

Supporting the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions

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Case Company: MoCap

ABSTRACT

Brand experience is about the experience a brand delivers to its customers. The experience of customers can be affected by a company by engineering and managing its offerings and interactions (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). The purpose of this study is to find out how a mid-sized B2B organisation can support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions.

By advancing previous research regarding the translation from Brand Strategy to experiential expressions, the Brandslation process for mid-sized B2B organisations has been optimised. Along this process, a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual have been developed for the case company. Aiming to translate these concepts into realities indicated a need for reflection on existing offerings and marketing interactions. Reflecting the existing experiences provided insight on the current level of brand-alignment and possibilities for improvement were identified. For the translation of the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual from concept to reality, a framework has been developed and filled in to ensure alignment between the factors influencing brand experience and the focus (marketing) touchpoints along the customer journey.

Replicating the Brandslation process, adding an Existing Experience Reflection and filling in the Semantic Transformation for experience framework gives the ability for mid-sized B2B organisations to support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. Thereby, this research fills the gap of a translation process between the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual from concepts to reality and it contributes to the practical ability of a mid-sized B2B organisation to create brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions.

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Keywords: Brand Experience, Customer Journey, Brand Experience Proposition, Brand Experience Manual, Service Design, Brand Alignment

Preface

This research is written as an assignment to complete the study Business Administration within the specialisation track Strategic Marketing and Servitization at the University of Twente in Enschede. The graduation internship to perform this research took place at MoCap, a high-tech mid-sized B2B organisation specialised in inertial sensors.

I would like to thank several people who have contributed to the realisation of this report. First of all, I want to thank my supervisors Mauricy Alves da Motta-Filho and Prof. dr. ir. Jorg Henseler for the support I received throughout the process of writing this report. Specifically, the feedback and suggestions of Mauricy Alves da Motta-Filho have been really useful and helpful. In addition, I want to thank my supervisor of the case company, Katja, for the opportunity she gave me and her support during my internship. Also, my thanks to the case company, my colleagues (of the marketing department), and all the participants in this study for making it possible to perform this study and write this report. Finally, I want to thank my parents, my boyfriend, and all my friends and family for their support and encouragement during my study, and specifically during the past months writing this research.

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1. Introduction

MoCap is a mid-sized B2B organisation headquartered in Enschede, the Netherlands. Next to Enschede, MoCap is also based in Los Angeles, Hong Kong and Shanghai. In addition to the MoCap offices, the company has about 15 distributors around the globe. The company has three key products consisting of Motion Capture with motion tracking suits and software (MVN and MTw), Inertial Sensor Modules with multiple product series, and a Wearable Sensor Platform named DOT. The products of MoCap are distributed by their global partners and, therefore, these global distributing partners are the most important customers of MoCap.

The offerings and interactions of MoCap with its customers consist, among others, of the website of MoCap with written content, events, webinars, tutorials, and downloads. Besides, customers can find MoCap on social media, visit the company building, or come across the MoCap logo online or offline. All offerings and interactions with customers combined form the experience of a customer with a brand. These offerings and interactions can be engineered and managed by a company to affect the experience of customers (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). In this research, the focus of the different offerings and interactions will be on the marketing activities performed by MoCap for their product DOT. A first step towards brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions is the Brandslation process. The Brandslation process is a Service Design process in which the Brand Strategy of a company will be translated to experiential expressions (Motta-Filho, 2017), with a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual as output. The Brand Experience Proposition describes the desired experience of customers by the brand (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018) and the Brand Experience Manual is a tool to communicate the Brand Experience Proposition to the New Service Development (NSD) teams (ibid.)

The Brandslation process with the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual (Motta-Filho, 2017) has been redesigned for MoCap (Wahid, 2020). In this research, the most important parts of the Brandslation process will be identified and replicated for MoCap's product DOT, with a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual specific for DOT as expected outcome. Replicating the Brandslation process as redesigned by Wahid (2020), will make it possible to adjust and optimise the Brandslation process for mid-sized B2B organisations.

After developing the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual for DOT, the brand still has to find alignment between the Brand Experience Proposition and its touchpoints. Therefore, the touchpoints must carry the brand characteristics of DOT. The level of alignment between the touchpoints and the brand characteristics will be reflected upon before working on the translation process. Work has been done defining the brand as an experience, but there is a lack of research on supporting the translation of the brand experience into the touchpoints. Therefore, the research question below has been formulated:

“How can a mid-sized B2B organisation - such as MoCap - support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions?”

To answer the research question, the following sub research questions have been formulated:

1. *How can the Brand Experience Proposition be defined and the Brand Experience Manual be structured?*
2. *What are the focus touchpoints in the offerings and marketing interactions of DOT?*
3. *What issues are the stakeholders facing with implementing the Brand Experience Proposition/Manual?*
4. *How can the level of alignment between existing touchpoints and the identified brand characteristics be reflected?*
5. *How can the experience proposition for touchpoints be translated from concept to reality?*

First, it should become clear how the Brand translation process has been conducted for MoCap and how it can be performed when focusing on the marketing activities to structure a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual for DOT. Besides, the key customer touchpoints in the offerings and marketing interactions of DOT must be identified. For the actual implementation of the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual, it is essential to know the issues that the stakeholders of MoCap are facing. In addition to the issues, the requirements of the employees for the brand experience implementation should become clear. When the issues and requirements are known, the desired experience connected to the brand character should be tested for the existing touchpoints. Lastly, the brand characteristics should be translated from concept to reality for the marketing activities, and thus, ensure alignment between the brand experience and the brand DOT. By answering the above-

stated sub-research questions, the research question can be answered and a framework for the process of implementing brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions can be structured.

This research will advance the Master Thesis of Haris Wahid (2020), who researched “How can the existing Brandslation process and Brand Experience Manual be adapted to support mid-sized B2B companies – such as MoCap – translate their brand into experiences that align the experiences of key stakeholders?”. Wahid (2020) performed a Brandslation process with a Brand Experience Manual as output, designed for mid-sized B2B organisations with MoCap as a case company. In this research, the Brandslation process will be revised and adjusted for DOT and the existing experiences with marketing activities will be reflected upon. Finally, a framework will be developed that guides DOT in supporting the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions, applying the Brand Experience Manual into real-life situations.

In order to get these findings, a broad theoretical review will be performed. This will help understand the concepts of brand experience, the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual (Motta-Filho, 2018 & Motta-Filho, 2020), Service Design, and the Semantic Transformation for experience (Motta-Filho, 2017). Design research is chosen as the methodology of this research by following an action research approach. These concepts will be explained in the methodology section of this research using Ary et al. (2010), Cole et al. (2014), and Motta-Filho (2017) and will be applied in the Research Design section. Hereafter, the results will be presented in a results section. Finally, a conclusion will be formulated and recommendations, contributions and limitations discussed.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Brand Experience

A first step to understand brand experience can be to separately view the meaning of brand and experience. Brand has been defined as “a conceptual meaning proposition made by the organization, which ultimately reside in customers’ minds as the result of their interactions with the branded offerings - both a proposition and the outcome of customers’ past experiences with the organization.” (Motta-Filho, 2017, p.56). Thus, the meaning of a brand is conceptualised based on propositions and experiences of its customers. An experience is viewed as an impression formed in the mind of individuals due to contact with a brand, its touchpoints and interfaces (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). Experiences occur during the search for a specific product or service, the purchase or receive of a product or service, and when the customer makes use of the product or services (Barkus et al., 2009; Arnould et al., 2002; Holbrook 2000). These occurrences of experiences can be connected with the customer journey, which will be explained in section 2.2. Combining brand and experiences, brand experience consists of the internal responses of customers and the behavioural responses on brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009). The internal responses of customers consist of sensations, feelings and cognitions, while the behavioural responses are evoked by a brand’s design and identity, its packaging, communication and environment (ibid.)

To clarify the concept, a distinction can be made between brand experience and customer experience. According to Motta-Filho & Roto (2018) “for the brand, experiences mediate their proposition to the customer; for the customer, the experience shaped their perception of the brand” (p.365). Customer experience is about the meanings customers construct based on various (consumption) touchpoints interactions with a company, while brand experience is about the desired interpretation of customers of any sort of brand manifestation (Motta-Filho, 2017), which include for example imaginary (Marrilees, 2006) and indirect (Duerden & Witt, 2010) experiences. Based on this, it might be concluded that brand experience is viewed from the perspective of the brand and more about the experience delivered by the brand, while customer experience is viewed from the perspective of customers and what each individual actually experiences.

By engineering and managing the brand experience, the experiences of customers might be affected positively (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). In literature, several aspects are identified to affect the experience of a customer. According to Merrilees (2016), the aspects affecting experiences are divided between sensory, emotional, intellectual, and physical. Earlier, Brakus et al. (2009) measured brand experience by creating the Four-Factor Model (Appendix Figure A), consisting of 12 items categorised into four aspects: sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual. Later, Alvarez et al. (2020) identified touchpoints, emotional impact and user's cognitive, and social and physical responses towards the product, service, or company as fundamental aspects of an experience. By separating brands between functional (simpler, information-dominant) and hedonic (more experiential activities) brands, it can be found that cognition and action of a brand are seen as most important for the brand experience of functional brands, while for hedonic brands sensory and emotion are likely to play a larger role (Merrilees, 2016). In addition, for B2B specific, Witell et al. (2020) categorised four aspects in two dimensions: a relationship control dimension - consisting of type of relationship and touchpoints - and a customer entity dimension - with actor role and customer journey stage (Appendix Figure B). Thus, depending on the type of organisation, a selection of different aspects should be given attention to when aiming to engineer and manage brand experience.

Nowadays, personal experiences with a brand can easily be shared on any social media platform. Therefore, the role of social networks increases as well as the power of so-called brand communities (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012), explained as a community of brand admirers who have structural social relationships (Merz et al., 2009). As this power is transferring from the brand itself to brand communities, the importance of using the existing influence on brand experience is growing for brands (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). Next to this, brand experience seems to be a greater predictor of buying behaviour than brand loyalty, as it gives a clearer view on customer satisfaction (Brakus et al., 2009). Delivering an excellent brand experience increases the level of commitment and encourages brand loyalty (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012) through functional design and creating an emotional connection using context that is engaging, compelling and consistent (Pullman & Gross, 2004). This is in line with the idea of experience-centric services stimulating the loyalty of customers through emotionally appealing events and activities, resulting in emotional connections and a distinctive memory (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010; Lim & Kim, 2018). The concept of experience-centric services is about the customer experience that can be affected through the usage of tangible and intangible service elements (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). Key emotions driving loyalty should be determined and emotions

positively affecting loyalty can be the basis for designing and managing service processes (Pullman & Gross, 2004). As relational elements strongly affect basic emotions, relational elements can be seen as the strongest driver of loyalty behaviour (Pullman & Gross, 2004). Moreover, tangible attributes of a service or product are seen as less influential on the preferences of consumers compared to subconscious sensory and emotional elements (Zaltman, 2003).

Overall, engineering and managing the experience of a customer with a brand can be referred to as experience management, since experience management has been defined as “the systematic design and implementation of the context clues that are emitted by the product and/or service and the environment.” (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994, p.10). The three essential attributes of experience-centric services (ExS) are: the physical environment, the presence of other customers and the dramatic structure of events (Lim & Kim, 2018). The environmental variables influence the subsequent behaviours, emotions and eventual experiences of customers (Lim & Kim, 2018). The other customers can enhance or damage the interactions of a customer with the service, but they can also influence a customer with their own behaviours or emotions (Lim & Kim, 2018). Lastly, the dramatic structure of events is important for the memory of customers, as they will remember the trend (either positive or negative), the high and low points, and the endings (Zomerdijs & Voss, 2010; Lim & Kim, 2018).

All in all, “the goal of experience design is to orchestrate experiences that are functional, purposeful, engaging, compelling, and memorable.” (Pullman & Gross, 2004, p.533). For experience management, a Brand Experience Proposition (section 2.3) can be used to define the experience desired by the brand itself based on the Brand Strategy (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). In order to communicate this desired experience to the teams held responsible for developing new service offerings, the Brand Experience Manual (section 2.4) can be used (Motta-Filho, 2017; Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018; Motta-Filho, 2020).

