# SCALE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

An exploratory study on facilitating business growth for social entrepreneurs.

> A thesis in MSc in Marketing and Media Management Date of hand-in: 07/12/2015

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<u>Supervisor:</u> Jonas Colliander "Societal marketing may give a brand just the edge it needs to win the hearts and minds of the skeptical consumers populating today's cluttered, super competitive marketplaces."

(Paul N. Bloom, Steve Hoeffler, Kevin Lane Keller and Carlos E. Basurto Meza)

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for your support!

First and foremost we would like to thank **Jonas Colliander** for the exceptional support. We highly appreciate your valuable insights – we could not have found a better supervisor.

Secondly we want to thank **John Karsberg** for stepping in when Jonas had far more important stuff on his agenda.

Furthermore we want to thank **Funda Sezgi** for inspiring us in our research, for supporting our cause and for welcoming us to the wonderful environment at Impact Hub.

We are also extremely grateful for all our **interviewees** who supported our research and were willing to donate their valuable time to give us insights about the life and work of true social entrepreneurs.

We would like to thank Norstat for collaborating with us on our research.

Last but not least we feel deeply humble towards the people at **Qualtrics Support** for dealing with a noticeable amount of e-mails coming from two lost souls figuring out how to set up a highly complex research design for the first time. Thanks for still answering us after numerous mails!

#### ABSTRACT

This paper explores social entrepreneurship with a specific focus on how social entrepreneurs apply processes and activities for growing their businesses from the broader field of entrepreneurship. The authors start with outlining a significant research gap: Growth for social start-ups currently finds almost no attention in academic research and is rather unexplored in the business world – which is critical considering that growth rate and scalability potential become most significant metrics to project the future success of new ventures. Within the first chapters of this work, the authors analyze established research from the broader field of entrepreneurship and identify entrepreneurial marketing as a key activity for entrepreneurs to pursue sustainable business growth - and that this business growth has a strong connection to customer acquisition. In order to apply those findings to the field of social entrepreneurship, the authors interview a sample of social entrepreneurs with a specific focus on (1) how they apply entrepreneurial marketing techniques to grow their organization and (2) what their very specific challenges in that context are. Two major obstacles for growth are identified: The high complexity of building a successful business when striving for both profitability and achieving a beneficial social impact – and the respective challenge to frame the complex value creation of social entrepreneurs into compelling and relevant value propositions towards customers. The authors build upon those findings and demonstrate within a experimental, empirical research how value propositions that focus on the social value perform superior for all tested variables connected to customer acquisition. Social entrepreneurs thus should be confident to leverage the social value they create in order to competitively position their offerings on the market and to strive for sustainable, long-term growth of their customer base.

**Keywords:** Social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial marketing, growth, growth strategies, value proposition, customer acquisition

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### 1.1 Background

There is no doubt that the rapid technological advancements within the last two decades had a transforming impact on the global business landscape. Disruptive developments not only brought up an enormous range of new products and services that fundamentally changed consumer behavior – but also a broad range of new business opportunities that ultimately transform the way companies are acting. Consequently entrepreneurship and the respective ambition to pursue new business ideas and start new companies are core trends in today's business world. The number of companies founded is increasing rapidly year after year and young enterprises under three years today account for 4% to 12% of employment in most countries.<sup>1</sup> Valuating those emerging companies however is a major challenge as there is a lack of historical data on the company performance and uncertainty on the many factors that might impact the future development of the company (Peemöller et al., 2001; Festel et al., 2013).

Instead of metrics such as profitability, other indicators for valuation are gaining in importance – most significantly the growth rate of a business and thus its projected scalability. Growth is usually understood in relation to growth of revenue, however for consumer orientated companies it is closely connected to the number of customers and thus to customer acquisition (Villanueva, 2008). The following thesis is handling growth with this understanding of the close relationship to increasing the customer base. A McKinsey report outlines that high-growth companies offer a return to shareholders five times greater than medium-growth companies.<sup>2</sup> Moreover the report states that companies with a growth rate greater than 60 percent at the time they reach \$100 million in revenues are eight times more likely to reach \$1 billion in revenues than those growing less than 20 percent.<sup>2</sup> Growth rate has become one of the most relevant metric for projecting future success of a young company – and thus is one of the core factors entrepreneurs need to focus on today. Growth and scalability today are becoming a success formula for building sustainable businesses in the early stages.

At the same time the business world faces an increased transparency towards consumers due to easy accessible and highly scaled information. Today corporations can no longer pursue morally doubtful operations and are critically observed by consumers (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011). At the same time

the awareness for social problems and challenges around the globe is increasing rapidly. Consequently CSR-related activities are turning into core values and highly influence respective company functions in today's corporations. Corporate ambitions to have a positive social impact with or besides their core business are no more differentiating or unique actions but turning into must-do activities required by customers.

It is thus not surprising that more and more uprising and ambitious entrepreneurs focus on starting and developing businesses that not only aim for profitability but also for having a substantial and sustainable positive impact on society or social causes. Terms as social entrepreneurship or impact investing turned from unknown words into globally used buzzwords.<sup>3</sup> The popularity of social entrepreneurship is increasing rapidly from both an academic and practical perspective (Phillips et al., 2015). And what applies for commercial start-ups as common knowledge, is projected become the number one key objective for social entrepreneurs as well: scaling their organization and impact.<sup>4</sup>

# 1.2 Purpose

Besides the rapidly increasing popularity of social entrepreneurship and many efforts to define it as a concept from an academic perspective, the term and respective strategic and managerial implications remain somewhat vague. Especially in terms of growth and scaling approaches, research until today is rather limited for social entrepreneurs (cf. Short et al., 2009 with a review on social entrepreneurship research), which will be outlined in the course of this paper. Based on the importance of growth as a metric for evaluating the potential of start-ups and projecting factor for business success, further exploration and research in this area is fundamental for the advancements of social entrepreneurship. Respectively the following paper aims for further investigating the topic of growth and scalability in terms of customer acquisition for social start-ups and for extending the currently limited research on growth strategies for social entrepreneurs.

In addition we see a high relevance of contributing managerial insights that enable social entrepreneurs to more successfully grow their businesses. As their organizations aim to have a positive impact on significant societal challenges our world faces today, we have a personal interest to support their cause with our research and contribute a small part to make their mission more successful in the future.

#### 1.3 Disposition

We start with establishing an overview on the current academic conceptualization of social entrepreneurship and respective differences to conventional school of thoughts on entrepreneurship. Furthermore we identify the concept of entrepreneurial marketing as a core function of growing entrepreneurial businesses and outline a distinct research gap in the sense that entrepreneurial marketing until today was not explored for the case of social entrepreneurs.

Subsequently we transition into our own research. For exploring growth in a social entrepreneurial context we applied a mixed-method research design: The first of two steps was to conduct a qualitative, exploratory research in the form of in-depth interviews with seven founders or CEOs of social start-ups with current ambitions to scale their businesses in order to find out how their organizations strive for growth. Furthermore we aimed for introducing areas for future research and potential issues for managerial recommendations by taking in problem-orientated approach and by aiming for determining the very specific challenges of applying entrepreneurial marketing for growth within the interviews. As a result we established a framework that outlines current barriers for growth for social entrepreneurs in an entrepreneurial marketing context as well as show how different issues are interrelated.

The second part of this paper focuses on one of those identified key issues – to frame a relevant value proposition towards customers – and explores potential solutions within a quantitative, experimental research. In particular we tested if and how the social impact of social entrepreneurial organizations should be a core element of the value proposition and how this configuration performs compared to a pure product-benefit focus. We conclude with a discussion of the findings of both researches and with outlining implications for management and future research.

#### 1.4 Research questions

Based on this approach we established two research questions that were explored within this work. For our exploratory, qualitative interview research the question was framed as follows:

(1) How and to what degree are social entrepreneurs applying entrepreneurial marketing for growing their businesses and what are their respective specific challenges? After analyzing the results and identifying the formulation of a relevant value proposition as a major obstacle for the current business growth for social entrepreneurs, we framed the subsequent research question for the quantitative research as followed:

(2) How should social entrepreneurs frame the value proposition for their offering to have the highest impact on customer decision-making?

# 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following chapter will set the stage for the subsequent researches by giving a comprehensive overview on academic research on the most relevant topics of this thesis. The idea of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship will briefly be defined from a theoretical perspective and the differences between both concepts will be outlined. Moreover entrepreneurial marketing (EM) will be introduced and defined as a key activity in entrepreneurial organizations for pursuing growth.

#### 2.1 Entrepreneurship

Before we start focusing on the area of social entrepreneurship, which is the core focus of our thesis, we find it useful to describe the concept of entrepreneurship in general. Jean Baptiste Say wrote the first definition of entrepreneurship in the eighteen hundred. His definition stated that "the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield" (Drucker, 1985). Around fifty years later, Schumpeter added an innovation perspective to the concept and described the entrepreneur and his function as "the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way" (Schumpeter, 1947). Both of these definitions were further developed, but are still seen as fundamental in contemporary research. In terms of innovation Drucker (1985) supports Schumpeter's thought by saying that every new business cannot be seen as entrepreneurial, one has to create something new. Furthermore, the opportunity aspect that Say focused on has been supported by authors like Stevenson et al. (1989) that describe entrepreneurship as a value-creating process where resources are used to exploit an opportunity.

According to Morris et al. (2002) the organization framework of entrepreneurship is build on three dimensions. These dimensions are innovativeness, pro-activeness and calculated risk-taking.

Innovativeness is described as the way in which an entrepreneur seeks creative and differentiated solutions to problems and needs. Pro-activeness refers to the process of making things happen through whatever means necessary. Lastly, calculated risk-taking involves activities where one is willing to jeopardize central resources in order to achieve opportunities, but at the same time tries to spread and mitigate the risk.

Risk is a central factor in the entrepreneurship concept since there is a contending relationship between opportunity-seeking and limited resources. Emerson (2003) outlined four central risks. Firstly, he mentions the risk of demand, which is the customer's willingness to adopt the product or service. The second risk concerns technology and the need for new advances in technology. Thirdly, the execution risk is described by the ability of entrepreneurs to attract workforce and partners. Lastly, he mentions the financing risk, or the availability of external capital (Emerson, 2003)

The emergence of new businesses is commonly viewed as an establishment of a completely new organization, but it can also grow out from an existing business (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). However the behavior approach to starting up a business is the same (Stevenson, 1982). A common way go forward with a new business is to use a causation approach where one identifies a consumer need, conducts a market research, raises capital and sets measureable goals (Morrish, 2011). However, an effectuation process is said to be more successful in the long run (Sarasvaty, 2001). According to Sarasvaty (2001), entrepreneurs that follow the effectuation process focus more on partnerships rather than on competitors, explore new opportunities instead of making use of existing knowledge and use control mechanisms to handle the unpredictable future, instead of predicting a future. This approach is strongly tied to innovation, and can make the entrepreneur successful even though one does not have a first-mover advantage (Han et al., 2001).

# 2.2 Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship incorporates the idea of creating innovative, market-oriented approaches to address social problems or serving social needs (Dees and Anderson, 2006). The concept of social entrepreneurship has been around for over hundred years (Dart, 2004), however the emergence of studies did not appear until the beginning of the 1990's (Philips et al., 2015). Since then there has been a high degree of interest among scholars, which resulted in a variety of research within the area (Ruvio and Shoham, 2010). Despite the high number of researchers examining this field and the

increasing amount of practitioner, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still poorly defined and the boundaries to other sectors remain unclear (Mair and Martí, 2006). There is no unified definition of social entrepreneurship, however it ranges from broad to narrow (Austin et al, 2006). An example of a narrow definition is seeing social entrepreneurial firms as nonprofits that mainly operate in the voluntary sector but have applied business processes (Thomson, 2002). When looking into the research area, we see that the broad definition seems to be more widely supported than the narrow definition. Within this direction of research authors like Emerson and Twersky (1996) describe social entrepreneurial businesses as firms with a commitment to the "double bottom line", i.e. put emphasis on the social aspect as well as the financial, and the dynamic relationship between these two aspects.

In addition to the broad and narrow definitions, we also see that two streams of research have emerged. According to Dees and Anderson (2006) it concerns two schools, namely the "social enterprise school" and the "social innovation school". The first school focuses on the generation of income with the aim to serve a social mission, while the latter is concentrated around new and better ways to address social problems or the covering of social needs. The focus on innovation seems to be present in more recent studies (See Mair et al. (2006) for list of definitions). A suggested definition from Zara et al. (2009) includes innovation in the following way: "Social entrepreneurship encompasses the activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner". Furthermore, according to Austin et al (2006) the activities performed need to create something new instead of replicate current practices in order to be called social entrepreneurship. This norm is further supported by Phillips et al. (2015), stating that social entrepreneurship exist in a social innovation system where one identifies problem-solving opportunities for unmet social needs.

An acknowledged framework for defining the concept of SE is to illustrate it in a spectrum, placing social enterprises between two extremes that range from purely philanthropic to purely commercial (see figure 1). Within this scale companies are positioned that are both mission and market driven and pursue a goal to create both social and economic value (Dees, 1998a).



Figure 1: The Social Enterprise Spectrum (cf. Dees, 1998a)

Since the concept of social entrepreneurship is rather new in relation to both practice and theory, and the business model itself is rather different from other ventures, social entrepreneurs face various challenges (Zahra et al. 2008). In their business landscape they experience institutionalized pressure to act in a specific way in order to be accepted as legitimate, which is not always well functioning for social enterprises (Dart, 2004). According to Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) it can even be detrimental because the mixing of social impact and profit are conflicting practices.

#### 2.2.1 The difference between commercial and social entrepreneurship

Austin et al (2006) identified four variables that clearly distinguish the two types of entrepreneurship: mission, market failure, resource mobilization and performance measurements.

First and foremost the social entrepreneur has a mission to create social value. A commercial-driven entrepreneur creates social value to some degree in terms of covering consumer needs and creating jobs, but making profit is the core of their business (Martin and Osberg, 2007). Another difference is that social entrepreneurs will have a greater opportunity to succeed in the market compared to commercial entrepreneurs, as they cover persistent and underlying social needs that exist in the society and not only short-term needs (Dees and Anderson, 2003). In terms of resource mobilization a social business will be more able to attract employees that work non-compensatory, however they

will have more restrictions than commercial entrepreneurs when it comes to how to distribute the surplus (Austin et al., 2006). Lastly, having social impact as a goal makes it challenging for social entrepreneurs to measure performance, as they strive to create both social and economic value, which Emerson (2003) refer to as operation with a "blended value proposition". This is challenging when it comes to indication of performance towards investors, since there is no holistic tool that integrates measures of both the financial ROI and social ROI (Emerson, 2003). According to Dees (1998b) the social ROI itself is not easily quantifiable, which adds to the complexity. In relation to social entrepreneurs, commercial entrepreneurs can more easily rely on tangible and quantifiable measures (Austin et al., 2006). Based a theory of Nicholls (2009) social entrepreneurs should aim for measuring their impact by using various strategic tools, also including qualitative measurement tools.

