SINNER

GEESKE MEIJER / THESIS

Master Thesis Industrial Design Engineering

DEFINING THE BRAND SINNER: PROPOSING A NEW STRATEGIC VISION AND CREATING A BRAND BOOK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This graduation report presents the results of my graduation project, as the final part of the Master 'Strategic Product Design' at the TU Delft. The project is conducted in collaboration with SINNER. This thesis proposes a new strategic vision for the brand SINNER, to reach out to the desired target audience. The thesis is composed of four consecutive phases that follow the research approach. It represents the Double Diamond approach (Nessler, 2016), starting with discover, followed by define, design and finally deliver.

SINNER - the primary stakeholder in this thesis - is known as a sports eyewear company that focuses on winter sports. With the ambition to gain more brand awareness throughout the Netherlands and eventually worldwide, multiple aspects of the brand have to be made clearer in order to create a stronger brand.

Brands need to innovate in order to maintain their position in the market. When a brand gets tired, it might require revitalization, also known as repositioning (Beverland, 2018). The conducted internal analysis is the basis for defining the brand, the external analysis has created input to understand the segment where SINNER can position itself and realize its competitive advantage. The literature review has been used to define how to strengthened a brand.

Based on these analyses the positioning and proposition were set up. Additionally, a purpose, mission and vision were determined and used in the brand DNA of SINNER. To communicate all of these elements, the design principles were set up. These design principles are applied in the brand book, which explains what the brand is about, how the brand communicates and how this communication looks when visualized. The brand book is the ultimate deliverable and shows how the new brand strategy enables internal alignment and consistency.

The outcomes for this thesis are:
• An analysis, providing an understanding of what the brand SINNER is about
• A new design strategy, describing the new brand identity
• A brand book that presents the new brand identity
• Brand touchpoints that visualize the translation from brand book to design

In the end several recommendations are done, to apply the results in order to give the SINNER brand a new and reinforced appearance.

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CHAPTER 1
PROJECT

In this first chapter, the topic and the approach of this project are introduced. This part describes the context and presents the initial problem and research questions.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of my graduation project, as the final part of the Master 'Strategic Product Design' at the TU Delft. The project is conducted in collaboration with SINNER.

SINNER

The primary stakeholder in this thesis is SINNER. SINNER is known as a sports eyewear company that focuses on winter sports. SINNER is a well-established brand, with customers all over the world. Many people are familiar with SINNER's winter sports essentials, like goggles, helmets and sunglasses - but SINNER has so much more to offer. Within the company itself, the employees know what SINNER is about, but everyone has his or her own vision of the brand. With the ambition to gain more brand awareness throughout the Netherlands and eventually worldwide, multiple aspects of the brand have to be made clearer in order to create a stronger brand. Therefore, a joint and shared vision of the brand must also be developed, which everyone within SINNER recognizes and confirms.

PROJECT CHALLENGE & GOALS

SINNER has a lot of potential and that should be used. For that reason, it is important for the brand to make a strong connection with its customers and to let them experience all the existing values of the brand in a unique way - that makes SINNER stand out against its competitors. Therefore, the goal of this graduation project is to create a clear vision of the brand, by creating a new positioning in order to translate this vision and positioning into new guidelines. These guidelines are captured in a brand book and present how SINNER could communicate its positioning.

The challenge for this thesis is formulated the following: SINNER is looking for a future vision in order to develop its position in the market, create more brand equity and connect with its customers.

To solve this challenge and gain understanding of the current situation a goal and three research questions have been formulated:

Assignment
Develop a new strategic vision for the brand SINNER and translate this into a brand book.

Research questions
1. **What does the brand currently stand for and what are its goals and values?**

2. **How do consumers perceive the brand SINNER?**

3. **How can the insights of the analysis be translated to design guidelines?**

In line with the three sub questions, the findings for this research questions are divided in different chapters. In the next part I will discuss the approach of the project.

The initial setup of this project can be found in Appendix A.

Assignment

Develop a new strategic vision for the brand SINNER and translate this into a brand book.

1.2 APPROACH

To create structure in the creative process, the revamped Double Diamond Approach is followed (Nessler, 2016). The Double Diamond process was originally released by the British Design Council to provide designers, but also project managers and non-creatives, a tool to create structure in design challenges and projects (Nessler, 2016). Nessler states in "*How to apply a design thinking, HCD, UX or any creative process from scratch*" that in any design project the main question is how to get from point "could be" to point "should be". At the start of the project this might seem a straight line, but in reality, every design project is a never-ending process. Additionally, Nessler suggests using the structured design approach of the Double Diamond to deal with the fuzziness in design projects (Nessler, 2016). The diamond consists of four stages: discover, define, develop and deliver (Nessler, 2016). In the following section, I will elaborate on each phase/step of the double diamond approach by explaining what will be covered.

Discover
The first half of the first diamond - the discover or analysis phase - describes the internal, external and brand analysis. The main goal is to gain insight into the problem and create a deeper understanding of the brand by collecting information from the consumer, the company, the market and its competitors, as well as literature. The analysis is divided into the internal analysis - where the goal is to gain understanding about the company - and external analysis, where the aim is to achieve understanding about the consumers and the competitors. Through the internal analysis, an understanding of the company can be gained by conducting informal conversations with the employees of SINNER. During the external analysis, a deeper understanding of the consumer's needs will be generated by interviewing ten consumers. To define

the position in the market, a competitor analysis is conducted as well. The discover phase is supported by a literature review, to gain more comprehension of branding.

Define
With these analyses from the discover phase, the define phase is about converging all of those unstructured research findings into opportunities. For the project, this means all insights are synthesized into a positioning, a proposition, and eventually into the brand DNA.

Develop/**Design**
In the next phase, by Nessler referred to as develop, the brand strategy is further developed into specific guidelines and a brand book. In the develop - design - stage the positioning, proposition and brand DNA are translated into design guidelines. The develop phase is the phase where multiple designs are made (diverging), and the information gained in the previous stages is further developed, into the design. Since this is a diverging phase, the process is still agile, and several iterations on the ideation might occur.

Deliver
At the end of the develop phase, decisions are made to be able to finalize the designs in the deliver phase. In the final phase, an implementation strategy is presented, and the results are reviewed for the delivery. The last improvements are made, everything will be evaluated, and the brand book will be ready for implementation.

Problem
Definition

Define
project goals
& research
approach

DISCOVER

Literature
review

External
Analysis
& Consumer Research

Internal
Analysis

Analyze Findings

Positioning & Proposition

DEFINE

Brand DNA

Guidelines

DEVELOP/DESIGN

Brand Book

Touchpoints

Examples

Evaluation

Reflection

DELIVER

Finalize
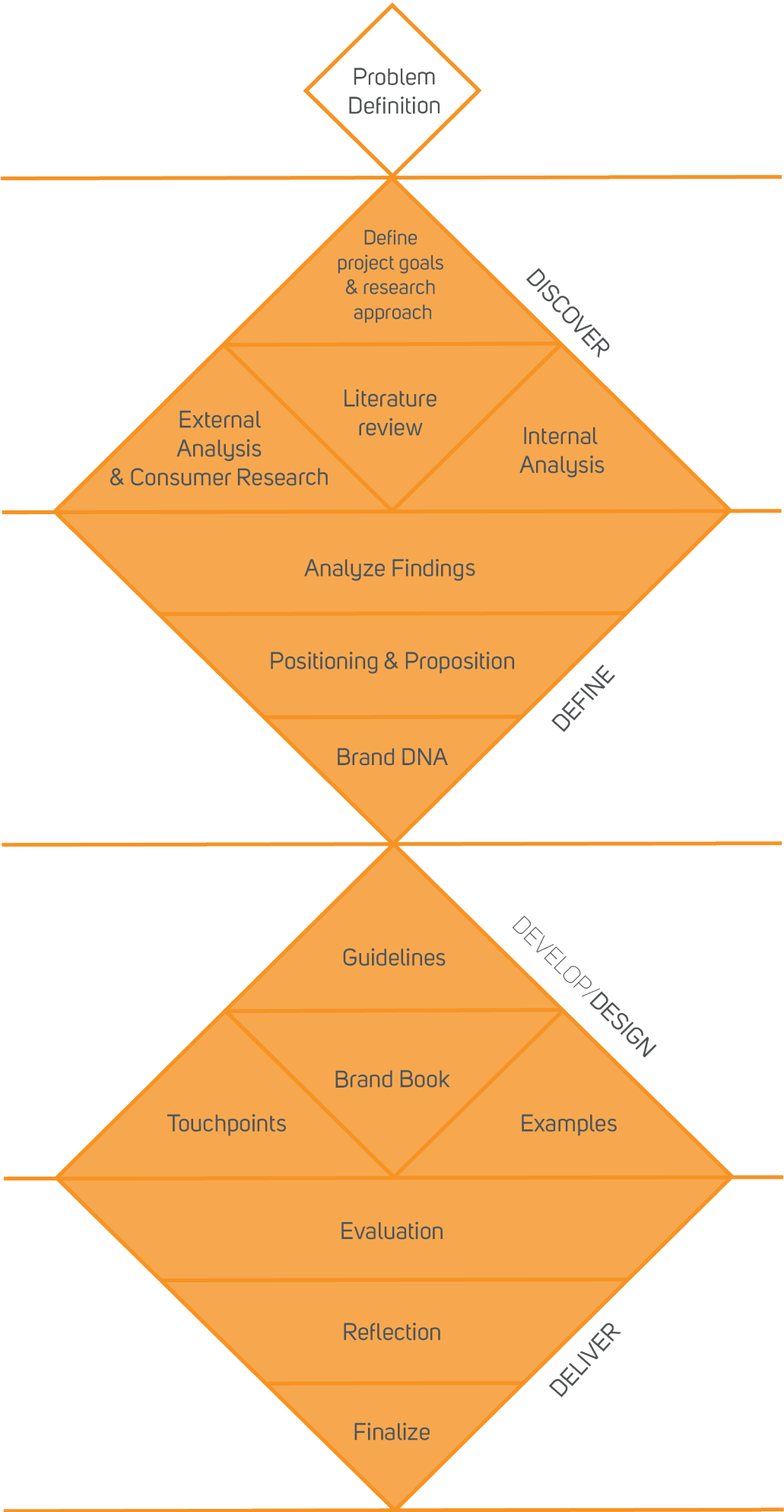
CHAPTER 2
DISCOVER

This part describes the internal analysis of the company. Most of the information in this chapter is collected by interviews and informal conversations with employees of SINNER. By defining different aspects of the brand SINNER, it becomes clearer what the brand wants to carry out.

2.1 INTERNAL ANALYSIS

ABOUT SINNER

SINNER is a lifestyle brand, which was established in 1996. Initially, the brand started as an eyewear company with sports sunglasses, but over the years, it developed into an international lifestyle and sports brand (SINNER B.V., n.d.). SINNER refers to itself as an explorer who searches the globe for inspiration, excitement, challenges, and magical moments that spark their never-ending curiosity. SINNER aims to represent innovation, quality, performance, and style (SINNER B.V., n.d.).

The products of the brand can be found in over 3000 stores, and the brand is distributing in over 30 countries worldwide. SINNER has ten distinctive product groups, consisting of hardware and soft goods. The brand offers a great variety of products - which all have in common that they are designed to protect against one of the elements. This also comes back in their mission statement: 'SINNER offers a complete and innovative solution to protect yourself against the elements'. The name SINNER refers to a sinner, according to the dictionary: 'a person who transgresses against divine law by committing an immoral act or acts'. However, at SINNER they like to say: 'there is a SINNER in everyone'. In addition, the pay-off: 'AS I AM' stands for being whoever you want to be, just as you are. This is a philosophy they want to propogate throughout the whole brand.

In February 2019, SINNER opened a flagship store in the city centre of Amsterdam, at the Leidsestraat 65. This flagship store is called 'House of SINNER', and the purpose of the store is to cultivate and communicate their brand, image, and presence throughout their AS I AM - philosophy.

CRYSTAL GLIDE SERVICE

HISTORY

Paul Bijvoet is the founder of SINNER, but long before he started the company, he already was an entrepreneur. The love for winter sports led him to start *Crystal Glide Service*, a company where he prepared skis and snowboards for multiple sport goods stores around the Netherlands. A hobby turned into a job and *Crystal Glide Service* became one of the biggest ski preparing workshops in not only the Netherlands but in the entire world. However, after a few successful years, Bijvoet was looking for something less seasonal, since preparing skis is a business for only a few months per year.

Therefore, around 1993, Bijvoet and his partner started to sell *Carrera* eyewear, a well-known eyewear brand. This turned out to be a great success, and therefore Bijvoet started to import even more small brands. However, after a few years, the entrepreneurs saw an unserved market. Brands like *Carrera* sold their eyewear products for high prices, however, Bijvoet and his partner thought that they could do the same

for a lower price. Due to their experience in eyewear, they had the network and knowledge, and therefore knew that there was a market for sports eyewear. Their mutual goal was to create a qualitative A-product, for a B-price - or in other words: high quality for an affordable price. In 1996 SINNER was founded. Initially, it started out as an eyewear company focused on selling sports sunglasses, but along the way more products were added, such as regular sunglasses, optical eyewear, and even fashion accessories. In the year 2000, the brand introduced two new products; ski goggles and ski helmets.

The love for winter sports always remained but developed from importing and selling products into an earlier statement: developing products that protect you against the elements.

FIRST SINNER BRANDSTORE 2006

03
SPORT

"Boarding is a religion,
the mountain is my church..

CAMPAIGN 2008

COMPANY STRUCTURE

SINNER is distributing worldwide, but the company is actually not as big as many people might think. Some employees have more than one function, and together they cooperate in different ways. In order to understand how the company works, informal interviews were conducted for this study. Most of the interviews were held over the phone, or spontaneously at the brand store or the office. The interview with the CEO, Paul Bijvoet was scheduled and conducted physically,

because of his busy agenda. During the interview, I've gained a good understanding of the current vision and history of the company. In the figure below, there is an overview of the employees. As visible in the figure, the company does not have a Management Team. In the end, CEO Paul Bijvoet is accountable for all the decisions that are made. However, SINNER's employees do have a lot of freedom and almost all the important decisions are made in consultation.

CEO
Paul Bijvoet

Sales Manager
Chiel

Operational Manager
Lotte

Sales Manager Benelux
Jildo

Export Manager & Country Manager UK
Kevin

Manager Warehouse
Rick

Brand Manager
Bart

Sales Belgie & Luxemburg
Jeroen

Warehouse Employees
Yakim, Ronald, Jasper

Warehouse Returns
Corry

Trade Marketeer
Errol

Country Manager Spain/Andorra
Carles

Country Manager France
Cyrille

Product Manager
Boukje

Buying
Alice

Facility
Bas Bijvoet

IT Manager
Bas de Geus

Junior Product Manager
Nienke

IT Employee
Xander

Finance
Cynthia

Figure 2.1.1   organizational chart

CURRENT VISION

Many employees working within the company have been there from the start. At this moment, more and more young people are joining SINNER. It is interesting to notice that every employee has his or her own definition of SINNER's vision. For some, it is about selling as many products as possible, whereas for others, the focus lies on getting more brand awareness. Brand vision is about the thoughts behind a company or brand, that helps setting goals in terms of where the company is heading towards, and where the brand aims to be in five or ten years (Aaker, 2014). For example, the vision of Elon Musk for *Tesla* is to enable people to go "*anywhere on earth in under one hour*" (Medium, 2018). Another example is *Patagonia*. Their vision is more about solving the environmental crisis: *"environment conservation and restoration"* (Medium, 2018). A brand vision does not have to be something tangible; it can be something that helps set goals towards the future. For SINNER, a clear vision could help to reach their goals.