2.2 Customer Journeys

As discussed in the section above, experiences occur during the search phase, the purchase phase, and the use phase of a product or service (Barkus et al., 2009; Arnould et al., 2002; Holbrook 2000). As each phase of the customer journey is recognised in the occurrences of experiences mentioned, the experiences can also be categorised in the three phases of a

customer journey: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Barwitz & Maas, 2018; Romano et al., 2020; Becker et al., 2020; Hu & Tracogna, 2020; Patti et al., 2020). More B2B specific, the customer journey stages could be defined as pre-bid engagement, value proposition, implementation, and operations (Witell et al., 2020). This connection between brand experience and customer journeys can also be found in the definition of a customer journey from Varnali (2019), mentioning that a customer journey is “a complex and holistic nature of customer experience and an opportunity to serve as an integrative framework for differing definitions in the service literature.” (p.2). Moreover, Vakulenko et al. (2019) state that a customer experience consists of the providers of touchpoints in the customer journey. The connection between the brand experience and the customer journey with different touchpoints can also be found in Figure 1 (Österle, 2019).

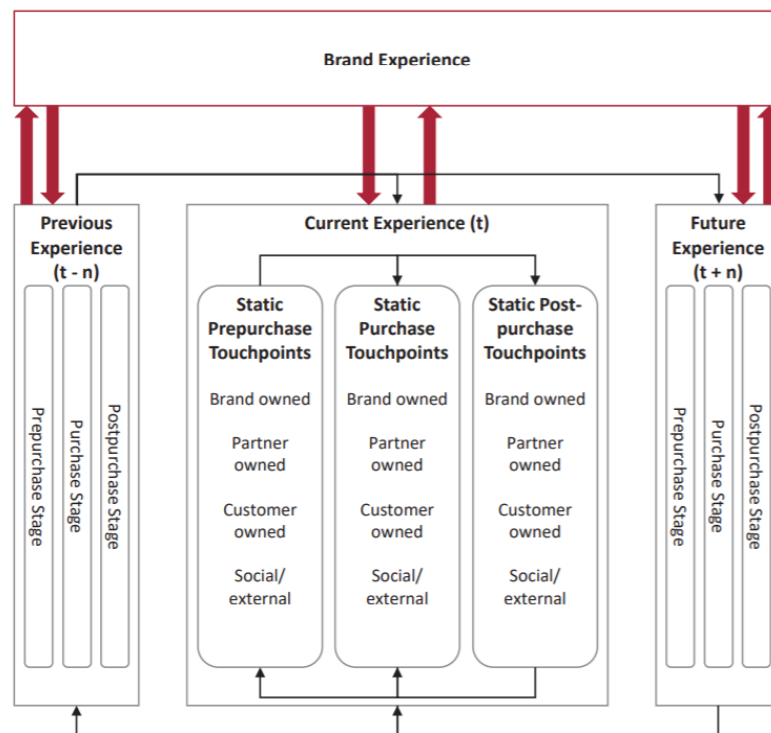


Figure 1: *Brand Experience and Customer Journey connection (Österle, 2019)*

Understanding the customer journey can contribute to the development of superior customer experiences (Følstad & Kvale, 2018; Kuehnl et al., 2019 & Becker et al., 2020). Customers are already sensitive to small details in the customer journey, which can influence the whole experience (Bolton et al., 2014). Also, customers are not always able to determine whether they want to interact with a brand or not, as experiences are made during expected and unexpected interactions with a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). In the relationship between contractor and

customer, trust can be seen as an important aspect. As trust is connected with emotions and a result of perception, developing or stimulating positive emotions and expectations in the beginning stage of the customer journey are seen as crucial (Voorhees et al., 2017; Canfield & Basso, 2017 & Lecoivre et al., 2021).

Carbone & Haeckel (1994) divided the experiences with a brand between performance-based experiences and context-based experiences, in which the experiences are built up from so-called “clues”. These clues are parts embedded in touchpoints, meaning every point where a customer “touches” an organisation (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). Next to performance-based and context-based experiences, touchpoints can be divided between brand-owned touchpoints, partner-owned touchpoints, customer-owned touchpoints, and social/external touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) or B2B specific in supplier activity, partner activity, customer activity, and external activity (ecosystem) (Witell et al., 2020).

Touchpoints can be categorised in a physical or relational context. In a physical context, touchpoints are referred to as mechanics touchpoints and are about sights, tastes, smells, sounds, and textures generated by things, whereas in a relational context the touchpoints are referred to as humanic touchpoints and are about behaviours emanated from people (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994; Pullman & Gross, 2004). Examples of mechanics are “landscaping, graphics, scents, recorded music, handrail surfaces, and so on”, while humanics are about “defining and choreographing the desired behaviour of employees involved in the customer encounter.” (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994, p.13). In addition to humanic and mechanic, Berry et al. (2006) adds functional clues to it (Appendix Figure C). Functional clues are about the ‘what’ of a service, and the quality of an offering (ibid.).

According to Berry et al. (2006), functional and emotional benefits should be combined in a market offer for firms to compete best as combining them is not additive but synergistic. The touchpoints (clues) should communicate important themes or the mission of an organisation via people or tangibles (Pullman & Gross, 2004). “From this perspective, managing customer experience means orchestrating all the ‘clues’ that people detect so that they collectively meet or exceed people’s emotional needs and expectations in addition to functional expectations” (Berry et al., 2002 in Pullman & Gross, 2004, p.554). Thus, it can be argued that engineering and managing the touchpoints or interactions of a customer in the customer journey can help to achieve the desired experience.

2.3 Brand Experience Proposition

As already mentioned in section 2.1, a brand experience can be engineered and managed by a company to affect the experience of a customer. In order for a company to engineer and manage the brand experience, a few steps must be taken. First, a Brandslation process has to be performed consisting of an Insight Phase and a Development Phase (Motta-Filho, 2020). The Brandslation process is a Service Design process translating the Brand Strategy of a company into an experiential expression (Motta-Filho, 2017). Service Design is found to be a crucial part of successfully translating the Brand Experience Proposition into service interactions (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). Therefore, Service Design will be further discussed in section 2.6. The Brand Experience Proposition is a result of the Insight Phase and Development Phase of the Brandslation process. A Brand Experience Proposition is defined by the experience of a customer desired by the brand itself (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). The Brand Experience Proposition can be developed after gaining insights on brand perception, service experience, internal capabilities, customers' context, and brand and business strategy per stakeholder (customers, employees, and organisation) (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). After a Brand Experience Proposition has been defined, it should be communicated to New Service Development (NSD) teams via a Brand Experience Manual. This Brand Experience Manual will be elaborated on in the section below (section 2.4).

2.4 Brand Experience Manual

The Brand Experience Manual is connected with the Brandslation process, as it will be the output of the Brandslation process (Motta-Filho, 2020). A visual illustration of the Brandslation process can be found in Figure 2, with the Brand Experience Proposition developed during the Development Phase building on data from the Insight Phase, and the Brand Experience Manual consisting of the Relationship Metaphor, Service Principles, and Service Moments (Motta-Filho, 2017). The three essential parts of the Brand Experience Manual are the Relationship Metaphor, the Design / Service Principles, and the Service Moments (Motta-Filho, 2017; Motta-Filho, 2018 & Motta-Filho, 2020). The Relationship Metaphor shows the relationship between a company and its customer persona, and how the experience should be with the Service Personality (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). The Design / Service Principles operationalise behaviour and provide guidelines to support the NSD team in its designing process, it presents the Tone of Voice (Motta-Filho, 2017 & Motta-Filho, 2020). Lastly, the Service Moments

present how the brand desires the customer experience, and have to make sure that the meaning of the design is also received by the customers (Motta-Filho, 2017 & Motta-Filho, 2020).

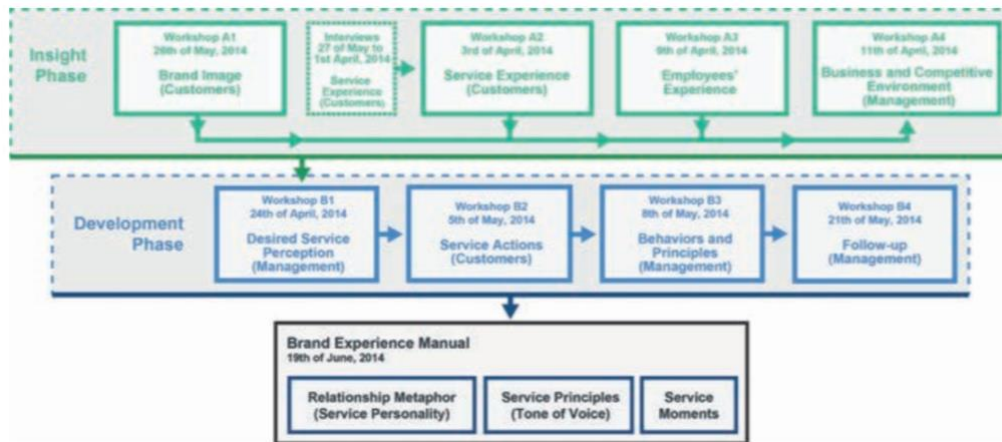


Figure 2: *The Brandslation Process* (Motta-Filho, 2017)

The Brand Experience Manual is the communication tool of the Brand Experience Proposition to the teams held responsible for developing new service offerings, also referred to as the New Service Development (hereinafter NSD) teams (Motta-Filho, 2017; Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018; Motta-Filho, 2020). The goal of the Brand Experience Manual is to provide the NSD teams with input about the (brand) experience to design for and thereby supporting the Semantic Transformation process (Motta-Filho, 2020). The Semantic Transformation for experiences is about the process of making sure that the brand meanings are embedded in the service experience through “the act of encoding intentional brand meanings into the qualities and characteristics of the settings that enable the service experiences.” (Motta-Filho, 2017, p.8). The Semantic Transformation will be further explained in section 2.7.

2.5 Service-Dominant Logic

Marketing is evolving towards a service-dominant logic, hereafter referred to as S-D logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). In S-D logic, service is considered to be the common denominator of exchange, process orientation is embraced rather than output orientation, and customers are made endogenous to value creation by arguing that value is always co-created with customers (and others) instead of just created by a firm and then distributed (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). From the perspective of S-D logic, goods are seen as the vehicles of the offered service. (Merz et al., 2009). Brodie et al. (2006) illustrate the service brand-relationship based on the S-D logic

with a triangle of a company, its employees, and its customers, consumers and other stakeholders in Appendix Figure D. The S-D logic view is in line with the idea of Wetter-Edman et al. (2014) stating that “in a Service Logic framework, service is understood as a perspective on value creation where value is co-created by customers and other actors and is assessed on the basis of value-in-use relation to the involved actors’ intentions.” (p.106). Value co-creation in Service Logic has been conceptualized with five concepts: actors, resources and resource integration, context, service system, and experience (Wetter-Edman et al., 2014).

The resources can be divided between operand resources and operant resources. Operand resources are resources that produce benefit after performing an operation or act, while operant resources are resources capable of causing benefit by directly acting on other resources (either operand or operant) (Constantin and Lusch, 1994 in Merz et al., 2009). In the evolution of S-D logic, the co-creation of value is highlighted together with process orientation and relationship (Merz et al., 2009). Moreover, value is created with customers and therefore, customers are seen as operant resources (ibid.). For S-D logic, “value is co-created through combined efforts of firms, employees, customers, stockholders, government agencies, and other entities related to any given exchange, but is always determined by the beneficiary (e.g., customer).” (Vargo et al., 2008, p.148).

In addition to marketing, Merz et al. (2009) argue that branding is also evolving and that the emergence of the brand logic is reflected in the S-D logic. Literature on branding began to adopt a stakeholder perspective in the early 2000s. The stakeholder-focus brand era states that value is co-created with stakeholders through social interactions and that stakeholders form a network relationship with brands (ibid.). In addition, it is argued that the location of value is in the mind of customers, stakeholders and the group opinion makers (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007 in Merz et al., 2009). For each individual, the brand meaning is dependent on personal experiences and the interpretation of these experiences. Meanings are “mental constructs and not properties of things, even if they seem otherwise.” (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012, p.256). Thus, different people can give different meanings to the same object or brand. Also, meanings can be given to things as well as to human actions (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). For human actions (of for example an employee), a meaning consists of the act (physical part), the intention to do the same, and the mental plan (how) of the action (ibid.).