When we look into the similarities we see that both commercial and social entrepreneurial businesses are at a nascent stage of development and will therefore experience challenges that are common for all new ventures. They both need to face risk, manage limited time, be dependent on capital and make an immense effort in order to survive (Martin and Osberg, 2007).

#### 2.3 Entrepreneurial Marketing for growth

The high relevance of marketing for entrepreneurs has been noted since early days. In an exploratory study Hills (1984) found that venture capitalists, which had dealt with hundreds of ventures before, rated the importance of marketing to the success of new ventures at 6.7 on a seven-point scale. Venture capitalists moreover emphasized the very specific challenges of entrepreneurial marketing and the significant differences and characteristics to marketing in matured firms (Hills, 1984). Both will be explored within this chapter.

The topic of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) has been explored in research within various dimensions. Miles et al (2015) provide a conceptualization and overview of different schools of thought. According to the authors, entrepreneurial marketing can be explored within three different major categories. Firstly the view on '*EM as entrepreneurship in marketing*' focuses on the utilization of marketing processes to recognize new marketing opportunities and to use innovation in the marketing mix to exploit those opportunities. EM from that point of view is thus a "[...] different way of doing marketing." (Miles et al, 2015). Secondly EM can be seen as '*relationships and networks in Small- and Medium Enterprises (SME) marketing*', a viewpoint that mainly focuses on exploring

differences between SMEs and large enterprises regarding the role and activities related to marketing (Miles et al, 2015). The third and last perspective EM as marketing in entrepreneurship' sees marketing "[...]" and thus explores marketing in the context of application in start-ups and emerging companies – and moreover as an activity that first and foremost focuses on business growth (Miles et al, 2015). Within this chapter we look at EM with an understanding mostly from the latter definition – marketing as a tool for entrepreneurs to grow their business. However this context is closely connected to the perspective on entrepreneurship in marketing and pursuing respective activities in new ways: Due to their different and rather limited configuration of resources and capabilities, entrepreneurial organizations are forced to think and act creatively and innovatively in terms of marketing (Morris et al., 2002) – thus many aspects of those two schools of thoughts are interrelated.

Morrish et al. (2010) summarize established conceptualization of EM by stating that the "[...] foundations of entrepreneurial marketing are grounded within the notion of resource constraints, entrepreneur/customer-centric strategy, and growth aspirations.". Furthermore EM as a strategy aims for achieving and sustaining strong competitive advantages (e.g. Morrish, 2011). In favor of the entrepreneurial firms in terms of pursuing EM is their positive attitude towards taking risks and pursuing innovations, which makes them ultimately more flexible (Morrish, 2011). In the following the most important characteristics, functions and notions of marketing in an entrepreneurial context will be explored.

#### **Recognition of new opportunities**

In line with the previous outlined conceptualization of entrepreneurship – that emphasizes pursuing exploration and exploitation of new market opportunities via new services, products or offerings as core entrepreneurial characteristics – researchers assign EM the following respective functions: In their conceptualization of the EM construct Morris et al. (2002) state that EM "[...] is fundamentally an opportunity-driven and opportunity-seeking way of thinking and acting". This clearly differentiates EM from the conventional understanding of other marketing disciplines that focus rather on exploitation of demand and the current customer base than exploration (Hills et al., 2008; Morrish, 2011). However EM is not a set of functions that replace traditional marketing within entrepreneurial organizations but rather an integration of both disciplines. Entrepreneurs pursuing EM use their "[...] opportunity discovery and creation, assessment and exploitation [...]"

capabilities to shape the traditional functions of "[...] segmenting, targeting and positioning the firm's value proposition to facilitate exchange." (Morrish et al., 2010)

#### Formulation and communication of new value

As previously outlined, entrepreneurship is closely connected to developing and introducing innovative products or services and thus to create new value for customers. Respectively one of the core functions of EM is to communicate this value to customers. A core tool for this – that will be covered more in-depth later in this work – is the value proposition that formulates the customer value. Value propositions can be modified by either "[...] increasing the offering's set of benefits (such as product, service, personal, or image-related benefits) or decreasing the total cost (including monetary, time, energy, and psychic costs)" (Miles and Darroch, 2006) – and by that influence customers in terms of acquisition, use and disposition of the offering (Miles and Darroch, 2006). Morris et al. (2002) suggest that EM has a different perception and approach in the development an organisation's value proposition – by strongly leveraging innovation to create unique value propositions. Miles and Darroch (2006) emphasize the previously explained unique and superior capability of entrepreneurial marketers to identify and exploit attractive entrepreneurial opportunities by leveraging innovation to enhance benefits or decrease costs of their offerings – which ultimately results in a superior value for the customer.

#### Adaptive control and commitment of resources

Entrepreneurs in most cases have the tendency to engage in a rather limited amount of planning (Lumpkin et al., 1998). Hills et al. (2008) analyzed two samples of Swedish and US companies and emphasize that young, high-growth companies tend to work without any formal marketing planning. Those companies have rather loose, integrated structures and functions, which foster rapid exchange of information, close proximity customers as well as intuitive and rapid decision-making (Hills et al., 2008). Entrepreneurs apply their opportunistic view on external environments also internally in terms of their resource allocation – they specifically re-assign, re-assess and leverage the value of their resource dynamically to exploit external opportunities (Miles and Darroch, 2006). Within their allocation of resources entrepreneurs pursuing EM are more willing to take calculated risks as they understand that "[...] current social, technological, and economic environments is inherently uncertain and requires rational betting on long shots." (Miles and Darroch, 2006). While entrepreneurs generally are more resource constrained, entrepreneurial marketers are distinguished by leveraging resources in more creative and unique ways – e.g. by optimizing resources allocation in

non-conventional ways, integrate resources from other stakeholders, use unique ways of complementing resources or stretch use of resources further than others can (Morris et al., 2002). One example is that within start-ups or entrepreneurial organizations, entrepreneurs usually can build up the motivation of their employees – e.g. by making them to work extra hours or by making respective roles to fulfill tasks they are normally not responsible for (Morris et al., 2002).

#### Utilize a high degree of customer intensity and orientation

According to venture capitalists, the lack of in-depth market knowledge and respective market- and customer-orientation explains 60 percent of all new venture failures (Hills, 1984). Several other researchers emphasize the close connection to customers as a core characteristic of successful entrepreneurial marketing (e.g. Bjerke and Hultman, 2002). Customer or market orientation generally focuses on activities and processes that continuously assess the external environment of a firm. Companies with an EM approach have a strong understanding of the explicit and latent needs of their customers as well as of their behavior (Miles and Darroch, 2006). Established ties and relationships to their customers not only enable entrepreneurs to align their current offering to those customer needs – they also open opportunities to build valuable knowledge that can be facilitated in future product development, technological distinctiveness and sales-cost-efficiency (Yli-Renko et al., 2001). Yli-Renko et al., (2001) by employing a sample of 180 entrepreneurial ventures, show the positive relationship between close connections to customers (social capital) and knowledge acquisition. As young companies often face significant resource limitations in early stages, they are subsequently more prone to serious mistakes and failure (Amburgey, Kelly and Barnett 1993). Building in-depth knowledge about their customer base enables entrepreneurs to mitigate those risks by doing the right and consumer-relevant decisions (Yli-Renko et al., 2001) and ultimately to create offerings that are and remain competitive (Miles and Darroch, 2006).

EM even more significantly focuses on the exploration and reaching out to potential new customers and their latent needs – in line with the previously outlined relevance of opportunity recognition. Entrepreneurship and EM are closely linked to innovation and introducing respective products or services to the market (Morris et al., 2002). In order to successfully pursue innovations that go beyond being incremental and that create sustainable competitive advantages or potentially disrupt existing market conditions, explicit customers needs cannot be the foundation (Christensen, 1997), as customers are usually not aware of those needs and ultimately not able to imagine use cases and value that goes beyond their very explicit needs. For entrepreneurs with innovation in the heart of their business it is thus inevitable to not only derive insights from their current customer base, but to identify new customers segments and needs as well as to create new product-market-technology spaces and respective customer value (Miles and Darroch, 2006). EM as a discipline thus should not solely focus on following the existing customers, but on actively shaping conditions (Miles and Darroch, 2006) and thus on reaching out to new customer segments and latent, yet unmet needs.

### 2.4 Conclusion

Various researchers outline EM as a fundamental way for entrepreneurs to develop and grow their businesses – not least in terms of customer acquisition – first and foremost by being opportunitydriven, by communicating new value and by fostering close relationships to customers. However EM until today has not sufficiently been explored within a social entrepreneurial context. Short et al. (2009) conducted an extensive review on existing social entrepreneurship research and identified marketing as one of the least developed research fields. One author who partially approached that topic is Shaw (2004), who conducted an exploratory interview research on how entrepreneurial marketing is applied within a social enterprise context. However within this research social enterprises were defined rather as organizations that apply entrepreneurial marketing in a not-for-profit context – which thus differs from our previously outlined definition of social entrepreneurs that act within a sphere that aims for both having an positive impact on social challenges as well as for being profitable. Taking social entrepreneurship by its current state, there is extensive room for exploration in terms of growth strategies connected to entrepreneurial marketing. Given that business growth today is a fundamental metric and indicator for the success of young, emerging businesses, we consider this research gap also as significant.

# **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will briefly outline our overall research approach and the reasoning behind it. As the research of this thesis is twofold, there will be more in-depth methodology explanations for each research as well as the introduction of the respective research questions in the subsequent chapters.

We have used both qualitative and quantitative methods for our thesis, the so-called mixed method research design (e.g. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). We started with an exploratory qualitative research, given that research on growth and entrepreneurial marketing in social entrepreneurship is

limited and there thus is a significant need for establishing new knowledge and insights. However as we anticipated that there will be interesting and relevant findings, we early on decided to have a problem-orientated approach and generate areas for future research with our first research. Respectively we decided to choose a high-relevance finding and to test it within a subsequent quantitative research. Looking at research theory we see that qualitative research is often very helpful as a source for hypotheses that can be tested using a quantitative research strategy (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The mixed-method research goes beyond the paradigms of pure quantitative and qualitative research advocates and the view that they are not combinable – but rather proposes that they are useful in combination, complement each other and minimize the weaknesses of each respective method as a single approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In our case we decided to not mix qualitative and quantitative approaches across the overall research (mixed-model approach) but to use them subsequently in two steps (mixed-method approach; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). With this sequential, explorative design, we first explored the topic using a qualitative method and after a theory and hypotheses building process chose relevant findings for empirically testing them in a quantitative phase. Guided by Creswell et al. (2008), who outline the importance of having a complete and in-depth analysis of the qualitative research results before testing them empirically, we strictly divided the qualitative and quantitative research, conducted a thorough analysis of the qualitative research findings first, prioritized them and subsequently chose the most relevant finding as a research question for the quantitative research.

In terms of our research topic and the purpose of a Masters thesis, this method has several advantages. From a validity perspective a mixed-method approach gives us the opportunity to back our results from the qualitative research empirically up within a quantitative research and thus to make it more generalizable (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A mixed-method approach gives additional connection-points to theory and enables us to include views from the practitioner (gathered in qualitative research) and at the same time not reject the characteristics of the academic research (Carson and Coviello, 1996). From a practical and managerial perspective, a mixed method approach gives us the opportunity to utilize quantitative research for shedding some light on identified issues connected to the immediate business situation of social entrepreneurs – and thus to add insights that go beyond analyzing and aggregating what participants of the qualitative research mention. By that we do not only build new theory and insights from an academic perspective – but

also are able to give concrete and actionable managerial recommendations for social entrepreneurs. We feel that this is especially valuable and relevant, as their purpose and mission to change society for the better is a cause worth pursuing and promoting.

# 4. INTERVIEW RESEARCH and ANALYSIS

The following chapter describes how we used a qualitative research approach in the form of indepth interviews with founders and CEOs of social entrepreneurial organizations to provide new insights on the specific ways social entrepreneurs pursue EM for growth and the respective challenges they face.

# 4.1 Methodology

#### 4.1.1 Research Question and Approach

Having identified EM and its respective characteristics, functions and processes as a key contribution of business growth for entrepreneurs, as well as the fact that it is still barely explored how social entrepreneurs apply EM and what specific challenges they face, we decided for a qualitative study to explore that matter further. Based on the previously given overview on entrepreneurial marketing we dedicated a significant part of the interview questionnaire to exploring how social entrepreneurs apply entrepreneurial marketing (with respective characteristics) for growing their businesses. Moreover we approached the interviews with a problem-orientated mindset: We aimed for extracting the very specific challenges of social entrepreneurs in order to be solution-driven in the subsequent quantitative research and discussions. Overall we aimed for answering the following research question:

(1) How and to what degree are social entrepreneurs applying entrepreneurial marketing for growing their businesses and what are their respective specific challenges?

#### 4.1.2 Description of participants

For recruitment and selection of interviewees we collaborated with Impact Hub, an international incubator and think tank for social-driven start-ups as well as a leading and globally recognized entity for promoting social entrepreneurship. At the time of our research, Impact Hub started a scaling program for social start-ups with distinct high-growth potential in order to offer tailored support to

respective program participants to promote and intensify their business growth.<sup>6</sup> This pool of social start-ups was thus particular suitable to select participants for our study. In terms of interviewees we focused on founders and CEOs, as their role requires them to have insights in all functions of their organizations and thus can assess respective structural aspects, interconnections, resources, capabilities and challenges most distinctively. All the companies that we interviewed were social entrepreneurs with applied business practices and that delivered products and services to consumers with the aim to support social issues. Overall we interviewed seven participants, for an overview please see table 1.

