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Introduction

As Gibbs (1988) stated “without reflecting upon this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalizations or concepts can be generated, and it is generalizations that allow situations to be tackled effectively”. For this reason, I decided to write a reflective journal during the creation of my project. I was sure that although it would have been very time consuming, it could have helped me identify important learning events that would have happened during these two months. This essay therefore presents a commentary on how I have learned from this experience, what would I have done differently, and how my perspectives or opinions have changed as a result of this experience.

Project choice

I am hovering with my fingers over the buttons of my laptop keyboard asking myself “Where do I start?”. So many thoughts spasm their way through my mind as I envision my journey on the creation of this project.

When I think about the moment when everything started, it instantly takes me back to my last Digital Marketing Masterclass that had as a guest Brittany Holloway, Product Marketing Manager at Soundcloud. During the very insightful session Brittany touched on one particular aspect that continued to stick with me even after class. She stated that “the marketing of music and artists could take an infinite number of forms, and the same does apply for streaming services” (Holloway, 2020). Later on, I asked myself if two, yet so different worlds in music could really have the same approach when it comes to marketing.

We are aware that in today's market any musician is not simply selling a product but an emotion that somehow creates an artist-fan connection, but what does it mean for a streaming service? A streaming service is nothing more than a product. Until hearing Holloway's statement, I was convinced that companies of streaming services would usually take a more traditional route when approaching its audiences and would predominantly aim at acquiring subscribers rather than creating a genuine bond with them.

I therefore started researching with great curiosity about the nature of previous marketing tactics of streaming services and how today's music delivery systems are being perceived. It was astonishing to see the disruptive impact that music streaming services such as Spotify, Amazon Music, Apple Music, Deezer and many more had. Not only were they fundamental for the battle against illegal distribution, but also made access to all kinds of music as easy as ever. In consequence, the growing popularity of this format encouraged many companies to enter the market.

Nonetheless, in order to stand out, many services started to invest in exclusivity in their own ways. Amazon Music for example, bet all on versatility. CEO Jeff Bezos said in an interview with Billboard (Witt, 2017) that Amazon Music consists of the marriage of high technology with music that makes the music-playing experience simple and therefore allows more people to listen to music more frequently. On the other hand, exclusive release games had become the central competitive maneuver for Apple Music, as for example the releases of important albums such as Frank Ocean's "Blonde", Drake's "Views" and Beyoncé's "Lemonade" (The Verge, 2016) would first appear on Apple Music. Lastly, the music streaming pioneer Spotify acquired the music intelligence platform Echo Nest, that allowed the Swedish company to discover more about consumer preferences as well as their behavior in order to not only anticipate their needs but also offer them a unique listening experience (IFPI, 2016). The focus seemed always to be more on the service, features and extra offers that they were holding and less on what they were containing, namely music. Alan Cross, who is an internationally known broadcaster, interviewer, writer, consultant, blogger, speaker as well as musicologist, argued during a TEDx Talk that people are being both manipulated by music technology and missing out on a full music experience. He namely stated that "streaming is context free music that goes in one ear and out the other. There is nobody that will tell you why that song is important, what's cool about this band, who is behind this album, where is this scene building, and what is this sound all about. You would not hear any of that. It is in one ear, out the other, I call it organized noise. (...) For a rich music experience, it is kind of lacking" (TEDx Talk, 2019). Although I stream music assiduously, I somehow agree with Cross' statement.

In my opinion, when we stream music, we do not always give nor understand the value it truly deserves. I therefore decided to take his statement as a challenge by creating a project for a music streaming service that would exactly offer what maybe many of us think is currently missing: a unique and rich music experience.

Research process

As I prefer to not work under pressure, I usually set up a plan in order to have a structured learning experience as well as to complete my work on time. For this reason, before starting to think on what brand to choose, I decided to apply the Deming Cycle (see Appendix A) for this three-year campaign. Going through this process helped me to break down the project into various sub-tasks. Once I had established the sector I wanted to focus on and had structured my project activities, I immediately started to think on what brand to work on. I knew that I did not want to focus on a brand that I already knew and that was already performing extremely well, as it was not motivating enough for me. After having a look at the global market share of music streaming services, I decided to not go for the big names such as Spotify (32%), Apple Music (18%) and Amazon Music (14%) (Midia, 2020), but rather concentrate on the underdog Deezer that currently holds only 2% of the market share (Midia, 2020) but has an enormous betterment potential. In fact, after visiting Deezer's website I noticed that the streaming service had so much to offer (e.g. original features, cool branding, good pricing, high sound quality) and the reviews online were very positive. Once I decided the brand I wanted to focus on, I immediately started to put a potential strategy together but had to quickly understand that all the ideas generated from my brainstorming were not necessarily reflecting the needs of a bigger audience in regard to a brand or a streaming service, but were simply expectations I had of a service that I was, and still am very excited about. Therefore, I increasingly realized that it was of great importance to incorporate primary research data. In order to gather different viewpoints to the topic, I decided to conduct one group and three one-on-one problem-centred interviews. As Schensul argues (2008) problem-centred interviews involve an exchange between real people in their own social, cultural, and physical context. They focus on meanings and behavior, which the