2.6 Service Design

The term Service Design has been introduced in combination with a growing role of the service economy in some countries and an increasing number of studies focussing on the role of New Service Development in service innovation (Yu & Sangiorgi, 2014). Service design can be defined as “design activities using dedicated tools and techniques to specify or concretize the structure and infrastructure or concepts of a service” (Yu & Sangiorgi, 2014, p.194). The practice of Service Design is focused on observing and understanding users, as well as facilitating collaboration and participation for value co-creation (Wetter-Edman, 2014). Service Design helps with the innovation of service using a design thinking approach (Lim & Kim, 2018) and for service development, Service Design works on necessary conditions, consisting of service concept, service system and service process, to achieve service quality (Yu & Sangiorgi, 2014). According to Motta-Filho (2017), “the role of Service Design is to develop the enablers of the brand experiences - yet, traditionally, Service Design research is not concerned with the brand proposition.” (p.18).

As also mentioned in 2.4, the Brand Experience Proposition needs to be communicated to the NSD team using the Brand Experience Manual in order to support the designing process and create brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. Service Design can improve the NSD process and support users’ value creation through the following three dimensions: “(1) Stage: highlighting ‘exploration’ and ‘evaluation’ stages as a trigger and an enabler for sustainable user-centric NSD, respectively; (2) Activity: integrating user-focused iterative activities alongside the overall phases of NSD processes, able to constantly (re)align organizational practice with value-in-use; and (3) Capability: building up and maintaining user-centered innovation capabilities within organizations.” (Yu & Sangiorgi, 2017, p.13). A visual representation of this connection can be found in the Appendices (Appendix Figure E). In this thesis, the design activities in the process of designing for a service will be performed by non-professional designers (marketing employees).

2.7 Designing for brand experience

The connection between brand experience and service design can be made with the Semantic Transformation, as the Semantic Transformation is about the translation process from core brand values into the design of the brand’s products or services via design features (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010). Clatworthy (2012) defined the Semantic Transformation as a process of

communicating brand associations via service manifestations. The established core brand values should be translated to the design of the brand's products via the design features (also referred to as product features) (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010). Contributing design features to the desired communication can make all the communication of the brand more effective and efficient (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010). To get this alignment between design features and the desired communication based on the core brand values, a triadic relationship has to ensure an added meaning. The triadic relationship, consisting of a Representamen, an Object, and an Interpretant, is about the connection between the design of a product, the design features that represent the core brand values, and the interpretation of the customers (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010). This connection between the brand values, design features, and interpretation context can also be found in the R-O-I framework of Karjalainen & Snelders (2010) (Appendix Figure F).

However, when focusing on services instead of products, the strategic brand identity is communicated through text, image, touchpoints, behaviours and interactions, organisational culture, and experience heritage (Clatworthy, 2012). To develop a brand-aligned customer experience, the brand identity (or brand DNA) must be translated into service associations, for which analogies and metaphors can be used. This results in a "description of the desired personality for the new service, represented through words, images and analogies." (Clatworthy, 2012, p.10). Lastly, the desired experience should be tested in a series of experience prototyping sessions, to have the project team experience the experience (Figure 3) (Clatworthy, 2012). For the implementation of core brand value into design features, lead products seem to be the most important for brand recognition and a constant renewal between brand value and design features should be present (Karjalainen & Snelder, 2010). In addition, the implementation and verification of touchpoints can be prioritised in three groups (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). The first group consists of negative touchpoints that should have been removed yesterday, the second group are touchpoints that can be implemented today, and the last group of touchpoints must be implemented in the future (for example if the technology required to implement this touchpoint is not available yet) (ibid.).

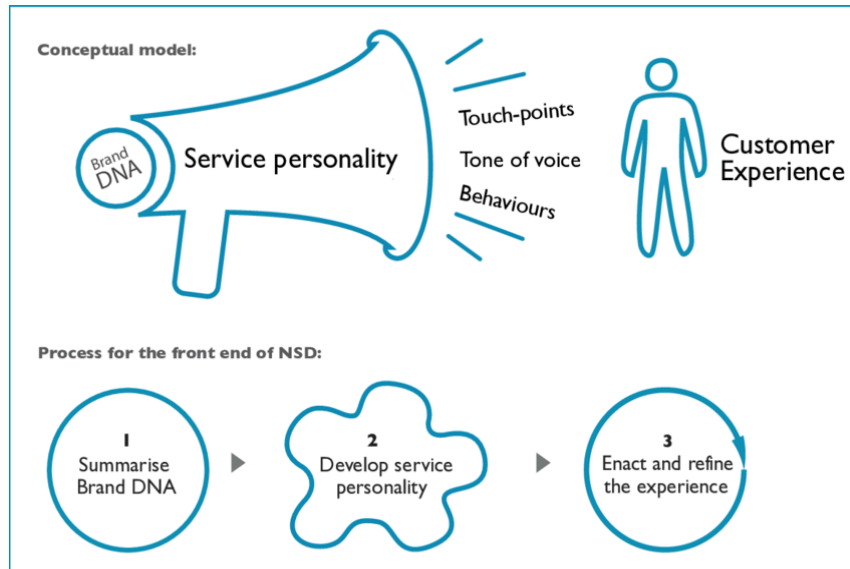


Figure 3: *Semantic Transformation* (Clatworthy, 2012)

Later, Semantic Transformation for experience has been discussed, being about the process of inserting the Brand Experience Proposition in the touchpoint of a service (Motta-Filho, 2017). With the service concept being grounded on the Brand Experience Proposition, the service concept can be understood as “an expression of the value propositions the organization makes to the customers.” (Vargo et al., 2008 in Motta-Filho, 2017). Next to this, the service concept should define what service will be offered and inform about the procedure of the implementation phase of the NSD process (Motta-Filho, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method

Design research is chosen in order to create a framework that guides MoCap in supporting the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions for DOT. Design research is described as research that “consists of activities concerned with the construction and evaluation of technology artifacts to meet organizational needs as well as the development of their associated theories” (Cole et al., 2014, p3). The design research in this thesis will be based on an action research strategy (Ary et al., 2010), used to introduce changes in certain processes and observe the effects of these changes (Cole et al. 2014). Action research consists of cycles in which an action phase is followed by a reflection phase, after which the cycle starts again. In the action phase, information about the intervention will be gathered (Motta-Filho, 2017). The action phase can be divided between data collection in Insight Phases and a Development Phases. The three methods described by Ary et al. (2010) – experiencing, examining, and enquiring – will serve as inspiration for the data collection methods in the action phase. In the reflection phase there will be made sense of the data together with the stakeholders and a plan for future actions will be set up (Motta-Filho, 2017).

3.2 Procedure

This research consists of two process - the Brandslation process and the Semantic Transformation process – so insights and developments will be collected and developed first for the Brandslation process and additionally for the Semantic Transformation process. In the Insight Phase, different issues influencing the customer experience will be explored and studied from multiple perspectives (Motta-Filho, 2017). These insights will be translated in the Development Phase into outcomes (Motta-Filho, 2017). An overview of the procedure can be found after the description of Insight Phase 1, Development Phase 1, Insight Phase 2, and Development Phase 2 in Figure 4.

3.2.1. Insight Phase 1

In the first Insight Phase, existing literature regarding brand experience, the Brandslation process and the Semantic transformation process will be explored in a broad theoretical review (section 2) to gain knowledge on these subjects. This theoretical review will be expanded and applied during all following phases. In addition, the case company and its offerings / marketing

interactions will be experienced by working within the company as in intern and making field notes and observations to gain insights on DOT. This will be followed by examining research performed within the case company regarding DOT and its customers. In addition to research earlier performed within the case company, the thesis of Wahid (2020) will be examined. The most important steps taken by Wahid (2020) for the Brandslation process will be determined in order to later replicate for DOT. Lastly, semi-structured interviews with DOT employees will be conducted. This type of interview allows for an open response in a conversational matter, in which questions will be adjusted based on the context of the conversation (Clifford et al., 2016). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted in order to find missing and additional information to start the development phase.

3.2.2. Development Phase 1

Based on the data collected in the first Insight Phase, an overview of the brand associations will be developed. In addition, a Customer Persona will be developed. In Workshop session 1, these findings will be reviewed and adjusted and, based on Workshop B1 from Motta-Filho (2017), the Brand Character and Relationships Metaphor will be co-created. After this workshop, a start can be made on developing the Brand Experience Manual.

3.2.3. Insight Phase 2

A group interview will be conducted with the whole marketing department together, to stimulate a discussion regarding their needs and requirements for the translation process. This interview will be guided using semi-structured questions regarding their needs. Similar to a focus group, all participants will be given the ability to provide their opinion and the participants will have a conversation about the topics together (Clifford et al., 2016). In Workshop session 2, the existing offerings and marketing interactions will be reflected upon in an exercise with the marketing department using semiotic analysis, being the analysis of how any sign creates a meaning or evokes a feeling (Evans & Harvey, 2001).

3.2.4. Development Phase 2

During the last workshop session (Workshop session 3), the (service) design concept will be co-created to find out how the brand proposition unfolds along the touchpoints of the customer journey. This workshop will be based on Workshop B3 from Motta-Filho (2017). After this workshop, a framework for the Semantic Transformation will be developed and the Brand Experience Manual will be finished.



Figure 4: *The Research Procedure*

3.3 Participants & Data Collection

According to Iglesias & Bonet (2012) “employees (internal stakeholders) play a key role in this brand building process because final customer satisfaction depends on every single interaction customers have with employees and so employee actions can make or break the brand” (p.252). In addition, experiences are created in a process of co-creation between the company, employees, consumers, customers, and other stakeholders (Vargo et al., 2008 & Brodie et al., 2016), with customers viewed as operant resources (Merz et al., 2009). However, in this case there are already many interviews performed with customers of DOT in earlier research. Thus, employees of DOT will be interviewed and will participate in the workshops of this research. All marketing, product support and account executive employees of DOT will be interviewed and the whole marketing department will participate in the workshops. The interviews will be coded using the Gioia method with Locke et al. (2020) as guideline. Based on the codes formed, important topics can be identified to find meaningful results and conclusions.

During the phases of the data collection, the data will be observed and reflected upon in order to optimise the processes along the way. Reflecting will already be practiced during the data gathering process, considering the data as not generalizable and conclusive (Ary et al., 2010). As “a practitioner who reflects-in-action tends to question the definition of his task, the theories-in-action that he brings to it, and the measures of performance by which he is controlled” (Schön, 1984, p.337). Additionally, in the reflection phase, future actions will be planned. The cycle of action and reflection phases will be repeated as many times as possible in the given time period.

Combining the field notes and observations with the theoretical review, the examination of the work of Wahid, the interviews and workshops, and reflecting on all data gathered during the

action phase, a revised and adjusted Brandslation process for DOT can be defined and the research question regarding the Semantic Transformation for experience - supporting the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions - will be answered.

4. Research Process

In this section, the research process that has been performed in each data collection phase – Insight Phases & Development Phases - will be described.

4.1 Insight Phase 1

The data collection already began by writing a broad theoretical review (section 2). During the process of writing this theoretical review, knowledge was gained regarding brand experience, customer journeys with its touchpoints, the Brandslation process (with the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual), Service-Dominant Logic, Service Design and Designing for Brand Experience. In addition to this broad theoretical review, internal findings were gathered by field notes and observations as an intern and by having access to DOT related company documents. Next to this, the thesis of Wahid (2020) has been examined to identify the most important parts of the Brandslation process. Lastly, interview sessions with employees of DOT were conducted in Insight Phase 1.

4.1.1 Internal Findings

Field notes and observations were performed, while working as an intern at MoCap, to establish an idea and overview of the existing offerings and marketing interactions with DOT customers. These field notes and observations consisted of own observations of the marketing activities performed for DOT as well as already existing documents about DOT. These existing documents are based on earlier conducted research regarding DOT and the communication wants and needs of DOT customers. This research provided information about the characteristics of DOT customers, the contact moments in the buying process, the channels used for DOT to reach (potential) customers, and how this can be optimised.

By exploring the brand DOT, it became clear that DOT is a relatively new product of MoCap which launched almost 1,5 year ago. Therefore, DOT is still in a development process. Offerings and marketing interactions of DOT with people can be found either offline and online. Offline marketing interactions can consist of contact with an employee of DOT while coming across them at an event or seeing, for example, a banner of DOT at a running event. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, DOT attended multiple events a year and wants to pick this up if it is possible again. In addition to these offline touchpoints, there are also multiple ways in which people can interact with DOT online. MoCap introduced webinars in 2020 as an alternative for the events, with some of these webinars only focused on DOT. By watching webinars, an

intensive interaction with (potential) customers was found during the webinars, as (potential) customers are able to ask questions and have an open discussion with employees of DOT. Besides, some customers are involved in the webinars themselves, as they have the opportunity to present their solutions developed with the use of DOT. Other online touchpoints found for DOT include the website of MoCap with several DOT-related pages. The (potential) customers can visit product-specific pages, customer cases, news items, blog posts, and knowledge sharing pages with a knowledge base, tutorials, and downloads (such as leaflets, datasheets, and an e-Book). On the website, brand-related aspects that are found for DOT are for example pictures and videos. The pictures and videos mostly show DOT as a product or moving models. In addition to visuals, the DOT-related web pages mainly have basic colours or earth tones like brown, black, white, and grey. Also, the colour orange is frequently used and is the most outstanding colour. Besides, it was concluded that content on the landing page of DOT is mainly product-focused and functional. Next to the website, DOT is also present on the social media platforms Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. On these platforms, the marketing department posts content and responds to the reactions of other people on their posts. The posts consist, among others, of webinar invitations, (applied) product pictures or videos, customer quotes, and DOT-specific information.

