An Analysis of Marketing Communication of the E-shop La Mode

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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na analýzu stávající marketingové komunikace lokálního e-shopu La Mode, který se věnuje prodeji dámské módy. Cílem teoretické části bylo vypracování literární rešerše, která vymezila základní pojmy v oblasti marketingové komunikace a dopomohla tak ke tvorbě teoretických východisek nezbytných pro provedení analýz v teoretické části. Cílem praktické části bylo analyzování současného stavu marketingové komunikace e-shopu La Mode. Provedené analýzy poskytly výsledky nutné k formulaci návrhů pro zlepšení stávající marketingové komunikace vybraného e-shopu.

Klíčová slova: marketingová komunikace, e-commerce, sociální sítě, marketingová analýza, marketingový výzkum, digitální marketing

ABSTRACT

The bachelor's thesis is focused on the analysis of the current marketing communication of the local e-shop La Mode, which is dedicated to the sale of women's fashion. The aim of the theoretical part was to develop a literature search that defined the basic concepts in the field of marketing communication and thus contributed to the creation of the theoretical starting points necessary for the analysis in the theoretical part. The aim of the practical part was to analyze the current state of marketing communication of the e-shop La Mode. The conducted analyses provided necessary results for the formulation of proposals for improving the existing marketing communication of the selected e-shop.

Keywords: Marketing Communication, E-commerce, Social Media, Marketing Analysis, Marketing Research, Digital Marketing

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Motto

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

Walt Disney

I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world full of marketing practices around us. People all around the world encounter marketing everywhere without even realizing it. Companies are striking from everywhere trying to pull us in with their luring techniques that make us spend money. Surprisingly, they are very successful. With the digital revolution, many new marketing tools came into the picture and became extremely popular. Digital marketing, social media, influencer marketing, and the list continues. All these practices are used by both offline and online stores.

This thesis focuses on the topic of digital marketing and how it shapes the marketing communication of e-shop La Mode. By conducting analyses and analyzing the digital marketing itself, this work identifies opportunities for La Mode to implement better strategies to increase its engagement and improve marketing communication with customers.

The theoretical part explores several key topics that are divided into four chapters. Starting with the development of a communication model, continuing with defining marketing and marketing mix of services, and covering the very important marketing communication and communication mix. It also focuses on digital marketing, defining e-commerce, and modern trends in marketing communication relevant to La Mode's online presence. The last chapter of this part defines various marketing analyses that are used in the practical part to gain better insights into the e-shop's practices.

The theoretical part serves as a basis for understanding the following practical part. Three research questions are formulated at the end of the theoretical part. These questions will be answered and verified after a proper analysis and completion of the practical part.

The practical part covers an analysis of La Mode's present state of marketing communication strategies. This part starts with McKinsey's 7S framework serving as an introduction of La Mode and continues with selected marketing analyses and an analysis of the e-shop's marketing communication techniques. The following analyses, such as the SWOT analysis, benchmarking, PESTLE analysis, and the analysis of La Mode's marketing mix, revealed the e-shop's key strengths, threats, opportunities, weaknesses, as well as external factors that influence the e-shop's operations.

At the very end of the practical part, a summary of this part is provided along with recommendations for improvement and the estimated costs of implementation that do not exceed the e-shop's marketing budget.

I. THEORY

1   MARKETING

Marketing is a process that allows both people and businesses to obtain what they need and want by creating and sharing value with others. From a business perspective, marketing is used by companies to build strong customer relationships, engage with their customers, and create customer value so they receive value from customers in return (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 25).

To understand marketing properly, marketers need to acknowledge its basis, such as customer needs, wants, and demands. Needs are characterized as the difference between what the consumer possesses and what the consumer requires. Wants are the consumer's desires that they need to satisfy. Demands are the consumer's desires paired with the resources required in order to obtain them (Solomon, Marshall, and Stuart 2023, 27).

As the definition of marketing changes over time, the American Marketing Association (2017) defines marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large".

1.1 Marketing Mix (7P)

A marketing mix is a set of tools that help businesses push their product to the targeted market (Luenendonk 2022). It consists of what the business can do to engage with customers and deliver customer value (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 72). 7P describes 7 elements that are involved in the marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. 7P is also different from the basic 4P model, as it adds 3 elements (people, process, and physical evidence) because services possess characteristics that distinguish them from products, and therefore the original 4P model is not suitable for both products and services (Vaštíková 2008, 26).

1.1.1   Product/Service

Products are physical goods or services that the customer pays for. Goods are tangible, which means the products are physical and can be touched, replaced, and seen. Services, on the other hand, are intangible (Singh 2012, 41).

The product is also defined as a combination of many elements. This includes design, packaging, physical features, or services that automatically come with the item, such as free delivery, warranty, and more (Solomon, Marshall, and Stuart 2023, 24). Services are intangible activities associated with the satisfaction of customers' needs and

possess the following characteristics: immateriality, inseparability from the producer of services, heterogeneity, destructibility, and the impossibility of owning a service (Vaštíková 2008, 20).

1.1.2 Price

Price refers to the amount of money that buyers pay for the product (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 72). It also represents the product's value – marketers use it to increase customer's interest in their products by putting an item on sale. However, the opposite strategy of setting a higher price than expected makes the price communicate that the company sells high-quality products (Solomon, Marshall, and Stuart 2023, 25).

1.1.3 Place

Place, or distribution value, includes the ways in which companies make the product available and bring it to their customers (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 72). Tracy L. Tuten (2021, 258) says that "there must be a channel through which the exchange can take place". Place includes distribution channels and transportation of goods and services to customers (Singh 2012, 42).

A channel distribution is a line of activities the product goes through to be delivered to its target customer. It includes transforming the product and transportation. It's an option given by the business to its customers to exchange each other's values. Channels play a significant role in the customers' buying process, such as selecting and ordering the product, paying for the product, and receiving the product. In terms of a business process and the product's path to the market, channels include manufacturing the product, packaging the product, and transporting the product (Tuten 2024, 262).

1.1.4 Promotion

Promotion in the marketing mix stands for all the activities a business performs to persuade its customers to buy its products (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 72). The promotion also helps to inform the customers about the company's products. Companies try to adjust and influence their behaviour, so customers focus on their products and forget other products produced by the company's competitors. Some aspects of the product that differentiate it from the competition might be a price that is considered reasonable by the customer, specific properties and features that the customer seeks, or simply the right time and the right place where the product is presented. Promotion is also called marketing communication (Tuten 2024, 291).

1.1.5 People

People refers to all the people standing behind the company – staff, executives, workers, etc. This part of the marketing mix deals with the quality of workers, their education, motivation, and personal development (Cimbálníková, Bilíková, and Taraba 2013, 61). According to Christine Ennew and Nigel Waite (2013, 232) "the people who provide a service affect how customers see the product, how it is promoted, and how it is delivered".

1.1.6 Process

Christine Ennew and Nigel Waite (2013, 232), say "process is concerned with the way in which the service is delivered, including business policies from service provision, procedures, the degree of customisation and so on". In other words, process in the marketing mix stands for any key procedure or operation that leads to the realization of the provided products (Cimbálníková, Bilíková, and Taraba 2013, 61).

1.1.7 Physical evidence

This tool of the marketing mix stands for anything tangible connected with a provided service. Physical evidence is pertinent to promotion, it helps with building the brand and image of the company (Ennew and Waite 2013, 232).

2   COMMUNICATION MODEL

In today's world, having a communication model is essential for businesses because it provides consistent brand messaging, enables communication of chosen messages to the targeted audience, and enhances customer engagement and loyalty. It also helps to differentiate the business from its competitors and allows customers to provide feedback that the businesses can utilize for their improvement. In summary, a communication model serves as a roadmap for developing effective communication strategies and driving business growth in the e-commerce environment.

2.1 Developing a Communication Model

To develop a proper and effective marketing communication strategy, marketers need to understand the general communication process. Such a process includes identifying the target audience and creating an effective promotional strategy to persuade the audience's response. Marketers these days focus on viewing marketing communications as maintaining current customer interactions and relationships with the firm and its brands. Communication strategies must be differentiated, as the preferences of every customer differ. Any form of communication needs to be a fit for specific individuals, niches, and segments. Each communication experience will have a different influence at various stages of the buying process (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 416).

To understand how communication works, nine elements are essential for creating an effective communication strategy. Kotler and Armstrong (2021, 417) describe a functioning communication process through these elements: sender, encoding, message, media, decoding, receiver, response, feedback, and noise.
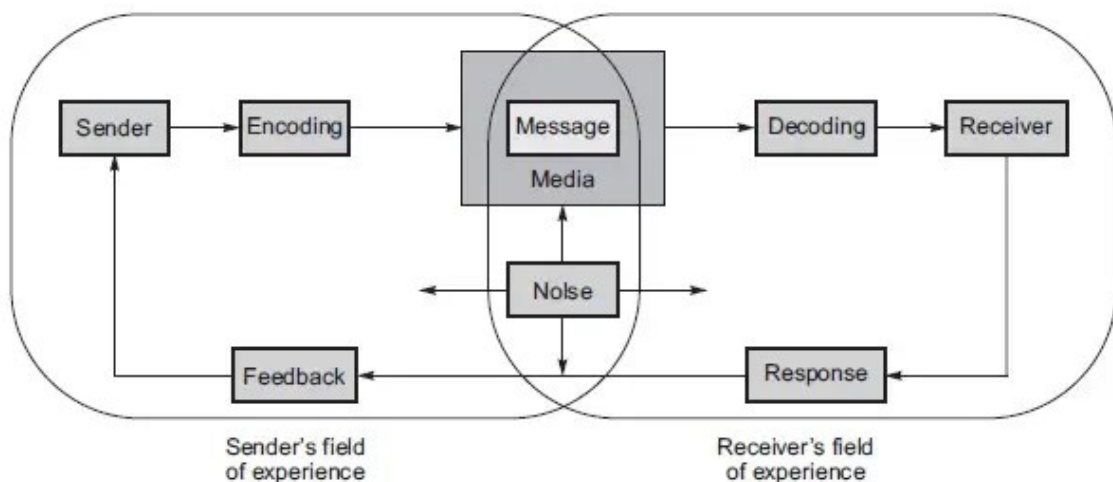
Figure 1 Elements in the Communication Process (Source: Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417)

2.1.1 Sender

A sender is a group of people, a person, or an organization that sends an intentional message towards a receiver through the use of communication channels. The sender needs to be viewed as acceptable, reliable, and attractive for the message to be effective. Acceptability is created through the sender's credibility and professional competence. Reliability is created by being viewed as objective and truthful. Attraction creates the probability that the receiver pays attention to the message (Přikrylová 2019, 24).

2.1.2 Encoding

Encoding is a process of creating any form of advertisement that carries a message. Such advertisement needs to be perceived as easily understandable by the receiver. The sender encodes the message into advertising by adding symbols, sounds, photographs, slogans, etc. (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417).

