How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females on safe and

sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

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Samia Cusman

Executive Summary

This research examines how Yoni can raise awareness by using an Instagram strategy. Yoni is a Dutch brand, which sells feminine hygiene products that are safe for the female organ and sustainable for the environment. This brand's mission is to raise awareness about the dangers of regular feminine hygiene products as well as revolutionizing the industry. The target group for Yoni are women between the ages of 18 and 45. . People under 35, in particular, those younger than 29 years of age, are avid users of the social media platform, making Instagram the relevant platform to use in order to raise awareness to the target group. This resulted in the research question: *"How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females on sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?"* Desk research has been conducted with the use of academic journals, relevant research, as well as articles on Yoni and successful Instagram strategies. In order to gain further insight in the target group, a qualitative research method in the form of a focus has been conducted. In total, 11 women between the ages of 20 and 28, have participated in the focus group. The variables from the operationalization table, that stem from the conceptual theory, have been used to create questions for the focus group. The findings of this research show that participants deem transparency, authenticity, relatability and educational as important traits of an Instagram page of a feminine hygiene brand. The current Instagram strategy adopted by Yoni, in particular, compared to its competitors, has been deemed as insightful and satisfactory by the focus group, however the company needs to make its content more relatable for the target group. The company must design content that contains faces, personal stories, and re-post user generated content, to create an emotional connection with its audience. Information from experts on the female organ, relevant stories from women and justification of the claims Yoni makes are amongst the type of content preferred by the participants of the research.

This strategy will bring more traffic to the page, increase the reach to the posts and subsequently, lead to an increase of awareness of unsafe feminine hygiene products.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Table of Contents

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Chapter 1

The menstrual cycle plays a prominent role in the lives of most women. Women are expected to have 13 cycles for an average period of 37 years, 6 years of that period are spent menstruating, meaning a periodic flow of blood (Qin, 2016). To protect undergarments and for practical reasons, feminine hygiene products are used during menstruation. As defined in the Handbook of Medical Textiles by F. Wiesemann and R. Adam, feminine hygiene products are products used during the menstrual cycle to protect undergarments from menstrual flow, or vaginal discharge (Wiesemann & Adam, 2011). This include sanitary pads, tampons, panty liners, and menstrual cups. These are products contain similar components found in baby diapers to guarantee absorption of the blood flow. According to Yimin Qin, key features of these products are absorption, fluid retention, prevention or masking of odour, comfortability and convenience (disposable) (Qin, 2016).

Although these products are necessary for women, the use of it may negatively affect the female body. One of the widely known health consequences due to the use of feminine hygiene products is Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), according to scientist Nicole Wendee (Wendee, 2014). TSS is a potentially fatal disease that presumably occurs after bacteria's such as Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus pyogenes overgrow in the vagina and make toxins (Victoria State Goverment). The syndrome is mostly linked to the use of tampons, however, the Better Health Channel states that the bacteria is not found in the vaginas during menstruating of one third of women that get TSS (Victoria State Goverment, sd). Wendee states that when manufacturers began using four synthetic ingredients in their products, the causalities of TSS spiked in the same time-period (Wendee, 2014).

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

<div align="right">Samia Cusman</div>

Problem Statement

The topic of this thesis was chosen upon learning about the possible destructive and fatal impact of the use of female hygiene products. This is why awareness needs to be raised for this issue. As stated in the European Union's General Product Safety Directive, it is not obligatory for companies to classify the ingredients on these products within the European Union, which could result in a general lack of awareness (European Chemicals Agency , sd). If there is no list of ingredients present, consumers might not be conscious of the components that may cause harm to them. Some women are prone to be sensitive to the synthetic materials used, which lead to vaginal irritations (Triodos Bank, sd).

In the book, Buying Cancer: The Truth Behind Our Beauty Products, Vivienne Harris discusses how the chemicals used in these products can have lasting damage to the female reproductive organs and can go as far as having been linked as a cause of cancer (Harris, 2017). The latter happened to Mariah Mansvelt Beck, co-founder of the brand Yoni. Mansvelt was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2011, to which her doctor advised her to replace her ordinary feminine hygiene products to those that contain organic cotton (Triodos Bank, sd). After becoming aware of the harmful components used in ordinary feminine hygiene products and noticing the inaccessibility of organic alternatives, Mansvelt decided to create a brand that sells feminine hygiene products that are free from pesticides and chemicals, while also being sustainable for the female organ and the environment (Yoni, sd). The Cambridge Dictionary defines sustainable in the environmental sense as, "causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time" (Cambridge Dictionary, sd).

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Figure 1 Yoni products

Yoni is a Dutch social enterprise, founded in 2015, with the mission to raise awareness about the dangers of regular feminine hygiene products, while making safe feminine hygiene products accessible for the ordinary consumer (Grrr, sd). Following the definition of Social Enterprise NL, a social enterprise is a company that has a mission to have social impact, rather than just focusing on making profit (Social Enterprise NL, sd). The goal of the brand is to bring transparency to the market and to change the industry (Zoelen, 2016). The sanitary pads and tampons are made from cotton, therefore are higher in price. The price of the products is slightly higher than other generic feminine hygiene products. For example, O.B Pro Comfort tampons with 16 pieces costs €2,79, while Yoni medium flow tampons with 16 pieces in the box cost €4.21 at the Albert Heijn, a Dutch supermarket franchise (Albert Heijn). When it comes to sanitary pads, Always pads with 14 pieces retail for €2,59, Sanature, a similar brand as Yoni, sells 10 pieces of pads for €3,25 and Yoni sells 10 pieces for €4,10 at the supermarket (Albert Heijn). According to a case study of the Triodos Bank, it is the first eco-cotton feminine hygiene brand in the market that can be found at the bigger supermarkets and pharmacies in The Netherlands (Triodos Bank, sd). However, customers can also buy the products online at the Yoni website.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

However, besides availability of the product, the brand needs to have promotion that will steer customers to buy Yoni instead of their usual brands. The market of feminine hygiene products has a high brand loyalty. A study conducted by Cotton Incorporated in 2015, found that new entrants are facing difficulties growing their market share due to high brand loyalty and market domination by a few brands (Nonwovens Industry, 2016). The brand loyalty to these intimate products is high, meaning that consumers tend to stick their regular brands, which generally are the leading brands such as Always and Libresse (Nonwovens Industry, 2016). However, the Cotton Incorporated study also found that 38% of the questioned European women are expected to buy other brands that are costlier (Nonwovens Industry, 2016). According to a market research conducted by MarketResearch.Biz, another factor of the anticipated development of the worldwide market is the growing marketing efforts that have been put in place through several media platforms to raise awareness about feminine hygiene products (MarketResearch, 2019).

Opportunity for the organisation

As social media has become a prominent platform that companies can use to convey their values and beliefs to their (potential) customers in this digital-era, it can also be used to raise awareness about the social problems a brand is tackling with its business. Social media platforms have shown to be an effective medium for marketing purposes, notably due the low threshold of engaging contact between followers and creators (Bamini K.P.D. Balakrishnan, 2014). This medium allows brands and high-profile individuals to be in contact with their followers and get direct feedback from their target-group(s) (Lim & Yazdanifard, 2014).

On average, women menstruate from the ages of 11-14 until the age of 51 or until menopause (Healthline). An ideal target audience for Yoni is menstruating women between the ages of 18 and 45. According to Frankwatching, of the 500 million daily

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

users the social media platform Instagram has, 70% is younger than 35, making Instagram the ideal platform for Yoni (Ketterij, 2019). It also states that the most active users are under 29 years old. Women in this age group can be targeted with the means of social media, in particular, the platform Instagram. Currently Yoni focuses its marketing strategy on Instagram as it offers more interaction, while Facebook demands a different strategy (Van Vliet, 2018). Instagram is a social media platform that is built around sharing content in the form of photographs, videos and moving images (Later, 2019). Later, the number one marketing platform for Instagram stated in their Instagram Marketing Guide that in 2018 Instagram has announced new features specifically created for brands to gain insights and use the platform for marketing purposes (Later, 2019). Former copywriter of Yoni, Florine Kist, states that nowadays the driving force for people to buy a product is the message behind the product to stand with the mission of the company. (Van Vliet, 2018).

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how Yoni can create higher awareness among young females on sustainable feminine hygiene products by using Instagram. In order to research and answer the research question, a number of different academic resources, will be used to find out what the perfect way of creating awareness is. Research will be conducted by an extensive analysis of the concept of social media strategies. By looking at examples of successful strategies, comparisons can be made and a recommendation can be finalized. A focus group consisting of two groups of both approximately 6 women between the ages of 18 and 30 will be conducted to help understand the effectiveness of the current marketing and social media strategies, to measure the awareness of the negative impact of feminine hygiene products and to gain insights on their Instagram usage.

The research question for the thesis will be:

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

''How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?''

The sub-questions that will lead to answering the research question will be:

- ❖ What is the main usage of Instagram?
- ❖ Who is the target group for the Yoni strategy?
- ❖ What are the current social media strategies Yoni is utilizing?
    - o What are the current strengths and weaknesses of their Instagram Strategy?
- ❖ What kind of points of improvement does the consumer see?
- ❖ What makes a successful Instagram strategy?
- ❖ What steps can they take to implement the strategies?

Scope of research

To get a clear overview of the target group for Yoni a segmentation of the target audience will have to take place. Considering that on average, women menstruate from the ages of 11-14 to 51 or until menopause, an ideal target audience for Yoni are menstruating women between the ages of 18 and 45 (Healthline). However, for the purpose of the research, the target group will be women aged between 18 and 30 as it is relevant to the statistics of Instagram users. According to Frankwatching, of the 500 million daily users the social media platform Instagram has, 70% is younger than 35, making Instagram the ideal platform for Yoni (Ketterij, 2019). It also states that the most active users are under 29 years old. Taking this in account, women in this age group should be targeted with the means of social media, in particular, the platform Instagram. Thus, the focus group will consist of 2 groups of approximately 5 women between the ages of 18 and 30. It is fitting to discuss current the Instagram strategies with the target group in order to create the perfect strategy for Yoni. This type of field research will allow the company to gain insights on the Instagram usage of its target group. During a focus

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

group session, participants are likely to convey their thoughts better, resulting in more valid answers than one might get from an online or paper questionnaire (Adams & Cox, 2008). Therefore, a focus group will be the appropriate method to conduct field research. Considering that current measures allow meetings to a certain extent, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a different approach will be adopted. To respect concerns and guarantee safety of those partaking in the focus group, the sessions will take place online. Video conference platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams will be consulted with the aim of finding out which one would have the relevant features for an online focus group.

Structure of report

This report has been divided into 6 chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Results, Discussion and Recommendations & Conclusion. Chapter 1, the introduction, will introduce the topic of this thesis and explain the background and significance of the research. Chapter 2 explains the theories and concepts that are relevant for the research. The Methodology, Chapter 3, justifies the research methods conducted to answer the research question. Chapter 4 will present the results of the research. This part will present the answers of the sub questions, that have been answered by the results of the conducted desk research and the focus group. Chapter 5, the discussion, will analyse the results from the focus groups and include relevant theory. The final chapter, chapter 6 will present the recommendations that derived from the findings from the discussion, it always include a conclusion.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

<div align="right">Samia Cusman</div>

Chapter 2

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a strategic plan for Yoni to reach young women and raise awareness about safe and sustainable and safe feminine hygiene products with the means of Instagram. This chapter will therefore discus the theories and concept that are relevant to that strategy. It will analyse marketing theories and concepts that are applicable to this research.

The following list of theories will be discussed:
- ➢ The Marketing Process
- ➢ The 4 principles of marketing
- ➢ The AIDA Model
- ➢ Customer Value proposition
- ➢ The SOSTAC Model

2.1 The Process of Marketing

As stated in the book, Principles of Marketing, by Gary Armstrong and Philip Kotler, marketing is the process of how companies build value for their potential customers and form relationships to receive value form these customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). This value can be translated in the form of customers with loyalty to the brand, which will continue to purchase from that brand.

