

STRATEGY OF INTRODUCING A NEW PRODUCT INTO A NEW MARKET CATEGORY



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STRATEGY OF INTRODUCING A NEW PRODUCT INTO A NEW MARKET CATEGORY

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Yours sincerely,

Jens van Campen

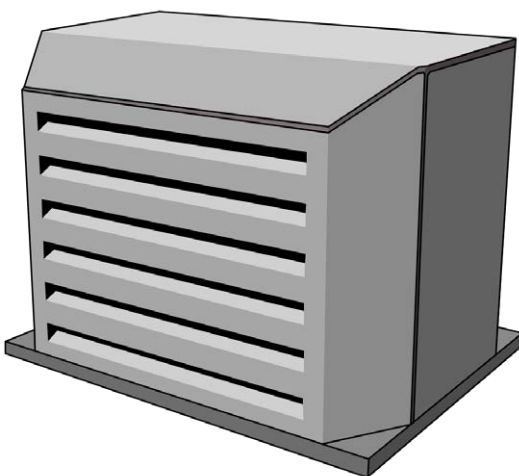
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JVC' or similar initials, enclosed within a circular scribble.

SUMMARY

A new legislation has been introduced by the Dutch government, requiring the outdoor units of ACs and heat pumps to produce no more than 40 dB at your parcel border. In many cases, sound reduction is needed to meet this new requirement.

To reduce this noise, a sound reducing enclosure can be placed over the unit. Van Cappellen Sound Solutions has developed such a product called the Brockx (figure 1). This company offers products for noise and vibration control. At the core of their business however, the company provides services in the maritime sector. They measure, model and predict noise and vibrations for luxury yachts. Their expertise in the acoustic area, combined with their innovativeness and the new development of the sound legislation has led to the development of the Brockx.

The problem that this project tries to solve, is how to continue with this product. No strategy has been developed yet, and not much is known about the market or how to conduct marketing. Van Cappellen can be classified as a small-medium company (SME), which also needs to be taken into account. To solve these problems, a structure has been created which is shaped by three chapters: SME marketing, 4C-analysis & marketing mix.



▲ Figure 1 - The Brockx

The chapter SME Marketing is intended to find out whether the situation of Van Cappellen is unique, what characterises small companies such as Van Cappellen, and how marketing is conducted. Through literature research and primary research it was found that similar situations are recognised among other SMEs. Three themes were also found which characterises SME marketing: networking, customer engagement & digital marketing.

The 4C-analysis consists of competition, company, context and consumers. The main conclusions are that the Brockx can differentiate from its competitors by being the enclosure that is of high quality while offering the perfect balance between sound reduction and size and weight. Next, the company should use its reputation in creating a brand image, to differentiate among other acoustic companies. Context factors such as the growing market of ACs and heat pumps and the sound legislation indicate that the market for sound reducing enclosures will increase. Finally qualitative and quantitative research has been conducted to find out what consumers find important. Selling the Brockx in cooperation with a wholesaler is considered the most viable option, as they have all the required logistical resources. Consumers' attitudes towards the Brockx are positive, as it provides the most sought after benefits. With this information a market positioning has been determined.

Continuing with these findings, the marketing mix is determined by filling in the 4P's: product, price, place & promotion. The 'product' chapter describes the Brockx in more detail. Manufacturing the Brockx can be done in the Netherlands first, and later in Central Europe as this will be cheaper. The price of the Brockx is determined through a competition-oriented method. The place of the Brockx is in the Netherlands, and made available through channels of a wholesaler. For the promotion, offline and online marketing methods have been proposed, together with an implementation plan.

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THE PROJECT

An overview of what shapes this project, the problem to be solved and its approach.





INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain all relevant aspects that shape this graduation project. The company, the Brockx, the design problem and the approach of this project will be explained.

The company

This graduation project has been executed in collaboration with the company Van Cappellen Consultancy.

History

Van Cappellen Consultancy is a proud family company that has been active in the maritime sector since 1984. The company was founded by Willem van Cappellen, a former pleasure craft designer who gained his knowledge on vibration control through his years of working at various related companies. Willem was lead engineer at the Maritime Research Institute of the Netherlands (MARIN), co-founder of the company Rubber Design and has also worked at the company Loggers, which is also involved in vibration and sound isolation.

At the request of two renowned shipyards, Feadship and Royal Huisman, Willem further developed his expertise in the area of yacht acoustics. This development has formed the foundation of the company, which is now managed by his son and daughter.

Currently the company has two entities: Van Cappellen Consultancy and Van Cappellen Sound Solutions, of which the logos can be seen in figure 3. In this report, the company will simply be called 'Van Cappellen', unless a distinction needs to be made. This keeps it more practical to read and may avoid possible confusion.

▼ Figure 2 - Example of a luxurious yacht



**Van Cappellen
Consultancy**

Noise and Vibration Control

**Van Cappellen
Sound solutions**

Innovative acoustic products

▲ Figure 3 - The two logos of the company

Van Cappellen Consultancy

Especially for luxury boats such as yachts, like the one in figure 2, comfort is an important factor. Noisy engines or annoying vibrations can be very prominent disturbances that negatively impact this comfort.

Van Cappellen Consultancy offers services to analyse, measure and predict noise and vibration levels of yachts. With this knowledge, they can offer fitting solutions to help solve these problems and improve the overall comfort of the ship (Van Cappellen Consultancy, 2021).

Van Cappellen Sound Solutions

As a way to solve these noise and vibration problems, the company offers different products under the name Van Cappellen Sound Solutions.

Years of experience of analysing noise and vibration levels have given the company a very strong comprehension of how noise and vibration behaves and how it can be reduced. This has enabled them to offer their own products which they assemble in their workshop.

The products are classified in two categories: marine comfort products and home comfort products (Figure 4) (Van Cappellen Sound Solutions, 2021).

MARINE COMFORT PRODUCTS



ENCAPSURE SOUND ENCLOSURE



CUSTOM BASE FRAME



FLEXCAP ISOLATOR MOUNTS

HOME COMFORT PRODUCTS



BROCKX

▲ Figure 4 - The product offerings of Van Cappellen Sound Solutions

The product

Because Van Cappellen has its roots in the maritime sector, they have originally been offering their marine comfort products. Now, they wish to apply their acoustic knowledge and expertise in a new market: home comfort products.

The reason for this, is because the company has identified an opportunity. As of April the 1st, 2021, a new legislation has been introduced by the Dutch government. This legislation requires the outdoor units of air conditioners and heat pumps to produce a maximum sound of 40 dB at the border of your property (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021). On average, an outdoor unit produces a sound of 50 dB (Airconditioning vergelijken, n.d.). This means that in most cases, the outdoor unit of your AC or heat pump needs to be placed at a distance from your neighbour's property. If this isn't possible because of a lack of space for example, the sound needs to be reduced.

So how to reduce the sound of your outdoor AC/heat pump unit? You place a sound reducing enclosure (the Brockx) around the unit, as visualised in figure 5. For many years, Van Cappellen has been offering this kind of solution in the maritime sector. Their enCAPsure sound enclosure (figure 4) is a custom built enclosure, which can be placed around the engine or other noisy machinery

of yachts. Because of the acoustic qualities of the material, the noise of the machinery is effectively reduced. This same principle can be applied for heat pumps and ACs, which is the reason why Van Cappellen has developed the Brockx.

Simply put, the Brockx is a hollow box made out of cork and aluminium. This cork box, hence the name Brockx, is a sound reducing enclosure that is placed around the outdoor unit of an AC or heat pump. It's designed as a rectangular box with diagonal edges at the sides and at the top.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Brockx is caused by two reasons:

- 1) Because of a new sound legislation, a lot of AC/heat pump units will need something to reduce its sound.
- 2) Van Cappellen is an expert in the area of acoustics and has a lot of experience with placing sound reducing enclosures in yachts. This knowledge and experience can be applied to reduce the noise of ACs and heat pumps as well.



▲ Figure 5 - Placing the Brockx over an AC unit to reduce the noise of the AC

The problem

Van Cappellen has many years of experience in the world of luxury yachts, but not in the world of air conditioning and heat pumps. They have developed the Brockx and now want to sell this product in a new market which they are unfamiliar with.

Besides a lack of knowledge on the AC and heat pump market, Van Cappellen is also not experienced in marketing a (new) product. In the maritime sector they come into contact with new clients through networking and word of mouth, so there hasn't been a need for marketing yet.

Furthermore, during the development of the Brockx, only a small amount of time was spent on market research. No real strategy has been defined, which means that many important aspects are unknown, such as:

- who to sell it to
- how to sell it
- how to differentiate from competition
- how to scale up production

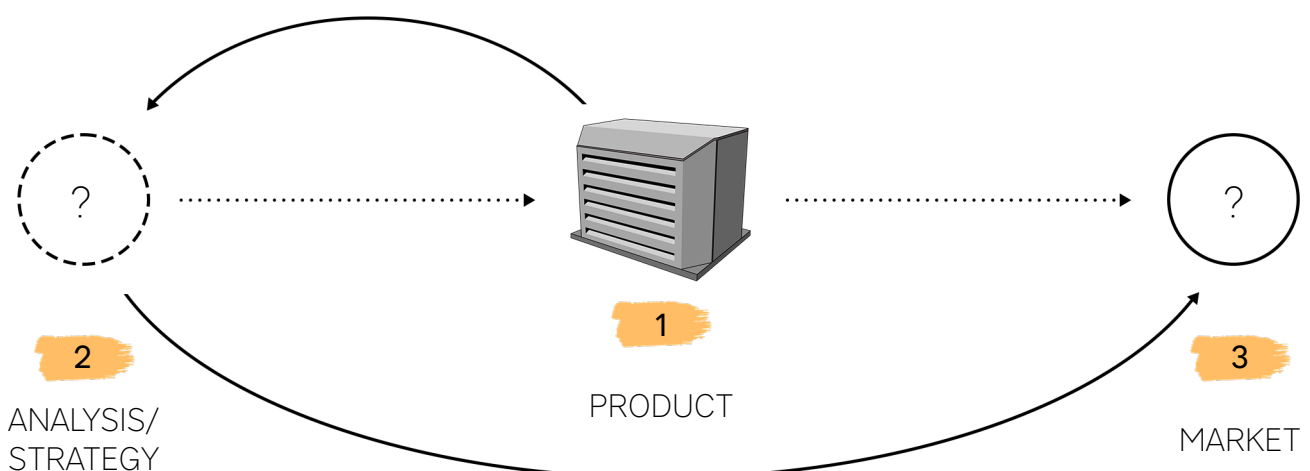
What they do know, is that they do not intend on selling directly to consumers (B2C), but instead to businesses (B2B). This is because they recognize that they don't have the resources for handling customer service, sales or logistics. In appendix B, some differences between B2B and B2C marketing are explained to gain a better understanding.

As a designer, such an approach of designing a product feels unnatural. In Delft we are generally taught to do an analysis first and think about a strategy, before creating an actual product. The dotted line in figure 6 illustrates this sequence.

With the Brockx, it seems that we have to first go a step back in the process, before we can move on and make decisions on how to market the product. This is illustrated by the continuous line in figure 6.

CONCLUSION

The Brockx has been developed without formulating a strategy first, or carrying out an extensive analysis of the market. There is too much unknown to be able to determine marketing aspects, so research should be done first before continuing with marketing the Brockx.



▲ Figure 6 - The approach that should be taken before marketing the Brockx

The approach

The problem of defining a strategy after a product has already been developed is quite unique, and should be solved appropriately. It's therefore decided to tackle this issue in three steps which are described below.

The structure of this project is depicted in figure 7 on the next page.

CHAPTER 1

SME Marketing

Van Cappellen can be categorised as a small to medium enterprise (SME). Literature research will be conducted to find out what characterises SMEs in terms of new product development (NPD) and marketing, and how they differ from large firms. This literature will then be compared to practice through primary research. The goal of this is to determine how to continue with the project. If the situation of Van Cappellen matches with literature and other SMEs, existing literature and methods can be used as input in the following phases. If not, further investigation might be needed to determine how to continue with the Brockx.

CHAPTER 2

4C-Analysis

This analysis is a method that stimulates the researcher to look at the situation from four perspectives: Competition, Company, Context and Consumers. Besides providing structure, using this method ensures that information is gathered from all relevant aspects so the current situation is mapped completely. This method is also chosen because with its results, a market positioning can be established. This positioning can then be used as input for the next phase, which is marketing the Brockx.

CHAPTER 3

Marketing mix (4P's)

Similar to the 4C-analysis, the marketing mix is a method which provides structure by covering all aspects of the marketing through four topics: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The simplicity and effectiveness of this method is what makes this a suitable tool for determining all the marketing aspects for the Brockx in a clear and concise manner. By explaining each part of the marketing mix, Van Cappellen can be offered a complete overview of the possibilities of marketing the Brockx.

How can we continue with this project?

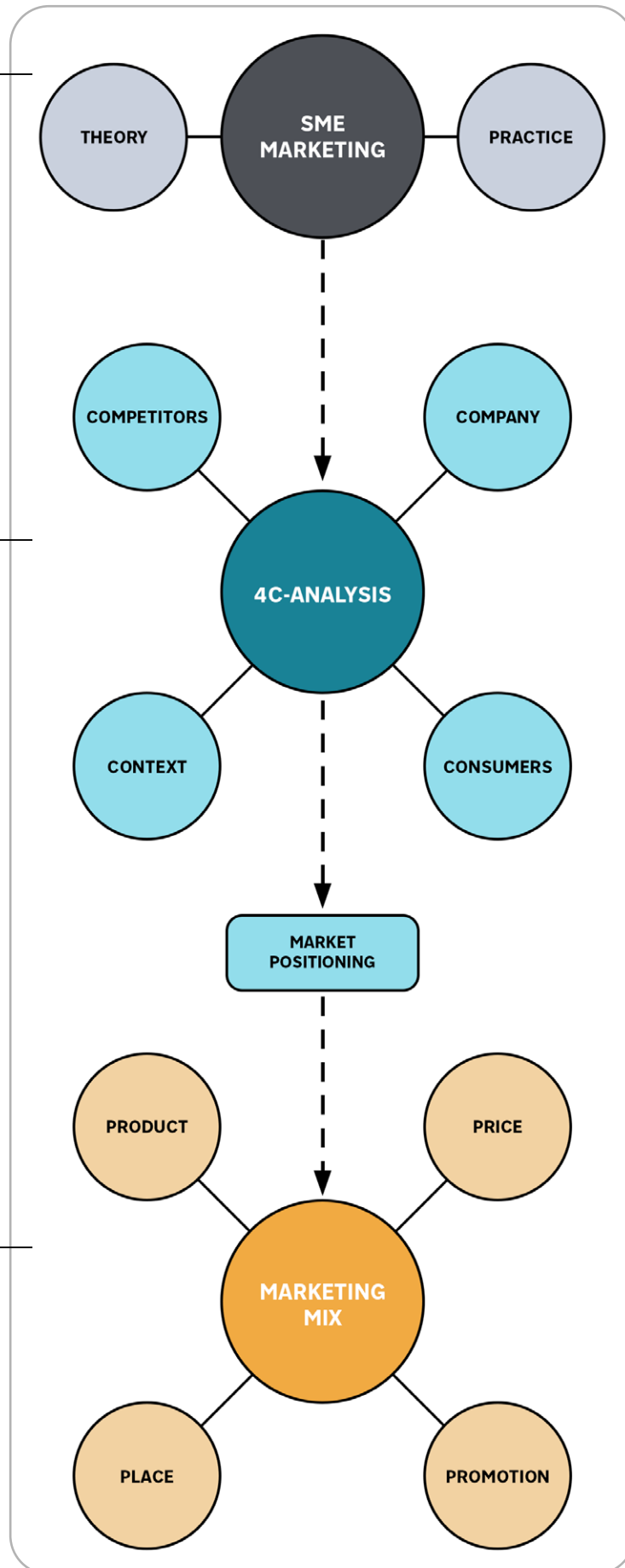
CHAPTER 1

What does the current situation look like?

CHAPTER 2

How can/will the Brockx be marketed?

CHAPTER 3

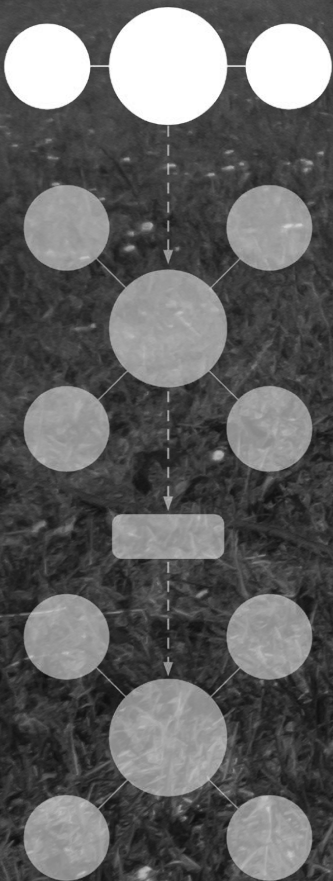


▲ Figure 7 - The approach and structure of this project

01

SME MARKETING

Exploring literature and comparing theory to practice for small to medium enterprises.





Marketing for SMEs

The way a product is marketed will also depend on the company that is selling it. Small companies are different from large companies in many aspects which influences how such a company should market their product appropriately. Van Cappellen is a small company, which is why this chapter provides a theoretical foundation on how such companies should approach marketing.

The way this foundation is made, is by first reviewing existing literature and drawing conclusions on what characterises small to medium companies, how they approach new product development and how they conduct marketing.

Based on these results, primary research is conducted to find out how the theory compares with practice. These insights determine whether the situation of Van Cappellen is unique or comparable to situations of other companies, and thus determines whether existing theoretical strategies in similar situations can be applied in the marketing of the Brockx.

1.1 SME THEORY

Van Cappellen Consultancy can be classified as a small company. As such, it has many different characteristics and behaves differently compared to large companies. This chapter will provide a theoretical foundation on different aspects of small-medium enterprises based on literature research.

Small to Medium Enterprises

Although we often think of large companies as the main contributor to our economy, small to medium enterprises (SMEs) are incredibly important. In Europe, 99% of all businesses are SMEs and make up more than half of Europe's GDP (European Commission, n.d.). The European Commission defines small to medium enterprises, or SMEs, as firms that have less than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than €50 million. Van Cappellen Consultancy can be defined as a small firm, which are firms with a staff of less than 50, and a turnover of less than €10 million (European Commission, n.d.).

Because SMEs consist of less employees than large firms, the structure of the company is different (Nicholas et al., 2011). Large firms often consist of many layers of management which are necessary to operate and manage the large number of people in a structured manner (Nicholas et al., 2011). SMEs consist of fewer people and don't need or have such a hierarchical structure, which makes them more flexible in their way of operating (Gilmore, 2011; Bocconcelli et al., 2016). Nicholas et al. (2011) also explain that this flexibility is a result of the top management being more visible, and a better flow of information between employees and management. Such a way of working is also visible while working as an intern at Van Cappellen. Despite having an official hierarchy, everyone is treated equally and quick communication and consultation among all employees is part of the everyday practices.

Another key difference between SMEs and large firms is the lack of resources (Nicholas et al., 2011). Large firms have more resources such as people, money and expertise (Gilmore, 2011). Being limited in these aspects, SMEs often make creative use of what they have (Bocconcelli et al., 2016; Resnick, 2011). They also tend to work more instinctively, experiment more and take more risks, because they don't have the time or knowledge to

assess every decision before making them (Salder et al., 2020). Being creative is also generally more encouraged in SMEs, while in larger firms creativity is often suppressed (Nicholas et al., 2011).

The different characteristics of SMEs also set them apart from large firms in the processes of new product development and marketing. In the following sections, these differences will be discussed and compared to the situation of Van Cappellen.

New Product Development for SMEs

A designer's approach of developing a product typically involves some sort of strategic thinking or market research. The situation of Van Cappellen therefore seems rather unique, as the market has not been researched extensively. The Brockx has been developed as a combination of existing expertise and a reaction to a legislation that has been deemed as sufficient reason to expect an increase in desirability for outdoor unit enclosures. Is such a way of development normal for SMEs, or is this more a unique situation?

Literature indicates that in reality situations such as that of Van Cappellen Consultancy are not as uncommon as it seems, especially among SMEs. Small firms actually rarely perform formal marketing research once they are established, and if they do it's often passive and informal (O'Donnell, 2011; Bocconcelli et al., 2016).

At Van Cappellen Consultancy, competition has been researched but not according to a certain method or to an extent that provides sufficient information on how the Brockx can differentiate and compete. In that regard, it can be considered informal like the literature indicates. Stonehouse & Pemberton (2002) add to this, as they argue that strategic theories, frameworks and tools of analysis are still mostly used by academics and not by business

managers, especially among SMEs. This can be explained by the fact that the strategic relevance of conducting market research is not as recognized as among large firms (Bocconcelli et al., 2016). Managers are either not convinced or not aware of the benefits of strategic tools (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002).

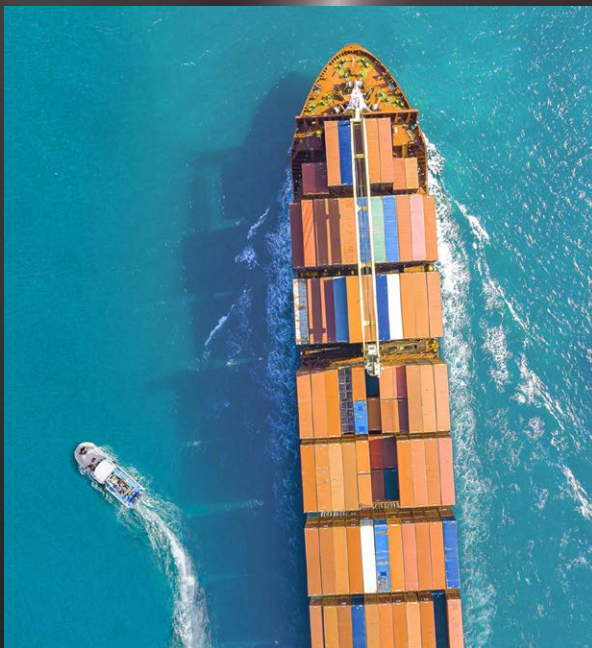
In an article by Woodcock et al. (2000), another observation similar to that of the Brockx is described. In their research on NPD in British SMEs, they note that among SMEs there's often not enough knowledge on competition, and that the market position is only discovered when their product is already about to be introduced to the market (Woodcock et al., 2000). With the Brockx already being a full prototype before having established a proper market positioning, the similarities are clear.

Even if the benefits of using such strategic tools would be recognised, most SMEs would still operate based on a day-to-day survival approach (Hill, 2011). Large firms are substantially more established in the market and are less dependent on innovation to survive (Nicholas et al., 2011). For SMEs, constant innovation is more necessary to keep their position in the market and to prevent being overtaken by competition (Salder et al., 2020). This focus on innovation, combined with a lack of time and money prevents SMEs from

investing time and effort in strategic planning, and steers towards a mentality of doing instead of planning (Hill, 2001). Without having to focus on strategic planning and having little layers of management also increases flexibility and enables SMEs to respond quickly to environmental changes (Nicholas et al., 2011).

Van Cappellen can testify to this drive for innovation, as they have been consistently improving their services in the field of maritime acoustics. Currently, their innovative character has taken the shape of a venture into a new market with the Brockx. O'Donnell et al. (2002) state that a venture into a new market by SMEs is often caused by a reaction to a decline in their original market, or by identifying opportunities in other, new markets. In this regard Van Cappellen has behaved similarly, as it's moving into a new segment because they have identified an opportunity in the market of outdoor AC and heat pump units.

To conclude, literature findings correspond with the current situation of the Brockx. Although not optimal, it's not rare among SMEs to formulate a strategy and decide on marketing aspects after a product has already been developed. In the case of the Brockx, research should be continued to establish a strategic foundation to successfully introduce the product to the market.



▲ Figure 8 - SME & large firm analogy

To better understand and remember these differences, it can be helpful to use an analogy. Referring back to the industry of Van Cappellen Consultancy, the differences of SMEs and large firms can be compared to the differences between small and large ships.

Large ships: A big vessel with many crew members and a lot of resources at its disposal. There is a clear hierarchy and there is little direct communication between crew and captain. Being a large ship, it slowly but steadily sails towards its destination, and it costs a lot of effort to change its course.

Small ships: A small boat with few crew members and little resources. The crew works closely together and the captain is part of the team. Because there aren't many resources available, creativity is encouraged and new desired directions are constantly looked for. As a small boat, it is much easier to change directions and sail towards new opportunities.

SME Marketing

Marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” (Gundlach & Wilkie, 2009) To put it very simply, marketing is everything that has to do with getting your product to a customer. In this section, literature findings on SME marketing will be provided and discussed.

Networking

To make up for the lack of resources, networking is often used by SMEs as a way of marketing (Bocconcelli et al., 2016). Resnick et al. (2011) also concluded that networking is one of the central components of SME marketing. In a business, networking is about the cooperation of two or more parties by sharing ideas, knowledge or technology, and is performed by conducting social activities, personal contacts or through exchanges (Gilmore et al., 2001). While networks are used deliberately to solve problems, the creation of networks is generally done by coincidence and without structure (Gilmore et al., 2001). Also the way in which networking is conducted is informal, unplanned and unstructured (Gilmore et al., 2001). Besides marketing, the use of networks is also often used in the NPD phase, as it contributes to the ability of SMEs to sense market opportunities quickly and respond accordingly (Atanassova & Clark, 2015).

Customer Engagement

Resnick et al. (2011) describe another central element of SME marketing, which is customer engagement. It is argued that SMEs are less expertised in marketing, and that this is compensated by emphasising on other aspects such as networking and customer engagement (Resnick et al., 2011). For SMEs there is a high focus on the needs of customers. For this reason it is considered important to create good relationships with customers (Reijonen, 2010). One of the most used ways of communicating with customers is through word of mouth, which is also a good solution to SMEs having limited resources (Reijonen, 2010). Being close to the customer also contributes to the ability of SMEs to meet changing demands and be innovative (Bocconcelli et al., 2016). Moreover, it also

allows for a slow build up and not too many customers at the same time (Reijonen, 2010). For Van Cappellen this way of communicating could also be beneficial, because the amount of Brockx units that can be produced will most likely not be increasing with such a speed that a large amount of customers can be satisfied in a short time.

Digital Marketing

A different form of communicating and marketing is through the use of digital methods. The use of digital marketing tools and techniques (DMTTs) has become a key aspect of modern SMEs' growth strategies, and having a good online presence nowadays is essential for the success of most businesses (Dumitriu et al., 2019). DMTTs allow a company to increase awareness, improve brand attitude and increase purchase intentions (Joel et al., 2012). Furthermore, new customers can be attracted by driving traffic to the website and generating leads (Joel et al., 2012). When it comes to using DMTTs, SMEs have a lot of catching up to do compared to large firms (Peter & dalla Vecchia, 2021). This difference is again caused by a lack of resources, which prevents SMEs from using or investing in DMTTs (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015). Like most SMEs, Van Cappellen makes use of some DMTTs such as a website, but there is still a lot of unused potential.

In summary, marketing for SMEs is characterised by the use of networking, being close to the customer and a limited employment of DMTTs. As with NPD for SMEs, informality is a general characteristic of marketing among SMEs. These aspects, networking, customer engagement, digital marketing and informality, will be used as guiding principles in the qualitative research that will be discussed in the next section.

CONCLUSION

The current situation of Van Cappellen correlates with what is stated in literature, which means that research can be continued for marketing the Brockx.

For marketing among SMEs, 3 characterising themes were found (networking, customer engagement & digital marketing), which will be compared to practice in the next chapter.

1.2 SME MARKETING IN PRACTICE

In this chapter, a qualitative study will be conducted to find new and practical data. Theory and practice will be compared to generate conclusions which will be used in chapter 3, when determining the marketing mix.

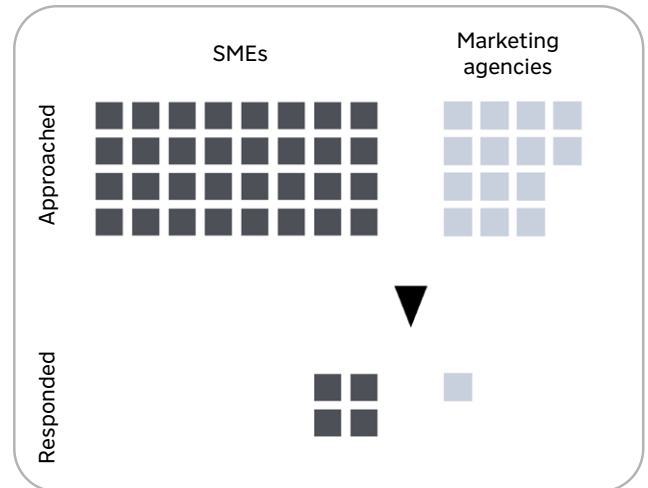
Method

The goal of this research is to find out how well the literature findings correspond with the way SMEs conduct marketing in practice. Furthermore, the aim is to find a suitable approach for marketing the Brockx.

For the research, both quantitative and qualitative methods were considered. On the one hand, a quantitative method would be suitable, as assumptions and insights are derived from theory, which now need to be tested (Streefkerk, 2022). However, the goal of the research is not only to find out whether the theoretical insights correspond with practice; the goal is also to achieve more knowledge and a deeper understanding of how SMEs conduct marketing. The emphasis will lay on gaining a better understanding on SME marketing, and therefore a qualitative approach will be used. Other researches also indicate that a qualitative approach is very suitable for gaining an understanding of especially SMEs and their way of working (Gilmore & Carson, 2018).

Initially it was tried to conduct semi-structured interviews with employees or owners of SMEs over the phone. After three calls however, it became apparent that the interviewees either didn't have the time for a conversation, or didn't have the answers ready. It was suggested to send the questions via mail instead. Following up on this suggestion, the interview guide was rewritten as a questionnaire with open questions and sent out via mail.

The companies that were approached are small B2B manufacturing firms, i.e. companies that sell products to other companies. To gain more knowledge on how B2B marketing is performed, an adjusted version of the questionnaire has also been sent out to B2B marketing agencies. Questionnaires have been sent out to 32 SMEs and 14 B2B marketing agencies (figure 9).



▲ Figure 9 - Number of SMEs and marketing agencies the survey has been sent out to vs number of responses

Results

In total, 4 companies responded and one phone call was held with a digital marketing agency. The responses from the four companies are listed below for each question:

1. How do you conduct marketing now, or come into contact with customers?

All four companies indicate that they use their website as the main way of being found by customers. Two companies invest in an online marketing agency to take care of some of their online marketing, and one of them also invests in online advertisements on Google and social media. One of the companies also uses sponsorship as a way of marketing and mentions word of mouth as a way of attracting new customers.

2. In what way was the marketing done before, for example when the company just started or when it wants to offer a new product/service?

Two companies used networking as a way of marketing. One company indicates that they managed their websites themselves at

first because they didn't have the budget for someone else to do it for them. One other company mentions that they haven't changed their way of marketing and still use their website and sponsorship. One company also states that they went door to door and used their local sports club as a way to attract customers.

3. What role does networking play in your way of getting in touch with customers?

All the companies indicate that they use networking in some way or another. One explains that they aren't good at 'old-fashioned' networking such as exhibitions or clubs, but instead focus on their existing customers as networks. By focusing on having good customer service, they aim to satisfy their existing customers which results in high scores on review websites, making them good in their pull strategy of attracting customers. Another company also indicates that for them, networking is important in maintaining existing customers, but not as important for attracting new ones. Another company mentions that word of mouth is very important, and by ensuring quality, the customers will spread this positive assessment.

4. How do these networks or business relationships arise?

Two companies mention that their networks are formed by their previous projects or working with other parties on a certain project. One company points to their use of peer review websites as a way to establish contacts. Another company mentions that they form networks by attending business clubs and sports games.

5. How do you stay informed of what the customer wants?

One company uses the data from their website as their main source of information. Another company builds custom products, so listens to each individual customer about what they want. The other two companies ask the customers by keeping in contact and one of them goes to meetings to stay up to date.

6. What do you think is the best way to sell a product to another company?

Two companies mention that good service is important. One company explains that their strategy is to be found online and give the customer the impression that they are dealing with the right company. Another

company mentions making clear agreements and another company thinks honouring these agreements and delivering quality is important.

Phone call digital marketing agency

During this call, the discussed characteristics networking, customer engagement, digital marketing and informality were discussed to find out if they recognise this while working with their clients.