Employees who are interacting with (potential) customers directly are account executives and product support employees for DOT, employees hosting webinars or attending events, and the marketing employees managing the social media accounts. In addition, the whole marketing department interacts with (potential) customers indirectly when these employees, for example, work on the web pages of DOT or send out a newsletter. Summarised in an existing document of DOT, touchpoints can be found in the customer journey in the phases from the awareness phase to the decisions making phase and lastly the purchase phase. These touchpoints and the division of them over the customer journey phases can be found in Figure 5 below. In addition, a document was found describing the customers of DOT using three personas - Chris, Dave and Ryan. The customers were all described as innovators, either as technicians, part-time innovators, or entrepreneurs. What drives the customers is their belief that they can change the world, they hang out with other innovators, and innovating is a habit. All factors that drive the customers of DOT can be found in Figure 6. The drivers were connected with the Personality / Tone of Voice mentioned in the document. The Personality / Tone of Voice describes that DOT is for the innovators, disrupters, rule breakers, and convention challengers who are confident

and believe in “can do”. Finally, two levels of communicating were determined, being corporate/brand level and tactical/activational level.

| Awareness | Decision | Purchase |
|--|---|---|
| Goal: enter prospects mind and drive to call to action. | Goal: meet prospects need for information better than that of competitors | Goal: provide evidence on being the best fit + understanding prospects needs |
| <u>Touchpoints</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Trade shows • Conferences • Online advertising (social ad, paid search, banner) • Organic search • Word of Mouth / (customer) referrals • Social media • Influencers • Distributors • Sponsorships • Samples • Trade journal • Press release • Network • Universities • <u>MoCap branding / establishment</u> | <u>Touchpoints</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Pilar page (website)</u> • Development page • Brochures • White papers • Blog • Webinars • Tutorial video • Knowledge base • Inertial sensor communities / associations • Question form • Quote form • Newsletter • Retargeting • Facebook / Insta message • Research • <u>Sales person (call / email)</u> | <u>Touchpoints</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer cases • Sales Pitch • Awards • User documentation • <u>MoCap DOT SDK</u> • <u>MoCap DOT sensor</u> • <u>MoCap DOT application</u> • Invoicing • Shipment • Packaging |

Figure 5: *Touchpoints in each customer journey phase of DOT*

What drives them?

- They are driven – they are the “rule breakers”
- Exhaustive in their pursuit of their goal
- They are prepared to go it alone
- Loners who have left “running with the pack”
- They believe they are different to others
- A unique community and different to the masses.
- Egotists, who believe they are special.
-and that they can make a difference
- Many innovators harbour a desire to make a meaningful contribution - to change lives. Change how we live and change the world.
- They are sceptical of tradition
- They are irreverent. They challenge convention and anything that “has always been done that way.” They are impatient with those who find comfort in routine and pursue change even when it brings conflict.

Figure 6: *Earlier identified drivers of DOT customers*

4.1.2. Examining Thesis of Wahid

This section provides insights based on the examination of the thesis of Wahid (2020). The results of the research of Wahid (2020) were used as base for this research. In the thesis of Wahid (2020), it can be found that the customer journey of MoCap consists of:

1. Need / first contact

2. Discovery call
3. Quotation and negotiation
4. Choosing MoCap & ordering
5. Implementation & support

Based on the customer journey identified for MoCap, a comparison of the customer journey was made between MoCap and DOT. This was done later, together with the DOT employees in Development Phase 1.

For mid-sized B2B organisations, Wahid (2020) defined the Brand Experience Proposition as the summary of the main brand themes. In the case of MoCap, Wahid (2020) identified five core brand values, consisting of people, pushing boundaries, diversity, impact, and fun. Also, six brand clusters were formed and later merged to three brand clusters, being: Trusted Expert & Entrepreneurial, Engaging & Pragmatic Collaboration, and Open minded & Facilitator. Based on the core brand values and the brand clusters, Wahid (2020) co-created the Relationship Metaphor in a workshop. Resulting in a cool nerd who is forward looking, open-minded and empathic, and who can be seen as a mentor and leader. This resulted in a redesigned version of the Brandslation process (Motta-Filho, 2017). Wahid (2020) redesigned the Brandslation process consisting of an Insight Phase and a Development Phase. The insight phase has been framed using three steps:

1. Preparation for interviews with company specific information and research on the Brandslation process;
2. Conduct interviews to get an internal perspective (employees and managers);
3. Conduct interviews to get an external perspective (customers across product lines and regions);

For the development phase, Wahid (2020) described four additional steps:

4. Create abstract outcomes of the Brandslation process in Workshops and let this be reviewed by other departments;
5. Discuss whether the implementation of the Brandslation process will be done through a customer journey, via touchpoints or another form. Here Wahid (2020) chose for touchpoints;
6. Discuss what the personas and Brand Experience Proposition mean for the touchpoints (or customer journey / other form);
7. Evaluate the total Brandslation process and determine the level of satisfaction of participants with the outcome of it.

With the use of the Brandslation process, a format for the Brand Experience Manual has been developed by Wahid (2020). Taking feedback from the MoCap employees into account, Wahid (2020) adjusted the Brand Experience Manual and developed a framework to structure the Brand Experience Manual for mid-sized B2B organisations:

1. Introduction: inform readers on the concept of branded experience and explaining why it is important for the organisation;
2. The Brand Experience Proposition: summarize the brand values and personality traits;
3. Brand and customer personas: describe the brand character and customer persona;
4. The brand story: explain how the brand persona and customer persona met each other and how this relationship evolved.
5. Implementation guidelines: provide a guideline for the crucial touchpoints.
6. Summary: a slide with the key takeaways from the Brand Experience Manual for employees to be able to view all essentials.

Lastly, Wahid (2020) developed a guideline to explain the Brand Experience Manual to new employees (Figure Appendix G).

4.1.3. Interview Sessions

Based on the previous research of Wahid (2020) and the research on developing a Brand Experience Manual (Motta-Filho, 2017; Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018) and Designing for Brand Experience (Motta-Filho, 2017), the most important steps for the Brandslation process for DOT have been identified. This made clear that multiple interviews must be conducted to collect information on brand perception, service experience, internal capabilities, customers' context, and brand/business strategy of stakeholders (Motta-Filho & Roto, 2018). By considering the information required, the Brandslation process as described by Motta-Filho (2017), the redesigned version for mid-sized B2B organisations by Wahid (2020), and the data collected earlier in this first Insight Phase, the interview questions were conducted to get information about DOT and how employees view DOT.

In total, two account executives and one employee from product support were interviewed and four marketing employees answered questions based on a written interview approach. The answers of the interviews conducted in this thesis were coded using the Gioia method (Locke et al., 2020). These interviews provided insights regarding DOT being a wearable sensor development platform, which is developed for developers and innovators, but also for companies with a business idea that wants to create its own custom application. So, the

customers of DOT are various, but it all starts with an idea or a problem. Some USPs mentioned for DOT are its flexibility, accuracy, scalability, and that it is really innovative. It also became clear that DOT responds to customer needs and it has a huge potential when looking at the sports and rehabilitation market. In addition, the employees believe that customers of DOT really trust the product and MoCap as a company. Finally, it was mentioned that the relationship between customers and employees of DOT is functional but can become emotional overtime. The buying process can take a year, in which the employees of DOT aim to support and advice the customers as best as possible.

By reflecting on the questions while conducting the interviews and after each (written) interview, and listening to feedback of the interviewees, it was possible to adjust and optimize the interview questions to receive the information that was found to be needed. Based on the adjusted and optimized interview questions, an interview guideline could be established (Appendix Figure H).

4.2 Development Phase 1

Although the crucial importance of trust did not come forward in literature when speaking of functional brands such as DOT, it was highlighted in interviews as an important factor for the experiences of customers. With trust being connected with emotions (Voorhees et al., 2017; Canfield & Basso, 2017 & Lecoeuvre et al., 2021) and emotional impact being influential for experiences (Pullman & Gross, 2004), it was decided to take emotional impact into account when aiming for brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. In terms of the journey of DOT customers, it became clear that customers typically are looking for a solution, they will find DOT and compare it to competitors. Along the journey from finding DOT, purchasing a first set and testing out whether it is a right solution for their problem, customers will have several touchpoints with DOT. These touchpoints can be found on the website (such as product pages, blogs/customer cases, downloads, forms, and webshop), while having contact with employees, and for example on social media. Across these touchpoints, the interviews made clear that informal communication is most appropriate but can also evolve from rather formal towards more informal. In addition, it became clear that DOT employees have the idea that the customer experiences are positive at this moment. Combining all this information resulted in an overview of the brand associations for DOT, a Customer Persona named Ian was developed describing the persona Ian, his reasons to use DOT, his reason to buy DOT, his personality and

interests, and his skills and tech curiosity. Additionally, the customer journey of Ian with the (marketing) touchpoints was made visual based on the customer journey steps mentioned in the interview sessions.

After developing the Customer Persona and Customer Journey, Workshop session 1 was performed based on Workshop B1 from Motta-Filho (2017). Workshop B1 from Motta-Filho (2017) was chosen as he mentioned that his workshop is the most important workshop of the Brandslation process. In Workshop session 1, the developed brand associations overview, the Customer Persona and the customer journey with (marketing) touchpoints defined for DOT were reviewed. Also, findings for MoCap based on research of Wahid (2020) were compared with their product DOT. By comparing the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual developed for MoCap with DOT, it became clear that DOT is more about having close contact with customers compared to MoCap. Based on the feedback, the Customer Persona was slightly adjusted (Figure 7) and an illustration of the customer journey was developed consisting of two phases with several marketing touchpoints (pink buttons) being identified (Figure 8):

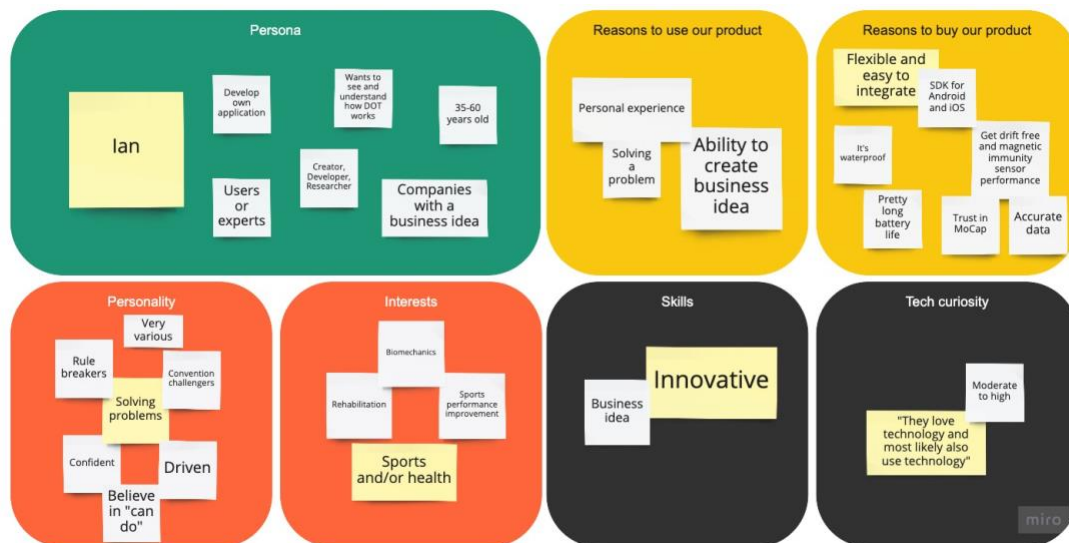


Figure 7: Customer Persona of DOT – Ian

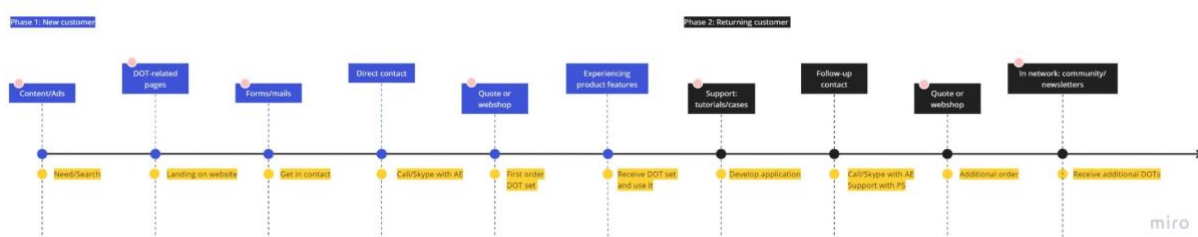


Figure 8: The Customer Journey for DOT with several marketing-related activities

Using the definition provided by Brakus et al. (2009), internal and behavioural responses can be identified as the two main dimensions of brand experience. Context-based, brand-owned marketing touchpoints for DOT in the category mechanic and humanic, focusing on cognition and action must be identified and focused upon. This theory was combined with findings in the interviews and the discussion about (focus) touchpoints in Workshop session 1. As a result, the marketing touchpoints that were identified to be of focus in this thesis are: website, content, events, and social media.

