The Power of Structure – Designing a Service Design Blueprint for Digital Marketing Agencies to Increase Customer Retention

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences   **Abstract**

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The Power of Structure – Designing a Service Design Blueprint for Digital Marketing Agencies
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Due to the global competition and the fast-paced changing digital marketing environment,
small digital marketing agencies need to nurture and retain customers rather than acquire
new ones. Many small marketing startups do not have the capabilities and resources to have
many customers and end up neglecting the ones they have. In addition, an evident lack of
structure and strategy which affects customer satisfaction and retention has been noticed.

This study was done for a small digital marketing agency, and the development process was to
design a Service Design Blueprint to improve customers satisfaction and retention. This Master
Thesis research aims at identifying customers' gains and pains of this Case Company while
revealing unknown customers' needs.

The literature review is based on understanding the B2B Digital Marketing environment,
exploring customer satisfaction and retention theories, and diving into the service-dominant
logic value creation for mapping service quality. Service Design methods and tools constitute
the foundation for the development work. This study collected data through qualitative
research mainly by using semi-structured interviews, persona interviews, and stakeholders'
workshops.

The empirical findings showed that unknown customers' needs are strongly related to the
company case business strategy and unstructured processes. By employing the results, the
business strategy of the case company has been stirred in the right direction. The
development outcome directly addressed the customers' pains and needs through the service
design blueprint to improve the offering and customer retention.

The theoretical and empirical outcomes showcase the importance of structure and business
strategy for small digital marketing agencies, even at early design. In addition, the results
have demonstrated the positive impact of customer satisfaction and customer-centric service
offering when retaining customers. The author believes that more small marketing agencies
or startups could benefit from these thesis results; however, further research on how service
design processes could be applied in a highly entrepreneurial environment is needed.

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, the digital marketing industry is facing an incremental change due to the rapid social media trends emergence and adoption by individuals and organizations. Due to the recent 2020 global pandemic, marketers were left to wonder whether they should adjust their digital marketing strategies to the "new normal" or ignore the disruptive change and continue as before. Whether or not marketers want to adopt the post-pandemic digital marketing strategies, essential solutions such as social media activities or search engine optimizations are a must in the portfolio of any agency, and a long time ago, ceased to be seen as a competitive advantage in the global digital marketing competition space.

Customers have access to a vast amount of information more than ever, and tailoring the offer based on their needs has become a must in the current information society. Many researchers have emphasized the need to understand the customers' needs and eliminate assumptions by taking the time to understand their goals and wishes by asking them directly.

According to Sağlam & Montaser (2021), based on Jobber and Fahy's (2004) research, it has been proven that customer acquisition activities were six times more costly than marketing for retention purposes. In addition, Sağlam & Montaser (2021), according to a Hwang et al. (2004) research, specify that retention successfully helps companies understand customers while enabling the capability of market targeting customization.

Despite the importance of customer retention, many digital marketing agencies are rather focused on customer acquisition and generating sales instead of nurturing and retaining their existing customers. It seems that many small digital marketing agencies want to acquire as many customers as possible in the hope of growing as a company but fail to plan a strategy for the existing ones, and the risk of customer churn increases with every new customer acquired.

Despite these observations and the known importance of customer satisfaction and retention, it remains unclear how much weight customer retention carries in digital marketing agencies' growth strategies. The question remains, why is it so easy for digital marketing agencies to focus on lead generation and customer acquisition rather than making sure customers are satisfied and remain loyal? More importantly, do small marketing agencies can acquire new customers rather than focus on existing ones?

Thus, these questions and the need to understand the importance of customer satisfaction and retention for the case company of this study are starting points in this thesis author's mind.

1.1   Research objectives and questions

The **purpose** of this thesis is to develop a service blueprint to improve Vidalico Digital's offering to impact customer satisfaction and retention positively. Vidalico Digital will be named from now on as the case company or shortly Vidalico.

The development work of this thesis focuses mainly on one of the significant problems the case company faces, which is whether Vidalico Digital marketing services are customer-centric and tailored based on customers' needs. The **objective** of this thesis is to co-create a customer-centric service design process to improve the existing offering for the case company clients to increase customer satisfaction and retention. To do so, a service blueprint shall be designed based on theoretical and empirical research. Furthermore, this research aims to identify Vidalico Digital customers' pains and gains to reveal unknown customers' needs.

In the context of the development process and business-to-business research, the following questions have guided the foundation of the research workflow:

RQ1: What is the life cycle of the customer journey, and what are the missing and existing retention points for Vidalico to proactively plan and deliver for.

RQ2: What are Vidalico customers' pains and gains in the customer life cycle?

RQ3: What are the main obstacles that prevent Vidalico from reaching its business goals and retaining customers?

This paper's author focuses on answering these questions by first analyzing the theories related to this topic in the academic peer-to-peer reviewed literature while following a qualitative research approach for discovering the customers and stakeholders' needs of Vidalico Digital. In addition, the author aims to collect empirical data through co-creating a new service design process with the case company stakeholders and customers to improve the existing offering to increase the retention rate.

To better understand the paper objective, research questions, and development process, a fully-fledged plan has been visualized in the figure below. For reference, the "steppingstones" represent the research methods, the "hills" are an illustration of the research questions, the two "mountains" showcase the Objective and Aim of this thesis, and the "mountain peak" represents the purpose of this research and what shall be developed as a result of the empirical findings of this study and the literary review.
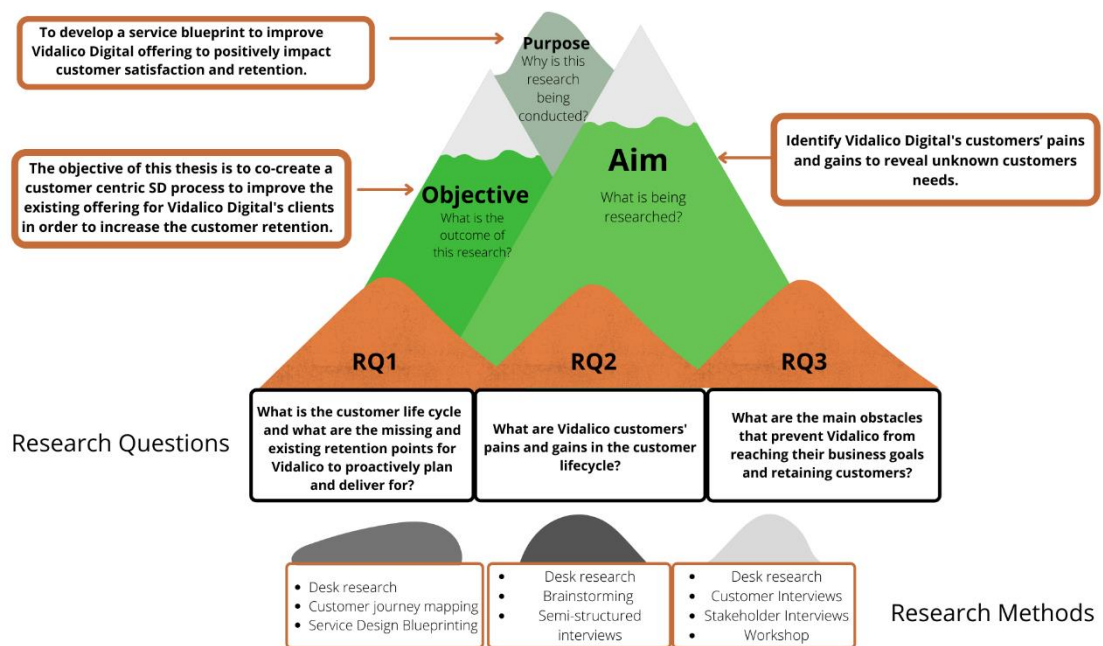
Figure 1: "Mountain metaphor" of research study and development work

1.2 Overview of the case company and the development challenge

Vidalico Consulted Limited was founded in 2014 by four master's students at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki. The company was started as an investment platform for an innovative startup that had an amazing social media product at that time. The company founders applied for a loan, and they immediately made the investment into this new promising idea. They set up the name of the company based on the initials of all shareholders, respectively, Ville, Daniel, Livia, and Constantin. The founders were planning to make an exit at the next round of investments with the group profit on top of the loan repayment. However, the startup did not perform well, and the company soon went into bankruptcy. The project failed, and the current CEO took complete ownership of the company and started his own venture in the marketing world. The CEO officially started the company activities in 2018, and he is currently working with free lancers as the company has not reached financial stability to allow the possibility of hiring employees. In 2020 the company had a positive margin, and 2021 is envisioned as a growth year where this thesis' solution will boost customer satisfaction and retention and ultimately help the expansion of the company.

According to the CEO, the main reason the startup he invested in failed was because the students ignored marketing. Even though the final product was a social media app, they

completely disregarded basic marketing activities that could have made or broken the product and offered it international exposure and success. The new company started as an endeavor to create marketing as a service which builds on the important factor, and the role marketing has in each company. The new company acknowledged the need for tech companies to translate and market technically advanced products or services and present them into stories that drive sales.

1.3   Current company status and challenges

The nowadays company, Vidalico Digital, as a digital growth agency, works directly with B2B technology companies offering marketing as a service as their main product. The company focuses mainly on lead generation by leveraging the power of inbound marketing for the international growth of its customers. Their marketing services use inbound marketing methodology to enable B2B companies to "attract," "engage," and "delight" their customers. Their services are Marketing as a Service, HubSpot CRM, Marketing Automation, Inbound Sales, and SEO Audit. The key elements in their strategy include buyer personas, content alignments, blog, and video posts, whitepapers, emails, infographics, and eBooks. Their promise is to help increase the "digital footprint" and lead generation and build brand awareness for their customers.

Even though the company offering is very attractive for B2B technology businesses, the CEO struggles with the same issues his customers have, which are identifying the customers' pains and gains to tailor and validate the digital marketing offering based on their needs. For the past three years, the CEO worked towards building a client base and growing the company. The company reached a level in which it can hire freelancers and work with external stakeholders; however, the CEO's vision looks at the more rapid growth in the coming years.

The author of this paper started working for Vidalico Digital in 2018 as a Marketing Intern. As a marketing intern, her main responsibility was to daily monitor and updated the company HubSpot CRM. From the very beginning, a discussion regarding a thesis or a research project was explored with the CEO, and the needs and challenges of the companies were addressed as a possible research topic. The main challenges in 2018 were the need for new talent and additional help with company tasks for the CEO, as he was the person performing all the necessary tasks for customer acquisition and retention. Another challenge was sales and lack of revenue which became a more prominent issue over the years.

In 2019 the idea for the thesis became a real need for Vidalico's CEO, as we were working together for another research on a Service-Dominant Logic paper. A "Growth strategy plan" was envisioned back then, and the company's business model was revised and updated to suit the growing needs of the company. At that stage, the founder was looking for a seed investment with the initial founding round at approximately 50k up to 100k. The most

prominent need in 2019 was getting a potential co-owner partner that could share the responsibilities and work together as a team to skyrocket the company's growth. Also, a discussion regarding establishing a partnership with other growth agencies was added to the growth strategy plan. Collaborating with other companies was designed to bring a plus of quality and help attract buyers and ultimately improve the company to grow in numbers and revenue. The same needs stand valid up to this point as well.

The author has laid out the company needs and challenges in a timeline format from 2018 up to the present month, April 2021. An ample explanation of each need and challenges stages should be found in the appendix.

1 — 2018
February
Needs: New Talent
Help with company tasks

Challenges: Lack of revenue, bootstraping

2 — 2019
October
Needs: Investment of 50k -100k
Co-owner investor
Partnership with other companies

Challenges: No trustworthy partner investors

3 — 2020
May
Needs: Sales increase
Brand awareness and visibility
Hiring employees

Challenges: Covid19 pandemic and companies reducing costs

4 — 2021
January
Needs: A toolkit to increase customer acquisition
A repeatable sales solution/a holistic package

Challenges: Competition

5 — PRESENT
Needs: A new service design process to increase customer retention.

Challenge: Find the niche to provide the best repeatable sales package

Figure 2: Vidalico Digital: Company needs and challenges timeline

The project research timeline and the development of the service blueprint with the company stakeholders should be held from February 2021 to November 2021. At this time, several interviews with various company employees, customers, and external partners should be held for data collection. One workshop should be held during fall 2021, and the final version of the service design blueprint analyzed together with the company CEO.

1.4   Key Concepts

The key concepts of this thesis are presented down below so that the reader can fully align with the terminology used by this thesis's author.

Digital Marketing

In the context of this thesis, digital marketing is the main topic of the development project, as the case company for which this study is conducted operates in the Digital Marketing environment. According to S. Kingsnorth (2016), digital marketing is mistaken for online marketing. A broad definition offered by G. Urban (2004) specifies that digital marketing uses the internet and digital channels to improve traditional marketing strategies and functions.

Marketing agencies

Vidalico Digital works with Nordic and German B2B customers and offers marketing as a service by using inbound methodologies to attract and retain customers. MacKay (2005) specifies that the marketing agency's services can vary according to its expertise. There are agencies that might focus on expertise, or integrations, or software, or training, but due to the massive digitalization nowadays, all marketing agencies must include digital marketing in their portfolio of services if they wish to remain relevant. According to MacKay (2005), the best marketing agencies have to be able to transform information into intelligence and use this intelligence into concrete action.

HubSpot

The case company for which this study is conducted is a certified HubSpot partner and uses HubSpot CRM as the main growth solution and tool for sales and marketing optimization, processes, and connecting their customer's sales team with their respective leads. When co-designing the new service design solution for customer retention, this thesis's author will take into account its integration with HubSpot CRM.

Value Co-creation and co-design

According to Grönroos (2008), the notion of value co-creation started to be of interest to many researchers at the beginning of the year 2000, and gradually it became an important issue in the service-dominant logic perspective. Vargo and Lusch (2008), notably the most quoted authors in the field of service-dominant logic, reformulated their initial statement on co-creating value, arguing that the customer has transitioned from a "co-producer" of value to a "co-creator of value" (Grönroos, 2011, 280). The development process of this thesis focuses on co-designing value with customers and case company stakeholders. Since this aim is to co-design a new service design process to increase customer retention for the case company, a more ample view will be taken in the following chapters on the differences between co-creation and co-design.

Customer

In the context of this thesis, customers refer to B2B technology Finnish companies. Even though the case company works with customers from outside Finland, the author of this thesis will focus mainly on companies and customers residing in Finland.

Stakeholder

Being a one-man company, the case company works mostly with free-lancers and business consultants as its main stakeholders. The author of this thesis will use the term stakeholder to refer to the company advisors, free-lances, and business consultants. According to Freeman (2010), the term "stakeholder" refers to a party that has a "stake" or has some sort of "legitimacy" over the business they are working with. Moreover, based on Thompson's definition (1967), Freeman (2010, 46) states that "a stakeholder" is an organization or an individual that is involved and is being directly affected by the company's goals or objectives.

Service Blueprint

The concept of service blueprinting shall be explained in the theoretical framework of this thesis. In the context of this paper, research a service blueprint co-created with stakeholders based on deep customers insights shall be the development work of this study.

1.5   Thesis structure

The disposition of this thesis is presented in this chapter. Figure 3 showcases the report structure of this thesis. The first chapter introduces the purpose, aim, and objectives of this thesis, the history of the case company, and why the author chose this research.

The second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters present the theories that shall be used as a theoretical foundation for the development project. These chapters go into debt into the B2B digital marketing environment, customer satisfaction and retention, service quality, and mapping pieces of literature. Co-creation, service-dominant logic, and service design theories and methodologies shall be presented and analyzed to support the development of the design project. These theoretical frameworks are fundamental for the new service design process to increase customer retention for the case company.

The sixth chapter goes into debt into the service design methodologies selected in the development project. The following subchapters discuss the reasoning of the author for choosing the selected methods and how the empirical data was collected. The methods used are semi-structured interviews, personas, customer journey maps, and service blueprint. The

research approach of this paper combined both deductive and abductive reasoning, as a few interviews were conducted while theories and literature were examined as a support to the first and second research questions of this study. In addition, chapter six presents the Double diamond process with its four phases: discover, define, develop, and deliver—this chapter emphasizes how the development phases were conducted.

Chapter seven showcases the results and findings from the empirical study and dives into the research questions answers and the service design blueprint that was created as part of the development project.

This thesis concludes with chapter eight, which summarizes and reviews the thesis process and looks further into the limitation, usability, and transferability of results. Furthermore, this chapter offers further research ideas and introduces a few future project proposals.

Figure 3: Thesis structure

2   Understanding B2B Digital Marketing agencies

Digital marketing services are the core business of the case company of this thesis paper research, and this chapter shall analyze the B2B digital marketing agencies. To do so, a clear-cut understanding of the digital marketing field needs to be established.

Fierro, Arbelaez, and Gavilanez (2017) indicate that the concept of Digital marketing has changed over time, since its first mention in 1990, because of the rapid adoption of social media and mobile technology. According to Bruyn (2008), Fierro et al. (2017, 244) state that digital marketing contains four aspects that can be found on a business platform, and they are "Web/mobile marketing," "Search Engine Optimization" "Social networks," and "consumer relationship management."

Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019, 35) offer a succinct definition of Digital Marketing as "the application of digital media, data, and technology integrated with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives."

Digital marketing is many times "confused" with online marketing (Kingsnorth 2019, 6); however, the technological advancement and the evolution of analytics helps us better understand customers' behavior in real life, and because of this, digital marketing has become an essential part in all marketing activities for both B2B and B2C companies. According to Kingsnorth (2019, 7), these marketing activities include: "PR, creative direction, brand, CRM, retention, product development, pricing proposition, communication - the entire marketing mix."

According to Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), understanding the importance of marketing for the future of the marketing environment can be facilitated by visualizing the interaction and management of the marketing audiences. Nowadays, audiences represent more than just websites, and in order to understand the marketing audience, Chaffey & Eliss-Chadwick (2019, 16) propose the "5D of managing digital marketing interactions."

Better visualization of the 5D of Digital marketing is introduced in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The 5D of Digital Marketing
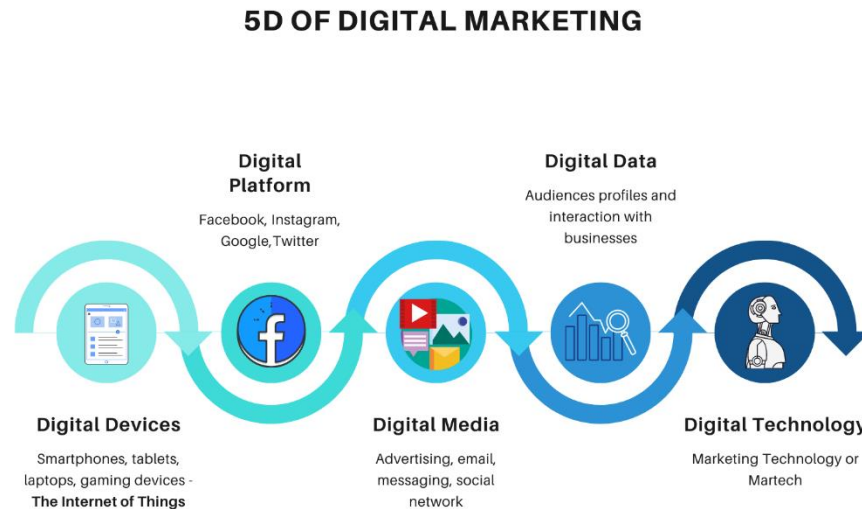
From a practical point of view, according to Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), digital marketing manages a variety of online activities of a company, mainly focusing on company websites, apps, social media pages, and all activity related to online communications. Digital marketing is used to acquire new customers and retain existing ones. Through customer relationship management (CRM), a customer relationship is built over time. In the context of this thesis, CRM services and integration are the main offerings in the case of company services and products, and the thesis author shall discuss in more detail in chapter 2.4 the HubSpot CRM offering that Vidalico Digital provides to its customers.