To get a better understanding of how the employees are perceiving the brand and experiencing the personality of SINNER, they were asked to fill in a brand perception survey. The brand perception survey contained a list of 58 words which represent the associations that consumers have with the brand SINNER - values that came from informal conversations with consumers, and from interviews with employees. Participants were asked to rate the word from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the perception "does not match with the brand at all", and 10 reflecting the notion of "perfectly matches the brand". In the interviews with consumers later on in the project, similar surveys were conducted. The values in the list were formulated in Dutch and English, for the reason that sometimes a word has a slightly different meaning when it is translated. This became also evident during the survey; for example, the word playful got a 7,5 out of 10 - so it matches the brand quitte good according to

the employees - whereas the Dutch translation 'speels' was rated with a 5,8 out of 10. However, sometimes the Dutch word appeared more appealing, for example 'reliable' was less popular than 'betrouwbaar'. The words with the highest rate can be found in figure 2.1.2 and an overview of all the results can be found in Appendix B.
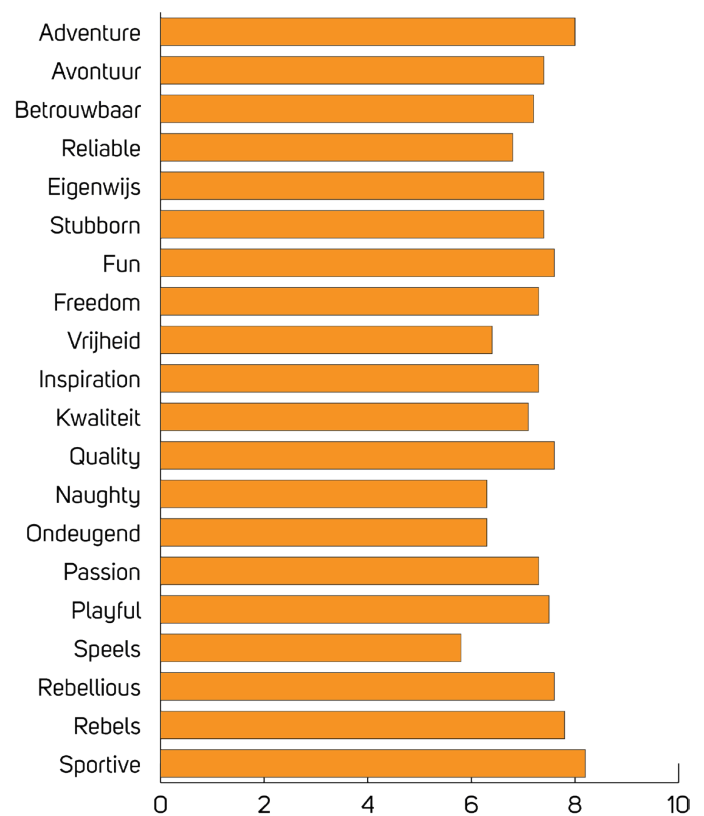

Figure 2.1.2   results brand perception survey employees

The current vision of SINNER's CEO Paul Bijvoet is the following: "Worldwide sell a SINNER product every second". However, this is not a brand vision, but more of a goal. According to Boukje, the younger employees would like to see the vision more aiming towards a trendy brand that fits everyone:

"We see that our products are doing well with the average Dutch person, around 40 years old. Nevertheless, our products are also intended for young people. We want to be seen as a cool and raw brand that is for everyone."

As Boukje stated in the interview, the younger employees would like to see the vision more aiming towards a trendy brand that fits everyone: "there is a SINNER in everyone". This is still not a vision according to the definition of Aaker, 2014, however the younger employees aim to become a brand that attracts younger consumers as well. However, at SINNER, they are still looking for the right direction. They have tried different directions to find out what works for the brand. Bart, brand manager of SINNER, stated:

"We are a brand that likes to do things slightly different than other brands: another kind of campaigns, a photoshoot at *Burning Man* (festival), we tried many things, and not everything worked out well. However, we do want everyone to feel addressed, which is sometimes tricky when our products are sold in both an *ANWB* store and a *Blue Tomato* store. At the *ANWB* they want more standard images, at the action sports store they want something that stands out."

The employees who have been with the company for a while, however, are satisfied with the way SINNER is positioned, because the company is still financially growing. However, some of them are aware of the fact that they do need younger consumers to keep the brand alive. The sales manager of the Benelux, Jildo, has been with SINNER almost from the beginning. He saw the brand developing, but as the employees became older, the buying consumers became older as well. Jildo clarifies:

"We are known for our quality and our affordable price. In the beginning, we were a cool brand, but I would love to see a shift in the target audience. When we can get the younger consumers on board as well, we will stay more relevant. We need to become cool again."

The following quote clarifies how the company originated, and how SINNER's vision is implemented within the company, according to the CEO.

"SINNER originated because I noticed a market that still was unserved. There were already multiple brands that sold high-quality eyewear, but in my opinion, the price for these products was way too high. I thought that I could do the same, but I refused to let the customer pay for marketing purposes. I didn't want to play the same game as these brands that pretend to be "cool". And I built on the idea that the mass is still the biggest resource of money ("Massa is kassa"), so it would still be profitable. We strive to be a company that provides high quality, for a normal and affordable price."

The idea of the brand was born, but the company still needed a name. Bijvoet wanted it to be understandable for everyone, but it had to be catchy as well.

"The name had to be cool, everyone had to understand it, so we wrote down multiple potential names, drank a few beers and in the end, we came

up with SINNER. We liked SINNER because the word has a kind of attitude and multiple meanings. A lot of people think it is American, and that's fine, we don't care. But we like to say: 'SINNER, as I am'. We are not religious, we are just the way we are. So, it is about the idea that you can be who you want to be, and that can be literally anyone. We are all equal. And after all, we are all sinners. Everyone has their SINNER moment every once in a while. For instance, instead of doing this interview at the office, we could have been sitting on the terrace with a beer. We like to be a little bit naughty and rebellious."

When I asked him what he thought consumers would say about his brand, his answer was the following: "I think they would say, I know it by name, it is fairly priced compared to the quality. When people buy our products, they are often surprised in a positive way by the quality they get". My next question was, what he wished the customers would say about SINNER: "That they say SINNER has fashionable, qualitative eyewear". The quality is really important, Bijvoet wants that people are able to do everything they want with their eyewear. Going to a festival, skiing, it must be resistable to some impact. He also mentioned that people used to have one pair of sunglasses, but nowadays people like to have multiple pairs.

"It is the same with sneakers, we used to have one pair of sneakers, now we have like 20 pairs of sneakers. When I wear yellow sneakers for example, maybe I want to match that with a yellow pair of sunglasses. Why should you have one pair of glasses, when it is a product that is on your head, that helps to create your identity?"

When Bijvoet founded SINNER, they started with eyewear. Nowadays the products that they sell is still mainly eyewear, but they added some accessories,

like backpacks and flipflops. In the future, they might minimize the accessories collection and focus on protecting everything around your head and face. "I want to focus on everything around your head that protects against the elements, so eyewear and helmets, but also knitwear".

According to Paul Bijvoet, SINNER strives to be a qualitative brand that sells mainly eyewear for a normal and affordable price. The name describes what the brand stands for, being whoever you want to be, 'As I Am'. Besides being who you want to be products enable the customer to do whatever they want.

MAIN PRODUCT CATEGORIES

SINNER has 10 distinctive product groups, which can be divided into hardware and soft goods. Most of the products are accessories for winter sports, but summer accessories were added recently as well - in order to also serve the market in summer. Pursuing the goal of being constantly profitable, SINNER invested a lot in optical eyewear the past years. On the website, there are three different categories: Winter, Summer, and Optical frames (see figure 2.1.3). In order to provide a clear overview of all products that SINNER offers, the current categories that SINNER offers will be maintained, apart from the Optical frames which will be combined with sunglasses in the Eyewear category.

All of these products have in common that they are designed to protect one against the elements. The winter sports essentials are protecting against the cold weather and snow, the sunglasses protect one's eyes against the sun, and most of their products are also completely water-resistant - the bags, for instance, protect the products inside it against water.

WINTER SPORT ESSENTIALS   SUMMER ACCESSORIES

helmets

socks

knitwear

tshirts

bags

headwear

flipflops

goggles

sunglasses

prescription glasses

EYEWEAR
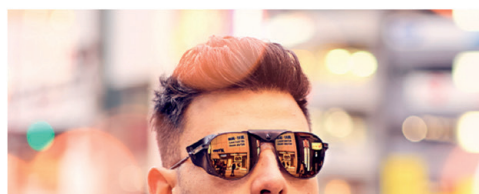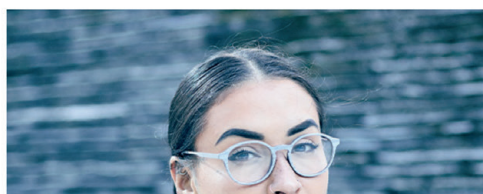
Figure 2.1.3   product categories website SINNER

SALES

Products of SINNER can be found in over 3000 stores worldwide, retail and online. Some of its retail partners are, among others, *Perry Sport*, *Hans Anders*, *ANWB*, *Intersport*, *Sport 2000*, *Beversport*. Online partners are for instance *Bol.com*, *Blue-Tomato*, *Amazon* and *Wehkamp*. Together these partners, the House of SINNER store, and the SINNER webshop are responsible for the total annual revenue of approximately 6,5 million euros.

The past years, there has been a trend of digitalization. Consumers buy their products more and more online. The online purchases of Dutch consumers increased by 7% in 2019 (Thuiswinkel, 2020). However, at the same time, this growth is also flattening; the share of the e-commerce sector in the total retail sector concerned 10.3% in 2019 (Thuiswinkel, 2020). This means that the retail sector is still an important

channel, but that consumers often use a combination of online and retail shopping. SINNER's online sales have seen an increase in revenue last year of 4,4 percent, where the retail revenue decrease with 3,2 percent. Nevertheless, the retail sales still account for 87% of the total revenue.

Only 5% of SINNER's online sales are generated by their own website, sinner.eu, whereas for example, *bol.com* is responsible for almost 53% of SINNER's online sales. This could mean that consumers are not fully aware of the brand itself, but when they do need for example a pair of sunglasses, they find the brand at *bol.com* while scrolling through the offer.

OWN DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS   EXTERNAL DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

House of SINNER (brandstore)

Online sinner.eu

Independent retailers

Online platforms

Besides online, SINNER has a lot of retail partners, in almost every regular sports store you can find the brand. *ANWB, Perry Sport & Aktiesport* are their biggest sellers - these stores are responsible for more than 17% of all sales, online as well as in retail.

In 2019 there were in total (online and retail) more than 600.000 SINNER products sold, from which only 1% was sold through SINNER's own website and flagship store.

Currently, SINNER is positioned as a sports and lifestyle brand. When looking at the sales of the products, 40,8% of all the products that were sold in 2019 were sunglasses. And 32,1% of all SINNER sales are products for winter sports, among other helmets, goggles and gloves.

more than
600.000
SINNER PRODUCTS sold in 2019

40,8%
of all those products
WERE SUNGLASSES

32,1%

of all SINNER's sales
are products for

WINTER SPORTS

CONCLUSION INTERNAL ANALYSIS

This first part of the analysis creates insight into how the brand was originated and how the company works today. SINNER started as a sports eyewear brand, and however, they describe themselves as an international lifestyle brand; they mainly sell sports eyewear. Most people only know SINNER for their winter sports products and are not even aware of the other product groups, like optical glasses and bags. When it comes to sales, more than half of the sales are sunglasses and goggles. Besides that, almost one-third of their sales are products for winter sports. The CEO stated that eventually, they want to focus on products that protect everything around the head and might get rid of some accessories. Within the company, it is unclear what the brand is about, there is a lack of vision, and the employees would like to target younger consumers as well. At the same time, consumers could be confused, because the brand does not have a clear positioning. In the external analysis, the product groups and its competitors will be analysed, so it will become apparent in which field SINNER is operating.

A few learnings from this chapter are concluded:
- SINNER strives to be a company that makes high-quality products and sells these for a fair and affordable price.
- The brand SINNER is currently not clearly defined. It lacks a vision and according to the employees, the current target audience is not the actual buying consumer group.

This part showcases an overview of the competitive landscape of SINNER. After the competitor analysis it will become more clear how SINNER can stand out from its competitors.

2.2 EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

SINNER is active in a lot of different product categories. The three categories described in the company analysis are used for the competitor analysis. The competitor analysis is conducted, to see where SINNER should position itself in the market. Currently, SINNER describes itself as a lifestyle brand, but many consumers see it as a winter sports brand. SINNER can be found in multiple markets, with different needs for each market. In this part, I will give an overview of the different competitors per market.

The competition is quite significant for SINNER because it offers such a variety of products. There is no other brand that sells the same range of products that is a direct competitor of SINNER. SINNER describes itself as a sports lifestyle brand. The company offers products for sports, but also equipment for daily life. The products for sports, especially for winter sports, are easy to categorize, and there are many other brands that do offer the same kind of products. The products for daily life, mainly sunglasses and optical glasses, also have many competitors - that totally differ from the competitors that SINNER has for sports. In this way SINNER is unique: no other competitor has the same range of product offerings and categories. In order to find interesting competitors, it is necessary to look at the different product categories. To gain more information about who SINNER's competitors are, I conducted an interview with Jildo - SINNER's sales manager for the entire Benelux. Next, I will discuss the different categories on different levels. The competitors from the first and second level are derived from the interview with Jildo and the remaining levels are based on desk research.

COMPETITOR LEVELS

The different products from SINNER are divided into three categories: winter sport collection, summer accessories, and eyewear. There is some overlap between these categories. To examine which competitor is a menace for SINNER, the competitors are analyzed per category on different levels. SINNER is placed in the centre, surrounded by competitors who compete on the same product form. The second circle contains competitors - with similar products - these competitors compete within the same product category. The third layer contains generic competitors - competitors who fulfil the same need as SINNER. The last circle, the fourth layer, contains budget competitors. This layer only shows competitors who match with the market as well, however not offering the same products or product quality but working on the same price level. Please note that the list of competitors is not exhaustive; due to the scope of this research, I have limited the number of competitors to this selection.

Additionally, I selected three competitors from different layers for a more extensive analysis, to find out how SINNER differs from those competitors and how SINNER can stand out from its competitors. These competitors (on product form) do not all focus on the same product categories as SINNER but offer products in a similar way or are active in the same market.

