



Digital Marketing Strategy: A Case Study of a Finnish Clothing Company

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to develop a digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy. The newfound Finnish streetwear clothing company was founded in September of 2023, creating a need for a comprehensive digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the company to follow. Hence, the thesis' purpose is to assist the case company by creating a digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines. Furthermore, the thesis objective is to analyse collected data to aid in developing the digital marketing plan and brand guidelines for the case company. The writer of the thesis, Joonatan Hänninen, is the company's co-founder.

The research problem addresses key questions relevant to establishing and promoting a streetwear clothing brand in the Finnish clothing market, particularly in the streetwear segment. To comprehensively address the research problem, the thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach to data collection. The study includes quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure a more complete market overview. The quantitative research involves a survey directed to the current and potential customers of the case company. The survey respondent pool size was 31, and the research resulted in further knowledge of customer preferences and perspectives. Moreover, the qualitative research includes interviewing a professional recording artist, Gabri, to study the connection between streetwear and music scenes in Finland and to utilise the information gained to assist in creating the case company's digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines.

The thesis research resulted in the creation of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company. Furthermore, the thesis provided the case company with an action plan to follow the created strategies. In addition, the research findings are applicable to the case company and hold broader implications for the Finnish clothing industry. The adaptable nature of the strategies and guidelines developed can be tailored to suit other companies within the sector, offering a valuable resource for businesses aiming to navigate the complexities of digital marketing.

Key words: digital marketing, brand guidelines, Finnish clothing industry, social media marketing, influencer collaborations

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
	1.1. Thesis objectives, purpose, and research questions.....	7
	1.2. Thesis methodology	8
2	GENERAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR PIECES TO PIECES OY .	9
	2.1. Segmentation, targeting, and positioning	9
	2.1.1 Segmentation	11
	2.1.2 Targeting	17
	2.1.3 Positioning.....	20
	2.2. Marketing mix (4 P's)	21
	2.2.1 Product.....	22
	2.2.2 Price	25
	2.2.3 Place	26
	2.2.4 Promotion	29
3	MARKET ANALYSIS	32
	3.1. Data collection methods & results	32
	3.2. Quantitative research	32
	3.2.1 Demographic analysis	33
	3.2.2 General questions analysis	36
	3.2.3 Product-centric questions analysis	40
	3.2.4 Brand-related questions analysis.....	48
	3.2.5 Marketing-related questions analysis	53
	3.2.6 Quantitative research conclusion & recommendations.....	59
	3.3. Qualitative research	61
	3.3.1 Interview breakdown.....	62
	3.3.2 Analysation of the interview	69
	3.4. Competitive analysis	80
	3.4.1 Key competitors.....	81
	3.4.2 Competitor strategies and performance analysis.....	82
	3.4.3 Competition comparison and SWOT analysis of the case company	88
4	CREATING BRAND GUIDELINES AND STRATEGY	92
5	DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY	102
	5.1. Introduction	102
	5.2. The current digital marketing of the case company.....	102
	5.3. Digital marketing concepts	105

5.4. Digital marketing action plan	111
5.5. Digital marketing strategy integration with brand guidelines	118
6 ACTION PLAN & CONCLUSION.....	123
REFERENCES	126
APPENDICES.....	130

1 INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of digitalism, the importance of brand strategy and marketing approaches is increasingly evident, especially in the fashion industry. The connection between materialistic values and the search for deeper brand engagement creates complexity for marketers and brand strategists. (Kaprefer, 2008:2)

The rationale for selecting this subject area comes from the observable shifts in consumer behaviour and the evolving landscape of digital marketing. (Leigh, 2021) The fashion industry, characterised by its seasonal changes and trend-driven nature, provides a rich context for exploring innovative digital marketing strategies. (Easey, 2009:4) This is particularly relevant in Finland's streetwear segment, where social media's impact on brand perceptions and consumer trends is significant.

This thesis, titled "Digital Marketing Strategy: A Case Study of a Finnish Clothing Company," explores the dynamics, unique challenges and opportunities considering digital marketing and branding of the Finnish fashion market, particularly the streetwear segment. These dynamics are explored in relation to the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy. The thesis writer, Joonatan Hänninen, is the co-founder of the case company and provides an inside perspective of the company's operations and viewpoints on various subjects discussed in the thesis.

The thesis aims to create a digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy. As the company is new and founded in September of 2023, it needs a comprehensive digital marketing strategy or brand guidelines to follow. It needs a guide to further establish and grow the business in the Finnish fashion market. The thesis purpose is to aid in creating the digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company. Furthermore, the objective of the thesis is to collect data through research and apply the collected information to enhance the current digital marketing and branding operations of the case company, as well as provide new nuances to the digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company.

The knowledge base for the thesis is based on the research on modern marketing theories combined with real-life case studies. In application, information is gathered through books and internet sources and quantitative and qualitative research, that the thesis writer conducts. This approach ensures the research is grounded in solid theory and applies to real-world situations, especially in digital branding and engaging customers in the fashion industry. The thesis applies a practical approach with no structured theory or practical chapters. Hence, theoretical, and practical approaches are utilised in a mixed manner.

The thesis progression begins by developing a basic marketing strategy for the case company. This section covers market segmentation, targeting, positioning, and exploring the marketing mix, known as the 4Ps. After setting this foundation, the focus shifts to establishing brand guidelines and strategies specifically designed for the Finnish fashion industry context.

The next part of the thesis involves a detailed market analysis. This analysis uses quantitative and qualitative research methods and examines the competition through competitive analysis. This approach provides a well-rounded view of market trends and customers' needs. Finally, the thesis concludes by creating a tailored digital marketing strategy, brand guidelines, and an action plan for the case company to improve its market position and customer connection.

1.1. Thesis objectives, purpose, and research questions

This thesis delves into the Finnish clothing brand's branding and digital marketing practices, Pieces to Pieces. The objective is to develop an effective digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines, drawing on qualitative and quantitative research within Finland's domestic fashion sector, specifically focusing on streetwear.

Given the company's B2C sales orientation through its web store, the digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines will be crafted to enhance sales and visibility in the Finnish market. The study also acknowledges the company's reliance on social media, aiming to strengthen its online presence through strategic initiatives.

The objective of the thesis can be formulated through research questions as follows:

"What are the essential components of a strong brand identity for a clothing/streetwear company in the Finnish clothing industry?"

"What are the competitive forces in the market, and how does the company's brand need to differentiate itself?"

"How can social media platforms be effectively leveraged to promote a clothing/streetwear brand in the Finnish market?"

The research questions will be used as a framework for the study, and the study focuses on answering the set research questions.

The purpose of the thesis is to assist the case company in creating a comprehensive digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines. The expected outcome of the research concerning the digital marketing strategy is a strategy focusing on increasing the social media presence of the case company, ultimately leading to increased sales and market share in the industry. Furthermore, aiding the

case company in creating tailored brand guidelines, specific instructions, and rules for how a brand should be presented and represented visually and verbally will create and increase brand credibility, trust, and customer loyalty in the Finnish clothing market.

1.2. Thesis methodology

The study will encompass comprehensive market research within the Finnish clothing sector; this includes quantitative and qualitative research and a competitive analysis to understand the various dynamics and strategies of competing companies to gain further information and an overall examination of the domestic fashion industry.

The methodology integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data will be gathered through a survey targeting current and potential customers. At the same time, qualitative insights will be obtained through an interview with a professional recording artist connected to the Finnish street-wear scene.

This mixed-methods approach ensures a more complete, reliable, and nuanced understanding of the market, providing substantial value to the case company in its branding and marketing endeavours. (LinkedIn Advice)

2 GENERAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOR PIECES TO PIECES OY

The second chapter of this thesis delves into the foundational aspects of formulating a comprehensive marketing strategy for the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy. The Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) framework is at the core of this strategy. This three-step formula is instrumental in assisting companies to effectively segment their audience, define the target market, and position their products to maximise the efficiency of marketing efforts. (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023a)

This chapter aims to apply the STP framework to assist in developing a digital marketing strategy and establishing brand guidelines for Pieces to Pieces Oy. By employing this framework, the focus is on accurately defining and narrowing down the target audience and focus groups. This approach helps in identifying the most effective communication channels, aiming to reduce marketing costs and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the case company's digital marketing operations.

Through a detailed exploration of each component of the STP model, this chapter will lay the groundwork for an effective marketing strategy tailored to the unique needs and dynamics of the case company in the competitive landscape of the Finnish fashion industry.

2.1. Segmentation, targeting, and positioning

Easey's book "Fashion Marketing" refers to the advantages of market segmentation in fashion marketing. He states that utilizing segmentation in fashion marketing enables fashion marketers to calculate which strategic direction the company will take to compete against competitors in the space; whether to compete directly if a strategic advantage is evident or to position the company to exploit strengths and avoid retaliation from a stronger competitor (Easey, 2009:134-135).

A market segment is a group of consumers who share similar needs and wants for a company's product or service. A market segment can be narrowed to a

more specific consumer group, creating a niche segment (Kotler et al., 2019:294–295).

The segment market for the case company is niche, as the case company aims to provide high-quality streetwear clothing with a simplistic appearance in design for streetwear and fashion enthusiasts, with an understanding of the streetwear dynamics and unique styles in apparel. The specific style and aesthetic in clothing the case company strives to offer is a blend of the style referred as "opium" and original influence from the company's designer. The "opium" aesthetic takes influence from rock and punk, modernizing it into today's age. (Fuga Studios)

The segmenting method used in the thesis is the descriptor perspective, as the segmentation approach is to segment the market to describe the characteristics of target customers. The descriptions included in the thesis segmentation are demographic, personality characteristics and geographical. This approach makes the research easily understandable and less costly due to secondary data availability. (Easey, 2009:135)

2.1.1 Segmentation

Demographics

Demographic segmentation is one of the four main types of market segmentation, which focuses on segmenting audiences based on data such as age, gender, income, and education. (Mialki). In this section, demographic segmentation is used to narrow the market and locate the demographic segment that is most logical for the case company to focus its digital marketing initiatives on.

The target age group the case company aims to target is between 18 and 30. Generally, the streetwear aesthetic is seen as an aesthetic for the youth, as social media, music, and sports greatly influence streetwear trends. Though, as the case, the company strives to offer high quality and durability in their clothing, the target audience shifts to a more mature audience, who tend to appreciate the high quality of their clothing. Hence, appreciate the clothing's fabric, weight and stitching more than the design on the clothing piece, enabling the case company to keep their designs simplistic. The thesis writer has observed that as domestic streetwear companies in Finland tend to target teens and young adults, the case company's targeted brand image and audience focus on providing apparel for young adults and adults.

Furthermore, the case company aims to maintain their products as reasonably affordable as possible, considering the quality the company aims to provide for the products. As the company does not aim to target teens with their clothing, the purchasing power of young adults and adults tends to be higher as they have entered their working lives.

However, at the ages of 18 and 30, people tend to be in various life situations, and their purchasing power varies depending on their education, profession, and other factors. Hence, the company aims to retain affordability in their products to remain accessible for fashion enthusiasts in various life situations.

The chart provided by Statistics Finland presented in Figure 1 represents the total earnings by level of education and age in 2022. It can be seen from the chart

that the average wage between the ages of 20 to 34 is between an estimated 2450 and 3700 euros per month, depending on their education. However, the chart does not take students into account (Statistics Finland, 2023a).

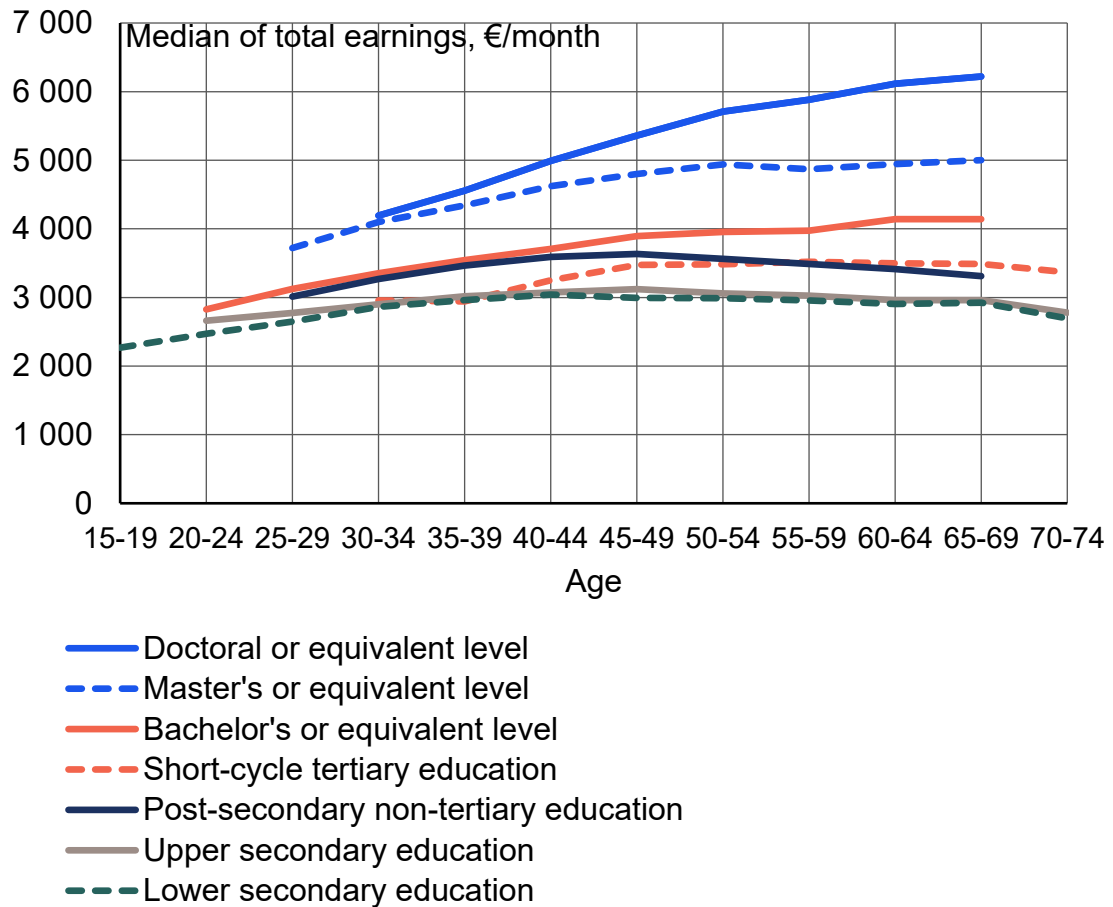


Figure 1. Median of monthly total earnings by the level of education and age in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2023a)

Moreover, according to Hypebeast's and Strategy &'s "Streetwear Impact Report", consumer and industry research states that 70% of the respondents had an annual income of under 40 thousand dollars (36,650 euros) or less. The research methods for the report included a consumer survey and an industry survey. The consumer survey collected a total of 40,960 respondents across the globe, while the industry survey collected a total of 763 respondents from a range of industry players (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2019).

However, as shown in Figure 2, 54% of respondents reported spending \$100-\$500 on streetwear clothing monthly, and 18% reported spending over \$500. (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2019)

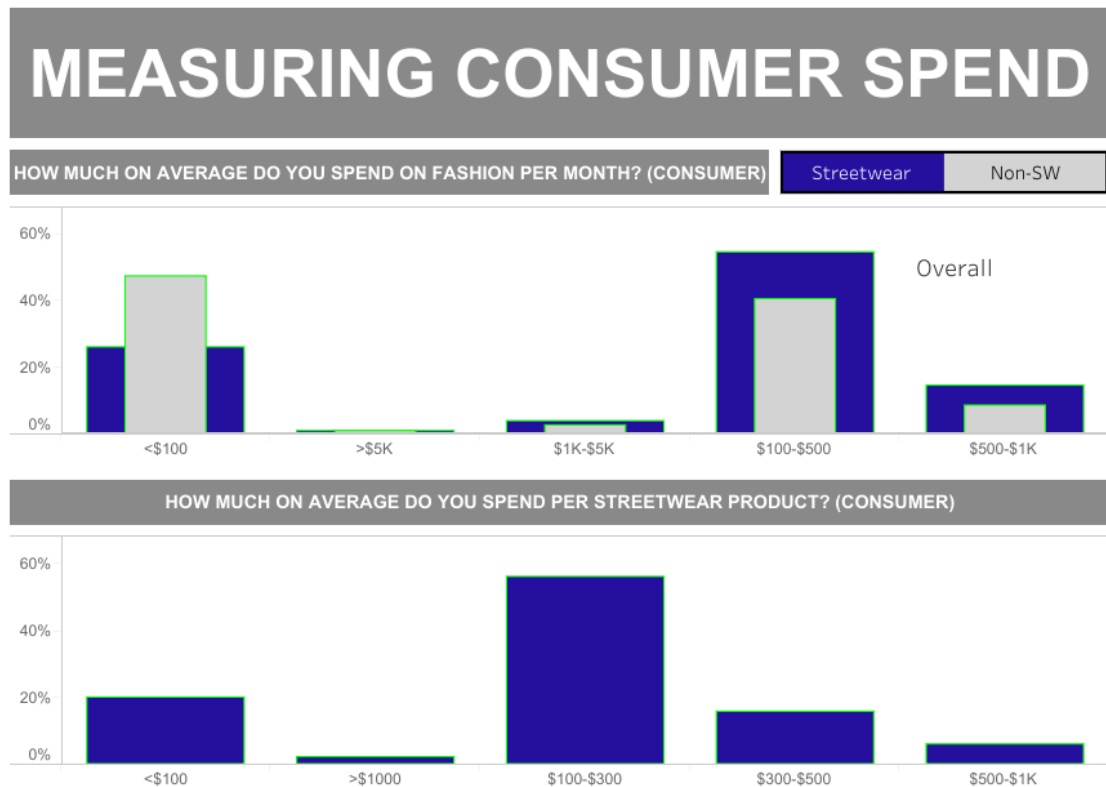


Figure 2. Measuring Consumer Spend (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2019)

In addition, regarding the regional differences in spending, visible in Figure 3, the results indicate that 55% of European and North American consumers are willing to spend the most when the total sum of the order is between \$100-300 (91,60-274,90 euros). Hence, as the case company's product prices vary between 30-70 euros, the case company's pricing aligned with the purchasing power of its targeted audience when the yearly income within the respondents was between 20-40 thousand dollars and the audience was set between 16-30 of age.

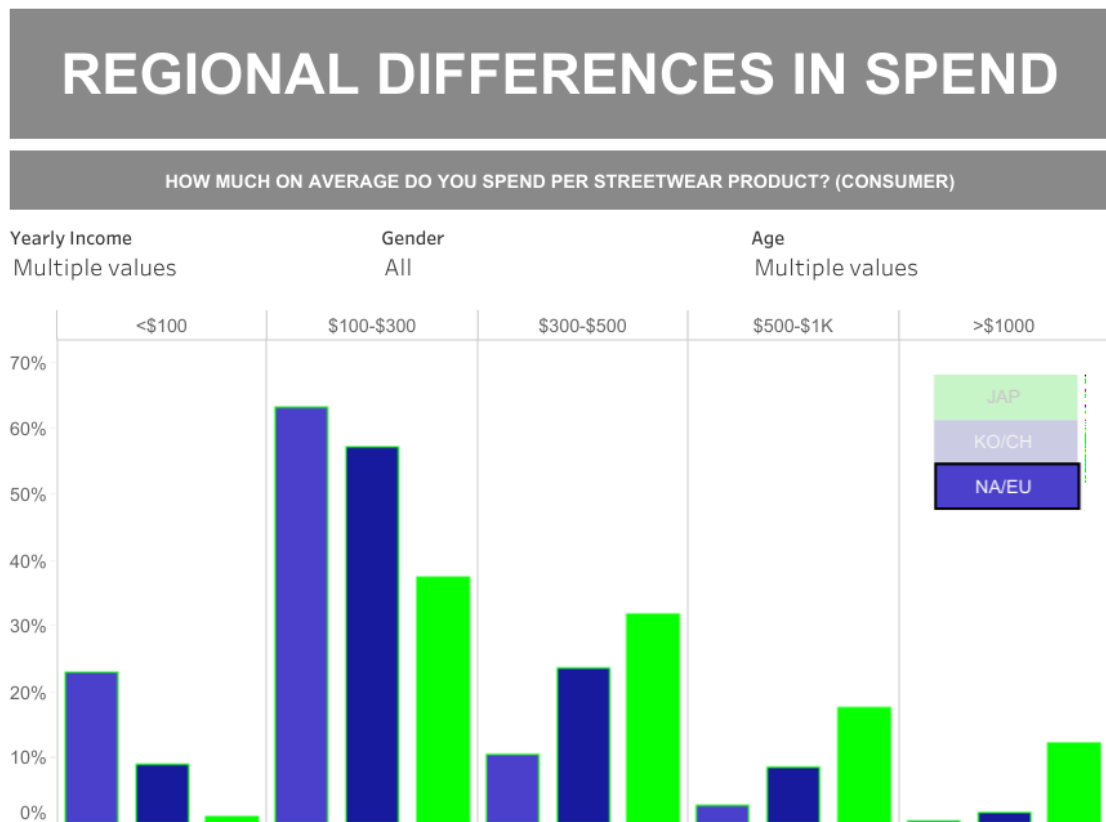


Figure 3. Regional differences in spend (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2019)

Lifestyle and Psychographs

Lifestyle and psychographic segmentation is a market research method that divides customer segments based on psychological criteria such as values, beliefs, interests, activities, and social status. (Webster) This section focuses on locating the most suitable customer segment for the case company, considering the lifestyle and psychological factors.

The values and beliefs the case company strives to deliver on its brand's ethos are quality, durability, and sustainability. The materials used in the company's clothing are the most important factor in its values, and the company considers the sustainability of the materials used in its clothing.

In Petra Komppula's thesis, "A study of the influence of values on the consumption of domestic fashion", a study was conducted to measure the influence of a brand's values on consumption in the Finnish markets. In the survey conducted by Komppula, over 50% of respondents were between the ages of 19-26. The

survey results indicate that when making purchase decisions, Finnish consumers value the quality of the product compared to the price of the product, with respondents answering 56.4% in favour of quality (Komppula, 2020).

In addition, Komppula's research, the information shown on Figure 4 states that among the respondents, the three most answered values they recognized within themselves were ecological, trendy, and domestic. (Komppula, 2020)

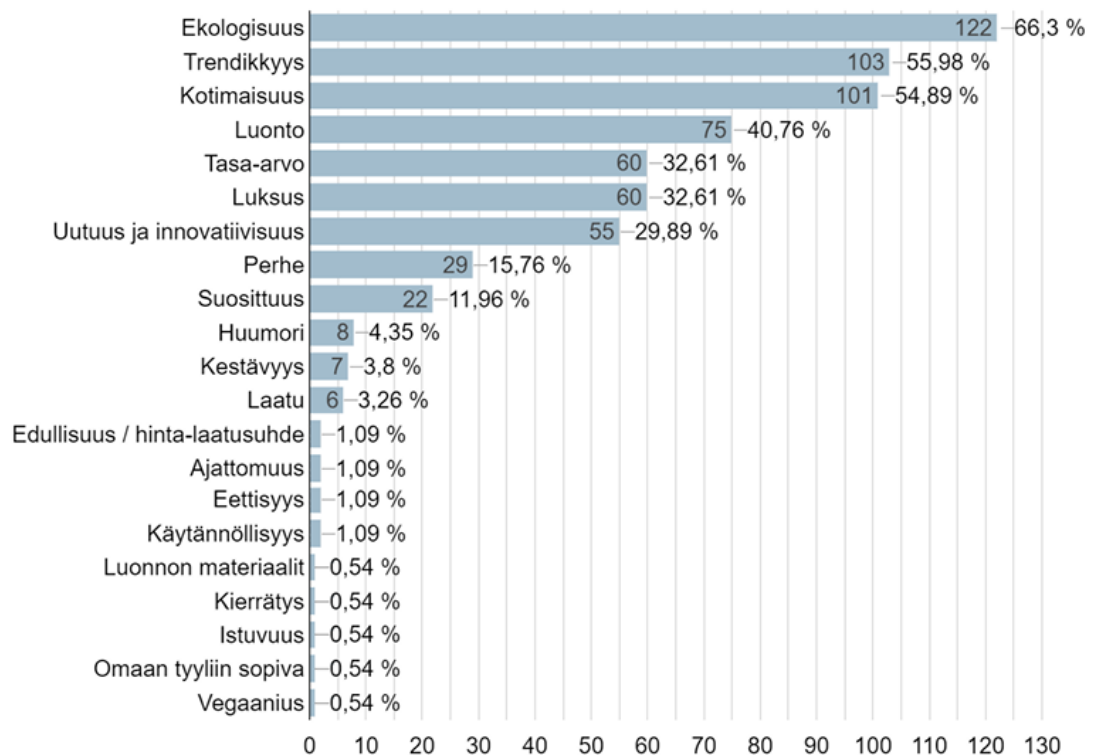


Figure 4. A screen capture of Petra Komppula's chart representing values of consumption among responders (Komppula, 2020)

Hence, the consumer segment for the case company psychographically is streetwear enthusiasts and newcomers who value how the product is made: quality, durability, and sustainability.

Geographic Segmentation

Geographic segmentation is another form of dividing customer segments into smaller, more accurate groups. Geographical segmentation divides the customer

segments by physical location, such as a country, city, or postal code (Doan, 2023).

As the case company is in its beginning stages of operations, the geographic focus is on the domestic market in Finland. Hence, geographically, the company focuses on providing its products to Finnish consumers. However, in the future, the company aims to expand from the markets of European countries to global markets.

Geographically, according to Ville Salonen, in their article on Finnish Textile & Fashion and as shown in Figure 6, Finland is the world's 12th most spending country on clothing per capita in 2022. As shown on figure 5, the average amount of money a person spent on clothing in Finland in 2022 was 730 euros. The greatest market share in Finland was women's clothing, with 356 euros per capita and men's clothing, with an average of 194 euros per capita (Salonen, 2023).