2.1.3 Message

Message is the actual advertisement transmitted by the sender (for example, an ad, e-mail, etc.). The advertisement distinguishes the business from its competition, is used in different media and markets, and evokes emotions in customers and receivers (Kotler, Keller, and Chernev 2022, 295).

2.1.4 Media

Media refers to the communication channels used to transmit the message. The media must be chosen appropriately for the advertising to be effective. Using the wrong channels typically leads to receivers not understanding the message (Přikrylová 2019, 26).

2.1.5 Decoding

After the message is converted into an appropriate advertisement and transmitted through the correct media, receivers decode the message. Decoding refers to the process of interpreting the symbols in the company's advertisement by a targeted receiver (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417).

2.1.6 Receiver

Receiver is anyone who receives the message. It can be a person, who is not interested in buying the company's product at all, as well as a person who is a loyal customer of the company. The company's target group influences the message – the business determines

how the advertisement communicates, how it appears visually, and what it communicates –
based on the target group's preferences (Kotler, Keller, and Chernev 2022, 294).

2.1.7 Response

As the message is transmitted and viewed by the target audience and receivers, it generates
a response. The response is a reaction (positive or negative) of the receiver after seeing or
hearing the message (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417).

2.1.8 Feedback

Responses generate emotions that lead to feedback. Feedback refers to the part of the
receiver's reaction which is communicated back to the sender after spotting the message
(Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417). Feedback determines whether the message was effective
or not and leads to potential changes in the message (Přikrylová 2019, 27).

2.1.9 Noise

Noise refers to any distortion happening during the communication process that results in
misinterpretation of the message by the receiver (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 417). Noises
often result in misinterpreting the company's product with its competition (Přikrylová 2019,
28).

3 COMMUNICATION MIX

Marketing communication or MARCOM refers to all the methods used by marketers to inform and engage with their target audience. These methods are used to generate a response and are part of the communication mix (Baines, Fill, Rosengren, and Antonetti 2019, 385). By using these methods, marketers attempt to build the brand's positive public image, develop brand awareness, or differentiate the brand (Tuten 2024, 291). Each marketing communication tool must be designed and coordinated according to the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC) to deliver a clear and captivating message (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 410). The main idea of IMC is to provide the right message to the right targeted audience. It also must be produced at the right time and place and for the right reason, so the message is successful. IMC functions as these factors: informative, persuasive, entertaining, and motivating (Juska 2017, 2). Sometimes the communication mix is referred to as the promotion mix because it is based on promotion (Solomon, Marshall, and Stuart 2023, 505).

3.1 Marketing Communication Mix

A communication, or promotion, mix is a combination of methods that deliver the advertising message and the product's value to the target audience. The COMMIX includes five main tools, such as public relations, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, and personal selling (Baines Fill, Rosengren, Antonetti 2019, 423).

3.1.1 Advertising

Advertising is used to engage with customers and influence the audience. It is done by renting some space to display the message or by renting a specific timeframe in the media – TV, for example (Baines, Fill, Rosengren, Antonetti 2019, 385).

Focusing on digital advertising, 5 common types of digital advertising exist: display ads, expandable banners, rich media ads, search ads, and native ads (Tuten 2024, 296).

- Display ads are usually displayed in the form of banner advertising. It contains texts, and graphics and is designed in various formats and sizes so it can adapt to desktops, mobiles, or tablets.
- Expandable banners are display ads that are designed to have interactive features, such as enlarging when the customer interacts with them.
- Rich media ads are also considered display ads with interactive features; they also contain videos, graphics, and data to attract visitors' attention.

- Search ads can be described as a generated response to a text or a phrase searched by the visitor on search sites.
- Native ads are the type of advertisement that is designed to blend with the original content.

3.1.2 Public Relations

Public relations (PR) means, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2021, 411) "building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building a good corporate image, and creating favorable events, stories, and other marketing content". The different perspective is targeted at consumers. Gaynor Lea-Greenwood (2013, 36) says that "public relations is a means by which companies attempt to influence consumer opinion about their marketing mix, image or ethos". She also says that PR is not as obvious as advertising, so to the general public, it sounds like a recommendation (Lea-Greenwood 2013, 26).

Companies use tools such as sponsorships, donations to charities, community participation, and social responsibility efforts. These tools are then discussed in the media to maintain the company's positive public image and therefore spread word-of-mouth marketing. In other words, PR stands for all the activities used by a firm to build a good relationship with its customers and with the public. Whenever a company happens to be in a crisis, PR specialists use PR tools to protect and recover the company's public image. These are done through press releases, speeches, donations, interviews, announcements, influencers, employees, or volunteering efforts (Tuten 2024, 300).

3.1.3 Direct Marketing

The main aim of this method is to generate a response and influence the customer's behaviour. Direct marketing is the use of sending personalized messages to customers, or target audiences, by utilizing collected data about customers (Baines, Fill, and Page 2013, 294).

In other words, direct marketing is a one-on-one tool used to target both customers and businesses (Lea-Greenwood 2013, 28).

3.1.4 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is a set of tools used by marketers to stimulate buying behaviour, such as purchase or sale, by a short-term incentive (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 411). It can be divided into two categories by its target – consumers or trade members. Focusing on

consumers, sales promotion includes tools like loyalty programs, bonus packs, discounts, coupons, price deals, or sampling. The trade members category includes discounts, deals, promotional products, displays or prizes, and bonuses (Tuten 2024, 304).

3.1.5 Personal Selling

Personal selling is a practice that involves communication between two or more people. Such a tool provides marketers with valuable information, stimulates customer behaviour, and develops positive feelings (Baines, Fill, and Page 2013, 294). In other words, personal selling involves customer interactions with the firm's sales representatives to make sales, build customer relationships, and attract more customers (Kotler and Armstrong 2021, 411). Tracy L. Tuten (2024, 304) says that "the more complex, technical, and intangible the product, the more firms rely on personal selling to promote it".

Personal selling usually involves personnel training, so the seller knows the basis of the product and obtains some selling skills, individual customer relations, and personal shoppers (Lea-Greenwood 2013, 29).

3.2 Selected Modern Trends in Marketing Communication

The marketing environment is always on the move, changing and shaping. As various trends occur, these trends also shape communication strategies (Ismail 2023). For the purposes of this thesis, two selected trends are defined.

3.2.1 Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Word-of-mouth marketing (WOM) is a type of unpaid promotion encouraged by the positive experience of customers. Such type of marketing is reflected in the customers' daily dialogues and, in many cases, takes the form of recommendations. This marketing tool is extremely powerful, as 88% of people trust their friends' or family members' recommendations. Companies are aware of that and try to encourage word-of-mouth marketing by providing customer service to generate the feeling of being heard and listened to (Hayes 2022).

3.2.2 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing means using a third party to promote the brand and its products. The third party refers to influencers, who are people viewed as famous by the public. These people usually have thousands of followers on social media and are capable of influencing their audience through the content they post. When it comes to influencer marketing,

influencers are paid to create good word-of-mouth marketing about the brand and promote it to their followers. This kind of promotion is considered more authentic and credible (Yesiloglu and Costello 2021, 13).

Types of influencers (Chaffey and Smith 2023, 26):

- Nano influencers – less than 5000 followers.

- Micro and niche influencers – more than 5000 and less than 99,999 followers.

- Mid-tier influencers – more than 99,999 and less than 999,999 followers.

- Top-tier influencers – more than 1,000,000 followers (global).

- Authoritative influencers – experts in a specific industry.

4 DIGITAL MARKETING

As this thesis deals with an e-shop, digital marketing is a crucial part of the marketing communication and functioning of such businesses.

According to Raymond D. Frost, Alexa K. Fox, and Terry M. Daughtery (2024, 27), digital marketing is defined as "marketing activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large".

Dave Chaffey and PR Smith (2023, 3) claim that "digital marketing is marketing because of the dramatic growth in adoption of digital devices, digital communications, and E-commerce sales we have experienced in the last 30 years".

Digital marketing is a subfield of marketing characterized by the management and use of electronic technologies and channels (internet, email, digital television) and digital data about customers' characteristics, or behaviour (Baines, Fill, Rosengren, and Antonetti 2019, 459).

Digital marketing also has a huge impact on selling online when it comes to specific industries. For example, retailers thrive on selling online. Education and tutoring have become more accessible, and many types of online entertainment, such as streaming platforms, or social media, have risen (Chaffey and Smith 2023, 49).

4.1 Creating a website

An e-commerce business sells through a website; therefore, it is crucial to create a proper website that the customers can access.

An effective website must be a connection of two key points: the brand's business goals and the needs of the brand's target market. Every business should know what the purpose of its website is, and who the website is for, and build a website that is easily accessible. Creating a website comes in 6 stages (planning, design, development, testing, responsive web design, and deployment), in which RWD (responsive web design) is very important (Ryan 2017, 40).

4.1.1 Responsive Web Design (RWD)

Every website should be accessible through every device, such as a phone or a tablet. Responsive web design means that the website adapts to the device (Ryan 2017, 40). Ben Frain (2022, 5) defines responsive web design as a "presentation of web content in the most relevant format for viewpoint and device accessing it".

4.2 E-commerce

E-commerce, according to Kenneth C. Laudon and Carol Guercio Traver (2019, 45), is defined as "digitally enabled commercial transactions between and among organizations and individuals".

In other words, e-commerce is the application of the Internet, mobile applications and browsers, and the Web, where the Internet consists of a network of computers, and the Web is an internet service that provides access to all the web pages (Laudon and Traver 2019, 45).

There is a difference between e-commerce and e-business. Raymond D. Frost, Alexa K. Fox, and Terry M. Daugherty (2024, 7) distinguish e-business as improving the business activities of a company through the use of digital technology, such as the Internet, the web, or computers in general. E-commerce, on the other hand, focuses on transactions involving the creation of a digital value, new online marketplaces, and buying or selling online.

E-shops provide the service of online shopping. Candice V. Cunningham (2019) says, "online shopping, on the other hand, is an e-commerce activity which involves purchasing items on a seller's website via credit or debit card and having the item delivered to your home".

4.2.1 Types of E-commerce

- Business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce – online businesses focus on a certain segment of consumers. Companies try to create a relationship with their customers that is based on trustworthiness (Kingsnorth 2019, 33).

- Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce – businesses sell their products to other businesses (Laudon and Traver 2019, 59). This type of e-commerce involves more professional relationships that focus on achieving specific goals. The goal might be, for example, a lower price that could lead the businesses to bargain (Kingsnorth 2019, 33).

- Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce – consumers sell to other consumers on a specific marketplace. This type of e-commerce involves auctioning, selling, or trading (Rivera 2024).

- Mobile e-commerce (m-commerce) – a type of e-commerce that uses wireless devices such as smartphones or tablets to make payments, buy and sell products, or access online banking (Bloomenthal 2022).

