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DEVELOPING A MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR AN iOS GAME
Guavo case

Bachelor's Thesis
Business Management

November 2014

DESCRIPTION

	Date of the bachelor's thesis
MAMK University of Applied Sciences	11.11.2014

Author(s)	**Degree programme and option**
Alina Grechkina	Business Management

Name of the bachelor's thesis

DEVELOPING MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR AN iOS GAME: Guavo case

Abstract

The growth of the smartphones' and tablets' penetration facilitated the emergence of the mobile applications (software) distribution platforms – app stores, especially one of the biggest – the Apple App Store. This platform served as a huge marketplace for many applications the majority of which were games. Due to a high number of monthly apps submissions to the app store, the market could be considered as highly competitive, thus, it was a challenge for many newcomers not only to survive but also to succeed on the market.

As one of those newcomers, GUAVO o.z. was aiming at launching a retro game – the "Tunneler". Due to the fact that the application was still in the process of creation, it needed a sound marketing communications strategy. Therefore, the main objective of the thesis was to develop a comprehensive, ready-to-use marketing communications plan.

For that purpose several issues had to be covered. First of all, the review of the existing theories was required in order to conduct the research. Thus, the theoretical part of the thesis included such topics as the general presentation of marketing communications mix, more specific look at the online marketing communications and the Apple App Store specifics. The research part of the study included mixed methods. It implied the investigation of the current situation, the targeting and positioning preferences of the case company through a semi-structured interview, the examination of the gaming industry and the selected target through the review of electronic materials, and identifying the best practices of the existing market players with the help of benchmarking research. Both types of the data – primary and secondary, were used and analysed by utilizing inductive and deductive approaches.

As a result, the research brought the significant findings. First of all, the semi-structured interview with the company's representative revealed the current state and identified the company's preferences in marketing communications. Secondly, the industry research showed the four main trends of the mobile gaming market: the growing share of Free-to-Play games; the transformation of the games into services; appearance of the art of balancing value and profits; and finally, expending global mobile games market. Finally, the benchmarking showed the importance of integrating PR, websites, social media, sales promotion and mobile marketing in formulating successful marketing communications strategy. The gained knowledge was applied to the case company as the propositions which were included in the marketing communications plan.

Subject headings, (keywords)

Marketing communications plan, mobile application marketing, mobile gaming industry

Pages	**Language**	**URN**
103+6 (Appendices)	English	

Remarks, notes on appendices

Tutor	**Employer of the bachelor's thesis**
Reijo Honkonen	GUAVO o.z.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The popularity of smart phones and tablets is increasing significantly worldwide (Our Mobile Planet 2013). Nowadays, these devices are used not only for calling and sending messages but also for entertainment. Due to the emergence of the special distribution platforms – app stores, many businesses locate their products there. Among all available applications there are several categories; the largest of them are the games. Because of the high number of monthly games submissions on the app store, this market is considered highly concentrated (Pocketgamer 2014). However, despite such saturation, some apps demonstrate remarkable performance on the market with huge consumer base and a great number of global downloads.

The focus of the thesis is concentrated around the commissioning company – GUAVO. GUAVO is a relatively young and small company which develops mobile applications for iPhone, iPad and iPod operating system – iOS. Previously concentrated on the utilities category of apps, the company decided to try itself in the gaming industry. Therefore, they started working on a totally new project – the "Tunneler" game. The app is the remake of the old PC game with the war theme. Keeping in mind that the market is highly competitive, the company needs to have a sound and effective marketing communications plan in order to survive on the market. For that purpose several research questions must be answered:

1) What is the current situation of the GUAVO company?
2) Who are the target users of the "Tunneler" game?
3) How will the "Tunneler" be positioned?
4) What are the most effective marketing communication tools and media in the mobile application world?
5) How should the company integrate the marketing communication tools, media and message in order to succeed in the Apple app store?

Therefore, properly answered questions will bring the following outcomes:

- Gaining insight on the company's current state.
- Identifying the best practices in marketing communications for mobile applications.
- Developing a comprehensive and multi-structured marketing communications plan.

In order to answer the stated questions and develop a plan, several issues must be covered: reviewing the existing literature about marketing communications planning and the specifics of the industry; empirical research and the development of the marketing communications plan for the case company.

Regarding the empirical research, for obtaining profound insights on the research questions both qualitative and quantitative researches have to be implemented. Therefore, the selected set of the methods includes semi-structured interview with the company's representative regarding the company's current state and marketing preferences, industry and target market research and benchmarking. The last method is aimed at investigating the best practices of the existing market players and applying them to the case product. All methods will complement each other and contribute to the final plan.

2   MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

As a part of a marketing mix which encompasses product, price, place and promotion, marketing communications represent the fourth element – promotion. According to the American Marketing Association (2014), marketing communications are defined as coordinated promotional messages and related media which are used to communicate with a market. In other words, these are the instruments by means of which the company communicates with its target audience and other stakeholders in order to promote the product or the company (Peslmacker et.al. 2013).

In order to design proper marketing communications marketers need to understand the whole process of communication. Traditionally, the communication model consisted of two parties (sender and receiver) and a message; this model rarely could be met in reality. In fact, the communication process is more complicated and consists of several steps (Figure 1).
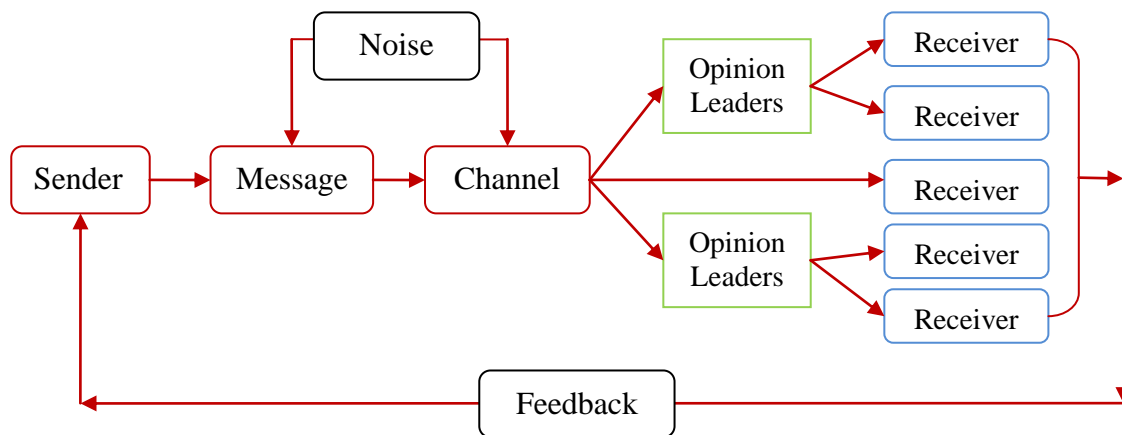
FIGURE 1. Multi-step communication model (Smith & Zook 2011).

As it is seen from the Figure 1 the model contains the initial elements − sender, message and receiver. Additionally, the message is transported through particular channels. Opinion leaders in this case play the key role in marketing campaigns by spreading a word to a wider audience. Finally, when the message is delivered to the customers a sender gets feedback based on which the effectiveness of marketing efforts is monitored (Smith & Zook 2011).

Marketing communications is a broad subject and needs to be considered in details. In order to understand it, it is necessary to take a look at the marketing communications mix including messages, media and tools, how these elements are integrated and how to target and position the products. These aspects will be described in the following sections.

2.1   Marketing communications mix

Marketing communications are aggregated into a particular mix. Among many authors there is no consensus about categorization of its elements, though, after examining the information presented in different books it is possible to recognize a pattern of similarity. Therefore, the best structured and explained marketing communication mix model, is suggested by Fill (2009, 19-21) and includes three main elements: tools, media and messages. This model is considered to be traditional where all the elements are disintegrated − they exist separately from each other.
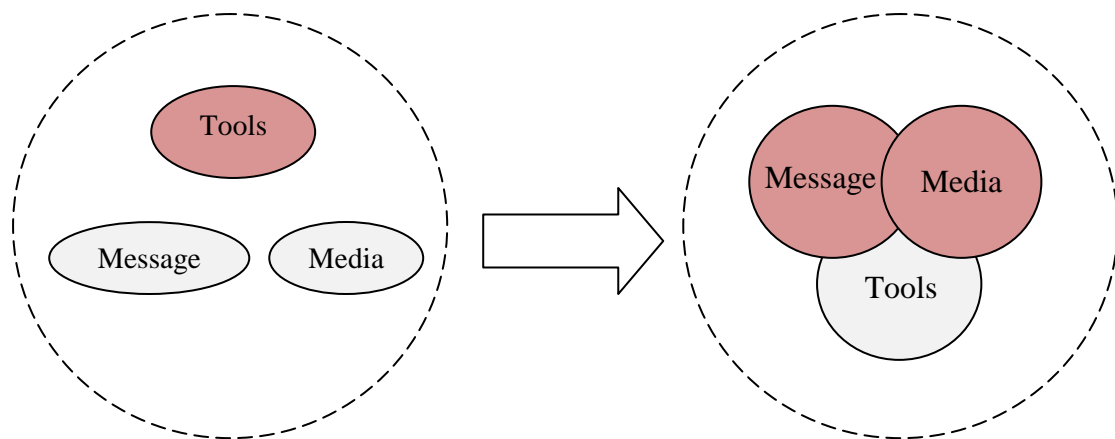
FIGURE 2. A shift from traditional to contemporary model of the marketing communications mix, adapted from Fill (2009, 19-20).

However, the world is constantly changing. The previous approach to marketing communications was based on intervention, or interruption, while the contemporary method implies a shift towards a permission-based approach. Seth Godin (1999) claims that permission marketing offers the consumers a possibility to deliberately choose to be marketed to. Besides, it ensures that the message will get maximum attention from the customers and persuade them to take part in durable and interactive marketing campaigns. Therefore, all three elements from the marketing communications mix become more integrated than before (Figure 2). However, the emergence of new media provided the consumers with the choice of when and how to get the information. As the result, the importance of some elements, such as message and media, has increased, while the tools have stopped being the key to reach customers (Fill 2009).

2.1.1 Message

In the designing communications Kotler et al. (2012, 783-786) highlight the significance of creating and delivering the message. According Shimp (2007), the message is used in the forms of advertising, publicity releases, promotions, etc.; and its content must be dictated by the brand's positioning strategy. In order to get the desired response and reach the target, the message should be remembered and capable to change or shape the attitude. Thus, it is necessary to consider what to say, how to say and who will say it.

There are two ways how to transport the message: personally and impersonally. The first approach is done by direct communication with target audience, and typically is performed by sales representatives, customer services, etc. The second way is based on advertising media which delivers the message to the masses (Clow & Baack 2007). Nowadays, due to fading importance of the mass media and emergence of niche marketing, the marketers try to deliver the messages personally. Before doing that it is necessary to define the message strategy.

There is no universal classification for the message strategies; however, many sources highlight several appeals that connect buyers with the brand: rational, sensory, social and ego satisfaction (Kotler et al. 2012). Based on that, Clow and Baack (2007) claim that the message strategy can be divided into three main categories: *cognitive*, *affective* and *conative* strategies.

A *cognitive* strategy implies presentation of the rational arguments to the customers. In this message strategy the key message is built on products attributes and benefits; therefore, the aim of the strategy is to influence on user's beliefs and knowledge structure. The cognitive strategy has several forms (Clow & Baack 2007):

- *Generic* messages: direct promotion of the offer's features without claim on superiority; fits best for a market leader. (e.g. the Campbell Soups' "Soup is good food').
- *Preemptive* messages: present superiority based on product's features; the purpose is to create a unique message, which will be associated with the brand, thus, prevent other competitors from copying it (e.g. "Just do it" by Nike).
- *Unique selling proposition*: explicit claim on product's superiority, which is supported by possessing a unique feature; very difficult to obtain (e.g. Reebok claim to be the only shoes which have DMX technology).
- *Hyperbole*: an exaggeration of attribute which is difficult to prove (e.g. "The world's number one shampoo").
- *Comparative advertisement*: direct or indirect comparison to the competitor's product, can contain the actual competitor's name (e.g. Burger King's flame-broiled food versus McDonald's frying food).

The *affective* message strategy is aimed at creating feeling and emotion in the target audience. This is a powerful technique to increase likability and recall of the product by invoking such feelings as love, hate, fear etc. There are two categories of affective strategy (Clow & Baack 2007):

- *Resonance* advertisement: connection of the product with consumer's past experience to create strong ties between them (e.g. using retro music for older generation).
- *Emotional* advertisement: invoking powerful emotions which can lead to further actions; linking to product such emotions as trust, reliability, friendship, happiness, security, glamour, luxury, serenity, pleasure, romance, and passion etc. (e.g. presence of babies in commercials).

And the last but not the least is the *conative* strategy is aimed at creating a quick response from the customers. The strategy is used to support promotional activities as coupons, discounts, contests etc., and create urge to immediate action (e.g. "Order product X within 30 minutes and get 15% discount.") (Clow & Baack 2007).

When describing message strategy it is necessary to mention the levels of engagement of consumers with the advertised product. The hierarchy-of-effect model presented by Lavidge and Steiner names all steps of the consumer engagement: awareness – knowledge – liking – preference – conviction – purchase. This model can be considered as the extended version of AIDA model which implies awareness, interest, desire and action (Kotler et al. 2012). Each message strategy aims at particular engagement stage. The Figure 3 presents the connection between these two aspects.
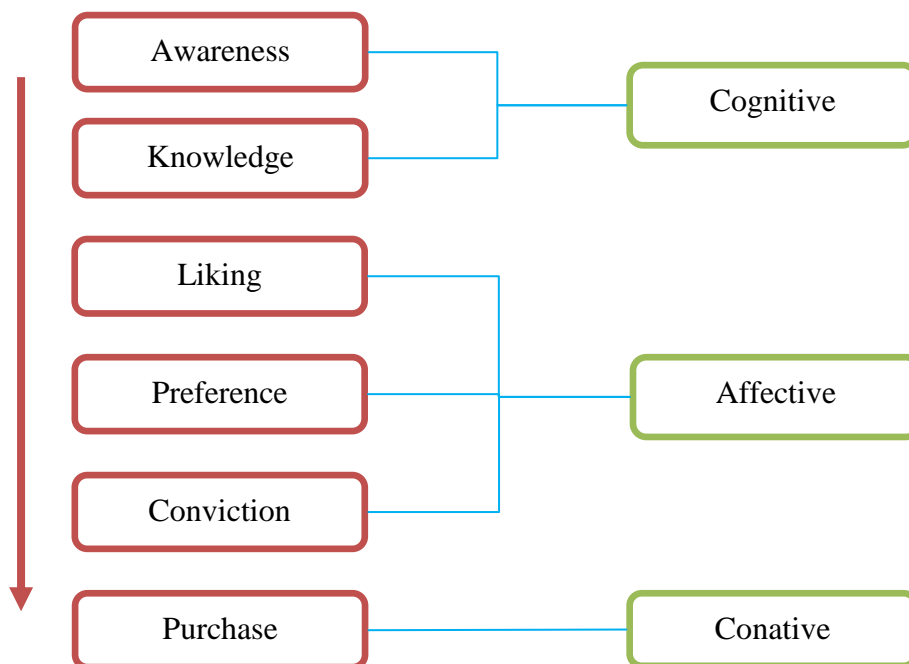

FIGURE 3. Hierarchy-of-effects model and message strategies (Adapted from Clow & Baack 2007).

As it follows from the Figure 3, the cognitive strategy, i.e. rational appeal, provides the knowledge base in the minds of the customers, making them aware of the product. In liking, preference and conviction stages feelings and emotions play an essential role and, therefore, affective advertising should be applied for this step. The last stage in the engagement of the customers and a product is the actual purchase. A conative strategy stimulates this action much faster than the previously named strategies.

2.1.2 Media

Media is a broad topic which incorporates many aspects, the main purpose of which is to deliver the message to the target user effectively. Previously associated mostly with advertising tool, media have been integrated with other MarCom tools such as PR, direct marketing, sales promotions, etc. Therefore, the technological advances brought changes not only to the business operations but also to the nature of media. As a result, nowadays the media appears in two major forms: *offline (traditional)* and *online* media.

TABLE 1. Media classification (adapted from Strauss & Frost 2014).

	Owned media	**Paid media**	**Earned media**
Offline	Street buzz activities Flyers, brochures, etc. Postal mail	Newspapers TV/Radio commercials Billboards, etc.	News coverage on traditional media Word-of-mouth
Online	Website/blog E-mails Social network pages	Online/mobile ads Paid search Ads in e-mail, etc.	Another website/blog Organic search Viral/online buzz (word-of-mouse) Social network community

As it is seen from the Table 1 each group of media is divided into three types based on the way how it is achieved: owned, paid and earned. The offline media takes the forms of print (newspapers, magazines), broadcast (television, radio), outdoor (billboards, transit) and ambient (guerrilla tactics) (Fill 2009). The MarCom activities, in this case, can be personally by the company (street buzz, mail, etc) or with the help of external services (ads in magazines, TV,

billboards). By the right integration of the tools, message and media the companies can stimulate the media coverage and word-of-mouth (Strauss & Frost 2014).

The centre of the thesis's focus is the online means of delivering message through the major medium – the Internet. However, the Internet has both strong and weak points regarding transporting the message. Therefore, such issues are presented in the following table.

TABLE 2. Advantages and disadvantages of online media (adapted from Strauss & Frost 2014)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Selective targeting Tracking the advertising effectiveness Flexible message length and delivery time Global reach Interactivity	Inability to reach mass audiences and the ones who are not online Audience measurement system problems

First of all, the advantages of online media are selective targeting, ability to track the effectiveness of advertising, flexibility of the message parameters and delivery time, global reach and interactivity. These advantages preponderate the weaknesses of the Internet which imply inability to reach target offline and mass audiences and problematic measurement of the target cohort (Strauss & Frost 2014).

Concerning the classification of the online media, it is possible to distinguish several types according to the way they are achieved (Table 1). The owned media includes possessing the company's website, blog, page on social networks and delivering direct mails through e-mails, while the paid media implies promoting the product through display ads on websites or social networks, paid search or e-mail ads (Chaffey 2011). As a result, the effective collaboration of the media and tools triggers the reaction from the third parties which serve as the earned media: coverage in other websites and blogs, online buzz in social media (Strauss & Frost 2014). The subject of social media, websites, mobile advertising and search optimization will be explained later in the theory.

2.1.3   Marketing communication tools

MarCom tools can be described as the mix of "disciplines that can be used in various combinations and different degrees of intensity in order to communicate with a target audience" (Fill 2009, 19). Nowadays, due to appearance of new technologies, the marketing rules have evolved, including the MarCom tools. Therefore, there is a fine line between offline and online tools. Many sources contain different information regarding the content of both online and offline tools mix; however, as it was said before, some similarities can be found.

After reviewing the sources, the following set of tools has been accumulated: advertising, public relations, brand activation, direct marketing, personal selling and sponsorship (Strauss & Frost 2014, Pelsmacker et al. 2013, O'Guinn et al. 2013, Kotler et al. 2012, Fill 2009). These 6 tools refer to the traditional (offline) techniques. However, online MarCom tools work by the principles similar to the traditional tools with the difference of using the Internet as the medium. As far as this thesis is concerned, the emphasis is to be put on the online communication tools, though the nature of both online and offline techniques will be explained. Besides, due to the fact some of the tools are to be practically applied to the case study, they will be presented in details; correspondently, the rest of the tools which will not be included in the practical part, however, would have to be mentioned as a components of the MarCom mix, will be shortly summarised in the "Other marketing communication tools" sub-topic.

Advertising

According to Arens (2008, 7), advertising is the "structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (good, services and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media." Analysing the components of this definition, it is possible to put it in a different way. First of all, it as a well-structured type of communication which can utilize both verbal and non-verbal elements compiled in a specific way. Besides, it is mass, or non-personal, communication as it is addressed to a big group of individuals (Arens 2008, 7-8).

 In the past, the growth of mass media resulted in development and increasing importance of advertising. Before the changes, the marketing communications were defined by and equal to

advertising. However, throughout the years the mass media has become more fragmented and the advertisement has reached its maturity stage. Therefore, nowadays it is extremely difficult or almost impossible to convey sustainable message to massive audiences. Nevertheless, despite the fact that some critics predicted the end of advertising, Smith and Zook (2011, 282) claimed that it is not "going away". Advertising has undergone some changes and transformed into the new forms, though, its significance in marketing communications has decreased (Smith & Zook 2011).

Advertising is one of the most visible elements of the company's operations. Depending on its marketing strategy, the company employs different types of advertising. Therefore, the Table 3 below presents the classification of those types by four parameters.

TABLE 3. The classification of advertising. Adapted from Arens (2008, 16)

By Target Audience	By Purpose
Consumer advertising: for individuals who buy the product for personal use. *Business advertising*: for individuals or organizations who buy the product for business use (trade, professional and agricultural use).	*Product/Non-product advertising*: promotion of product (service)/company mission or philosophy. *Commercial/Non-commercial advertising*: promotion with expectation of profit/non-profit incentives. *Action/Awareness advertising:* attempts to stimulate immediate purchases/build image of the product.
By Geographic Area	By Medium
Local advertising. *Regional advertising.* *National advertising.* *International advertising.*	*Print advertising*: magazines, newspapers. *Broadcast advertising*: TV, radio. *Outdoor advertising*: outdoor, transit. *Direct mail advertising*: e-mail, postal services *Interactive advertising*: Internet, kiosks, etc.

As it is seen from the table, advertising types depend on target audience, purpose, geographical area and media. Concerning the target audience, advertising can be consumer and business oriented. The name type itself says about the nature of such division: in the first case, the advertising campaigns focus on the actual individual who is going to use the offering for personal needs, while the second type concentrates around businesses which intend to utilize the product for their business. The purpose of advertising can vary; the advertisers need to decide whether they are going to promote the product or the company in general; what kind of incentives (to get profit or not) they are going to pursue; and finally, what kind of customer behaviour they want to induce (to get instant sales or inform public). Geographically speaking, the advertising activity should have a particular locus: local, regional, national or international. And the last but not the least, the types of advertising can be defined by the media they are employing. It usually takes form of print, broadcasting, outdoor, direct or interactive media (Arens 2008).

In this thesis, the main focus will be kept on the interactive type of advertising, i.e. using Internet as a medium. The word "interactive" implies that all the parties of the communication process will be enabled to communicate (Fill 2009). In these terms, "interactive" can be applied to all marketing communication tools as a part of interactive marketing. The internet, as it was previously stated, is not a mass medium; it is an ultimate niche medium (Middleberg 2001, 68). Therefore, the messages addressed online are more target-specific. Marketers highlight the increasing importance of contextual, behavioural and location-based advertising.

The first two types of online advertising, *contextual* and *behavioural*, are very similar concepts. They are widely used in the search engines. Based on the data the user enters in the search, the key words are identified and then used for delivering the most suitable ads. The ad-related service analyzes the user's online habits and decides which products the customer is more likely to buy (PC Magazine 2014). Thus, the marketers are not limited by "monochrome" segmentation and targeting, they get access to valuable information such as actual behaviour, interests and passion. Another advanced form of advertising is based on the real location of the user. The so called "*geo-targeting*", which is used by many platforms such as Google, Facebook, etc, extracts the location information, obtained from internet service providers or the registration details, and places the advertisement related to the particular geographic area (Smith & Zook 2011, 283).

In digital advertising one of the most popular definitions is the *display ads*. Display ads (sometimes referred as *banner ads*) are small rectangular boxes containing text or picture paid by the companies to locate them on particular websites (Kotler et al. 2012, 845). However, the banners can have different sizes, and therefore, are called differently: skyscraper (tall, narrow ads on the side on the webpage), button (a very small rectangle), square rectangle, wallpaper ad (a background of a webpage) etc (Strauss & Frost 2014, 276-280). Despite the fact that the banner ads are ubiquitous on the Internet, the effectiveness of such ads is very low as well as its Click-through rates (CTRs) (Shimp 2007).