Winter sports essentials

Diving into the competition layers for winter sports essentials, it becomes clear that in the first layer - that of *product form competition* - SINNER is defined as a winter sports brand who sells everything one needs on
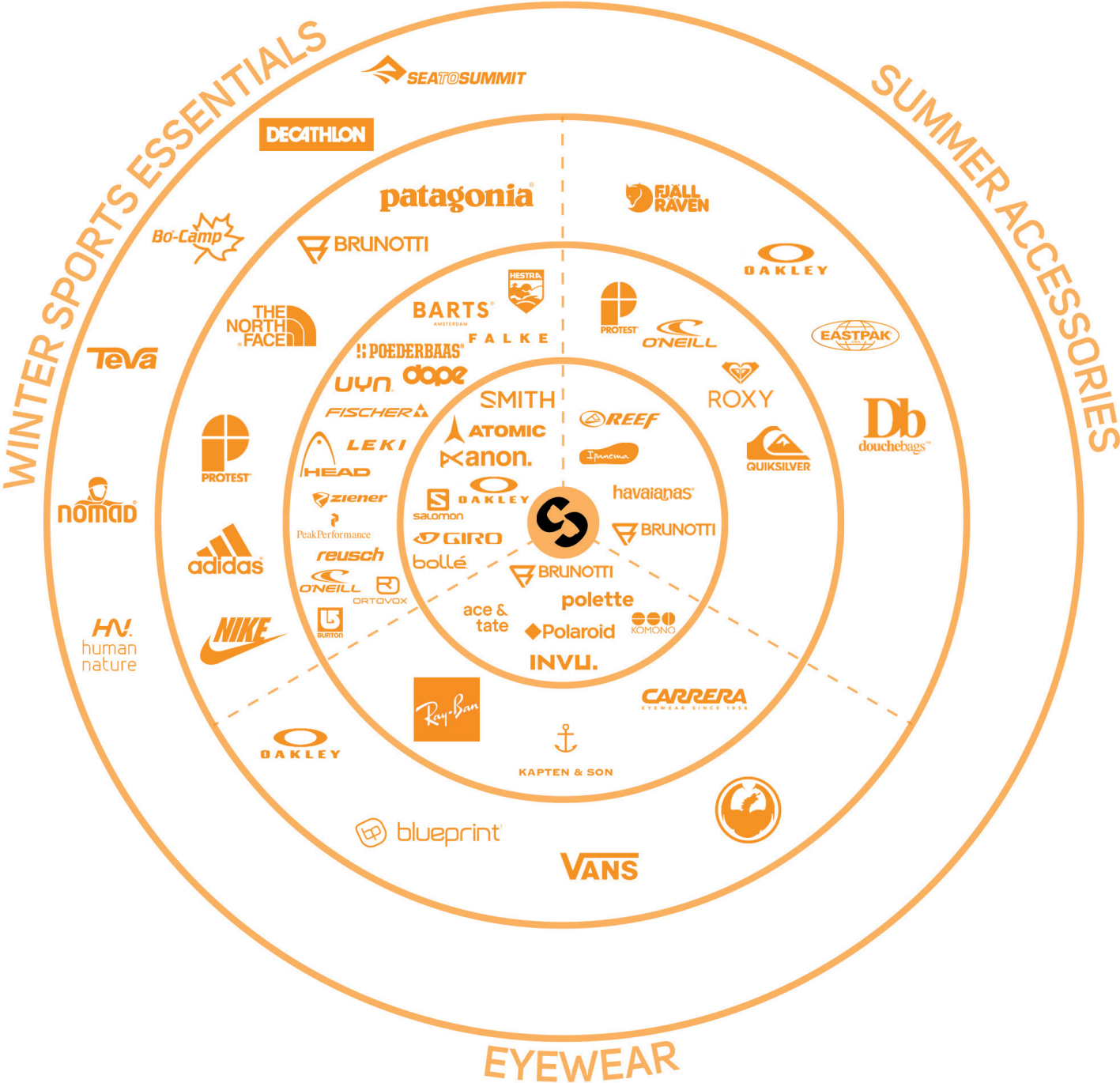
Figure 2.2.1 competitor levels

The North Face: *The North Face* is an American outdoor clothing company: it offers outdoor clothing, footwear, and equipment. The brand strives to "provide the best gear for athletes and the modern-day explorer". Similar to *Oakley*, *The North Face* has a strong black and white brand identity - but unlike *Oakley*, *The North Face* focusses on both men and women. On their Instagram profile, it tries to tell a story with the content. Besides posting pictures of (models wearing) the products, it also shows pictures of nature with text and quotes.
Interesting is that *The North Face* was not perceived that "cool" about 30 years ago (Dazed, 2016). The brand was known for practical outdoor clothes that did not have to be trendy, just functional. Nowadays, *The North Face* has taken on a level of subcultural significance (Dazed, 2016) and created new brand associations, but in the essence, it is still the same outdoor clothing brand from 30 years ago, and kept a lot of the same values.

a winter sport, except for the ski products itself - like skis and ski clothing. Direct competitors are *Atomic*, *Salomon*, *Smith*, *Oakley*, *Anon*, *Giro* & *Bolle* - where *Atomic* & *Salomon* both sell alpine equipment as well. *Smith*, *Anon*, *Giro* & *Bolle* are brands that sell ski helmets, goggles, and some other accessories. All these brands are bigger than SINNER and are well known within the ski market. *Oakley*, also a well-known brand selling high quality - however really high priced - offers ski goggles, helmets and eyewear. *Atomic* and *Salomon* are actually specialized in ski production, but they added qualitative helmets and goggles to their product assortment a few years ago. Because they are well known and also active in the ski market, they are big competitors for SINNER.

Oakley: Similar to SINNER, *Oakley* sells the same kind of products as SINNER, (sports) sunglasses, ski goggles, helmets, backpacks, etcetera. Apart from selling the same kind of products, *Oakley* is often named by the participants in the interviews as a brand that they compared with SINNER. In order to find out how SINNER can stand out from competitors as *Oakley*, a deeper study of this specific competitor is conducted. *Oakley* is a Californian brand, a subsidiary of the Italian corporate Luxottica. *Oakley* develops and manufactures sports equipment and lifestyle pieces, mainly eyewear, but also apparel and backpacks. The mission statement is: "Provide products that are superior in quality, safety and affordability in a sustainable manner" and the vision is: "Be a leader in the race toward sustainability in the eyewear industry".

When looking at the website of *Oakley*, it has a masculine and strong visual identity, and uses a lot of black and white. Although *Oakley* mainly focus on athletes, it uses lifestyle imagery as well and it seems that it shifts focus a bit more to lifestyle. It seems that it tries to target more on men than women, however, products for both are offered.
Besides the webpage, the Instagram page is analyzed as well. It focusses on people, not products, however on almost all of the pictures you can find *Oakley's* products.

In the second layer, that of ***product category comparison***, one finds competitors who also offer products needed for winter sport, but not particular products that SINNER sells. *Head*, *Fischer* and *Burton* are brands who sell ski or snowboard equipment - the material you need for the sports itself, like the skis and snowboards, poles, ski-boots, et cetera. *Peak Performance*, *Ortovox*, *O'Neill*, and *Dope* mainly sell ski clothes, and besides that, they offer a few accessories like gloves. The other brands in the second layer like *Hestra*, *Ziener*, *Reutsch*, *Barts*, *UYN*, and *Poederbaas* are specialized in one or two products. Hestra is a high-quality gloves brand, just like *Reutsch* and *Ziener*. The Dutch brands *Barts* and *Poederbaas* are known for knitwear - both within the same price range - and do not offer any other winter sports products. These competitors mainly differ from SINNER as they are specialized in one product or offer the winter sports equipment itself. These brands could become bigger competitors for SINNER if they would add helmets and ski goggles to their assortment.

The third layer - ***generic competition*** - consists of products that fulfil the same need of customers as SINNER does. This includes brands who sell sport products as well, but it could concern summer sports or other sports too. *Nike*, *Adidas* - and needless to say there are many more brands like these - offer sports clothing for running or for fitness. *The North Face* and *Patagonia* do sell outerwear but are more focused on outdoor sports, such as hiking. *Brunotti* and *Protest* are brands who focus mostly on surf and beach sports.
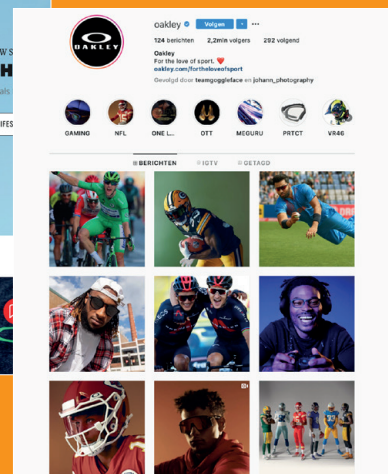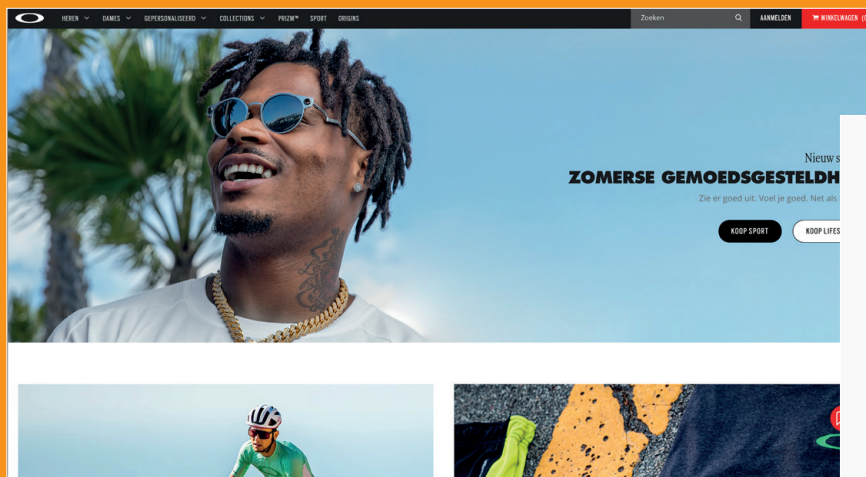
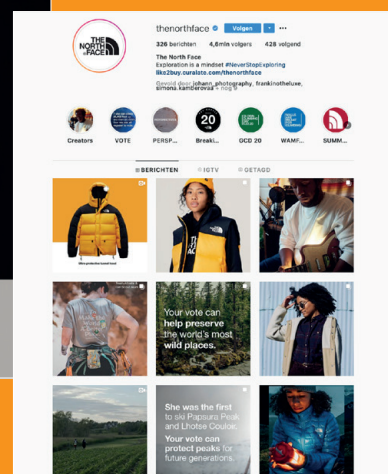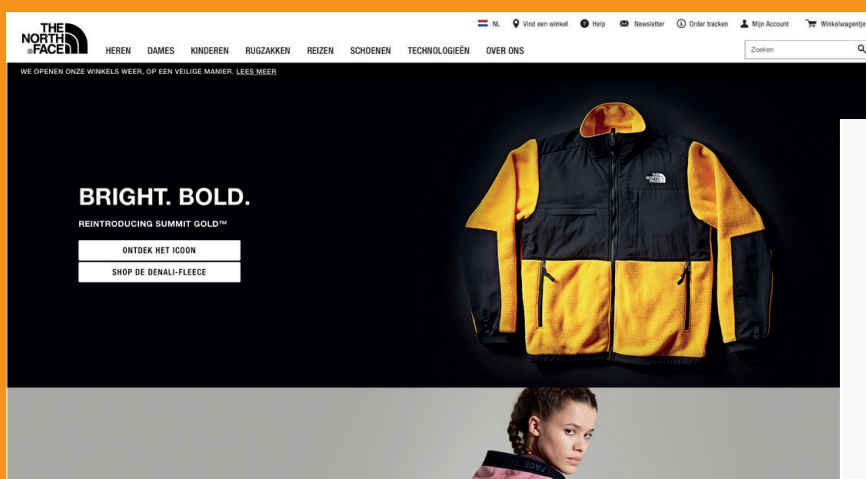Figure 2.2.2 Website & Instagram Oakley
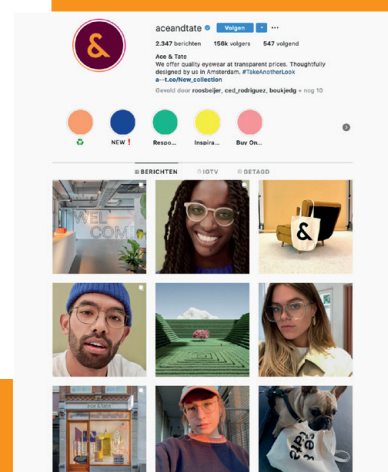

Figure 2.2.3 Website & Instagram The North Face

Figure 2.2.2 Website & Instagram Ace & Tate

The fourth layer is referred to as **budget competition**. These are brands that sell lifestyle and sports products which the target audience of SINNER could buy, and these brands are direct competition for the amount of money they can spend. SINNER offers products starting at a price around €20, up until approximately €130 for winter sport essentials. This is a strange layer of competition since SINNER offers high quality for a lower price. The brands from the fourth layer are mainly outdoor lifestyle brands that focus on ease of use and quality - for an affordable price.

In other words, SINNER has many competitors who all bring different values. It is quite a competitive field, although it depends per product category whether the competitors are a real threat. Nevertheless, offering high-quality products for a lower price is unique for a sport/lifestyle brand and this could, in fact, create a competitive advantage. Yet, the way SINNER positions itself is not unique enough to stand out from the above-mentioned crowd.

The same layers can be applied to summer accessories and eyewear. There is some overlap between the different categories, and since SINNER offers most of the products during the winter season, this competitor analysis together with the analysis of eyewear will be mainly used. Nonetheless, the analysis of summer accessories will be briefly addressed as well.

Eyewear

SINNER has an enormous collection of eyewear - from sunglasses and ski goggles to prescription glasses. For eyewear, the competitor analysis is also applied. In this section, the analysis of eyewear is shortly summarized. The first layer contains brands that mainly focus on eyewear, on prescription glasses as well as on sunglasses. According to Jildo from SINNER, *Polaroid*, *Brunotti*, and *INVU* are their biggest

competitors, since these brands sell the same kind of eyewear. *Ace & Tate* and *Polette* are brands more focused on prescription glasses but can be classified in the same price category as SINNER. *Komono* belongs to the same price category as well, but mainly focuses on sunglasses.

The second layer contains brands that belong to a slightly higher price category, like *Ray-Ban* and *Carrera*. *Kapten & Son* focuses more on sunglasses but sells other accessories as well.

The third layer exists of brands that sell eyewear as well, but these brands are more specialized in sports eyewear, like *Oakley* for instance, or only offer eyewear and goggles for snow sports.

Ace & Tate: *Ace & Tate* is a Dutch eyewear brand that offers qualitative eyewear frames - for an affordable price. The brand allows people to continuously update its eyewear, by offering simple prescription frames. The brand identity is considered minimal and clean. Unlike on the website - where almost only black and white is used - on its Instagram, slightly more colour can be found. The focus is on transparency in pricing, but besides that, with its content *Ace & Tate* tries to inspire both men and women, and all kind of people.

Summer Accessories

For the summer category, SINNER has a lot of competitors that are significantly larger companies. For example, SINNER does not offer beachwear and is not mainly focusing on the summer category of products. In the first layer, brands that sell the same products as SINNER are incorporated - products such as flip flops and sandals. *Reef*, *Ipanema*, and *Havaianas* only sell flip flops and are well known for this. Besides footwear, *Brunotti* also sells eyewear and bags. The second layer classifies brands that sell the same type of products as SINNER, but are more focused on other products. For example, *O'Neill*, *Roxy*, *Quiksilver*, and *Protest* are brands that sell beach clothing and have a small category in footwear or bags. The brands in the third layer concern brands that are more specialized in a certain product category. *Douchebags* is specialized in high-quality water-resistant bags, but the brand is not very well known. *Eastpak* and *Fjallraven* are well-known brands offering a lot of different bags and backpacks and are a competitor to SINNER because SINNER does not sell that many bags and is more specialized in eyewear. *Oakley*, again, is a more premium brand, that comes back in every category, but in a higher price segment than SINNER.

The fourth layer for eyewear and summer essentials is not analysed in this research, since this layer concerns budget competition. The outcome is comparable with winter sports essentials.