- Social e-commerce – a type of e-commerce that is authorized by social networks or social relationships (Laudon and Traver 2019, 61).
- Local e-commerce – businesses focus on attracting customers based on their present geographic location. This type uses online marketing tools and techniques to persuade customers to visit their store (Laudon and Traver 2019, 61).

4.3 Marketing Communication of E-commerce

As internet usage spreads rapidly, many businesses operate as e-shops. This means that all transactions are conducted online, and consumers shop on e-shops' websites. To be successful, e-shops rely on the use of specific marketing communications to deliver value to their customers and to spread brand awareness (Rahayu and Fatima, 2019).

4.3.1 Pay-per-click (PPC) Search Marketing

Pay-per-click ads are a type of paid result. The link is displayed at the top or bottom of a SERP (search engine result page) when a customer types in a keyword or a specific phrase. Marketers do not pay for the ad to be displayed, but PPC ads operate as a cost-per-click (CPC) model, meaning that the cost occurs after a visitor clicks on the link and is directed to the website (Chaffey and Smith 2024, 347).

4.3.2 Sales Promotion on the Website

In this case, sales promotion on the website involves tools available on the website itself. The website is used as a medium for sales promotion and provides a bigger reach to customers. This type is cheaper and provides 24-hour, non-stop accessibility from anywhere (Rahayu and Fatima, 2019).

4.3.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing uses social media to connect with marketing aims. It focuses on social commerce, social entertainment, social communities, and social publishing. Companies are allowed to interact with their customers more often through photos, announcements, videos, stories, informative posts, or polls (Tuten 2024, 301). Its main goal is to gain more website traffic through social media and published content. SMM also includes creating social media content to attract more customers and visitors, which later take part in word-of-mouth marketing (Zahay, Roberts, Parker, Baker, and Baker 2021, 2). Social media contains "organic social media" – posting the brand's own content, and "paid social media" – paid promotion of the brand's posts. It provides an opportunity to gain new

customers, engage with loyal customers in new ways, and listen to customers' comments and feelings towards the brand. Social media also influences customers on their lifecycle journey (Chaffey and Smith 2023, 275).

4.3.4 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization is the process of raising the number of visitors to a brand's website by making sure that the site name and links are at the top of a search engine results page (SERP) – usually by using the appropriate keywords. There are two types of results in SEO: organic results and paid results (Frost, Fox, and Daugherty 2024, 305-306).

Paid results are those that are displayed at the top or bottom of SERP and are labelled as advertisements (Farhana 2023).

Organic results are natural and are achieved by the application of organic search. Organic search is a strategy that optimizes the brand's website, so it is displayed on the first page of SERP. This is done by many techniques, such as adding keywords to the description of a product that may be searched by the customers, leading them to find what they seek (Frost, Fox, and Daugherty 2024, 306).

When it comes to SEO keywords, these are divided into two categories. Short-tail keywords represent short phrases that contain one or two words and are very general. This type of keyword is used by the majority of users. The second type is long-tail keywords. These are more complex, long, and specific. Long-tail keywords contain more words than short-tail and are used by s smaller number of people (Ryan 2017, 77).

4.3.5 User-generated Content (UGC)

User-generated content is any form of content created by users – customers themselves. It is a very extensive tool consisting of UGTs (user-generated texts), UGVs (user-generated videos), and UGIs (user-generated images). UGC in general has become extremely popular and plays a pivotal role in e-commerce (Shah and Zimmermann 2017, 1-2).

4.3.6 Digital Merchandising

Digital merchandising means promoting products online in a way that is appealing to the customer. To create a successful online merchandising technique, marketers suggest improvements – such as highlighting best-selling products, using high-quality and sharp photos, creating a website that is easy to navigate, etc. – that positively influence this type of merchandising (Dee 2024).

5 SELECTED MARKETING ANALYSES

A marketing analysis is an in-depth evaluation of a market or a business within a selected industry. It includes competitors, strengths, weaknesses, and potential customers and their purchasing patterns. Marketing analyses assist entrepreneurs in lowering business risks, connecting with their target market effectively, offering the right products, and keeping up with market trends (SendPulse 2023).

5.1 Micro-environment Analysis (McKinsey 7S)

Ovidijus Jurevicius (2023) defines McKinsey's 7S framework as "a tool that analyses company's organizational design by looking at 7 key internal elements, in order to identify if they are effectively aligned and allow the organization to achieve its objectives".

The seven factors are classified as hard and soft, where hard factors (strategy, structure, systems) are influenced by management, and soft factors (shared values, skills, style, staff) are influenced by corporate culture (Kenton 2022).

- Strategy – the firm's plan that determines how the company competes successfully in the market (Jurevicius 2023).
- Structure – determines who is responsible for what (Kenton 2022).
- Systems – the company's infrastructure, decision-making, and procedures (MTCT 2023).
- Shared values – standards that are generally accepted, these determine the behaviour of employees and management (Kenton 2022).
- Skills – the abilities of employees of the company, skills determine the firm's performance (Jurevicius 2023).
- Style – work ethics, how employees and management interact (Jurevicius 2023).
- Staff – the company's workforce, human resources, and management (MTCT 2023).

5.2 Macro-environment Analysis (PESTLE)

PESTLE analysis is the fundamental tool used to analyze the macro-environment (the external factors influencing the business). Such factors are political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental (Machková 2015, 85).

Machková (2015, 86-121) defines political, economic, social, and technological factors as follows:

- Political factors include an analysis of the political system, political stability, political connections of the country, and the conditions of running a business in a certain country.

- Economic factors include the economic policy of the government and the foreign trade policy that consists of the country's activities that influence foreign trade.

- Social factors are commonly the ones that determine whether a business's marketing strategy succeeds or not. Social factors include the consumers' behaviour, cultural differences, different priorities, different needs, and different expectations.

- Technological factors include information about the country's technical maturity as well as the feasibility of utilizing its scientific and research capacity.

- Legal factors include all the information about what is legal and what is not, so the company operates successfully and according to the law (Sedláčková and Buchta 2006, 16-17).

- Environmental, or ecological, factors are important as raw materials are becoming scarce. Customers often demand a business to be ethical and sustainable. This means that the business should lower its carbon footprint, lower its pollution, and invest in renewable materials (Mallya 2007, 48).

5.3 Meso-environment Analysis (Benchmarking)

Benchmarking is a process of comparing a business, product, or service with the competition. The main idea behind the benchmarking technique is to find the most successful competitor and apply the same process to one's own business, product, or service. Simply put, benchmarking is about comparing the best performers in a specific industry or field (Ionut 2022, 54).

5.4 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It's an analysis focusing on these key factors so the firms know what they can and cannot prevent. Strengths and weaknesses are positive and negative factors that are directly under the company's influence. These could be the company's characteristics, for example, a high-quality product or quick delivery – strengths; and high prices or low-quality products – weaknesses. Opportunities and threats influence the company in the means of a macro-environment. These factors cannot be easily predicted or prevented. For example, new technologies or demographic trends – opportunities; and higher competition or high inflation

– threats. SWOT analysis should be used to describe the present situation of the company (Průcha 2014, 396).

6 SUMMARY OF THE THEORETICAL PART

The theoretical part of this thesis covers several key aspects structured into five chapters. The first chapter defines marketing, and marketing mix (7P). The second chapter describes the development of a communication model that is important for the implementation of effective marketing communication strategies. In the third chapter, the bases for understanding marketing communication and communication mix are defined. It also covers selected modern trends in marketing communication. The fourth chapter covers the topic of digital marketing, focusing on e-commerce, along with selected modern trends of marketing communication of e-commerce.

The last chapter defines selected marketing analyses (McKinsey 7S, PESTLE, Benchmarking, and SWOT) that are crucial for discovering factors that mainly influence the business. PESTLE analysis and SWOT analysis focus on external and internal factors that influence businesses both negatively and positively. The McKinsey 7S Analysis focuses on seven internal elements of an organization that influence its operations and marketing strategies. The last analysis – benchmarking – compares a business with its main competitors to improve performance.

In conclusion, the theoretical part covers topics that are crucial for understanding the analysis of the e-shop's marketing strategies that are conducted in the practical part.

In the practical part, marketing analyses of the e-shop and an analysis of its marketing communication will be conducted. This will provide more information that will be used to answer three main research questions:

- *Research question (RQ1): Does La Mode utilize every tool in the marketing communication mix?*

- *Research question (RQ2): Does La Mode use modern trends in marketing communication, such as influencer marketing and user-generated content (UGC)?*

- *Research question (RQ3): What are the strengths and weaknesses of La Mode's marketing communication tools used on social media?*

II. ANALYSIS

7 INTRODUCTION OF LA MODE AND ITS ANALYSIS BY 7S MCKINSEY

La-Mode.cz is an e-commerce platform established in 2019 by one owner. The owner had started with retail earlier and found her passion for fashion along the way. The name of the e-shop, La Mode, represents its main product – clothing. La Mode focuses on women's clothing and fashion, shoes, and accessories. In the variety of offered products, every woman is able to find her style. From dresses, shirts, and jumpers to jeans, blazers, and shoes. The clothing reflects various styles and seasons. La Mode's clothing can be purchased in different sizes and colours.

Its primary vision was to "clothe women at affordable prices". But the vision has changed a little; the e-shop still wants to sell clothing at affordable prices but also focuses on improving the quality of the products.

As the e-shop operates as an e-commerce platform, its marketing techniques rely on digital marketing and social media marketing.

7.1 McKinsey 7S Analysis

This analysis is based on an analysis of the e-shop's stored information and documents as well as on an interview with the owner. The 7S analysis is used to introduce the e-shop properly and determine which area is fundamental for the e-shop's marketing communication.

7.1.1 Strategy

The e-shop focuses on women's clothing, as stated before. It provides fashionable, good-quality products at affordable prices. Its main strategy is to become the most successful local e-shop that is known for its quality rather than quantity. The owner's objective is to increase the e-shop's brand awareness and increase its marketing budget. The e-shop's strategy is to create good marketing communication to meet its goals - as an e-shop, La Mode relies on digital marketing as well as social media marketing. When it comes to the goal of providing quality products, the owner's strategy to achieve this objective relies on doing her research and finding the best suppliers.

7.1.2 Structure

The e-shop's structure is simple. The owner's responsibility varies from buying the goods, taking pictures of the products, uploading them onto the website, promoting and creating

social media content, editing the photos or videos, setting advertising, packaging the purchased goods to delivering packages to the shipping company.