Figure 2 explains the steps a company goes through in order to find the target group, design the marketing strategy and build the profitable relationships with the customers.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

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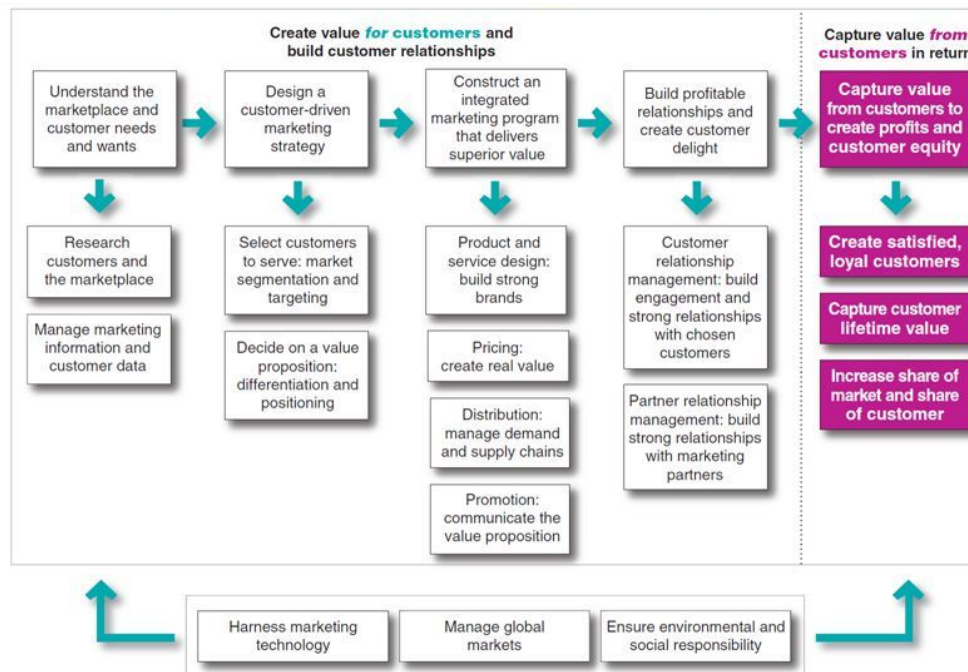
Figure 2 Expanded Model of the Marketing Process

2.2 The 4 P's of the Marketing Mix

Figure 3 The 4 P's of the Marketing Mix

In the book, Principles of Marketing, Armstrong and Kotler explain the Marketing mix as a set of strategical marketing tools, consisting of product, price, place and promotion. Product is the array of products or services a company offers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). The price is the amount the customer pays to acquire the products or service. Place refers the accessibility to and availability of the product or service. Promotion indicates the efforts done by the company to communicate their message to the target audience to persuade them to buy the product.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?
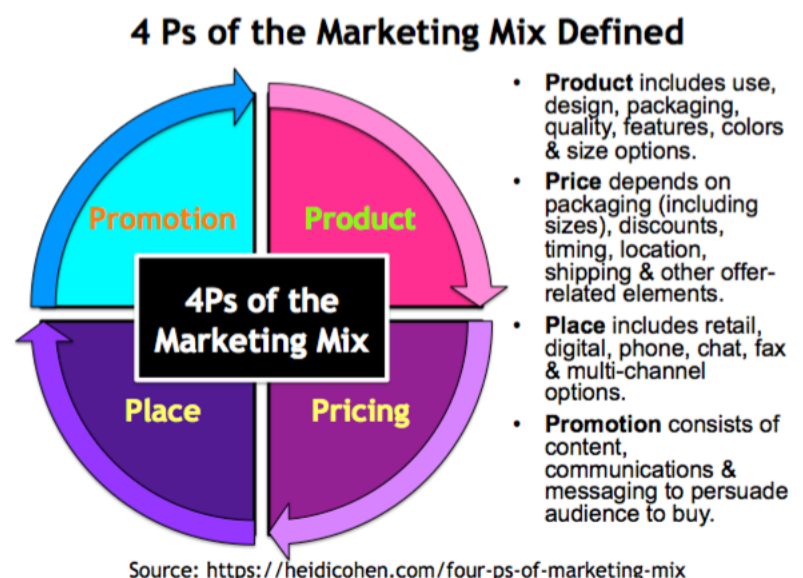
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2.3 AIDA model

Initially created by St. Elmo Lewis, the AIDA model explains that one must win the attention, keep the interest, create desire and get action from its consumers to forge a long-term relationship, (Rehman, Javed, Hyder, & Ali, 2015).

As stated by Rehman, Ur and Nawaz, the hierarchy of effects model is a linear theory in marketing that believes that consumers walk through a consecutive series of phases that end up in steps in the form of attention, interest, desire and action (Rehman, Ur, & Nawaz, 2014). Figure 4 shows the AIDA model. The model shows the steps these potential customers follow upon facing marketing communications. The different steps can be categorized in cognitive, affective and behavioural levels (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015). As explained by Hassan,
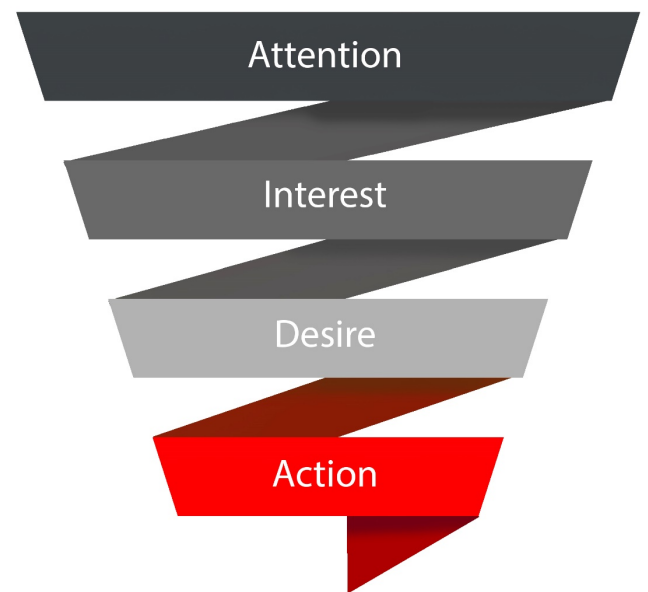
Figure 4 The AIDA Model

Nadzim and Shiratuddin, the first level is when the attention of the consumer has been caught, in which during the affective level, consumers will be interested in the products or services offered, leading to a desire to obtain it, which results in the behavioural level where action will be taken to purchase the product or service. (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015).

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How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman
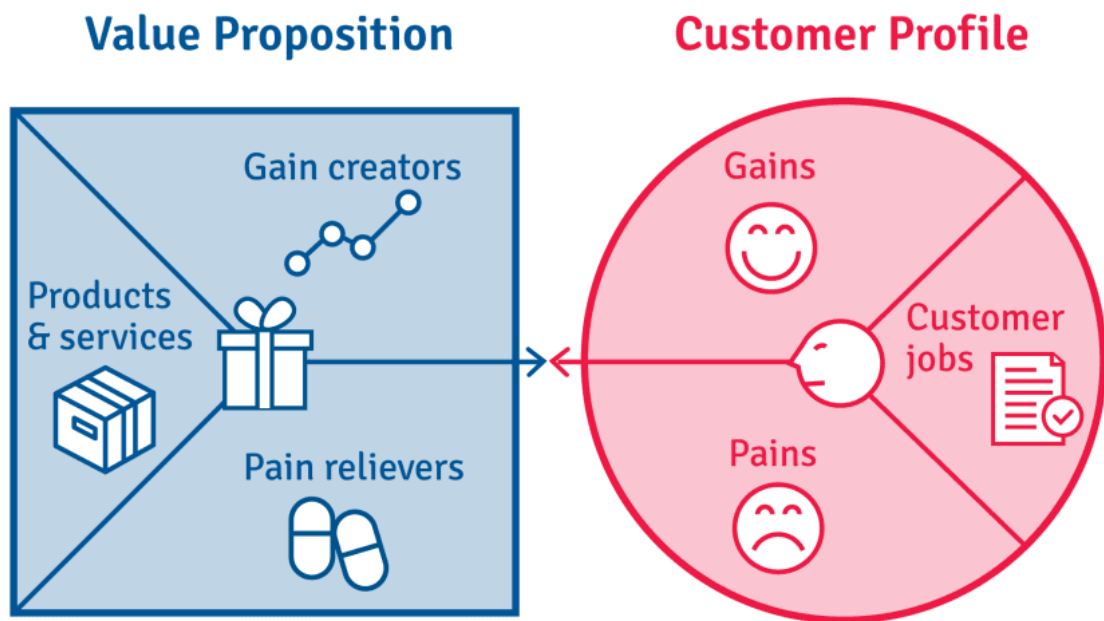
Figure 5 Customer Value Proposition

2.4 Customer Value Proposition

The customer value proposition describes the benefits customers can expect from the products and services (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). It portrays the needs of the customer segment and the solution the company has for this need.

The first part of the proposition shows the value proposition in which the company describes how it aims to create value for its customers. The proposition is divided in products & services, gain creators and pain relievers. The second part is the customer profile, here the companies clarifies the particular customer segments. The profile is divided in customer jobs, pains and gains. Alexander Osterwalder, the creator of the business model canvas, which includes the customer value proposition canvas, states that with the Customer Profile and the Value Map the company will achieve Fit between the two when one meets the other (Alexander Osterwalder, 2014)

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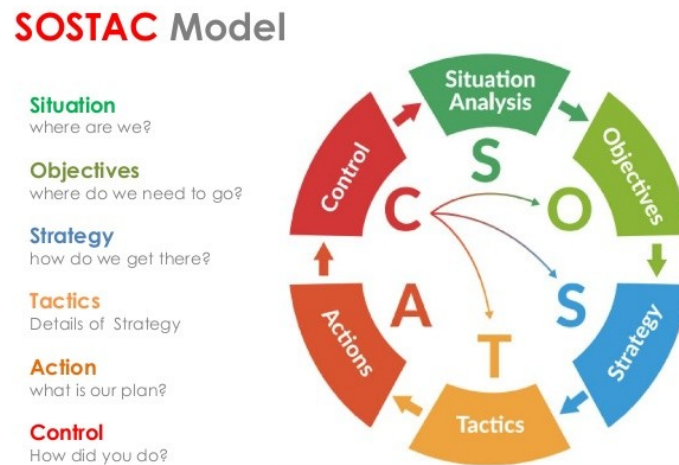
Samia Cusman

Figure 6 SOSTAC Model

2.5 The Sostac Model

Paul Smith has developed a communications framework titled the SOSTAC model (Reed, 2014). This framework takes the prominent factor of digital marketing into account (Reed, 2014). As seen in figure 6, the following steps are discussed in the model:

Situation

Before starting a strategy, it is important to understand the who, why and how.

Objectives

Before creating a strategy, certain objectives will need to put in place.

Strategy

A strategy will be created to reach those objectives.

Tactics

The tactics will aid the strategy by adding details to the strategy.

Action

The action describes the plan of the strategy,

Control

After the strategy, has been implemented a control takes place to evaluate if the objectives have been reached.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework has been made from the abovementioned models. Elements from the SOSTAC model, Aida model and Customer Value Proposition have been used to create this framework. The Customer Value Proposition has been used completely as it offers insights from the target group. Solely Awareness, Interest and Action are relevant from the AIDA model. From the SOSTAC Model, the situation analysis, objectives and strategy have been used, from there on a design can be created by Yoni to use for its strategy. The SOSTAC model is relevant as it is a marketing model for online marketing, with a focus on Social media. After a situation analysis has been made and the field research has been conducted, a strategy will be made for Yoni.
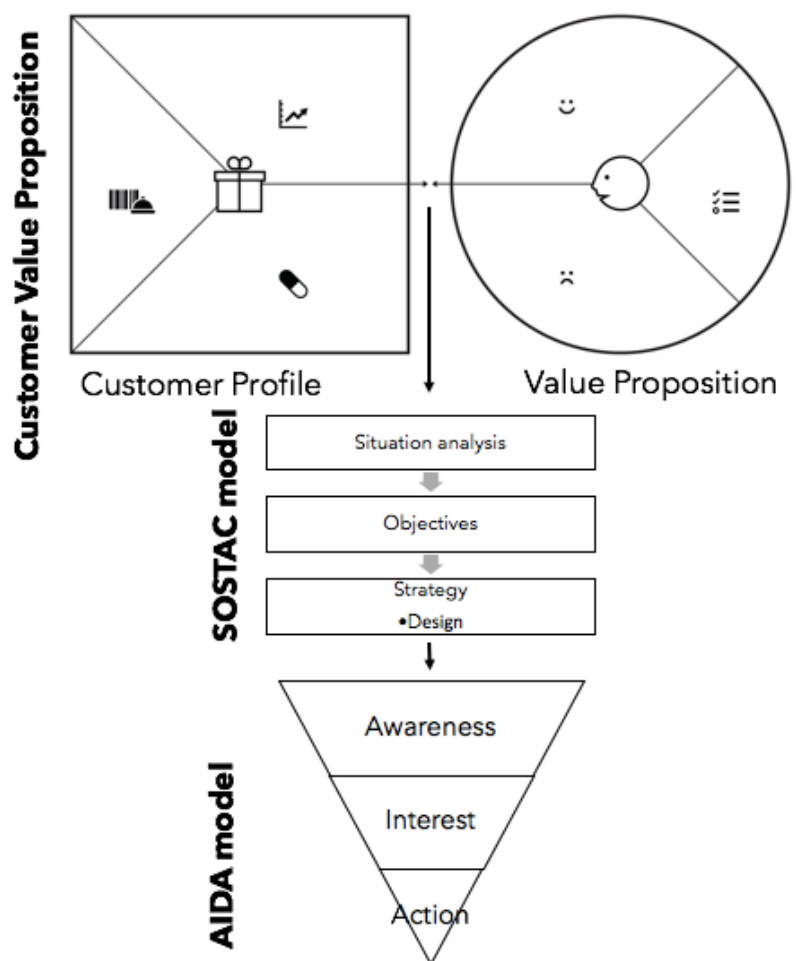

Figure 7 Conceptual Framework

2.7 Operationalization table

Table 1 illustrates the operationalization table, which includes the variables from the conceptual framework. Questions relevant to the variables will be made in order to be employed during the field research.