researcher tries to understand through the eyes and lived experience of the people. This first-hand experience conducting fieldwork for my project was a generally enjoyable experience. However, I am aware that I did make a number of mistakes during the process. Nonetheless, I learned some valuable lessons as a result of it. The individuals that I interviewed were all part of the campaign's target audience. Because I knew the interviewees very well, I did not draft formal questions, but preferred to comfortably develop natural conversations with the respondents. By doing so, I realized while re-reading the transcripts that I sometimes asked suggestive questions, meaning that my questions implied that certain answers should have been given in response. Furthermore, I think that during my group interview two respondents out of three were often providing elusive answers. In consequence, some parts of the conversation sometimes felt futile because firstly, I could not source as much information as I had wanted from these individuals, and secondly, I realized that their excitement about music streaming services was not as high as mine, which made the conversation less interesting. I tried to counteract these limitations by shifting my focus to individual interviews, although this was also fraught with some minor complications. However, comparatively and overall, all the individual interviewees proved to be more cooperative and more excited about the product. According to the Belbin questionnaire (2010) that I had conducted during my previous university studies, I tend to be a mild, sociable person that is concerned about others with a good capacity for flexibility and adapting to different situations and people, but I also tend to be indecisive in crunch situations, can be easily influenced and I am not considered to be a very confident person. Hence, through this activity I was able to still identify some of my personal traits that I was given from the Belbin questionnaire. I think that the two respondents had not taken my positionality as an interviewer seriously because we were too familiar with each other as a group and maybe my personality was not convincing enough. However, I never imagined that the way I was perceived by others could affect my interview and therefore project.

Strategy development

People develop feelings of ownership for a variety of objects, immaterial services, music genres and even various artists, which is referred as psychological ownership. According to Pierce et al. (2003), the concept of psychological ownership reflects a state in which individuals feel as though the target ownership is theirs. He also points out that the motivation for feelings of ownership is grounded in satisfying three fundamental human needs such as self-identity, having a place as well as efficacy and effectance (Pierce et al. 2001, 2003). In order to better understand my target audience's motivations for eventual feelings of ownership, I have conducted an analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970) based on the primary data I had previously collected (see Appendix B). Furthermore, I developed a means-end chain (Gutman, 1982) that is a conceptual structure for the liking of a product (see Appendix C). These two analyses helped me understand the motivations that drive human behavior, and the ways that personal values can influence individual behavior.

Based on the results, I came to understand that the interviewees' subscription to a music streaming service provided them resources for constructing an identity that can be controlled and communicated to an extended number of people (self-identity) (Belk, 2013). In addition to that, their music streaming subscription had allowed them to control and integrate music strategically in their everyday lives. This sense of possession usually grants individuals a sense of power (effectance) (Sinclair & Tinson, 2016). Lastly, they found a strong sense of identification and tended to develop a noticeable emotional connection, as they saw the service as a safe place or a home (having a place). This possession can be "thought of from the perspective of a fixed point of reference around which the individual structures a significant portion of his or her reality" (Porteous, 1976), in this case playlists, content and personal music libraries.

As the motivations were reflecting the needs presented by Pierce et al., I decided to focus on satisfying the three fundamental human needs mentioned before. During this three-year campaign I wanted to firstly become closely connected to the target audience so that they could have gotten the opportunity to know the brand intimately. Thereby, individuals would have considered this service as part of