CONCLUSION EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

The big competitors such as *The North Face*, *Peak Performance*, *Ray-Ban* and *Oakley* are often higher priced than SINNER, however, their focus is also more on athletes, high-end customers, and extreme adventurous sports. The competitors that are in the same price range as SINNER, like *Ace & Tate*, *Polaroid* as well as *Decathlon*, are more basic brands that have a minimal brand identity. SINNER stands out from its competitors in its product offerings, and the company offers a unique combination of equipment - designed to protect one against the elements. However, a lot of these competitors are more qualitative, bigger, and better known than SINNER – and therefore SINNER needs an additional unique positioning, in order to stand out.

Based on the analysis of all the above-mentioned competitors, the following insight is generated.

In order to stand out from its competitors, a positioning should be created for SINNER - in which it is not focussing on the high-end segment, but more on the middle segment: the regular customer. Furthermore, SINNER can stand out from competitors that are in the same middle segment, by creating a unique positioning statement.

This subchapter presents the consumer analysis and their results. To gain understanding about how the brand is perceived by consumers, semi-structured interviews were conducted. By defining the desired target audience, it becomes more clear how SINNER can connect with the younger target audience as well.

2.3 CONSUMER RESEARCH

Until now, SINNER has described its target audience as youthful, intelligent, and tech-savvy, aged between 18 and 35 years old. However, the largest consumer group - according to the CEO and the interviewed employees - that currently buys SINNER's products is a bit older, around 30 to 55 years old. Furthermore, SINNER would like to connect the younger audience to their brand as well. According to the CEO, their ideal target group is between 20-40 years old, however, an older audience is not a problem. Therefore, more information about how the brand is perceived by the desired target audience is needed. The aim of the consumer research is to gain insight into the values and needs of the desired target audience and how it perceives SINNER as a brand.

Therefore, the two research questions for the consumer analysis are the following:
1. What is the perception of the brand SINNER according to the desired target audience?
2. How well do the desired target audience know the brand?

SINNER is not having problems with their sales, however, the actual buying customers - the older generations - are not the audience that SINNER is targeting. In order to reach younger consumers as well, an understanding is needed of why the desired target audience is not buying SINNER's products.

INTERVIEW SET-UP

In order to gain more information about how SINNER is perceived by its audience, and about the brand associations consumers have with SINNER, ten semi-structured interviews were held.

METHOD

I conducted ten semi-structured interviews in order to gain insight into the consumer's perception of SINNER. Most of the selected participants are friends or acquaintances of mine. All participants are aged between 24 and 39 years old - since 20 to 40 years old is the desired target group. The group consisted of six women and four men.

The interviews were held to gain insight into the awareness of consumers about the brand and in their associations with SINNER. If respondents were not familiar with SINNER, the website and/or a catalogue was shown and the interviewees were asked what their impression of the brand was. The semi-structured interviews were personal and there was room for informal conversations - in order to dig deeper and get more honest responses (Birks & Mills, 2015). Only the last question was a rating question, where the participants were asked to rate a word or value to the extent, they thought it fits the brand. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix C.

The topics discussed in the interview are the following:
•   Brief introduction of the participant; the demographics and their experience with (winter) sports
•   Familiarity with the brand
•   Overall impression of the brand
•   Brand characteristics
•   Consideration of purchase
•   Shopping behaviour in general
•   Rating values that match the brand

PROCEDURE

Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes up to half an hour. The interviews were all conducted in Dutch, in an informal way. The interviews were held in person or by phone and were all recorded and transcribed. Two of the participants have worked as a ski teacher and have a lot of knowledge about different types of ski goggles and sports sunglasses. Since I worked as a ski teacher for four seasons, I know a lot of ski teachers. I decided not to interview more than two ski teachers because they might have too much knowledge and therefore are not objective enough. An overview of the participants can be found in figure 2.3.1. In the first column the number of the participant is displayed. The second colomn shows the gender, the third the age of the participant. The fourth column tells whether the participant is sportive or not. When the icon is fully black, the participant is not sportive. When the icon is half filled, the participant is semi sportive, completely orange the participant is really sportive. The same goes for the next column, the familiarity with with wintersport. The last column is a yes or no answer, when the SINNER logo is orange, the participants do own a product.

	gender	age	sportive	familiar with winter sports	owns a product
P1	♀	27			
P2	♀	36			
P3	♂	25			
P4	♀	32			
P5	♂	39			
P6	♂	24			
P7	♀	24			
P8	♀	25			
P9	♀	39			
P10	♂	25			

Figure 2.3.1 overview participants

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

After the interviews were conducted, all of the recordings of the interviews were transcribed. Thereupon, all the transcriptions were analysed, using principles of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) - since the research question was very explorative and open-ended. The codebook of the interviews can be found in Appendix E. To provide insight into the results of the interviews, relevant quotes are grouped in subjects. The introduction and demographics of every participant can be found in Appendix D and in figure 2.3.1.

Brand awareness

After the introduction, the participants were asked if they were familiar with the brand. Two of them never heard of the brand, five of them knew the product or even used to own products and three of the participants have products that they still use. Interesting was that almost all of them were not aware of the fact that they offered more than just ski optics.

> "I think it is a modern brand and I link it to sport activities. But I just saw on the website that they also offer normal sunglasses and optical frames and that surprised me." (P2)

Brand perception

One of the first questions the participants were asked was if they could elaborate on their (first) impression of the brand. The participants who were not familiar with SINNER, or wanted to see more of the brand, were shown the catalogue, the website or Instagram.

> "I think the brand is for alternative people, because I don't see any 'ordinary' models in the picture, and for me, this is a bit confusing. The fact that you wear six earrings, makes that you cannot exercise or sport at the same time. I see it as a sports brand, but they use the wrong images, the wrong people - with piercings and tattoos." (P1)

> "For me, it is a sports brand that has always been there. I was not aware of the fact that they sell sunglasses too, that surprised me. When I think of SINNER, I think of skiing and winter sports. In my mind, I see a ski goggle, with a black band and the white oval logo. I immediately feel like I want to ski down a mountain again." (P2)

Where P2 links the brand to sports, P1 has trouble with the models that are not representing sports. P2 recalls memories and perceives the brand in a positive way, connected to winter sports and skiing, but still remembers the old logo (see figure 2.3.2), like P6. Others see the brand less positive; they perceive the brand as not attractive.

> *"The first thing I can think of is a ski goggle, with a strap that has the SINNER logo on it. That oval thing."*
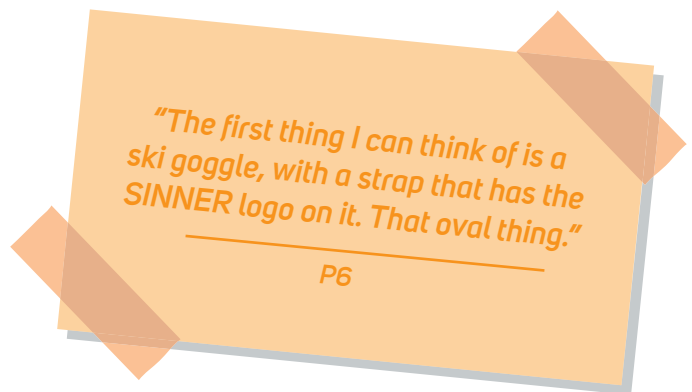>
> *P6*

Figure 2.3.2 SINNER logo before 2006

"Um, decent. When I see it in an optics or sunglasses store, I probably won't directly approach it. It is also not very attractive, in my opinion." (P4)

"I consider it a meaningless brand because I don't see them [anywhere]. Not even on my Instagram, for example. I assume that they also want new customers, who also buy other brands, or are interested in glasses, but I don't see anything passing by." (P5)

Many participants have an outdated image of the brand. Whereas P2 and P6 described the old logo, P4 and P5 are probably thinking of the same old logo because they have not seen the brand in the past few years. There was an interesting moment with one of the participants, where he first called the brand boring:

"Boring. Boring, because they don't stand out, the models they use for ski goggles, for instance, are not really special, and I would not buy it [the ski goggles] myself right now. (P3)

After seeing the catalogue, he carefully changed his opinion into:

"I actually see cool products. The goggles are different than I thought. I actually thought that it was more boring, at least, that's how I remembered it. I wasn't aware of the fact that they have more products than helmets, goggles, and eyewear." (P3)

Many participants were not aware of the fact that the logo has changed and the products as well. They have not noticed the (transformation of the) brand in the past years, which could mean that SINNER has not been as visible or distinctive in the past few years.

"It always looks qualitative, but most of all very functional. Not cool or fancy, but a brand that does what it should do." (P7)

P7 is aware of the quality of SINNER and would choose the brand because she appreciates its value. Most of the participants did not mention their impression and opinion about the brand, like P4 and P5, but mentioned that the brand recalled a memory instead, like P2, or they shared their experience with the brand. When respondents did not give their opinion of SINNER, I asked them again to elaborate on their overall opinion of the brand. P7, for example, then mentioned the following:

"Qualitative but not very attractive. But again, that is based on the image that I still have in my head, which is very, very old. Outdated." (P7)

Three out of ten interviewees still have a SINNER product. Some of the participants used to have SINNER products when they were children. This also explains why some of the participants remember the old logo and associate SINNER with decent and outdated.

Brand personality

In order to get a deeper understanding of the brand perception that consumers have, the personality of SINNER was also addressed. According to Aaker (1997) consumers tend to assign human characteristics to brands and products. Describing a brand as a personality can help to formulate a positioning. I wanted to know how the consumers saw the personality of SINNER, in order to create a better understanding of the current positioning and associations. The answers were diverse and broad; some participants thought the brand was boring, others perceived it as qualitative and sportive. Later on, in the interview, the participants were asked to rate words that, according to them, match or do not match the brand image of SINNER. This part of the interview was

conducted to get a better view of how the respondents perceive the brand. At the beginning of the interview, some participants found it difficult to be honest about the brand when their perception was negative. However, with the last question, it became easier for them to be honest.

" "I would describe SINNER as... can I say that... boring? For me, all of these pictures are like stock images, not personal at all. It lacks personality." (P4)

"Decent. When I think of SINNER as a skier, I see someone in front of me, who skies properly and parallel, but who would never do a trick in between, or who would ski outside of the slopes."

P7

These quotes from P4 and P7 indicate that SINNER is perceived differently than is intended by the brand itself. The brand is decent and perhaps even boring, according to these participants. Other participants formulated their perception of SINNER more positive. Positive aspects that stood out are the following:
- The brand is qualitative
- It recalls the memory of ski holidays and winter sports
- Multiple frame options, lots of colours, which is nice on the slopes

Negative aspects that were mentioned:
- The brand is outdated, sometimes even called boring
- The brand lacks a kind of personality, participants could not identify themselves with the models used in the photos.

To gain a better understanding of the needs of the consumer, I divided different values into categories. I ordered participants to rank different characteristics from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the perception "does not fit the brand at all", and 10 reflecting the notion of "perfectly matches the brand". An overview of the results can be found in figure 2.3.3.
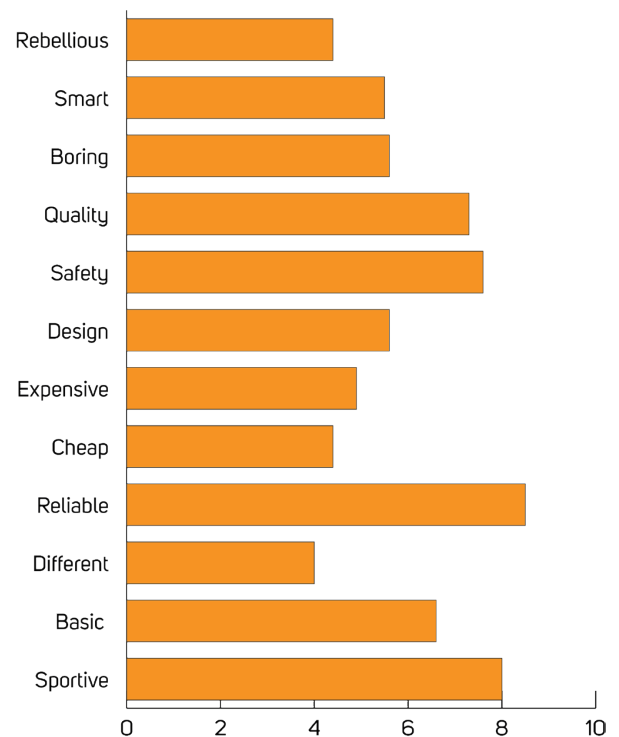

Figure 2.3.3   results brand perception consumers

Where the participants in the interview at first were afraid to answer honestly what they thought of the brand, with the rating assignment they did not have as much of a problem with honesty anymore.

> G: "Boring?"
> P7: "That is mean to say... Seven."

Consideration of purchase

Most of the participants did not own a SINNER product. They were asked if they consider buying a product of the brand if they needed something. Some were curious and would consider buying a product.

> "Imagine you come into a store where they sell multiple brands, and there are fifteen brands that you don't know and there are SINNER products as well, then I would probably choose SINNER, because I know it is qualitative". (P7)

After taking a look at the website or in the catalogue of SINNER, participants saw multiple products that caught their attention, however, they stated that solely 'a nice product' would not be enough to proceed to purchase.

> "I've seen the new collection and there was one pair of glasses that looked good. But it hasn't convinced me yet, so something has to be done that will convince me to buy it." (P10)

General attitude towards brands

To obtain an understanding of why people buy branded products, I also asked general questions about branded products. The main reason why the participants buy branded products is because of the quality that they expect from brands. Most of them try to avoid huge logos on products, regardless which brand; it's the experience they have with the brand that counts.

> "It's not necessarily about having a brand on it, but I think it's important that it is of good quality." (P7)

Needs and values

In order to define the desired target audience, the needs and values of the consumers have to be determined. These needs and values can be divided into several categories:

Functional needs
The functional needs are needs that are related to the product performance of the brand. These are the needs the consumers will firstly be looking for.

Emotional needs
Emotional needs are the underlying needs that can help to create a relationship with the customer.

Functional needs
- *high quality*
- *originality*
- *sportive designs*
- *no big logo's*
- *reasonable pricing*

Emotional needs
- *identify with the brand*
- *able to self-express*
- *right ethical sense*
- *feel safe*

Consumer values
Consumer values are based on the personal life of the consumer, in other words, what the consumer values in life. These values can be used in order to define the target audience.

Brand values
Brand values are the aspects which consumers value when buying products from a brand

Personal values
• Sportive
• Self-expression
• Ambition
• Freedom
• Convience

Brand values
• Quality
• Safety
• Originality
• Style

CONCLUSION INTERVIEWS

Ten interviews were conducted in order to find out how consumers perceive the brand SINNER. To conclude, the main findings from the interviews are the following:

•   In general, consumers perceive SINNER as outdated, and some of the participants even consider the brand as 'boring'.

•   None of the participants considered the brand as rebellious. Instead, most of them regarded it as a basic brand - which they would recommend to a friend who is going on a winter sports holiday for the first time.

•   The consumer perception of the brand is different than intended.

•   Consumers are not able to identify themselves with the brand and with the models used for the imagery.

CONSUMER OVERVIEW

Consumer segmentation is a method to divide consumers into groups of individuals who have common characteristics (Shopify, 2020). In this way, insights can be gained into the needs of the consumer - and how these can be met. Based on the interviews with consumers and conversations with the employees, two customer segments based on the desired target audience are created.