COMPANY	<b>INTERVIEWEE</b>	ROLE	GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	<u>YEAR OF</u> ESTABLISHMENT	<u>TYPE OF</u> OFFERING	INTERVIEW DATE
Gro Play	Kristian Lundquist	Co- Founder	International	2012	Product (digital)	02/10/15
Lemonaid	Julian Warowioff	Managing Director	International	2008	Product (tangible)	05/10/15
Fair Taylor	Sebastian Stjern	Former CEO	National	2010	Product (tangible)	12/10/15
Not for Sale Ale	Ulf Stenerhag	CEO	National	2014	Product (tangible)	13/10/15
Time Village	Marco Forzati	CEO	National	2014	Service (digital)	13/10/15
Mattecentrum	Hanna Petterson	Manager (Key Account)	International	2008	Service (intangible)	06/10/15
Feely	Philip Axelsson	Co- Founder	National	2014	Service (digital)	13/10/15

#### Table 1: Interview participants and organizational data

Within selecting our participants we took an iterative approach, as outlined by Spiggle (1994): We did not choose all participants in advance, but conducted the first two interviews in order to gather a first data set with respective insights. Subsequently we aligned our selection process with the ambition to confirm or challenge specific data and thus chose participants based on certain characteristics such as business model, type of offering, national or international focus and stage of growth. Our selection can thus be described as purposive sampling, meaning that participants were selected as they had high potential to provide relevant data – an approach which is suitable when the

main research objective is to gain increased understanding of a certain topic (Patton, 1987; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991).

#### 4.1.3 Data collection

We identified in-depth interviews as the appropriate research method, as it allowed us to get close to our participants and get extensive insights into their realities and practices (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). Our research approach was twofold: On the one hand, we wanted to treat the research topic more broadly at let the interviewees introduce topics and challenges they found relevant connected to growth and entrepreneurial marketing. On the other hand, we wanted to explore how those social entrepreneurs act within the defined dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing – and what specific difficulties they face. We thus used a semi-structured interview guide that allowed us to flexibly collect data connected to the broader research objective and to explore relevant issues as they emerged (Bryman and Bell, 2011) – as well as to go ask more in-depth questions according to characteristics of EM (for questionnaire see appendix 9.1). Furthermore, we asked follow-up questions related to the current subject if appropriate, in order to get a more in-depth understanding of emerged issues. The second half of the interview was focused on the outlined characteristics of entrepreneurial marketing – as far as they were not discussed before within the interview. For a visual conceptualization of the interview structure please see figure 2.

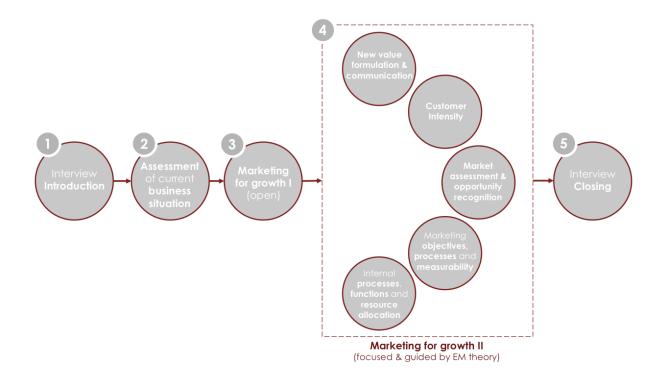


Figure 2: Structure and topics of conducted interviews (own visualization)

The interviews were done either face-to-face, through Skype or via telephone, depending on geographical location and time constraints for the interviewees. All of the interviews lasted for approximately one hour.

#### 4.1.4 Analysis of results

After conducting the interviews and collecting the data, our analysis was guided by the seven iterative operations of analyzing qualitative data by Spiggle (1994), which are utilized to "[...] generate conclusions, insights, meanings, patterns, themes, connections, conceptual frameworks, and theories [...]". Accordingly we structured the data by categorizing insights, by abstracting them to higher level constructs, by comparing similarities and differences among the interviews, by dimensioning certain constructs and by integrating findings within the previously established categorization and theory of entrepreneurial marketing in order to build additional theory. Those steps were an iterative process and should be seen as rather moving back and forth between the stages than sequential, meaning that we consulted our data collection, audio files and notes numerous times (Spiggle, 1994; Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). Our theory building efforts were

moreover guided by Eisenhardt (1989), who outlines how to analyze data, structure it into higherordered hypotheses and how to use existing adjacent research to challenge and or underpin findings in order to increase validity, sharpen generalizability and reach closure on a theoretical level. The search for emerging themes in our data (e.g. as explained by Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was especially a focus for us within our search for the research question for the subsequent quantitative research. The following analysis will thus focus on those commonly mentioned and discussed themes; all outlined findings apply for the majority of participants (if not outlined differently). All analytical steps described were conducted after both authors did extensive research on entrepreneurial marketing and social entrepreneurship in order to consider all mentioned insight with appropriate knowledge and to make sure that no relevant aspect was overlooked.

#### 4.1.5 Quality of the study and limitations

The motive behind conducting in-depth interviews is to illuminate experience and generate hypotheses, and not to aim for generalizability (by means of external validation), as in quantitative research (Goodman, 2001). A measure to portray the quality of a qualitative study is to aim for trustworthiness and credibility (Reese et al., 1999). According to Reese et al. (1999) interviews are a subject to misinterpretation either because interviewees are reluctant to reveal information or an interviewer interjects their own perspective. In order to mitigate and prevent those potential interferences, our solution to this problem was to use open-ended questions, to be neutral and clear and to reduce predetermined responses (Goodman, 2001) and moreover to ensure confidentiality by keeping information and quotations anonymous. In the following chapter findings and quotes are thus not directly connected to any interviewee or organization, but outlined without any kind of labeling. Both authors gained extensive knowledge and in-depth understanding through research prior to the qualitative interviews - which moreover enabled us to ground the guiding questionnaire deeply in theory. The semi-structured approach enabled interviewees to steer the direction of the interview and induce topics based on the specific relevance for them. To avoid a high degree of personal bias, both of the authors were present during all the interviews. This also enabled us to take extensive notes during the interview, and moreover all interviews were recorded and additionally transcribed afterwards. All those notes were consulted many times in order to cover all relevant aspects within this paper. The sample of interviewees was selected in cooperation with Impact Hub, a leading entity within social entrepreneurship globally, out of their 'Scaling Program' in order to

realize a significant fit between the interviewed organizations and our research question and objective.

However some limitations should be considered within this part of the research. First, our sample of seven interviews was sufficient to establish some common patterns in regards of the topic – however this sample is by all means not representative for the diverse and fragmented social entrepreneurship landscape. A larger sample might confirm those patterns on a larger scale and might moreover uncover additional insights. Second, social entrepreneurial organizations pursue business with a high degree of innovation. Our sample thus covered not all potential business model categories. Additional research could cover different types of social businesses and challenge if our findings are valid for other types of social businesses as well.

# 4.2 Analysis and discussion

#### 4.2.1 Introduction – the overall role and integration of entrepreneurial marketing

Marketing is key to customer acquisition and thus for growth – a notion that all interviewees mentioned in some ways. However it is also the function where most of them see significant need for improvement in their organizations. This became especially clear when founders were asked what kind of additional function they would add within their company if they would receive resources for one additional employee: Almost all of them stated that this would be a marketing related function – an expert for either communication, growth marketing, customer acquisition or marketing in general. How is it possible that the crucial relevance of marketing is acknowledged, however not sufficiently integrated and pursued in order to foster strong growth in terms of customers within the interviewed organizations? The reasons are diverse and will be further explored within this chapter.

#### 4.2.2 Recognition and exploitation of opportunities

**Finding a business focus is a major challenge:** While profit-orientated companies – or commercial start-ups – can focus their efforts to explore and exploit new business opportunities fully on scaling their business in terms of customer base, sales and thus revenue and profitability, the ambition of having a social impact in society adds a new dimension for social entrepreneurs to set an agenda, mission and respective goals for their companies. On that notion it also gets increasingly complex to firmly pursue opportunity recognition. Some of our social entrepreneurs outlined the

challenge of having a dual focus – to aim for sustainable profitability and to pursue and scale the social impact. This internal struggle to be clear and persistent in setting a growth focus impacts all respective EM activities and makes it significantly harder to pursue stringent growth. To illustrate the dilemma we would like to illustrate a saying from one of our interviewees:

"...one day trying to focus on the social impact, the other day focusing on the business model. In the end you do stuff that is not the best for either of them."

**Product first – a great offering is foundation for being successful:** Mentioned by the majority of entrepreneurs was the feeling or certainty that the social impact of their businesses is not the major selling point for customers – personal value of the offering and the respective product or service quality is most crucial for customer acquisition and retention for most of the interviewed start-ups. Interviewees felt that their companies had to be competitive on the note that they are operating in commercial market spaces in which they compete with pure profit-driven companies that solely can focus on developing their offering. Several entrepreneurs mentioned that if they focused exclusively on the social purpose in branding and communication it could backfire. One interviewee stated the following:

"We know that 10 % of our target market will focus on that we are a sustainable company, but we do not want to preach for the choir, then we do not do our mission right. We want the other 90% to think about this from a mission perspective and for that we need to have a good quality product first."

Another respondent chose to focus on storytelling in a marketing perspective by introducing themselves as a company with a social impact, but did not underestimate the importance of having a good product:

# "Quality of the product does not mean anything for introduction, but means all for keeping customers. If we want to keep our customers it has to be one of the best qualities available."

The conclusion here is that social entrepreneurs apparently need to apply the same mindset of opportunity recognition and exploitation as regular start-ups – finding latent customer needs and develop respective innovation-driven solutions that serve those needs. Pursuing a greater good for

society is in the experience of social entrepreneurs ultimately by no means a substitute on having a strong and customer-relevant offering.

#### Discussion

The notion of this bilateral struggle is insofar relevant, as it only finds partially – though increasingly - attention within previous research and the various ways literature explains social entrepreneurship. Those schools of thought mostly vary in regards how social entrepreneurs motivate and focus their entrepreneurial activities. As outlined in the second chapter, several previous research articles discuss entrepreneurial activities as strongly connected to innovation efforts for solving social problems and imply that they differ in that regard from commercial entrepreneurs who focus their efforts on a business level solely (Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson et al., 2000; Thompson, 2002; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Phillips et al., 2015). Those conceptualizations do not neglect the importance of establishing successful business processes for social entrepreneurs, however they focus especially on pursuing social change. Others put more emphasis on the dual focus on establishing a successful business on the one hand and having a substantial social impact on the other hand. In that regard business processes ultimately enable social start-ups to generate revenue and potentially profits with their offerings and to leverage their business models for solving societal problems (e.g. Emerson and Twersky, 1996; Dart, 2004; Thompson and Doherty, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009; Phillips et al., 2015). This latter school of thought, emphasizing a dual focus, is rather in line with the responses of our interviews, who pointed out how crucial it is to excel on offering- and business level as well as to create relevant value for customers in order to be successful to a degree that enables to pursue a social impact as well. Accordingly opportunity recognition is twofold, as social entrepreneurs continuously need to consider market opportunities to develop their business as well as potential ways to solve certain societal problems. This issue by nature adds a new complexity to exploring and exploiting opportunities within processes of EM – and to growing the overall organization. It is thus not surprising that all interviewees to some degree mentioned the challenge to excel on both dimensions. Several authors mention this challenge (e.g. Dart, 2004; Zahra et al., 2009, Miller et al., 2012).

#### 4.2.3 Formulation and communication of new value

Social entrepreneurs struggle to internally frame the overall vision and mission of their company: The challenge of setting an agenda and roadmap for the business as previously

mentioned is also reflected in how our social entrepreneurs approach framing an overall vision for their organization. Merging the ambitions to be a sustainably profitable and fast growing company, to provide a valuable offering to customers and last but not least to pursue the distinct social impact and improve certain conditions in society is a combination that adds a kind of complexity that might be underestimated from an external perspective. Most of our interviewees mentioned that the overall idea of the mission and goal of their organization is constantly changing and aligned. This factor makes it not only significantly harder to act stringently, according to our social entrepreneurs, but also impacts the communication towards investors – as the mission and vision is somewhat the foundation for it. The quotes below exemplifies the struggle:

"In the beginning we focused a lot on how to make this business viable, and at the same time trying to make the impact as big as possible. And without any funding that became really hard."

The social purpose of the company adds a new complexity on framing a compelling value proposition to customers: One of the most discussed topics within all interviews was the challenge of framing a relevant value proposition towards customers. While conventional full-profit companies can fully focus on the value of their product for customers when framing their value propositions, social entrepreneurs face the significant question whether or not to integrate their social impact and respective mission of their organization into the value proposition. While the personal customer value of an offering is – as previously mentioned – crucial to be competitive in the opinion of the interviewees, the question remains whether the social impact of a company can be a relevant and differentiating factor and also be seen as beneficial by customers. Most of our interviewees mentioned that this is an issue quite unexplored and unclear to them. One of our interviewees mentioned that whilst their social ambition is highly important for them, they feel that focusing too much on it within communication to their customers might undermine their product quality and relevance and thus could overall backfire.

"...By focusing too much on the social aspect we could scare off people. A green [product] is boring. But we do not know. Maybe we should go green, or really social."

"Social enterprise build on value but we want to make profit from it also. A bit challenging to reconcile these two sides. Especially towards our users. If you are making money for something this is per definition contrasting the social value. It is a wrong understanding, but very common."

#### Discussion

The complexity of framing and communicating value is the natural inference of what we described before – the complex challenge of acting within a space between profitability and social change. This is a topic that gained almost no attention in research so far. Smallbone et al. (2001) generally acknowledge that it "[...] is difficult to place a single value on the contribution made by social enterprises [...]" – pointing towards the complex and multidimensional ways of value creation of those organizations. The reasoning of our interviewees is closely connected to their mentioned relevancy of excelling in developing a strong offering for their customers – they ultimately compete in a sphere with commercial-orientated companies while also tackling social issues with their business model. In order to be competitive, this requires social entrepreneurs not only to pursue their social mission – but also to deliver an overall superior value towards customers (e.g. Slater, 1997). The core question thus is whether their social impact is rather an add-on in the perception of customers – or a unique selling point that exceeds the personal value of their business towards the customers and closely connected how different points of focus might impact customer decision-making and thus growth.