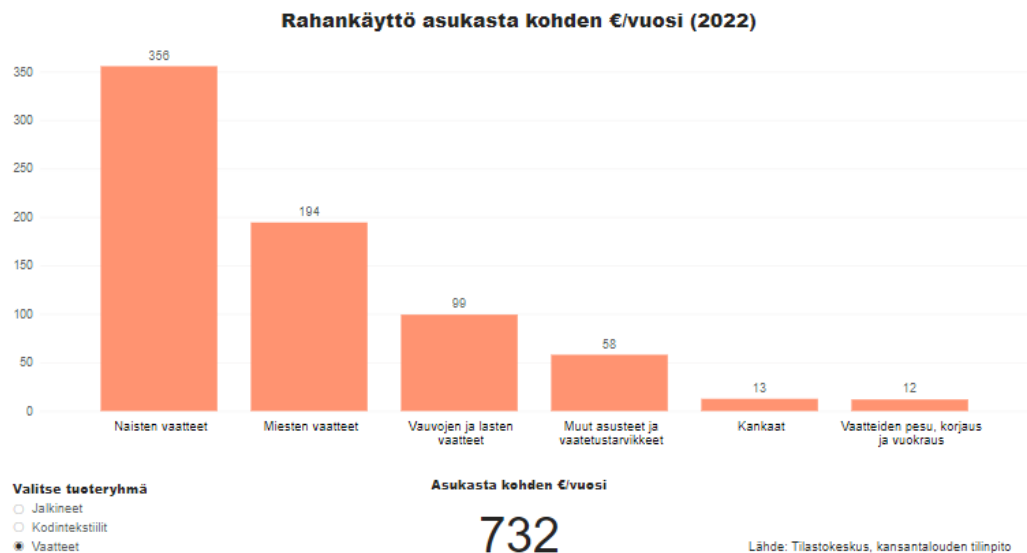


Figure 5. Spending per capita per year on clothing in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2023)

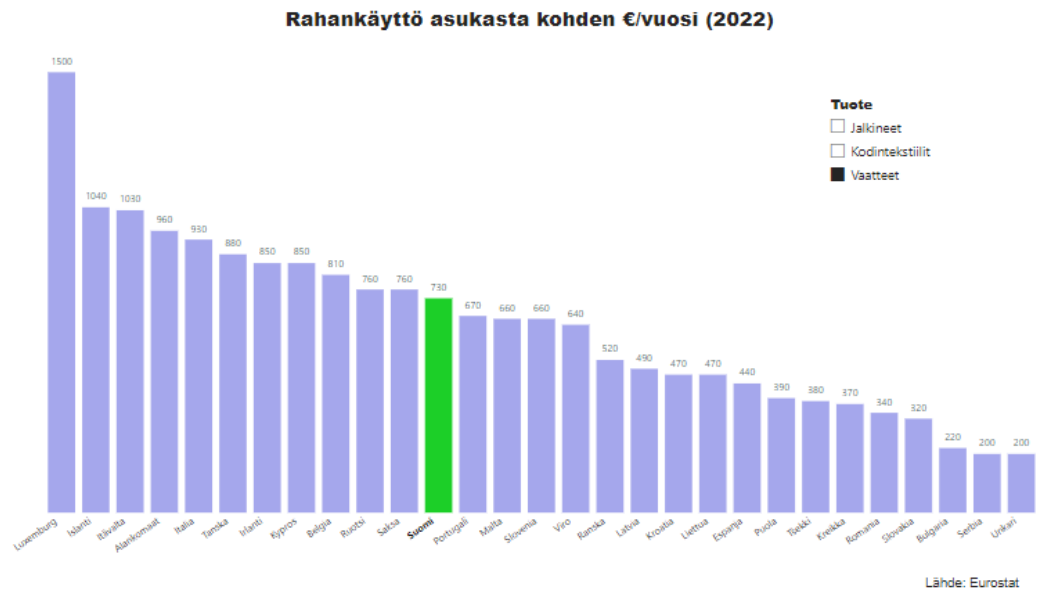


Figure 6. Spending per capita per year on clothing in Finland (Eurostat, 2022)

Overall, the statistics indicate that the Finnish people are willing to spend money on new clothing yearly. As the case company offers its products to all genders, the number of potential consumers for the company's products increases.

As the company does not have a physical store and the products are available for purchase from the company's web store, consumers from all cities and areas in Finland can access the web store and purchase products. Hence, the need for deeper specification on the targeting in cities across Finland is not topical.

2.1.2 Targeting

The mentioned segment for the company's marketing efforts is attractive, as the overall scope and size of the segment are of the proper size compared to the size of the company's current operations and capacity. As shown in Figures 7 and 8, on December 31st, 2022, the Finnish male population between the ages of 20 and 29 consisted of 649,335 men. (Statistics Finland, 2023b)

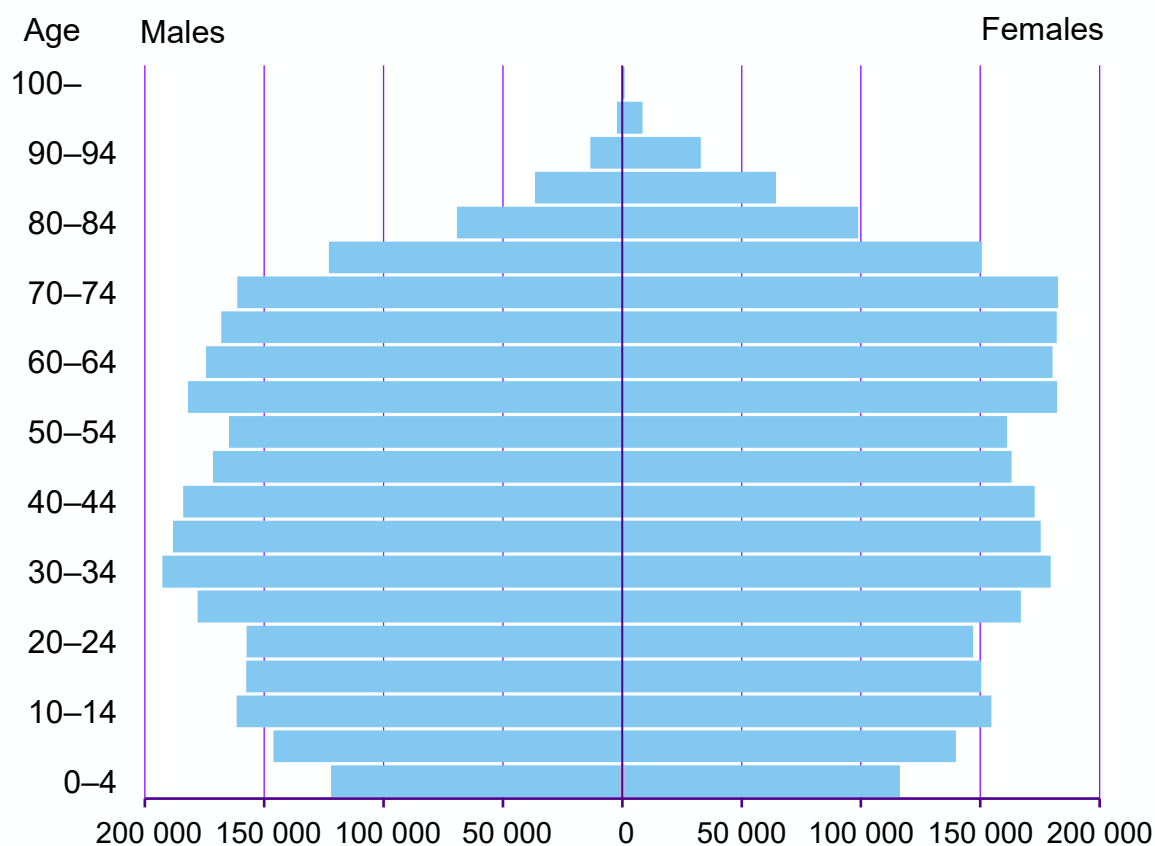


Figure 7. Age structure of the Finnish population on 31 December 2022 (Statistics Finland, 2023b)

Age structure of population on 31 December

2022			
Age	Total	Males	Females
0-4	238 282	121 934	116 348
5-9	285 852	146 098	139 754
10-14	316 194	161 507	154 687
15-19	307 960	157 544	150 416
20-24	304 385	157 373	147 012
25-29	344 950	177 930	167 020
30-34	372 101	192 595	179 506
35-39	363 619	188 248	175 371
40-44	356 657	183 898	172 759
45-49	334 702	171 537	163 165
50-54	326 045	164 781	161 264
55-59	364 009	181 875	182 134
60-64	354 703	174 364	180 339
65-69	349 928	167 972	181 956
70-74	343 733	161 239	182 494
75-79	273 662	122 972	150 690

80–84	168 074	69 235	98 839
85–89	100 950	36 576	64 374
90–94	46 307	13 389	32 918
95–99	10 755	2 257	8 498
100–	1 102	153	949
Total	5 563 970	2 753 477	2 810 493

Figure 8. Age structure of the Finnish population on 31 December 2022 (Statistics Finland, 2023b)

As competing companies in the industry focus on the younger generation, the case company focuses on adults, allowing it to differentiate itself in the space. Moreover, as the company's priorities, values and beliefs are more towards the adult audience, valuing quality and durability over extravagant clothing designs, the target audience makes sense for the company.

In addition, the affordability of the products and purchase power of its targeted audience support the growth potential for the case company in domestic markets. The case company's pricing strategy is well-suited for young adults and adults who have entered their working lives and, on average, have higher purchasing power than teenagers.

Furthermore, the company's focus on quality, durability, and sustainability aligns with consumer values identified in research conducted by Petra Komppula in Finland. Consumers in the study prioritized quality over price when making purchase decisions, indicating an appreciation for the values the company emphasizes. This alignment can help attract consumers who share similar values.

Moreover, Finland's status as one of the world's top-spending countries on clothing per capita in 2021 indicates a market for apparel. The company's decision to focus on the Finnish domestic market initially makes sense, as Finnish consumers are willing to spend on clothing. Furthermore, the company's web store provides access to consumers nationwide, eliminating geographical limitations.

In addition, offering a unisex product catalogue, including hoodies, t-shirts, pants, and accessories, increases the potential customer base. The inclusivity of products for all genders broadens the market reach.

The company's commitment to sustainability and "slow fashion" resonates with consumers increasingly conscious of environmental impact, as sustainability can be a unique selling point that attracts socially responsible consumers.

Furthermore, according to Petra Komppula, in her thesis "A study of the influence of values on the consumption of domestic fashion", 59% of respondents answered that they follow influencers in the fashion space. (Komppula, 2020:34) Through influencer marketing that resonates with the target audience of the case company, the influencers can authentically promote the case company's products to their followers, generating interest and trust.

2.1.3 Positioning

According to Kapferer, positioning aims to identify and take possession of a strong purchasing rationale that gives a company a real or perceived advantage. It implies a desire to take up a long-term position and defend it (Kapferer, 2008:178). Hence, positioning is a tool companies use to shape how the target audience perceives the product or service it offers. (Srikanth, 2023).

The position the case company aims to obtain in the Finnish clothing market and how it aims to be perceived in the industry is to be known for its quality garments while retaining affordability. In addition, the case company aims to position itself in the market as exclusive, striving to leave consumers wanting more of its products and building anticipation for each season's clothing releases. The goal for the company's positioning is to become a staple in the Finnish street-wear industry as a high-quality serving brand that is clothing the consumers trust to be the best in the industry on every individual clothing drop.

A unique value proposition (UVP) explains to a company's target audience what its product and service provides, why the consumers need it, and why the products differ from its competitors. (Shopify Staff, 2022)

The case company is to highlight and communicate its beliefs and values in prioritizing quality in its products, how it is contributing to a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry, highlighting the minimalist aesthetic of the clothing, making it versatile and easy to integrate into both formal and casual outfits, stress that the company offers affordability without compromising on quality, emphasize that the company provides clothing that is inclusive and suitable for all genders, and impress sense of urgency and exclusivity around products, driving demand and loyalty among the customer base. Furthermore, the sustainability of the clothing can be communicated similarly.

As the case company aims to differentiate itself as being more affordable than competing companies in the market, it is important to emphasize affordability without compromising the quality when the products are communicated to the audience, as low prices can easily be perceived as low quality.

To avoid the "low-price, low-quality" perception, the case company must build and present the brand correctly and turn the perception towards the image of great value instead of low-quality. (Calero-Holmes, 2023)

To tackle the "low-price, low-quality" perception, the case company aims to position itself in the market as a mix between a high-value brand and a premium brand. The basic principle of a high value-brand is to offer affordable pricing with relatively good quality, and the basic principle of a premium brand is high pricing for the product for exclusivity and a luxurious appearance; hence, the case company aims to position itself to be perceived as high quality, while remaining valuable pricewise (Floor, 2010:139-146).

2.2. Marketing mix (4 P's)

The marketing mix (4p's) consists of four variables the marketer can control to meet consumer needs: price, product, promotion, and place. Essentially, the marketing mix is getting the right product to the chosen market segment at the correct time, place, and price (Easey, 2009:141).

This section of the marketing mix will focus on the case company's upcoming zip-up hoodie for its early 2024 clothing release.

2.2.1 Product

When products are created and designed, a tech pack will be created for the product as the manufacturing company will require information about the product from which they will begin manufacturing the initial sample. The tech pack of the case company's zip-up hoodie is presented in Figure 9.

Essentially, a tech pack is a blueprint of the final product. A tech pack is created for the product's manufacturer, which contains the technical specifications and design details that make the product. Hence, a tech pack is a tool between the designer and manufacturer to communicate the necessary information to create the correct product, as the final product quality highly depends on the communication between the two parties (Kochar, 2023).

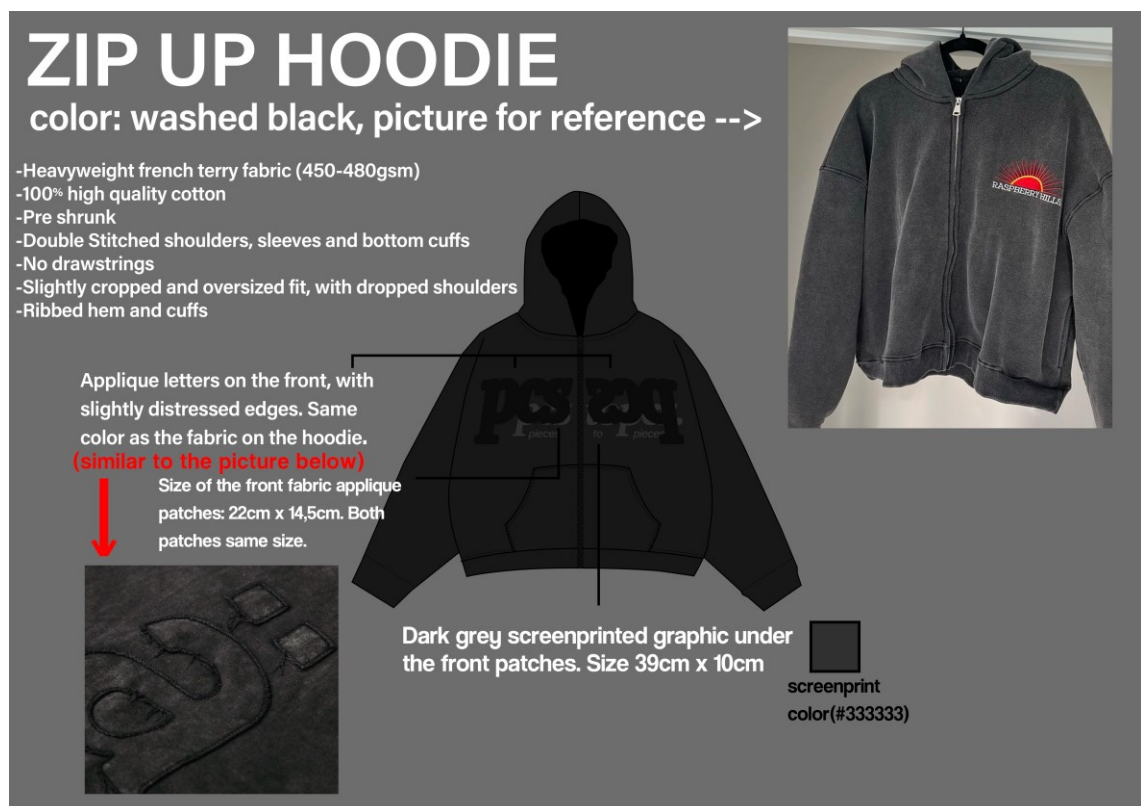


Figure 9. Pieces to Pieces Oy Zip Up Hoodie tech pack

Analysing the ready-made tech pack in Figure 7 for the company's zip-up hoodie shows various specifics about the product. The initial specification about the product is the colour and, specifically, the washed effect the company aims to produce for it. The washed effect on the cotton lightens out the colour, creating a more vintage aesthetic to the product.

In addition, the additional characteristics and specifications of the product are listed on the tech pack. For example, the needed weight, fabric, and quality are stated first, promoting the company's values and priorities about product quality.

Furthermore, the tech pack states that the fabric should be "pre-shrunk", meaning that the fabric goes through a controlled process during manufacturing, where the fabric is pre-shrunk and made into a garment, preventing further shrinking when used by a consumer. (A Cleaner World)

The tech pack presents the product's weight as 450 to 480 gsm. In the textile industry, the term "gsm" is used to determine the product's weight, and the term comes from the words grams per square meter. The weight of the fabric can affect its performance in various ways. A heavy-weight fabric can be more insulating and durable, whereas lighter fabric can be more breathable (CottonMonk, 2023). Hence, the desired gsm for the zip-up hoodie promotes durability through the heavy weight of the product.

Furthermore, the tech pack explains the appearance-affecting characteristics of the product with double stitching on shoulders, sleeves, and bottom cuffs. In addition, the tech pack states that the product must not have drawstrings and must be slightly cropped and oversized with dropped shoulders. Furthermore, the product must have ribbed hem and cuffs. All the mentioned factors of the product affect the overall appearance and aesthetic and have been carefully planned by the designer to suit the streetwear aesthetic the case company is striving to bring with its products.

Moreover, the tech pack explains the details of the product's design. One of the product's unique selling points is the distressed patching on the front of the zip-up hoodie that matches the overall colour of the product. The sizing of the

patching is given on the tech pack in addition to a reference picture. Furthermore, the product includes a screenprint under the patching and further information on the screenprint is also given on the tech pack.

Overall, the product's benefits and unique selling points are the high quality, weight in gsm's and the patching design. In the streetwear industry, high gsm clothing is sought after and respected, as it indicates quality and price in production, leaving an impression on the consumer that the product is well-made, and the fabric is of proper quality. Uniqueness in the product design is in the distressed patching, as other competing Finnish streetwear companies have yet to apply the method in their products.

2.2.2 Price

The product's pricing is yet to be determined as the overall production, sampling and shipping costs related to the product are unknown. Though, through competing manufacturing companies for the product, assuming that the product is to be manufactured in Europe, the average bulk unit cost for the exact zip-up hoodie with the material, weight and design qualifications is around 30 euros per unit. The European sample creation heavily differs among manufacturers but will cost the case company 200 to 500 euros.

The minimum order quantity in European manufacturers differs between 100 and 120 pieces; hence, the company is forced to order a minimum of 100 pieces of the product.

Considering the discussed matters, the overall zip-up hoodie order will be between 3200 and 4100 euros, respectively. To remain competitive, the case company aims to price the product as affordable as possible, and the goal for the expected price is between 69,90 and 79,90 euros per unit. Through pricing the product accordingly, after taxes of 24%, the overall net amount the company will make through selling an average of 100 products is between 5300 and 6100 euros.

As the company operates in Finland, the value-added tax on the products must be considered when calculating product pricing. The value-added tax rate of Finland in sold products is 24% of the product's initial price without taxes; if the case company purchases 100 zip-up hoodies for the bulk unit cost of 30 euros to get a profit margin of 50%, the company must double the initial bulk unit cost of 30 euros and add the value added tax percentage of 24%, resulting in a price of 74,4 euros the customer must pay.

The goal for the first clothing drop for the case company is not to maximise profits but to increase brand visibility and acknowledgement in the Finnish street-wear industry, ultimately building trust around the clothing's high-quality promise, leading to increased sales in the company's future clothing releases. The company does not have a prior consumer base or demand for its products so

that it will be differentiated from the competing companies through a premium quality-to-price ratio.

Furthermore, the case company plans to execute discount strategies with their clothing drops, offering package deals with discounted prices. For example, the company has released its baseball cap for the summer of 2023, along with the early 2024 clothing release, which will include the mentioned zip-up hoodie and a beanie; the baseball cap can be offered as a package deal with the zip-up hoodie with a discounted price, to increase the baseball cap sales, as the company plans on releasing a new cap on the summer of 2024. Accessories such as caps and beanies can be produced with a lower bulk unit cost than clothing; hence, the company has more room to discount the prices compared to the zip-up hoodie.

2.2.3 Place

As the company does not have a physical store, the purchasing of the company's products occurs in its web store. The distribution process of the products operates as such: when a customer orders a product from the company's web store, the product is packaged and sent through the mail to the customer. The case company is a business customer of Posti Oy, and the mailing will be done through Posti Oy.

A service, Shopify, powers the company's web store. The web store design is simple and effective, presenting the company's offerings directly to the consumer with pricing and additional information about the product, such as the material, weight, sizing, and manufacturing country. The front page of company's webstore can be found in Figure 10.

The benefit of utilizing Shopify as the company's web store is reduced costs. In comparison, if the company had a physical store in the Tampere area, the monthly rent for the store would be between 500 and 2000 euros, depending on the size and location. With the company being new and not requiring a physical store, the company saves vast amounts of capital by operating online.

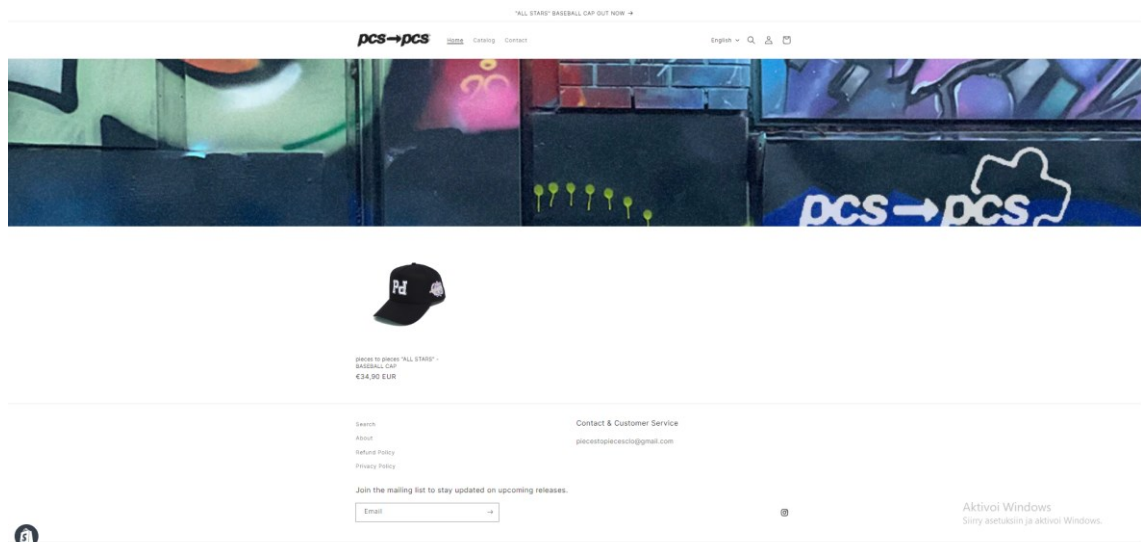


Figure 10. The case company's webstore

The case company's web store offers all necessary payment methods, from regular credit card payment to PayPal. However, the company operates online and does not take cash as payment.

As a business customer of Posti, the company has fixed prices for each package size. The fee is added to their total order cost when the customer orders the product. Posti offer's tracking numbers directly to the company, and the company then sends the tracking number to the consumer via email. In addition, the company offers a pick-up option on their orders, and the customer can collect the order from the company's headquarters in Nokia.

In Finland's legislation, when ordering products online, the customer has 14 days to return the product. When the consumer sends the notice of return, the customer has an additional 14 days to return the product to the company. The company has 14 days to return the money to the customer after receiving the notice of return (Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority). After the company has received the returned product, the company will assess the condition of the product to decide whether the product is in its original condition and can be sold again or used for a different purpose, for example, photo shoots and marketing content.

As the case company's operations are at the beginning stages, the company does not have a separate storage facility. The overall quantity of products the

company will have at the beginning after the initial clothing drop will be around 200 when assessing its storage of 25 baseball caps, 100 zip-up hoodies and 50 beanies. The products will be stored in the company's owners' apartments.

2.2.4 Promotion

Digital and Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms, especially Instagram and TikTok, are vital tools for digital promotion for the case company. These platforms fit perfectly to the case company's primary consumer demographic.

As shown in Figure 11, according to a study conducted by DNA named "Digital life - social media further research 2023" concerning the usage frequency of social media platforms in Finland, in the age group of 16-24, TikTok is ranked third, with 74% of target group respondents recruited in Nepa from online panels responding to using TikTok daily. Moreover, in the age group of 25-34, 56% of the respondents responded that they use Instagram daily. The target group recruited from Nepa's online panels consisted of Finnish people aged 16 to 74.

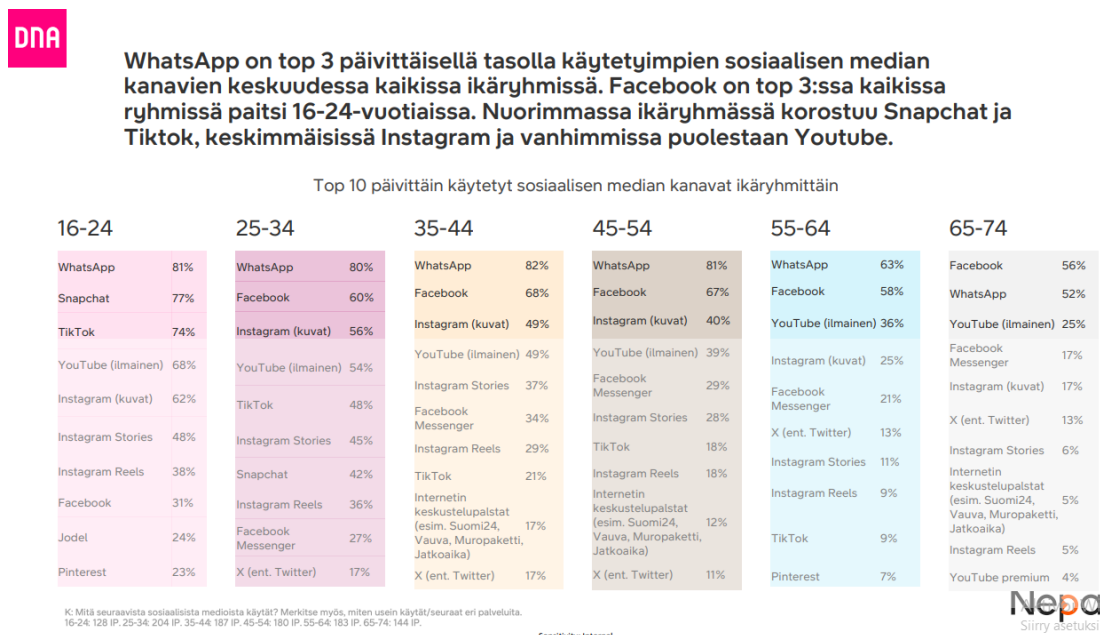


Figure 11. Top 10 daily used social media platforms in Finland by age (DNA, 2023)

Moreover, through collaborating with influencers, especially from the Finnish music industry, the case company can leverage their following for brand en-

dorsements. These partnerships should focus on authentic, brand-aligned content that resonates with the target audience, potentially driving reach and credibility.