Table 1 Operationalization Table

Operationalization table			
	Variable	**Definition**	**Questions/Statements in the focus group**
C R E A T I N G B R A N D	**Customer Profile**	What is the customer profile of the focus group participants? What are the current things they do to fulfil their needs? This will offer valuable insight in what the interests of the target group are.	• What kind of brands/influencers do you follow on Instagram? • What are the reasons you follow these brands/influencers? • What kind of informative posts would you like to see? • What words do you find good to use on Instagram, from a company that offers feminine hygiene products?
	Attention	"Attention: represents a cognitive stage (Stepaniuk, 2017; Montazeribarforoushi et al., 2017; Su et al., 2016), refers to the awareness of ad. Usually, the number of individuals who exposed to ad in this stage represents the highest ratio of response among the other stages." What are points that catch attention for the target group.	• What draws your attention to a post? • What makes you click on an Instagram post? • Are you more likely to click on a video or an image? • According to you, what is an acceptable image? • What is not a suitable image (let them think freely, without examples) • Do certain colour (schemes) evoke something in you more than others? If so, which ones?

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

A W A R E N E S S	**Design**	To what extend is the design of the Instagram page and its content important? This will measure the preferences of the participants when it comes to design.	• How do you look at an Instagram page? (Describe your steps) • What do you think of the current Yoni Instagram layout? • What do you like about the design? • What do you not like about the design? • Now that you have seen some posts from yoni and their competitors, what would you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of their Instagram
T H R O U G H I N S T	**Customer Value**	What does the target group value from a brand, from a company account? value proposition describes the benefits customers can expect from the products and services. It portrays the needs of the customer segment and the solution the company has for this need. (Principles of Marketing, 15e, Kotler and Armstrong, 2014)	• To what extent do you prefer companies to speak out on issues within their sector? • What are your needs when it comes to feminine hygiene products? • What are your needs when it comes to information/marketing of feminine hygiene products?

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

A G R A M	**Customer Gains**	To what extend does the target group want the Instagram account to be useful and informative? This will examine what the target group wants to gain from the Instagram page.	• Would you value design more than information? • How should a social enterprise use their Instagram (just business or also provide information?) What kind of information would you deem useful?
	Action	follow the insta, be interested and potentially buy the products	• Have you ever bought something from an Instagram account? • To what extend are you likely to buy a product through Instagram? • What would persuade you into purchasing?
	Situation analysis	**Current sitation, that will come from deskresearch.**	

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will outline the research methods that are used to answer the sub-questions and the main question of this study. In order to research and answer the research question, a number of different academic resources, will be used to find out what the perfect way of creating awareness is. Research will be conducted by an extensive analysis of the concept of Instagram marketing strategies. By looking at examples of successful strategies, comparisons can be made and a recommendation can be finalized. Both field and desk research will be conducted. The field research will be done in the form of a focus group.

Desk research

Desk research has been conducted to find theories and research that answer the sub questions and subsequently the research question. Search engine Google Scholar, containing academic sources such as published journals, research and academic articles has been consulted. Students of The Hague University of Applied Sciences are granted permission to access journals and research from scholars. Books that have been used to teach business and marketing courses in the European Studies courses have also been consulted to define certain notions and concepts.

The following table shows the theory and models used to answer the following sub-questions:

- ❖ What is the main usage of Instagram?
- ❖ Who is the target group for the Yoni strategy?
- ❖ What are the current social media strategies Yoni is utilizing?
    - ○ What are the current strengths and weaknesses of their Instagram Strategy?

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

- ❖ What kind of points of improvement does the consumer see?
- ❖ What makes a successful Instagram strategy?
- ❖ What steps can they take to implement the strategies?

The sub-questions that will lead to answering the research question will be:
- ❖ What is the main usage of Instagram?
- ❖ Who is the target group for the Yoni strategy?
- ❖ What are the current social media strategies Yoni is utilizing?
  - o What are the current strengths and weaknesses of their Instagram Strategy?
- ❖ What kind of points of improvement does the consumer see?
- ❖ What makes a successful Instagram strategy?
- ❖ What steps can they take to implement the strategies?

Table 2: Sub-questions answered by desk research

SUBQUESTION	Article/Book	Justification
What is the main usage of Instagram?	How Instagram can be used as a tool in social networking marketing Huey & Yazdanifard (2014) Link to website *Relevante Instagram-cijfers* (Relevant Instagram Statistics) Ketterij, B. v. (2019, June 19) [infographic] Link to website	This report explains how Instagram is used and the possibilities it has as a tool for marketing purposes. Frankwatching published data about Instagram and its user than can be relevant to answer this sub question. The statistics used in the infographic can be retraced.
Who is the target group for the Yoni strategy?	*Relevante Instagram-cijfers* (Relevant Instagram Statistics) Ketterij, B. v. (2019, June 19) [infographic] Link to website *De succesvolle social media strategie van Yoni Care* (The successful social media strategy of Yoni Care) Van Vliet, M. (2018, October 18) Link to website	The Data from Frankwatching gives relevant insight on the Instagram user. This will aid to find a target group for the research. Ruigrok is a company that has conducted research for Yoni to find out more about the s

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

What are the current social media strategies Yoni is utilizing? - **What are the current strengths and weaknesses of their Instagram Strategy?**	*De succesvolle social media strategie van Yoni Care* (The successful social media strategy of Yoni Care) Van Vliet, M. (2018, October 18) Link to website The AIDA model Results from Focusgroup. Instagram page of Yoni	Former Yoni-copy writer, Florine Kist explains the current strategy in this article. The AIDA model shows the steps the target group goes through when seeing the social media posts of Yoni This model can help
What makes a successful Instagram strategy?	How Instagram can be used as a tool in social networking marketing Huey & Yazdanifard (2014) Link to website Colliander, J., & Marder, B. L. (2018, January). 'Snap happy' brands: Increasing publicity effectiveness through a snapshot aesthetic when marketing a brand on Instagram . Computers in Human Behavior, 78, 34-43.	This report explains how Instagram is used and the possibilities it has as a tool for marketing purposes. This article researches the effectiveness of certain Instagram posts.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

What steps can they take to implement the strategies?	Prakoso, A. S., & Iskandar, B. P. (2015). The role of instagram post type towards audience engagements . *Journal of Business and Managment, 4*(7), 784 - 795. (Prakoso & Iskandar, 2015) https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/304294173.pdf	This source discusses how Instagram has been used to create brand value. The source is an article that has been published in the Journal of Business and Management.

Field research

In order to help understand the effectiveness of current marketing and social media strategies, measure the awareness of the negative impact of feminine hygiene products and gain valuable insight on the target group, a qualitative method will be executed. In the journal article, *''Selecting a quantitative or qualitative research methodology: An experience''*, Olusegun A. Sogunro, used the definitions by researcher K.F Punch to define qualitative and quantitative research methods. As explained, K.F Punch defines quantitative research as "empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers" On the other hand, qualitative research has been defined as "empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers'' (Sogunro). In relation to this thesis, a qualitative research is more relevant as a research method. A qualitative research method, in the form of a focus group will be conducted. The variables for the questions asked during the focus group stem from the conceptual framework that has been created with the use of elements from the SOSTAC model, AIDA model and Customer Value Proposition. These variables will be leading for the research. These focus groups will be conducted online, with two groups of each 5 to 8 women between the ages of 18 and 30 that use feminine hygiene products and have an Instagram account. The focus group will be analysing the Instagram page of Yoni and that of its competitors to discuss their needs and wants. The results will aid in creating a successful Instagram marketing strategy.

The women in the focus group will be between the ages of 18 and 30. It is necessary that they use or have used feminine hygiene products during, before and/or after the menstrual period. Another important factor is that these women have an account on the social media platform, Instagram. In order to find appropriate participants for the focus group, the social circles of the researcher from this thesis will been approached. Social media will be used to find the women that fit the aforementioned profile. A social media post on Instagram would aid in finding these participants.

According to Adams and Cox, participants tend to express their opinions and thoughts better because of the freedom to think to in a context they have not thought about before

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

(Adams & Cox, 2008). Thus, making this method the most appropriate one in respect to the aim of this research.

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic and the current measures put into place as a result of the outbreak, there has been a major shift to online and remote meetings. In respect to the safety concerns of the participants, the sessions will take place online. A video conference platform such as Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams will be used for the online sessions. Although the three platforms have the ability to hold and record a video-meeting, the free versions of Zoom and Google Meet have time limit of 40 and 60 (Business Insider US, 2020). Considering the entry time needed for the participants to log in and make sure that everything is working properly, the time needed for the introduction of the focus group and its participants and the extra time for answering the question that take longer than expected, Zoom and Google Meet were found to not be eligible for the field research. Microsoft Teams offers the possibility to have a virtual video-meetings in which one can show presentations, record and transcribe the sessions (Dunster, sd). The platform is accessible as users can use it from both desktop and smartphones (Dunster, sd). Through The Hague University of Applied Sciences, students have access to the premium version of Microsoft Teams, which includes more features such as, internal and external video meetings, screen-sharing, the ability to record and transcribe the meeting (Dunster, sd).

While Zoom and Google Meets offer nearly similar services as Microsoft Teams, the additional costs needed in order to benefit from the extra features have led to the decision to use a different platform. Therefore, the platform Microsoft Teams will be used to conduct the focus group. Considering that the field research will take place online, consent from the participants will be asked from the start of the focus group. The session will be recorded, meaning that there will be proof that the participants have given their consent.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Limitations

The collected data about Yoni has been retrieved from articles, interviews and portfolios from companies that have completed work for the brand. Bearing in mind that the respective data does not come directly from the brand, there will inevitably be inaccuracies. However, the reliability of the desk research has been assured by using research journal articles, from well-known journals and publishing houses.

The validity of the field research will be ensured by relating the questions of the focus group to the variables of the conceptual theory. The conceptual theory stems from the theories discussed in the chapter on the theoretical framework.

The limitations of field research may derive from observer interference and social pressure. According to Hector Lanz, observer interference explains that the presence of a camera, or knowing that the participants are being observed could lead to answers that have been modified by the participants (Lanz, 2017). Other participants are likely to affect each other's answers, either because of dominant voices or unanimous opinions, this principle is called the social pressure (Lanz, 2017).

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter of the thesis will present the data obtained from the focus group in regards to the sub-questions and the theoretical framework. The demographics of the participants of the focus group will be presented. The results from the questions asked during the focus groups will be summarized. This summary can be found in the annex. Before the results are presented, a brief overview of the current Instagram strategy will be presented and explained.

Figure 8 Screenshot of Yoni's Instagram page

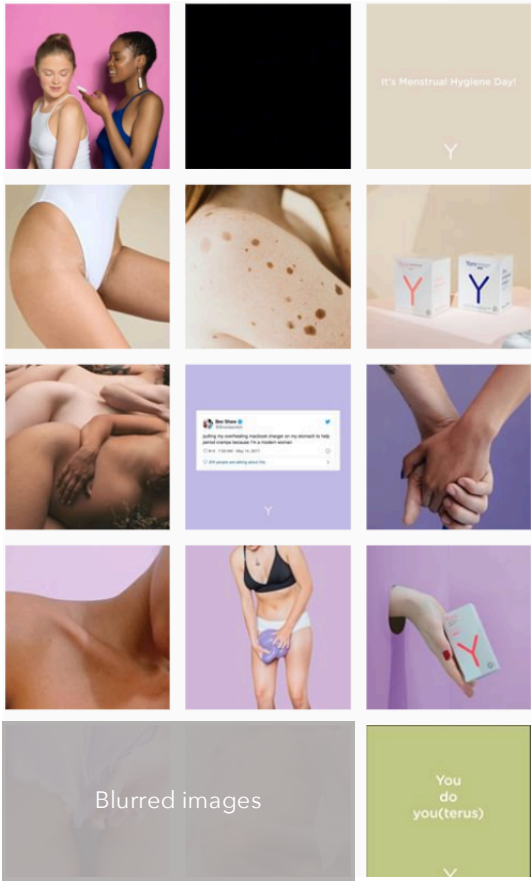## 4.1 Current situation of the Yoni Instagram Strategy

As seen on figure 8, Yoni currently has 15.4 thousand followers on Instagram. Its biography mentions their mission statement and purpose of their Instagram page. From the bio, visitors can be expected to find educational posts on their page. Normally where one would use the option for a link in the profile description to for a link to company or store, Yoni used it to add a Linktree. A Linktree is a tool that allows user to add multiple links through one link (Linktree, 2020). Yoni uses it to add the links to their website and shop, as well as its podcast, interview and other informational sites/articles. Figure 9, shows a screenshot of Yoni's Linktree.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Another strategic factor of the profile description is the ability to use a category. In Lindyn Williams' article about business categories as a strategy, the writer states that adding a category to a business account on Instagram gives an idea of what the page is about and will lead to more engaged followers (Williams, 2018). Yoni has the Health/Beauty category on its page, as seen in figure 8. This label, along with the hashtags used in the posts and stories, will aid to gain more exposure, as Instagram tailors users' Explore page based on these factors (Canning, 2019). The language used on the page of Yoni is English, presumably as a way to both expand its visibility and to draw multi-lingual followers.