Nevertheless, technological development allowed companies to advance their digital ads; therefore, the rich media ads emerged. The ads related to this category are interactive (Strauss & Frost 2014, 277). The rich media ads use a wider range of content rather than ordinary display ads. The content may include animation, video, audio, Flash, Java etc in order to create special effects and interactivity with the user (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 491). It can take the form of built-in games, drop-down menus, check boxes, search boxes and so on (Strauss & Frost 2014, 277). Among rich media ads there are several types of advertisements:

Pop-up and *pop-under* ads: are considered as one of the most annoying category (O'Guinn et al. 2013); they can appear as a new browser window in front of the required webpage (pop-up) or behind it (pop-under) (Strauss & Frost 2014). As a sub-type of pop-ups, *the interstitials* appear temporarily when the webpage is loading and disappear after a short period of time providing the access to the requested page (Pelsmacker et al. 2013).

Other types of advertising take place in social media and with mediation of mobile devices. Therefore, the social networking websites (Twitter, Facebook) act as a platform for advertisers to promote their products. They promise to deliver the message to the right audience regardless the devices (via PC, mobile phone or tablet) with maximum efficiency (Facebook 2014, Twitter, 2014). Regarding the mobile phones as a medium, mobile advertising has to be considered. These two aspects will be explained more precisely in the next chapters.

Public relations

Notwithstanding the fact that both advertising and public relations (PR) are concerned about finding the right audience and reaching it with particular message, there is a significant disparity. While advertising communicates with customers, PR talks to journalists. Journalists can be related to a highly educated audience which requires more careful and targeted approach (Middleberg 2001). Smith and Zook (2011, 312) define PR simply as "the development and maintenance of good relationships with different publics". PR is a broad concept which just partially overlaps with marketing communications.
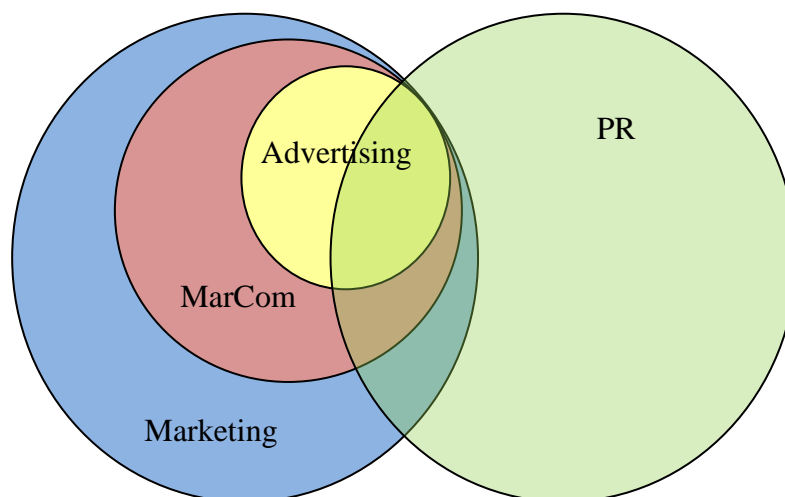
FIGURE 4. The marketing mix and PR. Adapted from Pelsmacker et al. (2013, 8)

Figure 4 explains the relationship of PR towards the promotion element of the marketing mix. As it follows from the figure, public relations have wide area of focus, and therefore, is more than marketing communications. The publics, as a target audience of PR, consist of various stakeholders on whom the company is dependent (Smith & Zook 2011, 312). These audiences shape different PR types.

Originally, there are two major classifications: *corporate* PR and *product* (marketing) PR. The corporate PR is aimed at enhancement of the company's image and developing good relations with the audiences important for the company in a long-run. They can be divided by internal

(employees, trade unions and shareholders) and external. The external PR is the oldest type of public relations; it is targeted towards public affairs (general public, trade associations, pressure groups and etc), financial relations (investors, banks and stock exchange) and media (TV, radio and trade press) (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 321-326).

The second class is the product PR which is directly related to the promoting products and developing brands. Marketing PR is targeted at commercial stakeholders – distributors, competitors and potential customers (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 323). It includes nonpaid media coverage for creating positive impression of the product/brand (Strauss & Frost 2014, 383), and brand-related activities, such as publicity (press/news releases, feature stories) and special events (open houses, VIP parties, product launches, etc.) (Arens 2008, 201).

In spite of significant differences between these two classifications, the constant growth of integrated marketing communications enables them to support and co-exist with each other (Pelsmacker 2013, 323). There are several qualities which make public relations and publicity an attractive tool:

- High credibility: stories, news and features are more genuine and credible rather than advertisements.
- Ability to reach buyers whose attitude towards salespeople and advertisements is neutral or negative.
- PR is able to dramatize the company's communication activities (Kotler et al. 2012, 797)

In the context of the thesis, PR will be accentuated on the overlapping area of marketing and public relations (as depicted on Figure 4), that is, marketing PR. However, before going into MPR (marketing public relations) using internet technologies, it is necessary to mention some of PR tools. These tools can be utilized in both product and corporate PR.

- *Press release.* According to Chartered Institute of Public Relations (2014), press release, or news release, is "written information that is deemed to be newsworthy. Often sent out to journalists and/or interested parties". The good news stories contained in the press release take advantage of free media coverage. Typically, the stories are related to release of new products, presentation of scientific discoveries or information about internal company environment. Although, the coverage in media is non-paid, the

marketers lose the control over the message presentation to the public (O'Guinn et al. 2013). Press release is the part of press kit, also known as media kit, which contains all information regarding to the company (description, awards, articles, photos, video, audio, etc) (Entrepreneur 2014).

- *Feature stories* are written by specially invited journalists about a noteworthy occasion of the company on the basis of exclusivity. This PR tool is significantly different from press releases. First of all, because a lengthy story is written by one journalist who is provided with exclusive information; and secondly, this tool is more controllable than press release (O'Guinn et al. 2013).

- Among other PR tools marketers highlight *company newsletters* (in-house publications about the organization targeted on internal and external stakeholders), *interviews* and *press conferences* (managing crisis situation, product launch, breakthrough, etc) and *sponsored events* (aimed at supporting PR) (O'Guinn et al. 2013).

As far as online MPR is concerned, all the above mentioned tools can be successfully used on the Internet. Online PR includes traditional online techniques, such as Website and e-mail, as well as social media and online buzz. With no doubts, most internet users who make purchases online perform the information search about a particular product in advance. For that reason, websites are considered to be a trusted source of information. Moreover, it serves as a channel for other PR tools, such as placing a press kit and press releases and publishing company's newsletters. In addition, websites can deliver the value by entertaining, building communities and providing customer service (Strauss & Frost 2014, 283-284).

A significant aspect of successful PR is word-of-mouth (WOM), which incorporates the already mentioned techniques, such as social media marketing, buzz marketing and influencer marketing. Nowadays the consumer behaviour is greatly influenced by WOM, and therefore, people are more likely to relate to ordinary people than to celebrities (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 24). In simple words, the task of public relations in WOM is to give people something to talk about. This idea triggers the growth of influencer marketing which "refers to a series of personalized marketing techniques directed at individuals or groups who have the credibility and capability to drive positive word-of-mouth in a broader and salient segment of population" (O'Guinn 2013, 271).

Brand activation

Brand activation, presented by Pelsmacker et al. (2013) as a marketing communication tool, is a smooth and flawless integration of all available communication means to stimulate interest, trial and enhancing consumer loyalty. As a part of brand activation, sales promotions appear to be short-term incentive tools which stimulate quick movement products from producer to the end user (Strauss & Frost 2014, 286). Therefore, all sales promotion activities provide users with rewards that encourage them to behave in a desired way of brand managers (Shimp 2007, 530).

Although, sales promotions can be confused with advertising, there is distinctive trait between them: advertising offers the reason to buy, whereas, sales promotions offer incentives to buy (Kotler et al. 2012, 824). Usually, sales promotion tools fall apart into three main categories (Smith & Zook 2011, 358):

- Customer promotions: premium, gifts, prizes, competitions, etc.
- Trade promotions: special terms, advertising and display allowances, free items, etc.
- Sales force promotions: trade shows, sales force contests, etc.

On the Internet, sales promotions play the same communication role as offline sales promotions. In fact, it assists in engaging customer with the brand for the first time by enabling development of interactive functionality (Fill 2009, 777). Besides, it adds the value to the image of the product and strengthens the brand (Smith & Zook 2011, 359).

There are several tools of sales promotions which are widely used online. Sampling and coupons allow users to try the product before the actual purchase; usually it takes a form of demo versions (Strauss & Frost 2014, 288). Contests and sweepstakes are responsible for creating enthusiasm, rewarding long-time users and building brand recognition (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 504). Virtual gifts are non-existing goods which usually people spend money on; they are widely used in mobile gaming. Social-media-driven sales promotions imply using social media as a helpful tool for spreading information regarding promotions (Smith & Zook 2011, 363-364). In the context of integrated marketing communications, each tool perfectly works in the synergy with another tool. Examples can be spreading coupons via direct e-mail, promoting contests through social media and so on.

Direct marketing

Direct marketing is another widely used communication tool. According to Strauss and Frost (2014, 290), the Direct Marketing Associations defines the concept as "any direct communication to a consumer or business recipient that is designed to generate a response in the form of an order (direct order), a request for further information (lead generation), and/or a visit to a store or other place of business for purchase of specific product(s) or service(s) (traffic generation)". Direct marketing involves any Marcom tool which can directly interact with customers (Smith & Zook 2011). Therefore, marketers identify two major categories of direct marketing tools and media: *non-addressable* and *addressable*.

The first group implies placing an ad in print media, radio or television in order to stimulate the direct response. In the recent years the employment in print media of so called Quick Response Codes, or QR-codes, is growing dramatically. The codes can be read through special barcode readers installed on smart phones, and provide instant access to the brand's website. (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 429).

The second classification, the addressable media, includes telemarketing, catalogues and direct mail. Telemarketing is used for finding, getting, keeping and developing customers using the phone. Catalogues, on the other hand, are the lists of products presented visually and distributed in the printed form or online (Pelsmacker et al. 2013). The last type of the addressable media is the direct mail. Previously implemented by using post services, the contemporary direct mail takes the form of e-mail and its wireless offspring – text messaging via mobile devices. Regardless the fact that e-mail was predicted to be replaced by new emerging media, it is still the most effective technique for developing customer relationships (Strauss & Frost 2014, 290).

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, the permission marketing plays a significant role in successful performance of the company and establishing good relationships with consumers. In other words, the permission marketing is based on respect towards customers' privacy. Therefore, marketers widely use the opt-in qualification which means the given by users permission on a voluntary basis to receive commercial e-mails (Strauss & Frost 2014). It is important for companies to follow this principle, because, as it is well explained by Smith and

Zook (2011, 383), unsolicited e-mails (spam) are illegal and can damage a company's brand reputation.

Pelsmacker et al. (2013, 423) consider databases as "the heart of direct marketing". A database is the collection of various pieces of information about the customers which is used for analysis, selection, segmentation and their retention. It can include personal information (name, address, phone number, e-mail, etc), purchase history and communications data (Pelsmacker et al. 2013). A mailing list is a part of the database marketing; it contains basic information for contacting prospects. Regarding the way it is acquired, there are internal (based on company's records of its customers) and external (purchased or rented from the third party) mailing lists. In order to develop a database, marketers need to maintain dialogs with customers and learn about their preferences and behavioural patterns (O'Guinn et al. 2013, 206).

Other marketing communication tools

Personal selling is one of the traditional tools used in marketing communications. It implies face-to-face, real time conversation between customer and sales representative (Strauss & Frost 2014, 301). Notwithstanding that personal selling is the most important tool in many corporations (O'Guinn et al. 2013), its application is not that popular online due to disabling direct personal communication. However, some businesses manage to integrate this tool with general online strategy. They provide real-time sales assistance online via chat options on the website or use the Internet video calls software, for instance Skype (Strauss & Frost 2014, 301).

According to Arens (2008, 350), a **sponsorship** is a non-personal communication tool which embraces both sales promotion and public relations, and defined by IEG as "a cash or in-kind fee paid to a property (which may be a sports, entertainment, or nonprofit event or organization) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property". Usually, companies undertake sponsoring activities in order to establish and enhance daily or special brand related interactions (Kotler et al. 2012, 777). There are two methods a company can apply: investing into existing event or create its own. When deciding to apply sponsorship as marketing communication strategy, particular attention must be drawn to selecting a target group (Pelsmacker et al. 2013). Based on target audience's preferences, spon-

sorship can be divided into several types: sport, arts, education and community sponsorship (Smith & Zook 2011, 343-344).

Search engine optimization (SEO) is not included in traditional tools mix; however, it is greatly used by marketers online. According to PEW Internet (2011), search is the number one activity among both young and adult users. Among the most popular search engines – Google, Bing and Yahoo!, Google is a market share leader with 67.6% in the U.S. market (comScore 2014). Search engines can be referred to reputation aggregators which take the form of websites that rank web pages to some rating system. An aggregator collects information about websites, classifies the websites by category and popularity and organizes them into the rank listings (Strauss & Frost 2014). Consequently, SEO is used as a technique to improve the listing in search engines. The first tree websites appeared in the search results are the most visible (Enge et al. 2012); thus, it is very important for some companies to implement SEO in order to empower brand visibility online (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 490).

Search engine optimization is incorporated into the search engine marketing which appears to be a complex discipline that combines "human behaviour, linguistic preferences, marketing techniques, analytics, Web site usability and technology to drive qualified visitors to you Web site and convert them into customers" (Strauss & Frost 2014, 332). Depending on the desired position in the search ranking, two major types of search are identified: organic (natural) and paid search.

- *Organic search* is a non-paid technique that optimizes a website's position in the listing, according to user's search terms (Google 2014). There are two main advantages of the organic SEO: it is cost effective and builds a trust among customers. This type of SEO can be achieved by providing relevant and customer-targeted content, spreading links related to the content (backlinks) and integrating effective keywords with meta-tags. Besides, there are other ways to create a short-term boost, which are considered as dishonest, or so called black hat SEO. However, these methods do not create value to the website and most often blocked by a search engine (Technopedia 2014).

- *Paid search* takes place when the company pays a search engine a fee to promote its products on the top of the search when a user types particular keywords (Strauss & Frost 2014, 335). This technique goes along with online advertising described previ-

ously. Typically, search engines offer their own advertising services, for instance, Google's AdWords. Paid search has several techniques and one of them is keyword buying. It implies that a company selects the keywords, and based on them sets the maximum amount it is willing to pay when a user clicks on the promoted link; it is called cost-per-click (CPC) (Google 2014). The search engine marketing works the best when both organic and paid searches are combined and balanced.

2.2 Integration of marketing communications

The concept of integrated marketing communications emerged when the power had shifted from companies to customers. This phenomenon made marketers look at and reconsider their MarCom strategies. There were many definitions given to the integrated marketing communications and one of them claims that the integrated marketing communications are "a concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value of a comprehensive plan in order to integrate and coordinate its message and media to deliver clear and reinforcing communication" (Kotler et. al. 2012, 971). In order to profoundly understand the concept it is suggested to look at the comparison between traditional and integrated communications (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Comparison of traditional and integrated communications (adapted from Pelsmacker et. al. 2013).

Traditional	Integrated
Aimed at acquisition	Aimed at retention and CRM
Mass communications	Selective communications
Monologue	Dialogue
Information is pushed	Information is pulled
Effect through repetition	Effect through relevance
Aimed at attitude change	Aimed at satisfaction

In other words, integrated marketing communications are concentrated around the customers. Therefore, tools, media and message are synergized in a way that will increase customer retention and build strong relationship between product and user. Besides, the communications are more targeted and relevant to the users, thus instead of pushing the information to the customers, the customers are encouraged to require information. And finally, a satisfied customer is more likely to be more loyal to the brand and continue dialogue with the company.

Consistency is a vital issue when integrating the communications. Due to the fact that the consumers do not distinguish one tool from another, they get easily confused with inconsistent messages, and consequently, are not persuaded to purchase a product. Therefore, to sum up the said before, the elements of the communications mix need to be thoroughly planned so that they form consistent and comprehensive plan (Pelsmacker et. al. 2013).

2.3 Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

All marketing communications should be arranged in a way that they are directed to a particular target market, have a clear positioning; are created to achieve a specific objective; and are managed to accomplish the objective within budget constraint (Shimp 2007, 90). Some of the main tasks of marketing and advertising people are to identify needs and wants of different consumer groups, understand what makes these groups unique and different, and find the best solution to successfully position and differentiate market offerings to gain competitive advantage (Kotler, 2012, p367).

Kotler (2012, 367) suggests that in order to compete more effectively, companies should apply target marketing. This strategy helps company to concentrate all its marketing efforts on particular group(s) of customers, whose needs and wants are more likely to be satisfied by an offered product. For the reason of effective target marketing marketers should accomplish the following steps:

1) Market segmentation. A company should identify and outline various consumer groups with different needs and preferences.
2) Market targeting. Select one or more segments to enter.
3) Market positioning. Create and communicate the benefits of the market offerings for each target segment.

2.3.1 Market segmentation

Kotler (2012, 375) claims that there are four major segmentation variables – geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behaviour segmentation. All of them are going to be shortly presented in this section.

Geographic segmentation: divides the market into units such as continents, climate, nations, regions or neighbourhood. The differences in consumer's behaviour and purchasing patterns indicate cultural diversity, and, therefore, require adjustment of marketing programme accordingly (Pelsmacker 2013, 123).

Demographic segmentation: the market is split into the following variables: age, gender, life stage, family size, income, generation, social class, nationality, race, occupation and religion. These variables are closely associated with customer needs and wants, and they are easy to measure. Therefore, demographic characteristics are the basic and necessary variables to link back to when targeting market (Kotler 2012).

Psychographic segmentation: implies segmenting markets by using lifestyle or personality criteria (activities, interests, opinions). Moreover, "each generation is profoundly influenced by the age in which it is reared – the music, films, politics and defining events of that period" (Kotler 2012, 381). The members of generation share approximately the same characteristics and experiences which can be utilized by marketers. Table 5 contains a short description of three generations: "baby boomers", "generation X", "generation Y".

TABLE 5. Characteristics of the generations (Pelsmacker et al. 2013, 125).

Present age	Generation name	Characteristics
40-60	Baby boomers	Luxury, high-quality products, not bargain hunters, less critical of marketing techniques and advertising
30-40	Generation X	High spending, materialistic, ambitious, need for individualism, critical of marketing techniques and advertising
15-30	Generation Y	High buying power, high expectations of services and relationships, marketing and technologically savvy, less brand loyal, viral marketing key

In this thesis, the focus will be concentrated on the "generation Y" and it will be depicted more precisely later on.

Behavioural segmentation: is based on division of buyers into the following groups: knowledge of the products or service, attitude towards it, the way they use and response to market offer. (Kotler 2012, 385)

Each type of segmentation exhibits its characteristics and can be categorized in terms of ease of measurement and predictability of consumer choice behaviour (Shimp 2007, 91). The Figure 5 presents the classification of 4 segmentation characteristics.
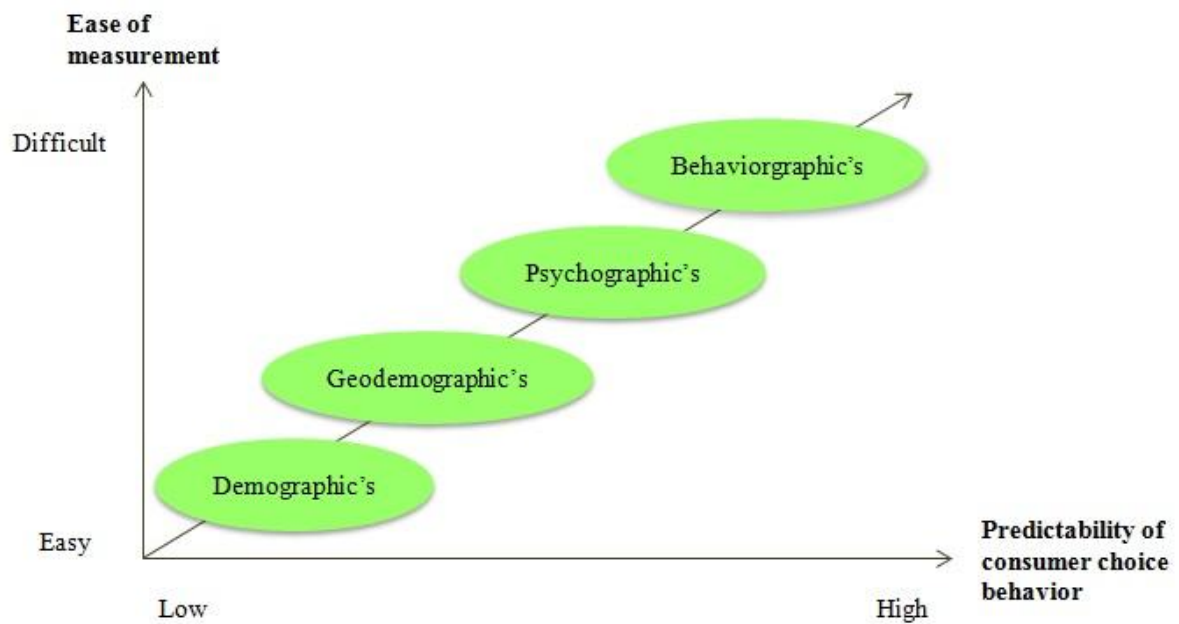
FIGURE 5. Classification of 4 general targeting characteristics. (Shimp 2007, 91)

As it can be seen from the Figure 5, demographical characteristics as well as geodemographics', or geographical, are the basic variables which are easy to obtain and analyse, yet tell very little about how buyers will behave, whereas psychographic and behavioural characteristics lead marketers to superior understanding of consumers. Therefore, the more predictable the consumer's behaviour appears the more difficult it is to measure corresponding variables.

2.3.2 Market targeting

After the market-segment opportunities are identified, a company has to decide how many segments it wants to hit and select which ones to target. There are three concepts concerning

targeting strategies which are worth mentioning: market concentration, market differentiation and undifferentiated marketing.

Market concentration means that a company chooses one segment and put all its marketing effort on it, trying to be leader within the selected segment. Market differentiation implies selecting two or more segments and developing separate strategies for each of them. Concerning the third concept – undifferentiated marketing – a company applies one strategy for all targeted segments (Pelsmacker 2013, 136).

2.3.3 Market positioning

Ries and J. Trout (2000, 2) stated: "positioning is not what you do to a *product*. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect." In other words, positioning is the act of designing the organization's product/service and image to obtain a distinctive place in the minds of the target market. Positioning is an essential aspect in marketing an offer. Successful positioning helps marketers identify the brand's essence and in result maximise the potential benefit to the company (Kotler 2012, 396). The marketers distinguish several positioning strategies (Pelsmacker 2013, 138-139):

- Emphasizing *product attributes and benefits* as unique selling proposition which makes the company or product special for the target market.
- *Price/quality positioning* means offering the same or higher quality for lower price than the competitors.
- *Use or application positioning* means how the product is used by customers and how well it can solve particular problem.
- Positioning by *product class* implies showing the superior advantage over other alternatives (competitors).
- *Product user* positioning associates a product with some user, presenting how the product helps the user to solve his/her problem.
- Positioning by *competitor* implies the strong comparison in advertising against a well known competitor brand or products.
- *Cultural symbols positioning* is using symbols to refer to brand personality.

Besides, Fill (2009) suggests considering the 3P's of marketing communications strategy: push, pull and profile positioning strategies.

- *Push*: presentation of the information for the purpose of influencing trade channel intermediaries. The message is focused on the product and the communicational goal is to develop relationships and distribution network.