The first segment, the playful explorer, is the translation of the desired target audience. This segment is based on the consumer interviews. These consumers are young adults, aged between 20 and 30 years old. They are young and value their freedom, they do not have any boundaries. However, these young adults want to be taken seriously, and they are rather ambitious, sportive, playful, and impulsive. They search for products with which they can express themselves, and they will update their style as often as necessary. Moreover, the playful explorer looks for brands that are original, but is also following trends. Consumers who belong to this segment do not appreciate big logos directly visible on the products, and they do not want to be associated with brands that are meant for the mass. The brands they purchase need to do well in sustainability and ethical issues as well.

The second segment, the smart enjoyer, is the other desired target customer. However, this segment comes a bit closer to the current target audience. The smart enjoyer has a busy work life and does no longer has the freedom off being young that the playful explorer still has. Nevertheless, consumers in this category still value their freedom, but they are more focussed on spending time with their family. They search for products that are high-quality and conscious, and they are more aware of sustainability. The smart enjoyer still seeks for a unique product to express him or herself, however, this product should be more timeless.

PLAYFUL EXPLORER

Age range: 20-30 years old

Background: Young adults, students or graduates who just started working, living in urban centres - who are sportive and yearly go on winter sports holiday.

Values: Playful, self-expression, friendship, and freedom

Aspirations: Enjoying life, travel, and be successful

Habits: The playful explorer has a limited budget, but does care a lot about style and looks. They follow trends, and when needed, they will update their style and purchase the latest technology. The playful explorer seeks for a unique product, in order to express him or herself. They are characterised by impulsive purchases, for instance by buying multiple sunglasses.

SMART ENJOYER

Age range: 30-40 years old

Background: Adults with children, who are employed and live in suburbs. They are known for having busy lives, going on a ski holiday with the kids for the first time.

Values: Conscious, focused on family time, and convenience

Aspirations: Seeking balance by creating a stable environment for the children

Habits: In order to provide a stable environment for the children, the smart enjoyer rather saves than spends money. When in need of something, he or she will try to purchase products that last long, both quality and in style. Items will be reused by siblings; therefore, the products need to be somewhat timeless.

Short questionnaire

After conducting the interviews and reviewing the outcomes, I became curious about how many sunglasses or prescription glasses the respondents own. It was clear why consumers buy branded products - because of quality. That was one of the aspects that the CEO mentioned as well, but he also mentioned that there is an upcoming trend of people owning more than one pair of glasses, likewise as they own multiple pairs of sneakers, to match with their outfits. In order to get answers on this question, I conducted a short survey amongst my instagram followers. Pictures of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix F.

Sunglasses
98 people responded to the first question: 'How many sunglasses do you own?'. All of the participants were between 20 and 35 years old which represents the age of the desired target group.

Prescription glasses
The second question was for prescription glasses. I asked people to answer only if they have prescription glasses. 43 people participated this time.

Conclusion questionnaire

The questionnaire was held more as a test, in order to confirm if consumers actually own more than one pair of (sun)glasses. Concerning prescription glasses, 67% of the participants answered they own just one pair. This makes sense, since prescription glasses are quite expensive and used on a regular basis - rather than as an accessory. The responses to the amount of sunglasses respondents owned were more interesting -, and this confirms what Paul Bijvoet stated.
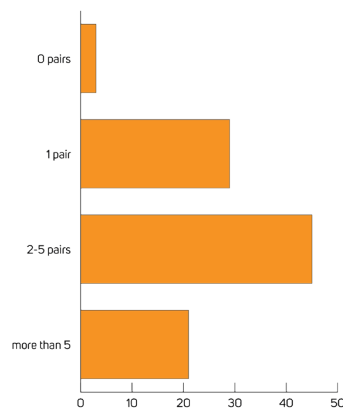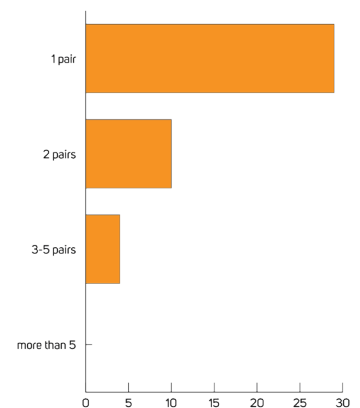

Figure 2.3.4   sunglasses   *Figure 2.3.4   prescription glasses*

The goal of this project is to create a clear vision for the brand SINNER. Understanding the brand in its current state is important, in order to define the brand identity, and to connect this image to the right target consumers. This chapter presents the findings from a literature review about branding, provides insight into how to build a strong brand, and examines how SINNER positioned itself in the past few years.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

BRANDS AND BRANDING

There are multiple definitions of a brand and of branding, and in order to get a better understanding of these terms, I will cover several definitions. In his book *The New Strategic Brand Management*, Kapferer states that the reason there are so many definitions of branding is due to the fact that many experts disagree on the definition. One well-known definition is the one from the *American Marketing Association*: "A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers." (Beverland, 2018; American Marketing Association). In *Brand Management*, Beverland explains that recent definitions have shifted from defining a brand as a logo to differentiate products and services from competitors. Given this, Beverland defines a brand as follows:

> *An intangible, symbolic marketplace resource imbued with meaning by stakeholders and the broader context in which it is embedded that enables users to project their identity goal(s) to one or more audiences.*

Whereas Beverland perceives a brand as a vehicle for stakeholders to reach their audience in the desired manner, Kapferer (2008) focuses more on the relationship with a consumer. According to him, a brand is a set of added perceptions, created by assets in the mind and hearts of consumers. Comparatively, Aaker (2014) states that a brand is an organisation's promise to the customer, delivering more than only functional benefits - for example emotional, self-expressive, and social benefits. He defines it as *"a journey, an evolving relationship based on the perceptions and experiences that a customer has every time he or she connects to the brand"* (Aaker, 2014).

For SINNER, it is essential to create this relationship with the consumer, to add meaning and associations to the brand. People like to show their identity with brands and products. Someone driving an *Audi* or *BMW*, might be a different person, with a different personality, than someone who is driving a *Peugeot*. This also applies when one is skiing in the mountains; someone who is wearing a *Peak Performance* jacket might be more into freeskiing (and dedicated to skiing in general) than someone wearing a *Decathlon* jacket. Likewise, someone who wears a *Burton* jacket is often an experienced snowboarder. With branding, a company tries to create this shared belief about a brand. It is a process where the actions of a brand can be tailored to the actions of a customer - and the other way around - so they become mutually related to each other. Brands are the realisation of this symbolic meaning, and branding is the process where these meanings are created (van der Vorst, 2004).

Because SINNER has been around for almost 25 years, consumers already have created different associations with the brand. However, there are many consumers who do not know SINNER that well or at all. Consumers that do know the brand find it hard to understand the characteristics of the brand. This is why the process of designing and maintaining a brand - branding - is important. Therefore, in this thesis, the brand SINNER will be redefined. With branding, strong associations can be created for SINNER, and in this way, more consumers can identify themselves with the brand and the relationship between the brand and consumers can become stronger. In the long term, consumers will associate SINNER with their own created emotional benefits and develop a better understanding of the brand.

BRAND STRENGTHENING

The question is, how can the brand SINNER become stronger? There are different ways to measure a brand's equity. The definition of brand equity is, according to Aaker (1996), a set of assets that are connected to a brand's name - and that attaches the value provided by a product or service to a customer. It consists of two aspects: *brand awareness* and *brand image*. When a brand has positive brand equity, the brand will make a difference to its users in a positive way. For this thesis, the focus lies on customer-based brand equity, defined by Keller (1993) as follows: *"The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of that brand"*. The concept of customer-based brand equity provides a view of what brand equity is and how it should be used to make a stronger brand (Keller, 2011).

Brand awareness

Brand equity can be created through a clear brand identity (Beverland, 2018). Clear brand identities will be recognized and recalled by a customer - and therefore, 'Recognition' and 'Recall' are the two aspects of brand awareness, as can be seen in figure 2.4.1. Brand recognition is to what extent consumers recognize the brand as one to which they already have been exposed to (Keller, 2011); so for example, if one goes to a sunglasses store, would he or she be able to recognize SINNER between all the other brands as one they have seen before? Brand recall is the ability to connect the category to the brand. An example of brand recall is consumers mentioning SINNER when asked to name brands within the category ski goggles (Beverland, 2018).

Brand image

In order to evaluate the brand's image or how the customer sees the brand, brand associations can be measured. In reality, measuring a brand's image usually implies measuring the extent to which customers recognise and value the associations that have been developed as part of the brand identity (Beverland, 2018). To create favourable, strong,
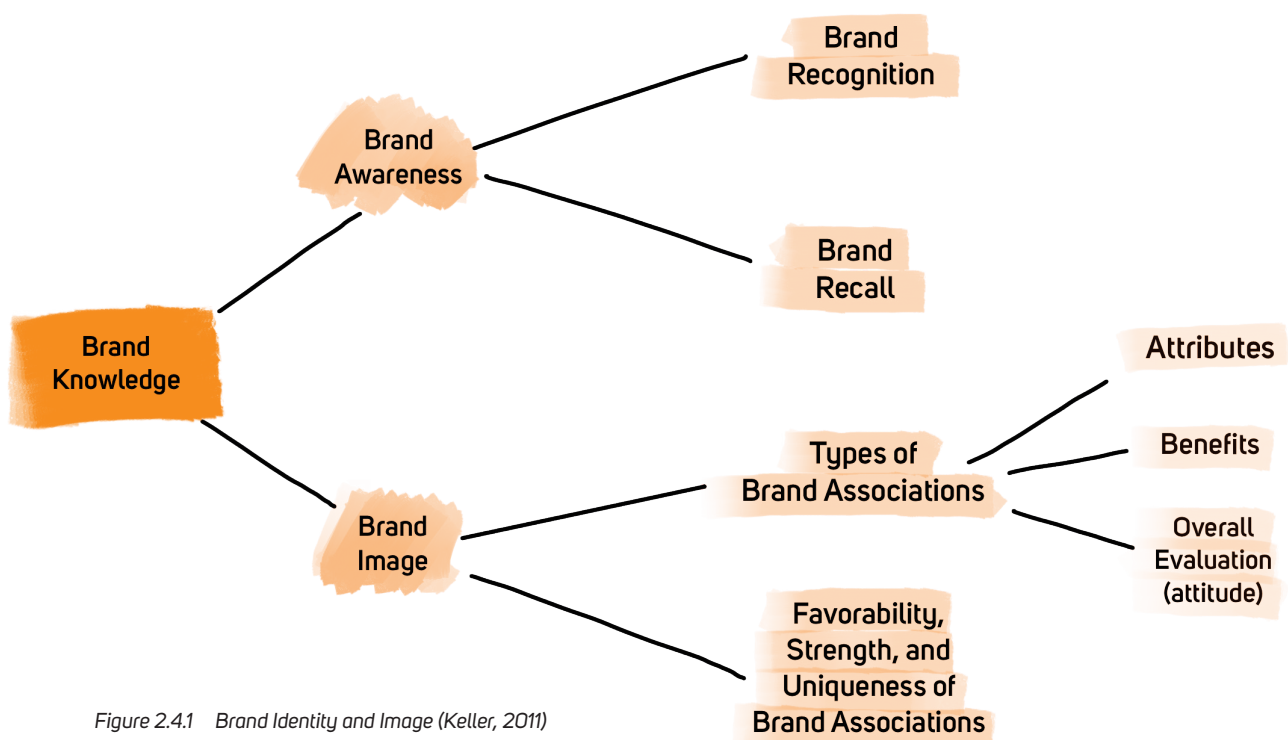

Figure 2.4.1   Brand Identity and Image (Keller, 2011)

and unique brand associations, the brand has to be exposed repetitively. By increasing the familiarity of the brand through repeated exposure, brand awareness can be built; once there is a sufficient level of brand awareness, the brand image can be created (Keller, 2011).

To create a positive brand image, SINNER thus needs strong, favourable, and unique associations. Brand associations can be brand attributes, benefits, or an attitude, for instance (Beverland, 2018). According to Keller (2011), brand attributes are descriptive features which describe the character of the product or service. This can be product-related - colour, size, design features - or non-product related - price, packaging, user, and imagery. Brand benefits are personal and capture the value and meaning that individual consumers attach to the product (Keller, 2011).

As mentioned before, SINNER needs strong, favourable and unique associations. The stronger a person thinks about a brand, the *stronger* the brand *associations* will be. Two factors that strengthen these associations are its personal relevance and the consistency with which it is presented over time (Keller, 2011). In general, direct experiences create the most potent associations, since the consumer will create a memory of the brand when he or she interacts with the brand. Associations that some of the participants from the interviews with SINNER have are for instance memories from when they were a kid. However, some target consumers associate the brand SINNER as a 'boring' brand, even when they used to own SINNER products. Personal relevance can be gained for SINNER by adjusting the brand to the needs and wants of the consumer. In order to create more consistency, the brand identity needs clear guidelines.

Favourable associations are brand associations created by the marketer for the product - and encompass that the brand has relevant attributes and benefits that satisfy customers needs and wants. (Keller, 2011). Not every brand association will be equally important for every consumer; it can be situation or context-dependent. A favourable association can be created concerning the product, or to an intangible asset; for example, an influencer who is using the product, or a specific type of imagery. Another association that consumers have with SINNER, as appeared during the interviews, is "old-fashioned". However, this association is not necessarily a negative one, since frequently old-fashioned - vintage - products become a trend again over time. Multiple brands tend to make use of this trend. O'Neill, for example, released a "reissue" collection, with retro ski apparel. To embrace the memories that some consumers had with SINNER when they used to own products as a kid, SINNER could for instance use Polaroids in their imagery, referring to "old memories". Specific use of colour could help to create a favourable association. The colours used in the brand identity may not directly matter to most consumers; however, it can unwittingly play an essential role in brand awareness (Keller, 2011).

A brand needs *unique associations* in order to stand out, however, it will probably share some associations with other brands unless there is no competition for the brand (Keller, 2011). A unique brand positioning should convince consumers to buy products from the brand, however, shared associations can function as category classification. SINNER is seen as a winter sports brand, which creates an understanding for the consumer. Nevertheless, SINNER needs unique associations within this category in order to distinguish itself from its competitors in the same field.

Conclusion brand strengthening

By creating brand awareness and a brand image consisting of strong, favourable and unique brand associations, knowledge about the brand can be gained - and this can again be used to create a strong brand. SINNER needs a clear brand identity, that will be recognized by the target audience, in order to create more brand awareness. Consistency in the brand identity and imagery, and personal relevance, like using polaroids to refer to memories, will help to create a clear brand image for the consumer.

BRAND EQUITY PYRAMID

In the previous part, an explanation is given of what is needed for a strong brand. In this section, I will elaborate on how a strong brand can be created. The strength of the relationship between the consumer and brand can be measured by and improved with Keller's (2011) 'brand resonance model'. The brand pyramid assumes that there is a relationship between brand awareness and brand equity. This approach is supported by the belief that the brand only exists in the mind of the consumer (Beverland, 2018). In figure 2.4.2, the brand pyramid is displayed.

The pyramid consists of four steps. Each step should be successfully completed before the next step can be executed. There are four steps that represent a set of fundamental questions; these are as follows (Keller, 2011):

1. Who are you? (Salience)
   brand essence/identity
2. What are you? (Performance & Imagery)
   brand meaning
3. What about you? (Judgments & Feelings)
   brand response
4. What about you and me? (Resonance)
   brand relationship

The order of the steps in this pyramid, from identity to meaning, to responses to relationships, is essential. Meaning cannot be created without an identity, and responses cannot be evoked without the right meaning (Keller, 2011). Keller (2011) states that the left side of the pyramid can be seen as the rational route of the six building blocks, and the right side is more an emotional route.