Many businesses use networking, but with the covid pandemic, more emphasis has been going towards digital marketing. Informality was recognised, but this also depends on the type of company. They also see a high customer engagement, especially within B2B because these transactions usually take longer and more money is involved in the decision. Their advice on marketing a product to other businesses is to use digital marketing as a way to generate leads. These leads are then 'nurtured' to the point that personal contact is applicable. This is beneficial because in most cases, personal contact is not needed when a potential customer is at the start of their decision making process. One way to generate leads is to offer content and offer information on topics such as sound or enclosures.

Discussion

Starting this research, the intention was to receive around 5-10 responses. With a total of 5 responses this goal was achieved, but improvements could be made. Calling companies proved to be unsuccessful quite quickly, and instead companies were approached by emailing them the questions with an explanation on the project. 4 of the 32 (12,5%) approached companies responded, two of which responded after receiving a friendly reminder. 6 other companies also responded by saying that they don't have time to answer the questions, and out of the 14 digital marketing agencies, only one responded by saying that they also don't have time.

A possible better strategy can be to call first, and follow up with the questions via mail. This way a more personal relationship could be established without them having to answer on the spot. By establishing personal contact first, a person might be more motivated to respond to the follow-up mail.

Nonetheless, sufficient information has been gathered which allows the literature findings to be compared. The three characteristics of SME marketing are clearly recognized in the

responses of the approached Dutch SMEs and digital marketing agency.

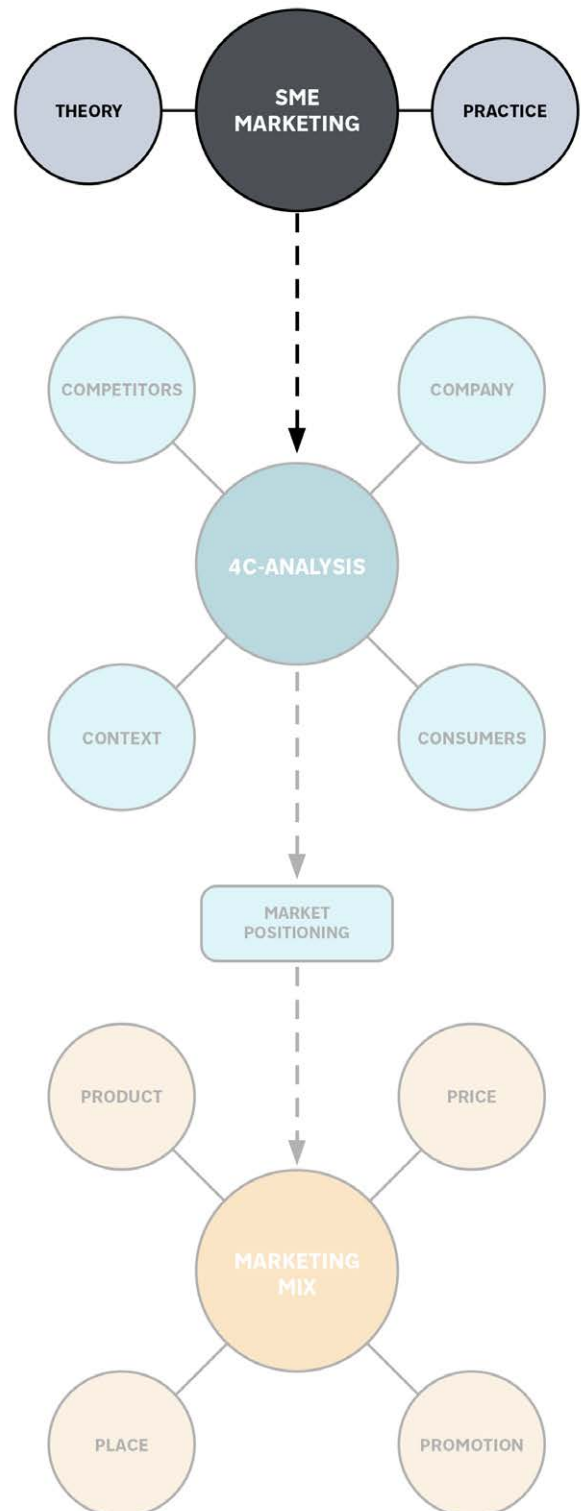
Networking plays a role in different activities for SMEs. It's used for marketing new products, but also for maintaining existing customers and nourishing this relationship. Besides that, networks are also maintained to keep an understanding of what the customer wants. This also corresponds with what is stated by Atanassova & Clark (2015), which is that networks are used in the NPD phase to sense market opportunities quickly.

The distinction between networking and customer engagement is that networking doesn't necessarily involve a customer. As the results show however, networking can also be used as a way of customer engagement. This makes sense because in a B2B scenario, your customers are other businesses, which you come in contact with through networking. So customer engagement is important for SMEs, and one way of being engaged for especially B2B firms is through networking.

A limited use of DMTTs is also partly seen in the results. Peter & dalla Vecchia (2021) state that SMEs aren't using the full potential of DMTTs, which can also be said for the contacted SMEs. On the plus side, it's also noticeable that SMEs are starting to catch up. Some of them are using some tools themselves, such as investing in Google Ads. Others are relying on digital marketing agencies once they have the budget for it.

CONCLUSION

The literature findings correspond with what is found in practice through primary research. The development of the Brockx correlates with these findings. This means that the project can continue with the 4C-analysis as intended (figure 10), and input from literature and SMEs on possible marketing tools and methods can be used as input in phase after the 4C-analysis, which is the marketing mix.

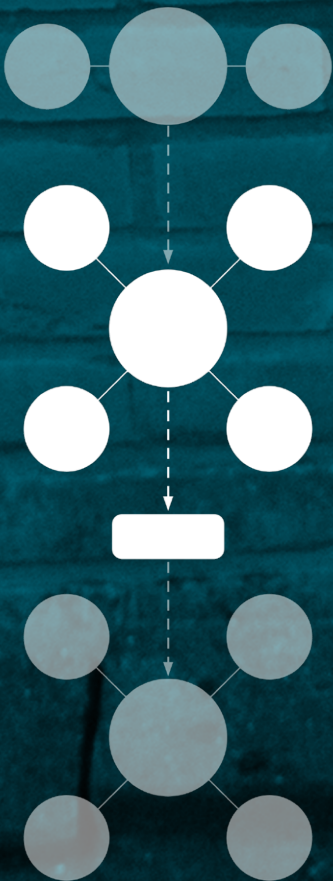


► Figure 10 - Progress of the project

02

4C-ANALYSIS

An extensive analysis of the current situation of the competition, company, context and consumers.



The 4C's

The 4C-analysis is a method that provides structure and directions, and helps the researcher in covering every relevant aspect to establish an appropriate position in the market. The way this method achieves this is by forcing the researcher to look at the situation from four different perspectives, the 4 C's: competitor, company, context and consumer.

This analysis first starts with formulating a market definition. After deciding on the right definition, the 4C analysis can be performed. The order of researching the different C's is up to the researcher, but it should be taken into account that an outcome of one C may influence the research of following C's. It's therefore wise to think of a good strategy on what to research first.

Because a sound reducing enclosure is quite an uncommon product, the research starts by analysing the competition. This gives a good overview of what is currently on the market and how the Brockx may position itself to stand out from the rest.

Next the company is analysed to find out what the company of Van Cappellen has at its disposal to become a strong competing player in the market.

After that, the context is researched, which takes relevant trends into account and looks at the situation from a broader perspective. This helps in finding possible opportunities and may confirm whether the intended direction is viable.

Finally the consumer is analysed through various research methods. From this it becomes known to what customers the Brockx can be sold and what these customers desire in such a product.

The 4C-analysis will be concluded by establishing a market positioning and with advice on how to proceed with the gathered insights.

2.1 MARKET DEFINITION

This chapter will cover the process of generating different market definitions and choosing the right one for conducting a 4C-analysis.

Home comfort products

Before a 4C-analysis can be conducted, it's important to first establish the market definition (Hultink, 2020). This is because different market definitions will influence different parts of the 4C-analysis, and can result in vastly different outcomes (Hultink, 2020).

On the website of Van Cappellen Sound Solutions, the Brockx has already been put in the category of home comfort products (Van Cappellen Sound Solutions, 2021). This already provides a good indication of a market definition, however it's arguably a bit too abstract to use for the 4C-analysis. The goal of a market definition is to provide a frame in which the 4C's can be analysed. A too narrow definition will prevent the analysis from uncovering all relevant aspects in the market, but a too broad definition will be unhelpful and doesn't provide a good scope that is needed. The level of abstraction needs to be just right.

Concrete to abstract definitions

To come up with a different market definition, a range of definitions has been put on a scale ranging from very concrete definitions to very abstract definitions.

This scale has been made by starting with the most concrete way of phrasing the market definition, which is exactly what the product is: an outdoor unit sound reduction enclosure. Then for each step the definition is made a little more abstract and a little more vague. The 'market of relaxation' is deemed to be abstract enough, and any more abstraction would probably not be helpful for this project. This is not a standard process but rather a subjective approach of finding the right way of phrasing a market definition.

Accompanying products have been put beside each definition to give an idea of whether the definition is on the sweet spot of providing direction, while being abstract enough for a broader analysis and looking beyond the obvious.

Figure 11 shows the different market definitions. As can be seen, the most concrete definitions are accompanied by direct and obvious competitors. The most abstract definitions result in products that have a small chance of being relevant enough for analysis. The market of home comfort is arguably one of the more abstract market definitions and therefore not good enough to be used for the 4C-analysis.

Chosen market definition

The market definition that has been selected is that of home improvement products. This definition is just a bit broader than all the sound-related products, but is not too broad that the relation to the Brockx is difficult to find. There are probably consumers who are only interested in sound reduction because of noise complaints or the new legislation, but it is also imaginable that a consumer who has €2.000-€3.000 available to spend, would also be looking at alternatives in improving their homes.

It would therefore be beneficial to look at competing products that also have to do with home improvement, whereas the use of home comfort products as a market definition would result in products that are likely to be further away from this.

Concrete



Market of outdoor unit sound reduction enclosures



Market of outdoor unit enclosures



Market of outdoor noise reduction



Market of noise reduction



Market of sound control



Market of home acoustics



Market of vibration reduction



Market of home improvement



Market of silence



Market of home comfort



Market of relaxation



Abstract

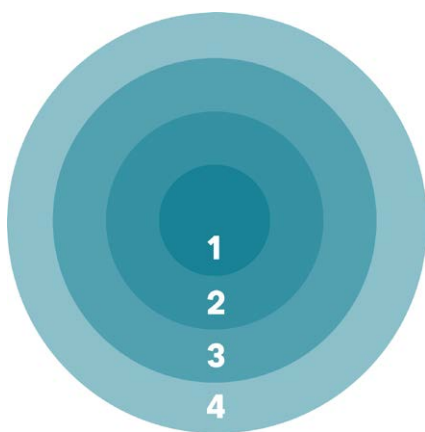
▲ Figure 11 - Finding the right market definition

2.2 COMPETITORS

The competitive environment will be explored in this chapter. All relevant competitors will be identified, and the most direct competition will be discussed in more detail. Final conclusions will be drawn to explain possibilities on how the Brockx can differentiate from its competition.

Levels of Competition

For identifying relevant competitors, the level of competition method by Lehmann and Winer (2008) is used. The advantage of this method is that it forces you to not only look at direct and obvious competitors, but also look at firms that might not seem interesting now but can become relevant in the future. This is important, because disruptive changes in the market have often come from unexpected or indirect competitors (Hultink, 2020). For the short term, direct competitors will be most relevant, but for longer term strategy it's important to take less direct competitors into consideration as well. Furthermore, taking a more abstract view can provide inspiration and allow a company to look outside of their usual scope and possibly generate strategic ideas that otherwise wouldn't have been thought of.

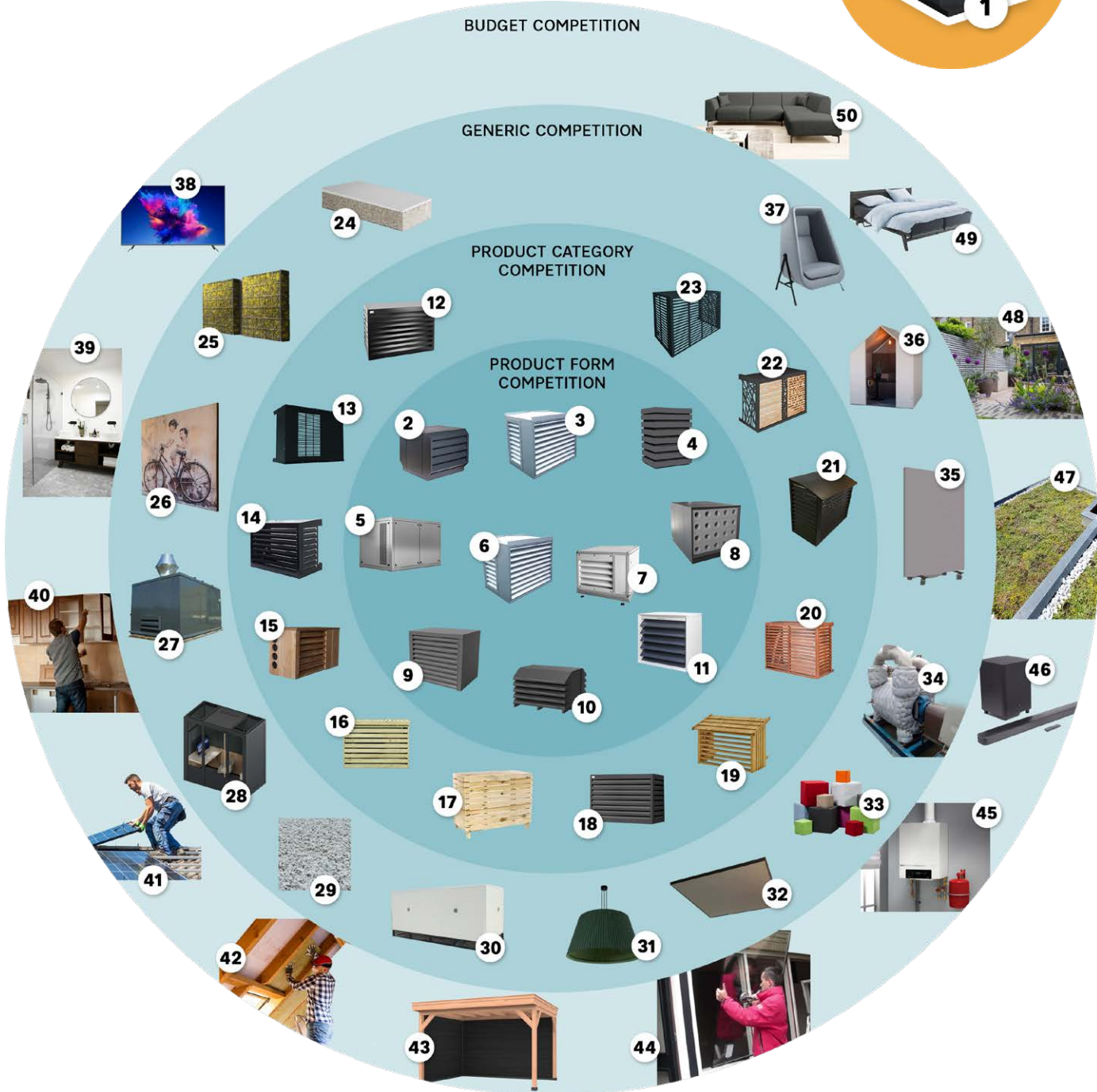


▲ Figure 12 - Levels of competition

The method uses four levels to distinguish competing products:

- 1. Product form competition.** These are products that provide the same benefits for the consumer, and are similar in terms of price/quality. In the case of this project, these competitors will be other similar sound reduction enclosures.
- 2. Product category competition.** One step further from direct competition are products that are within the same category, but not similar in price/quality. Other outdoor unit enclosures will be categorised in this level, because they fall under the same category as the Brockx, outdoor unit enclosures, but don't deliver the same benefit of sound reduction.
- 3. Generic competition** - On this level are products that fulfil the same need. The need that is fulfilled by the Brockx is sound reduction. This already provides a vastly different group of competitors.
- 4. Budget competition** - The final and most abstract level is budget competition. Budget competition is basically things that a consumer can spend relatively the same amount of money on. People's budgets can only be spent once, so alternatives to the Brockx compete for consumer's money. The competition is much less frequent or intense than product form competition, but it's competition nonetheless. For this project the market has been defined as the market of home improvement, so budget competition might be other things that can be improved in a home or might add value to a house.

The levels of competition are often visualised in four circles/rings (figure 12), with the most centre one being the product form competition and the outer one the budget competition. Figure 13 on the right shows the complete, filled in graph with the competitors. For the full list of competitors, see appendix D. The following chapters will cover each of the levels in more detail.

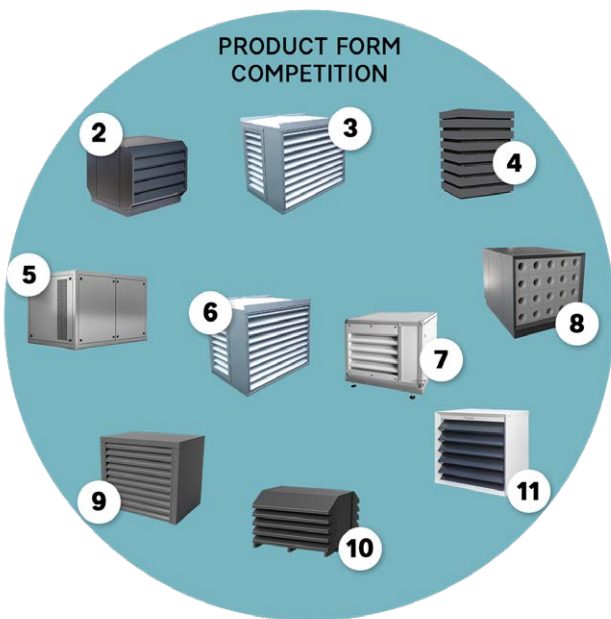


▲ Figure 13 - Identified competitors

Product Form Competition

Identifying competition is only a first step of competitor analysis. It's even more important to get an understanding about how strong these other products are actually competing and in what way (Hultink, 2020). For this reason, companies that are competing most directly and in the short term will be researched in this section. These are the companies with products from the product form competition level (figure 14), and are respectively: Merford, Solflex, REMKO, Silent Mode, Reducd, Climeleon and Daikin. They each will be researched according to the following topics:

- **Who are they?**
- **Product range**
- **Markets**
- **Product attributes**
- **How will they react?**



▲ Figure 14 - Product form competition

Who are they?

To know your enemy is a key factor in many types of competition. In marketing this is no different. This section will provide some general insights into who the competing companies are.



▲ Figure 15 - Merford logo

Merford (2) & (8)

The company Merford can be considered as one of the most direct competitors. Their DICE enclosures offer great sound reduction at sharp prices. The company was founded in 1956 and started selling air technology components such as air vents. Since the 1970s they have been offering solutions in the field of sound control and now offer a wide variety of sound reducing products and materials. Besides this they also offer doors, vents and facade systems. Merford's website provides information about Merford's employees. There are 21 people working there with different positions in the team: managing director, HR-manager, director corporate development, corporate recruiter, business development manager, general manager special doors, general manager sheet metal working, sales manager (4x), account manager (7x), account engineer, receptionist, acoustics store advisor (Merford, 2022).



▲ Figure 16 - Solflex logo

Solflex (3), (6) & (7)

Solflex is a firm that develops and tests acoustic solutions. They also test products of other firms such as Merford, Climeleon and REMKO, which can be a little confusing as they don't mention these brands anywhere. The products that are theirs seem to be indicated with a green thumbs up beside the product name. They test all these products according to the DIN EN ISO 3744 norm in a studio, which gives a good indication of how the competition compares to each other. The company has an office in Bulgaria and one in Austria, and is active in the whole of Europe. They sell their products to air-conditioning and refrigeration installation companies, as well as to manufacturers and subsidiary-companies (Solflex, 2021).



▲ Figure 17 - REMKO logo

REMKO (4)

The company REMKO started in 1976 and is now a medium-sized company active throughout Europe, with their office based in Germany. Their focus is on air conditioning, heating and dehumidifying, for which they offer a wide range of high quality products. Throughout the years they have stayed true to their customers' demands, which now makes them an experienced and innovative firm with trustful services and solid products. The company produces its own products which it also tests according to European norms for which they are certified as well. They have an extensive network of partners which allows them to provide services such as installation and maintenance (REMKO, n.d.).



▲ Figure 18 - Reducd logo

Reducd (9)

Reducd is a Dutch firm that has started halfway in 2020. The team consists of three people that work together with other enthusiasts and experts that want to be involved with the product. Their enclosure is the only product they offer, which they promote on their website with many positive aspects. One main aspect is sustainability. Their enclosure is made out of mostly recycled material and is built to last for a long time. They also emphasise the quality of the product and the fact that it's built in the Netherlands, which is also good for sustainability (Reducd, 2021).

Silent Mode

Silence for the next

▲ Figure 19 - Silent Mode logo

Silent Mode (5)

This Italian-based firm is involved with the entire value-chain of creating enclosures; from planning to design and production. Their employees consist of specialists in the field of acoustics, cooling technology, IT and metal construction. Because their entire supply chain is located close to each other, they are reportedly able to respond fast to market demands. They offer several acoustic solutions such as enclosures, vibration reducing products and indoor products (Silent Mode, n.d.).



▲ Figure 20 - Climeleon logo

Climeleon (10)

The company Climeleon also only has one product, which is their Wave outdoor unit enclosure. They have developed this product in cooperation with the heat pump manufacturer General, which is a company operating in the Benelux (Climeleon, n.d.).



▲ Figure 21 - Daikin logo

Daikin (11)

As the only large firm on the list, Daikin is one of the biggest global air conditioning and heat pump companies. The company was founded in 1924 and has since been involved with many innovations in the field of air conditioning. They have over 80.000 employees worldwide and a revenue of more than \$22.953 billion. They are active all over the world and besides cooling and heating systems also offer an enclosure for their air conditioners. Because they have such a long history and are such a big company, they can be seen as an authority in the field of HVAC (Daikin, n.d.).

Product range

Based on their product range, the competition can be classified into three groups, as displayed in figure 22. The full product ranges of each of the companies can be found in appendix D.

In the first group are the companies that only sell one product, which is their sound reducing enclosure. The companies in this group are Reducd and Climeleon. The second group are the companies that offer multiple products in the acoustic sector: Merford, Silent Mode and Solflex. The third and final group consists of REMKO and Daikin, who have products in other segments, such as cooling, heating and humidifying. Van Cappellen can also be positioned in the group of acoustic products, as they also offer products in the area of acoustics and have been offering acoustic related services for many years now.

The brand of a certain company can have a positive or negative influence on the offering and assessment of that company (Beverland, 2018). For example, it can be expected that a speaker produced by the brand Bose will be of good quality. This also works the other way around: the products that a company offers contribute to its brand image (Zhang, 2015). Linking this back to the example again, it is clear that Bose has earned its brand image by consistently producing high quality products over the years.

Because the companies in group 2 offer acoustic products, consumers could arguably perceive these brands as being experts in acoustics, or at least having more expertise in the area of acoustics compared to the companies in other groups. Van Cappellen is also positioned in this group, and it would therefore be beneficial to differentiate its brand image to be able to stand out from the other acoustic companies.

CONCLUSION

The competing brands can be split up into three types of companies. One group that only offers their sound enclosure, the second group offering other acoustic products and the third group that's offering HVAC-related products. Based on the product offerings, Van Cappellen competes with Merford, Silent Mode and Solflex and should find a way to differentiate its brand image.



▲ Figure 22 - Product types sold by competition

Markets

This section covers the possible markets in which the Brockx can be sold, and where competitors are operating in.

In figure 23, these markets are shown. They are divided into sectors, buildings and people/companies, which gives a more structured understanding of the possible markets. As a starting point, sectors are chosen to divide the market into different groups. Then buildings are chosen as a group because these are the locations where an enclosure will be placed, and finally people/companies are chosen because this is to whom the product could be sold. A full analysis can be found in appendix G.

Generally speaking, the competition is active in most of these markets. For example, REMKO sells products such as ACs in virtually every sector. On the other hand, from their website it seems that their sound reducing enclosure is marketed towards residential areas. The markets in which the competing sound enclosures are marketed are underlined in figure 23. From this, it seems like there are

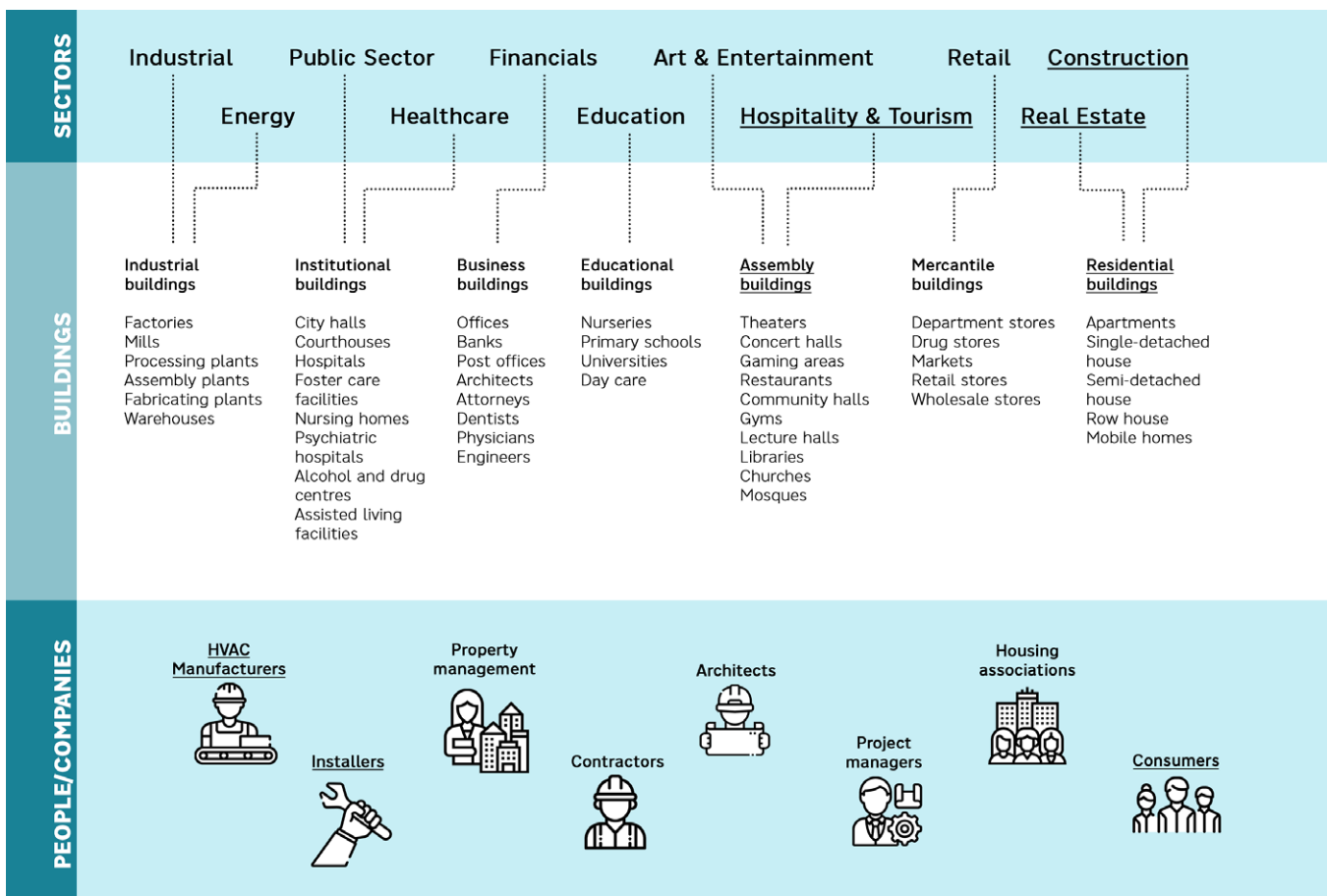
still some opportunities left for the Brockx to target a niche market without strong competition being present.

Another conclusion is that the companies Solflex and Silent Mode are not or at least less active in the Dutch market. For that reason, the companies Merford, REMKO, Reducd, Climeleon and Daikin should arguably deserve more attention.

CONCLUSION

The competing companies are active in most of the existing markets that have been discovered. Their enclosures however, seem to be marketed to a much smaller group of customers. On the one hand, this could show the relevant markets where there is a demand for soundproof enclosures. On the other hand, this could mean that other (niche) markets, which don't seem to be targeted yet, could be a good opportunity for entering the competitive environment because there's not much activity in these markets yet. Further research on potential markets and market segmentation will be done in chapter 2.5.

▼ Figure 23 - Possible markets for selling the Brockx





▲ Figure 24 -
Competing
products

Product attributes

This section will take a closer look at the attributes of each of the competing products that are directly competing with the Brockx.

As can be seen in figure 24 above, the enclosures are similar, but all have different characteristics. The products will be compared based on the following attributes:

- Price & sound reduction
- Design & size
- Access for maintenance
- Ease of installation
- Weight
- Quality
- Sustainability

Price & sound reduction

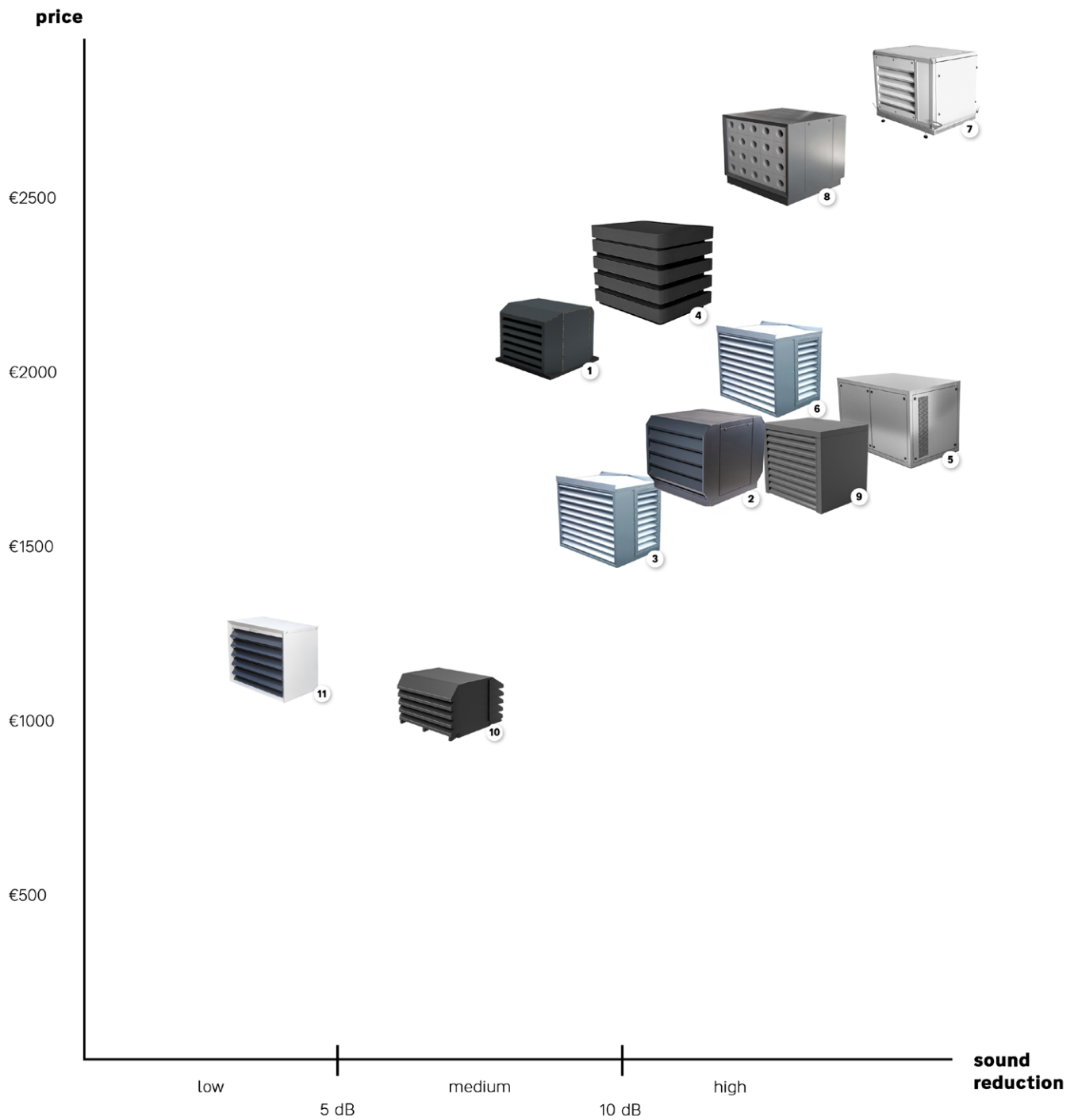
In figure 25, the competing products are displayed in a graph that plots the price on the y-axis against the sound reduction on the x-axis. From this graph it becomes clear that based on only these two factors, the Brockx is not in a strong position. There are five competing products which provide a better sound reduction for a lower price.