Next to this, a Brand Character and Relationship Metaphor were co-created in Workshop session 1. Creating the Brand Character consisted of describing DOT as a person with several words categorised into five clusters. Robin was chosen as a character name, with an age of around 30. The occupation of Robin was determined to be a (personal) coach. In addition, all five clusters describing DOT as a person were translated into five key personality traits. To create the Relationship Metaphor, a background of the relationship was thought about in Workshop session 1. The marketing department was asked to think about how the brand character met the customer. By doing so, an analogy about two people was made. After Workshop session 1, the phases of the Relationship Metaphor as described in the analogy were extended into a relationship story by listening back the recording of the workshop.

Combining the co-created Brand Character and Relationship Metaphor with the earlier findings of the workshop resulted in the development of the Brand Experience Proposition (Figure 9). The layout of this Brand Experience Proposition was inspired by the Brand Experience Proposition as developed by Wahid (2020). In addition, a began was made with the Brand Experience Manual by adding an introduction, the Brand Experience Proposition, the Customer Journey with the marketing touchpoints, a description of the Brand Character and the Customer, and the relationship story. Also, earlier ideas regarding the implementation of the Brand Experience Proposition into the offerings and marketing interactions of DOT were described in the Brand Experience Manual.



Figure 9: *The Brand Experience Proposition for DOT*

Based on the process of preparing for Workshop session 1, performing the workshop and reflecting on it afterwards, a guideline for Workshop session 1 could be developed. This guideline (Appendix Figure I) can be used by mid-sized B2B organisations to replicate Workshop session 1.

4.3 Insight Phase 2

Workshop session 1 was finished by a group interview with the marketing employees using semi-structured questions to stimulate a discussion between the employees. This was done to create alignment and a clear overview on the issues and needs regarding the translation of the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual from concept to reality. Based on this group interview, it became clear that the marketing department finds it difficult to transform the findings of the Brandslation process into concrete outcomes, such as deciding on an appropriate and aligned tone of voice in customer cases or on social media. Also, the marketing employees are not sure whether something is or will be perceived as they aim it to. Lastly, it came forward that examples of what can be improved would be appreciated as well as examples of how the Brand Experience Manual can be translated to reality.

Inspired by the need of the marketing employees to have examples of misalignments between the brand character and the offerings / marketing interactions, a second workshop was

conducted to reflect on the existing offerings / marketing interactions. For Workshop session 2, findings and theory have been combined to develop an Existing Experience Reflection exercise (Figure 9). After identifying the focus touchpoints for DOT, they were reflected upon using semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis can identify how signs are interpreted (Evans & Harvey, 2001) and therefore it was used to find out whether existing offerings / marketing interactions were brand-aligned. In an exercise, alignment must be found between brand offerings / interactions, interpretations, and the brand values that were identified earlier. Combining the idea of semiotic analysis with the R-O-I framework (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010) and the Semantic Transformation factors provided by Clatworthy (2012) an exercise was developed as can be found in Figure 10. During Workshop session 2, an image/text was presented for each marketing touchpoints (website, content, events, and social media). Together with the marketing employees, the images or text were analysed by identifying the signifier and the signified. Finally, based on the identified signifier and signified, the degree of alignment or misalignment with one or more of the brand values was discussed with the marketing department.

| <i>Image or text</i> | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Offering / Interaction (Signifier) | Interpretation (Signified) |
| - ... | - ... |
| Brand Value: ... | |

Figure 10: *Existing Experience Reflection exercise*

By preparing, performing and reflecting on the second workshop session, a guideline for Workshop session 2 could be developed. This guideline can be found in Appendix Figure J.

4.4 Development Phase 2

After reflecting on the existing offerings / marketing interactions, the desired experience should be tested in a series of experience prototyping sessions (Clatworthy, 2012). In a third workshop session, it was identified how the Brand Character developed in Workshop session 1 would help the Customer Persona solve a problem. In Workshop session 3, a translation of the Brand Experience Proposition to a service concept was co-created with the marketing department. This was done by first identifying together how the Brand Character helps the user in solving

their problem. Then, these ways in which the Brand Character helps the user were translated into business situations by thinking about which offerings / interactions have to be paid for and which are for free. Lastly, a customer service journey was co-created with the marketing department, describing how the customer experience unfolds for the touchpoints. This was done by considering the phases of the relationship and the ways in which the Brand Character helps the user. The preparation, performance and reflection of Workshop session 3 together result in a guideline for Workshop session 3 (Appendix Figure K).

To develop a framework for the Semantic Transformation for experience for DOT, the findings of Insight Phase 1, Development Phase 1, Insight Phase 2, and Development Phase 2 were combined. Based on literature regarding the aspects influencing brand experience, tone of voice, behaviours and emotional impact were identified as relevant aspects for DOT when aiming to influence the experience of customers. The desired tone of voice, behaviours and emotional impacts were identified in earlier stages and processed into the framework by placing the DOT specific information related to these aspects in arrows (Figure 12). This ensures that the desired tone of voice, behaviours, and emotional impact is analysed and considered when engineering and managing the marketing touchpoints. For the Semantic Transformation for experience developed for DOT, the Brand Experience Proposition and the co-creation of the customer service journey resulted in the desired interactions in the customer journey for DOT. These desired interactions were developed by considering the findings of the Existing Experience Reflection exercise as well. In order to create a framework for the translation process, all information was collected in an overview (Figure 11).

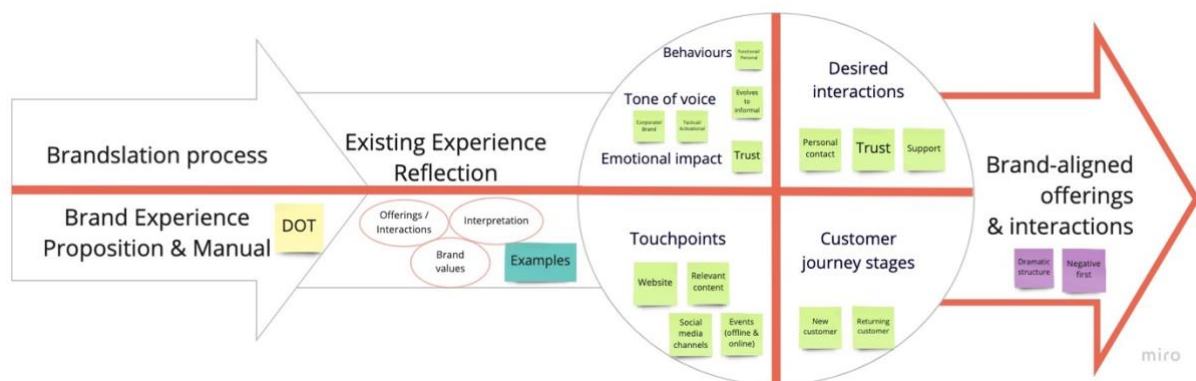


Figure 11: *From Brandtranslation process to brand-aligned offerings & interactions*

This model illustrates how information from the Brandtranslation process – resulting in the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual specific for DOT – is used for the

reflection of the existing experiences. By performing semiotic analysis, examples were found for DOT on alignments and misalignments between the existing experiences and the brand strategy. Finally, by considering the aspects that influence brand experience along the focus touchpoints of the customer journey stages as well as the desired interactions as described by the marketing department in Workshop session 3, a Semantic Transformation for experience framework was developed for DOT. This framework can be found in Figure 12 below:



Figure 12: *Semantic Transformation for experience developed for DOT*

This developed framework shows that the focus of DOT should be on ensuring approachability by being easy to find online and making it simple for customers to get into contact with an employee of DOT, either by filling out a form, finding contact information on the website, reaching out to an employee on an event or sending a direct message on social media. In addition, an onboarding process can be developed for DOT customers going from phase 1 to phase 2. This has to ensure that customers are supported along their development journey with the knowledge required. Finally, based on the Semantic Transformation for experience framework, the physical environment, the presence of other customers and the chronological order for implementing or improving the factors play an important role (Lim & Kim, 2018). Negative marketing touchpoints must be identified and eliminated with priority, after which it is time for touchpoints that can be implemented today and touchpoints that cannot be implemented today due to for example the need for further innovations must be implemented in the future (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994). Also, the chronological order can ensure a dramatic structure of events, making sure that customers remember their experience (Lim & Kim, 2018).

For applying the priority order to DOT, some examples will be given. Along the journey of working at MoCap as intern, it was noticed that the webshop is found difficult by customers. Having a webshop that is difficult to find is in contrast with an ‘easy to find webshop’ and can be seen as a negative marketing touchpoint which must be solved with priority. In addition,

Contact CTAs is an example of a touchpoint that can be implemented today. Lastly, an onboarding process consisting of mails and packages needs to be developed before being able to implement it. Therefore, this touchpoint needs further innovations and must be implemented in the future.

Due to the ending internship and therefore time constraints, it was not possible to review and test the developed solution for DOT. This also made it impossible to adjust the solution based on feedback from them or their experiences. However, the presented Semantic Transformation for experience framework for DOT contains the Brand Experience Proposition for DOT translated into desired interactions along the customer journey. In addition, all aspects influencing brand experience are considered. This gives evidence that the developed framework provides the ability to influence the brand experience of DOT.

5. Results

This research was conducted to find a solution on how mid-sized B2B organisations can support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. This results section will show the research findings, it discusses the applied research approach and it states the theoretical and practical contributions of this research.

5.1 Research Findings

Combining Insight Phase 1, Development Phase 1, Insight Phase 2 and Development Phase 2, several research findings were discovered. These research findings can be categorised into the Brandslation process, the Brand Experience Manual, the Existing Experience Reflection and the Semantic Transformation for experience.

5.1.1 Brandslation process

In this research, an adjusted version of the Brandslation process (Motta-Filho, 2017; Wahid, 2020) was established based on Insight Phase 1 and a Development Phase 1. In Insight Phase 1, a broad theoretical review was performed to gain insights on brand experience, understand the Brandslation process, and determine crucial touchpoints in the customer journey. In addition, the marketing activities for DOT were experienced and the communication towards customers was observed. This information was extended with existing files regarding the brand strategy for DOT, earlier conducted research for DOT and the thesis of Wahid (2020) regarding the Brandslation process for mid-sized B2B organisations. Interviews were conducted with employees of DOT as the last part of Insight Phase 1. These insights were translated to outcomes in Development Phase 1. In this Development Phase, the Customer Persona and brand associations were developed as well as an overview of the customer journey with the focus marketing touchpoints. In addition, Workshop session 1 was established in which the Brand Character and Relationship Metaphor were developed. By combining all the results, a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual were developed in Development Phase 1.