the self, and would have developed feelings of ownership (Beaglehole, 1932). Consequently, through the deep knowledge about Deezer, individuals would also have become more familiar about the brand, its personality as well as distinctive features, which would have ultimately contributed to the establishment of a sense of home and belongingness and eventually self-reflection. Once I had established my approach towards the creation of the campaign, I did a second brainstorm session. I was surprised at how my ideas for the marketing activities had changed based on the interviews I had conducted and the theories I had applied few days before. When I started with the development of the strategy, I became aware that creating a strategy, thinking about a campaign message and putting together concepts for various marketing activities was my favorite part of the project. I was really engaged, had high levels of energy and was enthusiastically involved in my work. Most scholars agree that engagement includes an energy dimension and an identification dimension. Thus, engagement is characterized by a high level of vigor and strong identification with one's work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Bakker and Leiter (2010) also define work engagement as a motivational concept. They state that "when engaged, employees feel compelled to strive towards a challenging goal. They want to succeed". In fact, I realized that during this creative part of the project I was very committed to the work. I did not keep my energy in reserve and was somehow absorbed in my work that I sometimes lost track of time and was not particularly reactive to distractions. However, I think that the high motivation can be attributed to the fact that I am very passionate about music and everything that surrounds it (e.g. the industry, the art etc.).

Key message, campaign flow and marketing activities

The success of a marketing campaign does not depend mainly on its budget but rather on the message that is sent (Epure & Dinu, 2011). For this campaign I wanted to engage in a process of brand differentiation that would have strongly focused on convincing potential as well as existing subscribers that Deezer corresponds to how they listen to music. Just like music is varied and endless, so are people's reactions to it. Individual factors such as how someone is feeling, how accustomed the person is to listening to music, what are the person's tastes in music, what type

of personality is the person, and lots other factors can play a major, sometimes completely decisive role for their music listening experience (Gabrielsson, 2011). I therefore came up with the key message *You are what you stream*. The message wanted to emphasize the distinctive features that Deezer (e.g. Flow, SongCatcher etc.) holds, but also aimed at conveying in a personal and emotional manner the idea that Deezer is everyone's best music companion. In order to create a variety of concept ideas, I decided to subdivide the key message in three different campaigns: *Emergo*, *The Power of Your Music* and *Your Music through Time*. This approach allowed me to be more creative and think critically on how to convey the message through three different campaigns. For me it was important to always take a customer-centric approach. I thought it would be beneficial to bring different facets of marketing communication together that would have eventually enhanced as well as supported each other so that a clear and consistent message about Deezer and its service could have been integrated and coordinated. I therefore did my research on the advantages and disadvantages of the different marketing channels and came to conclusion to mostly focus on live experiences, social media, influencers, playlists, digital marketing and Out of Home advertising.

Live experiences

Forbes (2019) reported that millennials and every other generation are opting out of accumulating stuff and exploring experiences instead. Furthermore, a quantitative study conducted by Braun and Krause (2010) reported that when examining Music Listening as a Function of Favorite Format, respondents indicated a high emphasis on live music and streaming as the most favorite formats. Based on this evidence, I thought it would have been beneficial for the brand to combine these two forces and create experiences that would have been memorable, but relevant to the people attending. I wanted to place great importance to the already existing subscribers, as I wanted them to feel special. In my opinion, this approach would have helped Deezer to engage with its audience on a more personal and interactive level. An Eventbrite report (2017) outlined that attending a live event is a form of expression for millennials (73%). For this reason, I

decided to launch a series of intimate concerts as well as host different silent disco events around the world. With the concept of the concert I wanted to highlight the beauty in discovering new music but also create a new way to introduce the brand to a new audience (i.e. as a plus one guest). With the idea of the silent disco on the other hand, I wanted to represent the brand's personality (i.e. young, cool, original, fun) but also outline the distinctive features that Deezer provides as a music streaming service. People that would have attended one of Deezer's events (i.e. concerts and silent disco) would have experienced a feeling of joy and excitement, which would have subsequently turned them into new subscribers and ultimately into brand advocates (see also Appendix D). With this strategy people would have eventually helped the brand expand its personality and influence through word of mouth as well as online.

Social media

Technology has profoundly changed the process of communications (Jones et al. 2008). Because of the increasing use of the internet and social media for the reception as well as research of information, digital savvy people are more and more turning away from traditional media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As a consequence, the multi-way communication model has aroused, where the focus has shifted from companies to consumers, individuals to communities, nodes to network, publishing to participation, and intrusion to invitation (Berthon et al., 2012). In my opinion, social media are means by which a brand can establish a dialogue with its (potential) customers, build relationships with people and ultimately increase its brand value by the perception of and experiences with the subscribers or followers. Therefore, I thought it would have been a cost-effective and relevant option for forging Deezer's brand image in people's memories, build knowledge about the brand as well as evoke positive feelings and judgements towards it. As we know, the essence of social media is about content, sharing, conversation, openness and interaction (Hawkes & Gibbon, 2008). Hence, in order to generate trust and preference towards Deezer, its service and its content, I decided to develop a social media strategy where engaging, relatable and appealing music related content would have been consistently delivered; for example, creating