Design & size

Each product has been photoshopped into the same perspective and has been correctly sized according to their smallest available enclosure (figure 24). This makes comparison easier, and shows that the Brockx is one of the most compact enclosures. Looking at the design, it can be concluded that it's unique, however the competing products are also distinct from one another. One advantage though is that the Brockx isn't a simple rectangular shape. This makes the design a bit more special than for example products 5 or 9.

Access for maintenance

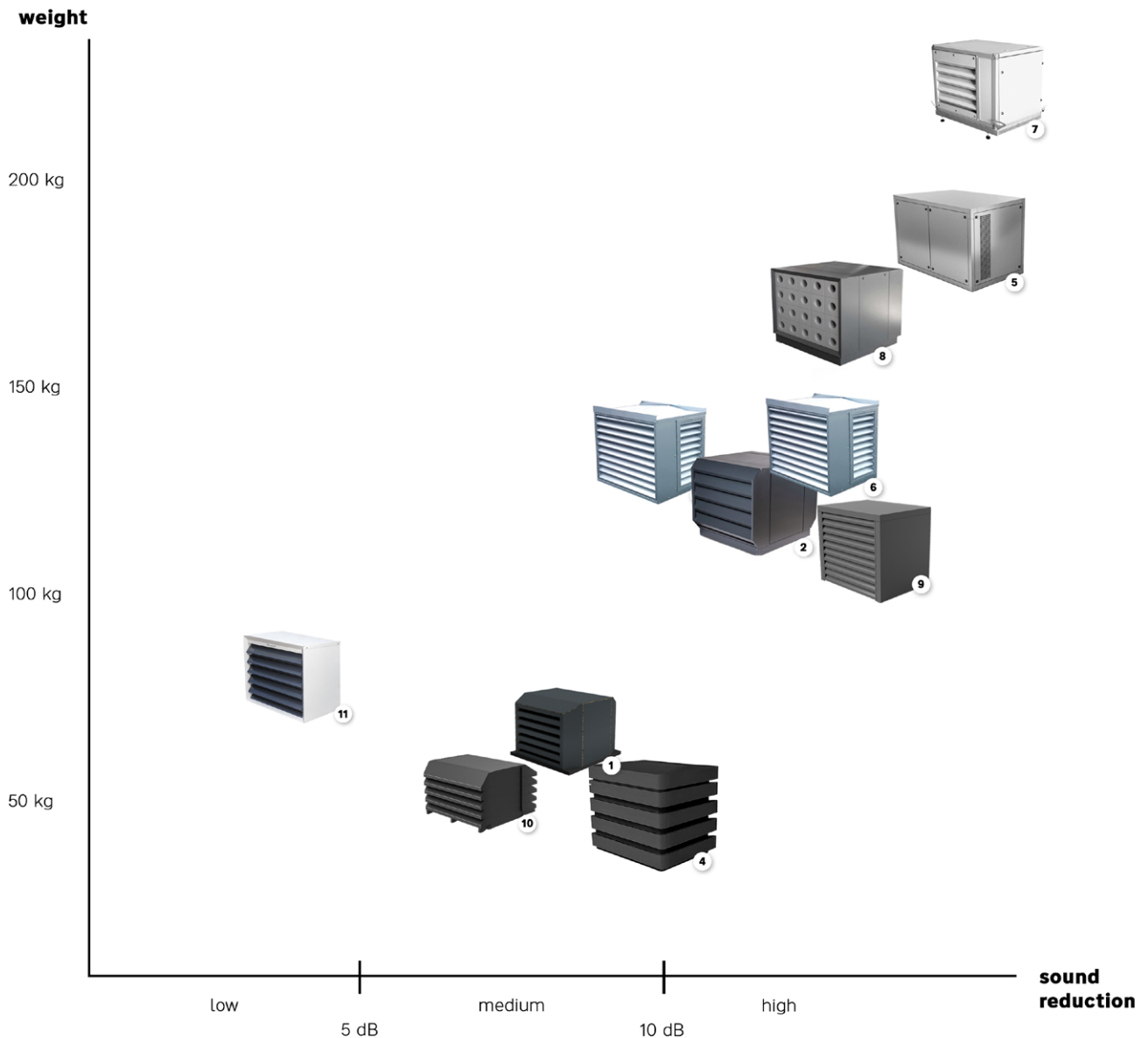
When an enclosure is placed around the unit, it physically blocks the user from accessing the unit. When maintenance is needed, it will therefore be practical for the user or the installer if the enclosure offers some form of accessibility through for example a hatch. The Brockx performs well in this area, as it is very simple to remove a panel to access the unit. Competitors also seem to offer easy access, such as Merford, Solflex and Silent Mode. For the Climeleon, access seems a bit more difficult because there's no hatch and the sections are screwed on. For REMKO, Daikin and Reduct this also seems the case, as it's first needed to remove some screws before being able to open a section.



▲
 Figure 25 -
 Graph of competing
 products (price vs.
 sound reduction)

- 1. Van Cappellen Sound Solutions - Brockx
- 2. Merford - DICE-05
- 3. Solflex - HCS 14
- 4. REMKO - SWK 4.1
- 5. Silent Mode - H1
- 6. Solflex - HC 10

- 7. Solflex - H 18
- 8. Merford - ACE-01
- 9. Reducd - Suskast
- 10. Climeleon - WAVE 5
- 11. Daikin - EKLN-A



▲
 Figure 26 -
 Graph of competing
 products (weight vs.
 sound reduction)

Ease of installation

The time and effort it takes to install an enclosure will be very important, especially for the installer. Installing the Brock can be done within one hour and is relatively simple thanks to the installation guide. The ease of installation for competing products can be based on what competitors state on their website, and based on their installation tutorial videos. The enclosures that seem to be installed easily are the ones by Climeleon, Daikin, Reducd and REMKO. The ones that seem more difficult to install are the enclosures from Merford, Solflex and Silent Mode.

Weight

Reducing a sound can be done in different ways. One approach is adding mass to the object that is positioned between the source of the sound and the person (Everest, 2001). Adding mass is therefore an effective way to create a soundproof enclosure. The graph in figure 26 plots the weight against the sound reduction. A clear relation can be seen: more weight almost always equals more sound reduction. More weight also means more stress on your roof, or a more difficult job for the installer. It can therefore be beneficial to find the right balance between weight and sound reduction, which the Brockx arguably has.

Quality

It's not unlikely that an enclosure will be visible for the user. So besides other visual aspects, the quality will be an important feature. The actual quality of a product can't be determined by looking at photos, so therefore we can only say something about the perceived quality. The photos from figure 27 below show some close-ups of the Brockx and competing products of which something can be said about the perceived quality. Judging the perceived quality is subjective, but it could be said that the Brockx performs well in this area. The enclosure by Climeleon for example looks less refined, while the REMKO looks a bit more industrial/rugged. But again, personal preference is an important influence.

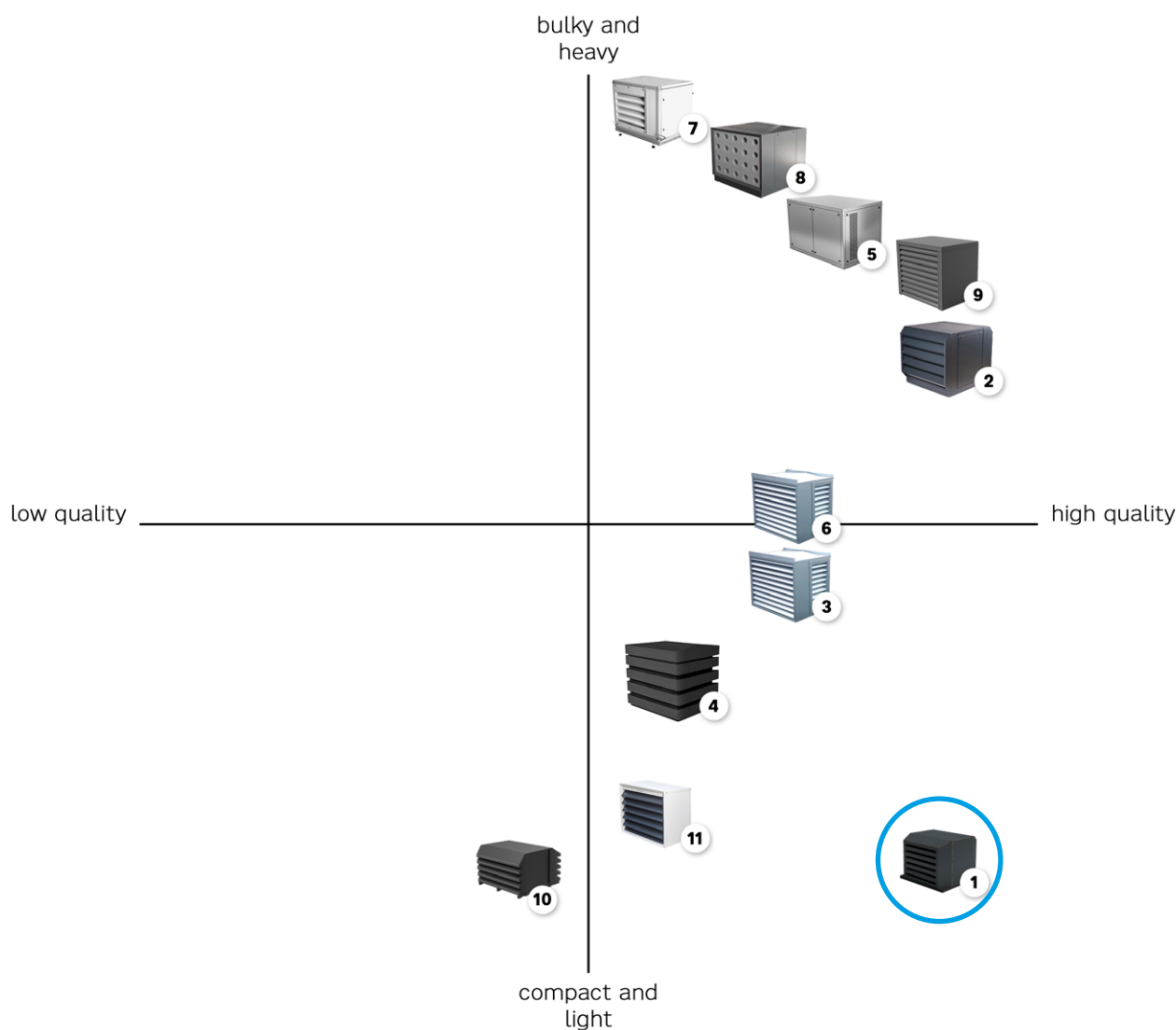
Sustainability

Nowadays it's almost impossible to not think about sustainability when discussing products (and rightfully so). Especially for some people, sustainability can be an important factor in their decision making process. The competitors can be put in two groups: ones that claim that their product is sustainable, and ones that don't mention sustainability. Merford, Solflex and Daikin don't explicitly mention sustainability, but instead mention their durability for example. REMKO, Silent Mode, Reducd and Climeleon all mention sustainability, either by using recycled material, or mentioning the ability to recycle the material afterwards. The Brockx uses cork and cleverly exposes some of the material to visually convey its sustainability.



▲
Figure 27 -

From top-left to bottom-right:
Close-ups of the Brockx,
REMKO and Climeleon (2x)



▲ Figure 28 - Perceptual map of quality vs. size and weight

How to differentiate

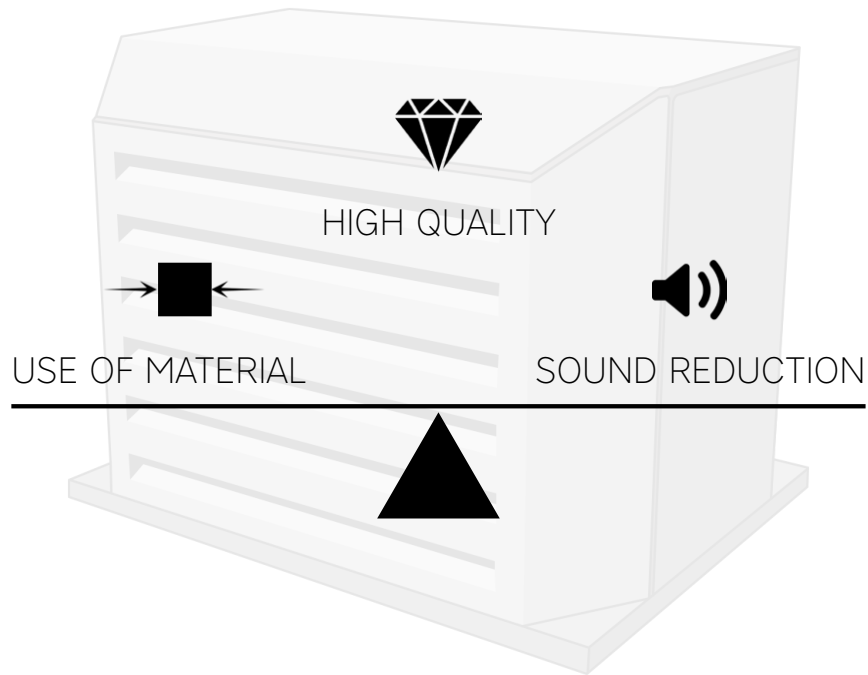
Looking at each of the attributes, it becomes clear that there isn't one attribute in particular which the Brockx can use to differentiate. The Brockx performs well in all of the areas, but isn't the best in a single one. It's therefore necessary to find a certain combination which can provide a way for the Brockx to stand out.

The perceptual map in figure 28 shows such a combination. This graph has quality on the x-axis, and size & weight on the y-axis.

The Brockx is now positioned in a place where there are no competitors, as it's the only product which is of high quality, and at the same time compact and lightweight.

The compactness and lightness also explain why the Brockx doesn't offer as much sound reduction as its competitors: it's a deliberate choice to offer sufficient sound reduction for meeting the legislation requirement of 40 dB, without adding any more unnecessary extra material, i.e. size and weight.

The sound reducing capability of the Brockx can therefore be justified by its search for a balance in sound reduction and use of materials. This way, something negative (relatively low sound reduction) can be turned into something positive: the perfect balance between offering sufficient sound reduction and using as little material as possible to keep the product lightweight and compact.



▲
Figure 29 -
 The differentiating
 qualities of the Brockx

CONCLUSION

Figure 28 visualises how the Brockx can be positioned to differentiate from its competition. It can differentiate by being the high quality enclosure that is engineered to find the perfect balance between use of material (size and weight) and sound reduction. Figure 29 illustrates this balance between use of material and sound reduction, with the overarching aspect of high quality.

With such a statement, Van Cappellen could justify the fact that the price range of the Brockx is similar to competitors that are in the higher price range, while offering not as much sound reduction: it's a deliberate choice to offer sufficient sound reduction for meeting the legislation requirement of 40 dB, without adding any more unnecessary extra material, i.e. size and weight.

How will they react?

When the Brockx will be introduced, it can be expected that the competitors will respond in a certain way.

One way the competition might react is by copying certain features of the Brockx that current products on the market don't have. The main feature that is different with the Brockx is the use of cork. Using cork has a lot of benefits, which will be covered in chapter 3.1, so it's not unlikely that certain companies will use this idea and design their own enclosure using cork. On the other hand, it can be expected that these companies have already considered using cork, as it's a material known for its acoustic characteristics. Especially the acoustic experts will probably have taken this material into consideration when developing their enclosure. The reason competitors might start using cork after the introduction of the Brockx, is therefore probably not because they didn't think of it. What could happen however is that the Brockx becomes successful, and the cork proves to be a good choice for material. In that case, certain reasons why cork hadn't been applied at first by the competition might be proven wrong, and may be reason enough to start using this material for their enclosures as well.

Other differentiating aspects such as the design or size might also be copied once the Brockx becomes a strong competitive force in the market. For example, if many people will prefer the Brockx because of its compact size, competitors might also start producing smaller enclosures.

It is difficult to predict which company will react in what way, but some assumptions can be made. The bigger companies such as REMKO or Merford are rather innovative and have more resources which enables them to react rather quickly and develop improved or new, similar products. On the other hand, the sound enclosure is a small part of their total product range, especially for REMKO. This might mean that these products receive less attention as their overall revenue doesn't depend much on the sales of the enclosures. Smaller companies such as Reducd or Climeleon might also try such tactics in order to compete, but will probably put more emphasis on their own features which makes them unique. For example, on the website of Reducd they state that their use of recycled material and heavy weight is what makes their enclosures good at reducing sound, while Climeleon is a lot less expensive, probably also

because of their choice for plastic as material. It's therefore less likely that they will move away from this choice, however they will be more eager to find other ways to compete, as their enclosure is their main product. For Daikin it also seems less likely that they will react as they are such a large and global company, whose priority lies in the area of HVAC systems. And finally as mentioned, Silent Mode and Solflex are not very active in the Netherlands and are therefore also less likely to respond.

CONCLUSION

The potential success of the Brockx will show how much demand there is for an enclosure with such attributes. Other companies might improve their existing products or start producing new enclosures with similar attributes to meet the customer's demand that has been exposed by the Brockx. Out of the existing competitors, it can be expected that there will be some reaction to the introduction of the Brockx. This will be done by either finding new ways to compete, or copying certain features of the Brockx. Because the differentiating attributes of the Brockx are susceptible to being copied, Van Cappellen should not only rely on them to achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Other ways of differentiation should be looked into.

Product Category Competition

The next ring of the levels of competition is the product category competition. These are products which are in the same category, but do not necessarily share all the similar features (Hultink, 2020).

The enclosures in this category are not designed for sound reduction. Their two main functions are to be aesthetically more pleasing than the AC or heat pump units, which are generally not perceived as attractive, and to provide some protection from weather circumstances or vandalism. These products and corresponding companies are relevant because they might also start offering sound reducing versions once this market grows.

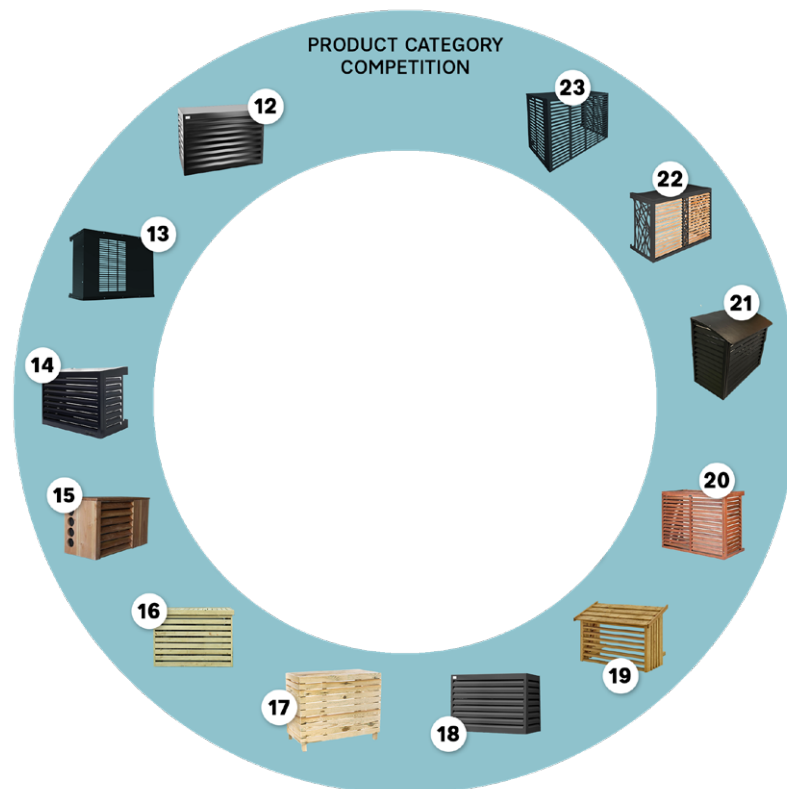
The reason for this is that these companies are already (successfully) selling enclosures. They are active in this market and they know that

there is a growing demand for sound reduction, especially now that there is a new legislation. It seems like a small step to move from enclosures towards enclosures with sound reduction.

On the other hand, becoming competent in the area of acoustics is no simple thing. Because these competitors probably don't have this expertise yet, it can take some time for them to directly compete with Van Cappellen. But especially in the longer term, this risk should not be underestimated.

In short, the companies in the product category competition sell enclosures that do not yet reduce sound and are therefore not direct competitors. It can be expected however that some of them will start to also create sound reducing enclosures once the demand for this continues to grow. This makes them potentially dangerous competitors that deserve to be looked out for.

Figure 30 -
Product form
competition



Generic competition

More abstract competition consists of the products that fulfil the same need (Hultink, 2020).

The goal of mapping these indirect competitors is to broaden the scope of the analysis. These products will not be competing with the Brockx in the near future, but they may provide some inspiration for other possibilities such as developing a new product in the future. There is an incredible amount of

acoustic products, so this analysis attempts to only show the wide variety of products that are on the market.

An interesting company in this section is Easy Noise Control, which offers a wide variety of acoustic products. In some way, it can be assumed that they have a similar brand image of Van Cappellen as being an acoustic expert. If they were to decide on moving into the market of sound enclosures, they could become a strong competitor. Such competitors should therefore not be dismissed.

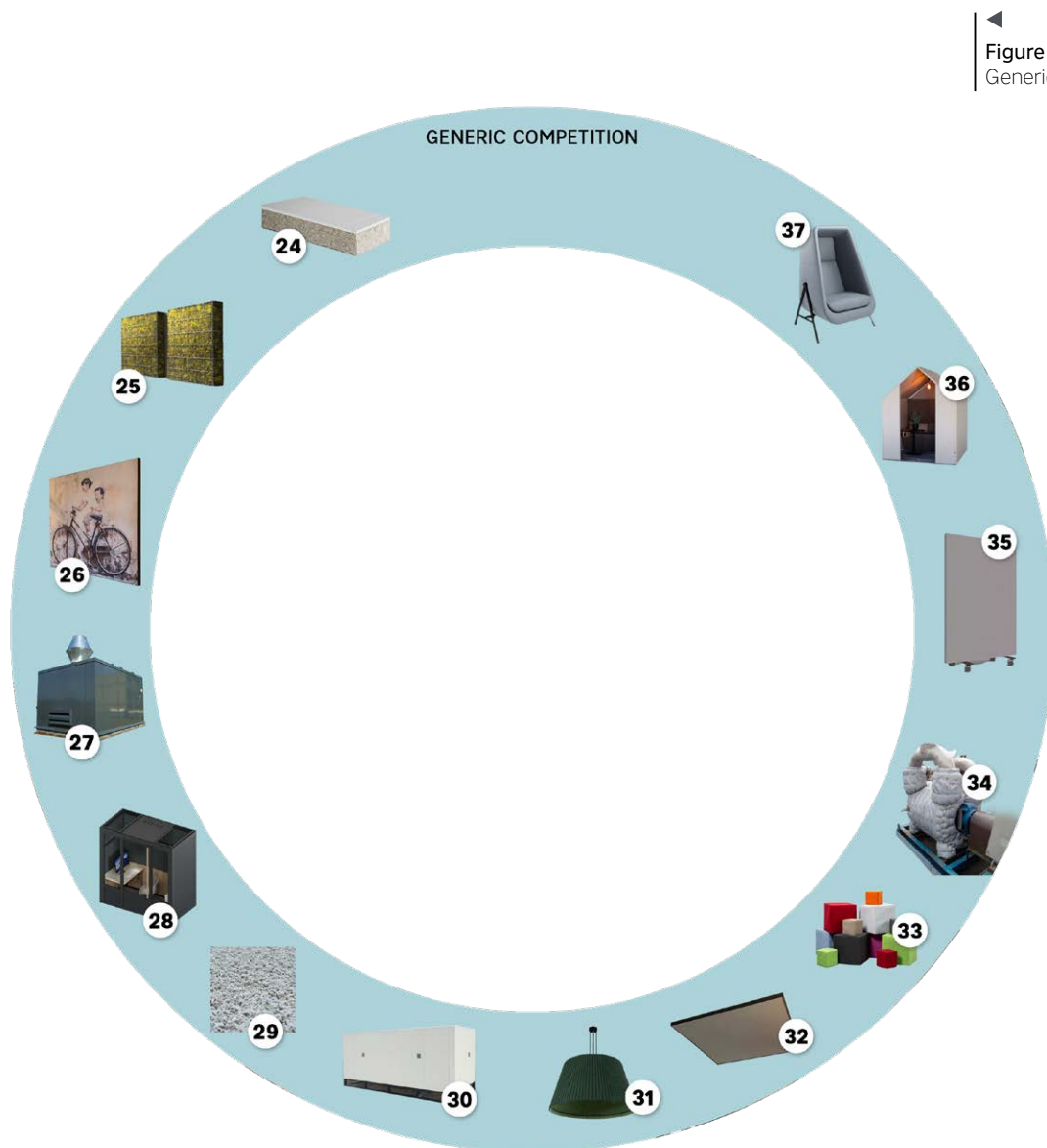


Figure 31 -
Generic competition

Budget competition

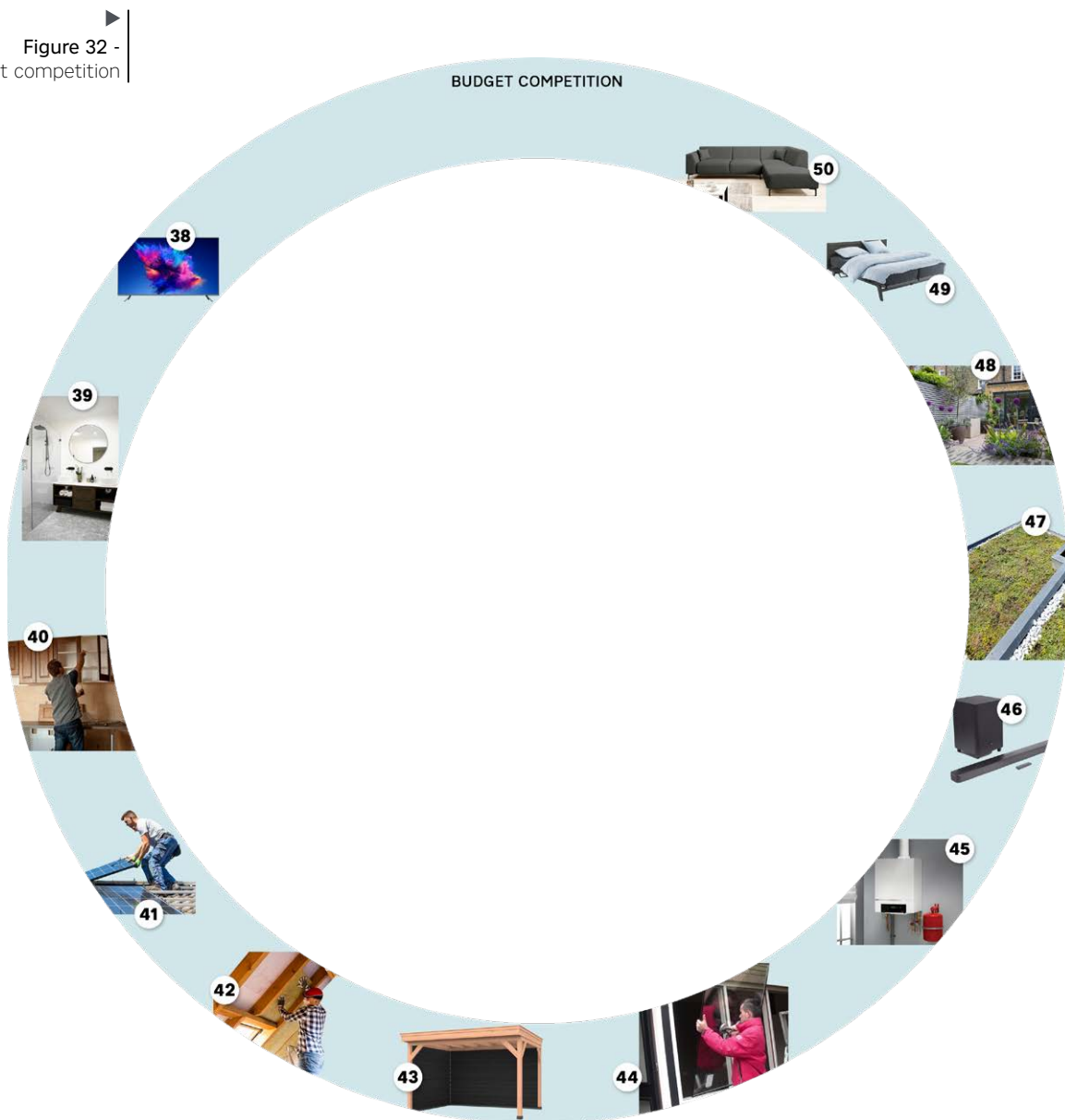
The final and most abstract competitors are those of the budget competition. These products compete with the least intensity (Hultink, 2020).

The products in this level of competition are chosen subjectively. They are meant to create awareness for Van Cappellen on even the most abstract type of competition, and to provide some inspiration on what kind of products this might consist of.

In a way, the products in this category compete for the attention of the consumer. The consumer needs to be made aware of the existence of the Brockx, otherwise such a product will not even be taken into consideration.

In other words, creating awareness for the Brockx will be an important part of the marketing. Because even the least direct and relevant competitors might be chosen over the Brockx if they aren't aware of its existence

Figure 32 -
Budget competition



Competitors - Conclusions

In this chapter, the competitive landscape has been mapped and explored. This section will sum up all the conclusions of the covered topics. The two most important findings are illustrated on the right, and will be used as input for the market positioning of the Brockx.

Levels of competition

There are many direct and indirect competitors. Direct competition consists of companies that compete in the short term, while less direct competitors might become relevant in the longer term.

Product range

Van Cappellen Sound Solutions can be classified among the companies that sell acoustic products, and should find a way to differentiate within this group.

Markets

Based on activity of competing companies, relevant markets for enclosures are real estate and residential buildings, restaurants and other assembly buildings, HVAC manufacturers and installers. Other niche markets might also be chosen for the Brockx because of less competition, but further research is needed to confirm a direction (see chapter 2.5 for more information on market segmentation).

Product attributes

The Brockx can be positioned as the enclosure that is of high quality and is engineered to find the perfect balance between size, weight and sound reduction. This can justify its relatively high price. It differentiates by being the enclosure that is both compact and visually conveys high quality.

How will they react?

It can be expected that competitors will mostly react by emphasising on their own differentiating qualities, but it remains possible for them to copy some of the qualities of the Brockx when it becomes a successful product. Van Cappellen should therefore strive to be different on more than the product level.

Product category competition

Companies that sell enclosures without sound reduction might pose a threat once they decide to offer sound reducing variants as well.

Generic competition

Less direct competitors are companies that sell other acoustic products. There are many other applications for acoustics which could provide inspiration for product development in the future.