Figure 9 Yoni's Instagram lay-out

Figure 10 Screenshot of Yoni's Linktree

The current page has images that can be perceived as provocative due to its suggestive nature. Considering that Yoni is a feminine hygiene brand, their page shows images that relate to menstruation and the female body. Throughout page it is noticeable that the colour schemes change approximately every 6 posts. These posts have backgrounds, packaging, items or other objects with either the same colour or are monochrome and contain the same hue. These colours are mostly pastel colours. Figure 10 shows a few posts with different colours. The posts can be perceived as somewhat abstract, however the
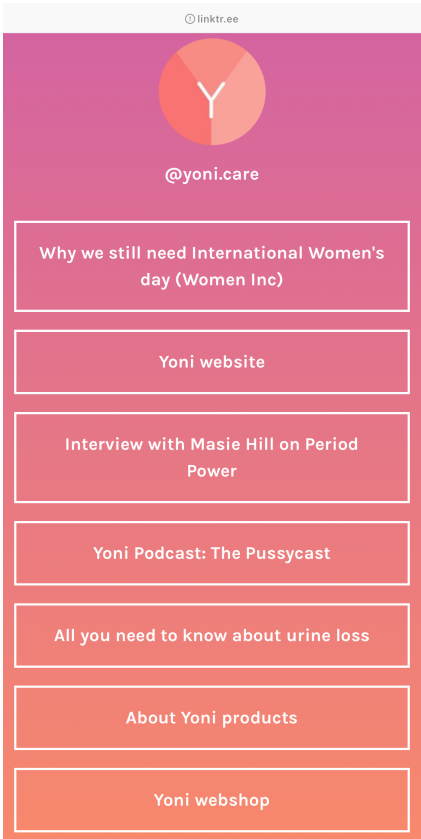
How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

caption always tend to tell an informative, motivational or commercial story. In figure 11, the image illustrates an unclothed body with a mirror in front of the private parts. The mirror shows a reflection of a sea. The caption for this image is a message that has an uplifting spirit. The word "reflection" is mentioned and the meaning for this post is to recommend followers to reflect on themselves during difficult times. This was posted on march 18th and most likely refers to the sentiments during the Corona Virus pandemic.

Figure 11 Yoni Instagram Post

The following image, figure 12 contains one of the products Yoni sells, tampons. Standard feminine hygiene brands mostly use blue liquids to illustrate period blood, as everything surrounding the menstrual period is still considered taboo, whether it is in the advertisements or on the product packaging (Thorpe, 2017). Yoni decided to use colours that are more realistic, these colours vary from dark red to light red, to almost yellow. In figure 12 the tampons are put in order from dark to light, to portray the changes in the blood flow. Despite the accurate colours used by Yoni, the two nail polish bottles in red and yellow give the viewer the idea that nail polish has been used for the colours rather

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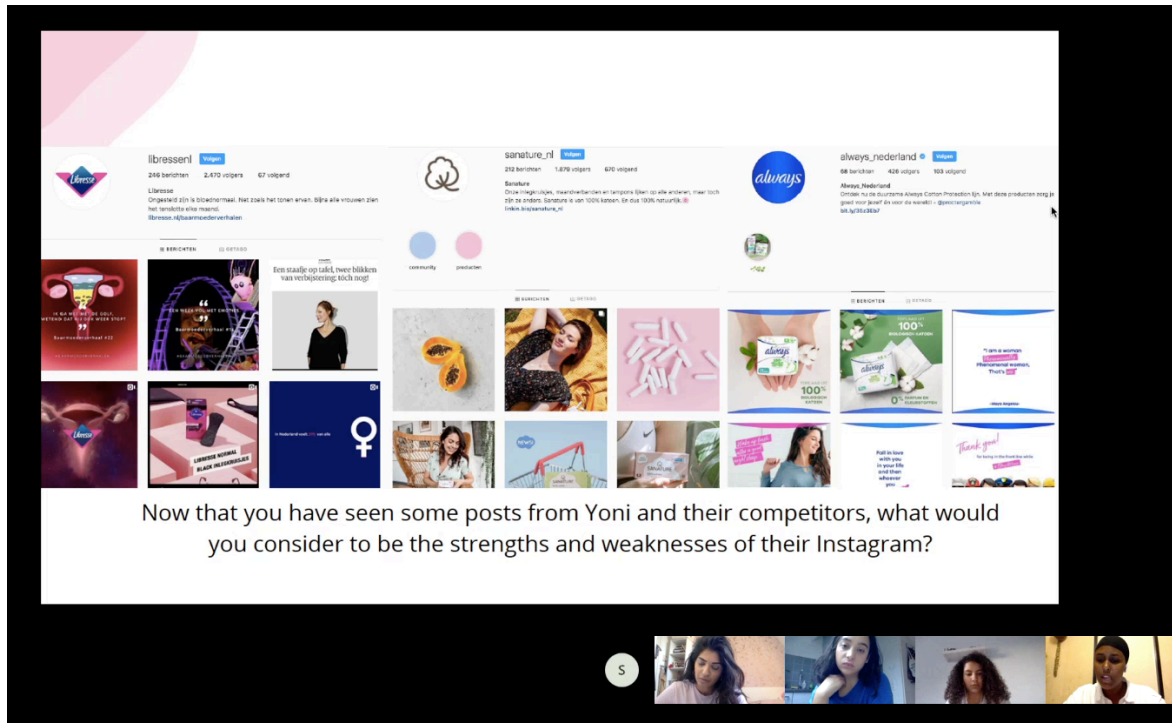
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than actual period blood. The text in the caption informs readers about heavy blood flow and the negative consequences it may have.

Figure 12 Yoni Instagram Post
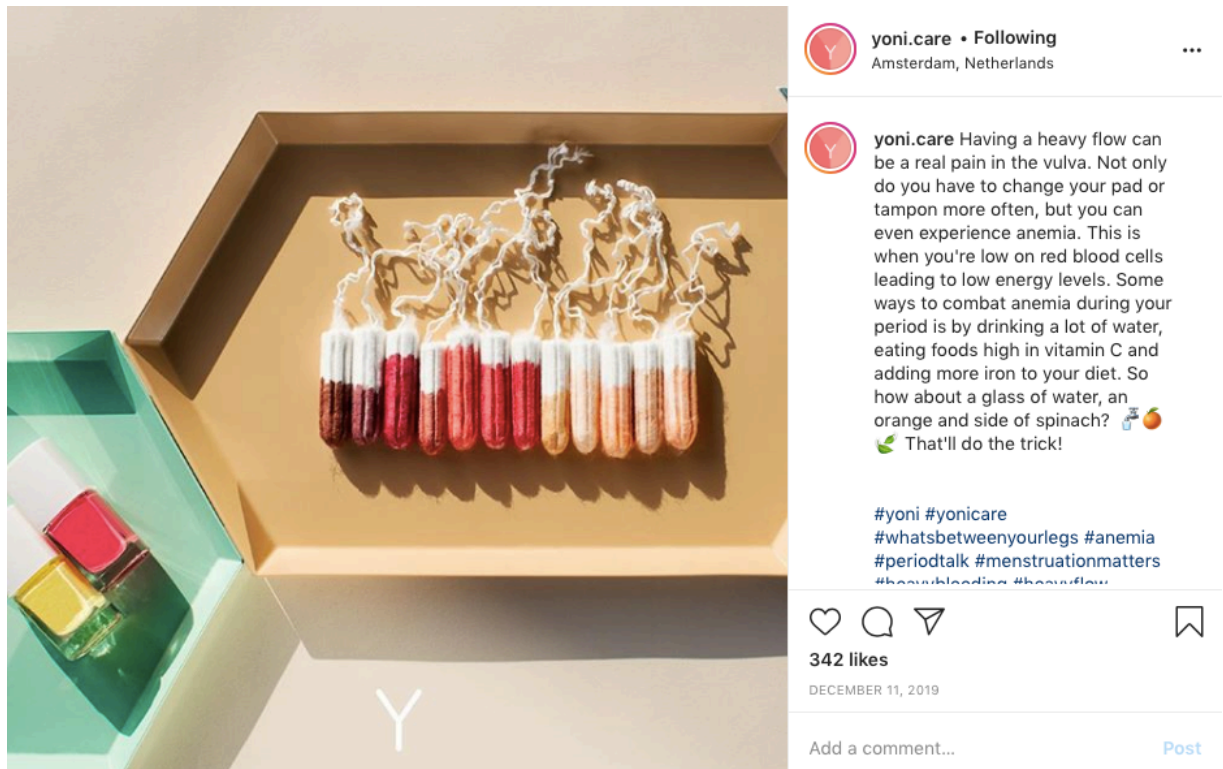
How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Screenshot of focus groups session 1

4.2 Demographics

The demographic of the participants of the focus groups include relevant data to the research. This relevant data consists of name, age, city of residence, study, job position and the participant's daily average on Instagram. The daily average on Instagram in particular shows how active the participants are on the platform. However, this is solely the average of that specific week, meaning that it can fluctuate due to different reasons. The data can be found in table 3 and table 4. It is significant to mention that participant 4 has not been able to answer all question as the connection failed at times. The target group for the focus groups were women between the ages of 18 – 30, the women that participated are between 20 and 28 years old. These participants are predominately students that live in The Hague. From the 12 participants, 8 of them are currently students. As seen in tables 2 and 3, 7 participants spend between one and one and half hour on Instagram, leading to a total average of 1 hour and 37 minutes per person.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Table 3 Focus group participants

	NAME	AGE	CITY	STUDY	WORK	Daily average on Instagram
Focus group 1 participants						
1	Dilan Aydogdu	24	Maastricht	Pre-Master European Studies	Cashier (part-time)	1h 27m
2	Houda Nabih	21	The Hague	BSc International Relations and Organizations	Student	4h 5m
3	Komal Khan	23	The Hague	Pharmacy	Pharmacy Assistant	1h 30m
4	Myriam Sbaouni	24	Utrecht	Law	Student	19m

Table 4 Focus group participants

	NAME	AGE	CITY	STUDY	WORK	Daily average on Instagram
Focus group 2 participants						
5	Fleur Supelli	28	The Hague	Chemical Technology (graduated)	Senior Compliance Associate	1h
6	Marelot Mannes	22	The Hague	European Studies	Student	1h 17m
7	Demelza Scheffer	25	The Hague	Public Administration	Financial Traineeship	1h 30m
8	Guna Campbell	25	The Hague	International Public Management (graduated)	Strategic Regions Programmes Manager	2h 51m

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

9	Miyuki Yanez van der Pol	20	The Hague	International Studies	Student	1h 30m
10	Neghineh Ajoebi	23	The Hague	European Studies (graduated)	Sales Assistant	1h
11	Selin Sönmezdag	20	The Hague	European Studies	Waitress/Bartender	3h

After a brief introduction of the focus group and the women, the participants answered questions to assess their current use of feminine hygiene products in order to gain better understanding of their customer profiles. As shown in Figure 13, pads and tampons are amongst the most used feminine hygiene products used by the participants. The brands used by these women are mostly from Always, O.B and store brand products such as Kruidvat, Albert Heijn and Jumbo.

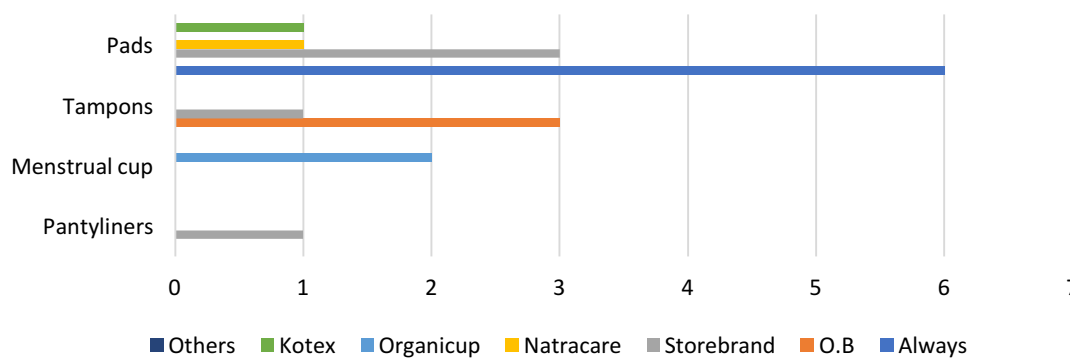**Brands and types of feminine hygiene products used by participants**

Figure 13

The answers to the question "*What are your needs when it comes to feminine hygiene products?*"' are quite unanimous. The most mentioned needs when it comes to feminine hygiene products, as seen in figure 14, are comfortability, security, chemical-free and good quality. For comfort reasons concerning menstrual pads, wings are preferred.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Wings help to keep pads in place. Which connects to the second need, security. The participants mentioned that they would like the product to be leak-proof. Wings in pads make the pads more leak-proof. However, this also concerns tampons and menstrual cups. Participant 3 mentioned in the first focus group that due to health reasons (allergy), the only products that can be used during her menstrual period need to be free of chemicals. The other participants mentioned chemical-free products as well. Quality was mentioned by participant 10 in focus group 2. Participant 10 stated that it is important that the products need to last for a reasonable time Availability of the product has been mentioned by participant 7 in Focus group 2, however this is not illustrated in figure 14. Availability refers to Place from the 4 P's of the Marketing Mix. Availability can be interpreted as whether the product can be bought in local stores, on the go at stores in the stations, airports, near universities etc.

