

# **Building a stronger brand for 7 Vitals Massage Studio during COVID-19 pandemic.**

Chien Huynh Minh

---

Bachelor's thesis  
2023

 Tomas Bata University in Zlín  
Faculty of Management and Economics

---

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně  
Fakulta managementu a ekonomiky  
Ústav managementu a marketingu

Akademický rok: 2022/2023

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: Chien Huynh Minh  
Osobní číslo: M19660  
Studijní program: B0413A050024 Ekonomika a management  
Specializace: Ekonomika a management podniku  
Forma studia: Prezenční  
Téma práce: Budování silnějšího jména obchodní značky pro 7 Vitals Massage Studio v průběhu pandemie COVID-19

### Zásady pro vypracování

#### Úvod

Definujte cíle práce a použité metody zpracování práce.

#### I. Teoretická část

- Proveďte literární rešerši problematiky budování obchodní značky a silnějšího jména firmy.

#### II. Praktická část

- Systematicky analyzujte podnik 7 Vitals, jeho externí mikro a makro prostředí a jeho zákazníky prostřednictvím obchodních modelů a struktur.
- Systematicky vyberte vhodné nástroje pro tvorbu a zlepšování jména značky a vytvořte plán jejich využití pro vylepšení jména značky 7 Vitals.
- Zhodnoťte ekonomické dopady a rizika vytvořeného plánu.

#### Závěr

Rozsah bakalářské práce: cca 40 stran  
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tištěná/elektronická  
Jazyk zpracování: Angličtina

Seznam doporučené literatury:

GODIN, Seth. *This Is Marketing: You Can't Be Seen Until You Learn to See*, 2018, 267 s. ISBN 9780525540830.  
HOLLENSÉN, Svend. *Marketing Management, A Relationship Approach*. 4th ed. 2019, 728 s. ISBN 9781292291444.  
LARSEN-ZARECHNOVA, Maria, A. HAMMERSHOY a M. K. LOVÉN. *Business Communication In The Service And Experience Industry*. 1st ed. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2018, 280 s. ISBN 9788741265346.  
PINE, Joseph a James GILMORE *The Experience Economy, Updated Edition*, 2011, 361 s. ISBN 9781422161975.  
WIRTZ, Jochen a Christopher LOVELOCK. *Essentials Of Services Marketing*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Pearson, 2018, 670 s. ISBN 9781292089959.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Ing. Michael Adu Kwarteng, Ph.D.  
Ústav managementu a marketingu

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: 10. února 2023  
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: 19. května 2023

L.S.

---

prof. Ing. David Tuček, Ph.D.  
děkan

---

doc. Ing. Petr Novák, Ph.D.  
garant studijního programu

Ve Zlíně dne 10. února 2023

## PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ/DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

### Prohlašuji, že

- beru na vědomí, že odevzdáním diplomové/bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby;
- beru na vědomí, že diplomová/bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k prezenčnímu nahlédnutí, že jeden výtisk diplomové/bakalářské práce bude uložen na elektronickém nosiči v příruční knihovně Fakulty managementu a ekonomiky Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně;
- byl/a jsem seznámen/a s tím, že na moji diplomovou/bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3;
- beru na vědomí, že podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- beru na vědomí, že podle § 60 odst. 2 a 3 autorského zákona mohu užít své dílo – diplomovou/bakalářskou práci nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s tím, že vyrovnání případného přiměřeného příspěvku na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše) bude rovněž předmětem této licenční smlouvy;
- beru na vědomí, že pokud bylo k vypracování diplomové/bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tedy pouze k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky diplomové/bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům;
- beru na vědomí, že pokud je výstupem diplomové/bakalářské práce jakýkoliv softwarový produkt, považují se za součást práce rovněž i zdrojové kódy, popř. soubory, ze kterých se projekt skládá. Neodevzdání této součásti může být důvodem k neobhájení práce.

### Prohlašuji,

1. že jsem na diplomové/bakalářské práci pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako spoluautor.
2. že odevzdaná verze diplomové/bakalářské práce a verze elektronická nahraná do IS/STAG jsou totožné.

Ve Zlíně

Jméno a příjmení: .....

.....  
podpis diplomanta

## **ABSTRACT**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to businesses worldwide, including the massage industry. The closure of non-essential businesses and social distancing regulations have impacted the revenue of massage studios, leading to a decline in customer demand. Therefore, building a stronger brand identity for a massage studio during the pandemic has become essential to ensure customer retention and attract new clients. This bachelor thesis aims to explore the branding strategies implemented by 7 Vitals Massage Studio to build a stronger brand identity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focuses on identifying the challenges faced by the studio, the measures taken to adapt to the new normal, and the branding strategies implemented to overcome the challenges.

The research methodology includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey is conducted among the existing customers of 7 Vitals Massage Studio to understand their perceptions and expectations of the brand. In-depth interviews are conducted with the management team of the studio to gain insights into their branding strategies.

The findings suggest that the pandemic has significantly impacted the revenue of 7 Vitals Massage Studio, leading to a decline in customer demand. However, the studio adapted to the new normal by implementing safety measures and shifting its focus towards virtual consultations and personalized packages. The study reveals that the studio's branding strategies, such as maintaining consistency in brand messaging, providing value-added services, and leveraging social media platforms, have helped build a stronger brand identity and increase customer engagement.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the branding strategies implemented by 7 Vitals Massage Studio during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings can be used as a guide for other massage studios and small businesses to build a stronger brand identity and maintain customer loyalty during challenging times.

*Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, hospitality industry, Instagram, Marketing, Consumer behaviour, Strategies, local brand, 7 Vitals Massage Studio.*

## ABSTRAKT

Pandemie COVID-19 přinesla podnikům po celém světě, včetně masérského průmyslu, významné výzvy. Uzavření nepodstatných podniků a regulace sociálního distancování ovlivnily příjmy masážních studií, což vedlo k poklesu poptávky zákazníků. Proto se budování silnější identity značky pro masážní studio během pandemie stalo nezbytným pro zajištění udržení zákazníků a přilákání nových klientů. Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl prozkoumat strategie brandingů implementované společností 7 Vitals Massage Studio k vybudování silnější identity značky během pandemie COVID-19. Studie se zaměřuje na identifikaci výzev, kterým studio čelí, opatření přijatá k přizpůsobení se novému normálu a strategie značky implementované k překonání výzev.

Metodologie výzkumu zahrnuje kombinaci kvantitativních a kvalitativních metod. Průzkum se provádí mezi stávajícími zákazníky 7 Vitals Massage Studio, abychom pochopili jejich vnímání a očekávání značky. Probíhali hloubkové rozhovory s manažerským týmem studia, aby získali náhled na jejich strategie budování značky.

Výsledky naznačují, že pandemie významně ovlivnila příjmy 7 Vitals Massage Studio, což vedlo k poklesu poptávky zákazníků. Studio se však novému normálu přizpůsobilo zavedením bezpečnostních opatření a přesunem svého zaměření na virtuální konzultace a personalizované balíčky. Studie odhaluje, že strategie značky studia, jako je udržování konzistence v zasílání zpráv o značce, poskytování služeb s přidanou hodnotou a využívání platformy sociálních médií, pomohly vybudovat silnější identitu značky a zvýšit zapojení zákazníků.

Celkově tato studie poskytuje cenné poznatky o strategiích značky implementovaných 7 Vitals Massage Studio během pandemie COVID-19. Výsledky mohou být použita jako vodítko pro další masážní studia a malé podniky k vybudování silnější identity značky a udržení lojality zákazníků v náročných časech.

*Klíčová slova: COVID-19 pandemie, pohostinství, Instagram, marketing, chování spotřebitelů, strategie, místní značka, 7 Vitals Massage Studio.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the many individuals and organizations who have supported me throughout my journey in completing this bachelor thesis.

Firstly, I want to thank my thesis supervisor, Ing. Michael Adu-Kwarteng, Ph.D. for his guidance, patience and invaluable feedback throughout the entire research process.

His expertise in the field of Marketing has been instrumental in shaping this project, and

I am grateful for the time and effort he has dedicated to helping me succeed.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of my family, who have been my constant source of inspiration and encouragement. Their unwavering love and support have helped me navigate the challenges of academic life, and I could not have completed this thesis without them.

I want to extend a special thanks to my friends and colleagues who have provided me with emotional support, proofreading, and much-needed distractions during the writing process. Their willingness to listen, offer advice, and simply be there for me has been invaluable.

In addition to the people who have supported me directly, I would like to thank the many organizations that have contributed to my research. Specifically, I am grateful to 7 Vitals Massage Studio for their generous funding, which made this research possible. Their commitment to supporting young researchers in the field of Marketing is truly inspiring, and I am honored to have been a recipient of their support.

Finally, I would like to thank the participants who generously gave their time and insights for this study. Their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives has been crucial in shaping the research findings and recommendations, and I am grateful for their contributions.

In summary, I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the support of so many people and organizations throughout this journey. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and belief in me.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Abstrakt</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>I.</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Theory and literature review</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2 Theory review</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1 7P model .....	13
2.2 Customer analysis .....	13
2.3 Competitor analysis .....	14
2.4 Brand equity .....	14
2.5 External brand communication .....	14
<b>3 Marketing</b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1 Experiential marketing .....	15
3.2 The digital marketing .....	15
3.3 SWOT analysis .....	16
3.4 Golden circle .....	16
3.5 The Dragon formula .....	16
3.6 Social media planner .....	17
3.7 The snapshot of Brand Management, Marketing and consumer behaviour .....	18
<b>II.</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Problem area</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>4 7 Vitals Massage Studio</b> .....	<b>22</b>
4.1 Situation .....	22
4.2 Problem area .....	25
4.3 Objectives .....	25
4.4 Research Question .....	25
4.5 Further development .....	25
<b>5 Philosophy of science and methodology</b> .....	<b>26</b>
5.1 Philosophy of science .....	26
5.2 Ontology and Epistemology .....	26
5.3 Methodology .....	26
5.4 Data collection methods and research processes .....	27
5.5 Credibility .....	29



<b>III.</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Analysis.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>6 Internal analysis: 7Ps model .....</b>	<b>32</b>
6.1.1 Company analysis: the 7Ps of services marketing .....	33
6.1.2 Customer analysis.....	36
6.1.3 Competitor analysis .....	38
6.2 Brand equity as a key concept .....	40
6.3 External brand communication and company’s presented brand of 7 Vitals .....	40
<b>7 Marketing .....</b>	<b>42</b>
7.1 Experiential marketing as a key concept.....	42
7.2 Experiential marketing of 7 Vitals.....	43
7.3 The digital marketing mix as a key concept .....	44
7.4 The digital marketing mix of 7 Vitals.....	45
<b>8 SWOT analysis of 7 Vitals.....</b>	<b>46</b>
8.1 Recommendation for action .....	46
<b>IV.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Project .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>9 Objectives.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>10 Strategy and tactics .....</b>	<b>49</b>
10.1 Instagram strategy for business growth.....	49
10.1.1 The DRAGON formula .....	50
<b>11 Action plan .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>12 Cost analysis .....</b>	<b>53</b>
12.1 Previous costs of 7 Vitals .....	53
12.2 Expected costs of the project.....	54
12.3 Expected returns .....	55
<b>13 Risk analyses.....</b>	<b>56</b>
13.1 Strategies for reducing the above risks (A-D) .....	57
<b>14 Time analysis .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>15 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>16 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>17 Bibliography .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>List of figures.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>List of tables.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix P I: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY .....</b>	<b>71</b>

***Appendix P II: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY.....73***  
***Appendix P III: Interview with Martin - owner and manager of 7 Vitals. ....75***

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to businesses across various industries, including the massage therapy sector. As governments around the world implemented lockdown measures and social distancing guidelines, massage studios were forced to close their doors or limit their operations, leading to significant revenue losses. However, some massage studios have managed to adapt to the new normal and even thrive amidst the crisis.

One such studio is 7 Vitals Massage Studio, a local business that has been providing high-quality massage therapy services to the community for several years. Despite the pandemic, 7 Vitals Massage Studio has remained resilient, maintaining its commitment to providing exceptional customer service while implementing new safety protocols and offering online consultations.

The essence of this project is to explore how 7 Vitals Massage Studio can build a stronger brand during the COVID-19 pandemic. This project aims to identify the key challenges facing the studio, assess its current brand identity and marketing strategies, and propose practical recommendations to improve its branding and customer engagement.

The significance of this project lies in its potential to provide valuable insights and strategies that can benefit not only 7 Vitals Massage Studio but also other massage studios and small businesses facing similar challenges. By examining the case of 7 Vitals Massage Studio, this project can shed light on the importance of branding and marketing strategies in maintaining business resilience and competitiveness during crises.

By reading this project, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and learn practical strategies to build a stronger brand identity and customer engagement. This project can also serve as a valuable resource for students and researchers interested in the fields of marketing, branding, and small business management.

# **I. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2 THEORY REVIEW**

The theory review constitutes a vital and indispensable element within the realm of research, encompassing various academic pursuits such as a bachelor thesis. This rigorous process entails an exhaustive and meticulous scrutiny, evaluation, and analysis of prevailing theories, models, frameworks, and conceptual underpinnings that bear direct relevance to the research topic at hand. The overarching objective of a theory review is to establish a robust theoretical groundwork, ascertain existing research gaps, and furnish a structured framework conducive to the comprehensive interpretation and contextualization of research findings. This theory review endeavours to furnish students with a comprehensive guide, delineating key considerations and pragmatic steps to facilitate the seamless execution of an efficacious theory review, thereby facilitating the exploration of pertinent literature in a thorough and discerning manner.