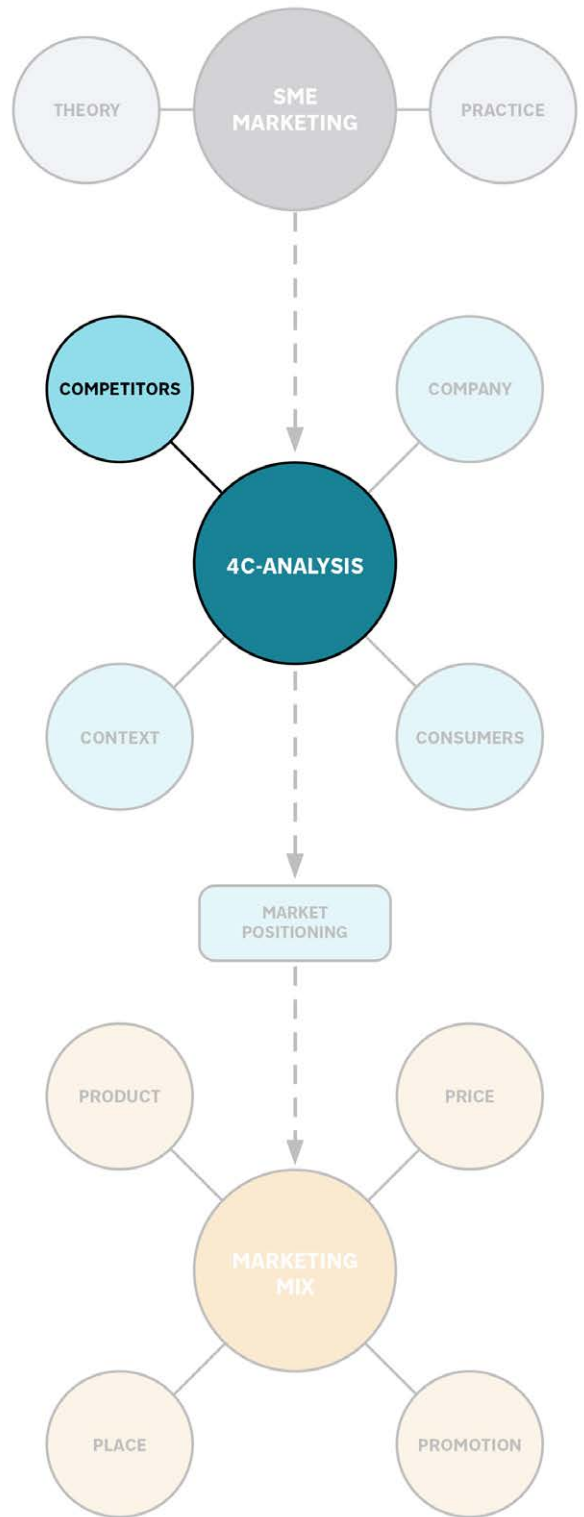
Budget competition

Even the most abstract competitors compete in some way. Awareness of the Brockx should be created among consumers for them to consider buying such a product.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

Van Cappellen Sound Solutions can be classified among other acoustic companies, and should strive to differentiate within this group.

The Brockx can differentiate and justify its price by being the enclosure that is of high quality while at the same time offering the perfect balance between sound reduction and size and weight.



▲ Figure 33 - Progress of the project

2.3 COMPANY

This chapter will take a closer look at the company Van Cappellen Consultancy. The company will be analysed internally by mapping and assessing its resources, to find possibilities for achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

Resource based view

A firm has different resources at its disposal such as money and people. Looking at a company with a resource based view (RBV), helps to explain how a company can use what they have in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2009). This perspective has been chosen because it helps in the process of covering all relevant aspects of the situation of the company, be that externally or in this case internally.

Besides the benefits, using a RBV also has some disadvantages. One disadvantage that is discussed in literature is the fact that a RBV elicits a static and inward view that lacks focus on a future perspective (Knott, 2015). Focusing on internal resources can refrain the researcher from taking external factors such as competition in mind. In other words, using the strategic perspective of looking inwards can come at the cost of forgetting to look outwards. In the context of the 4C-analysis, this disadvantage may be alleviated as the remaining Cs (competitors, context & consumers) steer the researcher's view into different, outward and future oriented directions. This is also what makes the 4C-analysis a useful tool in general: it provides concrete things to look into to prevent taking a one-sided view of a company's strategic situation.

The VRIO framework

The first framework that has been developed for this RBV is the VRIO framework by Barney (1991). When using this framework, each resource of a company is assessed based on whether it's valuable, rare, inimitable and whether the company is organised to employ this resource. When a resource meets each criteria, it means that this is a valuable resource, that is rare and difficult to be imitated by competitors, and that the company is organised in such a way that it can

also use this resource to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Resources that meet the most criteria have the most chance of being deployed as a way to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Goggin, 2022).

For analysing the company, other tools such as a SWOT analysis could also have been used. The VRIO framework has been chosen instead, because it differs in two assumptions. The first assumption is recognition of resource heterogeneity. For both the SWOT and other tools such as Porter's five forces (1980), it is assumed that firms in the same industry are the same in terms of resources and pursued strategies (Barney, 1991). However, in the case of Van Cappellen it can be expected that because of their unique core brand, their resources may be vastly different. The second assumption is that these resources are mobile, and thus can be transferred between firms (Barney, 1991). When looking at Van Cappellen, it can be expected that certain resources will not be able to be sold or transferred. Especially their reputation is something that is an immobile asset. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis is a framework that covers external factors as well (opportunities and threats), while in this section of the 4C-analysis, the desire is to focus purely on the company.

The VRIO analysis for Van Cappellen is shown in table 1. Different categories of resources (physical, human, intellectual and financial) are used to help in finding the complete set of resources of the company. It can be seen that most of the resources are valuable, but are not considered to be rare. Resources such as these lead to a state of *competitive parity*, which means that competitors can be equal in terms of this resource (Goggin, 2022). Some resources are considered both valuable and rare, which can lead to a *temporary competitive advantage* (Goggin, 2022). This makes sense, because if competitors can copy your valuable and rare resources, you will lose any advantage you had over them. Finally there is one resource that is valuable, rare and inimitable: the reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy. However, if the company is not

Resource	This resource is:			
	V (valuable)	R (rare)	I (inimitable)	O (organized)
Physical resources				
Workshop/test facility	Yes	No		
Sound measuring devices	Yes	No		
Human resources				
Engineers	Yes	No		
Sound experts	Yes	No		
Intellectual resources				
Vibration analysis	Yes	No		
Noise level predictions	Yes	No		
Noise and vibration measurements	Yes	No		
Transmission- and damping loss factor testing	Yes	No		
Insulation treatments	Yes	No		
On-site inspections	Yes	No		
Connections with cork manufacturer	Yes	Yes	No	
Broad expertise on acoustics	Yes	Yes	No	
Reputation of being expert in luxury yacht acoustics	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Financial resources				
R&D Budget	Yes	No		

▲ Table 1 - VRIO analysis of Van Cappellen Consultancy

organised to use this resource, it will remain an *unused competitive advantage* (Goggin, 2022). Van Cappellen should therefore work towards a situation in which they can utilise this advantage and use it to their benefit.

Brand image

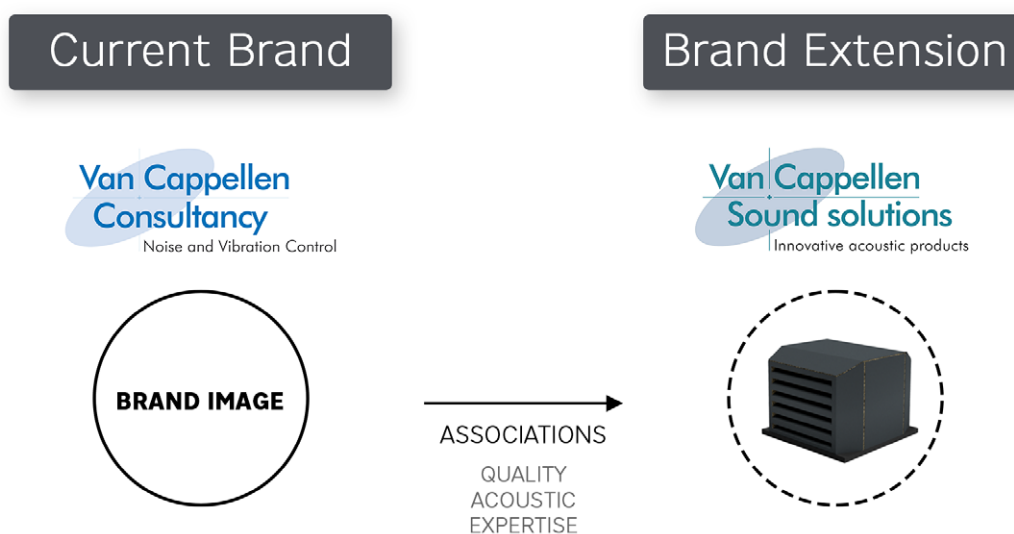
The reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy is something that can be used to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. This reputation has been built up by being an expert on acoustics in the maritime area and that of luxurious yachts. Many clients can testify to the professionalism and expertise, and over 35 years of experience is impossible to simply be copied by competitors. It's therefore a resource that could really be used to develop a competitive edge for Van Cappellen.

The way that Van Cappellen can be organised around this resource, and attain a sustainable competitive advantage, is through branding. Van Cappellen Sound Solutions is an extension of its core brand, Van Cappellen Consultancy. By using branding, the attributes, benefits and overall perceived quality of the core brand may be conveyed onto the extended brand and its products (Keller, 1993). This means that if consumers associate Van Cappellen Consultancy with high acoustic expertise and high quality of the yachting industry, they may also associate the Brockx with such

qualities. Figure 34 visualises this transfer of associations. These brand associations that consumers have in their mind are also defined as the brand image.

It's not sure, however, if and to what degree this brand image of Van Cappellen Consultancy currently exists in the mind of the consumers. In the sector in which they operate, Van Cappellen has made a name for themselves. But for consumers or businesses that the Brockx will be sold to, it's very unlikely that they have heard of the company, let alone have any associations with it. To create this brand image, the company's reputation can be used (Beverland, 2018). The difference between brand image and reputation is that brand image is a consumer's mental picture of a company, while reputation is less subjective and more of an assessment by stakeholders on a company's performance (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). This reputation is more certain because it can be testified by the many successful projects Van Cappellen Consultancy has conducted for its wide range of clients. As Beverland (2018) also indicates, especially in a B2B situation, reputation is a representative of brand image. It defines what is unique and favourable about a brand and can be a useful start for creating a brand strategy (Beverland, 2018) For this reason the reputation should be used as a foundation to build and improve Van Cappellen's brand image.

In Cretu & Brodie (2007) their research, a significant relation was found between



▲ Figure 34 - Effect of brand extension on brand image associations

a company's reputation and perceived customer's value. This customer's value has been defined in this study as the trade-off between perceived quality/benefits and costs. So when a company's reputation is high, customers generally put a higher value on what they purchase, which also increases the chance of this purchase taking place. In relation to the Brockx, this means that the good reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy can result in consumers placing higher value on the Brockx, and a higher chance of them purchasing it.

Interestingly, in their research there wasn't a significant relation found between company reputation and perceived product quality (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). Instead, brand image was found to have a, although not very strong, significant positive effect on perceived product quality (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). This further suggests that using brand image will be helpful in shaping the customer's perception of the Brockx to be of high quality. Combined with the good reputation, positive attitudes of customers on the Brockx can be evoked, which will be very beneficial for Van Cappellen.

Brand extension can also have the benefit of being perceived as having a greater expertise or competency in a certain category (Berger et al., 2007). For this to happen, it is important that the products are compatible with the parent brand and require similar skills. When this is the case, the overall perceived quality will increase as well as the purchase likelihood (Berger et al., 2007).

Besides the benefits of brand extension, it should also be mentioned that there is a risk involved. The main risk of a brand extension is dilution (Müge Arslan & Korkut Altuna, 2010). If a company extends their brand by launching a new product, the existing brand image that consumers have in mind will change, and new associations will be created (Martínez & de Chernatony, 2004). Even a successful brand extension can cause the existing associations to become weaker (Keller, 1993). And if the new product doesn't fit well with the parent brand, the dilution will be even greater. To illustrate this with an example, imagine a brand that is known for selling high quality shoes. If they were to extend their brand by selling t-shirts, the image of their brand would dilute. Where they were first known for their quality shoes, it's now less clear what their brand is about, and they become more generic and less distinguishable from their competitors. Furthermore, their existing brand image can even be damaged if the brand extension is

unsuccessful. Negative associations of the failed new product can tarnish the perceived quality of their shoes.

Müge Arslan & Korkut Altuna (2010) explain that dilution will always take place, no matter the type of brand extension. However, there are different ways of alleviating this. First, the brand extension should be similar to the parent brand (Keller, 1993). Because the Brockx is sound reducing and has a clear link with Van Cappellen Consultancy's acoustic qualities, it can be expected that customers will not judge the Brockx as being too far from its parent brand. Another way of limiting dilution is by using a different brand name (Müge Arslan & Korkut Altuna, 2010). Van Cappellen does this by using the name Van Cappellen Sound Solutions instead of Van Cappellen Consultancy. This should be helpful in limiting dilution, and at the same time it can ensure that positive associations are conveyed, because they have kept their name Van Cappellen. Finally, in the communication strategies for the brand extension, an emphasis should be placed on quality (Müge Arslan & Korkut Altuna, 2010). Perceived quality has the biggest effect on brand image after extension (Müge Arslan & Korkut Altuna, 2010), so making sure that quality is communicated well will be an important part in the marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

Van Cappellen Consultancy should use its reputation as a starting point for developing a strong brand image. With a good brand image, associations of the parent brand can be transferred onto the brand extension, which is the launch of the Brockx by Van Cappellen Sound Solutions. A good brand image will also have a positive effect on the perceived quality of the Brockx. Brand extension also leads to dilution of the brand, but this can be mitigated by ensuring a good fit between the extension and parent brand, using a different brand name and communicating product quality.

Brand equity

Establishing a strong brand image is also a key driver in building brand equity, which is the overall value of a brand (Zhang, 2015; Keller, 1993). Put simply, a positive brand equity means that consumers know your brand and favour your product over a similar competing product that doesn't have such a brand (Keller, 1993).

Having a high brand equity will result in more loyal customers and higher purchase intent (Hossien Emari, 2012). Furthermore, it is also found that high equity brands are more often related to having premium prices. This is because consumers place more confidence in a brand with higher brand equity, and as a result are willing to pay a premium price for the brand (Lassar et al., 1995; Pandey et al., 2020). Improving brand equity will therefore also be beneficial for the viability of the Brockx.

Also among SMEs, building a strong brand has become a central activity to ensure growth and achieve a favourable position in the market (Dumitriu et al., 2019). To build a strong brand, an effective approach is to implement both classical and digital marketing strategies (Dumitriu et al., 2019). This combination is necessary, as classical marketing methods such as posters or flyers are not as effective anymore, especially compared to how fast word of mouth travels online. Reviews by other

consumers and a positive online presence are considered much more valuable in assessing a brand. Therefore conducting digital marketing techniques will help in improving consumer's experience of a brand (Dumitriu et al., 2019).

It is also worth mentioning that sustainability is playing an increasingly larger role in brand equity (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Being sustainable is becoming more important in the consumer's perceptions of a brand, and because of this relates to the overall brand equity. It's therefore good to mention the Brockx' sustainable aspects as it will have a positive influence on the brand equity of Van Cappellen as well.

CONCLUSION

In summary, brand image is a key driver to overall value of a brand, also called brand equity. High brand equity leads to consumer loyalty and a higher willingness to pay a premium price. Communicating the sustainable qualities of a brand also helps in improving brand equity. Van Cappellen will benefit from improving their brand equity and can achieve this by building their brand image and communicating their sustainable qualities through traditional and digital marketing tools.

Company - Conclusions

This part of the 4C-analysis has taken a resource based view and looked internally at the qualities of Van Cappellen which could be employed to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. In this concluding section of this chapter the main findings are listed, with the most important ones emphasised on the right.

Resource based view

In the context of a 4C-analysis, a RBV is an appropriate tool that helps the researcher to analyse a company internally and identify possible strengths.

The VRIO framework

The reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy is a resource that has the most potential of leading towards a sustainable competitive advantage.

Brand image

The reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy can be used to create or improve the brand image, which will allow the positive associations of the parent brand to be transferred onto the brand extension, the Brockx.

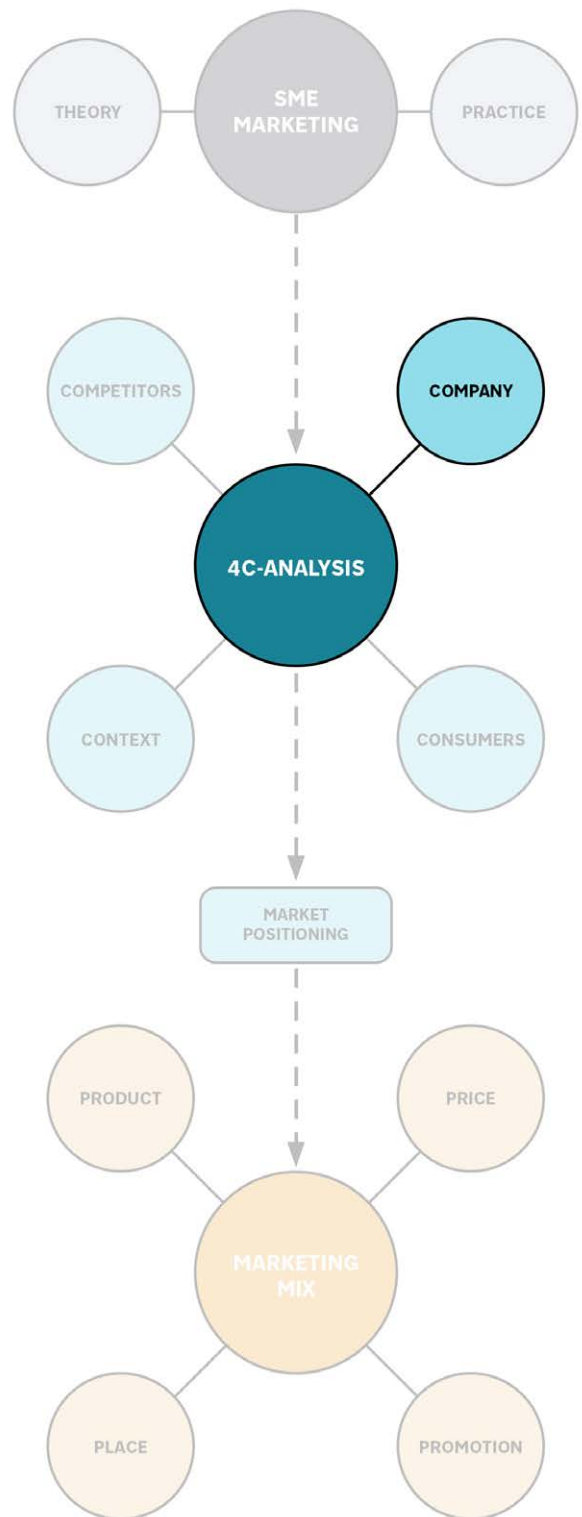
Brand equity

The overall value of a brand is called brand equity, and should be improved by working on the brand image and communicating sustainability through both traditional and digital marketing tools.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

The reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy is the most promising resource to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and should be used in building their brand.

Branding should be used to transfer the associations of Van Cappellen Consultancy's brand image onto the Brockx.



▲ Figure 35 - Progress of the project

2.4 CONTEXT

The goal of analysing the context is to find relevant factors that should be taken into account when determining the attractiveness of a product category (Hultink, 2020). To find such factors, an online desk research has been performed. The most relevant factors are described below.

Context factors



▲ Figure 36 - Sound legislation

Sound legislation

The most obvious and most relevant factor is the new sound legislation. This new rule can possibly result in an increase in desire for sound reducing products for outdoor units. Several articles on this new legislation indicate an increase in awareness of this issue (Redactie Bouwwereld, 2019; van der Zee, 2020), but it's difficult to pinpoint exactly how aware people are on this issue, and if it has a significant impact on the demand for sound reducing enclosures.



Figure 37 - Steel prices increasing ▲

Increase of steel prices

The market of steel was already relatively unstable, and the consequences of the covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine has caused the prices of steel to increase even more. While the increase is becoming less steep, it is unlikely that prices will decrease any time soon (Brink Staalbouw, 2022 ; MetaalNieuws, 2021). This could be beneficial for Van Cappellen Consultancy, as some of its direct competitors use steel for their enclosures. This may result in them having to increase their prices, as the costs of making the units are likely to increase as well. The Brockx also has to deal with an increase in price of aluminium (van Gastel & de Jonge Baas, 2021). However, the Brockx consists of relatively little aluminium and is mostly made out of cork, which is a material with a fairly stable price, especially compared to steel.



▲ Figure 38 - Increase in ACs

Growing demand of (wall-mounted) air conditioners

As gas is getting more expensive and with houses moving away from using gas at all, the desire for air conditioning is increasing. An extra increase is caused by the covid pandemic, which has resulted in many people having to work from home and want a comfortable working environment (Roestenberg, 2022). The covid pandemic has also caused the Dutch government to spend a lot of money subsidising air ventilation in schools (Aircotech Klimaattechniek, n.d.). This means that it's likely that there will be more schools who will invest in air conditioning, which can be an interesting market for the Brockx. Another interesting fact is that especially the wall-mounted units are being bought more. This is due to the fact that people often don't have enough space in their yard or on their roof for a unit (Gawalo, 2021). Not many competitors offer a wall-mounted version of their unit, whereas the Brockx does. This makes this development extra beneficial for Van Cappellen.



Figure 39 - Increase in heat pumps ▲

Growing demand of heat pumps

Another consequence of the rise of gas prices is the increasing demand for another alternative: heat pumps (Kassa, 2022). A desire to be more sustainable is also relevant, but most of the increase is due to economic considerations. Furthermore, because heat pumps are a sustainable alternative to gas, the Dutch government issues a subsidy for buying heat pumps which further increases the popularity (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2021).



▲ Figure 40 - Digital marketing

Increase in B2B Digital marketing

Digitalisation is a well-known trend that characterises the 21st century. Part of this digitalisation is the increase in use of digital marketing tools and techniques (DMTT) by businesses (Steward et al., 2019). More and more businesses use digital tools as a way to market their product and communicate their brand to their audience (Pandey et al., 2020). Pandey et al. (2020) also argue that because buyers find most of their information online nowadays, it is necessary to maintain a credible online presence. An online presence also contributes to an increase in brand equity (Dumitriu et al., 2019), and helps businesses in comparing products and selecting the right ones based on recommendations of peers (Steward et al., 2019). This can be achieved through various methods such as a website, social media posts or by posting blogs (Pandey et al., 2020).

“(...) purchasing managers are increasingly relying on the recommendations of peers obtained online at professional community sites, review sites, and referral sites”

(Steward et al., 2019)



Figure 41 - Sustainability and circularity ▲

Sustainability and circularity

Another key aspect of our current time is the ever increasing desire towards a more sustainable planet. Paired with this general desire, the consumers' expectation of companies to conduct business in a sustainable manner is also increasing (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Whether a company is perceived as sustainable or not will also influence their brand equity (Dumitriu et al., 2019), so it's important to not only be sustainable, but communicate this as well. Furthermore, in our process towards being more sustainable, the concept of circularity is an increasingly important contributor (Ghisellini et al., 2016). Circularity is about closing the loop of a product's lifecycle, i.e. using a discarded product as a raw material for a new product instead of simply disposing of it. For the Brockx, such behaviour can also be encouraged by, for example, implementing a buy back service to give the Brockx a new life once the user wishes to dispose of it.

Context - Conclusions

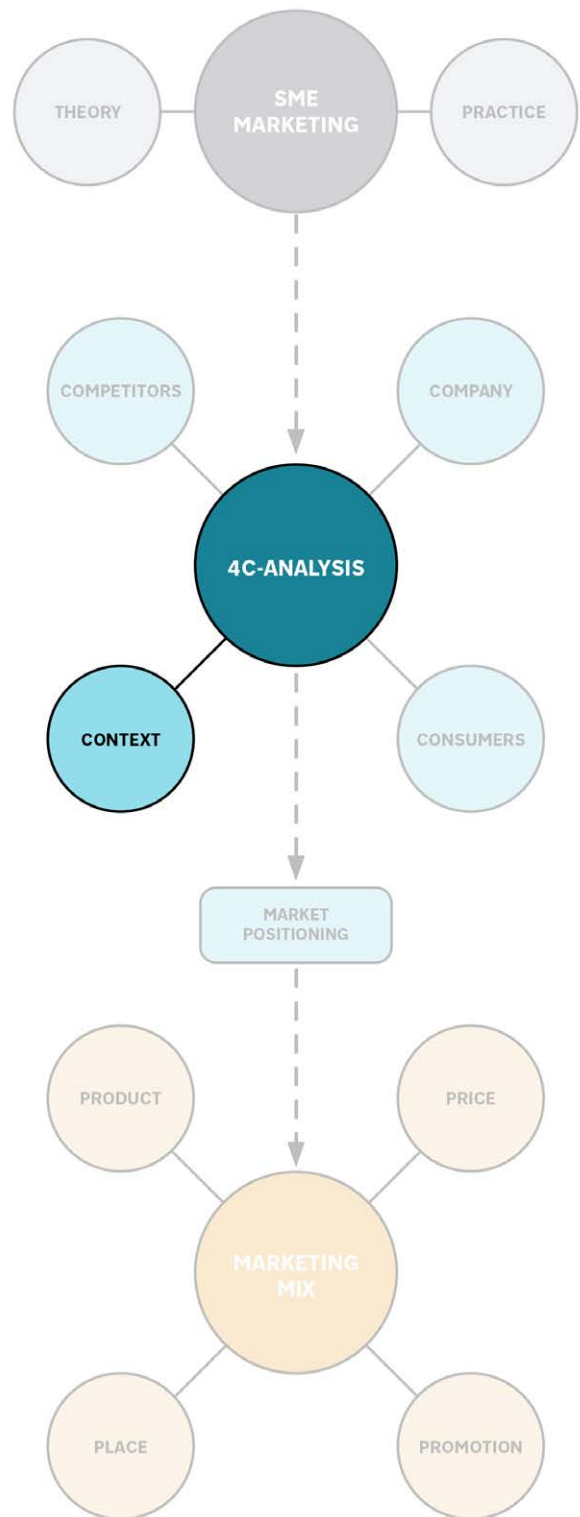
Several context factors have been found. Based on the growth in both the AC and heat pump market, we can conclude that the product category of sound reducing enclosures for ACs and heat pumps is an attractive category to move into. How much impact the new legislation will have is difficult to tell, and demand for sound reducing enclosures should be further looked into.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

The growing market of ACs and heat pumps, combined with the new sound legislation points towards a promising product category of sound reducing enclosures.

Digital tools should be used for B2B marketing and increasing brand equity.

Sustainability is an important aspect that should be mentioned when marketing the Brockx.



▲ Figure 42 - Progress of the project

2.5 CONSUMERS

This final chapter of the 4C-analysis will cover all relevant aspects of the consumers. The consumer decision making process will be explained, and two primary researches will be done to uncover information about both direct consumers (businesses) and the final consumers (end users). Finally, market segmentation will be conducted and a direction will be chosen.

Decision making process

The consumer decision making process is a model commonly used to help understand consumer behaviour, and entails five steps a consumer goes through when making a decision of purchasing a product (Engel et al., 1968). This model can also be applied in a B2B scenario, but the small differences as described in appendix B should be kept in mind (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011; Smith, 2021).

The stages of the consumer decision making process are the following: recognition of need, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation (figure 43). In each of these steps, the consumer has a different goal and should therefore be addressed appropriately when marketing the Brockx. A detailed description of each step can be found in appendix I.

For this chapter, the third stage is important. In this stage, consumers evaluate alternative products before they decide on which one to purchase (Magnier et al., 2019). It's therefore important that consumers know your product, and that you know what consumers find important in their evaluation (Stankevich, 2017). The two researches in this chapter will uncover what both businesses and end users find important factors in their evaluation of alternatives.



▲ Figure 43 - Consumer decision making process

Market segmentation I

To determine a position in the market, it's important to know to whom you want to sell your product. Instead of launching your product into the market and hoping that it will resonate with some people, it's much more effective to identify and understand these customers first. This way the product can be marketed accurately and resources can be used in a more effective and precise manner. Also without targeting a specific group, customers are less likely to feel like your product is meant for them. Because when you try to address everyone, no one will feel addressed (or more accurately in Dutch: als je iedereen probeert aan te spreken, voelt niemand zich aangesproken) (Hultink, 2020).

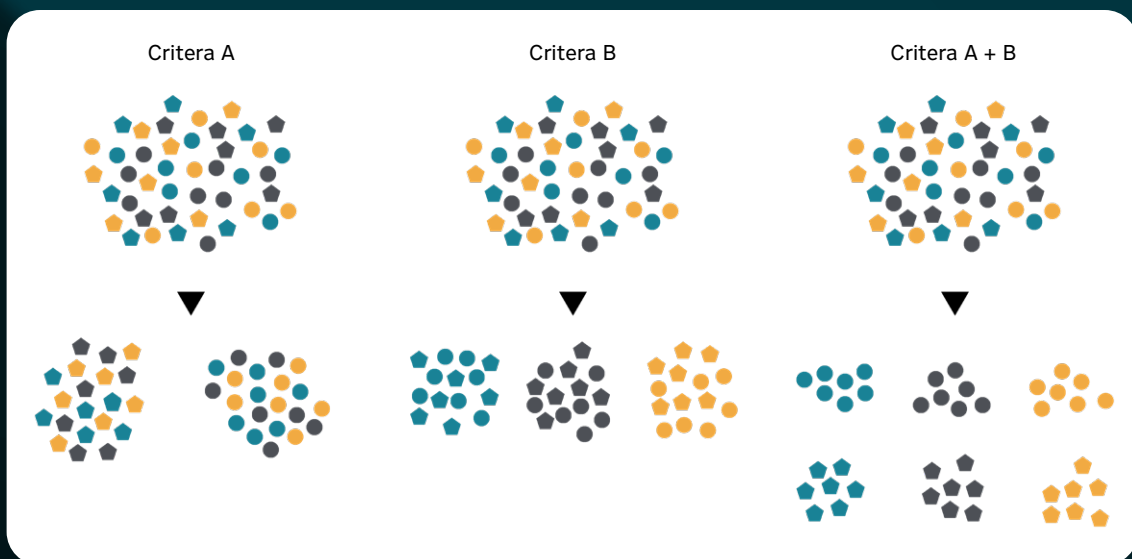
A good approach to identifying customers, which is also a key aspect of marketing, is market segmentation. Market segmentation is a way to divide the large, mixed group of unknown potential customers into smaller, heterogeneous groups with similar characteristics (Cortez et al., 2021). Good segmentation is important, because not doing so can cause the company to remain in an unprofitable market, to lose its unique position in a market or to target segments without sufficient growth or profitability (Cortez et al., 2021). One of the reasons a company might not be able to successfully implement segmentation, is

because they find it difficult to move from their existing target group to a new one (Simkin, 2008). For the situation of Van Cappellen Consultancy, this will not be an issue, as the Brockx has yet to be introduced to the market. Segmentation hasn't been done yet, which allows for a fresh start.

The right approach for segmentation is to divide the market based on two criteria, in this case sought benefits (e.g. sound reduction) and firmographics (e.g. type of industry). A more elaborate explanation and argumentation for this method can be found in appendix J. Figure 44 provides a visual representation of segmentation based on two criteria. As can be seen, by segmenting based on two criteria, smaller and more specific groups are created.

CONCLUSION

Segmentation is a crucial aspect of successful marketing. The approach for segmentation will be to first determine different benefits that both companies and end users are looking for. Then, different groups will be made based on firmographics such as type of industry, sector or building type. The sought benefits by companies and consumers will be found through primary research in the following sections.



▲ Figure 44 - Segmentation based on the combination of two different criteria

Primary research - Businesses

To gather important information on the context of businesses and sound enclosures, a qualitative research has been conducted. This section will cover the research and discuss some of the most important findings.

Method

A semi-structured interview approach is chosen to conduct the qualitative research. The reason a semi-structured interview is chosen, is because there is some general knowledge, but new and unknown directions should be explored (George, 2022). This type of interview also allows for a more personal and natural conversation, which allows for additional questions to be asked. This can be very useful, because new and unexpected topics may come to mind during the conversation.

The interview is divided into two themes. Theme 1 covers the enclosures, and aims to find out what businesses find important in their decision making process, and to find out how they perceive the Brockx and its competitors. The second theme is about market segmentation, which should provide information on which market segments are available, which ones are most promising and through what channels the Brockx can be sold.

The participants are chosen based on their expertise in the area of air conditioning and heat pumps. Two acquaintances of mine work at one of the biggest HVAC wholesalers in the Netherlands, Coolmark. Because I have spoken to them before, these people are a great way to start this research as they are willing to take the time to speak to me about this topic. What also makes these people great participants is their years of experience in this sector and their affinity with the topic of sound reducing

enclosures. After these interviews it was decided that it would be fruitful to conduct another interview with a different wholesaler to get information from a different source. The other wholesaler that was approached is Climadirect, which has its head office in Ridderkerk, my hometown. Besides this being a practical company to travel to for an interview, this wholesaler is also very interesting to talk with because they are already selling some sound reducing enclosures. They offer enclosures from both Merford and Reducd, who are two of the main competitors. An overview of the participants can be found in table 2 below.

Procedure

The two interviews with P1 and P2 were both held at the head office of Coolmark in Barendrecht on separate days. The first time I spoke with P1, who is product coordinator and is involved with testing other outdoor unit enclosures. The second interview was held with P2, the commercial director at Coolmark. The third interview with P3 was held at the office of Climadirect in Ridderkerk.

Each interview started off with an explanation on the project, my role as a graduating student and my goal of the research. For the first theme I purposely didn't tell which enclosure is from the company that I am doing the project for, to prevent any biases when the products are evaluated. For all three interviews, the audio was recorded using my phone and transcribed afterwards. The full interview guide and transcriptions can be found in appendices K & L.