- *Pull*: encourages customers to enquire and request the product through the channel network. The message is concentrated on the product and drives consumers to purchase the offer. This strategy goes along tightly with use of tools, media and messages in order to position the product in the minds of the end users.

- *Profile*: targets at all the stakeholders of the organizations and delivers messages to them. This strategy is aimed not for driving purchase decisions but to build the firms' reputation among all involved stakeholders (government, distributors, suppliers, finance markets, etc) (Fill 2009, 295-302).

However, Fill (2009, 304) claims that these three positioning strategies are not mutually exclusive. In practice, it is possible to find several strategies at once in an organization. Therefore, many companies tend to balance those strategies, having some of them of a higher priority than the others.

After discussing the basic theories regarding marketing communications and its components it is necessary to have more profound look at the topic. Therefore, the next part discusses a more specified and case-related theory.

3 ONLINE MARCOM AND APPLE APP STORE SPECIFICS

Emergence of Internet revolutionised the business management. The new technologies made organizations rethink and reapply business strategies, models and communication approaches in the online market. At that time the new definitions came out: e-commerce and e-business.

Turban at al. (2012, 6) define e-commerce as "the process of buying, selling, transferring, or exchanging products, services, and/or information via computer networks, mostly the Internet and intranets." Chaffey (2011, 12) describes e-business as "all electronically mediated information exchanges, both within an organization and with external stakeholders supporting the range of business processes. In other words, e-business is a broader definition comparing to e-commerce.

These revolutionary changes impacted not only on business models but also on marketing activities which had to shift online as well. Therefore, it is worth introducing another definition – digital marketing. Referring again to Chaffey (2011, 17), digital marketing is a very similar to e-marketing, or Internet marketing, term tightly related to e-commerce carrying the meaning of "management and execution of marketing using electronic media such as web, e-mail, interactive TV and wireless media in conjunction with digital data about customers' characteristics and behaviour" (Chaffey 2011, 17). Since marketing undergone these changes, marketing communications as a part of it also adapted to the new realities. Partially the online nature of marketing communications mix has been discussed in the first theoretical part due to strong ties with traditional communications. Therefore, this part will be concerned only about digital/online aspect of MarCom.

In addition to consequences of technological revolution some changes in the customer's behaviour occurred. Strauss and Frost (2014, 25) pay attention to a phenomenon such as the power shift from seller to buyer. The existence of Internet provides both individuals and business clients with colossal influence on the companies. Nowadays, users have stopped being limited by their circle of relatives, friends and colleagues; fast access to hundreds or even thousands of people through couple of clicks made the word of mouth even more powerful marketing force. Therefore, Strauss and Frost (2014, 26-28) highlight contemporary trends affecting consumers:

- The trust between consumers and organizations is fading away; if fact, users tend to trust each other much more.
- Vanishing of the mass market and replacement by more fragmented targeting.
- Significance of connections have been increasing a lot since existence of social networks, allowing users to build relationships or obtain needed information (e.g. job recruiters and candidates) without face-to-face interaction.

- Nonstop availability of content such as video, audio, books, etc through iTunes, Netflix, Google play and many other services helps users to meet their needs on demand regardless time and place.

In the context of this thesis, not only should the e-marketing communications be discussed but also the insights of the Apple app store have to be provided.

3.1   Apple app store specifics

The Apple app store established in 2008 was a unified digital distribution platform for the mobile software, i.e. applications, which were designed for iOS (Apple's mobile operating system) devices – iPhone, iPod and iPad. It enabled users to browse, purchase and download app on their hardware. Nowadays the app store is about capturing current trends, creating new niches and providing users with fresh experiences (McCann 2012).

The app store offers thousands of apps of different categories (games, utilities, books, etc.) and prices. The user can search for a specific app or choose from the top apps ranked by the Apple app store. Talking about the top charts, there are three main groups: top paid, top free and top grossing (Apple App Store 2014). The first two groups are the *free* and *paid* apps that did the most downloads. The third group needs better description. Due to the emergence of in-app purchases (they allow to buy additional features within the app (Apple Inc. 2010)), the top *grossing* apps section was created. This section shows the apps which make most money including in-app purchases. Therefore, this is the top chart where many companies want to be (Jurewitz 2013). In order to submit the app, developers need to pass the Apple's apps approval and provide all needed components (Figure 6)
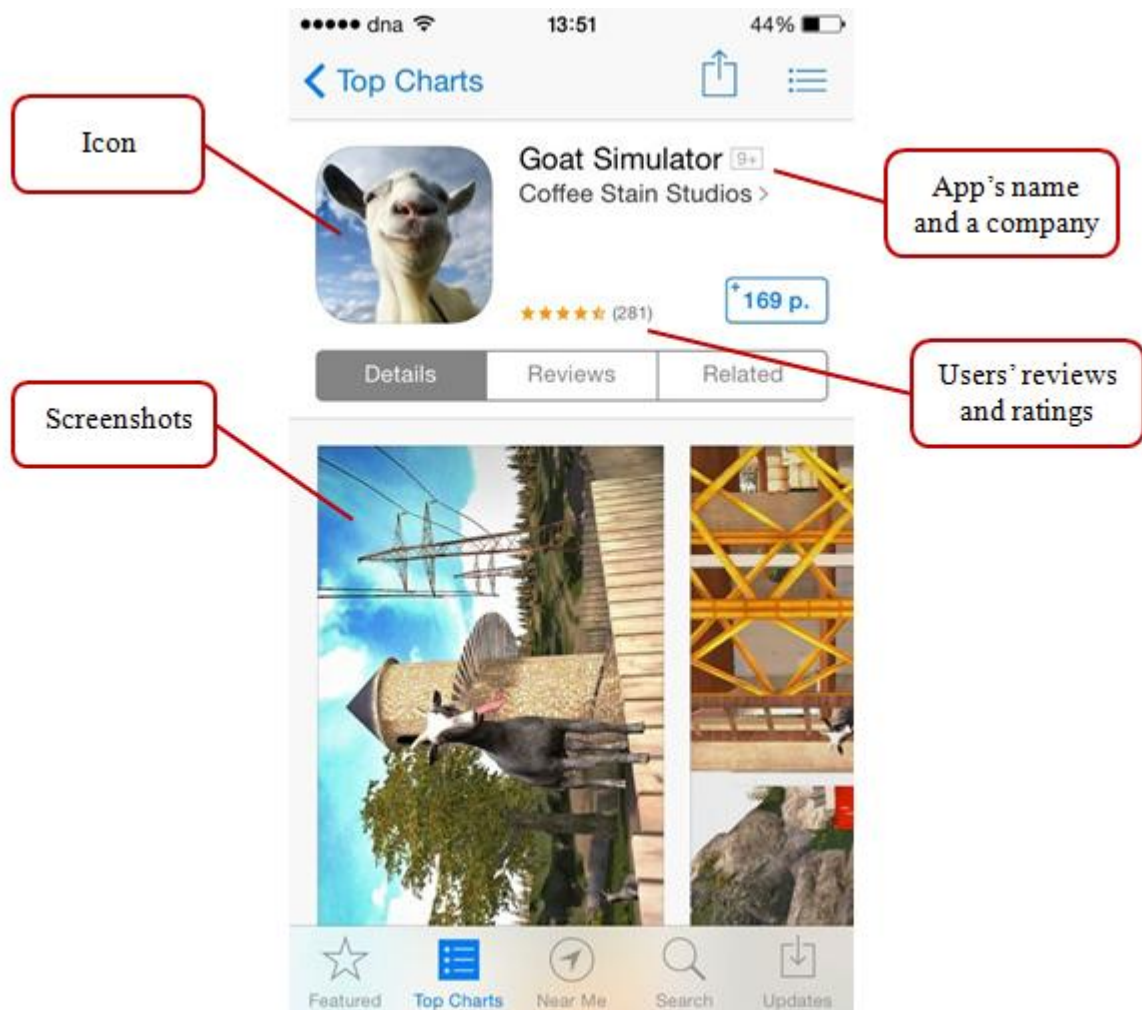
FIGURE 6. Example of an app on the Apple App Store (Apple App Store 2014).

As it is seen from the Figure 6, some components the developers need to consider while submitting the app on the app store are the icon, name and screenshots. Additionally, a profound description and support information must be provided. The components should be consistent with each other in order to increase the chances to appear on higher positions in the app store. These issues compliment the app store optimization techniques which will be presented later.

3.1.1 Types of apps

The topic of pricing in the app store was slightly mentioned earlier. However, this is an important aspect to consider while developing applications, therefore, it must be covered in details. For that purpose it is worth naming three main business models which are commonly used in the app store: Free, Paid (Premium) and Freemium (McCann 2012).

Free apps business model. This category is sometimes confused with the Freemium apps which will be described later. In order to clarify this issue, the free apps are the apps which do not require any payment whatsoever. However, there are two types of free apps: free apps with all content available and the lite versions which are limited by particular parameters (time- or content-restricted). The first type almost does not bring any revenue to the developer unless the app is supported with ads. However, the second type allows the users to try the limited app and motivate them to buy a premium version. This type can also contain advertisements which are in most of the cases the promotion of the full app (McCann 2012).

Paid apps business model - is also referred as premium model. This category of apps usually possesses complete content or additional subscription. The additional subscription implies periodical charges (e.g. navigation apps). Prices in this category vary a lot, though, price level decreases constantly.

- *$0.99 - $2.99.* The biggest price group in the paid apps category; it provides full content or sometimes can use in-app purchases. The majority of games and entertainment apps relate to this group (McCann 2012).

- *$3.99 - $4.99.* This more expensive group of apps sometimes is referred to a premium model. Such apps usually do not contain any advertisements in order not to annoy the user who paid that amount of money. Games and entertainment have a much smaller share in this category, therefore, if a game has such price it is supposed to be with better graphics and interface (McCann 2012).

- *$5.99 and more*. This price range belongs to more specific apps which are targeted on certain needs. Most of the time, these are business, education, etc. apps rather than games. The main value of such apps is the information they provide, therefore, the developers of such apps pay less attention to the design of the product (McCann 2012).

Freemium business model. The incorporation of the two above mentioned models – free and premium form a freemium model; among games it is usually called a Free-to-Play model. This model was created after the emergence of in-app purchases. Therefore, freemium apps are the apps which can be downloaded and used for free, however, offer additional feature which can

be bought within the app. This model is considered to be the most popular among the apps in the app store (Newzoo 2013).

However, freemium has both bright and dark sides. On the one hand, it is a perfect tool which triggers so called "Psychology of Free". A free product is an emotional button which instantly diminishes the mental barriers of the individual. In fact, users think that they have nothing to lose disregarding time as an investment (Techcrunch 2011). Therefore, this model attracts a user base with no or less costs on advertising efforts and other expenses. On the other hand, despite its advantages, a freemium model rises some questions when it comes to the practical application. First of all, a company should decide what should be free. This issue is difficult to balance: on the one hand, the part of the content must be free and valuable to the users, but on the other hand it should not be too much so that the company will lose sales. Therefore, before employing such model a careful analysis is required. Secondly, the company should ensure that the users fully understand the advantages of the premium product. In case sales are low, a company realises that it provides too much content for free and it might be difficult to save the current consumer base and limit some free resources (Kumar 2014).

3.1.2 App Store Optimization

Earlier in this section the topic of App Store Optimization (ASO) has been already mentioned. The nature of app store optimization is similar to the previously discussed search engine optimization – to improve the app's ranking. According to Maher (2012, 2), app store optimization "makes the app more visible in the search results – which will make it more likely to get downloaded". Apple does not reveal its algorithms concerning the rankings, however, it is possible to facilitate the app's position in the rankings. Basically, there are two types of ASO techniques: on-metadata and off-metadata.

On-metadata. This optimization is in total control of the company. According to Gauchet (2013) it consists of description, app name and keywords, icon and screenshots.

- *Description*: must clearly explain the app's functionality and catch the customers' attention; the most important information must be put there. A good app description may include: social proof (app's reviews in media), benefits and features, call to action.

- *Keywords*: must be present in the name and description and reflect the apps features.

- *Icons and screenshots*: are the visual representation of the app. Icon is the first thing the user see, therefore, it needs to be appealing and tell what the app is about. Screenshots present the app's interface and design, thus, all important features must be captured.

Off-metadata is out of control of the company, however, greatly affects the app's ranking. There are three components of off-metadata: positive reviews, high ratings and number of downloads. Although, there is no way in direct manipulation of these factors, a company still can influence them by two-way communication with users (Jesse 2014).

3.2 Games insights

Video games are a huge industry which has its unique traits and should be approached differently. However, the majority of video games theory is tightly related to the IT field, therefore, this section will be focused at general introduction of this segment in order to familiarize the reader with the basic terms and issues of the industry. These basic principles go along with the mobile games which are the centre of the case study.

First and foremost, any game as well as any other software requires interaction with the user that is a human being. Nowadays time can be considered as the main cost and the most valuable resource; therefore, each next device aims at reducing time to execute particular operations. Consequently, to succeed in the contemporary world, *usability* of a product is a significant factor to consider.

Usability defines how well the system's functionality can be used. It encompasses such dimension as learnability, efficiency, memorability and user satisfaction. Learnability implies how easy it is to learn how to use the system; efficiency - how fast it is to use; memorability – how easy it is to remember the learnt material and user satisfaction – if it is enjoyable to use it. Developing a game according to high usability dimensions mentioned above rises its chances to prosper (Miller 2003).

Due to the wide range of games (e.g. from Tetris to GTA) it is necessary to classify them according to their plot and complexity. Initially, there were two types of games: hardcore and casual games, latter on the middle type has been identified – mid-core. Based on that, the us-

ers of such games are classified correspondently: hardcore, mid-core and casual gamers. The first two types are very similar with slight shade of distinction: the mid-core gamers are less expert than hardcore but much more skilled than a casual gamer. Therefore, hardcore and casual gamers have to be characterised.

- *Hardcore* gamers. Playing games is a lifestyle for such users; they spend the large amounts of money on purchasing and playing games. Regarding time, the sessions they play are very long and regular. They value challenging tasks in the game and enjoy complexity of graphics and interface functionality. The majority of hardcore games are used via PC or other consoles.

- *Casual* gamers. Playing games is only one of many alternatives how to spend leisure time for this category of users. They buy fewer games and select the most popular or recommended ones. The time sessions are much shorter than hardcore gamers' and the required interface is simple. Mostly they play games through their mobile devices (Chehimi et al. 2006).

Therefore, knowing the type of the game it is easier to identify the end user. The basic characteristics presented above summarize the target audience and provide game developers with information for making decisions regarding the game's interface and other functionalities. However, knowing the targeted type of game users is not enough for developing marketing communications strategy, therefore, other aspects must be taken into consideration. This issue will be explained more precisely in the practical part.

3.3 Online media

This section is the continuation of the previously discussed "Media" topic. The focus is to be kept of the online media which are closely related to the case study. As a result, the following issues have to be studied: social media, websites and mobile advertising.

3.3.1 Social media

The appearance of social media revolutionized the way of interaction: it gave control to customers. In the mass of customers the new opinion leaders emerge in the form of bloggers.

Therefore, the companies are provided with choice to join the dialog with consumers or fail. The importance of social media is explained by allowing marketers to listen to the audience more easily and efficiently. In other words, customers can communicate with each other and the companies can communicate with customers. Additionally, it expands the organization's networks by distributing a branded content to the large audiences (Smith & Zook 2011).

The nature of social media is based on creating and sharing the contents with other participants. As a fact, marketers use the social media to create buzz and stimulate viral marketing. Therefore, this type of media is considered one of the most effective means of word-of-mouth communication (O'Guinn et al. 2013).

There are several classifications of the social media: blogs, collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), content communities (e.g. YouTube), virtual worlds and social networks (Pelsmacker et al. 2013). In the US, for instance, the most popular social media websites are Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (Statista 2014a). As it was mentioned previously, media can be paid and unpaid. The paid type of social media is the social media advertising. The example of such advertising is the ads displayed on the Facebook website. The social networks, in this case, provide companies with the data which can be used for better targeting and user engagement (Strauss & Frost 2014). In the context of the thesis, a particular attention has to be given to the social networks.

According to Chaffey (2011, 17), *social network* is "a site that facilitates peer-to-peer communication within a group or between individuals through providing facilities to develop user-generated content and to exchange messages and comments between different users." By creating content, a user spreads the information to his/her network of followers and these messages appear in the common stream. Each website provides a set of facilities which are similar by its sharing features. *Facebook* allows users to add and see the text, photo, video content and evaluate it by using "Likes" system. Users can share, repost the messages and start following interesting sources or the influencers. *Twitter* is a micro-blog network which enables users to write 140 character posts which can include text, video, photo and links. Similar to Facebook, a user can mark the "tweet" as favourable or "retweet" it and pass it to further network. *YouTube* is a video hosting platform widely used as an e-marketing channel. Additionally, the companies can embed the video link to their websites (Smith & Zook 2011).

Another very important feature of the social networks is the *hashtag*. Hashtags are the meta-data presented in the form of "#"and therefore, are related to the keywords. In order to create a hashtag in the message, the symbol "#" is put in front of the word Figure 7).
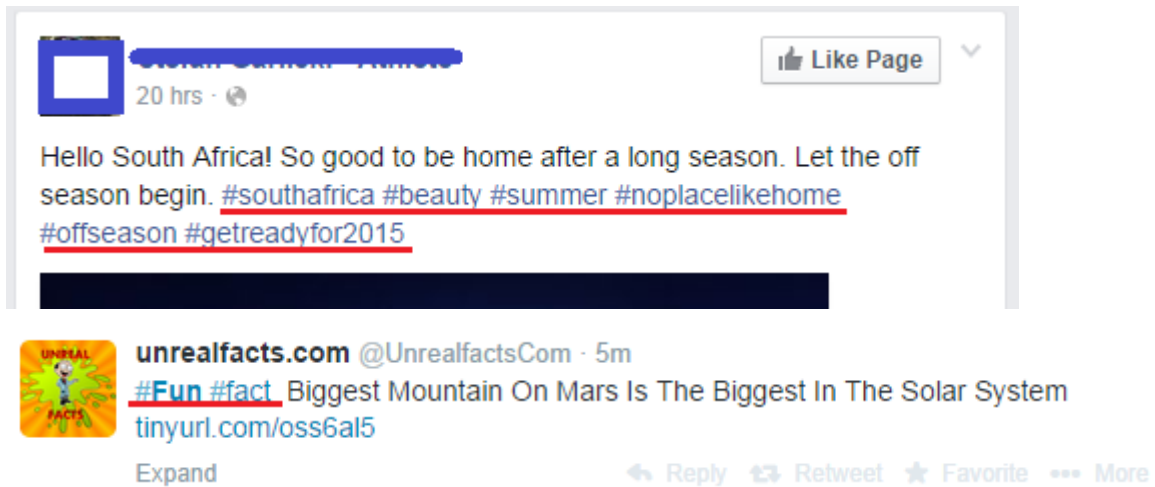
FIGURE 7. Examples of hashtags in social media (Facebook, Twitter 2014).

This action is used to categorize the message and help the users find it in the social network search. Consequently, by clicking the hashtag all the messages of that category will appear in search results. The hashtags are public, therefore, if anybody enters the hashtagged word he/she will get the results of all the messages which contain the word. In Twitter, for example, the most popular hashtags become a Trending Topics (Twitter 2014).

As a result, social networks provide companies with unique opportunities to establish a brand name, reach the users and listen to them. By using hashtags a company can promote its products and bring it to the top trending topics. Additionally, the social media can be integrated with other marketing communication tools such as PR, Advertising, Sales promotions, etc.

3.3.2 Websites

Website is another online medium widely used by the companies. In fact, it is one of the main ways to represent the company online. Therefore, it is important to create a high profile website in order to stimulate sales and establish a good brand name. According to Smith and Zook (2011), there are four basic factors which keep visitors satisfied and coming back again: high-

quality content, easy navigation, quick downloading and constantly updated information. These factors contribute to the overall usability of a site.

In order to increase the chances of higher number of visits, the website should be easily found through search engines. For that purpose the previously described search engine optimization and paid search has to be applied. Moreover, due to the increasing share of mobile internet (Statista 2014b) it is necessary to resize the website according to different mobile screen resolutions (Chaffey 2011).

Nevertheless, another type of online presence exists – *landing pages*. A landing page is any webpage or micro-site on which the visitor lands when he/she clicks the link to a product (Smith & Zook 2011). There are several types of such pages: a landing page that is stand-alone without any connection to the main website, a specialized micro-site with particular purpose and a specific page in the website (Ash 2008).

Based on the purpose, two main categories of landing page exist. *A Click Through* landing page is aimed at persuading the visitor to click through in order to get to another webpage. Typically, this kind of page contains the products description and "warms up" the visitor for the next step – clicking through the link which usually leads to the page where he/she can directly buy the product (e.g. landing page of the app leading to the app store). On the other hand, *a Lead Generation* landing page is used for collecting the visitors' data, such as name and e-mail, on the subscription basis, and consequently, to contact with the subscribers (e.g. webinar registration) (Unbounce 2014). It is important to mention that in the practical part of the thesis websites and landing pages will have significant distinguishes: website implies the online representation of the *company* and landing page represents independent *app's* (micro) website.

3.3.3 Mobile marketing

Mobile marketing, or wireless (mobile) advertising, implies communication with the customers through the use of mobile devices. As it was said previously, mobile internet penetration is growing constantly every year, thus, the mobile marketing communication becomes more and more important. The most common techniques to deliver message are SMS, MMS or mobile

banners and in-app ads. The first two techniques are based on the permission marketing which is based on the respect of the user's privacy. Therefore, a message mediated in a form of SMS or MMS has to be opted-in (Pelsmacker et al. 2013).

The interest of the thesis is based on the last types of the mobile advertising: mobile banners and in-app ads (Figure 8). First of all, it is worth mentioning, that the mobile advertising has similar characteristics as online advertising via PC. The types of the ads carry the same meaning, however, are adjusted to a mobile screen.

FIGURE 8. Example of in-app advertisement.

Since the topic of the thesis is related to promotion of the mobile application, consideration of in-app ads is required. According to Mobile Marketing Association (2011), there are several ad units for mobile applications:

- **Mobile application banner ad** – "still image(s), text or combination of these intended for use in mass-market campaigns where the goal is a good user experience across all mobile phone models, network technologies and data bandwidths" (Mobile Marketing Association 2011, 17). This ad can be placed in any corner of the app.
- **Mobile application interstitial ad** – similar to the explained previously type which takes form of a full-screen active or static advertisement. This ad appears when particular action is made; typically, it disappears after a while or requires manual closure.
- **Rich media mobile ad** – a more advanced form of mobile advertising which can interact with the user; can contain different media such as video, audio, text, etc.

Consequently, promoting mobile app through other applications became one of the most popular MarCom tools in app marketing. As an offspring of the online advertising, mobile advertising is built on similar principles: behaviour and geo-targeting. There are numerous systems which help companies to advertise their apps both on paid and free basis. Therefore, this issue will be discussed more in the practical part of the work.

