

The Project of Improvement of Current State of Sustainability Marketing Communication in the Selected Company

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Master's thesis
2023

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Faculty of Management and Economics

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

Akademický rok: 2022/2023

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: Bc. Tereza Poštulková
Osobní číslo: M210559
Studijní program: N0413A050031 Management a marketing
Specializace: Marketing management
Forma studia: Kombinovaná
Téma práce: Projekt zlepšení současného stavu marketingové komunikace udržitelnosti ve vybrané společnosti

Zásady pro vypracování

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Závěr

Rozsah diplomové práce: **cca 70 stran**
Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

BUTLER, Gemma a Geraint EVANS. *Sustainable Marketing*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021, 320 s. ISBN 1472979133.
CARADONNA, Jeremy L. *Sustainability: a history*. Revised and updated edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022, 352 s. ISBN 9780197625033.
ESTEBAN-BRAVO, Mercedes a VIDAL-SANZ, Jose Manuel. *Marketing Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 882 s. ISBN 9781108792691.
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SAHOTA, Amarjit. *Sustainability: How the Cosmetics Industry is Greening Up*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2014, 362 s. ISBN 978-1-119-94554-3.

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Datum zadání diplomové práce: **10. února 2023**
Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **21. dubna 2023**

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Ve Zlíně dne 10. února 2023

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ABSTRAKT

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na problematiku marketingové komunikace udržitelnosti společnosti XY. První část je věnována teoretickým východiskům marketingové komunikace a udržitelnosti a představuje současné trendy v těchto oblastech. Druhá část se zaměřuje na praktickou analýzu současného stavu marketingové komunikace ve vybrané společnosti a analýzu konkurence s důrazem na udržitelnost. V rámci projektu je ve třetí části navržena optimalizace současného stavu marketingové komunikace dané společnosti v souladu s principy udržitelnosti. Celý projekt je závěrem podroben nákladové, časové a rizikové analýze. Cílem práce je podat návrhy na zlepšení současného stavu marketingové komunikace udržitelných témat společnosti, která bude mít pozitivní vliv na loajalitu zákazníků a zároveň bude respektovat zásady udržitelného rozvoje.

Klíčová slova: marketingový mix, komunikační mix, marketingová komunikace, udržitelnost, CSR

ABSTRACT

The diploma thesis focuses on the issue of sustainability marketing communication of the company XY. The first part is devoted to the theoretical foundations of marketing communication and sustainability and presents current trends in both areas. The second part focuses on the practical analysis of the current state of marketing communication in the selected company and the analysis of the competition with a focus on sustainability. As part of the project, in the third part, optimization of the current state of marketing communication of the given company is proposed in accordance with the principles of sustainability. Finally, the entire project is subjected to a cost, time, and risk analysis. The objective of the work is to provide recommendations for enhancing the current state of marketing communication of sustainable topics of the company, which will have a positive impact on customer loyalty while also respecting the principles of sustainable development.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Communication Mix, Marketing Communication, Sustainability, CSR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Ing. Michael Abu Kwarteng, Ph.D., for providing me with support, advice, and recommendations throughout the process of writing my thesis.

Additionally, I am thankful to my family and partner for their unwavering support and patience during my studies.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainability, sustainable development, and corporate social responsibility are increasingly important topics in today's world. As human society continues to develop, there is a growing need to mitigate the negative effects on natural resources. Companies have recognized this need and have started incorporating sustainable practices into their marketing strategies. By doing so, they not only actively participate in climate protection but also attract customers who value sustainability.

One such company is the company XY, which specializes in the sale of nuts and dried fruit. Despite carrying out and communicating a range of sustainable practices, the company is often perceived as unsustainable based on customer feedback. However, the company is open to new initiatives and improving its sustainability marketing communications.

This thesis aims to identify sustainable practices in XY's marketing communications and understand customers' opinions and attitudes towards them. The study will focus not only on the communication mix of company XY with primary regard to its sustainable elements but also on designing a new communication strategy that targets customers who prioritize sustainability when purchasing. The proposed recommendations will be based on a situational analysis supplemented by primary research.

The theoretical part of this thesis presents the fundamental principles and models that are essential for improving the marketing communication strategy. It is based on the premise that a communication strategy cannot be developed without a marketing strategy, which requires a basic understanding of marketing models.

The practical part of the work includes a situational analysis of the company and primary research, which will provide input data for a proposal to improve XY's sustainability marketing communication. The situational analysis will focus on the competitive environment and the current marketing communication of sustainability. The primary research will map the preferences of existing and potential customers in the field of sustainability and its marketing communication, providing insight into the purchase decision-making process.

The project part of the work builds on the outputs of the previous analysis to compile a proposal for a communication mix and a strategy for addressing a new target group. The main communication goals include informing the market about the company's sustainable

practices, arousing interest in sustainable products, and motivating customers to purchase them.

The author of this thesis works in the marketing department of the company, which provides a deeper insight into the issue. This allows for data to be drawn from internal sources and for individual outputs to be consulted with the company's owners. Due to the strong competitive environment, the work is anonymized. The output of this work will be used to optimize the communication strategy in the field of sustainability and to reach a new target group.

