our vision for the app, detailing its purpose, features, and target audience. We will also delve into the market landscape and analyze the competition, highlighting areas where our app stands out.

Our business model will follow the general structure of a business model canvas, while also expanding upon certain areas we believe would be beneficial to the company or potential customers. Additionally, we will discuss our marketing strategy, and we will provide a detailed financial plan for the app's development and launch, outlining the costs involved and the revenue streams we expect to generate.

1.1 Objective of thesis

Productivity apps have become an essential tool for many people to help them manage their time or focus on important tasks. However, not all productivity apps are created equal, and many users struggle to stay motivated and engaged while using them. This is due to a known issue of retention in these applications (Pinochet, Tanaka, de Azevedo and Lopez, 2020). To address this problem, we propose using service design and gamification principles to create a more engaging productivity app.

Two of the top genres downloaded from major app stores such as the Apple Store and Google Play were games and productivity applications (Statista 2023). Moreover, through our research we found that women find more utility in productivity applications but are spending less time on them than men (Pinochet et. al. 2020).

This led us to set a primary goal of building a business model for a product that fills that niche in the productivity application market. FocusHome, a productivity application and simulation game targeted at women. In this thesis we aim to prove the existing niche in the productivity app field and provide a solution to the retention, which affects especially women, of productivity applications.

1.2 Research problem

One of the most pressing issues productivity apps faces both now and going forward is providing users with incentive beyond their own personal goals. These apps typically offer a basic tool for tracking and managing phone usage. While this is good for understanding that the user may have problems controlling their time on the phone, it does nothing to help build habits or keep them engaging with the application long enough to learn how to control themselves. The problem is worsened by the fact that there are other apps designed to keep customers more attached to their phones, and they often offer more incentive and rewards for time spent using them.

The issue of engagement and retention is further observed from the perspective of the business. Several of the largest applications focused on productivity use business models that rely on users becoming long term customers through some form of subscription-model (Fig 5). To keep users engaged and subscribed, productivity apps need to constantly improve and innovate their services and content. They must also find a way to compete with other apps that offer more immediate incentives and rewards for time spent using them.

This brings us to the research problem which we are hoping to solve, how can a productivity mobile application achieve sustainable growth and profitability within the competitive mobile app market? To tackle this problem, we believe that productivity app companies need to use service design and gamification principles to create more engaging and rewarding apps. By understanding their target audience and what motivates them, companies can create apps that are more intuitive, user-friendly, and tailored to their users' needs.

1.3 Approach

The objective of this thesis is to develop a business model for a gamified productivity application named FocusHome that incentivizes users to complete tasks and achieve their goals. The app will combine game-like elements with productivity features to create an engaging and fulfilling user experience. To have a clear guide for our business model we have decided to follow the format of a business model canvas.

1.3.1 Desirability

To assure that a unique value is provided to the customer we will further analyze the previously conducted research to ensure there is value for a new customer trying FocusHome and determine which points are critical in making the app even desirable to our target audience.

Furthermore, with research and a deep analysis of our potential competitors in the marketplace, we will identify which customer group will have the most interest in a product like FocusHome. To demonstrate our findings, we will create two personas representing our target customers and expand upon their motivations, desires, and needs.

To ensure that our product is visible to our target audience, we will create a comprehensive marketing strategy that tailors our approach to our audience's preferences and allows us to adapt to the needs of new customers in the future. This strategy will be broken down into three sections that focus on the customer, the implementation of our strategy, and how we measure the success of our campaigns (Cundari, 2015). It will also be a point of emphasis for us to establish which channels are the best for FocusHome to build meaningful relationships with customers and acquire useful feedback.

1.3.2 Feasibility

While creating this business model it has become clear that the development and long-term support of FocusHome will rely on several external key factors alongside the operations that will take place in-house. These factors must be weighed against the desires of our potential customers to create the best value within our means.

There are aspects of FocusHome that are within the means of our financial plan. However, we do not have the ability or skill to perform all tasks that are crucial in maintaining the service. This applies heavily to the technical side of development where a whole team may be required to see real progress towards releasing the application. For situations like this we need to outsource the task to a third party. There are also third-party platforms we need to build further relationships with for us to have the ability to distribute our app to the largest base of users.

1.3.3 Viability

Alongside the important task of making the app a desirable productivity app option for potential customers, we must ensure that creating an application like FocusHome is a viable business venture by determining the cost of development, the cost of operations, and potential streams of revenue.

Determining the overall cost structure of FocusHome will require composing a comprehensive financial plan. This includes research on probable costs, creating an expenses budget and projecting sales and revenue figures.

2 Research methodology

The research methodology for this thesis involves a review of secondary data sources. Our goal when starting this thesis was to understand the concepts of gamification, service design, and their roles in application development and user engagement. This methodology is a form of desk research. It is well-suited for collecting a wide range of information from diverse sources and creating a comprehensive analysis of the research topic.

Secondary data sources in this research allow for a wide-ranging review of the literature. However, it is important to note that these sources are also subject to their own limitations. There are potential issues with the accuracy of literature, or the relevance of the data. Despite these limitations, this methodology is suitable for the thesis's aim of exploring gamification and service design within the context of mobile applications.

2.1 Literature review method

The first step involves conducting a literature review to gather relevant academic papers, books, articles, and other works related to the application of gamification and service design in mobile applications. This process includes using databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect among others, to ensure a wide coverage of the research topic. The review is structured around the key themes of using a business model canvas, gamification, and service design. We focus on identifying common patterns or relationships that can be gathered from literature and used to further develop the business model canvas for FocusHome.

2.2 Data extraction

Once we have collected the data, we organize it, identify the relevant information, and extract it. During this stage we take note of the key findings, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives of each source. The focus during this process is to further identify the trends and themes in existing literature. This step helps us gain a deeper understanding of the current state of knowledge regarding the topic and to identify gaps in the literature.

2.3 Data analysis

Following the data extraction, we must analyze the data. This involves interpreting the data with the research question in mind, drawing connections between sources, and making sense of the information in terms of the research topic. The analysis aims to generate insights about how gamification and service design contribute to user engagement and the success of mobile applications.

2.4 Presentation of findings

The final stage of the methodology involves presenting the findings of our research. We do this by summarizing the main points and discussing the implications of the findings. We also suggest areas where further research can be conducted. To conclude this stage, we draw conclusions about our research question. These conclusions are based on the analysis of the secondary data.

3 Literature review

The theoretical background for this thesis and business model combines several theories from the fields of business strategy, gamification, marketing, and service design. The literature used to study these subjects includes surveys, statistics, books, and articles.

3.1 Business Model Canvas

The business model canvas was originally developed in 1974 by Alexander Osterwalder as a method of creating or expanding upon business ideas. A business model canvas is composed of nine sections that cover what a product is worth, the difficulty and needs for building a product, and the value of a product for a customer (Fig 1).



Figure 1: Business Model Canvas with highlighted sections based on needs for a business plan (Osterwalder, 2010).

This canvas is especially well suited towards physical goods. It does not account for the extra steps services have to take to be successful. Viljakainen, Toivonen and Aikala (2013) have suggested a new type of business model canvas, one that is more suited towards services. It is based on the canvas illustrated by Osterwalder, while taking influence from the main sections of a business model suggested by Seppänen and Mäkinen (2007).

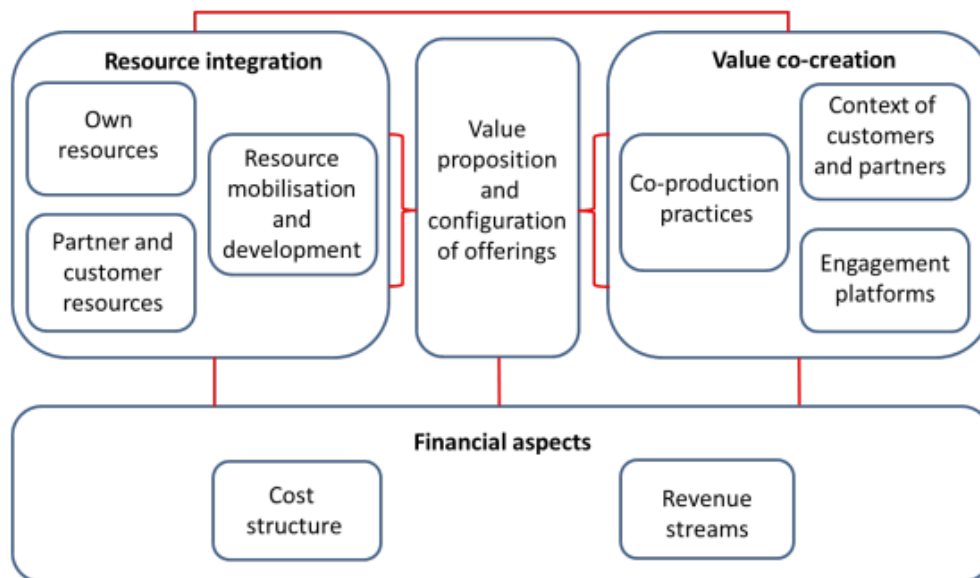


Figure 2: Suggested business model canvas for services (Viljakainen et. Al. 2013).