3.4 Marketing communications planning

In this chapter the focus is kept on how to plan various marketing initiatives. A number of techniques were observed and all of them were similar to each other to some extent. However, SOSTAC©, created by PR Smith, is considered to be one of the best marketing models. Not only does this model help with marketing plans, but also assists with writing marketing communication plans and other kinds of planning activity. It is a comprehensive and easy to use model which covers all aspects needed for a successful plan (Chaffey & Smith 2008). The Figure 9 presents all the steps which are included into the SOSTAC© system.
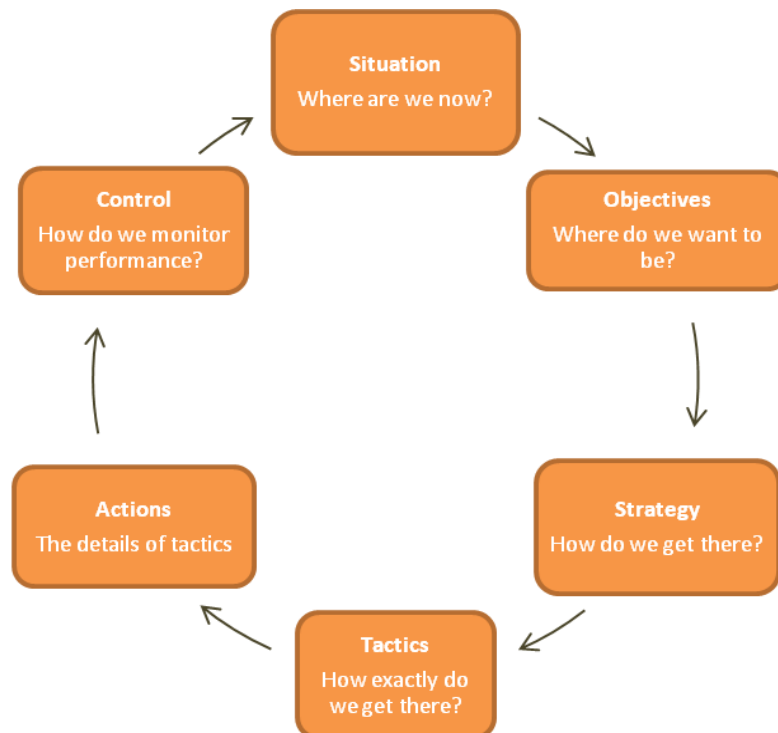

FIGURE 9. SOSTAC© planning cycle (Smith 2011)

3.4.1   Situation analysis

American Marketing Association (2014) defines situation analysis as "The systematic collection and study of past and present data to identify trends, forces, and conditions with the potential to influence the performance of the business and the choice of appropriate strategies. The situation analysis is the foundation of the strategic planning process. The situation analysis includes an examination of both the internal factors (to identify strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (to identify opportunities and threats). It is often referred to by the acronym SWOT."

In other words, the situation analysis implies thorough examination of the company's current state. Chaffey and Smith (2008) claim that the analysis should include a summary review of the overall marketing performance, competition, marketplace, strengths and weaknesses. However, according to Smith and Zook (2011, 229), complete SWOT analysis must be presented in the full marketing plan, and in case of marketing communications plan this analysis can be narrowed down. Regarding to this thesis, only the tools which will be used for developing the marketing communications plan will be presented.

Therefore, the focus of the marketing communications plan should be kept on performance, target markets and positioning (Smith& Taylor 2004, 36). In order to develop a comprehensive marketing communications plan, Chaffey and Smith (2008, 444-451) suggest including in the situation analysis such tools as SWOT, PEST, and target market analysis. However, as it was mentioned before, such tools as PEST will be omitted from the theory due to its invalidity in this particular case.
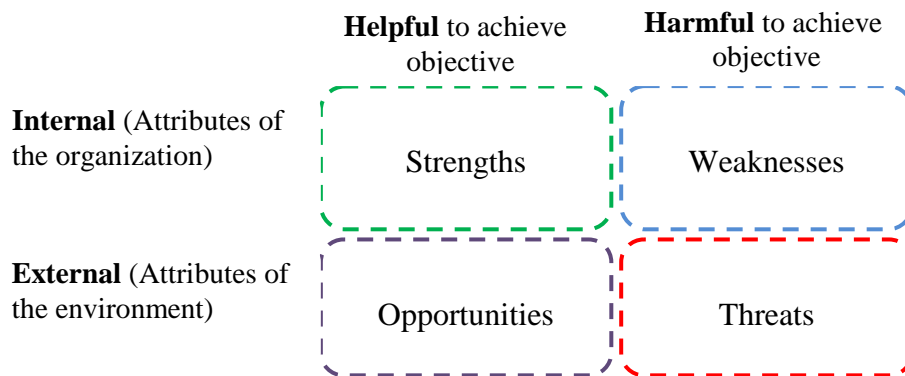
SWOT analysis

	Helpful to achieve objective	**Harmful** to achieve objective
Internal (Attributes of the organization)	Strengths	Weaknesses
External (Attributes of the environment)	Opportunities	Threats

FIGURE 10. SWOT analysis (adapted from Kotler et al. 2012, 112)

According to Kotler at al. (2012, 111), SWOT analysis is the overall evaluation of both internal and external marketing environments. Internal environment refers to strengths and weaknesses, while external implies opportunities and threats. All SWOT factors influence on the objectives set by the organizations, but these impacts differ in being helpful (strengths and opportunities) and harmful (weaknesses and threats).

SWOT is considered to be an outstanding tool not only for analysing the current situation but also for formulating strategies. As it was mentioned before, a full and thorough analysis of internal and external environments gives the profound fundament for complete marketing plan.

Target market analysis

Duening et al. (2009) claim that the target market is simply a group of people the company believes to be most likely to buy its product or service. Analyzing the target market is a complicated procedure requiring a lot of considerations.

The target identification was discussed more precisely in the "Targeting strategies" section of this thesis. Nevertheless, the emphasis should be put on examining the demographics, psychographics and niche markets. This implies looking at statistical data of population, determination of attitudes, tastes, and niches including generations, cultures etc (Pinson 2008).

3.4.2 Objectives

In marketing communications planning the second significant issue to deal with is the setting the objectives. Clearly defined objectives must build an effective marketing communications plan and assist strategies and tactics (Chaffey 2011, 399). In terms of e-marketing, Chaffey and Smith (2008) claim that there are five main objectives which merge into the 5S concept:

- *Sell*: increase sales.
- *Serve*: add value.
- *Speak*: get closer to the customers by learning and interacting with them.
- *Save*: reduce costs.
- *Sizzle*: extend and reinforce brand.

All the objectives need to be set in SMART terminology. The abbreviation "SMART" stands for specific (clearly defined variables), measurable (setting a measure of activity), achievable (attainable), realistic (being relevant to the brand) and time related (the period in which results should be generated) (Fill 2009, 335).

3.4.3 Strategies

Chaffey (2011, 241) defines strategy as "the future direction and actions of an organization or part of an organization". In marketing communications planning, a strategy answers the question "How do we get there?" and shows how the objectives will be achieved. Moreover, the strategy summarizes and drives the tactics, brings them to the harmony and integration (Smith&Zook 2011, 235). It is very important to constantly keep in mind the objectives while developing strategies; therefore they should be frequently revisited and revised (Chaffey 2011, 275).

Companies can have several levels of strategies: corporate strategy, business unit strategy, operational strategy and functional strategy. The *corporate strategy* is related to overall scope of the organization; the *business unit strategy* identifies the ways to compete in a certain market; the *operational strategy* aims at achieving corporate and business unit strategies; and finally, *functional strategy* keeps focus on achieving different functional areas or business processes (Chaffey 2011, 241).

Different authors give different explanations of what the strategy should include in marketing communications planning. The Table 6 gathers information from various sources about how the communication strategy should be designed and what are its components. Note that there is no connection between lines horizontally.

TABLE 6. Designing a communication strategies

Chaffey (2011)	Fill (2009)	Kotler at al. (2012)	Smith and Zook (2011)
-Ansoff Matrix: Market penetration, Market development, Product development, Diversification -Target marketing strategy -Positioning & differentiation strategies	Target audience Positioning: • Push strategy • Pull strategy • Profile strategy	Target audience Message strategy Selection of communication channels	STOP&SIT acronym: • Segmentation • Target Markets • Objectives • Positioning • Stages • Integration • Tools

Looking at the table above, it is possible to see a pattern of strategy design. All the sources highlight the importance of *targeting* and *positioning strategies*. Consequently, the strategy and the whole marketing communications planning should be always consistent with the target audience. Besides targeting, to communicate and deliver value and message a proper positioning must be defined. The targeting and positioning strategies are discussed more thoroughly before in this work.

Besides, as it is seen from the Table 6 an important aspect in overall marketing communication strategy is the message (Kotler et al. 2012). According to Shimp (2007), the brand's positioning strategy dictates the content of the message. Therefore, a *message strategy* is an irreplaceable part of the marketing communication plan. The types of the messages and their impact on customers have been already presented in the "Message" sub-topic.

Additionally, Smith and Zook (2011) mention such acronym as STOP&SIT referring it to the strategy development. The STOP elements (Segmentation, Target Markets, Objectives and Positioning) have been already described to some extent in this and previous sub-topics; however, SIT (Stages, Integration, Tools) must be also taken into consideration. For effective strategy the following issues should be solved:

- Stages: Are there, and what are the sequence of stages? The phasing plan can be utilized, i.e. *tease → reveal → extend stages* (Pelsmacker et al. 2013).

- Integration: Is it all put together smoothly?

- Tools: What are the tools and channels are going to be applied (Smith&Zook 2011)?

Finally, Chaffey (2011) suggests including Ansoff matrix to build the strategy, which implies market penetration, market development, product development and diversification depending on type of markets and products. The matrix is used in a full marketing plan and, as far as the thesis is concerned, this tool can be considered inappropriate and will not facilitate building marketing communications strategy.

3.4.4 Tactics

The American Marketing Association (2014) defines tactics as a "short-term actions undertaken to achieve implementation of a broader strategy". In other words, the tactics are considered to be the details of the strategy. They include the tools to be used, which should be stated clearly. The best tool for developing tactics is the Gantt chart. This chart will help to keep the tactics according to the stages defined in the strategy (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 464-465).

3.4.5 Actions

Actions implement the tactics; therefore, they should be formed into a detailed action plan. This is the stage where good project management skills matter. As the actions are the details of the tactics, it is important to build them with maximum precision in order to reduce the risk of failure (Smith & Zook 2011, 237).

3.4.6 Control

After developing the strategy, tactics and applying the actions several questions arise. The marketers have to find out if the plan is working, the tactics are right, the resource allocation has been done well, the objectives are achieved, etc. The following figure presents the whole process of control in terms of e-marketing.
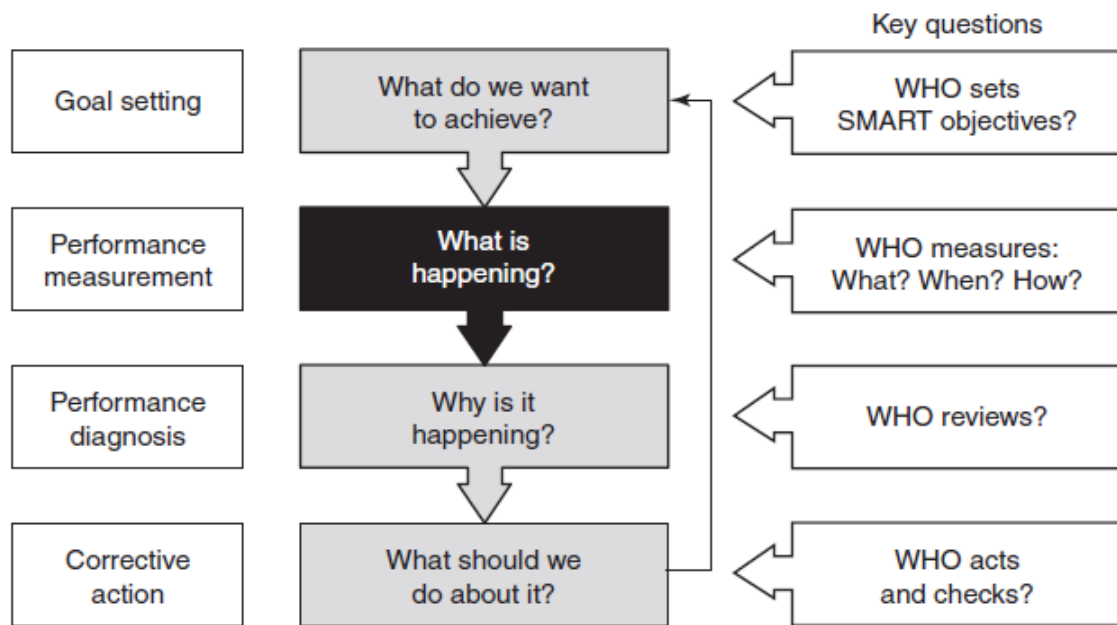
FIGURE 11. Control process in e-marketing planning (Smith 2008, 472)

As it follows from the Figure 11, there are several stages in the control process. Starting with the objective setting, which was described earlier, the process moves towards the current performance. The performance measurement requires thinking through all possible metrics which can be used to measure against the targets based on strategy and objectives. After identifying those, the frequency of monitoring has to be set (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 471-472).

Chaffey (2011, 440) suggests considering and covering 3 metrics:

- Business contribution: channel profitability (revenue, costs, ROI etc.)
- Marketing effectiveness: channel outcomes (sales, conversion rates, leads etc.)
- Online marketing effectiveness: channel behaviour (visitors, subscriptions, enquiries etc.)

In order to diagnose the performance, the marketers need to identify the criteria which define the success and then measure performance against those criteria. In case the performance does not correspond to the desired results the actions or the objectives need to be reconsidered. The monitoring process may show that some of the tools neither are efficient nor effective enough; therefore, correction actions are needed. It is also advised to have contingency plans and respond within a short time period to emerging threats and opportunities (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 473-474).

3.4.7 The 3Ms

Additionally to the SOSTAC planning system, the three key resources must be included:

- *Men* (and women): acquiring the human resources, allocating them to each action and considering insourcing or outsourcing.
- *Money*: forecasting ROI and setting adequate budget to achieve the plan.
- *Minutes*: developing and setting timescales, schedules and deadlines of the actions and sticking to them (Smith&Zook 2011, 226-229).

4 METHODOLOGY

After the relevant literature is reviewed and studied, it is necessary to design a research process in order to fulfil the thesis objective. However, before doing so it is worth introducing the case company and the product.

4.1 Introduction of the case company

The case company for the thesis is the GUAVO Company, or GUAVO o.z. The company is located in the capital city of Slovakia – Bratislava. It is a relatively young and small company which was established in 2013, and nowadays consists of up to ten employees. GUAVO o.z. specializes in development of mobile software (applications) based on iOS platform. Therefore, the software is applicable only on iOS devices, produced by Apple, such as iPhone, iPad and iPod.

Among its applications, three of them have already been released: AGO jobs, Retina Alarm Clock and Alarm Clock 7. The first application is the project made for one of the biggest human resource leasing companies in Bratislava – AGO company. The AGO jobs app provides possibility of searching for available workplaces and enables its users to apply for desired positions. The last two are the apps in the utilities category. Generally speaking, these applications possess the functions of an ordinary alarm clock; however, offer additional advanced features such as RSS feed, Radio, connection to the most popular social networks – Twitter and Facebook and synchronised calendar. Alarm Clock 7 is the latest released app which was developed based on inspiration from the new (at that moment) operating system – iOS7.

4.1.1 Introduction of the case product

Earlier, in the beginning of this year, the company started working on its new app which was called the "Tunneler". The "Tunneler" is the contemporary replication of the old PC game, released in 90's, with the same name. Back in time, the game, developed by a Russian programmer, had a great success among young users of PC. Therefore, inspired by childhood nostalgia the company decided to bring "Tunneler" back to life in a new format – as an iOS app.

As far as the meaning of the game is concerned, the main characters are the tanks which have their location bases situated underground. As the player moves the tank out of its base, the tank paves the way by shooting the area in front of it and creates the tunnels. At the same time, the opponent possesses his own base in the same playground and digs the tunnels as well. When the tanks are out of the location bases, they have some supply of power which shrinks with time; and the power can be recharged only when the tanks reach any location base. Originally, the plot of the game was simple: a player should find and destroy the opponent (enemy)'s tank before the power supply runs out. However, GUAVO decided to advance the game by adding some additional features:

- Several play modes (individual, multiplayer via Bluetooth, multiplayer online).
- Scoring and ranking systems in order to establish competitiveness among players.
- Virtual goods: different skins (models of tanks), power-ups (they empower tanks' performance).

- Establishing the gamer's status system (includes assigning badges) according to his/her activity in the game (number of accomplished levels).

4.1.2 Background information for the research

Because of the fact that the games category possesses the biggest share in the Apple app store, the game market is considered highly competitive. However, despite a huge number of applications introduced since the beginning of Apple app store, the games category hold the first position in absolute number of dead apps which were pulled out from the app store by Apple or the publisher (Adjust 2014). To highlight the competitive environment in the Apple app

store, it is important to mention the average number of submitted games within summer 2014, which equals to 12,428 games per month based on the Pocketgamer statistics (2014).

As it is seen from the Apple app store insights, a company operating in the game development sector undergoes many threats and obstacles. Aside from surviving in the market, game developers, as well as all any business, strive to get a profit which at least covers the costs. Therefore, it is vitally important for the company to build sustainable and effective marketing communications which eventually lead to growing number of downloads and sales.

Linking the preceding information to the GUAVO case, the new app, the "Tunneler" is going to come across more or less the same problems and forces as any other Apple app store newcomer. Regarding the geographical focus of the research, the emphasis will be put on US as it is a leader in both downloads and revenues worldwide (AppAnnie 2014). The "Tunneler" game is the first experiment of GUAVO as a game developer; unlike the previous products, the game requires a new approach to marketing and understanding of the whole game industry. The observations made during the author's working experience in GUAVO revealed the need for reconsidering the current marketing communications efforts and advancing them based on research.

4.2   Research questions and objectives

The aim of the thesis is to develop a sound marketing communication plan for GUAVO regarding the new application the "Tunneler". As it is obviously stated, the research process will be focused on the marketing communications mix, which includes tools, message and media. Therefore, in order to create the plan, the following research questions must be answered:

- What is the current situation of the GUAVO company?
- Who are the target users of the "Tunneler" game?
- How will the "Tunneler" be positioned?
- What are the most effective marketing communication tools and media in the mobile application world?
- How should the company integrate the marketing communication tools, media and message in order to succeed in the Apple app store?

Based on the research questions above, the following outcomes are to be reached:

- Gain insight on the company's current state.
- Identify the best practices in marketing communications for mobile applications.
- Develop a comprehensive and multi-structured marketing communications plan.

The company can utilize the information included in the marketing communication plan as a step-by-step guide with the intention of accomplishing the marketing and communications objectives.

4.3   Theory and practice synergy

As it was mentioned earlier the core framework which has to be used for developing marketing communications plan is the SOSTAC planning model which includes Situation, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, Actions and Control, and accompanied with 3M (Men, Money, Minutes) model. The following figure aids in understanding the synergy of theoretical and practical part of the thesis.
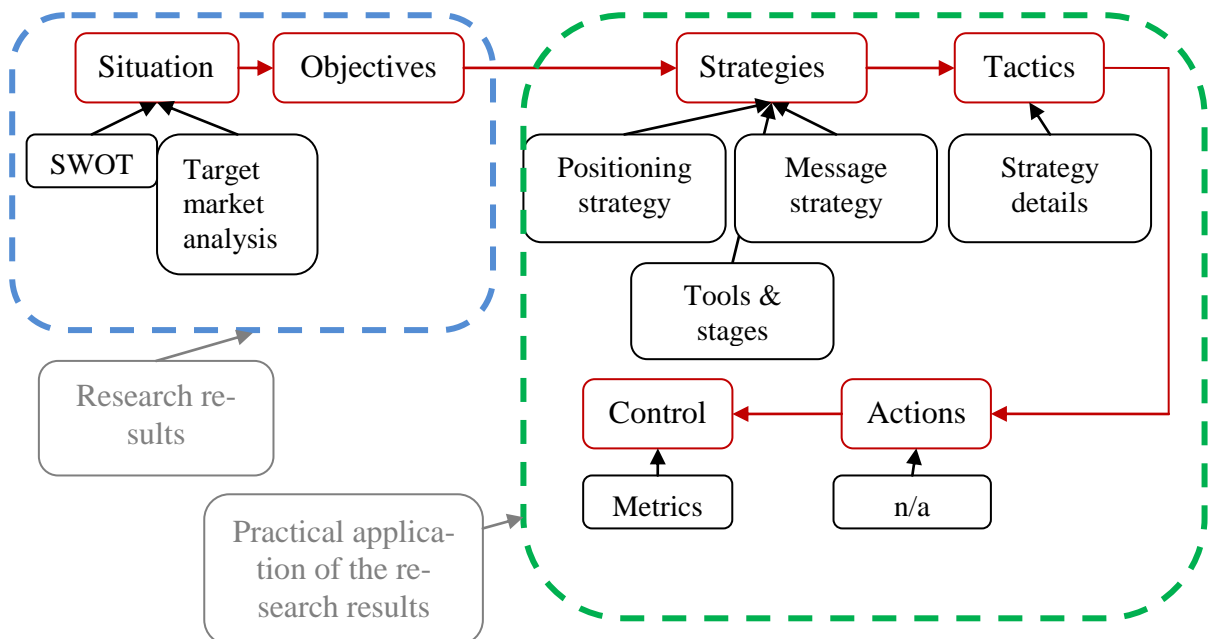

FIGURE 12. SOSTAC model for the case study.

According to the Figure 12 the framework is divided into two parts: the results of the research and practical application of the results in the plan. Both parts cannot exist without each other, as the situation analysis and the objectives build the fundament for further planning process. The first part has to be accumulated through interview, benchmarking, industry and target market research, thus, cannot be changed or modified. The second part is the application of the gained information to the case product and in a control of a marketer.

In order to avoid repetition, it is suggested that the situation analysis and objectives will be stated in the results section, while the rest of the SOSTAC elements will be presented in the marketing communication plan. It is important to note that the "Actions" and the 3M elements in the plan have to be omitted due to limitations of necessary resources.

4.4   Research strategy

There are two major methods of research which can be applied to marketing communications and any other issues: quantitative and qualitative. Both of them have different characteristics and together they can bring value by observing the issue from several points of view (Daymon & Holloway 2011). Blaxter et al. (2010, 65) present the explanation of both research methods by quoting Punch (2005, 3): "Quantitative research is empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers". Regardless its nature, the qualitative research can generate the quantitative measures based on gathered qualitative data (Hesse-Biber 2010).

Therefore, despite the differences, quantitative and qualitative researches are closely related. Because of the fact that the research is very difficult to imagine as purely qualitative or quantitative, the so called "mixed methods" are becoming more common (Blaxter et al. 2010). The mixed methods use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to answer the research questions (Hesse-Biber 2010). Hesse-Biber (2010, 3) cites Creswell (2005, 224), such combination of methods "involve[s] the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multiphase study".

There are two types of data sources: primary and secondary data. *Primary* data are data recently collected for the purpose of a specific research project, which can take form of observa-

tions, focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc. *Secondary* data, on the other hand, are data which was previously gathered and already exists – documents, surveys, market reports, etc (Kotler et al. 2012).

4.5 Research methods

The chosen research methods should be relevant for answering the original research questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Therefore, in the context of this thesis the particular research methods were employed: semi-structured interview and review of electronic sources.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interview is one of the interview types which are frequently used by qualitative researches (Daymon & Holloway 2011). Having prepared in advance the topics for discussion, the researcher has a main structure of the interview, however, with opportunity to rephrase and change the order of the questions. Moreover, this type of interview allows asking complimentary questions which can result in in-depth responses. A great advantage of semi-structured interview is that in spite of systematic materials the tone of the interview can be set informal and conversational (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).

Regarding to the case company, the semi-structured interview is aimed at obtaining the needed data from the company's representative in order to utilize it for further situation analysis, targeting and positioning.

4.5.2 Review of electronic sources

According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, 97), electronic research refers to "research activities that rely on communication that is mediated through computers and other new technologies, such as mobile phones". Originally, this research was based on quantitative methodology, however, with the growing popularity of internet resources the qualitative research can be applied as well (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).

In this work two main categories of electronic research were implemented: research literature published online and existing Internet materials (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). The first category was used for building theoretical fundament for further research by utilizing online mate-

rials available in the university library and on the Internet. A great attention should be given to the second category.