Having established a broad understanding of the digital marketing field, this thesis author shall present an ample view on the B2B Digital marketing agencies as the case company operates in this field.

According to Brady et al. (2008), digital marketing agencies have changed drastically in the past years as customers started to look for more complex solutions for their marketing activities. If before, digital marketing agencies were creating brochures, events, and website design, nowadays digital marketing agencies have reached into the fields of content and brand experience. Digital marketing agencies' customers go beyond simple marketing concepts, and they are looking for innovation and new ways to engage with their consumers and overall to play a more strategic role in their customers' day-to-day business. (Brady et al. 2008).

In the context of B2B, Brennan and Croft (2012) emphasize that B2B companies employ social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn using communication performance as a way to improve their business through innovation and marketing. Pandey et al. (2021) state that organizations recently realized that digital marketing in the B2B environment helps establish customer trust. According to Pandey et al. (2021), today, B2B customers are well informed and do not need much support in their buying decisions.

Vieira et al. (2019) state that Agnihotri et al. (2016) indicate that B2B is rapidly growing, surpassing the B2C (business-to-consumer) e-business because of the usage and adoption of B2B applications. Drawing a parallel between B2C and B2B digital marketing, according to Vieira et al. (2019), B2C focuses on brand building and consumer journey, and B2B digital marketing focuses on lead segmentation and customer engagement.

According to Roetzer (2011) argues that B2B marketing agencies are turning to more effective marketing strategies such as inbound selective consumption principles to satisfy consumer needs. The main principle the company uses is Inbound marketing, coined by HubSpot, an Internet marketing software company. An in-depth view into the HubSpot strategies and services shall be analyzed in chapter 2.4

2.1   Creating a B2B successful digital marketing strategy

In order to gain a better understanding of the digital marketing strategic side, the most popular marketing strategy models are presented by the author of this thesis based on Kingsnorth (2016) and Ryan (2014) research:

Figure 5: Marketing strategy models based on Kingsnorth (2016) Table 1.1 p. 8

In order to gain a better understanding of the strategic view of the digital marketing environment, the following models shall be reviewed from a digital marketing perspective: The 4 Ps of marketing that fit in "traditional marketing mix" (Ryan, 2014, 33): Product, Price, Promotion and Place.

Product

According to Ryan (2014, 34), the product is the "unique value proposition" offered by a firm to its customers. From a digital marketing perspective, Kingsnorth (2016, 9) argues that the product needs to be attractive for the online environment, and firms need to understand the varied motivations and usage of the products in the digital space.

Price

According to Ryan (2014, 33), price is crucial in the online space as on the internet; the pricing needs to be transparent. Kingsnorth (2016, 9) argues that discounts and offers are common in the digital marketing industry; however, programs like affiliate marketing can help businesses through third parties that promote products in exchange for a commission or fee.

Place

The place is as important online as for any physical shop or business, argues Kingsnorth (2016, 11), as SEO, paid search, and the right online channels are crucial for any business in the digital space.
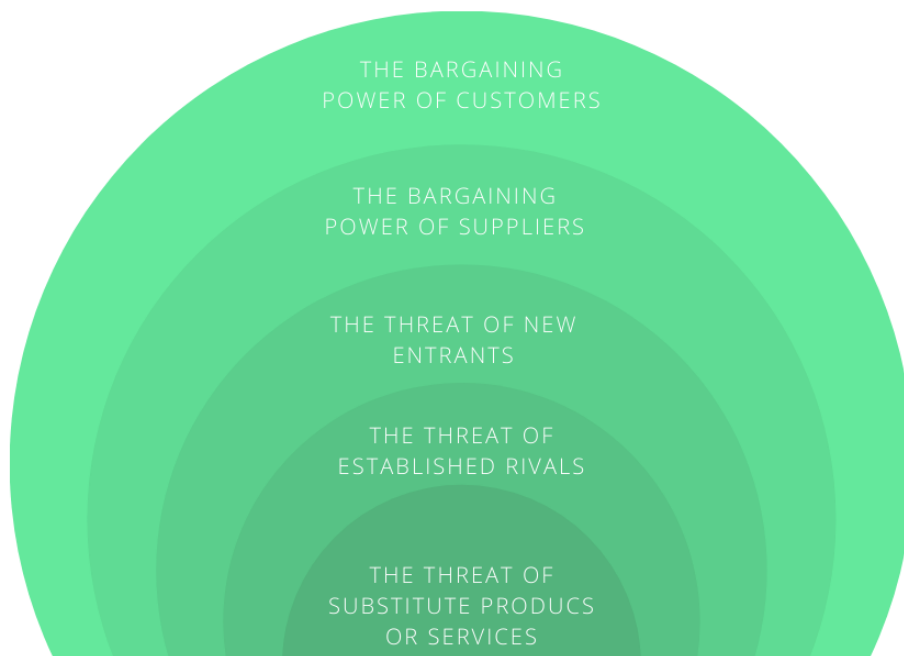
Promotion

Based on Kingsnorth (2016, 12), research promotion in the online environment is limited in terms of space and time, and this creates a need for an impactful message. According to Ryan (2014, 35), these are a few forms of online promotion available now: SEO, pay-per-click search advertising (PPC), affiliate marketing, online public relations, social media, email and mobile marketing, customer relationship management, content marketing, etc.

The following model in the marketing strategy models is Porter's five forces. According to Kingsnorth (2016, 13), the purpose of Porter's five forces is to assess the competitors and the profitability within an industry and ultimately gain a competitive advantage over the market.

The five forces of Porter are illustrated in the figure down below:

Figure 6: Porter's Five Forces

THE BARGAINING POWER OF CUSTOMERS

THE BARGAINING POWER OF SUPPLIERS

THE THREAT OF NEW ENTRANTS

THE THREAT OF ESTABLISHED RIVALS

THE THREAT OF SUBSTITUTE PRODUCS OR SERVICES

The third marketing strategy model presented by Kingsnorth (2016, 18) is brand position mapping. This map is created from the customer perspective and offers an overview of a firm and the position of its products in the market in comparison with competitors, whether in traditional marketing or in the digital space.

The fourth marketing strategy model is Customer lifetime value or CLTV, and Kingsnorth (2016, 20) states that the CLTV is the total value attributed to a customer during their whole customer lifecycle. From a digital marketing perspective, the Customer lifetime value is represented by several models such as "cost-per-click" or "cost-per-acquisition" and are used as performance indicators for promotional channels (Kingsnorth 2016, 22)

The fifth model of Kingsnorth (2016) is Segmentation which represents the segmentation of customers into different factors such as behaviors, demographics, and buying patterns. This segmentation allows marketers to target their messages and promotional content in their marketing communication. According to Kingsnorth (2016, 23), there are five forms of segmentation, respectively: geographic, demographic (gender, age, education, etc.), behavioral (buying patterns), and psychographic (beliefs, opinions, and interests).

Finally, the last marketing strategy model is the Boston Consulting Group matrix which, according to Kingsnorth (2016, 25), allows marketers to categorize the products in a portfolio by comparing them to the market share and growth. From a digital marketing perspective, this allows firms to know which products are more likely to be sold on specific channels or through different marketing methods.

By understanding these marketing models, the endeavors of setting up a digital marketing strategy and ultimately co-create a service design process to improve the case company retention and customer satisfaction are within this paper's reach.

In order to create a service blueprint for the case company, a successful digital marketing strategy for B2B environments needs to be researched by this thesis's author.

According to Chaffey (2019, 278), a digital marketing strategy has as its primary goal to grow a firm's business through customer acquisition and retention through digital devices and platforms.

According to Vieira, Almeida & Agnihotri (2019 p. 1088), the main differences between B2B and B2C digital marketing strategies are: "lead segmentation," "content delivery," and subscriber engagement" and on the contrary, B2C focuses on brand building and end-consumer journey.

Having made this distinction, it is crucial for a successful digital marketing strategy that different media platforms are not being treated like silos and managers know the difference between "digital communications components" as stated by Vieira, Almeida & Agnihotri (2019, 1089), and they are:

1. **Paid media**
   ➢ Media that must be paid for such as advertising on Facebook or Google

2. **Owned media**
  ➢ This refers to the customer activity and contact with a firm through its own website.
3. **Digital inbound marketing**
  ➢ Marketing strategies that encourage customers to voluntarily engage with a company website while the firm is aiming to match the needs of potential leads in order to transform them into customers.
4. **Earned social media**
  ➢ Earned social media represents the activity being produced by all stakeholders and customers in social media.
5. **Organic search**
  ➢ This refers to the visits, clicks, or traffic on search engines a website can acquire from organic search engine optimization or SEO or paid and sponsored links or banners.

Building a digital marketing strategy is imperative since, without it, companies are bound to miss opportunities and ultimately lose business (Ryan, 2016, 21).

According to Ryan (2016, 25), there is no digital marketing strategy to fit all companies or ensure durable success; however, a foundation of digital marketing strategy can be laid out, and these are the steps to follow:

1. Knowing the company business: is the company fit for digital marketing? Does the company own the technology or the skills to implement a digital marketing strategy?

2. Knowing the company's competitors: is the company aware of the online and offline competitors? If yes, how can the firm differentiate from the competition offering?

3. Knowing the company's customers: Is the firm aware of their customer's needs? How can the company build a long-lasting relationship with its customers in the digital space?

4. Knowing the company's goals: Does the company know what direction it's going? Does the firm have clear, measurable goals that can be achievable?'

5. Knowing the state of the company: Is the firm aware of its results and KPIs (key performance indicators)? Is the company up to date with its progress, conversion rate, traffic, and the most successful channels to stay in touch with customers? (Ryan, 2016, 24-25)

After laying down, the foundation of a digital marketing strategy Chaffey (2019, 284) brings into focus the user as the main part of the strategy and that when creating such strategy, companies and marketers should be aware of the following issues:

- Using marketing automation tools such as email mobile based on CRM information

- Harnessing a customer experience across all channels
- Maximizing results from partnerships and advertisement
- Developing the social media marketing through content marketing and paid adds

In his framework Chaffey (2019) also emphasizes the importance of implementing and managing the main strategic digital marketing initiatives such as customer acquisition, customer conversion, proposition and experience development, and customer retention and growth for a structured and functional roadmap for the future.

2.2   The fundamentals of B2B Digital Content Marketing

According to Wang et al. (2019), based on Holliman & Rowley's (2014) definition, B2B content marketing is defined as the creation and sharing of relevant and compelling content to engage customers. This is done at the exact time in their buying journey process in a way that encourages them to convert to a business outcome. According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), the B2B buying process involves many decision-makers and is defined as a multi-stage and complex process. The most crucial stage in Holliman and Rowley's (2014) view is the post-purchase stage, as B2B managers form meaningful connections with the suppliers who succeed in accomplishing both the organization's and the purchasing manager's needs.

The case company is focused on digital content marketing platforms, and according to Yaghtin et al. (2020), being active on digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram has become more important for companies as through these digital marketing platforms, companies can promote their brand and products. Yaghtin et al. (2020) argue that Content Marketing in the B2B environment is different from other marketing approaches. Instead, CM communicates relevant information and offers answers for the B2B buyers they are searching for.

Based on Rancati and Gordini (2014) studies, Yaghtin et al. (2020) indicate that the three pillars of CM are illustrated in figure 7:

Figure 7: Content Marketing Pillars

Content Marketing Pillars

Content

Customer
Engagement

Goal
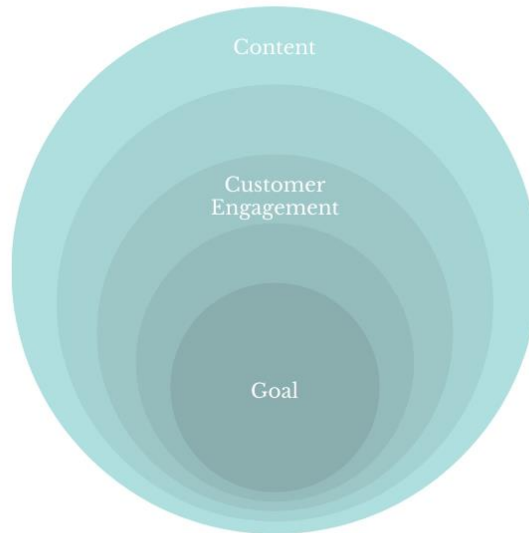
Many times, according to Holliman and Rowley (2014), customers seek a brand because of its relevant and engaging content for education or entertaining purposes. Regarding the second pillar of content marketing, Yaghtin et al.(2020) mention that customer engagement further develops the "customer-brand relationship quality" and motivates customers to purchase from the company. The goal or the third pillar of CM is identified by Rancati and Gordini (2015) as in the table down below:

Table 1: CM Third Pillar goals

Brand awareness (86%)	Customer acquisition (84%)	Sales (82%)
Retention (65%)	Lead generation (63%)	Online traffic (60%)

According to Yaghtin et al. (2020), social media channels increase customers' trust in the ability and integrity of sales managers and consequently lead to improved customer loyalty. The authors argue that Digital content marketing focuses on the factors that lead to big sales and to long-lasting customer relations rather than short-term sales.

2.3   Customer Engagement and social media for Digital Marketing agencies

To address the research questions of this paper related to customer retention, an ample view into the customer engagement field and process needs to be laid down.

Harmeling et al. (2017) argue that customer engagement has many definitions and viewpoints, and it has been used for company strategies or customer responses many times interchangeably. However, also Harmeling et al. (2017) agree that different viewpoints on this topic need to be consolidated, and they indicate that according to Vivek et al. (2012, 128), customer engagement represents "activities engaged in by the consumer that are not directly related to search, alternative evaluation, and decision-making involving brand choice."

Brodie et al. (2013, 107) specify that customer engagement represents "a context-dependent, psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic, iterative engagement processes."

According to So et al. (2014, 306), the term "customer engagement" appeared more prominently in the firm-customer relationships as customers were shifting co-creators of value and experiences forwards and having an active role to the firm value and performance rather than simply passive recipients.

So et al. (2020) indicate that customer engagement has its roots in the service-dominant logic approach and customer co-creation. So et al. (2020, 305), based on a Marketing Science Institute study (2010), indicate that customer engagement can be described as "customers behavioral manifestation" in relationship with a brand "beyond purchase" through motivational drivers like "word-of-mouth," "recommendations," "customer-to-customer interactions," "blogging," "writing reviews" and similar marketing activities.

According to Busalim, A.H. and Ghabban, F. (2021), the customers' decision to purchase a product or a service can be aligned in 5 stages, and these stages are visualized in the below figure:

Figure 8: Customer purchase decision-making process

As the case company operates in the B2B environment, Youssef et al. (2018) show that B2B organizations are more interested nowadays in customer satisfaction. Based on Sashi (2012), Pansari and Kumar's (2017) research, Youssef et al. (2018) indicate that customer engagement is based on trust and commitment, and it mostly focuses on customer satisfaction through superior value in long term-relationships.

According to Kumar and Pansari (2017, 294), engaging customers has many benefits, and they propose two tenets of engagement which are "satisfaction" and "emotion," since, according to them, engagement would happen only after a trusted and committed relationship. "Satisfaction" and "emotion" are customer engagement antecedents, and value, trust, affective commitment, word of mouth, loyalty, and brand community involvement are consequences, according to Kumar and Pansari (2017).

According to Brodie et al. (2011), as customer engagement is an iterative process, customer engagement consequences such as commitment, trust, the emotional brand attachment may be seen as antecedents.

To manage both antecedents and consequences, Kumar and Pansari (2017) propose a customer engagement matrix where the level of emotions and satisfaction can be measured. The customer engagement matrix can be better visualized in Figure 9 down below:

Figure 9: Customer Engagement Matrix

Customer engagement mix
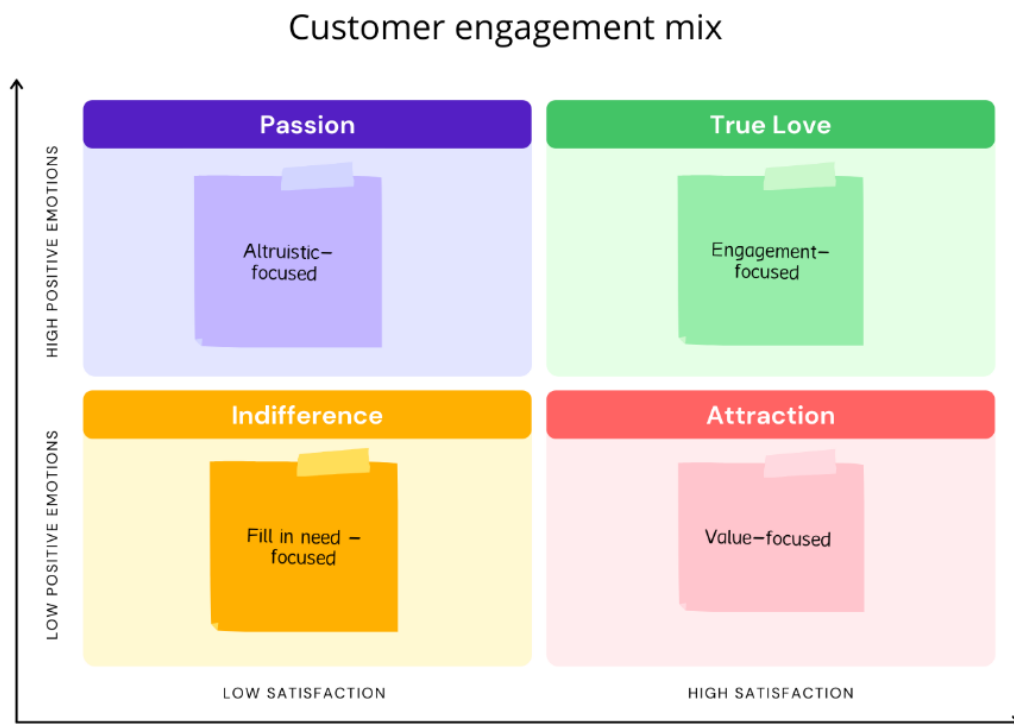
According to Pansari and Kumar (2017, 307), if the customers experience a low state of emotion, that stage is being characterized as customer indifference. Thus, at this stage, the only reason the customer engages with the firm is to "fill in a need." If the firm understands the reason for customer indifference, strategies can be developed so that the customer can move towards the high emotions-high satisfaction stages.