Furthermore, a well-structured email marketing strategy can create valuable customer relationships. Newsletters featuring new releases, special offers, and exclusive content can keep the brand at the forefront of customers' minds, encouraging repeat visits and purchases.

Content Marketing

Creating social media content that reflects the brand's values and aesthetic can improve organic reach through search engines. Video content on platforms like Instagram, YouTube and TikTok as part of an integrated social media strategy can provide a better brand experience for the potential customer. Showcasing products, fashion tips, or customer stories can significantly enhance engagement.

Advertising

Targeted advertising campaigns on platforms like Instagram can effectively reach specific audience segments. These ads can be tailored based on demographics, interests, and behaviour, ensuring higher engagement rates.

Sales promotions and offers

Seasonal discounts or bundling offers, for instance, buy a hoodie, get a cap at a reduced price, can increase sales. These promotions should be time-limited to create urgency and encourage immediate purchases.

Community engagement and brand events

Developing an active online community through interactive social media project can create brand loyalty. Engaging with customers through polls, contests and giveaways can create a sense of belonging for the customer.

Organizing pop-up events or collaborations with local stores can provide direct customer engagement and an opportunity to experience the brand firsthand. These events can also include exclusive products, not available in the case company's web store.

Measuring and analysing promotion effectiveness

Utilizing analytics tools to track the effectiveness of promotional campaigns is crucial. Continuous analysis and adaptation based on customer feedback and engagement metrics can help refine strategies for better outcomes.

For the case company, the effectiveness of its digital marketing efforts can be monitored through the analytics applications of the social media platforms used as well as through the case company's web store, Shopify.

Current situation

Currently, Instagram is the only social media platform the case company uses and is relatively active on. The case company's Instagram page can be seen in Figure 12. The case company has posted two official Instagram posts concerning the release of their "ALL STARS" baseball cap and had released Instagram stories actively promoting the product at the time of the release.

Instagram

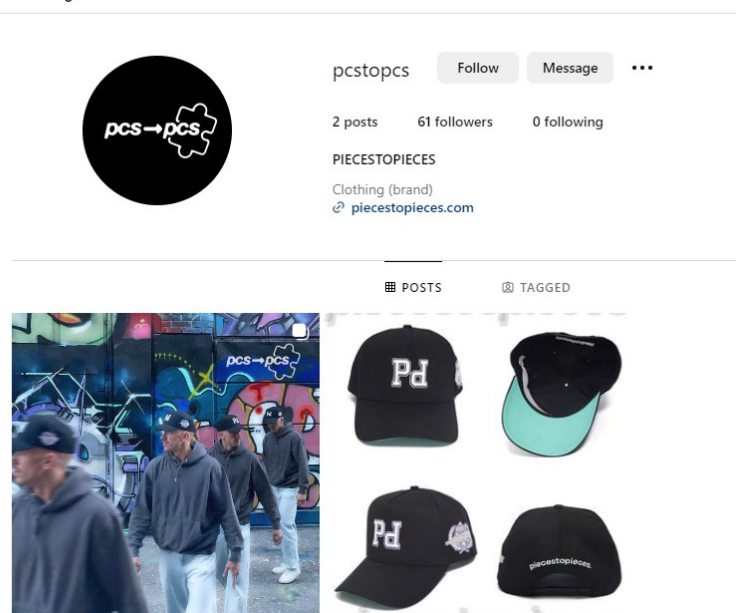


Figure 12. The case company's Instagram page

3 MARKET ANALYSIS

3.1. Data collection methods & results

As the research purpose of the thesis is to manufacture a digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company, a survey was formed to gain further knowledge and information towards consumer preferences and opinions, which involved questions about streetwear in general, products, industry, brand-related questions and digital marketing and social media-related questions. In addition, to support the survey, an interview with a professional recording artist involved in the Finnish streetwear space was conducted to gain further insight into the industry.

Hence, the data collection methods used in the research are qualitative and quantitative, with a survey and an interview with a professional recording artist, Gabri.

3.2. Quantitative research

The quantitative research conducted for this study offers a comprehensive view into the consumer preferences, behaviours, and perceptions related to the case company, a Finnish streetwear brand. The survey, executed from November 1, 2023, to December 1, 2023, gathered valuable insights from 31 respondents. These respondents were primarily composed of the company's existing customers and individuals who engaged with the company's social media channels. Participants were recruited through the case company's Instagram story post, encouraging followers to participate in the survey. The survey can be found in the appendixes of the thesis.

This diverse respondent base provided a snapshot of the brand's current market standing and consumer sentiment. The survey covered several key areas: demographic analysis, general questions about streetwear preferences, product-centric considerations, brand-related perceptions, and marketing-related viewpoints. Each survey section was designed to uncover specific insights to guide

the case company in bettering its product development, marketing, and overall brand positioning strategies.

3.2.1 Demographic analysis

Age distribution

In examining the age distribution of the survey respondents and as shown in Figure 13, it was observed that the 21-22-year age bracket encompasses the majority, accounting for approximately 40% of participants; this indicates a significant leaning toward younger consumers, particularly those in the early stages of adulthood.

Close behind are those in the 20-21-year age bracket, making up about 37% of respondents, suggesting that the brand also resonates with college-aged individuals.

Participants aged between 23 and 25 comprise a smaller proportion of the sample at 15%, while the youngest under 18 years and those over 25 years are the least represented in the survey, with 7% and a marginal 1%, respectively.

Hence, these figures highlight the brand's particular appeal to a youthful demographic, likely to be at the forefront of engaging with fashion trends and digital branding initiatives.

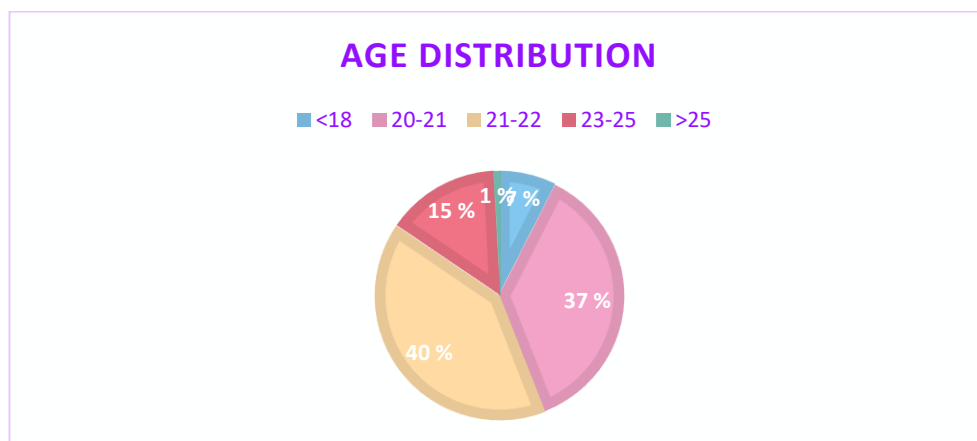


Figure 13. Age distribution

Gender breakdown

As shown in Figure 14, the gender among respondents is notably inclined, with males significantly dominating the sample, representing a percentage of 90.3% of total responses. In contrast, female participants represent a minority at approximately 8.7%. Furthermore, a segment of the respondents, accounting for 0.7%, chose not to specify their gender.

Hence, this imbalance emphasises the case company's substantial male consumer base. It may guide the case company's marketing strategies and product development to cater to this dominant demographic segment.

Mikä on sukupuolesi?

31 vastausta

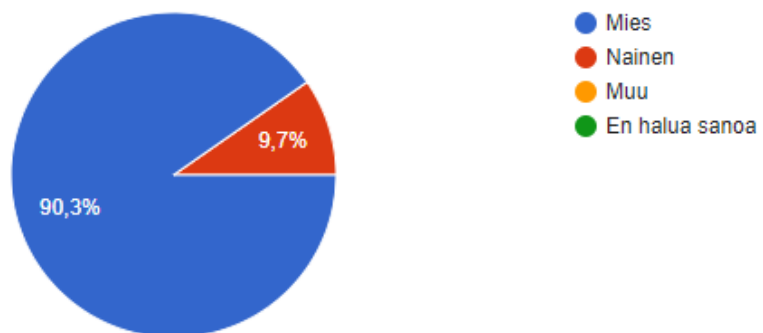


Figure 14. Respondent gender breakdown

City of residence

As shown in Figure 15, the geographical distribution of the respondents is concentrated significantly in Nokia, where 45.2% of the participants reside; this suggests a strong regional presence or preference for the case company in the area. Tampere holds the second-highest proportion of the survey's participants at 25.8%, indicating another key area of the brand's market penetration. Conversely, other cities, including Helsinki, Turku, and Vaasa, represent smaller fractions of the survey population, with percentages ranging from 3.2% to 7.6%.

Hence, this geographical data may indicate where the case company's marketing efforts have been most effective or where its market presence is most pronounced.

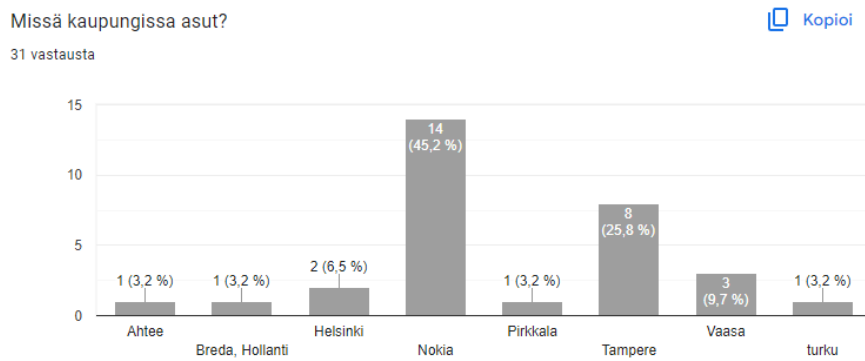


Figure 15. City of residence

Average monthly income

Visible in Figure 16, the survey data indicates a notable difference in the income distribution among respondents. Notably, approximately 32.3% of participants reported earnings in the range of 1000-2000€ a month. With an equal proportion, another 32.3% of respondents fall within the lowest income bracket, earning between 0-1000€; this reflects the brand's reach across lower and mid-income segments.

Conversely, the segment of respondents with incomes over 4000€ is considerably smaller, consisting of just 3.2% of the sample. Those earning between 2000-3000€ make up 22.6% of respondents.

Hence, the income distribution insight suggests that the brand's customer base place in a broad spectrum, not limited to any single economic level. This may have significant implications for pricing strategies and product offerings, ensuring accessibility and appeal to a diverse customer base.

Mitkä ovat keskimääräiset kuukausitulosi? (Vapaaehtoinen)

31 vastausta

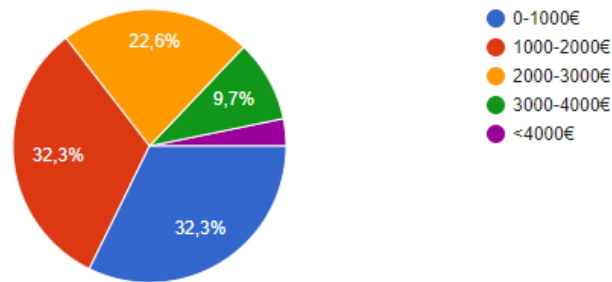


Figure 16. Monthly income

3.2.2 General questions analysis

Interest in streetwear

As shown in Figure 17, a high percentage of 93.5% of respondents express an interest in streetwear or actively wear it, indicating a high level of engagement with the streetwear fashion style among the survey population.

Oletko kiinnostunut streetwear-vaatteista/käytätkö streetwear-vaatteita?

31 vastausta

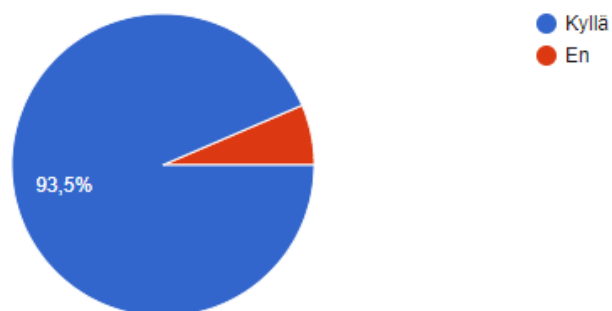


Figure 17. Interest in streetwear

Familiarity with Finnish streetwear brands

As shown in Figure 18, the respondents are highly familiar with Finnish streetwear brands. Brands like Vitunleija and Pieces to Pieces are known to nearly all respondents, with 96.8% and 90.3% familiarity rates, respectively. Other brands such as Disko Studios, VFlame, Euro, and Leized also have a high recognition rate among participants, each with 58.1%. Zouseph's is the least recognised, with 45.2% familiarity among respondents.

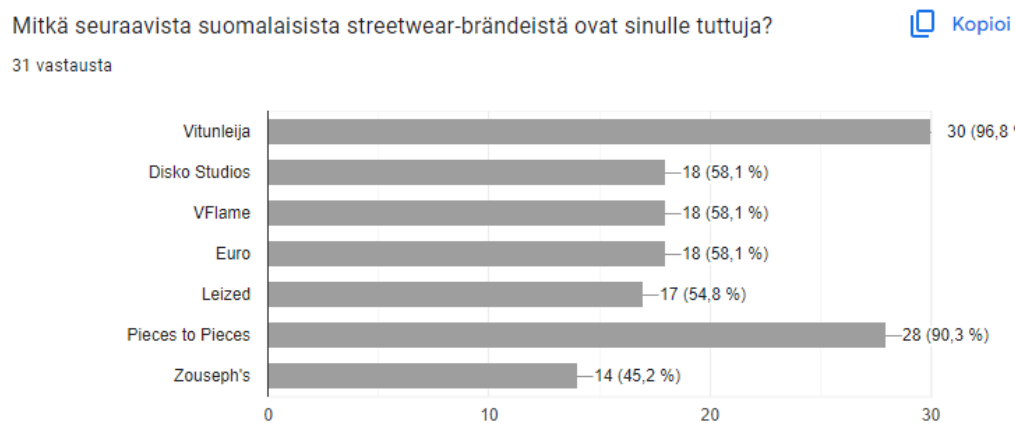


Figure 18. Streetwear brand familiarity

Purchasing from Finnish streetwear brands

As shown in Figure 19, a substantial majority of the respondents, 67.7%, have purchased products from Finnish streetwear brands, indicating a strong engagement with local brands; this contrasts with the 32.3% who have not made such purchases. The high level of patronage suggests that Finnish streetwear brands have a significant presence among the survey participants and potentially a strong foothold in the market.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 20, various products have been chosen for those who have purchased from Finnish streetwear brands. 6 respondents bought t-shirts, and five have hoodies, the most popular choice. Other items like caps, shirts, and jackets are equally distributed among the respondents, each with one mention; this suggests a diversity in product interest, although t-shirts and hoodies are predominant.

Oletko ostanut tuotteita suomalaiselta streetwear-brändiltä?

31 vastausta

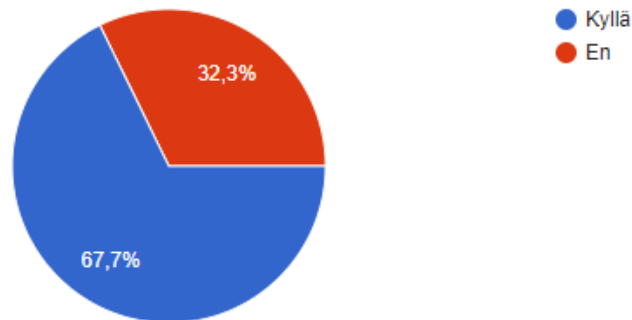


Figure 19. Purchasing from streetwear brands

Mikäli vastasit aikaisempaan kysymykseen "Kyllä", mitä tuotteita olet ostanut?

[Kopioi](#)

20 vastausta

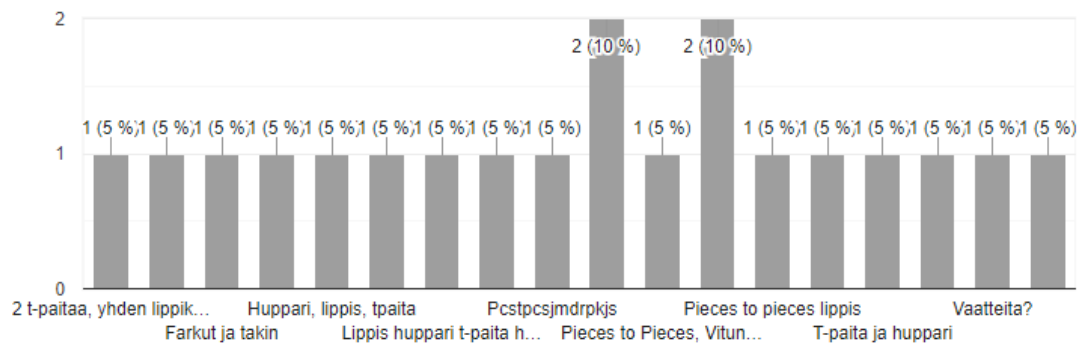


Figure 20. Bought products

Purchasing frequency of streetwear products

As shown in Figure 21, most respondents, 58.1%, purchase streetwear products annually. A considerable segment, 22.6%, buy these products monthly, demonstrating a more frequent engagement with streetwear fashion. On the other hand, 12.9% of participants purchase streetwear less frequently than annually, indicating a more occasional purchasing behaviour. Lastly, a small % of the respondents, 6.5%, are highly engaged consumers making streetwear purchases weekly.

Kuinka usein ostat streetwear-tuotteita?

31 vastausta

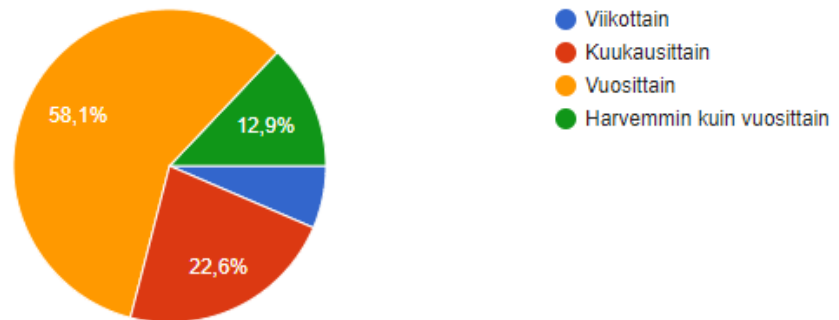


Figure 21. Streetwear clothing purchasing frequency

Shopping preferences for streetwear

Visible in Figure 22, when exploring new clothing purchases, 58.1% of respondents show flexible shopping behaviour, splitting their preference between streetwear brands and online retailers such as Zalando; this highlights a consumer segment that is not exclusively loyal to one purchase channel but is instead comfortable with a hybrid approach.

Meanwhile, 25.8% of respondents particularly favour online retailers like Zalando for their shopping needs, indicating a strong preference towards the convenience of online shopping.

Interestingly, 16.1% of those surveyed specifically seek out products from various streetwear brands, suggesting a dedicated interest in brand variety and the quality or uniqueness offered by such brands. This distribution of preferences underscores a diversified market in its shopping habits for streetwear.

Kun harkitset uusien vaatteiden ostamista, etsitkö yleensä vaatteita erilaisilta streetwear-merkeiltä vai ostatko enemmän verkkojälleenmyyjiltä, kuten Zalandoilta?

Kopioi

31 vastausta

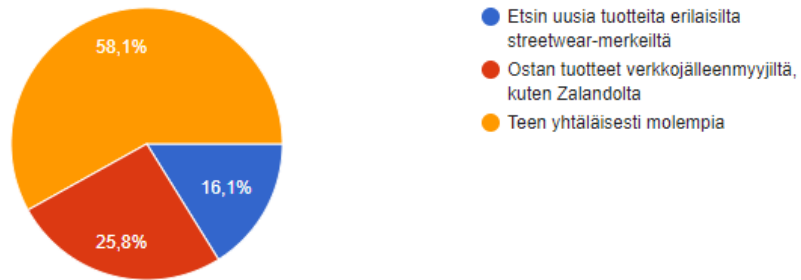


Figure 22. Shopping preferences

Ultimately, the survey states that most respondents are interested in streetwear in Finland, with most respondents interested in purchasing streetwear, including from Finnish brands. Annual purchases are most common, reflecting a well thought out approach to buying streetwear. The data points to a consumer base that values brand diversity and the convenience of digital shopping, supporting the case company's approach to aim to focus on its online presence.

3.2.3 Product-centric questions analysis

Preferred products and price range

Visible in Figure 23, hoodies and sweatshirts are notably the most preferred items among Finnish streetwear brands, with 74.2% of respondents indicating them as their choice for purchase.

Minkä seuraavista tuotteista mieluiten ostaisit suomalaisilta streetwear-merkeiltä?
Älä huomioi vuodenaikaeroja.

31 vastausta

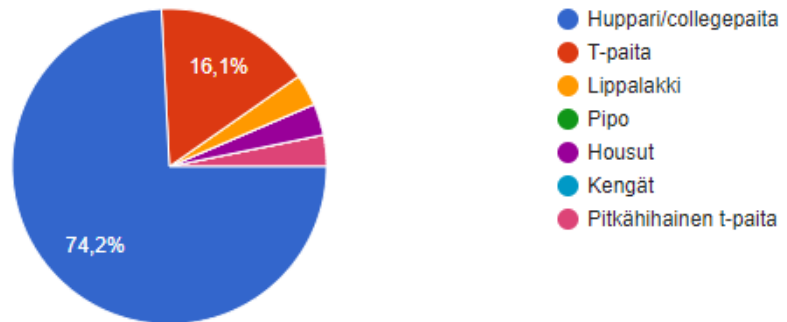


Figure 23. Preferred products

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 24, a majority of 58.1% are willing to pay between 50-100€ for a high-quality hoodie, showing a preference for mid-range pricing. However, a significant 35.5% are willing to invest over 100€, suggesting that a considerable segment of the market perceives high value in premium streetwear offerings.

Only a minimal 6.5% would prefer to spend under 50€, indicating that low price points are less of a priority for consumers in the context of quality streetwear products.

Kuinka paljon olet valmis maksamaan streetwear-merkin tuotteesta? Esimerkiksi harkitse, että tuote on laadukas huppari.

31 vastausta

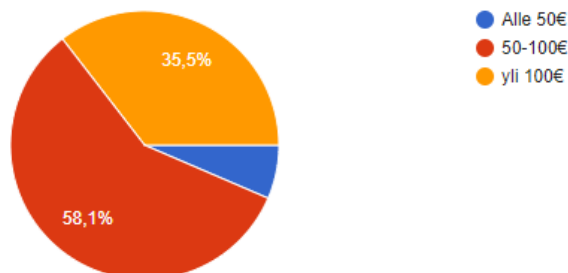


Figure 24. Product pricing

Willingness to pay for domestic products

As shown in Figure 25, a significant majority of respondents, 80.6%, express their willingness to pay a premium for domestically produced products or from small businesses; this is a particularly relevant insight for the case company, a small Finnish streetwear brand, which could capitalize on this consumer sentiment.

The data suggests that the case company's local identity and scale may be leveraged as key selling points, aligning with a consumer base that values domestic production and the support of smaller businesses.

Oletko valmis maksamaan enemmän, jos tuote on kotimainen tai pienyrityksen tuote?

31 vastausta

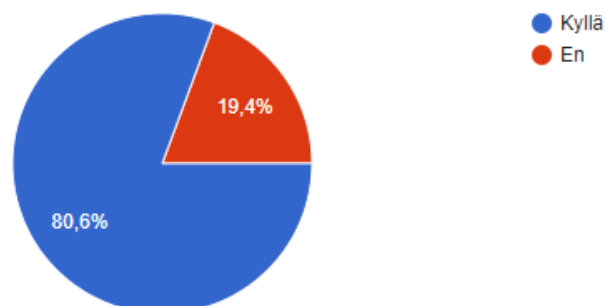


Figure 25. Willingness to pay for domestic products

Most valuable features

As shown in Figure 26, the survey reveals a pronounced appreciation for visual elements in streetwear, with prints being the most preferred feature valued by 71% of respondents. Logos also appeal significantly, with 51.6% indicating a preference for branded elements.

Embroidery and patches are appreciated by 41.9% of the participants, suggesting a taste for small details that add character to the clothing. Puff prints are favoured by 25.8% of respondents, pointing towards a niche appreciation for this design technique.

Surprisingly, despite the heavy use of rhinestones by competing companies such as Vitunleija and Leized, only 12.9% of respondents preferred this feature; this could suggest that while rhinestones have prominence in the offerings of competitors, they may have seen a decline in trendiness over the years and been replaced with other features such as puff prints and patchwork.



Figure 26. Favoured clothing features

The case company can use this insight to tailor its product designs to match the clear preference for distinctive prints and logos while considering the lower demand for rhinestone designs.

Preference for visible designs

As shown in Figure 27, the survey data indicates a market division in terms of design preferences for streetwear, with 61.3% of consumers favouring simplicity over more extravagant designs, which are preferred by 38.7% of respondents.

This preference for minimalistic designs aligns well with the case company's focus on simplicity in its product offerings. The inclination towards understated aesthetics provides a clear direction for the company's design strategy, suggesting that continuing to develop products with a simple yet elegant approach will likely resonate with most of the current customer base.