### **2.1 7P model**

The 7Ps service marketing model was developed by Booms and Bitner in 1981. They first published the model in their book "Marketing Strategies and Organization Structures for Service Firms". The model includes seven elements: product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence, and is useful for projects focused on strengthening a business's brand by ensuring a comprehensive and consistent approach to marketing their services. (Christopher Lovelock, 2017)

### **2.2 Customer analysis**

Customer analysis is a critical component of any marketing strategy, as it enables businesses to understand their customers' needs, preferences, and behaviors. One popular approach to customer analysis is the development of customer personas, which are fictional representations of a business's ideal customers. By creating detailed customer personas, businesses can gain insights into their customers' motivations, pain points, and decision-making processes, allowing them to tailor their marketing efforts and improve the overall customer experience. (Revella, 2015)

### **2.3 Competitor analysis**

Competition analysis is an essential aspect of any business strategy, as it enables businesses to understand their competitive landscape and identify opportunities for growth and differentiation. By analyzing their competitors' strengths, weaknesses, and market positioning, businesses can make informed decisions about pricing, product development, marketing, and other key areas. (Porter, 1998)

### **2.4 Brand equity**

Brand equity refers to the value that a brand adds to a product or service, beyond the functional benefits it provides. It is the intangible assets such as brand awareness, loyalty, perceived quality, and associations that a brand possesses, which contribute to its value. Building strong brand equity can lead to increased customer loyalty, higher prices, and greater profitability. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

### **2.5 External brand communication**

External brand communication refers to the ways in which a business communicates its brand identity to its external stakeholders, such as customers, investors, and the media. Effective external brand communication is essential for building a strong brand image, attracting customers, and increasing brand loyalty. This can be achieved through a variety of channels, including advertising, public relations, social media, and events. One popular approach to external brand communication is the use of a brand messaging framework, which provides a clear and consistent message that aligns with the brand's core values, personality, and positioning. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

### 3 MARKETING

Most people think that marketing only consists of promotions and sales. However, many experts agree that advertising and sales are only the surface level of marketing. Marketing not only helps you achieve your goals, but is primarily a strategy for maintaining those goals in the long run.

#### 3.1 Experiential marketing

Experiential marketing, as defined by Pine and Gilmore in their book "The Experience Economy," is a marketing approach that focuses on creating memorable and immersive experiences for customers. The goal of experiential marketing is to engage customers on a deeper emotional level, building stronger brand loyalty and advocacy. By creating unique, multi-sensory experiences that resonate with customers, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors and create lasting memories that drive customer retention. (Gilmore, 2011)

#### 3.2 The digital marketing

The digital marketing mix model is a popular framework for understanding the different types of media channels that businesses can use to promote their brand and reach customers developed by (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018) in book Business communication in the service and experience industry. Owned media refers to the channels that a business owns and controls, such as their website, social media pages, and email marketing. Earned media refers to the media exposure that a brand earns through positive word-of-mouth, press coverage, and social media mentions. Paid media refers to the channels that a business pays for to reach customers, such as display advertising, sponsored content, and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.

By leveraging all three circles, businesses can create a comprehensive and effective media strategy that reaches customers across multiple channels. For example, a business might use their owned media channels to share valuable content and engage with their audience, while also using paid media channels to reach new customers and increase brand awareness. At the same time, they can earn media exposure through positive customer reviews, influencer partnerships, and other forms of earned media. This integrated approach to media planning

can help businesses maximize their reach and impact and build a stronger and more effective brand. (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018)

### **3.3 SWOT analysis**

SWOT analysis is a tool used to classify the right marketing strategies for a business. It identifies both, internal and external factors. (Hollensen, 2019)

Strengths and weaknesses belong to the internal factors, and they encompass dimensions like human and financial resources, capacity, production, customer satisfaction, market share, product or service quality and availability and financial performance. (Hollensen, 2019)

External dimensions such as trends, regulations and laws, technological development or global and local economic conditions are covered by opportunities and threats. (Hollensen, 2019)

The information in SWOT analysis must be well-founded by other analyses or research. (Hollensen, 2019)

### **3.4 Golden circle**

The Golden Circle, as described by Simon Sinek in his book "Start With Why," is a framework for understanding how successful companies communicate their brand message and build customer loyalty. The Golden Circle consists of three concentric circles: Why, How, and What. The outermost circle represents What a business does, the middle circle represents How they do it, and the innermost circle represents Why they do it. Sinek argues that the most successful and innovative companies start with their "Why" - their purpose or belief - and use this to guide their "How" and "What." By focusing on the emotional and philosophical core of their brand message, businesses can create a deeper connection with their customers and build stronger brand loyalty. (Chaffey, 2022)

### **3.5 The Dragon formula**

The Dragon Formula, as described by Dot Lung in her book "The Dragon Sisters Guide to Marketing: Your Formula for Owing Your Market," is a framework for creating a powerful and effective marketing strategy. The formula consists of four key elements: Strategy, Storytelling, Synergy, and Structure. The first element, Strategy, focuses on defining your business goals and identifying your target audience. The second element, Storytelling, involves crafting a compelling brand story that resonates with your audience. The third



element, Synergy, involves creating a cohesive and integrated marketing plan that leverages multiple channels and tactics to reach your audience. The final element, Structure, involves implementing and measuring your marketing plan to ensure that it is effective and achieving your business goals.

By following the Dragon Formula, businesses can create a comprehensive and integrated marketing strategy that maximizes their reach and engagement with customers. The formula emphasizes the importance of creating a strong brand story and leveraging multiple channels and tactics to reach your audience. By doing so, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors, build stronger brand loyalty, and drive long-term success. (Lung, 2014)

### **3.6 Social media planner**

A social media planner is a tool that helps businesses and marketers plan and organize their social media content and strategy. It typically includes features such as a content calendar, post scheduling, analytics tracking, and audience targeting. By using a social media planner, businesses can ensure that their social media content is consistent, relevant, and engaging to their target audience. They can also optimize their social media strategy by tracking analytics and adjusting their approach based on what works best.

In today's digital age, social media is an essential component of any successful marketing strategy. A social media planner can help businesses maximize the impact of their social media efforts by providing a centralized platform to plan, create, and track their social media content. With the right social media planner, businesses can increase their brand visibility, engagement, and ultimately, drive conversions and sales. (Kawasaki, 2014)

### **3.7 The snapshot of Brand Management, Marketing and consumer behaviour**

Brand management, marketing, and consumer behaviour are inseparable facets that form the bedrock of a thriving business enterprise. At the heart of brand management lies the pivotal concept of brand equity, representing the value that a brand imparts to a product or service. The establishment and nurturing of brand equity demand a profound comprehension of consumer behaviour, as it is ultimately the consumer who assigns value to a brand. Consequently, marketing assumes a critical role in the creation, communication, and delivery of value to customers, thereby facilitating the development of resilient and impactful brands (Keller, 2012).

The pursuit of effective marketing initiatives necessitates a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour, as diverse consumers harbour distinct needs, wants, and preferences. To gain a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted realm of marketing, one can turn to the authoritative work "Essentials of Services Marketing" by (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). This comprehensive guide illuminates the intricacies of marketing services, unearthing unique challenges and opportunities that arise when promoting intangible offerings. Topics of paramount importance, including service quality, service design, pricing strategies, and customer experience management, are explored in depth, enabling marketers to navigate the complex landscape of service marketing with acumen and finesse.

Considering that the present project aims to propose a targeted Instagram strategy spanning approximately three weeks, it is imperative to transcend the confines of general marketing principles and delve into the realm of consumer behaviour. This symbiotic relationship between marketing and consumer behaviour demands due consideration. Consumer behaviour is an intricate interplay of various factors, encompassing personal, psychological, social, and cultural influences. Personal factors, such as age, income, education, occupation, personality traits, and lifestyle choices, contribute to the shaping of consumer behaviour. The realm of psychology also exerts its influence, with motivational drivers, perceptual biases, learning processes, and the formation of attitudes and beliefs playing a vital role in consumer decision-making. Social factors, including family dynamics, reference groups, social class distinctions, and the overarching influence of culture, further shape consumer behaviour. Finally, cultural factors, such as shared values, norms, customs, and symbols within a specific society or group, add layers of complexity to the consumer's mindset (Revella, 2015).

To gain deeper insights into customer expectations, align marketing strategies, and bolster business success, the seminal work "Buyer Personas: How to Gain Insight into Your Customer's Expectations, Align Your Marketing Strategies, and Win More Business" by (Revella, 2015) serves as a valuable resource. This authoritative guide underscores the significance of crafting well-defined buyer personas, enabling marketers to develop laser-focused marketing strategies. By undertaking meticulous research and crafting comprehensive buyer personas, marketers can tailor their messaging and tactics to resonate with distinct customer segments, fostering deeper connections and driving enhanced business outcomes.

Leveraging the confluence of knowledge in marketing, social media marketing, and consumer behaviour empowers businesses to manage their brands with increased efficiency. Effective brand management necessitates marketers to grasp and harness the intricate interplay of the various aforementioned factors. Building brand awareness and shaping brand image necessitates a nuanced understanding of consumer perceptions and responses to branding elements such as logos, slogans, packaging, and advertising. Cultivating a strong brand personality requires an acute awareness of consumer attitudes, values, and the cultural milieu in which the brand operates (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018).

In summation, the interconnected domains of brand management, marketing, and consumer behaviour call for a holistic and comprehensive approach to achieve enduring success. Effective marketing initiatives rely on an in-depth understanding of consumer behaviour, while successful brand management demands a comprehensive grasp of both marketing principles and consumer behaviour dynamics. By harnessing the multifaceted facets of these domains and crafting well-informed strategies, marketers can proactively create, effectively communicate, and seamlessly deliver value to customers, thereby cultivating robust and influential brands. This symbiotic relationship between brand management, marketing, and consumer behaviour unlocks the potential for businesses to establish enduring customer relationships, foster brand loyalty, and ultimately drive sustainable growth and success (Solomon, 2019).

In essence, the art of brand management encompasses a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour intertwined with strategic marketing initiatives. It is through this integrated approach that businesses can forge meaningful connections with their target audience, adapt to their evolving needs, and position themselves as brands of choice in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Thus, by recognizing the inherent interconnectedness of brand management, marketing, and consumer behaviour, organizations can unlock the

power to captivate, inspire, and thrive in the ever-changing business landscape of the modern world.

## **II. PROBLEM AREA**

## 4 7 VITALS MASSAGE STUDIO

7 Vitals is a micro-scale business (OECD, 2020) which was founded on November 18, 2020. 7V was the first authentic Vietnamese massage salon in Slovakia. It is situated in north-western Slovakia, around 250km from the capital Bratislava, close to the borders with Poland and Czech Republic. (Kysuce, n.d.)

Name 7 Vitals Massage Studio, shortly 7 Vitals or 7V was chosen for numerous reasons. In Vietnamese culture, number 7 means great luck, and the connected ‘vitals’ are elements that can be improved by visiting the massage salon 7V. These elements include relaxation, balance, inner beauty, outer beauty, energy, vitality and regeneration.

### 4.1 Situation

*“In February 2020, the coronavirus pandemic struck the world economy with the biggest shock since the second world war.”* (The Economist, 2020) Since the worldwide spread of the new coronavirus, hospitality, tourism and service industries had been struggling. That is because *“it is far easier to operate factories under social distancing than it is to run service-sector businesses that rely on face-to-face contact.”* (The Economist, 2020)

In pre-pandemic times, managers had to deal with factors of uncertainty in order to reduce them. During the global crisis regarding COVID-19, *“uncertainty can reach extreme levels, and the normal way of working becomes overstrained.”* (Finn, Mysore, & Usher, 2020) Due to this situation, it is not a surprise that existing operating models do not need to work. Organizations and companies were affected by the situation more than they were by economic crisis in 2008-2009. Many of them were facing battle for existence and some even lost it.

Even though pandemic related restrictions are not actively in use in Slovakia anymore, (korona.gov.sk, 2022) the uncertainty levels generally did not return to pre-covid levels. (VOX EU CEPR, 2021)

Uncertainty, according to McKinsey & Company, can be evaluated by two factors – *“magnitude and duration.”* (Finn, Mysore, & Usher, 2020) The magnitude of the corona crisis is supposedly decreasing, on the other hand, the time period was long. (Finn, Mysore, & Usher, 2020)

**Duration and magnitude of a crisis are important determinants of uncertainty.**

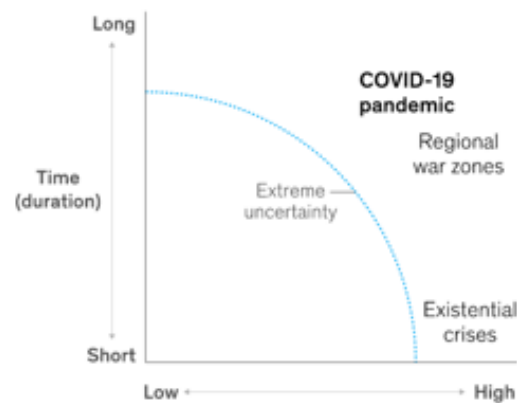


Figure 1: Extreme uncertainty (Finn, Mysore, & Usher, 2020)

Service and hospitality industry was hit hard by the virus and restrictions resulting from it.