Participant	Gender	Company	Function
P1	Male	Coolmark	Product coordinator
P2	Male	Coolmark	Commercial director
P3	Male	Climadirect	Product manager

Table 2 - ▲
Overview of interview participants

Results and discussion

Important attributes for companies

The first thing that is considered very important is the looks of the product. P1 explains that this product will in most instances be placed in someone's backyard, or at least in sight, which means that it is important that it looks good and blends in with its surroundings. P2 had a more practical opinion, and considered air circulation and sound reduction as most important. P3 finds sound reduction and ease of installation the most important criteria.

Next, the participants were also asked if they could evaluate each attribute and indicate how important they consider this attribute in their decision making process for buying enclosures. The results are described in table 3 below.

The influence of a company on a buyer's perception

In chapter 3.3, it was concluded that Van Cappellen should use their brand image of being an expert in acoustics in the yachting industry to transfer the positive associations onto the Brockx. In the interview it was intended to verify whether this could be an effective approach.

Both P1 and P2 indicate that they look at the company that sells the product, and that such a brand image definitely has its benefits. If they had to choose between a brand that only sells enclosures, a brand that sells other HVAC related products, or a brand that sells other acoustic products, their preference would go to the last brand. This is because they expect such a company to possess a certain expertise

Weight	Very important for installers and because of the occupational health and safety legislation. For consumers this is probably less important.
Design	Very important for consumers. Most consumers buy an enclosure to hide their unit. For wholesalers this is not as important but they take the needs of their customers into account.
Size	Very important, it should be as small as possible because this is practical and more aesthetically pleasing for end users.
Sound reduction	Very important. In the first instance to meet the sound legislation, but there is demand for extra reduction as well.
Time and ease of installation	For installers, very important. Wholesalers listen to what installers find important and will therefore also value quick and easy installation. Consumers won't care as much.
Price	Don't have to be the cheapest, but still very important because there is competition. Installers use a system for easy comparison of products of wholesalers. For B2B price is not as important as for B2C.
(Perceivable) quality	The wholesaler wants to offer high quality products, so the product should look good and be weather resistant. Also important for consumers, especially when the product is visible.
Sustainability	Wholesalers work with corporate social responsibility practices and legislations, and take their CO2 footprint in mind. However, for this product, sustainability is not the most important factor. More focus will be put on the efficiency of the unit instead of how sustainable the enclosure has been made.
Other attributes	Possibility for a wall-mounted version is good to mention, as not many competitors have this. Also good access for maintenance is an important benefit, especially for installers.

Table 3 - ▲
Evaluation of importance
of attributes



▲ Figure 45 - Images used during interview as points of discussion

which they highly value. P1 also informed that because sound reduction is becoming more important, an acoustic company would be a good choice to work together with.

Having a higher price than competitors can also be justified by being of high quality. P2 mentioned that they don't want to be the cheapest, but instead want to offer a full package of service and high quality products, as long as the price is realistic.

Perception of enclosures

The images in figure 45 were used to evaluate the Brockx and its competing products based on aesthetics. This assessment is subjective, but some general conclusions can be made.

Enclosures such as the Silent Mode (5), the ACE (7) or the Solflex H18 (6) are considered to be too bulky. This also goes for the DICE (2), but on the other side its design is perceived well. P1 also thinks that the Daikin looks a bit boxy and bulky. P2 doesn't think much of this design; it's something you would expect from an AC manufacturer.

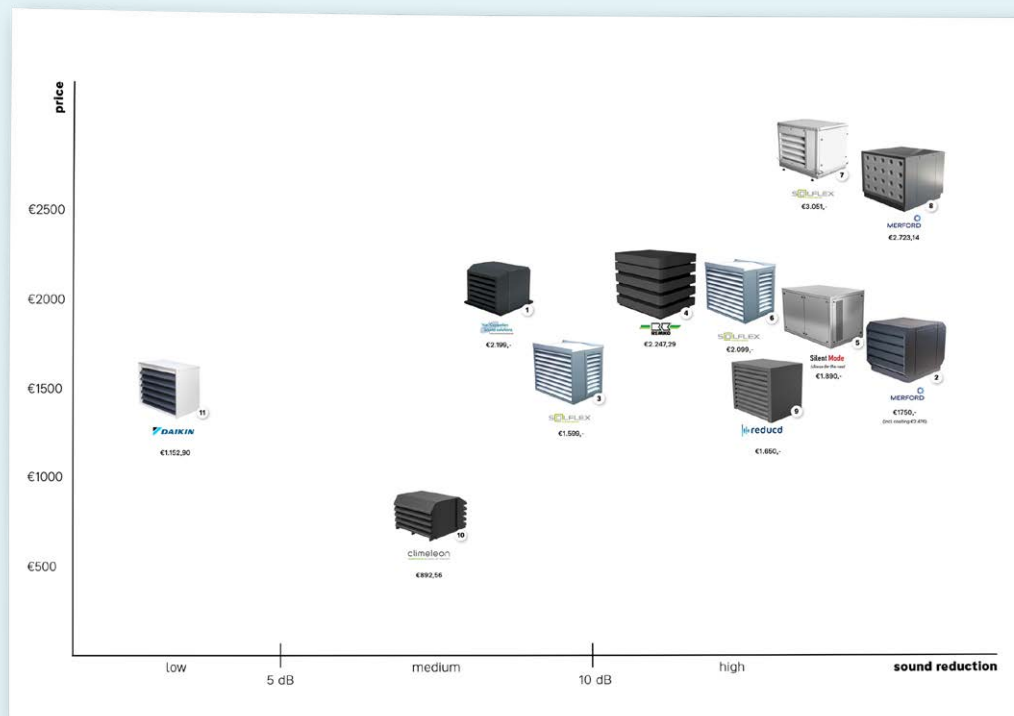
The enclosures that have a different type of design, such as the Climeleon (9) are perceived better. P1 thinks that the Climeleon looks a bit strange, but has a nice appearance. P2 also thinks that the Climeleon looks good and says that it would blend in well with its

surroundings if it were placed on a roof. The REMKO (4) is considered well-designed by P1, while P2 doesn't think it looks good. The Solflex HCS 14 (3) is perceived better by P1, while P2 thinks it doesn't look great. The Reduct (8) is considered good looking by both P1 and P2, as it's more modern and quite sleek. The same is said about the Brockx (1), which benefits from its compact design and angled corners which prevents the product from being perceived as boxy or bulky. P1 also suggested that the product shouldn't make it too evident that there is an installation inside. Consumers want to hide their heat pump or AC, so if the enclosure almost looks similar, it's undesirable.

"Really that bulkiness, I don't like that. That looks just like, you know there's an installation inside it." (P1, 2022)

It can be said that the general preference for design goes towards something that is not too bulky, looks sleek and modern and is able to blend in with its surroundings. The Brockx is perceived positively, mostly due to its compactness and sleek design.

The pictures in the right image of figure 45 were used to discuss some more detailed criteria. In the competitors section of chapter 3.2 it was concluded that the Brockx should differentiate by the only product that is both compact, light weight and of high quality. P1



▲ Figure 46- Graph used during interview as point of discussion

also indicated that he thinks that the material of the Climeleon appears to be of relatively low quality. P2 however doesn't think that this is the case. The quantitative analysis in the next section will find out how consumers perceive the quality of each of the enclosures, which could provide more information on whether this direction has potential.

Price and sound reduction

The next important point that was discussed is the price to sound reduction ratio. The Brockx is relatively expensive for the amount of sound reduction that it offers. It is expected that Van Cappellen could justify this by mentioning that the Brockx has been engineered to find the right balance between material use and sound reduction. It's very important to test whether this assumption is right, and if the Brockx can really be sold this way.

The graph in figure 46 was used to start this discussion. As expected, P2 would choose the Reducd, as it's less expensive and offers more sound reduction. P1 also indicates that if you only look at this information, the Brockx is positioned very disadvantageously. Luckily, both P1 and P2 indicate that less sound reduction can be justified by mentioning that it's purposefully designed this way to stay as compact as possible. P1 mentions that by using branding effectively, you can justify its high price. However, the price shouldn't be

so high that consumers won't even take the product into consideration.

"Yes, I think so (it could have potential). Because, like I said, the product is in sight after all. It only shouldn't be so much more expensive that they think you're written off anyway." (P1, 2022)

Furthermore, P1 explains that brand awareness should be created so that people understand the story of the brand and know that it stands for quality. P2 also thinks that the Brockx is salable, as long as the marketing is done well. The nice appearance and quality of the Brockx combined with the brand image should help a lot in this.

When asked about the high price, P3 elaborated that a lot of installers can be surprised by it because the enclosures generally cost more than the ACs or heat pumps themselves. On the other hand, a lot of consumers don't have a choice and need to buy such a product to meet the legislation requirements. P3 explains that for some people this won't be an issue, but for people that live in the city for example and have a lot of neighbours that complain, the only choice is to buy an enclosure. In cities such as Amsterdam, the municipality is actually quite strict, and installers are held responsible for meeting

the requirements. It's therefore also in their interest to be able to offer sound reducing enclosures, especially ones that are easy to install.

"I notice for example with the growth of Reducd, this is purely because it's easy to install. In terms of price it's similar (to Merford), but they choose that option because they simply look at practicality and ease of installation" (P3, 2022)

Possible markets

The market for the Brockx seems to be very promising, as both P1 and P2 indicate that this is a booming market. P1 explains that more and more consumers want an AC, and that the market of heat pumps is also growing rapidly. According to P1, there is already some demand for products such as the Brockx, but with the rapid growth of both ACs and heat pumps, a rising demand for enclosures seems to be inevitable. P2 also tells us that there is definitely a market for the Brockx.

"By the way, there is a huge market for you in that area. Because heat pumps are increasingly being introduced in the Netherlands and this could become a booming business." (P2, 2022)

P3, who is already selling two brands of enclosures, paints an even more positive picture and mentions that there is already a very large demand for these products. A lot of times they even receive projects for heat pumps, and the enclosures are included in the total project. This means that for certain projects, dozens of enclosures are sold at once together with the ACs or heat pumps.

"I even noticed it before the legislation.. but now, it's really a hot item. Now we even include enclosures a lot of time in the quotation for new projects." (P3, 2022)

When asked about an enclosure such as the Brockx in particular, P2 also said that there is definitely a market with people who are willing to pay a bit more money for a product that looks better and is of higher quality.

The types of companies that can be sold to are mostly related to end users. For example businesses that do a lot of work for consumers, such as self-employed persons or large installation companies. P1 also argues that small businesses where there is a unit in sight might be interesting, such as

SMEs, restaurants or stores. P2 also gives the example of restaurants in a city, where buildings are positioned close to each other and where sound reduction could be desired. The most promising sector according to P2 is construction or real estate, because of the growth of the heat pump market.

"Construction, real estate, I think it is very interesting, because it is increasingly moving towards heat pump systems. And of course you actually have the proposition to get off the gas. So what you see now is that there is a huge increase and sale in the heat pump area, air water heat pumps." (P2, 2022)

When asked if there are certain segments that aren't worth it to begin with, both P1 and P2 mentioned the industry sector. Here there is often no sound reduction required, the aesthetics don't matter and if sound reduction were needed, much bigger installations such as acoustic panels would be used.

How to approach the marketing

P1 argues that marketing should be communicated through two channels: towards the installers and also towards the end users.

"So on the one hand it is important to influence the installer that they want your enclosure, on the other hand it is also good to influence the end user that they think, I want that enclosure for this and this reason. So you actually have two communication tools to actually focus on. For the installer, it is much more about easy installation." (P1, 2022)

P2 confirms this and explains that the way the market should be approached is together. Van Cappellen could for example generate demand from the bottom up (pull strategy), by using branding, or from the top down by approaching project managers or municipalities (push strategy). The wholesaler could generate demand from the top down by promoting the Brockx on their website to installers.

"And to the end users, yes, you have to promote that in a different way. And then at a certain point refer back to where people can purchase the products, but if you do that together then there really is a market for it." (P2, 2022)

To sell the Brockx, P1 explains that the most practical way is to work together with a wholesaler. P2 adds to this, as they mention that they have all the logistical resources and are able to handle customers and only come in contact with Van Cappellen if they themselves have any questions. This way, Van Cappellen only needs to take care of producing and assembling the product. This could be a good option, as Van Cappellen does not have the resources to handle customer service or build up a large stock of products. Figure 47 illustrates what selling the Brockx with a wholesaler looks like.

One disadvantage of this is that there will be margins in place when the Brockx is sold from manufacturer to wholesaler, from wholesaler to installer and finally from installer to end user. P2 explains that the margin from wholesaler to installer can be around 25-30%. P3 confirms this. According to him, all margins generally range between 25%-35%. This could mean that the price for the end user will become quite high, so this is something that will be further looked into in chapter 3.2.

Practical aspects of working with a wholesaler

With the gained knowledge from the interviews with P1 and P2, more specific questions could be made to get more knowledge on how a possible cooperation with a wholesaler would actually go. As P3 already sells enclosures, he can explain how this works in practice.

One thing that is good to know, is how many products should be produced and how many a wholesaler wants to keep in stock. P3 explains that Reducd keeps a stock themselves, and they deliver their enclosures or even install it themselves the next day if necessary. Payment then also goes per product which is sold to an installer. With Merford, they have the appointment that the wholesaler keeps about 10 products in stock. In this case, the wholesaler pays up front for the 10 enclosures. Because Van Cappellen doesn't have the resources to have many products in stock themselves, it's good to know that the wholesaler can do this for them. About 10 products is then a good indication of what can be expected.

"Yes for Merford, that's really stock. We have appointments to keep 5 small ones I think, 3 middle ones and 2 big ones I believe we should keep in stock." (P3, 2022)

I was also wondering whether manufacturers can work together with different wholesalers.

Van Cappellen Sound Solutions



▲ Figure 47 - Schematic overview of how the Brockx reaches the end users

P3 indicates that for a wholesaler, it is desirable if their company can sell the enclosures exclusively, because then if people want to buy the Brockx for example, they will always come to them. But, P3 also explains that it's not uncommon when suppliers work with multiple wholesalers. Merford for example can be bought via many different channels such as Climadirect, Wasco and also their own webshop. Van Cappellen should try to find out what could be in their best interest. Establishing a good relationship with one wholesaler might be a good way to ensure quality above quantity.

Limitations

Because I knew P1 and P2 already, I had the advantage that they were willing to take the time for this interview and explain to me everything that I needed to know in detail. This was also a great way to enter a company that normally would be more difficult to get information from. On the other hand, knowing your participant might also cause some biases. Some bias occurs in every research, but it is good to discuss which ones might occur and what influence this may have on the research (J. Smith & Noble, 2014).

One first possible bias that can occur is the social desirability bias. With such bias, participants tend to give answers that are socially desirable and might refrain from stating their actual thoughts (Grimm, 2010). Because I know P1 and P2 already, it might

be the case that they give answers that are for example phrased more positively in order not to disappoint me, or give answers that I wouldn't like to hear which could possibly influence my relationship to them. However, the topic of the interview isn't a sensitive one, which is where such bias mostly occurs (Grimm, 2010). I also expect that both P1 and P2 answer truthfully, as they know that also for me, honest answers will be most helpful. Another way of preventing this is by not mentioning which product is the one that I'm working on. This way when the participants assess the products, they won't refrain from speaking their mind if they think the Brockx looks poorly designed for example.

Another bias that may be present is selection/participant bias (J. Smith & Noble, 2014). For this qualitative research, wholesalers were selected because it was expected that they have a lot of knowledge on multiple aspects around the topic of sound reducing enclosures and the market of AC and heat pump units. Because P1 and P2 are both from Coolmark, the results are biased towards their perspective. By interviewing another participant from a different wholesaler, this is somewhat addressed. However, results are still biased towards the perspective of wholesalers in general, and the view of installers or other companies for example are not represented. Further research would be beneficial to get direct information from these other parties as well.

As I am working on this project myself, some design bias may happen as well (J. Smith & Noble, 2014). For me personally it would be preferred if this product would have a good chance in the market, because that would allow me to move on with my project instead of having to do research in another direction. Because of this preference it could be the case that through my questioning I am steering towards a more positive view of the Brockx. By being aware of this possible bias while formulating the questions and conducting the interview, I tried to refrain from formulating any leading questions or steering the conversation in a certain direction.

Finally, while analysing the data, both positive and negative aspects were taken into account equally. This way any analysis bias can be avoided, as no emphasis is put on any answer to confirm a desired outcome (J. Smith & Noble, 2014). Any negative outcomes have been addressed, so no analysis bias should be present, at least not consciously.

CONCLUSION

To summarise this research, there are some main conclusions that will be useful in continuing this project.

First, it's good to realise what attributes companies find important when buying an enclosure. The distinction between installers and end users is also very important and will be addressed later in the marketing mix as well. The most important attributes for both types of customers are aesthetics, sound reduction and air circulation. For installers weight, installation time and access for maintenance will be more important, while end users will focus more on the visual aspects and overall performance.

Second, the brand image of Van Cappellen is something that could really be beneficial. The general preference for acoustic companies is something that could make Van Cappellen take an even stronger position in the market.

A third conclusion is the way the Brockx and its competitors are perceived. The Brockx is one of the better looking enclosures thanks to its compactness and sleek design. When it comes to price and sound reduction, it is positioned less positively among its competitors. However, by offering a product that is of high quality while achieving enough sound reduction to meet the legislation, there will still be a lot of demand for this type of product: a combination of good sound reduction, good design and high quality.

Finally if we look at the market, there is a lot of growth in the area of ACs and heat pumps. There already is demand for sound reducing enclosures and this will only continue to grow in the future. The most promising market is that of construction and residential buildings, as the legislation is meant for residential buildings and because in this area there is a demand for both sound reduction and a well designed product. This market should be approached in co-operation with the wholesaler, as they can do both logistics and sales, while Van Cappellen could assist in marketing and establishing their brand. Furthermore, both a push and pull strategy should be used to optimally target both consumers and installers.

Primary research - Consumers

As Brotspies & Weinstein (2017) suggest, both direct customers and end users should be taken into account when segmenting the market. Also, it will be beneficial to know the needs of the end users. This information can be used to persuade companies into buying the Brockx, because this way they can be convinced that end users are willing to buy this product from them.

This quantitative research has been conducted through the use of an online survey. This chapter will explain the aim of this research and summarises the main findings. For a full description of the method, results and discussion, see appendix M.

Topics of this research

The main goal of this quantitative research is to get a better picture of the end users of the Brockx. This will be accomplished through two topics.

The first topic is the consumer's attitudes towards the different enclosures. This can be calculated by using Fishbein's multi-attribute model, in which the importance of a product's attributes are multiplied by the ratings of each attribute (Saleh & Ryan, 1992). A higher attitude score means that consumers have a better attitude towards this product and are more likely to purchase this product over a competing product. The questions in this topic will also uncover what these end users find important if they would purchase an enclosure and how they perceive the different competitors.

The second topic focuses on the Brockx specifically, and aims to find out how likely people are to choose this product and how much they are willing to pay for it.

The third topic is more general and consists of several questions which aim to get more insight into the situation of consumers. These questions ask for example about where consumers' outdoor units are positioned, or whether people are willing to spend extra money for more sound reduction.

Main findings

The following findings are derived from the answers of 52 respondents.

Importance ratings

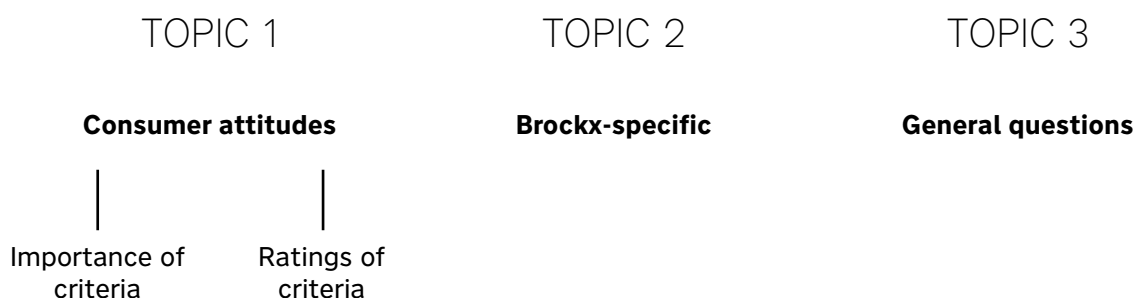
Durability and sound reduction are rated as the most important criteria when buying an enclosure. Next are sustainability and then visual criteria such as perceivable quality and design. In general it can be said that the participants value functionality over form. When buying an enclosure, they find it most important that the product functions well and is made to last. Directly following that, the product must look good as well. When marketing towards consumers, these findings should be taken into account.

Design

The results generally align with what was concluded from the interviews. Enclosures that are perceived well are sleek and don't look like simple enclosures which communicate the fact that there is an installation inside. Boxy and too unfamiliar looking products are perceived less well. It looks like the Brockx has found the right balance as it's ranked third among the competition.

Perceivable quality

The quality of a product seems to be assessed based on the use of materials. Plastic made enclosures are scoring lower, while the metal ones, with the exception of the REMKO (which looks like a harder type of plastic), are rated



higher. Using an aluminium skin seems to be a good choice for the Brockx, as it scores quite well in this aspect.

Perceivable durability

In general, it can be said that products that look solid and made of sturdy material are perceived better when it comes to durability. The Brockx also scores quite well on this aspect and ranks third among its competitors.

Brand

Colour psychology seems to play an important role in the brand ratings. Brands with calm and cool colours such as blue are scoring highest, while brands with red or green colours receive lower scores. Van Cappellen has made the right decision on their use of colours and logo, as they are ranked highest.

Attitudes

The Brockx manages to achieve the highest attitude score among its competitors. From this result we can conclude that the Brockx is a very promising product, and the overall attitude of consumers towards this product is very positive. This high score can be explained by the fact that the Brockx manages to score well on every aspect.

Brockx-specific

The main takeaways from the specific questions are that the Brockx has a high chance of being chosen by the participants if they were to buy an enclosure. In terms of willingness to pay (WTP), not many participants are willing to spend more than €2.000 on it. Also, participants are not very willing to pay extra money for more sound reduction; if the enclosure reduces the sound enough to meet the legislation, then it's often enough.

General questions

What can also be concluded is that most of the participants have an AC or heat pump, of which the outdoor unit is often in sight. This means that for many of the participants, an aesthetically pleasing enclosure is desired.

CONCLUSION

From this primary research we can make several conclusions.

The first conclusion is the insight into what end users find important. Consumers value functionality the most and after that sustainability and aesthetics.

Next we have learned how the competing products are perceived by consumers in terms of design, perceivable quality, perceivable durability and their brand. With design it can be said that consumers prefer enclosures that are sleek, compact and well-designed so that it's different from what outdoor units usually look like, but not too far from what is familiar. For quality and durability, it's important that components are connected well and sturdy-looking materials such as metals or hard plastics are appreciated. For the brand it seems that the colour blue is very popular and has a positive effect on consumers.

Using Fishbein's model, consumer attitudes were calculated. Taking only the attributes from the survey into account, the Brockx places third out of the 12 assessed products. When taking all attributes in the equation, the first three places are all filled with the three versions of the Brockx. Because the Brockx scores well on all aspects, it is likely that consumers will form a very positive attitude towards this product.

In the marketing of the Brockx, it should be taken into account that while consumers are likely to choose the Brockx, the price can be a serious issue. Not many people are willing to pay more than €2.000 for the Brockx, so this should be looked into further (chapter 3.2 covers this issue).

From the general questions we learned three things: First, if people had to purchase an enclosure, they are quite likely to choose the Brockx. Second, most people would not really be willing to spend extra money on extra sound reduction. And third, a lot of people have an AC or heat pump, and for many of them, the outdoor unit is visible, so an aesthetically pleasing enclosure is desired.

Market segmentation II

With the newly gathered information, the market can be segmented. As proposed earlier, segmentation should be done based on two criteria. First the desired benefits should be determined and then groups should be made based on the type of industry or sector.

As both primary researches indicate, sound reduction remains one of the most important attributes. For both businesses and consumers, this is the main sought benefit. The second most important attribute is aesthetics. We can place these attributes on an axis.

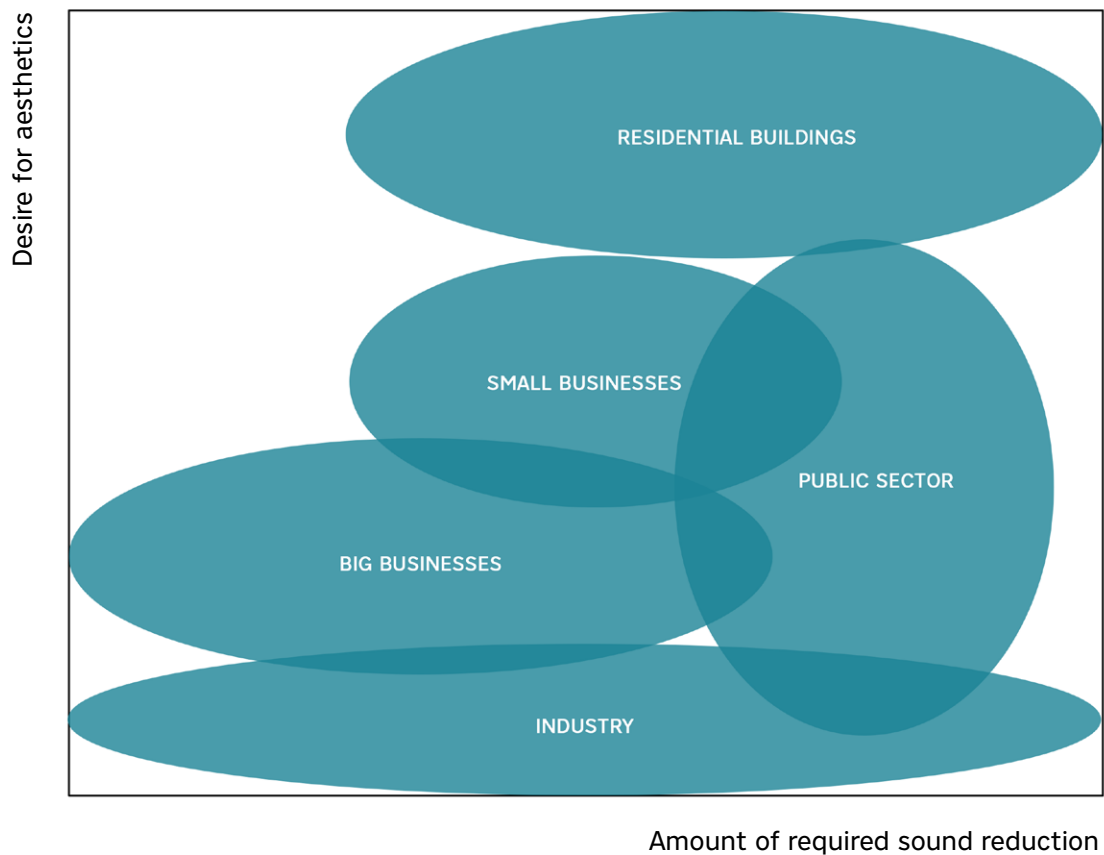
The next step is to place the different types of industries and sectors on this graph. We now have a clear overview of possible groups based on sought benefits.

The Brockx is a very aesthetically pleasing product and offers a good amount of sound reduction. Based on this, the segment of

residential buildings will most likely be the best option to focus on. Small businesses are less desirable because the outdoor units are often placed out of sight where aesthetics and sound reduction is less important. The same can be said for the public sector and big businesses. The industry sector is the most undesirable, which also came out of the interviews. In this area there is either no sound reduction required, and in most cases aesthetics also isn't relevant.

CONCLUSION

The segment of residential buildings seems to be the most promising. In this area, the Brockx is most likely to be desired because it offers an aesthetically pleasing way of reducing sound.



▲ Figure 48 - Segmentation based on sought benefits and sectors

Consumers - Conclusions

In this chapter we have taken a closer look into the consumers. Both businesses and consumers have been analysed through interviews and a survey, which provided the necessary information to segment the market. Below the main conclusions are listed, with on the right the most important ones that will shape the marketing mix.

Decision making process

The consumer decision making process can be used to analyse how consumers decide on buying a certain product and will be used as input for the marketing mix.

Market segmentation I

Segmentation is a crucial aspect of successful marketing. Segmentation will be done by first determining different benefits that both companies and end users are looking for, after which groups are made based on sectors.

Primary research - businesses

The most suitable way of selling the Brockx is by working together with wholesalers who can do all the logistic processes for which Van Cappellen doesn't have the resources. Wholesalers generally only sell to Installers who then sell to end users. Installers and end users have different desires and should be marketed to separately. During marketing, using the brand of Van Cappellen can be an effective way to attain a stronger market position.

Primary research - consumers

Consumers value performance and then aesthetics most. The Brockx and the brand of Van Cappellen are very well perceived. Calculating the overall consumers' attitudes results in the Brockx achieving the highest score, because it performs well on almost every criteria.

Market segmentation II

The most promising segment seems to be residential buildings, as in this area there is a demand for an enclosure that is both aesthetically pleasing and good in sound reduction.

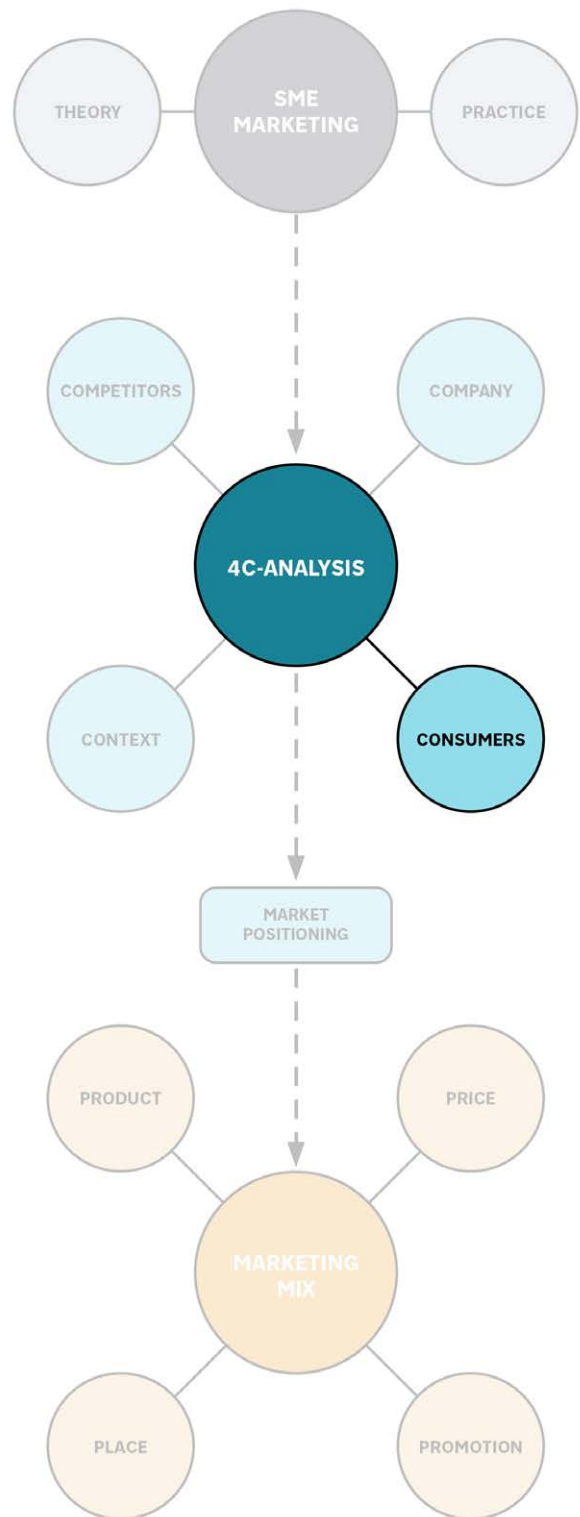
MAIN TAKEAWAYS

Selling and marketing the Brockx should be done in cooperation with a wholesaler.

Consumers and businesses have different desires and should be marketed to appropriately.

The Brockx is perceived well by both businesses and consumers.

The segment of residential buildings should be the main focus for selling the Brockx.



▲ Figure 49 - Progress of the project

2.6 MARKET POSITIONING

In this final chapter of the 4C analysis, all findings will be connected to establish a final market positioning. To conclude this chapter, a final recommendation will be made based on the Boston growth share matrix framework.

Market positioning

To describe the position in the market, you must know what your customers want, how you can differentiate among your competitors and which segments you should target (Hultink, 2020). Through the 4C-analysis, the answers to these questions have been found.