I. THEORY

1 MARKETING

The majority of people believe that marketing consists solely of promoting and selling. Nonetheless, numerous experts concur that advertising and sales represent only the surface level of marketing. Not only does marketing help in the achievement of set objectives but is primarily a strategy for maintaining them in the long run.

1.1 Marketing mix

The marketing mix is a compilation of the chosen strategies that a company employs to reach its objectives in the selected market. All elements of the marketing mix are used to create a distinct position for the product in the market. The aim is to achieve a certain personalization of the product while differentiating it from other competitive products. In the early 1960s, Professor Jerome McCarthy suggested a marketing mix, which is also known as the 4P model.

1.1.1 4P model

The 4P model of marketing, as proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016, pp. 47-49), is a set of tactical marketing tools – product, price, distribution, and communication policies – that enable a company to tailor its offer to the needs of its target market. This model involves deciding on the product and its features, setting the price, determining how the product will be distributed, and selecting a method to promote it. The components of the 4P model are *Product, Price, Place, and Promotion*.

However, for some disciplines, the 4P model has become inadequate due to its inability to address the specific needs of the field (especially in the area of services). This has led to the expansion of the marketing mix to include three more elements, resulting in the 7P marketing mix, which includes *People, Physical evidence, and Processes* (Vašítková, 2014, p. 22).

Product

From a marketing perspective, a product is anything that can be offered and exchanged in the market as an object of value to meet a certain need, address a certain issue,

or provide a certain benefit. This can include material goods, services, or even ideas (Vysekalová, 2006, p. 27). Additionally, there are three distinct levels of product:

- **core** – the basic benefits, utility, value, or services that the product is able to provide to the customer,
- **real product** – product quality, design, functionality, etc.,
- **extended product** – includes extra benefits and services that provide a certain advantage to the customer (Foret, 2012, pp. 101-103).

Ultimately, the product is the most essential element of the marketing mix.

Price

The price of a product or service is the only element of the marketing mix that can generate income for a company. Therefore, it is essential to coordinate the pricing policy with the product design, distribution, and promotion to form a consistent and effective marketing strategy. Decisions regarding other elements of the marketing mix can also affect the pricing strategy. The target costing technique is used to determine the optimal price and then calculate the associated costs (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 489).

Additionally, pricing is impacted by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include marketing objectives, marketing mix, costs, and corporate policy, while external factors include the market demand, costs, prices, and competition's supply (Cibáková and Bartáková, 2007, p. 162).

Place

Distribution is the process of transferring goods and services from the producer to the consumer (Vysekalová, 2006, p. 160). It involves a series of activities such as physical distribution, change of ownership relations, and supporting activities. The distribution network is typically composed of manufacturers, distributors, and support organizations. Goods can be delivered to the consumer through direct or indirect distribution (Foret, 2012, p. 119).

Promotion

The fourth element of the marketing mix is known as promotion or marketing communication. It encompasses all the communication tools that can be used to effectively

reach the target audience. The following chapter provides more in-depth information about marketing communication.

1.1.2 4C model

The 4P model, which examines the market from the perspective of the manufacturer, is contrasted by the 4C model which looks at the marketing mix from the customer's point of view. The 4C model consists of four elements: *Customer value*, *Cost*, *Convenience*, and *Communication*. Customer value refers to the perceived worth of a product or service to the customer, while cost is the price that the customer pays for it. Convenience is related to how easily the customer can access the product or service, and communication represents the two-way exchange of information between the customer and the company, which is now an integral part of the 4C model. (Jakubíková, 2013, pp. 189-194).

1.2 Marketing strategy

When formulating a marketing strategy, it is important to align it with the overall business strategy, taking into account the company's competitive advantage and the value proposition offered to customers. To ensure successful strategy formulation, it is essential to identify the company's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats presented by the external environment (Blažková, 2007, p. 36).

The marketing mix should be designated to meet the marketing goals and provide a framework for making decisions that will lead to customer satisfaction. The marketing strategy should be aimed at achieving the desired marketing objectives within a given marketing environment (Horáková, 2003, pp. 25-28).

1.3 Direct marketing

Direct marketing is a popular marketing tactic that is used as a part of a marketing strategy. Nowadays, mass marketing is being replaced by more specialized marketing strategies that focus on smaller markets. This had led to an increase in communication channels and a more precise target audience (Kotler and Keller 2016, p. 679). As it is not feasible to tailor communication to each customer, basic marketing segmentation and target group determination are necessary. Targeted marketing typically involves three steps: **segmentation**, **targeting**, and **positioning** (STP).

1.3.1 Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a large, non-homogeneous marketing into smaller, more homogenous groups of customers. These groups have distinct needs, characteristics, and properties and can be targeted with a tailored marketing mix. Market segments are defined by their requirements, resources, location and purchasing habits (Boučková, 2003, p. 123). By segmenting the market, companies can more effectively tailor their products, services, and marketing communication to the individual segments (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 327).

Market segmentation is based on objectively identifying differences in the market, rather than the subjective division of the market by the company. Segments can be broken down into different levels, so depending on the level of segmentation, we can differentiate between mass, non-segmented marketing, segmented marketing, marketing focused on micro-segments, and micro-marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 283-285). In recent years, the tendency of marketing aimed at the individual customer is continuing to increase, in which individual customers take responsibility for which product and which brand they will purchase (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 331). For segmentation to be useful and effective, a segment must be:

- **measurable** – particularly with regards to its size, purchasing power, and profile of individual segments,
- **accessible** – individual market segments must be reachable in an efficient manner, and it must be possible to serve them properly,
- **large enough** – the segment must be large or profitable enough to be worth targeting,
- **distinguishable** – segments must be distinct in concept and align with unique marketing mixes and programs,
- **action** – effective programs can be created to target and serve individual segments (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 351).

