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Marketing communications strategy

Assignment 1

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Executive summary

Marketing communications is a complex subject and draw on a variety of disciplines. It is a strategy which defines the entire range of activities a company will do to market its products. In order to have an integrated approach, an organisation need to align its brand through its customers and its budget. This report covers a marketing communications planning framework for a small Welsh business: the Hiut Denim Company. All the framework is based on the COSTAC model which is the Chris Fill approach. The report is devised into 6 part: context analysis, objectives, strategy, communications mix, implementation and control.



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I. Introduction

All organisations need to communicate with a range of stakeholders in order to undertake their business activities and ensure a suitable distribution of their goods and services (Fill, 2009, preface). That's why marketing communications is an essential part of a business. Regarding the company, Hiut Denim Company is a clothing brand producing denim based in West Wales in a small town of 4,000 inhabitants called Cardigan and launched by David Hieatt. This local company made only 100 pairs of Hiut's a week because they are using the best quality denim. The factory has been running for 6 years now and the company wish to put on with an ambitious plan to grow the business. David is using the internet to attract customers through marketing communications which is *"the promotion used to communicate elements of an organisation offering to a target audience"* (Fill, 2009). Marketing communications framework is an integrated approach within a harmonised marketing mix, a coordinated communication mix, internal programs and synchronised agencies. It can be based on different models as SOSTAC (Smith, 2011) or COSTAC (Fill, 2009). That's why, through this report, a marketing communications planning framework will be described to ensure the Hiut's ambitious targets with a 5£million's budget from June 2019 to May 2020.

II. The context analysis

The context analysis is the COSTAC's first step and the purpose is *"to understand the key market and communication drivers that are likely to influence a brand and either help or hinder its progress towards meetings its long-term objectives"* (Fill, 2009, p310). Moreover, it is a necessary step of the planning process and it is intended to *"show the management the current situation that the organisation finds itself within each section with relation to communication issues"* (Smith, 2013). Indeed, it helps to understand information and market research data about a target audience and provide the rationale for the plan. The analysis should include a review of the performance regarding sales, market share during the most recent period (Smith, 2011, p229). It has 4 parts: the business context, the customer context, the internal context and the external context.

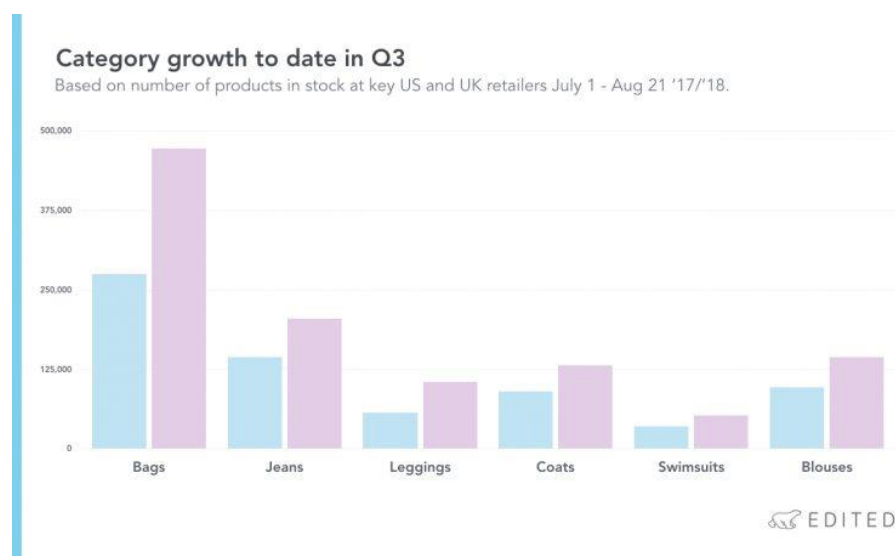


A. The business context

The business context should provide a clear picture of the organisation's performance by highlighting successes problem areas and future developments which will impact on the business (Fill, 2014). This analysis will allow the Hiut Denim Company to understand how the market works and how potential customers react to their product regarding their needs and wants.