This market preference presents a strategic advantage for the case company, as it can continue building on its existing design philosophy that appeals to a consumer base seeking less decorated and refined streetwear options.

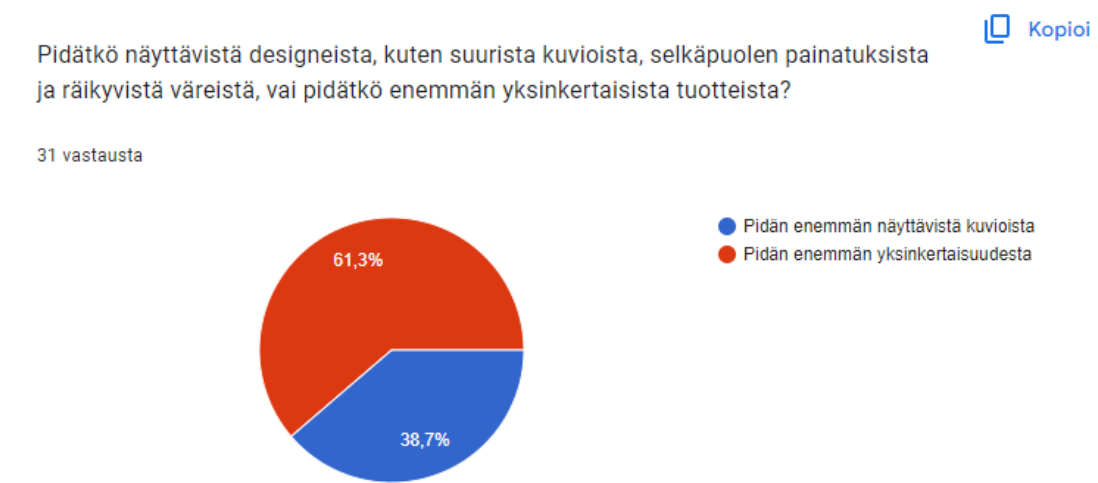


Figure 27. Preference for visible designs

Material interest

As shown in Figure 28, a vast majority of consumers, 93.5%, emphasize their interest in streetwear products' material, thickness, weight, and fit, highlighting the significance of quality and comfort in their buying decisions; this is advantageous for the case company, whose philosophy is grounded in creating top-quality products with careful consideration of these aspects.

The case company's focus on ensuring a high material quality and the right fit resonates strongly with consumer interests, suggesting that its commitment to providing high quality is well-aligned with market demands and can be a defining feature of its brand identity.

Kiinnostaako sinua streetwear-tuotteen materiaali, paksuus, paino ja istuvuus?

31 vastausta

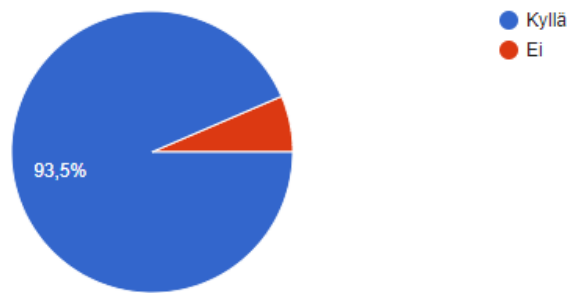


Figure 28. Material interest

Fit preference

As shown in Figure 29, the survey reveals a strong preference for an oversized fit, with 97% of respondents indicating their preference for this style, while only a marginal 3% expressed no preference.

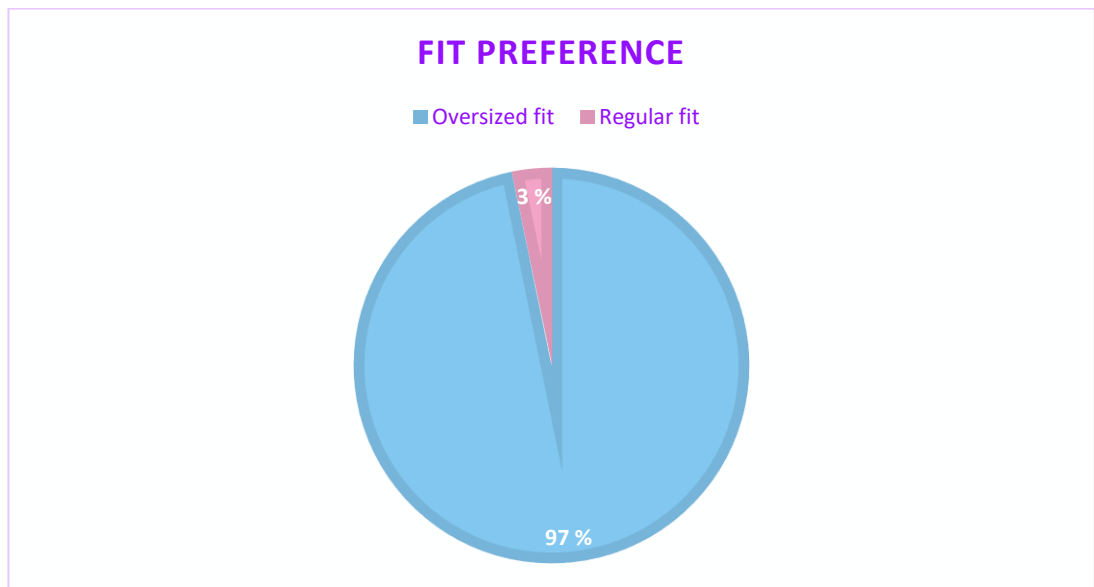


Figure 29. Fit preference

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 30, most consumers, 87.1%, prefer streetwear with dropped shoulders, while only 12.9% do not. This trend towards a more relaxed fit is good for the case company, as it already focuses on making clothes with this feature.

Pidätkö tiputetuista olkapäistä?

31 vastausta

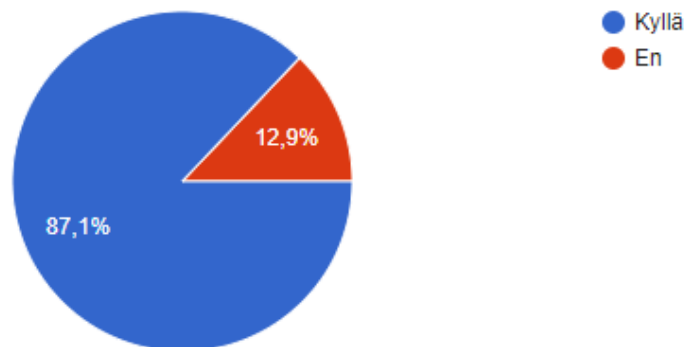


Figure 30. Preference for dropped shoulders

Desired product length

Unexpectedly and as shown in Figure 31, considering recent global fashion trends, a slight majority of 58.1% of respondents prefer standard-length products over cropped designs, while 41.9% favour them.

This preference for traditional lengths is a surprise, especially given the rising popularity of cropped garments in the international streetwear scene, with brands like Vicinity showcasing cropped designs in hoodies and t-shirts.

The survey's findings suggest that while today's streetwear trends lean towards cropped styles, the local market still shows a strong liking for standard lengths. This insight is important for the case company in strategizing its design direction, balancing standard, and cropped options in its collections to cater to diverse customer preferences.

Haluatko tuotteen olevan lyhennetty, esimerkiksi vyötärölle?

31 vastausta

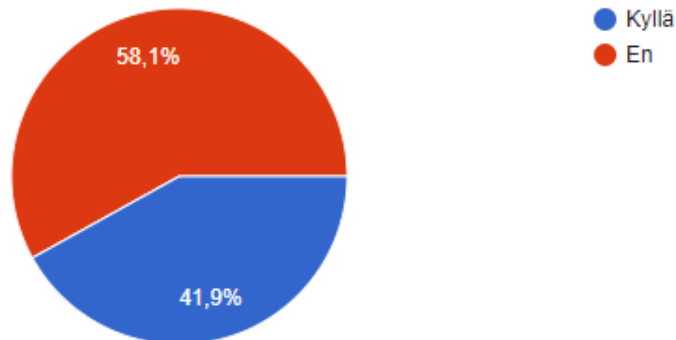



Figure 31. Desired product length

Production method consideration

As shown in Figure 32, considering the ethicality in purchasing, 48.4% of respondents indicate they only 'sometimes' consider factors like production methods, workers' conditions, and sustainability when purchasing products. Surprisingly, 38.7% 'never' consider these factors, and a smaller percentage of 9.7% do so 'mostly'. Only 3.2% consistently 'always' consider these ethical aspects during purchasing; this reveals a less pronounced focus on sustainability and ethical production among the surveyed consumers.

Kuinka usein mietit tuotteen tuotantomenetelmiä, työntekijöiden työympäristöä ja kestävyyttä tehdessäsi ostopäätöksiä?

 Kopioi

31 vastausta

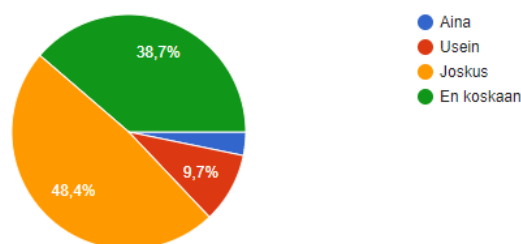


Figure 32. Production method consideration

For the case company, which aims to select the most sustainable clothing manufacturers, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity. While the overall consumer base may not prioritize sustainability as a key factor in purchasing decisions, the company's commitment to ethical practices can still serve as a unique selling point. This commitment can be leveraged in marketing campaigns to educate consumers about the benefits of sustainable fashion, potentially influencing consumer behaviour and positioning the brand as a leader in ethical fashion practices within the streetwear market.

3.2.4 Brand-related questions analysis

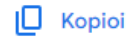
Consistency vs. novelty in product releases

As shown in Figure 33, the survey results regarding preference for brand consistency versus novelty are nearly evenly split. 51.6% of respondents appreciate brands that regularly release new collections, products, and styles, while 48.4% prefer brands that maintain a consistent and recognisable style over time.

This split suggests a strategic opportunity for the case company to cater to both preferences within its customer base. The company could benefit from maintaining a core collection that produces its signature style, satisfying consumers drawn to the brand's identity. Simultaneously, it could introduce seasonal new pieces or limited-edition items to attract those who seek novelty.

This approach allows the case company to uphold brand recognition and loyalty while keeping the product offerings fresh and engaging. Balancing these two aspects could be key to sustaining long-term customer interest and differentiating the brand in the competitive Finnish streetwear market.

Arvostatko sitä, kun streetwear-merkki julkistaa säännöllisesti uusia kokoelmia, tuotteita ja tyylejä, vai suositko mieluummin merkkejä, jotka säilyttävät ajan myötä vakaan ja tunnistettavan ulkoasun?



31 vastausta

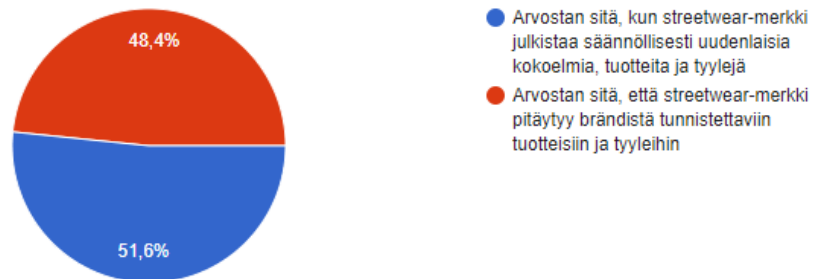


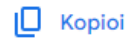
Figure 33. Consistency vs. novelty in product releases

Frequency of new product releases

Contrary to the fast-fashion model and as shown in Figure 34, 64.5% of survey respondents prefer streetwear brands that release new products more rarely, which is aligned with a desire for exclusivity and a perception of increased value in limited availability. Only 35.5% of consumers favour regular product releases, indicating a smaller but still significant interest in frequent new additions.

For the case company, this preference for infrequent releases is consistent with its current approach of using the drop model for launching new clothing. This strategy of releasing products more scarcely helps maintain the brand's image as exclusive and keeps the products interesting and desirable. The company's tactic of creating anticipation and demand through scarcity can be reinforced by these survey findings, confirming that its approach to product releases is in sync with the expectations of most of its target audience. This strategy helps create a unique brand identity and likely contributes to each product's longevity and perceived value.

Haluatko, että streetwear-merkki julkaisee uusia tuotteita harvoin, jotta ne säilyvät harvinaisempina, vai mieluummin, että uusia tuotteita julkaistaan säännöllisesti?



31 vastausta

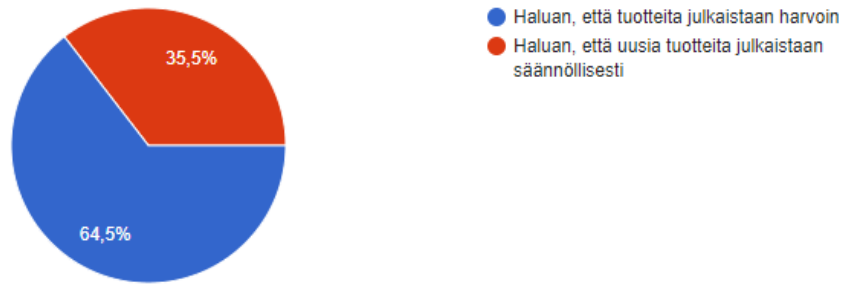


Figure 34. Frequency of new product releases

Factors influencing perception of streetwear brands

As shown in Figure 35, the survey results highlight quality as the most answered factor influencing streetwear brand perception, with 90.3% of respondents seen it as important. Price is another considerable factor, with 77.4% considering it, followed by brand reputation at 74.2%. The clothing design also plays a critical role, with 83.9% of respondents acknowledging its importance. Public figure endorsements have a minimal impact, with only 22.6% influenced by them. A small percentage of 3.2% indicated 'something else' as an influential factor. However, they did not specify what this factor was, underscoring that there may be other unnamed elements that sway consumer opinions.

Mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat käsitykseesi streetwear-merkistä?



31 vastausta

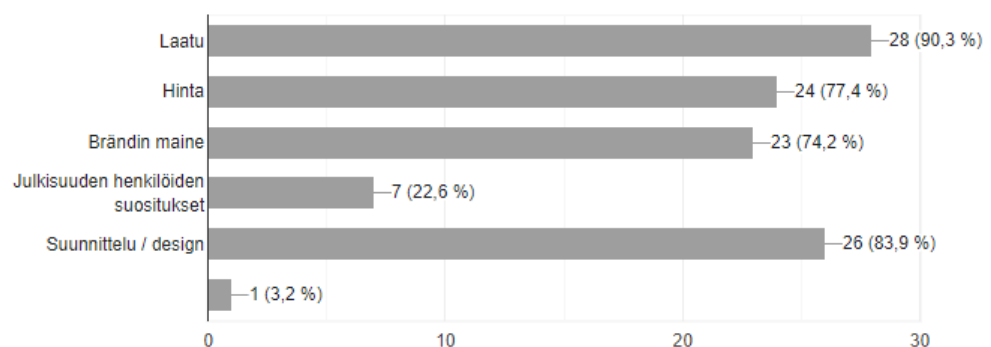


Figure 35. Influencing factors on the perception of a streetwear brand

For the case company, the emphasis on quality and design and offering more affordable options than its competitors align well with consumer priorities. The survey indicates that while quality remains the most important factor, the balance of cost and reputation is also vital; this can inform the case company's pricing strategy to ensure that its products are not only of high quality and well-designed but are also positioned competitively in terms of affordability. By focusing on these key consumer-valued factors, the case company can enhance its market position and appeal to price-conscious consumers who wish to maintain quality and design.

Importance of brand values in purchase decisions

As shown in Figure 36, brand values encompassing sustainable development, quality, and honesty are notable in influencing purchase decisions, 1 being the least important and 3 the most important. While the largest portion of respondents, 45.2%, rate brand values as moderately important (2 out of 3), a significant 29% view them as highly important (3 out of 3), and 25.8% as less important (1 out of 3). This distribution implies that while brand values are important, they are weighed alongside other decision-making elements.




Figure 36. Importance of brand values in purchasing decisions

These findings suggest an opportunity for the case company to communicate and emphasise its commitment to sustainability, high-quality products, and transparent business practices. Given that a substantial respondent segment considers these values very important, the case company could strengthen its competitive edge by highlighting these attributes. Even as brand values are not the singular deciding factors for all consumers, showcasing the company's dedication to these principles can appeal to a broad range of consumers and may appeal to those who emphasise brand ethos in their purchasing choices.

Language of communication

As shown in Figure 37, regarding communication language preferences, a substantial majority, 74.2%, are receptive to Finnish streetwear brands using Finnish and English on social media and in advertising. Meanwhile, 16.1% lean towards English exclusively, and a smaller fraction, 9.7%, prefer Finnish. This openness to bilingual communication suggests a versatile consumer base that can engage with brands across multiple languages.

Tulisiko mielestäsi suomalaisen streetwear-merkin kommunikoida suomeksi vai englanniksi sosiaalisen median alustoillaan ja mainonnassa?

 Kopioi

31 vastausta

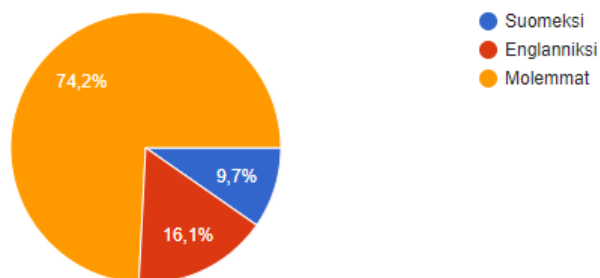


Figure 37. Language of communication

This insight is encouraging for the case company, which currently communicates primarily in English. It suggests that the company's existing language strategy aligns with the preferences of a significant part of its audience. However, there is also an opportunity to expand its reach with the local market by incorporating Finnish into its communications. Balancing both languages could

help the company strengthen its connection with Finnish-speaking customers while maintaining its international appeal.

3.2.5 Marketing-related questions analysis

Usage of social media for discovering brands

As shown in Figure 38, a vast majority, 87.1% of survey respondents, use social media platforms as a primary means to discover new clothing brands; this underscores the pivotal role of social media in the brand discovery process and highlights its influence on the consumer journey. For the case company, which currently focuses all its marketing efforts on social media and its digital marketing strategy, this data reinforces the validity of its approach.

The case company's decision to leverage social media for brand promotion and engagement aligns perfectly with consumer behaviour patterns, suggesting that continued investment in these channels will likely be beneficial. The case company can enhance visibility, encourage discovery, and foster a community around its brand by staying attuned to the platforms where its target audience is most active.

Käytätkö sosiaalisen median alustoja etsiessäsi uusia vaatemerkkejä?

31 vastausta

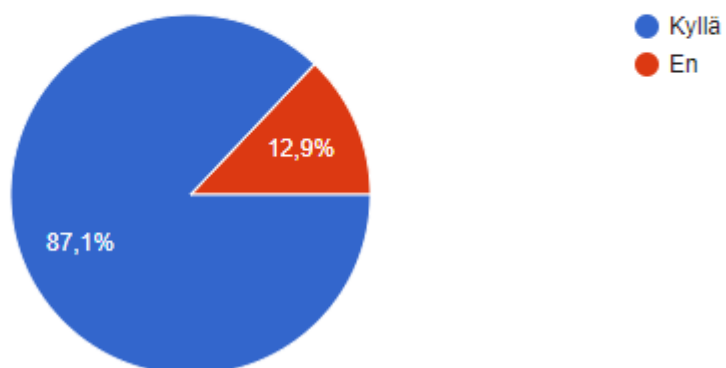


Figure 38. Usage of social media for discovering brands

Preferred social media platforms for brand interaction

As shown in Figure 39, the survey indicates that Instagram and TikTok are the predominant platforms for following and discovering streetwear brands, with usage rates of 87.1% and 80.6%, among participants. This trend underscores the importance of these platforms for the case company, which is looking to connect with their audience and expand their reach.

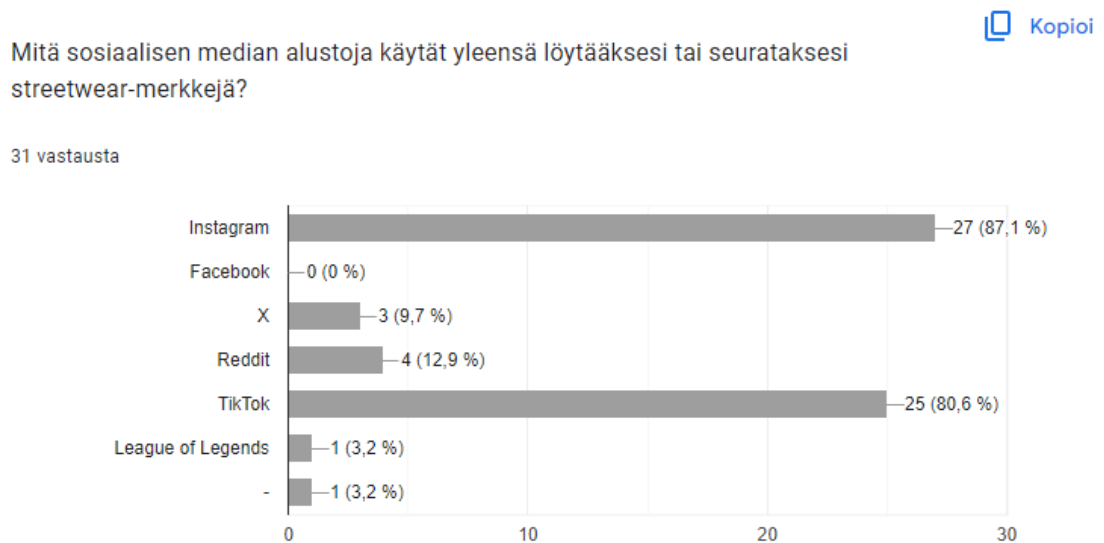


Figure 39. Preferred social media platforms for brand interaction

These findings support the case company's strategic focus on Instagram and TikTok as primary channels for their digital marketing efforts. The company's approach is validated by targeting the platforms consumers most frequently use to explore and engage with streetwear, and its tactics align with current consumer behaviours. This alignment enhances the company's ability to capture attention, drive brand awareness, and increase digital engagement effectively.

Content preferences in social media marketing

As shown in Figure 40, the survey highlights that consumers are most interested in seeing photos of models wearing the products, with 74.2% indicating this as their preferred content type; this is followed closely by behind-the-scenes footage and detailed product showings, at 54.8%. Edited video clips also hold considerable appeal at 45.2%. The lower interest in NBA-related content and

specific TikTok trends, at 3.2%, suggests that such content is less preferred in engaging the streetwear audience on social media.



Figure 40. Content preferences in social media marketing

For the case company, understanding these preferences is crucial, as it points to the need to invest in high-quality images of models in their products, offering transparency through behind-the-scenes content and providing close-up product details that can inform and attract consumers. The survey supports the company's current content strategy, reinforcing the importance of visual storytelling and product-centric content in digital marketing efforts to captivate and connect with their audience.

Influence of social media content on purchasing decisions

As shown in Figure 41, the survey results reveal that an overwhelming % of respondents, 93.5%, have considered purchasing from a new streetwear brand after seeing their content on social media. This significant figure indicates the powerful impact of social media content on consumer behaviour and the potential for the case company to drive sales through its digital marketing efforts.

Oletko harkinnut ostamista/ostanut uudelta streetwear-merkiltä nähtyäsi heidän sisältöään sosiaalisessa mediassa?

31 vastausta

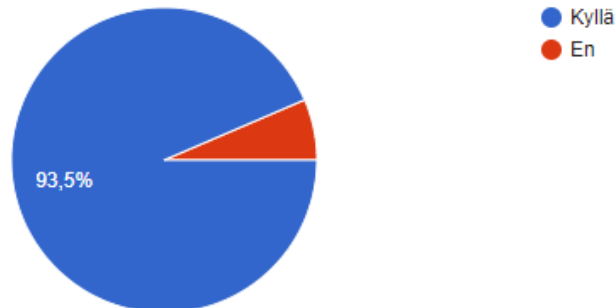



Figure 41. Influence of social media content on purchasing decisions

Consumer engagement with new brands on social media

As shown in Figure 42, the survey data shows that 51.6% of respondents rarely interact with new streetwear brands on social media, 29% interact frequently, and 19.4% never do; this indicates that engagement with new brands on social platforms is generally somewhat low.

Kuinka usein osallistut sosiaalisen median kautta uusien streetwear-merkkien toimintaan, vaikka ne olisivat suhteellisen uusia markkinoilla? (esim. tykkääminen, jakaminen, kommentointi)

 Kopioi

31 vastausta

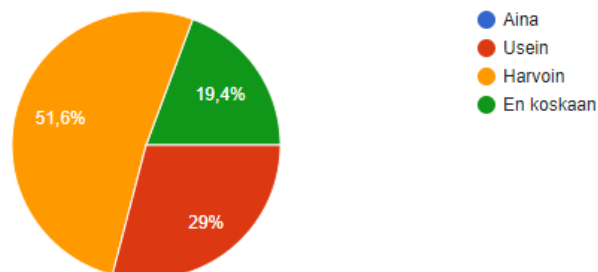


Figure 42. Customer engagement


For the case company, this information is important. It shows that customers may only sometimes actively engage with social media content. Hence, the

case company should be fine with their social media posts sometimes getting few likes or comments. The focus should be ensuring that their interactions are meaningful and lead to sales. Building a smaller but more committed group of followers who care about the brand could be more valuable than just having much superficial interaction.

Impact of social media influencers

As shown in Figure 43, the survey indicates that social media influencers considerably impact the marketing of streetwear brands, with 58.1% of participants recognising their influence. However, 38.7% of those surveyed do not believe influencers significantly impact their perception of streetwear brands, and a small portion feel that the effect depends on the specific influencer.

Mielestäsi, vaikuttavatko sosiaalisen median vaikuttajat merkittävästi streetwear-merkkien markkinointiin?