Research considers the value proposition in that regard as a core concept for defining and ultimately communicating the value an organization creates (Frow and Payne, 2011). Value propositions can embody various types of value – from functional (associated with specific functional needs) to emotional (reflecting experiential needs) and symbolic (reflecting self expression needs) – and ultimately contribute to a greater focus on customer experience (Rintamaki et al., 2007). It is thus a matter of what value configuration is most relevant for framing a value proposition for social entrepreneurial organizations. This is not only crucial for raising awareness on the greater mission of the organization internally and as outlined for communicating the core value towards customers – value propositions also contribute to framing the organizational purpose to other stakeholders (Frow and Payne, 2011). This is especially relevant for social entrepreneurs in terms of attracting investors, which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

While it is known that social engagement in terms of CSR activities can positively impact brand perceptions and purchase decisions of customers (e.g. Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sprinkle and Maines, 2010), it is unexplored how value propositions should be framed in a most relevant way, when entrepreneurs act in a space between providing value to both customers and to greater good with

the core of their business model. We thus consider the notion of the described complexity of framing value and the value proposition towards customers as most significant. Value propositions are foundation for the overall value delivering chain, including activities from defining customer value to actual communication of value and respective marketing activities (e.g. Lanning and Michaels, 1988; Anderson et al., 2006) – and thus a key element for business and customer growth. The struggle to successfully communicate the value of an offering to customers in the most relevant way thus ultimately might be one of the key roadblocks for fostering business growth for social entrepreneurs – a matter that will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### 4.2.4 Resource commitment and allocation

A hybrid position on the social enterprise spectrum significantly complicates getting funding and investments: Another often mentioned and discussed matter by all interviewees was the hybrid character of their social businesses: Aiming for higher revenues and maximizing profitability whilst pursuing a social impact. This hybrid positioning makes it significantly harder to attract investors and funding, according to all interviewed social entrepreneurs. Their organizations embody a kind of business that up to this point (1) is not well understood by investors (as mentioned even some entrepreneurs are not fully aware how to set their focus and frame mission, vision and purpose of their start-ups) and (2) does not find many sources of investment. In terms of the latter we heard several times in interviews that many investors tend to invest in full-profit start-ups that they better understand, whilst donations and governmental support is mostly concentrated on non-profit organizations. Impact investing focusing on social entrepreneurs is gaining in popularity according to our interviewees – however is currently still rather limited. The overall problem thus is a mix of a lack of available funding for this rather new category of businesses and the difficulty to successfully convey the business potential of social start-ups towards investors. The lack of resources ultimately impacts and limits the way EM can be pursued.

"Talking about the financial side – it is hard because for investors we would maybe not be as good as some other [commercial] start-ups they are talking with at the same day. For many other companies who seek to invest in social: they can just give away their CSR money to non-profits instead [...] It is tough."

Social start-ups can strongly build on their intrinsic motivation of their employees: From several interviewees we heard that their staff has a distinct intrinsic motivation for the social purpose and impact of their start-ups. This significantly impacts how those organizations deal with the very

limited amount of recourses they have. In some cases employees worked pro-bono, in other cases they invested working hours beyond conventional workload or took over responsibility for several functions.

#### "If we succeed we will make a change and huge impact hopefully. Which for ourselves is really satisfying."

**Responsibility concentration on few employees undermines performance of certain functions:** However the previously mentioned aspect also brings problems: Hence the limited amount of financial resources several interviewees mentioned the impossibility to staff all required functional departments workload-adequate. The consequence in those cases was that staffing was foremost concentrated on positions that connect to product development and other upstream functions. Responsibility for rather downstream located functions – especially marketing and sales – was concentrated on a few employees that mostly had other responsibilities as well. Developing elaborated marketing approaches and the respective execution is thus rather difficult – ultimately leading to the fact that certain EM-related functions underperform in such organizations.

"I am a co-founder, and the marketing guy, but I also do other things so I am not 100 % committed to that."

#### Discussion

Similar as the case for communicating the complex and two-sided value of social entrepreneurial organizations towards customers, the hybrid model also impacts attracting investors and respective pitching and communication towards them. As social entrepreneurial organizations pursue rather new kinds business models, it is harder to convey profitability and growth potential towards investors, venture capital funds or business angels – and their dual focus might lead to increased perceived risk by those entities, as social entrepreneurs enter new terrain on both a business and social change level (Miller et al., 2012). One the other hand social entrepreneurs might still to some degree neglect the importance on showing long-term profitability, as impacting the social cause often is prioritized over planning profitability (Shaw and Carter, 2007) – which most likely makes it significantly harder to attract more commercial orientated investors. This raises the question whether in the long run stronger business acumen towards investors is necessary for social entrepreneurs.

While we do not discuss funding and investment strategies for social entrepreneurs in detail within this paper, it is the circumstance that social entrepreneurs until today dispose only over those limited amounts of funding – and moreover face the challenge to attract investors – that makes it significantly harder to staff appropriately and give all growth-relevant functions the required attention. The stated complexity of clearly defining responsibilities is reflected in theory in several ways. Founding social entrepreneurs perceive their role as somewhat vague and, among each other, in quite different ways (Shaw and Carter, 2007). It is a logical consequence that functions such as EM for growth might suffer under the vaguely defined responsibilities and limited opportunities to staff appropriately.

That stated, for social entrepreneurs it is even more crucial that they can build upon the motivation of their employees – not only in terms of pursuing marketing for growth. Morris et al. (2002) outline that this is the case for many new ventures. Shaw and Carter (2007) explored that topic further and show that 'belief in the work of the enterprise' as well as the motivation 'to affect change and make a difference' are the most influential factors for entrepreneurs to establish a social enterprise. Miller et al. (2012) moreover show how compassion and the commitment to improve certain conditions in society and for others can foster motivation within pursuing social entrepreneurship. This extensive intrinsic motivation is thus a factor that compensates the limited amount of resources – and impacts both the pursuance of entrepreneurial marketing in specific and the execution of all functions in a social enterprise on a more general level.

#### 4.3.5 Customer intensity

Social entrepreneurs have a limited approach to customer insight generation and research, and thus limited knowledge on their customer base: Talking about customer intensity and the respective closeness to the customer base generated the insight that social entrepreneurs do not engage in in-depth research on their existing customers nor on potential customer segments. The majority of our interviewees stated that they are not fully aware what customers think about their product or service. Most of the offerings of our social entrepreneurs were thus not grounded in deep consumer insights, but rather on the intuition of the founders. Products or services and their respective relevance were mostly tested within the immediate environments of the entrepreneurs – e.g. by asking friends, family and getting insights from close business contacts, mentors or investors. Those stakeholders however are not necessarily representative for current and potential customer bases. Interviewees pointed to this matter as a weakness and as a highly relevant point for

improvements in the future. As early stage companies most of them do not have the manpower and resources to engage in ways of research that explores customer needs and preferences in in-depth ways. All of them however were aware that this is a major drawback in terms of not having a strong knowledge foundation for framing value propositions, marketing in general as well as product development and improvement.

#### "We talk to people but it is not so easy. We want to move towards the more pragmatic approach to get a clue of what works better [...] see what kind of actions are people taking."

**Starting off with a small, well-defined customer base enables controlled and focused scaling:** Whilst asking our interviewees on their target group definitions and respective focus segments, we identified two patterns. One group of social entrepreneurs had a rather broadly focused approach on targeting customers with rather generically defined segments based on loose demographical data such as age, location and income. The second group of social entrepreneurs however started their businesses with a very narrow and in-depth defined customer segment in mind. That approach enabled them to develop their offering with a very specific customer in mind and align all respective marketing activities very focused. Knowing their exact customers also enabled those organizations to explore the respective needs and requirements much further than those start-ups with a rather generically defined target group – ultimately leading to generating stronger customer insights.

"In the beginning we wanted to reach everyone [...] we reached a lot more woman than we thought, and that is because they are interested in [the matter]. We will focus more on woman from now on. But still not exclude guys of course."

#### Discussion

The lack of in-depth customer knowledge can most likely be considered as closely connected to the ambiguousness of framing the activities of social entrepreneurial organizations into a clear mission and cause as well as building a relevant value proposition towards customers (and potentially investors). Ultimately understanding user needs is the most significant requirement for developing commercially successful products (e.g. Achilladelis et al. 1971, Rothwell et al. 1974). If social entrepreneurs are not fully aware what their defined customer segments actually want and require, it is not only challenging to develop relevant offerings but also to frame their respective value.

The fact that those interviewed organizations who where successful in scaling their customer base started off with a rather focused group of core customers and established a relatively high degree of customer intensity is not surprising. Insights based on observed reactions and customer feedback provided a proper customer knowledge base and thus a foundation to develop offerings and their value proposition further – and to subsequently scale it towards a broader base of customers. This is very much reflected in studies on lead-users, a concept first introduced by Eric von Hippel (1986). Lead-users represent strong needs that might be latent for many customers in the future thus their feedback has a strong forecasting power in terms of scaling towards a broader base of customers (von Hippel, 1986). They are able to anticipate benefits of new solutions better than most of the population, which makes purchase or usage and respective customer feedback more likely; lead-users thus reflect upcoming trends stronger than broader bases of customers (von Hippel, 1986). For social entrepreneurs this especially relevant as their solutions potentially not only solve customer needs in new ways but also impact social challenges in new ways, which gets increasingly more attention by customers. The likelihood of success of innovative offerings when working with lead-users has been shown in various researches (e.g. Morrison et al., 2000).

#### 4.3 Conclusion

Many of the outlined challenges of social entrepreneurs in regards to their entrepreneurial marketing and growth efforts can be connected to very specific causal issues. Figure 3 outlines how several factors are interrelated. On a fundamental level a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of acting within a space of pursued profitability and business-sustainability on the one hand and solving societal challenges on the other hand needs to be reached (#1 in figure 3). While this might be valid on a business process level as well, we explored this matter from an entrepreneurial and growth marketing perspective and how it makes communicating the value of a social business more challenging. The second fundamental matter is customer understanding and thus efforts to gain extensive insights into their attitudes and decision-making behavior related to new respective offerings (#2). This is especially relevant for social entrepreneurs, as their organizations have new configurations of value creation – by combining delivering customer value and social value with their business models. How this might be prioritized and valued by customers remains to be further explored in research.

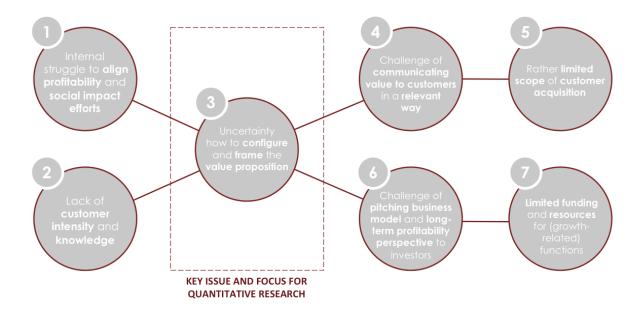


Figure 3: Key issues hindering growth in terms of EM and their interconnections (own visualization)

Those two factors can be seen as objectives social entrepreneurs need to devote more time and effort to, even though this requires relocation of resources due to resource limitations. However they both impact a critical aspect and element of growth - the framing of value propositions that break the complex value creation of social entrepreneurs down to unambiguous and highly relevant explanations of the value they provide (#3). This might imply to focus on a few, but relevant aspects - and leave out other aspects that might be crucial for the business internally but not vital for external stakeholders. However - based on the interviews - the most fundamental question to be solved first in this regard is whether the offer characteristics in terms of personal customer benefits or the impact on societal challenges with a business model are more crucial for customer decision making and thus for growth in terms of sales or user acquisition. The uncertainty with regards to the value proposition impacts and complicates and both the communication towards customers (#4) and other potential business stakeholders like investors (#6). It thus exacerbates and limits growth in terms of customer acquisition (#5) and receiving funding (#7). Communication towards customers might imply the requirement of a different value proposition as towards business partners or investors. We focus on the former, as we explore growth terms of customers. However in both cases further research on framing value proposition is needed.

Value propositions are the foundation for all communication activities and thus for successful entrepreneurial marketing and growth. We consequently identified the question of where to set the focus and what to include in terms of the value proposition as the most relevant research question for the subsequent quantitative research – in order to reduce the current vagueness of that matter and to shed some light on how to utilize strong value propositions better for growing social entrepreneurial businesses.

# 5. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH and ANALYSIS

This chapter will first outline relevant theory as a foundation for testing differently focused value proposition of social entrepreneurial organizations within a quantitative research. The concepts of value, customer perceived value and value propositions will be introduced by reference to established research. Moreover we will outline which dependent variables will be tested for different value propositions and how those are related to customer decision making and thus to growth. We will furthermore establish hypotheses for those variables based on research in adjacent fields (as research on social entrepreneurship is still at a nascent stage), outline our research question, design and methodology as well as explain and summarize the results. Overall we aim for answering the following research question within this chapter:

> (2) How should social entrepreneurs frame the value proposition for their offering to have the highest impact on customer decision-making?

# 5.1 Theoretical Background

#### 5.1.1 Value and Customer Perceived Value

In today's society people are more educated and informed than ever, which means that customers have tools to verify a company's claims and seek out superior alternatives from competitors (Urban, 2004). In other words, consumers are more demanding and the competition gets fiercer. According to Woodruff (1997) a solution for companies is to strive for superior delivery of customer value. The reason for this is that customer estimate which offer they believe will deliver them the highest value and act accordingly in their purchasing behavior (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Customer perceived value is defined as "…consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, 1988). Traditionally this trade-off has

been focused on the relationship between perceived quality and price (Monroe, 1979), but according to researchers like Sheth et al. (1991) a consumer's choice is dependent on multiple values. These values are independent, but relate to each other in that sense that they all contribute to the total value perception and thereby influences choice (Sheth et al, 1991). An example of a framework that takes this into account is the perceived value scale developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). In addition to functional value (the value for price and the quality of the product), this framework is also based on emotional (the feelings and emotions tied to the product/service) and social value (the way the product contribute to increased social self-concept). Perceived value has been identified as the primary factor influencing purchase intention (Chang and Wildt, 1994). One can therefore state that it is highly important for companies to focus on increasing the value for potential customers and make them aware of values being offered, not only in terms of price and quality, but also other factors that influence the customer perceived value.

## 5.1.2 Value proposition

Value proposition as a concept in its core is understood as a tool for companies to define and communicate the overall value of their offering and has first been introduced by McKinsey and Co within a staff paper by Lanning and Michaels (1988). They described it as a promise of value towards the consumer, consisting of benefit and price. Thus in their definition a value proposition is superior, when consumer perceive the benefit-cost proportion superior in comparison to competing offers. A company can articulate its value proposition in terms of a three-step 'value delivering system' - choosing, providing and communicating the value (Lanning and Michaels 1988). Several researches built upon and applied that construct (e.g. Payne et al. 2005), emphasizing the character of the value proposition as a business tool for companies linked to customer expectations as well as clearness and unambiguousness as the major attributes of successful value propositions. Lindi and da Silva (2011) take in a customer-centric perspective and define five relevant dimensions on which a company can innovate and improve its value proposition: Performance ("the way organizations work with the aim of serving their customers while doing so profitably"), ease of use ("degree to which individuals believe using a certain system or product will be effort free"), reliability ("the ability of a product to deliver according to its specifications"), *flexibility* ("firm's ability to reallocate and reconfigure its organizational resources, processes and strategies as a response to environmental changes") and *affectivity* ("feelings or emotions associated with working with a company or using its products and services").