content that truly reflects the diverse communities that Deezer serves. According to an article published by Forbes (2019), there is an emerging desire from consumers who are now looking for brands to emphasize social responsibility. Asking questions and using branded hashtags was another tactic I wanted to use in order to increase engagement with the audience. I thought that it would have helped Deezer to collect user-generated content to then post on the brand's own social media channels. This would have been a way to spark conversation, make people feel involved and ultimately create a sense of community.

Influencer marketing

Influencers on social media represent a new type of independent third-party endorser who shape audience attitudes through the usage of social media (Freberg et al., 2010) (see Appendix E). In fact, according to a research conducted by InKling (2017), influencers are mostly very trusted on social media platforms, especially on YouTube and Instagram. However, whether or not people trust an influencer depends foremost upon their credibility. If the influencer violates their *ethos* they will lose the trust of their followers and in consequence lose their influence (Forbes, 2019). Based on these findings, I decided that influencer marketing would have played a key role during this three-year campaign. However, in order to attain authentic and trustworthy presence among different online communities (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014), I thought it would have been crucial to engage with influencers, artists included, that would somehow reflect the identity of the brand. One of the strategies focused on partnering with different influencers for the production of various creative and engaging content formats that would have always had music as well as people as a centre of attention. However, the distinctive features of Deezer's service (e.g. Flow or SongCatcher) would have always been implemented in every type of content that would have been released. The intent with that choice was to increase knowledge about the value of the service through a trustworthy third party. Furthermore, influencers would have been given a unique free trial code for the service to promote to their audience. After having a conversation with Alexander Wisotzki, who is digital marketing manager at my previous workplace (ALDI SUISSE AG), I decided that

the content provided would have predominantly been video content. During the conversation he namely stated that video content usually performs best with most algorithms on social media, based on the fact that the viewer's attention is captured for a longer period of time. Even though I was already convinced to produce mostly video content, I preferred to do my own research on it and found out that the longer a viewer would have engaged with a piece of Deezer's video content, the more likely an algorithm would have boosted the content to a wider audience. Furthermore, viewers are most likely to share visual content created by brands, media and influencers (Net Imperative, 2017).

Playlists

There are two types of playlists: algorithmic and human curated playlists. In the world of digital music providers, algorithmic playlists seem to have a similarity to commercial radio, whereas human curated playlists are put together by a person that is truly based on a person's input on songs, artists and genres. For this marketing activity, I wanted to collaborate with various influential people, i.e. artists, activists, authors, comedians, influencers and many more to help establishing brand awareness, knowledge and liking. Every collaborator would have had the opportunity to be one of Deezer's playlist curator. With the implementation of this concept, Deezer would have reached a wider audience base in a harmonious way that would have eventually generated new subscriptions but also engagement. In order to have a wider reach and impact among the target audience, this marketing activity, would have always been utilized in synergy with other activities such as social media and influencer marketing.

Digital Marketing

The audiobook and podcasting markets are growing far faster than the overall media and entertainment market. Deloitte (2019) predicts that the global podcasting market will increase by 30% to reach US\$1.1 billion in 2020, surpassing the US\$1 billion for the first time. As this market is growing, I thought it would be beneficial for the brand to create an original podcast that would have had

various important artists as a guest. By doing so, Deezer would have not only expanded its presence, but also acquired a certain value because of the correlation with many artists. During my one-on-one interviews, two out of three interviewees told me that in terms of content, they would have liked to know any interesting stories from music history. By having this information as a starting point, I came up with a podcast that would have had an entertaining and educational take on various music genres. The artists invited on the podcasts would have told many interesting stories from music history of their genre, such as the production of certain albums, their sources of inspiration, a release gone wrong and many more. With this approach, I wanted to give listeners a rich music experience that according to Alan Cross (see also page 3) was missing but also create a space where listeners would have experienced a sense of belongingness, as if it would have been a conversation among friends at a party.