1.3.2 Targeting

Once the segmentation process is complete, the company can decide to target one or more of the identified segments. This process, known as targeting, involves evaluating the appeal of each segment and selecting the one that can offer the most value to the company (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 284-286). A company may choose to concentrate on one or a few segments, or even a subset of a segment (micro-segments). Alternatively, it is possible

to target multiple segments simultaneously, which may include different customers with similar needs (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 104).

The decision-making process related to market targeting involves several steps, such as evaluating the segment in terms of size, purchasing power, profitability, competition level, and threat of substitutes. This is followed by deciding on the importance of criteria and choosing rating scales. The segments are then evaluated based on individual aspects, ensuring the values are comparable, and expressing the overall value of the segment. Finally, the segments are ordered according to their suitability and trackability using an algorithm (Boučková, 2003, p. 131).

Therefore, targeting is the analysis and selection of target segments. When evaluating, three main market factors should be taken into account: the size and growth of the segment, the structural attractiveness of the segment, and the company's goals. The largest and fastest growing segments are now always the most attractive – however, they may be occupied by competitors and thus be less profitable (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 290). If an attractive segment is found, it is important to consider whether the company has the necessary knowledge and resources to satisfy it. A company should only enter a certain segment if it can provide products and services at an above-average level and gain an advantage over the competition (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 352).

1.3.3 Positioning

After identifying the market segments to target, a company must determine the position it wants to establish in the minds of customers. Product positioning refers to the product's place in the customer's mind relative to competing products. It is a tool used to differentiate the product from competitors for the target audience and involves securing a desirable position in the market (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 309-312). The product's positioning should be distinct and clearly differentiate it from other offerings in the market.

To gain a competitive advantage, a company must provide more value to the selected market segment by either offering a lower price than the competition or justifying a higher price with superior quality. If the product promises more value, it must deliver on that promise. Effective positioning begins with differentiating the company's offering. Once the product's position has been determined, the company must communicate it to customers and base its entire marketing program on the chosen positioning strategy (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, pp. 104-105). There are five value propositions that can be used to build positioning:

- **greater benefit at a higher price** – customers can enhance their prestige by purchasing high-quality products and services that symbolize social status or lifestyle,
- **greater benefit for the same price** – threatening the competition by offering the same or comparable benefit at a lower price,
- **the same benefit at a lower price** – a value proposition with significant potential when the company tries to attract customers away from competitors whose market position is often dominant,
- **less utility at a much lower price** – buyers with budget restrictions will settle for even more limited utility if the product costs less,
- **greater benefit at a lower cost** – in the long term, this strategy is challenging to maintain, as companies that adopt it typically struggle to achieve success relative to their competitors (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 365).

Once the company has selected its positioning strategy, it is crucial to ensure that all aspects of the marketing mix, including product, place, price, and promotion, align with and enhance the chosen strategy. Additionally, the company should remain attentive to the evolving needs of its customers and the competitive environment to make necessary adjustments to the product or service positioning. (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 297-303).

1.4 SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a useful tool for identifying the current state of a company. It is a part of situation analysis, and after completing macro-environment and micro-environment analyses, it can be summarized into four key areas: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Horáková, 2003, p. 46).

Combining and comparing the identified opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses of the company creates a SWOT matrix, which highlights the evaluation of the situation analysis and makes managerial decision-making easier (Hadraba, 2004, p. 96). With a SWOT analysis, management can assess the current and future position of the company. If used correctly, the results of the analysis can lead to improved company performance or the creation of a better marketing plan. When implementing any measures from the analysis, it is important to discuss the results and suggestions with the employees, as their involvement in the running of the company gives them a greater sense of importance and can contribute new ideas to the company (Simoneaux and Stroud, 2011, pp. 75-78).

2 MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Marketing communication is a crucial aspect of any business that involves promoting products or services to potential customers. It is the process of creating and executing various marketing tactics and strategies to demonstrate the value of company's products and services to its target market. This chapter aims to define marketing communication, discuss the communication mix, and introduce both traditional and modern tools of communication mix.

2.1 Definition

Marketing communication, according to Kotler and Lane (2016, p. 580), is the way in which companies “*inform, persuade, and remind their customers – directly and indirectly – about the products and brands they sell.*” It can also be described as a set of techniques and methods used to share information about goods, services, or brands with target customers (Todorova, 2015, p. 368). Additionally, Kotler and Keller (2016, p. 580) explain that marketing communication is the voice of the company and can be used to make the brand memorable, promote sales, and even influence stakeholder value. Other objectives of marketing communication include creating and stimulating demand, product differentiation, stabilizing turnover, and building and cultivating the brand itself (Přikrylová, 2019, pp. 43-44).