As per the passion stage in the customer engagement matrix, Pansari and Kumar (2017, 307) argue that customers can have a high level of emotion but low levels of satisfaction for a product or a brand. In the "Attraction" stage, "value-focused" customers are satisfied with the brand and the products purchased but have low positive emotions towards the brand. Finally, in the "True-love" stage, customers are genuinely satisfied with the products and have high emotions and expectations from the firm.

As the case company mostly operates in the social media and online environment a customer engagement through social media analysis is necessary for this theoretical framework.

According to Chuang (2020, 202), companies are trying to look more attractive to customers by using "customer-oriented technologies such as social media." Guesalaga (2016, p.75.) defines customer engagement through social media as "the extent to which the organization's important customers are active in using social media tools." Agnihotri (2020 p.292.), based on

Itani, El Haddad & Kalra (2020) and Pansari & Kumar, (2017) research, argues that customer engagement can be captured in the following stages: "Customer referral value," "customer social-influence value" and "customer knowledge value."

Table 2: Capturing customer engagement based on Agnihotri (2020) research

Customer referral value	Customer social-influence value	Customer knowledge value
Conversion of prospects into a customer by existing customers based on a reward system	Customers create social media content, blogs, reviews, comments.	Customer feedback, market intelligence, and suggestions are shared by customers.

According to Wang, Pauleen, and Zhang (2016), social media represents an important buyer-seller channel of communications, thus easing the customer engagement process. The case company of this thesis research connects with its customers' customers through social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube. According to Agnihotri (2020, 294), many companies have already integrated social media platforms into their customer relationship management, and social media and online communities offer rich customer feedback to better pinpoint customers' priorities and ultimately understand customers' needs.

2.4   Inbound marketing and HubSpot partnership strategies

The case company, Vidalico Digital, became an official HubSpot partner in 2018. HubSpot is an internet software company based in Massachusetts founded in 2006. According to Halligan and Shah (2014), the company started the transformative marketing principle - inbound marketing. This marketing methodology refers to the fact that consumers are choosing their solutions based on their own informed decision when to interact with brands (Roetzer, 2011).

Avery and Steenburgh (2020) state that HubSpot solutions are focused on business-to-business companies to help them develop online content, attract visitors, convert visitors into leads, and acquire visitors into customers. Inbound marketing comprises marketing strategies that focus on attracting customers based on their needs and during a time where potential customers were searching for specific solutions (Avery & Steenburgh, 2020).

As a standard definition, *"Inbound marketing is a strategy of connecting with potential customers through materials and experiences they find useful. Using blogs and social networking, marketers hope to entertain and inform viewers with the content they seek by themselves"* (Marketing.schools.org, 2020). To draw a parallel, outbound marketing is the

traditional way of advertising, mainly through product promotion for a larger public in the hope of receiving a response. (Dakouan et al. 2019)

According to Baltes (2016), the main difference between outbound and inbound marketing is that traditional marketing and pushing products to customers are associated with outbound strategies. On the contrary, inbound marketing refers mainly to digital marketing and winning the customer interest and capturing the customer's attention through content marketing. According to Dakouan et al. (2019), an Inbound and outbound marketing comparison is laid down by Volpe (2015) and Rancati et al. (2015), and it can be visualized in the figure down below.

Figure 10: Inbound and Outbound Marketing Comparison adapted from Dakouan et al. (2019)
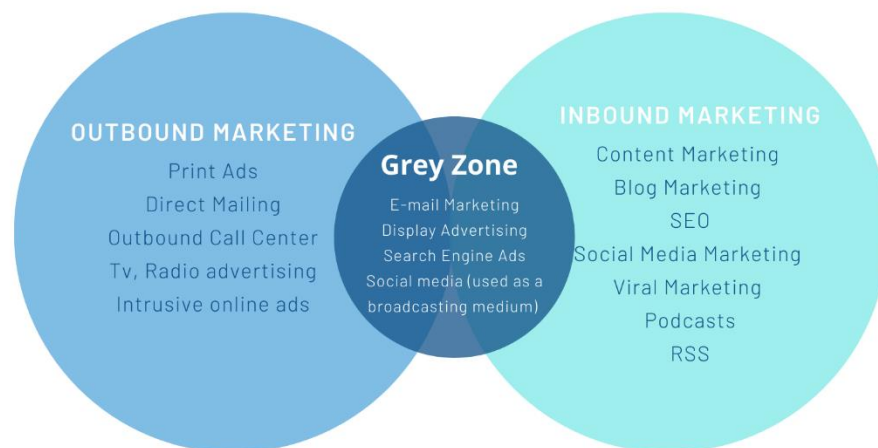
As the case company operates in the digital marketing environment, a detailed analysis of the components of inbound marketing and HubSpot partnership strategies shall be discussed in this chapter.

The concept of inbound marketing was first introduced in 2005 by HubSpot founders Halligan and Shah when the founders realized that customers didn't want to be interrupted by advertisers and salespeople, and they wanted help based on their needs (Halligan and Shah, 2014).

The inbound methodology follows the Attract, Engage and Delight phases to build momentum and convert visitors into customers. (Hubspot, 2021). These phases are well visualized in the business model adopted by HubSpot called the "flywheel" in figure 11 down below.

Figure 11: Flywheel, based on HubSpot illustration
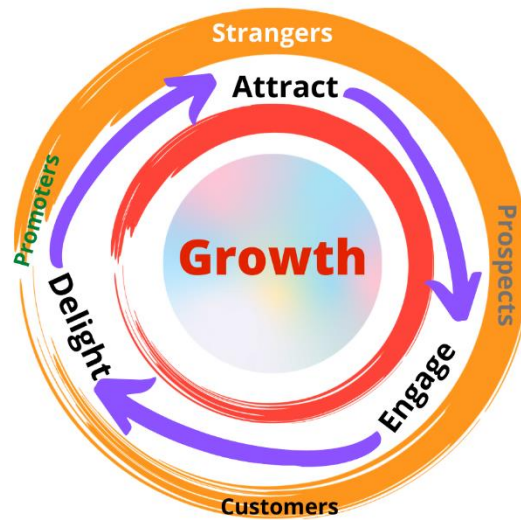
The "attract" inbound marketing strategy will reach the target audience through blog posts, content, and social media that bring value to the buyer persona (HubSpot website, 2021). In order to attract the desired audience, a well-optimized SEO strategy (search-engine-optimization) strategy for the created content needs to be established. The SEO strategy will focus mainly on keywords and related phrases linked to the products and services or the way a company intends to help the target audience (HubSpot, 2021).

After "attracting" the desired audience and engaging strategy focus on building a long-term relationship with customers through "solution selling" and communicating value for the right customers, a final step in the inbound methodology is delighting customers through surveys, chatbots, and "social media listening" up to a point they become promoters of the brand or company from which they acquired products or services. (HubSpot, 2021)

As this thesis, empirical results' outcome is to improve the case company offering and customer retention it is essential to take a look into the customer journey map that is a core fundamental in HubSpot inbound methodology.

Agius (2019) states that through the customer journey process, customers interact with a company with the purpose of achieving a goal. The customer journey is particular to the customer's physical experiences and touch point, and the best way of understanding their journey is through product development.

According to Ai et al. (2020) indicates that the basic elements of the customer journey map are the customer journey, customer behaviors, contact and pain points, emotions, and opportunities for improvement. The customer journey map offers a systematic analysis of the customer touch points in the service process by showcasing customers' emotions and customers' pains while proposing an improvement solution for each pain point to positively enhance the customer experience (Ai et al.2020).

Agius (2019) mentions that not only understanding customer journey is essential to understanding customer needs, but also customer journey mapping is needed in order to visualize how customers interact with a company's services and products by mapping out the activities customers undertake to achieve their goals.

Considering the outcome of this thesis's methodology, meaning a service blueprint to improve the case company offering and increase retention, table 3 offers an illustration of the types of customer journey maps.

Table 3: Types of Customer journey maps, Agius, 2019

Current State	Day in the Life	Future State	Service Blueprint
Journey maps that visualize the actions, thoughts, and emotions of customer experience while interacting with companies.	Journey maps visualize the actions and emotions of customer experience with companies on a daily basis.	Customer journey maps that visualize what actions and emotions customers will have in the future after interacting with a company.	Customer journey maps that combine previous journey maps and add the responsible factors for delivering the experience while including people, technologies, and processes.

After intensive research, this thesis's author discovered that besides the official HubSpot website, not much information could be found on the HubSpot partnership programs and strategies. HubSpot's main offering is free CRM (customer relationship management system), which brings customers and partners a way to collect deep customer insights for all leads and future customers (Avery & Steenburgh, 2020). By entering into a HubSpot partnership, the

partner is able to access a global community that sells HubSpot platforms and services to their clients and uses HubSpot tools to meet client needs (HubSpot, Solution Partner Program, 2021).

HubSpot partners gain access to events, press, certifications, tier badges, and training and generally a good reputation for being a HubSpot partner (HubSpot, 2021). As a partner company, Vidalico Digital had access to technical and business support, support from an Account Manager, HubSpot onboarding fee for their clients, access to HubSpot integration, visibility for a global customer shop, and additional benefits from the HubSpot tier (HubSpot, 2021). When designing the service blueprint HubSpot CRM and services will be considered in creating the service process.

3 How does customer satisfaction impact customer retention rate

To begin this chapter, a customer retention definition shall be researched by this thesis author so that a clear-cut understanding of the customer retention framework can be utilized in the development chapters of this thesis.

According to Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019, 724), customer retention represents an evaluation of the product or service quality that measures how satisfied and loyal customers are. Leventhal & Leventhal (2006, 434) argue that a company must consider the lifetime value of a customer in order to adopt a customer retention approach. Based on the author's research, lifetime value is enabled by referrals, word-of-mouth, and future purchases.

According to Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019, 726), customer retention encompasses all the practices and activities performed by a firm to satisfy its customers and build long-lasting relationships with them.

According to Gustafsson, Johnson & Ross (2005, 210), the drivers that impact customer retention are customer satisfaction, affective commitment, and calculative commitment.

- **Customer Satisfaction**

The assessment of the performance of a product, service, or offering by customers is defined as customer satisfaction (Gustafsson, Johnson & Ross, 2005).

Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019) indicate that service quality and the value perceived by customers were the main drivers of customer satisfaction.

- **Affective and Calculative Commitment**

Based on marketing scholars Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019, 211) defines commitment as "the desire to maintain a relationship," "a pledge of continuity between parties," "the sacrifice or potential sacrifice if a relationship ends," and "the absence of competitive offerings." Even if the customer satisfaction is low through these instances, a "stickiness" is created, and the customers continue to be loyal to the company's products and services (Chen, C. & Liu, H. 2019). To make a clear-cut distinction between the affective and calculative commitment, Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019) defines calculative commitment as a rational dependence towards a company due to limited choices, and on the other side, the affective commitment presumes a more emotional involvement through commitment and trust towards a firm.

As the main distinction between satisfaction and affective and calculative commitment, according to Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019), satisfaction measures performance, and affective and calculative commitment visualizes the relationship and lays down the results that enable the customers to move forward.

Based on a Gerpott et al. (2001) research Chen, C. & Liu, H. (2019) indicate that the main factor of customer loyalty is customer satisfaction which ultimately is directly impacting customer retention. Even though customers can be satisfied, ultimately, this doesn't make them loyal and prone to not churn from the company products or services. (Leventhal, RC, & Leventhal, RC (eds) 2006).

Based on Leventhal & Leventhal's (2006) research, these strategies can be employed by companies to improve their customer retention. These strategies are presented in table 4 down below.

Table 4: Strategies for Customer retention

Customer Retention Rates	The root cause of Defections	Profitable customers	Internal marketing
Measure over time and line of business	Discover why customers are churning and implement a retention customer program.	Focus on the most profitable customers and set clear cut goals	Focus on internal marketing and assess the service quality provided by the front-line employees.

To conclude, Leventhal & Leventhal (2006) writes that companies aim for long-lasting satisfied, and loyal customer relationships, as their main marketing strategy is to secure a repeatable selling or transaction model and ongoing retention supply.

4   Service offering and mapping service quality

In order to build a service blueprint for the case company, service offering, and mapping service quality need to be researched by this thesis's author.

Along with the digital revolution, Kowalkowski et al. (2019, 450) argue that firms across all industries have been disrupted by the use of digital technology to create new value-creating opportunities and adopt a servitization strategy. Kowalkowski et al. (2019, 450) state that "digital servitization" represents the use of digital tools often used in transformational stages where a firm moves from a product-centric approach towards a service-centric business model.

To lay down the foundation of service blueprinting, firstly, this paper shall discuss the notion of mapping service quality within the service quality management domain.

According to Gupta, Singh & Suri. (2018, 296) service quality represents a critical factor for business performance. The service quality provided to the end customer can be measured through various parameters, and they are as follow: "reliability," "assurance," "timely delivery," "information quality and content," "skilled manpower," "infrastructure," "usage of IT tools" and "network coverage" (Gupta et al. 2018, 296).

One of the most known service quality models introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988) is SERVQUAL which translates as the gap between the expectations and perceptions of consumers comprises quality stages: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. (Gupta et al. 2018, 296). According to Atilgan, Akinci, and Aksoy (2003, 413), these stages represent the way customers organize service quality information in their minds.

 According to Altuntas. & Kansu (2020, p.2420) in order to handle service quality in an overall and holistic manner, SERVQUAL (service quality measurement scale), QFD (quality function deployment), and FMEA (failure modes and effect analysis) need to be integrated to determine the difference between perceived and expected service quality, to assess the service design process and eliminate future and possible failures in the service delivery.

As this thesis objective is to co-create a customer-centric process to improve the existing offering for Vidalico Digital's clients in order to increase customer satisfaction and retention, service mapping and service blueprinting needs to be presented in this theoretical framework.

According to Getz, O'Neill & Carlsen (2001, 382), service mapping is constructed on the idea that customers go for tangible evidence of service when they cannot evaluate the quality of the service. Service mapping is also linked to "blueprinting," as Getz et al. (2001) indicate based on Laws' (1991) research.

Getz, D., O'Neill, M. & Carlsen, J. (2001, 382) states that *"a blueprint provides a set procedure or guidance to staff in their delivery of the service, whereas mapping the customer's experience is a way to evaluate and improve a blueprint."*

Gersch, Hewing, and Schöler (2011, 737) emphasize that in marketing service blueprinting is used to "visualize," "analyze," "organize," "control" and "develop service processes. Sickdorn et al. (2018, 53) see the service blueprint as an "extension of journey maps."

Bitner, Ostrom & Morgan (2008, 71) describe service blueprinting as a "visual notation" to showcase business processes through symbols that indicate actors and activities. According to Ryu et al. (2020, 2), a service blueprint is utilized to explore the whole picture of the service delivery from the customer's perspective. The main components of Service Blueprint, according to Bitner et al. (2008), are the following:

1. Customer actions: This includes activities that customers undergo in the service quality process.
2. Visible contact employee actions: Face-to-face service encounters with customers.
3. Invisible contact employee actions: All other activities that are performed to prepare the service process for customers.
4. Support processes: All activities carried out by individuals that are not in contact with customers but are crucial for the service process.
5. Physical evidence: All tangible interactions that customers come in contact with which can affect the customer's quality perceptions.

A similar service blueprint can be visualized in Figure 12 down below:

Figure 12: Service Blueprint based on Bitner et al. (2008) framework
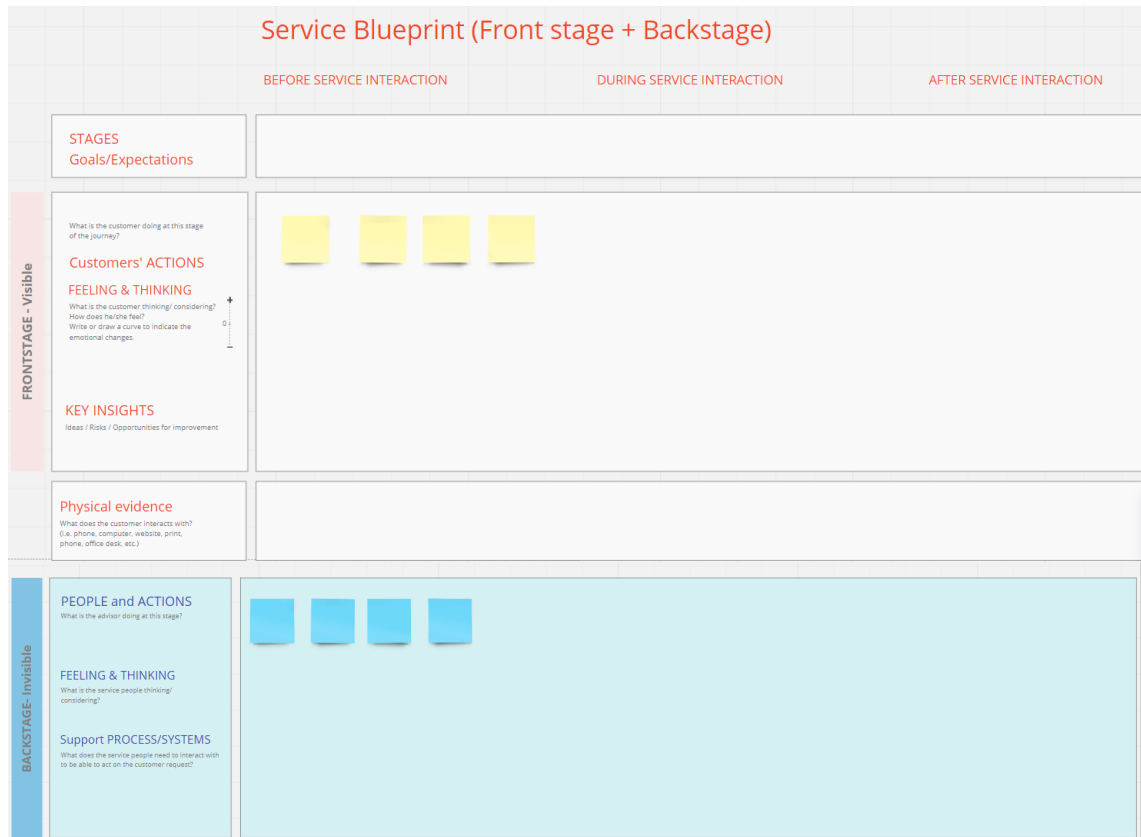
Lim and Kim (2014) argue that through conventional service blueprints nowadays, information interchanges are difficult to pinpoint as these service blueprinting frameworks present several limitations.