More recent research especially focuses on connecting value proposition increasingly tight to customer needs and on being more adaptive in that regard: Anderson et al. (2006) introduce three different ways of framing a value proposition – listing all possible benefits of an offer (*'all benefits'*); communicating benefits that constitute a difference and advantage compared to competitors (*'favorable points of difference'*); and focusing on a few selected benefits that connect to specific needs of customers (*'resonating focus'*). They dismiss the first two strategies as too generic and emphasize the importance of the latter in terms of being selective about including benefits and mindful about the customer needs. A value proposition, according to them, thus should be highly tailored towards what customers require. Moreover different authors emphasize the importance of value documentation and evidence-character of a value proposition (e.g. Anderson et al. 2006; Terho et al. 2012), making the actual value more transparent and tangible towards customers. Framing relevant value proposition and being able to constantly document and communicate value created thus should become core business skills for respective customer-facing teams and management levels (Anderson et al. 2006).

## 5.1.3 Connecting value proposition to customer decision-making

Since we are looking into growth for social entrepreneurs in terms of customer acquisition, we find it relevant to highlight consumer purchase intention as well as factors influencing it, as they ultimately lead to customer acquisition. Firstly, in order to know in which way (social) entrepreneurs can affect consumers purchase intention, we looked into general marketing theory. We consider implications from brand theory as important based on the fact that brands have strong connections to growth since they influence consumer behavior (Kotler and Keller, 2012) and since stronger brands ultimately lead to greater revenue (Ailawadi et al, 2003). A brand can be defined as a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Kotler, 1991). Based on this definition, the market offering from a social entrepreneur can also be viewed as a brand, even though it might not yet be an established brand in the eyes of the consumer.

As we have already outlined, stating a value proposition is a way to frame the company's value offering towards the consumer. Connected to branding theory, we find that communication is a central tool to increase brand knowledge and learn how consumers perceive the brand. According to Percy and Rossiter (1985) there are four communication objectives used in advertising: category need (whether or not the consumer is in the target group), brand awareness (a consumer's ability to

recognize or recall the brand within the category), brand attitude (consumers evaluation of the brand, positive/negative) and brand purchase intention (consumer's decision to buy a brand or take a purchase-related action). Although the model is not explicitly hierarchy, which means that the stages can occur in a different order, they are all connected to each other, and most commonly appear in the order the objectives are presented.

It is important to note that we are not looking in communication in terms of advertising, but focus on value propositions – which are ultimately rather abstract constructs in terms of communication. They are not a tool or concrete communication action but rather a formulation of value that subsequently can be translated into communication activities. We are thus testing how the formulation of value (and the respective configuration of value) as a message impacts customer decision-making. This has implications for the selection of dependent variables to be tested in the quantitative research: Firstly, we disregard brand awareness for two reasons. It is strongly connected to communication and advertising activities and their respective impact, which we are not testing. And moreover our work focuses on newly established businesses – which limits relevance of brand recognition, brand recall and thus brand awareness. Secondly, we disregard category need, which is an optional communication objective according to Aaker (1991) and again has not necessarily a connection to value propositions. Due to the fact that the category need is seen as the response to brand awareness (Aaker 1991), i.e. a dependent relationship between the two objectives exist, the use of category need becomes inadequate for adopting it to the research.

However, we think that brand attitude is a highly relevant communication effect for analyzing how value propositions are perceived. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined brand attitude as the overall affect towards the act of buying the brand and it is therefore closely connected to purchase behavior – and in our case linked to growth. Furthermore, instead of using brand awareness as a communication objective, we find it relevant to include another construct for analyzing consumer perception of value proposition, namely brand interest. Brand interest is defined as "the base level of approachability, inquisitiveness, openness, or curiosity an individual has about a brand" (Machleit et al, 1993) and is a construct that involves a motivational action tendency. This action tendency does not warrant purchase but a consumer will have intention for further contact with the brand (Machleit et al., 1993).

Based on those establishments, we consider that brand attitude and brand interest have linkage to purchase intention and that all three variables are appropriate to measure how differently framed value proposition might impact customer behavior. We thus focus on a certain part of the model of Percy and Rossiter (1985), which is illustrated in figure 4.

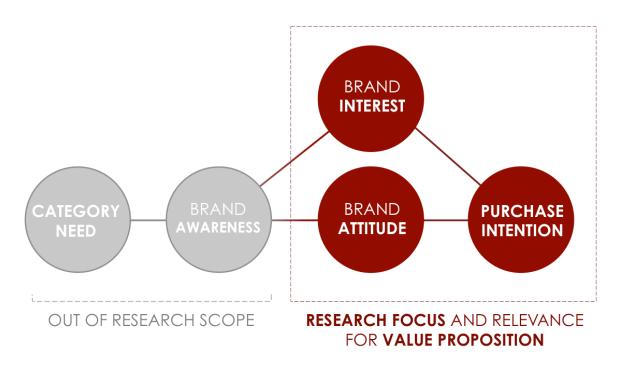


Figure 4: Variables for testing the impact of value proposition on customer decision-making. (modified model; inspired by Percy and Rossiter, 1985)

## 5.2 Introduction of hypotheses

Before considering the actual research we establish hypotheses how differently framed value propositions potentially will impact brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention of consumers. We specifically will explore within the research, whether a focus on product benefits for the customer or a focus on the social benefits of the offer and on the respective social impact of the social entrepreneurial organization within a value proposition will perform stronger. In order to predict the outcomes and establish hypotheses to be tested, we first consulted existing theory. As previously established there is a significant research gap on exploring consumer's reactions to social entrepreneurial firms in particular. To understand how consumers react to market offerings introduced by different value propositions of social entrepreneurs we thus will use theories from adjacent areas. Research fields where this is most apparent are most likely connected to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Looking at the definition of CSR by Godfrey and Hatch (2007);

"corporations that are responsible for more than simply making a profit", we can draw lines to social entrepreneurship and make use of CSR-related theory.

Companies that are operating in today's environment experience a growing pressure to act social responsible and are consequentially being judged on their ability to make a positive impact on the society (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011; Pirsch et al, 2006; Auger et al., 2003; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). It is crucial for marketers to understand how the various costumer segments respond to a company's CSR actions (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2011), especially since the social value has a notable impact on the consumer's perception of the company (Paine, 2003). Companies that operate with social related marketing are attracting a growing number of consumers (Lou and Bhattacharya, 2006), have a competitive advantage (Werther and Chandler, 2005; Bloom et al. (2006)) and are more likely to experience loyalty from consumers (Rudawska, 2014). The loyalty aspect is particularly true for companies with a fully integrated CSR strategy and known as socially responsible brands, compared to those who affiliate themselves with causes (Du et al, 2007). This leads to interesting insights to connect with social entrepreneurship, and strengthens the arguments that companies that create a social impact can benefit from it in terms of consumer rewards. In the following paragraphs we will use brand perceptions as a tool to further investigate what effect social entrepreneurs can have on consumers.

## **Brand interest:**

Adding social value to an offering will impact the consumer's perception of the company (Paine, 2003). Rudawska (2014) found that firms using social responsible marketing would gain a higher degree of interest from customers. The main reason for that is introducing social related causes in general (Sprinkle and Maines, 2010), but moreover because it covers consumer needs in terms of willingness to support thriving issues in the society, such as environmental issues and poverty (Rudawska, 2014). Furthermore, it is likely that the consumer will be more interested in a CSR company if the cause promoted is aligned with the consumer's personal connection or interest in the cause (Bhattasharya and Sen, 2004).

Moreover research shows increased awareness from consumers for companies operating with CSR initiatives. Although brand awareness and brand interest are not the same measures, brand awareness leads to brand interest, cf. adoption process (Urban, 1971). The activation process starts with (1) awareness, where the consumer is being introduced to the idea, before it can obtain (2)

interest for the idea and seek more information, followed by the steps of (3) evaluation, (4) trial and (5) adoption (Urban, 1971). Given that brand awareness is present, social entrepreneurs might be able to achieve interest from consumers. According to Werther and Chandler (2005) the higher social impact a company was able to show, the higher the awareness from the consumer. This was furthermore supported by Du et al. (2007), who saw that brands with a strong connection to CSR experienced higher awareness especially in regards to products, when compared to charity programs. Having social entrepreneurs in mind, who offer products or services with inherent social efforts, a potential consequence for them might be higher consumer awareness, potentially followed by a higher degree of interest. Thus our first hypothesis is stated as followed.

# H1: A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on brand interest compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

## Brand attitude:

Before connecting social or CSR related theory to brand attitude, it is important to note that the way we use attitude is slightly differently defined compared to the model of Percy and Rossiter (1985). Here we will use a more general approach that is not explicitly connected to branding and communication, and go for the definition of Pirsch et al, (2007) that define attitude as the summary evaluations of objects, issues or people based on behavioral, cognitive and affective information or experiences.

According to Bhattasharya and Sen (2004), consumers have more negative attitudes towards irresponsible firms than firms operating with a responsible corporate behavior. When the consumer perceives CSR activities and applies positive characteristics to the company, it results in a more favorable evaluation (Yoon, 2006). Furthermore, these evaluations result in a more benign corporate image, which, in turn, leads to an increase in consumers' positive attitudes towards the companies' brands (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Klein and Darwar, 2004). According to Pirsch et al. (2006) these evaluations account to the long-term effects of CSR. However, this could also be applicable in a shorter term, as CSR can have a positive impact on product evaluations and even products which the consumer has not earlier been introduced to (Brown and Dacin, 1997). This potentially tells us that social entrepreneurs, bringing new products or services to the market, could experience favorable perceptions and more positive brand attitude. According to Peloza and Shang (2011), CSR activities can be inherent in products and have a significant impact on attitude as well as behavior.

The attitude towards a company operating with CSR, seems to be more positive when there is a better fit between the company's profile and the cause (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). This is furthermore supported by Bloom et al. (2006) who found that social-cause affiliations led to more favorable consumer ratings, with feelings of affinity as the main driver. Another finding by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) showed positive attitude arose when the consumer perceive the company to have a good reputation (Sen, 2004). Based on those discussions the second hypothesis is as followed:

H2: A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on brand attitude compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

## **Purchase intention:**

For increasing purchase intention, positive perception in terms of brand interest and brand attitude must be in place (Brown and Dacin, 1997). With this condition satisfied, customers may be more likely to purchase goods and services from socially responsible firms than from commercial firms (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sprinkle and Maines, 2010). However it is a complex matter that depends on several factors (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). One of these factors is to frame the offer in a good and sensible way as it has a significant impact on the response (Ellen et al., 2000). This is furthermore connected to a study conducted by Trudel and Cotte (2003), that showed that if consumers got informed about an ethical product, i.e. could obtain knowledge about the product, they would even be willing to pay more for it than an unethical product.

In a similar way as for brand attitude, Bhattasharya and Sen (2004) found a positive link between CSR and purchase intention in terms of an appropriate fit with the company. If the consumer views the choice of social cause as fitting for the company, they are more likely to buy the product (Sen, 2004). This is furthermore supported by Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) who claim that low fit is disadvantageous and that managers need to select social programs carefully in order to be perceived as a socially motivated strategy – and not as a profit seeking strategy from the company side.

The purchase intention also has positive correlations to consumer's perception of the ethical behavior of the company if it exceeds their expectations (Creyer and Ross, 1997). According to Pirsch et al. (2006) there are both long- and short-term CSR programs that can be used to reach different business goals. With the short-term program it is possible to achieve increased product purchase sby incorporating a promotional program –the long-term program is appropriate to

achieve goals such as to improve customer attitude, brand attitude and increased loyalty. The latter refers to *institutionalized* CSR programs, which are more likely to be transferrable to social start-ups, as those programs attempt to incorporate the social aspect among all stakeholder groups and aspects of the company (Pirsch et al., 2006). The results from this study show that institutionalized CSR programs had a greater effect of both purchase intention and customer loyalty.

Purchase intension is strongly connected to value and those CSR firms that deliver the most value will also be the most successful (Peloza and Shang, 2010). According to Peloza (2011) managers should aim to maximize the value for customers, particularly in product-related forms. CSR activities that are categorized as philanthropic – or non-product related – are rather focused on other-oriented value while product-related CSR enhance both other- and self-oriented value. When consumers have a choice, they will prioritize product-related CSR over philanthropy (Peloza and Shang, 2010). This type of product-related CSR activity has more similarities with social entrepreneurship, since they offer products or services with inherent social efforts and value.

Our last hypothesis is thus stated as followed:

H3: A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on purchase intention compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

## 5.3 Methodology

## 5.3.1 Research Problem

We previously discussed that the uncertainty of how to configure and combine the customer and social value in a compelling way leads to the fact that social entrepreneurs do not maximize the relevance of their value propositions and entrepreneurial marketing efforts, which potentially hinders growth. We respectively identified this matter as a core research field for further empirical exploration, in order to enable social entrepreneurs to improve framing their mission and created value more efficiently and relevantly towards consumers. In particular we are interested in the fundamental question if core product benefits and thus direct customer value of an offering still have the most significant impact on customer decision making – as social entrepreneurs tend to compete in spaces with commercial companies that focus on exact this kind of value – or if the social impact and value of social entrepreneurial organizations are ultimately a highly differentiating aspect for their businesses and should be the core of compelling value propositions. We transferred

this problem into a quantitative, experimental research and tested how value propositions with either a social-benefit or product-benefit focus impact customer decision making in terms of the previously outlined variables – brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention – which have the strongest connection to value propositions. Our findings give recommendations for social entrepreneurs how to leverage their social impact for competitive value propositions.