**Service Industries Hardest Hit By COVID-19 Outbreak**

Projected change in spending in late March and April compared to pre-COVID-19 estimates

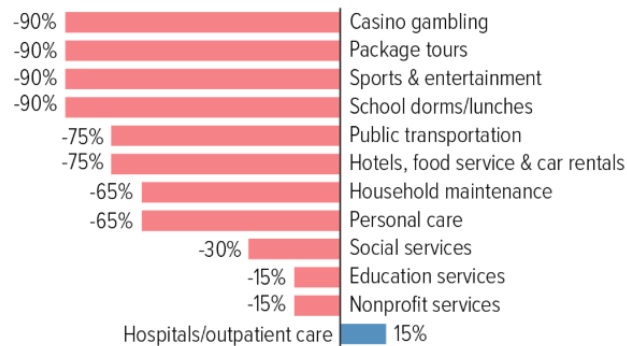


Figure 2: Service industries hardest hit by COVID-19 outbreak (Sachs, 2020)

There was a partial lockdown in Slovakia during Spring 2020 when only grocery shops, drugstores, and pharmacies were operating besides hospitals. At that time, citizens were not allowed to travel to different regions of Slovakia in order to keep the spread of coronavirus under control. The restrictions were fluctuating with small changes; however, they were mostly not advantageous for hospitality and services. (Ministerstvo vnútra SR, 2020)

It creates a great example of new phenomenon of turning from the global or long-distance suppliers to local ones. Not only it is safer for businesses, but in case the country declares a state of emergency with limited movement between regions it is easier for people to get the

product or service as well. (Shih, 2020) (WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, 2020) (FRANCESCA DE NICOLA, 2020)

During the partial lockdown businesses like spas, nail salons, cosmetic clinics, skin clinics, or massage studios were struggling, but so were the customers. *“Even though spa businesses were not considered essential during the mandatory shutdown, for many, it is the only way for them to de-stress and get through the pain, anxiety, and fear that the pandemic has placed upon the world”*, (VALENTI, What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen, 2020) said founder of spa and massage institution for Vogue. Another founder of business in the same industry had something similar to say as well: *“Salons are an affordable luxury for weekly self-care rituals and help people feel good about doing something for themselves, you go to the same salon and you see others there. It is almost like a community center for people to gather and not feel alone.”* (VALENTI, What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen, 2020)

In these statements we can detect connection to the market for love, friendship and especially belonging wrapped in the experience of being together with others and feeling of warmth. Elements of Who-am-I market can also be traced. In case customers share their experience with others, they are letting them know they care about themselves and choose specific, high-quality brands of services. (VALENTI, What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen, 2020)

The article also states that the challenge for service industry is not only to survive, but also to make customers and guests feel safe and welcome regardless the restrictions and measures. (VALENTI, What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen, 2020)

Instagram marketing proved to be effective in 2020 in local survey (Appendix 3) conducted in Kysuce where the massage studio is located as well as in 2021 in global research. (Dencheva, 2023) Due to that, 7 Vitals Massage Studio made a decision to enhance their brand name through social media marketing and external communication, specifically via Instagram.



## **4.2 Problem area**

Marketing, as an important part of many external communication strategies, and external communication with customers are crucial for building a strong brand and marketing advantage. (Hollensen, 2019) .This bachelor's thesis offers effective and potentially lucrative Instagram strategy as well as tips for marketing, communication with various stakeholders and for influencing the parts of external brand communication that cannot be directly affected, such as word-of-mouth or word-of-mouse. Before these strategies, the company is be analyzed from internal and external perspective together with potential customers, competition, and potential options of marketing.

## **4.3 Objectives**

One of the objectives of this thesis is to analyse clients and potential clients of 7 Vitals, and their preferences in order to gain insights and empirical data that can be used for development and innovation of the business.

The main objective of practical implementation of the strategy created in this bachelor's thesis is to strengthen the brand 7 Vitals and business itself through Instagram marketing.

## **4.4 Research Question**

How can external brand communication, especially Instagram help with building a strong brand during COVID-19 pandemic and immediate period after?

## **4.5 Further development**

Suggested further development of the business includes creation of loyalty bonds, their maintenance and reinforcement. It could be also called community management. Thesis or project regarding this is an opportunity for the future.

## **5 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND METHODOLOGY**

The philosophy of science and methodology section clarifies approach to this thesis and methods that were applied in the process of writing.

### **5.1 Philosophy of science**

“The philosophy of science is a field that deals with what science is, how it works, and the logic through which we build scientific knowledge.” (Smith, 2003)

Epistemological and ontological methods together with paradigm are the foundation for the perspective of the project. (Smith, 2003)

Paradigm should be selected based on the aim of the thesis. This project is written on the basis of critical realism. It takes into consideration both, qualitative and quantitative aspects of 7 Vitals’ efforts to introduce new Instagram strategy.

### **5.2 Ontology and Epistemology**

Ontology studies reality and its nature. (Fryer, 2020) It investigates if there exists a reality independent from human perception. (Hammershøy, 2021)

Epistemology examines meaning of knowledge, truth based on knowledge, and how and when consideration of something as truth is justified. (Fryer, 2020)

From an ontological point of view, there is an independent reality according to critical realism.

However, from perspective of epistemology, it cannot be perceived objectively. Critical realism demands “critical reflection on our own subjectivity.” (Hammershøy, 2021)

### **5.3 Methodology**

Research design used in this thesis was mostly descriptive. It evaluates both, primary and secondary data.

## 5.4 Data collection methods and research processes

Source divides data into two categories— primary in case the obtained information is unconditioned and collected by investigator, and secondary supposing the information is processed by another researcher. (Streefkerk, 2018)

Another division is based on the type of information. It can either be qualitative or quantitative.

Qualitative data are expressed by categorical information. In contrast, quantitative data extract statistical and numerical information. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, n.d.)

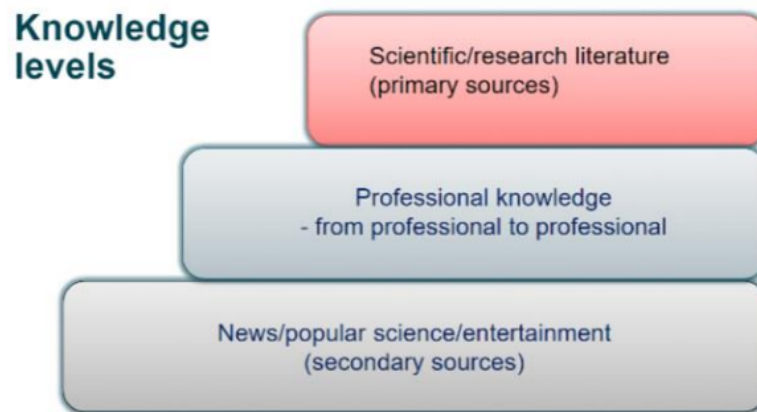


Figure 3: Knowledge levels (Jakobsen, 2022)

Information, data, and knowledge used in this project were acquired in three steps. First, basic and generic information was collected from internet and communication between employees, clients and employer. Later, non-academic websites and articles were used for gaining basic overview about matters such as meso - environment of 7 Vitals as a business or social media statistics. Afterwards, more responsible sources were checked.

The second step took place once the topic for this project was set. Relevant literature was reviewed, and there were some of the primary data collected. They included two surveys answered by clients and potential clients, and insights from the owner. Literature including books and articles was researched and processed. The last step included assessing academical and professional articles. It also included personal interviews with clients.

## Search strategies

- Browsing
  - Why? Inspiration – find search terms
  - How? quick'n'dirty – brainstorm - mindmaps
- Systematic search
  - Why? Find articles, books, 'info' specifically on your subject
  - How? Academic databases in your field, library databases, Boolean operators, keep track of your searches
- Chain search (knowledge based on knowledge)
  - Reuse the reference list in a book/article relevant to your subject
  - Curriculum

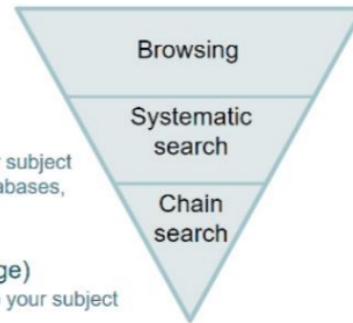


Figure 4: Search strategies (Jakobsen, 2022)

Process of research started with browsing – basic information was found online. Another technique in this stage was brainstorming. Mind-maps were constructed in order to visualize and note brainstormed ideas and thoughts. This technique showed to be helpful for strategy planning and for data collection.

Systematic research included inspection of relevant journals, articles, blogs, and other sources of information. They were accessed mostly via Google Scholar and UTB Library. This stage also included collection of primary data: Two surveys that were taken in second half of 2020. In case of the first questionnaire, respondents were individuals from Čadca and surrounding area. The topic was usage of social media and marketing. When it comes to second survey, the respondents were random people from around Čadca, where 7 Vitals is located, that could potentially become customers of 7 Vitals. The researched topic of this survey was motivation behind visiting newly open places.

One of the valuable sources of primary data utilized for this project involved conducting an interview with Martin, the esteemed owner and proficient manager of the renowned 7 Vitals. This insightful conversation with Martin not only provided an opportunity to gather pertinent information but also allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the intricacies and nuances surrounding the massage industry.

During this in-depth interview, Martin graciously shared his wealth of knowledge and experience, shedding light on various aspects of his role as both an owner and manager. His expertise proved invaluable in unraveling the complexities associated with running a successful massage studio, from the day-to-day operations to the intricacies of providing exceptional customer experiences.

Martin's profound insights delved into the key factors contributing to the studio's notable success, including the selection and training of highly skilled massage therapists, the implementation of cutting-edge techniques and equipment, and the meticulous attention to creating a serene and welcoming environment for clients. Moreover, his extensive understanding of the industry's evolving trends and emerging customer preferences provided invaluable insights into maintaining a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving market.

Through this enlightening interview, a multifaceted perspective on the massage industry was obtained, not only expanding our understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by studio owners but also highlighting the dedication and passion required to establish and sustain a thriving business in this field.

The interview with Martin, with its depth and breadth of information, significantly contributed to the overall research endeavor, providing a solid foundation for analysis and exploration of the project's objectives. By incorporating Martin's firsthand experiences and unique insights, a more comprehensive and enriched understanding of the massage industry was achieved, enabling a more robust and insightful final outcome.

Once the systematic search was done, chain search arose. Based on previously gained information and knowledge, further research was conducted. More specific personal interviews, further literature review, and additional unofficial experiments with social media marketing were done.

## **5.5 Credibility**

Validity and reliability are useful in assessment of quality of methods, measurements and data used in a document or a thesis. Separately, validity evaluates precision and correctness of a measure, while reliability examines its coherence. These are important to consider in order to prevent research bias. (Middleton, 2019)

With a view to reliability, triangulation was used in every case feasible. That way, it was achievable to get as realistic and objective results as possible within the realm of timely and monetary possibilities.

Triangulation assures that data and information used in thesis are accurate and solid. It is done by comparing information from several relevant sources. If they are corresponding and matching it creates a higher level of confidence in the findings and results of the thesis that they are used in. (Noble & Heale, 2019)

Models, theories, and frameworks were chosen based on previous personal experiences and understandings, advice coming from thesis supervisor, and online recommendations.

The gathered primary and secondary data were triangulated by searching for specific pieces of information from several sources with the intention to compare findings. The primary data and information were researched further by gaining secondary data, to ensure there is no subjective opinion used in place of factual information, while secondary data were paralleled with the ones from other sources.

Limitations were encountered as not all needed information was freely available from accessible sources. Therefore, there exists no responsibility of this thesis for complete correctness of all information and data.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

## 6 INTERNAL ANALYSIS: 7PS MODEL

7Ps connect traditional 4Ps, which are product, place, promotion, and price, that are used to market merchandise with three extra Ps that are crucial to offer and advertise services. These extra Ps are people, processes, and physical evidence and environment. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Product elements are the core of company's marketing strategy. If the service or product is not designed and executed well, it does not hold high value for consumers. Company needs to make sure they can fulfil customers' needs and wants better than competition. "*Service products usually consist of a core product that meets the customers' primary need, and a variety of other elements that help customers use the core product more effectively.*" (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018) Those products are called supplementary services and they cover "*providing information, consultation, order taking, hospitality, and handling exceptions.*" (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Place and time represent the distribution channels through which the services are delivered. Those can be physical and electronic. "*Companies need to decide where and when they can deliver service elements to customers, and the methods and channels they can use.*" (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018) The distribution channels can be different for core and supplementary products. There is also an emphasis on the time when the service is delivered because the consumers can be time sensitive. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Price may be one of the key elements for customers. They do not evaluate the price of service by itself. Instead, they add the transport fees, time or other elements in order to find out if the service is worth not only the monetary price. Since services cannot be stocked, every lost opportunity to sell the service is leading to loss in sales and profit. The prices of the services are directly linked to the profit, and therefore this sector is often very dynamic and changeable according to customers, demand, competition or other factors. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Promotion has three crucial roles, and they are mostly educational. They are to inform and provide advice, to impress the consumers so they buy the service, and to affect their decision to buy the service at specific times. Promotion and education help to visualize and understand the service products since that can be challenging for the customers. "*It is important for a service to create confidence in its experience, credentials, and the expertise of its employees. For example, firms can use physical images and metaphors to promote service benefits and demonstrate their competences.*" (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)



Processes characterize the way the companies provide their services. That holds as much importance as the service itself. Processes must be designed well in order to avoid disappointment of customers. Consumers can be participating in the co-production. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Physical environment stands for the environment of delivering the service. *“The appearance of buildings, landscaping, vehicles, interior furnishing, equipment, staff members’ uniforms, signs, printed materials, and other visible cues provide tangible evidence of firm’s service quality.”* (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018) Physical environment also guides the consumers through processes. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Last P stands for people. Employees can make a huge difference and service companies need to select, train and motivate them well. Not only do they carry technical skills, they also cannot lack positive attitude and interpersonal skills. Since the technological development will not completely erase human contact from services, companies should work closely with their HR department in order to create competitive advantage through the employees. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

### **6.1.1 Company analysis: the 7Ps of services marketing**

The core product of 7 Vitals is massage. There are 15 options: full body Vietnamese massage for 60 minutes, full body Vietnamese massage for 90 minutes, full body Vietnamese massage + full body peeling for 75 minutes, Vietnamese foot reflex massage for 30 minutes, Vietnamese foot reflex massage for 45 minutes, Vietnamese foot massage + peeling for 45 minutes, Vietnamese massage with hot lava stones for 60 minutes, Vietnamese massage with hot lava stones for 90 minutes, Vietnamese massage using warm herbal pockets for 60 minutes, Vietnamese massage using warm herbal pockets for 90 minutes, Vietnamese face and head massage for 30 minutes, Vietnamese face and head massage + mask and facial peeling for 30 minutes, Vietnamese back and neck massage for 30 minutes, Vietnamese back and neck massage for 45 minutes and banking + massage for 45 minutes. (7 vitals, 2020)

The supplementary services are providing information and advice online via social media profiles or website, via call, or in person at the physical location. The process of booking is performed through the same channels. The hospitality can be found in the positive attitude of staff and teas and coffee that are privately imported from Vietnam where they were produced. There are several types of tea and one type of coffee, that is traditionally served with condensed milk. They are served the traditional Vietnamese way. Before the procedure,

guests also get to choose out of six massage oils to match their preferences in scents and health benefits. (7 vitals, 2020)

7 Vitals Massage Studio uses mass customization in order to provide personalized experience for every guest. Customers themselves alter the services by choosing the type of massage, beverage, and massage oil according to their preferences, therefore it falls to category of adaptive customization. (FormLabs, n.d.)