Consumers want a product that lasts long, performs well and looks good. In terms of sound reduction, the main priority is to reduce the sound enough so that it meets the legislation requirement. For many consumers the enclosure will be in view, so it's important that the product will be high quality, compact and well-designed. The Brockx will not be sold directly to consumers, but through wholesalers and installers. It's therefore also important that the Brockx is easy to install.

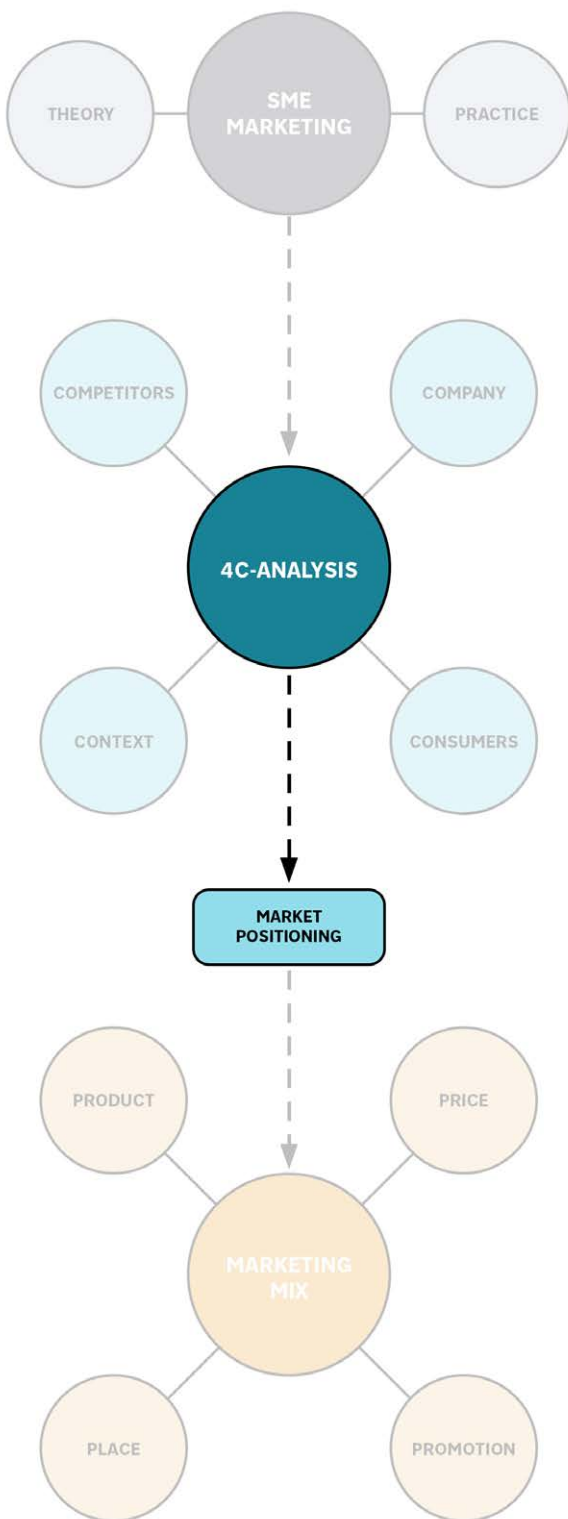
The Brockx is different from its competitors as it's the only product that is very compact and light, but still looks very high quality. It offers the right amount of sound reduction to meet the sound legislation, without being too bulky or heavy.

Segmentation is done based on behavioural criteria and firmographics. The most desirable segment is the one where there is a demand for sound reduction and aesthetics. This combination is mostly present in residential buildings. Combined with the fact that the sound legislation is valid for residential buildings as well, makes this segment the best one to target.

The positioning statement below summarises all these findings in one sentence. On pages 72 and 73 an overview of the main findings of the 4C-analysis can be found.

POSITIONING STATEMENT

“For residents that are looking for an aesthetically pleasing way to cover and reduce the noise of their outdoor AC or heat pump unit, the Brockx is a high quality sound reducing enclosure that offers the perfect balance between aesthetics and sound reduction.”



▲ Figure 50 - Progress of the project

Marketing approach

The new insights have led to a deeper understanding of the competitive environment and the market in general. With this knowledge, a decision can be made on how to proceed with the marketing activities. Three options can be considered in this decision.

The first option is to work together with a wholesaler. Van Cappellen could sell their Brockx to a wholesaler, who then sells it to their clients (installers), who finally sell the Brockx to consumers. The main advantage is that the wholesaler can offer a complete package of logistical services such as customer service, transportation and stock. The disadvantage is that for each step, there will be a margin for the involved party to make profit, which could lead to high prices that might make the Brockx more undesirable for customers.

Another option could be to sell directly to installers or for example roofing companies that can install the Brockx. This way, the margin of the wholesaler would be left out, which could enable the Brockx to be priced better and allow it to be more competitive or provide more profit for Van Cappellen. On the other hand, activities such as customer support or stock will need to be handled by Van Cappellen, for which they currently don't have the resources. This would require a larger investment and might cause more risk.

A final option is that Van Cappellen does everything completely by themselves. The benefit is that no money will go to other involved parties, allowing the Brockx to be priced better, more competitive and could provide more profit. This would however mean that a lot of money and effort has to be put in expanding the company into an entity that is able to handle customer support, transportation, stock and also installation. From prior research we learned that this is not impossible, but would require even more investment.

All things considered, it seems that the best option for Van Cappellen would be to cooperate with a wholesaler. In the beginning of the project it was explained why a B2B model was desired. By working together with a wholesaler, all these issues will be solved. Van Cappellen will only be in contact with a wholesaler if they have any questions which they cannot solve themselves. Such a cooperation would mean that Van Cappellen

should only be involved with their own branding, marketing (which the wholesaler will help with) and manufacturing of the Brockx. The following chapter of the marketing mix will elaborate on how to exactly continue with these activities.

Reflection on the 4C-analysis method

Looking back on the process of using the 4C method, it can be said that this method was very appropriate for this project and has resulted in the desired information to establish a market positioning. By looking at the situation from the four different perspectives, a broad range of knowledge has been gathered which can be used to determine whether Van Cappellen should continue with this product. Furthermore, a lot of new insights have been found that will be used as input in the marketing mix to be able to successfully promote and sell the Brockx.

BCG Growth Share Matrix

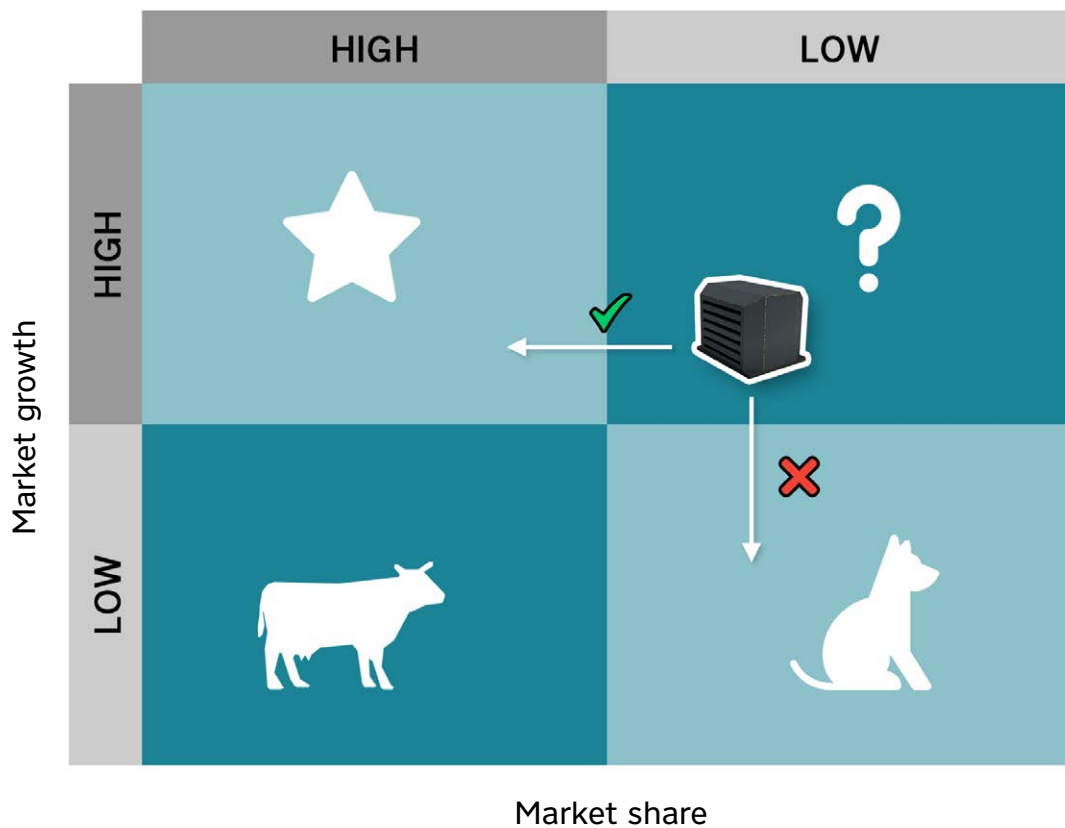
The Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) growth share matrix is a framework that is used by companies to help them decide on what products or businesses they should focus their resources on. In this section, the BCG will be used to provide a recommendation on how to proceed with the new knowledge and established market position.

The benefit of the growth share matrix is that it's relatively easy to use. The framework is based on two factors: relative market share and growth rate (Boston Consulting Group, n.d.). With market share placed on a y-axis and growth rate on an x-axis, four quadrants are created (see figure 51) which have each been given an appropriate name (Muilwijk, 2020).

From prior research we can conclude that the market for sound reducing enclosures is growing rapidly. Because the Brockx is not being sold yet, the market share is 0. Therefore, the Brockx can be positioned in the top right quadrant, which is the 'question mark'.

For products that are positioned in this quadrant there are two options: discard them, or invest in them so that they can become a 'star' (Boston Consulting Group, n.d.). When products are stars they generate a lot of profit, but also need a lot of investment to maintain its position. The goal of a star is to become a 'cash cow' once the growth of the market flattens (Boston Consulting Group, n.d.). Cash cows make a lot of profit and don't require much investment (Muilwijk 2020). The order of going from a question mark to star and cash cow is therefore called the 'success sequence' (Konečný & Zinecker, 2015).

When the sequence is not successful, we speak of a 'disaster sequence' (Konečný & Zinecker, 2015). When this happens, a product becomes a 'dog' and has a low market share in a market that is growing slowly. When this happens, it's advised to discard this product once it starts to cost money, because unlike question marks, it has little to no chance of becoming successful again (Muilwijk, 2020).



▲ Figure 51 - The Brockx placed in the BCG matrix

CONCLUSION

The BCG growth share matrix is a simple and effective way to find out what products of your portfolio you should spend your resources on. The Brockx can be placed in the 'question mark' quadrant, which means that it has a low market share in a market with a high growth. For such products, the strategy is to invest so that it becomes a star, and finally a cash cow. Considering the optimistic results of the 4C-analysis, it is advised that Van Cappellen should continue with the Brockx and invest in it to gain a bigger market share and establish itself in the market.



High market growth
High market share



High market growth
Low market share



Low market growth
High market share



Low market growth
Low market share

4C-ANALYSIS OVERVIEW



MAIN TAKEAWAYS - COMPETITORS

Van Cappellen Sound Solutions can be classified among other acoustic companies, and should strive to differentiate within this group.

The Brockx can differentiate and justify its price by being the enclosure that is of high quality while at the same time offering the perfect balance between sound reduction and size and weight.

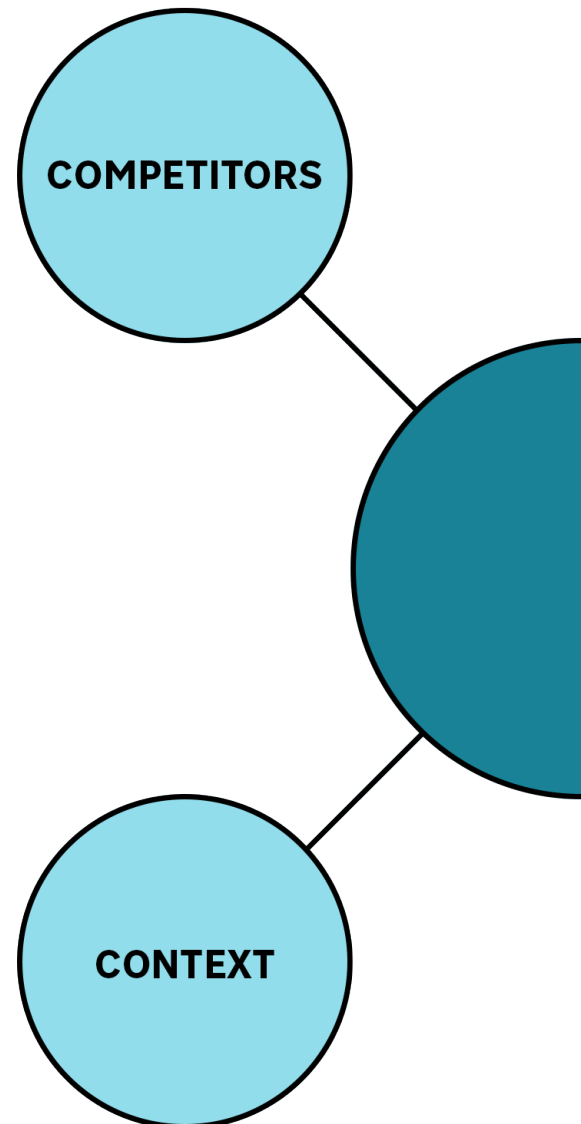


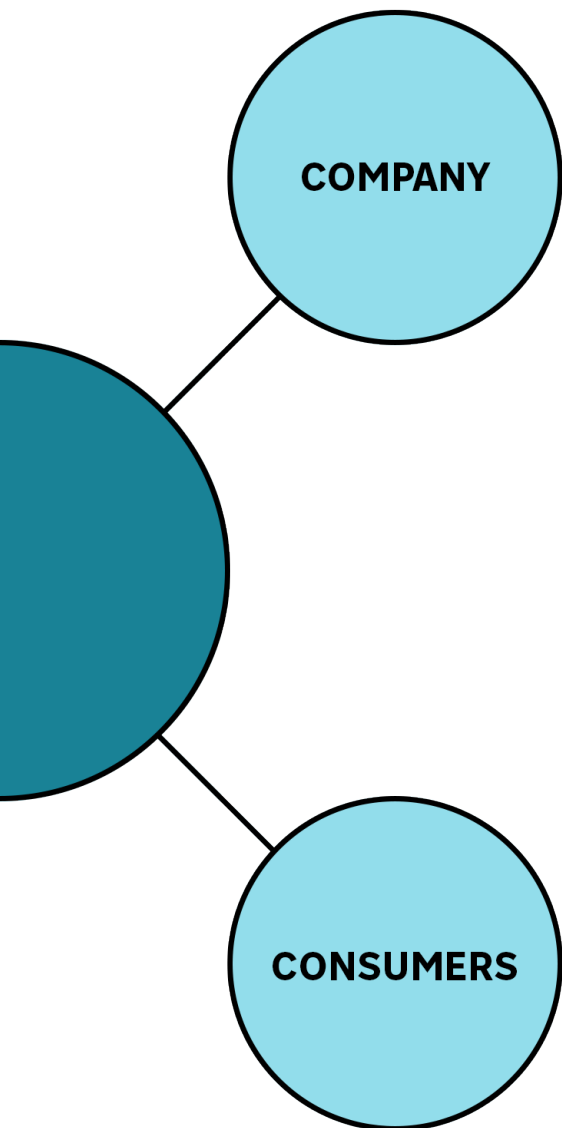
MAIN TAKEAWAYS - CONTEXT

The growing market of ACs and heat pumps, combined with the new sound legislation points towards a promising product category of sound reducing enclosures.

Digital tools should be used for B2B marketing and increasing brand equity.

Sustainability is an important aspect that should be mentioned when marketing the Brockx.





MAIN TAKEAWAYS - COMPANY

The reputation of Van Cappellen Consultancy is the most promising resource to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and should be used in building their brand.

Branding should be used to transfer the associations of Van Cappellen Consultancy's brand image onto the Brockx.



MAIN TAKEAWAYS - CONSUMERS

Selling and marketing the Brockx should be done in cooperation with a wholesaler.

Consumers and businesses have different desires and should be marketed to appropriately.

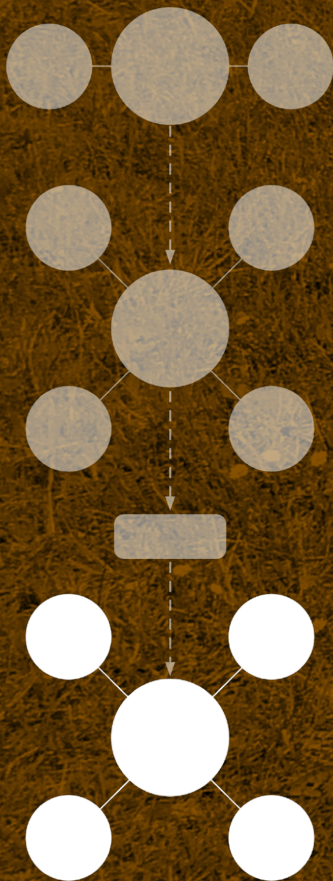
The Brockx is perceived well by both businesses and consumers.

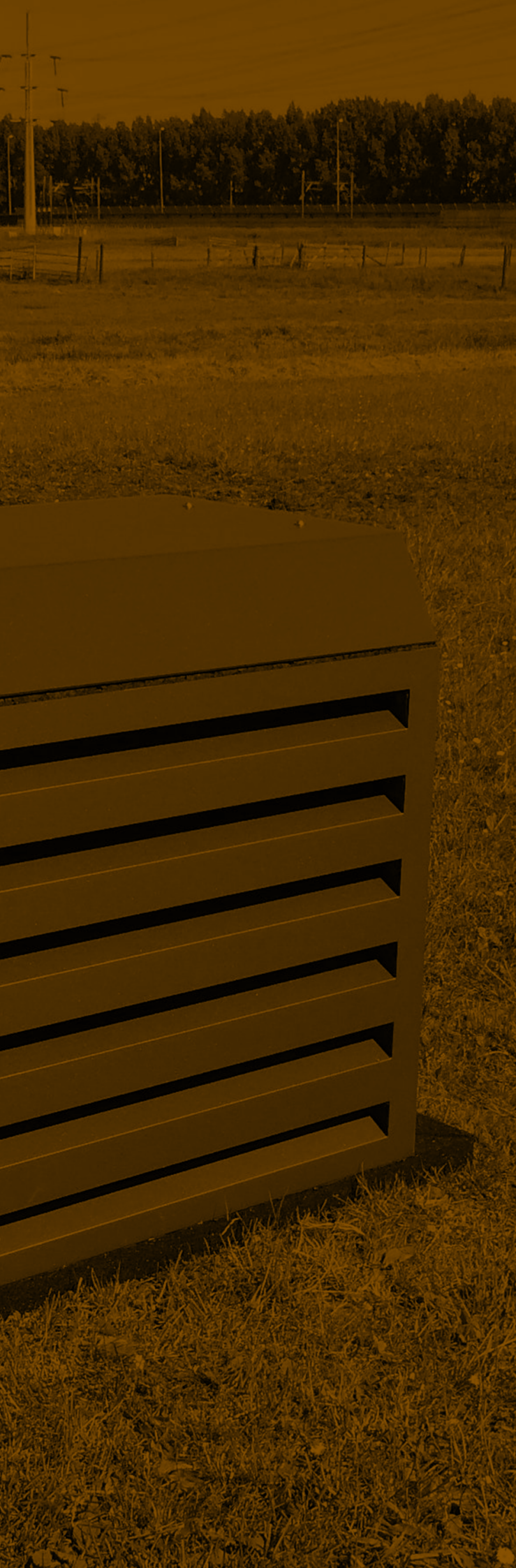
The segment of residential buildings should be the main focus for selling the Brockx.

03

MARKETING MIX

Implementation of the newfound information into a concrete approach to enter the market.





The 4P's

Although this model was introduced almost by Jerome McCarthy over 50 years ago, its usefulness is still undeniable today (McCarthy, 1960). Over the years, the marketing mix has been adopted by countless managers and academics, and has become a central element of marketing theory and practice (Dominici, 2009). The original marketing mix is described by 4P's: product, price, place and promotion (McCarthy, 1960). These four components will help to formulate strategic decisions which are necessary for achieving a competitive advantage (Singh, 2012). When the marketing mix is completed, every relevant aspect is covered: what is the product and how will it be made, how will it be priced, where and how will it be sold, and how is it advertised.

Because this method has been used for so long, it has also been a point of discussion for many years. As the world evolves, the way of marketing changes as well. Especially the internet and digitalisation in general hugely influence how marketing is conducted nowadays. Following this development, there is a division between researchers who think the marketing mix has been outdated and new methods should be used, while others argue that the marketing mix is able to adapt by adding new elements within the marketing mix itself (Dominici, 2009). This is done by for example adding extra P's, like 'people', 'process' and 'physical evidence' (Lahtinen et al., 2020).

Because the Brockx is a physical product, the traditional 4 P's will still be very useful and it's arguably not necessary to use an adapted version of the model. Instead, possible digital methods or applications will be discussed within the P's themselves.

3.1 PRODUCT

This chapter will explain every important aspect of the product. The Brockx will be covered in more detail in terms of how it is made. Then the production and manufacturing will be discussed, after which the possibility for a line extension will be covered.

How is it made?

The initial idea for producing an enclosure was based on the existing methods which are applied in the maritime sector. This method combines the enCAPsure technique with a framework by producer Fawic. However, it quickly turned out that this would not be a suitable solution for an enclosure that is placed around outdoor units of ACs and heat pumps.

There are a couple reasons for this, first of which is that the product would become way too expensive. The enCAPsure is designed to allow very easy access for maintenance of the machine inside of the enclosure. For

ACs or heat pumps this is also important, but far less because maintenance is much less required for such units. The enCAPsure method would therefore be overkill and unnecessarily expensive. Besides that, it was realised that most people would want an enclosure that looks good because it could be placed in their garden or on their roof. In an engine room there is no need for good aesthetics, but as an enclosure for your AC or heat pump it simply doesn't look good enough.

Van Cappellen searched for different materials to build the enclosure. Finally it was decided to go for a very special material: cork. Cork is a material that is already used in the world of acoustics, as it's naturally sound-dampening



▲ Figure 52 - The Brockx



▲ Figure 53 - Harvesting of cork

and consists of many other benefits (Sokol, 2022). Besides that, cork is also a very sustainable material. When cork is harvested, the bark is split off the tree without causing any damage to the tree itself (figure 53). The bark grows back, and every 9-14 years this process is repeated. Next to being a recyclable and renewable material, cork is also environmentally friendly because carbon dioxide gets trapped in the cork (Sokol, 2022).

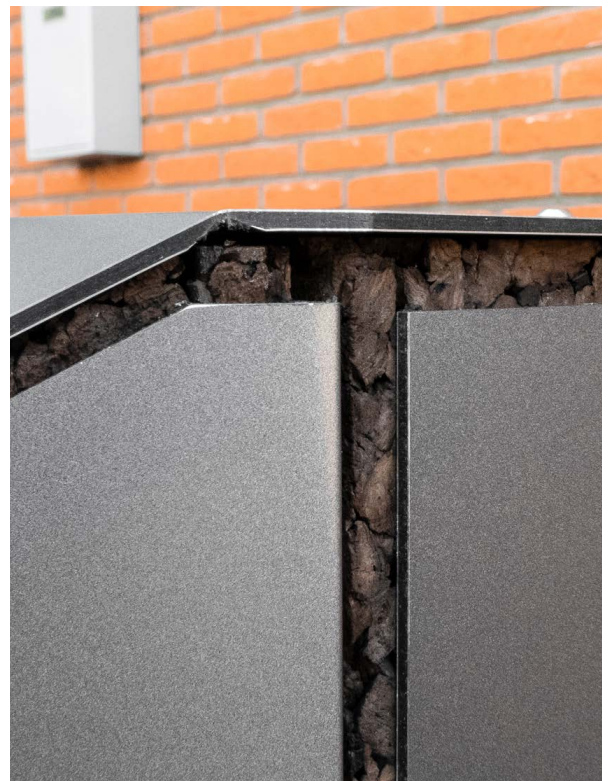
For the Brockx, a processed variant of cork is used: expanded cork. After the cork is stripped off the tree, it gets crumbled into small bits. These crumbs are then super heated with steam, which causes the naturally present resins to be released, which act as a natural

super glue that binds all the granules together (CorkLink, n.d.). This process not only makes this material virtually 100% natural, it also makes it very lightweight and great at sound absorption (Sokol, 2022).

Another reason for choosing cork as soundproofing material, is because it's stiff enough to support itself. This way, no heavy frame or other material is needed which allows the product to be kept very light. The only real disadvantage is that pieces of cork can be chipped off of the edges. Also, a fully cork enclosure could look very good, especially for people who put a higher value on sustainability than others. However, this will not be desirable for everyone. Some extra material is needed to



▲ Figure 54 - Cork applied in the Brockx



▲ Figure 55 - Close-up of the Brockx

Advantages of cork as a material

- 100% natural
- CO2-negative process
- Sustainable
- Insulation value doesn't decrease over time
- Fire retardant
- Antibacterial
- Anti-static
- Does not absorb dust
- Water resistant
- Highly durable
- Naturally resistant to algae and fungal growth

protect the cork and make the product more aesthetically pleasing for more people.

The outside shell is made out of aluminium sandwich sheets. This sandwich is made out of thin layers of aluminium with plastic in between, making it very strong yet lighter than for example steel. By milling just the top layer of the sandwich, grooves are created that enable the material to be folded to a desired degree. This way, the material can easily be folded along the corners of the cork, which can be seen in figure 55, and into the air slits. The panels are purposefully placed away from the edge of the cork, which causes some cork to remain visible. This makes it easier for assembling the panels, but showing the cork is also a great way of communicating its sustainable qualities.

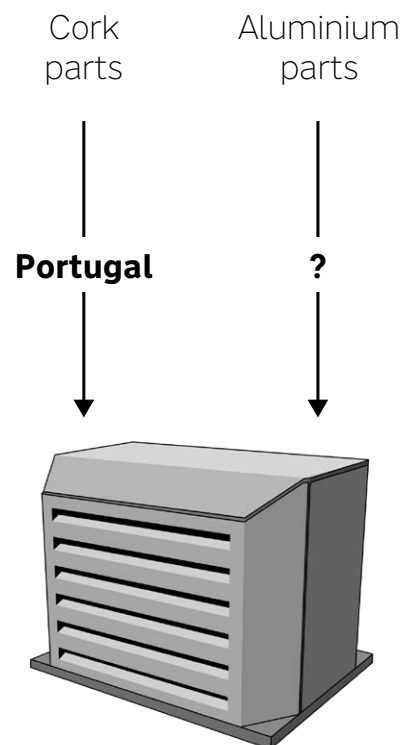
One risk of keeping some cork uncovered is that it is exposed to all types of weather conditions. Luckily, cork consists of some great properties that allow it to be very durable. First of all, cork is antimicrobial and antifungal. This means that bacteria and mould, so also moss (which is a combination of fungi and algae), have a very hard time manifesting itself on the material (Hirshberg, 2022). Cork is also water resistant (Sokol, 2022), which combined with its slanted edges at the top make it protected from any rainfall or snow.

Manufacturing

For the prototype of the Brockx, the aluminium shell has been manufactured in the Netherlands, and the cork has been imported from Portugal. As the demand for the Brockx will increase, it might become more profitable if manufacturing is done somewhere else. This chapter aims to find some direction on where to manufacture the Brockx.

Because Van Cappellen has the connection with the cork manufacturer from the yachting industry, and because Portugal is known for its cork production, this section will be about where the outside shell of the Brockx can be produced (figure 56). Van Cappellen should continue its cooperation with the cork manufacturer.

Looking at the possibilities for production from a general perspective, there are three options: produce locally in the Netherlands, produce in Central or Eastern Europe or produce in Asia. Each choice has its own positives and negatives.



▲ Figure 56 - Manufacturing of different parts

Asia

According to the US News & World Report (2019), China has been named the best country in the world for Cheap Manufacturing, followed by India, Vietnam and Thailand. The benefit of being able to produce at a low cost is that you can increase your profit margin and offer your product at a more competitive price.

The downside of manufacturing in foreign countries that are far away, is that it's more difficult to monitor the production and ensure good quality due to the distance and language barrier (Conlin, 2022). Especially for the Brockx, poor production quality is unacceptable as it aims to differentiate by being of high quality. Furthermore, even if the quality would be good, there is still a negative association with tags such as 'made in China' (Chan, 2013). Although such associations are undesired nowadays, such consumer attitudes should be kept in mind when trying to convey a certain message of quality to your customers. These negative associations may also exist due to poor labour conditions, which is not something that you should invest in or be associated with. Such factors should be critically looked at before deciding on where to manufacture.

Another challenge of manufacturing in China or other Asian countries is that it usually requires high volumes of products in order to be really profitable. This way the cost per unit becomes very low. Otherwise, shipping will be quite expensive if only a few products are transported over such a long distance (de Laat, 2022). Delivery will also take much longer. Shipping your products from China to the Netherlands for example will take about six weeks (Book Air Freight, n.d.). Finally, there is a general increase in people's preference to buy products that are made locally (Consultancy.eu, 2022). This could also make producing the Brockx in Asian countries a less beneficial option which should be kept in mind.

Central & Eastern Europe

Producing in Central or Eastern Europe has become increasingly popular for companies (Consultancy.eu, 2022). Many companies are actually relocating their production from Asian countries to Central and Eastern European countries (Consultancy.eu, 2022). The reason that these countries such as Hungary, Romania or Poland are becoming more attractive for businesses, is because of a highly competitive environment and low wages result in low prices, which are actually not that far behind from prices of Asian countries (Emerging Europe Staff, 2020). At the same time, these countries offer high quality because a lot of the workforce is highly educated (Zieba, 2018).

Working together with a foreign manufacturing company also means that trust is very important. Less wealthy countries may offer very cheap labour, but a chance of corruption or other forms of fraud can be a real danger (Carr, 2022). It's therefore important to ask for references and critically check a company's reputation before making any commitments. In Eastern European countries there's still a lot of corruption, despite many government efforts to get rid of this (Nasuti, 2016).

Because European countries require a lot less shipping than Asian countries, smaller batch sizes can still allow for a good profit margin. At the same time, shipping will take a lot less time. Shipping from Hungary to the Netherlands for example only takes about one week (Eurosender, n.d.), which is more desirable for the Brockx.

Netherlands

Producing in the Netherlands will be more expensive than offshoring, but comes with some important benefits.

One major benefit is that it's easier to monitor the process and work closely together with the manufacturer. This will result in being able to ensure a high quality product, which is very important for the Brockx. When both parties work closely together, it also allows them to optimise the product by being able to make quick changes, and possibly improve the process as well (KVK Editorial, 2020).

Also short delivery dates and the option for small batch sizes are important benefits for starting off the production for the Brockx. The Brockx is still very new and will be subject to more design changes in the future. It would therefore be wise to start off producing in the Netherlands until the Brockx has been developed further and has matured more in the market.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, it seems like the best strategy for manufacturing the Brockx will be to start off in the Netherlands first. The Brockx is still partly in its development phase, and working with a manufacturer in the Netherlands allows optimisation of all aspects of the product and the manufacturing process, while being able to closely monitor and ensure a high quality product. Until such developments, the product must be made in small batches, otherwise a large investment will be needed even though there are still many things uncertain considering the optimal process but also the possible success of the Brockx.

In later stages, offshoring to Central or Eastern Europe could be a good option. This will make the manufacturing of the Brockx less expensive, while still being close enough to the market to avoid long shipping times and very high batch sizes. Monitoring the process and cooperation will also be easier than when the production gets offshored to Asian countries.

Assembling

If all parts of the Brockx are manufactured, they have to be assembled. As of now, Van Cappellen has assembled the Brockx on their own in their own workshop. When larger volumes of the Brockx will have to be produced, Van Cappellen will not have enough resources to do this themselves.

There are many assembly companies that could help in manufacturing the Brockx. To find out more about the possibilities, I visited the company Verschoor Metaal Techniek (VMT) (figure 57). This company offers services for every part of the production process, and also offers the assembly for products. As they are very experienced with different production methods as well, VMT offers to help in optimising the production of the Brockx as well. Furthermore, VMT already offers their services starting at 10 products and is able to scale up, which is very suitable for the Brockx. Van Cappellen could for example start with the assembly themselves, and work together with VMT as the demand increases.