 Kopioi

31 vastausta

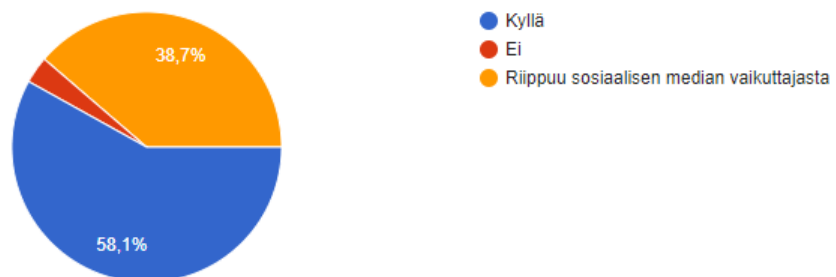


Figure 43. Impact of social media influencers

For the case company, this insight could influence its marketing strategy. The company and its competitors have embraced the trend of partnering with professional artists as social media influencers. This approach resonates with a significant part of the target audience, who value the endorsements of known personalities. Given the notable influence of these individuals, the case company should continue to carefully select influencers who align with their brand values and aesthetics to connect with their audience authentically. This strategy could be crucial in setting the brand apart and driving consumer interest and sales.

Influence of paid social media advertising

As shown in Figure 44, the survey reveals that 71% of respondents are influenced by paid social media advertising, such as sponsored posts; this suggests that paid advertisements are a compelling factor in generating interest in brands for most consumers. Conversely, 29% do not find paid advertisements to be a key influence in their decision-making process.

For the case company, this insight is particularly valuable. The company's goal of using paid advertisements to boost brand awareness and drive sales is well-founded. As most consumers report being influenced by such advertising, allocating a portion of the marketing budget to paid social media campaigns could increase the company's visibility and attract potential customers. This strategy aligns with consumer trends and could be vital to the company's overall marketing approach to reach a broader audience and encourage purchase behaviour.

Oletko ottanut vaikutteita jonkin brändin maksetusta sosiaalisen median mainonnasta? (esim. sponsoroidut julkaisut)

31 vastausta

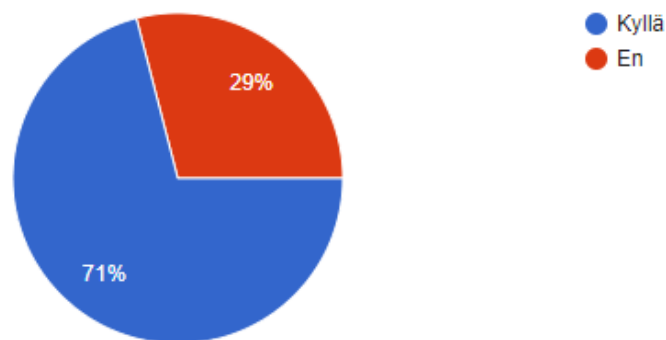


Figure 44. Influence of paid social media advertising

3.2.6 Quantitative research conclusion & recommendations

The quantitative research has provided insight into the case company's target market's preferences, behaviours, and expectations. The demographic analysis reveals a young, predominantly male audience with diverse income levels in specific Finnish regions.

The general questions highlight an interest in streetwear, an annual purchasing pattern, and a preference for online shopping. Product-centric insights underscore the value placed on material, fit, and ethical production, while brand-related data emphasize quality, design, and the significance of brand values. Marketing-related findings show the impact of social media in discovery and purchasing decisions, with a balanced view on influencer marketing and paid advertising.

Based on the extensive insights gathered from the quantitative research, the case company is positioned to effectively refine its strategies to resonate with its target market. The demographic analysis has highlighted a young and predominantly male audience in specific Finnish regions such as Nokia and Tampere. This demographic detail presents an opportunity for the case company to tailor its marketing efforts to these areas, utilizing localized strategies that specifically appeal to this audience segment.

Regarding product development, the company should continue to focus on offering clothing with oversized fits and traditional lengths, as most of the market prefers these. The high value placed on material quality, fit, and ethical production methods should be emphasized in the case company's marketing and branding, showcasing its commitment to these aspects, and differentiating its products in the market. Additionally, the company can balance maintaining a consistent brand image and introducing novel products, catering to the diverse preferences for brand consistency and the desire for new releases.

Furthermore, a mid-range pricing strategy is optimal, with scope for premium pricing in the case of exclusive or limited-edition items. This approach will allow

the case company to cater to its broad customer base's varying financial capabilities while emphasizing the value and quality of its products.

Moreover, digital marketing is crucial, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. These platforms are pivotal for brand storytelling, product showcases, and engaging with the target audience. The company should invest in creating high-quality, visually appealing content, including behind-the-scenes footage and detailed product showcases, to engage and inform potential customers. Experimenting with paid social media advertising could also increase brand visibility and drive sales.

Influencer marketing requires a strategic approach. The company should seek collaborations with influencers who align with the brand's aesthetic and values and have a genuine connection with the target audience; this can enhance the authenticity of the marketing efforts and lead to more effective customer engagement.

Customer engagement on social media should focus on building a community around the brand. While engagement rates might not always be high, the company should be encouraged. The focus should be on the quality of interactions and their potential to drive sales rather than solely on the volume of engagement.

Lastly, the company's communication strategy should encompass Finnish and English, catering to the bilingual preferences of its audience. This approach will ensure broader reach and resonance with local and international customers.

Implementing these strategies will enable the case company to align closely with its target market's needs and preferences, solidifying its position in the competitive Finnish streetwear market and paving the way for sustained growth and success.

3.3. Qualitative research

An interview was conducted on November 2, 2023, with Gabri, a professional recording artist. The purpose of the interview was to explore Gabri's thoughts and preferences on various topics related to his history with streetwear, the relationship between music and streetwear in the Finnish industry, influencer-oriented questions, such as his past collaborations with streetwear brands, digital marketing, and social media-related issues, emerging trends, and brand-related matters. The interview was a Teams video interview and lasted approximately forty minutes.

Methodology

The interview was designed to delve into Gabri's personal history, style evolution as an artist, and its role in his personal brand, with a broader aim of gaining better insight into the Finnish streetwear industry, culture, and the involvement of Finnish streetwear culture in the Finnish music industry.

The choice of the interview method was driven by the need to gather in-depth insights from Gabri regarding his relationship with streetwear, fashion influences, and his experiences in the music industry. The semi-structured interview format was selected to allow flexibility while ensuring that all key topics were addressed. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, were carefully observed. The quantitative research questionnaire / survey can be found in the appendixes of the thesis.

Furthermore, the interview analysis utilises Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). In its essence, TPB is commonly used to understand and predict human behaviour in various domains, including health, social sciences, marketing, and environmental studies. (Ajzen, 1991) In analysing the interview, TPB is used as a tool to enhance the analysis of influencer marketing dynamics, particularly in the context of influencer marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behaviour.

3.3.1 Interview breakdown

The interview with the professional recording artist Gabri includes six sections covering a variety of subjects, including himself, the correlation between the Finnish fashion and music industries, collaborations, digital marketing and social media, emerging trends, and branding.

Background

In the first section of the interview, Gabri was presented with questions concerning himself and his history on streetwear, his style evolution as an artist and his style part of his brand.

Gabri's answers showed how his style and relationship with clothing in the earlier stages of his life had been influenced by the style of skaters he had seen in his childhood. For him, characteristics of the skater style were baggy clothing, especially pants. Later in life, he became interested in brands such as Supreme and Off-White through the social media platforms such as Instagram. The brands were in the highest of their popularity in Gabri's high school years. Gabri stated that before truly finding his style's identity, he fell victim to following ongoing fashion trends and hype of the mentioned brands: "A time-period which luckily ended". Now, Gabri states to dress in clothing he finds appealing and does not try to force himself to wear designer clothing and go along with the masses.

When Gabri was asked, "What makes your style unique?" he answered that his style is not unique and that it is rare for someone to have a unique style. For him, uniqueness in clothing comes from the daring of trying different things and combining elements that would not normally be combined, "If you believe that it looks good on you, you should wear it", he states. Gabri recognises unique styles from the international fashion world from people such as Rick Owens, the founder of Rick Owens.

Through becoming a professional recording artist, Gabri's style has become part of his personal brand through collaboration on his music's promotional campaigns with the Finnish streetwear clothing brand Disko Studios.

When Gabri was asked if his style is part of his personal brand, he stated that when a person is in the spotlight, everything, including clothing, becomes part of how people perceive him. The clothing Gabri wears during shows, interviews and promotional pictures influence the audience's perception of him and build his personal brand as an artist. "With Disko Studios, in promotional pictures, the style we aim to picture is my style, but a little more extra", he states.

Music and fashion

The second section of the interview focused on the relationship between the Finnish fashion industry and the music industry. The section aimed to get a more comprehensive insight into the music industry through a professional operating there.

The first question of the second section, "Do you think there is a true connection between artists and fashion in Finland?" aimed to grasp Gabri's initial thoughts about the connection between the industries. Gabri believes that the connection between the two industries has strengthened in the past five years, with more streetwear companies aiming to secure an artist in their circle to collaborate with. "The Finnish streetwear brands, which are the most successful at the moment, go hand-in-hand with artists and music", Gabri says. Solidifying the connection between streetwear brands and the music scene in Finland.

When asked why streetwear brands reach out to artists to collaborate, Gabri reasoned that artists tend to be role models to the younger audience. When an artist co-signs and collaborates with a brand, the brand automatically becomes approved by the artist and is recognised by the artist's audience.

Furthermore, Gabri was asked about the mutual benefits of collaborations between streetwear brands and artists; he saw that when the collaboration is mutually beneficial, the situation works and that these situations do not always occur, with the clothing brand being the only party which benefits from the situation. A good symbiosis between a brand and an artist occurs when the clothing brand's

brand, products, and aesthetic match the artist's personal brand. "A mutually beneficial situation occurs when both parties share the same vision and their brands are on the same page", he states.

When Gabri was asked if there was a correlation between the moulding of new streetwear trends and the music scene in Finland, he believed the phenomenon to relate more towards the individual artists than the music scene. An example he gave towards the subject was the brand Vitunleija and its origin, rising towards success along with the success of a Finnish artist, Cledos.

With the final subject of the second section of the interview, Gabri was asked about the abundance of new streetwear brands popping up from the social media platform TikTok. Moreover, he expressed the difficulty of building a well-established clothing brand, as he believes the industry to be one of the most difficult industries to become successful in.

Finally, he stated that as clothing brands are abundant now in Finland, he does not believe that all of them have long-term goals and plans and believes them to vanish along the trend. He believes the difficulty in establishing a clothing brand from the masses is creating a strong brand and differentiation. Overall, he believes that the market is flooded with new clothing brands. Still, only a handful of brands are going in the right direction to succeed, with Disko Studios pioneering the newer wave streetwear brands in Finland.

Influencer-specific questions

The third section of the interview included influencer-specific questions, intending to gain knowledge of which brands Gabri favours and in which situations he would be inclined to collaborate with a brand. In addition, the section dives into Gabri's past collaboration campaigns.

As Gabri has gained more notoriety in the public in 2023, clothing brands have contacted him to inquire about promotional collaborations, in which they would send him free clothing for him to wear and promote – Gabri has yet to answer or collaborate with the brands. The reasoning behind the refusal of collaborating with the brands has been due to the lack of mutual benefit to both parties and the lack of vision the brands have shown, Gabri states.

The only collaborations Gabri has done previously have been with the mentioned Disko Studios on all his promotional campaigns concerning his music. Gabri says that in every promotional photoshoot, he has done, he has worn at least one piece of the brand's clothing, and if not, the personnel from the brand have helped him with the styling of his outfits.

When Gabri was asked about the amounts of money he charges for collaborations with clothing brands; he answered that he has not charged Disko Studios anything for their collaborations, as the relationship between the parties is mutually beneficial.

In addition, Gabri further elaborated that in a situation where he would agree to get free products from a company, he would not charge the clothing brand for the promotion as he has already gotten a product he enjoys from the brand.

Furthermore, when he was asked hypothetically if a clothing brand would reach out to him to promote the brand's clothing and the situation would not benefit him as he would only be used as a tool for the clothing brand's promotional efforts, Gabri stated that the situation would depend on many factors, including the current state of his career as an artist as well as the amount of money offered.

Digital marketing and social media

The fourth section of the interview concerned digital marketing and social media. The section aimed to get more perspective on which platforms Gabri favours when searching for new clothing brands, which social media platforms he found the best for digital marketing efforts, which kind of content he prefers and what he thought about the significance of influencer marketing.

Concerning social media platforms, Gabri says that he mainly uses Instagram and TikTok to discover new clothing brands. In addition, within the social media platforms, he finds himself finding new clothing from the posts of other artists and influencers.

Furthermore, he feels that nowadays, artists can be connected to specific clothing brands and gives an example of a UK artist Central Cee and the clothing brand Corteiz. In Finland, an example of a similar situation, according to Gabri, would be Cledos and Vitunleija.

When asked about the most effective social media platform for a streetwear clothing company, Gabri firmly stated TikTok. He says that in TikTok, an account with low follower count can relatively easily begin to trend and gain views and interactions rapidly. In addition, he believes that as a marketing tool, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook are weakening.

Moreover, as Gabri emphasised TikTok as the ideal digital marketing platform, he was asked about the preferred content within the platform from streetwear clothing brands.

From the perspective of digital marketing and trend-creation, he stated that the content that would go viral and gain attention is impossible to predict.

However, the content he enjoys the most from a previously unknown brand would be product showcases, and from an already familiar clothing brand, he prefers behind-the-scenes footage. In behind-the-scenes footage, he would like to see

the overall aesthetic and lifestyle of the brand through what happens in photoshoots and which artists and influencers appear and collaborate with the brand.

Concerning paid social media advertisements, Gabri feels to have not been influenced by them and has not bought products from, for example, sponsored posts on social media platforms. However, he agrees with the statement that paid social media advertisements are good for raising brand awareness.

Emerging trends

The fifth section of the interview touches on emerging trends in the Finnish streetwear industry and Gabri's thoughts on the subject. The section aimed to capture Gabri's insights into the future of Finnish streetwear from the perspective of a music professional, as trend-creation in the past of Finnish streetwear has correlated with the music scene, with artists such as Cledos increasing the popularity of Vitunleija clothing.

Concerning emerging trends in the streetwear fashion scene of Finland, Gabri returned to the subject of clothing brands collaborating with artists. In his opinion, when determined clothing brands that share a vision with an artist collaborate, the chances of succeeding in the industry rise exponentially. Essentially, the trend is obtaining a team or an influencer around the clothing brand's brand and utilising the gained brand awareness in building the company.

Furthermore, Gabri pointed out the emerging trend of Finnish streetwear clothing brands beginning to expand their operations overseas, to Europe, for example.

As most Finnish streetwear brands operate in their web store, shifting towards selling products to other European countries is possible; however, capturing customer interest in other countries is difficult.

When Gabri was asked how he sees the future of Finnish streetwear, he stated that the industry and the culture are going in a good direction, with the people becoming more open to the craziest new ideas and innovations, more like the streetwear culture overseas.

Moreover, Gabri pointed out that, especially in the Helsinki area, people have begun to focus on what they wear more, going out of the house with better-looking, more thought-out outfits.

Brand-related questions

The sixth section of the interview consisted of brand-related questions. The section aimed to delve into Gabri's opinions and perspectives of a good brand and how brand values affect his purchasing decisions and brand appearance.

As a good brand can take various forms in the clothing industry, Gabri stated that if he knew how to manufacture an all-around good brand, he would be a clothing entrepreneur. However, in his opinion, differentiating from other competing companies in the industry revolves around following your vision and sticking to things you find the best, as no one else can have the exact same vision you do.

When asked about the clothing release method of releasing clothing more scarcely in comparison to releasing new clothing more frequently, Gabri preferred the "drop" model, where clothing is released more scarcely, keeping the atmosphere around the brand more exclusive and forcing consumers to actively follow the brand's social media platforms, increasing commitment. Gabri continues that when an established clothing brand uses the drop model, the supply of the products does not match the demand, creating hype around the brand and its products.

Furthermore, when a product is scarcely available, customers are willing to pay more for the product from re-sellers. When customers are willing to pay more for the product on the re-sell markets, the product's value rises, and even though the company does not directly benefit from the re-sell markets, it gains more hype for its products and brand.

Moreover, when Gabri was asked if he preferred more subtle branding compared to extravagance, he stated that he preferred a blend of both. He enjoys minimalistic, simple products with a unique "X-factor" characteristic that differentiates the product from others.

When asked about the importance of brand values when making purchasing decisions, Gabri stated that he rarely considers brand values as a factor when purchasing new clothing. He emphasised the unfortunate opinion of not prioritising brand values but believes that promoting brand values and beliefs does not differentiate the brand towards his age group, as an abundance of companies do it already in the industry and is not a differentiating factor. However, he believes that emphasising brand values is a personal preference and understands consumers who put value in such factors.

Finally, when Gabri was asked if he preferred brands to communicate either in Finnish or in English in marketing content, such as advertisements and social media content, he thought it depended on the company's goal. If the company aims to target Finnish consumers entirely, the content can be in Finnish; however, if the company aims to target international markets, the content should be in English. Ultimately, in marketing, Gabri believes that the language of the content is not the deciding factor. Still, the product speaks for itself – if it is something he finds interesting, the language the product is communicated with is not as important.

3.3.2 Analysis of the interview

The analysis of the qualitative research interview data with Gabri is done by using a thematic analysis approach. The thematic analysis approach allows the identification and analysis of recurring themes and patterns in the data.

Background analysis

In the background section of the interview, themes such as influence on personal style, style development and style as a part of personal brand takes place.

As Gabri discusses his background and history of fashion influences, he states that the aesthetic of the skate culture has influenced him. The unique character-

istic of the skate culture which most interested him was the bagginess of clothing. Moreover, he discussed being interested in brands such as Supreme and Off-White.

Supreme is a clothing and skateboarding lifestyle brand; hence, the brand has influenced the style of skaters and has been in the interest of skaters and people sharing the style of the culture. Moreover, Off-White is a luxurious streetwear brand, known for its heavy influence on the streetwear industry and high pricing of clothing.

Furthermore, during the interview, it can be analysed that Gabri recognised having purchased clothing from luxury brands to seem more fashionable but later concluded that the clothing did not improve his style.

Teenagers, who generally possess an unclear self-concept, view luxury brands as an avenue for self-presentation and self-expression. (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Mrad et al., 2020)

The second theme of the background section of the interview, style development, occurs when Gabri discusses his personal style and unique styles in general. Gabri believes that his style is not precisely an “unique” style, but still states to wear clothing he finds appealing and does not blindly follow the current fashion trends. In addition, as a figure of unique style, he addresses Rick Owens. The style of Rick Owens takes influence on the gothic aesthetic, like the case company’s pursuit of blending the gothic and rock/punk aesthetic towards modern streetwear.

Lastly concerning the themes of the background section of the interview, Gabri discussed about his style as a part of his personal brand as a professional recording artist. From Gabri’s statements about various factors contributing to his personal brand, it can be stated that clothing choices does shape audience perception of a person’s brand.

In summary, the background section's analysis of Gabri's interview unveils key themes in the evolution of his personal style, offering valuable insights for the case company.

Skate culture and iconic streetwear brands like Supreme and Off-White have significantly influenced Gabri's fashion journey. His shift from seeking enhancement through luxury brands to prioritizing personal appeal underscores broader themes in teenage self-presentation.

The conscious effort to cultivate a style independent of trends, influenced by figures like Rick Owens, adds depth to the narrative.

Importantly, the discussion on style as a branding element for a recording artist highlights the symbiotic relationship between clothing choices and audience perception. This nuanced understanding forms a solid foundation for gaining further insight into the style background of the interviewee.

Music and fashion analysis

The themes of the section which concerns the relationship between fashion and music industries in Finland consists of the connection between the industries, influence on streetwear trends and challenges for new brands.

Concerning the relationship between the two industries, the collaborations between artists and clothing brands and the mutual benefit of the parties stood out the most. From the interview, it can be interpreted that the connection between the two industries have increased during the past five years and that the most successful current streetwear companies in the industry are collaborating with the most successful artists.

According to Gabri, individual artists and social media influencers can drive and set fashion trends. As an example of the phenomenon, he gave the artist Cledos's influence of the popularity of the streetwear clothing brand Vitunleija.

In summary, the analysis of the section exploring the relationship between the music and fashion industries in Finland uncovers crucial dynamics shaping the Finnish streetwear scene. The deepening connection between these industries, highlighted by growing collaborations between successful streetwear brands and influential artists, underscores the relationship driving industry trends.

The influential role of individual artists, exemplified by Cledos, emphasizes their contribution to shaping streetwear trends. Additionally, the section underscores the challenges faced by new streetwear brands, emphasizing the need for differentiation and a distinct brand identity for success in the competitive market. This insight adds a realistic dimension to the analysis, guiding strategies for emerging brands.

In essence, these insights form a solid foundation for recognizing the industry's collaborative nature and artists' influential power. This nuanced understanding positions the emerging Finnish streetwear brand to navigate the complex landscape, leveraging key trends and challenges within music and fashion.

Influencer-specific questions analysis

In the third section of the interview, the thematic analysis centres on influencer-specific questions, aiming to discern Gabri's brand preferences and the circumstances under which he would consider collaborating with a brand. Additionally, this section delves into Gabri's past experiences with collaboration campaigns.

The initial theme in the influencer-specific questions section is Gabri's favoured brands and collaboration criteria. From the interview, it can be analysed that due to his success in the industry in the year 2023, clothing brands have begun inquiring collaborations with him; however, he has not answered the inquiries due to the lack of mutual benefit and similar vision.

The subject of mutual benefit is repeated throughout the interview and is essential to Gabri in all collaboration. In addition, as the streetwear clothing brand Disko Studios has worked and is working with Gabri in all his previous campaigns, the two parties share a similar vision which is mutually progressing Gabri's personal brand as an artist and the company's brand forward.

Furthermore, the section touches the financial aspects of collaborations. Gabri underscores that he has refrained from charging Disko Studios for previous collaborations, emphasizing a relationship built on mutual benefit rather than monetary transactions.

However, when Gabri was presented with a hypothetical scenario, wherein a brand might utilize him solely as a promotional tool, his decision-making process is revealed to depend on various factors, including his current career status and the financial incentives offered.

To further analyse the influencer marketing dynamics of the section, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Icek Ajzen can be applied to enhance the depth of the examination, especially in the context of influencer marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behaviour. (Ajzen, 1991)

When considering Gabri's criteria for brand collaborations, it is crucial to recognize how these choices shape consumer attitudes. Gabri's preference for brands that align with his style and values, like Disko Studios, enhances the authenticity of his endorsements, positively influencing his audience's attitudes towards these brands. This alignment reflects Gabri's personal brand strategy and plays a significant role in forming positive consumer perceptions.

Hence, Gabri's decision to decline collaborations where there is a lack of mutual benefit or vision misalignment also impacts consumer attitudes. These choices send a message about brand authenticity, potentially leading his audience to view such brands sceptically; this highlights the power of influencer endorsements in shaping consumer attitudes, an essential factor for brands to consider in the competitive streetwear market.

In summary, the thematic analysis of the section illuminates Gabri's strategic collaboration approach, offering insights for brands seeking influencer partnerships. The prioritization of mutual benefit, vision alignment, and loyalty under-

scores the decision-making processes in influencer collaborations. This information serves as a guide for brands aiming to establish meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships within the context of the Finnish streetwear industry.

Digital marketing and social media analysis

The fourth section of the interview concerning digital marketing and social media is dedicated to exploring digital marketing and social media within the context of the Finnish streetwear industry. This section provides a comprehensive perspective on the evolving landscape of digital platforms, influencers, and content preferences perceived by the professional recording artist Gabri.

By delving into Gabri's insights, the analysis seeks to uncover the dynamic interplay between social media, digital marketing strategies, and the preferences of both consumers and influencers in the realm of Finnish streetwear.

The initial theme of the section concerns Gabri's favoured social media platforms for discovering new clothing brands and products. In the interview, Gabri states that his favoured social media platforms are Instagram and TikTok. In addition, he emphasizes the role of artists and influencers on these platforms in shaping his preferences.

Furthermore, a notable theme within the section is the connection between artists and specific clothing brands. Gabri provides examples, citing instances like Central Cee and Corteiz in the UK and drawing a parallel in Finland with Cledos and Vitunleija. This theme underscores the influential role of artists in brand associations.

Moreover, consider an ideal digital marketing platform, Gabri strongly advocates for TikTok as a streetwear clothing company's most effective social media platform. He highlights the platform's potential for rapid trendsetting, especially for accounts with a low follower count, and expresses a perception of diminishing effectiveness on Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook as marketing tools.

In addition, considering the theme of preferred content, especially on TikTok, Gabri suggests that predicting viral content is challenging but prefers product showcases from unknown brands and behind-the-scenes footage from established brands. This preference extends to showcasing the aesthetic and lifestyle through photoshoots and collaborations with artists and influencers.

The final theme of the section touches the subject of the impact of social media advertisements. In the interview, Gabri shares his perspective on paid social media advertisements, indicating that he remains unaffected by them. However, he acknowledges their effectiveness in raising brand awareness.

To further analyse the section, Theory of Planned Behaviour can be utilized. Gabri's use of platforms like Instagram and TikTok to discover and engage with new brands is pivotal in shaping consumer attitudes. His preference for specific types of content, such as product showcases or behind-the-scenes footage, indicates the content styles that resonate with his audience. These preferences can significantly influence consumer attitudes toward a brand. For instance, behind-the-scenes footage may create a sense of authenticity and exclusivity, fostering a positive attitude towards the brand; this suggests that the type of content influencers like Gabri engage with, and share can be a powerful tool in shaping consumer attitudes toward streetwear brands.

In addition, the connections between artists and specific brands, as seen in Gabri's discussion of examples like Central Cee and Corteiz, provide insight into how these associations help establish social norms. These partnerships influence consumer behaviour by driving a brand's popularity and setting trends that followers may feel socially inclined to adopt. The endorsement of a brand by a prominent artist like Gabri creates influence, suggesting that wearing these brands is socially desirable, as this aspect of influencer marketing is crucial in understanding how consumer behaviour is shaped by the perceived norms within their social circles and the broader community.

Furthermore, Gabri's views on TikTok highlight the platform's unique ability to democratize fashion trends, even for accounts with a low follower count. This aspect of TikTok can significantly affect consumers' perceived behavioural control. It suggests that consumers find it easier to discover and engage with new

trends and brands, feeling greater control over their fashion choices. The platform's algorithm allows for rapid content distribution and can make consumers feel that staying up to date with the latest trends is more accessible and manageable. This perception of ease in discovering and following trends is a critical factor in how consumers interact with and are influenced by digital marketing on platforms like TikTok.

In summary, this section offers insights into streetwear brands' evolving digital marketing landscape. The influence of artists, the dominance of TikTok, and the importance of authentic content creation are key considerations for brands seeking effective strategies in the digital space.