The structure of the information service blueprint is laid down by Lim and Kim (2014, 301-302) as follow:

1. The customer actions row represents the role of the customer in the production and delivery of information.
2. The Information row presents information such as roles, forms, features, qualities and promotes "information-oriented thinking" (Lim & Kim, 2014, 302)
3. The Information delivery system row lays down the ICT systems and the roles of employees in the production and delivery of information.
4. The Partners represent the network providers.
5. The adjacent bottom row categorizes the customer actions in the following series of stages: "Define," "Prepare," "Confirm," "Execute," "Monitor," "Modify," and "Conclude," covering the entire service process.

These seven phases that aim to accomplish customers' goals are defined in table 5 based on Lim & Kim 2014, 302 *Table 1. Seven Phases for Accomplishing a Customer Goal in an IIS Process.*

Table 5: Information Service Blueprint, 7 phases

Define
Define and plan the goals of the Information Intensive Service process
Prepare
Prepare the stage to accomplish customers' goals
Confirm
Confirm the information for goal accomplishment
Execute
Perform the main goal in the process
Monitor
Asses the information to ensure the goal accomplishment
Modify
Adjust the process for possible improvements
Conclude
Prepare for post-service actions

To conclude, a comparison between the Information Service Blueprint and the standard Backstage- Frontstage Service Blueprint was needed in order to choose the best framework for the case company. In the end, the thesis author decided to go with the Bitner et al. (2008) approach as the company does not have that many ICT systems in place at the moment of this thesis development work.

5   Adopting Service-Dominant logic value creation

The service-dominant logic thinking framework was made famous by Vargo & Lush in their 2004 article on the topic. According to Ballantyne, Williams, and Aitken (2011,179), service-dominant logic was introduced as a "counter paradigmatic" to the good-dominant logic in marketing. According to Vargo and Lush (2006), the service-dominant logic is different from the services output found in the good-dominant logic and rather focuses on the singularity of the word "service" and the act of executing a service for someone.

Lusch and Nambisan (2015) argue that in the S-D logic, goods represent tools that enable the service provider, and service is what is constantly exchanged. The authors state that service-dominant logic allows all social and economic actors the possibility to integrate operant resources (employees capabilities, partner networks, etc.) for value creation.

Based on an Edvardsson et al.2011; Gummerus 2013 and Vargo and Lush 2004, 2008 research Skålén, Per, et al. makes a clear-cut difference between G-D and S-D logic value as follows:

1. Customers are co-creators of value
2. Actors in the context are evaluators of value
3. Value is the result of actors' activities that integrate tangible resources

After publishing the service-dominant logic term, Vargo & Lush (2006) immediately revised the co-production of value into the co-creation of value with customers, which was a complete shift from the G-D logic since value was seen as an addition to products in the production process. According to Karpen, Ingo O. et al. (2012, 22), co-creating value defines as "assisting customers in co-constructing and engaging in superior experiences." Based on a Grönroos (2008) research Karpen, Ingo O. et al. (2012) argue that in the service-dominant logic framework, value is not added to a product, and it is subjective to customers perspective.

According to Karpen, Ingo O. et al. (2012, 21), the core of S-D logic is that "superior value proposition" replaces the "value provision" as the foundation of business strategy.

Thus, Karpen, Ingo O., et al. (2012, 21) research the strategic capabilities that "enhance" and "facilitate" the co-creation of value represent the competitive advantage of any organization.

Having laid down the basis of S-D, which plays an important role in the development of a new service design process for the case company of this thesis research, the field of customer retention shall be explored in the following part of this chapter.

Co-creating value with customers and stakeholders

The focus of this final theoretical framework part is to lay down the basis of stakeholder value co-creation.

Based on Mitchell, Angle, and Wood (1997) research Kornum, N. & Mühlbacher, H. (2013 p.1461) define a stakeholder as "individuals," "organizations," or "institutions" that are directly involved and have a real stake with a company and a direct impact to the company management.

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004, 8), co-creation is defined as *"creating an experience environment in which consumers can have active dialogue and co-construct personalized experiences."* Nowadays, consumers tend to engage in a more participative role in the process of value definition and creation. (Prahalad, C.K. and Ramaswamy, V., 2004.)

However, even though the customers are involved in the process of value creation, the process is not complete until the stakeholders have an active participatory role. (Gummesson, E., Kuusela, H. & Närvänen, E. 2014.) According to Lusch and Vargo (2014, p.189), co-creating value represents not only the production and delivery of value to customers but also together with stakeholders and customers to enable the resource integration and co-creation of value for all actors based on needs and perceptions of value.

As the case company mostly works with business consultants and freelancers, a multi-stakeholder's ecosystem of value creation needs to be taken into account when designing the new service design process to improve the company offering to increase the retention rate.

Based on a Pera, R., Occhiocupo, N. & Clarke, J. (2016) research, it is acknowledged that the multi-stakeholder value co-creation is not always taken into consideration as firms mainly focus on co-creating value with customers. According to Pera, R., Occhiocupo, N. & Clarke, J. (2016, 4033), stakeholders are "resource-integrators" that actively participate in the value shared ecosystem. Furthermore, companies that are inclined towards a multi-stakeholder approach are prone to secure more resources that create more value for the stakeholders (Pera, R., Occhiocupo, N. & Clarke, J. 2016).

To holistically conclude this theoretical framework, the term of co-creating value with customers and stakeholders needed to be researched by this thesis author as the new service design process will be co-created with the case company customers and stakeholders.

6   Research and Development process

The following chapters shall follow the service design process into developing a new service design blueprint to increase customer satisfaction and retention for the case company Vidalico Digital. The methods used to conduct this study shall be presented by the thesis author. The following section will dive deep into the service design field, and later the author shall present why the double diamond model was chosen as the main service design process of this study. Following chapters 6.3 and its subchapters will walk the reader through the data collection process and analysis and through each step of the service design process. This research and development chapter shall close with the workshop details, how it was organized, conducted and what was the first thought before presenting the development result.

6.1   Following the service design process to develop a service blueprint

According to Stickdorn et al. (2018, 26), Service Design is a new "human-centered," "interdisciplinary," "iterative approach" that blends user research with prototyping and visualization tools and frameworks to create experiences aimed at the business, user, and stakeholders needs. Based on a crowdsourced definition, Stickdorn et al. (2018) state that through service design, organizations can see their services from their customers' perspectives. The main service design principles created by Stickdorn et al. (2010) in his research "This is Service Design Thinking" state that service design is:

1. **User-centric**- as all services should be seen through the customers' eyes.
2. **Co-creative** - since all stakeholders need to be involved in the design process.
3. **Sequencing** - as all services need to be linked in a clear sequence of actions.
4. **Evidencing** – services need to be visualized through physical objects or illustrations.
5. **Holistic** – the whole service environment needs to be considered.

Through the application of Service Design methodology and following the design principles, new processes can be created by focusing on solving the right problem and understanding the needs of the customers rather than going straight for the solution. Drawing a parallel between service design and digital marketing, Micheaux, A. & Bosio, B. (2019) argue that service design thinking has guided marketers to view the customer from a centric perspective as co-creators of their own experiences. Service design tools such as customer personas, journey maps, and service blueprints better position marketers to understand the customers' needs and wishes (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess & Schneider, 2018).

To develop a service design blueprint that will help the case company to increase customer satisfaction and customer retention, this thesis development shall follow the Double Diamond

SD process developed by the UK Design Council, which shall be presented in detail in the following chapter.

6.2   The Double Diamond methodology approach

According to Yu (2017), there are many SD processes in the Service Design literature and mostly are based on the double-diamond model created by the UK Design Council. The double-diamond framework encompasses four phases respectively: Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver.

The Discover phase indicates the exploration of inspiration, initial ideas, and user needs a stage, while the Define phase clarifies the design problems and produces the design brief. The Develop phase is represented through new solutions and refined by a large number of stakeholders and prototype those solutions while the final phase, Deliver, wraps up the service solutions and aims at launching them (Yu, 2017, 28).

Another popular SD process approach is the Stickdorn & Schneider (2010, 120-126) framework, where the authors define the stages as "exploration," "creation," "reflection," and "implementation."

The post-popular SD processes, according to Yu (2017), are compared in figure 13 down below.

Figure 13: Service design processes frameworks based on Yu, 2017 research figure
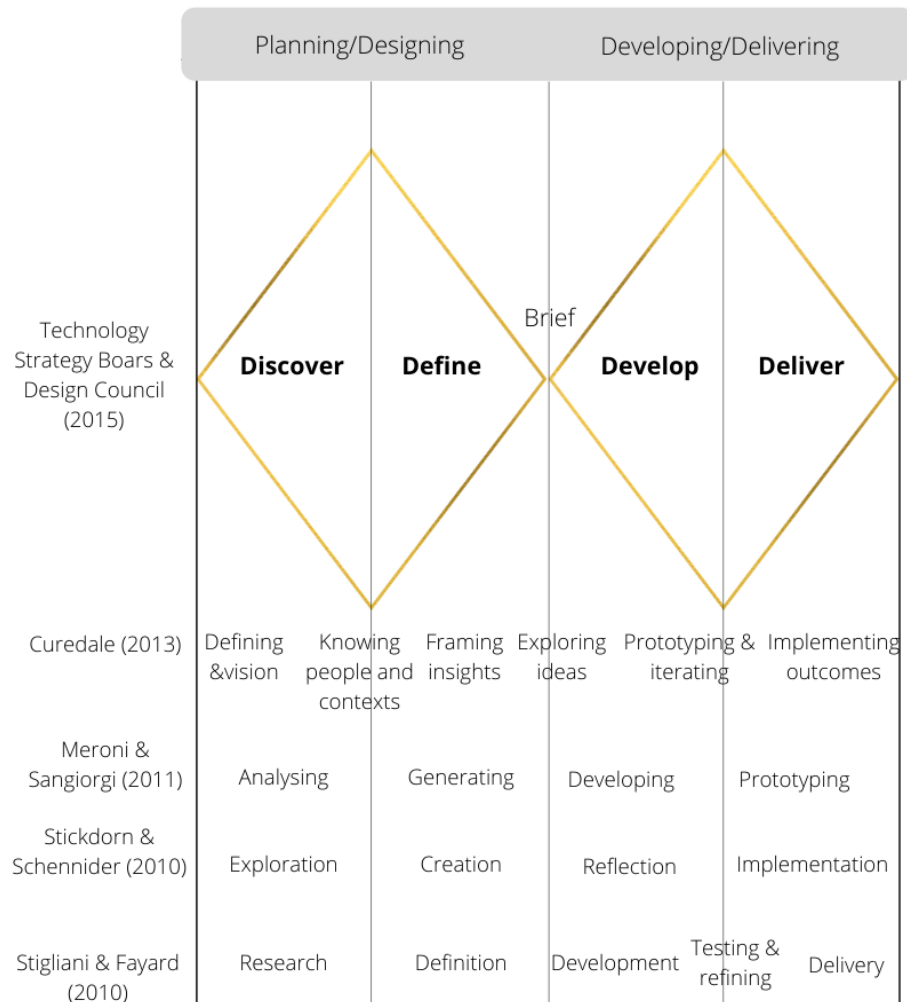
In reality, many divergent and convergent phases need to be included as the design process "interplay" between seeking opportunities and ideas and evaluating and taking decisions (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 84). As the SD process is adaptive, iterative, and never linear by nature, a linear framework is often proposed only to better understand this cyclical process (Stickdorn, 2018).

6.3   Discover & Define

The methods and tools used in this thesis are qualitative research methods to truly understand the customers' needs and identify and explore the "how and why" to obtain actionable insights. According to Tschimmel (2012), the first diamond of the Design Council

Double Diamond process comprises the first divergent stage of any project. Tschimmel (2012) explains opportunities, new information, and insights are being researched in the Discovery phase by the designer, while in the Define stage, initial project ideas and identifying the main opportunities are the designer's main priorities.

The approach to data collection in this thesis was both of primary and secondary nature. Primary data, according to Stickdorn et al. (2018), is new data collected for a specific purpose, while secondary data refers to pre-existing data collected by someone else, but it is re-used under a new purpose.

While identifying this distinction, Stickdorn et al. (2018, 117) also differentiate between preparatory and secondary research. In the preparatory research, the designer is diving deeper into the organization, its competitors, the client perspective, and overall finding the correct answers to be answered in the research. The secondary research represents the starting phase of the research process and uses existing secondary data that was initially collected with another purpose to avoid researching what has been already researched. (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 118).

6.3.1 Preparatory and secondary research

Tuulaniemi (2018) states that at the start of each project, even before the discovery phase, a good brief between the company and service designer where the goals and objectives of the projects are defined is needed. This initial brief should comprise the following (Tuulaniemi, 2011, 132 – 133, Translated version):

- The purpose of the design project
- The primary and secondary target groups of the service to be designed
- Previous information about the target groups
- The business objectives of the service
- The portfolio offered by the company
- The company's vision, mission, and business strategy
- Information on the company's market situation and the services corresponding to the service idea
- The scope, schedule, and phases of the project
- The project budged
- A general overview of the project
- Final project background information

The preparatory research phase in this thesis started with the author following the Tuulaniemi (2011) project brief list, and the first meeting booked with the CEO was already in

early March 2021, where all the brief points were discussed, and a Company Memorandum was created. Several brief meetings were organized after that as the project outcome was not clear in the beginning since we rapidly realized that many areas of focus within the case company needed to be developed, and it was too complicated to reach a conclusion; thus, we were stuck in an ideation phase.

An external business advisor and service designer helped the thesis author and the CEO of the case company to narrow down the scope and reach a positive resolution as this initial briefing phase took longer than expected. Even though in the company memorandum the initial idea was to co-design a new process to increase the customer acquisition for the case company and develop a toolkit for repeatable sales, we immediately realized that even though such a toolkit might have been developed, it would have never reached the implementation phase as the case company does not have the capability of acquiring new customers due to the lack of employees. A meeting with one of the company business advisors and service designers was held so that we could narrow down the scope and reach a convergence phase where the project members could reach a final solution.

In the secondary research phase or "desk research," the research questions, the purpose, and the aim of the thesis were created and defined.

Therefore, as in the preparatory phase, the CEO and the thesis author were stuck in an ideation phase, respectively, in the desk research phase. Therefore, they were able to iterate toward a final research path through a "quick voting method" to help them reduce options (Stickdorn et al. 2018) by picking 1 issue out of 3 different dilemmas to solve and reach out to only one possible outcome.

The customer retention problem was selected as a research path, both by the CEO and the thesis author. The main research paths can be visualized in figure 14 down below.

Figure 14: Research paths of the design brief

1. Sales success rate	2. Increase customer acquisition	3. Improving customer offering and increase retention rate
Statement Dilemma	**Statement Dilemma**	**Statement Dilemma**
The current low sales success rate prevents Vidalico Digital from growing as a business.	In the current digital marketing environment acquiring new customers has proven to be difficult for the company case.	Whether Vidalico's Digital marketing services are well tailored against Hubspot customers' needs.
Research Questions	**Research Questions:**	**Research questions.**
Q1: How has the sales success rate increased or decreased over time at Vidalico Digital?	Q1: What are the best channels to reach new customers in the current Digital Marketing environment?	**Q1**: What is the life cycle of the customer journey and what are the retention points for Vidalico to proactively plan and deliver for.
Q2: What are the current factors that prevent Vidalico Digital from closing deals successfully?	**Q2**: What are the best customer segments that match with the current company digital marketing services?	**Q2**: What are Vidalico customers' pains and gains in the customer lifecycle?
Q3: What are the best strategies to increase sales for the existing Vidalico Digital's marketing services?	**Q3**: How can the current offering package be improved to attract more customers?	**Q3**: What would be the best digital marketing offering for Hubspot clients?
Objective: Based on literature analysis and empirical data this thesis objective is to co-design a service design toolkit to improve the existing sales process for Vidalico Digital.	General Q: How have other digital marketing agencies generated brand awareness to increase customer acquisition?	**Purpose**: The objective of this thesis is to co-create a customer centric process to improve the existing offering for Hubspot clients in order to increase the customer retention.
Aim: Identify the factors that play a key role in the sales success rate of Vidalico Digital and co-create the right strategy for Vidalico to increase sales all together.	**Objective:** Based on qualitative research and literature review the objective of this thesis is to co-create a new service design process to increase customer acquisition for company case: Vidalico Digital.	The main **objective** of this thesis is to co-create with customers and stakeholders a customer centric service design process to improve the existing offering for the company case clients to increase the customer satisfaction and retention.
Looking into the followup process, automation, sales deals, project plan.	**Aim**: Identify the key issues preventing Vidalico Digital from acquiring new customers and determine the factors that attract customers to choose Vidalico's digital services.	**Aim**: Identify Vidalico's customers' pains and gains in order to tailor and validate/develop the digital marketing offering based on their needs.
Outcome:Service Design Toolkit to improve sales process		

6.3.2 Personas and Semi-structured interviews

The desk research was continued with semi-structured interviews and persona interviews conducted during the months of August and September 2021. According to Owen (2013), semi-structured interviews are the most popular type utilized in qualitative research and define as using pre-existing questions with the possibility of the researcher to explore further clarification from the interviewees.

A total of 8 semi-structured interviews were held with the company CEO, current and former customers, business advisors, and stakeholders. All the interviews were held online, and the thesis researcher needed to observe the voice tones, nuances, and facial expressions of the interviews since the body language was not possible to analyze in the online environment. The body language of the interviewees would have been useful to understand the deeper meaning behind each answer, as often time interviewees did not directly say what was on their mind.

The questions were formulated in advance and categorized in themes such as: "Customer satisfaction," "Customer value," "Service quality" and overall, the partnership and collaboration with Vidalico as the general theme of the questions.

During the interviews with the current Vidalico Digital customers, the participants were asked to identify and define what are their pains and gains in the customer lifecycle so that possible missing or existing retention points could be identified.

Interviews with former customers were conducted as well for a deeper understanding of the customers' churn reasons and why the company could not deliver its offering promise.

Also, interviews with stakeholders and business advisors were suitable as a data collection approach in this context, as the service design process needed to be looked at from a holistic perspective (Stickdorn et al., 2010).

In addition, an interview was conducted with the company's biggest client to fully understand their daily workload, the gains, and pains and the jobs to be done infirm so that we could proactively plan the final tailored solution for their customers' goals and wishes.

According to Stickdorn et al. (2018), personas are a detailed description of particular groups of people, such as customers or stakeholders, and aim at understanding the customers or stakeholders' motivations and behaviors and help the service designer to better understand their needs in order to tailor solutions that deal with real customer issues.