- The owner
- Staff (models + assistant)

7.1.3 Systems

The e-shop does not have any written codex or any documentation of methods. However, La Mode utilizes some of its own systems when it comes to photoshoots, uploading products to the website, and distribution. Before almost every photoshoot, the owner calls a meeting with the models to brainstorm new ideas for reel videos. The models propose some ideas of their own that are realized afterward and evaluated to determine whether the videos will be posted. The owner must pick the best photos and edit them right after the photoshoot, so the photos can be uploaded to the website as soon as possible. When the owner uploads products to the website, she must pick the best photos that reflect the products' quality and details, measure the products' measurements, and write a catchy caption describing the products. If a customer purchases some products, the owner checks the product's quality (mainly seams and fabric) and packs them according to the e-shop's aesthetic. This means the products are folded into a transparent plastic bag decorated with a ribbon, sprayed with perfume, and packed into a pink plastic cover. After that, the packages are transported to the depot of a selected delivery service.

7.1.4 Staff

The e-shop's structure of personnel consists of three people – the owner and two models. Sometimes the owner requests help from her part-time assistant, but this does not happen regularly. However, the owner is considering hiring someone full-time to help her run the e-shop in the future.

7.1.5 Skills

The owner has no specific business or marketing education. Everything relies on skills obtained along the way of doing business and self-educating. Such skills are, for example, photography skills. The owner has come a long way in the time of running the e-shop and the progress is visible in Figure 2. Editing skills are based on photography skills and can also be seen in Figure 2. Other skills include communication skills and customer service skills. Communication skills were improved by regular communication with customers and

suppliers and by dealing with customer service almost every day. La Mode emphasizes its customer service and caters to customers if possible.

Figure 2 Photography skills comparison - 2020 vs. 2023 (Source: Instagram: la_mode.cz)

7.1.6 Style

The owner uses a visionary management style that is driven by accomplishing the same vision. She tries to motivate her staff by being friendly and by establishing a good atmosphere between them.

7.1.7 Shared values

The owner shares with models the values of good relationships and a positive atmosphere. The owner also focuses on the models' well-being and trust. The models are responsible for being able to communicate properly, being on time, and taking care of themselves. The e-shop operates on both extrinsic and intrinsic value – models receive discounts and want to grow as persons. The intrinsic value is achieved by motivation from the owner, by being friendly, and by helping them with their issues.

7.1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the 7S McKinsey analysis highlights that La Mode, as a small e-shop, possesses a well-aligned organizational structure, needed skills, shared values, and a strong

emphasis on digital marketing and social media strategies, all of which have contributed to the success of its marketing communication strategies.

8 SELECTED MARKETING ANALYSES OF THE E-SHOP

This chapter focuses on marketing analyses that were defined in the theoretical part. To conduct these analyses, the necessary information was gathered from the e-shop's documents, an interview with the owner, and personal observations.

8.1 An Analysis of La Mode's Marketing Mix

This chapter analyzes the marketing mix of the e-shop – product, place, price, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence and is based on interviews with the owner, personal experience, as well as observation of the e-shop's processes.

8.1.1 Product/Service

The products of this e-shop are women's fashion, as mentioned before. The e-shop does not focus mainly on clothing but also on shoes and accessories. As can be seen in Figure 3, the offered products reflect a variety of different fashion styles, seasons, and holidays (a Christmas collection, for example). The products are taken care of in the warehouse and packaged properly into a pink cover. The package also contains a thank you card and a small package of sweets to show gratitude to the customer.

8.1.2 Price

The price is visible on the e-shop next to each displayed product. The owner sets prices mainly according to the wholesale price, so if a product is purchased for a higher wholesale price, the retail price will be higher as well, and vice versa. Price is also set according to quality – if a product is of better quality than expected or than other products, the price is set accordingly. The quality is determined by comparing the fabric, material, and seam quality with other products.

La Mode's prices are also set according to the e-shop's competition – La Mode usually sells at lower prices than other e-shops selling similar or the same products, as can be seen in Chapter 9.3.4. Another factor that determines the price is psychological (odd) pricing. La Mode's prices always end with the number 9. This technique can result in a 10-30% boost in sales (Baier 2023). The e-shop's price range for the e-shop's products can be seen in Table 2. This table also shows the usage of psychological pricing – even items on sale end with the number 9.

Lastly, La Mode provides holiday discounts (for example, Valentine's Day discounts, Easter discounts, Christmas discounts, etc.) or seasonal sales. Sales vary from 10 % to 55 % and can be found in a separate section on the website. Even sale prices end with the number 9.

Type of products	Price range
Tops	199 – 549 CZK
Bottoms	249 – 839 CZK
Dresses	199 – 1,499 CZK
Sweaters/sweatshirts	299 – 699 CZK
Blazers/cardigans	429 – 899 CZK
Jackets/coats	579 – 1,859 CZK
Sets	389 – 1,099 CZK
Shoes	219 – 899 CZK
Accessories	99 – 499 CZK

Table 1 Price range (Own processing)

8.1.3 Place

The owner has built relationships with many B2B businesses over the years. The place where the products come from differs. Some products are purchased from suppliers' warehouses in the Czech Republic, others are purchased from Poland or Italy. The products are manufactured mainly in Italy, Turkey, Poland, and China before being distributed to the warehouses.

The place is also the e-shop itself. The website is the platform where customers access and purchase products. It is easy to understand and navigate. The navigation menu helps to make the search for products easier (as shown in Figure 4). If a person looks for a specific item, they can use the search bar as well. Lastly, the e-shop provides a small showroom to showcase its products for customers who prefer an in-person shopping experience. Customers are able to visit the showroom after prior communication and agreement with the owner through e-mail or social media direct messages. The showroom functions as a support for the e-shop, as mentioned in Chapter 8.5.
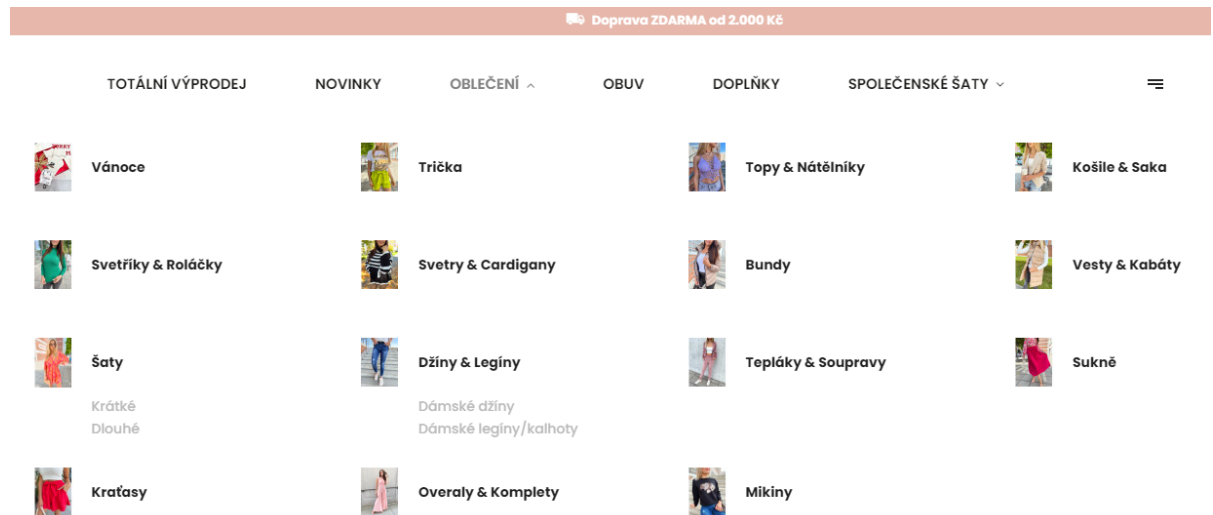
Figure 3 The e-shop's navigation menu and its offered products (Source: www.la-mode.cz)

8.1.4 Promotion

The e-shop utilizes digital marketing as a form of promotion. The owner creates social media content to engage with followers and customers and utilizes social media advertising – such as Facebook and Instagram advertising. Other promotion methods are sales promotion on the website, influencer marketing, word-of-mouth, digital merchandising, personal selling, and basic SEO. More details about La Mode's promotion can be found in Chapter 9.

8.1.5 People

La Mode, as mentioned in Chapter 6.1.4, is a small local e-shop consisting of only 3 permanent people. The main person is the owner who does everything to keep the business running. The additional 2 people are models, responsible for being the faces of this brand.

8.1.6 Process

La Mode's process means efficient order processing, quick shipping, and effective customer service. The overall process of delivering products to customers generates a positive customer experience that results in positive reviews visible on the e-shop's website.

8.1.7 Physical evidence

La Mode pays attention to the packaging; it must reflect the brand. The owner uses pink packaging, a perfume to make the package scented, and a small gift to show gratitude. The owner also utilizes high-quality photos and videos to show the products in detail, as well as very detailed descriptions of products. The biggest aspect of physical evidence is La Mode's showroom, which is accessible after a previous agreement with the owner. Customers are

able to try products on and experience them in person. Lastly, the e-shop's positive ratings and reviews build strong credibility for the brand.

8.1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis shows that La Mode aligns all the aspects – products, pricing, distribution, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence – effectively. By focusing on the quality of offered products, promotion activities, and pricing strategies, La Mode has built a loyal customer base and provided many positive shopping experiences.

8.2 PESTLE Analysis

The definition of this analysis can be found in the Chapter 2.1.1. Briefly, this analysis represents how each factor influences the e-shop. For marketing communication, social, technological, and environmental factors are the most important ones. By utilizing this analysis, La Mode can optimize its communication techniques.

8.2.1 Political and Legal factors

Government regulations, such as taxation policies, can influence e-commerce businesses. Higher taxes lead to higher costs, which may result in a lower marketing budget. However, lower taxes may result in the opposite. La Mode employs a flat-rate tax and therefore, the recent changes in tax rates do not influence the e-shop. However, the recent increase in flat-rate tax has resulted in possible higher prices of the e-shop's products (An interview with the owner). In the year 2024, the flat-rate tax increased by 1,290 CZK per month (BusinessInfo.cz 2024). Legal factors include e-commerce regulations – terms of service, refunds, copyright, etc. Another legal factor influencing the e-shop is the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR. GDPR ensures that data about customers stays private and protected from third parties. E-commerce businesses are forbidden to trade with customers' information, such as name, e-mail address, or phone number. GDPR also protects customers from unwanted advertising. Businesses cannot send any form of advertisement without the customer's previous consent (Gembalová 2024). Last year, an amendment to the Consumer Protection Act No. 634/1992 Coll. was issued. This amendment includes changes concerning sales, reviews, returns, and general terms and conditions (Kučera 2022).

8.2.2 Economic factors

Economic factors, such as high inflation, play the most significant part. High inflation leads to increasing prices and, therefore, lower customer demand. The current inflation rate

(March 2024) in the Czech Republic is 7.1 % (Český statistický úřad 2024). Higher interest rates may result in people saving money rather than spending it. The opposite lower interest rates may result in people spending more money. Starting on March 21 of this year, the Czech National Bank reduced interest rates to 5.75 % (ČNB 2024).