With the trend of avoiding mass marketing and creating marketing plans that are tailored to smaller segments, there are more communication channels and, thus, a more specialized audience (Kotler and Keller 2016, p. 679). To make corporate communication more effective, the concept of integrated marketing communication was created, which is based on the interconnection of individual types of communication, which makes it possible to save money and time while making all corporate communication more efficient (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 586).

2.2 Marketing communication mix

Marketing communication is an essential part of the traditional marketing mix (known as the 4Ps) – *Promotion*, which encompasses all forms of commercial and non-commercial communication, and is a crucial element for successful sales of products and services (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 48). The main purpose of marketing communication is to create persuasive sales and promotional messages that quickly and effectively link

businesses and their brands with customers, highlighting the superiority of the product and distinguishing the brand from its competitors (Todorova, 2015, p. 369).

A marketing communication mix, also referred to as a promotional mix, is a specific set of tools that help companies communicate customer value and build strong customer relationships. In 1998, McCarthy identified the marketing communications mix as a particular arrangement of the following elements: *advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations*. To effectively communicate the advantages of products or services to target customers, the right combination of these elements is essential. Each component of the mix has a unique structure and function within the broader marketing stimulation campaign (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004, p. 43).

The marketing communication mix tools used to be divided into traditional and modern. Traditional tools were further divided according to the form of communication into personal and impersonal. Marketing tools can be broadly classified into personal and impersonal. Personal sales are a prime example of personal tool, while sales promotion, advertising, direct marketing, and public relations are some of the traditional impersonal tools. Trade fairs and exhibitions, on the other hand, are a blend of both personal and impersonal forms of marketing. (Příkrylová, 2019, pp. 45-47). Modern marketing communication tools were created to meet the ever-changing needs of the market and include, for instance, word-of-mouth marketing, content marketing, event marketing, and influencer marketing.

However, the way the marketing communication mix is understood nowadays is significantly different. The division of communication mix tools into “traditional” and “modern” is no longer entirely appropriate, partly because so-called “modern” instruments have incorporated original components of the “traditional” communication mix to some extent. The chances of “traditional” marketing communication methods successfully targeting particular client segments are noticeably higher in today's information- and information technology-rich world. Therefore, for businesses and organizations that want to succeed with their marketing plans, integrated marketing communication is now more than just a benefit. It is a requirement (Varmus and Kubina, 2016, p. 681). Many businesses and organizations employ micro-segmentation to make the most effective usage of the segmentation that is essential for precise campaign targeting (Vodák et al., 2013, pp. 315-322).

2.3 Traditional marketing communications mix tools

Marketing communication tools that are considered traditional are those that rely mostly on media such as film, television, radio, billboards, personal communication, and press to communicate. These tools were widely used before the advent of digital technologies. Nonetheless, traditional tools are still important and must be taken into account when developing a communication strategy. To achieve effective marketing communication, it is necessary to combine traditional and modern tools in an optimal way.

2.3.1 Advertising

Advertising is a form of non-personal communication that involves paying to deliver marketing messages to a large audience. It is a crucial component of the marketing communication mix, as it can inform, persuade, and influence target audiences to take action. (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 582). The primary objective of advertising is to enhance brand recognition, shape customer attitudes towards the brand, and create a brand image. (Karlíček and Král, 2016, p. 49).

2.3.2 Personal selling

Personal selling is a form of communication that involves a two-way interaction between the seller and the buyer. Its primary objective is not only to make a sale but also to establish positive relationships with customers and enhance the reputation of the company and its products. One of the benefits of personal selling is the direct feedback it provides from customers. In the modern era, personal selling does not necessarily have to take place in person, as it can also be conducted in an online setting (Přikrylová, 2019, p. 45).

Personal selling is rarely used as the sole promotional tool, and it usually works in connection with other promotional methods while also being supported by them. It is an effective technique to gain insights into customers' behavior and market trends. Personal sellers are able to motivate customers to buy, and they help them with the purchasing process (Todorova, 2015, p. 371).

2.3.3 Event marketing

Event marketing is a term used to describe any event where a company's product or service is promoted. These events can take place both online and offline, such as trade

exhibitions, seminars, conferences, networking events, live streaming events, and webinars. The primary purpose of event marketing is to increase brand and product awareness, generate leads, and introduce new products or services to customers. It is also a successful strategy for increasing customer loyalty (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 583-596).

In recent years, event marketing has become a more effective marketing channel than digital advertising, email marketing, and content marketing, as people spend more and more time online. However, to maximize the visibility of events, it is important to use social media and email communication for promotion. Studies show that 84% of event attendees develop a more favorable perception of a product, brand, or service after attending an event (Caldecott, 2020). Additionally, sharing customers impressions on social media can further strengthen the brand's image (Rafalson, 2017).

2.3.4 Sales promotion

Sales promotion is a marketing strategy that offers customers short-term benefits, such as price discounts, free samples, coupons, competitions, tastings, or other promotional activities that add value to products for a limited period. The primary goal of sales promotion is to encourage consumer purchases and enhance the effectiveness of intermediaries. This strategy is often used in connection with specific forms of advertising and is intended to complement and support the communication program. While advertising provides customers with a reason to buy a product, sales promotion provides incentives to increase and accelerate sales. (Příkrylová, 2019, p. 46).