Emerging trends analysis

The fifth section of the interview delves into emerging trends within the Finnish streetwear industry, offering a unique perspective from Gabri, as a professional recording artist deeply immersed in the music scene.

This segment seeks to capture Gabri's insights into the future trajectory of Finnish streetwear, exploring the relationship between fashion and music as key trend drivers. Building upon the historical correlation between music and streetwear, exemplified by artists like Cledos influencing the popularity of specific brands, the section aims to unravel Gabri's observations on the evolving landscape.

The initial theme of the section concerns trend-creation through artist collaborations between clothing brands and artists in shaping emerging trends in Finnish streetwear. Gabri emphasizes that successful collaborations, where brands align with an artist's vision, significantly enhance the brand's prospects in the industry; this underscores the symbiotic relationship between the fashion and music scenes, showcasing how artists contribute to the popularity of specific clothing brands.

Another section theme explores the emerging trend of Finnish streetwear brands expanding overseas operations, particularly in Europe. Gabri highlights

the challenges associated with this trend, including the difficulty of capturing customer interest in foreign markets. This theme reflects the industry's shift towards globalization and the strategic considerations involved in reaching a broader audience.

Furthermore, the third theme of the section concerns the shift in consumer focus and streetwear culture. Gabri's observations on the evolving streetwear scene in Helsinki form a thematic thread, emphasizing a positive trajectory in both the industry and culture. The increased openness to innovative ideas and a heightened focus on personal style indicate a cultural shift in the perception of streetwear, aligning more closely with international streetwear cultures.

Finally, the section concludes with a theme centred on the heightened focus on personal appearance in the Helsinki area. Gabri notes a trend where individuals are placing more emphasis on their outfits, choosing better-looking and thought-out ensembles. This theme signifies a growing consciousness and deliberation in streetwear fashion within the local community.

In summary, this section provides valuable insights into the future of Finnish streetwear, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the music and fashion scenes. The analysis sheds light on the challenges and opportunities associated with globalization, with implications for brands seeking to navigate the evolving landscape of the Finnish streetwear industry.

Brand-related questions analysis

The sixth section of the interview provides a deep dive into Gabri's perspectives on brands, encompassing factors such as brand differentiation, release strategies, branding aesthetics, the role of brand values in purchasing decisions, and language considerations in marketing content.

The initial section theme touches brand differentiation and release strategies. Gabri articulates the challenge of manufacturing an all-encompassing good brand and underscores the importance of differentiation. He prefers the "drop" model in releasing clothing, emphasizing scarcity to maintain brand exclusivity.

This approach creates a sense of hype around the brand, leading to increased demand and higher perceived value, even in the resale market.

Furthermore, the second theme of the section concerns aesthetic preferences. Gabri's preference for a blend of subtle branding and extravagance signifies a nuanced taste. He values minimalistic, simple products but appreciates a unique "X-factor" that sets a product apart. This nuanced preference highlights the importance of individuality and distinctiveness within the brand's offerings.

Moreover, considering brand values and purchasing decisions, while Gabri acknowledges the personal preference of some consumers for brands with strong values, he admits that he rarely considers brand values when making purchasing decisions. He offers a pragmatic perspective, noting that emphasizing brand values may not be a significant differentiator in the industry, particularly within his age group.

Finally, the section touches the theme of language in marketing. Gabri's perspective on language in marketing content reflects a pragmatic approach aligned with the company's goals. He recognizes the importance of tailoring language to target audiences, advocating for Finnish content for local targeting and English content for international markets. However, he underscores the ultimate significance of the product itself over the language of communication.

In summary, this section unravels Gabri's views on brand building, highlighting the complexities of creating a distinctive brand identity. The themes of differentiation, release strategies, aesthetic preferences, the role of values, and language considerations collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Gabri's brand-related perspectives within the context of the Finnish street-wear industry.

Conclusion of the qualitative analysis

The thematic analysis of Gabri's interview aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of key themes in the Finnish streetwear industry. Gabri's background reveals influences from skate culture and iconic brands, guiding the case company in understanding teenage self-presentation.

Furthermore, exploring the music and fashion relationship uncovers dynamics between artists, brands, and industry trends. Insights into influencer collaborations emphasize mutual benefit and loyalty, offering guidance for meaningful partnerships. The digital marketing analysis highlights the dominance of TikTok and the importance of authentic content for effective brand strategies.

Moreover, emerging trends discussions showcase insights into globalization challenges and the evolving streetwear culture. Brand-related questions unravel Gabri's perspectives on differentiation, release strategies, aesthetics, and the role of values, guiding the case company in navigating brand dynamics.

Ultimately, the analysis chapter serves as a strategic compass, offering nuanced insights for the case company to navigate the complex landscape of Finnish streetwear.

In addition, through utilising Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour in the thematic analysis of Gabri's interview, a comprehensive framework is built on understanding the nuanced impact of influencers like Gabri on consumer behaviour in the Finnish streetwear industry. The theory helps in understanding the connection between influencer marketing and consumer decision-making.

3.4. Competitive analysis

In the fast-changing Finnish streetwear market, understanding the competition is crucial for any brand looking to make a significant impact. This section focuses on a detailed competitive analysis essential to developing a strong digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company. The goal of this analysis is not just to identify the main competitors in the market but also to clearly understand their strategies, market positions, and how they connect with customers.

The Finnish streetwear sector, known for its unique fashion styles and cultural influences, is a competitive field where brands constantly strive to attract and keep customer interest. This competitive analysis will look closely at different aspects of competitor strategies, including their products, prices, marketing and branding methods, target audiences and distribution channels. Examining these different aspects is important to get a complete market picture.

Additionally, this section will analyse the case company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs). Understanding these aspects is key to finding unmet needs and changes in the market that the case company can use to its advantage.

With the rise of digital technology, how companies market products and interact with customers has greatly changed. Therefore, a big part of this analysis will focus on how the competitors use the internet, including their websites, social media strategies, and how they engage with customers online; this will give valuable insights into the latest trends in digital marketing in the Finnish streetwear market, which are very important for creating an effective digital strategy for the case company.

In summary, the competitive analysis in this section is not just a current view of the market but a tool to help plan future strategies and positioning for the case company. It lays the groundwork for the strategic recommendations for the case company's brand guidelines and digital marketing plans, ensuring they are strong and in tune with the market's characteristics.

3.4.1 Key competitors

This section of the thesis will research the key competitors in the Finnish streetwear industry, initially through identifying the direct competitors and subsequently identifying the indirect competitors. Additionally, the section will touch the subject of competitive companies from foreign countries operating in the European markets.

Direct competitors are those brands that offer similar streetwear products and target comparable market segments as our case company. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023) By examining the competitors, the case company gains insight into the market's core players, product lines, marketing strategies, and customer base.

Following this, the analysis will shift to uncovering indirect competitors. These are businesses that, while not offering identical streetwear products, still compete for the same consumer attention within the broader fashion market. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023) Identifying these competitors is crucial for understanding the wider competitive landscape and the various factors influencing consumer choices in the industry.

Direct competitors

The domestic market's direct competitors for the case company consist of brands such as Disko Studios, Vitunleija, Euro and VFlame. However, none of the mentioned brands have a similar aesthetic to what the case company aims to produce. However, they share similar targeting segments in the Finnish market that the case company aims to target, making them the direct competitors for the case company.

Demographically, all the mentioned companies target the same area as the case company, having put the vastest focus on the larger cities of Finland, still being able to offer products to the entirety of Finland through their web stores.

The targeted age groups of the direct competing companies vary; however, in addition to targeting the younger audience, they share a similar focus on targeting the age group between the ages of 18-25 like the case company.

As the streetwear market in Finland is relatively small, the purchasing power of its customers remains mostly the same, and the companies target the same demographic purchasing power-wise; this can be seen from the pricing of the companies' products.

Indirect competitors

The indirect competition in the Finnish streetwear market includes companies such as Makia and Bille Beino. These companies operate in the same market as the direct companies but do not aim solely for streetwear products. For instance, Bille Beino is a clothing brand founded by a former NHL player, Ville Leino and the brand's aesthetic forms around sports and arts.

Bille Beino clothing can naturally be seen worn by the fans of ice hockey in Finland, with the clothing mostly worn by teenagers and young adults. In comparison, Makia aims to target the more mature audience with their simplistic and more functional aesthetic in clothing.

3.4.2 Competitor strategies and performance analysis

This section examines the strategies and performance of competitors in the Finnish streetwear industry, focusing on product offerings, pricing strategies, marketing and branding tactics, and distribution channels.

The section assesses how these competitors differentiate their products, position themselves in the market, and effectively reach their customers. The goal is to identify best practices and gaps in the market, providing valuable insights to enhance the case company's strategic positioning in the competitive landscape.

Product offerings

This competitive analysis section delves into the product offerings of the direct competition companies in the Finnish streetwear market, aiming to provide a detailed overview of their product ranges and release strategies. Emphasis is placed on understanding the types of clothing these companies offer, with a special focus on Disko Studios, which aligns most closely with the case company in terms of market segmentation and targeting strategy. The analysis will explore the variety and uniqueness of products offered by these competitors, including their innovative approaches and the impact these have had on the market and consumer trends.

The product offerings of the direct competition companies mainly consist of hoodies, t-shirts, winter jackets, headwear, and shoes. As the direct competition companies use the drop model in clothing releases, they do not have a current clothing catalogue, and the catalogues may vary depending on the companies' releases.

When focusing on the most direct competitor for the case company, Disko Studios, which has the most similar market segmentation and targeting strategy to the case company, the prior releases of the company consist of t-shirts, jeans, college pants and hoodies. In addition, the company has offered their college pants and hoodies as a bundle, marketing the bundle as a "tracksuit".

Disko Studios has had multiple clothing lines in the year 2023, one of the most notable being their collection for the hip-hop-festival Blockfest. The collection included basketball-themed jerseys, t-shirts, and caps – with designs based on green camouflage patterns. In addition, one of the most influential clothing pieces of the company has been their leather and varsity jackets.

The uniqueness of the company's product offerings has been in their innovative designs, which were not brought to Finland before the company's releases. For instance, before the release of Disko Studios' varsity jacket, the Finnish streetwear market did not have a streetwear-styled varsity jacket. In addition, adding to the company's innovativeness, the company's staple jeans, which have been

distressed with the pattern of a diamond, have created buzz for the product in overseas markets.

Pricing strategies

This competitive analysis section will focus on analysing the pricing strategies of direct competition companies and aims to reveal the cost structure of the direct competition companies' products and the reasoning behind the pricing strategies.

In the Finnish streetwear market, an analysis of the pricing strategies among direct competitors reveals a pattern of similar pricing levels. For instance, on Vitunleija's website, a zip-up hoodie is priced at 120 euros, and a t-shirt at 49,90 euros, both including tax. Similarly, Leized's latest collection features hoodies at 100 euros, college pants at 79,95 euros, and a cap at 39,95 euros.

Although the current pricing for Disko Studios' products is not available due to the closure of their web store, previous knowledge indicates that items such as their diamond jeans were priced at around 150 euros.

Initially, the direct competition companies follow a general cost pattern within the market, with companies likely to set their pricing at levels known to be common and expected for the products in the Finnish market - keeping the companies competitive.

Secondly, while the exact manufacturers, bulk order sizes and manufacturing countries are unknown, the pricing of the companies' products suggests that the products' production costs fall in the same category. However, some specified clothing pieces such as jackets and jeans are more costly, contributing towards the increased price.

Another reason for the companies' product pricing is the similar target audience and pricing tactics. The companies set their product prices at a level they believe the target audience is willing and able to pay for their products. Increased

product pricing can be seen in companies such as Disko Studios, as their products are more inclined towards an adult audience than Leized, for example.

However, in the case of Vitunleija, with the brand being supported by the most influential artists and social media influencers in Finland, the company's product cost has increased compared to other smaller companies in the industry due to brand value. Ultimately, the Finnish streetwear industry companies aim to position their pricing in a way of not appealing to too expensive or too cheap to attract customers looking for a mix of quality and value.

In conclusion, by analysing the competing companies' pricing strategies in the industry, the case company can gain valuable knowledge to reflect on its pricing strategies to penetrate the market successfully.

Marketing and branding

This competitive analysis section will examine the marketing and branding efforts of the direct competition companies within the Finnish streetwear market. The section will focus on how these companies position themselves in the market, their specific branding activities, and their digital marketing strategies, with a particular emphasis on their use of social media platforms. This analysis aims to uncover the nuances of their marketing approaches and how they leverage digital channels to connect with their audience, enhance brand visibility, and drive consumer engagement.

The similarity between the digital marketing and branding strategies of direct competition companies is the heavy reliance on the company's founders to build their personal brand, whether directly through the company's social media platforms or indirectly through the founder's individual social media platforms and promote the brand and its products.

For instance, the founder of Vitunleija, Bakari Diarra, has 173 thousand followers across Instagram and TikTok and uses his social media presence to drive his company's digital marketing strategies. Bakari is also involved in the operations of Euro, a brand whose ambassador is the artist Cledos.

Furthermore, the founders of VFlame and Leized are actively creating and posting content on the company's social media platforms to follow Bakari's footsteps in becoming more recognised on social media, leading to further acknowledgement towards their brands.

The content the founders of the competing companies create and post on social media platforms varies in professionalism. For instance, Bakari often posts unprofessional and comedy-like content on his social media platforms, appealing to an audience of varying ages through his content. However, Bakari's content often attracts a younger audience, which fits his company's targeting strategy and market segmentation, Vitunleija.

The content created by VFlame and Leized's founders focuses more on professionalism than Bakari's content and mostly includes product showcases and behind-the-scenes footage. For example, the founder of Leized often answers to the comments of their TikTok posts with videos, further promoting and showcasing the brand's products. This customer interaction and engagement method is crucial as it demonstrates how these brands maintain an active, engaging presence on social media.

Moreover, another similarity between the companies' digital marketing strategies is the utilisation of collaborations between Finnish artists. For instance, Vitunleija has a long history of collaborating with artists such as Cledos, Korelon and Davi. Additionally, VFlame has collaborated with an emerging artist named VJ and Leized with an artist named Tupe. These collaborations are significant as they show how these brands leverage local cultural influences and personalities to enhance their brand visibility and appeal.

The company Vitunleija is also a signed "artist" to Warner Music Finland and releases music as an ambassador for other artists and, in some cases, Bakari himself. For example, in Vitunleija's releases, artists such as Cledos, Elastinen, Davi, William, Korelon and the company representative Bakari perform in various songs; this further elaborates the connection and collaborations between artists in the Finnish music industry and streetwear clothing brands. By releasing music under the company's name, Vitunleija can reach the audiences of

each of the featured artist's audiences to promote the brand. This unique approach of integrating with the music industry is an innovative strategy that differentiates them from others and shows how they extend their brand reach beyond traditional fashion marketing channels.

Distribution channels

The main distribution channels used by the direct competing companies are their web stores. As mentioned, the companies use the drop model to release new clothing seasonally. Hence, Disko Studios, Leized and Euro do not have physical stores. Vitunleija has launched a physical store in Helsinki. However, the store is not open daily and is also connected to the drop model - the store is open when the company announces on social media. In addition, Zouseph's also has a physical store in Helsinki.

Furthermore, as Vitunleija, Euro and Disko Studios are heavily involved in the Finnish music scene, "pop-ups" are held occasionally at various events, such as concerts of Finnish hip-hop artists. Moreover, currently, Euro does not have a web store nor a physical store available and the products are only sold in Cledos's shows. The choice of distribution channels like web stores, physical stores, and event-based sales significantly impacts customer accessibility and their overall shopping experience.

The marketing integration with the distribution of companies Disko Studios, Euro and Vitunleija through utilizing pop-ups is unique and effective as on the pop-ups, they can offer exclusive products, only available at the exact time and place; this creates further excitement and hype for the companies and their products. This strategy enhances customer engagement and reinforces the brand image as trendy and unique.

Concerning logistics and fulfilment, according to Bakari's interview on Concepti released in 2021, Vitunleija handles logistics and fulfilment for their online sales by taking pre-orders. After the customer has paid for the product, the blank versions of the products, for example, a hoodie with no additional prints or designs on the product, are ordered. After the blank versions of the products are brought

to the facilities of Vitunleija, the products are printed on the spot and sent to the customers (Concepti, 2021) .This method is effective if the company can print and manufacture the clothing designs.

However, through researching the TikTok account of Leized, the founder of the company has explained the use of the traditional logistic method of ordering ready-made products from the manufacturer of the company and stocking them to the company's facilities and sending the product to the customer when the order is made. The case company also aims to use this model as it does not plan to print or manufacture the designs of the products and uses a manufacturing company.

Moreover, collaborations in distribution occur especially in Vitunleija and Euro pop-ups as Bakari Diarra has a role in both companies operations. The products of both companies are offered as the consumer base of both companies are similar and promoted by the same group of artists and influencers.

3.4.3 Competition comparison and SWOT analysis of the case company

This competitive analysis section aims to summarise the competitive analysis through SWOT analysis. The SWOT is manufactured through a competitive analysis chart.

SWOT analysis is a framework used to identify and analyse organisational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The aim of utilising SWOT analysis is to see the factors concerning decision-making and strategic planning (Bigelow, 2023).

The chart compares the case company and its direct and indirect competitors, encompassing brands such as Disko Studios, Vitunleija, Euro, VFlame, Makia, and Bille Beino. The chart visualises the competing companies' target audience, product offerings, pricing strategies, marketing and branding, and distribution channels.

The anticipated outcome of the competitive analysis chart is an insightful SWOT analysis that will inform the case company's strategic planning and decision-making processes. This analysis is intended to provide an understanding of where the company currently stands compared to its competitors and map out a trajectory for future growth and positioning in the market. The chart can be found in the appendixes of the thesis in Figure 55.

Strengths

The case company is positioned in a niche market, aiming to provide high-quality streetwear with a simplistic design. This distinct positioning can appeal to fashion and streetwear enthusiasts who appreciate a blend of modern and punk influences in their apparel.

Furthermore, the case company's segmentation strategy focuses on demographic, personality, and geographical characteristics, facilitating targeted and efficient marketing efforts.

Weaknesses

The case company's product range is currently limited to the "ALL STARS" baseball cap. This limited offering may affect the brand's ability to attract a wider customer base and establish itself as a versatile fashion brand before releasing new products.

Moreover, as a new entrant in the market with a single product, the case company may struggle to build brand recognition and penetrate the market, especially against established competitors with a broader range of products.

Opportunities

The planned expansion to include hoodies, pants, and t-shirts offers significant opportunities to capture a larger market share and cater to diverse consumer needs.

Furthermore, the initial customers of the baseball cap and those attracted by the brand's unique aesthetic can become loyal customers as the product range expands.

Moreover, utilizing modern digital marketing strategies and capitalizing on current fashion trends can enhance brand visibility and appeal, especially among the younger demographic.

Threats

The streetwear market is highly competitive with established brands that strongly hold the target demographic. This competition could pose a challenge in gaining market share.

In addition, the fashion industry is subject to rapid changes in trends. The company needs to be agile in its product development to adapt to these evolving consumer preferences.

Lastly, depending on the success of future product lines, following a less successful initial product could pose financial risks and pressure on the case company.

Conclusion to the competitive analysis

This competitive analysis of the competing companies in the Finnish streetwear market has provided a comprehensive overview of the competitive landscape, which is essential for the strategic development of the case company. It examined competitor strategies, market positions, and customer engagement methods, focusing on direct and indirect sector competitors.

The Finnish streetwear market is highly competitive and characterized by its unique styles and cultural influences. The analysis detailed various aspects of the competitors' strategies, including product offerings, pricing, marketing techniques, and distribution channels, to offer a complete picture of the market dynamics.

A critical part of this analysis was the SWOT analysis, which highlighted the case company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This assessment is key to identifying market opportunities and areas where the case company can differentiate itself.

In conclusion, this competitive analysis presents a snapshot of the current market and serves as a strategic tool for the case company's future planning and market positioning. It provides the foundation for strategic recommendations for the company's brand guidelines and digital marketing plans, ensuring they resonate with the market's evolving dynamics.

4 CREATING BRAND GUIDELINES AND STRATEGY

Creating a branding strategy for a company commences with constructing a clear and articulated brand identity system. This system is grounded in purposeful brand positioning, underpinned by a unique personality and value set, and directed towards a meaningful, long-term vision (Pollák & Markovič, 2022:77).

An integral component of this system is the brand identity prism, as shown in Figure 45, often referred to as a brand book, manual, or guidelines. This prism presents the brand's visual and verbal elements, including the brand name, logo, tagline or strapline, and brand mantra (Pollák & Markovič, 2022:77).

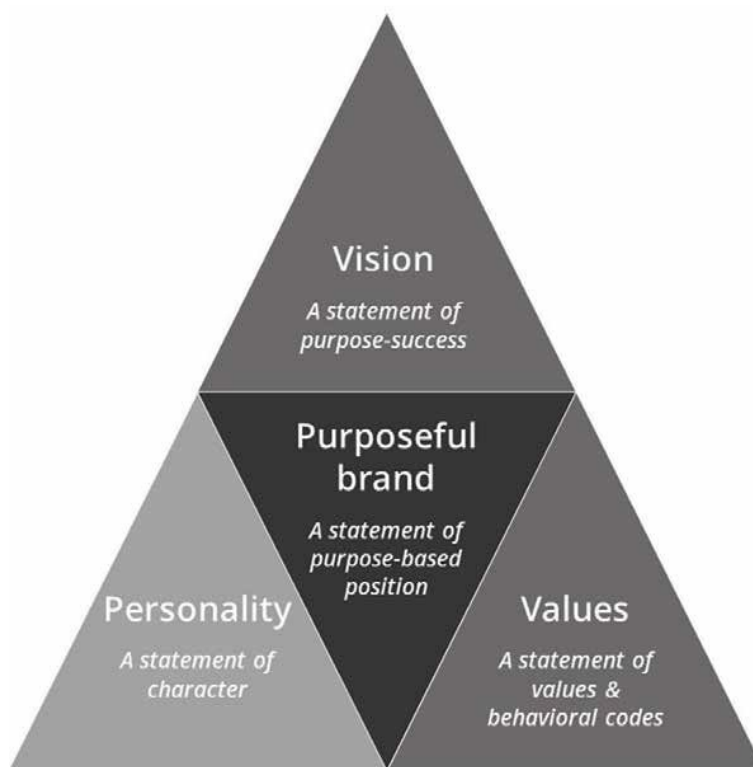


Figure 45. A brand identity prism (Pollák & Markovič, 2022:78)

The core purpose of brand guidelines is to ensure consistency and coherence in how a brand is presented across all touchpoints. This consistency is crucial for building brand recognition and equity over time (Kapferer, 2008:173). For the case company operating within the Finnish streetwear market, the underlying values of the brand's identity are quality, durability, sustainability, and being at

the forefront of fashion trends. These values define the brand's actions and resonate deeply with the target audience's expectations and preferences, as identified in our research.

The following sections will detail the specific components of the case company's brand guidelines, demonstrating how they have been created to reflect the brand's core values and align with market research insights. This alignment ensures that the brand's identity is consistent, internally relevant and appealing to the case company's target market, establishing a strong and resonant presence in the competitive landscape of Finnish streetwear.

Mission statement & vision

The company's mission statement can be formed as follows: *Our mission is to revolutionize the Finnish streetwear market by consistently delivering clothing that combines quality and durability with contemporary style. We empower individuals to curate their unique outfits, whether for a formal occasion or a casual day out. Our commitment is to be at the forefront of fashion trends in Finland, offering clothing that seamlessly fits into the modern lifestyle. As Pieces to Pieces, we provide the building blocks for every wardrobe, helping our customers assemble outfits that express their individuality effortlessly.*

The case company's mission statement emphasises the ability to utilise the company's products to create various outfits in the modern times of streetwear, whether on casual stay-at-home outfits or more formal outfits to go out with. In addition, the mission statement emphasises the company's core values of quality and durability and aims to become a trendsetter compared to following fashion trends.

Furthermore, the vision for the case company is to become synonymous with trust, dependability, and style. The brand strives to achieve a reputation where the mention of "Pieces to Pieces" wakes recognition of high-quality and stylish clothing that is accessible and affordable. This vision aligns with the quantitative research findings, indicating a strong consumer preference for quality and affordability brands. The goal is to reach a point where customers proudly

acknowledge their Pieces to Pieces clothing, represents quality within an accessible price range.

Personality

The personality traits and characteristics that describe the brand are mysterious, simple, and dependable. The case company can be characterised as mysterious, as the overall aesthetic of the company and its operations are to remain quiet and show rather than being loud with false promises and providing lower quality. The brand's colour palette supports the mystique and simplicity around the brand, as the main colours used in the company's clothing, advertising, marketing, and social media platforms are black, grey, and white.

Simplicity is a characteristic which describes the brand, and the brand does not aim to over-fluctuate its marketing and advertising platforms with content and aims to remain efficient and scarce. Initially, when marketing operations are launched, the company must produce more digital marketing and social media content to gain notoriety in the market, but after the initial marketing phase of the company's digital marketing strategy is over, the company posts content on their pages only when the content is needed and most effective towards its goals. This tactic will keep the brand's image refreshing each time the company releases new products or promotes current ones, as the consumers are not overdosed on content, keeping them from growing tired of the brand.

Dependability, as a characteristic of the company, highlights the promise of delivering quality products and customer service to the company's customers. Dependability emphasises product quality and varying situations, such as delayed shipping and product returns; the company aims to promote fast customer service and communication between the company and its customers.

Logo

The case company's official logo, show in Figure 46, features the abbreviation "pcs -> pcs", with the arrow symbolizing "to" and connecting the two parts of the brand name. This design choice, including the puzzle element, resonates with

the brand's aim to be perceived as mysterious, inviting customers to 'piece together' the narrative behind each clothing item. This concept of mystery and narrative-building aligns with qualitative insights, indicating the appeal of brands that offer more than just products but stories and identities.