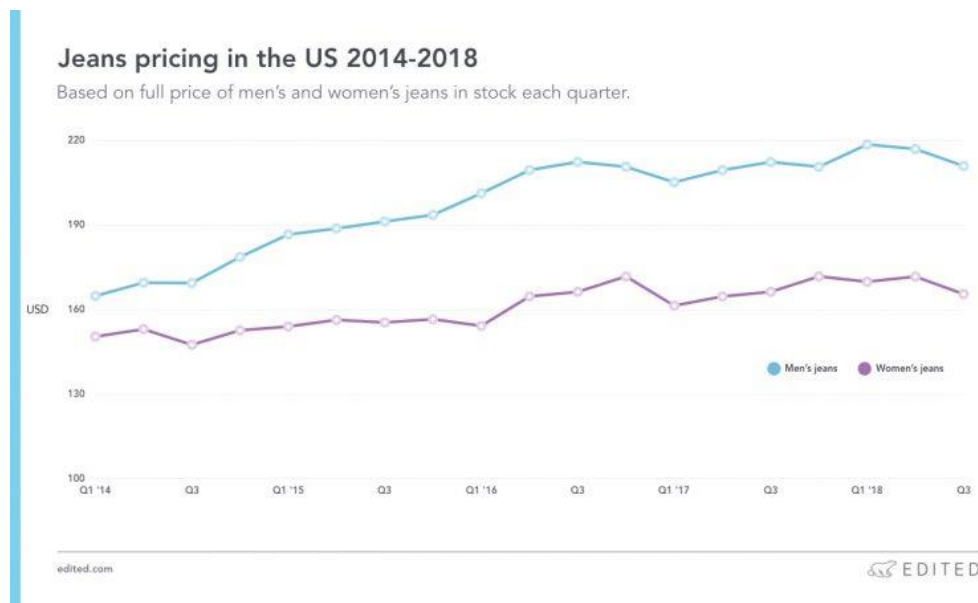
1. The denim market

Jeans stand the test of time and it is a fashion item of clothing which are stapled products. It is a very competitive market which means that it is great for innovation. The majority of clothing brands are selling jeans. According to Research and Markets (2019), *"denim market is expected to reach \$79,211.0 million by 2023"*. It is a market still in growth but the denim market is changing related to the fashion trends. There is more and more style of jeans (skinny, boyfriend, cropped, wide, etc) that's why the market is growing across the years. On the basis of product, the denim market has been categorized into jeans, jackets and shirts, dresses, and others, wherein others include tops and shorts. Moreover, *"the recent growth in women's jeans is good news for the industry because women want to wear more than just leggings and yoga pants"* said Cohen (2019). According to Smith (2018), denim is back in business for a majority of brands regarding the number of products in stock:





The market is segmented in three areas as the mass market, the standard and the premium (P&S Intelligence, 2018). The Hiut Denim Company is a premium brand. However, the majority of shoppers are paying more for inferior quality and inferior price. Regarding denim's prices, *"men's jeans are up 28% to \$210.86 this quarter, and women's have grown 10% to \$165.44 which demonstrating it's the more competitive market"* (Smith, 2018). Moreover, the price is also growing across the years because of the quality and the competition.



The Hiut Denim Company is selling high quality jeans but it is not a well-known company in an internationally way. Their prices are between £150 and £185 for women's jeans and between £155 and £240 for men's products and they are trying to keep their prices reasonable for premium hand-crafted jeans (HiutDenim, 2019).

2. The competition

Nowadays, a lot of people are wearing trousers that's why the competition is harsh. As said before, the majority of clothing brands are selling denim. According to creative director of Wrangler, *"the success in the denim market depends on brands and retailers having strong stories to stand out from the competition"* (Drapers, 2019). The main competitor of the denim's market is Levi's because it is the jean's creator. In order to mastering the market, the quality-price ratio is very important. Hiut Denim



Company is a very small business regarding Levi's, Topshop, Urban Outfitters, Lee, Kaporal, Diesel or Wrangler for example. There are also more accessible stores like H&M, Zara, ASOS or Primark for example. The luxury market is a hard competitor too because of the innovation of different brand as Guess, Balmain.

3. Supply chain

Distribution channel for the denim market are stores, department stores, hypermarkets and supermarkets, online shop and exclusive stores (Research and Markets, 2019). Denim's factories are especially in Asia because the workforce costs less. Regarding Hiut, all their jeans are made in Wales with high quality of cotton and are only selling by Hiut. The company is making only 100 pairs a week so the stock is limited.

4. Intermediaries

There are no intermediaries for the Hiut Denim Company because they are selling their products only in their store in Cardigan and online.