This persona interview was conducted so that no information regarding the case company clients would be subjected for assumption, and the customers would be directly asked on "what they are actually doing and why are they doing it" (Stickdorn et al. 2018, 211). The customer persona, goals, wishes, pains, and gains can be visualized in figure 15 down below. A similar customer persona shall be created from the customer interviews analyzed data:

Figure 15: Customer persona
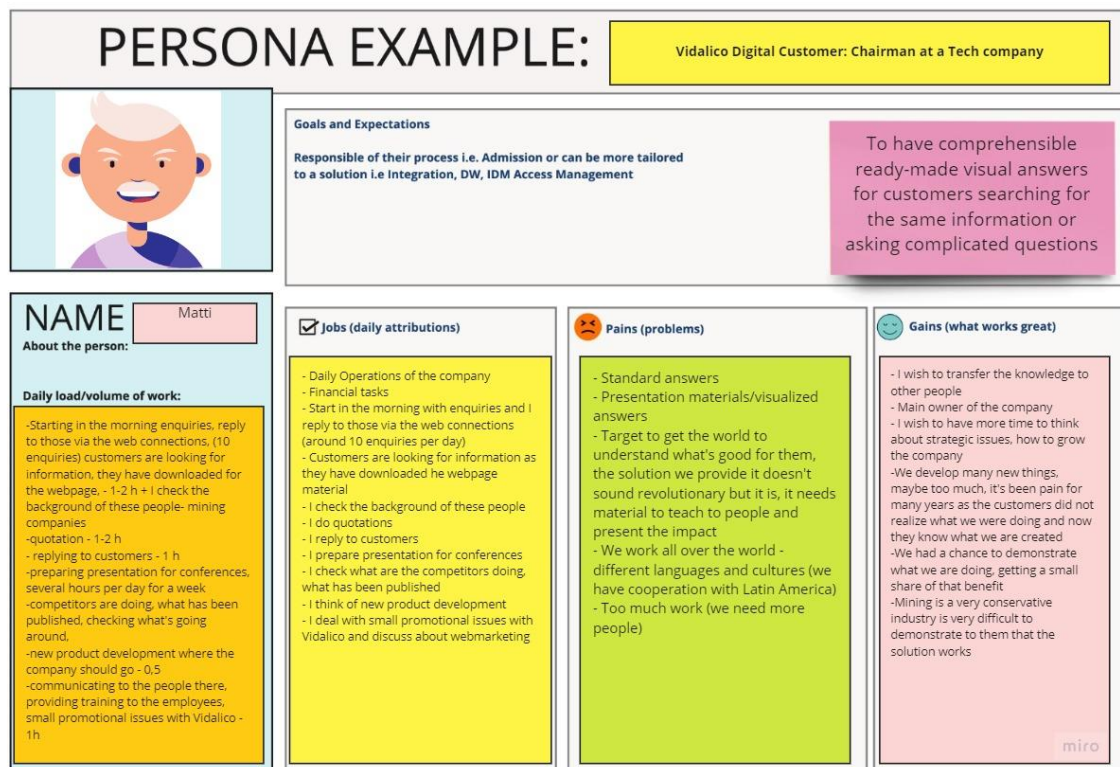
All interviews were recorded with the express consent of the participants, and they took approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher documented the interviews through hand-written notetaking and updating the questions alongside the interview's dedicated time. The gathered data were transcribed and organized in PowerPoint documents for initial data analysis.

6.3.3   Coding and Analysing the Data

Before starting the data analysis, all interviews were transcribed manually as a whole, in written format, and through the use of text editing software. According to Khandkar (2009, 23), qualitative data analysis is formed from 3 parts respectively:" noticing," collecting and thinking about interesting things."

In this thesis research, the transcribed interviews were deconstructed, and initial preliminary analysis was made. The most surprising and common features were highlighted, and initial themes were formed. In order to build concepts, Khandkar (2009) states that that data needs to be examined, compared for similarities, and broken down into pieces so that parts of the data will be marked by codes or labels. This helps the researcher to further identify these codes as a significant part of the transcript that will need further evaluation.

The codes in this thesis were analyzed based on similarities, dissimilarities, and surprising facts that resurfaced from the customers' and stakeholders' interviews, and the second line of coding was developed in order to define categories that ultimately will serve at answering two of the research questions of this study. The first line of coding aimed at labeling and highlighting actions, activities, concepts, different opinion processes, and relevant aspects the researcher found valid. The codes were grouped and categorized, and the following concepts or themes were formed as a result of the second line of coding:

- Reveal Unknown customer needs and insights
- Stakeholder insights
- CEO vision and perspective
- Customer Pains and Gains
- Existing retention points
- Missing retention points

The final key findings from all the interviews were divided into three main parts, respectively "new information" that each interviewee provided, similarities and repeated information throughout all interviews, and different insights and options that resurfaced from all the interviews.

Based on the final categories and key findings, the thesis research shall focus on only two challenges that will be further developed in the stakeholder workshop. During the workshop, a customer journey map based on customer's pains and gains shall be co-designed, and a tailored service blueprint for improving the offering based on customer's needs to help increase the customer retention rate shall be developed together with the stakeholder, and later on, validated with the customers.

6.4   Develop & Deliver

The second diamond represents the convergent stages of the project where solutions are being developed and tested with customers/ users and stakeholders through Design Thinking frameworks and tools such as scenarios, workshops, and sketches, as the designer are iterating towards the Delivery phase, where a final product or concept is tested and launched as a result of the service design process. (Tschimmel, 2012, 10).

A stakeholder workshop to ideate and develop the first concept of the service design blueprint was based on the Discover and Define research and key insights. The aim of the workshop was to brainstorm and find solutions to Vidalico's customers' pain points in the customer life cycle and propose solutions on how we may retain more customers in the future. The goal of the workshop was to fill in the ideal customer journey map so that a final service blueprint can be iterated and delivered to the company as a result of the research

development process. In addition, the stakeholder workshop had as a final objective to answer to the research question No. 1 respectively:

What is the life cycle of the customer journey, and what are the retention points for Vidalico to proactively plan and deliver for?

Together with the main stakeholders and the customer feedback collected in the Define stage, the company CEO could clearly visualize the entire customer life cycle and clarify the retention points while analyzing the customers' gains and pains and sketch out a three stages plan that will be further explained in the following chapters.

As a final and complete overview of how the double diamond process was applied in this thesis research, the figure attached down below showcases the entire service process from the initial ideation stages to the final Service Design Blueprinting delivery steps.

Figure 16: Double Diamond application in this thesis research

The Double Diamond

Based on a Double Diamond framework (Nessler, 2018)
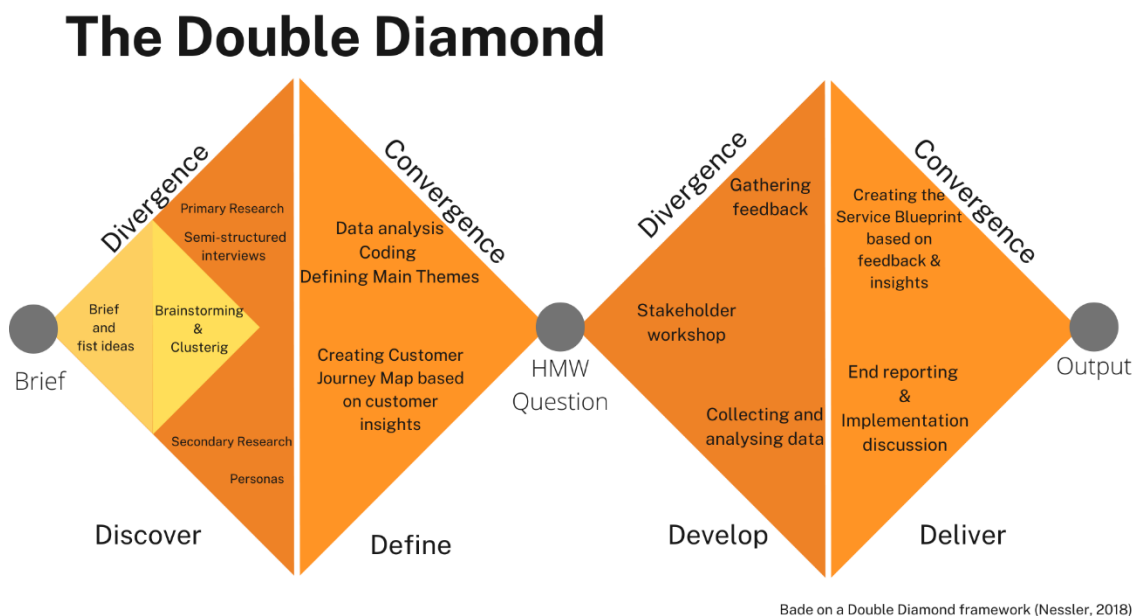
6.4.1 Stakeholder workshop

A 4-hour stakeholder workshop was held on the 6th of November 2021 at Helsinki Oodi Central Library with the company CEO, current newest employees, and business advisors. In order to introduce the participants into the divergent and convergent phases, an initial "Yes and.." facilitation exercise was held so that the group could emerge into an ideation stage.

Rapidly, after the exercise, the workshop was divided into three main parts, the first one focusing on analyzing the customer personas and discussing the most intriguing findings, and

ideate on a few solutions on how may we solve the most pressing customer pains; the second part of the workshop was focused on an already-made customer journey map that contained the current customer feedback on each stage of the offering process and highlighting the feelings, wanting and challenges of the customers in each stage; finally, the third part focused on creating an ideal customer journey map scenario for one customer persona where all the stages were reconsidered, and the stakeholders were asked to ideate on what would be the feelings, the wishes and what would the customer do at each stage in the service process.

Picture 1: Customer journey analysis: Second workshop phase

In the picture seen above, the company CEO and all the business advisors were diving into a microscopic look over the steps and drivers that determine leads and prospects to get in contact with the company and reach out for a service quote. Three types of leads were discovered respectively:

1. Companies that receive funding
2. Companies that won sales and need marketing as a service
3. Companies that get feedback from customers that their product works and have the green light to grow

It was mutually agreed in the stakeholder workshop that the company would focus on the third type of leads as these types of future customers are looking for long-term partnerships rather than a project-like work which typically happens with the customers that suddenly win sales or get big funding. Previously, the company was focusing on the first two types of leads as the conversion was done rapidly because of their need to start the project due to the newly acquired budget.

Having said that, in the following chapter, the workshop phases shall be discussed, and the workshop frameworks shall be described in detail.

6.4.2   Breaking down the workshop phases

At the beginning of the workshop, this thesis author presented the work and the research already done until the Development part, and the results revealed during the customer interviews. As previously discussed in the above chapters, the stakeholder workshop took approximately 4 hours with a lunch break in between and consisted of 3 workshop phases.

The first workshop phase lasted for 1 hour and focused on the customer personas and had as main goal identifying and discussing the customer pains and gains. The customers' personas were already created by this thesis author after holding customer persona interviews with the company customers.

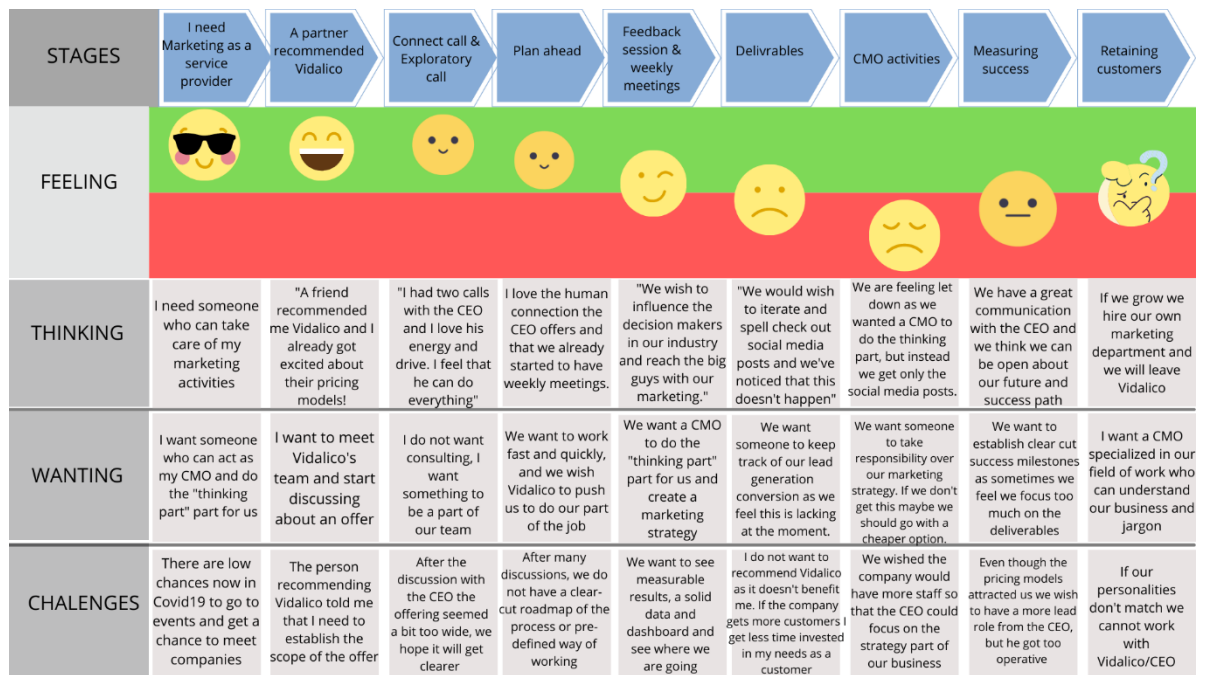Picture 2: Stakeholders analyzing the customer personas
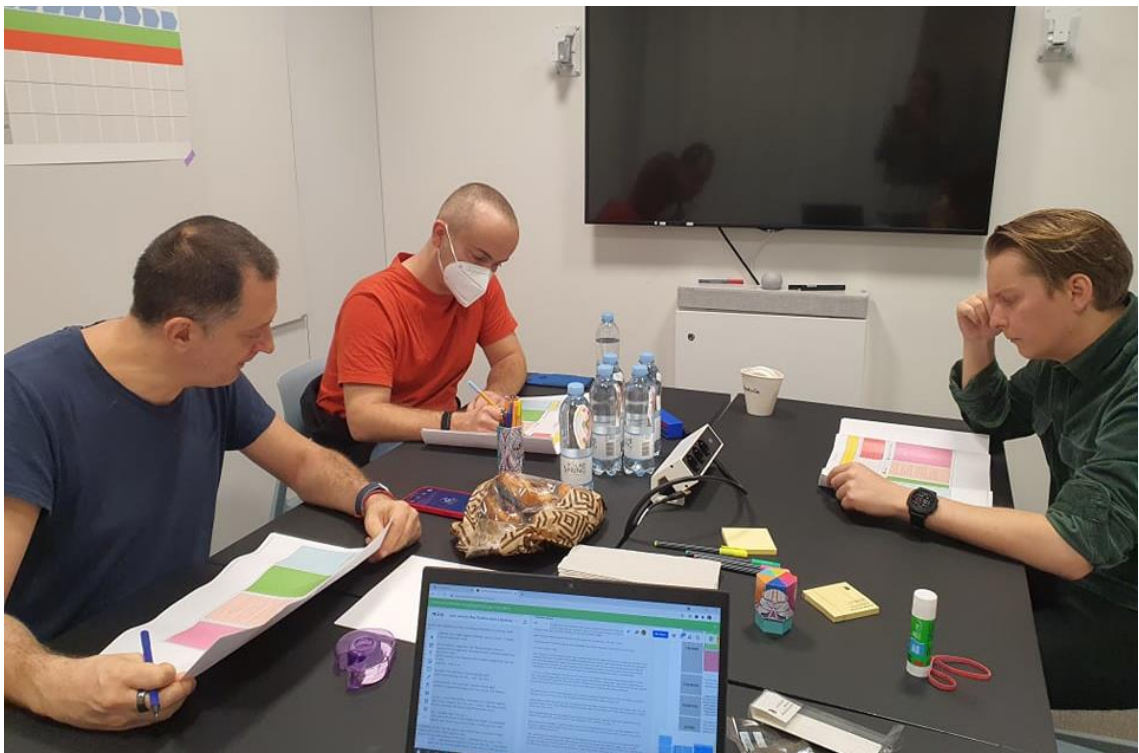
The stakeholders were asked to focus on one persona for which an ideal customer journey map shall be envisioned. The results and observations from the customers' personas shall be detailly discussed in chapter 8.

The second phase of the workshop lasted for 45 minutes and focused on the current customer journey map created by the thesis author based on the customer and the CEO interviews. In this phase, the stakeholders discussed how leads and future prospects come in touch with the need for marketing as a service. The participants also went through each stage of the customer journey map and ended up focusing on the pain points notably shown in the "Deliverables" and "CMO activities" stages. An ideation session was held to identify solutions to the current pain points that directly impact the customer satisfaction and retention rate.

The customer journey map used in the second phase of the workshop can be visualized in Figure 16 down below. This map fleshed out the customer journey stages from the initial service need stage towards the service closure, where customers decide to continue to use Vidalico Digital services or churn. In addition, the customers' feelings, thoughts, and wishes were displayed, while for each stage, the biggest challenge was pointed out for the CEO and stakeholders to note and come up with solutions for.

The customer journey map template used in this development part is an updated version of a Miro User Journey Map FlyUX by Nancy Boshuijs.

Figure 16: Customer journey map created from the customers' interviews

| STAGES	I need Marketing as a service provider	A partner recommended Vidalico	Connect call & Exploratory call	Plan ahead	Feedback session & weekly meetings	Delivrables	CMO activities	Measuring success	Retaining customers
FEELING									
THINKING	I need someone who can take care of my marketing activities	"A friend recommended me Vidalico and I already got excited about their pricing models!	"I had two calls with the CEO and I love his energy and drive. I feel that he can do everything"	I love the human connection the CEO offers and that we already started to have weekly meetings.	"We wish to influence the decision makers in our industry and reach the big guys with our marketing."	"We would wish to iterate and spell check out social media posts and we've noticed that this doesn't happen"	We are feeling let down as we wanted a CMO to do the thinking part, but instead we get only the social media posts.	We have a great communication with the CEO and we think we can be open about our future and success path	If we grow we hire our own marketing department and we will leave Vidalico
WANTING	I want someone who can act as my CMO and do the "thinking part" part for us	I want to meet Vidalico's team and start discussing about an offer	I do not want consulting, I want something to be a part of our team	We want to work fast and quickly, and we wish Vidalico to push us to do our part of the job	We want a CMO to do the "thinking part" part for us and create a marketing strategy	We want someone to keep track of our lead generation conversion as we feel this is lacking at the moment.	We want someone to take responsibility over our marketing strategy. If we don't get this maybe we should go with a cheaper option.	We want to establish clear cut success milestones as sometimes we feel we focus too much on the deliverables	I want a CMO specialized in our field of work who can understand our business and jargon
CHALENGES	There are low chances now in Covid19 to go to events and get a chance to meet companies	The person recommending Vidalico told me that I need to establish the scope of the offer	After the discussion with the CEO the offering seemed a bit too wide, we hope it will get clearer	After many discussions, we do not have a clear-cut roadmap of the process or pre-defined way of working	We want to see measurable results, a solid data and dashboard and see where we are going	I do not want to recommend Vidalico as it doesn't benefit me. If the company gets more customers I get less time invested in my needs as a customer	We wished the company would have more staff so that the CEO could focus on the strategy part of our business	Even though the pricing models attracted us we wish to have a more lead role from the CEO, but he got too operative	If our personalities don't match we cannot work with Vidalico/CEO

For the third and final phase of the workshop, an ideal journey map was created. However, in the ideation phase, the participants deviated from the required task, and the facilitator had to constantly bring them to focus on the ideal dream scenario as the participants were naturally sketching out a service blueprint.