3.1.1 Key partners

To improve the likelihood of our company succeeding we need to establish relationships with potential partners. Engaging with partners can help achieve short- and long-term goals while also helping in mitigating risk factors.

We can divide the types of partners we need to start and maintain the business into two categories, developmental and operational. Due to the overall complexity of building a mobile application there is a need for us to outsource some of the development tasks to a firm that specializes in this field. For the operational aspect of the app, it is important to have relationships with partners who can host the app and help with maintenance tasks as it develops further in the future (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

3.1.2 Key activities

A company must perform key activities for the business to succeed and fulfil their value proposition to the customer. The activities performed differ depending on the product or services the businesses offer. Key activities can be divided into three categories production, problem solving, and platform. Production activities are focused on the quality,

sustainability, and creation of a product or service. Problem solving activities refer to creating fresh solutions to solve a customer's problem. Finally, platforming activities primarily focus on online platforms and networks (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

3.1.3 Key resources

Key resources play a significant role in the foundation of any business model. Businesses need these resources to maintain their operations. These resources fall under the four categories of physical, financial, intellectual, and human. The type of key resources needed depends on the value a business plans to offer customers, the type of customers they plan to serve, and the markets the business plans to enter (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Physical resources are a vital tool, consisting of all tangible assets owned by a business. These assets can range from real estate and machinery to inventory. However, it is important to be aware that businesses cannot function solely on physical resources. Human resources are considered important for several businesses, acting as a major force behind the functioning of an organization. This holds especially true for business models that rely on specialized skills and experience, because it can be used as a competitive advantage (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Some business models place a more emphasis on their financial resources. These include cash reserves, lines of credit, or stock option pools. For businesses prioritizing financial resources, they serve as a safety net, enabling the company to survive economic difficulties, take advantage of growth opportunities, and maintain their operations (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

3.1.4 Value proposition

Value proposition is one of the most important aspects to consider when starting or improving upon a business. As a term it has been defined differently by many experts, however, it defines the value your product or service provides to customers.

Over time, the term value proposition has been divided into different perspectives. Our chosen perspective is the transitional customer value proposition. We want to focus on a more transitional proposition because it allows us to understand the users' point of view and opinions while using the application (Payne, Frow and Eggert, 2017).

3.1.5 Channels

Channels are the resources at your disposal that allow you to reach your customer base and prove to them the value of your product or service. There are two main types of channels to be considered, the first being owned direct channels which have an inflated cost of entry for

implementation and operational tasks, but it nets a higher return. The second main type of channel is a partner indirect channel which has a lower overall return; however, partner channels allow for the use of a partner's strengths to reach much wider audiences (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

Each type of channel can go through up to five channel phases that can be used to determine the value each channel provides to the customer.

Channel Types		Channel Phases				
Own	Direct	1. Awareness How do we raise awareness about our company's products and services?	2. Evaluation How do we help customers evaluate our organization's Value Proposition?	3. Purchase How do we allow customers to purchase specific products and services?	4. Delivery How do we deliver a Value Proposition to customers?	5. After sales How do we provide post-purchase customer support?
	Sales force					
	Web sales					
Own stores						
Partner	Indirect					
	Partner stores					
	Wholesaler					

Figure 3: Channel types & channel phases (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

To provide current customers with support and make potential customers aware of the product it is important for us to use a variety of owned direct and partner indirect channels.

3.1.6 Customer segments

The customer segment section of a business model canvas is where customers are separated into unique groups based on the value they may see in a product or service, and what channels they can be reached by (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

3.1.7 Revenue streams

Revenue streams are a vital aspect of both business plans and models as they detail the process in which businesses will make a profit, while also showing an estimate for what businesses believe a customer is willing to pay (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Revenue streams come in two forms, transactional and recurring. Transactional revenue streams consist of singular payments from a customer. This includes payment methods such sales of assets or usage fees, while recurring revenue streams consist of payments over a longer period. This includes payment methods like subscription fees, renting, and licensing.

3.1.8 Cost structure

Cost structure focuses on the total cost of all important aspects of operating under a business model. The cost structure can be determined based on the three keys of a business model

canvas: activities, resources, and partnerships. Cost structures can be divided into two categories, cost-driven and value-driven. These two are at the very end of the spectrum, and many business models incorporate both in their strategy. A company that wants to keep their costs at a minimum would focus on a cost-driven structure. A value-driven structure is implemented less, as profit is important to most companies. Companies that do want to firstly offer value to their customers will use this structure. An example of these types of business is luxury hotels (Osterwalder et.al. 2010).

3.2 Gamification theory

Gamification is a recent concept that gained significant attention in education, marketing, and health. It has been defined as the application of game design elements and game principles in non-game services (Deterding et al., 2011). Furthermore, according to Huotari and Hamari (2012), gamification is a process of enhancing services with affordances for “gameful” experiences to support users’ overall value creation. The goal of implementing gamification into a service is to enhance user engagement, motivation, and overall experience.

The application of game elements can vary widely, but the most common elements seen in games are points, badges, leaderboards, and quests or challenges. These help to motivate users to perform certain actions or behave in a particular way (Seaborn & Fels, 2015). This taps into the competitive nature of humans and can make mundane tasks more exciting and engaging.

Despite the perceived benefits of gamification, it is not without its challenges. Critics argue that the reliance on rewards such as points and badges can undermine intrinsic motivation (Nicholson, 2015). There are also concerns about the long-term effectiveness of gamification. While it may initially increase engagement, this effect may wear off over time as users become accustomed to the game elements (Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa, 2014).

3.3 Service design theory

Service design is an interdisciplinary approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines, such as psychology, design thinking, and business strategy. The goal of service design is to design services that are useful, usable, efficient, effective, and desirable from the customer's point of view and effective, efficient, and distinctive from the service provider's perspective (Mager, 2008).

The origins of service design can be traced back to the 1980s and 1990s when companies started to recognize the importance of service experiences in differentiating themselves from

their competitors (Shostack, 1984). Over the years, service design has evolved from a mere concept to a well-recognized field, with its own tools, methods, and theories.

One of the key principles of service design is the focus on customer experience. This is achieved by understanding the customer journey, which is the complete sum of experiences that customers go through when interacting with a service and its provider (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). By mapping the customer journey, service designers can identify pain points, moments of truth, and opportunities for innovation.

Despite its benefits, service design also has its challenges. One of them is the inherent complexity and intangibility of services. Unlike physical products, services cannot be easily visualized or prototyped. Furthermore, services often involve multiple touchpoints and interactions over time, which adds another layer of complexity (Stickdorn et al., 2018).

Another challenge organizations face is that implementing service design principles requires a shift in organizational culture. A company would need to embrace a more user focused approach and be willing to invest in understanding their customers' needs and expectations (Polaine et al., 2013).

4 Data analysis

We have based our research on a survey and statistics that vary depending on the topic discussed or the need to expand further on our business model canvas. One of the key studies that FocusHome is based on was conducted by Pinochet, Tanaka, Azevedo and Lopes (2020). The goal of this survey is to put into perspective why individuals use productivity applications, and why they may decide to stop using them.

		n	%
Gender	Male	93	29.1
	Female	227	70.9
Education	Incomplete high school	1	0.3
	High school completed	17	5.3
	Undergraduate student	172	53.8
	Graduate degree	82	25.6
	Graduate student	12	3.8
	Postgraduate degree	36	11.3
Family income	Less than 4 minimum wages	89	27.8
	From 4 to 6 minimum wages	94	29.4
	From 7 to 10 minimum wages	66	20.6
	More than 10 minimum wages	71	22.2
Engaged in professional activity	Yes	207	64.7
	No	113	35.3
Age	Up to 25 years old	209	65.3
	Between 26 and 35 years old	80	25
	Between 36 and 45 years old	13	4.1
	Above 45 years old	18	5.6
	Total	320	100

Figure 4: Demographics of survey respondents (Pinochet et.al. 2020).

The survey consisted of three hundred types of respondents. Out of these respondents two thirds were female while about one third were male. The majority were either undergraduate students at the time the survey took place or had obtained a graduate degree. Most of the respondents were employed. A clear majority of them were twenty-five years of age or younger. Many of the respondents had a family income of four to six minimum wages, or under four.