▼ Figure 57 - Visit at the assembly company VMT



Line extension

With the Brockx, Van Cappellen is extending their brand horizontally by moving into a new product category (Ranjbarian et al., 2013). This section will cover the option for extending vertically as well, by introducing another version of the Brockx.

As concluded in the 4C-analysis, Van Cappellen should build and increase brand equity. Besides horizontal extension as Van Cappellen is doing, vertical extension helps in building your brand as well (Ranjbarian et al., 2013). A possibility for a vertical extension for the Brockx is to offer a slimmed-down version, which only functions as an aesthetic enclosure and doesn't offer sound reduction.

The benefit of offering such a version is that it can be made a lot cheaper than the regular Brockx. No sound reduction also means no cork needed, making the whole manufacturing process very simple and much cheaper. The enclosure can therefore be offered at a much lower price. From the research in chapter 2.5 it was found that for many people the price of a sound reducing enclosure is too much. A cheaper, simplified version of the Brockx may therefore be much more suitable for this audience. Besides the price, there's also a very large demand for aesthetic enclosures, as we learned from the interviews in chapter 2.5. This would allow Van Cappellen to gain

a large market share by attracting a lot more customers.

Product extension may increase your brand equity (Ranjbarian et al., 2013), but there's also a risk involved with how consumers will perceive your brand. For example, if the extension doesn't fit your brand well, then this may negatively influence your brand image (Magnoni & Roux, 2012). If Van Cappellen were to offer a product that has nothing to do with acoustics, it's questionable how this will be perceived by consumers. What also influences the attitude of consumers towards extension, is the perceived quality (Ranjbarian et al., 2013). If Van Cappellen would offer a slimmed-down version of the Brockx that is of very high quality, it could arguably mitigate the possible negative effect of the product not being acoustics-related.

A final thing to consider in such a product extension is the competition. In chapter 2.2, the product category competition was covered, which showed that there are already a lot of other companies which offer aesthetic enclosures, which could make it very difficult for an enclosure of Van Cappellen to be successful. On the other hand, the market of ACs and heat pumps is still relatively young and growing very fast. A lot more people will be looking for an aesthetic enclosure, and it's definitely possible for Van Cappellen to profit from this.



CONCLUSION

A vertical brand extension may be a good option for Van Cappellen. There is a large demand for aesthetic enclosures, and a lower price could result in a large market share. Such an extension can also increase the brand equity of Van Cappellen. Even though an aesthetic enclosure may not be directly in line with the acoustic brand of Van Cappellen and could result in a negative effect on consumers' attitudes, producing a high quality product can minimise this risk. The market of heat pumps and ACs will also continue to grow, which means that despite the competition, Van Cappellen could benefit from the large and growing demand for aesthetic enclosures.

Warranty

Consumers in the Netherlands are by law entitled to a well-functioning product. This means that even if the manufacturer doesn't offer any warranty, they still need to replace or repair the product, or return the money if the product does not function as it should or has a shorter lifetime than is expected (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022). In addition, the manufacturer can provide extra warranty. By offering a warranty for your product, certain benefits can be achieved. In this section the benefits will be discussed and different types of warranty will be explained.

Benefits

Over time, manufacturers have been forced to become more customer-centric due to high competitiveness (Zheng & Su, 2020). Providing a good after-sale service nowadays is an important aspect to ensure the survival of a business (Zheng & Su, 2020). There are two main benefits which make warranty important for customers and manufacturers.

The first benefit of a warranty is that you protect your consumer (Qiao et al., 2022). When your product doesn't function as it should, or breaks due to reasons that are not caused by the customer, they are protected from paying any damages themselves. Especially with products that are innovative and new, warranty is an important feature (Blischke & Murthy, 1992). This is because, as Blischke & Murthy (1992) suggest, such products are viewed with a level of uncertainty and consumers are not able to assess its performance before buying it. Sound reducing enclosures are quite new to the market, so it can be expected that customers are uncertain of its qualities, especially if they have to spend a relatively large amount of money on it. By offering a warranty, you ensure the customer that their product will perform as advertised.

The second benefit of providing warranty is that you communicate trust in your product (Qiao et al., 2022). For complex products, consumers often rely on others to assess the quality of the product and assess the risk of buying the product based on such indications. With a product that is new, such indications are not available. So if consumers for example doubt the durability of the Brockx due to the cork being exposed, they might not want to take the risk of buying the product. In such a case, a warranty shows that you trust the product to be durable enough. This may

convince the consumer that there is not a high risk in buying the product, and motivates them to buy the product (Blischke & Murthy, 1992).

Types of warranty

As warranty has steadily been becoming more important, different types of warranty have been introduced. These types are classified by the number of variables that the warranty covers (Zheng & Su, 2020). When a product features only one of these variables as warranty, it's called a one-dimensional warranty, and with two variables, two-dimensional (Blischke & Murthy, 1992).

A one-dimensional warranty usually covers either age or usage (Blischke & Murthy, 1992). This means that when a product fails within that time frame, the manufacturer will repair or replace the product (Qiao et al., 2022).

Two-dimensional warranties are most common, and feature two variables such as age and usage (Qiao et al., 2022). To illustrate: the warranty of a car may be limited to 4 years, or 50.000 kilometres. When either of those limitations are met, the warranty expires. For the Brockx, such a warranty may not be applicable, as the product will not be 'used' the way a car is. The usage of the Brockx will be almost equal to its lifetime, because the moment it's installed, it will be in use.

The length of the warranty can be determined by comparing it to other similar products. In general, the factory warranty for ACs and heat pumps are about 2-5 years (Airconditioning wijzer, n.d.; 123klimaatshop, 2022). This can be a good indication for the warranty of the Brockx as well. This way you show your customer that you trust your enclosure to be as durable or more durable than the unit that it's covering.

To conclude, a one-dimensional warranty is the best option to implement for the Brockx. The length of this warranty should be at least two years, to match the warranty of ACs and heat pumps.

Product - Conclusions

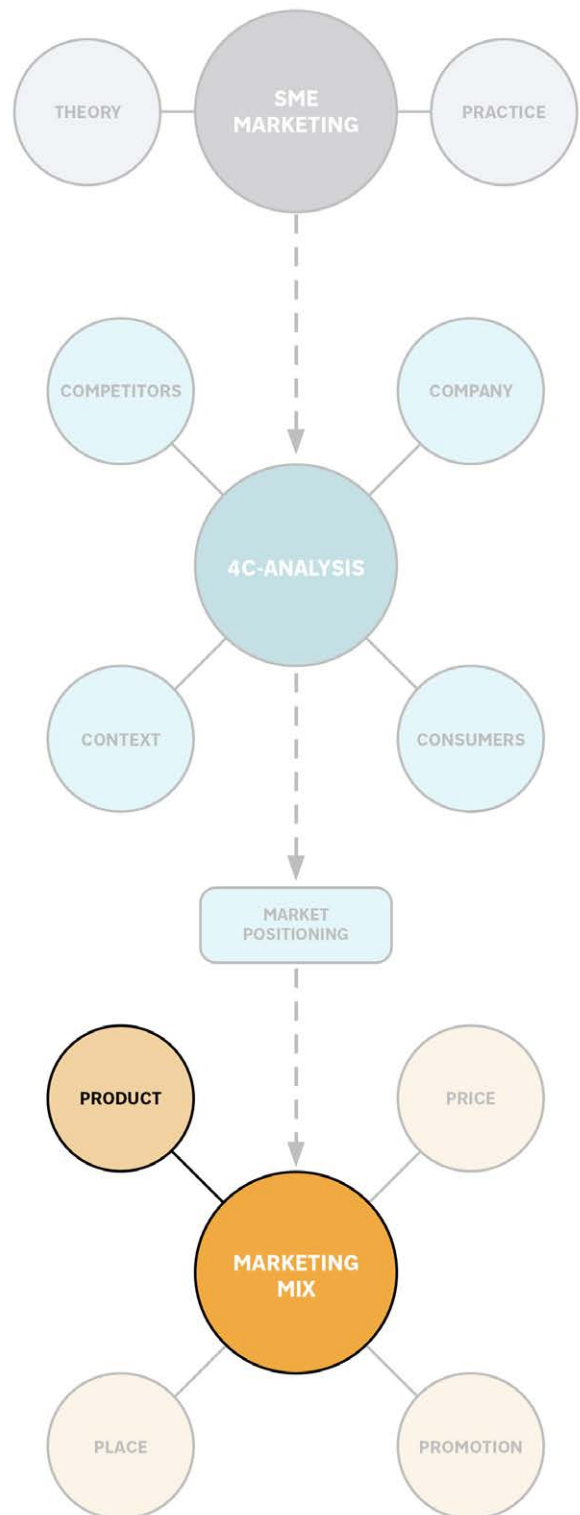
In this chapter the product has been covered in more detail. This section will summarise the main conclusions.

The product that is to be sold is the Brockx: a sound reducing enclosure for the outdoor units of ACs and heat pumps.

Manufacturing the Brockx should be done in the Netherlands first, because this allows for easy monitoring of the process and quick improvements made in the product and manufacturing process. In later stages, manufacturing the Brockx could possibly be done in Central or Eastern European countries due to lower manufacturing prices.

Van Cappellen should also think about the possibility for a vertical line extension to increase their brand equity, by offering a non-sound reducing enclosure. Such a slimmed-down version will be cheaper and could attract a lot of customers.

For the Brockx, a one-dimensional warranty should be offered to communicate trust and ensure consumers that there is not a high risk of buying the product.



▲ Figure 58 - Progress of the project

3.2 PRICE

The second part of the marketing mix is price. In this chapter a strategy for determining the price will be discussed and a pricing indication will be proposed.

Pricing approaches

For most people, price is a very decisive factor in their decision to buy a product or not (Wieland, 2018). Correspondingly, Al Badi (2018) concludes in his research that price is the most effective way of increasing the level of competitive advantage. At the same time, the price should be high enough so that it ensures profitability and communicates quality (Wieland, 2018). It's therefore very important to find a balance and decide on the right price.

There are different approaches for determining price. In an article by Callaghan (2022), three approaches are proposed: cost-based, value-based and competition-based.

With a cost-based approach, the price is calculated based on the total costs and determined profit margin (Mooij, 2020). For Van Cappellen this could be a way to determine the price of the Brockx. However, a lot of aspects which determine the costs are unknown yet or bound to change. For this reason, this may not be the optimal approach.

The value-based approach is oriented around the customer (Mooij, 2020). The price is determined by the customer's willingness to pay. From the quantitative research in chapter 3.5 however, we found that there are very few people who are willing to pay over €2.000, which is approximately the average price of a sound reducing enclosure. On the other hand, from the interview in chapter 3.5 we also learned that many people are forced to buy an enclosure because of the legislation. Basing the price on consumers' willingness to pay will therefore not be the best strategy, as this is very difficult to determine and may not represent reality accurately.

The third approach is competition-based. Because the Brockx will be new to the market, it's a good option to use the prices of competition as a benchmark (Callaghan, 2022). Out of the three approaches, a competition-based one should be most suitable for pricing the Brockx.

Competition-based approach

Looking at the competition, it can be argued that the company Reducd will compete most intensely. Their product scores well on design, is practical, offers a lot of sound reduction and is priced relatively low. Also from the interview in chapter 3.5, it became clear that from the enclosures that are already being sold in the Netherlands, the Reducd is most desirable by installers and achieves a large number of sales. Therefore, to be competitive, the Brockx should be priced around the same price as the enclosure of Reducd.

Using the product configurator of Reducd, an indication for the price can be determined. A small enclosure from Reducd (with coating) will cost €3.100,- for consumers (Reducd, 2021). From the interviews from chapter 3.5 it was concluded that the different margins are on average between 25%-35%. With an average of 30%, we get the following prices displayed in table 4. Based on these calculations, the Brockx must not exceed a cost price of €1.411,02 (including VAT) to maintain a competitive price for consumers.

It should be noted that this is just an indication. In further cooperation with a wholesaler, the exact margins and prices should be discussed. It can be expected for example that the margins for wholesalers and installers differ.

CONCLUSION

The price can be determined through a competition-oriented method. Based on the Brockx its most direct competitor, the consumer price should be around €3.100. With the different margins this results in a cost price of around €1.411,02.

	Margins	Excl. VAT	Incl. VAT	Price penetration (Incl. VAT)
Price for consumer		€2.561,98	€3.100,- (Reducd, 2021)	(10% lower) €2818,18
	30%	- €591,23	- €715,38	- €650,35
Installer		€1.970,75	€2.384,62	€2167,83
	30%	- €454,79	- €550,30	- €500,27
Wholesaler		€1.515,96	€1.834,32	€1.667,56
	30%	- €349,83	- €423,30	- €384,82
Supplier (Reducd)		€1.166,13	€1.411,02	€1.282,74

▲ Table 4 - Calculating a price indication for the Brockx

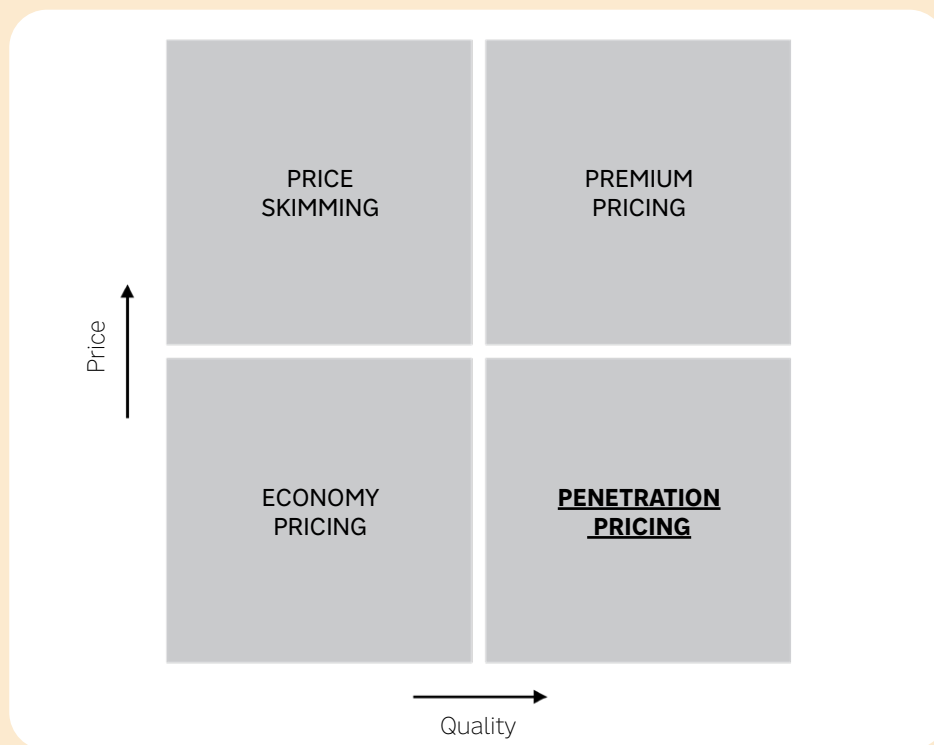
Pricing strategy

Building further upon the pricing approach, a specific strategy can be chosen (Kienzler & Kowalkowski, 2017). The pricing strategy matrix as displayed in figure 59, provides a clear overview of the basic strategies and can be used to determine the right one (Friesner, 2016; Punwasee, 2022). This matrix is based on two parameters: quality and price. From these parameters, four strategies can be derived: price skimming, premium pricing, economy pricing and penetration pricing.

With price skimming, the goal is to maximise profit by offering the product at the highest acceptable price, and lowering the price once the novelty wears off (Mooij, 2020). This strategy is applicable for high price, low value offerings, and typically applied in markets with a high level of product launches (Mind Tools, n.d.). A good example of this is the video game market: new games are introduced very frequently, and as the novelty of these items wear off, the price gets lowered. The market of sound reducing enclosures is not one of frequent product launches. And as the sound reducing enclosures are already very expensive compared to what most people are willing to pay, this is not the right strategy.

Premium pricing is for products of high quality and high price (Punwasee, 2022). As the name suggests, this strategy is used by premium brands such as luxury fashion brands or high end cars. With this strategy the most profit margin can be attained, but it might not be suitable for the market of sound reducing enclosures. Premium products are generally bought by people who are conscious of their image and maybe want to show off or belong to a certain group (Mind Tools, n.d.). Although there could be some people that will buy the Brockx to show off, the majority will buy the Brockx for its practical benefits. The Reducd enclosure is also of very high quality and performs better in sound reduction, so it would be difficult to convince customers that the Brockx deserves a premium price compared to the Reducd. Therefore, premium pricing is not a suitable strategy for becoming competitive in the market.

For products that are low cost and low of quality, economy pricing is applied. A very good example of this is the supermarket Lidl, which competes by offering products at a lower price. The way they can offer at a lower price is because they have lower costs than their competition because they spend less



▲ Figure 59 - Pricing strategy matrix

on things like packaging or other aspects (Mind Tools, n.d.). The goal of the Brockx is to communicate high quality, so this is also not a viable strategy.

The final option is price penetration. With this strategy, the goal is to quickly attain a large market share by offering your product at a lower price than your competitors (Mind Tools, n.d.). This method is generally applied by companies who wish to enter a new market, and where customers are sensitive to price (Punwasee, 2022). In the case of launching the Brockx in a new market, this strategy could be very suitable. This way, many installers can be convinced to choose the Brockx over competing products. Once a larger market share is gained and a client base of installers is created, the price of the Brockx can then be increased. From the interviews in chapter 3.5 it was found that installers prefer to work with products which they are familiar with. So once the Brockx is sold to a large number of installers due to its more profitable pricing, these installers will likely keep working with this product even when the price will slightly increase. The main risk of this strategy is that a low price also means a low profit margin (Punwasee, 2022). Even to remain profitable,

this strategy is quite difficult to implement successfully. Another potential risk is that a low price can cause the brand to be perceived lower (Mind Tools, n.d.). On the other hand, an enclosure that is cheaper than its competitors will still be relatively expensive, so the risk of the brand being perceived as cheap is quite unlikely. In table 4 the prices are also shown for the Brockx if it were to be sold at a 10% cheaper price than the Reducd. The price for the consumer should then be €2818,18, while the maximum cost price must be €1.282,74.

CONCLUSION

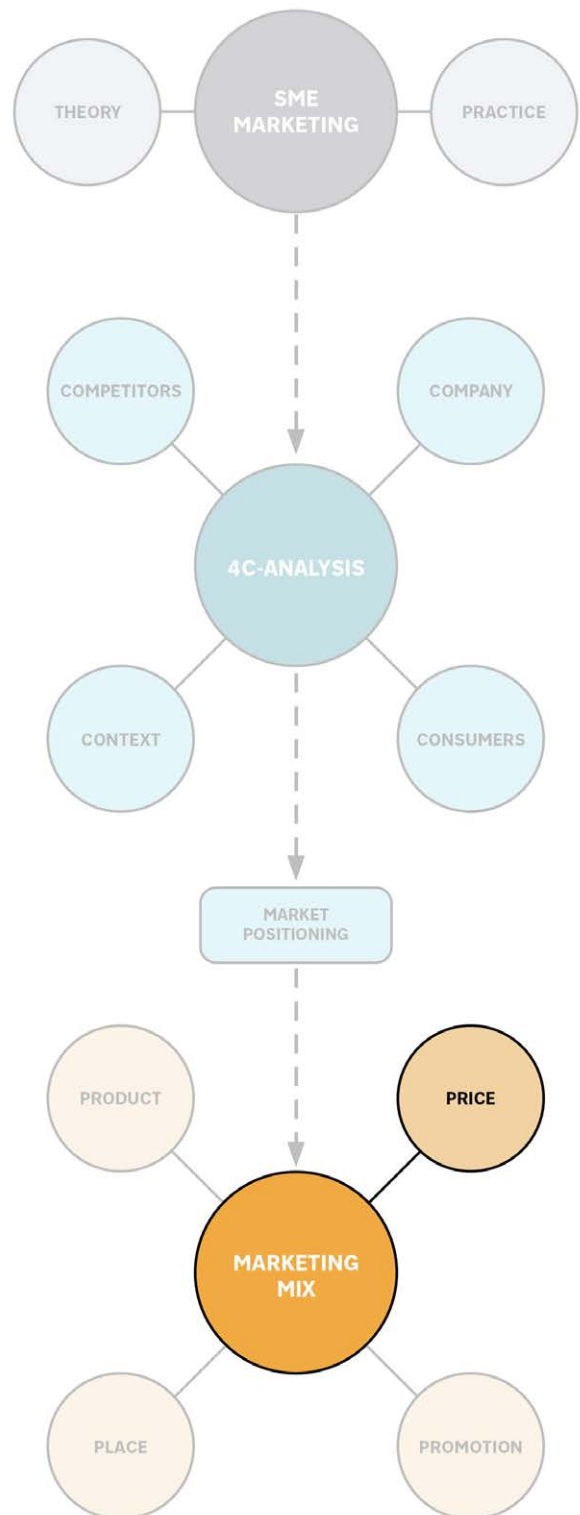
Price penetration could be a suitable strategy for pricing the Brockx. This way, the market can be penetrated and a large market share can be achieved quickly. The risk is that the profit margin has to be small, and profitability may be at risk or difficult to achieve. To determine the exact price, all other aspects such as production, assembly, transportation, margins etc. must be known. In further cooperation with a wholesaler, these details should be discussed and a final price can be determined.

Price - Conclusions

In summary of this chapter, the following conclusions have been made.

First, a competition-based approach has been chosen to determine a price indication. As the Brockx will be new to the market, establishing a price based off of competitors' pricing is a good strategy. Based on its most direct competitor, Reducd, the maximum cost price should be €1.411,02 to be able to sell at a competitive price of €3.100.

A good pricing strategy to launch the Brockx is penetration pricing. By offering the Brockx at a lower price at the start, a large market share can be established before raising the price to a normal level. If the Brockx is to be sold at 10% below the price of the Reducd, a maximum cost price of €1.282,74 is needed.



▲ Figure 60 - Progress of the project

3.3 PLACE

In the marketing mix, Place describes the availability of a product. This chapter will describe the place of the Brockx in terms of geographical availability and channels that are used for selling it.

Geographical location

The location where a product is sold is one of the main components of a product's place (Singh, 2012). The distance between a consumer and manufacturer is very important, because this influences many factors such as transportation, availability and other logistical elements, which also influence the cost of the product.

Because Van Cappellen is located in the Netherlands, the most direct place to sell the Brockx is also the Netherlands. Most wholesalers have multiple distribution centres in different places in the country, and have the logistical resources to transport the Brockx to these locations. Because the Netherlands is also a relatively small country, the Brockx can easily be sold throughout the entire country.

The market of sound reducing enclosures is quite small as of now, but is growing steadily. It can be expected that it will take quite some time before the market matures and stops growing. Therefore for the foreseeable future, the Netherlands should provide enough opportunity for selling the Brockx. Also because the Brockx needs to be launched first, grow in the market and then scale up its production over time, it's not necessary or realistic to immediately sell the product in large numbers and abroad. It will take some time before this will become important.

Still, it's good to think on a long term basis. Another very good location for selling the Brockx is Belgium. Wholesalers such as Climadirect are already transporting to Belgium (Climadirect, n.d.), so when cooperating with such a wholesaler, they will be able to sell the Brockx there as well. Furthermore, Belgium is an attractive market, because there's also a legislation present for the maximum sound of ACs and heat pumps (van der Zee, 2020b). It can therefore be expected that the demand for sound reducing enclosures will increase here as well.



▲ Figure 61 - Initial launch of the Brockx

Channels

From the 4C-analysis it was concluded that the most viable way of selling the Brockx is in cooperation with a wholesaler. If this path will be taken, then the wholesaler will cover all logistical aspects of the Brockx. This means that the wholesaler will transport the product to the necessary locations, where they can be distributed.

The Brockx will then be available for installers to buy, who then will install the product for the end users. Because the big wholesalers have facilities and storages in the entire country, the Brockx can easily be sold and distributed to anyone living in the Netherlands.

For installers, buying the Brockx will also be made very easy as wholesalers have websites that are catered to them, with all the necessary information and option to buy the products online.

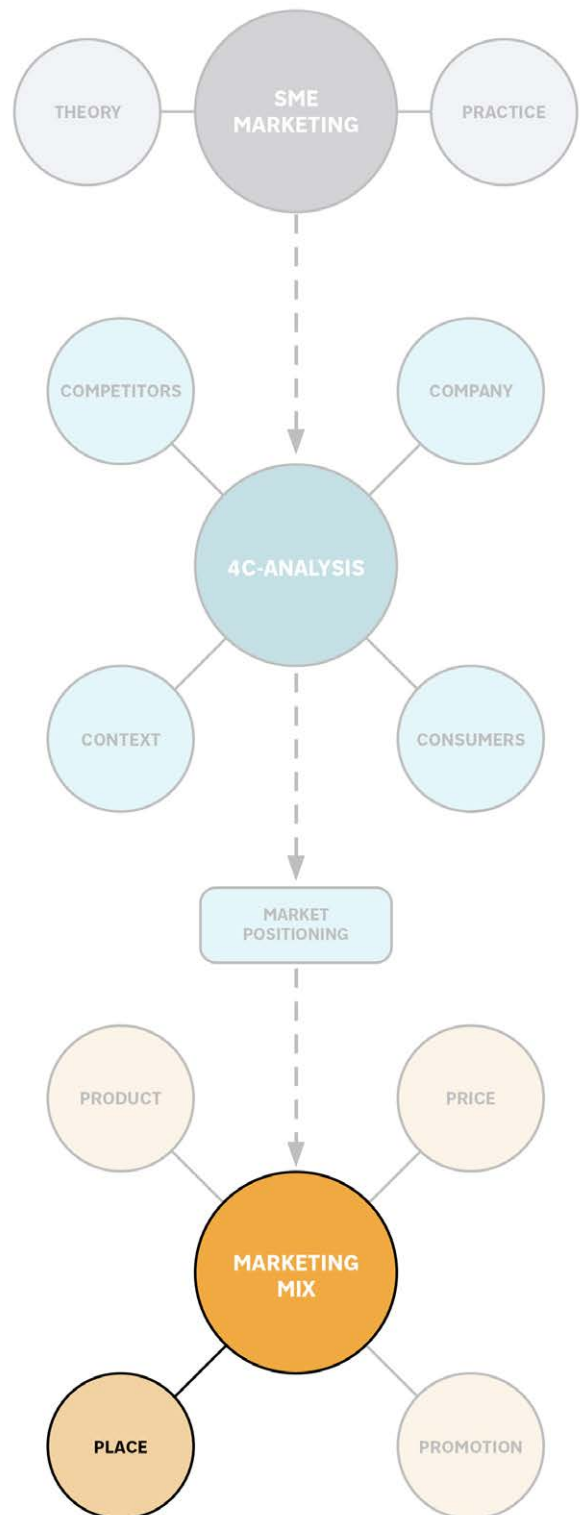
Finally, wholesalers often also have showrooms to showcase their products. This would be a great way for the Brockx to get some exposure as well, to people that are unfamiliar yet with the concept of sound reducing enclosures.

Place - Conclusions

This chapter has covered two aspects of the Place of the Brockx; geographical location and channels.

Selling the Brockx should be done in the Netherlands, as this will be logistically the most viable option, and because the market will be large enough for the foreseeable future.

If the Brockx is sold in cooperation with a wholesaler, the wholesaler will take care of the distribution channels. The wholesaler has the logistical resources to transport and store the products so that they can be distributed across the country.



▲ Figure 62 - Progress of the project

3.4 PROMOTION

This chapter covers the promotion part of the marketing mix. For both offline and online marketing, different structures and methods will be discussed. Push and pull strategies are covered and an implementation plan will be proposed.

Offline marketing

The basic goal of promotion is to show your product to customers and motivate them to purchase it (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). This can be done through either traditional or digital marketing methods. Nowadays it might seem that digital methods are more important as its use and relevance are increasing rapidly. However, the use of offline methods shouldn't be underestimated. There's still a large number of potential customers that aren't regular internet users (Bobalo, 2018).

This part of the promotion will cover the traditional, offline marketing methods. First a structure for implementing these tools will be discussed, after which the tools themselves are proposed.

Product life cycle

The product life cycle (PLC) is a model which describes the different stages of a product: introduction, growth, maturity and decline (Chen, 2018).

The Brockx is now at the introduction stage, where awareness is the most important marketing objective (Beever, n.d.). Once the Brockx has been successfully introduced and sales are increasing, it enters the 'growth'

stage. At this stage it's especially important to be able to persuade consumers into buying your product, as consumers will compare your product to those of competitors (Chen, 2018). After this, the product reaches maturity. Here the number of sales will stop to increase as a stable position in the market has been achieved. In this stage, branding will become more important as it will be more difficult to differentiate from competing products which saturate the market (Chen, 2018). The final stage is the stage of decline, which means that the number of sales is decreasing. For both the maturity stage and decline stage, the promotion objective is to maximise sales (Chen, 2018).

The PLC is usually visualised as a graph that follows the number of sales over time (figure 63). This structure will be used for classifying where and when to implement certain offline marketing methods.

Offline marketing methods

There are many possible marketing methods that can help in achieving the promotion objectives for the PLC stages. In appendix M, some possibilities are discussed. For marketing the Brockx, business fairs, networking, word of mouth and bus stop advertising are considered to be the most suitable options.

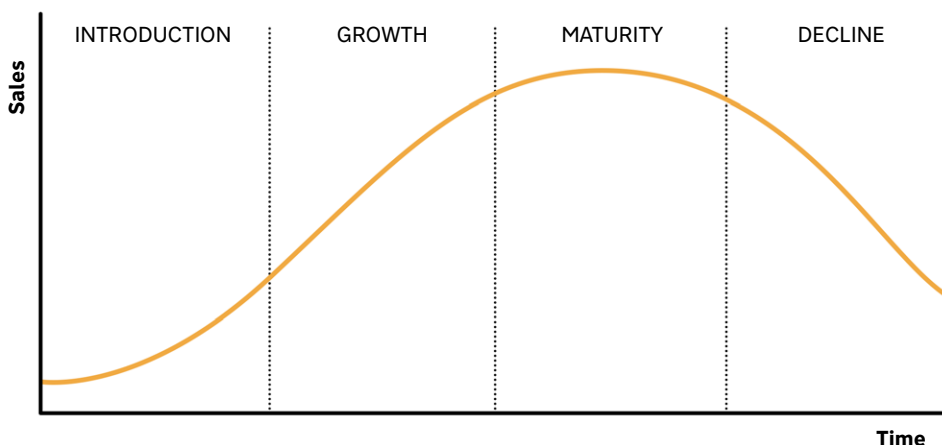


Figure 63 - Product life cycle (PLC) graph ▲

Business fairs

Having your product at a fair (figure 64) enables people to look at the actual physical product and allows for personal contact. Business fairs are also a great way to come into contact with other companies and establish new networks, which is very suitable for a B2B situation such as the Brockx. Promoting your product on a stand is also a great way of getting your name out in the world and creating awareness for your product. It's therefore a perfect tool to apply in the introduction phase of the Brockx. Also in the growth and maturity stage, when the Brockx must differentiate from its competitors, advertising at a business fair is a great way of showcasing the unique strengths of the product and enables Van Cappellen to communicate their brand. Very roughly speaking, a stand will cost around €15.000 (Dirkzwager, 2022).

Networking

In chapter 1.1, networking was recognized as one of the key components of marketing for SMEs. By using existing networks and forming new ones while attending business fairs for example, new connections can be made and awareness of the Brockx can be spread. Besides connecting to possible customers, a second goal is also to have others talk about the Brockx. This way of marketing is also called word of mouth (WOM).

Word of mouth

WOM is a very natural and personal way of marketing, making it a key driver of product diffusion (Z. Chen & Yuan, 2020). WOM is very important in the awareness phase of the PLC, and still relevant in the growth stage (S. Chen, 2018). Due to its personal effect, it's also considered to be a more effective tool than for example poster or radio advertisements

(López & Sicilia, 2013). However, in order to get people to talk about your product, they need to be informed first. Other advertisement is therefore needed first to start spreading your product through WOM (López & Sicilia, 2013). Furthermore, now that almost everything and everyone is present or active online, word of mouth plays a significant role in the digital world as well (Z. Chen & Yuan, 2020). Methods to support this type of WOM, also called electronic WOM (e-WOM), are discussed in the next section.