In focus group 1 everyone stated that they have no knowledge about sustainable feminine hygiene products, besides the menstrual cup. All 4 participants mentioned the menstrual as example and participant 4 also mentioned reusable underwear worn during the period. Focus group 2 also mentioned the menstrual cup as an example as well as reusable and/or chemical free products.
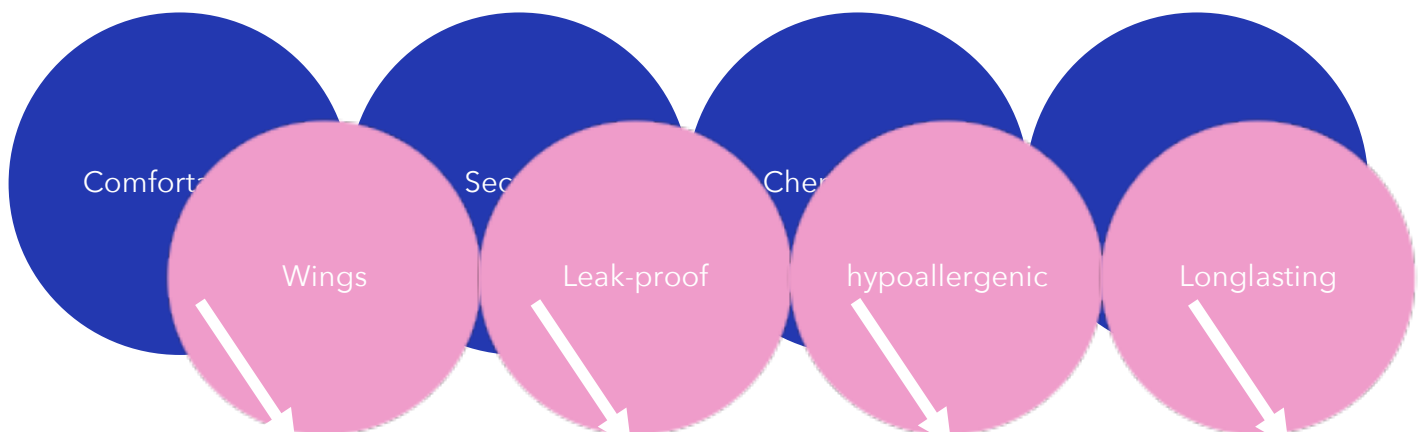

Figure 14 Needs regarding feminine hygiene products

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Samia Cusman

For the question *''Do you know brands that sell sustainable/safe products?''*, the focus groups surprisingly mentioned different brands from different sustainable products. Figure 15 shows the brands mentioned by the groups.

Figure 15 Sustainable feminine hygiene brands mentioned by the focus groups

Menstrual cups	Pads	Tampons	Reusable pads
Diva cup	Natracare	Cottons	Etam
Organicup	Yoni		
Mooncup			
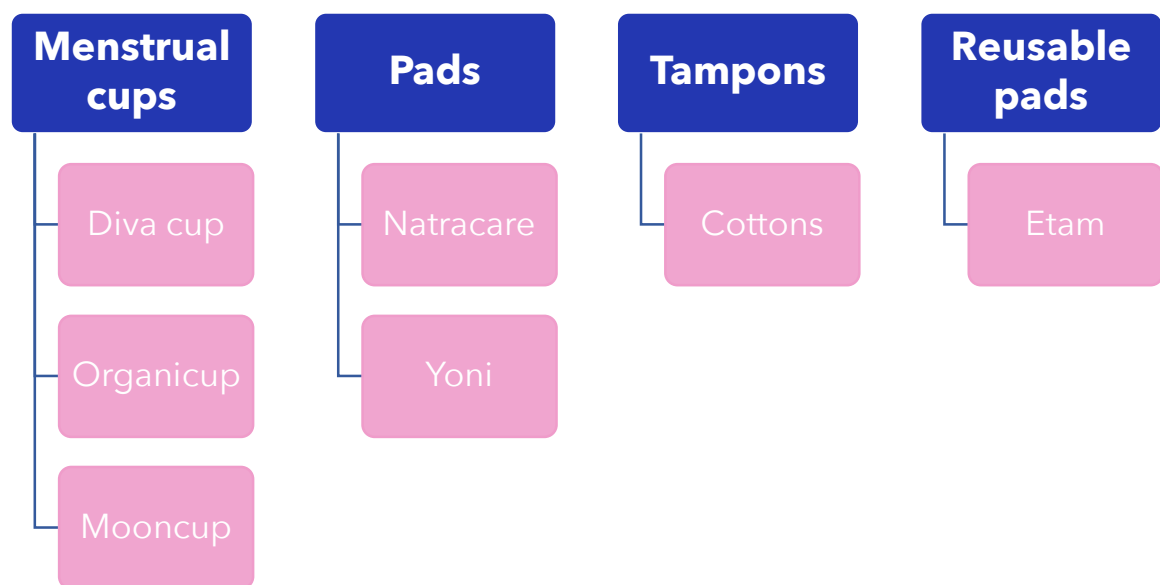
Questions to gain a better understanding of the customer profile of the participants and what catches their attention have been asked in round 2. The first two questions relate to the variable customer profile and the next 6 questions relate to the variable attention. To start off the round, the questions *''what kind of brands/influencers do you follow on Instagram?''* and *''What are the reasons you follow these brands/influencers?''* have been asked. When it comes to fashion, the participants follow sustainable brands such as Cos, NuIn Fashion, high-fashion brands such as Balenciaga, Prada, Chanel and dior, fashion influencers and other brands that they might relate to such as eyewear brand Ace & Tate. When it comes to sustainable accounts, sustainable lifestyle influencers and sustainable social enterprises such as Tony Chocolonely are amongst the accounts followed. Local cafés and business are also popular to follow amongst the participants of focus group 1.

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Samia Cusman

Participant 10 stated that she likes to follow science based influencers and licensed therapists. Participant 6 on the other hand likes to follow car brands such as Lamborghini, political commentators and political parties. Participant 8 mentioned that the type of influencer she follows are those that are related to food. Participant 2, follows artists such as photographers and make-up artists. The reasons to follow these accounts vary from enjoying the nice aesthetics of the posts to staying up to date about certain things, to be inspired, or because the posts are, or, the person in question is relatable.

What kind of informative posts would you like to see?

To follow up on the question, *"What are your needs when it comes to information/marketing of feminine hygiene products?"*, the question *" What kind of informative posts would you like to see?"* was asked. The answers have been illustrated in table 5.

What kind of informative posts would you like to see?

Table 5 Type of information wanted by the focus group participants

Sustainability	What happens to the pad after? Is it recyclable and what are the environmental effects?
Supply chain	Tracing back their whole production chain, so that followers will know where the product is made. Also, to find out if there is a (valuable) reason why Yoni's products are more expensive.
Busting myths	Information about diseases, because young women tend not to know what a normal menstrual period is.
Busting myths	Valuable information from medical professionals.
Busting myths **Understanding target group**	Rebuking myths and other false information on feminine hygiene products. Providing information about the menstrual period, bleeding between periods and when periods are not regular.

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Reviews & busting myths	Different women speaking up about their experiences, such as pregnant women, women with diseases, women in their menopause etc.

In focus group 1, the participants stated that encouraging words, words related to feminism and being a woman would be good to use on Instagram for a feminine hygiene brand. On the other hand, in focus group 2, the participants stated that words such as ''vagina'' and its synonyms would be good to use, along with correct terminology. As well as speaking on menstrual periods as an ordinary matter.

4.3 Instagram Use

To the question *''What draws your attention to a post?''* the most common answer is current events, an example given by participant 1, is posts that have something to do with the recent bombing in Lebanon. Post that stand out, because it is something new, or stands out of the norm, politically engaged posts, quality images, images containing text and funny posts draw the attention mostly.

What makes you click on an Instagram post?

In focus group 1, participant 1, mentioned to click on a post when it contains a model that does not fit the traditional norms or diverse models because these are perceived as relatable by her. Interesting text on the post encourages participant 2 to click on it. Participant 4, states that besides high quality images, posts that have a story, for which you need to swipe to read the next line intrigue her enough to click on it. In focus group 2, participant 8, states when it comes to interior design or other inspirational accounts, she clicks on the posts to be inspired and to see the tagged items. Participant 10 likes slideshows of informative posts, this encourages her to click on them. Participant 9 states that she clicks on posts to see it better and to zoom in, whereas participant 5, clicks in order to either save the post or to forward it.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

To the question, *''Are you more likely to click on a video or an image?''* the preference went to images rather than videos. However, since videos cannot be paused on Instagram, the participants mentioned that they do not mind Instagram TV videos (IGTV), as these are longer than a minute and can be paused.

To the question, *''according to you, what is an acceptable image?''*, the participants had unanimous answers. According to them, an acceptable image, is anything that does not offend, harm or insult other communities, social classes or sexes. Besides that, participant 10 mentioned that the images should ''follow general social guidelines'', including no pornography, suggestive child pornography and the aforementioned. Participant 5 mentioned that nudity is acceptable to a certain extent.

Relating to brands that sell feminine hygiene products, participant 6 stated that it is acceptable to use more realistic images.

When it comes to the question, *''What is not a suitable image?''*, participant 10 and 7 stated that false information and illustrations are not deemed suitable. Participant 8 agreed and added that certain things as red drops to illustrate blood could be suitable. Anything illegal or too realistic can be deemed as not suitable.

The specific colours that have been mentioned are red, yellow, orange, pink, red and purple to answer the question *''Do certain colour(schemes) evoke something in you more than others? If so, which ones?''*. The colour groups that have been mentioned are pastel, dark colours, bright colours such as yellow, warm colours, such as rust and deep orange. Participant 2 state to prefer monochrome, harmonious colours.

4.4 Yoni's Instagram
Before the focus group participants took a look at Yoni's Instagram, they described how to look at an Instagram page. Their steps have been illustrated in table 6.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

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Table 6 Steps of looking at an Instagram page

Participant	Steps	Comments
1	Read bio, scroll through the feed,	
2	Read bio, scroll through the feed,	Looks for meaningful words, likes contrasts rather than a coherent feed.
3	Read bio, scroll through the feed, watch stories, watch highlights and then look at tagged posts	Will follow if very interested.
5	Look at number of followers, watch stories, scroll through the feed and read comments under interesting posts,	Will follow if very interested. Continues to look at suggested pages.
6	Read bio, click on a random post, read the comments, scroll through the feed,	Will follow if very interested.
7	Read bio, look for mutual followers, scroll through the feed	
8	read comments, look for mutual followers	
9	Read bio, sometimes look at followers, watch stories, scroll through the feed then look at tagged posts.	Will follow if very interested.
10	Scroll through feed, click on nice pictures, watch stories	Will follow if very interested.
11	Look at mutual followers, watch stories, look at highlights then scroll through feed.	

After allowing the participants to navigate to the Instagram page of Yoni and visit the page as they would do normally, they answered the following question: *''What do you*

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

think of the current Yoni Instagram layout?''. The participants in focus group 1 expressed their contentment after going through the page. Unanimously they stated that the images where quite abstract, however intriguing enough to click on them. The most provocative posts especially, intrigued the participants to click on them. Participant 2 found the captions interesting.

Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9 expressed their appreciation for the posts, specifically the posts that illustrate the female body, whereas participant 8 deemed these posts as too suggestive and quite sexual. In focus group 2, the participants found the page to be aesthetically pleasing and that the colours blend well together.

However, both groups stated that the pages could be categorized as a feminist or body positive type of page rather than a feminine hygiene brand, upon first glance because of the nature of the posts.

When asked about what the participants liked about the design, the colours where amongst the first things mentioned. According to the participants, the pastel colours give a calming sense beside that, the colours seem to change every few weeks. Participant 5 acknowledged and praised the use of food and other inanimate objects to illustrated certain things. Participant 7 finds the design of the posts artistic and mentioned that the use of female bodies is refreshing.