Brand salience

The bottom of the pyramid - the first building block - represents brand salience. Brand salience measures the different aspects of brand awareness and indicates how easily and often the brand is recognized by consumers (Keller, 2011). When consumers do not know the brand, they will not be aware in which category the brand operates. When a brand has the right brand identity, consumers will understand the brand and its products.

Brand performance

Brand performance describes how well the product that the brand sells meets the customers' needs (Keller, 2011). The product and its quality is important for how the brand is perceived. It is about reliability, design and price.

Brand imagery

The other type of brand meaning is brand imagery. This is the way customers think about a brand abstractly, not what they think the brand's 'purpose is' (Keller, 2011). The imagery also refers to more intangible aspects, and consumers can create imagery associations from their own experience with the brand as well.

Figure 2.4.2   Keller's brand pyramid (2011)

CONCLUSION BRANDING

Brand judgments

Brand judgments are about the personal response from consumers towards the brand. These judgments could be personal opinions and evaluations on the brand, which consumers form by combining all the different brand performance and imagery associations (Keller, 2011).

Brand feelings

Brand feelings are customers' emotional reactions to the brand. These impulses are linked to the 'social currency' provoked by the brand (Keller, 2011). The feelings can be about how the brand affects customers' opinion about themselves and their relationships with others. It is important that these connotations are positive, since they influence the behaviour of the consumer.

Brand resonance

The top of the pyramid is about brand resonance, which focuses on the ultimate relationship between the brand and the customer (Keller, 2011). Brand resonance describes how strong this relationship is in terms of intensity, the psychological bond with the brand, and the level of activity (repeated purchases, the extent to which customers seek information about the brand, et cetera).

Conclusion brand equity pyramid

The pyramid shows how the strength of a relationship between the consumer and brand can be measured - and improved. High brand equity can be reached by following the six brand building blocks, which is considered interesting and valuable for SINNER to create and maintain a strong brand.

In the next phase - the define part – the brand SINNER will be defined, using the tools from this chapter. Brands need to innovate in order to maintain their position in the market. When a brand gets tired, it might require revitalization, also known as repositioning (Beverland, 2018). As the name already reveals, positioning means finding the right location in the minds of a consumer group or market segment (Keller, 2011). A good positioning will help to explain what the brand is about, how it is unique and why consumers should buy it. In the next chapter a positioning and proposition will be created for SINNER, to gain more consistency. A positioning and proposition will be created to gain more consistency. This chapter made clear why it is important for SINNER to improve its brand and how to this can be done.

FRAMEWORK

The number of methods and techniques on how and why users relate to brands has grown enormously in recent years and each framework has something valuable to offer in different stages of the brand-building process. (Beverland, 2018). However, to limit the scope of this thesis, just a few frameworks are chosen and applied.

Brand DNA Model

Based on the similarities between different brand identity models the Brand DNA model was designed (van der Vorst, Brand and Product Commercialisation lecture slides, 2019). It consists of three elements; purpose, positioning and personality (see figure 2.5.1). Besides the brand equity pyramid, described in the previous part, the Brand DNA model will be partly used.

PURPOSE

BRAND DNA

POSITIONING   **PERSONALITY**
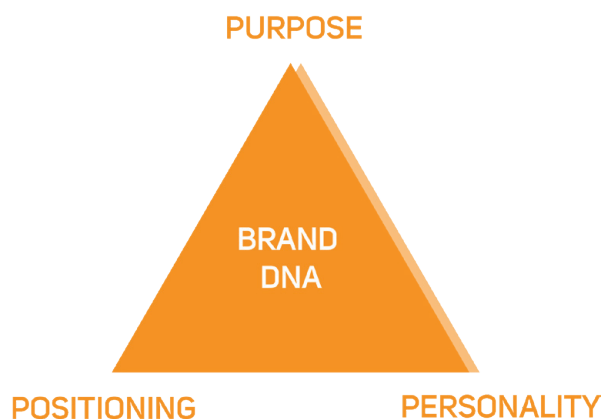
Figure 2.5.1   Brand DNA model (van der Vorst, 2019)

The three cornerstones will be described briefly:

Purpose
The purpose describes the reason - a deep believe - that the brand exists embedded in a societal and cultural context. It is often an inspirational sentence. Besides engaging consumers, the brand purpose is also a part of the vision and the mission. The purpose explains *why* the brand exists, the vision describes *what* the brand aims to achieve and the mission describes *how* the brand achieves that.

Positioning
The positioning is a statement that explains the goal that the consumer will achieve and how the brand distinguishes itself from other brands (Tybout and Sternthal, 2005).

PURPOSE
why?

MISSION
how?

VISION
what?
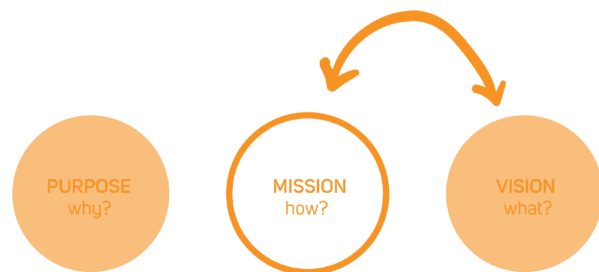
According to van der Vorst (2019) the positioning can be described as the following sentence:

For .. (target audience), ..
(Brand name) offers ..
(product category) that ..
(product attributes),
.. (functional benefits)
and gives people the ... (emotional benefits)
to .. (self-expressive benefits).

Personality
The last part of the Brand DNA model is the brand personality. According to Aaker (1996) the personality of a brand is defined as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand.

CHAPTER 3
DEFINE

Based on the results from the analysis, the purpose, mission and vision statements have been formulated.

3.1 PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION

PURPOSE

As explained in the previous chapter, the purpose describes the reason that the brand exists. The purpose for SINNER is defined as follows:

Our purpose is to equip our customers for the elements, although not only when they are surrounded by the elements, but especially in their daily lives. We enable our customers to express who they are - whoever they want to be - and encourage them to 'play more'.

The reason for SINNER's existence is that they offer products that equip someone for the elements. The CEO stated in the interview that they want to protect everyone against the elements. To make 'to protect' more positive, this is changed into 'equip for'. SINNER enables their customers to express who they are, with the products they offer. In daily life, one will not be wearing a helmet or other ski equipment of course, but SINNER encourages their customers to bend the rules and have more fun in daily life as well.

VISION

The definition of a vision is discussed in the internal analysis (Chapter 2.1). The vision describes what the brand wants to achieve. The vision for SINNER is as follows:

We are an affordable brand, offering high-quality products that help you equip yourself for the elements. We aim to be the regular choice of product, whether you are a professional athlete or a beginner. The world should be a playground for everyone, and we enable you to discover it.

SINNER envisions to be the regular choice of product, by emphasizing on that the world is a playground for everyone.

MISSION

To achieve the vision, SINNER offers high-quality products for an affordable price, where it aims to be available for everyone. The mission statement is as follows:

Our mission is to offer high-quality products, for an affordable price. We aim to provide products that last long, that are convenient and available for everybody.

In this chapter, the positioning of the brand is determined and translated into more tangible guidelines, which can be used for all the touchpoints and actions of SINNER.

3.2 BRAND STRATEGY

POSITIONING STATEMENT

In order to place SINNER in the market regarding their competitors, a positioning statement is developed. A positioning statement explains the goal that a consumer will achieve by buying products of this brand, and it explains how it distinguishes itself from other brands that can help to accomplish the same goal (Tybout and Sternthal, 2005). Good brand positioning helps brand strategy by explaining in what the brand is about, how it stands out and why consumers should purchase it (Keller, 2011).

The positioning statement for SINNER will be as follows:

> *For the naughty ones, SINNER offers qualitative eyewear, that is accessible and that enables you to unify with the elements. The world is your playground, explore your abilities, and dare to stand out.*

The different parts of the positioning will be explained furthermore.

For the naughty ones...
SINNER used to call themselves rebellious and provocative, but this identity is not matching their target group and current customers. In order to distinguish themselves from competitors who also target 'adventurous customers', 'naughty' is incorporated. For SINNER the meaning of naughty (especially for children) is in Dutch '*ondeugend*' - disobedient - but never naughty in a sexual way. It is about looking for boundaries, but not crossing the line; awaken your inner child and dare to be different.

...SINNER offers qualitative eyewear, that is accessible and enables you to unify with the elements.
As mentioned in the analysis, SINNER is a sports

eyewear and accessories brand that has a heritage in skiing. This part of the positioning refers to the category that SINNER is positioned in - mainly eyewear and especially sports eyewear that is designed in order to equip their customers for the elements. The products are qualitative and reliable - like any other A-brand - but more accessible in terms of pricing, so their products are conveniently available for everybody.

The world is your playground, explore your abilities and dare to stand out.
In the next part, the proposition will be explained, but this is the self-expressive part of the positioning. This part illustrates that SINNER offers products that enable the customer to discover the abilities of the world and encourage them to be whoever they want to be, wherever they are.

PROPOSITION

The value proposition is an extension of the positioning. The proposition identifies what the benefits are for the consumer who buys a SINNER product. The values of SINNER products are more than just the product benefits itself; it enables the consumers to discover the 'SINNER' in themselves. In Building Strong Brands, Aaker (2012) states the following about the value proposition:

> *"A brand's value proposition is a statement of the functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits delivered by the brand that provides value to the customer. An effective value proposition should lead to a brand-customer relationship and drive purchase decisions"*

The association people have with SINNER is about skiing and winter sports. When people see

an advertisement for the brand SINNER, they will remember their last ski holiday, for example. The feeling they recall is freedom, for example standing on top of a mountain. An escape from their daily life, a holiday in the snow, or a road trip to the coast. The proposition is formulated as follows:

SINNER often evokes the feeling of seeking adventure, being surrounded by nature and experiencing freedom. It offers an escape from the daily routines, allowing yourself to have your own SINNER moment every now and then, and awaken your inner child.

In other words, SINNER offers products that evoke memories of moments in places without obligations and limitations. In these moments you can be you, and you decide who you want to be.

BRAND EQUITY PYRAMID

In the last chapter of the discover phase Keller's (2011) brand pyramid was introduced - a tool to improve the relationship between brand and consumer. Since the goal for this project is to define the brand SINNER, this model is used to create a deeper understanding of the brand. The parts of the brand equity pyramid applicable to SINNER will be discussed briefly below.

Brand salience
The customers who are familiar with SINNER, are aware of what kind of products the brand sells. Some consumers only know SINNER from the ski slopes, and are not aware of the fact that the company sells other products as well. However, there is a lack of awareness among consumers who have only heard of the name SINNER, but are not able to place the brand in a category.

It is important to make consumers aware that SINNER is a sports eyewear brand that sells more than just ski goggles and helmets. Nevertheless, the association with winter sports is a unique association and should be maintained. Through active targeting the desired consumer group the brand awareness can be raised.

Brand performance
The most important features of the brand are its quality and the affordable prices of SINNER products. Thereby, SINNER offers approachable products in lots of different styles and colours.

Resonance

**Positive experience
Recurring customers**

Judgments

**Quality,
Established,
Old-fashioned,
Reliable**

Feelings

**Sportive,
Boring,
Outdated,
Approachable**

Performance

**Approachable eyewear
for an affordable price.
Diversity in products and
styles**

Imagery

**Standard font,
Alternative models
Colourful products**

Salience

**Brand awareness is present with current customers and
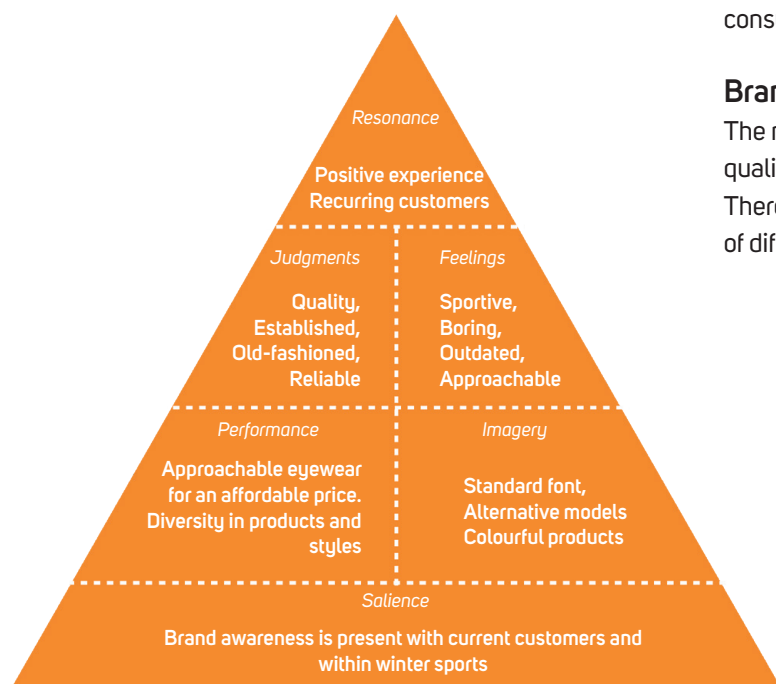within winter sports**

Figure 3.1.1   Brand Equity pyramid for SINNER

Brand imagery

In the current brand identity, the brand makes use of a recognizable, however standard font, Helvetica. The photographed persons are not typical models. The models SINNER uses are rather alternative, with tattoos and piercings for instance. Both the imagery and products are colourful. However, the consumer cannot identify him- or herself with the models and brand identity. The knowledge gained in the interviews can be used to create different imagery, to which consumers can relate and which fits the new positioning. I would suggest changing the current font to a more playful type that will be more recognizable for the consumer.

Brand judgments

The current group of customers is aware of the quality of the products that SINNER offers. Furthermore, they know that the brand has existed for a while now, which makes them perceive it as a reliable brand - however, at the same time as a bit of an old-fashioned brand as well. SINNER should embrace the quality, but should get rid of the negative connotations by communicating the differentiation and created feelings.

Brand feelings

The feeling that consumers have about the brand is that the brand is sportive, but also approachable. When they put this feeling into words, they describe it as a brand for a beginner on skis. Other participants had less positive feelings, for example, they considered the brand as boring and outdated.

Brand resonance

Among the current buying consumer group, there are a lot of recurring customers, especially from the older target audience. This group is aware of the brand equity, which I experienced in the brand store 'House of SINNER' as well. A man, in his mid 50's, came back after 5 years to buy exactly the same bag, because the 'quality and the design were excellent'.

BRAND PERSONALITY

The brand personality is the last part of the Brand DNA model (van der Vorst, 2019). It consists of different characteristics that will be the driving tone of voice for the brand. The characteristics for SINNER are:

Playful
Someone who often releases their 'inner-child', searches for fun in every situation and makes the world a playground.

Naughty
Someone who likes to push boundaries and dares to stand out, sometimes a little bit crazy.

Social
Someone who is enthusiastic, and loves to have fun together with others.

Sportive
Someone who loves to be active and outdoors. It does not matter whether it is skiing, cycling, surfing or just walking, but he or she is always full of energy.

Approachable
Someone who is not arrogant, does not judge and is open to everyone.

Reliable
Someone you can always count on, and is straight to the point, no surprises.

In a nutshell, SINNER is your straight-talking, approachable, reliable and slightly funny friend.