Combining the Brandslation process (Motta-Filho, 2017) with the redesigned version of Wahid (2020) and the adjusted Brandslation process version established in this research to find the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual for DOT, the following version of the Brandslation process was found, with 7 steps in the Insight Phase:

1. Gain knowledge on brand experience and specifically the Brandslation process;
2. Collect information about the specific organisation (products, marketing activities, customers, customer interactions);
3. Review all existing documents and activities of the specific organisation regarding their brand (strategy);
4. (Review already existing research regarding brand experience for the specific company, if there is any;)
5. Prepare an interview guideline;
6. Conduct interviews with employees and managers (get an internal perspective);
7. Conduct interviews with a variety of customers (get an external perspective);

For the Development Phase, the following steps are advised to be taken:

8. Create an overview of the customer journey with the focus touchpoints, the brand associations, and the Customer Persona;
9. Provide theoretical information regarding brand experience toward the workshop participants and evaluate the overview together;
10. Adjust the overview were needed;
11. Conduct a workshop to create the abstract outcomes of the Brandslation process (the Brand Character and Relationship Metaphor) and discuss what the personas and Brand Experience Proposition mean for the customer journey/touchpoints/another form;
12. Start with developing the Brand Experience Manual including the brand values, the customer journey and focus touchpoints, the Customer and Brand Persona, and the Relationship Metaphor;
13. Review the first part of the Brand Experience Manual with the marketing department;
14. Have a final evaluation of the overall Brandslation process.

5.1.2 Brand Experience Manual

A Relationship Metaphor and Brand Character were co-created in Workshop session 1. Combined with the developed Brand Experience Proposition, a Brand Experience Manual was developed for DOT. This Brand Experience Manual was developed mainly based on the guidelines provided by Wahid (2020), but some additional content was added. Therefore, the Brand Experience Manual for mid-sized B2B organisations consist of:

- A table of content: provide an overview of the topics that will be covered in the manual;
- An introduction regarding the importance of this manual: explain to the users why they would want to use this manual;

- The Brand Experience Proposition: provide an overview of the developed brand proposition;
- The Customer Journey: describe the steps of the customer journey and give an overview of the focus marketing touchpoints.
- The Brand and Customer Persona: describe separately the Brand and Customer Persona.
- The relationship story between the two personas: describe how the Brand and Customer persona met each other and how this relationship evolves over time.
- Implementation: based on the interviews and workshops results, provide advice for implementing the brand proposition into the touchpoints.
- Exercise Findings: make an overview of the exercise findings and provide recommendations.

In addition to the Brand Experience Manual, Wahid (2020) developed a guideline for the Brand Experience Manual for employees. However, based on feedback from the marketing department mentioning it was decided to not develop a guideline for the Brand Experience Manual for DOT.

5.1.3 Existing Experience Reflection

To build on the Brandslation process, Workshop session 2 was conducted to reflect on the existing marketing activities as part of Insights Phase 2. By combining the insights of the Brandslation process with interview questions, it became clear that the marketing department required examples of alignments or misalignments between the Brand Experience Proposition and existing marketing activities. Therefore, in Workshop session 2, the level of alignment between the existing offerings / interactions of DOT, the interpretation of these existing offerings / interactions and the discussed brand values of DOT were reflected. As meanings on a brand are formed based on personal experiences and the interpretations of these experiences (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012), this exercise helped to identify the possible interpretations and whether these align with the desired brand experience. In order for mid-sized B2B organisation to reflect on existing experiences, the following process was identified:

1. Review the Brand Experience Proposition/Manual;
2. Listen to the needs of the company;
3. Determine focus touchpoints of the customer journey;
4. Perform semiotic analysis on the verbal text and visual signs of focus touchpoints (Figure 10);
5. Review the findings with the marketing department;

6. Add the findings of the semiotic analysis to the Brand Experience Manual with recommendations regarding the existing marketing activities.

5.1.4 Semantic Transformation for experience

To answer the research question, the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual was translated from concept to reality in Development Phase 2. Based on Workshop session 3 in Insight Phase 2, the desired customer journey was co-created with the marketing department. With the customer journey consisting of a sequence of touchpoints, the different touchpoints should be identified. Key customer touchpoints in B2B organisations can be found in the following B2B customer journey phases: pre-bid engagement, value proposition, implementation, and operations (Witell et al., 2020). Besides touchpoints along the customer journey, Clatworthy (2012) illustrated in Figure 4 that the tone of voice and behaviours are part of the brand identity as well. Including tone of voice is strengthened by the fact that the Design / Service Principles of the Brand Experience Manual represent the tone of voice (Motta-Filho, 2017 & Motta-Filho, 2020). Combining all information gathered in Insight Phase 1, Development Phase 1, Insight Phase 2, and Development Phase 2, and removing the DOT specific information, a framework towards Semantic Transformation for experience for mid-sized B2B organisations was developed (Figure 13).

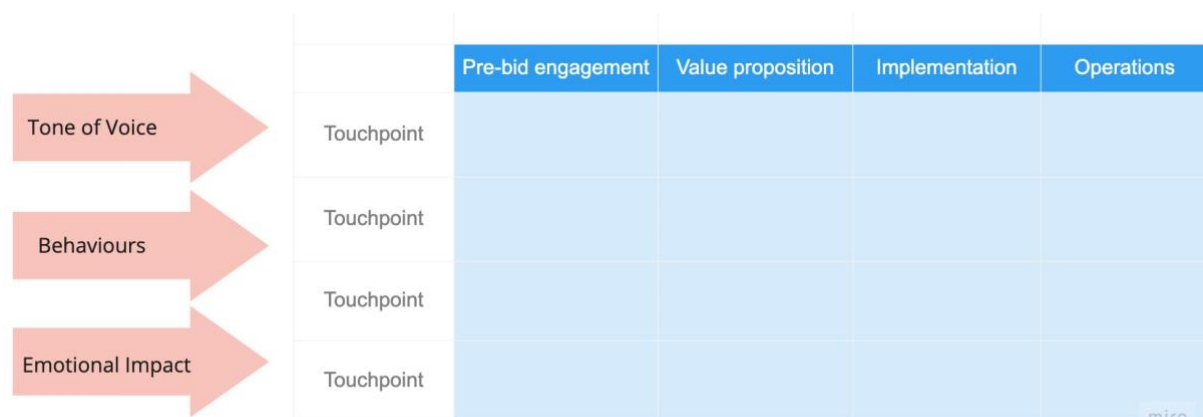


Figure 13: *Semantic Transformation for experience framework for mid-sized B2B organisations*

The developed Semantic Transformation for experience framework facilitates the translation of the Brand Experience Manual to the NSD team, making this team able to support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. This process can be summarized in an overview. As Service Design can improve the process of the NSD team and

support users with value creation using three dimensions (Yu & Sangiorgi, 2017), these dimensions can also be found in the steps describing the Semantic Transformation process. These Service Design dimensions are stage, activity, and capability. The process of Semantic Transformation for experience identified consists of the following steps:

1. Review the Brand Experience Proposition & Brand Experience Manual and the Existing Experience Reflection;
2. (Perform additional interviews with sales, marketing employees and customers regarding the existing Brand Experience Proposition & Brand Experience Manual and adjust it if necessary);
3. *Stage*: Make sure that the customer journey stages and focus touchpoints are clear;
4. *Stage*: Combine collected information to determine the desired tone of voice, behaviours and emotional impact;
5. *Activity*: Conduct a group interview with the marketing department to stimulate a discussion regarding their needs and requirements;
6. *Activity*: Co-create the desired customer journey for all stages of the customer journey and focus touchpoints by taking the Brand Experience Proposition into consideration;
7. *Activity*: Finalise the Brand Experience Manual with the company specific Semantic Transformation for experience model and the points of attention;
8. *Activity*: Determine a chronological order for implementation and improvement of the brand-aligned marketing activities and, in this way, ensure a dramatic structure of events in the customer journey;
9. *Capability*: Review the findings with the marketing department;
10. Start the improvement process and maintain it regularly.

To conclude, supporting the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions starts with a Brandtranslation process, with a Brand Experience Proposition as output based on the Brand Strategy. This Brand Experience Proposition must be communicated to the NSD team by conducting a Brand Experience Manual. The existing experiences of a customer with a brand must be reflected upon in an exercise to determine the level of alignment between the established Brand Experience Proposition and the existing offerings and marketing interactions. Finally, the Semantic Transformation for experience for mid-sized B2B organisations must be developed while considering the chronological order and the dramatic structure of events when engineering and managing the brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. This results

in model Figure 14, illustrating the process of going from the Brandslation process to brand-aligned offerings and interactions for mid-sized B2B organisations.

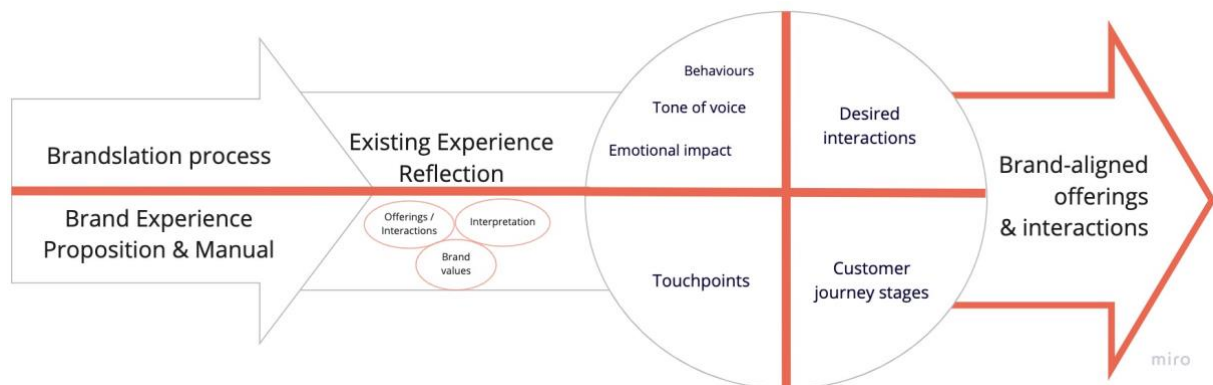


Figure 14: *From Brandslation process to brand-aligned offerings & interactions for mid-sized B2B organisations*

5.2 Discussion

Based on the theoretical review of this research, several decisions were made on how to measure brand experience. First of all, tone of voice, behaviours, emotional impact, and touchpoints can be found in the developed Semantic Transformation framework as indicators for brand experience. However, several theories provided a variety of factors that together explain brand experience. For example, Alvarez et al. (2020) mentioned touchpoints, the emotional impact and the user's cognitive, and the social and physical responses towards the product, service, or company as fundamental aspects of an experience, while Merrilees (2016), measured brand experience using the dimensions: sensory, emotional, intellectual, and physical. Including other or additional factors than touchpoints, tone of voice, behaviours and emotional impact might also have resulted in other or additional findings regarding brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. In addition to the chosen factors, the lead product and the chronological order of implementation or improvement comes forward in the final recommendations as well. This has to ensure that the implementations or improvements remain clear and demarcated for a company. However, this could result in missing crucial misalignments when an organisation only focuses on, for example negative experiences of lead products. Therefore, it is advisable for a company to use the developed Semantic Transformation for experience framework as a tool, while keeping aware of possible additional opportunities.

Next to the theory used for this research, also the method section can be discussed. As already mentioned, a written interview approach was chosen for the marketing department to fit their agendas and save time, however this approach made it necessary to frequently ask the participants to hand in their answers, although a strict deadline was set. Besides, the written interviews made it impossible to ask additional questions during the interview. Based on this experience, it can be argued whether a written interview approach for the marketing department was the best approach to choose in this research.

In addition to the way of interviewing, it was decided to only interview sales and marketing employees. Based on S-D logic including employees from other departments, customers or other stakeholders is recommended (Vargo et al., 2008) and could have led to more insights and perspectives on the brand experience as value is located in the mind of all stakeholders (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007 in Merz et al., 2009). Especially including the customers would be advisable as they are operant resources (Merz et al., 2009). This could possibly lead to insights on the current brand experience and potential negative experiences. However, in this case earlier conducted research already provided a lot of insights on customers and on their experiences with DOT. Also, for the Workshop sessions only marketing employees were included. Including employees from several departments or other stakeholders might result in more insights and perspectives. However, the downside of a larger group of participants in the Workshop sessions is that it will cause more disagreement and therefore it becomes harder to create, for example, a Brand Persona and Relationship Metaphor.

Next to this, the content of the interviews can be argued about as well. The interview questions asked to employees have resulted in certain answers. Small adjustments to these questions could have led to different answers. Besides, asking more additional questions based on the answers provided by the interviewees could have resulted in even more in-depth results. Thus, the interview questions and the way they were asked might have an effect on the outcome and should be reviewed critically. In this research, the interview questions were constantly reviewed throughout the process to, eventually, create optimised interview guides.

For this research, it was decided to take marketing activities as the main point of attention. Therefore, little attention was given to, for example, design features or sales activities. Although the model is adjustable for several companies, it is advisable to extend this research and possibly adjust the proposed framework when aiming for brand-aligned offerings and interactions

throughout the whole company, for all products and services offered and all activities resulting in interactions.