When it comes to time, 7 Vitals Massage Studio is providing their procedures daily from nine in the morning until nine in the evening in order to make it inclusive for people who are too busy to pay a visit during the workdays. In special cases they can arrange the services outside the opening hours too. (7 vitals, 2020)

The hospitality and the core service must take place in the physical facilities of 7V, which is the studio itself and the waiting room that will be described later, in the section of physical environment.

The prices in 7V are comparable with businesses within the same branch as mentioned before. The price range is from 15€ for any of the 30 minutes long massages to 38€ for the 90 minutes long massages using hot lava stones or herbal pockets. The prices are fixed. (7 vitals, 2020)

The other user outlays such as time and effort to get to the studio can play a role in decision making. 7 Vitals is located 10 minutes by walk from the main train and bus station and in the center of the town Čadca. There is a barrier-free access. (7 vitals, 2020)

7 Vitals takes promotion and education of potential customers very seriously. Not only are there many posts about every kind of offered tea and massage oils, prices, and offers on Facebook and Instagram, but some of them are promoted as well. For almost half of the potential consumers of the procedures at 7V, the profiles on Facebook and Instagram are important for credibility. (Appendix 1) The place is added to Facebook places and on Google maps too, so it can be used as a location for the posts. In the pre-Christmas times, there were posted pictures of the wooden gift cards with Christmas-themed envelopes supporting people in choosing that experience as a gift for their family members or friends. The fact that 7V is the first Vietnamese authentic massage studio is used often in the advertisement because people in that area tend to like establishments with authenticity and they like to visit newly opened businesses. (Appendix 2)

There was a giveaway too, in order to popularize the studio and to make people interact with the posts and therefore help the Instagram and Facebook page beat the algorithms of those servers, and to promote the business in positive light. (Appendix 3)

Processes in the 7V are mainly delivering the core and supplementary services. Both of those must take place in actual physical environment accompanied by the staff members – the owner and the Vietnamese masseuses. Since the masseuses do not speak Slovak yet, manager supports them in that aspect and provides the customer service during executing the supplementary services like serving tea or choosing the right oil. Then the customer moves from waiting room to the actual studio and masseuse performs chosen procedure. The guest is expected to have certain preferences such as the preferred strength. Masseuse regularly asks if the massage is suitable or if something should be different in order to let the guest co-produce the whole experience. (Appendix 3)

Other supplementary services are provided online. For both, Facebook and Instagram profiles, there are set automatic replies and every message is answered as soon as possible. The profiles and webpage try to create calming and intuitive online environment for the customers. (Appendix 3)

Physical environment has a strong importance for 7 Vitals. It is one of the strongest advantages for this business.

The place has original authenticity since it is the first Vietnamese massage salon in the whole country, but even though many of them are, not all the materials are from Vietnam.

To enhance the authentic experience, all the details are matched to the theme – salon works with natural materials and subtle colors as much as possible.

Materials like vouchers, business cards and price list are made of burnt wood. The uniform of the masseuse is in the same color as the official logo of 7V.

The most dominant elements of 7V interior are the waterfall and starry night ceiling. Water falling from the top of waterfall is used to bring out the atmosphere of relaxation. In case of the starry night ceiling, it is inspired by the nights in Vietnamese village where the owner spent his childhood. (Appendix 3)

Segment of people in 7 Vitals only include two people at a time – manager Chien and masseuse. In order to keep theme effectively, the animate cues are matched to the inanimate ones according to the theory of L. Carbone. Masseuses, who are providers of the core service, are Vietnamese with many years of experience in traditional Vietnamese massage. They went through massage courses in both, Vietnam and Slovakia, and they were chosen thanks to their abilities and experiences. They were also taught how to be hospitable and how to treat guests in Slovakia due to the cultural differences. (Appendix 3)

6.1.2 Customer analysis

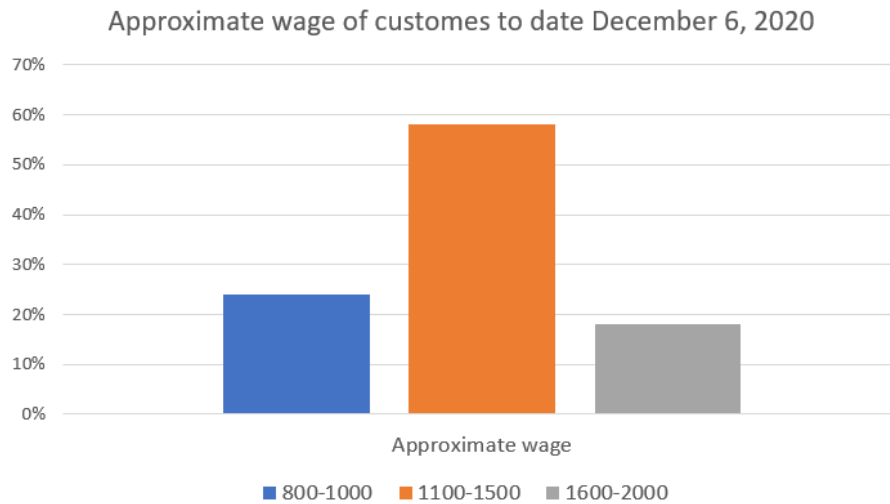


Figure 5: Approximate wage of customers (Appendix 3)



Figure 6: Number of customers (Appendix 3)

When analyzing the customers from demographic point of view, to the day December 6, 2022, 38% of them were in age between 20 and 30 years, 42% in age between 30 and 40 years and 20% in the age category 40-50 years. 100% of customers came from radius of 35 kilometers from the salon 7V. (Appendix 3) In case of gender, 58% consisted of female customers, and 42% of male customers. (Appendix 3) When talking about income, 10% of

customers were students supported by their parents and 90% of clients were independent. Their approximate wages according to the research varied from around 800€ a month to around 2 000€ a month, (Appendix 3) and therefore majority of the clientele is at least slightly above average when it comes to wage in Slovakia. (STATdat, 2020) The data were collected by 7 Vitals.

Another research was conducted in the same geographic area regarding opinions of potential customers about new places by 7 Vitals. Motivation to visit 7 Vitals Studio was in the focus. More than 50% of asked potential customers expressed their desire to visit new places in general because they like to try new things and discover places others are not familiar with yet. Few people declared their curiosity and hunger for ability to compare different providers to be their driving force for visiting new places. The aim to support the new and young businesses and new photos for social media were mentioned as well, around 30% considered them a reason to visit. 10% of asked people suggested they prefer places and providers they are already familiar with. (Appendix 2)

In case of psychographic segmentation, after opening the salon there were found two attributes of customers: they take care of their physical health or use the services of 7V as a tool to relax their mind. According to the gained insights, four personas were created as representation of the actual customers.


Persona 1



<p><b>Demography</b></p> <p>Name: Peter Kula                  Gender: male                  Age: 35                  Status: married, 2 kids                  Profession: plumber at local company                  Income: 950€/month</p>
<p><b>Psychography</b></p> <p>Motivation: to try something new, to relax                  Lifestyle: working week and free weekends, likes traditional cuisine, non-smoker, drinks occasionally</p>
<p><b>Online behaviour</b></p> <p>Peter uses Facebook actively, shares funny and political pictures. He has an Instagram profile but he does not use it very often, he rarely post pictures there and prefers FB.</p>
<p><b>Biography</b></p> <p>Peter has a wife and 2 children. He works as a plumber in private sector from Monday to Friday. During weekend he likes to go for a hike or to have a spa day with his family. Once every two weeks he meets up with his friends and they spend their time according to the motto 'a little beer never killed nobody'.                  Once in a while he needs to relax by himself and sort out his thoughts, and that's when he comes to 7 Vitals. He is light user.</p>

Figure 8: Persona 1 (7 Vitals, 2020)

Persona 2



<p><b>Demography</b></p> <p>Name: Jana Michalicová                  Gender: female                  Age: 46                  Status: divorced, 1 adult kid                  Profession: executor                  Income: 1600€/month</p>
<p><b>Biography</b></p> <p>Jana is focusing on herself, keeping her body and mind healthy. She has a child that is already an independent adult. They have a good relationship and Jana keeps in touch with her ex-husband as well, they are friends and business partners.                  Jana works a lot on working days, she exercises at least 3x a week and she likes to travel and try new things, but she also likes to settle down for a single provider in case the service or product fits her needs. She likes 7V because of the quality of massage and is a heavy user. She is a regular and visits the studio twice a month.</p>
<p><b>Psychography</b></p> <p>Motivation: to relax her body and mind                  Lifestyle: working week and free weekends, healthy diet, drinks wine rarely, smokes occasionally</p>
<p><b>Online behaviour</b></p> <p>Jana uses Instagram and Facebook actively during her free weekends by sharing her progress with fitness and new recipes she discovered. She uses LinkedIn for professional purposes.</p>

Figure 7: Persona 2 (7 Vitals, 2020)

Persona 3

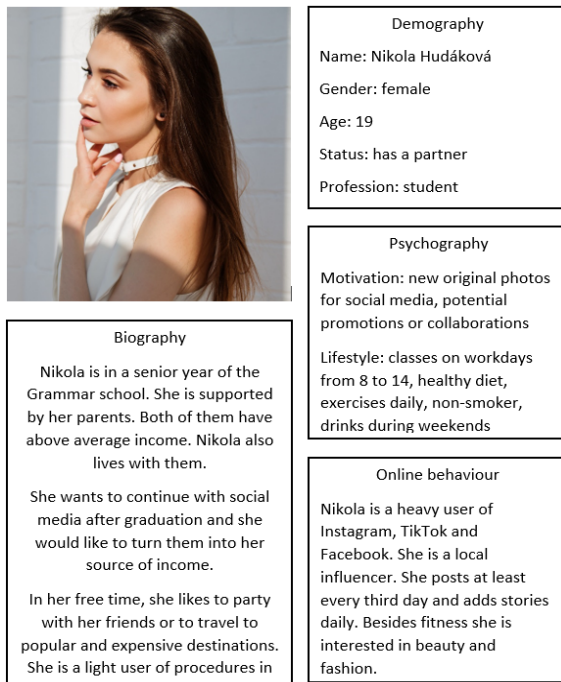


Figure 9: Persona 3 (7 Vitals, 2020)

Persona 4

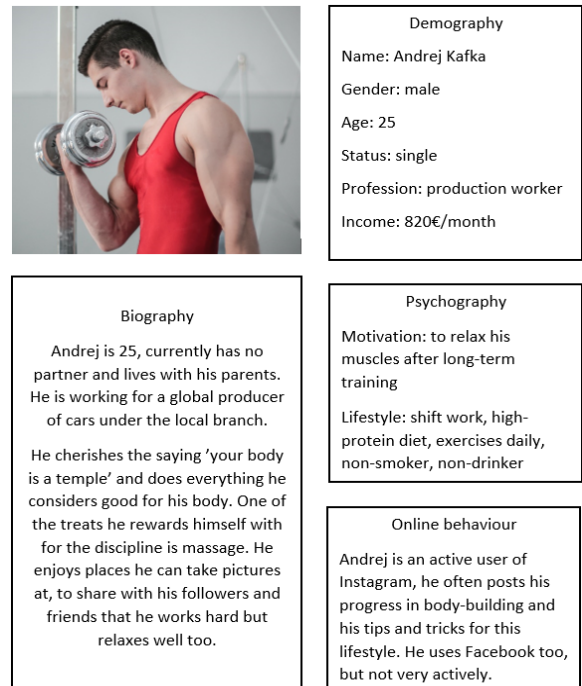


Figure 10: Persona 4 (7 Vitals, 2020)

6.1.3 Competitor analysis

Every business offering the same or similar products or services is a part of competition segment. (Commerce Commission NEW ZEALAND, 2020)

For relevant competition, the radius of 35 kilometers from the town of Čadca, where the 7V Massage Studio is located was chosen. Majority of the customers came from within this radius. (7 vitals, 2020)

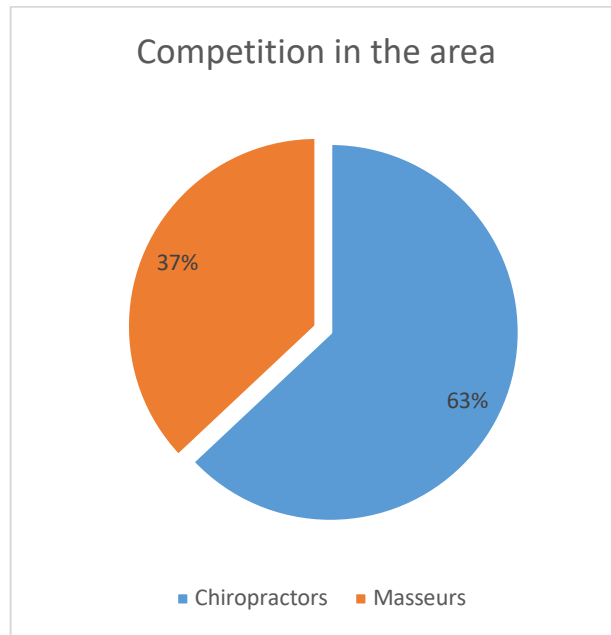


Figure 11: Competition in the area (7 Vitals, 2020)

There are several businesses that can be considered rivals. The prices of their procedures are slightly lower than the ones in 7 Vitals (Masáže Stanislav , 2020) (7 vitals, 2020) and they offer slightly different services. Most of the salons are run by chiropractors. There is no other establishment with any kind of authenticity, theme, themed interior and engagement of all five senses. In addition, the other massage salons and studios do not actively use social media and websites. In fact, some of them do not have the official webpages or social media profiles. (Search, n.d.)