8.2.3 Social factors

Demographic factors (age, gender, lifestyle, etc.) influence the e-shop's target group and therefore determine the proper marketing communication techniques. Demographic changes – for example, aging – influence the e-shop's communication strategies. La Mode needs to adapt to sudden changes and optimize its communication based on its aging target group to stay appealing. Another social factor is customer preferences – some customers prefer online shopping, while others prefer personal shopping. This can influence the e-shop to the extent that the e-shop decides to establish a showroom where customers may try and buy products. Trends are also affecting the e-shop; as they change, the e-shop must keep up with them in both fashion and social media communication areas (An interview with the owner).

Lastly, influencers affect La Mode by promoting other e-shops and therefore converting La Mode's customers to its competition. As the majority of influencers available on social media focus on fashion or lifestyle (Minocha 2024), La Mode must utilize influencer marketing to stay competitive and appeal to new customers.

8.2.4 Technological factors

As e-commerce relies on the digital environment, technological factors influence it on an everyday basis. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI), social media improvements, new applications relevant to marketing communication (such as photo editors, video editors, etc.), and technological improvements in smartphones, laptops, etc. have influenced the way businesses like La Mode communicate with their customers. E-shops nowadays use mainly digital marketing to engage with customers. This is done mostly through social media which relies on creating relevant content in the form of photos, videos, or stories. Instagram has gone through many innovations that led to better communication – for example, by adding the feature of stories and reels that are used by many users. AI innovations can be used in e-commerce to enhance marketing communication by using AI chats that generate required responses (it may help with content creation, for example), or AI applications that edit required files (An interview with the owner).

8.2.5 Environmental factors

Environmental disasters such as storms, floods, etc. influence the e-shop in terms of chain and suppliers. Favorable weather conditions are essential for creating optimal social media content – natural light plays a significant role in digital merchandising. Another role the weather plays is in customer demand. During seasons, La Mode must adjust its product supply. Sustainability influences e-shops in general, as many customers expect businesses to be sustainable in the supply and packaging areas. Lastly, the efforts to reduce CO_2 emissions and the environmentalists' demand for more sustainable transport can affect the costs of the supply chain, resulting in higher prices of the e-shop's products (An interview with the owner).

8.2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the PESTLE analysis provides a better understanding of many external factors that influence La Mode's operations and its marketing communication strategies. By considering these factors, La Mode can adapt its marketing communication and strategies to overcome external challenges. The e-shop can also create more convenient marketing communication, specifically from the information obtained by the analysis of social, technological, and environmental factors.

8.3 Benchmarking

Benchmarking, simply put, means comparing an entity or a business to another, which is usually the biggest competitor in a business field. This analysis compares specific aspects that La Mode focuses on and considers the most important with its competitors. For the purposes of this analysis, the competitors will be anonymized as the real names cannot be used – the e-shops will be referred to as E-shop A, E-shop B, and E-shop C.

E-shop A is an e-shop selling clothing that slightly differentiates from all the other selected e-shops and La Mode, and that is why it has been chosen for this analysis. This e-shop also sells brands like Cecil, Tom Tailor, etc.

E-shop B is an e-shop that is generally considered the biggest competitor on the market and that is why it has been chosen for this analysis. This e-shop dominates the clothing industry when it comes to businesses like La Mode that focus on creating their own brand.

E-shop C is an e-shop also focusing on clothing and is very similar to La Mode; that is the reason this e-shop has been chosen for this analysis. This e-shop, like La Mode, started its business in Zlín.

8.3.1 Website Design

This aspect was analyzed based on the functionality, clarity of the e-shops, their navigation menus, and the quality of the photos.

E-shop's A menu does not appear when customers mouse over it they need to select the section of women's clothing for the menu to appear. Otherwise, the menu is quite detailed. The website design is simple. The photos showing the clothing are not as high-quality and detailed as those on other e-shops.

E-shop B's menu is more detailed. Customers already see what types of products they are able to buy. When it comes to product display or visual merchandising E-shop B displays its products in the form of high-quality photos that show all the details of the products.

E-shop C's menu is displayed on the front page under a banner, so customers only need to scroll down. The menu is not as detailed but consists of all the categories customers need. The overall design is simple and aesthetically pleasing, and high-quality photos show all the details of the offered products.

La Mode's website is simple, aesthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate. The navigation menu is detailed, and high-quality pictures show the products' details. La Mode also involves a feature that zooms in on the product when customers mouse over the photo (as shown in Figure 4). The competitor's websites do not include this feature.
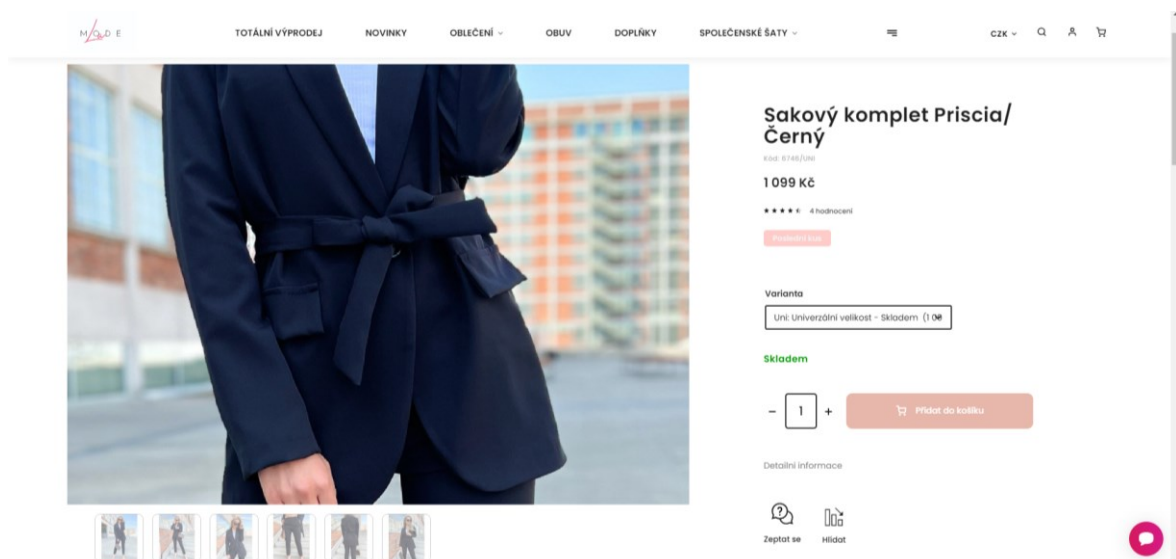

Figure 4 Zooming in on the product (Source: www.la-mode.cz)

8.3.2 Foreign Accessibility

This aspect was analyzed based on availability for foreign customers, such as a separate website translated into other languages or the option to switch currencies on the e-shop itself.

E-shop A does not offer any option to switch the language or currency.

E-shop B provides the opportunity to access another website that is specifically designed for Slovakian customers. The website is translated into Slovak, and prices are displayed in a different currency – euro.

E-shop C does not provide an option to access a separate website in a different language however, this e-shop offers the option to switch the currency to the euro.

E-shop La Mode does not have a separate website aimed at the Slovak audience but also provides the option to switch prices to the euro.

8.3.3   Product Range

This aspect was analyzed based on the quantity and differences of available products.

All e-shops focus on fashion – women's clothing.

The product range of E-shop A is narrow. This e-shop offers clothing and accessories, but unlike other e-shops, e-shop A does not offer shoes or handbags.

The range of E-shop B's products is wide. This e-shop offers more products in quantity and more products in different styles.

E-shop C offers fewer products than E-shop B, however, the product range is adequate. It offers clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories, all in different styles.

E-shop La Mode provides enough fundamental products that are required by its customers – clothing, accessories, handbags, and shoes. The product range is similar to the range of E-shop C.

8.3.4   Pricing and Discounts

This aspect was analyzed based on the level of prices and the discount amount provided.

E-shop A provides clothing at high prices with no discounts.

E-shop B's prices and quite high, but that may be due to its fame and the expenses of such famous e-shop. This e-shop also provides discounts.

E-shop C's prices are surprisingly higher than E-shop B's prices. E-shop C also offers discounts.

La Mode offers significantly lower prices than all the previous e-shops. This may be due to lower expenses because this e-shop is not as famous as, for example, e-shop B. La Mode offers discounts as well.

8.3.5 Online Marketing

This aspect was analyzed based on the quality of posts posted, the number of followers, and the consistency of posts of each e-shop on social media. The information is current as of March 31, 2024.

E-shop A is present on Instagram, and Facebook. Its Instagram contains 2 posts and only 48 followers. The Facebook page of this e-shop has received 17 likes and 19 followers so far. It is self-explanatory that this e-shop does not rely on digital marketing and lacks the effort to do so.

E-shop B, as previously mentioned, is more known and famous. This is visible on its social media – Instagram and Facebook. This e-shop's Instagram account has 174 thousand followers and high engagement (likes, comments). Its Facebook page has 137 thousand likes and 146 thousand followers. The engagement on this page is also high (likes, comments). The TikTok account of this e-shop has almost 10 thousand followers and better engagement and views than e-shop C's and La Mode's accounts.

E-shop C is active on all platforms, as E-shop B – Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Its Instagram account contains 64,3 thousand followers. Its Facebook page consists of 63 thousand likes and 67 thousand followers so far. The engagement on these platforms is adequate. Lastly, its TikTok account has only 47 followers; the engagement is lower but adequate for the number of followers. There is also a visible effort to be consistent.

La Mode's Instagram contains 11,8 thousand followers, and its Facebook page consists of 7,4 thousand likes and 7,7 thousand followers so far. The engagement is lower, followers are not as active as E-shop B's or C's followers. Although some posts on Facebook obtain more likes than the competitors' posts, overall engagement has a lower rate. La Mode's TikTok account has only 41 followers with low engagement and views. This may be caused by the inconsistency of La Mode's videos on this platform.

E-shop	Instagram	Facebook	TikTok
A	48 followers	19 followers	-
B	174K followers	146K followers	10K followers
C	64,3K followers	67K followers	47 followers
La Mode	11,8K followers	7,7K followers	41 followers

Table 2 Number of followers of each e-shop - March 31, 2024 (Own processing)

8.3.6 Customer Reviews and Ratings

This aspect was analyzed based on the possibility of adding ratings directly on the e-shops' websites and the ratings from customers.

E-shop A does not provide the opportunity to rate its services, and therefore no reviews or ratings can be found on its page. The same thing applies to E-shop C.

Visitors can access ratings on E-shop B and La Mode by clicking on 'Shop rating' at the bottom of the page.

E-shop B received 5,489 ratings and reviews (March 31, 2024). The overall score is 5 stars, and the majority of customers are satisfied. Especially with quick delivery, product range, and great customer service.