Finally, validation and ensuring dependability of the results is challenging as the proposed framework to support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions has not yet been tested for other mid-sized B2B organisations. Therefore, to validate the results and ensure that the proposed model can be applied for all mid-sized B2B organisations, it is necessary to test the usability of this model in other mid-sized B2B organisations.

5.3 Contributions

The theoretical contribution of this research is filling the gap of a translation process (Semantic Transformation) between the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual concepts and the reality. Designing this translation process will add to the existing theory regarding the Brandtranslation process for mid-sized B2B organisations. For other research regarding the support of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions, MoCap can be used as a case company.

The practical contribution of this research is filling the gap between the concept of a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual and the way of applying these concepts into the touchpoints of the offerings and marketing interactions of mid-sized B2B organisations such as MoCap. So, it will provide a framework guiding MoCap on how it can support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. Additionally, other mid-sized B2B organisations can use this framework as a guideline for practical contribution as well. The importance to engineer and manage brand experience increases due to social media and the power of brand communities (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). These brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions must help MoCap and other mid-sized B2B organisations in improving the brand experience of customers. Improving the brand experience will result in an increase of commitment and brand loyalty (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). In addition, mid-sized B2B organisations will be able to better predict the buyer behaviour (Brakus et al., 2009). Although sensory and emotional elements have more impact on customer preferences compared to tangible attributes (Zaltman, 2003), this research can be extended from marketing touchpoints to also design features of the product. As brand-aligned design features of a product can result in more effective and efficient communication of the brand (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010).

6. General Conclusion

In this section, a general conclusion will be formulated based on the thesis context, a conclusion of the results, and the limitations of this research with the recommendations regarding future research.

6.1 Thesis Context

In this thesis, the Brandtranslation process with the Brand Experience Manual for mid-sized B2B organisations developed by Wahid (2020) redesigned based on Motta-Filho (2017) has been advanced. This was done with a case study conducted at MoCap for their product DOT.

Brand experience can be identified as subjective, internal consumer responses and behaviour responses on brand expressions (Brakus et al., 2009). The experience of a customer with a brand can be affected by engineering and managing the offerings and interactions a customer has with the brand. As the lead product seems to be the most important in terms of brand recognition (Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010), the touchpoints in customer journey with the lead product should be identified. The touchpoints of customers, together with the tone of voice, behaviours and emotional impact should be engineered and managed based on the Brand Strategy to facilitate brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions. This process is supported by the Brandtranslation process, which is about translating the Brand Strategy into a Brand Experience Proposition (Motta-Filho, 2017).

According to S-D Logic, customers are viewed as operant resources, which means that value is co-created with customers (Merz et al., 2009). In addition to customers, organisations, employees, stockholders, government agencies and other entities can be involved in the process of value creation (Vargo et al., 2008). Therefore, the Brand Experience Proposition should be co-created with multiple stakeholders of an organisation. When this Brand Experience Proposition has been developed, it can be communicated to the NSD team with a Brand Experience Manual (Motta-Filho, 2017).

After a Brand Experience Manual has been developed, DOT wants to find a way of translating the concepts into reality so that the company can support the development of brand-aligned offerings and interactions. By working at DOT, reviewing company documents, reading literature, reviewing existing research and conducting interviews and workshops, the main question of this research could be answered, being: “How can a mid-sized B2B organisation -

such as MoCap - support the development of brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions?”

6.2 Conclusion

The main findings of this research are an adjusted and optimized Brandslation process for mid-sized B2B organisations. As output of this Brandslation process, a simple but complete version of the Brand Experience Manual was developed. An Existing Experience Reflection exercise was developed and added to the Brand Experience Manual. Finally, a Semantic Transformation for experience framework has been developed for mid-sized B2B organisations.

The Brandslation process was conducted using two stages, Insight Phase 1 and Development Phase 1. In Insight Phase 1, data was collected by performing a broad theoretical review, taking field notes and observations and by reviewing company specific documents as an intern. Finally, interviews were conducted with DOT employees to collect missing and additional information. After this Insight Phase, an overview of the brand associations and customer journey was developed as well as a Customer Persona in Development Phase 1. In addition, Workshop session 1 was conducted to review these developments and co-create a Character and Relationship Metaphor.

Combining the results of Insight Phase 1 and Development Phase 1, a Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual were developed in Development Phase 1 as outcome of the Brandslation process. The Brand Experience Manual for mid-sized B2B organisations is structured in the following way:

- A table of content;
- An introduction regarding the importance of this manual;
- The Brand Experience Proposition that was developed;
- The customer journey with the focus touchpoints for marketing;
- The Brand and Customer Persona;
- The relationship story between the two personas;
- Guidelines for improvement based on the interviews and workshops results;
- The Existing Experience Reflection exercise findings;
- The Translation Process with a guide to implement this process.

Part of the Brand Experience Manual is the Existing Experience Reflection exercise. This exercise was developed based on the need of the marketing department for examples, which came forward in the group interview conducted in Insight Phase 2. The Existing Experience Reflection exercise is based on semiotic analysis and was developed for the marketing department to reflect on the existing experiences of customers in terms of images and text on their website and social media channels. Based on this exercise in Insight Phase 2, alignments and misalignments were found between the existing experiences and the desired experiences based on the Brand Experience Proposition.

Finally, a Semantic Transformation process for experience framework for DOT was developed to facilitate the translation of the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual from concept to reality. This transformation process was developed by combining all findings from Insight Phase 1, Development Phase 1, Insight Phase 2, and by conducting Workshop session 3 as part of Development Phase 2. The Semantic Transformation framework consists of the aspects that play a role in influencing brand experience (tone of voice, behaviours, and emotional impact), the focus touchpoints, the phases of the customer journey, and the desired interactions. This model could be made general for mid-sized B2B organisations by removing DOT specific points and using the customer journey phases of B2B organisations. This framework can be applied to create brand-aligned offerings and interactions by considering a dramatic structure of events and eliminating or improving touchpoints resulting in negative experiences first.

To summarize, the sub-research questions were answered in the sections stated in Table 1 on the following page. Combining all the answers resulted in the ability to answer the main research question in section 5.1.4 Semantic Transformation for experience.

Table 1: *Answers on sub-research questions*

| Section | Sub-research question |
|---|---|
| 5.1.1 Brandslation process & 5.1.2 Brand Experience Manual | How can the Brand Experience Proposition be defined and the Brand Experience Manual be structured? |
| 4.2 Development Phase 1 | What are the focus touchpoints in the offerings and marketing interactions of DOT? |
| 4.3 Insight Phase 2 | What issues are the stakeholders facing with implementing the Brand Experience Manual / Brand Experience Proposition? |
| 5.1.3 Existing Experience Reflection | How can the level of alignment between existing touchpoints and brand characteristics be reflected? |
| 5.1.4. Semantic Transformation for experience | How can the experience proposition for touchpoints be translated from concept to reality? |

6.3 Limitations & Future research

One of the limitations of this research is that the results are based on one case company, MoCap. Combined with the fact that qualitative research has been conducted, verifying the results is difficult. In order to do so, further research could test the developed approach for creating brand-aligned offerings and marketing interactions and identify its applicability to other B2B organisations. After such further research, adjustments to the conceptual framework can be made and further tested. In addition to only one case company, the number of interviews held was 7 (of which 4 written and 3 normal). Extending this number of interviews would provide a broader view on the brand, its customers, the relationship between employees and customers.

As this research advances the work of Wahid, limitations of his work could also affect this research. The information provided by the interviews held by Wahid was also used for this research. Therefore, it might be possible that new employees or new customers who could be relevant for this research did not get the opportunity to participate in this research and were not able to contribute to the outcome. Lastly, being a student results in the general limitations of having a relatively strict and short time period available for performing the research. Also, as a student, there is limited access to resources and a limited experience with conducting research.

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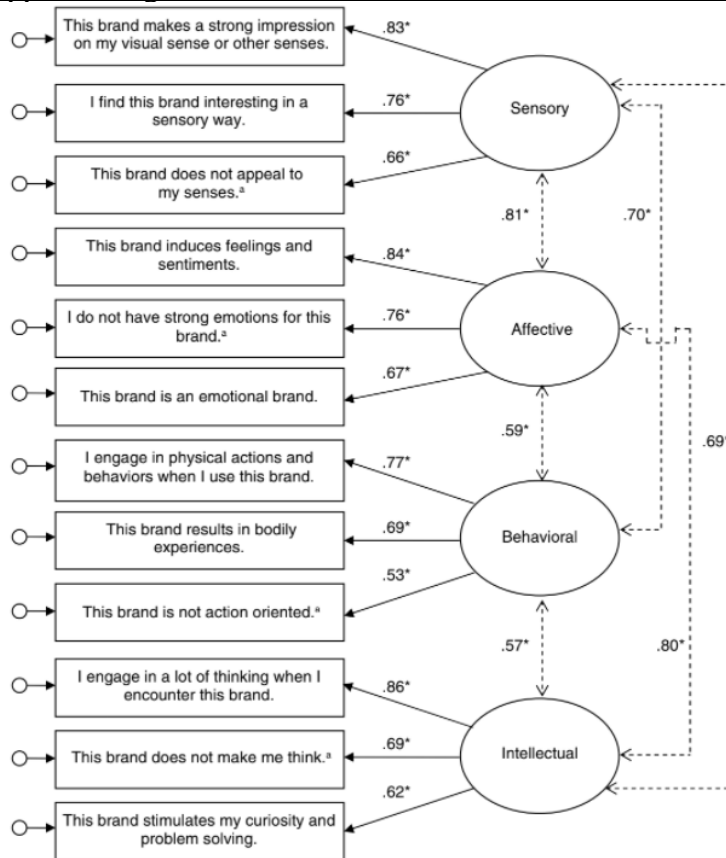
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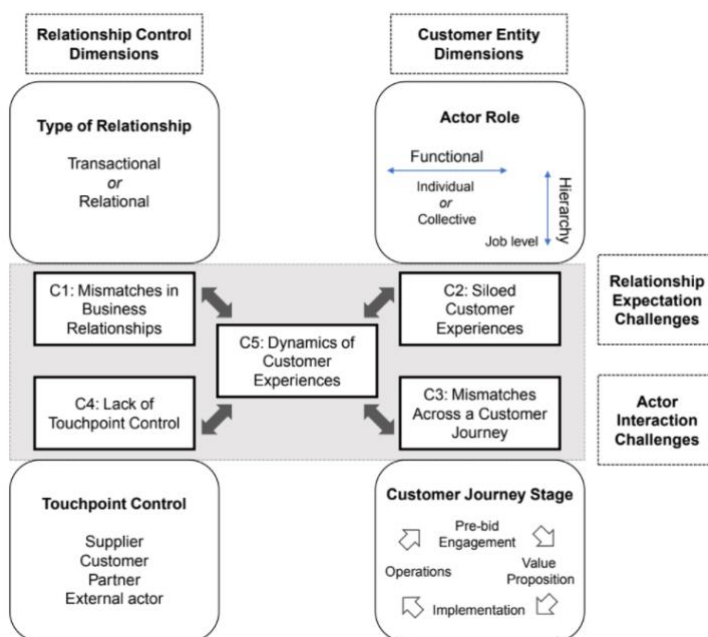
8. Appendices

Appendix Figure A: The Four-Factor model with 12 items



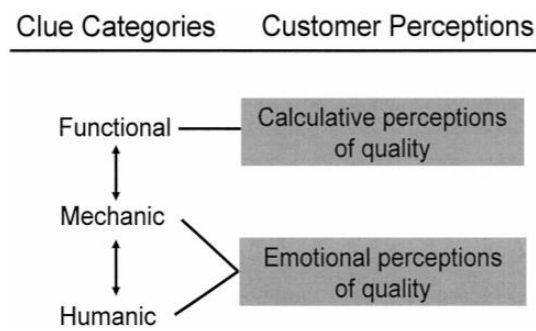
(Brakus et al., 2009)