When asked *'' What do you not like about the design?''*, participant 1 found the fact that one has to click on a post to understand it rather unpleasant as the preference goes to scrolling through a feed without clicking. Participant 8 does not like the suggestive posts, according to her, the posts are not related to what Yoni sells. Participant 9 agrees and states that the images seem too perfect. These posts do not relate to the menstrual period and the sentiment women have when they are on their period.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?
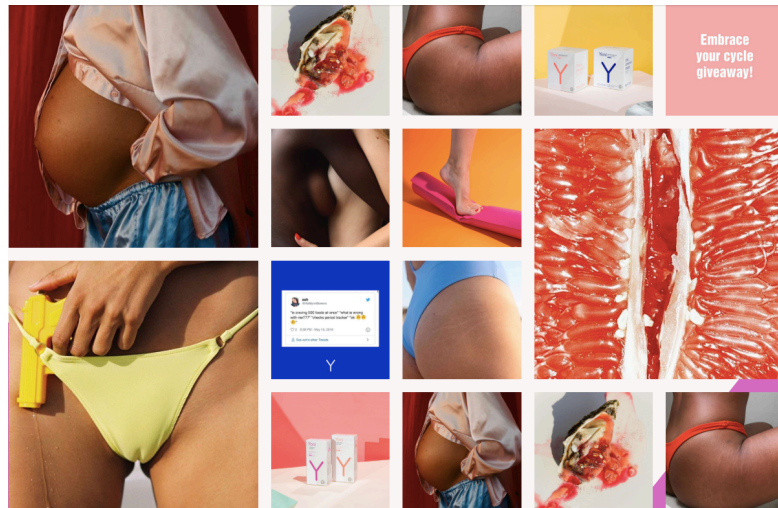
Samia Cusman

Figure 16 Collage of images from Yoni's Instagram page

To gauge what the participants sense when they see images from Yoni's Instagram page, figure 16 was shown to the participants. The participants from focus group 1 stated that these pictures evoke empowerment and the normalisation of certain body parts. They mentioned that the pictures illustrate inclusiveness and seem real, the participants can recognize themselves in it. Participant 2 stated "It is provocative, but in a good way." The participants from Focus group 2 stated that the pictures are feminine, diverse and colourful. However, the picture in the left corner was deemed out of place, as the participants could not link the image with the brand. The images were also deemed as too perfect. Participant 9 stated to not feel "as sexy as the women in the picture" during her menstrual period.

4.5 Instagram Pages of Competitors

After asking the participants to analyse the Instagram page of competitors, in this case Libresse, Sanature and Always, they were encouraged to speak out about their thoughts on the pages. In particular, the strength and weaknesses. After that they were asked to compare the Instagram page of Yoni to these pages to discuss the strength and weaknesses of Yoni's page. To conclude the participants shared what they believe Yoni's page is still missing.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman
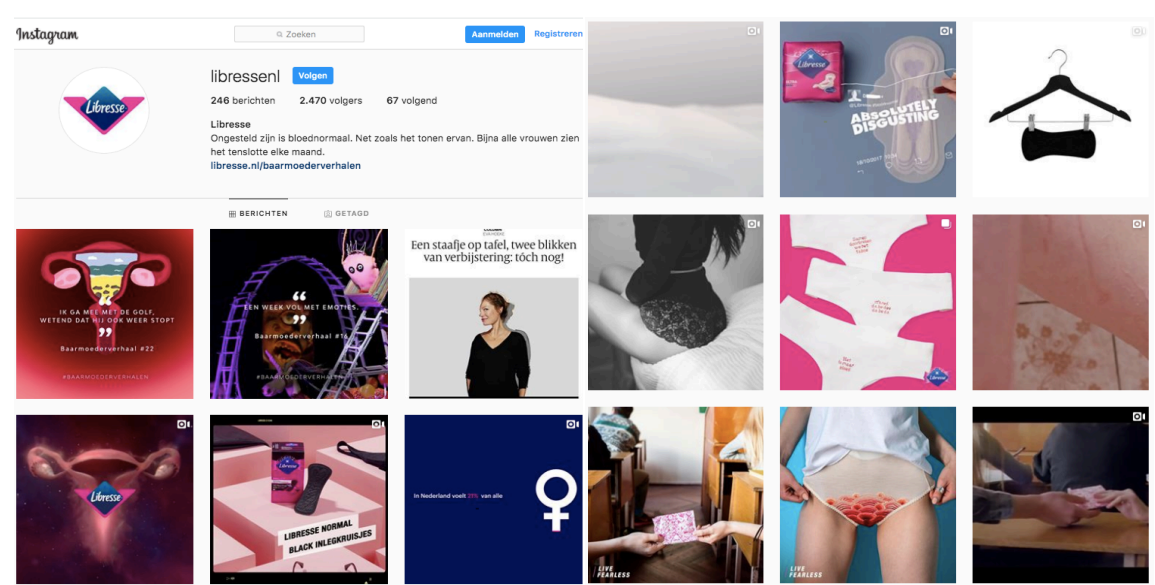
Libresse	
Strengths	• Videos • Focused on stories about/from women
Weaknesses	• Too commercial, the page focuses more on making profit • Not visually pleasing • Dark lay-out
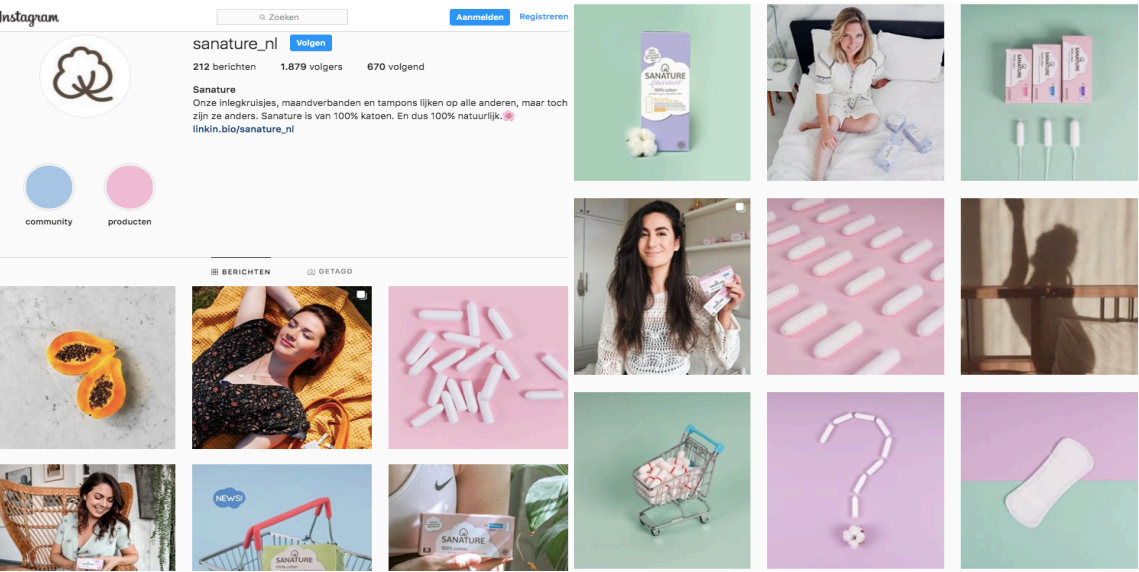
How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Sanature	
Strengths	• Posts with text big enough to read while scrolling, with relevant facts or other information.
Weaknesses	• Pink-washed, a lot of pink colours • White-washed, no diversity

Always	
Strengths	• Biography mentions the latest product that cares about the body and the world. • Illustrates active women
Weaknesses	• Too commercial • Not genuine • Not informative • The borders on the images • Instagram page is quite recent • Seems like the brand tries to be too relatable • The quotes are too ''cringey''

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?
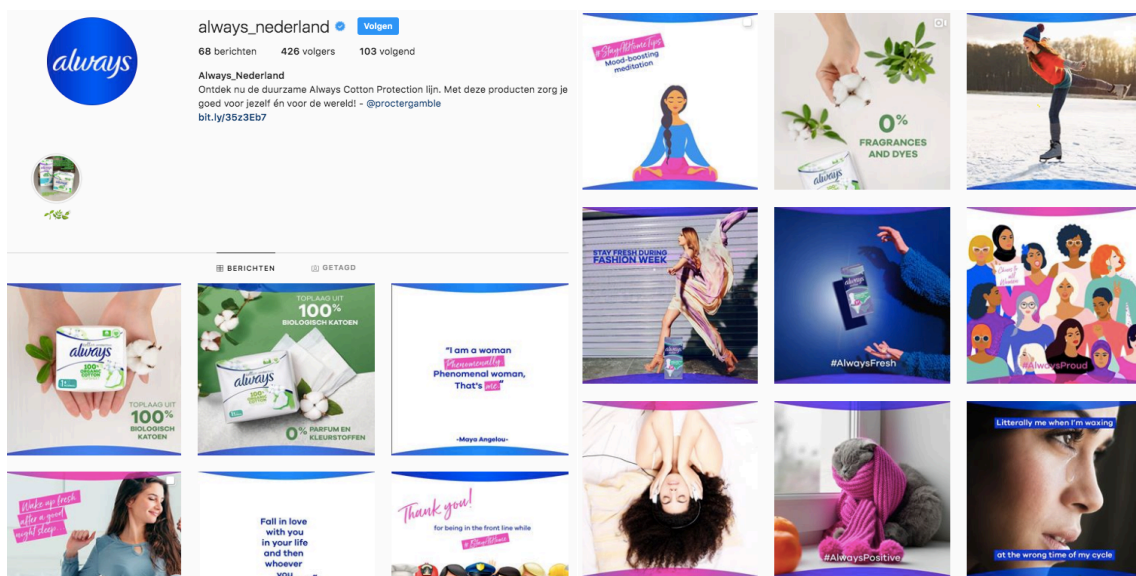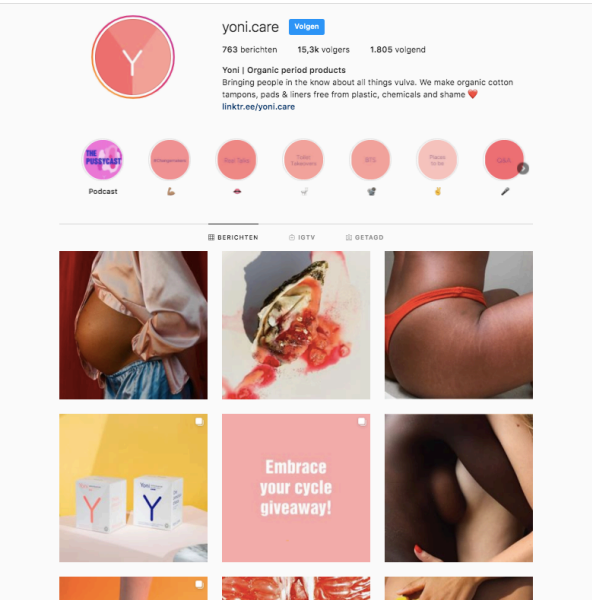
Samia Cusman

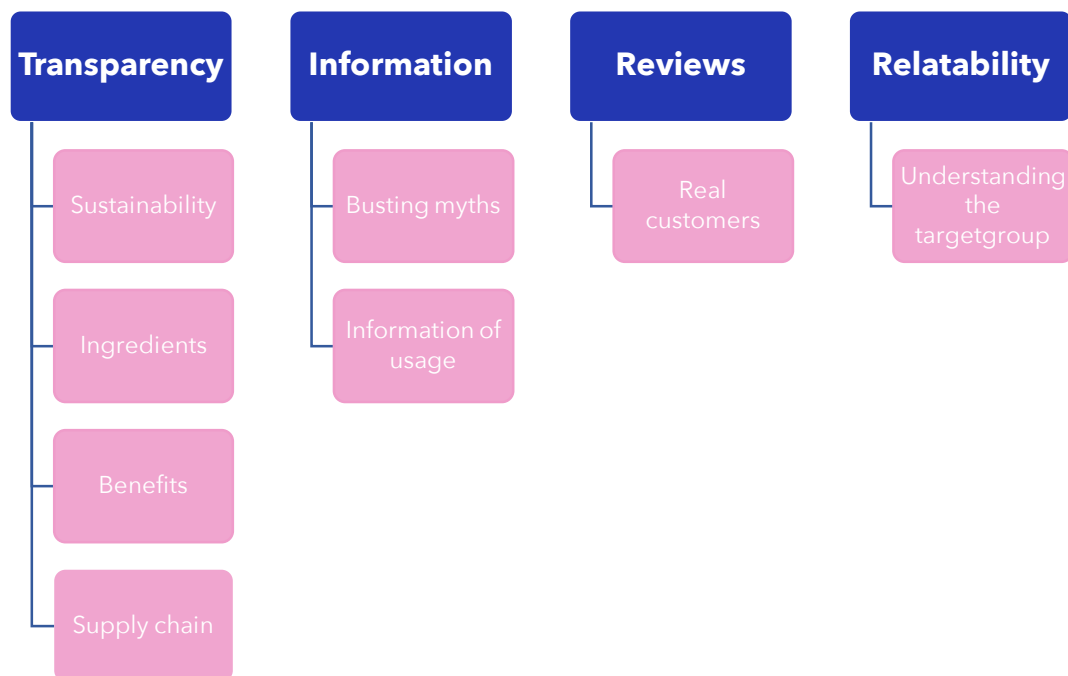| Yoni	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
- Videos - Artistic posts - Better feed - Coherent posts - Less pink-washed - Interesting - Plays on the short attention-span - visually appealing - Embraces the feminine aspect of being a woman - Informative captions - Diverse and inclusive	- Too commercial - Not relatable enough; too glamorous - Not many videos - Because of the artistic pictures one might miss out on the information given in the captions - Mostly posts of the packages rather than the actual product - Does not show women in realistic ways with everyday activities.