Out of home advertising

Until recently I underestimated the power of out of home advertising. One campaign that made me realize how much of an impact this tool could have, was Stormzy's campaign for his debut album *Gang Signs And Prayer*. Mysterious billboards in London were hinting at the international artist's upcoming debut album (Independent, 2017). I remember that people on social media as well as digital and non-digital newspapers were really excited about it, which eventually sparked up a conversation about his music. Research from Nielsen found that 46% of surveyed adults did an online search after first seeing the object of their search in an OOH ad (Broadsign, 2018). After having taken this campaign as an inspiration, I thought on how I could implement a similar concept to a music streaming service. I therefore came up with a New Year's Resolution campaign, where different song lines that circle around the theme "New Year's Resolution" would have appeared on busy metro and bus stations. In order to have a bigger impact but also make it more engaging and interactive, I would have launched the hashtag #MyDeezerResolution, where people could have had the opportunity to express what song and artist represents them best. Also the out of home promotion of the podcast was highly influenced by Stormzy's campaign.

Deployment of budget and timeline

I considered the deployment of the budget and timeline one of the most difficult and challenging parts of the project work. I think that my lack of experience played a role in it, as I sometimes felt overwhelmed on where to find information or what is best to do. I also realized that because I was not feeling confident enough with the task, I procrastinated it. Fernie et al. (2015) define procrastination as the postponement or avoidance of starting, engaging in, and/or completing a task or a decision-making process, whether intentional or unintentional.

However, in order to have a realistic budget, I researched the estimated revenue of the company. Subsequently I investigated the average expenditure of tech companies. Deloitte (2017) stated in an article that according to a survey conducted by CMO tech companies can be considered as big spenders when it comes to marketing, as they spend 15% of their income. In conclusion, I used this percentage of the company's income to create the campaign.

Conclusion

Research has demonstrated that whenever people believe that human attributes are malleable and can be developed through effort and learning (incremental theory) (Dweck & Legget, 1988), people's motivation enhances for learning and leads them to seek out rather than avoid challenges, improving persistence and performance in the face of difficulties across important areas of life such as education, work, health, relationships and sports (Steimer & Mata, 2016). Furthermore, according to Buchanan and Huczynski (2010) the personality of one's person is not stable, as the self-concept can be reorganized. I realized that my confidence throughout this project was always relative to the task, therefore I am strongly ambitious to ameliorate my main weaknesses that I am now consciously aware of such as trying to avoid confrontation as well as tending to be insecure, mild and too diplomatic.

I am also willing to continue fostering my strength as a good planner as well as my creativity, which in my opinion will help me to strongly increase my self-confidence for a future job in the marketing field.

Moreover, through this project I was able to confirm my passion to work in a music related field. According to Vallerand & Houliort (2019) passion may also lead to the highest levels of self-growth because one's passion for a given activity facilitates the experience of a number of recurrent positive experiences and processes during activity engagement that in turn can promote adaptive outcomes (and self-growth) within the sphere of the activity, as well as outside of it in one's life in general.

Lastly, according to Culina-Obradovic and Brajkovic (2009) project activity is an "open form of teaching considering that there is openness in decision-making within the flow, and the product or result develops successively from the teaching process". In fact, this assignment also gave me the opportunity to think critically, to engage in a very creative approach to solving problems or difficulties, and not just to reproduce content. Marketing is known to be a discipline where there is no black or white, no right or wrong, but there are simply ideas that will arouse negative or positive reactions from people. Therefore, I think it is of great importance to understand why something did eventually not work and what could have been done in order to avoid making a similar mistake again. In conclusion, I believe that like this experience, any reflecting and learning can be used in a positive way in future, as it will help me to not only grow professionally but also in a personal manner.

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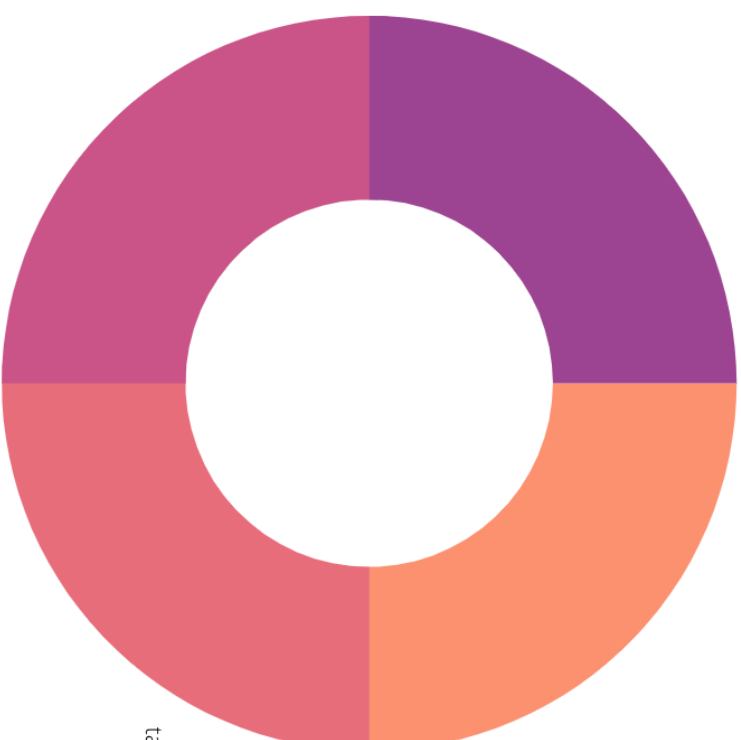
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ACT