Three phases in the customer life cycle were identified by the stakeholders as they discovered together that the most requested phase by the customers, respectively CMO as a service, is the phase the company wishes to move away from.

The company wishes to completely switch to a different customer target renouncing all together at start-up customers and focusing on companies that have a turnover of 1 MEUR or more. In addition, the company envisions a future where they will be focused more on selling HubSpot services rather than having such a wide offering.

This final workshop phase took more than 2 hours, and together the stakeholders created the journey map that will build the foundation for the service blueprint. The final service design blueprint represents the living tool on which the company will build its future strategy for the next following years. The goal of this final stage of the workshop was to acquaint stakeholders and the CEO with an ideal or dream-like scenario where the challenges and pain points have been taken into account and can be resolved through deliverables and clear customer feedback.
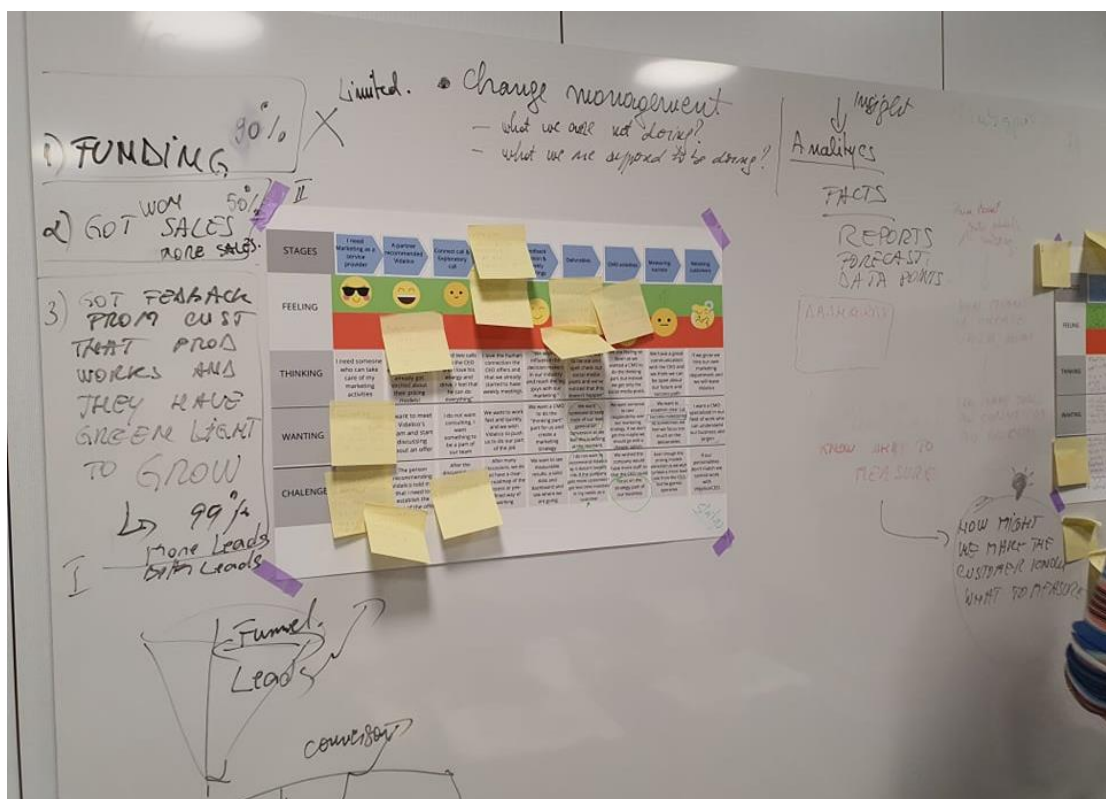
Picture 3: Moving towards the final part of the stakeholder workshop

The stakeholders adopted a free way of inputting the final dream-like scenario and used several papers to note down their customer life cycle stages; thus, the facilitator had the job to collect all the papers and ideas and cluster them together in order to create the final version of the service blueprint.

6.4.3 Creating and Delivering the Service Design Blueprint

According to Pandey, A. & Kulshrestha, R. (2021), through service blueprinting, difficulties in the service system can be recognized, and solutions on how service performance can be developed are visualized through image representation. Since this representation of the service flaws was required in the Vidalico customer life cycle and envisioned in the Deliver stage of the Double Diamond approach, a complete Service Design Blueprint was co-created with the main business advisors of the company after the stakeholder workshop.

The final service design blueprint was created in the Miro online software, and a blank template accompanied by the finalized version was handed to the company CEO at the end of November 2021. The blank template was offered to the company for future updates and changes in the service design process and serves as the foundation model for the future customer journey maps and service blueprints to be designed by the company stakeholders and employees.

<u>Components of the Service Design Blueprint</u>

This service design blueprint has four main components, respectively, services stages, "frontstage" representing customer steps, deliverables or touchpoints, and the "backstage" relating the CEO, employees, and stakeholders' actions and steps. All components and sub-actions shall be explained in detail, and each part of the service design blueprint showcased part by part due to its considerable size.

    a) Service Blueprint Stages: This relates to the main customer life cycle stages that both the customers, CEO, employees, and stakeholder need to go through during the service process.

    b) Front Stage steps: These are the actual activities that are visible to the customers and through which the customers need to go in order to complete the service process.

    c) Deliverables or touchpoints: This refers to the actual physical products/services or interactions between the customer and the company. They can vary from Discovery calls to Budget proposals.

    d) Backstage steps: This represents the actions that are not directly visible to the customers, mainly performed by the company CEO, its employees – in this case, the Account Manager, and by external stakeholders.

Figure 17: Final version of the service blueprint
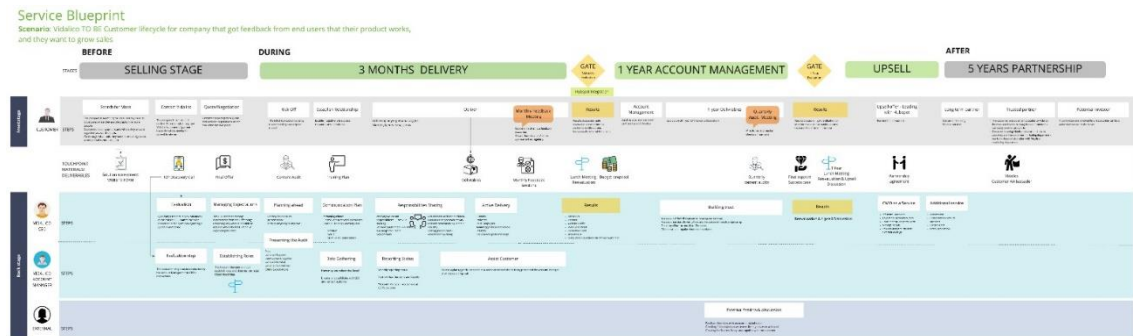
In Figure 18 attached down below and linked to the Appendix of this thesis research rapport, a few main components can be noticed and shall be explained in detail in this chapter. Due to the service blueprint resolution and size, the analysis shall be displayed in sections starting with explaining the "Front and Back Stage," "Scenarios," and the initial "Selling stage." The blueprint was created for the following five years, hence the length of the template.

Figure 18: Types of customers and Frontstage
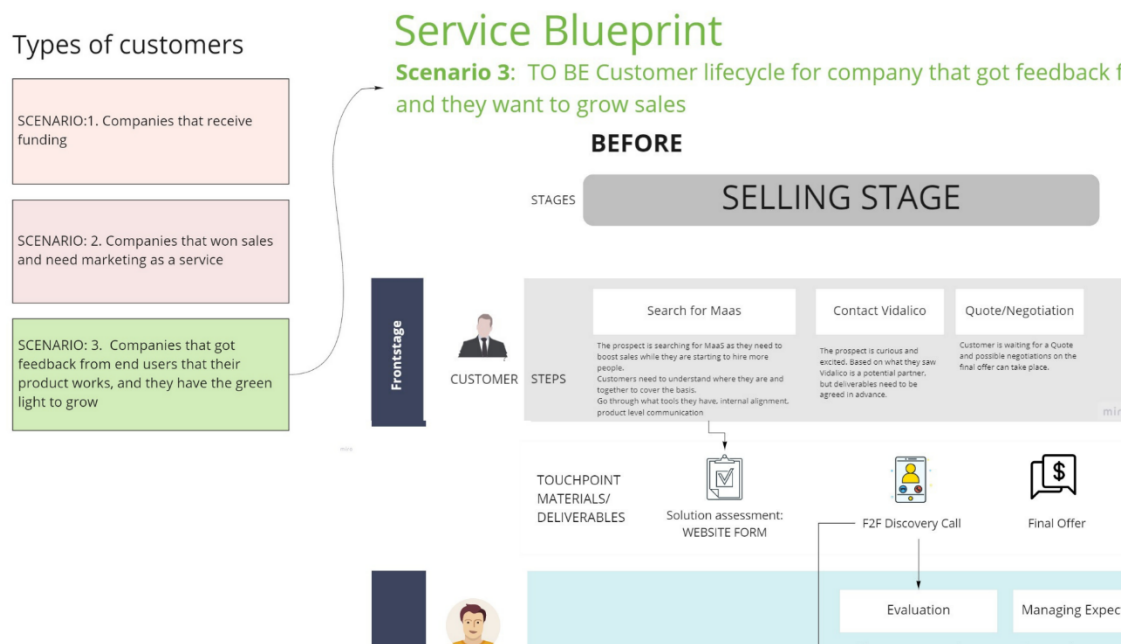
Before even mapping out the service blueprint, the ideal scenario was chosen by the stakeholders, as from 3 types of customers, the workshop participants chose to focus on companies that received feedback from their end-users that their product works, and they have the green light to grow.

As explained in chapter 6.4.1, these customers are the ones that are most willing to continue with the Vidalico service package even after the first three months' initial contract. All the stages shall be analyzed down below, and for each phase, the frontstage, the deliverables, and the backstage shall be detailly explained.

<u>Selling Stage</u>

In the Selling Stage of the service blueprint, the prospect/future customer is in search of MaaS (Marketing as a Service) in their growth endeavors. After interacting with Vidalico's website from the first Discovery call is being booked by the company CEO, and the Evaluation phase is started where the needs and customer goals are addressed, and the expectations are addressed and managed. In the quote and negotiation stage, the customers await the final offer.

In the frontstage, the CEO and Account Manager are managing the expectations when creating the final offer proposing only what is possible to achieve within the next three months or one year, depending on the offer. At the same time, the Account Manager and the CEO establish the roles and sketch the initial Client Roadmap.

<u>3 Months Phase</u>
Figure 19: 3 Months Delivery
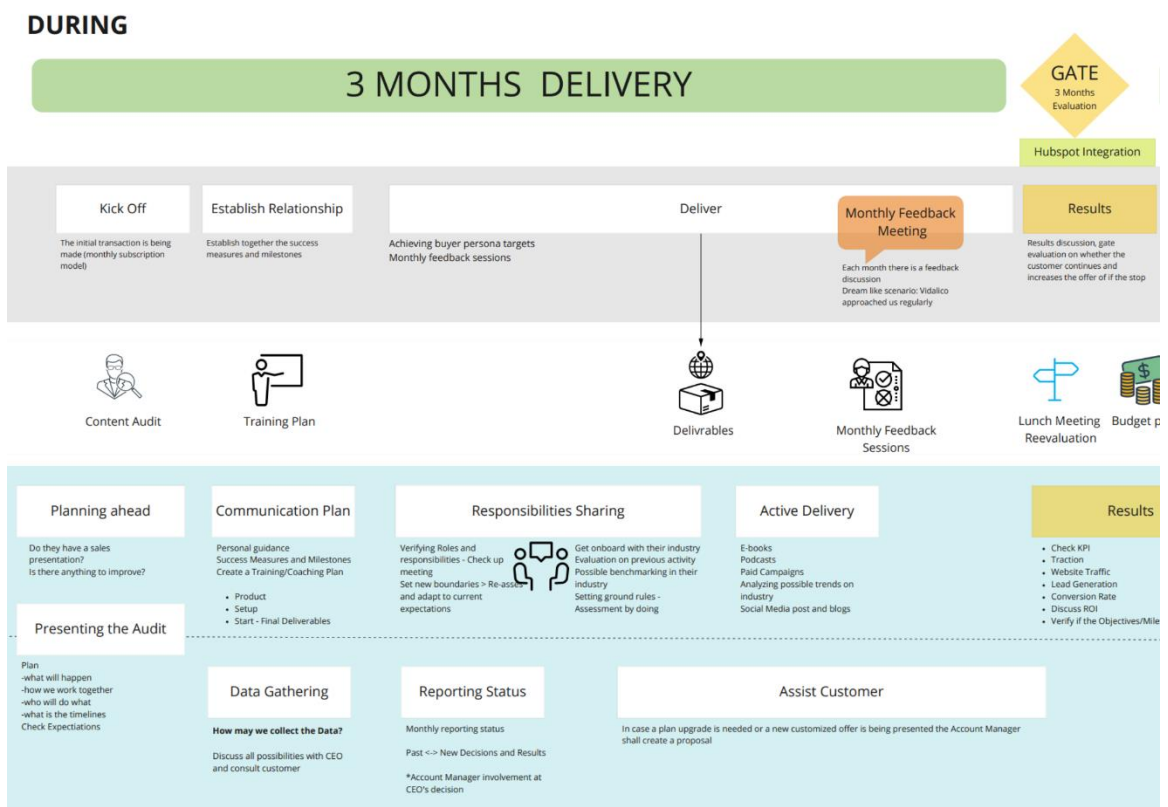
In this first three months of delivery, the customer goes through a kick-off period where the CEO and the Account manager plan together with the customer on what would be the service design milestones and the final deliverables.

During this phase, a content audit shall take place, and a clear-cut presentation shall be delivered to the customer on what will happen, how the work shall be conducted, who will be in charge of the process flow, what is the expected deadline and what are the main expectations. During this phase, the Account manager and other stakeholders shall be collecting all customer data, and each month they will present a reporting status with the past decisions and results.

At the end of this three months delivery or customer work period, the final agreed deliverables shall be implemented with the customer, and the final results analyzed and discussed in the reevaluation lunch meeting. Throughout these three months, both in the frontstage and backstage monthly feedback discussions shall be planned well in advance, and the final deliverables and the entire service process shall be evaluated and iterated together with the customer.

The final active delivery and deliverables are to be decided by the customers, but they can consist of e-books, podcasts, videos, paid campaigns, social media posts, and blogs, etc. The account manager shall be ready from the very beginning of the service process to help the customer with HubSpot CRM integration and assist the customer in case of any upgrade plan is being presented.

1 Year Account Management

After the three months of delivery, the results are being presented, and together with the customer, the company CEO verifies if the objectives were met, and checks the KPI (key performance indicators), the website traffic, lead generation conversion rate, and discusses the three months ROI (return on investment. An additional budget proposal for one-year account management is suggested to the client with the note that HubSpot integration should be implemented if it was not already integrated in the three months delivery period.

 During this 1-year, trust is built between the customer and Vidalico, and quarterly content audits are being conducted by the case company stakeholders and employees. Regular feedback meetings are standard practice in the customer life cycle. After one year of Account management, a final rapport success case is being written or filmed and posted on the company website, and handed over to the client.

A final gate evaluation is being conducted at the end of the year to verify if the customer wishes to continue and to increase the offer or to stop working with Vidalico. This gate evaluation is taking place in the 1-year lunch meeting evaluation and upsell solutions.

Figure 20: 1 Year Account Management phase
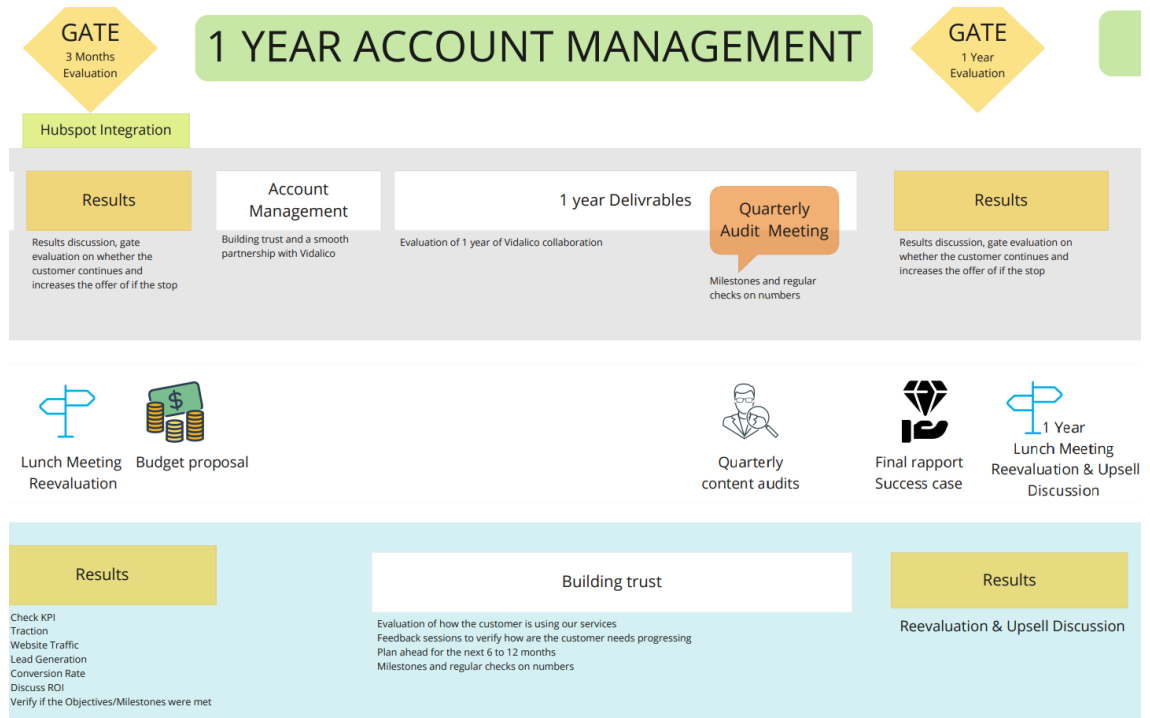
Upsell & 5 years partnership stage

Finally, the upsell offer is being presented by the Account Manager and the company CEO, where HubSpot CRM and integration are a must in the service package to ensure continuous growth and a unique customer experience.

In the Upsell phase, a partnership agreement is signed, and the CEO can offer his services under the "CMO as a Service" package where he directly influences the customer decisions, and more responsibility is placed on the CEO's agenda and role. Additional services might be suggested and encouraged during this upsell phase in a customizable way to ensure the customer's needs and goals are being accomplished.

A long-term of approximately five years or more is being run where the final aim of the case company is to transform the customer into an ambassador or promoter of Vidalico services. During this time, the customer marketing department works in close contact with Vidalico as an integrated part of the team. All in all, if this type of customer is nurtured until such a

trusted partnership is established, a potential investor partner might be involved in the future in this way, solving the initial case company need of a Co-partner investor.