Purpose of Instagram Page
''To what extent do you prefer companies to speak out on issues within their sector?''

In both focus group 1 and 2, the participants state that for them it is important that companies go full out and speak out on issues within their sector. Participant 7 does not mind if companies do not speak out, however it will be appreciated if they do.

46

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

The following figure shows the needs mentioned when it comes to information and marketing of feminine hygiene products. Under transparency, participants stated that they want to know what it is that makes the products sustainable and different from the other brands. Alongside that, the needs in information/marketing of feminine hygiene products are more insights about ingredients, information about the supply chain, busting myths surrounding these type of products, reviews from actual customers and understanding of the target group.

Transparency	Information	Reviews	Relatability
Sustainability	Busting myths	Real customers	Understanding the targetgroup
Ingredients	Information of usage		
Benefits			
Supply chain			

To the question ''*Would you value design more than information?*'' the unanimous answer was that information is more valued than design. However, participant 10 disagreed by stating that the design is what makes the page memorable.

Transparency, about the product and the brand, the story of the brand, and anything relating to an –ism and authentic stories are the kind of information that is deemed as useful by the focus group participants.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

''How should a social enterprise use their Instagram?''

According to focus group 1, a social enterprise should use their Instagram to show what the company actually does and how it gives back to the community. It should show where the money of the consumer goes to. Participant 3 mentioned that it should build a connection and make it personal by showing faces of people.

According to focus group 2, a social enterprise should use their Instagram to show where the money of the consumer goes to justify the higher price of the products. The participants stated that the enterprise should proof its claims and stand behind its goals. However, participant 10 mentioned that the enterprise should not push too much as it can be perceived as bragging.

''Have you ever bought something from an Instagram account?'

None of the participants have bought something through Instagram before, except for participant 5.

''To what extend are you likely to buy a product through Instagram?''

In focus group 1, the participants stated that they are likely to buy a product through Instagram if it will have an impact, if there is a certain cause where the profit will go to, if the product is worth the price and if it is something that could not be found elsewhere. In focus group 2 none of the participants are likely to buy a product through Instagram.

''What would persuade you into purchasing?''

Participant 7 mentioned that a link to a proper website would persuade her to purchase something, the rest of focus group 2 agreed.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will illustrate the analysis made based on the results of the focus groups and the conducted desk research. The aim of this study is to find out how Yoni can raise awareness on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products amongst young women, with the means of Instagram. After the analysis of the Instagram usage of the target group and the relevant questions discussed during the focus group, an effective Instagram strategy can be recommended. The outcome will have relevant and effective strategies that can be implemented by Yoni.

5.1 Demographic

According to the findings of the demographic of Instagram users, the most active users are younger than 29 years old and women that use feminine hygiene products, are between the ages of 11-14 and 51 or until menopause. Therefore, the target group for the focus group, was women between the ages of 18 and 30 years old as it the most relevant for this research. The women that were part of the field research, are Instagram users that also use or have used feminine hygiene products.

5.2 Customer Profile

The focus group indicated that almost all of the participants currently use feminine hygiene products from the regular brands, such as Always and O.B. Most of them have little to no knowledge about sustainable feminine hygiene products. The focus group participants mentioned not to know a lot about sustainable feminine hygiene products, especially when it comes to sustainability for the female organ. However, they did manage to mention a few brands that sell safe and sustainable products. Yoni could play into this knowledge gap, marketing to unaware consumers, possibly by paid advertisements on the social media platform. The valuable trait would be transparency, by providing more information on the sustainable and safe products.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

The type of companies and influencer followed by the focus group participants are in the categories, fashion, science, sustainability, local cafés, automotive, political commentators and parties, artists and food. According to Larochd et al., social media has offered the possibility for brands to create a sense of a community online (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). These brand communities allow the brands to improve the value, brand loyalty, brand trust and sense of community feeling between the members (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Followers of Yoni's Instagram page could have a sense of belonging to a community of women that care about sustainability, feminine hygiene products and body positivity. It would be the company that takes a lead in creating this sentiment.

As illustrated in the previous figure and table 5, the type of posts the participants would like to see are informative post about sustainability, transparency and relatability. According to research conducted by Joan Lindsey-Mullikin and Norm Borin on why a strategy is crucial for successful social media sales, the company is encouraged to inspire its audience to share the companies' social media posts amongst their own circle (Lindsey-Mullikin & Borin, 2017). This allows the company to generate more traffic and gain a larger audience to raise awareness to. If the content of the posts come close the ideals of the followers or the type of information they would like to see, they would be more likely to share these posts. Transparency, could be a strategic concept considering that, as mentioned before, feminine hygiene product manufacturers are not obliged to enclose the ingredients on the product package. Without a list of ingredients, consumers are less likely to find suspicious components. Yoni on the other had does mention the ingredients on its package.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Instagram posts about how sustainable the product is and that give more information on the supply chain, myths surrounding the menstrual period, other things related to the period and different women speaking up about the product or their personal experiences are amongst the preferred type of informative posts the focus group mentioned. According to Laroche et al., the use of social media for marketing purposes could lead to developing customer relationships and increasing brand awareness (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Yoni could use these types of posts to gain engaged followers while informing them on the issues in the industry.

The field research found that encouraging words, words related to feminism and being a woman would be good to use on Instagram for a feminine hygiene brand. The participants also stated that words such as ''vagina'' and its synonyms would be good to use, along with correct terminology. According to Sarah B. Rodriguez and Toby L. Schonfeld the organ will lose its legitimacy, by speaking about the vagina, yet not using metaphors rather than the word vagina and mistaking it for the external female genitalia (Sarah B. Rodriguez, 2012). Yoni uses the correct terminology for the female genitalia, however it would be recommended to create more posts highlighting the correct terminology considering the taboo around naming the female genitalia.

5.3 Attention

Politically engaged and relevant post are in particular the type of posts that draw the attention of the focus group participants. Amongst other posts, images that contain text or are of high quality tend to draw the attention as well.

However, what actually pushes the participants to click on a post is when the model on the image does not fit the traditional norms or has an ethnically diverse background. Besides that, participants also click on an Instagram post to get a better look, to share or send it to other users. As found in the focus group, the participants noticed that most of

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

the times they had to click on an image to find out its meaning. This indicates that the posts of Yoni are intriguing enough, to push viewers to click. According to Colliander and Marder, high quality images, for example, tend to have a positive effect on Instagram users, due to how certain aspect can play onto the attitude of these users (Colliander & Marder, 2018).

There is a preference for images rather than videos when it comes to the preferred type of Instagram post. However, IGTV's are preferred over regular videos as it allows users to pause. Yoni currently only has two IGTV's. Instagram plays videos automatically and the sound is not always on, meaning that users need to tap on the video to hear the sound, within those seconds the Instagram user might lose their attention. According to the Instagram Marketing Guide by Later, videos need to be comprehensible even without sound in order to keep the viewer there (Later, 2019). If a video has a voice-over or includes people talking, it would be useful if it contains subtitles. This will make the content also more accessible for deaf and people who are hard of hearing.

According to the focus group participants, acceptable images to post on Instagram are images that abide by social guidelines, do not harm nor insult other communities, social classes or sexes and do not include pornography. However, nudity to a certain extent is deemed acceptable by the participants, as highlighted by participant 10. Feminine hygiene brands in particular are encouraged by the participants to use more realistic images.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?
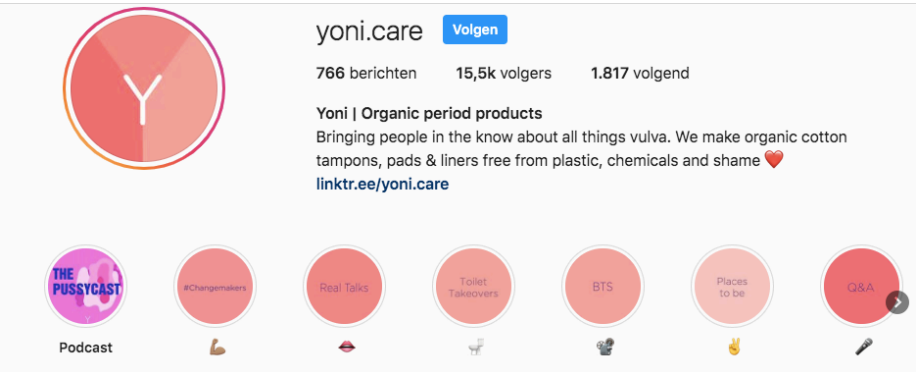
Samia Cusman

Figure 17 Screenshot Yoni Instagram Bio

The current Instagram feed has harmonious colours which resulted in unanimous acclaim from the focus groups. The use of pastel, monochrome and warm colours have been mentioned to be calming according to the focus group. Figure 17 shows the upper part of the Instagram page of Yoni. The highlights, which are stories that have been saved, show a monochrome colour set which are colours of the same hue. The specific colours that have been favoured by the participants are orange, pink, red and purple. The colour groups that have been mentioned are pastel, dark colours, bright colours such as yellow, warm colours, such as rust and deep orange. As stated by

Figure 18 Colour chart

Rajesh Bagchi and Amar Cheema, colours have a significant effect on consumers' perception as well as on emotions (Bagchi & Cheema, 2013). Bright colours such as, white, pink, red and blue provoke positive reactions, for example happiness and excitement (Bagchi & Cheema, 2013). The researches also state that research has found that the bright colour red accompanied by other warm colours, for example, orange

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

would communicate excitement better than blue, a cooler colour (Bagchi & Cheema, 2013).

Following the research of Kurt & Osueke, yellow has been deemed as a psychologically strong, happy and outgoing colour. Red on other hand catches the attention first and is a basic, yet strong, warm colour (Kurt & Osueke, 2014). Considering how colour does indeed affects how the viewers engage with certain posts, positive perceived colours such as yellow, red, orange, blue and pink should be used by Yoni. As well as taken into account the aforementioned colours by the focus group participants.

5.4 Design

The bio is what most of participants look at first when they look at an Instagram account. As seen in figure 17, the Instagram bio of Yoni reads ''Bringing people in the know about all things vulva. We make organic cotton tampons, pads & liners free from plastic, chemicals and shame''. It states that the company makes feminine hygiene products, yet the participants could not instantly draw that from the posts on the page. Although the images on the Instagram page of Yoni were found to be very abstract by the focus groups, they also thought that it was still intriguing enough to click on the posts to find out more. The choice of colours was appreciated by the focus groups, including change of colour every few posts was deemed as visually pleasing. Former copy writer for Yoni, Florine Kist stated that the Instagram feed of the company will show the colours of the brand and that it will change monthly when addressing the different core values (Van Vliet, 2018). The participants also stated praised the use of food and other inanimate objects to illustrated certain things. Participant 7 finds the design of the posts artistic and mentioned that the use of female bodies is refreshing. This aligns with the core value ''We are daring'', which means that Yoni talks about the menstrual period candidly without beating around the bush (Van Vliet, 2018). However, both groups stated that the pages could be considered as a feminist or body positive type of page rather than a

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

feminine hygiene brand. The disliked feature of the design was the fact that at first glance, the design does not directly relate to the product. Whereas the images that illustrated female bodies and certain body parts was appreciated, one participant deemed it as too suggestive and another as too perfect to relate to.

These posts do not relate to the menstrual period and the sentiment women have when they are on their period. The Instagram pages of the competitors of Yoni, Always, Libresse and Sanature, have been analysed by the focus groups. The participants found that these accounts were missing the authenticity that Yoni's page has. According to them content seemed too commercial and not relatable. However, compared to Yoni, the participants mentioned that they liked the videos Libresse has, because it includes stories from real people. The *''#Baarmoederverhalen'', (*uterus stories), go beyond the menstrual period and tackle miscarriages, fertility and other topics, all still related to the menstrual period. Always shows active women, which is seen as more realistic than some of Yoni's images, according to the participants. Although, the Instagram posts of Yoni have been deemed as not relatable enough, the posts are considered visually to be more appealing, diverse and inclusive and informative. The participants are missing posts about the products and videos. According to Zimmerman, the most successful images are those that will have an emotional connection with the viewer (Zimmerman, 2013). The company should create images with faces, to give a personal and human touch to the content.

5.5 Customer Value

Figure 14 illustrates the needs from the focus group when it comes to feminine hygiene. As seen in figure 14, the needs can be categorized into 4 groups; comfortability, security, free from chemicals and good quality. Availability of the product has been mentioned by participant 7 in Focus group 2, however this is not illustrated in figure 14. Availability refers to Place from the 4 P's of the Marketing Mix. Availability can be interpreted as

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

whether the product can be bought in local stores, 'on the go' stores in train stations, airports, near universities, and so on.