Reflective Commentary

CHECK

Identification of KPIs



PLAN

Market research
Competitive analysis
Brand analysis
Research on target audience and consumer trends
Qualitative Interviews
Budget estimation

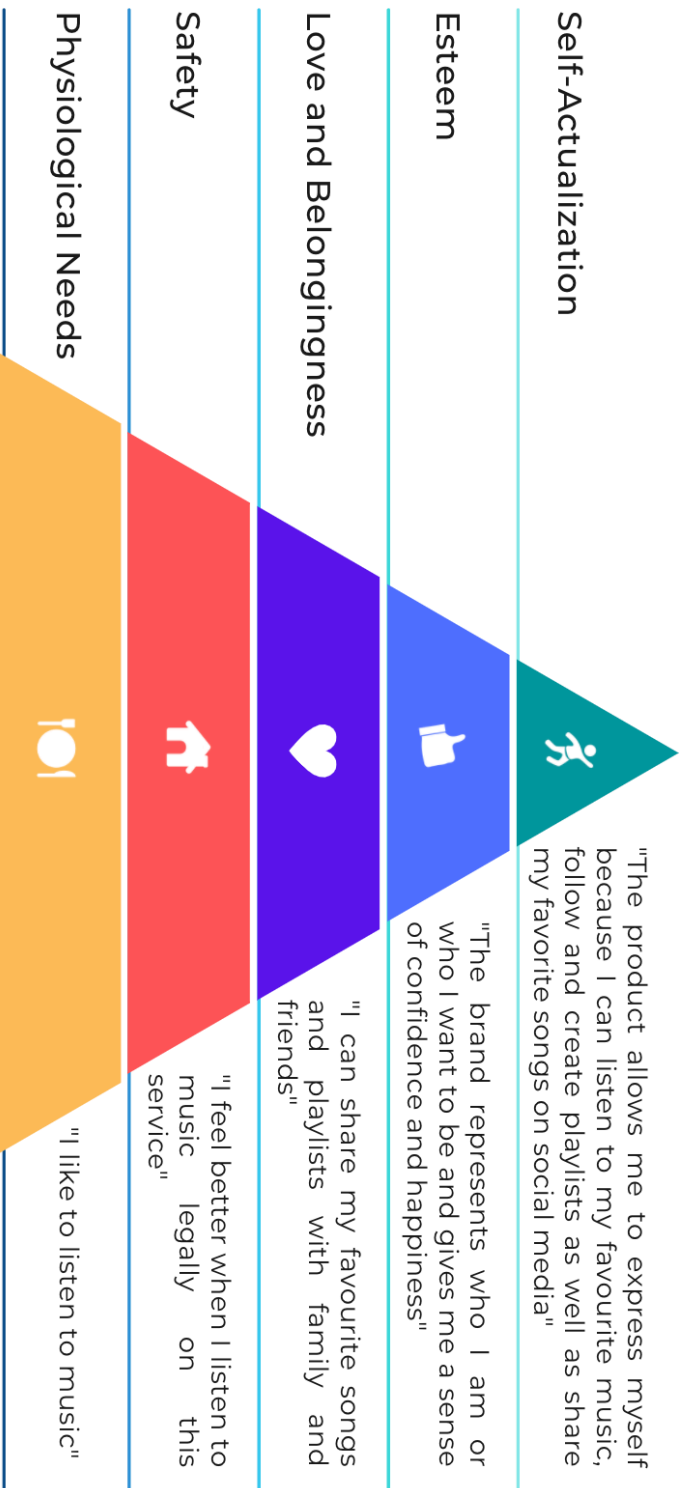