BRAND DNA

The brand DNA is based on the purpose, positioning and personality. The brand DNA of SINNER is defined as follows:

Equip for the elements
Since we ourselves love being outside, whether it snows or the sun is brightly shining, we offer products that unite our customers with the elements. We design the products, so you can enjoy the circumstances.

Naughty and playful
We like to be a little naughty sometimes, push the boundaries. In a society where speed and stress have taken over, people take less and less time to play and connect with nature. We enable people to play and connect with the world, consider it their playground. We encourage our customers to be naughty and play with the rules.

Dare to stand out
We dare you to stand out, to be different from others! You can find it back in our payoff: AS I AM, you can be whoever you want to be. We all are just the way we are and, after all, there is a SINNER in all of us.

CONCLUSION

At this point in the define phase, all the different elements from the brand identity are described for the brand strategy. The insights from the internal, external analysis and consumer research are translated into the purpose, vision and mission and the positioning and proposition.

EQUIP FOR THE ELEMENTS

NAUGHTY & PLAYFUL

DARE TO STAND OUT

In this part - design principles - the brand strategy is translated into tangible guidelines for creating the brand book. The brand DNA is the base for the design principles and is literally translated.

3.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles are designed as leading principles for the communication of the brand. The principles explain how the Brand DNA is translated into design. Per guiding principle, an extended collage can be found in Appendix X.

Equip for the elements
You can dream of climbing the highest mountain, but sometimes we need to stay realistic, down to earth. Perfect scenarios are meant to inspire, but in the Netherlands, we don't have mountains. It is essential to be able to identify with the imagery, as well for the models and the setting. We show real people that use our equipment in actual situations you want to experience yourself.

Naughty & Playful
We all have that inner child, that is still naughty and playful. We use imagery that shows that we push boundaries and make the world our playground. We create impact with images that tell a story that could be around the corner. We like to tell stories that bring back memories.

Dare to stand out
We are all just the way we are, and we like to celebrate that with others. We use images with people that could be your friends, doing crazy stuff and have fun together. We dare our customer to stand out and have fun!

Main principle
All the principles have something in common that covers the whole brand. The essence of the branding of SINNER is that the brand encourages the customer to 'play more'. To have fun, live more, enjoy more, create more 'SINNER' moments, make the world your playground.

CHANGING IDENTITY DESIGN

The design principles can now be translated into design language and visuals. As before, SINNER was characterized as rebellious - and this will change into playful. However, the question is, how to transform the identity into playful?

Typography
An important asset of a brand identity is the type of font that is used. The font that was used up until now is Helvetica Neue. This is a well-known font, used a lot by representative brands (such as Apple), however, it can also be perceived as slightly static. A more playful font can contribute to creating a more playful appearance.

Three types of fonts were tested on some of the interviewees and the models that were used for photography purposes. They all agreed that the Helvetica Neue font did not match the new values of the brand - because it is too static and not playful at all. To make the identity more approachable and to show more playfulness there is chosen for the font Uni Sans. Four different types of weight are used, Uni Sans Bold, Uni Sans Semi Bold, Uni Sans Regular and Uni Sans Light.

UNI SANS BOLD

BOLD IS FOR HEADLINES, BETWEEN HEADLINES AND ACCENTUATION OF WORDS IN TEXTS.

UNI SANS SEMI BOLD

Semi Bold is for small texts on a photographic or colored background and is used when the light variant is too small for print.

UNI SANS REGULAR

Regular is for sub-headings in body copy.

UNI SANS LIGHT

Light is for body copy, annotations and captions.

Figure 3.3.1   Typography

Logo

The current logo has not been changed. Although many consumers still remember the old logo (from before 2006), the current logo fits in well with the new values. The company prefers the wordmark logo because it includes the pay-off. SINNER also

Figure 3.3.2   Current SINNER logo

has a stacked logo, an icon of an S with a sunglasses silhouette. This logo is stronger for people who are not familiar with the brand, because it emphasizes more clearly that it is an eyewear brand.
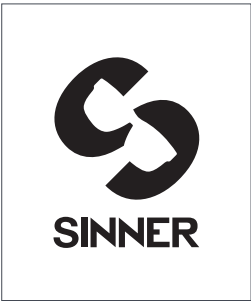

Figure 3.3.3   Stacked SINNER logo

Colours

The colours that SINNER uses in the current brand identity are mostly orange and black. The orange that used is kind of dark, see the payoff in their logo in figure 3.3.2. As SINNER's new brand personality is naughty and playful, there is a need for a brighter colour. However, changing the colour might be not the best option because consumers might not recognize the brand afterwards. That is why a lighter version of the colour is chosen, to make it more bright and let the

brand stand out more. Besides, the use of orange can also be seen as an eyewink to the Dutch heritage of the brand. This new orange colour will not replace the current darker version, but it will be used as the new leading colour.

Orange, a mixture of red and yellow, combines the energy from red and the happiness associated with yellow (Bourn, 2011). It is often associated with enthusiasm, creativity, success, fun, pleasure and freedom, among other things.

Additionally, orange, black and white are used as a basis, to provide simplicity and consistency and also to balance the playfulness of the orange colour. To allow for occasional variation, or if orange does not work against certain backgrounds, pink can be used.

PANTONE®				
PANTONE 021C	PANTONE 1575 C	BLACK 100%	WHITE	MAGENTA 100%
CMYK				
CMYK 0% 75% 100% 0%	CMYK 0% 50% 100% 0%	CMYK 50% 40% 40% 100%	CMYK 0% 0% 0% 0%	CMYK 0% 100% 0% 0%
RGB				
254/64/0	255/128/0	0/0/0	255/2500/255	255/0/255
HEX/HTML				
FF4000	FF8000	000000	FFFFFF	FF00FF

Figure 3.3.4   Colours

Tone of Voice

The voice of a brand, the tone and temperament should be distinctive and consistent in all aspects of the brand (Sullivan, 2019) (Medium, 2019). For SINNER the tone should be playful and match the message that it wants to convey. It should be readable for everyone. The following guidelines were composed, especially for the brand book, and have been adopted from it. As the Brand book is a means of conveying the vision and values, there might seem to be a slight contradiction ('we' versus 'person-to-person') in the utterances below, however, this is used purposefully to address all employees.

Order related communication: SINNER talks to customers in a person-to-person, down-to-earth way.

Grammar and formatting: We use correct grammar, and we use the same language you would when having a conversation with your buddy.

Readability: We use simple words and short sentences to ensure what we want to say is heard.

Style / Tone of voice: All copy is straight to the point, easily readable, and casual, with a twist of playfulness.

Imagery

The guidelines for the imagery and photography are in line with the design principles. Each principle explains how this guideline can be translated into photography.

Equip for the elements
The images should show a subtle reference to adventure. In the situations shown, the use of the products is visualized, even when this does not seem necessary. The location refers to sports activities or shows an adventurous-looking location. The whole shows creative, but characterizes simplicity.
In order to maximize reach, too much emphasis should not be placed on the adventurous aspect; it should be accessible to almost everyone, or appealing - no exaggerated situations such as impossible stunts or too high mountains.

Naughty & playful
The imagery should have something playful, or naughty. It can be a little bit provocative or showing a weird contrast. It should not only address the utterance that there is some kind of SINNER in all of us, it should also show it. Visualize playing with the rules. The images should not show excesses such as naked or drunk people. Naughty is meant to be playful, not in a sexual way.

EQUIP FOR THE ELEMENTS

Reference to skiing, the scenery is outdoor with clouds and the models are about to do something silly. There is a search for adventure and the goggle is our product that equips them.

NAUGHTY AND PLAYFUL

Together in an inflatable swan on just one pair of skis looks like asking for trouble. However, they aren't just sharing a lollipop, they're bending the rules and are ready to play.

DARE TO STAND OUT

The contrast of skiing and an inflatable swan may look slightly silly, but that is what we want to communicate. Dare to be different!

Dare to stand out

The images may contain fun elements, such as people doing crazy things with their friends. The image must appeal as a special memory, in which the characters are themselves and push boundaries. People must be able to identify with what is happening in the images.

At the bottom of the previous page, an example of the photography is given and explained why it suffices.

Polaroids

Polaroids are tangible pictures, and therewith also tangible memories. They can enhance the feeling and memory of a vacation or any other particular moment in time. A polaroid is used to capture a precious moment and can only be captured once. As a result, the photo may not always be completely perfect, but that is what makes it more personal and memorable and captures a specific valuable moment. That's why polaroids are sometimes used in SINNER's images to embrace that feeling of a personally memorable moment.

CHAPTER 4
DESIGN

The fourth chapter relates to the third phase, the design phase. In this phase the brand strategy and guidelines are further developed into the brand book.

4.1 THE BRAND BOOK

BRAND BOOK

Another name for a brand book can be a brand style guide, a brand guide or a brand bible, among other similar terms. It is the document where the guidelines for maintaining brand identity are documented for internal use, to communicate consistently across all touchpoints.
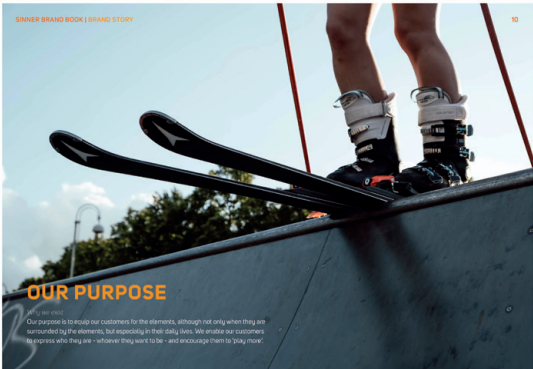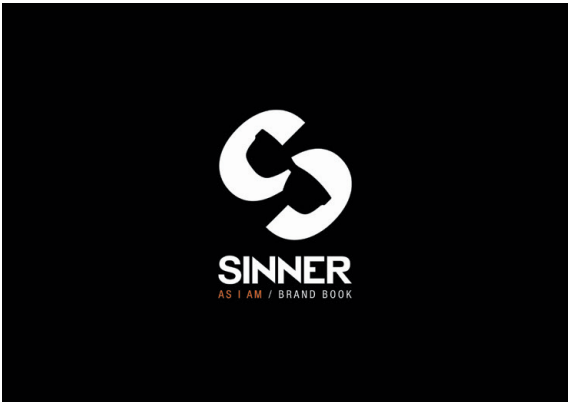
CONTENT

The brand book serves as an internal inspiration tool, where employees and design agencies can find the guidelines and elements for the brand. It also aims for a consistent and unambiguous approach to all communications. The brand book is divided into the following seven chapters:

1. Brand story
2. Our Logo
3. Our Voice
4. Our Customer
5. Design
6. Communication
7. Stories

The first chapter - brand story - is about the story of the brand. It describes how the brand originated and creates comprehension of the brand purpose, mission and vision of the brand. The brand DNA is explained, supported by the brand values and the design principles. The second chapter shows how the logo should be used. The third and the fourth chapter explain the tone of voice, for the desired target audience of SINNER. In this section the two different customer segments are explained as is defined in the Consumer Research part of this thesis. Next, in the design chapter the guidelines are translated into a brand identity. Besides the typography and the colour palette, there is also explained how the guidelines can be translated into photography. The last two chapters present touchpoints of how this will look like.

The brand book is a means of communication to convey the message of the brand and its values internally. It must ensure that the employees of SINNER look the same way to the brand, the vision, the mission and the brand strategy. Additionally, it is about the culture, and therewith it contributes to the transformation that SINNER stands for. Therefore the brand book is the essential core of the implementation strategy.
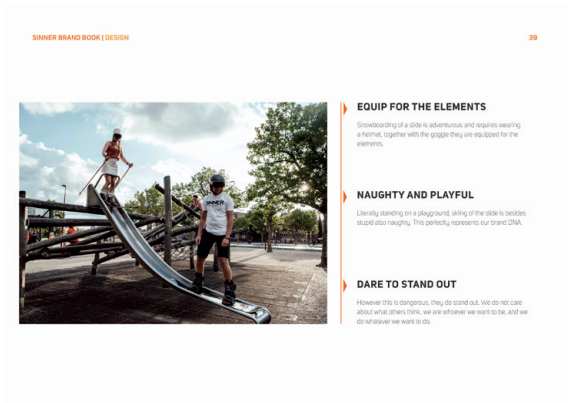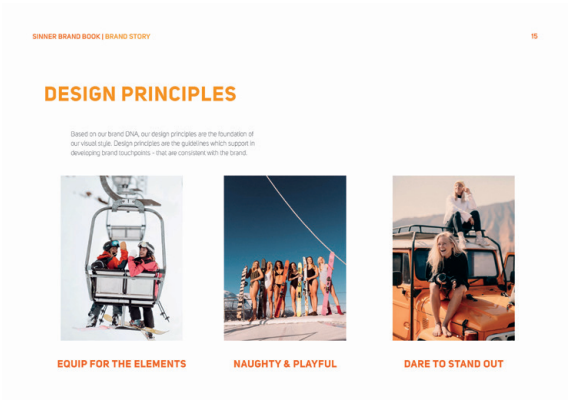
SINNER

AS I AM / BRAND BOOK

INTRODUCTION

The visual identity of a brand is about its style, its appearance, the feeling it arouses, and about the language of a brand. The identity contains a set of brand elements, ingredients, and building blocks that can be combined, in order to communicate the brand expression as clearly as possible. This visual identity clarifies what our brand SINNER is about.

This document will lead you through all the elements of the brand identity and how these cooperate in different touchpoints. You will learn more about our passion, our story, and our goals. This brand book will serve as an internal tool for inspiration and understanding what SINNER stands for – and how we translate this into our brand.

SINNER BRAND BOOK | BRAND STORY   10

OUR PURPOSE

Why we exist
Our purpose is to equip our customers for the elements, although not only when they are surrounded by the elements, but especially in their daily lives. We enable our customers to express who they are – whoever they want to be – and encourage them to 'play more'.

SINNER BRAND BOOK | BRAND STORY

OUR VISION

What we aim to achieve
We are an affordable brand, offering high-quality products that help you equip yourself for the elements. We aim to be the regular choice of product, whether you are a professional athlete or a beginner. The world should be a playground for everyone, and we enable you to discover it.

OUR MISSION

How we achieve it
Our mission is to offer high-quality products, for an affordable price. We aim to provide products that last long, that are convenient and available for everybody.

Figure 4.1.1   Pages from the brand book

4.2 BRAND TOUCHPOINTS

To assist in the translation from brand book to design, a few touchpoints are designed that serve as examples to show in more detail what the principles are about. Brand touchpoints are the representation of the brand, which visualize the brand identity.

ADVERTISING

Advertisements are a powerful form of branding. Specific channels are used in a targeted manner to approach the intended target groups. In contrast, for purposes of increasing brand awareness, frequently visited places are very effective. The purpose of the communication therefore determines the chosen channel.

Two different visual guidelines for an advertisment are created.