7 Vitals detected threats connected to competitors in the special services offered by other salons, for example group therapy, in tradition and in networks of older salons. However, the competitors focus on slightly different customers.

Professional webpage, updated social media profiles, theme and interior created with attention to detail are the biggest competitive advantages of 7 Vitals. (7 vitals, 2020)

## 6.2 Brand equity as a key concept

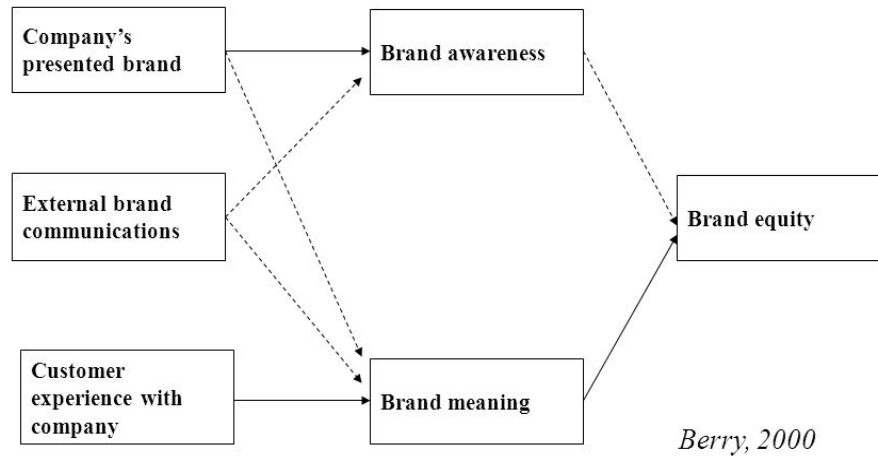


Figure 12: Service-branding model (Tocquer, 2012)

There are six components leading to the brand equity. Brand equity can be explained as the extra price consumers are willing to pay just for the brand. When a firm wants to achieve strong brand, they need to take in consideration all six of these elements. Those are company's presented brand, external brand communication, customer experience with the company, brand awareness, brand meaning and brand equity. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Company's presented brand and external brand communication are focused on in this thesis. They are relevant for external communication with customers. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

Personnel, marketing and facilities are covered by company's presented brand. The firm can directly influence those.

External brand communication includes word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse and company cannot directly control them. (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018)

## 6.3 External brand communication and company's presented brand of 7 Vitals

When it comes to word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse, 7 Vitals cannot directly influence those, but the key for them is to provide the top-quality services, to solve the negative experiences and dislikes, and to improve constantly. In order to take feedback into consideration, every guest is asked about their feelings and thoughts on the experience after the procedure. After the visit they are also sent a message through the channel they booked



the message to rate 7V on Google places if they were satisfied, or to contact the salon if they were not happy about the service. (Appendix 3)

Company's presented brand is created by the themed physical service facilities, personnel, and advertisement described before. Even though it was mentioned earlier in the promotion section, advertisement is something that will be discussed further.

## 7 MARKETING

### 7.1 Experiential marketing as a key concept

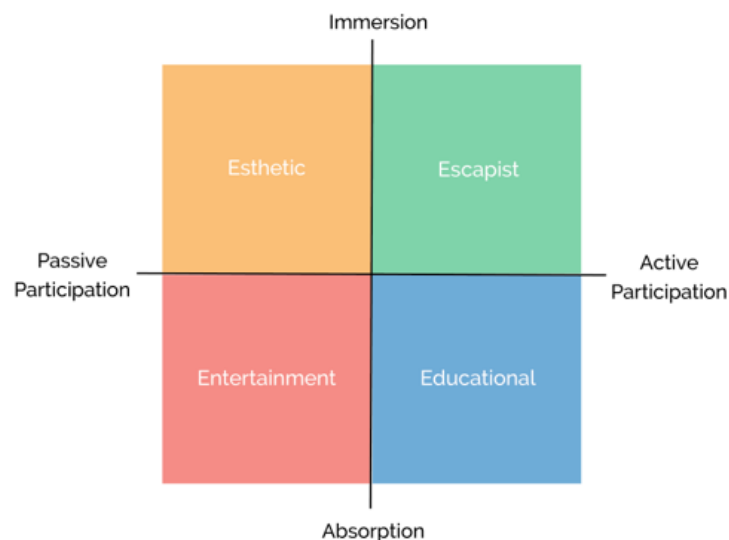


Figure 13: The four realms (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

Experiential marketing can be observed in most branches of the economy. Customers are usually co-creators of the hospitality services and experiential marketing is a way to create strong tangible and memorable experiences by engaging their five senses. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

The experiences can be sorted into four realms according to passive or active participation, and absorption or immersion. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

The realm of entertainment does not require high level of intensity of experience nor active involvement of customers. Hollensen described it as something that gladdens and amuses. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

Educational realm involves active participation with low level of intensiveness. *“In this zone, participants acquire new skills or increase those they already have.”* (Hollensen, 2019)

When it comes to aesthetics, the intensity is high, but the activity is low since the customers are not directly participating in the action. Customers are rather immersed in the experience. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

The last realm is escapism. It combines high intensity with high level of participation. It is described as “a tendency to escape from daily realities or routines by indulging in daydreams, fantasies, or entertainment that provides a break from reality.” (Hollensen, 2019)

## 7.2 Experiential marketing of 7 Vitals

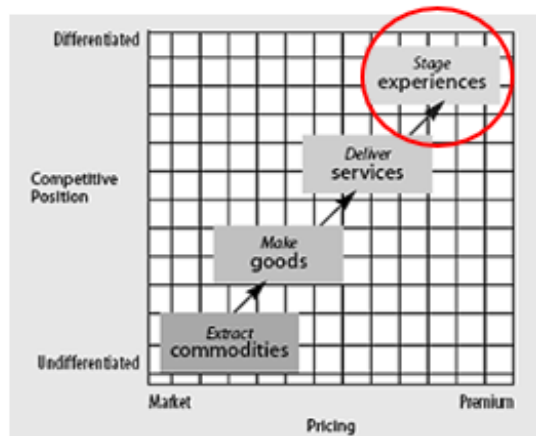


Figure 14: The progression of economic value by Pine and Gilmore (7 Vitals, 2023)

7 Vitals Massage Studio is an experience business, selling not only the massages themselves, but providing relaxation, fighting against anxiety and making people feel good about themselves. 7V does not transform people’s lives though.

7 Vitals acts in accordance with the experiential marketing, and it uses tingles for every sense: there is the touch represented by high quality massage, vision through the interior and neat appearance of staff, smell indicated by the aromatic massage oils, taste implied by the teas and coffee, and hearing represented by the water in waterfall.

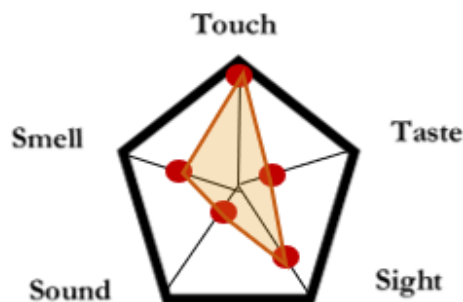


Figure 15: Sensogramme designed for 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023)

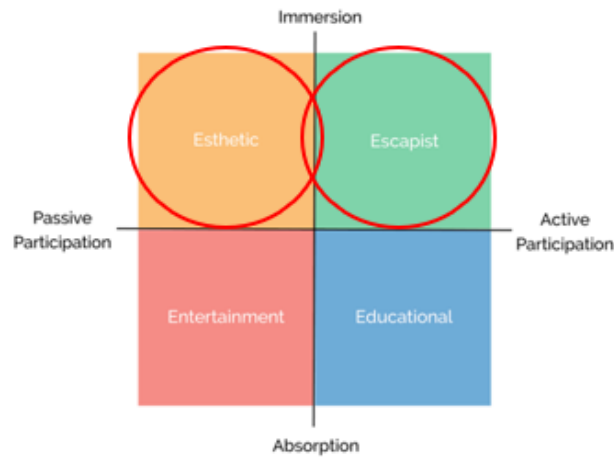


Figure 16: The four realms designed for 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023)

7V combines realms of aesthetics and escapism. It provides immersion for the customers with both, high and low levels of participation. Guests in 7V are required to take place in co-creation of the service and at the same time they do not necessarily need to be active. The facilities and treatment have high level of intensiveness.

These two combined realms are called escasthetics. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

### 7.3 The digital marketing mix as a key concept



Figure 17: The digital marketing mix (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018)

There exist several ways how to let the market know about the company. Due to the high usability of social media and online channels, the number is rising.

*“In modern marketing, types of media are sometimes divided according to three classifications: owned, paid and earned.”* (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018)

Every firm manages their own communication channel mix with accordance to their goals and available resources. (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018)

#### **7.4 The digital marketing mix of 7 Vitals**

For 7 Vitals, the dominant used media are the owned media. They inform, advise, visualize, and persuade the audience through their official website, Facebook profile, and Instagram profile. They also actively use e-mail.

According to the results of the questionnaire, only 4,2% of the respondents do not actively use Facebook nor Instagram. 25% of respondents spend more time using Facebook and the 66.7% uses Instagram more. The last 8,3% of respondents use both of them around the same. 58,3% of the asked ones uses Facebook and Instagram to look for new spots and 79,2% of respondents already visited at least one place that someone from their surroundings or they themselves found on social media. (Appendix 1)

According to this research, the target audience of the salon 7 Vitals prefers Instagram and many of them check the credibility on Google reviews. (Appendix 1) For this reason, 7 Vitals prioritizes the Instagram profile above the Facebook one.

7 Vitals already encountered the earned media too, the customers and people who did not visit 7V yet alike tag them in their stories or mention them in comment section when relevant. (Appendix 3)

When it comes to paid media, the only ones the massage studio uses are the promoted posts on Instagram and Facebook. (Appendix 3)

## 8 SWOT ANALYSIS OF 7 VITALS



Figure 18: SWOT of 7 Vitals (Huynh, 2020)

Reasoning behind every point in the SWOT analysis can be found in previous parts of this bachelor's thesis or in the appendices. (Hollensen, 2019)

### 8.1 Recommendation for action

After the research, analysis and observation of the company, customers, and competitors, an idea to develop the Instagram strategy of 7 Vitals Massage Studio further in order to attract more customers was planted.

## **IV. PROJECT**

## 9 OBJECTIVES

In order to develop a project, objectives must be chosen.

In this case, two objectives were set. They are to increase awareness of 7 Vitals and their services, and to increase number of clients.

Tracking awareness can be tricky, however, there are tools directly from Instagram, which provide valuable insights. Reach and engagement are performance indicators 7 Vitals should focus on for the start. The company should strive to increase their monthly reach by 50%, and their engagement by 70%. In order to achieve so, it is possible to use sponsored posts in order to expose more Instagram users suitable as potential clients for 7V to the content. One sponsored post a week would ensure regular exposure. Therefore, extra monthly cost is suggested to be 60€.

When it comes to gaining new clientele, valuable and attractive content should be ensured. KPIs that should be tracked are number of new clients that came due to good content, and feedback of clients that saw the posts in order to constantly improve 7V's presence on Instagram. Expected results are increase of clients by 5% a month.



## 10 STRATEGY AND TACTICS

### 10.1 Instagram strategy for business growth

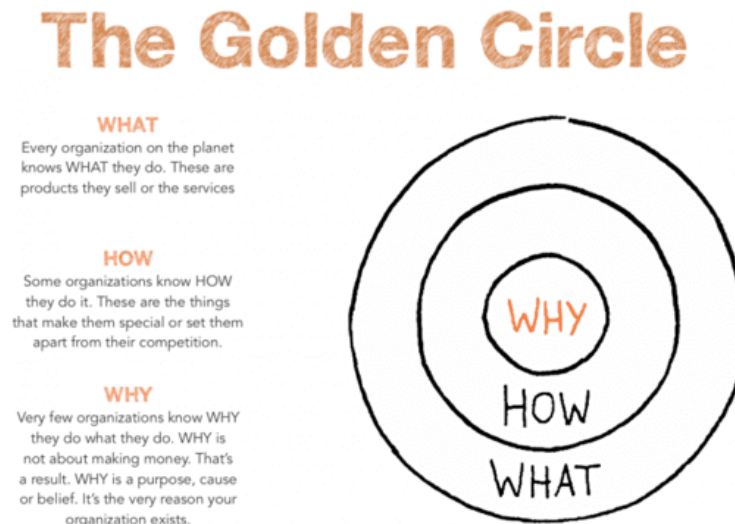


Figure 19: The golden circle by Simon Sinek (Chaffey, 2022)

First step towards the strong Instagram strategy is to know the purpose of the marketing. The clear purpose makes the business and the person standing behind it more attractive and appealing. (Lung, Instagram Strategy for Business Growth, 2020)

In order to find the true purpose, the golden circle by S. Sinek can be used. It consists of three questions: What do I do? How do I do it? Why do I do it? The 'why' represents the purpose and it is not based on monetary reasons. And this Why, or purpose, should be shared in various forms as much as possible in order to show the real story and passion. (Lung, Instagram Strategy for Business Growth, 2020)

The why of 7 Vitals is to share different culture with Slovak people, that might be not as familiar with it. Therefore, the further purpose is to create more accepting and open-minded environment. (Appendix 3)

Strategy in this case consists of three main points. The content must have a purpose, it can be either content to grow, to build the brand on or to sell. (Lung, Instagram Strategy for Business Growth, 2020)

To spread the awareness among the interested people, the maximal number of relevant hashtags should be used. For better effect it is important to keep the consistency. (Lung, Instagram Strategy for Business Growth, 2020)

### 10.1.1 The DRAGON formula

The DRAGON strategy consists of six dimensions that lead to successful Instagram marketing. They are dialogue, relatability and relevance, authenticity, giving value, opinion and niche clarity. (Lung, 2020)

*“Social media isn’t one-way street, it’s a two-way tango!”* (Lung, 2020) Conversation and dialogue cause higher reach and awareness of the brand. The direct messages are also an important part of algorithm. The different types of messages have various values. Text messages have the lowest value for the algorithm, while the text messages have the highest importance, because they cannot be faked. The more dialogue and interaction there is on the Instagram profile, the more reach it is given by algorithm. Good ways to create dialogue instead of announcements and monologue are for instance to ask open-ended questions in the captions, to show curiosity and interest and to maintain an open mind so everyone feels comfortable with sharing their opinions even if others do not agree. (Lung, 2020)

Relatability and relevance can secure likeability and evergreen content. Emotions can often make audience relate, which makes the post more engaging. (Lung, 2020)

Authenticity in this model stands for being real, truthful and transparent in presenting the brand. This way the profile will gain the organic audience. (Lung, 2020)

The point of giving value is that brand should first give, and only after that take. There must be real value in the posts in order to be engaging and successful. They can advise, educate, trigger, inspire, or entertain and that way create value for the followers. (Lung, 2020)

Having an opinion can increase engagement different ways – positive, negative or somehow else. Opinions tend to lead to dialogues and brands need to take a stand. Since people build communities around common opinions, brands should share theirs through words and actions. (Lung, 2020)

Niche is the group of people who share common interest or value. The posts and stories should be aimed at target group through uniqueness, traceability and scalability. (Lung, 2020)














If following these guidelines, the followers and engaging people should go through four phases: *“I know it., I like it., I want it. And I am buying it.”* (Lung, 2020)

7 Vitals has not tried the DRAGON formula previously, and it seems to be beneficial to implement these principles into Instagram marketing.