## 5.3.2 Research Methodology and Design

For our quantitative research we used an experimental design, which has the purpose to explore how manipulating an independent variable affects one or more depended variables (e.g. as described by Bryman and Bell, 2011). We modeled the overall experiment as an online-survey within the internedbased survey provider Qualtrics. As previously established based on theory, our hypotheses suggest that social-driven benefits within a value proposition will positively influence brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention for consumers. Our core interest was thus how a value proposition for the offering of a newly established start-up that focuses on rather conventional product-benefits impacts those three variables in comparison to a value proposition that focuses on social benefits and social impact. Based on the concept of experimental research design (Bryman and Bell, 2011), our research design was structured as followed. Half of the participants were exposed to a value proposition with a pure product-benefit focus – which we defined as the control group. The other half of the participants was exposed to a value proposition that introduced solely the social-benefits of an offering and the respective social impact of a company - which we defined the experimental group. The 'social degree' of the value proposition is thus the independent variable we manipulated and we measured the respective impact on the depended variables brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention.

In terms of execution the research design and survey flow was the following (also see appendix 9.2 for the complete survey): After providing demographical information about themselves, each respondent was exposed to a fictive news article that briefly introduced a fictive start-up and its respective offering in a neutral way (meaning no product or social benefits were mentioned). The news article was either about a company that offers a low involvement product (juice) or a high involvement product (bikes) and participants were randomly assigned to one of them. After they read the article participants were exposed to a value proposition that either focused on the product-benefits of the offering or on the social-benefits of the offering and the respective social impact of the start-up. Each respondent was only able to see one of the two companies and subsequently only

one of the two value propositions. After participants read newspaper article and value proposition they answered a questionnaire with measures on the dependent variables. Independently from which scenario participants were exposed to, they answered the same questions. We included quotas in Qualtrics to ensure that participants were evenly assigned throughout those described scenarios and that all scenarios are thus comparable.

The value propositions (appendix 9.2) were carefully crafted and each respective version consisted of exactly four different benefits in order to make them equally strong from a quantitative perspective. In order ensure that all value propositions are perceived as intended, we conducted a pre-study with 30 respondents. We used the exact same survey design as outlined before. However after being exposed to article and value proposition, respondents had simply to answer whether they perceived the company as social or not, in order to assess whether the companies with a social focused value propositions are perceived as clearly more social and the scenarios thus have the indented effect. Our results showed that there were a significant difference (p-value: .009) between the groups, and that the social focused value proposition were perceived as social in a much higher degree than the product focused. For an overview of the results, see appendix 9.3.

## 5.3.3 Data Collection and Participants

The experiment was conducted online. We modeled the previously outlined research design and questionnaire within the interned-based survey provider Qualtrics and used their tool for data collection.

We decided to use a quite broadly demographically defined target groups and focused on Millennials – people born between 1980 and 2000 (15-35 years old in 2015). Millennials are considered as a highly relevant target groups for both established and emerging consumer-facing companies, as they have a high purchasing power and are considered as the a most important target group from an economical and profitability perspective.<sup>6</sup> Moreover around half of all Millennials are interested in entrepreneurship and have a high interest in new kinds of products and services<sup>7</sup> – which makes Millennials particularly interesting for entrepreneurs as they are more likely to adopt new products or services than other target groups. In terms of our specific research question, 48% of Millennials say that the quality of the product is the most important attribute they check for before they decide what to purchase and 75% said that it's either fairly or very important that a company gives back to society instead of just making a profit.<sup>8</sup> Thus both social- and product-driven benefits play a role

within brand perception and purchase decisions for Millennials, which makes them an ideal target group to test for prioritization.

We used two sources for recruiting participants. A large part of the sample was recruited in cooperation with Norstat, a large, international data-collection agency. Norstat gave us the opportunity to define the group of targeted participants in an in-depth way by the means of what we outlined above and distributed the survey link to a respective sample of respondents. For the other part of the overall participant sample we recruited a group of Swedish and international Master students at the Stockholm School of Economics. Both samples were merged together, which is viable as they both fall into the overall demographically defined segment of participants. However in that way we also added additional diversity by having both students and non-students in the respective group of Millennials. As both groups were evenly distributed over all scenarios of the experiment we compensated any potential severe differences among the scenario groups. Overall 105 participants were recruited with Norstat and 90 participants at the Stockholm School of Economics. Participants were aged between 18 and 35 (with a mean age of 25.08 and a median age of 25), gender distribution was even with 97 women and 96 men (with two participants preferring not to answer their gender), the occupation was distributed as 96 students, 87 employed and 11 unemployed (with one participant preferring not to answer). In order to measure the degree of ethical mindset or social involvement of the participants, we also asked whether they regularly donate to charity (85 stated yes, 110 stated no) as well as if they are involved in voluntary work (33 stated yes, 162 stated no). Participants were either Swedish or international, however all of them are currently living in Sweden. As the recruiting was conducted in collaboration with Norstat, the response rate among overall participants receiving the link is unknown.

The variables brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention were measured by using question constructs from previous studies to ensure that the respective questions in combination measure the actual variable. Brand interest was measured by the mean of two seven-point evaluation scales ("I am intrigued by\_\_\_" and "I am curious about\_\_"; with 1 - strongly disagree and 7- strongly agree) inspired by Machleit et al. (1993). Brand attitude was measured by the mean of three seven-point evaluation scales ("My impression of \_\_\_\_\_\_ is (1) good, (2) pleasant, (3) favorable"; with 1 - strongly disagree and 7- strongly agree) inspired by Till and Busler (2000) and Mitchell and Olson (1981). Purchase intension was measured by the mean of three seven-point evaluation scales ("How likely is it that you would buy the product?", "How likely is it that you buy other products from \_\_\_\_\_\_ as well?",

"How likely is it that you would buy the product instead of a competitors product?"; with 1 - very unlikely and 7- very likely) inspired by Till and Busler (2000) and Pirsch et al. (2007).

## 5.3.4 Quality of the study and limitations

To be able to measure the quality of the study, we will evaluate two important factors, reliability and validity, that are commonly used for quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

**Reliability:** In quantitative research reliability is referred to as the degree of which a measurement remains the same if given repeatedly, is stable over time and whether measures are similar during a given time period (Kirk and Miller, 1986). A common way to measure the consistency internally is to use Cronbach's alpha, which measures the consistency of a scale and that can be considered reliable if above .7 (Saxena and Parikh, 2008). This was the case for our main measures (brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention), since it ranged from .774-.903 (see table 3, 6 and 9). To be able to know if the research is consistent over time, an additional research would need to be conducted in the future. This was not possible with this research, as it falls out of the scope of our thesis – which nevertheless can be considered as a limitation

**Validity:** Validity measures the degree to which the finding is interpreted in a correct way and thereby shows the correct results (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Validity can be separated in internal and external validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Internal validity: To achieve an experimental design with a high internal validity, it is relevant to have a control group and to randomly assign subjects to the experimental and the control group, which eliminates threats to internal validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011). We transferred this design on our research, as participants were randomly assigned to either the product-focused or social-focused value proposition scenario. We moreover ensured that all participants answer the questionnaires with the exact same design and that the randomization of participants was evenly distributed. In addition we also conducted a pre-test to be sure that our development of the value proposition was perceived in the way we intended.

External validity: External validity explains whether the results can be generalized or not (Bryman and Bell, 2011). We had a rather broad sample, focused on Millennials living in Sweden. Moreover we are confident that combining the recruiting of participants with Norstat with the sample of students at SSE ensures variety of participants to a degree that makes our results generalizable to a

certain degree. This degree however could be stronger if the sample of respondents would be larger, which was not realizable due to the scope and accessible resources we had with this thesis.

## 5.4 Analysis and results

After data collection and extracting the complete sample from Qualtrics, we structured the data within IBM SPSSStatistics and analyzed it according to the previously introduced hypotheses. An important decision we made during the first steps of the analysis was to merge the high involvement and low involvement scenarios - thus results for the product-focused value propositions for highand low involvement scenarios were merged, and for the social-focused value propositions respectively. We made that decision because we saw the same tendencies in the mean values that the social-focused value proposition performs stronger for all variables in both involvement scenarios. However as our initial samples were rather small, we merged those scenarios in order to have a stronger foundation for analyzing the respective significance of differences between the mean values. To see if the measures were significant we used an independent-samples t-test, with the purpose to explore if there are significant differences between two groups. In our research we compared the differences of those respondents who were exposed to product-focused value proposition with those who saw the social-focused value proposition. Furthermore we also included an additional research through a regression analysis. We made use of a conditional process analysis developed by Andrew F. Hayes, with the purpose to look at a mechanism which describe how a variable transmits its effects of another variable (Hayes, 2012). A significance level of 90% was used for all our analyses.

H1 (Brand Interest): A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on brand interest compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

As previously outlined, brand interest is a measure that impacts purchase intention in the way that consumers with a higher brand interest are more likely to be in further contact with the brand. We tested brand interest for both the product- and social-focused value propositions. The results from the test showed a significance level of .047 and thus a significant difference between the two groups. In terms of the means of brand interest, the social focused value proposition had a mean value of 4,48 on a 7-point scale, compared to 4,14 for the product focused VP (see table 2 and 4 for results).

The results indicate that a social-focused value proposition achieves a higher degree of brand interest for consumers compared to the product-focused value proposition. Hypothesis H1 is thus supported.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Cronbach's	Cronbach's Alpha based on	N of
PRODUCT	93	4,1434	1,24664	,12927	Alpha	standardized items	items
SOCIAL	102	4,4837	1,13221	,11211	,744	,776	2

Table 2: Group Statistics (brand interest)

Table 3: Reliability Statistics (brand interest)

	Levene' equality of		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	90% Confide of the Di Lower	
Equal variances assumed	,590	,443	-1,998	193	,047	- ,34029	- ,17035	- ,62184	- ,05874
Equal variances not assumed			-1,989	186,388	,048	- ,34029	- ,17111	- ,62315	- ,05743

Table 4: Indep	endent Samples	Test	(brand	interest)
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**H2 (Brand Attitude):** A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on brand attitude compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

Brand attitude measures the evaluation of a brand and its overall affect for the consumer towards buying the brand. In the same way as for brand interest we tested for both kinds of value propositions. The results from the test showed a significance level of .077 and thus a significant difference between the two groups. In terms of the means of brand attitude, the social focused value proposition had a mean value of 5,12, compared to 4,8 for the product focused at a 7-point scale (see table 5 and 7 for results).

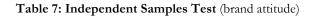
The results indicate that a social-focused value proposition achieves a higher degree of brand attitude for consumers compared to the product-focused value proposition. Hypothesis H2 is thus supported.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Cronbach's	Cronbach's Alpha based on	N of
PRODUCT	93	4,8423	1,12244	,11639	Alpha	standardized items	items
SOCIAL	102	5,1176	1,04112	,10309	,900	,901	3

Table 5: Group Statistics (brand attitude)

Table 6: Reliability Statistics (brand attitude)

	Levene's test for equality of variances				t-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		ende Interval ifference Upper
Equal variances assumed	1,054	,306	-1,777	193	,077	- ,27535	,15494	- ,53143	- ,01927
Equal variances not assumed			-1,771	187,726	,078	- ,27535	,15548	- ,53236	- ,01834



**H3 (Purchase Intention):** A value proposition with a social focus has a stronger positive influence on purchase intention compared to a value proposition with a product focus.

Purchase intention indicates if the consumer will decide to buy a product or take a purchase-related action. Again we tested for both kinds of value propositions. The results from the test showed a significance level of .076 and thus a significant difference between the two groups. In terms of the means of purchase intention, the social focused value proposition had a mean value of 3,93 compared to 3,58 for the product focused value proposition (see table 8 and 10 for results).

The results indicate that a social-focused value proposition achieves a higher degree of purchase intention for consumers compared to the product-focused value proposition. Hypothesis H3 is thus supported.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Cronbach's	Cronbach's Alpha based on	N of
PRODUCT	93	3,5842	1,45185	,15055	Alpha	standardized items	items
SOCIAL	102	3,9281	1,23981	,12276	,903	,905	3

Table 8: Group Statistics (purchase intention)

Table 9: Reliability Statistics (purchase intention)

	Levene's equality of		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		ende Interval ifference Upper
Equal variances assumed	5,723	,018	-1,783	193	,076	- ,34388	,19285	- ,66261	- ,02514
Equal variances not assumed			-1,770	181,802	,078	- ,34388	- ,19426	- ,66503	- ,02272

Table 10: Independent Samples Test (purchase intention)

## 5.5 Summary of results

Overall the three hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were confirmed and the results show a superior performance for the social-focused value proposition for all three dependent variables brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intention. As an addition comment we see that the mean values results are not particularly high. We operated with a 7-point scale. The highest mean value within the results slightly above 5. However, our intention was to see which of the two value propositions performs stronger in relative terms and in comparison.

A particular and additional issue we were interested in was whether the superior performance of the social-focused value proposition has a connection to ethically minded consumers and whether

superior performance is limited to those consumers. We modeled this within the survey by asking whether participants regularly donate to charity. Respondent had the possibility to answer yes or no – inn our sample a total of 85 people answered 'yes' and 110 participants answered 'no'. We subsequently tested for any correlation between those participants that gave money to charity and their reaction towards the different value proposition in terms of the three variables. To measure this we used a regression analysis developed by Andrew F. Hayes. The results from the regression showed that there is no significant difference between those who gave money to charity and those who did not (please see appendix 9.4 for results). This indicates that the social-focused value proposition performs equally strong for customers independently from their social involvement or degree of ethical mindset. This will be further discussed within the following chapter.

## 6. DISCUSSION

## 6.1 Theoretical and managerial implications

The key themes and results from both studies suggest that social entrepreneurs acknowledge the relevance of the key characteristics of entrepreneurial marketing as a key for growth, but that the high complexity of acting within a space of being a commercial business and having a social impact makes it significantly harder to pursue EM activities compared to fully commercial orientated startups. This ambivalence is a reoccurring theme throughout our findings and impacts growth efforts in several ways. Internally it increases the difficulty to frame the overall mission and purpose of the organization, to define core objectives and to align activities towards those objectives and to balance resources and processes between them. A fundamental activity for entrepreneurs and of entrepreneurial marketing is the recognition of new opportunities and latent customer needs that can be leveraged for introducing new innovative offerings to the market. Again this process gets more complex for social entrepreneurs as they combine their product or service development efforts with creating a social impact. Respectively this impacts the relationship to external stakeholders as well. As long as this ambivalence and complexity is an issue that needs to be better understood in order to turn social start-ups into successful businesses with sustainable long-term profitability ambitions, it will most likely remain difficult for social entrepreneurs to compete with fullprofitability orientated start-ups on receiving funding. However within this work we were particularly interested in relationships of entrepreneurs to customers and in specific how the

complex value creation can be utilized and potentially advantageously leveraged for positioning their offering towards customers and ultimately positively influence customer decision making and acquisition.