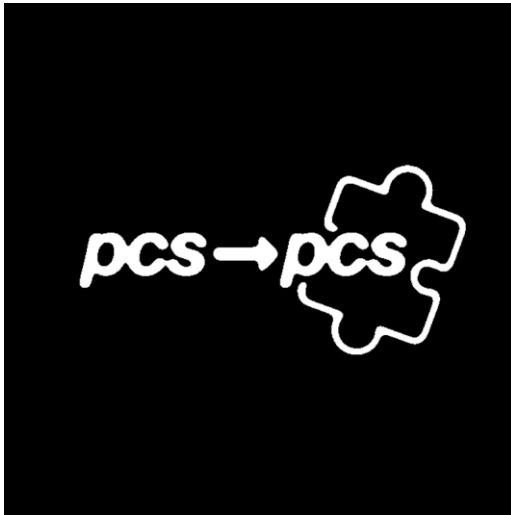


Figure 46. Pieces to Pieces Oy logo (Pieces to Pieces Oy, 2023)

Colour palette

The colour palette, seen in Figure 47, consisting of grey, black, white, and dark brown, has been carefully selected to mirror the desired "opium" aesthetic, drawing inspiration from modern rock and punk. This palette supports the brand's vision of simplicity and uniqueness. Black, typically associated with luxury, is used to represent quality, while white adds a contrasting element of cleanliness and purity, enhancing the brand's modern and simplistic presentation. Grey is utilised for subtle detailing, and dark brown provides additional depth to the palette. This selection of colours reflects our research findings that emphasise the importance of aesthetics in consumer preferences.

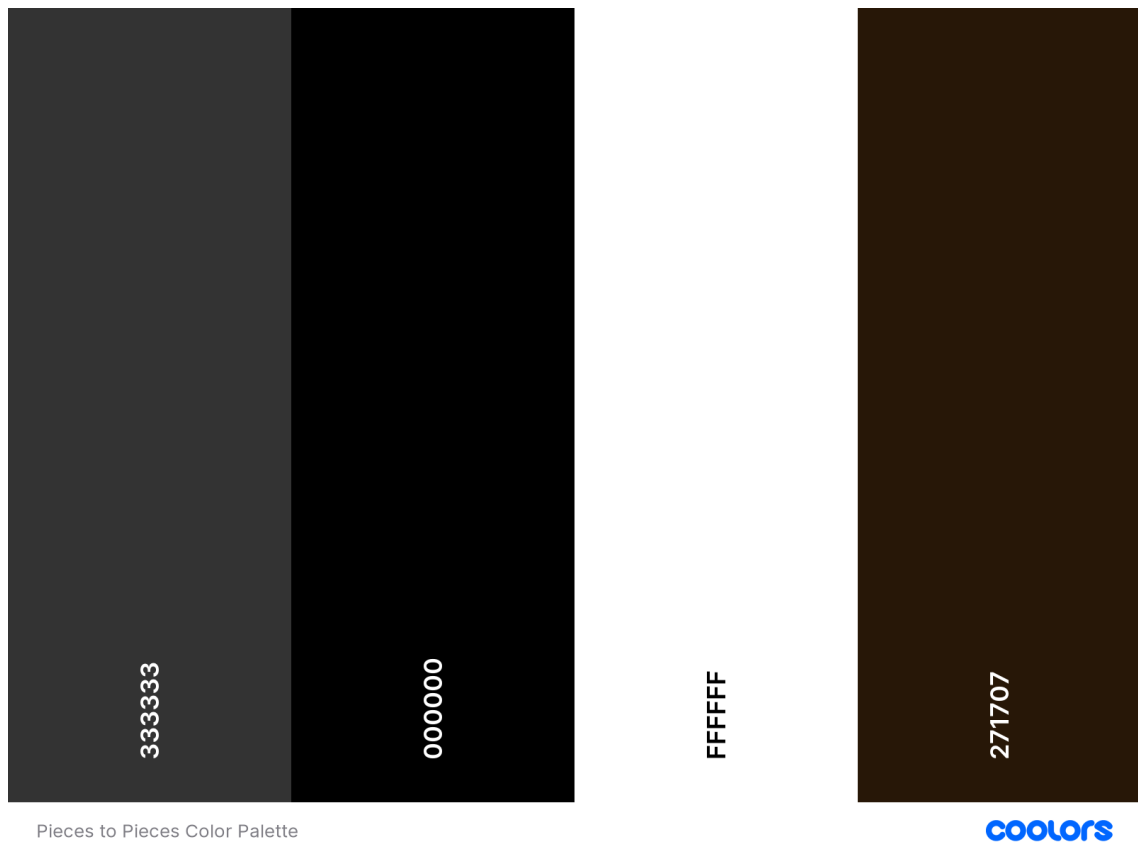


Figure 47. Pieces to Pieces Oy colour palette (Coolors, 2023)

Typography and design elements

The typography and design elements used in the case company's clothing vary depending on the product and season. The overall aesthetic of the typography, as seen in the idea boards in Figures 48 and 49, suggests a focus on professionalism and simplicity. For digital marketing content, a specific font is consistently used, exemplified in the social media post about the "All Stars" baseball cap, visible in Figure 28. This font choice, being clear and thick, ensures legibility and aligns with the brand's commitment to simplicity and professionalism. Such attention to typography is supported by qualitative research, highlighting the impact of visual elements on brand perception.



Figure 48. Pieces to Pieces Oy idea board 1

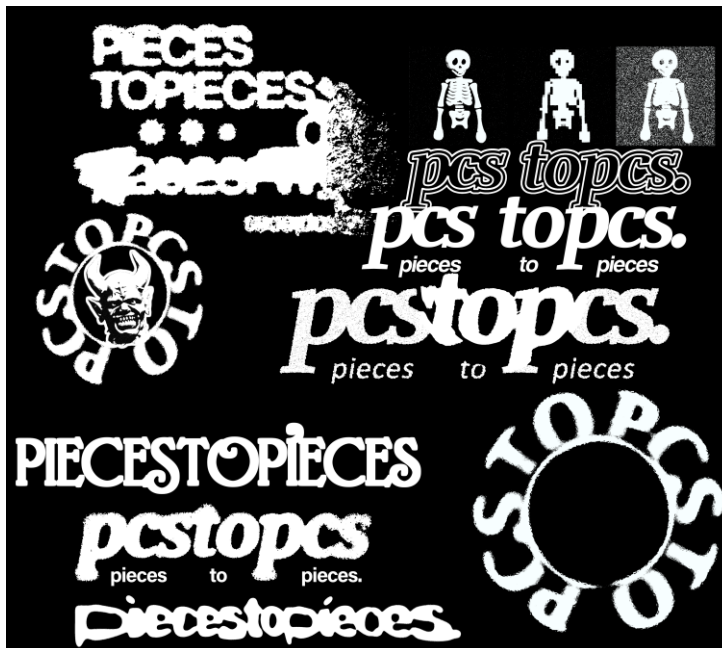


Figure 49. Pieces to Pieces Oy idea board 2

Tone of voice in social media content

The case company adopts a formal tone in its social media content to reflect its commitment to professionalism and brand consistency. This approach aligns with the brand's core values and is designed to resonate with an audience that values quality and dependability.

However, the case company employs a strategic shift in tone when announcing new clothing drops. During these key moments, capital letters are used in the text of their posts to create a sense of emphasis and urgency. For example, the "All Stars" baseball cap was launched with the statement: "ALL STARS BASEBALL CAP AVAILABLE NOW AT PIECESTOPIECES.COM". This technique captures immediate attention and differentiates major announcements from regular content. The social media post concerning the release of the "All Stars" baseball cap can be found in Figure 50.

The use of capital letters in these instances is a deliberate stylistic choice. It highlights important announcements and ensures they stand out on the followers' feeds, thereby effectively capturing the audience's attention. This approach is part of a broader strategy to maintain a dynamic and engaging presence on social media, ensuring that each communication is impactful and resonates with the audience.

Through this balanced approach to communication, the case company aims to strike a balance between maintaining a professional image and generating excitement around new product releases. This method reflects an understanding of the importance of adapting communication styles to suit different types of messages and audience engagement objectives.



Figure 50. A social media post of Pieces to Pieces "ALL STARS" baseball cap

Communication language in digital marketing

The choice of language in digital marketing is a crucial aspect of the case company's communication strategy, particularly as it operates in a multilingual market like Finland. The case company communicates primarily in English, which aligns well with a significant portion of the target audience's preferences, as the thesis's quantitative research suggests. The survey reveals that a substantial majority, 74.2%, are receptive to Finnish streetwear brands using both Finnish and English on social media and in advertising. Meanwhile, 16.1% lean towards English exclusively, and a smaller fraction, 9.7%, prefer Finnish. This diversity in language preference indicates a versatile consumer base comfortable engaging with brands across multiple languages.

However, the research also highlights an opportunity for the case company to broaden its appeal and strengthen its connection with the local Finnish-speaking market. Incorporating Finnish into its digital marketing efforts, alongside English, could provide a balanced approach, catering to local and international audiences.

Gabri's perspective on language use in marketing content supports a practical approach that aligns with the company's objectives. He supports using Finnish in content targeting local audiences and English to reach international markets. Gabri emphasizes that while language is an important tool for audience engagement, the quality and appeal of the product itself hold larger importance in marketing communications.

In conclusion, the case company's language strategy in digital marketing should reflect its diverse audience base. By maintaining English as the primary communication language, with the strategic incorporation of Finnish, the case company can effectively cater to its local and international consumers. This bilingual approach aligns with consumer preferences and reinforces the brand.

Conclusion

The brand guidelines for the case company present a thorough framework that captures the brand's essence. These guidelines have been carefully shaped to reflect the company's fundamental values: quality, durability, sustainability, and innovation in fashion. They have been aligned with insights from both quantitative and qualitative research, ensuring that the brand resonates effectively with its target audience and bridges the gap between brand identity and consumer expectations.

The mission to transform the Finnish streetwear market through quality and style establishes a clear direction for the brand. The personality of the brand, marked by being enigmatic, straightforward, and reliable, creates a unique character that appeals to the audience. The choice of colour palette and typography, along with the strategic language used in digital marketing, further strengthen the brand's identity, aligning with the preferences and expectations of the audience.

Additionally, adopting a bilingual approach in digital marketing, using both Finnish and English, broadens the brand's appeal and connects with a wider range of consumers locally and internationally. This strategy is backed by insights

from research and expert opinions, reinforcing the importance of tailoring language to suit different audience groups while keeping the focus on product quality and attractiveness.

In closing, the brand guidelines for the case company guide how the brand is represented, ensuring consistency, clarity, and a strong connection with the audience. As the brand moves forward in the competitive Finnish streetwear market, these guidelines will be crucial in establishing a strong, recognizable, and esteemed brand identity.

5 DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

5.1. Introduction

This thesis, dedicated to developing brand guidelines and a digital marketing strategy for the case company, has explored various areas of branding and marketing within the dynamic fashion industry. The aim has been to construct a framework that enhances the brand's identity and effectively engages with the target audience digitally. This final chapter focuses on the digital marketing plan, a crucial component in actualizing the strategies and insights gathered throughout this study.

This chapter will delve into the current digital marketing practices of the case company, primarily its use of Instagram, and how this platform's demographics align with the company's target audience. Following this, the chapter will discuss the key components of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy, including search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and various facets of social media marketing, such as influencer collaborations and paid advertising. Each component will be discussed in the context of its relevance and application to the case company, concluding with a detailed action plan that integrates these components into a cohesive strategy to achieve the company's marketing objectives.

Through this chapter, the thesis aims to provide a practical, actionable plan that can be implemented by the case company, thus bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application in digital marketing.

5.2. The current digital marketing of the case company

In the dynamic world of digital marketing, the case company has utilized social media, particularly Instagram, as a cornerstone of its marketing efforts. Instagram's visual-centric platform makes it an ideal match for fashion brands aiming to create a strong visual presence and engage effectively with a youthful audience.

As shown in Figure 51, recent statistics underscore the strategic suitability of Instagram for the case company. As Dixon (2023) reported, a notable proportion of Instagram's user base falls within the key demographic segments for fashion brands. Specifically, 30.8% of Instagram users are between 18 and 24, while 30.3% are between 25 and 34. This demographic alignment positions Instagram as a prime channel for reaching the target audience of the case company.

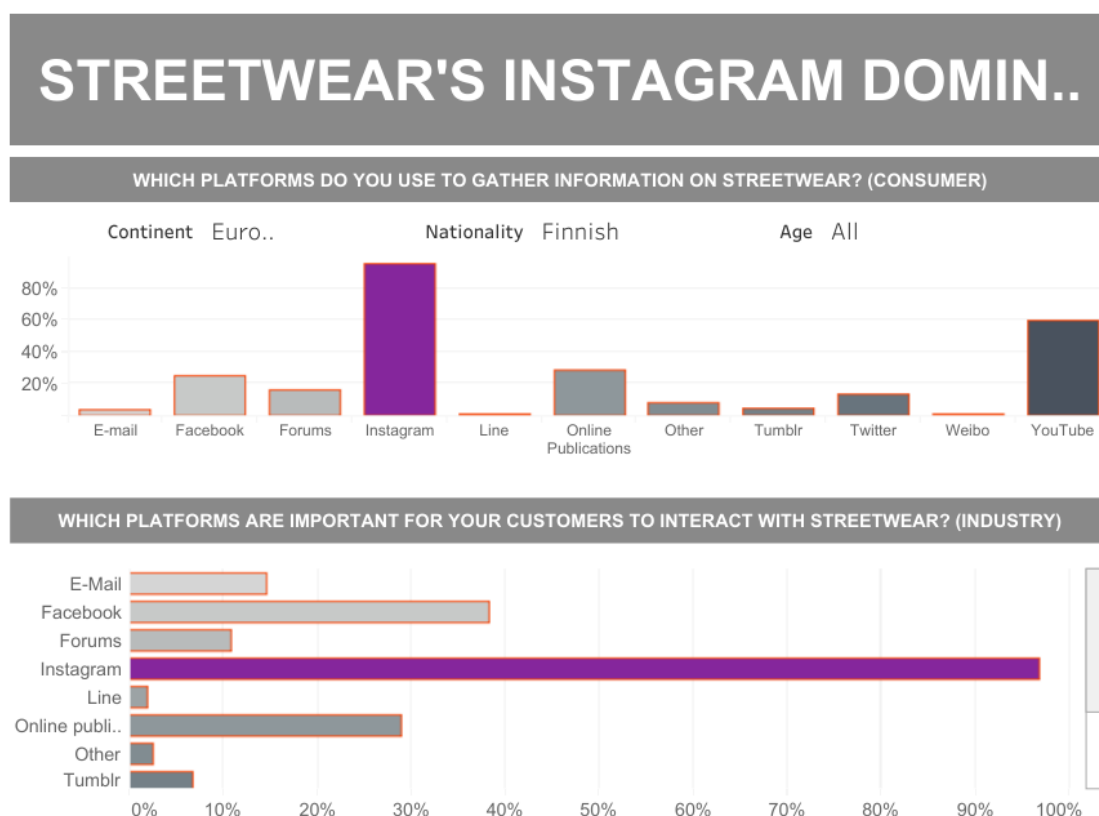


Figure 51. Streetwear's Instagram Dominance -chart (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2023)

Furthermore, the dominance of Instagram in the streetwear sector is reinforced by the findings of the "Streetwear Impact Report" conducted by Hypebeast and Strategy& in 2023. This study provides a data-driven perspective on streetwear market trends and consumer behaviours. An overwhelming 96% of streetwear enthusiasts reported using Instagram as their main platform for streetwear-related information, with the percentage being marginally lower at 94.3% among Finnish respondents (Hypebeast & Strategy&, 2023). These figures strongly advocate for Instagram as a focal point of marketing for a streetwear-oriented brand like Pieces to Pieces.

Supporting these findings, the quantitative analysis conducted earlier in the thesis shows the significance of Instagram among the survey respondents. The analysis revealed a strong preference for Instagram as a source of information and engagement with fashion brands, aligning perfectly with the broader market trends. Hence, this validates the case of the company's already existing strategic focus on Instagram and underscores its effectiveness as a tool for reaching and engaging with our target demographic.

An essential aspect of the case company's current marketing strategy on Instagram is implementing the clothing "drop" model. This approach, effectively described by Dopson (2023), revolves around creating anticipation and excitement for new releases. The case company aims to leverage social media to tease upcoming products, generating a buzz culminating in quick sell-outs upon product launch. This strategy not only boosts sales but also enhances the perceived value and exclusivity of the products.

Moreover, linking this to the survey findings, the survey conducted as part of this thesis revealed a preference among consumers for infrequent product releases. This preference aligns with the drop model's approach of releasing products more scarcely, thus maintaining the brand's image as exclusive and keeping the products interesting and desirable. By adopting this strategy, the case company is in sync with the expectations of its target audience, contributing to each product's longevity and perceived value.

Additionally, insights from the qualitative interview with a professional artist, Gabri, further support the strategy. Gabri preferred the "drop" model, where clothing is released more scarcely, thus creating an exclusive atmosphere around the brand, and encouraging consumers to actively follow the brand's social media platforms. This preference underscores the effectiveness of the drop model in building brand commitment and enhancing the case company's overall marketing strategy.

Adopting this model, the case company has marketed its initial product, the "All Stars" baseball cap, on Instagram. By strategically building anticipation before

the cap's release, the case company have capitalized on the potent mix of urgency and exclusivity that the drop model offers (Dopson, 2023).

5.3. Digital marketing concepts

Digital marketing refers to various strategies and tactics marketers can use online to promote products, services, or brands to a digital audience; digital marketing leverages digital channels and platforms to connect the business to its customers and potential customers, driving brand awareness, engagement, and conversion. (AMA, 2023)

As the modern digital marketing landscape is vast, a business can leverage marketing elements through search engine optimization, content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, influencer marketing and affiliate marketing, for example. (AMA, 2023)

The digital marketing concepts related to the case company's digital marketing strategy are search engine optimization, email, and social media marketing.

Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization, SEO in short, refers to businesses optimizing their websites, web stores and online content towards their targeted audience to improve visibility and ranking in search engines such as Google, Bing and Yandex. SEO uses keywords, internal and external links, and optimized content to help search engines find and rank websites on search engine results pages. The goal of utilizing SEO is to increase organic traffic to the company's platforms. Organic traffic refers to non-paid traffic towards the company's platforms (University of San Diego).

According to Google, 49% of survey respondents conducted by Google answered that they use Google to discover or find a new item or product. In addition, 59% of respondents use Google to research products before purchasing in-store or online, strengthening the importance of SEO in digital marketing (Google Product Discovery Statistics, 2023).

As the case company is in its initial stages of operations and is funded through the two owner's personal funds, the most crucial benefit of utilizing SEO is the generation of organic traffic. Moreover, as search engines are available 24/7, the possibility of potential consumers finding the company's web store and social media platforms increases. (Muthoni, 2021)

Furthermore, as the case company's brand aims to forward dependability and trust through SEO, it can rank higher in search engines, promoting trustworthiness and credibility. When a website is ranked high in search engines, initially, the website is easier for the potential consumer to find and, subsequently, appears more trustworthy and credible (Muthoni, 2021).

Finally, with the most important benefits of SEO related to the case company's web store and social media platforms is the competitive advantage SEO offers against competing companies not utilizing SEO. By investing time into SEO, the case company can outrank the competing companies in the industry to gain brand awareness and increased market shares, leading to increased sales (Muthoni, 2021).

Email marketing

In digital marketing, the basic principle of email marketing is sending emails to the company's target audience. Email marketing is one of the most effective methods to turn potential customers into customers and on-and-off customers into loyal ones. Email marketing efforts can include sending customers newsletters, promotional messages, and special deals (Johnson, 2023).

According to a study conducted by eMarketer, email marketing campaigns have a median return on investment of 122%, four times more effective than other digital marketing methods. The most beneficial elements of email marketing related to the case company are cost-effectiveness, increased web store traffic and automation (Sean, 2022).

According to a survey conducted by Statista among marketers worldwide, the results state that every US dollar spent on email marketing companies earned 36 dollars. Among the presented industries, the highest ROI was in the retail, e-commerce, and consumer goods sectors, with 45 dollars per dollar spent (Dencheva, 2023).

Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a digital marketing method on a social media platform. Companies utilize social media marketing to promote their brand, products, or services to the company's targeted audience. (Baluch, 2023) In fashion marketing, social media marketing aims to engage with the brand's target audience, increase brand awareness, and drive increased sales. (Fashion Retail Academy, 2023)

According to Anna Baluch, in their article on Forbes Advisor, the three best social media platforms concerning social media marketing are Facebook, Instagram and X. (Baluch, 2023). As mentioned on Figure 29, Instagram is the most effective social media platform concerning streetwear marketing.

In fashion marketing, social media marketing takes multiple forms, including influencer marketing, content marketing, paid social media advertising content marketing, and social media contests and giveaways. (Geysler, 2023)

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing involves a brand collaborating with a social media influencer that represents or is related to the marketed products or services industry. (Geysler, 2023) Concerning the case company, an example of influencer marketing is the case company collaborating with streetwear influencers or musicians in Finland to gain brand awareness and advertise the company and its products.

Content marketing

Content marketing is vital to a fashion brand's digital marketing strategy. In its essence, content marketing is creating content that shows the product the company offers to its audience in different forms, such as pictures, videos, blog posts, and more. As the world is transitioning from traditional advertisements to social media content, emphasizing content marketing helps companies differentiate from traditional marketing methods to create unique, helpful, high-quality content to promote their offerings (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023b).

Paid social media advertising

Paid social media advertising is a paid campaign run on a social media platform towards the target audience. (Sirohi, 2023) The case company ran a paid social media advert on Instagram in August of 2023 concerning its baseball cap. The advert aimed to increase visits towards the company's web store for customers to purchase the advertised product.

The target audience set for the Instagram advert included an estimated target group size of 514.7 to 605.5 thousand users; according to Instagram, the target audience size was graded as "excellent". Furthermore, the targeted locations included the entirety of Finland. Moreover, the targeted interests of the users were streetwear, clothing, shopping, online shopping, street fashion, hip-hop genre music, and more. Lastly, the age group the advert targeted was 18-30.

As shown in Figure 52, the Instagram paid advert cost the company 30 euros within six days, with an average cost for one visit to the web store of 0,77 euros. Furthermore, the advert reached 4886 users, with 44 users visiting the company's Instagram page and 42 visiting the company's web store. The overall views of the advertisement, including repeated views from the same user, was 7427.

Instagram adverts work in a way that the more the company pays for the advert, the larger audience Instagram shows the advert to. Hence, the number of users the advert reached met the case company's expectations, as the case company paid 30 euros for the advert over six days.



Figure 52. Profile activity, Instagram Analytics (Pieces to Pieces Oy, 2023)

As shown in Figure 53, the users who saw the advert were 76.1% male and 21.2% female. The targeted audience for the advertisement did not clarify gender; hence, it can be stated that the interests concerning the targeted audience reach more men than women.

The age group of the users that saw the advert were 65.4% of 18-24 and 34.5% of 25-34, indicating that the targeted interests of the users favour towards a younger audience.

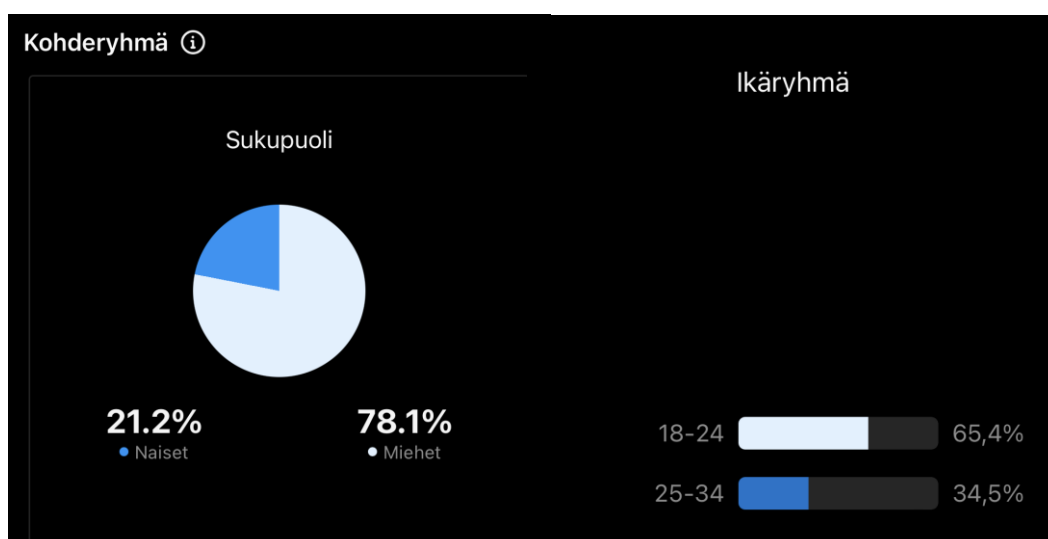


Figure 53. Target group, Instagram Analytics (Pieces to Pieces Oy, 2023)

As shown in Figure 54, the geographical areas of users that saw the advert were 43% from the Uusimaa area, which included cities such as Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo and Lohja. 18.1% of the users were from Pirkanmaa, 12.4% from Southwest Finland, 8.3% from Northern Ostrobothnia and 6.6% from Central Finland. The geographical results of the advert indicated that users in the metropolitan area of Finland is the most interested in streetwear clothing.

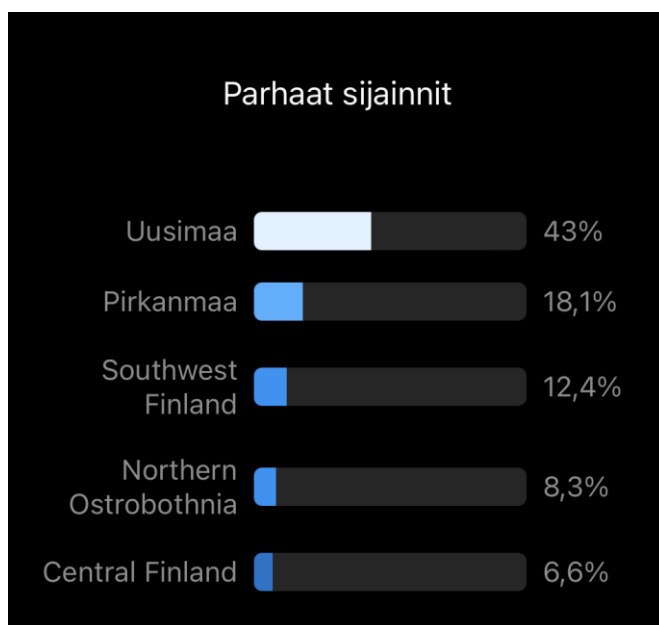


Figure 54. Best locations, Instagram Analytics (Pieces to Pieces Oy, 2023)

In conclusion, from the results of the paid advertisement of the case company's baseball cap, male users between the ages of 18 and 24 in the metropolitan area of Finland are the most interested in the company's product. However, the advertisement campaign did not result in sales, suggesting that creating paid campaigns in the beginning stages of a clothing brand is primarily for creating brand awareness.