B. The customer context

The purpose of undertaking customer analysis as part of a business plan is *"to examine the consumers most likely to purchase your product or service in-depth"* (Smith, 2016) because customers are the most important assets of a business and, without them, a business can't be efficient. That's why a company should know its customers' motivations for buying and if the company can deliver the experience they are expecting. Understand their needs and their wants allow to target in the most effective way which customers are the most suitable regarding the business. Hiut should know why do they buy, why them, how much do they buy, where, when and what type of buying situation are they in.

First, it is important to identify who are the current customers. In the basis of customer type, the market has been segmented into men, women and children. In the case of Hiut, they are selling only denim for men and women. Customer's age is not really defined because the majority of people are



wearing denim no matter their age. In general, denim's customers are all around the world because of the trends. Indeed *"the penetration of western fashion and western lifestyle has accelerated the casualization of clothing across the globe"* (P&S Intelligence, 2018). Through the development of exportation and importation, customers all around the world can make a denim purchase. Moreover, Hiut's consumers have an interest in the environment because all denim is organic and eco-friendly. Hiut customer base is digitalised because the majority of the selling are online. Thank of the development of marketing communications, customers are influenced by advertising and fashion trends. A lot of people want to buy denim good quality like Levi's or Diesel for example. Regarding the price of a good quality product, Hiut's customers are in a good social situation. Women and men have consumer habit related to the quality and the quantity of denim's purchases. According to P&S Intelligence (2018), *"men category is expected to continue holding the largest market share owing to heavy demand for casual-wear and rugged-material clothing by men across the globe"*. Jeans is likely a routine purchase but it depends on the price and the quality. Mass market customers are buying most often denim products because of its low prices and low quality. Regarding Hiut, it's a limited purchase thank of the high quality.

C. External context

The purpose of the external analysis is to identify issues, opportunities and threats that are sitting on the horizon of the general environment that will affect the operations of the organisation (Fleming, 2019). This part is using a macro-environment analysis and enable to understand in which environment the company is progressing. In the case of the denim industry, a PESTLE analysis is the most suitable model.



Denim market PESTLE	
Political	Political issues are the taxation on imports from other countries which must be regulated and the promotional activities which are regulated in all countries (BrandsandCo, 2014).
Economic	▪ The economic crisis has affected the purchasing power of customers in 2008 (BrandsandCo, 2014). ▪ Stage of economic development. ▪ Denim market competition is very harsh. ▪ The raw material is essentially cotton so the stock exchange price is currently increasing (ZoneBourse, 2019).
Social	▪ There are important cultural differences because of the needs and fashions which are different according to cultures (BrandsandCo, 2014). ▪ Denim is an important part of a wardrobe and the heart of fashion (BrandsandCo, 2014). ▪ Social trends are driven by fashion.
Technological	▪ Social media marketing through Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. ▪ Development of advertising strategy according to fashion trends. ▪ Online shopping is more and more developed and is more accessible. ▪ Brands are improving mobile applications ▪ Internet is a new way of distributing fashion related to famous people because it helps consumers get the fashion they want (Frue, 2018).
Environmental	▪ New ways of producing denim which enable to take care of the health and the environment (BrandsandCo, 2014). ▪ This industry must provide ethical products that respect the planet over the years. ▪ Using recycled material and packaging. ▪ The strong impact of the cotton crop on the environment.
Legal	▪ The emergence of labels as “confiance textile” which guarantee healthy textiles. ▪ European regulation REACH obliges industries to be clean in the using of substances (Wordpress, 2013).

D. Internal context



The internal context is a link with the micro-environment which means that the organisation should know its competencies and its capabilities in detail. The internal context answers the questions “what do we start from?” and “what do we have in our hands?” (Vlerick, 2018). Its strengths are members and employees, internal resources as technical resources, managerial skills or organisational structure for example but also physical elements (location and equipment). The whole internal context can be resumed by the McKinsey 7s’s framework: staff, skills, style, strategy, structure, systems and shared skills. Regarding the Hiut Denim Company, internal information can’t be provided. Their strength is their workforce because all their employees are specialised in the seam and the whole production is handmade. Hiut’s weaknesses are essentially the financial insecurity regarding their weak notoriety.