Sales promotion can be categorized into two types: customer-oriented and business-oriented. Customer-oriented sales promotion is aimed at encouraging customers to make immediate purchases through the use of price deals, coupons, and samples. The funds for this type of promotion are typically distributed by traders and producers. On the other hand, business-oriented sales promotion is used to motivate sales representatives, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, and their sales staff to purchase more, display, and sell better products. This is achieved through methods such as posters, exhibitions, trade shows, bonuses, and more. (Todorova, 2015, p. 371). This strategy is highly adaptable and helps to generate interest in new items, test products, and create a lasting advertising impact. It is an effective way to influence customer behavior in the short term and increase sales.

2.3.5 Public relations

The company engages in public relations activities to build relationships with customers, suppliers, dealers, and any other group that could influence the company's objectives and has an interest in it. Public relations (PR) encompass a range of activities, such as media relations, product publicity, corporate communication, lobbying, and consulting. The primary objective of these activities is to safeguard and enhance the reputation of the company, present company information in a favorable light, increase publicity for specific products, and support laws and regulations that impact the company's operations. (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 567).

In short, PR is a management function that helps to create favorable conditions for communication, understanding, acceptance, and collaboration between the organization and its stakeholders (Todorova, 2015, p. 372).

2.3.6 Direct marketing

Direct marketing is an increasingly important part of the global economy, as it enables businesses to directly connect with their target audiences and generate transactions. This type of marketing is based on four pillars: target group identification, integration, control, and continuity. Compared to mass marketing, direct marketing takes a different approach to customers, and it is not typically included in the promotional mix. However, it has become a vital part of many organizations' integrated marketing communications (Vargnese and Joseph, 2016, p. 22).

The fundamental elements of direct marketing are the measurability and transparency of its actions, as well as the secrecy of individual activities from competitors. It also enables businesses to build and maintain long-term relationships with customers. To be successful, each direct marketing action should have a well-defined strategy, such as reducing costs per customer, increasing the volume of transactions, or increasing the number of loyal customers (Hesková and Štarchoň, 2009, pp. 128-129).

With the advancement of technology, new direct marketing techniques have emerged, such as web marketing, email marketing, direct mail, web seminars, telemarketing promotions, sales channels, and direct sales. These forms of direct marketing offer businesses the ability to measure their communication, allowing for precise segmentation of target groups. Figure 1 illustrates the main direct marketing tools.

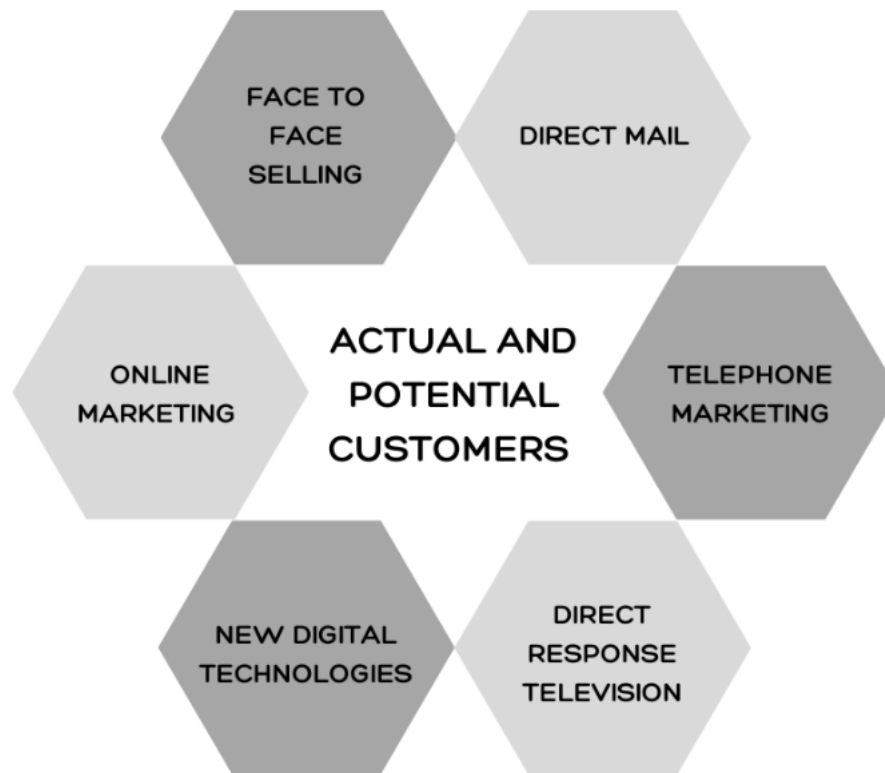


Figure 1: The main direct marketing tools (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 582)

2.4 Selected modern marketing communication mix tools

About a decade ago, traditional marketing communication started to become less effective due to its conventional techniques, and more advanced forms are now beginning to gain traction. This change was mainly caused by traditional marketing's inability to meet customer demands. Customers are no longer just a source of short-term profit but are now seen as a chance for companies to achieve long-term stability (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 43). Nowadays, consumers have less time and attention, so marketers must be more active to capture their attention and deliver the necessary messages. In many cases, modern communication tools can reduce the cost of promotion and enhance its effectiveness.