The participants of the focus group expressed that they think it is important that companies speak out on issues within their sector. Yoni speaks out on issues, the brand has been founded on the mission to bring a whirlwind of change in the industry. As mentioned before, the motive for consumers to purchase a product is the message behind the product and to align oneself with the mission and values of a company (Van Vliet, 2018). This can be related to following brands on social media, that speak out on issues that the follower has affinity with. Transparency is an important term for the, participants, they stated that they want to know what it is that makes the products sustainable, safe and different from the other brands. Alongside that, the needs in information/marketing of feminine hygiene products are more insights about ingredients, information about the supply chain, busting myths surrounding these types of products and reviews from actual customers.

According to Sue B. Zimmerman, engaging in conversations will attract attention and will create sense of community for the followers (Zimmerman, 2013). Asking questions is a successful method to increase engagement from the followers (Zimmerman, 2013). Another way to promote engagement would be by giving away free products, where followers would have to share posts in order to have a chance to win, give or discounts that can only be found on the Instagram post. Hashtags, are a type of tag generated by adding the '#' symbol in front of a word or phrase so that users can find relevant posts relating to a certain theme or topic (Zimmerman, 2013). Although hashtags can be general, it is recommendable to use user-generated tags to make it relevant for the target audience and to generate traffic from the target group. Certain hashtags can be used in order to encourage followers to create content with those hashtags, so that Yoni can post this content on its own page to give their page a personal and human touch and play in to the community feeling. Yoni could increase the traffic to its account, the engagement of followers, the sense of community feeling and raise awareness by

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

tackling the aforementioned topics such as transparency, the supply chain, busting myths and explaining the flaws of the industry.

5.6 Customer gains

All participants, except one, stated that information is more valued than design.

Transparency, about the product and the brand, the story of the brand, and anything relating to an –ism and authentic stories are the kind of information that is deemed as useful by the focus group participants. According to focus group 1, a social enterprise should use their Instagram to show what the company actually does and show where the money of the consumer goes to. It is deemed valuable by the participants for a social enterprise to proof its claims and stand behind its goals. According to Instagram, 75% of Instagram users take action, in the form of following the advertiser, looking for more information through the account or added website, or even purchase a product upon seeing an advertisement on the platform (Whitney, 2020). A social enterprise could connect to potential new followers by advertising its purpose. The enterprise will be able to create an emotional connection that will encourage people to take action when the fundamental values of the are present (Conway, 2020)

5.7 Action

During the field research, all participants, except for one, indicated never to have bought something through Instagram. The participants stated that they are most likely not buying anything through the social media platform in the future, mainly because due to security reasons. However, when it would be for a valid cause, such as a donation or buying an item of which the profit goes to a good cause, they are more likely to place a purchase. One of the links in the Yoni's Linktree, includes the Yoni web-shop, where

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

58

consumers can buy tampons, pads, menstrual cup and panty liners. The Linktree leads to the official web shop, which gives a safer feeling

Grrr, the digital creative agency that created the website and web shop of Yoni, stated that creating a web shop was a strategic step for the company, considering the fact that these types of products can be kept for a long time and that its users always have it with, whether this is at home or on the go (Grrr, sd). Grrr has worked on user-friendliness and the online shop, customers can navigate through the site in Dutch, English, German and French (Grrr, sd). Besides the Netherlands, Yoni also serves customers located Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, making its products readily accessible (Yoni, sd). By raising awareness on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products on Instagram, whilst offering their products as a solution to the problem, Yoni could generate more sales.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to find out how Yoni can raise awareness among young females on sustainable and safe feminine hygiene products with the use of Instagram. To investigate this, the theory on successful Instagram strategy and a focus group with women between the ages of 20 and 28 has been conducted. The following recommendations and conclusion have been drawn from the results of the respective theory and focus group.

According to the findings from the field research, Yoni has an interesting and visually appealing Instagram page. However, at first glance, it is not clear what kind of page it is, whether it is a feminine hygiene brand or a feminist page. This might lead to viewers that leave the page and will not follow the brand nor engage with its posts. The answer to the research question: ''How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?'' is by implementing a new strategy that will draw new people to the page. The strategy consists of designing more relatable posts, creating video content, engaging more with the audience, offering informative posts, with the help of experts and an advertising campaign.

Yoni must create posts that are more relatable to tis target group. The type of posts that can increase the relatability, are stories from other women. Compared to its competitor, Libresse, Yoni could start with a series of images and videos in which women tell their story about miscarriages, diseases linked to the menstrual period, how they live with their menstrual period. Considering the case of transparent and informative posts, it would be prefect to explain more about the supply chain of Yoni's product so that the company can back its claim of being safe for the female organ and sustainable for the environment and to have experts on the organ explain certain matters and busts myths surrounding

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

feminine hygiene products and the menstrual period. With the ease of sharing Instagram posts, the women will likely share informative posts, leading to increase in awareness on the topics. The reason why the target group prefers to see real stories from women is to have content that is more relatable and genuine. This is why Yoni should allow user generated content to be posted on their account. Not only does this show that certain women actually use the products, it will also allow them to share their stories and reviews. These types of posts may spark new conversations.

In order to not lose viewers due images that may be perceived as too abstract, Yoni should have more posts where there is just text on the image. This allows viewers to read without clicking on the actual post. The text could consist of interesting facts about the female reproductive organs, regular feminine hygiene products, explanation on the correct terminology of these organs and other relevant things. Video content is also recommended, since Yoni does not have videos on its account, beside two IGTV's. Videos have the strategic advantage of being able to present more information than an image. The video content could consist of a series of busting myths surrounding feminine hygiene products, the menstrual period and everything that comes along with that. Another factor to not lose nor confuse viewers is to clearly show that the Instagram page belongs to a feminine hygiene brand, rather than a feminist page. By putting the products more on the fore-front, the viewers could comprehend that the page is ran by a brand that sells these products. Yoni currently posts images of the packages of its products every now and then, however these packages might not grasp the attention of the viewer, especially at first glance.

Another recommendation on increasing the awareness on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products through Instagram would be by creating an advertising campaign that targets the target audience. Instagram has strategic features for marketing purposes, such as showing insights on the current audience, the possibility to target a very specific

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

group and to learn more about the target audience. This campaign would denounce the regular feminine hygiene products, considering the lack of awareness, this would greatly catch the attention. A strategic way to catch the attention would be by asking rhetorical question, such as asking whether one would use products that contain chemicals for their menstrual period or to absorb other vaginal fluids. This would continue with Yoni listing the harmful ingredients used in the regular feminine hygiene products. The campaign would encourage the viewers to follow Yoni to stay in the loop about the topic and learn more about safer alternatives.

Another recommendation on increasing the awareness on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products through Instagram would be by creating an advertising campaign that targets the target audience. Instagram has strategic features for marketing purposes, such as showing insights on the current audience, the possibility to target a very specific group and to learn more about the target audience. This campaign would denounce the regular feminine hygiene products, considering the lack of awareness, this would greatly catch the attention. A strategic way to catch the attention would be by asking rhetorical question, such as asking whether one would use products that contain chemicals for their menstrual period or to absorb other vaginal fluids. This would continue with Yoni listing the harmful ingredients used in the regular feminine hygiene products. The campaign would encourage the viewers to follow Yoni to stay in the loop about the topic and learn more about safer alternatives.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is to answer the research question: "How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?" According to the findings from the research, there is a need for information, about safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products and Yoni can play into that with a new Instagram strategy that will have a hands-on approach on raising

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

62

awareness. The research show that Yoni currently has an appealing page, however there are types of content missing that would bring more traffic to the page and eventually result in an increase of awareness on the possible dangers of regular feminine hygiene products. The recommended types of content to increase awareness are a series of informative videos, more images that contain text, an advertisement campaign and posts that have the goal to engage with followers.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

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How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Appendices

<div align="center">European Studies Student Ethics Form</div>

Your name: Samia Cusman
Supervisor: Ms. Agota Szabo
Instructions/checklist
Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.
a. [X] Read section 2 that your Supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
b. [X] Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
c. [X] Ask your project Supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
d. [X] Always append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation. This is a knock-out criterium; if not included the Final Project/Dissertation is awarded an NVD.
Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)
 (i) Title of Project:
How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females on sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?
(ii) Aims of project:
To find an ideal Instagram strategy for Yoni so that the company can raise awareness about safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products.
(iii)   Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your Supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)
          YES / N0
 If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your Supervisor. You have completed this form.
This project is not designed to include research with human subjects . I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature _____-   date _____
If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):
Participants of the field research will participate in a focus group where they will answer question about their Instagram usage, their preferences on design and other relevant factors and examine the Instagram page of Yoni and its competitors.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?
 The ideal participants are women between 18 and 30 that use or have used feminine hygiene products and have an Instagram. They will be recruited by posting a call to join on Instagram Stories, besides that, the immediate circle of the researcher will be contacted to recruit suitable participants.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?
Questionnaires[   ]; Pictures[x]; Sounds [   ]; Words[   ]; Other[x].
Participants will look at images from the Instagram of Yoni and its competitors. The focus group will be held online and will be conducted through Microsoft Teams.

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. By means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. **Participants of the focus groups have given their consent to be reordered and to analyse their answers**

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data?
The video recording of the focus group is private and will only be comprised to the supervisor or second reader upon request.

Student's signature: *[signature]*   **date: 14/09/2020**

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures)**: Ms. Szabo date: 09/09/2020**

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Before starting the focus group, the participants have each declared their name and gave their consent to participate in the focus group and to record the session. This was done this way because of the fact that the sessions took place online rather than in person, in order to respect the Coronavirus distancing measures.

Feminine hygiene products

The participants mostly use pads or tampons, either from big brands such as Always or O.B, store brand such as Albert Heijn and Kruidvat or organic brands such as Natracare. The features needed from feminine hygiene products are wings, quality, decent price,s comfortability, security and that it is free from toxins.

Menstrual cups and reusable period underwear are amongst the type of sustainable feminine hygiene products mentioned. The sustainable brands mentioned are Natracare, Mooncup, Organicup, Yoni, Cottons and Etam.

Instagram

The participants follow sustainable high-fashion or sustainable clothing brands, local cafés, artists and influencers. The reasons to follow them are because of the aesthetics and to be inspired.

What grabs the attention to a post are current events, something that is being denounced, models that look different than usual, something new or funny content. What makes the participants click is to find out more in the caption or the tagged accounts, to zoom in on the image, or to share with others.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

The main preference for the type of post preferred goes to images and then IGTV because it is allows to pause the video.

Acceptable images to posts are those that adhere the general social guidelines, those that might shock, but are not too provocative, respectful to others and to not shame nor insult different social classes/sexes.

Unacceptable types of images mentioned are suggestive (child)pornography and insulting images. Relating to feminine hygiene brands, unacceptable images are those portray fake scenarios or illustrations.

Monochrome, pastel, warm and light colours are amongst the favourite colours from the participant. The mentioned colours are red, yellow, orange, deep orange, rust, green, pink and purple.

The steps of going through an Instagram page:

Participant	Steps	Comments
1	Read bio, scroll through the feed,	
2	Read bio, scroll through the feed,	Looks for meaningful words, likes contrasts rather than a coherent feed.
3	Read bio, scroll through the feed, watch stories, watch highlights and then look at tagged posts	Will follow if very interested.
5	Look at number of followers, watch stories, scroll through the feed and read comments under interesting posts,	Will follow if very interested. Continues to look at suggested pages.

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

6	Read bio, click on a random post, read the comments, scroll through the feed,	Will follow if very interested.
7	Read bio, look for mutual followers, scroll through the feed	
8	read comments, look for mutual followers	
9	Read bio, sometimes look at followers, watch stories, scroll through the feed then look at tagged posts.	Will follow if very interested.
10	Scroll through feed, click on nice pictures, watch stories	Will follow if very interested.
11	Look at mutual followers, watch stories, look at highlights then scroll through feed.	

Yoni's Instagram

The participants are positive about the Instagram of Yoni, they state that the colours blend perfectly, that the images are daring and that appraise the creativity of illustrating certain body parts with the use of food and things such as blankets. However some of the images are deemed too suggestive.

Design-wise, the colours and images are liked by the participants, however the images seem too abstract. They note that it is not clear that the page is ran by a feminine hygiene brand. They state that they would like to see the product more. However, upon clicking on the posts, they find out that the captions actually relate to the image and that most of the times it does relate to feminine hygiene products, menstrual period and everything relating to the female reproductive organ.

Type of information

How can Yoni create higher awareness among young females, on safe and sustainable feminine hygiene products, by using Instagram?

Samia Cusman

Information is deemed more valuable than design according to the focus group. The type of information that is deemed useful is anything that relates to an –ism, such as feminism, transparency, story of the brand, proof of the claims and insight on the supply chain.

While the participants appreciate when social enterprises speak out on issues within their sector, it is not obliged but merely seen as an advantage.

When it comes to the marketing of feminine hygiene brands, the focus group participants, prefer companies to be transparent, relatable and show that they actually understand their target group.

The type of informative posts they would like to see from these brands are the environmental effects, transparency on the supply chain to explain the price of the product, information from medical professionals on diseases and rebuking myths and personal stories from women, about diseases, miscarriages or other things that relate to the female reproductive organ. They also mentioned that they would like to see things named as it is, for example to name the vagina by the correct name rather than using metaphors.