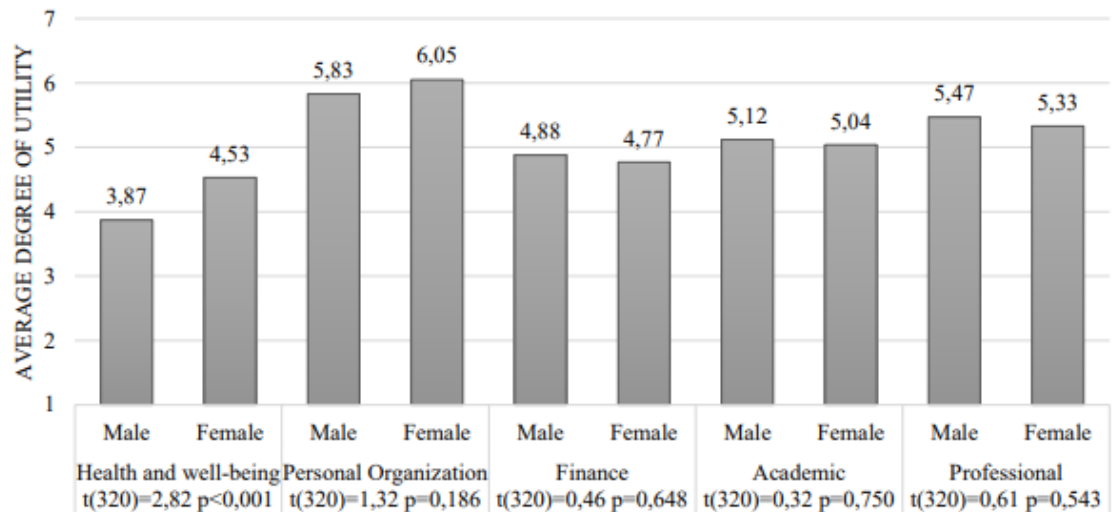


Figure 5: The average degree of utility of productivity applications on mobile devices (Pinochet et.al. 2020).

As the chart above shows, women tend to spend more time on productivity apps centered around organization, health, and well-being. Overall, the differences within those categories are quite high.

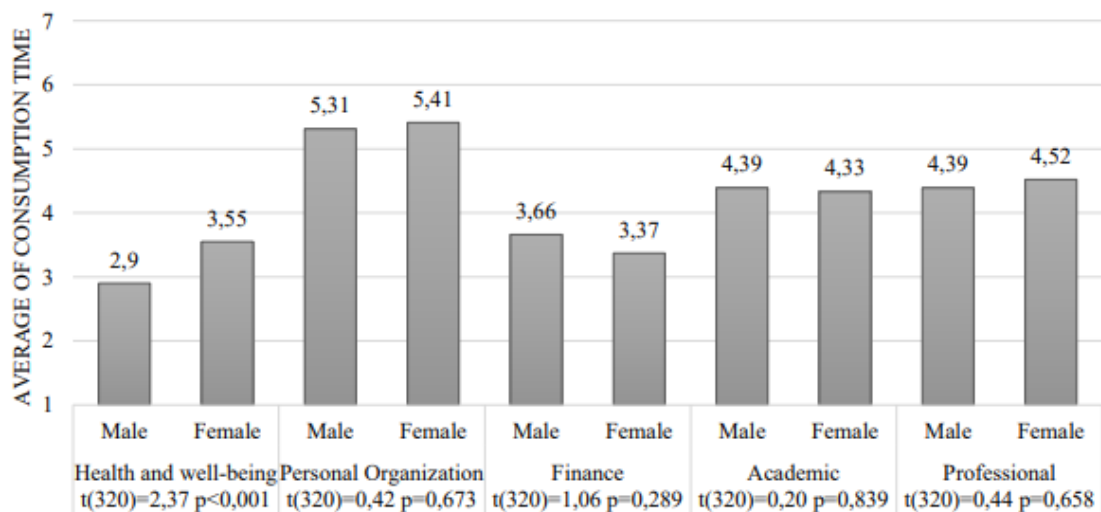


Figure 6: The average consumption time of productivity applications (Pinochet et.al. 2020).

While women use more productivity applications compared to men, there is a clear difference in the usage times. Women tend to use these applications for a shorter period at once and may often stop using applications completely.

5 Company profile

FocusHome is a tech company with a focus on the field of mobile applications. Our aim is to redefine how productivity applications are built through the concept of gamification. The main product of this Espoo based company, also called FocusHome, is an app that transforms mundane tasks into a cozy home building simulation. The company's team will originally consist of two founding members, who work as marketers, designers, and customer service representatives amongst other tasks. As FocusHome grows, the team will grow with it as specialized professionals will be hired to lead the fore-mentioned tasks. The company's sole goal is to create innovative solutions that make work feel like a game. We will be refining the app and adding new features to make it even more engaging for users to interact with.

6 Executive summary

The primary function of FocusHome as a company is to design and publish applications in the productivity sector of the market. The core product of the company will be a productivity application also titled FocusHome that will allow customers to build and decorate their dream home with cosmetics they earn from completing tasks. FocusHome uses gamification and service design to create an engaging game-like experience for the customer, while also using principles found in freemium games to create a profitable application that can be supported long-term.

Although FocusHome will strive to appeal to as large a customer as possible within the confines of our ability, the target audience of the FocusHome application will be high school students sixteen to eighteen years of age, and young professionals from age nineteen to twenty-five. Marketing for FocusHome will primarily focus on women in these age groups.

We believe the key difference in FocusHome that separates it from our competitors is the short- and long-term incentive that will help both retain users and keep them engaged with the application over longer periods of time. These features include common features found in freemium games such as earnable cosmetic items and noticeable progression. This application also touches a niche in the market, which is yet to be conquered by any other company's productivity application.

To kickstart the development of FocusHome we need 40,000€ in investment from potential stakeholders in the company. This sum would go towards paying our partnering development studio while also helping us due needed maintenance and updates to the application.

7 Value proposition

The productivity app market is saturated with a diverse selection, making it a challenging space for new developers. To stand out, an app needs to offer more than basic productivity tools, it needs to provide a unique, engaging, and value-added experience. Our product, FocusHome, is an app that merges productivity and entertainment in a unique way. Our app's value proposition lies in its innovative use of gamification, its user-friendly design, and an accessible pricing model.

7.1 Gamification

Gamification has become a powerful tool for businesses to change the behavior of their users and increase engagement with their services. By adding game like features into nongame related content, gamification taps into the natural human desire for competition, achievement, and recognition, among other motivators (Fuchs, Fizek, Ruffino and Schrape 2014). This has been successfully applied across several industries, including education, health, marketing, and productivity (AlMarshedi and Wanick, 2016).

A promising area for gamification is in productivity apps. These apps set out to help individuals manage their time, tasks, and goals more effectively. Gamification can provide an added incentive for users to engage with these services regularly. However, to effectively gamify a productivity app it is important to understand the motivations of the users. Some individuals may be motivated by the enjoyment of playing a game, while others may be motivated by external rewards or recognition. Due to this gamification designers must consider both internal and external motivating factors to keep users engaged with the app over longer periods of time (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled and Nacke, 2011).

The way we plan to implement gamification into FocusHome is through a home building and decorating simulation game. Users will start out the game with an empty one-bedroom apartment with very few items to customize this virtual apartment with. To earn items the users must set tasks and timers for themselves to be completed at any time. Once they have completed the task, closed the app, or stopped the timer they will be rewarded with in game currency they can use it to expand their virtual home or purchase added items from the market and decorate their virtual home. The amount of in-game currency received is based on the time they have spent completing a task, this is so the reward is proportionate to the

amount of work completed. Seeing their virtual home develop will provide the incentive necessary for them to continue using the application.

7.2 Customization as incentive

Time management can be a challenging task for many individuals, and even more so when it comes to trying to remain motivated and committed to achieving goals. The problem with many time management applications is that they lack the necessary incentives to keep users engaged and motivated. This is where gamification can come in and provide a solution. The FocusHome app is a prime example of how gamification can be utilized to solve the problem of lacking motivation in time management applications. This will be achieved by offering a more personalized experience to the user that can serve as a visual representation of them using their time to accomplish goals.

To achieve this, the app will include a basic character creator that will allow users to customize their avatar however they choose with the options available to them. The players will then start off in a basic apartment with little to use in terms of decoration. As users progress towards their goals, they will be able to earn in game currency that can then be used to purchase upgrades to their virtual home including furniture, paint palettes, expansions, and clothes for their respective avatar.

In addition to the free cosmetics available, the app will also offer an optional premium system that will provide users with another form of progression. By paying for this system, users can earn even more cosmetics, and some special items, alongside their normal progression, further enhancing their personalized experience.