La Mode received 480 ratings (March 31, 2024), with an overall score of 5 stars (only one customer voted for 1 star). The majority of the e-shop's customers are satisfied with quick delivery, the quality of the products, great customer service, and the products' visuals (many e-shops extremely edit their photos so the original product does not look the same).

8.3.7 Shipping

This aspect was analyzed based on available transport information, such as the cost of transport and the transport services used.

E-shop A does not provide any information containing shipping methods, shipping time or shipping prices.

E-shop B provides information that is not as detailed as La Mode's information. From a customer experience, delivery fees are the main thing that is missing. However, this e-shop provides information about shipping time, customer service (e-mail, telephone number), and payment methods.

E-shop C also does not provide any shipping information about fees, methods, or delivery periods.

La Mode provides all the information necessary, such as shipping fees, payment methods, delivery and shipping time and tracking information. Unlike E-shop B, contact information such as a telephone number or e-mail address is not present on this specific page.

8.3.8 Customer Service

This aspect was analyzed based on the availability of customer service such as contact details, chat window, showroom address, or click-through on social networks.

Customer service is present in all e-shops.

E-shop A provides contact information such as an email address, a telephone number, and links to their social media.

E-shop B provides a more elaborate 'contact' page. Such a page contains a telephone number (with a specific time frame when the number is available), an e-mail address, and direct links to their social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok). Other than that, their page provides information about their showroom address and opening hours. A small Google map is present on the page, as well as photos portraying the showroom and the staff. E-shop B also provides the opportunity to ask questions through a chat bubble.

E-shop C provides a 'contact' page as well and is similar to E-shop B's page. It contains a phone number, an email address, and a map that does not represent a showroom but an address for product returns. This e-shop provides links to its social media too – Instagram and Facebook page.

Customers may contact La Mode through social media, a chat bubble, or a specific 'Contact Us' page. This page provides a pre-prepared e-mail form, and the customer's only job is to fill in the information necessary (name, e-mail address, and the message – question, specific problem). La Mode also provides a contact space at the bottom of the page with direct links to its Facebook, Instagram, and an e-mail address.

8.3.9 Responsive Design

This aspect was analyzed based on the availability of responsive design, meaning whether the e-shop website adapts to the device or not.

All e-shops provide access to a website with a responsive design, so the customer can access the e-shop from any device (smartphone, tablet, laptop, etc.).

8.3.10 Conclusion

This analysis provides La Mode with many valuable aspects that may result in better optimization of its website and social media, as well as marketing communication strategies. By leveraging the results from benchmarking, the e-shop can improve its business practices, website, and enhance its online presence to become more appealing to customers and become more visible.

All e-shops were rated based on this analysis and each aspect on a scale of 1-5 points, where 5 points is the highest and 1 point is the lowest number of points achieved. If an e-shop does not include some feature, it is rated at 0. Based on a comparison of these e-shops, each one received a proper amount of points for each aspect.

	E-shop A	E-shop B	E-shop C	La Mode
Website design	2	5	4	4
Foreign accessibility	0	5	3	3
Product range	2	5	3	3
Pricing and discounts	0	3	2	5
Online marketing	1	5	4	3
Customer reviews and ratings	0	5	0	4
Shipping	0	3	0	5
Customer service	2	5	3	3
Responsive design	5	5	5	5
Total	**12**	**41**	**24**	**35**

Table 3 The ratings of every analyzed aspect (Own processing)

From Table 4, the overall winner is E-shop B, which is the most successful one of the selected competitors. La Mode ended up in second place based on this rating. This could mean that even though La Mode's social media possess lower engagement, according to this analysis, its website provides a better user experience than E-shop C, which could be considered the closest competitor to La Mode from the e-shop sample.

In conclusion, La Mode stands as a strong competitor in the business environment. This analysis proves that even smaller e-shops or businesses can provide high-quality services and products, no matter how high their following count is.

8.4 SWOT Analysis

This analysis is defined in Chapter 2.1.5. In a few words, this analysis focuses on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the e-shop. SWOT analysis helps to understand the current situation of the e-shop and is relevant in the context of marketing communication strategies, as the e-shop can build the strategy or improve it based on its strengths and opportunities.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Product diversity	• Reliance on digital marketing
• Digital marketing	• Absence of PPC ads
• User-friendly website	• Limited physical presence
• Responsive design	• Small team
• Quick shipping	• Limited marketing budget
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• E-commerce trends	• Market saturation
• Potential for growth beyond regional reach	• Competitors leveraging alternative promotion platforms
• Lower interest rates	• Sudden changes in trends
• Collaboration with local influencers	• Changing customers' preferences
• Planned EU legislation addressing waste and fast fashion	• Continuing rise in popularity of Temu and other Asian fast fashion e-shops

Table 4 SWOT analysis (Own processing)

8.4.1 Strengths

One of the e-shop's strengths is the product diversity. The e-shop sells shoes, accessories, and clothing in many colours and sizes - each product reflects a different style. Another strength is digital marketing. As stated in Chapter 8.3.5, La Mode engages with its customers mainly via social media (Instagram and Facebook) and creates content that shows products to potential customers. The e-shop provides a user-friendly website that is easy to navigate, and offers help chat for questions, uploads high-quality photos of products, and each product is precisely described (measurements, colour, materials). The website is also optimized for mobile devices – responsive design. The last main strength of La Mode is quick shipping. Customers are very satisfied with this aspect, as can be seen in their testimonials in Figure 5 (An interview with the owner).

EB Eva Brychtová
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 5.2.2024

Komunikace, bleskové odeslání a kvalita perfekt.

J Julie
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 3.2.2024

Absolutní spokojenost, doporučuji 👍 Super ceny
i materiály, rychlé doručení.

AŠ Alena Štěpánová
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 25.1.2024

Je vidět, že za tímto e-shopem je někdo, kdo
svou práci dělá s láskou a kvalitou ne kvantitou.
Objednala jsem již několikrát a pokaždé mi přišel
krásně zabalený a voňavý balíček s děkovnou
kartičkou a sladkým potěšením. Rychlé doručení i
komunikace, barvy vždy 100% odpovídají fotkám.
Ráda zde vždy nakoupím ❤️ Alena

Figure 5 Customers' satisfaction with La Mode's quick shipping (Source: www.la-mode.cz)

8.4.2 Weaknesses

One of the main weaknesses is the e-shop's reliance on digital marketing and digital presence. As an e-shop, the digital environment may come with flaws or issues that need to be fixed immediately in order to work properly. Another weakness is the absence of PPC ads. La Mode does not utilize this type of advertising, which makes it harder to acquire new potential customers. PPC ads can increase brand awareness by up to 80 %, and visitors from PPC are 50% more likely to purchase products than organic visitors (Berry 2023).

As La Mode operates as a B2C e-shop, there is a limited physical presence of the products. This may be inconvenient for customers who prefer in-person type of shopping. Therefore, La Mode should also focus on offering an official showroom and extending its small team. As everything is in the owner's competence as the only other staff are models and an occasional assistant, by hiring a full-time assistant, the owner could spend more time focusing on providing personal experience using the showroom. The last weakness of this

e-shop is its limited marketing budget. La Mode utilizes paid advertising, and a higher budget could improve its reach and visibility (An interview with the owner).

8.4.3 Opportunities

The main opportunity for the e-shop is e-commerce trends such as influencer marketing or visual try-ons. Partnering with local influencers focusing on fashion can help La Mode reach a new audience and increase brand awareness within the local community. Local influencers often have loyal followers and can provide authentic partnerships that can result in gaining new customers and an increase in sales. The American Marketing Association suggests hiring nano-influencers as the return on influencer spend (ROIS), comparing nano-influencers and macro-influencers, is three times higher for nano-influencers (Beichert, Bayerl, Goldenberg, and Lanz 2024).

As an e-shop, La Mode has a great opportunity to expand its reach beyond its current regional market and explore new customer segments and markets.

By addressing sustainability concerns and implementing new upcoming EU regulations, La Mode can appear as a responsible and eco-friendly brand, appealing to environmentalist consumers and enhancing its reputation in the market. The European Commission implemented new regulations concerning the ecodesign of products in the EU. The regulation is intended to increase the circularity of products, energy efficiency, and other aspects of environmental sustainability (European Commission n.d.). Therefore, La Mode can utilize this regulation in the form of buying products from a new, more sustainable provider.

Lastly, as mentioned in Chapter 8.2.2, lower interest rates are a great opportunity for La Mode, as people are expected to spend more money.

8.4.4 Threats

Market saturation is a huge threat as numerous e-shops are focusing on women's clothing. In 2021, the fashion industry held the largest share of 29% in e-commerce (The Council on Czech Competitiveness 2021). This makes it challenging to differentiate and stand out. That is why La Mode also faces the risk of competitors using platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and others, to engage with their customers in the form of videos. An analysis conducted in 2023 by the Wyzowl company shows that 91 % of consumers reported they prefer to see content in the form of a video (Wyzowl n.d.). Therefore, La Mode needs to adapt to competitors' marketing strategies to stay competitive. In the digital environment, social media tends to support sudden changes in trends and fashion. Instagram is the leading

platform for changing trends in fashion. This is a threat to this industry, as 72% of Instagram users have made a fashion purchase after seeing it on the platform (Conant 2023). La Mode must adapt to these trends and preferences to stay relevant and appealing. The increasing popularity of competitors such as Temu, Shein, and other Asian fast fashion e-shops is becoming a huge threat to businesses like La Mode. These e-shops usually offer similar products at lower prices, converting customers on their side, instead of staying loyal to local e-shops.

8.4.5   Conclusion

The SWOT analysis highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the e-shop. La Mode should keep maintaining the quality of its strengths, such as digital marketing, product range, etc., and focus on its weaknesses to stay competitive and relevant. Weaknesses like a small team, a limited physical presence, or the absence of PPC ads can be dealt with almost immediately, and their costs are within La Mode's marketing budget as, can be seen in Chapter 10.4.

Opportunities and threats are factors that the e-shop cannot influence however, La Mode can prepare for incoming potential threats and take a chance in utilizing incoming opportunities. Threats such as changing customers' preferences, the rising popularity of fast fashion e-shops, or sudden changes in trends can be prepared for in terms of following trends or creating a survey on the e-shop's social media for its customers. By doing so, La Mode can follow changing preferences and stay competitive within the market with high saturation and the increasing popularity of fast fashion.

Opportunities can be utilized in the form of hiring a nano-influencer to boost the e-shop's reach and sales, following new e-commerce trends, or buying goods from new, sustainable suppliers so the products follow the new EU legislation.

It is a great tool that shows all the factors La Mode needs to pay attention to in order to remain successful and competitive.