The research based on the existing Internet materials takes the forms of *industry/market research and benchmarking*. The first part implies collecting and analysing the data for further application in the situation analysis of the "Tunneler" game, while the second part is aimed to answer one of the research questions: "What are the most effective marketing communication tools and media in the mobile applications world?" As it follows from the question, this method aims at studying the current trends and identifying the best marketing communication solutions which can be applied to the case company.

According to Kotler at al. (2012), benchmarking implies examining the best practice competitors in order to improve organization's performance. The main purpose of the benchmarking is to copy or advance the existing best practices, and as the result, improve quality or services (Kotler at al. 2012, 338). The benchmarking process contains the following steps:

1) Defining the processes or functions to benchmark.
2) Identifying the key performance variables to assess.
3) Identifying the best market players in the class.
4) Measuring their performance.
5) Developing the programmes and tasks to close the gap.
6) Applying the programme and monitoring the results (Kotler at al. 2012, 338).

Moreover, in today's challenging market environment it is impossible to successfully perform while being abstracted (Kotler et al. 2012). Consequently, application of the benchmarking in this research is vital for GUAVO.

4.6   Data collection and analysis

In this section the whole process of collection and analysis of the data will be discussed for each research method. Additionally, the data obtained during the research was both primary and secondary. As it was mentioned previously, the semi-structured in-depth interview is considered a primary source of data, while the review of electronic materials encompasses both types. This issue will be discussed more precisely in this topic.

4.6.1   Semi-structured interview

As it was mentioned before, interview implies questioning and discussing issues with the interviewee (Blaxter et al. 2010). However, there are many different contact methods which can be utilized by the researcher depending on suitability. Besides standard personal, face-to-face interview, the interviewer can contact the person through mail, telephone or online (Kotler et al. 2012).

Due to the geographical location of the case company, it was impossible to arrange personal meeting, thus, the Internet, particularly Skype conversation, served the best solution in this situation. Originally, the expected interviewee was the CEO of GUAVO company, however, due to his intense schedule the opportunity to answer the interview questions was delegated to another company representative, Ivan Moravský, who was the chief of HR department and had excellent understanding of the company's operations.

Consequently, a Skype meeting was arranged in advance, according to the interviewee's schedule. The discussion topics and major questions were formulated in a way that they profoundly answer the research questions; the list of the discussion topics with questions can be found in the Appendix 4. Because of the fact that the interview aimed at in-depth understanding of the company's current situation, targeting and positioning, it was very important to obtain elaborate and well-thought-out replies. Therefore, the list of topics for discussion was sent to the respondent in advance.

Eventually, the interview started on time, at 15.00 on 24 August, both parties had the conversation topics and were ready to discuss. Besides the purpose of gathering necessary data which can answer the research questions, creating a great degree of closeness and personal interaction between researcher and respondent is another important issue (Daymon & Holloway 2011). Thus, the secondary aim of the interview was to build rapport from the beginning of the conversation. The interviewee was informed about the approximate length of the interview and it was agreed that no audio/video recording would be used; therefore, the notes were taken during and after the interview. Besides, the purpose of the research and the use of data were clarified. The advantage of the semi-structured interview allowed the conversation flowing in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, and yet, covering all the topics of interest. Moreover, it allowed asking secondary questions which brought more in-depth insights. As a researcher,

not only did the author pay careful attention to the information, but also was following the non-verbal communication, emotions and the tone of voice.

The first topic of the discussion aimed at gathering information about the game, and thus, understanding the current situation. Besides, it was extremely important to know who and where their target customers were and how the app would be positioned. Thus, the primary focus of the research, as it was agreed, would be put on the US market. For better understanding the positioning question the company's representative was provided with the radar chart and graphically presented the desired positioning. A radar chart "plots the values of each category along a separate axis that starts in the center of the chart and ends on the outer ring" (Microsoft 2014). Therefore, this information built the fundament for designing the marketing communications.

In order to provide a real value for the case company, it is obvious that the marketing communication plan must respond to the needs and wants of the commissioning party. Hence, such issues as the company's objectives and marketing communications preferences were considered. Finally, the interview took exact amount on time as it was planned before – 1 hour. In order to confirm the accuracy of the answers, the gathered data was summarized by the researcher and approved by the respondent. As the nature of the semi-structured interview fulfilled its promise, the conversation brought some additional results which would not be obtained with other research method. Those deep insights found practical application in further planning, and therefore, will be covered in the next chapters. The overall impression from the interview was positive: the atmosphere was warm and friendly; the cheerful and enthusiastic attitude from the respondent was supported by jokes and willingness to explain some aspects in details, when such were needed.

Data analysis

The analysis process of the qualitative data is one of the most challenging parts of research. The research process can be inductive (top-down) and deductive (bottom-up). However, qualitative research can combine both of them (Daymon & Holloway 2011). In this research both inductive and deductive processes were used. Moreover, the inductive approach was implemented first, in order to find similar patterns and themes, and which was followed by the de-

ductive – developing propositions based on the obtained results and supported by theoretical findings.

After the interview the information was carefully revised. The answers on the initial questions were recorded and accompanied by the additional data gathered through secondary questions. The first step was to identify similarities in the answers and form them into patterns. The next step included search for interconnections between those patterns and based on that draw the final results.

4.6.2 Review of electronic sources

Before implementing the electronic research it was necessary to determine the subjects the researcher was intended to study. Since this research method took the forms of industry/market research and benchmarking, the following set of issues was considered:

- Current trends in the mobile gaming industry;
- Target users' psychographics and behaviour-graphics;
- Publicity of the best market players;
- Online presence of the best market players;
- Social media activities of the best market players.

Industry/market research

As it is seen from the first two issues to study, this part of research was very important for implementing the situation analysis of the case company. As mentioned previously, the situation analysis had to be presented in two forms: SWOT and target audience analysis. Since SWOT analysis incorporates both internal and external factors, an industry and market researches were the best supplements to the internal environment based on the results of the semi-structured interview. According to the data obtained during this research the particular trends were segregated into opportunities and threads.

Moreover, for an effective marketing communications plan it was necessary to study the target audience of the case product. The primary goal of such analysis was obtaining the basic information from the company about who the end users were. Based on that, a second mission was to examine the target audience in terms of psychographics and behaviour-graphics. This

research would greatly contribute to the situation analysis in the plan, and consequently, would be used for developing strategy and tactics.

Therefore, this type of electronic research required reviewing existing online materials in the forms of statistics, academic papers and industry reports. These documents were carefully explored on the topics presented previously, such as current trends in the mobile industry and the target users' traits psychographically and behaviour-graphically. Subsequently, the results were generated and used as a part of the plan.

Benchmarking

The design of the benchmarking process, as well as the data collection, was the most dynamic and changeable. Moreover, it was more time-consuming than the semi-structured interview, however, brought brilliant results and value to the research. The whole process went according to the existing framework as it was explained in the theoretical part (see page 50). Additionally, as it was already mentioned the focus of the benchmarking research was put on the US market.

Step 1: Defining the processes or functions to benchmark

First of all, it was necessary to define the processes to benchmark. Therefore, the preliminary research of the existing materials was implemented. Moreover, a number of different apps were studied in order to identify possible functions and activities which could be relevant to the research. As a result, it was decided to include the basic information about the apps, online presence in the form of websites, blogs and landing pages, media coverage and the activity in the social media. The final version of the benchmarking was organized into the table presented below.

TABLE 7. Benchmarking framework.

Name	Company	Release date	Global downloads	Revenue model	Website/Landing page activities	Media coverage	Facebook activity	Twitter activity	YouTube activity
X	Y								

The data to be collected and filled in the Table 7 were of different types. Thus, both primary and secondary data were used in the study. The following aspects describe the nature and purpose of each column in the Table 7:

- The name of the app and the company served as the identifiers of the researched items.
- The next three columns, release date, number of global downloads and the revenue model, played the role of the criteria for selecting the certain candidates to study (the selection of the benchmarking players will be explained later on). The sources of such data were considered as *secondary* due to the fact that the numbers were obtained previously.
- The rest of the columns were aimed at aggregating the *primary* data through observations and analysis of the available resources:

  a) The examination the company's online presence was done by observing the candidates' websites and landing pages. As it was agreed in the theoretical part (see page 35) websites implied the presence of the *company* while landing pages were considered as the *app's* micro-website presence. This investigation aimed at generating practical tactics, based on the competitors' actions, in terms of establishing the online presence through different media.

  b) The next topic of study was the publicity and PR of the candidates. The reason of choosing this parameter was based on theoretical statement made by Smith & Zook (2011) which implies that positive publicity fosters good relationships with the media. Therefore, the aim was to study the extent of media coverage for each candidate and identify its role in the app promotion.

  c) Based on the theory, the high effectiveness of social networks (O'Guinn et al. 2013), made it impossible to omit the social networking websites while identifying the best practices. Mentioned previously in the "Social media" topic, three the most popular networks in USA were chosen for benchmarking: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Statista 2014a).

Step 2: Identifying the key performance criteria and indicators

After the main processes to study were identified, the next necessary action was to assign the values for each column and develop the criteria. To start with, each column of the benchmarking table was considered on what type of data it required. This method combined both qualita-

tive and quantitative data, and therefore the whole table could be contingently divided into two parts. The first part encompassed the *factual, quantitative parameters (secondary data)* – name, company, release date, revenue model and global downloads, while the other part implied evaluation mostly based on *qualitative (and primary) data* – online presence, media coverage and social media activities.

Talking about the first, *quantitative* part of the table, two major Internet sources were utilized: AppAnnie (www.appannie.com) and Xyo (xyo.net). These were one of the best analytical companies which studied application environment in different app stores. Their services were used by the vast majority of developers and marketers. In order to obtain necessary data (release date, revenue model and global downloads) through these services, a person must have an active account. Fortunately, GUAVO provided the researcher with the access to their accounts; therefore, the data collection went smoothly. However, despite the availability of data, the total precision of the information was unfeasible, due to the privacy policy. This issue concerned the number of global downloads, because the real information was in possession of the developers, and the decision to reveal it should be made by them as well. Nevertheless, thanks to developed formulas used by AppAnnie and Xyo, it was possible to see the approximate number of downloads.

The second, *qualitative* part was more challenging and time consuming. As it was said before that the process was changeable, this part underwent a compelling number of changes in order to bring more valuable insights. The following subtopics present the criteria for each study issue.

Online presence

First of all, for the purpose of studying the online presence via website of the company and a separate landing page of the app a keywords search through Google was utilized. The data regarding the presence was recorded in the abbreviations, such as WS (website) and LP (landing page). In case the candidate had all or some of the above mentioned web pages, alongside the abbreviation the actual address was provided.

Publicity

First of all, it was necessary to determine *how to categorize* media coverage and *which crite-ria* to use. After careful consideration, it was decided to utilize the first 30 results in the Google search and examine them on the topic of publicity. This amount of results was chosen in order to restrain the limits of the research and yet to get overall picture of media coverage for each app. Besides, because of the Google ranking system, the most suitable results ap-peared in the first search pages. After the research was limited, the need for criteria emerged. Therefore, based on rough estimation the following criteria were created:

Low	Medium	High

| % | 20 | 40 | 60 | 80 | 100* |

*100% equals 30 Google search results
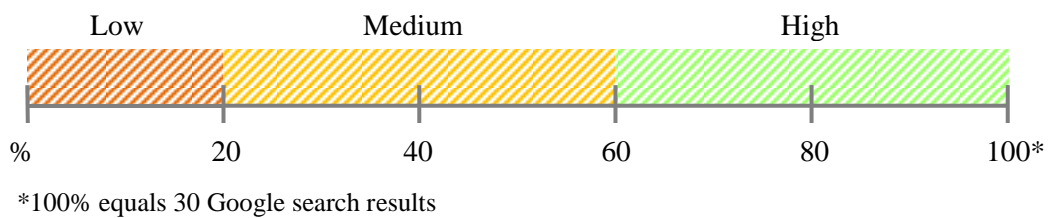
Extent of media coverage	**Criteria**
<u>Low</u> degree of media coverage	0-20% publicity of the sample, which is 0-6 arti-cles/reviews out of 30 Google results;
<u>Medium</u> degree of media coverage	21-60% of the sample, which is 7-18 out of 30
<u>High</u> degree of media coverage	61-100% of the sample, which is 19-30 out of 30

FIGURE 13. Criteria for media coverage.

Consequently, the proportion of the criteria corresponded to 1:2:2. Due to the fact that obtain-ing publicity was a challenging task for many small companies, the "medium" and "high" degrees were assigned the largest percentage. In order to relate a web page to publicity, the content of the web page was examined. As a result, only featured stories, articles and reviews were counted.

During the data collection concerning media coverage, some flaws of this research part ap-peared. Knowing that some applications were released one or more years ago, gathering the data about its publicity throughout the whole period from releasing till now would neither be valid nor valuable. Therefore, reconsideration and redesigning of this method was imple-mented. Based on the information provided by the GUAVO's representative regarding the assumed length of the launch period, which was equal to 2 months after the release (see page

66), the search was divided into 2 periods: from the release date until 2 months after the launch; after 2 months until current date (Figure 14).
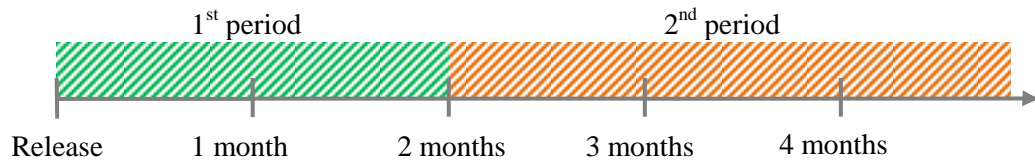

FIGURE 14. Division of the media coverage research by periods of time.

Therefore, the benchmarking table (Appendix 1) contained 2 values separated by "/" sign; where the first value represented the first 2 month of media coverage and the second – from 2 months until now. This change in the research design allowed understanding the company's PR activities in different stages of the app's lifecycle. Such complexity of this part required proper filtering in order to obtain the most appropriate search results. Therefore, specific time periods of publications, quotes and commands were used. The final inquiry had the following form:

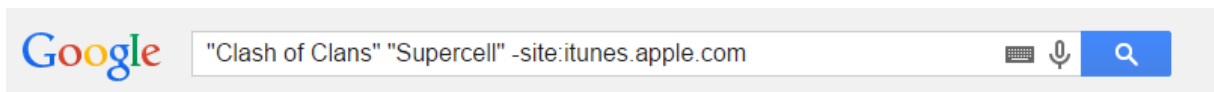**"app name" "company name" –site:itunes.apple.com**

FIGURE 15. The example of the search inquiry.

Social media

The last research topic was the analysis of the candidates' activity on the social media websites. The criteria to evaluate this issue included profile pages, posts, likes, and subscribers. Therefore, the final criteria were the following:

TABLE 8. Criteria for social media activity.

Value	Criteria
0	no page
1	page/ poor profile/ no entries
2	page/ few entries/ few subscribers/ updated very rarely
3	page/ entries are updated periodically (once per several months)/ poor connection to users
4	page/ good activity (more often)/ good connection to users/ good repost rate
5	profound page profile/ high frequency of activity/ great subscriber base/ excellent connection to users/ high repost rate

However, the presence in the social media could be done in two ways: creating a company's page and creating an app's page. Sometimes, the companies applied both ways in the app promotion; therefore, it was a subject to study. Consequently, both company's and app's profiles were examined and the corresponding value was assigned to each page. The data was presenting in the similar to the media coverage way: *"value of an app page/value of a company page"*. This principle was used for understanding the ways how the companies maintained social media activities and which instruments they utilized.

Step 3: Identifying the best market players

After the criteria were identified the benchmarking process moved to the next step. The sample of the examined apps was selected according to the specific conditions. Because of the fact that the US Apple app store was the focus of this research, only the apps ranking in that country were considered. As a result, the sample was selected based on the following factors:

1) The top grossing games in the "Action" category;
2) Thematically similar to the war topic;
3) Contained the word "Tank" in the name;
4) Young enough to be valid for research (in this case, not earlier than 2012);
5) One app per publisher (because one publisher can have the same marketing tactics for all its apps).

The selection process resulted in 20 high performance apps which consequently measured with the mentioned earlier criteria. The number of the candidates perfectly fitted into this benchmarking. There are two main reasons for that:

1) Some apps had a unique experience in succeeding in the Apple app store, the key factors of which would be almost untraceable. Therefore, in case of small size of the sample, the result would have a possibility not to provide any value to the research application.

2) 20 apps would be the right amount as it could lead to identifying similar patterns and finding the interconnections between them.

Finally, the last steps in the benchmarking process include the actual measurement of the performances, developing and applying the programmes, however, they will be described later in the thesis.

Data analysis

The data analysis process had the same principle as the interview analysis. First of all, the inductive approach was implemented, and then the data were analysed deductively. The analysis of the benchmarking started at the time when the apps were assessed according to the criteria. Later on, when all the fields in the table were filled out, the identification of the themes and patterns was implemented and the interconnections were found.

5   RESULTS

The analysed data of every method was carefully reconsidered and divided into distinctive topics. Consequently, the following chapter includes the results of both semi-structured interview and electronic research. Moreover, the obtained results and the theoretical part were used for generating the propositions which were incorporated into the marketing communications plan.

5.1   Semi-structured interview

The results of the semi-structured interview with the company's representative were partially mentioned in the sub-chapter "Introduction to the case company". The more promotion-specific answers will be presented here. The responses were gathered and analysed into several topics.

The product

As it was said previously in this work, the "Tunneler" game was related to the "action" category in the Apple app store and was going to focus on the US market. Regarding the revenue model, the company chose to make the game free with in-app purchases, or, as it was mentioned in the theoretical part, Free-to-Play (F2P) business model (see page 29). Based on the electronic research, both industry analysis and benchmarking showed that F2P model was the leader among other app business model and the vast majority of the studied apps used it (Ap-

pendix 1). As a result, strongly supported by theory and practice, the company made the right choice by applying F2P model.

Not only did the company choose the most effective business model, but also the release date. The "Tunneler" is expected to be launched during December 2014. As a well known fact, this month is characterized with Christmas holidays, which are celebrated in many countries. In December, the Apple app store activity increases significantly, especially in the US, which holds a leading position in number downloads during holidays among other countries (Statista 2012). Another factor influencing such high activity in December is the Apple's launch of the new iOS devices on a yearly basis which occurs in autumn (Apple Inc. 2014). Consequently, the new devises can serve as a Christmas gift, which increases the number of potential app users.

Additionally, the strong and weak points of the app were discussed. As a result, the major advantages and disadvantages were identified and presented in the Table 9.

TABLE 9. Strengths and weaknesses of the case product.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• User-friendly interface; • Retro game with advanced features.	• GUAVO is an unknown brand as a game developer.

Obviously, the company did not possess a large number of strengths and weaknesses; however, it was not claimed that GUAVO had only few. In fact, the product was in the process of development; therefore, no real records of its performance existed, and consequently it was too early to identify actual internal factors. Nevertheless, the general evaluation of the product's and the company's internal environment was done.

Regarding the strengths, first of all, the game had simple and understandable interface which many games lack nowadays. As it follows from the theory of game industry, the usability of a product plays a big role in the games' success (Miller 2003). According to the respondent, the game was easy to learn and fast to play. Moreover, based on the previous success of the original game, this game possessed more advanced features. These features were presented more profoundly in the "Introduction to the case product" section.

However, regardless how great the app was, the main weakness of the "Tunneler" was the fact that the company was not well known as a game developer. Linking this aspect to the results of benchmarking, the majority of the candidates were the big market players; therefore, the brand recognition was one of the most significant factors of success. Therefore, it could be a challenge for GUAVO to establish a good brand.

Targeting and positioning

In order to develop proper marketing communications, the target market should be identified. In case of GUAVO, the "Tunneler" is aimed at the users of the age *20-35 years old*. More-over, due to the nature of the "Tunneler" the most expected users are the males. Such prefer-ence was made based on the years when the original game was popular. Additionally, among the types of gamers presented in the theory the particular focus would be given to *casual gam-ers.* According to the theory, the age determines the generation which is influenced by the attributes of that period – the music, films, politics etc (Kotler 2012). Therefore, this age range corresponds to the "Generation Y" concept, and consequently, must be studied more precisely. The examination of this target market will be presented in further results of the indus-try/market research.

As far as the positioning is concerned, the Figure 16 represents the perceptual map of the "Tunneler" based on the GUAVO's point of view.
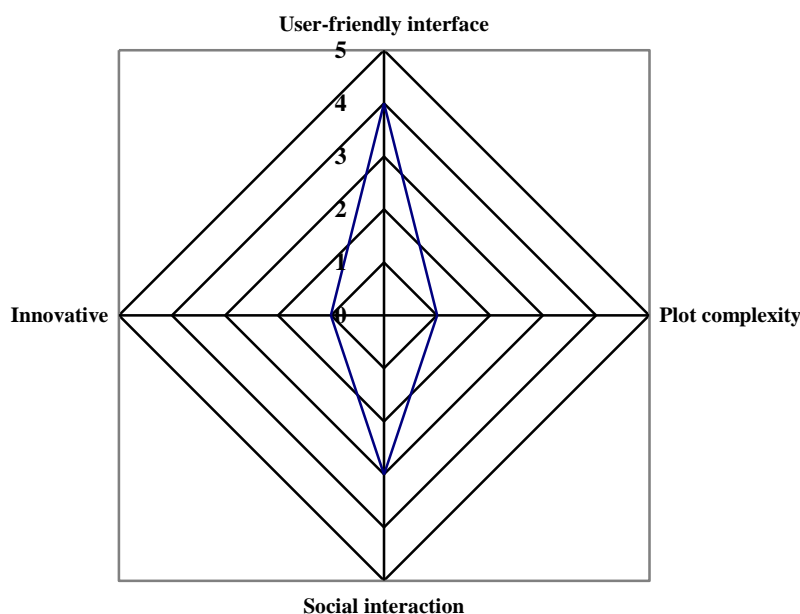

FIGURE 16. Positioning map of the "Tunneler"

The Figure 16 took quite an unusual for the positioning map form. Instead of "x" and "y" axes, a radar chart was applied. Consequently, the 4 main characteristics were taken into consideration: User-friendliness of the interface, Plot complexity, Social interaction and Innovative nature of the product. All the studied characteristics defined how the company wanted to position itself in the minds of the end users. As a result, the following statement was developed: *a retro game with simple, easy to play design, uncomplicated but catchy plot which brings people together.* Therefore, the company clearly emphasizes its differentiation on the market as *a retro game* which is supported by advanced features (design and plot) and giving a promise to connect people.

It is noticeable that the above mentioned positioning statement has significant similarities with the strengths of the product presented earlier. Indeed, the strong points of the "Tunneler" created a basis for positioning, while the retro nature makes the game stand out from the other market players. As the continuation of this chain, the positioning statement built a fundament for further message development alongside the storytelling.

Message

According to the theory, the message is used in the forms of advertising, publicity releases, promotions, etc. Therefore, the message content must be dictated by the brand's positioning strategy (Shimp 2007). The characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph will be utilized in the message creation. However, despite the major meaning of the message, each message should be slightly adjusted to each audience. In case of the "Tunneler", the message is formulated in two ways: message based on features and promises and the story behind the app.
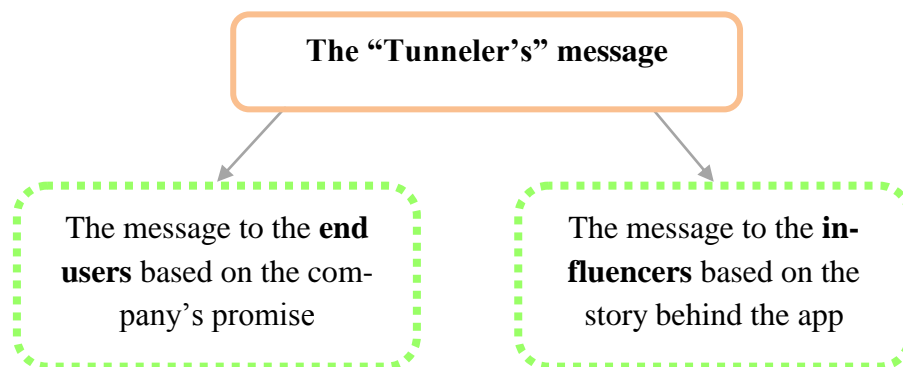
The "Tunneler's" message

The message to the **end users** based on the company's promise

The message to the **influencers** based on the story behind the app

FIGURE 17. Division of the "Tunneler's" message.