In Figure 21, the final stages of the service blueprint can be visualized. As currently, in 2021, the case company has one Account Manager and mostly works with stakeholders and free-lancers; there was a visible limitation on the timeline and stages this thesis author can foresight based on the stakeholders, and customers feedback, and key insights.

Figure 21: Final stages of the Service Blueprint
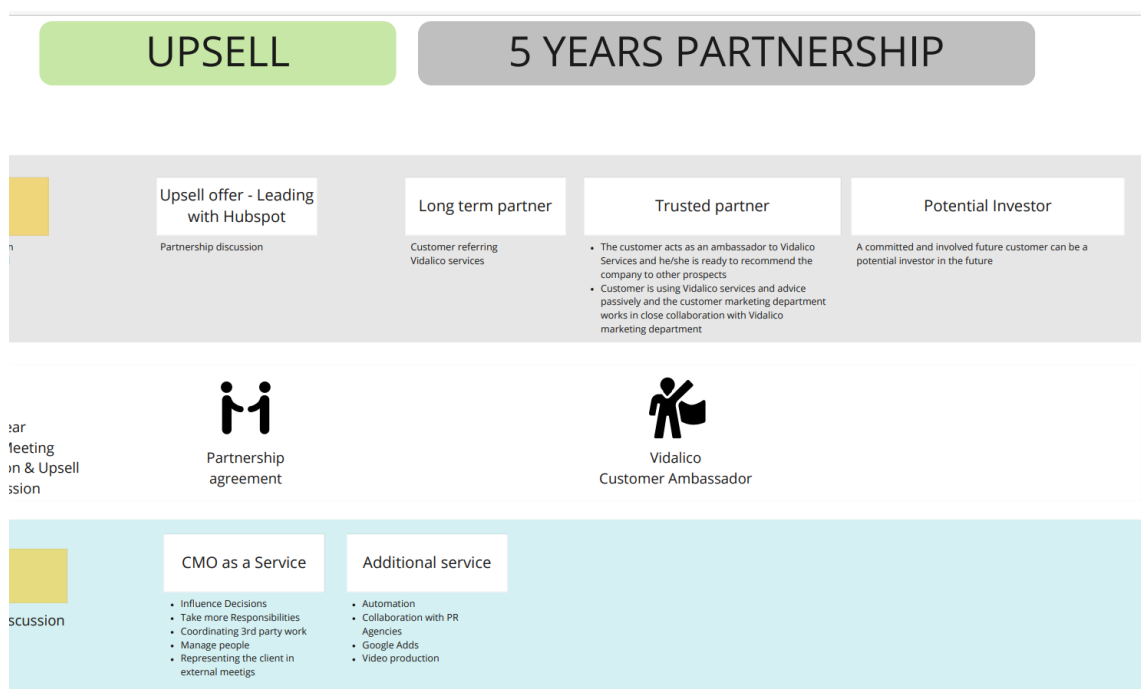
6.4.4   Final reflection and workshop summary

Even though the workshop was set to last only 2 hours and a half, a clear need for more time to discuss the pressing issues of the case company customers was a significant motivation to increase the length of the workshop. One week before the workshop, an interview results session was held with the CEO, and after that meeting, it was rather clear that a different approach needed to be taken.

 At the end of the workshop, a clear-cut plan was established that together with the team, the company offers should be re-evaluated and narrowed down, and the focus of the offering should be "leading with HubSpot service," according to the stakeholders.

Finally, it was decided that the customer target group should be focused on companies with a turnover of 1 MEUR or more so that the team's creativity and digital marketing solutions won't be compromised by the lack of budget. A further discussion for an additional workshop with the stakeholders that focuses on the new target group customer persona was planned and shall be conducted outside of this thesis research. The future workshop and the following steps and processes to increase customer satisfaction and customer retention rate shall have the service design blueprint co-developed with the company stakeholders as the growth pillar.

7   Results

The purpose of this study was to develop a Service Blueprint to improve the case company offering, to positively impact customer satisfaction and retention. This is done while aiming to identify the customer's pains and gains in order to validate the offering based on customers' needs.

Circling back to the "Mountain symbol" of the purpose, aim, objective and research questions that needed to be achieved, the disposition of the results in this study shall be following this figure. Hence, the research questions shall be answered initially, and each segment of the mountain shall be addressed in the following chapters.

Figure 22: Mountain symbol" of research study and development work
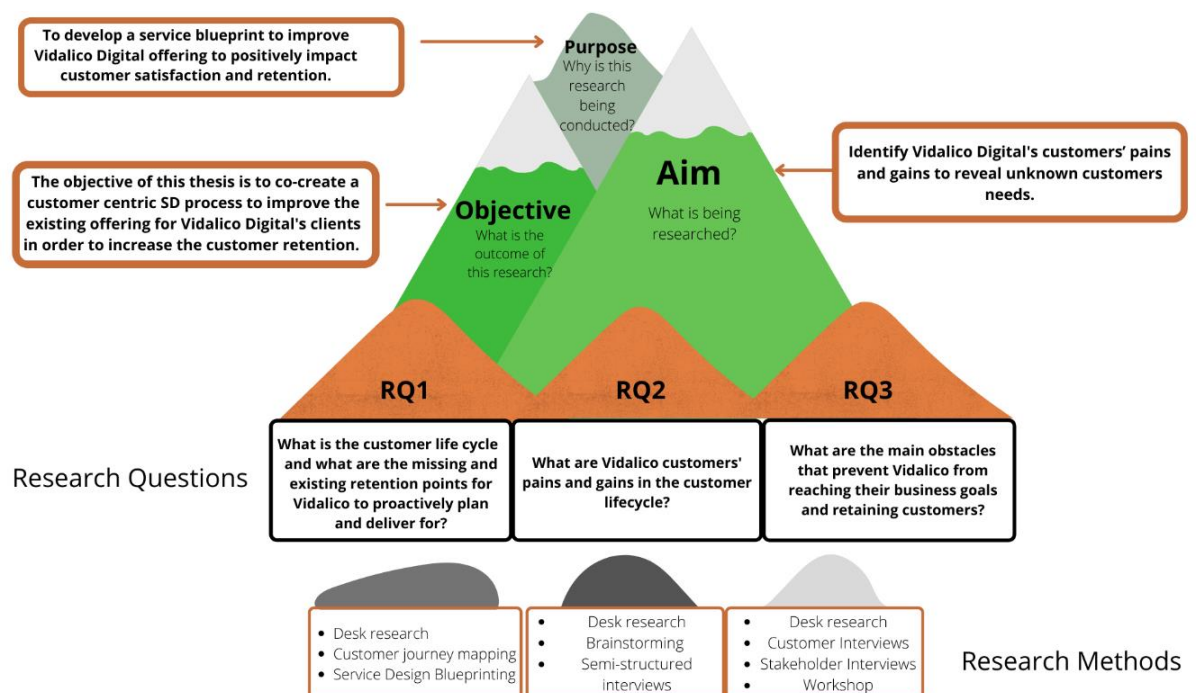
7.1   Missing and existing retention points

The interviews conducted for this study and the final stakeholder workshop were designed with the purpose of finding answers to the three research questions, and ultimately to support achieving the aim and objective of this study:

RQ1: What is the life cycle of the customer journey, and what are the missing and existing retention points for Vidalico to proactively plan and deliver for.

RQ2: What are Vidalico customers' pains and gains in the customer life cycle?

RQ3: What are the main obstacles that prevent Vidalico from reaching its business goals and retaining customers?

According to Sandberg and Alvesson (2011), producing innovative research questions will reveal unresolved problems, challenge old assumptions, and create interesting theories. All research questions were generated from the real case company need of empirical findings surrounding these unresolved challenges.

After interviewing the CEO and former employees, it was revealed that the customer journey was not clear nor mapped out. Since these steps were not defined, there was no knowledge on what the existing and missing retention points in the customer life cycle are, so that the company couldn't proactively plan nor deliver according to when the customers are ready to continue or leave Vidalico services. For this reason, a clear-cut understanding of the customer journey needed to be mapped out with the customers so as to unveil the existing and missing retention stages in the service process.

Figure 23, briefly also presented in chapter 6.4.2, showcases the real customer journey map and the exact stages in which the customer expectations and goals are not met, and they decide to terminate the service.

Figure 23: Customer journey map

STAGES	I need Marketing as a service provider	A partner recommended Vidalico	Connect call & Exploratory call	Plan ahead	Feedback session & weekly meetings	Delivrables	CMO activities	Measuring success	Retaining customers
FEELING									
THINKING	I need someone who can take care of my marketing activities	"A friend recommended me Vidalico and I already got excited about their pricing models!	"I had two calls with the CEO and I love his energy and drive. I feel that he can do everything"	I love the human connection the CEO offers and that we already started to have weekly meetings.	"We wish to influence the decision makers in our industry and reach the big guys with our marketing."	"We would wish to iterate and spell check out social media posts and we've noticed that this doesn't happen"	We are feeling let down as we wanted a CMO to do the thinking part, but instead we get only the social media posts.	We have a great communication with the CEO and we think we can be open about our future and success path	If we grow we hire our own marketing department and we will leave Vidalico
WANTING	I want someone who can act as my CMO and do the "thinking part" part for us	I want to meet Vidalico's team and start discussing about an offer	I do not want consulting, I want something to be a part of our team	We want to work fast and quickly, and we wish Vidalico to push us to do our part of the job	We want a CMO to do the "thinking part" part for us and create a marketing strategy	We want someone to keep track of our lead generation conversion as we feel this is lacking at the moment.	We want someone to take responsibility over our marketing strategy. If we don't get this maybe we should go with a cheaper option.	We want to establish clear cut success milestones as sometimes we feel we focus too much on the deliverables	I want a CMO specialized in our field of work who can understand our business and jargon
CHALENGES	There are low chances now in Covid19 to go to events and get a chance to meet companies	The person recommending Vidalico told me that I need to establish the scope of the offer	After the discussion with the CEO the offering seemed a bit too wide, we hope it will get clearer	After many discussions, we do not have a clear-cut roadmap of the process or pre-defined way of working	We want to see measurable results, a solid data and dashboard and see where we are going	I do not want to recommend Vidalico as it doesn't benefit me. If the company gets more customers I get less time invested in my needs as a customer	We wished the company would have more staff so that the CEO could focus on the strategy part of our business	Even though the pricing models attracted us we wish to have a more lead role from the CEO, but he got too operative	If our personalities don't match we cannot work with Vidalico/CEO

The key results from the customer journey map were the following:

- In the initial stages, the customer is feeling very positive about the case company, as usual, customers come from good referrals, and they immediately get in contact with the CEO. Even from the beginning, it was clear that the expectations and the scope of the offer need to be clarified as this is the main reason the customers' needs are not met during the service delivery period.

- After the service agreement had been signed, the results showed that the customer still does not have a clear-cut road map with success milestones planned out. In addition, the CEO has oversold his services with the intent of making the customer happy; however, it was rapidly discovered that the CEO does not have the resources and the capabilities to deliver all the additional services promised in the initial proposal. The customers need a CMO to actively plan and think of their marketing strategy, but since there was no one to execute on the deliverables, the CMO activities have been gradually excluded from the service process.

- The final stage of the service process revealed an unsatisfied customer who is ready to move on to another service provider or to hire their own marketing manager. The customers mainly want a vast package that contains the CMO as a service option in addition to active deliverables such as social media posts, blog posts, e-books, email marketing, direct marketing campaigns, and other digital marketing services. This is a direct result of the initial oversell proposal, unclear expectations, and milestones.

Even though the communication between the customer and the CEO has been great through the whole service process, the customers feel that they want to work with someone who understands their field of business, their needs, and professional jargon. The customers stop working with the case company due to a strong personality mismatch meaning that if the CEO and the customer's personality do not resemble, eventually the collaboration agreement will naturally stop sooner than later.

- Finally, based on the customer and stakeholder interviews, the average customer life cycle can vary from 3 months to approximately one year.

<u>Missing and existing retention points</u>

Based on the customers' interviews and workshop findings, the missing and existing retention points are:

<u>Existing points</u>

- Customers are encouraged to continue the partnership with the case company due to the regular face-to-face feedback meeting and open communication.
- The CEO has done a fantastic job of keeping the customers accountable for their online presence by pushing and encouraging them to be active on social media.
- The pricing model, which is based on a monthly subscription, is one of the reasons customers decide to start working with the case company and continue the partnership later on, as it offers them a clear way to budget in advance.
- Most of the time, a strong friendship is being developed between the CEO and the customers, and this represents another reason why customers prefer to continue the case company services due to the easy-going customer relationship.

<u>Missing points</u>

- Customers become anxious about the company's lack of personnel resources, and they are in constant fear of being neglected.
- Marketing as a service might work if the company or CEO is an expert in the domain providing the MaaS as; if this is not the case, the company can "hit the wall" of experience and not fully understand the customers' needs in the area. Because of this, many customers decide to go with a specialized CMO in their business areas.
- The company is struggling in a vicious cycle, meaning that if the company helps the customers grow and acquire more revenue, the customers eventually hire their own marketing department leaving the case company.

- Many customers believe the business is not scalable as it is so dependent on whether the CEO and customer personalities match.

In order to proactively plan and deliver the service offering together with the company stakeholders, these existing and missing points were the main focus when designing the service blueprint. As a result of these revealed missing retention points, the CEO hired an Account manager and is planning to expand the team to ensure the customers feel listened to and their needs and wishes are being addressed throughout the whole service process. In addition, the results served as a confirmation that a major change needs to be implemented so that the company can finally grow and leave the current unscalable cycle in which it operates.

7.2 Identifying customer pains and gains

The second research question is directly linked to the aim of this study which is to identify Vidalico Digital customers' pains and gains to reveal unknown customers' needs. In addition, in order to arrive at these key findings, the author of this thesis aimed at discovering the company's strengths and weaknesses according to customers' and stakeholders' interviews.

To better evidentiate this, a parallel shall be drawn in the table down below between the CEO point of view and the stakeholders and customers insights on the company strengths and weaknesses.

Table 6: Parallel between CEO's and Customers & Stakeholder visions

CEO's vision: Strengths	CEO's vision: Weaknesses	Customers and Stakeholders' vision: Strengths	Customers and Stakeholders' vision: Weaknesses
Extremely tech-savvy Looking at marketing in a holistic way Very agile and quick to experiment Extremely fast in communicating	There is no co-partner to support the CEO vision and growth ambitions It is very hard to find someone with a similar skill set and matching personality to the CEO.	The human connection the company can provide is unique The CEO has a very easy way of connecting with people	Lack of people; the company needs more personnel to grow The current business model is not scalable, and change needs to be addressed

Have lower costs due to the lack of personnel		The CEO is bold and quick to experiment and easily adapt to any project The CEO is a fantastic public speaker and a great motivator of people	It is very hard for the CEO to follow through with a plan and see it to a completion It is hard to build trust between prospects and the CEO due to the wide offering skepticism and mismatching personalities.

RQ2: What are Vidalico customers' pains and gains in the customer life cycle?

During the first brief-up discussions, the customers' pains and gains were not known to the Company CEO, and moreover, there was an assumption that there is nothing the company can improve in terms of customers relations and the belief that the customers are very satisfied with the current service offering. However, the customers and stakeholders' interviews and the stakeholder workshop revealed that customers have many pains and unaddressed needs in the service process. Many of these pains and gains identified by the thesis's author throughout the development processes were eye-opening to the company CEO and current new employees.

Interviews & Workshop identified customers' gains

- Flexibility, transparency, and attractive pricing models
- Working closely with the team is done in a lean-agile way
- The great process of setting up the basic structure and for deliverables
- Regular feedback meetings and open discussions
- Smooth team integration
- Esteemed view over the team's professional capability, energy, and capability of getting things done

Interviews & Workshop identified customers' pains:

- The customers' products are hard to explain to non-expert people outside their field, and this has proven to be problematic when planning the marking campaign

- The case company would need to improve its capability of keeping track of data
- The pricing models cannot be fully measured as the "thinking part" cannot be quantifiable
- The customers are not willing to recommend the case company as it does not benefit them since the case company has such low time resources
- Customers are anxious as they know that the small team has extended the resources to so many customers
- The offer is too wide and not clear, and many customers have expressed their need to understand what the case company does and doesn't

According to the theories presented in chapter 3, Gerpott et al. (2001) indicate that the main factor that positively impacts retention is customer satisfaction. The results of this research validate the fact that customer satisfaction is the main reason customers leave the case company.

Using the Leventhal & Leventhal (2006) framework for strategies for customer retention presented in chapter 3, a few observations can be drawn:

Customer Retention Rates: Prior to this research, the main focus of the company was to acquire new customers living under the belief that the current customers were satisfied. The qualitative research revealed that the customer retention rate is low due to the project-based type of customers, unclear roadmap, and milestones.

The root cause of Defections: The main reason customers were leaving was because of the wide offering, unclear expectations, and overselling services. The first implementation of a retention customer program is now being discussed with the company business advisors and new employees, with the service blueprint as the living tool of keeping track of the customer journey and retention points.

Profitable customers: It was immediately revealed that clear-cut goals were not set with the customers and that customer acquisition was prioritized by the case company. Because a clear focus on the most profitable long-term customers was not set, many customers decided to leave when they were feeling neglected and anxious that the company might take new clients.

Internal marketing: From the CEO and former employee interviews, there was a clear understanding that not enough time and effort was put into internal marketing as all the resources were dedicated to the customers. Since the company is scoping down the offering, more time has been allocated to the case company's own marketing, and a thorough assessment of service quality shall be held monthly by the front-line employees.

In addition to answering the third research question, which directly supports the purpose of this study, the reveal of unknown customers' needs must be addressed to achieve better customer retention and satisfaction.

7.3 Revealing unknown customers' needs

RQ3: What are the main obstacles that prevent Vidalico from reaching its business goals and retaining customers?

In order to answer the final research question revealing the unknown customers' needs will offer clarity on why the company has failed to grow and achieve its business goals throughout the years.

Advanced Marketing needs

It has been revealed during the customers and personas interviews and the workshop that customers have a strong need to recognize the international market and influence the decision-makers of their industry. In addition, many feel that a direct marketing campaign and shot and impactful stories will allow them to get access to the big players of their industry.

Many customers are in the success and rapid growth phase of their business; thus, the lack of time is a big issue for many of the case company customers. Because of this, many feel the need for smart rapid digital marketing solutions and believe that the advertising work could be done by the case company.

It was revealed that during the 2020 pandemic, an increased need for promotional videos is a must, and many customers are expecting help from case companies with the preparation, knowledge transfer, and industry jargon translation. However, the qualitative data indicates that more human resources and specific capabilities are needed in order to help the customers with these advanced marketing requests.

Direct customers' needs

Customers admitted that they would feel more at peace if the company had more employees so that the CEO could focus completely on the marketing strategy and the "thinking part" of their business rather than the deliverables.