7.3 FocusHome user experience

Service design principles focus on understanding and addressing the needs of users (Grant, 2018). By gaining a deep understanding of what users want and need from their productivity apps, we can design an application that is tailored to meet those needs. This can result in a more intuitive and user-friendly app that encourages users to stay engaged and productive. For the FocusHome application we want to focus on implementing these user centered design aspects into all aspects of the business model to further prove that a model cantered around how a customer feels and interacts can be used as a successful foundation for a business.

7.3.1 Success and failure

We want to emphasize how users experience both success and failure. Consider the Habitica approach, where users set a to-do list comprised of daily and weekly tasks. Once a task is completed, they can check it off, earning in-game rewards. Failure to complete a task result in the user's character taking damage and missing these rewards. This ties game progression

to real-life activity, but it heavily leans on the user's self-accountability. While this affords the user considerable freedom in how they utilize the app, it can sometimes sideline the primary motivation for downloading the app in the first place (Diefenbach & Mussig, 2019).

Our proposed approach introduces an additional layer of engagement - a task timer. Each task a user sets will be accompanied by a countdown timer, whose duration can be set by the user. Rewards will then be distributed upon the completion of this countdown. If the app is closed before the timer stops, the accrued time spent in-app will be calculated, and corresponding rewards will be distributed upon the app's re-opening. This system serves to further motivate task completion by keeping the user engaged and accountable.

7.3.2 App accessibility

One of the most common complaints among users of our largest competitor Habitica is that there is a learning barrier for features in the app, and that there are unexplained features (Ionescu, 2022). To be competitive in this space we want to build an app that can be almost immediately understood. This brings us to the second point of emphasis, providing clear and concise instructions or guidance within the application. This includes providing prompts or tips to guide the user through the application's features and functionality. This can be done through visual cues or step-by-step instructions that help users navigate the app and understand how to use it to achieve their goals.

7.4 Price

FocusHome will be available as a free download to all users, with all the base features included at no cost. We believe this is the best way to launch FocusHome as most downloads across app stores are free applications. This allows us to better reach our targeted audience as they may be less likely to download an application with an initial price tag.

Secondly, the freemium model allows users to experience the value of our app firsthand before making any financial commitment. This is critical in a market where users are often skeptical about the value of paid apps. By providing our core functionality for free, we can build trust and demonstrate value, which can eventually lead to higher conversion rates for our premium features.

However, to sustain the app's development and provide an ad-free experience, we plan to offer premium features at an additional cost. This tiered pricing model allows us to cater to a variety of user needs and budgets. For users who wish to enhance their experience, they can opt for the premium version, which would include exclusive features, items, and an ad-free experience for 2,99€ per month. Users may also purchase a subscription, which makes the app free of ads for a recurring monthly charge of 0,99€.

8 Target customer

Based on the findings collected in a survey regarding the intention to continue using mobile productivity apps (Pinochet et. al. 2020), we feel that the best target audience for FocusHome is female students and young female professionals between the ages sixteen and twenty-five. According to the survey (Pinochet et. al, 2020), women download more productivity apps comparatively to men, but they often spend less time using the application than men. This trend is consistent throughout all genres of the productivity application market outside of finance and academics.

The gaming genre referred to as cozy games grew rapidly in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Makena, 2022). To this day, the genre of cozy or wholesome games keeps growing steadily (Makena, 2022). We see a correlation between cozy game players and productivity application users being female (Jenson and de Castell, 2010). This led us to believe there to be an opening in the productivity application market for an app that incorporates features from the genre with productivity applications through gamification.

8.1 Personas

To have a more visual representation of the customers we want to appeal to we have created two personas. These personas represent our target audience near the higher and lower end of the desired age groups we are trying to appeal to.

The first persona is named Tanya. Tanya, a high-achieving high school senior, is driven and organized but struggles with managing her time effectively among academics and personal interests. She discovers FocusHome, which turns time management into a fun game. She sets study sessions and tasks in the app, earning virtual items to decorate her in-app home as she completes tasks. This gamified approach not only helps her reach study goals but also balances other aspects of her life, making her daily routine more fulfilling.

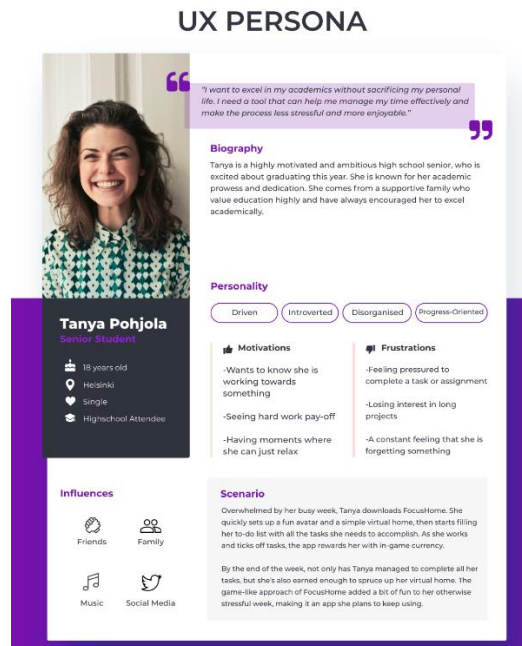


Figure 7: Tanya’s persona profile.

Our second persona represents a potential customer on the older side of our targeted audience. Ava is a twenty-four-year-old woman who works as a full-time software engineer. She is independent, ambitious, and values her personal and professional growth. However, she sometimes struggles with maintaining a work-life balance, often finding herself overwhelmed with her workload. She is tech-savvy and has tried different productivity apps in the past, but none have managed to keep her engaged or met her unique needs. Ava seeks an app that can help her manage her time better while also providing an engaging and personalized experience. She hopes that with the right tool, she can find a balance between her work, personal life, and self-care routines.

UX PERSONA

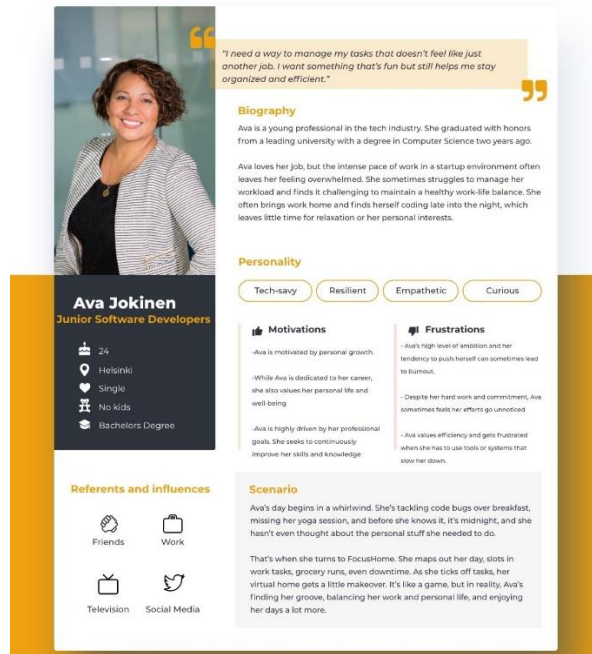


Figure 8: Ava’s persona profile.

8.2 User journey

Now that we have been able to establish the type of customer, we want to attract with FocusHome, we have created a user journey to demonstrate how their experiences, emotions, and actions could look in an ideal situation.

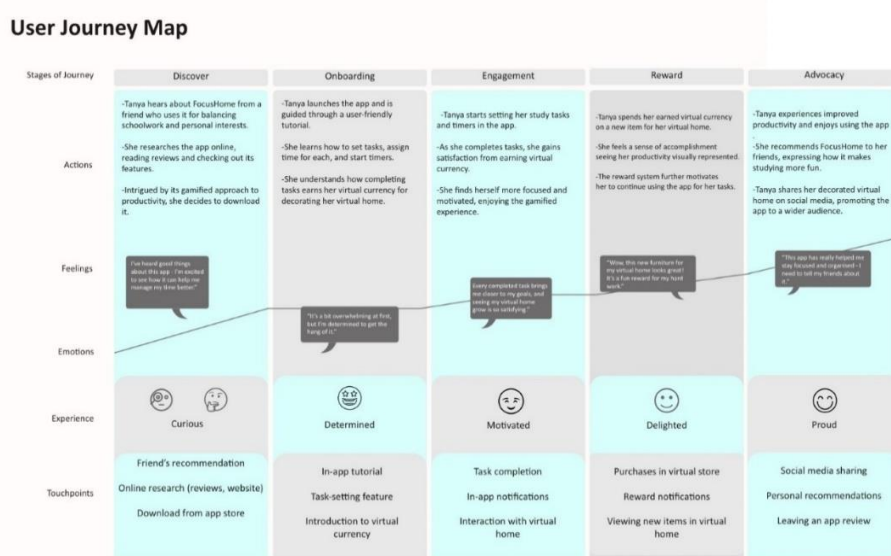


Figure 9: User journey map for Tanya's journey.