The major difference between digital and traditional marketing is the platform through which an audience is exposed to the marketing message. Digital marketing, compared to traditional marketing, utilizes digital channels (such as social media and websites) as tools for marketing communication. On the other hand, traditional marketing mainly uses traditional media, such as magazines, newspapers, and billboards. The main distinctions between traditional and digital marketing tools are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Differences of traditional and digital marketing tools (Yasmin et al., 2015, p. 71)

Comparison basis	Traditional marketing tools	Digital marketing tools
Definition	form of marketing that promotes goods and services through magazines, TV, and other media	type of marketing which uses the Internet and social media for advertising
Engagement	low	relatively high
Conversion	slow	extremely fast
Nature	static	dynamic
Investment returns	difficult to measure	easy to measure
Effectiveness	more expensive, less effective	less expensive, more effective
Targeting	standardized	customized
Tracking	not possible	possible
Reach	local	global
Tweaking	not possible once the advertisement is placed	can be changed or edited anytime
Results	slow	quick and live
Communication	mostly one-way	two-way
Interruptions	advertisements are bound to the users and are difficult to skip	advertisements can be skipped if customers do not find them interesting

Although digital marketing has many advantages, traditional marketing tools remain essential. Therefore, it is important to find the right balance between both forms of marketing, as they are more efficient when used together (Oclu, 2018, p. 1775). The most popular digital marketing tools are outlined below.

2.4.1 Online advertising

Online advertisements are those created on the Internet. Advertisers attempt to select the channels that will best reach their target audience and create texts and visuals that effectively communicate the message they want to convey (Deschwal, 2016, pp. 200-204).

There are a variety of criteria that can be used to differentiate between types of advertising. With the advent of technology, companies and organizations are able to target customers more effectively and track the results of their campaigns. Internet advertising can be used to quickly adjust advertisements and measure the success of the campaign. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising on search engines can include:

- **advertising in the search network** – appears in the search results when searching for specific keywords,
- **advertising in the content network** – displayed on numerous websites based on the context,
- **email marketing** – form of targeted communication through email,
- **inbound marketing** – covers all marketing activities related to the content, such as PR articles, website texts, and company blogs,
- **affiliate marketing** – a type of partnership-based collaboration (Oclu, 2018, pp. 1775-1779).

2.4.2 Email marketing

Email marketing is a type of digital marketing that involves sending promotional messages to customers via email. Email addresses can be obtained from collecting customer data or acquired from third-party companies, but permission is required to send emails. Companies use tailored content, usually visual, to create advertisements that are specific to their target audience. Links are often included in these emails, usually for the purpose of PPC advertising. It is also important to provide recipients with the option to unsubscribe from the mailing list to prevent unwanted emails and maintain a positive brand image (Todorova, 2015, p. 372)

2.4.3 Social media marketing

Social networking websites are virtual spaces where users can create personal profiles, communicate with each other, and find others who share their interests. Social media marketing is the practice of marketing through social media, which is distinct from traditional marketing approaches due to its close connection with customers. It requires special attention and strategy development to create a positive brand image and loyalty (Moretti and Tuan, 2014, pp. 116-118). The impact of social media on customer behavior is

an interesting topic. Content can be directed precisely to a particular group of customers who are interested in it, which helps to form strong and long-lasting customer relationships.

One of the advantages of social media marketing is the ability to reach a large audience at a relatively low cost. It also allows for real-time engagement with followers, which can help to build brand loyalty and trust. Additionally, social media platforms offer useful analytics and insights into audience behavior and preferences, which can inform future marketing efforts. Effective social media marketing requires a well-defined strategy and a comprehensive understanding of the target audience and platform-specific best practices. A successful social media marketing campaign requires ongoing monitoring and optimization based on performance data (Atske, 2022).

When discussing social media marketing, it is also important to mention community marketing as well. Community marketing is a method of building brand loyalty by engaging a community of customers and potential customers in an ongoing dialogue. It can take many forms, such as social media engagement, user-generated content, and events. The idea behind community marketing is that people are more likely to purchase from a brand that they feel connected to, and that communities provide a valuable source of feedback and insight. One of the key benefits of community marketing is the ability to leverage word-of-mouth marketing. When members of a community are engaged and passionate about a brand, they are more likely to recommend it to their friends and family (Nguyen, 2023). This can help drive sales and create brand advocates who will continue to support the brand over time.

To be successful with community marketing, brands need to focus on forming relationships with their customers, rather than just selling to them. This requires a commitment to open communication, transparency, and authenticity, as well as a willingness to listen to feedback and incorporate it into marketing strategies.

2.4.4 Content marketing

Content marketing is a type of marketing that focuses on creating and sharing valuable and pertinent content to attract and retain a target audience. The goal of content marketing is to motivate profitable customer action, such as increasing brand awareness, generating leads, and driving sales. Content marketing can take many forms, such as blog posts, social media posts, videos, podcasts, and webinars. It is important to create content that is informative, educational, or entertaining, and that is relevant to the needs and interests of the target audience (Howells-Barby, 2022).

One of the primary advantages of content marketing is the ability to build trust and credibility with customers. By providing useful information and insights, brands can establish themselves as thought leaders in their industry and gain the trust of potential customers. This can eventually result in increased brand loyalty and customer retention. For brands to achieve success in content marketing, they must develop a content strategy that is in line with their business objectives and target audience. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the target audience's needs and interests, as well as a dedication to producing high-quality, valuable content on a regular basis. (Pulizzi, 2014, p. 4).