## 11 ACTION PLAN

Action plan offers possible Instagram plan for around one month during Christmas time. It was based on research of suitable times and time of the day to post, popular hashtags, and several other factors.

Table 1: Example of content plan (7 Vitals, 2023)

Date	Time	Post	Caption	Hashtags
Dec 15	20:00		Would such a nice gift card make a good Christmas present for you?	#7vitalsmassagestudio #7vitals #7v #vietnamnaslovensku #vietnamese #vietnamskamasaz #massagesalon #masaz #masaznestudio #massagestudio #masaznysalon #massage #massageotherapy #vitality #vitalita #energia #energy #balance
Dec 18	12:30		This massage technique is unique to Vietnam. The tools are called herbal pockets. Would you like to try?	#balans #rovnovaha #krasa #beauty #regeneration #regeneracia #relax #zdravie #zdravyzivotnystyl #vianoce #vianocnydarcek #christmas
Dec 20	16:30		We are always happy when you decide to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in our studio.	
Dec 22	20:00		Are you hunting the last-minute gifts that will be heart-warming? We get your back! In 7 Vitals you can buy beautiful wooden vouchers in Christmas envelope that will make your friends and family members enjoy experience with us.	
Dec 25	12:30		We wish every one of you Merry Christmas. What was the best gift you got this year? And what was the best one you gifted?	
Dec 27	16:30		One of the dominant elements in our salon is the Buddha's waterfall. The reason behind the combination of Buddha and water is to create harmony and peaceful environment as Buddha is symbol of balance and peace, and water is proven to help with relaxing.	#7vitalsmassagestudio #7vitals #7v #vietnamnaslovensku #vietnamese #vietnamskamasaz #massagesalon
Dec 29	20:00		Due to high demand of the herbal pockets, we are going to introduce them a bit further. They are filled with herbs and they help with relaxing the muscles through soft pressing against the skin and muscles. The herbs not only smell nicely, but they help with healing process too.	#masaz #masaznestudio #massagestudio #masaznysalon #massage #massageotherapy #vitality #vitalita #energia #energy #balance
Jan 1	12:30		Let us introduce you to the hot lava stones! We are sure you will become friends.	#regeneration #regeneracia #relax #zdravie #zdravyzivotnystyl #caj #čaj #vietnamskycaj
Jan 3	16:30		Meet Yen, our masseuse. She came from Vietnam exclusively for 7 Vitals. She has both, Vietnamese and Slovak certificates and many years of experience in traditional Vietnamese massage. You will be in good and careful hands when you will visit our studio.	
Jan 5	20:00		What tea do you prefer for mornings?	
Jan 8	12:30		Have you tried our procedures already? Which massage is your favourite?	
Jan 10	16:30		Many people asked about our special ceiling – the starry night, so we are here to explain. This ceiling is inspired by the night sky in Vietnamese villages where you can see the stars clearly. Nights there are comforting, and we wish to provide comfort for you too.	
Jan 12	20:00		We got question about barrier-free access a few times, and we would like to answer for everyone who wanted to contact us but didn't know how or didn't feel like it. There is a barrier-free access to 7 Vitals, and we will gladly welcome you all in our massage studio.	

The dates and times to post were chosen based on current trends and combination of recommendations from LinkedIn (Morales, 2022) and LinkedIn experts (Santora, 2023) to the date April 01, 2023, and own experience regarding Christmas time. The real times and days are matter of decision of hired marketing assistant.

Captions should be the same as in the table above but in Slovak language, in order to ensure their suitability for the target groups.

Hashtags can be used depending on current algorithm.

When it comes to visual materials including pictures used for posts and optional stories, Canva Pro should be used as it is popular choice among marketing people, and it is user-friendly platform. (Sophy, 2023)

## 12 COST ANALYSIS

Cost analysis is the process of identifying, estimating, and comparing the costs associated with a business project or activity. It involves analyzing the direct and indirect costs associated with the project and identifying ways to optimize spending to maximize profitability. By conducting a thorough cost analysis, businesses can ensure that they are making informed decisions about resource allocation and can identify areas where they can reduce costs and improve efficiency. (Rajan, 2017)

### 12.1 Previous costs of 7 Vitals

The initial budget for opening 7 Vitals massage studio was largely centered on the cost involved in establishing a salon, web creation, getting a business license, acquiring different courses and marketing. In order to deepen understanding of economic aspects regarding 7 Vitals, following table describes costs of establishing the brand and business 7 Vitals.

Table 2: Previous costs of 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023)

No.	Items	Description	Price (EUR)	Q'TY	TOTALS (EUR)
1.	BRANCH ESTABLISHMENT	Studio opening included all of equipments	11200	1	11200
2.	WEB CREATION	Simple, clean, name, easier to remember, content marketing, attractiveness, etc	80	1	80
3.	Business license	Legal paperwork for running the business	15	1	15
4.	Marketing	Boosting the name of 7 vitals through social media	150	1	150

5.	Additional courses	Learning how to improve the procedures	900	1	900
----	--------------------	--	-----	---	-----

Additional monthly cost for running the 7 Vitals is 750€ including renting a space costing 500€, running ads on social media costs 50€, maintenance of equipment and tools costs 100€, additional tax obligation costs 100€.

All information regarding economic aspects was provided to get better overview of costs and investments.

## 12.2 Expected costs of the project

Since the initiative designed in this thesis is not too complex and complicated, the process of implementation would not be too difficult. Hiring a studying future professional on part-time contract 'Agreement on part-time work for students' for its realization would be convenient solution. Hiring process would not cost money directly, as it would either be done via network or via social media post. In Slovakia, marketing assistants are not paid very well, especially living outside Bratislava. To April 01, 2023, average salary for marketing assistant living in Bratislava is around 1 000€, while outside Bratislava it is around 660€ brutto. (Naše Platy, n.d.) That means around 4€ per hour. In order to ensure good working conditions, suggested salary is six euro per hour. Total expected time needed for this project is around 15-20 hours, making it 90€ to 120€ in salary, and zero euro for insurance, as there is no required insurance if a part-time employee is a student up to 26 years old working up to 20 hours a week and making up to 200€ a month. (Černegová, n.d.)

Professionally taken pictures of 7 Vitals cost 100€ as mentioned before and they can be used for longer time.

Besides working power, Canva Pro costs 12€ per month (Canva, n.d.), and there are only two months needed for this specific project. Before and afterwards, free version of the program is sufficient for 7 Vitals until next project takes place.

When it comes to sponsored posts, 7 Vitals would not use boosting as it seems to weaken performance of organic posts long term. (Lewis, n.d.)

In total, it is expected that the project would cost around 140€.

Table 3: Expected costs of the marketing initiative (7 Vitals, 2023)

No.	Items	Descriptions	Price (EUR)	Q'TY	TOTALS (EUR)
1.	MARKETING ASSISTANT	Improvements for running the business	6	20	120
2.	Canva	Software for visual creation for posts	12	2	24

### 12.3 Expected returns

Expected returns on investment refer to the estimated financial returns that an investment is likely to generate over a given period of time. This measure is used by investors and financial analysts to assess the potential profitability of an investment, and to compare the expected returns of different investment options. (Asness, 2011)

When it comes to social media, average return on investment is 280%. (Neal Schaffer, 2023)  
Based on this information, the ROI of this project should be around 400€.

Besides monetary benefits, this project should spread awareness about 7 Vitals and its services as well as boost performance of organic posts of the page.

### 13 RISK ANALYSES

Risk analysis is the process of identifying, assessing, and evaluating the potential risks and uncertainties associated with a particular investment or business decision. This involves a thorough analysis of various types of risks. (Filbeck, 2015)

Detected risks arising from the previously described initiative are mainly monetary.

In case the chosen language, visuals, or content would not be fitting for the target groups, 7 Vitals can lose around 200€. Besides, it can be a bad image for the parlor.

In order to avoid such situation and consequences, it is important to properly overview the marketing assistant and provide them with all support, advisory and help they may need.

In case this initiative proves to not be effective, it is important to alter the strategy in order to improve next project of similar kind.

This kind of project needs to be assessed in terms of the risk factor. The degree, impacts, probability, and evaluation of each risk are all included in this. Analyses of risks may be qualitative or quantitative. A broad vocabulary is used in qualitative risk analysis, for example moderate, severe, or catastrophic, to identify and assess risks or offers a written description of the risk, whereas quantitative risk analysis computes numerical probabilities over the potential outcomes. Thus, 7 Vitals is able to create an emergency plan in advance of any unforeseen circumstances. Accordingly, the business can create plans to address, reduce, or even completely avoid the risks connected to the project as proposed. The risk analysis will start with a list of the risks that 7 Vitals is likely to encounter in Slovakia when redesigning its marketing and selling strategies. The analyses of the project will take into account the size of such risk from both customers and the company in question, which is either a major or minor risk. During the survey, the researcher discovered the risk factor. Among them are;

- a) High cost of procedures
- b) Growth of massage studios
- c) High rate of transportation cost from customers' side
- d) Growth of electricity prices

The researcher intends to take into account the risks involved and how those risks would be assessed in an effort to carry out the project for the microenterprise under study. This takes these risks' likelihood and severity into account.



### **13.1 Strategies for reducing the above risks (A-D)**

The high cost of procedures, which discouraged customers and led to reduced revenue. To reduce this risk, the studio introduced package deals that incentivized customers to purchase multiple sessions at a discounted rate. By doing so, they were able to reduce the overall cost per session for customers and increase revenue for the business.

Another challenge was the growth of massage studios in the area. To address this challenge, 7 Vitals Massage Studio implemented a differentiation strategy that focused on offering unique services that catered to different customer needs and preferences. This strategy helped to set them apart from their competitors and attract customers who were looking for a customized massage experience. Additionally, they invested in improving the overall customer experience by providing exceptional service and modern amenities in their facilities. To make it easier for customers to book appointments and engage with the business, they leveraged technology by implementing an online booking system and social media marketing.

Transportation costs for customers posed another challenge for the studio. To reduce this risk, 7 Vitals Massage Studio offered discounts for customers who used public transportation or carpool. They also established convenient locations that were easily accessible by public transportation, which helped to reduce the overall transportation costs for customers. By doing so, they were able to attract customers who valued convenient and cost-effective options.

Finally, the studio faced the challenge of high electricity prices. To address this challenge, they implemented energy-saving practices such as turning off lights and electronics when not in use and using energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances. They also explored the use of renewable energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines. By implementing these practices, they were able to reduce their energy costs and contribute to a sustainable environment.

By implementing these strategies, 7 Vitals Massage Studio was able to reduce the risks associated with high costs, competition, transportation costs, and electricity prices. They continued to provide high-quality massage services to their customers and established a loyal customer base that appreciated the unique services, exceptional customer service, and convenient locations. The studio's success story spread, and they became a leader in the massage industry in the Slovak Republic.

## 14 TIME ANALYSIS

Time analysis is a technique used to analyze the amount of time required to complete a specific task or project. It involves breaking down the task into its individual components and measuring the time required to complete each component. (Nickerson, 2009)

The marketing plan that was developed for this bachelor thesis was specifically designed to take place in December, with a focus on the period from the beginning of the month up until Christmas. The reason for this timing is that during this time, people in Slovakia typically spend a significant amount of money on Christmas gifts. This is because Christmas is an important part of Slovak culture, and gift-giving is a popular tradition.

The goal of this marketing plan was to capitalize on this seasonal trend and create a campaign that would appeal to potential customers during this time. By targeting this specific time period and focusing on the tradition of gift-giving, the plan aimed to increase sales and promote the brand in a meaningful way. (Dedinský, 2022)

Using the data and insights gained from this marketing campaign, it is possible to develop similar projects in the future that take advantage of similar cultural trends and seasonal patterns. By analyzing consumer behaviour and market trends, it is possible to create effective marketing campaigns that resonate with the target audience and drive sales. With this in mind, it is clear that the marketing plan created for this bachelor thesis has the potential to serve as a valuable blueprint for future marketing campaigns in Slovakia and beyond.

Table 4: Time schedule for the project of 7 Vitals ( 7 Vitals, 2023)

	2020		2023						2024	
Activity	Nov	Dec	Mar	Apr	May	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Hiring process										
Content creation										
Content publishing										
Data analysis										

In October 2023, 7 Vitals Massage Studio is seeking to hire a Marketing Assistant to support their marketing efforts. The studio recognizes the importance of having a dedicated

professional who can contribute to their growth and brand awareness. The Marketing Assistant will play a crucial role in assisting the marketing team with various tasks, ensuring the successful execution of marketing strategies and campaigns.