This user journey follows Tanya as she takes a friend's recommendation and downloads FocusHome. She expresses curiosity towards the gamified approach. As she opens the app she is met with a user-friendly tutorial, that guides her through all the features of the app. She is feeling determined to learn how to use the app and utilize all its features. Tanya sets her first study tasks and timers. She feels a sense of satisfaction after completing tasks, as that earns her virtual currency. The app has helped her stay more focused and she is feeling motivated.

She spends the virtual currency she earned to purchase an added item for her virtual home. Staying productive and seeing the results visually represented makes Tanya feel happy. She feels motivated to continue using the application as it has helped her accomplish her tasks, and happy the app rewarded her for it.

Tanya is proud of the progress she has made. She has enjoyed the app so much that she wants to share her experience, so that other people can feel the sense of accomplishment. Tanya recommends the app to her friends, as she believes it could make studying as fun for them as it was for herself. She also leaves a positive review in the app store and shares her virtual home on social media, which promotes the app to a wider audience.

This user journey highlights how the gamified elements and rewarding system of FocusHome can motivate users to achieve their goals, leading to an elevated level of satisfaction and advocacy. It also emphasizes the importance of an accessible onboarding process and a user-friendly design for ensuring user engagement and retention.

9 Customer relationships

Businesses need a plan of action for interacting with customers to conduct the goals of both parties. Establishing the type of relationship, a business has with their customer can further drive customer retention, acquisition, and supply opportunities for further upselling (50minutes, 2017). Because the application tries to reach into so many different spaces, we need to create several distinct types of relationships with our potential customers to help them conduct their goals while using the app and continue to grow our business.

9.1 Self service

Although we are striving for a user experience that is very easily understandable, we acknowledge that some users may need assistance beyond a tutorial. One way we hope to help our users as fast as possible is a frequently asked question, or FAQ, section on our website. Users can look for answers to their questions on there.

Another way users can help themselves, and other users, is our online communities. Users may ask questions, share tips and tricks, produce solutions, or even just share their progress with the community.

9.2 Personal assistance

FocusHome has a support tab on the app and website. Through there a user may fill out a form that connects them to our e-mail. All e-mails will be answered within one business day, as we want to provide our customers with a fast customer support system.

Customers may also send us a direct message on our social media platforms. Though there is not any written promise on a one business day reply for messages through these channels, we will do our best to get back to customers as soon as possible. If we happen to be online or are otherwise able to reply right away after getting a notification of a new message, we will get back to the customer immediately.

10 Channels

Channels are the resources at your disposal that allow you to reach your customer base and prove to them the value of your product or service. There are two main types of channels to be considered, the first being owned direct channels which have an inflated cost of entry for implementation and operational tasks, but it nets a higher return. The second main type of channel is a partner indirect channel which has a lower overall return; however, partner channels allow for the use of a partner's strengths to reach much wider audiences (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

10.1 Partner indirect channels

Though influencer partnerships are used for marketing purposes, they indirectly build brand trustworthiness and sense of community alongside promotion. According to Hubspot and Brandwatch (2023), twenty-one percent of social media users trust an influencer's opinion so much as to make a purchasing decision based on it. We want to utilize their platform to build brand familiarity with our target customer.

10.2 Owned direct channels

Due to the main incentive of FocusHome being based on a virtual home and player customization, we believe the best way to build relationships with users over a longer period, is to have an active presence online, and build a sense of community among those who use the app.

According to a study conducted by Hubspot and Brandwatch (2023) 90 percent of social media marketers believe that building a community online around your product or service is not only recommended but also essential to achieve success in today's competitive and fast paced market. As our marketing strategy is heavily focused on social media marketing, it is only natural to follow the professional's advice and build an open online community for our users. This also helps us to build our brand and refine our image.

We will create a page on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. We have chosen these platforms as sellers have seen high returns from directly selling on these platforms (Hubspot and Brandwatch, 2023). Instagram is especially important for our potential influencer partnership due to the high concentration of creators working, specifically on that platform.

11 Key activities

Operating a mobile application company requires a focus on several key activities to ensure it functions properly. These activities support the success of the application through the business model canvas (Osterwalder et. al. 2010). One of the most important activities is the development of a quality product that users will enjoy (Savsar, 2012). This involves creating an engaging and intuitive user experience and providing ongoing updates and maintenance. Additionally, it is essential to establish partnerships with reliable hosting and development firms to ensure the app runs smoothly and has minimal downtime.

Another key activity is marketing and user acquisition. This involves creating a strong brand identity and promoting the app through various channels, such as social media, influencer partnerships, and targeted advertisements (Chaffey, 2019). Building a loyal user base is key to the success of the app and requires a commitment to ongoing engagement and communication with customers.

In addition to these activities, it is crucial to have a solid financial plan in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of the company (Finch, 2013). This involves understanding the costs associated with app development, hosting, marketing, and ongoing maintenance, and establishing revenue streams through methods like in-app purchases, subscriptions, and advertising. It is also important to regularly assess the app's performance and adjust strategies as necessary to ensure continued growth and profitability.

Finally, managing a business requires a focus on team building and leadership. This involves hiring skilled developers, designers, and marketing professionals and providing them with the resources and support necessary to perform their best work. Creating a positive and collaborative work environment is essential for fostering creativity and productivity, and

effective leadership is necessary to ensure everyone is working towards the same goals and objectives (Yohn, 2021).

11.1 Market analysis

The market for productivity and time management apps has been growing rapidly in recent years. This is mostly due to increasing demand from consumers who are looking for new ways to optimize their time and stay organized. According to a report by Statista (2023), the global productivity software market revenue is projected to reach US\$88,05 billion by 2028, with a compound annual growth rate of 2,95% between 2023 and 2028. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the increasing adoption of mobile devices, the rise of remote work, and the growing popularity of gamification in productivity.

FocusHome is well positioned to capture a share of this growing market due to its unique approach to productivity and time management that speaks to an uncaptured niche. By incorporating gamification elements, the app can provide a more engaging and rewarding experience for users. This approach has proven successful for other productivity apps, such as Forest and Habitica, which have gained a loyal following among users (Habitica, n.d.) (Forest, n.d.).

In terms of competition, FocusHome will be competing with established productivity apps such as Habitica, Freedom, Forest, Rize, Focus@Will and Serene, with Habitica being the biggest competitor. However, the app's gamification elements modelled by cozy gaming and focus on motivation and engagement set it apart from these competitors. Additionally, the app's target audience of female high school students and young female professionals aged sixteen to twenty-five represents a segment of the market for potential for growth that is highly engaged with mobile technology and open to original approaches to productivity.

One potential challenge for FocusHome is the crowded nature of the app market, which can make it difficult to stand out and gain visibility. However, the app's unique approach to productivity and time management, combined with its targeted marketing strategy, should help it overcome this challenge and establish itself as a leader in this space.

11.1.1 Competitor analysis

To gain a better understanding of the competitive landscape, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of six productivity applications in the market: Rize, Freedom, Forest, Focus@Will, Serene and Habitica. We compared each application on several key metrics, including pricing, features, user interface, and customer support.

	Best Feature	Best Used For	Pricing	Free Plan	Support	Negatives	Rewards
<i>Rize</i>	Automatically tracks time spent on desktop	Managing work productivity on Mac OS	Subscription model with plans ranging from free 14.99 €	✓	✓	No mobile version available	✗
<i>Freedom</i>	Allows you to block several websites on multiple devices when in use	Blocking distracting Apps and services on all devices	The app has a subscription model with three pricing options Monthly, Yearly, and Forever	✗	✗	Little to no customer support	✗
<i>Forest</i>	Virtual forest planted When you spend time off your phone	Managing time and improving time management skills	The app is free to download, and has an optional premium service for 3.49 €	✓	✓	Provides little in terms of data	✓
<i>Focus@Will</i>	Blends personalised music with time management to improve focus	Focusing on task and preventing distractions	Subscription based model. Starting at 7.49€ a month	✗	✓	Does not track stats for you	✗
<i>Serene</i>	The app allows you to plan your day and Prompts you to follow the schedule	All around productivity. Great for workplace focus	Subscription based model. Starting at 4€ a month	✗	✓	Only available using Mac OS	✗
<i>Habitica</i>	Offers cosmetic Incentive for completing goals	Accomplishing personal goals, and managing tasks	Optional subscription Model starting at 5€	✓	✓	Several optimisation issues	✓

Figure 10: Competitor analysis.