All marketing communication mix tools have the same goal – to promote products or services to a target group of customers using the most efficient method of promotion (Kotler and Armstrong, 2016, p. 440). Therefore, an effective combination of marketing communication tools is the key to a successful company's marketing communication.

3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The trend of sustainability is on the rise, and businesses are striving to create new sustainable strategies. Communication, both internal and external, is a key component of any company strategy. Nowadays, the switch toward a “green” economy not only meets basic needs but also provides opportunities for both businesses and customers. Therefore, environmental, and social aspects of production, transportation, and final delivery of products to customers are often part of a sustainable strategy. Consumers are increasingly interested in sustainable products, and sustainability is becoming a competitive advantage for businesses that want to be sustainable. Therefore, it is essential to update companies’ marketing plans. The younger generation is beginning to expect sustainability, and soon businesses will not only have the option but also an obligation to use and communicate sustainable practices (Robertson, 2021, pp. 3-13).

To remain successful and profitable, companies must create marketing strategies that focus on satisfying customer needs, public interest, and the environment. Crafting such a strategy and its related marketing communication is not a simple task. On one hand, it is essential to conserve production resources and reduce consumption, while on the other hand, it is necessary to increase sales, which implies more output and consumption (Robertson, 2021, pp. 60-75). The marketing strategy must be designed in a way that allows businesses to make money while reducing their environmental impact, in order to establish a balance between the two sides. Additionally, a well-designed sustainability marketing strategy can lead to cost-saving innovation, and competitive advantage (Bhatia and Jain, 2014, p. 7).

It is crucial for companies to move away from traditional approaches and introduce new ideas to their marketing strategies that take sustainability into account (Robertson, 2021, pp. 3-13). This shift can only be achieved when the management, suppliers, and other stakeholders understand the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into their strategy and operations. In the near future, sustainability will become the standard, and businesses that do not adopt it will struggle to remain competitive in the market (Goodman et al., 2017, pp. 3-7).

3.1 Concept of sustainable development

To accurately understand the concept of sustainable development, we must look to the definition of sustainability itself. According to the World Council on Economic

Development, sustainability is defined as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (WCED, 1987, p. 54). The primary use of sustainability is to correct and counterbalance the negative effects of climate change (Caradonna, 2022, p. 3).

The development is often demonstrated by its effects on the economic, environmental, and social spheres. In other words, businesses must conduct all their economic activities without damaging the natural environment, while taking into account long-term issues such as human rights, social justice, and natural resources. Additionally, sustainability has a wide range of meanings in the marketing industry, often in relation to sustainable comparative advantage and sustainable growth (Fifka, 2011, pp. 1-35). Adapting the WCED definition, Kotler and Armstrong (2016, p. 50) state that “*the concept of sustainable marketing holds that the organization should meet the needs of its present consumers without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs.*” Thus, sustainable marketing typically involves promoting products, processes, and brand values that prioritize social and environmental responsibility. As a result, sustainability requires greater caution, foresight, and less entitlement, and selfishness in the planning of socio-political, economic, and environmental initiatives (Caradonna, 2022, p. 16).

Sustainable marketing, like any other marketing practice, cannot be defined without considering the primary marketing goal: profit. Therefore, the main question is how to accomplish both profitability and sustainability in business. To achieve sustainability and profitability, it is necessary to develop marketing strategies that meet customer needs, public interest, and ecological concerns. This is an important shift towards the triple bottom line, also known as the three Ps: *people, purpose, and planet* (Butler and Evans, 2021, p. 45).

3.1.1 Green marketing

Sustainable marketing is often referred to as “green marketing”. However, green marketing differs from sustainable marketing in that it focuses solely on the environmental aspects of a marketing strategy and promotes products or services by highlighting their positive impacts on the environment. The American Marketing Association (AMA, ©2023) defines green marketing as “*the development and marketing of products that are assumed to be environmentally safe*”. Several synonymous expressions are used interchangeably for green marketing such as environmental marketing and ecological marketing.

Green marketing is a management approach that involves a comprehensive strategy to identify, anticipate, and fulfill consumer and community needs in a profitable and sustainable manner. The primary distinction between green marketing and social marketing is:

- emphasis is placed on the ecological sustainability and societal acceptability of the marketing process,
- creating a more integrated and interdependent understanding of how the economy, society, and environment are related,
- establishing an open-minded outlook that allows for the fulfillment of expectations over an extended duration,
- beyond its benefit to the environment and society, a notion must be viewed as having inherent value,
- putting more emphasis on global issues than issues that just affect certain societies (Peattie and Belz, 2010, pp. 54-55).

The primary objective of green marketing is to increase awareness about environmental issues and the positive impact that purchasing green products can have on the environment. As a result, while green marketing activities aim to provide people with more information, they also offer them more options for consuming green products and integrating them into their lifestyles (Peattie and Belz, 2010, pp. 13-17).

Green marketing places a strong emphasis on conducting all marketing activities while also protecting the environment. By protecting and improving the environment through sustainable development, the natural environment can be passed on to future generations in its current or better form. Therefore, green marketing is closely linked to sustainable development (Butler and Evans, 2021, pp. 67-71). Green marketing offers opportunities such as environmentally friendly behavior, social responsibility, competitive advantage, and cost reduction. These opportunities not only apply to the marketing function of enterprises but also other functions, and they help to address the environmental concerns that the world faces today through traditional purchasing strategies (Patel, 2016, pp. 141-142).