As it is seen from the Figure 17, the message is aimed at two different audiences: end users and the influencers. Based on the discussion, the first type of message is built upon the promises and the attributes of the game, while the storytelling is based on the app creation. The respondent expressed the story in the following way: *"With emerging popularity of mobile devices, people are still missing things which were present in their early ages when the PC software was one of the few options to play the games. Since many people have forgotten the "Tunneler" the developers, in order to express the honour to the game, gave it a second life."* This story is supported by the promise the company makes: *"Fun, easy going, great value for leisure time."*

Additionally, knowing the positioning and the features of the product the message to the end users has to be designed. For that purpose, the theory presented in the "Message" section will be incorporated with the responses of the GUAVO's representative. Consequently, this information will greatly contribute to the message strategy which will be explained in the further marketing communications plan.

Marketing communications

This is one of the most important issues discussed in the interview which brought significant results. As it follows from the theory, a successful plan should be strongly supported by well-defined objectives. The GUAVO's representative highlighted the following goals:

1) Reach top 10 apps in the app store in category of action games within 1 year.

2) Get 10 000 downloads in 2 months after release.

3) To get 300 reviews in the app store with average rate 4 in 2 months after release.

It is necessary to mention that the objectives were set according to the SMART acronym – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related (Fill 2009, 335). When looking carefully at the objectives, it is easy to see the interconnection between them: the high number of the reviews, positive average rate and big volume of downloads move the app higher in the Apple app store ranks; therefore, the first objective can be achieved. This principle is strongly supported by the Apple app store optimization which was presented in the theoretical part (Jesse 2014). As the result the first objective was assigned a first priority.

As for the promotional activities, the company did not follow any sufficient marketing communications plan; therefore there was a strong need for that. However, some actions were undertaken with the previous products.

- First of all, the company had its own website with the description of all their products.

- Secondly, GUAVO possessed the company's page on social media websites, particularly, Facebook and Twitter.

- The last but not the least, the company developed a PR programme.

By closer examination of the company's previous experience with the first apps, a particular aspect aroused interest – PR. First of all, the company pursued PR activities in order to get the publicity and promote the app to the users. For that reason the databases of the influencers such as tech journalists, bloggers and reviewers were created with more than *one thousand contacts.* This is a compelling number of data which can be used for promoting the game. As it was said in the theory, the databases are the heart of the direct marketing (Pelsmacker et al. 2013), therefore there is a great opportunity for the company to apply the direct marketing targeting at the influencers in order to generate publicity. The company used this approach for promoting previous apps with special service MailChimp that enabled tracking the mass mailing; however, unlike the results of the benchmarking say, such activities were implemented after the apps' launch. Therefore, the company, based on the previous experience, was aiming at advancing their marketing communications efforts.

Hence, there was a need to identify the most favourable for the company techniques. For this game GUAVO wanted to start the PR activities before the launch. And according to them, the best time to start reaching the influencers was 2-3 months *before* the release in order to generate publicity within a short period of time *after* the launch, which was also defined by them as *2 months.* This fact was taken into consideration when doing the benchmarking research and developing a marketing communications plan.

Among other preferences the company highlighted the importance of social media marketing and online advertising. However, it was surprisingly accepted by the GUAVO's representative the possibility to use mobile advertising as one of the promotional tools, after he was asked about the company's opinion about it. As a result, the company agreed that the mobile marketing could be very effective for promoting the game.

Additional results

Additionally, the company was asked to set the budget constrains for the marketing communications campaigns in percentage; however the response met difficulties due to particular complications in the game development process. Therefore, no specific constrains were mentioned, though it was preferable to apply low cost solutions.

5.2   Review of electronic sources

5.2.1   Mobile gaming industry research

As it was previously stated, the gaming industry research was aimed at obtaining information which would contribute to the part of the situation analysis - SWOT. The main issues were to study the current trends which occurred on the market and what kind of impact they could make. Consequently the results of the research would help to identify all opportunities and threats.

The results of the industry research have been partially presented in the earlier chapter "Background information for the research". Nevertheless the research needed to embrace all the aspects which could be used in the plan. Therefore, the following insights were discovered.

First and foremost, the global gaming market for the past decade has experienced significant changes. Previously, the whole market was based on the games which could be played mainly through TV screen or PC; however, the technological progress provided users with more alternatives of playing games – mobile phones, tablets etc. Starting with the games which could be installed through decentralized sources, the breakthrough in mobile gaming industry was caused by emergence of unified digital distribution platforms, or the app stores. Launched in 2008 the Apple app store provided the "home" for many different applications (Apple Inc. 2008). This fact triggered the changes in the gaming industry (Figure 18).
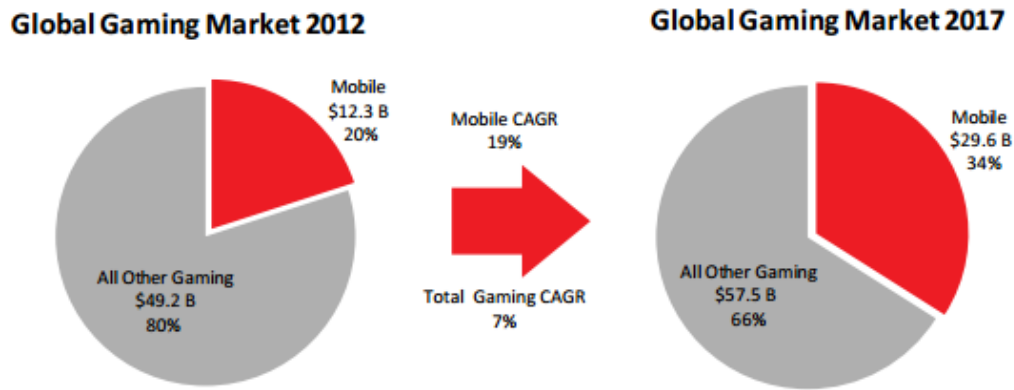
FIGURE 18. Changes in the global gaming market (Redwood Capital 2013).

Consequently, due to fast appearance of such app stores the share of mobile games in the global gaming market is increasing significantly every year. Based on the statistics of 2012, the mobile market was 1/5 of the global gaming market, and its share is predicted to reach 34% (Redwood Capital 2013). The size of the US market is determined by the number of mobile gamers which in 2012 equalled more than 100 million users (Newzoo 2012).

Narrowing this research to the Apple app store, the games category in the app store holds the leading position among all other categories with more than 20% share. Alongside with the average app submission rate which was 12,428 games per month during summer 2014, the game market in the Apple app store can be considered as highly competitive (Pocketgamer 2014). The results of benchmarking showed a compelling number of big market players took the top positions in the app store ranks. This phenomenon is explained by the high acquisition of smaller developers by large gaming companies such as Electronic Arts (Redwood Capital 2013).

Besides the big picture of the mobile games in the Apple app store, nowadays mobile world is undergoing particular trends. These trends are influencing all the game developers; and thus, have to be considered. Consequently, the tendencies were aggregated into four separated topics which are depicted below.
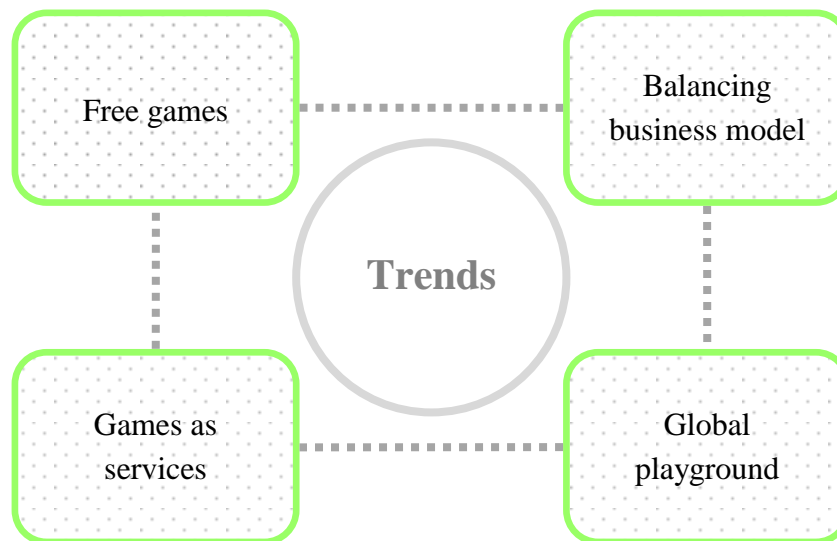
FIGURE 19. Current trends in the mobile gaming industry (adapted from Newzoo 2013).

- **Free games.** This trend can be also called "Free-to-Play" games (F2P). The definition of such model was presented in the theoretical part (see page 29). Among other business models, F2P possesses the biggest share in the US mobile game market with 72% (Newzoo 2013). Moreover, it increases the power of in-app purchases; therefore, 90% of the revenues in the Apple app store come from this particular model. Such share of mobile games using F2P created a need for new games to adapt their business models in order to survive in the highly competitive market. From the gamer's psychology perspective, providing a free game with in-app purchases gives a higher chance to involve and retain the users (Intel 2014). Indeed, when the users make some achievements in a game, the decision to spend $0,99 on advancing some features is made faster.

- **Games as services.** Based on the results of the free games trend, the involvement of the users in a game became a high priority task for many game publishers (Newzoo 2013). Therefore, after a user downloads a game the process of involvement does not stop. In fact, this is a beginning for further development of the app which will add more and more value to the game in order to retain the existing users.

- **Balancing business model.** Since the current trend defined games as services, the need to balance both revenues and value of the products emerged (Newzoo 2013). This phenomenon leaves room for creativity of the companies. The balance between delivering value to the users and getting revenues is an important task for the game developers; however the means to reach this balance are unlimited.

- **Global playground.** Due to innovations of technologies and emergence of mobile distribution platforms, such as Apple app store the reach to the users became global. Nowadays a company can determine and easily launch the product to the countries of its choice. Therefore, the previously hard to penetrate countries became more reachable (Casual Games Association 2013). As a result, the mobile gaming market became a global playground for millions of users.

The mobile gaming industry research reached its initial goal which was set previously – to study the current trends in the mobile games market. As a result the four main tendencies were identified: growing share and significance of free mobile games with in-app purchases; transformation of the games' nature towards building and delivering value to the end users; appearance of the art of balancing value and profits; and finally, expending global mobile games market and becoming an international playing arena. The result of this research constitutes the situation analysis of the plan.

5.2.2 Target market research

The next results are generated from the target market research. As an initial purpose of this research, the psychographic and behaviour-graphic patterns of the target audience, based on the GUAVO's response, had to be examined. The following figure incorporates the basic target users' characteristics.

GENERATION Y

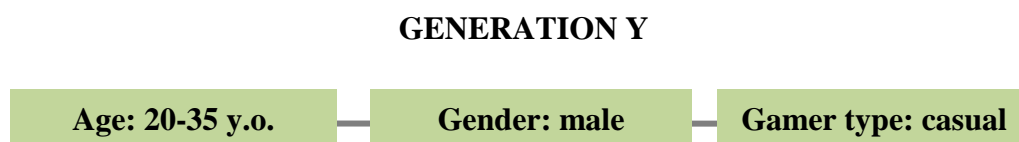| Age: 20-35 y.o. | — | Gender: male | — | Gamer type: casual |

FIGURE 20. Characteristics of the target users based on the results of semi-structured interview.

Consequently, the Figure 20 shows that the target users fall into the category of the Generation Y. This fact served a starting point for further research. First of all, the Generation Y belongs to the individuals born between 1980's and early 1990's. Being a largest consumer group in the US, the Generation Y, or "Millennials", influence many online businesses (Valentine & Powers 2013). In order to understand this particular segment, the following table presents all the necessary issues regarding this target group.

TABLE 10. Information on the target users (Nielsen 2014, Valentine & Powers 2013, Lammiman & Syrett 2004, Chehimi et al. 2006).

Basic characteristics	Psychographics	Behaviour
Well-educated Open to change Think differently Individualistic Technologically savvy	Heavy users of smartphones and other devices Watch less TV Online shopping Value of entertainment Casual gamers	Not brand-loyal Play games in leisure time

To start with the basic characteristics which determine the Generation Y, the target group was greatly influenced by the new technologies and the Internet. Therefore, this cohort is being familiarized with technologies from early ages and can be considered technologically savvy. Besides, they are well-educated, individualistic, more ready to face the risks and able to think differently (Lammiman & Syrett 2004).

Looking at the psychographics of the group, it is possible to mention major differences from the previous generation. First of all, the representatives of this group watch the TV less, and thus, are not influenced by the traditional media. This fact makes the companies to reconsider their marketing efforts and go towards the word-of-mouth techniques (Valentine & Powers 2013). Secondly, the preferences and interests of the cohort shape around new technologies. According to Nielsen Segmentation (2014), so-called "You & I Tunes", "Generation WiFi" and "New Technorati" segments present the following traits: high extent of using hi-tech devices (particularly smart phones and tablets), online shopping and entertainment as a value.

The popularity of online shopping among the Generation Y is based on their sufficient purchasing power and technological expertise.

The behaviour patterns of this target group do not possess strong brand loyalty. They tend to switch the brands easily and fast (Valentine & Powers 2013), therefore, for the companies it is important to retain their interest by engaging them with a product. Additionally, based on the fact that the target audience is also related to the casual gamers, the following characteristics and behaviour are: buying popular or recommended games, playing for short sessions, preference for having relaxed atmosphere, being attracted to simple interface and playing games in their leisure time (Chehimi et al. 2006).

As the result, the most important characteristics of the target audience were studied and distinguished by psychographics and behaviour patterns. The information obtained during this research will contribute to the formation of the final marketing communications plan.

5.2.3   Benchmarking

The results of the benchmarking research are profoundly described in this sub-section. As it was mentioned previously, the research aimed at identification of the best practices in the Apple app store through examination of the topics such as publicity and PR, online presence and social media activities of the best market players. As a result, the desired outcomes of the research were obtained and divided into the topics.

Online presence through website and landing page

The first topic to present was the online presence of the candidates thought website and landing page. Consequently, 20 apps were studied and the results were drawn from both quantitative and qualitative data. The following diagram shows the percentage of different types of online presence.
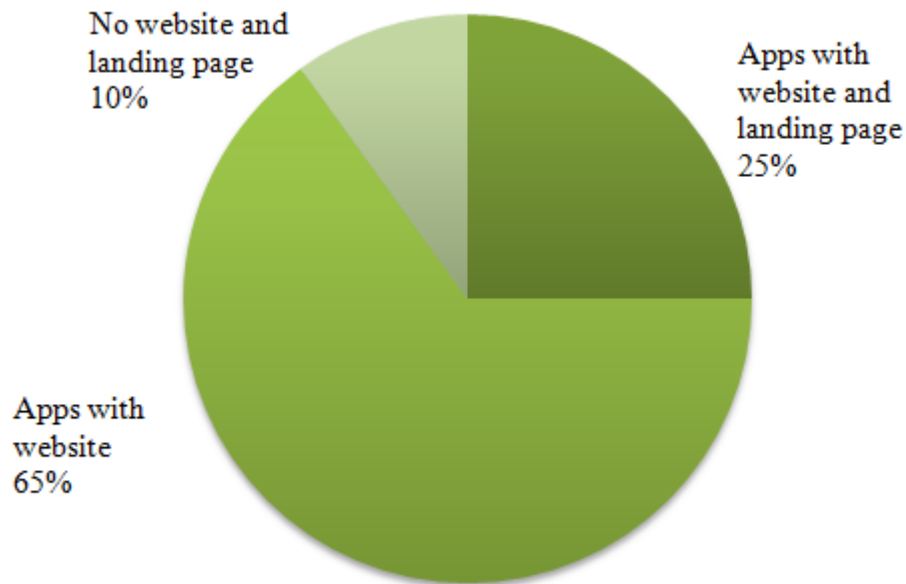
FIGURE 21. Percentage of the app's and company's online presence categories.
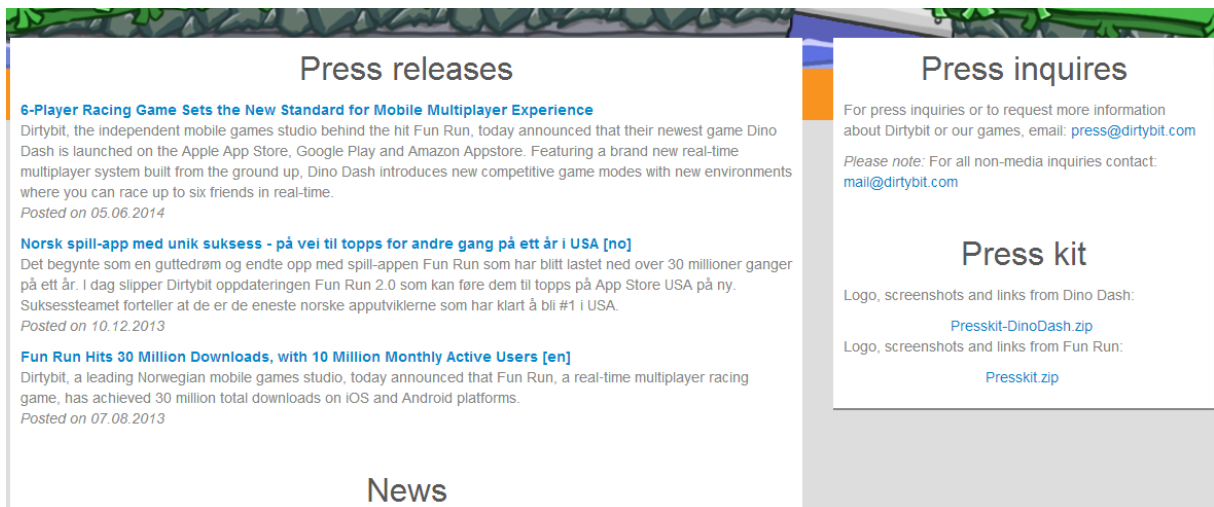
As it is seen from the Figure 21, the majority (90%) of the companies established their presence online with the purpose to promote their products. However, only few apps (25%) had their own landing page. The interrelation between having the company's website and the app's landing page can be explained by the functionality of the major website. The pattern which was identified by reviewing the company's and the app's websites implied that the *high-profile websites (including company's description, blog, products section, forums, FAQ, feedbacks, careers etc.) have no need in establishing landing page for each app*.

Consequently, the above mentioned pattern tells us that the functionality of the company's website influences the choice of other online presence tools. However, despite this pattern, some exceptions take place. For instance, few of the companies had neither website nor landing page, and still, showed remarkable performance. This issue is very difficult to explain, therefore, it might be a good subject for further research.

Relating this part of benchmarking results to the case company, since GUAVO is a small start up with few products, two possibilities exist: to develop the main website to the level of the best players or to create a separate profound landing page for the game. The decision on this aspect will be described in the actual marketing communications plan.

PR and publicity

The examination of companies' PR activities gave some insightful results. First of all*, most of the web pages contained the press related information* available for reviewers, bloggers and other influential people. In order to provide audience with relevant and full information, the following press content was utilized: *press releases, contacts, description and press kit* (including audio-video files, logos, screenshots etc.) (Figure 22). Consequently, it is one of the effective methods to spread information for being publicized.

FIGURE 22. Example of press-related information on the website.

Besides, the research showed the connection between the extent of media coverage and the well-being of the company. Based on the results of the industry research presented earlier, the app store market is mainly ruled by the big game companies, such as Electronic Arts, Game Insight, Chillingo, Wargaming, EGG, GLU, Mobage (Newzoo 2013), which acquire a successful smaller developers. Almost a half of the studied candidates were the large market players, as a result they had *more media coverage than the small companies*. It is easily explained by well-established company's brand triggering the reaction from media, regarding the new products. Nevertheless, some exceptional cases (e.g. "Don't touch the spikes" app) occurred: small players with high publicity.

Another intention of the research was to examine the interconnection between the level of publicity *before* and *after* 2 months of the release. In order to simplify the results the following graph is suggested.

Media coverage within 2 months   Media coverage after 2 months
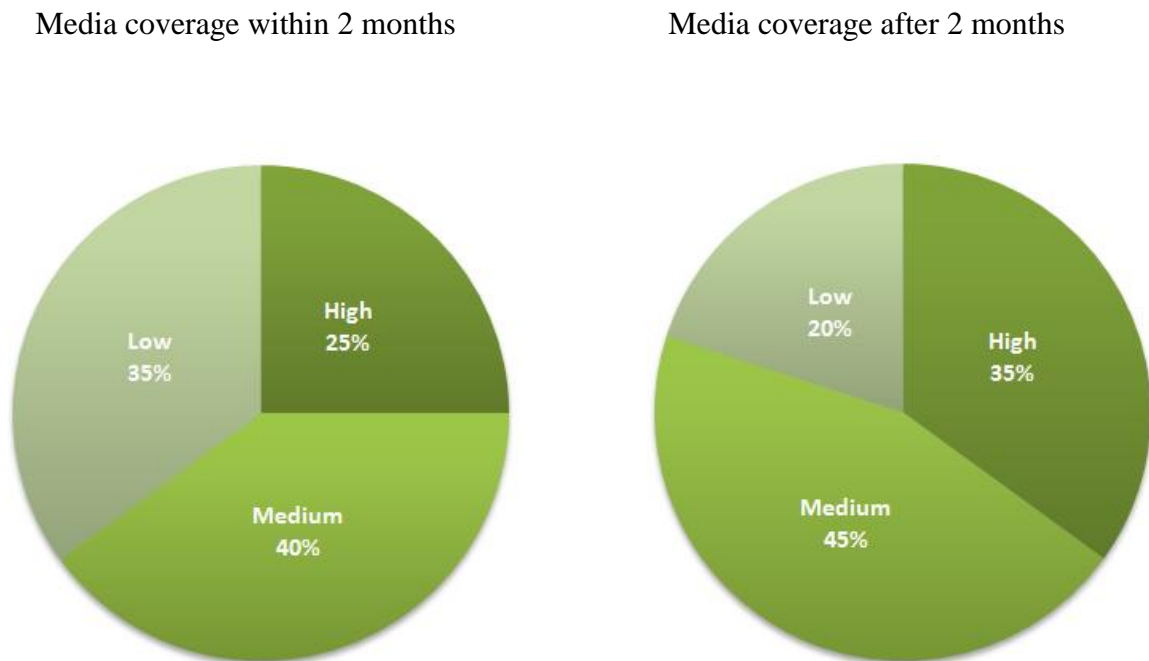
FIGURE 23. Percentages of each media coverage criteria.

As the research shows, the noticeable changes occur after 2-month period. The share of low extent of media coverage shrinks (from 35% to 20%), while the medium and high extents are expanding. The explanation of such phenomenon is difficult to generate because of the limitations of the sources; however, it can be assumed that: a) the companies take necessary actions towards the PR promotion *not* in advance; b) PR efforts create a cumulative effect when the *media coverage intensifies with time*. Nevertheless, the comparison between two periods of time shows that in both cases, the companies obtained the substantial amount of publicity. This finding proves *the importance of public relations for a company* (Smith & Zook 2011), and moreover, highlights *the significance of acquiring publicity in the early stages of the app's life cycle*.