Rize is a desktop application that tracks and breaks down the time spent on your desktop. This A.I. powered tracker is optimized for MacOS and works on Windows as well. The basic version is available to download for free. They also offer two subscription models: an annual billing that comes up to 9,99€ per month, and a monthly billing of 14,99€. These plans include more comprehensive analytics on time spent on your desktop. As a productivity application, Rize only offers a basic time tracking system with few organizational features. There is no incentive for users to better their productivity other than self-discipline.

Freedom, a website, and app blocker, allows users to block websites and apps that they know to be distracting while working or studying. Users can choose between three subscription models, monthly charge of 8,99€, a yearly charge that comes to 3,33€ per month and a forever access for a onetime payment of 199€. There is no free plan, so a customer must commit to the app for one month. Freedom also lacks incentive for users, as well as direct customer support beyond e-mail.

Forest, our second biggest competitor on the market, uses a gamified approach to motivate users to stay off their mobile devices. A user plants a tree, and it grows while the app is open. The progress is lost if the user exits the application while their pre-set timer is on. Seeing their time management skills and productivity improve visually gives the customers incentive to keep using the application. The app is free to download on the GooglePlay store, and provides a premium service for 4,49€ per month. On the apple store the app costs 4,99€ to initially download. Forest offers a wide variety of in-app purchases to help users grow their trees and forests. The app also has a free Chrome extension for desktop. A selling point for the Forest app to some customers may be their co-operation with a tree-planting

organization. The organization gets donations from the company in accordance with virtual money spent on the app and uses it to plant trees in real life.

Focus@Will, a music app designed to increase productivity, offers a subscription-based pricing model with a free trial period and various subscription such as the monthly plan for \$7,49 and a two-year plan for \$220. A user must subscribe to a paid plan if they wish to use the app after the free trial. The app caters to people, who can focus with music playing, or thrive on it, but would not appeal to people outside of that group. The app also does not track any stats for the user in terms of productivity.

Serene, a mindfulness, and productivity app, also offers a subscription-based pricing model with a free 10-hour trial period and an annually billed subscription plan for forty-eight€. The app allows users to plan their daily schedule, block distractions and offers focus enhancers such as count down timers and music. Serene is only available for MacOS desktop users, which limits their potential user base by quite a big margin.

Habitica, our biggest competitor, offers a video game-like experience while helping users focus on their goals. Users can set up tasks, and upon completing them, they earn rewards and in-game virtual currency as well as unlock new features. With the currency, they can upgrade their character, make them stronger, and earn extras such as mounts and weaponry for their characters. Users may even battle monsters with other users. A unique feature amongst all reviewed apps is that in Habitica users may create parties with each other. This can be especially useful within a school project group or a workplace team. The app is free to download, and offers optional premium subscriptions ranging from 4,58€ to 5,99€ a month depending on the length of your subscription. Users may also make in-app purchases. As the app is open source, it does have some optimization and bug issues. Another con for the app is that it relies heavily on user honesty and self-discipline. The tasks set up by users can be ticked off as done immediately in exchange for rewards.

Rize stands out for its unique focus on personal finance management, while Focus@Will and Serene both offer unique approaches to increasing productivity through music and mindfulness exercises. Freedom stands out for its ability to block distractions across multiple devices. Forest and Habitica both incentive users to work towards their goals by rewarding them for their time.

11.2 Marketing strategy

The success of a mobile application highly depends on the product's quality and the effectiveness of its marketing strategy. For mobile apps to thrive, they must differentiate themselves from competitors and communicate their value proposition to their target

audience. This involves several factors, including the needs, objective, tactics, and execution (Garris & Mishra, 2015).

11.2.1 Digital advertising

Digital advertising is a cost-effective and efficient way to reach a large audience (Desai, 2019). FocusHome will use Google Ads and social media ads to target users who have shown an interest in productivity apps, time management, and gamification. The company will create eye-catching visuals and messaging that highlight the benefits of using FocusHome. For example, we could create ads that show a person checking off tasks in the app and earning rewards for completing them.

It is important to continually track and adjust digital advertising campaigns to ensure that they are effective (Desai, 2019). FocusHome can use data analytics tools to monitor the performance of our ads and amend to improve our conversion rates. By regularly testing and refining our ads, we can increase the company's return on investment (ROI) and attract more users to the app (Desai, 2019).

11.2.2 Social media marketing

Social media is an excellent platform for engaging with your target audience and building brand awareness (Li, Larimo and Leonidou, 2020). FocusHome will use Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook to post content related to productivity, motivation, and gamification. For example, we will create posts that offer productivity tips or motivational quotes to inspire our followers.

In addition to organic posts, FocusHome can also use social media ads to target our audience. These ads can be highly targeted based on factors such as age, location, and interests (Instagram, n.d). By creating engaging content and responding to comments and messages, the company can build a loyal following and establish themselves as an authority in the productivity and gamification space.

11.2.3 Influencer partnerships

Partnering with influencers who have a strong following in the productivity and tech space can help increase brand awareness and credibility (Chaudhary, 2022). FocusHome will identify influencers who align with our brand values and target audience and collaborate with them to create sponsored posts and promotions.

Influencers can help create buzz around the app and provide social proof of its effectiveness. For example, an influencer could create a video tutorial on how to use FocusHome or share a post about how the app has helped them stay on track with their tasks. By leveraging the

influencer's audience, FocusHome can reach a wider audience and generate more interest in the app.

11.3 User feedback

Gathering feedback from users is critical for improving the app and building a loyal user base (Mendoza, 2013). FocusHome will regularly survey users to understand their needs and preferences and use this information to improve the app and create more targeted marketing campaigns.

In addition to surveys, we will also collect feedback through app reviews and social media comments. By responding to feedback promptly and addressing user concerns, the company can demonstrate that they value their users and are committed to improving their experience with the app.

By incorporating user feedback into our marketing strategy, FocusHome can create more effective campaigns that resonate with our target audience (Desai, 2019). Additionally, by continually improving the app based on user feedback, we can increase user retention and establish ourselves as a leader in the productivity and gamification space.

12 Key partnerships

Establishing relationships with potential partners is a critical strategy for improving the likelihood of our company's success (Osterwalder et.al. 2010). This is particularly true in building a mobile application because the development process's complexity creates the need for involvement from external partners. To achieve all goals both short and long term, as well as mitigate risk factors, we need relationships with partners that specialize in developmental and operational tasks.

Outsourcing developmental tasks to specialized firms can ensure that the mobile application is built to a high standard while freeing up internal resources for other tasks. On the other hand, establishing relationships with partners who can assist with hosting and maintenance tasks is important in ensuring that the application runs smoothly and is always available to users.

The selection of partners should be based on criteria such as their experience, expertise, reputation, and compatibility with the company's goals and values. Osterwalder et. Al. (2010) suggests building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with partners can be a key factor in the success of the company.

12.1 Developers

Partnering with an experienced development firm is a crucial aspect of our strategy to successfully launch and maintain our mobile application. As we lack the knowledge and skills to fully develop an app with the systems we want to implement, outsourcing a sizable portion of the non-design development to a private firm will enable us to focus on creating a visually appealing and user-friendly interface based on our research.

By partnering with a development firm experienced in developing simple to mid-level applications with a focus on mobile games, we can leverage their expertise in developing the core functionality of our app. The development firm will collaborate with us to create an app that meets our specific requirements and integrates seamlessly with the services we plan to use, such as Amazon Web Services for hosting and content delivery. Outsourcing the development work can accelerate the development timeline while ensuring that the app meets our ambitious standards for quality and performance.

Furthermore, designing an app that feels like a game can create a more immersive and engaging experience for our users, leading to higher revenue generation (Stieglitz et al. 2018). With the support of a development firm that has a proven record of accomplishment in this area, we can achieve our goal of creating an app that stands out from the competition and attracts a loyal user base. By working together, we can create an app that not only meets but exceeds our users' expectations, setting us up for long-term success in the competitive mobile app marketplace.

12.2 Web hosting

Hosting is essential for any online service to ensure that their application or website is available, dependable, and secure. Many businesses choose to outsource their hosting needs to a provider that can manage high volumes of data and traffic without compromising on performance (Abdullah, 2020). For FocusHome, one of the primary value propositions is the ability to use the app whenever necessary, with minimal downtime. This can be challenging to accomplish with less-established hosting services that may lack the necessary capacity and infrastructure to support a potentially large user base.

We believe that Amazon Web Services (AWS) is the best choice for hosting our application. AWS has a proven record of accomplishment of working with applications and websites with large user bases and high traffic, making it a reliable and trustworthy choice for hosting (Amazon, 2023). While our needs for FocusHome are much smaller than some of the flagship services they offer, it is still the most cost-effective service for our needs. Additionally, AWS offers the capability to deliver updates quickly, which is crucial for our business, as we rely on a steady stream of content to incentivize users to continue using the application.