III. Marketing communications objectives

Promotional goals are the result of the context analysis and emanate from corporate and marketing plan. Communication objectives provide *“a balance to the plan and take away the sole emphasis on sales that inevitably arises”* (Fill, 2009, p311). *“The organisation must be flexible to be able to anticipate and adjust to changes in their environment”* (Fill, 2009, p326). This step means to define where do the organisation want to go, that’s why objectives *“should be quantified in terms of success of failure criteria”* (Smith, 2012, p233). Moreover, establish clear objectives is necessary to give a focus to the organisation division. First, an objective should be SMART which stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. According to Fill (2009, p335), the process of making objectives SMART requires *“management to consider exactly what is to be achieved, when, where and with which audience”*. There are 3 levels to consider:

A. Corporate level

Corporate objectives are derived from *“the business or marketing plan and refer to the mission and the business area that the organisation believes it should be in”* (Fill, 2009, p312). These kinds of objectives can be critical success factors or financial for example. Regarding the Hiut company, this



objective can be: to increase the total income by 7% by December 2019 and reach 120 pairs of Hiut's a week by May 2020. These objectives match with the SMART definition.

B. Marketing level

Marketing objectives are derived from *"the marketing plan and are output-oriented and can be considered as sales-related objectives"* (Fill, 2009, p312) These objectives refer to sales, market share, launching or the number of new products for example. Marketing objectives for Hiut might be: to increase market share by 4% over the next 12 months.

C. Marketing communications level

Marketing communication objectives are derived from *"an understanding of the current context in which a brand exists and the future context in the form of where the brand expected to be at some point in the future"* (Fill, 2009, p312). These objectives related to how the communications should affect the mind of the target audience (Smith, 2012, p234) and are derived directly from the context analysis. It can be in relation to the image, the launch and the positioning. Marketing communication objectives in the case of Hiut might be:

- To improve awareness by 15% by May 2020.
- To organise 2 open days of the factory by May 2020.
- To increase the number of sponsorships by May 2020.

D. Positioning

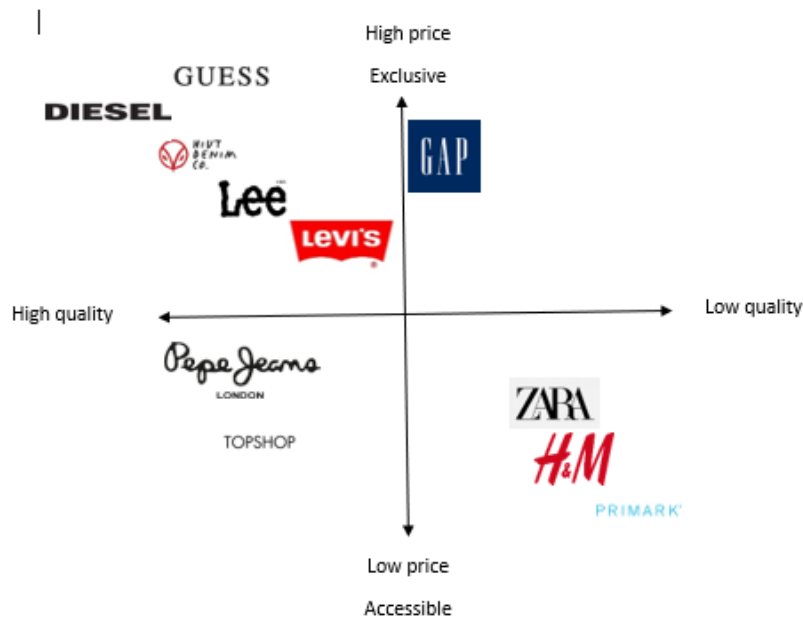
Positioning is the *"in the mind"* of the consumer relative to the competition and not the physical placement of a product which may use positioning strategies. It is the customer who positions the brand or product and not the company itself. According to Kotler (2003), *"positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image so that they occupy a meaningful and distinct competitive position in the target customers' minds"*. Moreover, the positioning concept must be clear and consistent because it is an important part of integrated marketing communications. The following



positioning map will allow understanding where is the Hiut Denim Company in the customers' mind.

Hiut Denim Company is high quality and high price brand but not in the same step than Diesel or Guess

for example. At the opposite, there are low quality and low prices brands like Primark and H&M.



IV. Promotional strategies

First, the communication strategy should be customer media-oriented and the strategy must be toward to the communications needs of the target audience that is revealed during the customer and business context analyses (Fill, 2009, p312). A marketing communications strategy is *"the strategy used by the company to reach their target market through various types of communications"* (Dragilev, 2019). It is all about how the objectives will be achieved. The methodology used to achieve previous objectives is based on the type of customers. In order to develop a marketing communications strategy, 3P's model can be used.