9 ANALYSIS OF THE E-SHOP'S MARKETING COMMUNICATION

This chapter focuses on La Mode's marketing communication, how the e-shop promotes its products, and whether the promotion is effective or not. The analysis represents the present state of the e-shop's promotion mix and is based on information obtained from an interview with the owner and the author's own observations.

9.1 Advertising

The e-shop utilizes advertising primarily provided by social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, using the Facebook Commerce Manager. The owner invests in this kind of paid advertising on these platforms, with the expenditure ranging from thousands to ten thousand Czech crowns per month. In the last 3 months, the most successful Facebook advertising was in the form of a reel video. This video with a total of 37,5 thousand views, obtained 108 likes. The second most successful paid advertising was in the form of a video as well. The video gathered 36,6 thousand views and received 93 likes. It focused on showcasing the products available on the e-shop and communicated information about a total sale happening at that time. By highlighting the products and promoting a sale, La Mode effectively caught the attention of viewers, leading to a significant number of views and likes.

This indicates that La Mode leverages visual content and social media advertising to reach and engage with its target audience effectively.
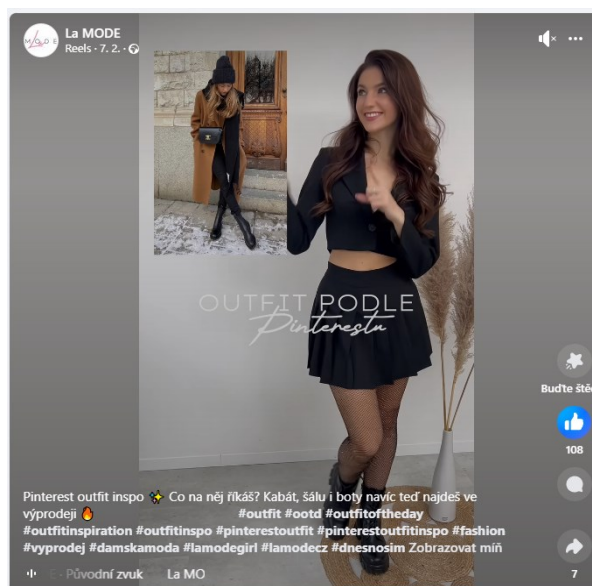

Figure 6 The most successful Facebook advertising - last 3 months (Source: La Mode's Facebook page)

9.2 Public Relations

La Mode does not utilize any public relations techniques. Despite the fact that PR is an important technique used by many companies and businesses, due to the size of the e-shop, this technique is therefore unnecessary.

9.3 Direct marketing

Direct marketing means communicating directly with targeted customers in order to promote products. Although the e-shop does not currently use direct marketing techniques, implementing such strategies, for example, personalized email campaigns, can boost the e-shop's sales.

9.4 Sales Promotion and Sales Promotion on the website

La Mode utilizes sales promotion tactics in the form of discounts, sales, holiday sales (Valentine's Day, Halloween, etc.), and coupons to encourage customers to make purchases. The e-shop also provides free shipping if a customer makes a purchase that exceeds the value of 2,000 CZK. Sales promotions are visible on the website in the form of banners with a viable click-through. The main aim of these techniques is to attract customers and increase sales. That is why La Mode should utilize some engagement bonuses, for example, in the form of a small discount given to one of the most active followers on Instagram.

By leveraging such sales promotions, the e-shop can drive customer engagement and boost its sales.

9.5 Personal Selling

The e-shop utilizes personal selling only in connection with its showroom. By using this strategy, La Mode can offer customers personal assistance, product recommendations, and styling advice. All of that creates a positive shopping experience and persuades the customer to buy La Mode's products. This direct interaction allows the owner to demonstrate the quality and features of the products and address any questions in real-time. Although the showroom is not the primary sales channel for the e-shop, this strategy provides a human touch to the online shopping experience that some customers may prefer. The current state of the showroom is not official – there are no opening hours. Customers may use the offer to personally see and try on the products by previous agreement with the owner. La Mode should therefore optimize the showroom and make it an official feature of the e-shop, so more customers are able to experience the products in person.

By leveraging personal selling with its e-commerce platform, La Mode can start engaging with more customers and provide a more positive shopping experience that combines both online and in-person services.

9.6 WOM

Word-of-mouth marketing is an important marketing technique that the e-shop tries to encourage as it generates loyal customers. The e-shop actively encourages WOM marketing by focusing on providing excellent customer service, ensuring high-quality packaging and products, and expressing gratitude to customers through personalized gestures like thank-you notes, and small gifts in the form of a candy.

According to the owner, these efforts have resulted in the development of a loyal customer base, with many customers becoming repeat buyers due to positive WOM recommendations (An interview with the owner).

9.7 Influencer Marketing

E-shop La Mode utilizes influencer marketing to increase sales and gain more followers and customers. The owner usually finds a micro-influencer who is trustworthy, has good followers/engagement rates, and contacts them. The partnership works in the form of a barter trade – the influencer usually obtains free clothing according to their own liking, and in exchange, the clothing is then promoted on their Instagram account in the form of stories and posts. Influencer marketing techniques had helped the e-shop in the past. The estimated average followers gain was 500 followers and 38 purchases per campaign. There is not an influencer campaign running at the moment, but the owner is doing her research to prepare for the next one.

Influencer marketing has proven to be the best strategy for La Mode, as it expands its reach and makes the brand appear more authentic and trustworthy. Such technique boosts the e-shop's engagement on social media platforms. By partnering with influencers, La Mode has been able to effectively promote its products to a wider audience and generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

9.8 PPC Search Marketing

PPC ads are a form of online advertising where advertisers pay a fee each time a customer clicks on the ad. While the e-shop does not use PPC ads, implementing this strategy on platforms like Google Ads or social media can increase website traffic and sales.

9.9 Social Media Marketing

La Mode is active on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. As stated before in Chapter 6.3.5, Instagram is the biggest platform for this e-shop. With 11,8 thousand followers and an average of 965 views per story in the last 3 months, La Mode has the biggest potential for gaining new customers on this platform. Its Facebook platform consists of 7,4 thousand likes and 7,7 thousand followers, but the engagement rate is low. La Mode's TikTok account has 41 followers and is in the beginning of becoming more relevant, as the activity is not consistent.

La Mode effectively connects with its customers by actively engaging with followers, sharing visually appealing content, and utilizing social media advertising aimed at new customers. The e-shop also has the potential to expand its reach, grow, and attract more customers with its Instagram account and the consistency of its posts.

Social media platform	Number of followers
Instagram	11,8K followers
Facebook	7,7K followers
TikTok	41 followers

Table 5 Number of followers on each platform (Own processing)

9.10 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The owner, lacking experience or education in SEO, has relied on a paid marketer to set up the initial SEO framework, which has not been further updated over time. Without a proper SEO, La Mode is limited, and therefore it is harder to extend its customer base.

While La Mode possesses a basic SEO setup, there is still an opportunity for optimization and updates.

9.11 User-generated Content (UGC)

User-generated content means customers create and share content related to a brand or product. Although La Mode does not utilize UGC, encouraging customers to share reviews, testimonials, and photos can improve brand authenticity, trust, and engagement. According to the American Marketing Association (2024), 92% of consumers prefer authentic user-generated content, and UGC campaigns result in a 29% boost in web conversions.

9.12 Digital Merchandising

La Mode utilizes digital merchandising, so the products look good on the website. The owner pays attention to detail and makes everything look aesthetically pleasing. It's important to pick appropriate surroundings and backgrounds, use natural lighting, edit the photos in a particular way so the colours in the photos match the products' real colours, accessorize the models so the products appear stylish, etc. When it comes to digital merchandising, what matters most is the quality of the photos. Without a proper camera, the photos could not show all the details of the products, making it harder to sell them.

By the usage of high-quality photos and creating aesthetically appealing product visuals, La Mode effectively showcases its products. The focus on digital merchandising does not only improve the overall shopping experience for customers but also helps to demonstrate the quality and style of the offered products.

9.13 Conclusion

In conclusion, La Mode utilizes every used tool effectively and focuses on the communication techniques that are important for building a successful e-shop in the local sphere.

The e-shop focuses on digital advertising on social media, resulting in new followers and customers from paid ads. The public relations technique is not utilized by the e-shop and probably will not be in the near future. Direct marketing is another technique not utilized by La Mode. However, sales promotion, mainly on the website, is a technique the e-shop utilizes in the form of banners displaying new collections or sales. Other sales promotion techniques, such as engagement bonuses, would be a great opportunity to boost engagement on social media.

La Mode utilizes personal selling in the form of a small showroom. By offering a proper and official showroom to the public, more people who are sceptical about e-shops would gain the opportunity to experience La Mode's products in person.

Word-of-mouth marketing is actively encouraged by the e-shop, as this technique is important for e-commerce. Some people solely rely on personal opinions and recommendations.

Influencer marketing has proven to La Mode that this technique works, and thanks to the rightly chosen influencers, the e-shop has gained more followers and customers in general. La Mode does not utilize PPC ads, which could potentially boost brand awareness and sales.

The e-shop emphasizes social media marketing. La Mode provides high-quality content displaying offered products and communicates properly with its customers, mainly through Instagram and its Facebook page. La Mode's TikTok is not active or consistent.

La Mode does utilize basic SEO however, some adjustments and updates are necessary for the SEO framework to work properly.

User-generated content is a technique not utilized by the e-shop, which can deprive the e-shop of potential customers, as the provided data points out the fact that UGC is effective.

La Mode also puts an emphasis on digital merchandising. The e-shop and its social media provide high-quality content, focusing on the details of each product and displaying the products in their real colours.

10 A SUMMARY OF THE E-SHOP'S CURRENT MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT

This part provides a summary of the theoretical part, recommendations for La Mode's improvement of marketing communication, and a cost analysis of selected recommendations.

10.1 Summary of the E-shop's Current Marketing Communication

The practical part provided insights into the e-shop's current marketing communication strategies. Starting with introducing the e-shop by using the McKinsey 7S analysis, which provided information about how La Mode operates, and continuing with other selected analyses that resulted in more insights, including SWOT analysis, benchmarking, analysis of the e-shop's marketing mix, and PESTLE analysis. These analyses enriched the practical part and provided details needed to recommend new strategies for the improvement of La Mode's marketing communication.

McKinsey 7S pointed out that La Mode functions well as a small local e-shop. It utilizes a good strategy that slowly fulfills the e-shop's goals, positive shared values, and skills needed to function. However, since the team is small, the e-shop should hire someone to deal with marketing and SEO, or the owner should extend her education and pay for a course so she could do it herself.

The analysis of La Mode's marketing mix showed that the e-shop offers a variety of products in many sizes and styles and does not only focus on clothing but also offers shoes and accessories that complete the product portfolio. The price is set mainly according to the wholesale price and competition. The e-shop utilizes the psychological pricing technique that is proven to increase sales and provides discounts and sales. The place of distribution is the e-shop's website and a small showroom. La Mode gets its products from many distributors, and the clothes are made in different countries, reflecting the quality that the e-shop aims for.