In addition, customers wanted to see advanced measurable results, such as traction, metrics, and KPIs, and have solid data and dashboards to have a clear marketing goal from the beginning.

All in all, as it was revealed that all interviewed participants, both customers, stakeholders, and former employees, mutually expressed their concern regarding the wide and unstructured company offering. Everyone wished for a more focused offering since the company is losing customers' trust with such a wide offering and so scarce resources.

"When you are good at everything, you are not good at anything" - Company Stakeholder

Having said that, the workshop and the final service blueprint uncovered the main obstacles that prevented Vidalico from succeeding as a business, and they are the following:

- **The power of structure** – According to Karabag & Berggren (2014), a structure directly impacts business performance. The results of this development process directly prove that structure is the main business performance indicator. The CEO of the company started the company as a free-lancer and never stopped to set up a clear business strategy and structure his way of working. Because of the initial lack of structure years later, the effects can be visibly seen by the company customers who repeatedly reported the unstructured company processes.
- **Unscalable business model** – Even though the CEO was aware that the company was trapped in a vicious cycle now, the empirical data proved that the current business model is not scalable, and change must be addressed. Scoping down the offering, changing the target group, setting clear expectations, and having a solid structure were the main focus points that were included in the service blueprint co-designed with the company stakeholders.

7.4   Summary of results

When analyzing the theoretical framework, the results, and empirical research, if the reader would need to fully understand the "why" behind the slow growth of the company and the customers leaving, the thesis author can summarize the following key findings that can be visualized in figure 23 down below:

Figure 24: Summary of results
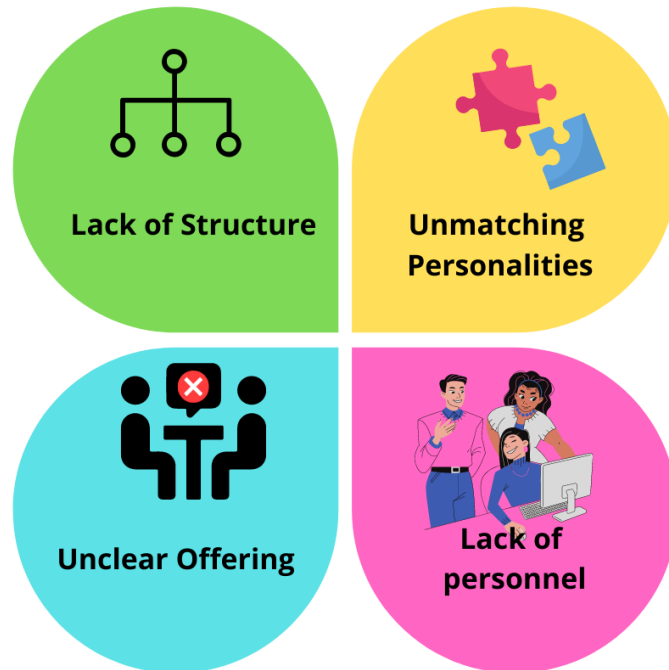
- Clear lack of structure in company services processes is the main reason customers leave.
- The entrepreneurial and high experimenting nature of the company employees does not match with all types of customers personas.
- The wide and unclear service offering created different customers' expectations leaving the customers disappointed.
- The lack of human resources and a co-partner that matches the current CEO skills and drive to succeed is a must in order to grow and offer the customers the assurance their needs are being addressed.

The final service blueprint was handed to the company CEO, and the framework was already taken into use; however, due to the current lack of customers, the prototype and validation stage in the service process was left out of this thesis boundaries.

It was agreed with the company CEO that the service blueprint performance should be reviewed after a year for accurate feedback and data. In addition to the service blueprint,

the final research package with the customer journey maps, personas, and anonymous interview results were handed over to the company.

8   Summaries and conclusions

The aim of this research study was to identify the case company customers' pains and gains and reveal unknown customers' needs. This aim was set up with the intent of holistically understanding the real reason why the customers are not continuing with the company services even after they grow and succeed as a business. Consequently, the objective of this thesis was to co-create a customer-centric service design process to improve the existing offering for the case company's clients in order to increase customer retention. As a result, through the purpose of this thesis, a service design blueprint for improving Vidalico Digital offering and positively impacting customer satisfaction and retention was developed in the end.

The knowledge base is aimed at understanding the B2B digital marketing environment and the defining the strategies for service offering and mapping out service quality. Furthermore, the theoretical framework focused on looking at how customer satisfaction impacts retention and understanding the role of service-dominant logic for value creation.

8.1   Discussion, limitations, and results transferability

The thesis work was jeopardized because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and limitations; thus, the development work has suffered from not having the opportunity to meet the customers and stakeholders in person. All the interviews were held online, and many insights "got lost in the translation" on online communication platforms. In addition, as the perception of time and productivity has drastically changed, the customers and stakeholders were very reluctant to participate in a face-to-face workshop on a weekend day.

The decision to hold an in-person workshop was a direct result of the countless customer feedback discussions where customers were saying that online workshops and events are not something they are willing to participate in, and they are waiting for the world to come back to normal. However, when inviting the customers to this workshop, no customer was willing to attend, thus instead of the customers and stakeholders' workshop, it was decided to focus only on the stakeholders' input and later validate the results with the customers.

Demonstrating the usability and good use of the final deliverables of the development process to the case company has proven to be difficult, and mostly the customer feedback and results were based on assumptions. Only after the interviews were conducted, both customers and

the CEO understood the benefits of having analyzed qualitative data and receiving clear-cut results then all parties became motivated to actively participate in the development process.

Service Design frameworks and tools were never used by the case company, and due to the lack of structure and processes, there was a clear resistance towards these design thinking tools that would naturally showcase the flaws in the service process. During the workshop and seeing the frameworks at work, the CEO agreed that tools like customer journey maps and service blueprints need to be the "living-breathing" pillars for a more customer-centric offering.

In terms of limitations, credibility, and usability of the results, the low number of customers and active stakeholders posed the main research problems when the development work started. Furthermore, the case company had little influence on whether customers or stakeholders would participate in this research study even though it directly benefited them.

Many tech companies cut marketing resources during the pandemic, which according to Quelch and Jocz (2009, 52), is normal behavior that companies exhibit in times of crisis. As a result, this directly affected the case company as, during 2020, the team had to juggle with limited budget, a world of uncertainty, and direct need of change and adapt to the online environment.

Because of so many limitations, the results could be applied to small digital marketing agencies or micro-companies as it offers valuable information on why clear value propositions and structured processes have a crucial impact on the whole startup life cycle and even after the firm is well-established.

As final recommendations for the case company, the presented service design blueprint needs further development and to be validated with the future new target audience since this was left outside of thesis boundaries.

Each deliverable and customer interactions stage might need further revision, and several stakeholders could be added to the backstage processes. The service blueprint can be transferred to the case company's customers for process alignment, but the service environment of the customers' needs must be carefully re-designed to meet their business goals in order to have a well functional living service design tool for both new customers and new employees need to be onboarded to the new process, and further development must be applied from project to project.

Being now aware of the power and importance of structure, the case company should align its team with clear roles and responsibilities and together work towards achieving the customers' goals while setting clear expectations throughout the service process.

8.2   Further research

This thesis showcases a clear need to position customer retention to its rightful place of importance with customer acquisition. However, further research on customer retention strategies is needed, especially when researchers warn companies of the cost differences between acquiring new customers and retaining customers (Jobber and Fahy, 2004).

Opportunities for research on HubSpot strategies and how to demonstrate the importance of well-established CRM processes exist. Even the current case company's customers still use spreadsheets and other customer relationship management tools; thus, a clear indication of the benefits of using HubSpot is still to be better showcased.

Placing this thesis research in a wide context, further research on the importance of structure and strategy for startups or small marketing agencies is highly recommended by this thesis author. This thesis research has showcased that an idea only is not enough, and to grow a business, a well-planned strategy and clear goals need to be established.

Even though the thesis author in this study has not researched the applicability of the service design approach in startups, researchers claim that the role of service design in startups remains mostly "unexplored" (Korper et al. 2020, 303).

Breakthrough research might be achievable if it could be demonstrated whether or not service design methodology could be universally applied in such a fast-changing environment as startups. This could be realized through further service design projects and using the results of this thesis, which has as a case company a digital marketing startup that operates in an innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

As a future research case, following the service design blueprint being validated with future customers and holding further customer workshops and interviews to develop the framework would benefit the case company.

Looking back at the company memorandum created in March 2021, the initial project proposal was to co-design a new service design process to increase customer acquisition. The project's initial purpose was to develop a toolkit that will generate a repeatable sales combination of tailored services that will bring the most sales and profit when the case company achieves the resources and capabilities to look forward to a large customer base research project could be initiated.

Combining and comparing the results of the acquisition research project with the results of this thesis, the next fellow researcher would be able to investigate deep customer insights and gain a 360-degree understanding of how to acquire and retain customers while maximizing profit.

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10   Figures

11 Tables

Pictures

12 Appendices

Customers Interview

Vidalico partnership

When was the first time you heard about Vidalico?

How did you get in contact with Vidalico? What was the first meeting?

When did you decide to choose Vidalico as a marketing service? Why Vidalico and not another competitor?

Talking about competitors: Was there anyone else you considered and why?

Could you walk me through regular interaction with Vidalico services?

How satisfied are you so far with their offerings?

Are you using their Hubspot integration? What do you like about Hubspot? Is there anything you would wish to have in the Hubspot offering?

If you would change anything from their processes, what would it be and why?

Customer satisfaction

How does Vidalico's current solution deliver to your needs?

What is the part of the Vidalico service you are happy?

Is there anything that you are not happy with currently?

Customer value

How does the value received from Vidalico's services help you achieve your goals?

What do you think of your collaboration with Vidalico?

How do you feel about the pricing model of Vidalico's service?

Service quality

How would you describe Vidalico's services' current performance within your industry?

What features would you like to see in Vidalico's marketing services in the future?

What are the limitations of Vidalico's services you see?

Where would you like to see improvement in the future? The in-service performance or service features?

Do you face any challenges in communicating with Vidalico and their partners?

Customer engagement

What does Vidalico as a brand mean to you?

How would you describe your company relationship with Vidalico?

Based on the results you have achieved with Vidalico marketing services, would you recommend it to other businesses?

Why would you or wouldn't you?

Retention

Where do you see your collaboration with Vidalico services in 5 years?

How would you describe Vidalico's customer support? Is there anything you would like to have differently?

How often does Vidalico request customer feedback? How quickly does this feedback get implemented?

Would you like to receive more services in the purchase package, such as training/education programs or videos?

As we have reached the end of this interview, is there anything you would like to add?

Stakeholder Interview

- For example, how would you describe his workflow and process in a project?

- How did the case company measure success in the project instead of how you were measuring it?

- How was the customer interaction?

- Could you maybe share what the company's goals, values, and vision are from your perspective?

- Could you describe the type of customers that are currently with Vidalico?

- What do you think Vidalico needs to grow and succeed as a business?

- And as far as you know, is there anything missing from the current process and offering that case company is putting out there for customers.

- Was there something that was working well or something that you wouldn't change or?

- What would you say Vidalico's biggest strengths and weaknesses are?

- Are you familiar with maybe the pricing models, service offering, customer journey, and deliverables they put out there? If yes, is there anything you would improve or change in that?

- Could you give advice or share a few ideas on how Vidalico could improve its offering and retain more customers even after the company's growth?

CEO Interview questions (From several briefs)

How does a typical day as a Founder/CEO at Vidalico go?

How does the typical process of a lead convert into a customer look-like?

What does the customer journey look like?

Could you provide me with some stats? How many leads, opportunities/prospects, what is the bounce rate, click rate, churn rate?

What is your experience with social media? How many leads (approx..) come from Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Youtube/Tiktok etc. Paid search? Organic search? Referrals/Recommendations/Word-of-mouth? Email marketing? Influence marketing

How can we make the agency more profitable? What would make the agency more profitable in your vision?

What can be done to improve client relations?

What can you do personally to improve your performance and value to the agency? What can your stakeholders do?

 How would you strengthen employee (your) training and education provided by the agency?

 What are the top priorities in the agency that are improving the efficiency, value delivered to clients and profitability? Why were these priorities/tasks chosen in the first place?
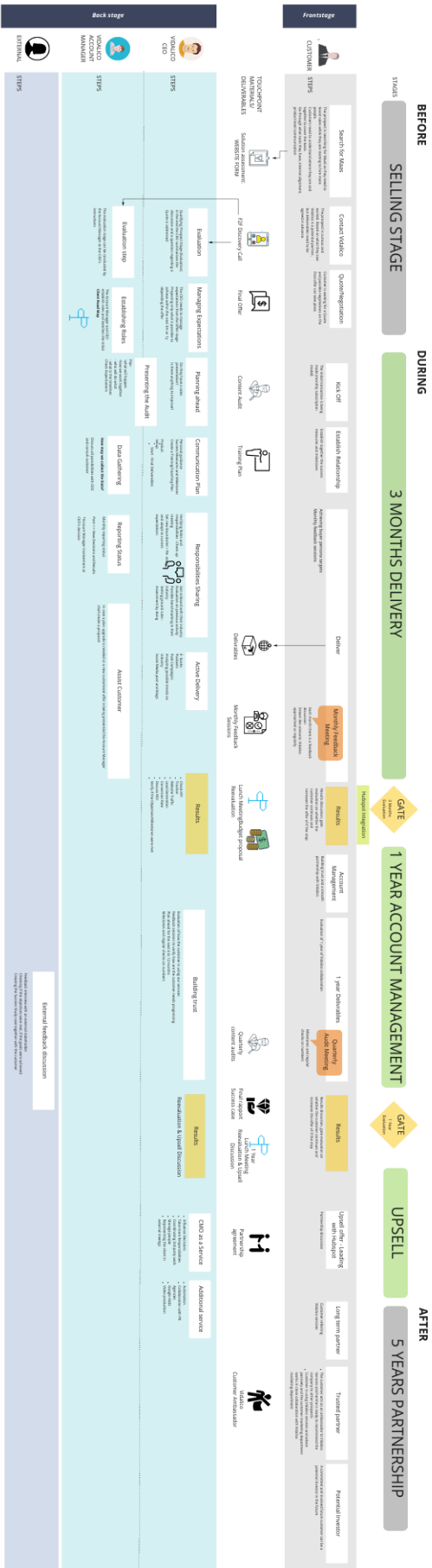
What are the greatest strengths of Vidalico? What are your greatest weaknesses?

The Service design Blueprint

Service Blueprint

Scenario: Vidalico TO BE Customer lifecycle for company that got feedback from end users that their product works, and they want to grow sales

	BEFORE	DURING		1 YEAR ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT	AFTER	
STAGES	SELLING STAGE	3 MONTHS DELIVERY			UPSELL	5 YEARS PARTNERSHIP

Frontstage

CUSTOMER

Steps: Search for Maas · Contact Vidalico · Quote/Negotiation · Kick Off · Establish Relationship · Deliver · Results · Account Management · 1 year Deliverables · Results · Upsell offer: Leading with Hubspot · Long term partner · Trusted partner · Potential investor

Touchpoint materials/deliverables: Solution assessment: WEBSITE FORM · PDF Discovery Call · Final Offer · Content Audit · Training Plan · Deliverables · Monthly Feedback Sessions · Lunch Meeting/Budget proposal · Quarterly content audits · Final report, Success case · 1 Year Lunch Meeting, Reevaluation & Upsell Discussion · Partnership agreement · Vidalico · Customer Ambassador

GATE Hubspot Integration

GATE 1 Year Evaluation

VIDALICO CEO

VIDALICO ACCOUNT MANAGER

EXTERNAL

Back stage

Steps: Evaluation · Managing Expectations · Planning Ahead · Communication Plan · Responsibilities Sharing · Active Delivery · Results · Building trust · Results · CMO as a Service · Additional service

Preparing the Audit · Establishing Roles · Data Gathering · Reporting Status · Assist Customer

Monthly Feedback Meeting

Quarterly Audit Meeting

External feedback discussion

Customer personas

PERSONA EXAMPLE:

Vidalico Digital Customer: Chairman at a Tech company

Goals and Expectations

Responsible of their process i.e. Admission or can be more tailored
to a solution i.e Integration, DW, IDM Access Management

To have comprehensible ready-made visual answers for customers searching for the same information or asking complicated questions

NAME Matti

About the person:

Daily load/volume of work:

-Starting in the morning enquiries, reply to those via the web connections, (10 enquiries) customers are looking for information, they have downloaded for the webpage, - 1-2 h + I check the background of these people- mining companies
-quotation - 1-2 h
- replying to customers - 1 h
-preparing presentation for conferences, several hours per day for a week
-competitors are doing, what has been published, checking what's going around,
-new product development where the company should go - 0,5
-communicating to the people there, providing training to the employees, small promotional issues with Vidalico - 1h

☑ Jobs (daily attributions)

- Daily Operations of the company
- Financial tasks
- Start in the morning with enquiries and I reply to those via the web connections (around 10 enquiries per day)
- Customers are looking for information as they have downloaded he webpage material
- I check the background of these people
- I do quotations
- I reply to customers
- I prepare presentation for conferences
- I check what are the competitors doing, what has been published
- I think of new product development
- I deal with small promotional issues with Vidalico and discuss about webmarketing

😣 Pains (problems)

- Standard answers
- Presentation materials/visualized answers
- Target to get the world to understand what's good for them, the solution we provide it doesn't sound revolutionary but it is, it needs material to teach to people and present the impact
- We work all over the world - different languages and cultures (we have cooperation with Latin America)
- Too much work (we need more people)

😊 Gains (what works great)

- I wish to transfer the knowledge to other people
- Main owner of the company
- I wish to have more time to think about strategic issues, how to grow the company
-We develop many new things, maybe too much, it's been pain for many years as the customers did not realize what we were doing and now they know what we are created
-We had a chance to demonstrate what we are doing, getting a small share of that benefit
-Mining is a very conservative industry is very difficult to demonstrate to them that the solution works

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PERSONA EXAMPLE:

Vidalico Digital Customer - CEO at a tech startup company

Goals and Expectations

Responsible of their process i.e. Admission or can be more tailored
to a solution i.e Integration, DW, IDM Access Management

When working with Vidalico I want get the thinking part rather than quantifiable deliverables so that I can get a clear strategy.

NAME

Pekka

Daily load/volume of work:

☑ Jobs (daily attributions)

CEO dealing with processes, new ventures and partnerships, hiring new people, helping the team, thinking new strategies, working with external partners

😣 Pains (problems)

- We want partners who take responsibility and not to follow what we say
- We want more paid search in different channels
- We need to keep track of the conversion of our customers and the KPIs
-I'm stressed that my marketing partner has not enough time for me
-We want someone to do the thinking part and understand our needs and business
-We do not want meetings or workshops, or consultancy we want someone to act as our CMO

😊 Gains (what works great)

- Easy to get thinks done, fun and energetic approach
-Company close and on our timezone
- Easy to reach and easy to communicate

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Photos from the Stakeholder workshop