The responsibilities of the Marketing Assistant may include market research, assisting in the development of marketing plans, conducting competitor analysis, managing social media platforms, coordinating promotional activities, and assisting in the creation of marketing materials. The candidate should have a strong understanding of marketing principles, excellent communication skills, and the ability to work effectively in a team.

Following the hiring of a Marketing Assistant in October 2023, 7 Vitals Massage Studio focuses on content creation during November and December. Content creation plays a vital role in engaging the target audience and building brand loyalty. The Marketing Assistant, in collaboration with the marketing team, will work on developing compelling and informative content for various marketing channels.

During this period, the Marketing Assistant will be responsible for creating content that highlights the studio's unique services, benefits of massage therapy, customer testimonials, wellness tips, and other relevant topics. The content may be produced in various formats such as blog posts, social media posts, videos, infographics, and email newsletters. It will be essential to maintain a consistent brand voice and align the content with the studio's values and objectives.

In December 2023, 7 Vitals Massage Studio focuses on content publishing as part of their marketing strategy. The Marketing Assistant, in collaboration with the marketing team, will be responsible for scheduling and publishing the created content across various platforms. The Marketing Assistant will utilize social media management tools, content management systems, and email marketing platforms to schedule and distribute the content. They will ensure that the content reaches the target audience at optimal times, taking into consideration factors such as engagement rates and audience behaviour. The Marketing Assistant will also monitor the performance of the published content, track key metrics, and make necessary adjustments to optimise future content distribution.

In January 2024, 7 Vitals Massage Studio focuses on data analysis to gain insights into their marketing efforts. The Marketing Assistant, with the support of the marketing team, will

analyze various marketing metrics and data to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

The Marketing Assistant will assess key performance indicators (KPIs) such as website traffic, social media engagement, conversion rates, and customer feedback. By interpreting the data, they will identify trends, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. The insights gained from data analysis will guide future marketing decisions, allowing the studio to refine their strategies and achieve better results.

Overall, the hiring of a Marketing Assistant, content creation, content publishing, and data analysis all contribute to the growth and success of 7 Vitals Massage Studio, helping them build a strong brand presence, engage their target audience, and make data-driven marketing decisions.

## 15 RECOMMENDATIONS

After conducting a thorough analysis of the relevant data and information gathered from the strategic action plan, it is crucial to proceed with the project implementation phase. This stage requires a clear understanding of the specific strategies required to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

One of the key recommendations for the project implementation phase is to adopt a rigorous KPI monitoring system. This approach enables businesses to track and measure the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, allowing them to identify which ones are delivering results and which ones are not. This data can then be utilized to fine-tune future marketing campaigns and optimize their effectiveness.

Another important recommendation for future projects is to cultivate a sense of loyalty between the enterprise and its customers. Loyalty is critical to long-term success, as it not only helps to retain existing customers but also attracts new ones through positive word-of-mouth marketing.

One effective approach to building customer loyalty is through community management. This involves creating a strong and engaged online community around the brand, leveraging social media platforms and other digital channels to build relationships with customers and encourage them to become brand advocates. By nurturing this community and providing ongoing value to its members, businesses can create a loyal customer base that is highly engaged and supportive of the brand.

In conclusion, the project implementation phase requires a thorough understanding of the specific strategies required to achieve the desired goals and objectives. By adopting a rigorous KPI monitoring system and cultivating customer loyalty through community management, businesses can optimize their marketing efforts and build a strong and loyal customer base.

## 16 CONCLUSION

This thesis connected the gained primary and secondary data with the theoretical frameworks. Given the situation, the most relevant problem area was assessed to be how to let people know about the new service company and how to make them feel comfortable enough to come for a service to 7 Vitals.

For this purpose, SOSTAC framework was used. It included situational analysis covering internal and micro- and meso-external analyses, set objectives, strategy, tactics, and action plan offering examples and procedures, and risk and control section.

Internal analysis of this thesis has base in 7Ps model followed by customer analysis including personas, and competitor analysis. Then, brand equity was described, and marketing activities and initiatives of 7 Vitals were assessed and categorized.

Afterwards, SWOT analysis was created for 7 Vitals, connecting factors from both, internal and external analyses.

Objectives were set following data obtained online in order to choose the ones that are realistic and achievable. Tactics and strategy section provide base guidelines for the marketing plan. There are The Golden Circle and DRAGON Formula used to explain it.

In the action plan, there is an example of posts for Instagram for specific period of time, and it includes conditions for the potential plan.

The thesis next includes economic considerations consisting of expected costs and expected returns.

At the end, there are listed risks and way of controlling those.

Advised next steps for this thesis are to look into loyalty of clients and ways to improve this aspect, and community management initiatives development.

## 17 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- OECD. (2020). *Enterprises by business size*. Available at: <https://data.oecd.org/entrepreneur/enterprises-by-business-size.htm>
- The Economist. (2020). *COVID-19: The impact on industry*. Available at: <https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/coronavirus-report-v4-1.pdf>
- The Economist. (2020). *The pandemic has caused the world's economies to diverge*. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2020/10/08/the-pandemic-has-caused-the-worlds-economies-to-diverge>
- FINN, P., MYSORE, M., & USHER, O. (2020). *When nothing is normal: Managing in extreme uncertainty*. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/risk-and-resilience/our-insights/when-nothing-is-normal-managing-in-extreme-uncertainty>
- Korona.gov.sk (2022). *Aktuálne opatrenia a informácie o COVID-19 (Current restrictions and information about COVID-19)*. Available at: <https://korona.gov.sk/obmedzenia-pre-prevadzky-a-sluzby/>
- VOX EU CEPR. (2021). *COVID-19 uncertainty: A tale of two tails*. Available at: <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/covid-19-uncertainty-tale-two-tails>
- SACHS, G. (2020). *Service industries hardest hit by COVID-19 outbreak*. Available at: <https://www.cbpp.org/service-industries-hardest-hit-by-covid-19-outbreak>
- Ministerstvo vnútra sk. (2020). *Vláda pristúpila k obmedzeniu pohybu obyvateľstva a kontrolám na hraniciach pred a počas veľkonočných sviatkov*. Available at: <https://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=vlada-pristupila-k-obmedzeniu-pohybu-obyvateľstva-a-kontrolam-na-hraniciach-pred-a-pocas-velkonocnych-sviatkov>
- SHIH, W. C. (2020). *hbr.org*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2020/09/global-supply-chains-in-a-post-pandemic-world>
- World economic forum (2020). *weforum.org*. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/ongoing-impact-covid-19-global-supply-chains/>
- FRANCESCA DE NICOLA, J. T. (2020). *blogs.worldbank.org*. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/how-covid-19-transforming-global-value-chains-lessons-ethiopia-and-vietnam>
- VALENTI, L. (2020). *What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen*. Available at: <https://www.vogue.com/article/spas-nails-manicure-pedicure-massage-facials-covid-19>
- VALENTI, L. (2020). *What to Expect From Spas as Lockdowns Loosen*. Available at: <https://www.vogue.com/article/spas-nails-manicure-pedicure-massage-facials-covid-19>

- DENCHEVA, V. (2023). *Instagram marketing and advertising - statistics & facts*. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/topics/5286/instagram-marketing/#topicOverview>
- HOLLENSSEN, S. (2019). *Marketing Management, A Relationship Approach* (4th. vyd.). Amsterdam: Pearson Benelux. 728 p. ISBN: 9781292291444
- SMITH, G. (2003). *The philosophy of science*. Available at: <https://undsci.berkeley.edu/the-philosophy-of-science/>
- FRYER, T. (2020). Available at: [https://tfryercom.files.wordpress.com/2020/10/cr\\_shortguide\\_201029.pdf](https://tfryercom.files.wordpress.com/2020/10/cr_shortguide_201029.pdf)
- HAMMERSHØY, A. (2021). *Paradigm, epistemology and ontology*. Denmark.
- STREEFKERK, R. (2018). *Primary vs. Secondary Sources | Difference & Examples*. Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/working-with-sources/primary-and-secondary-sources/>
- Australian bureau of statistics. (n.d.). *Quantitative and qualitative data*. Available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/statistical-terms-and-concepts/quantitative-and-qualitative-data>
- JAKOBSEN. (2022). *Methodology*. Denmark. Available at: <https://thejacobsen.com/about/methodology/>
- MIDDLETON, F. (2019). *Reliability vs Validity: What's the Difference?* Available at: [https://www.scirp.org/\(S\(lz5mqp453edsnp55rrgjt55.\)\)/reference/referencespapers.aspx?referenceid=2789575](https://www.scirp.org/(S(lz5mqp453edsnp55rrgjt55.))/reference/referencespapers.aspx?referenceid=2789575)
- NOBLE, H., & HEALE, R. (2019). *Triangulation in research, with examples*. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333794057\\_Triangulation\\_in\\_research\\_with\\_examples](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333794057_Triangulation_in_research_with_examples)
- WIRTZ, J., & LOVELOCK, C. (2018). *Essentials Of Services Marketing*. 704 p. ISBN: 13-978-1292089959
- 7 Vitals. (2020). *Cennik*. Available at 7vitals.sk: <https://www.7vitals.sk/cennik/>
- FORMLABS. (n.d.). *Guide to Mass Customization*. Available at: <https://formlabs.com/eu/blog/mass-customization/>
- 7 Vitals(2020). *O nás*. Available at 7vitals.sk: <https://www.7vitals.sk/o-nas/>
- STATdat. (2020). *Priemerná mesačná mzda podľa odvetví*. Available at [statdat.statistics.sk: https://statdat.statistics.sk/cognosex/cgi-bin/cognos.cgi?b\\_action=cognosViewer&ui.action=run&ui.object=storeID%28%22i2F54CEABC9464EB6B9D47D7B63C86C2B%22%29&ui.name=Priemerná%20mesačná%20mzda%20podľa%20odvetv%C3%AD%20\[pr0205qs\]&run.outputFormat=&run.promp](https://statdat.statistics.sk: https://statdat.statistics.sk/cognosex/cgi-bin/cognos.cgi?b_action=cognosViewer&ui.action=run&ui.object=storeID%28%22i2F54CEABC9464EB6B9D47D7B63C86C2B%22%29&ui.name=Priemerná%20mesačná%20mzda%20podľa%20odvetv%C3%AD%20[pr0205qs]&run.outputFormat=&run.promp)



- Commerce commission new zealand. (2020). *What is a competitor?* Available at: <https://comcom.govt.nz/business/avoiding-anti-competitive-behaviour/what-is-a-competitor>
- Masáže Stanislav . (2020). *Cenník*. Available at: [masazestanislav.webnode.sk](https://masazestanislav.webnode.sk) : <https://masazestanislav.webnode.sk/cennik/>
- SEARCH. (n.d.). *Massage parlors in Cadca*. Available at: <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=masazny+salon+cadca#rlimm=16197570494433654879>
- TOCQUER, G. (2012). *Berry's service brand equity model*. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Berrys-service-brand-equity-model\\_fig1\\_271294528](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Berrys-service-brand-equity-model_fig1_271294528)
- PINE, B., & GILMORE, J. (2011). *The Experience Economy, Updated Edition*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press. 400 p. ISBN: 13- 978-1422161975
- LARSEN-ZARECHNOVA, M., HAMMERSHØY, A., & LOVÉN, M. (2018). *Business Communication In The Service And Experience Industry*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag. 280 p. ISBN: 978-87-4126-534-6
- LUNG, D. (2020). *Instagram Strategy for Business Growth*. Available at: <https://www.domestika.org/en/courses/1102-instagram-strategy-for-business-growth>
- MORALES, A. (2022). *What's the Best Time to Post Content on LinkedIn?* Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/business/marketing/blog/linkedin-ads/whats-the-best-time-to-post-on-linkedin>
- SANTORA, J. (2023). *Best Times to Post on LinkedIn to Increase Your Engagement in 2023*. Available at: <https://influencermarketinghub.com/best-times-to-post-on-linkedin/>
- SOPHY, J. (2023). *What is Canva and How Can You Use it for Your Business?* Available at: <https://smallbiztrends.com/2023/02/what-is-canva.html>
- Naše platy. (n.d.). *Marketing*. Available at: <http://www.naseplaty.sk/prehľad-platov/marketing.html>
- ČERNEGOVA, A. (n.d.). *Dohoda o brigádnickej práci študentov v roku 2023 – dane a odvody*. Available at: <https://www.podnikajte.sk/socialne-a-zdravotne-odvody/dohoda-o-brigadnickej-praci-studentov-2023-dane-odvody>
- Canva. (n.d.). *Design like a Pro*. Available at: <https://www.canva.com/pro/#pricing>
- LEWIS, C. (n.d.). *Do Not Boost Post on Facebook or Instagram*. Available at: <https://carolinelewisconsulting.com/do-not-boost-post-on-facebook-or-instagram/>