SWOT analysis revealed La Mode's strengths – such as product diversity, quick shipping, strong digital marketing, user-friendly website, and responsive web design; and weaknesses – such as limited physical presence, a small team, the absence of PPC ads, reliance on digital marketing, and a small marketing budget. La Mode should keep improving its strengths, and focus on its weaknesses. The e-shop could upgrade its showroom and therefore not rely

solely on digital marketing, improve its team as stated before, invest in PPC advertising to generate more traffic, and if possible, invest and increase its marketing budget. Opportunities and threats are factors that La Mode cannot influence but can benefit from or minimize. For example, the threat of disasters could be minimized by obtaining products from various providers in different countries (La Mode has already implemented this). Lastly, benefiting from opportunities such as collaborating with local influencers could improve La Mode's reach and fulfill its objective to become a successful local e-shop.

PESTLE analysis focusing on external factors influencing the e-shop provides a better understanding of social, technological, and environmental factors – the main aspects that influence the e-shop's marketing communication. The e-shop itself cannot influence these factors but can benefit from them. For example, by focusing on the social factor, La Mode can determine its target group (average customer: woman in her early 30s) and therefore optimize the marketing communication. Expecting that women in their early 30s use social media, La Mode can utilize fashion trends and tips in the form of reels and visual content on Instagram. Technological factors may result in using better lights, camera, and editors, all of which improve the quality of photos, which encourages customers to make a purchase. Environmental factors may persuade the e-shop to use sustainable packaging and choose suppliers that manufacture from sustainable materials.

Promotion is crucial, as La Mode solely relies on digital marketing. Social media marketing is the main form of promotion, the e-shop also utilizes basic SEO, influencer marketing for seasonal campaigns, WOM, sales promotion on La Mode's website, and digital merchandising. Lastly, personal selling is utilized the least as the showroom is not official, but customers may use it after a prior agreement with the owner.

10.2 Answers to Research Questions

This part answers the following questions that were introduced in the summary of the theoretical part (Chapter 6). These answers are concluded from the analyses and observations of La Mode's social media and website.

- *Research question (RQ1): Does La Mode utilize every tool in the marketing communication mix?*

La Mode does not utilize every tool in the marketing communication mix. The e-shop utilizes tools such as advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling. La Mode utilizes tools such as WOM, influencer marketing, social media marketing, and basic SEO from selected modern trends. The tools that La Mode does not utilize are PR, and direct marketing from

COMMIX, and PPC ads and UGC from selected modern trends. Although it could be possible in the future to use every tool if the e-shop becomes famous, it is not in alignment with La Mode's objectives. As the e-shop wants to remain local and not become a business giant, the utilization of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, etc. is enough for such e-shop.

- *Research question (RQ2): Does La Mode use modern trends in marketing communication, such as influencer marketing and user-generated content (UGC)?*

Influencer marketing, as analyzed in Chapter 9.7, is one of the communication trends La Mode utilizes effectively. Even through the sporadic use of this technique, La Mode is actively in search of new influencers that fit the e-shop's standards. On the other hand, user-generated content is something La Mode is not familiar with. However, after discussing it with the owner, there is a possibility that La Mode will implement this tool in the future.

- *Research question (RQ3): What are the strengths and weaknesses of La Mode's marketing communication tools used on social media?*

The main strength is the use of digital merchandising and appealing visual content. As stated before in this chapter, La Mode pays attention to the quality of their provided photos, so the customers know what they are buying. The use of influencer marketing is a strength as well. The weakness of this e-shop's social media strategy is the absence of consistency on its TikTok account. La Mode is not consistent, and posts videos from time to time. This is not a proper way to gain followers and engage with new potential customers. Another weakness is the absence of SEO and PPC ads that generate traffic and new customers.

10.3 Recommendations for La Mode's Improvement

After all the analyses and a proper analysis of the e-shop's marketing communication strategies in Chapter 9, a few recommendations for its improvement are presented. La Mode's set budget for improvements is 40,000 CZK per one-time or first payment and 12,000 CZK per month.

La Mode could display some offline ads, perhaps in the form of leaflets or paper banners, in its showroom or provide such advertising to customers directly after making an in-person purchase.

La Mode's team is small, and therefore hiring a professional marketer could help. The owner would not have to deal with social media advertising alone. The marketer could increase engagement and attract more customers by setting up the proper advertising, as well as keeping up with the rapidly changing social media trends.

By implementing loyalty and engagement bonuses, La Mode could turn more customers into loyal ones. This means providing loyalty bonuses to customers who order regularly. The bonus could be in the form of an additional discount or points that could be exchanged for discounts, coupons, or clothing on sale. Engagement bonuses can be used to increase engagement on social media and gain more followers who will become customers. Such technique can be utilized in the form of a small discount given to one person once a month for being one of the most active followers on Instagram (liking, commenting, and sharing Ls Mode's posts).

After the analysis of La Mode's showroom in Chapter 8.5, the e-shop should offer a proper showroom – La Mode does offer the option to see its products in person, however, it is not official. By offering an official showroom, La Mode could obtain more customers who are afraid to shop online or prefer a personal shopping experience.

La Mode could hire a nano-influencer. Nano-influencers usually accept payments in the form of a barter trade. Therefore, La Mode could exchange its products for the influencer's advertising and UGC services.

The e-shop could also start implementing PPC ads – PPC ads generate more traffic and result in an increase in purchases and loyal customers. La Mode should implement this type of advertising to boost its performance.

La Mode could invest in SEO. This means paying for an update and an extension of SEO. This will help the e-shop generate more organic traffic.

By implementing these recommended strategies, La Mode can strengthen its brand presence, increase customer engagement as well as gain new loyal customers, and begin operating more efficiently in the competitive e-commerce environment.

10.4 The Cost of the Suggested Improvements

The estimated cost of improvements is calculated in Table 6, divided by the payment period – one-time payment and monthly payment. When determining the costs, it was necessary to find services that would not exceed the budget of the e-shop in the resulting calculation.

- Printing leaflets – bizay.cz provides cheap leaflet printing services for 379 CZK per 1000 pcs of leaflets. The e-shop provides sales now (April 4, 2024); otherwise, the price would be higher (Bizay, n.d.). La Mode could print 1000 pcs and observe how many people accept such advertising and how effective the offline ads are.

- Hiring a professional marketer – The website Socials.cz provides social media administration services – a one-time payment of 15,700 CZK (Socials, n.d.).

- Offering a proper showroom – the only thing La Mode should do is making the showroom official and optimize its space – by using basic decorations bought at stores that provide quality products at lower prices, the e-shop can utilize its space properly and offer an official showroom.

- Hiring a nano-influencer – despite the barter trade between La Mode and the nano-influencer, La Mode's product costs would not exceed the amount of 1,500 CZK for first/one-time payment. If the e-shop was satisfied with the cooperation, the monthly costs would not exceed 700 CZK (An Instagram conversation with an anonymous nano-influencer).

- Implementing PPC ads – the estimated costs of PPC ads – first-time payment – 5,000 CZK, then monthly 4,000 CZK (NetMagnet, n.d.).

- Investing in SEO – SEOConsult.cz provides SEO services; estimated monthly payment – 4,800 CZK (SEOConsult, n.d.).

Suggestion	First/One-time payment	Monthly payment
Printing leaflets (1000 pcs)	379 CZK	0 CZK
Hiring a professional marketer	15,700 CZK	0 CZK
Offering a proper showroom	5,000 CZK	0 CZK
Hiring a nano-influencer	1,500 CZK	700 CZK
Implementing PPC ads	9,000 CZK	4,000 CZK
Investing in SEO	4,800 CZK	4,800 CZK
Total	**36,379 CZK**	**9,500 CZK**

Table 6 Estimated cost of improvements (Own processing)

The total one-time cost is 36,379 CZK. This may seem like a large sum of money, but the estimated monthly payment is 9,500 CZK, which is a significantly lower sum that La Mode would pay for, considering all the improvements such as additional help, gaining organic

traffic and more customers, optimizing social media, and targeting new customers who prefer a personal shopping experience and offline advertising.

Considering loyalty and engagement bonuses, these two improvements are hard to analyze, as these carry many variables, and the result would not be clear. The basic concept of implementing such bonuses is free, as the owner or potential marketer can create them themselves (by creating coupons, for example).

CONCLUSION

Every business needs a proper marketing communication strategy to enhance its performance. For e-shops that rely on digital marketing and online platforms, the strategies are limited.

This bachelor thesis focuses on the topic of An Analysis of Marketing Communication of the E-shop La Mode and is divided into two parts – theoretical and practical (analysis). The theoretical part defines key aspects that are crucial for a thorough understanding of the practical part. Areas such as communication model, marketing, marketing communication, communication mix, selected trends, e-commerce, digital marketing, and analyses, are covered in the theoretical part. Three research questions were formulated along with the theoretical introduction and a summary, which were answered at the end of the practical part. The practical part focused on conducting analyses that are important for an in-depth understanding of the e-shop's marketing communication strategies and its operations. At the end of the practical part, a summary is provided with recommendations for improving La Mode's marketing communication strategies. The last chapter also involves an analysis of the estimated costs of proposed improvements.

La Mode, as a local e-shop, operates effectively. This is visible on its website in the Ratings section. La Mode has built a base of loyal customers over the years that produce a very effective tool called Word-of-Mouth – loyal customers spread positive ratings in conversations nonchalantly. Other marketing strategies the e-shop utilizes include digital marketing, social media marketing, influencer marketing, advertising, visual merchandising, etc. The conducted analyses revealed that La Mode utilizes selected tactics effectively however, the e-shop could gain more prosperity and customers by doing more. For example, by implementing UGC, the e-shop could gain more loyal customers who rely on authentic reviews on social media.

One of the main threats these days for fashion e-commerce, as the SWOT analysis defines it, is the rise of Asian e-shops such as Shein or Temu. These fast-fashion businesses offer clothing at low prices, which could potentially drive local e-shop's customers to shop there. La Mode can overcome this type of problem by consistently focusing on improving the quality of offered products and maintaining stable prices, that are lower than the prices of its competition. By already focusing on this tactic and implementing recommended techniques from the last chapter of this thesis, it is possible to assume that the e-shop will remain in the

competitive e-commerce environment in the future, despite the rising threats of fast-fashion businesses and many others.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
CPC	Cost-per-click
COMMIX	Communication Mix
C2C	Consumer-to-consumer
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MARCOM	Marketing Communication
PPC	Pay-per-click
PR	Public Relation
ROIS	Return on Influencer Spend
RWD	Responsive Web Design
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SERP	Search Engine Results Page
SMM	Social Media Marketing
UGC	User-generated Content
UGI	User-generated Images
UGT	User-generated Texts
UGV	User-generated Videos
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

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