The last but not the least finding in the benchmarking research concentrated around the exact web pages that serve as the influencers. The research showed that the studied apps were repeatedly featured via the same websites. Therefore, for practical reasons, the most mentioned

websites were arranged into the table, providing the basic information about them (Appendix 2).

The difficulty of this part of the research was explained by inability to find out the "back-stage" activities towards the influencers. Nonetheless, the results can be practically applied to the case product. Strongly relying on both theoretical and empirical information, the company can implement the PR campaign aiming at the influencers. Theoretically speaking, an integrated public relations will imply collaboration of influencer marketing, direct marketing (based on database marketing) (Pelsmacker et al. 2013), and PR tools such as press kits and website (Strauss & Frost 2014). Based on the research results, the company can carefully design the approach and start its PR activities *in advance* in order to get the publicity in the shortest period after launch. This issue will be discussed in details in the planning section.

Social networks

The last intended topic for the benchmarking research was related to the social networks and its role in the companies' marketing communications. The gathered data was recalculated and based on that the results were drawn. Therefore, in order to understand how the companies used social media and which ones were the most common, it is suggested to have a look at the Figure 24.
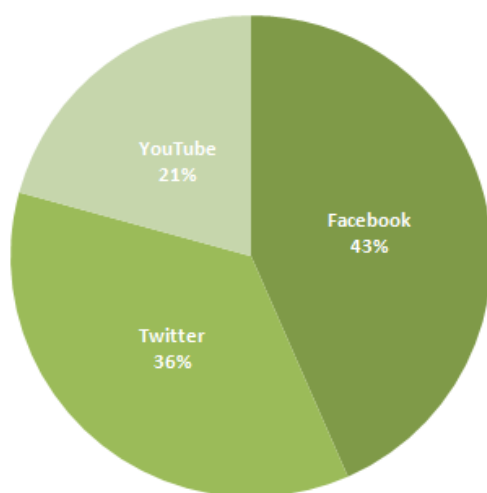
Average activity

	App's page	Company's page
Facebook	3.35	3.25
Twitter	2.4	3.05
YouTube	0.85	2.3

FIGURE 24. Activity on social networking websites.

Consequently, the research on social media showed the extent of utilization of each website. As it is seen from the Figure 24, *Facebook is the number one network* used by the companies (43%), and it is followed by Twitter (36%) and YouTube (21%) correspondently. This information supports the statement of the most popular social media in US (Statista 2014).

Besides, as it was mentioned before, both company's and the app's accounts in the social networks were studied. Thus, the average activity based on the previously set criteria (0-5) was calculated for each website and presented in the Figure 24. As a result, *the activity of the company's social media page is higher than the one of the app's page*. This generalization claims the significance of building the company's brand via social networks; however, some exceptions occurred: the app's page activity was higher than the company's.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of the examined apps demonstrated remarkable performance in the social networks. Some of the websites were used more than the others; however, overall social activity brought positive outcomes. It again proved the theory of powerfulness of social media as a great word-of-mouth medium (O'Guinn et. al. 2013). The insights made from the research results find a practical application to the case company in a form of social media marketing, and particularly, sales promotion via the networks. This aspect will be precisely explained in the plan.

Additional results

The additional results of benchmarking were generated from the qualitative data which could not be assigned a quantitative value, however, was very important for the research. These qualitative data were collected from the content of the blogs, social media posts, articles and personal observation.

The candidate's activity on the social media was aimed at the connection with the audiences. Therefore, the messages, such as questions to the users, news and announces, contests, polls, extracts from the reviews and reposts of the app related tweets, were sent. A particular attention was given to the contests, as it was one of the most successful and engaging experience ever used through social media (e.g. Clash of Clans, Fun Run). Linking this information with the theory, contests relate to the sales promotion tool in the marketing communications mix

and assist in engaging customer with the brand for the first time by enabling development of interactive functionality (Fill 2009).

Regarding personal experience, some games (e.g. Clash of Clans) made a great use of the mobile advertising. This tool was very difficult to identify in the promotional activities of the games, however, it might be a very powerful technique which assists in reaching the company's objective. As it was mentioned in the results of the interview, this type of advertising was favourably accepted by the company and therefore, has a great chance to be applied in the plan. Thus, to make the actions more specific, the preliminary list of the mobile marketing platforms were generated and used in the planning process (Appendix 3).

Another finding proves the traditional assumptions wrong. The original point of view on the quality was dependent on the price. Therefore, the higher the quality was, the higher the price was set on the product. However, according to the benchmarking results, the Free-to-Play model was the most used among successful games. This finding was strongly supported by the industry research made previously (see page 68). In fact, as it was mentioned before, the majority of the game developers choose exactly this model which establish the new statement: *"price is not equal to quality"*

Besides, as it could be seen in the benchmarking table, one candidate did not belong to the targeted sample, however, its idea was based on the same retro game as my case product. The candidate had the same name of the app with the same plot. At first, this app was met with alertness, however, the results of the benchmarking of this game showed that the company neither pursued any marketing programme, nor stood out by the app's performance. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that for now the GUAVO's "Tunneler" possesses a competitive advantage, though, some actions should be taken.

Limitations of the research

Although the results aimed to be as precise as possible, the research was limited to some extent. Due to the privacy rights, not many companies presented their performance statistics and the marketing efforts. Therefore, the public would never know what range of tools the company utilized, for instance, how they planned their PR campaign, how they reached the influ-

encers and so on. Some of the studied apps showed remarkable performance, though no trace-able tactics they used were identified.

6 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

This part of the thesis contains the practical application of both theory and research results to the case company. As it was clarified in the "Theory and practice synergy" section, the plan had to be developed based on the SOSTAC model, however, the first two elements – Situation and Objectives have been already discussed in the research results. Therefore, in order to avoid repetition, the author shortly presents the summarized information on this issue.

SWOT analysis incorporated both internal and external factors. To bring the results together the following table was created:

TABLE 11. SWOT of the case company.

S	W
• Simple and user-friendly interface; • Retro game with advanced features.	• The company is unknown as a game developer.
O	T
• Growing importance of F2P model; • Increasing share of the global mobile gaming market; • Balancing business model.	• Fast moving industry: emergence of new competitors.

The *internal* elements of the SWOT analysis are based on the GUAVO's representative's response. The strengths of the game are concentrated around its features and as a result, the main strong points are the simple and user-friendly interface, and advanced remake of the old PC game. Regarding the weak points of the "Tunneler", so far, the main obstacle is the lack of well-established brand name of the GUAVO in the game industry. This disadvantage can be eliminated with great performance of the game and proper marketing strategies.

The *external* factors have already been explored in the mobile gaming industry research. Therefore, the results are applied for the current evaluation of the company's opportunities and threats. Growing popularity of F2P games, expanding global mobile games market and

possibility to balance business models encourage companies to use their imagination in designing marketing communication. GUAVO can exploit these opportunities by applying the best existing practices and bringing fresh ideas, while still facing the main threat – entrance of the new market players.

Additionally, in order to summarize the target market analysis presented previously, the company needs to keep in mind that the traditional marketing communication cannot be applied on the target cohort; therefore, new approaches must be used. As a result the whole strategy has to be centred around 20-35 years old males, casual gamers, particularly from the US. The obtained information about the generation traits gives the clues for designing proper marketing communications.

Finally, the linking back to the theory, the clearly defined objectives must build an effective marketing communications plan and assist strategies and tactics (Chaffey 2011). Due to the fact that the focus of this thesis is on e-marketing communications, the previously mentioned 5S concept (*Sell, Serve, Speak, Save, Sizzle*) is to be applied. The previously formulated objective takes the following form: "*Reach top 10 apps in the app store in the category of action games within 1 year*." This statement is supported by the aim to increase sales, therefore, it relates to the "Sell" element of the 5S.

Besides, the objective corresponds to the SMART terminology. It is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related (Fill 2009, 335). The objective plays the central role in the whole marketing communications plan; thus, the further propositions will be based on that objective.

6.1   Strategies

6.1.1   Positioning strategy

The consistency of the positioning strategy with the target audience and its role in successful marketing performance was described in the theoretical part of the thesis. Therefore, based on the chosen target, the corresponding positioning will be developed. As it is already known from the target audience analysis, the users belong to the Generation Y, which implies the fact that the traditional tools and media are unlikely to be efficient.

Linking back to theory, Fill (2009) presents the 3P positioning model which consists of Push, Pull and Profile positioning strategies. The optimal variant for the case company is the Pull

strategy. This means that the users will be motivated to enquire and request the product through the channel network (Fill 2009). The reason of selecting this strategy lies in the characteristics of the target users: the unobtrusive messages, tools and media are more likely to attract the targets rather than pushing the product to them.

Additionally, the previously formulated positioning statement, "*a retro game with simple, easy to play design, uncomplicated but catchy plot which brings people together*", emphasises the product attributes and benefits which are the one of the positioning strategies suggested by Pelsmacker et al. (2013). Positioning and message are tightly bound, thus, positioning strategy has a great impact on the message which has to be designed according to the target group.

6.1.2 Message strategy

The content of the message follows from the positioning statement. However, long messages are not effective; therefore, the text of the message should be carefully planned and formulated. As it was mentioned in the theory, the message can be categorized into several strategies: cognitive, affective and conative (Clow & Baack 2007). In this thesis, all three strategies will be applied for different purposes.

First of all, it is important to point out that the message of the case product will be addressed to the totally different types of target audience: influencers and end users (see page 64). As it was mentioned earlier, influencers are the one of the best intermediaries in word-of-mouth. Knowing the fact that the end target users belong to the Y generation and the word-of-mouth is a key to approach them, the influencers play a significant role in the app promotion. As a result there are two groups of the message receivers which need to have separate approaches. The first group, influencers, has to receive personalized messages, while the end user – impersonal. The personalized approach, in this case, provides the product with a better chance to get publicity.

Starting with the *personalized* approach, it is necessary to identify the type of the message strategy to be applied. The initial purpose of addressing the message to the influencers is to generate positive publicity; therefore, the material to work with has to be interesting, catchy and noteworthy. Consequently, the message strategy has to provide influencers not only with information about product's attributes and features, but also with the *story* behind the game. Retrieving the results of the interview, the story is formulated in the following way: "*With*

emerging popularity of mobile devices, people are still missing things which were present in their early ages when the PC software was one of the few options to play the games. Since many people have forgotten the "Tunneler" the developers, in order to express the honour to the game, gave it a second life." It is obvious that the final copy of the personalized message is to be done by a professional copywriter; however, this statement has the intended meaning. Since the message carries the informational purpose, by the definition presented in the theory (see page 5), the *cognitive* message strategy has to be applied.

The second group of the receivers are the final users of the "Tunneler". The message to this audience has to be transported *impersonally,* and yet, in accordance with the target users' characteristics. Looking ahead the marketing communication plan, some of the chosen marketing communication tools are mobile advertising and sales promotions. In order to keep the idea of the message strategy comprehensible, the following table is presented.

TABLE 12. Message strategies for each marketing communication tool.

	Public relations	Mobile advertising	Sales promotions
Media	Influencers' blogs, websites	Mobile advertising services	Social networks, website
Type of message strategy	Cognitive	Cognitive + Affective	Conative

Mobile advertising as well as the sales promotions are aimed at the end users. Therefore, these are impersonal ways to deliver the message. For mobile advertising both *cognitive* and *affective* strategies have to be implemented. The reason for that is the type of the product. As it follows from the target market and industry research, dealing with game applications requires to have an interesting and catchy plot; therefore, in order to demonstrate the users the "Tunneler" game, the informative nature of the message should be employed. This message has to be presented in the form of animated pictures/video which represents the game in use, accompanied by text. However, due to a retro theme of the game, the *affective* strategy is needed. Taking into consideration the target audience, the *resonance* advertising (Clow & Baack 2007) will be a part of the whole message. In this case, it takes a form of 8-bit music accompaniment and the slogan: "*Old things you enjoyed are now in your pocket*". Thus, the message

for mobile advertising expresses the features of the app and the distinguishable advantage by invoking nostalgic feelings.

Finally, the third type of the message strategy – *conative*, has to be employed in the sales promotions tool. As it follows from the theory, the conative strategy is aimed at creating a quick response from the customers; it is used to support promotional activities such as coupons, discounts, contests etc., and create urge to immediate action (Clow & Baack 2007). Based on the research results, the online promotions are very effective tool; consequently, applying conative strategy by sending the messages regarding new promotions is an appropriate choice for the case company.

To sum up the above mentioned idea, all three message strategies will have influence on the users' engagement with the product promotion. While cognitive strategy creates awareness and knowledge base about the product, the affective strategy will make people like and desire the product, and the conative strategy will stimulate the final action – purchase.

6.1.3 Stages, integration and tools

As suggested by Smith and Zook (2011), the marketing communication strategy should include STOP&SIT acronym. However, the first aspects of STOP acronym (segmentation, targeting, objectives and positioning) have been already discussed; therefore, a particular attention will be given to the SIT (stages, integration and tools).

Stages

The promotion of the app is a multi-structured process which includes various messages, media and tools. In order to efficiently apply the marketing communication strategy, the process should be divided into several stages (Smith & Zook 2011). The author's proposition regarding the sequence of stages is based on the previously mentioned phasing plan where the stages are *tease → reveal → extend* (Pelsmacker et al. 2013). Taking into consideration the fact that the case product is the mobile application, the suggested name for the stages are *pre-launch → launch → post-launch* phases (Figure 25).
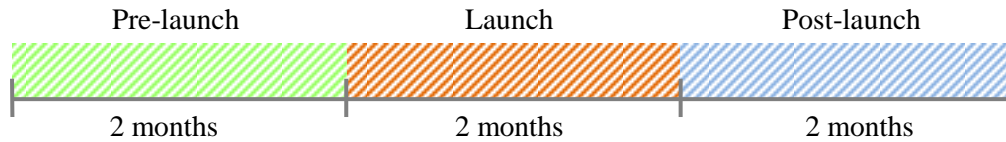
FIGURE 25. Stages in the marketing communication strategy.

Therefore, the first stage lasts until the actual release of the app to the mass users, the next stage, as it was clarified by the case company, are the first 2 months after launch, and finally, the third stage is the period after those 2 months. Each stage will be characterised by the mix of tools, media and messages which will be presented further.

Tools and integration

Due to the fact that the marketing communication strategy will be carried out through three stages, the difficulty to distinguish each stage among marketing communication mix may occur. Therefore, in order to keep the idea simple, the following figure is presented.
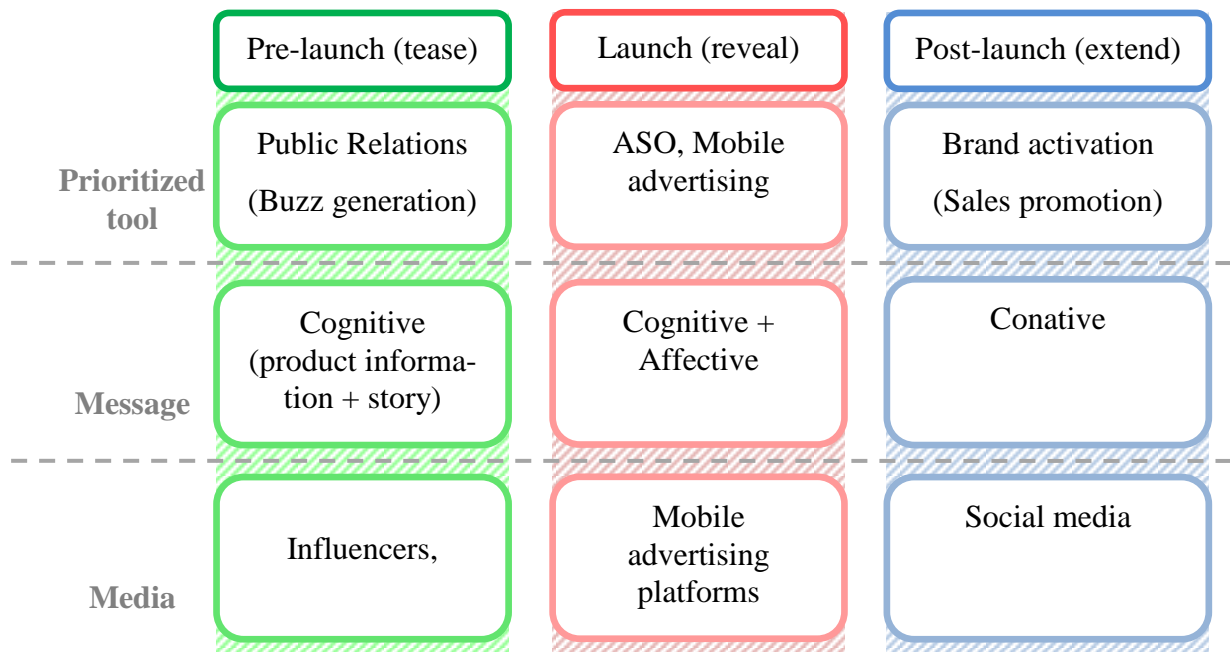
FIGURE 26. Marketing communication strategy in stages.

It is noticeable that the Figure 26 partially represents the information from the Table 12 in the "Message strategy" section. Indeed, no radical changes occurred, the Figure 26 is supple-

mented with stages. Each stage is characterised by the main tool which is going to be used during that phase. However, it does not claim that the mentioned tool is the only tool which will be utilize at the particular stage. The following presentation of the stages describes more precisely all the tools, media and messages.

<u>Stage 1</u>

Public relations define the first phase of the marketing communication strategy. The choice of PR as the main tool at this stage is based on both theory and practice. As the importance of public relations for a company (Smith & Zook 2011) was proved by the benchmarking research, the publicity acquisition in the early stages of the app's life cycle is essential. According to the responses given by the GUAVO's representative, the company is aiming at advancing their previous PR efforts by initiating such campaign before launch. In order to generate publicity the influencers must be reached. To do so, the strategy needs to be supported with a *direct marketing* tool. The target audience, in this case, are the influencers (journalists, bloggers, reviewers). The contact with the targets will be implemented via addressable media of direct marketing – direct e-mail. The message transported to the influencers has already been discussed, and will carry cognitive meaning.

Aside the influencers the company will communicate with the other audiences through publications on the websites and social media. The content of the message must have informative character with the "coming soon" context. Therefore, this stage implies using such media as websites, social networks and influencers.

<u>Stage 2</u>

The launch phase starts directly at the date of the "Tunneler's" release. This is the most exciting part of the app's life cycle, when the first results of the previous marketing communication activity start to appear. At this stage several issues must be taken into consideration.

First of all, the launch of the game must be supported by app store optimization (ASO). Based on the theory, this tool will maximize the chance to move up the ranking in the Apple app store (Maher 2012). The specific techniques of ASO will be described in the next section.

The focus of the second stage is acquiring more users by the mean of mobile advertising. The positive attitude of the company towards this tool had an impact on selecting mobile advertising as a part of the strategy. Besides, despite the fact that some critics predicted the end of advertising, Smith and Zook (2011, 282) claimed that it is not "going away". Advertising has undergone some changes and transformed into the new forms e.g. mobile advertising. This type of advertising fits the most to the case product because the "Tunneler" is a mobile iOS application, thus, it is aimed at the users who possess devices, such as iPhone, iPod and iPad. Based on the theoretical classification of advertising presented in the Table 3 the following figure shortly presents how the app advertising is going to be classified.

By geographical location
Country: USA

By medium
Interactive advertising:
online, wireless mobile devices

By target audience
Consumer advertising

By purpose
Product advertising
Commercial advertising
Awareness/ action advertising
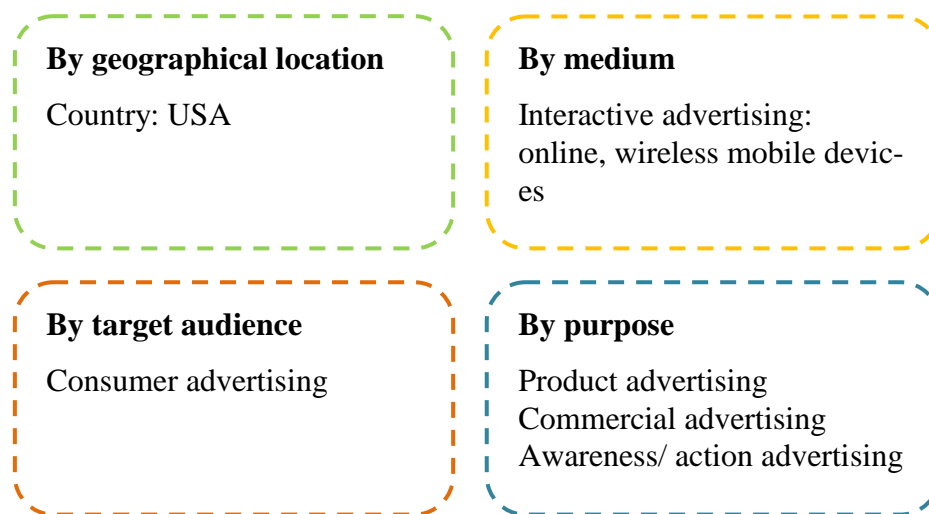
FIGURE 27. Advertising classification for the "Tunneler" (Based on Arens (2008)).

First of all, the geographical location and the medium have been already mentioned. Regarding the target group the consumer advertising will be applied, which means the end customer will utilize it only for personal use (Arens 2008). The purpose-wise advertising implies promotion of the product with aim to get profit. Besides, due to the fact that the mobile advertising is provided with direct link to the Apple app store, the promotion is aimed at both establishing awareness and calling an action.

As it was mentioned in the theoretical part, interactive advertisement is expresses through a variety of different forms. For the case product the rich media advertising has to be applied. The more precise description of the rich media ad will be presented in the "Tactics" section.

Concerning the content of the message for the mobile marketing, the cognitive and affective strategies will be applied. Since the usability and range of features matter a lot in the games (Alessi 2012), informing the users about game's plot is necessary to attract their attention. Moreover, using rich media allows including video and audio files. Therefore, an affective nature of the message has to be utilized with sound accompaniment (8-bit music) and the text expressing the designed previously statement "*Old things you enjoyed are now in your pocket*".

Stage 3

The last phase of the marketing communications plan is aimed at maintaining the interest to the game and increasing the number of downloads. For that purpose the prioritized tool is the brand activation. As described by Pelsmacker et al. (2013), brand activation provides a smooth and flawless integration of all available communication means to stimulate interest, trial and enhancing consumer loyalty. Sales promotion is a part of brand activation and serves as a dominant tool in the third phase.

As it follows from the additional results of benchmarking, this tool found its application in many successful games in a form of contests and sweepstakes. Therefore, the company needs to create short-term promotional campaigns with virtual gifts for the winners. For that purpose, the conative messages will be sent through the main media - the social networks. The reason for choosing the social networks as a medium in transporting the message is explained by the results of the research which highlight the significance of social media in a company's marketing communications effort.

Although, these stages are defined by a particular tool, the activities will not be terminated by the end of a stage. In other words, the tools will last more than the period, for example, the pre-launch phase will initiate social media marketing; however, it will continue to function also throughout other periods. The following section presents the next step in marketing communications planning process which divides the strategy into more fragmented pieces – tactics.

6.2 Tactics

As it was stated by Smith & Zook (2011, 237), "tactics are the details of strategy". Indeed, they provide precise description of the tools and how long these actions last. This part is a "step-by-step" guide for launching the app; therefore, the recommendations are given in a short form for better understanding. Besides, the theory says that a comprehensive tactics should include graphical representation, and the most suitable for this case tool is the Gantt chart (Chaffey & Smith 2008).