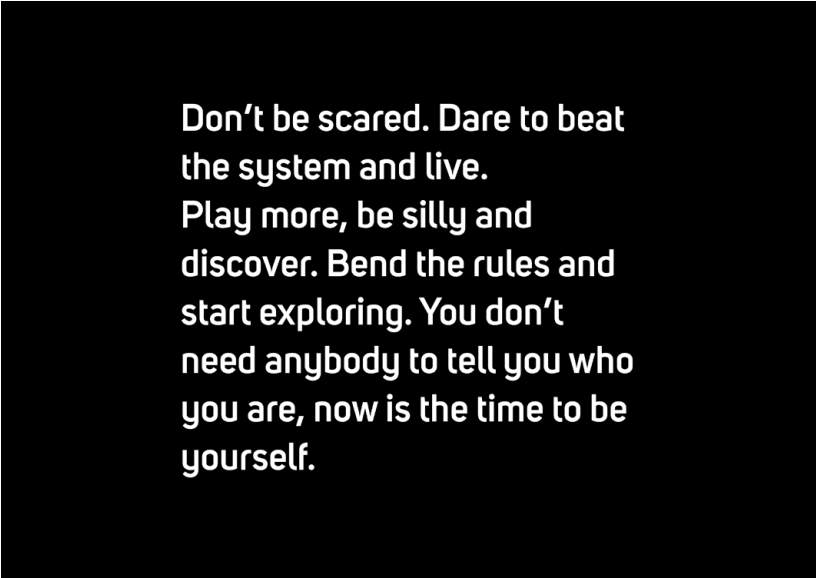*Figure 4.2.1   Visual guidelines for advertisement*

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Besides advertising in the city, social media is an important channel to reach your desired target audience. A few example post for Instagram and Facebook are created, see figure 4.2.4 an 4.2.5.

MANIFEST

Since the positioning is not communicated directly to customers, there may be some need to articulate the mindset to the customers. A new manifest has been made for this. It is shown at the end of the brand book. This manifest has been adapted to the newly created values and brand identity.

Don't be scared. Dare to beat the system and live.
Play more, be silly and discover. Bend the rules and start exploring. You don't need anybody to tell you who you are, now is the time to be yourself.
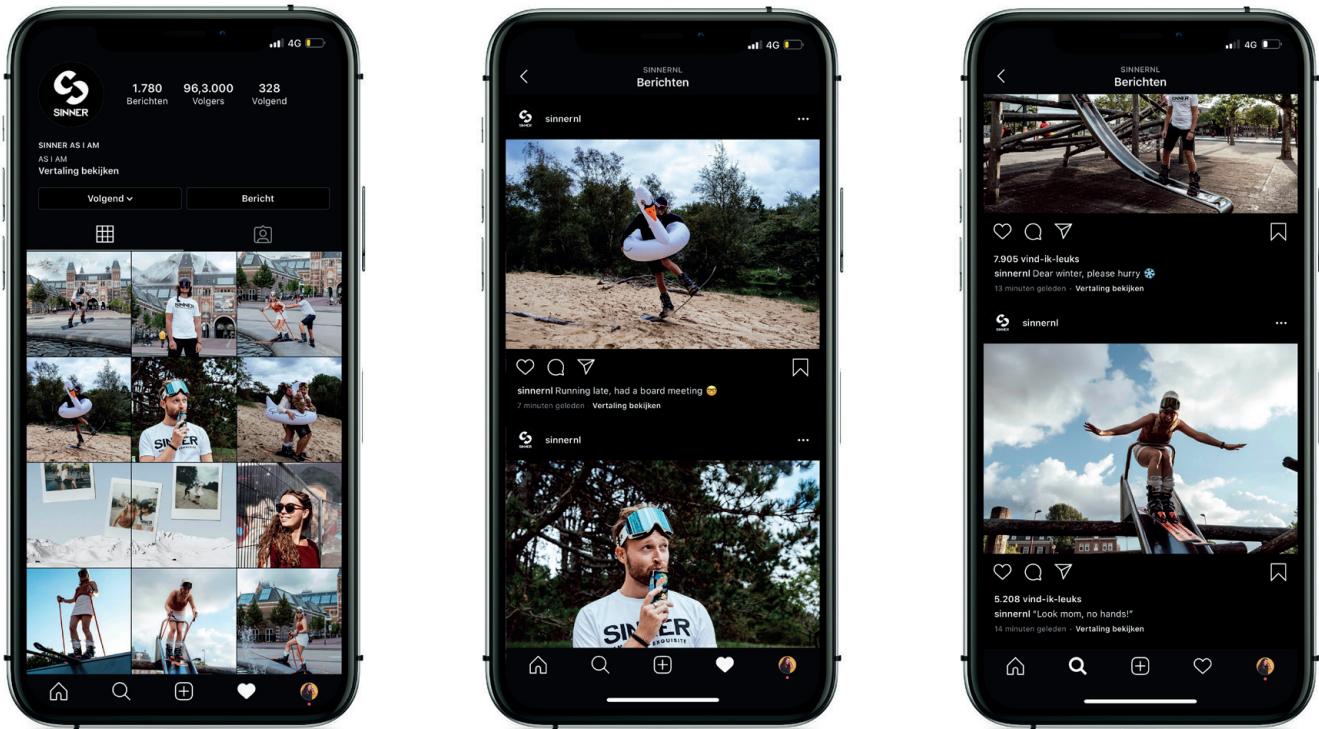
Figure 4.2.3   Manifest

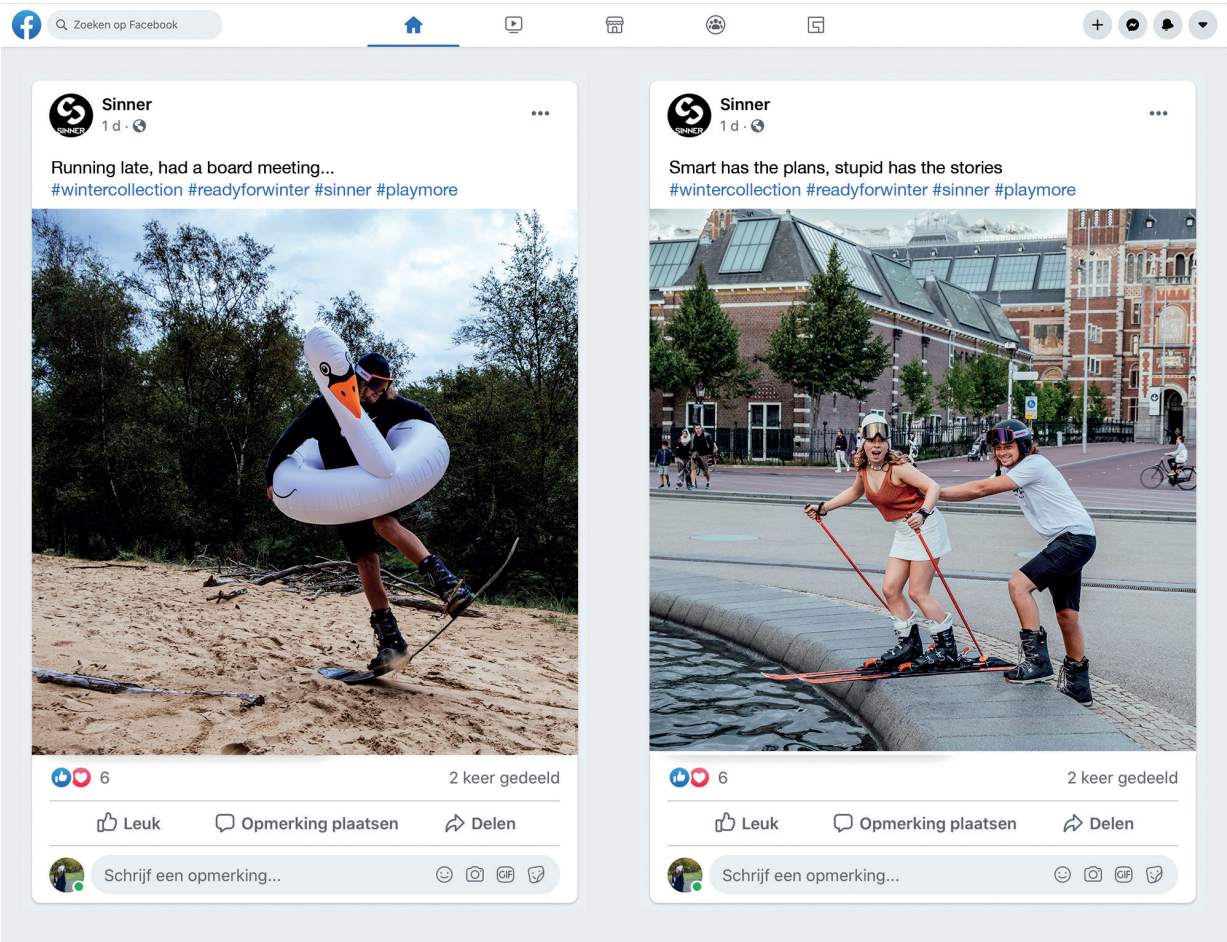*Figure 4.2.4   Instagram page with proposals for posts*

Figure 4.2.5   Instagram page with proposals for posts

CHAPTER 5
DELIVER

The last chapter reflects on the whole project. The evaluation and reflection of the project is presented. The conclusions will be discussed as well.

5.1 EVALUATION

The challenge for this thesis is formulated the following: SINNER is looking for a future vision in order to develop its position in the market, create more brand equity and connect with its customers.

The objective for this thesis was to develop a new strategic vision for the brand SINNER and translate this into a brand book. The Double-Diamond approach (Nessler 2016) was used to gather all the necessary input for the brand book. An extensive internal and external analysis has been carried out to find out where the brand comes from, what it stands for and what it strives for. In addition, interviews were conducted for the consumer survey to get a good idea of how consumers interpret the brand. The literature review provided the conceptual framework of elements that are necessary for formulating a new strategic vision and repositioning of the brand. With all the information presented, obtained from analysis and research, the theory was used to translate this into a brand book.

I used the internal analysis to find out what the current vision on the brand SINNER is. Internally held interviews made clear that the brand wasn't properly defined. There is a lack of a consistent vision on what the brand stands for and how this should connect to the current as well as the desired targeted audience.

The purpose of the external analysis was to determine in which part of the competitor levels SINNER operates and who are the brand's direct and indirect competitors (see figure 2.2.1). SINNER has a unique range of products; there are no competitors offering exactly the same product range. Of course, SINNER has competitors operating in the same part of the competitor levels, and to stand out in this gigantic

competitive field, a clear repositioning of the brand must take place, in which they must not focus on the high-end segment, but rather on the middle segment: the regular customer. SINNER can stand out from competitors that are in this same middle segment, by creating a unique positioning statement.

The consumer research provided insights on who the targeted audience is and how this group perceives SINNER. To determine their needs and values, ten interviews were conducted to clarify how consumers experience the SINNER brand. In general, consumers perceive SINNER as outdated, some of the participants even consider the brand as 'boring'. Where SINNER describes itself as rebellious, this is not interpreted as such by consumers. Most see it as a fairly standard brand that can be recommended to, for example, a novice skier. The consumer perception of the brand seems different than intended. As a result consumers are not able to identify themselves with the brand and with the models used for the imagery. Moreover there is a mismatch between the desired target audience and the actual buying customers.

To gain more insight in the needs of the consumers, two customer segments were developed, based on the targeted audience.

In the final part of the discover phase literature was used to examine how a brand can become stronger. By creating brand awareness and a brand image consisting of strong, favourable and unique brand associations, knowledge about the brand can be gained - and this can again be used to create a strong brand. It becomes obvious that SINNER needs a clear and consistent brand identity that is recognized by the consumers.

In the next phase - the define phase - the brand SINNER is defined with the aid of tools from the literature review. Purpose, mission and vision are formulated, together with a positioning and proposition along with a brand identity. These elements come together in the brand DNA. Based on the brand equity pyramid of Keller (2011), it is described how the relationship between the brand and the customer can be optimized.

After completing the brand strategy, design principles are established on the basis of the brand DNA and the brand personality, among other things. These principles are developed to create consistency in imagery, copy as well as the brand touchpoints. Examples of brand touchpoints have been developed to show how brand principles actually express themselves.

Finally, there is of course the brand book, which is the ultimate deliverable and shows how the new brand strategy enables internal alignment and consistency. It is the essential core of the implementation strategy which ensures that the employees of SINNER see the brand the same way.

Conclusion evaluation

In this chapter different aspects of this thesis are evaluated. This doesn't mean the project has come to an end, for it is just the beginning in which the brand book must continuously be innovated. Until now the brand book has only been presented internally, mainly due to time limit for this project. Ideally, the brand book should be evaluated by brand experts who can look at the brand objectively. The next chapter will provide an additional set of recommendations.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to keep the brand SINNER relevant, additional research should be conducted on a regular basis. But before focussing on the external exposure of the brand, it is more important to establish internal alignment. Therefore further analysis of the brand book is necessary to get a commonly shared view on the brand. All employees must understand the vision before they can create the same passion for the brand, act upon it and incorporate it into their work within the company and propagate it properly to the outside world.

The research for this project was mainly focussed on brand identity and brand strategy. But as noted in the interview with the CEO, the brand's products should also be evaluated. The products must be in line with the brand strategy and radiate the same. Perhaps certain products have to be eliminated because they no longer fit in the brand strategy of the brand. This will have to be investigated further.

It must also be considered how the company wants to communicate the SINNER brand and which communication strategy should be used for this. The guidelines for the advertisements and campaigns are available in the brand book, but research must first be done into which channels are best for communicating the brand and reaching the target audience. The difference between active or passive advertising has an effect on reaching the intended target group.

Finally, additional research needs to be done on the consumer, now that a new brand strategy is ready, for instance how it is interpreted by the desired target group and whether it works as intended. Outcomes may be used to tune and adjust the communications.

LIMITATIONS

For this thesis, there are several limitations to consider. Given the duration of this thesis, it was clear in advance that not all ideas could be properly tested and that the findings could also be properly validated. Due to these limitations, not all final results have been assessed. As stated in the recommendations, ideally the new brand strategy should be tested with the desired target audience to ensure it fits their needs and values.

Moreover, the world was in a pandemic when this thesis was conducted. COVID-19 had an impact on the SINNER company, and it also affected the trajectory of this thesis. Especially at the beginning of the project, it was difficult to get in touch with the employees of SINNER, as everyone worked from home. Conducting interviews with consumers or external experts was also difficult under these circumstances.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

To conclude this graduation project on a personal level, I will explain how I experienced this project and to what extent I have reached my personal goals.

Before I started this journey, my final master project, I knew that I wanted a graduation assignment where I could put in all of my passion and energy. An assignment that lies close to my strengths as a strategic designer as well as close to my personal interest. At SINNER, I found the graduation assignment where I found both and now I look back on an interesting and educational period.

When I started the assignment, SINNER gave me a lot of freedom in defining the project. Within a few weeks, this freedom led to struggling with choosing the right direction. Because I was forced to work solo, it didn't took long before I got stuck in all the information that I had gathered and what I wanted to do with it. Often during this project I became really insecure about how I perform as a strategic designer, but I also learned to accept that the design process is a process with ups and downs and a lot of diverging, converging and sometimes needs more iterations. Additionally, COVID-19 made it harder to have to work so individually, since I was working from home and not being able to discuss ideas and findings with other students. I struggled a lot with Zoom presentations and meetings, not being able to have real-life conversations with people. However, even with COVID, there were still a lot of people who could help me, online and sometimes even offline. Eventually, I really got back on track when I started with making photographs. This brought back my energy and I knew which direction was the right one. Even though I spent much time on making pictures that were not even usable in the end, it helped me to realize that I can be confident in my ways of working as a strategic designer. For me it helped to be more the creative designer first, to get the strategic part eventually done as well. This graduation project has taught me that I can do a project individually by using my creativity.

Looking back at the project, I can finally be proud of what I have achieved and delivered in the end, even with all the ups and downs, mood swings and mental breakdowns. I hope that SINNER will be able to use the results of this thesis for future strategic development and that the brand book will be an internal inspiration.

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