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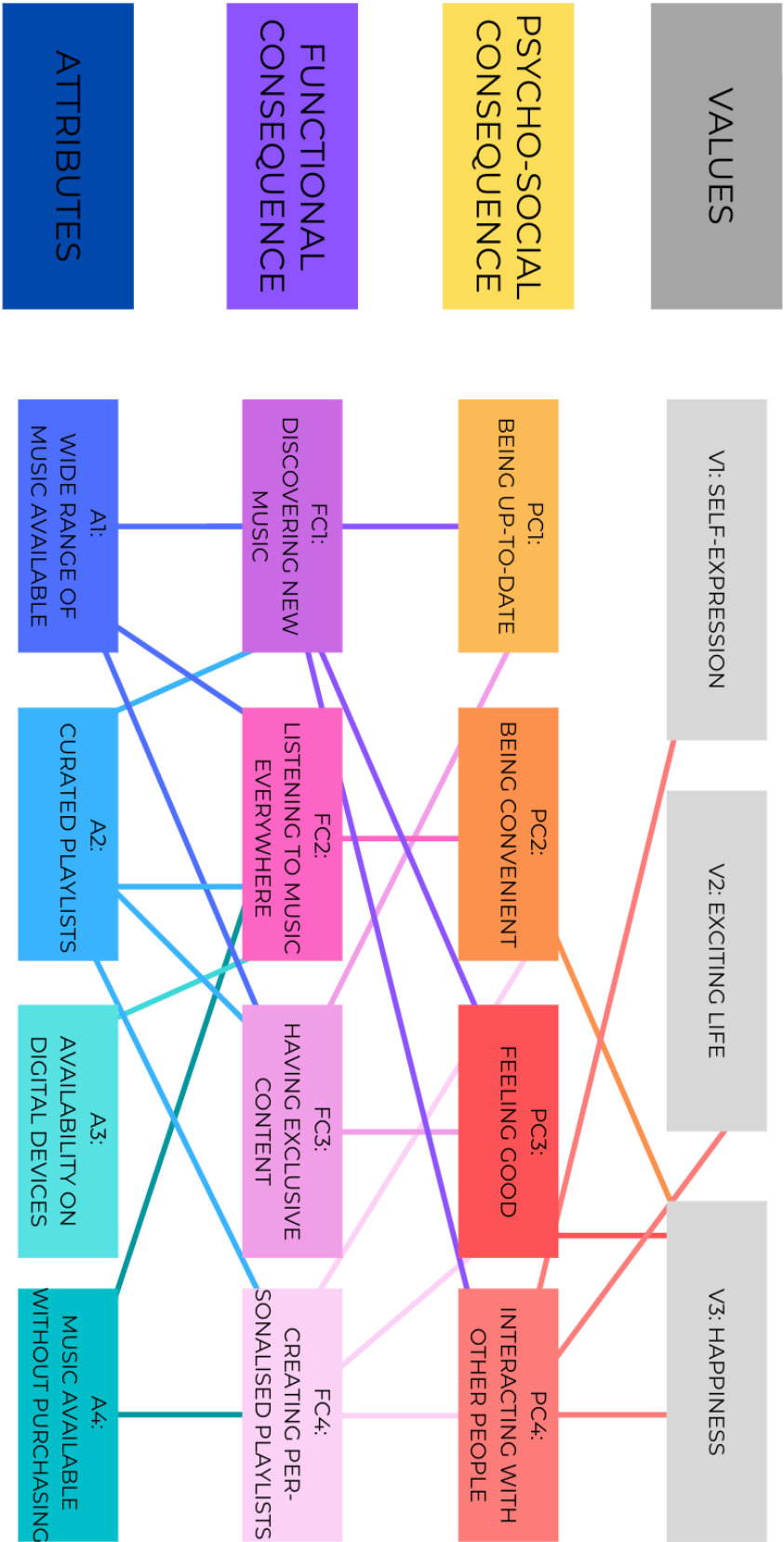
Identification and definition of objectives and goals
Choice of marketing channels
Project development (marketing tactics, strategy for message conveyance included)
Creation of media assets
Creation of Timeline and Budget