TABLE 13. Gantt chart for marketing communications tactics.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
		Pre-launch		Launch		Post-launch
Landing page & social media profiles		(pre-launch)	(pre-launch)	(launch)	(launch)	(post-launch)
Reaching influencers		(pre-launch)	(pre-launch)			
App store optimization			(launch)			
Mobile advertising				(launch)	(launch)	
Sales promotion campaign						(post-launch)

In the case of GUAVO, the time scale was included into the Gantt chart. Based on the results of the semi-structured interview, the approximate launch of the game should take place in December 2014. The author's suggestion is to release the app one week before Christmas because of high Apple app store activity during this particular period (Statista 2012). Considering the release date as a starting point, the other stages were assigned. According to the GUAVO's response, the PR activities, which determine the pre-launch phase, should start 2-3 months before the release; thus, this stage is initiated in mid-October 2014. Again, based on the response, the launch period lasts 2 months; therefore, the third stage begins in February 2015. To limit this plan the 6-months period is considered because it embraces all the mentioned stages. Moreover, the listed in the Table 13 techniques are ordered according to their sequence in the stages. These techniques are the generalized strategies; therefore, they must be described in detail including smaller assignments.

Stage 1

For the first step the PR activities must be implemented. To do that, GUAVO should consider establishing online presence (as follows from the results) and reaching the influencers. Based on the theory and research the following steps have to be completed:

TABLE 14. Stage 1 tactics.

#	Activity	Aspects to consider
1	Create separate landing page	- Game description, pictures, promo-video, "coming soon icon", press kit; - Adjusting webpage to the mobile screen; - Organic SEO.
2	Create profiles in social networks	- Profound profile consistent with landing page; - Publishing "Coming soon" posts; - Placing promo-video on YouTube
3	Reach influencers	- Using the company's database of influencers; - Personalized messages (cognitive); - Utilizing MailChimp service

1) Based on the research results GUAVO had two possibilities: to advance the existing company's website or create a landing page. The most preferable variant was to create a *separate landing page* for the game with detailed description, pictures and promo video. The reason for choosing the second alternative was the fact that the company was not well known as a game developer unlike the studied in benchmarking candidates. Based on the description of GUAVO, this app was the first experiment and differed to the great extent from the other products which were related to the utilities category. Consequently, to be consistent with the overall strategy, establishing a separate landing page for the "Tunneler" in accordance with the best practices of the other mobile games was needed.

To continue with the tactics, it is necessary to adjust the landing page for the mobile phone screen due to increasing popularity of mobile Internet (see page 35); place the "coming soon" icon on the web page. Both to landing page and existing company's website add press kit materials for further availability for the press. In order to improve the landing page's ranking with minimum costs, the organic SEO techniques must be implemented: providing relevant and customer-targeted content, spreading links leading to the website and integrating effective keywords with metatags (Strauss & Frost 2014).

2) Creating a profound *profile* of the game on *social networking websites*: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Place the messages regarding the soon launch of the "Tunneler". Submit the promo video to the app's YouTube channel. This aspect might contradict the benchmarking results which revealed that the majority of studied candidates presented better performance via the company's page in social networks rather than the app's page. However, as it was mentioned before, the company is not well known as a game developer, thus, presenting the app only through the company's page will cause inconsistency of the whole strategy.

3) Reaching the influencers with the *direct marketing tool* via direct e-mails. To do that, the company should utilize its personal database of the influencers, plus the generated during research list of the most popular influencers' websites (Appendix 2). As mentioned in the strategy, the message for the influencers must be as personal as possible with the information about the game and the story; however, for the ease of use, some e-mail services can be utilized. The company can continue using the MailChimp service as they did with previous apps.

Stage 2

After the fundament from the first stage is built, the marketing communications plan moves to the next stage. Despite the new tools are to be applied, the previous tools will still continue their functions. Additionally, at this stage the first results from PR efforts should appear in the form of publicity. The steps in the second stage are integrated into the Table 15 with following explanation:

TABLE 15. Stage 2 tactics.

#	Activity	Aspects to consider
1	Uploading the game to the Apple app store	• Name, icon, description and screenshots; • On-metadata app store optimization
2	Mobile ad campaign	• Rich media: audio, video, text • Applying message strategy: video – cognitive, audio – affective (8-Bit music), text – affective (slogan: "*Old things you enjoyed are now in your pocket*"); • Platform: paid – iAd by Apple, unpaid – ":tappx" (cross-promotion).
3	Adjusting landing page	• Placing app store button on landing page.
4	Adjusting social media activity	• Posting link to the app store; • Informing audience about the release.

1) *Preparing the app for launch* in the Apple app store. For logical reasons, this activity has to be done before the release. The name of the app, icon, text of description and screenshots should be carefully arranged. This step implies using basic app store optimization techniques such as effective keywords in the meta-data and high profile description of the game as described in the theory.

2) Launching a *mobile advertising* campaign. The rich media in a form of interstitial ads must be created including video, audio and text in accordance with the developed message strategy. Besides, the direct link to the Apple app store has to be added in order to provide fast access to the "Tunneler". In order to create the campaign a specific app advertising platform is required. During the research a list of such platforms was generated (Appendix 3). The most common service is provided by Apple - the iAd platform. This is a costly but effective tool for gaining the revenue from the app. However, based on the preferences of GUAVO concerning the minimum budget expenditure, a good alternative exists. The so called "Cross-Promotion" platforms (such as tappx.com) enable the company to advertise its apps with no fee, in exchange of advertising other apps through the game. In other words, the win-win situation is created.

Additionally, the length of the campaign must be determined. Therefore, based on low budget expenditure, the proposed period for such campaign is the launch phase which lasts 2 months.

3) When the app is launched, the landing page as well as social media profiles must be provided with the direct link to the app store for instant access to the game. This step will increase the chance to obtain more visits to the app store.

4) At this stage, the social media activity changes its character; from "coming soon" messages to the posts related to the freshly released app.

Stage 3

After the launch "boom" is less intensive, the third stage of the plan begins. This stage, as it was said previously, is aiming at maintaining interest to the game and involving more customers. The steps regarding this phase are presented below:

TABLE 16. Stage 3 tactics.

#	Activities	Aspects to consider
1	Creating contests	• Granting virtual gift; • Using hash tags; • Conative messages
2	Short-term promotions	• Discounts on in-app purchases
3	Maintaining interaction with users via social networks	• Announcing updates, promotions, asking audience app-related questions, polls.

1) Creating contests to generate word of mouth and stimulate downloads. Example of contest: to ask existing players via social networks to make a post including their username and #Tunneler hash tag for the chance to win a virtual gift. As the research shows, due to the great popularity of hash tags on the social media, such campaigns end in high number of downloads, consequently better sales and improving online

brand visibility. This "zero" cost campaign is one of the best alternatives for the "Tunneler" to gain more users.

2) Initiating short-term promotions that grant the discounts on in-app purchases. The message is to be delivered through both social media and in-app advertising.

3) Maintaining activity with social media followers by announcing updates of the game, new promotions and creating interaction with them by asking them app-related questions and questionnaires. As it is seen from the Table 13 the activity in social media is an ongoing process, which explains its presence in all phases.

To conclude the "tactics" topic, it is worth mentioning that all the tools, media and messages were integrated in the most favourable for GUAVO way, based on its responds regarding the budget limits and effectiveness of particular tools. The "Strategy" and "Tactics" sections are the representation of actual author's propositions which were generated during both literature review and research. All factors were taken into consideration including competitors' performance and the company's preferences.

6.3 Actions

As mentioned previously, the actions are the details of the tactics and it is important to build them with maximum precision in order to reduce the risk of failure (Smith&Zook 2011, 237). However, this section of the marketing communications plan is not applied in the present thesis. The reason for that are the limited resources, particularly, time and the knowledge base. Regarding the knowledge base, some of the actions imply using a qualified labour force in the field other than marketing communications.

6.4 Control

After the strategy and the tactics are implemented it is necessary to find out if the plan is working, the tactics are right, and the objectives are achieved. As it follows from the theory, the control process consists of several stages: measurement of performance, its diagnosis and corrective actions if necessary. For that purpose, the possible metrics should be determined, and they have to be used to measure against the targets based on strategy and objectives

(Chaffey & Smith 2008). For a better understanding of the control process the following table was created.

TABLE 17. Control process of the game's performance.

Metrics		Pre-launch	Launch	Post-launch
Business con-tribution	Costs			
	Revenue	x		
MarCom ef-fectiveness	№ of downloads	x		
	№ of active users	x		
	№ of position in app store in action games category	x		
	Conversion rate of mobile ad	x		
	№ of Facebook followers			
	№ of Twitter followers			
	№ of YouTube subscribers			
	№ of publicity			

Consequently, the Table 17 is built according to the metrics suggested by Chaffey (2011) and the marketing communications mix used in the case. The first classification of the metrics relates to the overall business contribution which monitors the costs and revenue of the app. The second group of the metrics directly relates to the tools and media which are proposed in this thesis as well as the objectives set by the company. The first three metrics in this group define the success of achieving the objective, particularly, reaching top 10 action games in the app store. The rest of the metrics present the effectiveness of selected tools and media. Additionally, all the metrics have to be presented in the numerical values.

In the "Tunneler's" case, the suggested frequency of the measurement is equal to the stages of the strategy. Therefore, every 2 months the results are recorded and evaluated according to the target performance. In case the real and desired performances do not match, the company may take the corrective actions. As a result, some tactics can be slightly changed or permanently removed from the plan.

6.5 Men, Money and Minutes

The suggested by Smith and Zook (2011) SOSTAC model contains another issues which must be considered while planning the marketing communications – Men, Money and Minutes.

However, due to the limitations of the thesis, these issues are also restricted. The "*Men*" (and women) aspect is constrained by the company's human resources. Considering the fact that this is a small company, the outsourcing possibility exists. The example of outsourcing is using the services of a professional copywriter for designing the story and press releases. Outsourcing the activities implies certain costs; these costs are difficult to estimate for the particular case. Therefore, "*Money*" or budgeting is not applied in the thesis. Additional consideration – "*Minutes*" – is defined more precisely in the plan. As it was mentioned before, the overall strategy is developed based on the 6 months period so that all stages are covered. Moreover, the time issue was presented in the Table 13 and defined the length of each activity.

7 CONCLUSIONS

As a primary goal of the thesis, a sound marketing communications plan for the GUAVO company had to be developed. Beforehand, a thorough literature review was implemented and presented in the theoretical part which built a strong fundament for further research. In order to create the plan, several research questions had to be studied. Therefore, this chapter concludes all the findings and results of the work.

As it was explained earlier, the synergy of the theory and practice was based on the SOSTAC planning model which incorporated situation analysis, objectives, strategy, tactics, actions and control. Therefore, in order to develop the plan a number of researches were required. For that purpose two major research methods were exploited: in-depth semi-structured interview and the electronic research which consisted of industry and target market researches. As a result, all needed information was obtained and applied to the planning process. Consequently, all of the formulated in the beginning of the research questions were answered.

First of all, the situation analysis showed the current state of the company with both internal and external factors. In spite of the fact that the company did not possess a well-established brand name, its advanced replication of the retro game was the main strength which was considered as a differentiation on the market and had a potential to deliver superior value to the users. Regarding the external environment, the current trends in the mobile gaming industry shaped the opportunities and threats for the company. A growing share of a Free-to-Play business model as well as expansion of the mobile gaming market provided vivid possibilities to express GUAVO's creative potential and gain a bigger consumer base. However, the high

competitiveness of the market increased the risk of the entrance of the new market players which makes the way to success more challenging.

Secondly, the target audience of the "Tunneler" was identified and studied in terms of psychographics and behaviour-graphics. As a result, the company had to deal with the 20-35 year old male users who belonged to the Generation Y. Based on the research, the target was difficult to reach through traditional media, therefore, marketing communications had to be shaped in accordance with needs and wants of the target cohort.

Consequently, based on the defined target audience, the positioning strategy had to be determined. In this case, the internal strengths of the company contributed to the development of the positioning statement which was concentrated on the user-friendliness of the interface, retro nature of the game, plot complexity and social involvement. The statement served as a fundament for further development of the message strategy.

Regarding the most effective marketing communication tools and media, the benchmarking research was implemented. The research intended to study the importance of PR, online presence and social media activity in the mobile application world. As a result, the significance of the PR activities and acquiring publicity was proved by the high extent of media coverage. Concerning the online presence through websites and landing pages, it was identified that both means were effective for promotion of the apps and the companies. And finally, the examination of the social media revealed the importance of maintaining interaction with the users and their further retention. Besides, the additional results exposed mobile advertising and sales promotions as another effective tool for the app promotion.

Finally, the identified best practices with the support of the company's views and preferences were applied in the marketing communications plan. The studied tools were integrated in the most favourable for the company way based on the theory, current trends and the results of the research. Therefore, a multi-staged strategy was developed. Each stage was assigned with a particular set of tools, media and messages which were consistent with the overall strategy. The integration of the marketing communications resulted in collaboration of such tools and media as PR and Direct marketing, Mobile advertising and App Store Optimization, Sales promotion and Social media. Besides, each stage was provided with a separate message strategy – cognitive, affective and conative, which was built in a harmony with the tools and the target audience.

To sum up the said above, the desired outcomes were reached. First of all, the situation of the company was understood and evaluated; secondly, the best practices were identified; and finally, a comprehensive marketing communications plan was developed.

7.1 Quality of research

In this thesis two types of research have been implemented: qualitative and quantitative. These mixed methods were used for profound examination of the research topic and obtaining valuable and independent results. However, in spite of wide range of techniques used in research there were some significant limitations.

First of all, evaluating and analysing the internal environment was rather limited due to lack of actual records of the product's performance. As it was mentioned earlier in the work, the game was still in development process, thus, it is only the matter of time to reveal real internal factors. Besides, as it seen from the benchmarking research, the whole process of identifying the best practices of the existing market players was challenging and complicated. In order to see a big picture many aspects were taken into consideration. However, some tactics were implemented by the candidate as "backstage" activities, therefore, there were no real evidences to what had been exactly done. Thus, due to such restrictions this topic still leaves room for further study.

In order to justify the quality and reliability of research several criteria must be considered: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). First of all, the credibility of the qualitative part of the research was increased by "member checking" data with the respondent. For that purpose, at the end the obtained answers were summarized by the researcher and confirmed by the respondent. Moreover, the written results have been sent to the interviewee for final approval. Transferability of the research shows how the knowledge gained from the research can be transferred to other situations (Daymon & Holloway 2011). In this case, the results of the benchmarking contain to some extent universal knowledge on how to promote a mobile app on early stages. Therefore, the results can be easily applied to other mobile games. As for dependability of the research, the readers were provided with profound and logical step-by-step guidance through whole research process, assuring that the material is easily understood by using graphical representation of the discussed issues. Finally, the confirmability of study is proved by demonstrating how the data is linked

to the initial sources. For that purpose, each decision and assumption were provided with relevant references to the existing data.

The validity of the quantitative research is proved by the fact that the method measures what it is supposed to measure (Daymon & Holloway 2011). Knowing that the benchmarking was an intensive and extensive work the researcher tried to arrange the research process which would maximally correspond to the studied issues. To do so, the analysis of media coverage was divided into two periods and the social media have been studied from both company and the app's perspectives. This insured that the obtained data would be as close to the reality as possible and furthermore could be adequately applied in the plan.

8   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The primary goal for me as a student was to find out how the theoretical knowledge I gained during my studies met the practical application in a real world situation. The previous internship in the named company contributed to the overall interest in the application development and marketing topic. Evidencing remarkable performances of the particular apps made me wonder how they manage to succeed in such competitive market. There were many tips and tricks how to rise chances to prosper in the app store, however, no academic studies were provided. Therefore, with the strong intention to reveal the secrets of the successful apps and bring valuable contribution to the commissioning company, I initiated my research. I strongly believe that the knowledge I gained during the research will help not only GUAVO but also other similar start-ups. Regardless the results, there is still plenty of unstudied questions which can bring a researcher closer to the full understanding of how to succeed on the market. Some of those issues are:

- What are the most effective ways to reach influencers?
- How to create a buzz on the early stages of the app lifecycle?
- How to shrink marketing costs to zero, what are the alternatives?

As for me, this work was an outstanding opportunity to test my marketing communications skills gained during studies and attain new knowledge which will greatly contribute to my professional background. Conducting several researches improved my ability of analytical and critical thinking. Interviewing process contributed to development of interpersonal communi-

cations skills and building a rapport with people. And finally, the time management was one of the main aspects which were mastered in this challenging process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Results of the benchmarking research.

#	Name	Company	Date of release	Global down-loads	Business model	Landing page/Website/ blogging activity	Coverage in media High/Medium/Low	Facebook activity 0-5	Twitter activity 0-5	YouTube activity 0-5
1	Bloons TD 5	Ninja Kiwi	Nov 10, 2012	1.8M	Paid + In-app purchases	WS:www.ninjakiwi.com	Me-dium/Medium	2/4	2/5	0/4
2	Boom! Tanks	The Codemas-ters Software Company Ltd	Jul 12, 2013	832K	Free + in-app purchases	WS:boomtanks.com LP:www.codemasters.com	Low/Medium	2/5	0/5	0/3
3	Castle Clash by IGG	IGG.COM	Oct 22, 2013	5.0M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:igg.com	Low/Low	5/5	5/2	0/2
4	Clash of Clans	Supercell	Jun 13, 2012	150M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.supercell.net	High/High	5/4	0/4	5/0
5	Clash of Lords 2	IGG.COM	May 14, 2014	519K	Free + in-app purchases	WS:igg.com	Me-dium/Medium	5/5	4/2	3/2
6	Deer Hunter 2014	Glu Games Inc.	Jun 29, 2013	26M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.glu.com	Low/Medium	3/2	0/5	0/5
7	Don't Touch The Spikes	Ketchapp	Jul 15, 2014	2.4M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.ketchappstudio.com	High	1/0	3/0	0/2
8	ENDI Tank Battle Multi-player	9245-4495 Quebec inc	Jun 15, 2012	1.6M	Free + in-app purchases	--	Low/Low	0/0	0/0	0/0

APPENDIX 1 (2). Results of the benchmarking research.

#	Name	Company	Date of release	Global down-loads	Business model	Landing page/Website/ blogging activity	Coverage in media High/Medium/Low	Facebook activity 0-5	Twitter activity 0-5	YouTube activity 0-5
9	Fun Run - Multiplayer Race	dirtyBit	Sep 05, 2012	2.7M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:dirtybit.com	Medium/Medium	5/4	5/5	0/2
10	G.I. JOE: BATTLEGROUND	Mobage, Inc.	Jun 28, 2013	356K	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.mobage.com LP:www.gijoebattleground.com	Medium/Low	4/5	0/4	0/5
11	Iron Force	Chillingo Ltd	Jul 24, 2013	36M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:http:www.chillingo.com	Medium/Medium	5/5	2/5	0/4
12	League of War	MunkyFun	Dec 04, 2013	1.2M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.munkyfun.com	Medium/High	4/4	3/3	0/2
13	Pixel Gun 3D	Alex Krasnov	May 02, 2013	14M	Free + in-app purchases	LP:pixelgun3d.com	Medium/Medium	5/0	4/0	4/0
14	Samurai Siege	Space Ape Games	Jul 12, 2013	9.2M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:www.spaceapegames.com	Medium/High	5/3	5/3	0/2
15	Survivalcraft	Igor Kalicinski	Apr 26, 2013	877K	Paid premium	WS:kaalus.wordpress.com	Low/Medium	3/0	0/0	0/0
16	Tank Domi-nation	Game Insight, LLC	Oct 30, 2013	2.1M	Free + in-app purchases	LP:tankdomination.com/ WS:www.game-insight.com	High/High	5/5	4/5	3/5
17	Tank Hero: Laser Wars	Clapfoot Inc	Mar 08, 2012	116K	Paid premium	WS:www.clapfootgames.com/	Low/Medium	3/4	2/4	0/0
18	TETRIS®	Electronic Arts	Dec 01, 2011	435K	Paid + In-app purchases	WS:www.ea.com/tetris-playstation	High/High	5/5	4/5	2/5
19	Tunneler	Sightsaw LLC	Jul 17, 2014	<1000	Paid premium	--	--	0/0	0/0	0/0
20	World of Tanks Blitz	Wargaming.net	Apr 30, 2014	2.8M	Free + in-app purchases	WS:eu.wargaming.net	High/High	5/5	5/4	0/3

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https://www.facebook.com/pages/IGG-I-Got-Games/309133065910791?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/ClashofClans?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/Supercellgames?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/CastleClash?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/tankboomgame?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/codemasters?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bloons-TD-5/624183617645758?fref=ts
https://www.facebook.com/ninjakiwigames?fref=ts

https://twitter.com/Bloons_TD5
https://twitter.com/ninjakiwigames
https://twitter.com/Codemasters
https://twitter.com/CastleClashIGG
https://twitter.com/IGG_COM
https://twitter.com/ClashOfLords2
https://twitter.com/supercellgames
https://twitter.com/glumobile
https://twitter.com/DontTouchSpikes
https://twitter.com/TheFunRun
https://twitter.com/DirtybitGames
https://twitter.com/IronForceGame
https://twitter.com/Mobage
https://twitter.com/chillingo
https://twitter.com/leagueofwar
https://twitter.com/MunkyFun
https://twitter.com/PixelGun3D
https://twitter.com/SamuraiSiege
https://twitter.com/SpaceApeGames
https://twitter.com/TankDomination
https://twitter.com/Game_Insight
https://twitter.com/tankherogame
https://twitter.com/clapfoot
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https://www.youtube.com/user/mobage
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https://www.youtube.com/user/MunkyFunGames/videos
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsClw1gnMrmF6ssIB_166_Q
https://www.youtube.com/user/SpaceApeGames
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqMhOzzBKaOk6glV-9Ve5cg/videos
https://www.youtube.com/user/EA/videos
https://www.youtube.com/user/wargamingNETcom/videos

APPENDIX 2. Review websites.

Name	Website	Description
Gamezebo	http://www.gamezebo.com/	Game reviews
Pocketgamer	http://www.pocketgamer.biz/	Game news, stories and features
Modojo	http://www.modojo.com/	Game news, stories and features
148Apps	http://www.148apps.com/	Apps reviews
Apptism	http://www.apptism.com/	Apps news
Appsmenow	http://www.appsmenow.com/	Apps reviews
Gamasutra	http://www.gamasutra.com/	Game news, stories and features
Appadvice	http://appadvice.com/	Apps news, reviews
iDownloadBlog	http://www.idownloadblog.com/	Apple news, stories and features
Appsgoer	http://ios.appsgoer.com/	Apps reviews

APPENDIX 3. Mobile Advertising platforms.

Name	Website
iAd	http://advertising.apple.com/tools/iad-workbench/
:tappx	tappx.com
chartboost	https://www.chartboost.com/en
appflood	http://appflood.com/
applifter	http://www.applifier.com/
tapgage	http://www.tapgage.com/
nativex	http://nativex.com/
Appia	http://landing.appia.com/mobyaffiliates
appoptim	http://www.appoptim.com/referral/index.php
jampp	http://www.jampp.com/appinstalls.php
fiksu	http://www.fiksu.com
Tapjoy	tapjoy.com

APPENDIX 4. Interview questions.

Topic	Questions
The product	• How would you describe the app? • Can you explain the business/revenue model of the app? • In which countries you want to release the game? • What is the release date for the app? • Why did you decided to bring an old PC game back to the users? • What story does the game tells to the customers? • What are the strong and weak points about your app? • Which applications do you consider as the competitors?
STP	• How many and what are the segments you want to target with your game? • What position of the product do you want? (Express on the chart) Are there any other characteristics you would like to emphasize?
Objectives	• What objectives you want to achieve after releasing the app?
Marketing communication planning	• Tell me about the current communication programme you are following, if you have any. • How did you manage the marketing communication of the previous apps? • How do you want the users to feel about your app? • What kind of promise does the app give to the customers? What is the message? • Which communication tools and channels would you prefer to use? Why? • What are the budget constraints for promotional activity? (can be given in %)
Future	• Is there any further development planned? • Are you planning to diversify number of your apps?