Appendix Figure B: B2B dimensions and challenges



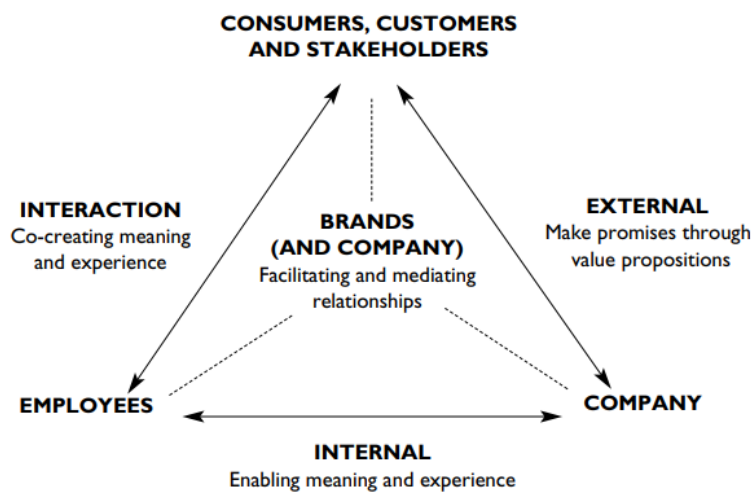
(Witell et al., 2020)

Appendix Figure C: Types of clues/touchpoints



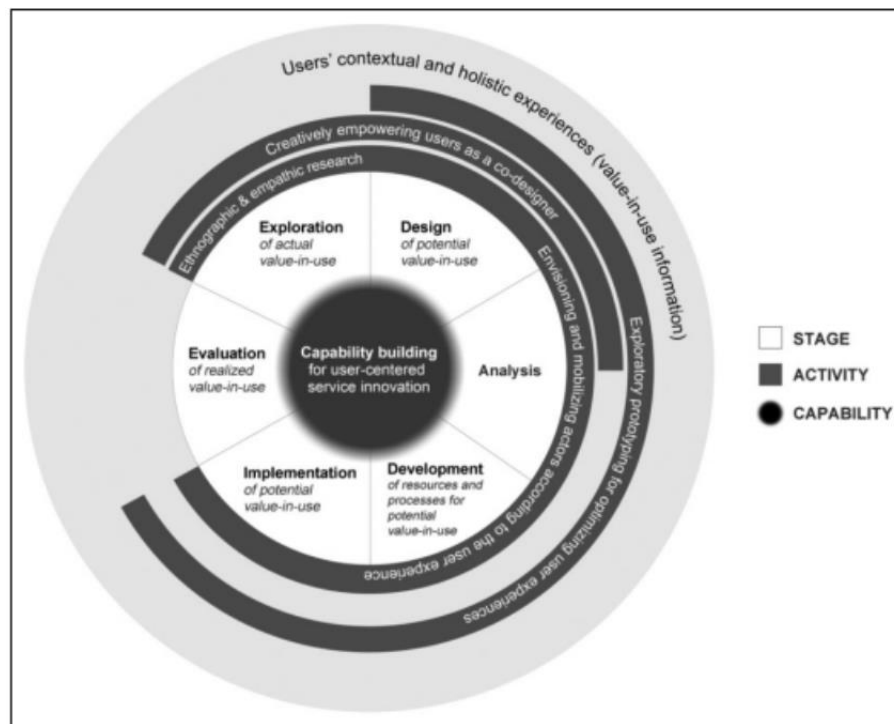
(Berry et al., 2006)

Appendix Figure D: The service brand-relationship-value triangle



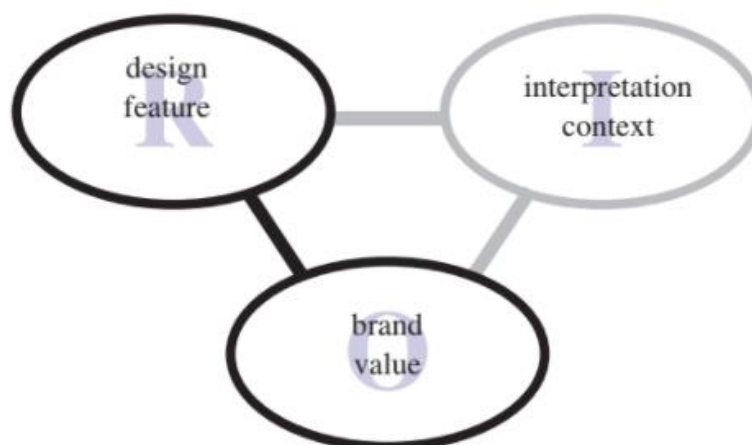
(Brodie et al., 2006)

Appendix Figure E: NSD model regarding value co-creation



(Yu & Sangiorgi, 2017)

Appendix Figure F: R-O-I framework



(Karjalainen & Snelders, 2010)

Appendix Figure G: Guidelines for explaining the Brand Experience Manual

Brand Experience Manual guidelines to explain the manual to new employees

- 1) Give the manual to an employee and provide a brief introduction. The manual is about humanizing the MoCap brand as a human (Tony) and creating a consistent experience across touchpoints. Customers have an idea of what MoCap is like based on their experience at any touchpoint and MoCap want to intentionally design the brand into touchpoints.
- 2) Explain what are the expectations from him/her. This will be either **using the manual or helping to refine the manual**.
- 3) If the employee is going to **use the manual** in interactions with customers, briefly explain who Tony is at an abstract level and how the manual provides guidelines and examples for implementation. The beginning of the manual must be fully read, but in the implementation section of the manual (slide 11 onwards), it is primarily important for the employee to read about the touchpoint relevant to him/her. Let him/her finish reading the manual and ask if he/she has any questions. Maybe ask some follow-up questions to make sure they understand how to 'become' Tony – describe some situations and ask what they would do.
- 4) If the employee is being used to **refine the manual**, the process takes a bit longer. First, ask the employee to read about Tony, Dave and the story of how they met.
- 5) MoCap wants to translate this into practical guidelines that can be applied (but adapted) for the touchpoints and context. Ask the employee to read the rest of the implementation slides and think about at a meso (general) level what a Tony means for the touchpoint. If MoCap was Tony, what are Tony's main goal and priorities at the touchpoint? This is more like general processes and behaviours. Example: For events, Tony strategically chooses events to make an impact but constantly shares his expertise. He is proud to be a thought leader and is easily approachable.
- 6) Ask the employee to think at the micro level if they have some more specific guidelines of practical actions that could be consistently taken – to implement the meso level guidelines. For example: For events, Tony strategically chooses events by selecting 3 events per year where he can really make an impact, he could show he is proud to be a thought leader by not undervaluing himself – talking about being a leader in the industry (but not being too arrogant) and he could be easily approachable by being easy-going, interactive and engaging.
- 7) Ask employees if there are several stages they consistently go through such as mentioned at the end of product design.
- 8) The manual was designed between June 2020 and September 2020. Therefore, it will be relevant initially but maybe follow-up interviews could be done periodically through quantitative and qualitative research (periodically can be decided upon by MoCap to find out if the manual is still relevant). Over a long period of time (such as 5 to 10 years), Tony may also start to evolve.

(Wahid, 2020)

Appendix Figure H: Interview guideline Marketing and Sales & Product Support

Interviews session with Marketing employees

Welcome to this interview and thank you for participating in my research. The research is focused on how MoCap can support the development of brand aligned marketing activities with DOT customers. Therefore, I would like to know more about the customers of DOT and their experience with DOT. Before we continue, I would like to ask permission for this written interview. Your answers will stay anonymous and will be kept confidential. Also, you do not have to provide an answer if you do not have one or do not want to answer a question, and you can always come back to your participation.

Marketing employees

| | |
|---|--|
| Brand description | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe (the brand) DOT (in a few words)? • What are your main associations with or brand themes of (the brand) DOT? |
| Customer journey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you describe the typical DOT customer to me? • How would you describe the customer journey of DOT customers? • What are the marketing touchpoints in this journey? (be as specific as possible) |
| Customer experience (with marketing activities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most important marketing activities for DOT now? • How do you think the customers experience the marketing activities for DOT? (positive/negative) And why do you think so? • What do you think are the needs/requirements of DOT customers in terms of marketing activities? |
| Employee-customer relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the relationship between DOT customers and employees during this customer journey? • Is there a two-way interaction between customers of DOT and employees? And if so, what does this interaction look like? • How do you approach the customers of DOT? (personal or impersonal, formal or informal) And why? • Do you think that a functional or emotional approach is requested by DOT customers? And why? <i>(To explain: So are customers purely focused on the functional aspects of DOT or do you think that a connection with DOT as a brand plays part in their decision making as well?)</i> |

Interviews session with Sales employees and Product Support

Welcome to this interview and thank you for participating in my research. The research is focused on how MoCap can support the development of brand aligned marketing activities with DOT customers. Therefore, I would like to know more about the customers of DOT and their experience with DOT. Before we continue, I would like to ask permission for recording this interview. Your answers will stay anonymous and will be kept confidential. Also, you do not have to provide an answer if you do not have one or do not want to answer a question, and you can always come back to your participation.

Sales employees & Product Support

| | |
|--|---|
| Brand description | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe (the brand) DOT (in a few words)? • What are your main associations with (the brand) DOT? • If DOT was a person, how would you describe him/her? |
| Growth potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your expectations of DOT in terms of growth? How big is its potential? |
| Customer journey (with marketing activities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you describe the typical DOT customer to me? • How would you describe the customer journey of DOT customers? And what do you think are the most important/determining touchpoints in this journey? <i>(To explain: This means where do (potential) customers first get in touch with DOT and how does this process proceed until after purchase? Where do customers get in touch with DOT and in which chronological order?)</i> |
| Customer experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the customers experience the marketing activities for DOT? (positive/negative) And why do you think so? • What do you think are the needs/requirements of DOT customers in terms of marketing activities? |
| Employee-customer relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the relationship between DOT customers and employees during this customer journey? • Is there a two-way interaction between customers of DOT and employees? And if so, what does this interaction look like? • How do you approach the customers of DOT? (personal or impersonal, formal or informal) And why? • Do you think that a functional or emotional approach is requested by DOT customers? And why? <i>(To explain: So are customers purely focused on the functional aspects of DOT or do you think that a connection with DOT as a brand plays part in their decision making as well?)</i> • Do you think customers are customers of DOT because they trust DOT? And if so, why do you think this is the case? |

Appendix Figure I - Guideline for Workshop session 1

Workshop session 1 - with marketing employees

In this session, the results from the experiencing and examining parts as well as the interviews will be discussed with the marketing departments. Based on these interview answers, the creation of the User Persona for DOT could have been started. In addition, an overview of the main brand associations could have been made. Together with the marketing team, all results will be reflected and a Brand Character and Relationship Metaphor of the Brandtranslation process will be created.

- The Brand Character is a metaphor for who the brand is in the relationship with the customer. The Brand Character advances interpersonal descriptors, defining the personality traits of the brand in the context of the service interactions (Motta-Filho, 2017).
- The Relationships Metaphor is a description of how the experience should be - it should define the brand as a character in a relationship with a customer persona (Motta-Filho, 2017).

Lastly, interview questions will be asked to the marketing employees to gain insights on their issues with implementing the Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual and find out their needs and requirements for the Semantic Transformation process:

Interview Questions for Part 2

- *Issues*: What are the main issues for implementing the designed Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual into offerings and interactions?
- *Needs/requirements*: What are your needs / requirements regarding this implementation process? (Do you need examples to make it clearer, is a visual representation or more a textual guideline requested or a combination of both?)
- *Ability*: What information do you still miss and therefore need to be able to create brand aligned offerings and interactions?

Appendix Figure J - Guideline for Workshop session 2

Workshop session 2 - with marketing employees

In this session, the Brand Experience Manual established based on the first interviews, Workshop session 1, and the second interview questions asked in Workshop session 1 will be discussed with the marketing team. The marketing team is able to provide feedback on the developed manual and based on this feedback, it will be possible to optimise the Brand Experience Manual for DOT. Also early advice established regarding the touchpoints, the desired tone of voice, behaviour and emotional impact will be included in the manual and discussed with the marketing employees.

Together with the marketing department, an exercise based on semiotic analysis for some of the most important touchpoints will be conducted (table below). This will provide insight for the marketing department regarding the alignment of their offerings and interactions with their described brand values. These findings can be added to the Brand Experience Manual afterwards.

| <i>Image or text</i> | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Offering / Interaction (Signifier) | Interpretation (Signified) |
| - ... | - ... |
| Brand Value: ... | |

Appendix Figure K: Guideline for Workshop session 3

Workshop session 3 - with marketing employees

In this session, the Brand Experience Proposition will be translated into service concepts. Finally, a desired customer journey will be co-created, keeping the brand characteristics established in Workshop session 1 in mind. The insights in this session have to provide enough information to create a Semantic Transformation process for DOT, facilitating the translation from Brand Experience Proposition and Brand Experience Manual concepts into reality.