Giveaways and contests

Giveaways and contests are a great way of increasing customer engagement and acquiring new ones while building brand awareness and ultimately growing the business. Conducting giveaways and contests as a part of a marketing plan enables the marketer to adjust the campaign to the company's specific situation and determine the rules as the marketer plans the giveaway or contest; the

marketer is flexible to spend as much or as little as wanted towards the prizes (Sheehan, 2023).

As a part of a digital marketing plan, according to a study conducted by Tailwind, an Instagram giveaway or contest can help grow a company's Instagram followers by 70% in three months. In addition, according to the study, Instagram giveaways and contests gather 3.5 times more likes and 64 times more comments than a regular post (Tailwind Blog, 2020).

5.4. Digital marketing action plan

Search engine optimization

The case company's web store provider, Shopify, offers various solutions for the mentioned digital marketing strategies, including SEO and email marketing. Shopify has a built-in SEO feature that helps companies optimize their content. Shopify automatically generates canonical tags added to the pages to prevent duplicate content from appearing in search results (Shopify).

Additionally, the website's sitemap.xml and robots.txt files are automatically generated, and themes automatically generate title tags that include the case company's store name. (Shopify) Hence, the case company can utilize SEO seamlessly within its web store provider, saving time and effort.

Email marketing

Shopify has an email marketing service, which is included in the store's "basic", "advanced", and "plus" plans of up to 10,000 emails every calendar month with Shopify's service, Shopify Email. However, after reaching the amount of 10,000 emails sent in a calendar month, the Shopify Email service costs the case company \$1 per 1,000 emails.

In addition, Shopify makes email marketing easy for the company; for example, Shopify allows the company to automatically send an email when a customer has added a product to their bag but has yet to proceed with the order. The

same applies to emails for returning consumers, with Shopify encouraging the case company to include a potential discount code for further purchases. Hence, creating email marketing campaigns using Shopify is made effortless and effective.

The case company plans on utilizing Shopify Email to promote new clothing releases, order bundle discounts and announcements if a consumer has added an order to their bag but still needs to proceed with the order, encouraging the consumer to go through with the order.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing represents the cornerstone of the case company's digital marketing strategy. It is particularly appealing due to its cost-effectiveness and significant potential for creating brand awareness, especially in the Finnish domestic streetwear market. Given the evolving digital landscape, social media marketing offers an accessible and versatile platform for connecting with the case company's target audience.

The thesis's quantitative research shows the effectiveness of social media marketing in the streetwear industry. A vast majority, 87.1% of survey respondents, use social media platforms primarily to discover new clothing brands. This significant finding underscores the crucial role of social media in the brand discovery process, highlighting its influence on the consumer journey. For the case company, focusing all its marketing efforts on social media is a strategy validated by these insights.

Furthermore, the qualitative insights from the interview with Gabri emphasize the pivotal role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions and trends in streetwear. Gabri's perspective underlines the importance of having a strong and consistent presence on social media platforms to captivate and retain consumer interest and differentiate the brand in a highly competitive market.

The case company's strategy on social media is to focus on creating content that resonates with the Finnish streetwear audience, leveraging the visual appeal of platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This approach is not only cost-effective but also aligns with the current trends and preferences of the target demographic. Through engaging and authentic content, the case company aims to build a loyal following, enhance its brand image, and eventually drive sales.

In conclusion, social media marketing is key to the case company's growth and brand recognition. The strategic use of these platforms, informed by quantitative and qualitative research findings, will enable the case company to effectively reach and engage its target audience, fostering brand loyalty and setting the foundation for long-term success in the Finnish streetwear fashion market.

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing holds significant importance in the streetwear industry, especially in Finland. Developing a comprehensive clothing catalogue is essential for the case company to effectively show its brand aesthetic and collaborate with influencers who can represent and promote this aesthetic.

The case company's strategy for influencer marketing focuses on building lasting relationships with influencers or artists who resonate with its brand values and aesthetics. The goal is to collaborate with these individuals to promote its products, enhancing brand awareness and driving sales. In his interview, Gabri emphasized the importance of mutual benefit in such collaborations, suggesting that after establishing a sufficient product range, the case company should reach out to potential influencers for partnerships, offering them free clothing for promotion.

This strategy is supported by insights from the thesis' quantitative research, which found that 58.1% of respondents recognize social media influencers' influence on streetwear brands' marketing. This significant impact highlights the potential effectiveness of influencer marketing for the case company. Furthermore, the survey data showed that while some consumers are sceptical about influencer endorsements, a considerable portion of the target audience values

endorsements from known personalities. This finding underscores the importance of carefully selecting influencers who authentically align with the case company's brand and can genuinely connect with its audience.

Additionally, the survey data showed that engagement with new brands on social media platforms is generally somewhat low, with 51.6% of respondents rarely interacting with new streetwear brands. Hence, this suggests that traditional social media posts might not always generate high engagement, making influencer marketing an even more crucial component of the case company's digital marketing strategy. By leveraging influencers' followings and credibility, the case company can tap into an existing audience base, potentially leading to more meaningful engagement and sales.

In summary, influencer marketing represents a strategic opportunity for the case company to enhance its visibility and appeal in the competitive streetwear market. By collaborating with influencers who embody the brand's ethos and can genuinely engage with their audience, the case company can strengthen its brand presence and foster deeper connections with its target market.

Paid social media advertisements

Paid social media advertisements are crucial to the case company's digital marketing strategy. The plan is to leverage paid advertising on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, initially to enhance brand awareness and later to drive sales. These platforms are particularly relevant given their widespread use and popularity among the target demographic.

The thesis' quantitative research revealed that a significant % of respondents, 71%, are influenced by paid social media advertising, such as sponsored posts. This finding underscores the potential impact of paid advertisements on platforms like Instagram and TikTok in reaching and influencing the target audience. Additionally, the survey indicated that while engagement with new brands on social media is somewhat low, impactful, and well-targeted paid advertisements can effectively capture the attention of potential customers.

Moreover, the qualitative interview with Gabri highlighted the growing influence of social media platforms in the streetwear industry, especially regarding brand visibility and consumer engagement. Given this context, paid social media advertisements offer a direct and measurable way to reach potential customers, particularly those who may not actively seek out new brands but can be influenced by targeted ads.

However, the case company must ensure its social media content is engaging and aligns with the brand's aesthetic before investing significantly in paid campaigns. High-quality, engaging content will complement the paid advertisements, ensuring that once users are drawn to the case company's social media pages, they are greeted with compelling content that encourages further interaction and potential conversion.

In summary, paid social media advertisements are a powerful tool for increasing brand visibility and driving sales. However, they should be part of a broader strategy with strong organic content. This integrated approach will maximize the effectiveness of the case company's digital marketing efforts, leveraging the strengths of both organic content and targeted advertisements.

Content marketing

Content marketing is central in the fashion industry, particularly for smaller businesses like the case company, where budget constraints limit large-scale advertising campaigns. The industry relies heavily on visual presentation, making content marketing a vital tool for showcasing products and aesthetics.

The case company is keen on producing high-quality content for each product release, aiming to provide value to potential customers and viewers; this includes focusing on high-quality images of models wearing the products, transparency through behind-the-scenes content, and detailed product showcases. The thesis survey indicates that these content types align with the target audience's preferences. 74.2% of respondents prefer seeing photos of models wearing the products, followed by behind-the-scenes footage and detailed product showings at 54.8%. Edited video clips also appeal considerably at 45.2%. This insight supports the case company's current strategy of emphasizing visual storytelling and product-centric content in its digital marketing efforts.

The content will be shared across Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Instagram and Facebook are ideal for showcasing products through detailed photos and images of clothing worn by models and announcing new releases and promotions. TikTok, highlighted by Gabri as an effective platform for streetwear companies, will be used to share edited video clips and behind-the-scenes content that aligns with the case company's aesthetic and brand ethos. This approach matches the case company's brand strategy and caters to its target demographic's preferences.

In conclusion, the case company's focus on content marketing is strategically aligned with consumer behaviour patterns and industry trends. By creating engaging, high-quality content that resonates with audience preferences and utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, the case company is well-positioned to enhance its visibility, engage effectively with its audience, and build a community around its brand.

Giveaways

In line with its digital marketing strategy, the case company plans to incorporate giveaways, particularly during promotions of new clothing drops. For instance, with the introduction of an upcoming zip-up hoodie, the case company intends to conduct a giveaway on its social media platforms. This approach involves posting a picture of the product along with giveaway rules in the caption, which typically require participants to like the post, follow the account, and tag a friend to enter. This method of promotion is cost-effective, as the primary expense is the production cost of the hoodie being given away.

By conducting giveaways, the case company not only incentivizes engagement and grows its follower base but also creates a sense of community and excitement around its brand and products. Such initiatives are especially valuable for building a committed group of followers more likely to interact with the brand and convert into loyal customers.

In conclusion, giveaways form an integral part of the case company's promotion strategy, especially in the context of new product launches. This approach aligns with consumer behaviours and preferences, as evidenced by our research, and effectively increases brand visibility, engagement, and customer loyalty cost-effectively.

5.5. Digital marketing strategy integration with brand guidelines

As explored in previous sections of this thesis, the digital marketing strategies adopted by the case company present a multifaceted approach to brand representation and customer engagement digitally. This section aims to clarify how these strategies align with the created brand guidelines, as it is essential to draw similarities between the tactical executions of these strategies and the underlying principles of the brand guidelines.

Brand consistency across digital platforms

The brand guidelines for the case company underscore the importance of maintaining a uniform brand image across all digital platforms. This uniformity is not just about visual consistency but also about ensuring that the brand's core values, and messaging are represented wherever the brand has a digital presence.

Furthermore, the case company has implemented this aspect of the guidelines in its social media strategy. On Instagram the case company aims to utilize a specific colour palette that resonates with its brand identity. This palette is deeply rooted in the brand's identity, reflecting its ethos and target audience's preferences.

Moreover, the brand's colour palette of grey, black, white, and dark brown, alongside its official logo, is consistently used across all digital platforms. This visual consistency is a testament to the brand's dedication to its modern rock and punk aesthetic, further cemented by its choice of a professional and simple font for all digital content.

In addition, the visual elements combined with the brand's formal tone of voice create an authentic and engaging coherent image. The brand's strategy to use these elements consistently across digital platforms, like its web store and social media, ensures the audience receives a unified brand experience.

Authenticity and customer engagement

The case company's brand guidelines emphasize quality, durability, sustainability, and fashion-forward thinking. This foundation forms the bedrock of the brand's identity, integrating these core values into every aspect of the company's operations and marketing efforts.

The brand's mysterious, simple, and dependable personality traits are integrated into its digital marketing strategies. This blend of characteristics sets the tone for how the brand engages with its audience, ensuring that every content aligns with these attributes.

Furthermore, the company's digital marketing approach subtly reflects the mysterious aspect. The brand maintains intrigue by not over-saturating its marketing channels with content, making each communication impactful and anticipated. This scarcity of content aligns with the brand's aim to keep its image refreshing and engaging.

Moreover, the case company's commitment to simplicity is evident in its social media content. The formal tone in their posts, interspersed with impactful announcements in capital letters, like the launch of the "ALL STARS BASEBALL CAP," exemplifies this approach. This strategy ensures that the message is clear, straightforward, and resonates with the brand's image of being unpretentious yet striking.

In addition, dependability, a core characteristic of the brand, is highlighted through its consistent delivery of quality and reliable customer service. This trait is crucial in building trust with the audience. The brand's digital marketing strategies reinforce this trust by showcasing its commitment to quality and sustainability in every communication, whether email marketing or social media posts.

Data-driven approach

The case company's brand guidelines emphasize their unique aesthetic and personality traits and underscore the importance of a data-driven approach in

their marketing efforts. This approach is vital to ensuring that the brand's operations, particularly in digital marketing, align with its core values of quality, durability, and sustainability while maintaining its fashion-forward stance.

Utilization of search engine optimization

A cornerstone of the case company's data-driven strategy is the use of SEO. By optimizing its online content and e-commerce platforms, the brand aims to increase visibility and organic traffic, thus aligning with its objective of being dependable and trustworthy. The strategic use of keywords, internal and external links, and optimized content is designed to boost the brand's ranking on search engines like Google, Bing, and Yandex, directly contributing to enhanced online discoverability and credibility.

The emphasis on SEO is a technical strategy and a reflection of the brand's commitment to making quality and sustainable fashion accessible. By improving search rankings, the brand makes it easier for consumers who value these attributes to find and engage with them.

Insights from email marketing

Email marketing forms another element of the case company's data-driven approach. Utilizing Shopify's built-in features, it utilizes the power of data to tailor their communication with customers; this includes sending targeted emails based on user behaviours, such as abandoned carts, and engaging returning customers with personalized offers.

The brand's email marketing analytics also allows them to understand customer preferences better, leading to more personalized and effective communication strategies. This level of customization drives sales and enhances the customer experience, resonating with the brand's core value of dependability.

Leveraging social media analytics and paid advertisements

The brand's approach to social media marketing, particularly its paid advertising campaigns on platforms like Instagram, is deeply rooted in a data-driven methodology. The company strategically targets its content and advertisements by analysing the demographics, interests, and behaviours of its audience, as evidenced by the detailed breakdown of its Instagram campaign analytics.

The insights gained from these analytics guide the brand in crafting content and campaigns that resonate with their primary audience – in this case, male users aged 18-24 in metropolitan areas. This targeted approach maximizes the impact of their marketing efforts and ensures efficient use of resources.

Innovation and adaptability

The case company's approach to digital marketing reflects a keen sense of innovation and adaptability, crucial traits underscored in its brand guidelines. As mentioned in its mission statement, its commitment to being a trendsetter in the Finnish streetwear market is echoed in its agile and forward-thinking digital marketing strategies.

The dynamic nature of digital marketing requires constant adaptation and innovation. The case company understands this need and demonstrates adaptability through various digital marketing channels. For example, the case company's aim of utilizing Shopify for web store optimization showcases a flexible approach, utilizing built-in SEO and email marketing tools to adapt to changing digital landscapes and consumer behaviours.

Social media and influencer marketing

Recognizing the powerful role of social media in fashion marketing, the brand aims to leverage platforms like Instagram and TikTok for content dissemination and engagement with its targeted audience. The brand's choice to invest in paid social media advertising, especially in the early stages, reflects a strategic move

to build brand awareness innovatively and effectively. Influencer marketing, particularly in collaboration with streetwear influencers and musicians in Finland, is another area where the brand's innovative approach is evident. The case company taps into new audiences by aligning with personalities that resonate with their brand's aesthetic and values, fostering brand recognition and credibility.

Content marketing

Content marketing, particularly in the fashion industry, demands constant innovation to stand out. The case company's approach to content marketing is through creating high-quality visual content that aligns with its brand aesthetic and engagingly showcases its products. Using platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, the brand aims to communicate its vision and product offerings effectively while providing behind-the-scenes glimpses to educate and add value for its audience.

Giveaways

The case company's aim to use giveaways, particularly as a promotional tool for new product launches, demonstrates an adaptable marketing tactic that increases customer engagement and helps acquire new customers and build brand awareness.

6 ACTION PLAN & CONCLUSION

Action plan

This part of the thesis presents a practical action plan for the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy, guiding the company in implementing the digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines that has been developed.

The first step for the case company involves establishing clear short-term and long-term goals for each part of the digital marketing strategy. Goals like increasing social media engagement and growing the email subscription base over the next three months should be prioritized in the short term. For the long term, objectives include expanding the customer base and consistently improving website traffic over the coming year.

Resource allocation is another critical aspect. The case company needs to set a budget for various digital marketing activities, such as SEO, social media advertising, and content creation. It is also important to assign specific tasks to both of the company's founders, according to their strengths or consider hiring external experts for more efficient execution of these strategies.

In addition, developing a detailed implementation schedule is crucial. For instance, the case company might update its website in the first quarter and initiate a focused social media campaign in the second quarter. Regular content updates and SEO optimization should be ongoing to maintain a dynamic online presence.

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of each part of the strategy is essential. The company should utilize tools like Google Analytics for website traffic analysis and social media analytics to monitor engagement and reach; this will help the case company understand the impact of its digital marketing efforts and make data-driven decisions.

It is also vital for the case company to regularly gather customer feedback and be ready to adapt its strategies accordingly. For example, if customer preferences indicate a change in content approach on social media is needed or if SEO strategies require updating to stay current, the case company should be flexible enough to make these adjustments.

Lastly, regular reviews and updates of the digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines are necessary; this ensures that the case company remains aligned with its core values and the needs of its target market while adapting to the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The case company can implement the strategies outlined in this thesis by sticking to this action plan, enhancing its digital presence and competitiveness in the Finnish clothing industry.

Conclusion

This thesis' purpose has been to a digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines for the case company, Pieces to Pieces Oy. This study has shed light on the importance of an efficient digital marketing strategy and brand guidelines by conducting quantitative and qualitative research, followed by vast analysis and practical suggestions towards the processes of the case company.

The objective set out at the beginning of this thesis have been met, establishing a roadmap for the case company to enhance its current digital marketing efforts, and creating new ones for the case company to follow and apply to its operations. The strategies described align with the case company's core values and brand identity and resonate with the target market's preferences and behaviours.

Furthermore, the insights gathered for the case company in this case study can have significant implications for the wider Finnish clothing industry. The guidelines and digital marketing strategies created for the case company and discussed widely in the case study are adaptable. They can be tailored to fit the

unique needs and brand personas of other companies within the sector and in the future.

As we look to the future, it is evident that the digital marketing landscape is continuously evolving. Therefore, it is recommended that companies remain agile, constantly evolving their strategies to keep pace with technological advancements and changing consumer trends. Regarding the case company, whose core values include staying ahead of the curve and creating trends instead of following them, constantly evolving is vital for the small company's future.

In conclusion, this thesis has provided a detailed roadmap for the case company, equipping it with the necessary tools and strategies to navigate the complexities of digital marketing and apply them to the competitive Finnish clothing industry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Quantitative Research Questionnaire

Appendix 1.1: Demographic Questions

Which of the following age categories do you fit in? (16-18, 19-20, 21-22, 23-25, <25)

What is your gender? (man, woman, other, I do not want to say)

In which city do you reside in? (open answer)

What is your annual income? (optional) (0-1000€, 1000-2000€, 2000-3000€, <4000€)

Appendix 1.2: General Questions

Are you interested in streetwear clothing/wear streetwear clothing? (yes, no)

Which of the following streetwear clothing brands are you aware of? (Vitunleija, Disko Studios, VFlame, Euro, Leized, Pieces to Pieces, Zouseph's)

Have you purchased products from a Finnish streetwear clothing brand? (yes, no)

If yes, which products have you purchased? (open answer)

How frequently do you purchase streetwear products? (weekly, monthly, yearly, less than yearly)

When purchasing new clothing, do you prefer purchasing from streetwear brands or large online retail stores, such as Zalando? (streetwear brands, online retailers, both equally)

Appendix 1.3: Product-Centric Questions

Which of the following products would you prefer to buy from Finnish streetwear brands? Ignore the seasonal differences. (hoodie/college shirt, t-shirt, cap, beanie, pants, shoes, long-sleeved t-shirt)

How much are you willing to pay for a product from a streetwear brand? For example, consider that the product is a high-quality hoodie. (>50€, 50-100€, <100€)

Are you willing to pay more if the product is domestic or from a small business? (yes, no)

What features interest you the most when buying a streetwear product? (prints/graphics, logos, embroideries, patches, multi-colours, varying/multiple materials, rhinestones, puff prints, other)

Do you like flashy designs such as large patterns, prints on the back and bright colors, or do you prefer simple products? (I prefer flashy products, I prefer simplicity)

Are you interested in the material, thickness, weight and fit of a streetwear product? (yes, no)

In terms of fit, do you prefer oversized or regular fit? (oversized, regular)

Do you like dropped shoulders? (yes, no)

Do you want the product to be cropped, for example to the waist? (yes, no)

How often do you think about a product's production methods, employees' working environment and sustainability when making purchase decisions? (always, often, sometimes, never)

Appendix 1.4: Brand-Related Questions

Do you appreciate it when a streetwear brand regularly launches new collections, products, and styles, or do you prefer brands that maintain a stable and recognisable look over time? (regular new collections, stable and recognisable look)

Do you want a streetwear brand to release new products infrequently to keep them rare, or do you prefer new products to be released regularly? (rarely, regularly)

What factors influence your perception of the streetwear brand? (quality, price, brand reputation, recommendations from public figures, design, other)

How important are brand values in your purchasing decisions? For example, sustainability, affordability, quality, honesty, community, etc. (1-3)

Do you think a Finnish streetwear brand should communicate in Finnish or English on its social media platforms and in advertising? (Finnish, English, both)

Appendix 1.5: Marketing-Related Questions

Do you use social media platforms to search for new clothing brands? (yes, no)

What social media platforms do you usually use to find or follow streetwear brands? (Instagram, Facebook, X, Reddit, TikTok, other)

What kind of content are you most interested in when following a streetwear brand on social media? (behind the scenes - photos and videos, detailed product presentations, edited video clips, photos of the products on models, other)

Have you considered buying/have bought from a new streetwear brand after seeing their content on social media? (yes, no)

How often do you engage with new streetwear brands via social media, even if they are relatively new to the market? (e.g. liking, sharing, commenting) (always, frequently, rarely, never)

Do you think social media influencers have a significant impact on the marketing of streetwear brands? (yes, no, depending on the influencer)

Have you been influenced by a brand's paid social media advertising? (e.g. sponsored posts) (yes, no)

Appendix 2: Qualitative Research Questionnaire

What is your background concerning your style and streetwear?

How did you become interested in clothing and streetwear?

What makes your style unique?

Is your style part of your personal brand as an artist?

How has your personal style and fashion choices evolved throughout your career as a rap artist?

Do you think there is a true connection between artists and fashion in Finland? Provide examples.

Why do you think clothing brands tend to reach out to artists to collaborate?

What do you believe is the mutual benefit for both artists and clothing brands in such collaborations?

What role does the streetwear culture and music scene play in shaping streetwear trends in the Finnish market?

Do you believe that your style on promotional content affects how the listener perceives your music?

Do you believe the Finnish streetwear industry is flooded with small brands emerging through social media platforms such as TikTok?

Do you take new Finnish streetwear brands seriously as establishing streetwear brands has become “trendy”, similar to making rap music?

Does this phenomenon affect your purchasing decisions?

If you believe the “trendiness” of creating a clothing brand harms the image of purchasing from a small streetwear brand, when is a brand “valid” enough to purchase from? (Optional)

What are your favourite streetwear brands in Finland? Why?

As a social media influencer are you often asked to collaborate with a brand?

Have you previously collaborated with a clothing brand?

How did it go, what did you do?

How do you decide whether you are willing to collaborate with a brand?

Do you charge the company for a collaboration and how much? (Optional)

How do you maintain authenticity and your own personal brand identity while collaborating with clothing brands?

Do you use social media platforms to search for new clothing brands? Which ones?

Which social media platforms do you believe to be the best to find new streetwear brands?

What social media platform do you believe to be the most beneficial in promoting a clothing brand and why?

What type of content do you find most engaging when following a streetwear brand on social media? (e.g., behind-the-scenes footage, fashion shows, edits)

Do you think social media influencers play a significant role in promoting streetwear brands? Why or why not?

Have you been influenced by a social media influencer/artist to purchase clothing in social media?

Do you believe that you influence other people in making purchasing decisions? Why?

Have you been influenced by a brand's paid social media advertising? (Sponsored posts etc.)

What do you believe to be the emerging trends in Finnish streetwear? Why do you believe so?

How are the mentioned trends influenced by social media?

How do you see the future of streetwear and fashion?

In your opinion, in the Finnish streetwear industry, what makes a good brand and how can a brand differentiate itself to be better than its competitor?

How important are brand values in your purchasing decisions?

Are you into simplicity or extravagancy in branding? Do you prefer the brand to be low-key or loud?

Appendix 3: Competitive Analysis Chart

Company	Type
Case Company	Case
Disko Studios	Direct
Vitunleija	Direct
Euro	Direct
VFlame	Direct
Makia	Indirect
Bille Beino	Indirect
Pricing Strategies	Marketing and Branding
Affordable, aligns with average wages (30-70 euros), focuses on quality	Digital Marketing, Social Media Focus, Influencer Collaborations, Quality and Sustainability Focused
Around 150 euros for specific items	Innovative Designs, Collection for a Hip-Hop Festival, Influencer Collaborations, Social Media Marketing
Hoodies: 120 euros, T-shirts: 49.90 euros	Heavy Reliance on Founder's Personal Brand, Music Releases, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Collaborations
Similar to Vitunleija	Similar to Vitunleija, Relies on Ambassador Artist Cledos
Unknown	Social Media Marketing, Influencer Collaborations
Hoodies: 109 euros, T-shirts: 39-46 euros, Jackets: 200-400 euros	Relies on Established Brand Value
Jackets: 120-300 euros, Hoodies: 100 euros (avg), T-shirts: 50 euros (avg)	Sports Influences, Ice Hockey Fan Base
Target Audience	Product Offerings
18-30 years, appreciates quality, diverse life situations	"ALL STARS" Baseball Cap
18-25 years	T-shirts, Jeans, College Pants, Hoodies, Tracksuits, Basketball-themed Jerseys, Caps, Varsity Jackets
Varied, Younger Audience	Hoodies, T-shirts, Puffer Jackets etc.
Similar to Vitunleija	Caps, T-shirts, Hoodies
Younger Audience (Similar to Vitunleija)	Latest Product: Puffer Jacket
Mature Audience	Basics, Accessories, Bags, Beanies & Hats, Hoodies, Jackets, Knitwear, Longsleeves, Shoes, Sweatshirts, T-Shirts, Tr
Teenagers, Young Adults	Hoodies, Jackets, Knitwear, Loungewear, Pants, Shorts, Sweatshirts, T-shirts, Underwear ,Caps and Beanies and Sp
Distribution Channels	
Online Web Store, National Coverage through Posti, No Physical Store, Drop Model	
Web Stores, Seasonal Drops, No Physical Stores, Drop Model	
Web Store, Physical Store (limited), Event-based Sales, Drop Model	
Similar to Vitunleija, Event-based Sales	
Web Store, Drop Model	
4 Physical Stores in Helsinki, Oulu, and Raisio, Web Store	
Physical Store, Event-based Sales	

Figure 55. Competitive Analysis Chart