Printed advertisement

To stimulate WOM and make a large audience aware of the Brockx, printed advertising is a good option. Advertising on bus stops for example could be a great way of doing this. The advantage of advertising on bus stops, is that it's quite cost-effective. For example, placing advertisements on 100 bus stops will cost approximately €7.500, and 250 bus stops will cost about €18.125 (One Media, 2022). This may seem like a lot of money, but especially compared to other methods, this is a relatively inexpensive way of reaching a very large number of people. Because these posters are displayed 24/7, a huge amount of people will be exposed to them. Also, you can choose in which cities you would like to place the ads. This means that you can for example choose to place them in cities or villages that have a high average income, or where it is expected that there is a lot of sound reduction necessary such as in Amsterdam. Based on a calculation by Outreach (2021), a bus stop ad can reach about 15.000 people a week, which means that 100 bus stops should approximately reach 1,5 million passer-bys. By implementing this method in the awareness phase, you can expose the Brockx to a lot of people. When people become aware of the Brockx, they may start to search for further information online.



▲ Figure 64 - Example of a business fair (Zuid Nederlandse Beurs, 2020)

Online marketing

In this section the online promotion will be discussed. First some customer journey models will be compared and a structure will be decided. Then possible digital marketing tools will be covered.

Difference between offline and online structure

For the online marketing methods, a customer journey can be used to provide structure. By using a customer journey model, your digital marketing tools can be tailored to the specific state of your customer for each phase. A customer who is just getting interested in your product for example, should be addressed or supported differently than someone who is almost deciding on making a purchase.

These models are different from previously discussed PLC. The PLC covers the lifetime of a product, while the customer journeys are covering the process which a customer goes through.

The offline methods can be seen as marketing efforts that can be implemented once and then can't be changed easily. When you print a hundred posters for example, that message is meant to stay for a couple of weeks. Digital ads can be changed practically for free and much faster. For this reason, the PLC is used for offline methods; it's a longer process over time.

Customer journeys are used for online methods, because these methods are dynamic (they can easily be changed and adapted), and implemented simultaneously. This is necessary, because while one person may want to find more information about the Brockx, another person may already want to purchase it. Different tools need to be available at the same time to guide each person correctly in their individual journey.

The type of tools will thus be classified by using a customer journey model. The specific content for each tool however can then be adapted according to which phase of the PLC the Brockx is in. When the Brockx moves from the introduction phase into the growth phase of the PLC for example, the content can be altered to be more suitable.

Digital customer journey

For determining a digital customer journey, there are many different models available. The previously discussed consumer decision making process (Engel et al., 1968) could be used for example, but also other different yet similar models which are often used by digital marketing agencies could be applied (Heuvel, 2020; Qualtrics, 2022; Winnrs, 2020). Finally the AIDA model or the buyer's journey are viable options (Jehanne, 2022; Shuteyev, 2022). The stages of these models are placed next to each other in table 5 for easier comparison.

Consumer decision making process	Digital customer journey	AIDAR	Buyer's journey
Need recognition	Awareness	Attention	Awareness
Information search	Consideration	Interest	Consideration
Evaluation of alternatives	Acquisition/Purchase	Desire	
Purchase decision	Service/Experience	Action	Decision
Post-purchase evaluation	Loyalty	Retention	

▲ Table 5 - Comparison and selection of customer journey models

Each of these models could be used for determining promotional aspects. But, to make it more suitable for this project, a mixture of different models is created. The following stages will be used:

- Awareness
- Interest
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Action
- Post-purchase evaluation

These steps are deemed more intuitive for launching the Brockx. The reason for this is that this way, there's a bit more emphasis placed on the phases before actually buying than for example in the digital customer journey. Because the concept of sound reducing closures is quite new, a lot of awareness needs to be created first. Afterwards, interest should be generated for the Brockx and the brand Van Cappellen. Following that, the next step is evaluation of alternatives. This is because there are strong competitors, so it's important that this phase is done right and consumers don't buy from competition. Next comes action, which is the phase in which the customer takes action and purchases the Brockx. The final phase is post-purchase evaluation, which is more suitable because it's unlikely that customers will buy other products of Van Cappellen, as they don't offer any other home comfort products yet. Retention or loyalty is therefore not very relevant. Instead, post-purchase evaluation will be used to increase brand equity and use customer reviews to stimulate other potential buyers.

Online marketing methods

A wide variety of digital marketing tools and techniques (DMTTs) can be found in literature and different digital marketing websites (Shuteye, 2022; Dumitriu et al., 2019). With these digital tools, the right messages can be communicated to the customer at the right time, and different goals can be achieved. Furthermore, using the right DMTTs also helps to improve a company's brand equity (Dumitriu et al., 2019).

There's not one right way of using certain DMTTs. Selecting the right ones is based on personal preference and subjective estimation of which tools fit the best for the company's situation (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Because Van Cappellen is a small company, the selection of tools will also take into consideration the

fact that there are limited resources available. The selected tools should therefore provide the most return on investment, and preferably be do-able without outsourcing. Each DMTT is assessed in appendix N. Based on this, a decision has been made on which ones to use for online marketing the Brockx and conveying the brand image of Van Cappellen. For each level of the consumer decision making process, the suggested tools will be discussed.

AWARENESS

This level in the decision making process is about having the customer recognize their need for something and about creating awareness on the possible solution. Creating awareness comes in two ways: For people that are already aware of the legislation and are looking for an option to reduce the sound of their unit, the goal of this stage is to make them aware of the Brockx and the company Van Cappellen Sound Solutions. For those that are not aware of the legislation and don't yet have a need for a product such as the Brockx, the focus is on creating a need in the first place. This can be done by for example illustrating the negative effect of the noise of an outdoor unit and explaining the new legislation. The following tools will help to achieve these goals.

Paid search advertising

When searching for something online using a search engine such as Google, the first search results that you see are paid advertisements; these websites have paid so that their website gets shown first. This is a great way to make sure that when customers are searching for certain topics, they see your product and website. Some other benefits of paid search advertising are the fact that it can be done and implemented quickly, the results are measurable and it's relatively inexpensive (Smith, 2022). This means that its return of investment can also be analysed by comparing the cost to the amount of clicks/traffic it has generated. What also makes this tool a suitable solution is the fact that it can be easily applied. Google Ads is a relatively easy way of doing paid search advertising and this way, Van Cappellen can implement this method themselves.

Search engine optimisation

This method can be seen as the free, organic way of getting your website to the top of the search results. With search engine optimisation (SEO), you make sure that your website and its content are optimised so that they rank higher in search engines. This means that when someone searches for an enclosure for example, your product will be positioned higher in the results and becomes more visible to potential customers. This is very important considering the fact that 75% of people don't look further than the first page of Google (Winnrs, 2020).

Although this method is a bit trickier, there is a vast amount of free information available online on how to do it. Furthermore, many plugins (digital add-ons which enhance certain programmes) can be used which make the process more intuitive and efficient. If it's still considered too difficult, there are many marketing agencies available that offer the service of conducting SEO.

(Social media) Advertising (pay per click)

By having advertisements placed on other websites or social media, you are able to reach people that weren't searching for anything related to sound reducing enclosures. It's therefore a great way of reaching a lot of people and increasing awareness and generating need recognition.

Facebook and Instagram are both part of the Meta group, and advertising on these channels can easily be done by visiting their website. Another advantage is that you can choose your target group and budget yourself, which makes it very suitable for Van Cappellen (Meta, n.d.).

Social media

Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are a great way to establish an online presence for free and increase brand equity. Van Cappellen could use social media to show all kinds of content of the Brockx and the company, create awareness around the legislation and allow for direct communication with potential customers. Being present on social media also creates a platform for consumers to leave comments and interact, which stimulates digital word of mouth (eWOM) (Donthu et al., 2021).

INTEREST

At this level, it's important to provide any type of information that people might be searching for. Providing content can be done in many ways and by different people.

(Responsive) Website

Possibly the most important DMTT, a website is the place where people can find all the relevant information and come into contact with the company. Van Cappellen already has good websites for both their Consultancy and Sound Solutions branches, which are updated every once in a while. The websites are also responsive, meaning that the interface changes so that it remains legible and user-friendly when the website is visited from other devices such as smartphones or tablets.

Blogs

Writing blogs is a very effective way of sharing content. By creating quality content which is actually useful for people, you create trust and generate brand awareness (Bell, 2016). The employees of Van Cappellen are experts in the area of acoustics, and they could use this knowledge to write blogs about different topics related to sound and acoustics. Another benefit of this, is that by sharing your expertise, you communicate to people that you are an expert in this area. This will help in building up the brand image and associations of being an expert in acoustics.

Youtube product demo

Some competitors are already providing videos to demonstrate their product. Van Cappellen should create different videos to demonstrate the Brockx. This could be a tutorial on how to install the Brockx, or an informational animation to explain how the product works. These videos can also be placed on the website, which will make it easier for people to find this information.

Sound comparison tool

This is a very simple yet effective way to demonstrate how much sound the Brockx could reduce. It might not be an entirely accurate comparison, but for potential customers it gives a really good idea of what a sound reducing enclosure can do for them.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

When potential customers have decided they want to buy a sound reducing enclosure, they will compare the different options that are available to them. At this level, Van Cappellen must ensure that they are taken into consideration, and convince customers that the Brockx is superior to its alternatives.

Comparison database

From previous research it became known that a digital database exists in which all products from wholesalers are listed, which allows installers to easily compare them to each other. When Van Cappellen works together with a wholesaler, the Brockx will also be listed in this database, and direct comparison will be possible for those that use this database.

Review websites

Review websites often make use of affiliate marketing to generate income. With affiliate marketing, you link to certain products on your website, and each time that product is bought after clicking on that link, you receive a small percentage. At the same time we learned from prior research that peer reviews are becoming more important, also in B2B situations. The Brockx is expected to be perceived positively, so peer reviews are likely to result in a positive perception of the Brockx and at the same time an increase in brand awareness, because more people will have heard of the company.

ACTION

After comparing competing products, the customer will have decided on the product that they would like to buy. For expensive products, customers take some time before actually purchasing the product after they have made the decision (Stankevich, 2017). It's therefore extra important that the buying process is smooth and doesn't hinder the customer. If Van Cappellen works together with a wholesaler, then this part is mostly covered by them. Wholesalers have a website with a webshop which allows installers to easily purchase products. Van Cappellen could help in this process with one nifty tool.

Product configurator/calculator

A product configurator or calculator is an online tool, in which you can enter the type of your AC or heat pump and the location of the outdoor unit. The tool can then calculate how much sound reduction is required, and the size of the enclosure needs to be. With a configurator you can also choose different sizes, coatings and, for example, a wall-mounted version. The configurator can then tell you the price of your chosen product, which is super helpful in the buying process.



◀ Figure 65 - Instagram & Youtube example

POST PURCHASE EVALUATION

Some time after a customer has purchased the product, they will evaluate whether it has satisfied and still satisfies their needs. As mentioned before, peer reviews are becoming increasingly important in the decision making process, so it's good to stimulate customers to review your product for other potential customers to see. There are a couple of tools that can assist at the post purchase decision level.

Reviews

By letting customers place their reviews on your website, potential customers can be persuaded into buying the Brockx. There is the risk that bad reviews are being placed by unsatisfied customers, however it can be expected that the Brockx will be perceived well. This is because the Brockx has been thoroughly tested and every aspect of its design has been thought about in detail. Furthermore, Van Cappellen could even benefit from responding to criticism. An honest, vulnerable reaction would result in a higher perceived sincerity, which could result in customers putting more trust in the company (Xia, 2013).

Customer relationship management

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an essential part of any business and entails the creation of channels and methods for managing customer-centric information (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2021). In other words, CRM is about how a company interacts with their customers. One relatively simple part of CRM is contacting customers and asking whether they are still satisfied with their purchase. By showing genuine care, you communicate to customers that your business is not just about selling products, but actually providing a desirable solution to a problem. This positive relationship could cause potential customers to gain a better attitude towards the company as well.

Social media promoters

The rapid growth of social media has shifted the way that products can be marketed and customers can be approached. Social media allows for people to share their thoughts and experiences of products in a fast and widespread way. By encouraging customers to share their experience of the Brockx on social media, eWOM can be stimulated and a large audience can be reached in a virtually free manner. Van Cappellen could for example make an instagram post in which they ask people who have purchased the Brockx to upload a photo in their instagram stories with the hashtag #Brockx. These people can then be 'rewarded' by reposting their post to the instagram of Van Cappellen. By doing so, many new people will be exposed to the Brockx and thus create an interest/awareness in people that would otherwise be more difficult to reach. Influencers could also be approached to promote the Brockx. These people have a large reach, but at the same time may ask a high fee.

Push/pull strategy

The Brockx and sound reducing enclosures in general are new to the market, and it's not yet known what the most effective strategy is. A mix of both push and pull strategies are therefore needed, as was concluded from the interviews in chapter 2.5.

Figure 66 shows which parties are involved with the buying and selling of the Brockx, and how the marketing works for this situation. What is interesting, is that both B2B and B2C marketing efforts are needed.

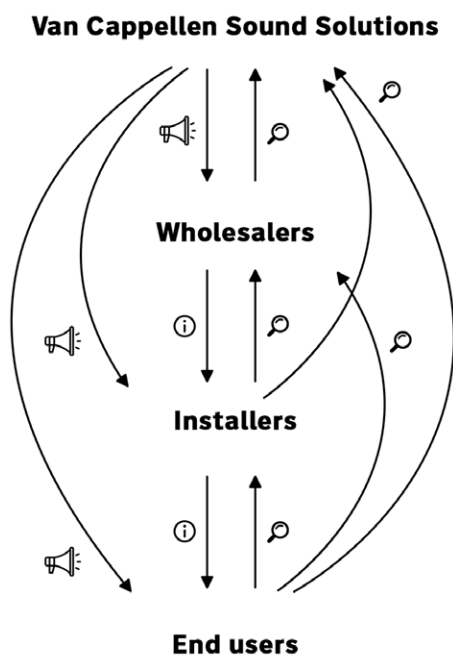
The promotion starts at Van Cappellen Sound Solutions, who advertises the Brockx through push marketing, as indicated by the megaphone. Next, the wholesaler provides information to the installers, who themselves also provide information to the end users, as indicated by the 'i' of information. Both installers and end users will be searching for information themselves, which is part of the pull strategy. This is indicated by the magnifying glass.

In table 6, the proposed marketing methods are categorised as either a push or pull strategy. From this visual it becomes clear that by applying these methods, both push and pull strategies are realised, resulting in the optimal way of promoting the Brockx.

What is also noticeable, is that offline methods focus more on push, while online methods focus more on pull. The reason for this, is that the offline methods are used mostly in the introduction phase, where it's important to spread awareness in the short term. For this objective, push strategies are most effective (Brocato, 2010). As Brocato (2010) also explains, push strategies are usually more applied for B2B situations, while for B2C an emphasis is on pull strategies.

Especially in the introduction phase, the focus should rely on B2B promotion. By pushing the promotion from the top-down, installers will quickly become aware of the Brockx, which should result in more sales as they are the ones who buy the product directly from the wholesaler.

Digital methods for the push strategy are also utilised, but the majority of DMTTs stimulate a pull strategy. Establishing a good online presence, offering knowledge on acoustics and information of the Brockx helps to build the brand of Van Cappellen and become a stronger brand in the long term. The DMTTs also support people who are searching for information, by making the online content easier to find through SEO for example.



Push	Pull
Business fairs	(Electronic) word of mouth
Networking	SEO
Printed advertisement	Social media
Paid search advertising	Website
Advertising (pay per click)	Blogs
Social media promoters	Youtube product demo
	Sound comparison tool
	Comparison database
	Review websites
	Product configurator/calculator

Offline
Online

▲ Figure 66 - How push and pull strategies work

▲ Table 6 - Marketing methods classified as push or pull strategies

Implementation

For both offline and online marketing methods, a structure has been proposed. By combining these structures, a road map can be created which demonstrates how the different tools can be implemented effectively (figure 67).

The roadmap follows the PLC of the Brockx. Within the phases of the PLC, offline and online methods are suggested. The DMTTs for the online promotion are the same, but the specific content should change depending on which phase of the PLC the Brockx is in.

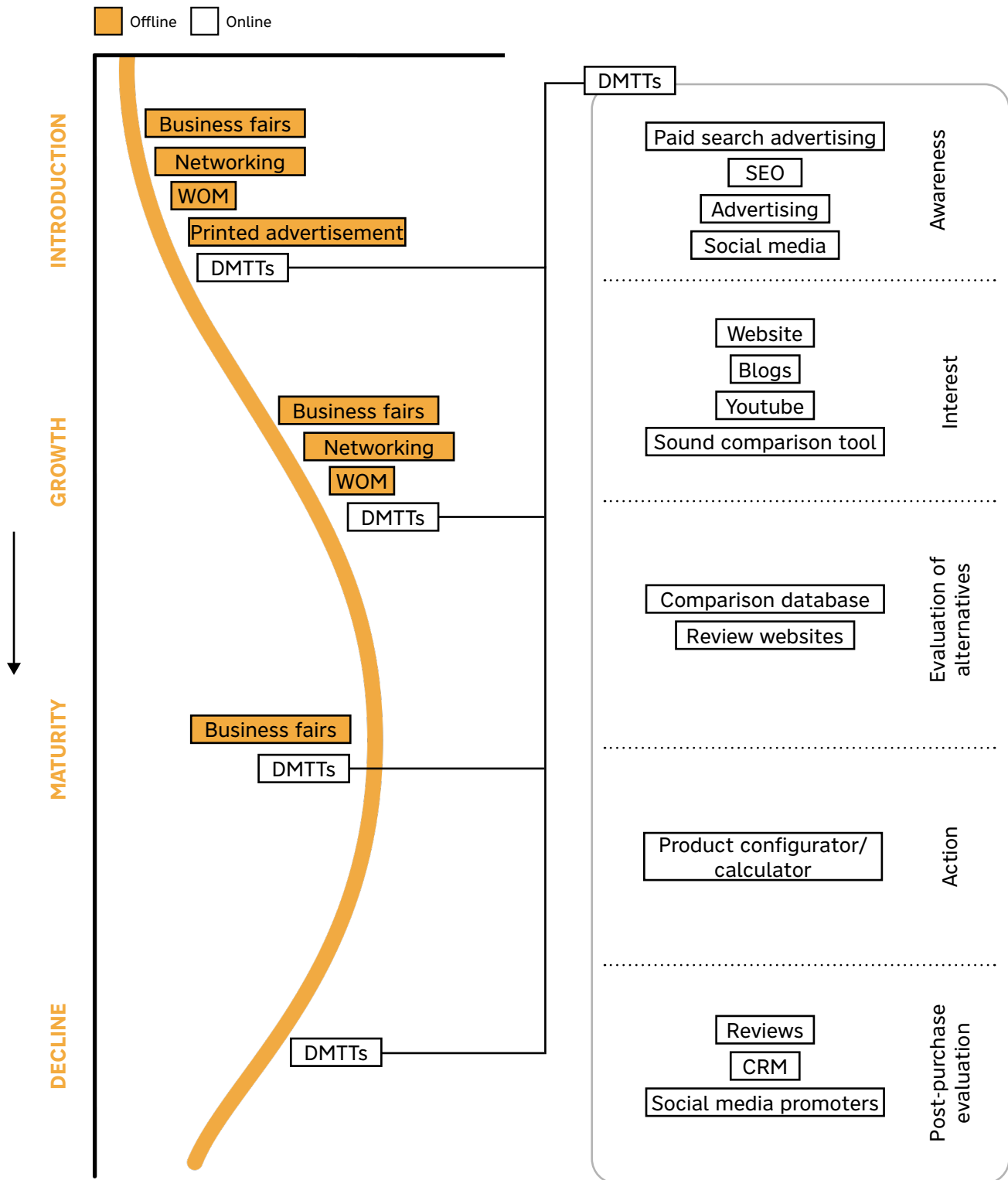


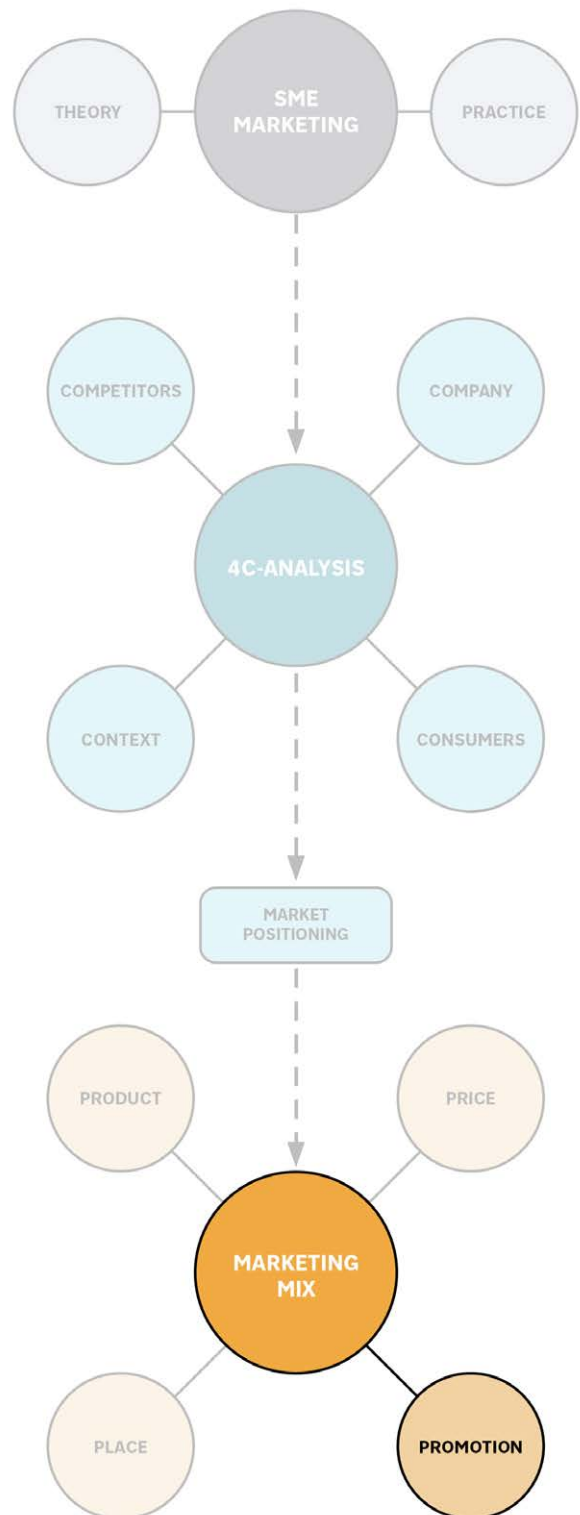
Figure 67 - Implementation of the offline and online marketing methods ▲

Promotion - Conclusions

This final chapter of the marketing mix has covered the promotional aspects of the Brockx. For both offline and online promotion, a structure has been proposed and possible methods have been provided.

The methods that have been selected are deemed most suitable for Van Cappellen, and ensure that both push and pull strategies are applied to optimally market the Brockx.

A final roadmap combines the offline and online methods and gives an overview of what methods to apply and when.



▲ Figure 68 - Progress of the project

MARKETING MIX 4Ps OVERVIEW



PRODUCT

Manufacturing the Brockx should be done in the Netherlands first. In later stages, manufacturing the Brockx could possibly be done in Central or Eastern European countries due to lower manufacturing prices.

The possibility for a vertical line extension to increase their brand equity should be thought about.

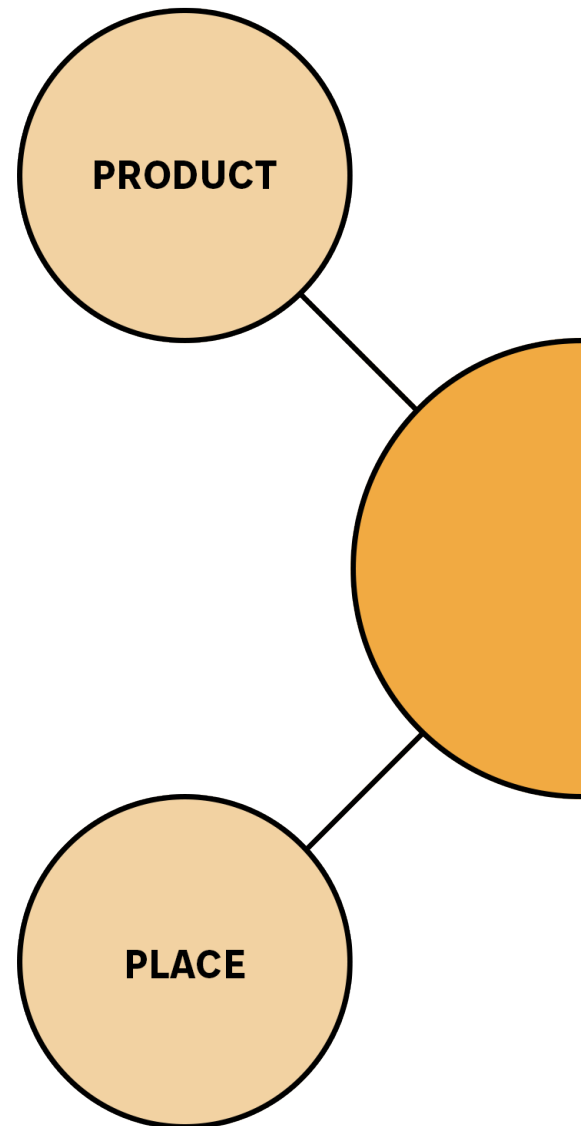
A one-dimensional warranty should be offered to communicate trust and ensure consumers that there is not a high risk of buying the product.

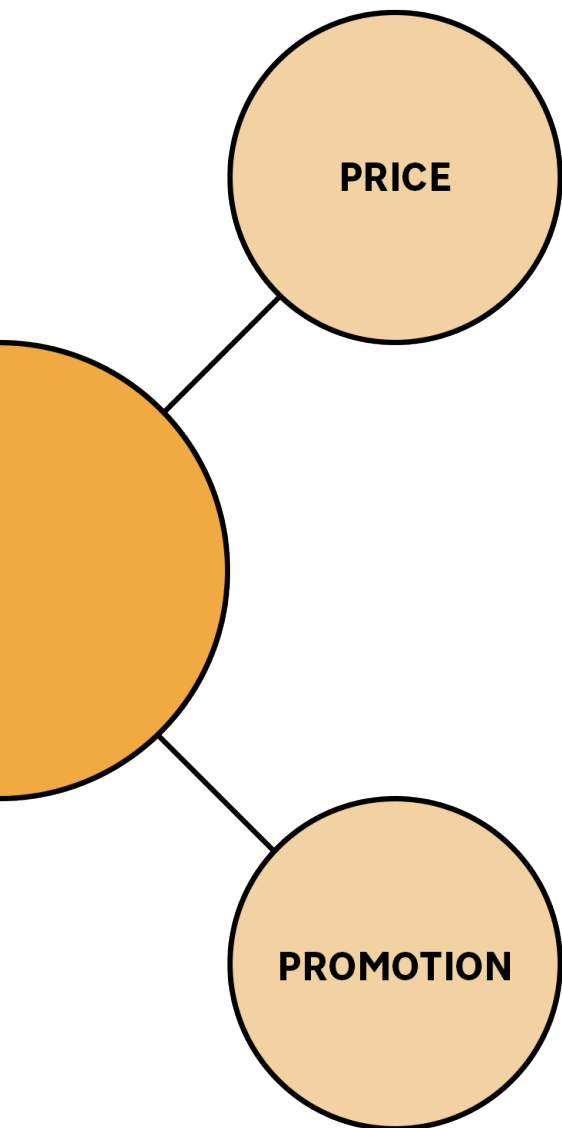


PLACE

Selling the Brockx should be done in the Netherlands, as this will be logistically the most viable option, and because the market will be large enough for the foreseeable future.

If the Brockx is sold in cooperation with a wholesaler, the wholesaler will take care of the distribution channels. The wholesaler has the logistical resources to transport and store the products so that they can be distributed across the country.





PRICE

A competition-based approach has been chosen to determine a price indication. Based on its most direct competitor, the maximum cost price should be €1.411,02 to be able to sell at a competitive price of €3.100.

A good pricing strategy to launch the Brockx is penetration pricing. By offering the Brockx at a lower price at the start, a large market share can be established before raising the price to a normal level. If the Brockx is to be sold at 10% below the price of the Reducd, a maximum cost price of €1.282,74 is needed.



PROMOTION

For both offline and online promotion, a structure has been proposed and possible methods have been provided.

The methods that have been selected are deemed most suitable for Van Cappellen, and ensure that both push and pull strategies are applied to optimally market the Brockx.

A final roadmap combines the offline and online methods and gives an overview of what methods to apply and when.

CONCLUSION

An evaluation and reflection to conclude this project.





BROCKX



Evaluation

The main goal of this project was to find out how to continue with the development of the Brockx.

To start, research has been conducted to find out the characteristics of small to medium companies (SMEs). It was found that the situation of Van Cappellen corresponds with cases that are reported in literature. Furthermore, three themes have been found that characterise the way SMEs conduct marketing. These themes were then compared to practical examples through primary research. From this research it became clear that these themes are also found in practice, and additional methods of marketing for SMEs have been discovered.

In the next phase of the project, a 4C-analysis has been conducted to extensively research the current situation of the Brockx and Van Cappellen. Looking at the situation from four perspectives (competitors, company, context & consumers), has resulted in all the necessary information to establish a market positioning. Furthermore, the 4C-analysis has resulted in practical knowledge on how to sell and market the Brockx. During the research, a connection has been established between Van Cappellen and a wholesaler, who could be the perfect fit for selling the Brockx. A final chapter on whether to invest and further develop the Brockx answers the question on whether to continue with the development of the Brockx. The final advice is that the current circumstances and market are deemed positive, and it's encouraged to continue with the Brockx.

The final part of the project ties all the new findings together and provides an overview of the marketing mix. By using the 4P's, a structured overview could be realised. Product, Price, Place and Promotion have been covered, which form a good overview for Van Cappellen on how they could start with the introduction of the Brockx, and continue as the sales will increase. For this part, a connection between Van Cappellen and a manufacturing/assembly company has been established. Hopefully this will result in a fruitful cooperation, but if that's not the case, at least more will be known about the possibilities of manufacturing and assembling, and other options may arise as a consequence.

Reflection

Starting this project was quite a challenge for me, because there were so many things I didn't know yet, and I didn't have a clear vision on how to approach this problem. At the start and also before the kick-off meeting, a lot of time and energy was spent on formulating the project and finding ways on how to approach it. Once I had decided on using the 4C-analysis, some pieces of the puzzle fell into place. While conducting research, I continued to update the structure and tried to find more logical ways of structuring the project. I was already familiar with the 4P's of the marketing mix, and this proved to be a valuable method for this project. I'm very happy with the final structure as it is described in the report. In my opinion it's quite simple, but still allows you to look at the situation from all angles. For other people this approach may also be useful, as it provides a clear structure on how to formulate a strategy once a product has already been developed. As I learned from the literature, this happens more often than I expected, especially among SMEs.

One of my personal ambitions which I described in the project brief was to become better at developing a strategy, and put theoretical knowledge into practice. Because I had to search for a lot of information, I also learned a lot about marketing and other topics. Connecting this knowledge to the Brockx, and thinking about how this knowledge can be used by Van Cappellen made me more aware of what type of information is actually valuable in practical situations. Looking back, I realise that I could improve my approach of learning about new topics. My approach had been to find as much information as possible and then filter out what I deemed relevant for the project. On the one hand this allowed me to learn a lot in a relatively short time, and find new interesting directions. On the other hand, this way of working has resulted in a very large number of sources, of which some might be unnecessary. Sometimes this way of working also took some extra time, because I was overwhelmed with all the new information. In the future I should think better of what I am searching for beforehand and be more efficient. For this project however, I found it quite difficult sometimes to envision what I should look for, and research also functioned as a sort of exploration.

What has made this project special for me, is that by working for a small company, your research can really be of help and have an

actual effect. I also stated in my project brief that I wanted to find out whether the methods and theories which I have learned from TU Delft could be applied to a smaller company as well. Throughout this project, I have learned that the methods which I have used are very suitable thanks to their relative simplicity.

Finally I am very happy that I have been able to find a possibility for Van Cappellen to work together with another company. Before starting the project, my main concern was that I wouldn't be able to give really helpful and practical advice, because I didn't know anything yet about such problems. After the interviews with the wholesalers, it became a lot clearer for me, which motivated me a lot. Although I am happy with the assembly company which I have visited, I would have liked to work on this a little bit more. As with the wholesalers, I would have preferred to be able to give more options to Van Cappellen, but I didn't manage to make enough time available to visit another company. In hindsight, I should have spent less time on certain topics to be able to do this, but at that time this was difficult for me to predict as many things were still uncertain.

All in all I am very happy with the process and final results of this project. Working together with Van Cappellen was a very fun and insightful experience. Because this was my first time as an intern, I'm really happy to have gained some practical working experience. Discussing certain marketing topics with different stakeholders was also very helpful for my personal learning process.

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