A. Pull

The pull strategy involves *"communicating with the end customer or consumer to attract them to the retailer/distributor in order to purchase the product"* (StudioWide, 2019). With this strategy, marketing efforts are ultimately directed at the customer. The pull strategy encourages end-user to demand the



product or pull the product through the channels. That's why Hiut should understand its consumers' behaviour in order to choose the message and media which will be used. This strategy is used in a B2C channel regarding this company. The goal is to attract new customers thanks to promotions and offers. It can be through contests, coupons or free sample for example. Through this way, Hiut's products can be differentiated from other products on the basis of real or emotional features and it will increase the loyalty.

B. Push

The push strategy "*promotes a product to retailers/distributors in order to force the product down into the distribution channel*" (StudioWide, 2019). The aim is to make customer purchasing with minimal or no advertising and involves personal selling to acquire a customer. In the case of Hiut, this strategy can be done because there are no intermediaries. Indeed, intermediaries focused to push the product down through the channels.

C. Profile

The profile strategy is all about satisfying the needs and wants of the stakeholders by closely keeping in touch with them. It is used in order to build awareness, perception, attitudes and reputation. The interest is to keep good relationships with all the stakeholders. It is all about how the customer is viewing the company. According to StudioWide (2019), "*a good profile usually means strong brand-equity*". In order to keep a good image, the internal communication must be developed through training and meetings because all the employees of the Hiut company must provide the same image. The organisation must consider all the perspectives of the people involved in the business by interaction and feedback. This strategy uses public relations (which is "*the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour*" (CIPR, 2019)), sponsorships (which is the act of supporting an event, activity, person, or organisation financially or through the provision of products or services) or corporate advertising (which is "*the advertising done for an entire organisation and not for individual brands or products*" (Marketing91,



2019)). Hiut Denim Company should use these channels and be interviewed by a local media for example and also sponsoring local companies in order to increase the awareness. They can also use newsletters in order to keep in touch with their customers.

V. The co-ordinated communications mix

The communications mix refers to a specific method used to promote the company or its products to target customers (Fill, 2009). It is related to the 7PS and the last P: promotion. The company must harmonise the marketing mix that is in the right place, with the right product, etc. This step includes 5 elements that are called a promotional mix:

- Advertising: the main function is to communicate with a specific audience and *“reach this audience with simple messages that represent opportunities to allow receivers to understand what product is”* (Fill, 2009, p483).
- Personal selling: involves a *“face-to-face dialogue between two persons or by one person and a group”* (Fill, 2009, p654)
- Direct marketing: it is a strategy used *“to create a personal and intermediary-free dialogue with customers”* (Fill, 2009, p623).
- Public relations: it is *“the management activity that attempts to shape the attitudes and opinions held by an organisation’s stakeholders”* (Fill, 2009, p564).
- Sales promotions: seeks to *“offer additional value as an inducement to generate an immediate sale”* (Fill, 2009, p539).

In order to coordinate this communication mix, Hiut must develop strong sales and advertising messages that will connect the company with their customers instantly and differentiate the brand in their mind. The message the company conveys through its marketing communications is critical: Hiut is doing jeans and only jeans with the slogan *“do one thing well”* (Hiut, 2019). They are not trying to



conquer the whole world. Hiut Denim Company is using the best quality denim and has an expert eye.

They are also promoting the “no wash club”. The message will affect individuals in different ways, that’s why the content is very important and must be credible. Media chosen by Hiut are their website and their social media (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook). Moreover, the coordinated communications mix must have internal methods as individual meetings, e-mails, team meeting, conferences, newsletters, notice and bulletin boards but also training and development.

To conclude, for integrated marketing communications, Hiut ought to use a harmonised marketing mix, a coordinated communications mix, internal programmes and synchronised agencies.

Media plan			
Level	Strategy	Objectives	Tools
Corporate	Pull	Increase the total income by 7% by December 2019	Personal selling, promotions, offers, coupon and direct marketing in order to increase the awareness and then the total income at the end of the year because of the growth of the customer number.
	Profile	Reach 120 pairs of Hiut’s a week by May 2020	Internal communications tools, question-answer sessions for the staff, training and development session in order to motivate and develop the employees’ skills.
Marketing	Profile	Increase the market share by 4% over the next 12 months	Public relations, sponsorships, corporate advertising and direct marketing.
Marketing communications	Profile	Improve awareness by 15% by May 2020	Public relations, newsletters, corporate advertising, direct marketing, digital media in order to target the appropriate audience.
	Pull	Organise 2 open days by May 2020	Promotions, offers, contests, free sample, coupon, product placement, digital media to attract as many people as possible.