- SCHAFFER, N. (2023). *Social Media ROI: The EASIEST Way to Calculate the Impact of Social Media on Your Business*. Available at: <https://nealschaffer.com/social-media-roi/>
- DEDINSKÝ, M. (7. 12 2022). *Ježiško bude chudobnejší. Prieskum ukázal, koľko minú Slováci na darčeky*. Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/h1ci3qb/jezisko-bude-chudobnejši-prieskum-ukazal-kolko-minu-slovaci-na-darceky/>
- REVELLA, A. (2015). *Buyer Personas: How to Gain Insight into Your Customer's Expectations, Align Your Marketing Strategies, and Win More Business*. 240 p. ISBN: 978-1-118-96150-6
- PORTER, M. E. (1998). *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*. 397 p. ISBN: 13- 978-0684841489
- GILMORE, B. J. (2011). *The Experience Economy, Updated Edition*. Harvard Business Review Press. 400 p. ISBN: 978-1422161975
- LUNG, D. (1. 1 2014). *Social Media Dragons*. Available at: [https://www.domestika.org/en/dotlung?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw6vyiBhB\\_EiwAQJRopkYqTZ0jFvA1BI9VK-9diZh1OYh\\_r4a8yhKgaB-0bOATT\\_rmUN6jnBoCD-4QAvD\\_BwE](https://www.domestika.org/en/dotlung?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw6vyiBhB_EiwAQJRopkYqTZ0jFvA1BI9VK-9diZh1OYh_r4a8yhKgaB-0bOATT_rmUN6jnBoCD-4QAvD_BwE)
- NICKERSON, A. M. (2009). *The Time Trap: The Classic Book on Time Management*. 320 p. ISBN: 13-978-0814413388
- ASNESS, C., ILMANEN, C. (2011). *Expected Returns: An Investor's Guide to Harvesting Market Rewards 1st Edition*. 608 p. ISBN: 13-978-1119990727
- FILBECK, H. K. (2015). *Investment Risk Management (Financial Markets and Investments) 1st Edition*. Oxford University Press. 710 p. ISBN: 13- 978-0199331963
- KAWASAKI, G, FITZPATRICK, P. (2014). *The Art of Social Media*. 208 p. ISBN: 978-1591848073
- KELLER, K. (2012). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, 4th Edition*. Pearson. 608 p. ISBN: 13-978-0132664257
- SOLOMON, M. R. (2019). *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being, Global Edition*. Pearson Education Limited. 640 p. ISBN: 13- 9781292443201
- KYSUCE. (n.d.). *Čadca*. Available at: <https://www.regionkysuce.sk/en/towns-and-villages/323-mesto-cadca>
- RAJAN, M., DATAR, S. (2017). *Hornsgren's Cost Accounting: A Managerial Emphasis 16th Edition*. 992 p. ISBN: 978-0134475585
- LOVELOCK, C., WIRTZ, J. (2017). *Essentials of Services Marketing, Global Edition*. Pearson Education Limited . 704 p. ISBN: 978-1292089959

CHAFFEY, D. (25. 10 2022). *Golden Circle model: Simon Sinek's theory of value proposition 'start with why'*. Available at: <https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/online-value-proposition/start-with-why-creating-a-value-proposition-with-the-golden-circle-model/>

CHAFFEY, D. (2022). *SOSTAC® marketing planning model guide and the RACE Growth System*. Available at: <https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/sostac-model/>

CHAFFEY, D. (2022). *Golden Circle model: Simon Sinek's theory of value proposition 'start with why'*. Available at: <https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/online-value-proposition/start-with-why-creating-a-value-proposition-with-the-golden-circle-model/>

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Extreme uncertainty (Finn, Mysore, & Usher, 2020) .....	23
Figure 2: Service industries hardest hit by COVID-19 outbreak (Sachs, 2020).....	23
Figure 3: Knowledge levels (Jakobsen, 2022).....	27
Figure 4: Search strategies (Jakobsen, 2022).....	28
Figure 5: Approximate wage of customers (Appendix 3) .....	36
Figure 6: Number of customers (Appendix 3).....	36
Figure 7: Persona 2 (7 Vitals, 2020).....	37
Figure 8: Persona 1 (7 Vitals, 2020).....	37
Figure 9: Persona 3 (7 Vitals, 2020).....	38
Figure 10: Persona 4 (7 Vitals, 2020).....	38
Figure 11: Competition in the area (7 Vitals, 2020).....	39
Figure 12: Service-branding model (Tocquer, 2012) .....	40
Figure 13: The four realms (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) .....	42
Figure 14: The progression of economic value by Pine and Gilmore (7 Vitals, 2023).....	43
Figure 15: Sensogramme designed for 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023).....	43
Figure 16: The four realms designed for 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023).....	44
Figure 17: The digital marketing mix (Larsen-Zarechnova, Hammershøj, & Lovén, 2018) .....	44
Figure 18: SWOT of 7 Vitals (Huynh, 2020) .....	46
Figure 19: The golden circle by Simon Sinek (Chaffey, 2022).....	49

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Example of content plan (7 Vitals, 2023).....	52
Table 2: Previous costs of 7 Vitals (7 Vitals, 2023) .....	53
Table 3: Expected costs of the marketing initiative (7 Vitals, 2023) .....	55
Table 4: Time schedule for the project of 7 Vitals ( 7 Vitals, 2023).....	58

## APPENDICES

Appendix P I: Survey of consumers social media as a marketing tool for 7 Vitals massage studio

Appendix P II: Survey of newly opened enterprises in the service sector

Appendix P III: Interview with Martin - owner and manager of 7 Vitals.

## **APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

Dear respondent,

This survey is intended for users of at least one of the Facebook and Instagram networks. It is anonymous and its results will be used in my year project, which is devoted to the establishment of a new business in the service sector.

Thank you for giving him a few minutes of your time :)

- Huynh Minh Chien

### **1. Do you use Facebook or Instagram?**

I actively use both

I actively use Facebook

I actively use Instagram

I have a profile created on at least one of them, but I don't use it

### **2. Do you spend more time using Facebook or Instagram?**

I spend an equal amount of time on both

I spend more time on Facebook

I spend more time on Instagram

I don't spend time on either of them

### **3. Have you ever entered a giveaway on Facebook or Instagram?**

Yes

No

### **4. Do you use Facebook or Instagram to find new places and businesses?**

Yes

No

### **5. Do you check the reliability of businesses and the feedback they have received on Facebook or Instagram?**

Yes

No

### **6. Have you visited a place in the past that you or someone close to you found on Facebook or Instagram?**

- Yes
- No

**7. Do you trust businesses with social media profiles more than those without? (If it doesn't matter to you, mark no)**

- Yes
- No

**8. Do you find social media posts featuring people more credible than posts without them?**

- Yes
- No

**9. Would you be willing to pose for a social media post for a service business such as a nail salon or massage studio?**

- Yes
- For a financial reward, discount or other benefits, yes
- No



## **APPENDIX P II: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

This short survey is anonymous and the results will be used in my year project.

Thank you for taking a few minutes of your time for it :)

- Huynh Minh Chien

**1. Do you like visiting newly opened businesses?**

Yes

No

**2. Do you visit newly opened businesses in your area?**

Yes

No

**3. Please justify your answers to the first two questions. ( open answer )**

**4. Do you use Facebook or Instagram to find new places and businesses?**

Yes

No

**5. Do you like places with an authentic environment - for example, from other countries, cultures or regions?**

Yes

No

**6. Mark how important individual elements are for your choice of operator. (1 = not important; 5 = very important)**

**1      2      3      4      5**

**Price**

**Quality**

**Location**

**Opening hours**

**Experiences of friends**

**Profiles on social networks**

**Feedback on Google and social media**

**Additional services**

**7. Do you trust businesses with social media profiles more than those without? (If it doesn't matter to you, mark no)**

Yes, in the case of a good ratio of price and quality of the main service, I would also change the operator because of them

They are nice, but I wouldn't the provider change because of them

No, they have no value to me

## **APPENDIX P III: INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN - OWNER AND MANAGER OF 7 VITALS.**

### **Why did you decide on opening the massage studio with strong Vietnamese theming?**

I like massages, and I was thinking about opening a salon for a long time, but I was afraid that people wouldn't want to receive services from us, because we are different. And then I thought, why wouldn't I use it as the advantage? So I set our original culture as a theme. I also hope that this move will embrace everyone that is not ethnically Slovak not to be afraid or ashamed, and that Slovaks, on the other hand, will be more open-minded and welcoming towards different people even in this part of the country. You see? I am influencer... and pioneer (giggles)

### **Why did you consider name 7 Vitals the best option?**

7 is one of the luckiest numbers in Vietnamese culture. Numbers in general are very important for the businesses, even the phone numbers are chosen very carefully in Vietnam, because they determine the success for the future. And vitals, well, I think it represents the chosen 7 elements well, and it's easy to pronounce in both, Slovak and English, which is important especially when people talk about it with others.

### **7V is Vietnamese authentic massage studio. What is representing the Vietnamese culture there?**

I tried to match everything to the theme, we used mostly natural materials like bamboo, wood and plants because in Vietnam you work with what you have access to. Besides that, I really wanted to incorporate 2 elements there: kind of waterfall with Buddha since he is a very important and popular symbol for peace and balance. The sound of water can be used for meditation as far as I know, so I believe it helps to unwind and relax. The other element is starry night. There was always something comforting in the stars in the village I grew up in. It was also a good and original way to mix dimmed light into the interior.

**What about the supplementary services? Why is it important to provide the traditional tea and variety of massage oils to choose from?**

I strongly believe that people should feel welcome in our massage studio, and we do that through the welcoming cup of tea or coffee. We have 7 different types of traditional tea and one type of coffee. All of them are brought from Vietnam exclusively for 7V. In case of oils, not everyone likes certain aromas and customers might have health problems which the specific oils can help with. We have 6 of them, again, from Vietnam.

**My next question is, how would you rank the engagement of each of 5 senses in 7 Vitals?**

I don't think this is a difficult task. First is touch that our customers come for. It's the centre of our services. Then sight, we really did a great job, if I may say so myself, because I haven't seen anything like we have yet. Some massage salons try to look authentic, but they only use pictures or photos and not real materials like I mentioned before. The third one is smell. I had to think about this one a bit, because taste is of a similar importance, but customers can refuse the tea or coffee while the massage oil is required for all of our procedures. That makes the taste the fourth one. The last is sound. Sound of water makes the experience fuller, but it is not as original. Anyone can use that. In the future we might change some parts, maybe we will add music to enrich the experience a bit, or add treats to tea and coffee, and then maybe the rank will change, For now I think this rank is adequate though.

**How do you collect feedback? And how do you use it?**

I personally ask every guest about their opinion and feelings after their procedure. We need to know what they think of our services so we can improve all the time. Once they leave, we send them a message where we kindly ask them to leave us feedback on google places, since people tend to check the credibility of places there, if they are satisfied with the procedure. If they aren't happy, we ask them to contact us so we can resolve any problem. So far people gave us great ratings, and we have heard very little negative points. In fact, only that the masseuse doesn't speak almost any Slovak yet.

**Do you collect data about the ways the actual customers got to know about the 7 Vitals Massage Studio?**

I collect different data about our customers. I created the personas out of them before and I can provide you this information too. Around 50% of the customers got to know about our studio from social media – either Facebook or Instagram. Out of those 50%, 32% know from Instagram and the other 18% from Facebook. And the other half heard about 7V from their family and friends. We had there a whole family already. First, the father came out of curiosity, later mom of the family came and at the end their son. He's about our age, 21 or so. And it all started by the son telling his dad about our salon, who then wanted to try it.

**How has the composition in terms of gender been so far?**

Not very surprising honestly, 58% of our customers were women and 42% have been men.

**What kind of promotion and advertisement do you use?**

We, of course, use Instagram and Facebook to gain the audience, and we pay for promotions of some of our posts, then we have big banner next to the entrance to the building where we are located, and now we are going to install a huge poster on the wall of a building. It is in very central location, in the most frequented part of pedestrian zone in Čadca. I am thinking about leaflets too... I didn't mention the stories on Facebook and Instagram. People tend to share their experiences online and they make free advertisement for us. And we are having giveaway, so people are tagging other people, commenting and liking our posts.

**It's few days before opening the massage studio, are there any competitors you're afraid of?**

I am not going to lie, I am both, excited and scared. We worked hard on our salon in order to differentiate it as much as possible, and also to make it difficult to copy. However, there are a few massage salons and studios that we can consider as competition. According to the

research you made before, there are more chiropractors than regular masseurs, so they offer a bit different procedures than we do. I made my own researches way ahead, and there is no one with the interior and theme like we have. Their marketing is really weak too, not many of the salons have websites, and some have only profile on Facebook. In general, I think people regularly don't put as much effort in details and the extra services as we decided for. We have nice webpage and we are updating our social media profiles. But the threats I feel are that there are salons that provide group therapy and other non- traditional procedures and services. Another one is the fact that there are much older salons, that people know of already, and they also told their friends about those salons. I think that's it... no, I think there's one more. I am a bit sceptical, because this is not a big city full of open-minded people, so based on past experiences, I am a bit afraid that people won't be interested since we are different... if you know what I mean.

**Do you have any specific establishment in mind, that you would take as direct concurrence?**

A: No, honestly, not really. I am not saying that the other places are not good, but we have completely different concept, and we focus on slightly different customers. We want to attract open-minded people that want to get to know and try new things, authentic experiences. While other salons, they mostly focus on people with specific problems, especially the chiropractors.

**If you could pick a competitor from further distance than the focused 35km, would you find any?**

I really haven't seen any as detailed massage studio, but I would probably go for Sabai Dee in Žilina, around those 35-40km afar. They have very interesting concept, and they also established a theme, but they used only pictures to create the environment. But they really have some strong marketing.

**I would like to ask you about masseuse that works for you. Where is she from and why did you choose her?**

She is from Vietnam and she came for my offer to work for the 7 Vitals. She had completed official course of Vietnamese traditional massage a few years ago and worked for several well-known spas since. Her previous employers were happy with her skills and abilities. I got to know about her from family members back in Vietnam and decided to contact her, and then helped her to get to Slovakia.

**What does she think so far?**

She is alright with the country, but I don't think she will stay here forever. I hope for a few years though.

**Have you experienced any obstacles with her so far?**

Well, I don't want to say yes, but I can't say no. The thing is, that she is more than 30 years old and she lived her whole life in Vietnam, so the cultural traits are deep inside her mind. And some of the cultural differences make her behaviour awkward for people in Slovakia, and some Slovak things are awkward for her. She also thinks she is better than others and that she is the boss since she has so much experience. I don't really like that because she has no idea how things work here in Slovakia. So often I have to remind her that I pay her for her job and not the opposite way (laugh). But I think she will learn eventually.

**What did it cost to bring her to Slovakia? And I don't mean only monetary aspects.**

Let's see... Of course, it costed money, but it costed me a lot of energy and time too, because I had to do the paperwork, e-mails and phone calls in both, Slovak and Vietnamese. The whole COVID-19 situation didn't make it better because restrictions were strict and even though the situation in Vietnam was much better than situation in Slovakia, she must have stayed in quarantine for a few days and then she got tested. At the end everything turned out just fine I would say.