Appendices

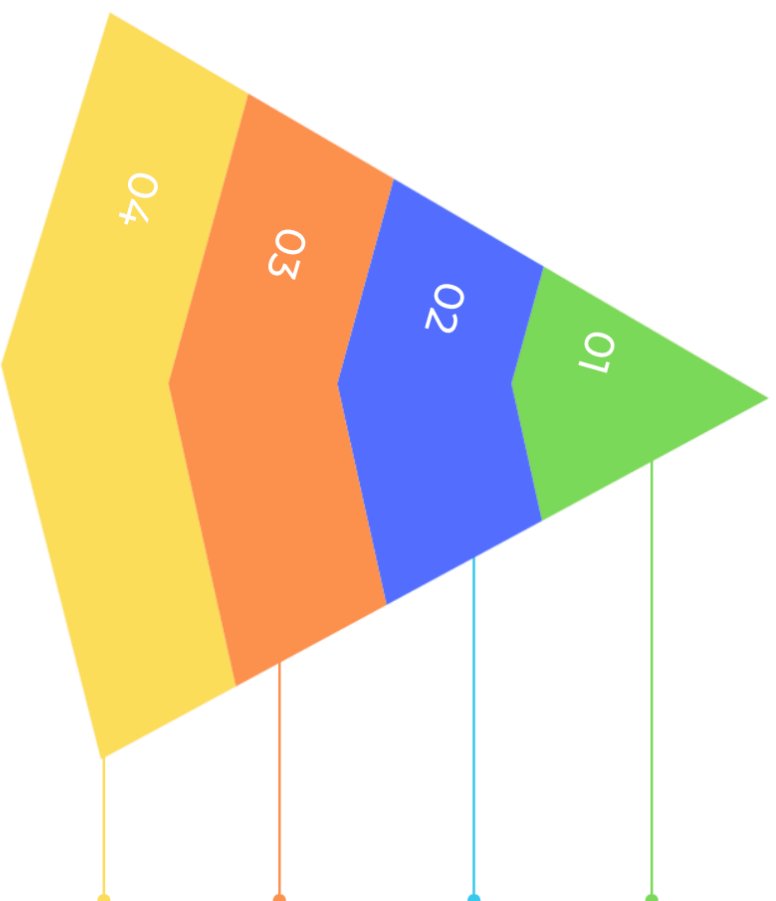
Appendix A: PDCA Cycle (Deming Cycle)

Appendix B: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





Appendix C: Means-End Chain



ADVOCACY

Target audience engages voluntarily in discussion with other consumers about the brand

ENGAGEMENT

Target audience demonstrates greater or more frequent interaction with Deezer

PARTICIPATION

Target audience makes simple efforts to engage with Deezer (e.g. likes on social media)

AWARENESS

Target audience passively receives brand messages from Deezer

Appendix F: Personal Develop



Strengths I am creative I am a good planner I am ambitious and motivated I am always prepared and willing to develop my knowledge and abilities	S	W	Weaknesses I am aware that I have to develop a broad range of business expertise and knowledge I know that I lack in confidence around people. Therefore, I am aware that I have to overcome shyness in order to result competent and credible with my visions and ideas.
Opportunities Working in the marketing field and implement different strategies Attend network events in order to socialize and step out my comfort zone	O	T	Threats Lack of confidence occasionally leads to overthinking and anxiety. I will try to increase my physical activity in order to reduce anxiety As English is not my first language I sometimes feel self-conscious. I am consciously reading books in English in order to improve my language skills

What do I need to learn?	What do I have to do?	What support and resources will I need?	How will I measure success? What does good look like?	Target date for review
Development of communication skills (Soft skills and attitudes)	- Overcome my insecurity and shyness - Widening my circle of contacts	- Attend events - Get to know new people through familiar people	Being confident with attending events on my own and confident in approaching and speaking to people	6 months
Improvement of English language skills (Knowledge)	- Reading books in English - Watching documentaries, series and TV in English	Talk and hold conversations on different topics whenever I have the chance to	Having more confidence when speaking or writing English	12 months
Development of broad range of expertise and knowledge (Knowledge)	- Reading books and academic journals - work in the marketing field	Ask people that are working in the marketing field about books I should look into in depth	Being confident when conversing about various topics	18 months
Improvement of mental well-being (no anxiety) (Attitudes)	- Follow a weekly gym routine - Meditate	- Follow a personalized workout plan - Download an app for meditation	- Better quality of sleep - Growth in positive mindset - Higher energy	3 months
Assistance with the implementation of marketing campaigns (Work skills)	- Prepare communication tools, including wording and design - Actively learning while taking responsibility	- Learn various ways of working by helping different teams with different tasks - Gaining insights in as many fields as possible	Increased knowledge and know-how on setting and implementing a marketing campaign	18 months