	Profile	Increase the number of partnerships by May 2020	Public relations, newsletters and corporate advertising in order to collaborate with others organisation (sport club, environment' associations).
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VI. Implementation

The next step is to schedule and implement the deployment of methods and the media (Fill, 2009, p313). Events must be scheduled according to the goals and the strategy. The purpose is to know when the mix elements will be employed with what budget. Moreover, *“a great strategy with poor implementation won't help the business achieve its goals, because it won't take the proper steps to achieve the strategy”* (Grunert, 2019). In order to implement the strategy in the best way, Fill (2009), use the 5M's approach:

- **Manpower:** it is the importance and contribution of people to getting tasks done. In the case of Hiut, everything is done in-house.
- **Materials:** it is what will the company need to use in terms of technology, systems to get things done. Indeed, it is physical equipment provided by the company. Regarding Hiut, it is all about their factory and their sewing machines for example.
- **Money:** the budget allowed for this campaign is £5 million.
- **Minutes:** the campaign is from June 2019 to May 2020. The following table allows to visualise the development of the campaign throughout the year.

	Project planning June 2019 – May 2020												
	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	£
Sponsorships													800,000
Direct mail													80,000

Open days													5,000
Press advertising													50,000
YouTube channel													10,000
Bike rent with Hiut advertising													90,000
Promotional gifts													30,000
Exhibition meetings													10,000
Pop-up store in Cardiff													100,000
Pop-up store in Bristol													300,000
Pop-up store in London													900,000
Posters in Swansea													800,000
TV advertising													1,000,000
Social media promotions (1/media)													100,000
Press interview in local media													10,000
Total budget: \$4,285,000													

All these methods cost a total budget of £4,285,000 and cover the whole year. Direct mail will be sent throughout the whole year and include brochures, catalogues, postcards and newsletters and let Hiut communicate one-on-one with the target audience. There are 2 open days organised in order to invite customer visiting the factory and attract new ones. Hiut should create a YouTube channel and use it every month to show the backstage, the story of the brand and also some small advertising. Moreover, to increase the awareness, Hiut can use sponsorship and contact local organisation, use bike renting



and sponsor it, create TV advertising and posters in Swansea, use their social media and paid promotional tweet or posts in Instagram but also interview in a local media. Through the year, there are some exhibition meeting all around the UK, that's why Hiut can go there and promote their brand. The last method is pop-up stores in Cardiff, London and Bristol and it is one of the best ways to attract new customers. All the promotion mix tools are used.

VII. Evaluation and control

This step is the last one of the marketing communications planning framework and focuses on analysing quantitative and qualitative metrics regarding the implementation and the strategy. Control is necessary in order to give to the company an idea of how well the plan accomplished its goals (Fill, 2009). All objectives can be monitored thank of indicators (sales volume, sales value, market share, conversion rates, etc). The key areas identified in the three main marketing communications objectives will be monitored in order to evaluate the progress throughout monitoring indicators like the awareness level the number of enquiries, the market share and costs for example. Moreover, a financial statement will also be provided by the management accountants in order to monitoring if the budget is not overrun. This statement can be provided at the end of every month.

In order to control the development of the activity, Hiut should organise one meeting at the end of every month with all the team and then discuss reviews and report of very months vs previous month. Theses meetings enable the team to follow the objectives' progress. Furthermore, reports concerning the performance relating to the sales volume, the budget and the total income for example can be done in order to see the progression. Hiut can also organise briefing in order to motivate the whole team and then, achieve all the goals defined.



VIII. Conclusion

To conclude, Hiut Denim Company has the ability to grow its business throughout marketing communications. The previous marketing communication planning framework with a budget of £5million should help the company to increase its awareness and achieve their goals. All the steps of the COSTAC enable to build a strong plan. Hiut needs to understand all its context analysis in order to implement goals and then a strategy. The company must evaluate and control the development during the whole year in order to achieve in time the objective: grow the business.

IX. Recommendations

Hiut ought to follow an integrated approach and use all the promotional mix tools in order to try to grow the business in the UK. They should stay settle on their story and values. Digital media are easy to use and it is the best way to increase the awareness. Hiut should develop its social media account in order to attract new customers. They can also organise some pop-up stores in Wales and use public relations.



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