One of the standout features of AWS is Amazon Amplify, a service that allows developers to create a backend for their applications and websites, making it possible to safely transfer and store user data (Amazon Web Services, n.d). This is an important feature, as we want to keep our customers' data safe.

12.3 Market place

The two marketplaces we plan on releasing FocusHome on are Apples IOS store and Googles Play store. These platforms account for most app downloads worldwide, with estimates suggesting over one hundred-forty billion app downloads in 2022 (Statista, 2023) (Fig. 8). This high download rate highlights the necessity for developers to meet the quality standards set by these marketplaces. Building FocusHome to these standards will allow the app to be released on these platforms and improves the user experience (App Store Review Guidelines 2022). Failing to meet these requirements can result in the app being rejected and not reaching its full potential audience.

Google Play and iOS Quarterly App and Game Downloads 2015 to 2022 Stack (bn)

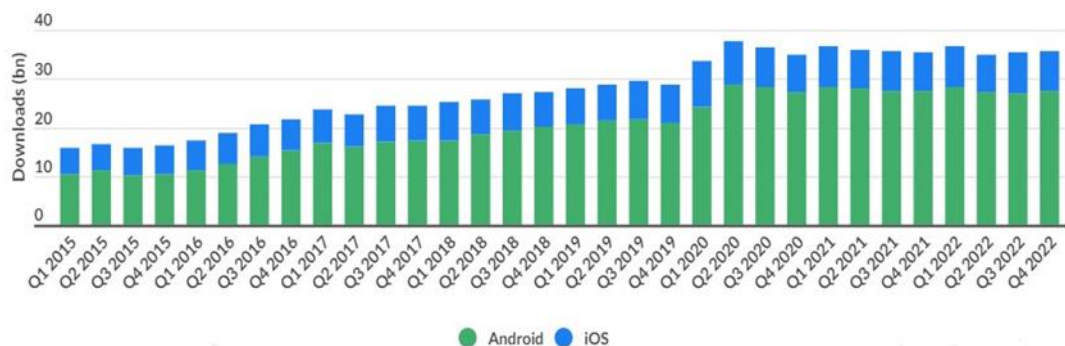


Figure 11: Google Play and IOS total app downloads by quarter (2015-2022)

Releasing an app on the Google Play Store is straightforward compared to the iOS store which has stricter guidelines and requirements. However, there the possibility of low-quality apps may be removed from the marketplace if they do not follow Googles developer program policies, as well as the core app quality guidelines (Google Play Store, n.d). Although the process is simple, in many ways there are challenges to releasing applications on the google play store, the issue of meeting the same standard of quality throughout a wide selection of android devices and operating systems. These unique devices and systems can further complicate development as it is a requirement for the application to work on all android devices.

Google does provide the option for some quality assurance testing before officially launching your application as well as for future updates. This is important as it gives a more direct way to communicate with the marketplace, we are distributing FocusHome on, and it helps us provide the customer with the overall best experience possible (Google Play Store, n.d).

Apple has a detailed review process for apps, and the acceptance rate is lower compared to the Google Play Store. The app must be assessed on iOS devices and pass certain performance and stability tests (App Store Review Guidelines, 2022). Additionally, the app must comply with Apple's legal and privacy requirements, such as having a privacy policy and ensuring that user data is overseen securely. Developers must pay an annual fee to be part of Apple's Developer Program, which provides access to resources and tools for app development and distribution (App Store Review Guidelines, 2022). However, due to IOS being consistent across all apples mobile devices less development needs to be dedicated optimizing FocusHome for other platforms.

13 Key resources

To create a mobile application such as FocusHome, we need to have the right tools, people, and funding. These are the key resources that will help our business thrive in a competitive market. They include software development tools, hardware infrastructure, experienced developers and designers, and financial resources. To manage these resources effectively, we need to prioritize and allocate them in a way that makes sense for our goals. Part of this is developing partnerships with technology providers and securing funding through investors. FocusHome also needs to be nimble and adapt to changes in the market and feedback from our users. By staying current with technology trends, keeping an eye on our competition, and listening to the needs of our users, we can stay ahead of the game and deliver a mobile application that people love to use. With the right resources in place, we can create an app that wows users and stands out from the competition.

13.1 Financial resources

Financial key resources are critical to the success of any mobile application business. These resources include funds for software development, hardware infrastructure, marketing, and hiring experienced developers. Proper management of financial resources is crucial for sustaining the company's growth and profitability.

To ensure financial stability, the company must secure funding through investors. Effective budgeting and cost management practices are also necessary to ensure that the company's financial resources are used efficiently.

In addition to securing funding, the company must also maintain a steady cash flow to support its day-to-day operations. A big part of this is marketing along with keeping customers engaged enough to want to keep using the application. The company also needs to implement financial reporting and analysis systems to track revenue, expenses, and other key financial metrics.

FocusHome needs to take an active approach in risk management to further mitigate financial risks. This involves diversifying revenue streams, so we can manage overhead costs, and develop contingency plans for unexpected events that may impact on the company's financial stability. By managing financial resources effectively, the company can sustain its growth and profitability, and deliver value to its users over the long term (Anderson, 2013).

13.2 Human resources

FocusHome's key human resources include experienced developers, and the founders of the company. The developers of the application will be outsourced from a company that specializes in mobile application development. All development and maintenance of the application will be taken care of by these developers.

The founders of the company will design the application, plan, and execute a marketing strategy and work as customer support representatives. Bringing these skills, knowledge, and expertise to the company is crucial for driving innovation and delivering value to users.

Even though the company will start out with only a small team, we must establish a strong company culture that fosters collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning. This involves creating a work environment that is supportive, flexible, and inclusive, where anyone we collaborate with will feel valued and motivated to contribute their best work.

14 Revenue streams

Revenue streams are income sources for a company. These streams can come from diverse sources and are categorized as transaction and recurring revenues. Transaction revenues come from one-time payments made by customers and recurring revenues, as the name suggests, come from income that happens periodically, for example a subscription model (Osterwalder et.al. 2010).

The main source of revenue for FocusHome is in-app advertising. These ads reach any user that does not purchase the premium subscription. Users may also watch ads to gain rewards, which also brings additional revenue.

Another stream of revenue comes from premium and ad-free subscriptions. The premium subscription will bring in a monthly revenue of 2,99€ per premium user and the ad-free subscription 0,99€.

14.1 Freemium

FocusHome follows the freemium model. The term freemium originates from the combination of the words free and premium. Gu, Kannan, and Ma (2018) define freemium as a plan of action for users to get a service for free and upgrade it in exchange for a fee. This model is commonly used for mobile applications, software, and online services. Using this pricing model may attract a large user base by offering a free version of the service that is still useful and appealing to users. Once users become familiar with the service and see the value it provides, they may be more likely to upgrade to a premium version that offers additional features or more advanced functionality.

14.2 FocusHome Free

FocusHome app will generate much of its revenue through in-app ads. The first ad, in the form of a banner, is presented to the free user when they open the app. A second ad, a full screen one, will pop up after a user finishes their play session. This brings them to the store menu, where they can opt to watch another ad for a free reward or purchase an avatar customization piece or virtual home decor item separately. They are also offered a chance to purchase the premium subscription. The user may also choose to close the app instead.

14.3 FocusHome Premium

To have a more streamlined experience, the user may purchase a premium subscription. This includes special virtual home decor and avatar customization items and makes the app ad free. The subscription works on a monthly recurring charge model and can be cancelled at any time. The customer can access the premium features for a monthly payment of 2.99€ and this will function as a replacement to the traditional subscription model available in most time management applications. We have chosen this model because it fits the theme of a gamified service while still providing us with another source of revenue outside of ads. If a user wants an ad-free experience but does not feel the need to have the other features that the premium subscription intel's, they may upgrade the app to an ad-free version for just 0,99€ per month.

15 Cost structure

To determine the profitability of FocusHome, we have created a financial plan that demonstrates all money flow regarding the application. This includes initial investment, projected monthly expenses and revenue income.

15.1 Financial plan

A financial plan is a crucial part of any business model. Its purpose is to highlight to stakeholders and investors the reason it is worth investing in FocusHome. By forecasting the financial performance of the business, you can show the value of investing in it. Though these forecasts are mere estimates, meaning they may be inaccurate, they form an overall picture of the business's expected performance. A well drafted financial plan can also demonstrate the level of commitment to the benefit of the company and potential investors (Finch, 2013).

We are asking for an investment of 40 000€. Most of this sum, (28 000€) goes towards app development. The fee to register with the Finnish patent and registration office is 240€. Google Play Store charges a registration fee of twenty-five€. The rest of the investment goes towards covering operating expenses for the first year.