First and foremost we identified that the complexity due to the outlined ambivalence specifically applies to framing the value proposition – a fundamental platform for all related marketing and thus growth activities - which is more challenging for social entrepreneurs than for fully commercial orientated companies as they create value within two dimensions. Our interviews with seven social start-ups – that are in a current phase of aiming for scalability and growth – gave us the impression that the respective social entrepreneurs currently intensively focus exploring how to be competitive. Most of them currently think and act from a 'product-first' perspective, meaning they aim for crafting superior products or services and feel that the respective benefits need to be a significant part of the value proposition towards customers in order to be competitive. This paper aims not for challenging the necessity of developing and providing superior offerings. However our findings of the quantitative research suggest that social entrepreneurs should be more confident in utilizing their unique way of doing business and their pursuit of a mission to solve societal problems for positioning their offerings on the market. We were particularly interested in variables mapping customer perception and decision making that can be connected to being exposed to a value proposition (and thus leaving communication-driven variables such as brand awareness out of scope).

Results of our experimental quantitative research show that value propositions that explain a company's offering by building upon the social impact it creates perform significantly stronger than value propositions that focus solely on the direct product benefits for the customer in terms of brand interest, brand attitude and subsequently purchase intention. Building upon adjacent theoretical research, many findings can potentially be applied and transferred to social entrepreneurship as well. In terms of brand interest research states that social engagement of firms – e.g. in terms of CSR activities or socially responsible marketing – positively impacts brand interest (e.g. Rudawska, 2014; Sen, 2004) and that the degree of social impact ultimately might influence interest as well (Werther and Chandler, 2005). Connecting those findings to our results, we suggest that social entrepreneurs not only can leverage social-focused value propositions to raise customer interest in their offerings but moreover should put high attention on measuring their social impact from the beginning and utilize it for their value formulation. Secondly adjacent research shows that

consumers have more positive attitudes towards socially responsible companies (e.g. Brown and Dacin, 1997; Klein and Darwar, 2004) and that a high fit between social engagement or CSR activities and the actual business is crucial for positively impacting brand attitude (Sen, 2004). Our finings do not only confirm that brand attitude is more positive in the case of social-focused value propositions of a social entrepreneurial organization – but connected to adjacent research that social entrepreneurs most likely can uniquely leverage that for fostering strong customer attitudes towards their organizations as their social engagement is in the core of their business, tightly connected to all business activities, inherent in their offerings and the fit thus is particularly high. We previously outlined how established research shows that high brand interest and attitude positively influence purchase intention (Brown and Dacin, 1997) and that social engagement of firms or respective CSR activities directly have a positive influence on purchase intention (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sprinkle and Maines, 2010), especially if the fit with the overall business is high (Sen, 2004) and the social or CSR activities are directly related to a companies offering and to the respective value for the customer (Peloza and Shang, 2010; Green and Peloza 2011). Our research confirms a higher purchase intension for customers when they are exposed to the offering of a social entrepreneurial organization by a social-focused value proposition. In connection to adjacent research it is again worth mentioning that the efforts to achieve a social impact and change for social entrepreneurs are an inherent part of their business, offering and activities - and the fit and connection thus extremely high. It is most likely that the respective effects of including the social impact inherent in business and offering within a value proposition towards consumers thus are potentially even stronger on purchase intention for social entrepreneurial businesses than for the analyzed CSR activities analyzed by previous research.

It is furthermore important to consider that all those effects apply not only for particularly ethicalminded consumers that potentially put more attention on such matters. We tested that by separating our participant sample based on their social engagement in terms of donating to charity or being involved in voluntary work. We found no evidence that social-focused value proposition performed significantly stronger for ethical-minded consumers – it performed equally strong in terms of all three dependent variables for participants that were socially engaged and for those who were not. We thus cannot confirm potential concerns that social-focused value propositions could limit the customer base or make it more niched, but that it is relevant for a broader base of customers. To conclude, we establish that social entrepreneurs can strongly and positively affect brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intentions of consumers by focusing their value propositions clearly on the social impact and social efforts that are inherent in their business and offerings.

## 6.2 Limitations and further research areas

That stated our experimental research tested this issue on a rather generic level. We incorporated both high and low involvement products, and it is certainly an interesting finding that the social-focused value proposition performs significantly stronger when merging the samples and measuring the variables. However one should not neglect the extremely high variety of products and services and the respective individual relevance of different benefits. For future academic research it will be certainly interesting to explore if our findings apply to different product categories on a more finely granulated level. It is moreover important to mention that our research design was experimental and that a high purchase intention not in all cases means actual purchases of customers in reality (cf. Carrington et al., 2010). This needs to be considered when following our recommendations and carefully applied and tested in reality. For introducing the hypotheses and discussing and explaining the results we partially built upon research from adjacent areas, such as research on the effects of CSR activities. We consider that those effects are similar and – due to the inherent nature of social-driven efforts for social entrepreneurs – are potentially even stronger. However those effects should be explored and explained in more detail for social entrepreneurs in order to build a stronger and more specific theory foundation around them.

In terms of the dual focus of social entrepreneurial organizations we see additional limitations and connection to relevant fields of future research. Firstly we identified the challenge of framing relevant value propositions for social entrepreneurs as a key issue, because it impacts several related aspects of business growth. However it is just one element and we found within the qualitative interview study that this kind of ambiguousness is reflected in many internal functions and processes that affect the development of the organization. Both from a managerial and academic perspective it is relevant to explore and consider those in order to better understand how social start-ups can strive towards scaling their business in similar ways as so many of their commercial counterparts do. Secondly understanding of how customers perceive those new kinds of organizations and business models that act between commercialism and social change is still rather limited and simultaneously a major obstacle for social entrepreneurs. Exploring this matter further will be a core objective connected to future research on social entrepreneurship for academic researchers.

While we can outline the tendency that social entrepreneurs can leverage their unique way of doing business for their value proposition in order to be relevant and differentiating, we also must emphasize the importance of understanding what core targeted customer segments require. Ultimately this leads back to one of the fundamental identified issues within the qualitative research: Social entrepreneurs should increase efforts in being highly customer-driven in all their activities and especially intensify research and engagement with their defined core customer segments. Gathering in-depth insights and a respective deep understanding is the foundation for being successful in framing value propositions that deliver outstanding performance for the social entrepreneur's business. Fundamentally it is an admirable and highly important decision to aim for achieving social change when founding a business – however only being and staying close to the customers and ensuring a high relevance of everything the company offers will enable to ultimately scale their impact into new dimensions. Social entrepreneurs are in that regard no exception.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Our two studies contributed a first effort to conceptualize the current state of business-growth focused activities of social entrepreneurs from a customer acquisition perspective. Growth and projected scalability of a business today are fundamental metrics for evaluating the long-term potential of start-ups and emerging companies. We found extensive academic research on entrepreneurial marketing as the fundamental way of acting to achieve sustainable business growth for entrepreneurs. However up to this point in time it remained unclear if social entrepreneurs are able to leverage entrepreneurial marketing activities in similar ways, what strategies for growth they are applying and what specific challenges they are facing. Our findings suggest that acting in a space between aiming for increased revenue and profitability on the one hand and pursuing a social impact on societal problems on the other hand adds a new degree of complexity to growth efforts and entrepreneurial marketing implementation. We identified that this complexity specifically applies to framing relevant value proposition towards customers and that this issue is closely connected to the core question whether to focus on the personal customer value of an offering or the social value the company creates with providing this offering. By exposing customers to fictive entrepreneurial companies and value propositions that focus on either product-benefit elements or social-impact

elements we found that the social-focused value propositions perform significantly stronger in terms of influencing brand interest, brand attitude and purchase intentions. Those findings show that social entrepreneurs should strongly consider positioning their offerings with a tight connection to their social impact ambitions.

Social entrepreneurship is only in its beginnings and the high complexity of building and growing such organizations requires a new kind understanding and acting as an entrepreneur. Developing new strategic approaches for sustainably scaling social start-ups will be a core future task for both academic researchers and ambitious founders. However as a first step in that matter, we believe that leveraging their social impact for communicating their significant value will be the key to growth and success.

## 8. SOURCES

## 8.1 Biblical sources

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## 8.2 Internet Resources (accessed last time before hand-in on 07.12.2015)

<sup>1</sup>Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2015, OECD; http://www.oecd.org/std/business-stats/entrepreneurship-at-a-glance-22266941.htm

<sup>2</sup>McKinsey, 2014: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/high\_tech\_telecoms\_internet/grow\_fast\_or\_die\_slow

<sup>3</sup>http://ssir.org/articles/entry/philanthropys\_buzzwords\_of\_the\_decade

<sup>4</sup>http://goodmustgrow.com/fifteen-for-15.pdf

<sup>5</sup>http://scaling.impacthub.net/

<sup>6</sup>http://adage.com/article/digitalnext/millennials-party-brand-terms/236444/

<sup>7</sup>https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/millennial-generation-research-review

<sup>8</sup>http://millennialbranding.com/2015/millennial-consumer-study/

## 9. Appendix

## 9.1 Questionnaire

## 1.Introduction

**Goal:** Smooth introduction of the interview; explain purpose, structure, agenda, background of thesis and interviewers; get to know basic facts about the start-up and interviewee.

#### Data asked:

Name: Age: Gender: Position: Company name: Year established: Turnover: Number of customers: Number (position) of employees: Financial model: Place of interview: Date and time:

## 2. Set the stage / assess business situation

**Goal:** Learn about how the interviewee defines the organization's purpose and business model; discover the role of marketing for the business, current marketing activities as well as defined marketing goals.

#### **Questions Catalogue:**

- Please briefly describe purpose of your company?
- Please briefly describe business model of your company?

- What makes your company successful?
- How do you define growth for your company? / What does 'scaling' mean for you?
- Please describe the role marketing currently has for you business?
- What marketing activities are you currently performing?
- How would you describe the core goals of your marketing activities?

## 3. Growth Marketing Challenges, Part 1 (open and interviewee driven)

**Goal:** Learn about the most present challenges of growth and respective marketing activities for the start-up – without creating any bias by suggesting categories or topics.

#### **Questions Catalogue:**

- What are the biggest challenges you are currently facing when it comes to growing your business?
- What are the biggest challenges you are currently facing when it comes to marketing?

## 4. Growth Marketing Challenges, Part 2 (research category driven)

**Goal:** Findings will enable to differentiate current challenges of social start-ups to the marketing challenges of established entrepreneurial marketing and respective research.

#### 4.1 Market assessment and opportunity recognition

#### **Questions Catalogue:**

- How do you identify market / business potential?
- How do you exploit this identified potential?
- How are you making sure you to constantly look for market opportunities?

## 4.2 Customer intensity

#### **Questions Catalogue:**

- What is your customer focus / main target group?
- How and on what reasoning and knowledge did you choose that target group?
- What is your approach to generate customer insights?
- What kind of market research did you do in the past / are doing know?
- Who is responsible for generating customer and market knowledge?
- Please describe the average process of winning a customer for you?

- Follow-up: On what channels do you reach them? What are major barriers for customers to decide for your product/offering?

- What effect has the social impact of your business on customer decision making?
- Please describe your approach on customer relationship management / keeping customers?

#### 4.3 Internal processes, functions and resource allocation

#### **Questions Catalogue:**

- Who is responsible for your overall marketing activities?
- How is marketing as a function integrated in your company?
- Approximately, how much % of your budget is allocated for marketing activities?
- As how advanced would you describe your marketing capabilities?
- Whom do you consider as your main competitors?
- How would you describe the density of competition within your market?
- How is this density affecting your marketing operations?
- How is your product/offering differentiated from your competitors?
- How are your customers perceiving this differentiation?

- What external stakeholders or parties do you consider as business partners?

- How do those partnerships accelerate your business growth?
- Please explain your approach to build those partnerships?
- What specific challenges occur when it comes to finding partnerships?

- Are you making use of consulting or other type of guidance when working with marketing/marketing strategies?

#### 4.4 Marketing objectives, processes and measurability

#### **Question Catalogue:**

- Please describe the previous impact on your business of your marketing activities?
- How satisfied are you with this impact? What could be improved?
- If applicable, how do you measure the effects of marketing activities?

#### 4.5 New value formulation and communication

#### **Question Catalogue:**

- Please describe the value proposition your product/service?
- How do you communicate that value proposition to your customers?
- How does your VP make you unique in the market? (follow-up: in comparison to commercial orientated businesses)

## 5. Interview Closing

**Goal:** Ask for additional comments not covered in previous blocks; thank interviewee for the time; outline next steps of the research and how findings are handled.

#### **Question Catalogue:**

- Are there any aspects our questions did not, but you would like to mention?

## 9.2 Survey Design

## 9.2.1 Low Involvement

Dear respondent.

We would like to ask for about 5 minutes of your time to answer a survey about a startup based in Stockholm.

We ensure that you will be 100% anonymous when answering these questions.

Age:

## Gender:

- Female
- O Male
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Yearly income:

- O Less than 200 000 SEK
- 200 000 300 000 SEK
- 300 000 400 000 SEK
- 400 000 500 000 SEK
- 500 000 700 000 SEK
- 700 000 900 000 SEK
- More than 900 000 SEK
- **O** Prefer not to answer

## Occupation:

- O Student
- **O** Full-time employment
- **O** Part-time employment
- **O** Not Employed
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Marital status:

- **O** Single
- **O** Married or partnered
- **O** Separated or divorced
- **O** Widowed
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Do you have children?

- O Yes
- O No
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Please read the following excerpt from a newspaper article about a young Swedish start-up and the founders:

## **New juice for Stockholm**

Bookmark article

Published today at 10:41 am

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP In connection with our ongoing mapping of Swedish entrepreneurs we visited an interesting startup in Stockholm last week: Juice Factory.

"Juice Factory" is a young Swedish startup, established in 2014 and based in Stockholm. Founded by Magnus Dahlberg and Andrea Söderlund, Juice Factory offers a range of three different fruit and vegetable juices to customers.

When asked how they came up with the idea, they responded, "After observing the beverage market for several months, we found that the demand for juices is still growing rapidly. As more people become aware of the importance of proper health and nutrition, we've seen several niches develop within the market for new, healthy beverages. This was an interesting opportunity for us, and one we felt was definitely worth pursuing."