15.2 Sales forecast

The sales forecasts demonstrate estimated sales over three years. The calculations are based on estimated monthly sales. Though these numbers are estimates, they have been calculated in a realistic manner to give stakeholders and investors a clear picture of the company's potential in the financial sense (Finch, 2013).

Many users are what we call free users. They use the application without spending any money on it. Instead, these users see ads during their time on the app. These ads net us an average minimum of 2,16€ per user in a month. This is our biggest revenue stream. The second biggest revenue stream is the premium subscription. It costs the user 2,99€ and is charged monthly.

PROJECTED REVENUE	Unit price	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Ads (min/free user)	2,16	2592	2808	3024	3132	3196,8	3261,6	3326,4	3391,2	3456	3520,8	3585,6	3650,4	38944,8
Premium subscription VAT 24%	2,99	269,1	299	328,9	358,8	388,7	418,6	448,5	478,4	508,3	538,2	568,1	598	5202,6
No VAT	2,41	216,9	241	265,1	289,2	313,3	337,4	361,5	385,6	409,7	433,8	457,9	482	4193,4
Ad-free subscriptions VAT 24%	0,99	198	207,9	217,8	227,7	237,6	247,5	257,4	267,3	277,2	287,1	297	306,9	3029,4
No VAT	0,8	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	2448
														Total VAT 47176,8
														Total no VAT 45586,2
														1st year loss -11977,6

Fig 12: Projected revenue for the first year of launch. The unit currency is euro.

The chart above demonstrates the projected revenue in the first year. We are expecting one thousand-two hundred free users to download the app during the first month. Because we invest more in marketing during the month of the launch and the following two months, we

expect to see a more rapid growth in free users during those first three months. We estimate a growth rate of one hundred new free users monthly, which drops to new fifty free users in the fourth month. After that the growth is a steady thirty new free users monthly.

Upon launch we estimate ninety users to purchase the premium subscription. Even though it is affordable, it is a new app, thus making the thresh hold of putting money into it bigger for users. During the first year, we predict gaining ten premium subscribers a month. Similar growth is projected for users purchasing the ad free subscription, though the overall number is higher, starting at two hundred users.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	
3736,8	3823,2	3909,6	3996	4082,4	4212	4557,6	4687,2	4816,8	4946,4	5076	5205,6	53049,6	
627,9	657,8	687,7	717,6	777,4	837,2	897	956,8	1016,6	1076,4	1136,2	1196	10584,6	
506,1	530,2	554,3	578,4	626,6	674,8	723	771,2	819,4	867,6	915,8	964	8531,4	
316,8	326,7	336,6	346,5	356,4	366,3	376,2	386,1	396	405,9	415,8	425,7	4455	
256	264	272	280	288	296	304	312	320	328	336	344	3600	
												Total VAT	68089,2
												Total no VAT	65181
												2nd year loss	-1150,89

Fig 13: Projected revenue for the second year.

The sales picked up slightly during the second year. During the first half of the year the application gains forty new free customers per month. The latter half of the year this number is increased to sixty. The first quarter of the year follows the sales pattern of ten new premium customers per month, after which the number doubles. We expect to gain ten monthly ad-free users throughout the year.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	
5378,4	5551,2	5724	5896,8	6069,6	6242,4	6415,2	6588	6760,8	6933,6	7106,4	7279,2	75945,6	
1285,7	1375,4	1465,1	1554,8	1644,5	1734,2	1823,9	1913,6	2003,3	2093	2182,7	2272,4	21348,6	
1036,3	1108,6	1180,9	1253,2	1325,5	1397,8	1470,1	1542,4	1614,7	1687	1759,3	1831,6	17207,4	
435,6	455,4	475,2	495	514,8	534,6	554,4	574,2	594	613,8	633,6	653,4	6534	
352	368	384	400	416	432	448	464	480	496	512	528	5280	
												Total VAT	103828
												Total no VAT	98433
												3rd year profit	32952,2

Figure 14: Projected revenue for the third year.

Throughout the third year we predict to gain eighty new free users on average per month. Even though the first year ends in a loss, we break even during the next thirteen months. The projected rise in sales in the third year of launch will bring us a profit of over thirty-two thousand euros.

15.3 Expenses budget

The expenses budget contains all business-related expenses in an itemized form. This budget determines the amount required to fund the business venture.

The initial expenses are registration fees to the Finnish Patent and Registration Office (240 €) and Google Play Store (25 €) as well as development cost of the application (28 000 €). The remaining amount of just over eleven thousand euros covers the first two months' expenses.

EXPENSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Marketing	2500	1250	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	14250
Accounting	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	720
Loan payment	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	8400
Hosting	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	12000
Transaction fees	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	1440
Bank account fee	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	240
VAT 24%	90,2	97,9	105,6	113,3	121	128,7	136,4	144,1	151,8	159,5	167,2	174,9	1590,6
Google Play Store comission 30% / 15%	890,67	965,1	1039,53	1081,56	1110,63	1139,7	1168,77	1197,84	1226,91	1255,98	1285,05	1314,12	13675,9
Apple App Store comission 15%	445,335	482,55	519,765	540,78	555,315	569,85	584,385	598,92	613,455	627,99	642,525	657,06	6837,93
													Total
Registration fee PRH	240												
Registration fee Play Store	25												
Development cost	28000												

Figure 15: Expenses in an itemized form, first year and initial costs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	12000
60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	720
700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	8400
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	12000
120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	1440
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	240
182,6	190,3	198	205,7	219,2	232,7	246,2	259,7	273,2	286,7	300,2	313,7	2908,2
674,835	692,61	710,385	728,16	749,55	777,42	837,69	865,56	893,43	921,3	949,17	977,04	9777,15
674,835	692,61	710,385	728,16	749,55	777,42	837,69	865,56	893,43	921,3	949,17	977,04	9777,15
												Total
												57262,5

Figure 16: Second year expenses.

As the Google Play Stores commission drops from thirty percent to fifteen percent after the first year, we can see a drop in cost for that sector in the second year. Marketing costs are also lower, as the initial launch campaign required more funds compared to ongoing marketing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	12000
60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	720
700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	8400
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	12000
120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	1440
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	240
333	354,2	375,4	396,6	417,8	439	460,2	481,4	502,6	523,8	545	566,2	5395,2
1015,01	1054,17	1093,34	1132,5	1171,67	1210,83	1250	1289,16	1328,33	1367,49	1406,66	1445,82	14765
1015,01	1054,17	1093,34	1132,5	1171,67	1210,83	1250	1289,16	1328,33	1367,49	1406,66	1445,82	14765
												Total
												69725,1

Figure 17: Third year expenses.

Despite the lower commission in the Google Play Store, the expense for that, as well as the Apple store, rises as more users spend money on the application.

15.3.1 Variable costs

Variable costs fluctuate in accordance with the volume of goods produced. As we do not have a physical product to sell, there are fewer variable costs. After the initial investment, the only variable costs are commissions paid to the app stores and VAT. Apple Store takes fifteen percent of revenue as their commission. This percentage is available through their small business program, where businesses netting a revenue of under 1 million US dollars annually are subject to lower commission. Google Play on the other hand charges a 30 percent commission for the first year the application is up for download. After the first year, the commission was reduced to fifteen percent (Apple, n.d) (Google Inc n.d).

15.3.2 Fixed costs

Fixed costs are recurring costs that remain the same despite the volume of sales such as property rent or insurance.

The biggest fixed costs are marketing and hosting of the app. The budget for marketing is bigger during the first three months of launching the app to attract more potential users. Accounting is outsourced for a fixed monthly rate. Other fixed costs are the fees for basic services for a business bank account and transaction fees. The loan payment is calculated to cover interest and loan deduction to be paid over 65 months or five and a half years.

16 Conclusion

The research problem we aimed to solve with this thesis is “How can productivity mobile application achieve sustainable growth and profitability within the competitive mobile app market?” To solve this, we needed to find evidence of an untapped niche need in the productivity application market and to present a business model for an application that may fill that space. Based on literature research and thorough competitor analysis, we were able to identify a target audience for a productivity application, which has yet been able to have their needs met.

We found out that a target audience like this is women aged sixteen to twenty-five, who are students and professionals. We came to this conclusion through researching the usage of productivity applications.

Our research indicates that designing the application through gamification would be best suited for our target audience. Moreover, our literature research suggested a rising user base of women playing games within the genre called cozy games. Adding game-like elements to an application, or in this case creating a simulation game within a productivity application,

we can keep users better engaged and they are more likely to return to using the application. As a result of this research, we found out that is not only feasible but also profitable to build a productivity application based on gamification principles.

With an initial investment of 40 000€, the application can be designed, developed, and published. Within three years of launching the application we predict an annual profit of nearly 33 000€.

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