Since its founding, Dahlberg and Söderlund have hired ten additional staff members who today work with marketing, sales and distribution, as well as management of supplier relations.

Ingredients used for Juice Factory's beverages are sourced partly from Sweden and partly imported from South America. All juices are produced just outside of Stockholm and then distributed to a range of cafes and grocery stores throughout Sweden, where the products are then sold directly to consumers.

Dahlberg and Söderlund told us they place a big emphasis on being a sustainable company with a positive social impact – guaranteeing quality throughout each step of the production process.

#### RANDOMIZATION (either product focused VP or social focused VP):

#### Product focused VP:

Now please read the following short text of how Juice Factory describe their offer:

"Juice Factory offers a range of three different juices – each based on a mindfully crafted recipe, offering a very unique taste to our customers. The juices are blended out of fresh fruits in our production facilities in Stockholm and are the ideal foundation for a very healthy and conscious lifestyle. The Juice Factory glass bottles are not only uniquely designed but are crafted in a way that keeps the juice extra fresh. One bottle of each of the three flavors covers the daily need of relevant vitamins. Each of the three flavors comes with a price of 35 SEK (3€) in a 0,3 litre bottle."

#### Social focused VP:

Now please read the following short text of how Juice Factory describe their offer:

"Juice Factory offers a range of three different fruit juices. We aim for being as sustainable as possible by thoroughly selecting our suppliers and exclusively import from small-scale farmers in South America. 5% of our profits are re-used for projects that improve the working conditions on farms in developing countries. All our bottles we serve the juice in are build out of 100% recycled glass. Our two founders are visiting all our supplying farms two times a year to be as close as possible to our partners and to learn more about how we as a company can make a positive impact. Each of the three flavors comes with a price of 35 SEK (3€) in a 0,3 litre bottle."

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
My impression of Juice Factory is pleasant.	О	0	O	O	0	Ο	О
Juice Factory's product claims are believable.	О	o	O	О	O	o	O
Juice Factory is a brand that you can trust.	0	o	0	Ο	O	o	Ο
I believe that Juice Factory is necessary to society.	0	o	0	Ο	O	o	Ο
My impression of Juice Factory is favorable.	0	0	O	Ο	O	o	O
Juice Factory does not pretend to be something it is not.	О	O	o	О	О	o	О
My impression of Juice Factory is good.	О	o	O	О	О	o	O
I would recommend Juice Factory to others.	О	0	O	O	О	ο	о

JF Q1 Based on the two texts you just read, please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:

JF Q2 Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
The quality of the product of Juice Factory is high.	О	O	O	o	O	О	О
I know what Juice Factory stands for.	О	ο	O	0	Ο	О	О
I have trouble finding out what image Juice Factory is trying to create.	О	O	О	o	О	0	о
In terms of the overall quality, I would rate the product of Juice Factory as high.	О	о	О	О	О	O	O
I will never know how good the product of Juice Factory is before I buy it.	O	O	О	O	О	O	•
Juice Factory delivers what it promises.	О	O	O	o	Ο	О	О
I need a lot of more information about the product of Juice Factory before I buy it.	О	о	0	o	О	O	O
I would recommend the product of Juice Factory to others.	О	О	О	O	О	0	0

JFQ3 Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I am curious about Juice Factory.	О	o	O	o	O	•	O
I think the product of Juice Factory has a fair price.	О	o	O	Ο	O	o	O
Learning more about Juice Factory would be useless.	О	0	О	Ο	O	o	О
The price of the product of Juice Factory is reasonable in relationship to the value I get.	о	о	О	о	о	o	O
I am intrigued by Juice Factory.	О	o	О	Ο	O	o	O
I perceive the described offering from Juice Factory as unique.	O	o	O	О	O	o	О
The described type of product is relevant to me.	О	0	O	O	O	o	о

### JFQ4 Please answer the following questions:

	Very Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat Unlikely (3)	Undecided (4)	Somewhat Likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very Likely (7)
How likely is it that you would buy the product of Juice Factory?	O	О	О	О	О	O	О
How likely is it that you would buy the product of Juice Factory instead of a product from a competitor?	О	О	0	O	О	О	O
How likely is it that you would buy other products from Juice Factory as well?	O	O	О	О	O	О	0

Do you give money to charity?

O Yes

O No

If yes, how much money do you donate on a monthly basis? In SEK.

Do you work voluntary for a non-profit company?

O Yes

O No

If yes, which company do you work for?

## 9.2.2 High Involvement

Dear respondent.

We would like to ask for about 5 minutes of your time to answer a survey about a startup based in Stockholm.

We ensure that you will be 100% anonymous when answering these questions.

Age:

Gender:

**O** Female

O Male

**O** Prefer not to answer

Yearly income:

- Less than 200 000 SEK
- **O** 200 000 300 000 SEK
- **O** 300 000 400 000 SEK
- 400 000 500 000 SEK
- **O** 500 000 700 000 SEK
- 700 000 900 000 SEK

- More than 900 000 SEK
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Occupation:

- **O** Student
- **O** Full-time employment
- **O** Part-time employment
- **O** Not Employed
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Marital status:

- O Single
- **O** Married or partnered
- **O** Separated or divorced
- $\mathbf{O} \ \ \mathsf{Widowed}$
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Do you have children?

- O Yes
- O No
- **O** Prefer not to answer

Please read the following excerpt from a newspaper article about a young Swedish start-up and the founders:

# **Bicycle startup in Sthlm**

Bookmark article

Published today at 10:41 am

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP In connection with our ongoing mapping of Swedish entrepreneurs we visited an interesting startup in Stockholm last week: Bike Factory.

"Bike Factory" is a young Swedish startup, established in 2014 and based in Stockholm. Founded by Magnus Dahlberg and Andrea Söderlund, Bike Factory manufactures and sells hand-crafted bikes.

The founders of Bike Factory are two passionate cyclists who spent months carefully observing the market for hand-crafted bikes. We asked them how they came up with the idea: "We could see that the market for bicycles had been growing and it continues to do so. This is partially a result of people making more of an effort to lead a physically active lifestyle, as well as placing an increasing emphasis on making environmentally conscious decisions to use sustainable methods of transportation. The timing just felt perfect for us."

Since it's founding in 2014, Bike Factory has hired ten additional staff members who today work with marketing, manufacturing, distribution, and management of supplier relationships. Both Dahlberg and Söderlund say they choose only the highest quality individual parts for the manufacturing process, ensuring that each bicycle represents the quality they as consumers appreciate most in a bike. Each bicycle is built in Bike Factory's own facilities and sold in Bike Factory's two separate store locations.

Dahlberg and Söderlund told us that there is a strong focus on being a sustainable company with a positive social impact – ensuring quality in each step of the process of building a bicycle, from choosing the individual parts used in each bike up until the point of sale of the final product.

#### RANDOMIZATION (either product focused VP or social focused VP):

#### Product focused VP:

Now please read the following short text of how Bike Factory describe their offer: "Bike Factory offers hand-crafted city bikes – manufactured in the heart of Stockholm and designed in collaboration with local artists that turn each produced bike into a unique looking vehicle. The bikes are crafted out of a specific combination of aluminium and other metals, making it lightweight and easily transportable everywhere. During the manufacturing process our own developed liquid is used several times, which makes the bike extra durable and prevents it from getting rusty. We have licensed brake technology from a leading manufacturer, which enabled us to receive several certificates for outstandingly high safety standards. Each of our bike comes with a price of 5000 SEK."

#### Social focused VP:

Now please read the following short text of how Bike Factory describe their offer: "Bike Factory offers handcrafted city bikes – manufactured in the heart of Stockholm. We choose our suppliers for the individual manufacturing parts extremely carefully based on their sustainability efforts. Moreover we aim for minimizing our own environmental impact within the manufacturing process by keeping transportation as well as use of material and resources as low as possible. We believe in the value of being active and invest 5% of our profits for healthcare-initiatives that encourage and foster physical activity. Our latest project is to organize the 'Sweden Goes Bike Day' in cooperation with different municipalities, which encourages everyone to avoid using cars and other means of transportation for one day and take the bike instead. Each of our bike comes with a price of 5000 SEK."

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
The quality of the product of Bike Factory is high.	О	O	O	O	О	0	o
In terms of the overall quality, I would rate the product of Bike Factory as high.	о	О	о	О	о	О	O
I would recommend the product of Bike Factory to others.	O	О	O	O	О	o	о
I know what Bike Factory stands for.	0	О	o	o	O	o	o
I have trouble finding out what image Bike Factory is trying to create.	o	О	O	O	O	o	o
I will never know how good the product of Bike Factory is before I buy it.	o	О	O	O	O	o	o
I need a lot of more	0	О	0	0	o	0	O

BF Q1 Based on the two texts you just read, please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:

information about the product of Bike Factory before I buy it.							
Bike Factory delivers what it promises.	О	O	О	О	O	0	0

BF Q2 Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Bike Factory's product claims are believable.	О	o	O	o	O	0	o
Bike Factory is a brand that you can trust.	О	O	О	0	О	О	о
Bike Factory does not pretend to be something it is not.	O	O	O	O	О	О	O
My impression of Bike Factory is good.	О	O	О	0	О	О	о
My impression of Bike Factory is pleasant.	О	O	О	0	О	О	o
My impression of Bike Factory is favorable.	О	O	О	0	О	О	о
I believe that Bike Factory is necessary to society.	О	O	О	0	О	О	o
I would recommend Bike Factory to others.	О	О	О	0	0	0	0

BFQ3 Please state to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I am intrigued by Bike Factory.	О	0	O	0	O	0	o
Learning more about Bike Factory would be useless.	О	О	O	О	O	o	o
I am curious about Bike Factory.	О	О	O	О	O	o	o
I think the product of Bike Factory has a fair price.	O	0	0	0	O	0	o
The price of the product of Bike Factory is reasonable in relationship to the value I get.	о	О	о	О	о	о	O
I perceive the described offering from Bike Factory as unique.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The described type of product is relevant to me.	О	О	О	О	О	O	0

#### BFQ4 Please answer the following questions:

	Very Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat Unlikely (3)	Undecided (4)	Somewhat Likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very Likely (7)
How likely is it that you would buy the product of Bike Factory?	О	0	O	О	O	О	o
How likely is it that you would buy the product of Bike Factory instead of a product from a competitor?	Э	О	О	О	О	о	O
How likely is it that you would buy other products from Bike Factory as well?	О	О	O	О	О	О	0

Do you give money to charity?

O Yes

O No

If yes, how much money do you donate on a monthly basis? In SEK.

Do you work voluntary for a non-profit company?

O Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

O No

If yes, which company do you work for?

# 9.3 Pre-Test Results

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRODUCT	14	4,3571	1,44686	,38669
SOCIAL	102	5,6875	1,13835	,28459

Levene's test for equality of variances					t-test for equality of means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	90% Confide of the Di Lower		
Equal variances assumed	,688	,414	-2,816	28	,009	- 1,33036	,47238	- 2,29798	- ,36273	
Equal variances not assumed			-2,771	24,633	,010	- 1,33036	- ,48012	- 2,31994	- ,34078	

# 9.4 Regression

Run MATRIX procedure: Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com Documentation available in Hayes (2013). www.quilford.com/p/hayes3 Model = 1Y = PurchaseX = Scenario M = CharGiveSample size 195 Outcome: Purchase Model Summary R-sq MSE F df1 df2 R р ,1369 ,0187 1,8234 1,2156 3,0000 191,0000 ,30 53 Model LLCI coeff ULCI se t р ,0002 constant 3,8651 1,0141 3,8113 2,1889 5,5413 ,6239 -,4059 -,6505 -1,4372 CharGive ,5161 ,6254 ,0335 ,0214 ,6404 Scenario ,9733 -1,0371 1,0800 ,2093 ,3907 ,5356 -,4366 ,8551 int 1 ,5928 Interactions: int 1 Scenario X CharGive R-square increase due to interaction(s): df1 df2 R2-chng F р 1,0000 191,0000 int 1 ,0015 ,2869 **,**5928 Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator(s): p LLCI CharGive Effect UL se t CI 1,0000 ,2307 ,2930 ,7875 ,4319 -,2535 ,71 49 2,0000 ,4400 ,2586 1,7017 ,0904 ,0126 ,86

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8 2 Run MATRIX procedure: Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com Documentation available in Hayes (2013). www.quilford.com/p/hayes3 Model = 1Y = BrandIntX = Scenario M = CharGiveSample size 195 Outcome: BrandInt Model Summary R-sq MSE F df1 df2 R р ,1489 ,0222 1,4237 1,4429 3,0000 191,0000 ,23 17 Model LLCI coeff ULCI se t р ,0003 constant 3,3365 ,8961 3,7234 1,8554 4,8176 ,3034 ,5513 -,6078 CharGive **,**5504 ,5827 1,2147 ,5742 Scenario ,5659 1,0147 ,3115 -,3611 1,5096 -,4406 int 1 -,1521 ,3453 ,6600 -,7228 ,4186 Interactions: int 1 Scenario X CharGive R-square increase due to interaction(s): df2 df1 R2-chng F р 1,0000 191,0000 int 1 ,0010 ,1941 ,6600 Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator(s): p LLCI CharGive Effect UL se t CI 1,0000 ,4221 ,2589 1,6307 ,1046 -,0057 ,85 00 2,0000 ,2700 ,2285 1,1817 ,2388 -,1076 ,64

76

8 3 Run MATRIX procedure: Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com Documentation available in Hayes (2013). www.quilford.com/p/hayes3 Model = 1Y = BrandAttX = Scenario M = CharGive Sample size 195 Outcome: BrandAtt Model Summary R-sq MSE F df1 df2 R р ,1290 ,0166 1,1794 1,0766 3,0000 191,0000 ,36 02 Model LLCI coeff ULCI se t р ,0000 constant 4,4713 ,8156 5,4823 3,1232 5,8193 ,0599 ,1194 ,5018 -,7695 CharGive ,9051 ,8893 ,3786 **,**7352 Scenario ,5151 ,4631 -,4727 1,2300 **-,**5843 -,2065 int 1 -,0649 ,3143 ,8367 ,4545 Interactions: int 1 Scenario X CharGive R-square increase due to interaction(s): df2 df1 R2-chng F р 1,0000 191,0000 int 1 ,0002 ,0426 **,**8367 Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator(s): p LLCI CharGive Effect se t UL CI 1,0000 ,3138 ,2356 1,3318 ,1845 -,0757 ,70 32 2,0000 ,2489 ,2080 1,1968 ,2328 -,0948 ,59

26

8 1