3.1.2 Green washing

Research conducted by Ogilvy & Mathers has revealed that greenwashing has become a widespread issue in recent years (Hsu, 2011). Due to the growth of green markets

and the subsequent rise in greenwashing, consumers are finding it challenging to differentiate between genuine green claims and those that are merely greenwashing (Nyilasy et al., 2014, p. 693). This has resulted in a decline in trust in green marketing, as it is hard to determine the reliability of green marketing campaigns (Chen et al., 2013, p. 2425). To identify greenwashing practices, seven sins of greenwashing were created:

- **the sin of hidden trade-off** – a product is claimed to be “green” based on a limited characteristic, without taking into account other environmental factors,
- **the sin of no proof** – an environmental assertion that lacks supporting documentation or reliable third-party certification,
- **the sin of vagueness** – an overly general or vague declaration,
- **the sin of worshipping false labels** – a product that misleads people into believing it has gone through a genuine green certification process by using deceptive suggestions or certification-like images,
- **the sin of irrelevance** – an environmental claim that, while true, is not helpful to those seeking eco-friendly products,
- **the sin of lesser of two evils** – a claim that is accurate for the product category, but distracts from the category’s environmental impact,
- **the sin of fibbing** – an environment claim that is simply false (Green business bureau, 2021).

3.2 History of sustainable development

Although it may seem like a modern concept, sustainability has been a topic of discussion for many generations. Societies prior to the 19th century faced issues such as deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, polluted urban air, silted rivers, drought, and intermittent crop failure (Caradonna, 2022, p. 23). The circular economy concept of the late 1970s is closely associated with sustainable development (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). This industrial system is distinct from traditional recycling or repair, which only reduces negative environmental impact. It is also known for managing waste from solar and wind energy (Korhonen et al., 2018, pp. 37-46). The goal of this system is to “replace the end-of-life concept of product” and to reduce or eliminate waste throughout the entire product life cycle, not only in production (Rathinamoorthy, 2019, pp. 21-22).

In the modern world, consumer interest in protecting and nurturing the environment is increasing. Millennials and Generation Z are twice as likely as older generations to look

for sustainability ideas, according to a 2019 survey by the social media site Pinterest that explored the underlying trends around sustainability and the planet. The most popular searches were for tips on sustainable living, eco-friendly transportation, and reducing carbon footprints (Pinterest 100, 2019). As a result, many organizations are now beginning to evaluate their sustainable practices and listen to their stakeholders' perspectives.

Comprehending history can aid us in getting ready for the future. The social-ecological system that evolved globally during the Holocene period has complex networks of relationships and properties that are characteristic of complex adaptive systems. Therefore, it is impossible to predict the future. However, understanding how humans and nature have interacted over time can assist us in comprehending the potential for creating a more sustainable future (Constanza et al., 2007, p. 522).

3.3 Principles of sustainable development

Agenda 21 is a document that was adopted during an UN meeting in 1992 and serves as the foundation for the principles of sustainable development. It comprises 40 chapters, which are further categorized into four sections: *social-economic*, *natural protection resources*, *identifying and securing the roles of the major groups*, and *implementation*. According to the United Nations (1992), the document outlines several key principles of sustainable development, including the intricate connection between essential areas of life such as economy, environment, and socialization, strategic planning, caution and prevention, the interdependence of regional and international activities, and preserving the current quality of life for future generations (WHO, 1992).

The principles and objectives are closely linked, and the United Nations (UN) regularly revises the standards that should be progressively achieved within the context of sustainable development. As of 2021, the document *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which was endorsed by the UN summit on September 25, 2015, has set out 17 objectives to be achieved between 2015 and 2030. According to the UN (2015), some of the most significant objectives are:

- eradicating hunger and poverty,
- ensuring universal access to a decent standard of living,
- providing access to education for all,
- promoting gender equality,
- guaranteeing everyone has access to clean water,

- expanding the economy, industry, and infrastructure,
- improving life on land and in the ocean.

The United Nations has emphasized that preserving values necessitates development that aims to mitigate the negative impacts of the current state of society and its development. This type of lifestyle is characterized by the overconsumption of natural resources, which is reflected in the overall condition of the planet. Sustainable development is founded on three fundamental, related pillars: *social*, *economic*, and *environmental* (Sahota, 2014, pp. 2-3).

The social pillar concentrates on implementing equality initiatives, such as reducing poverty, increasing access to education, and ensuring universal access to quality healthcare (UN, 2015). The environmental pillar is based on the notion that, due to the limited nature of natural resources, they must be valued and safeguarded for future generations. The economic pillar encompasses all economic activities and their relationships. This is a highly challenging issue from the perspective of sustainable development, as it requires finding the perfect balance between financial gain and environmentally friendly production (Sahota, 2014, p. 2). What is more, for the economic aspect, it is necessary to have a system that can continuously produce goods and services, prevents the accumulation of excessive debt, and manage the demands of various sectors within the economy (Caradonna, 2022, p. 13). As depicted in Figure 2, the combination and close interconnection of these three pillars create the ideal conditions for maintaining and developing the current values of the company.

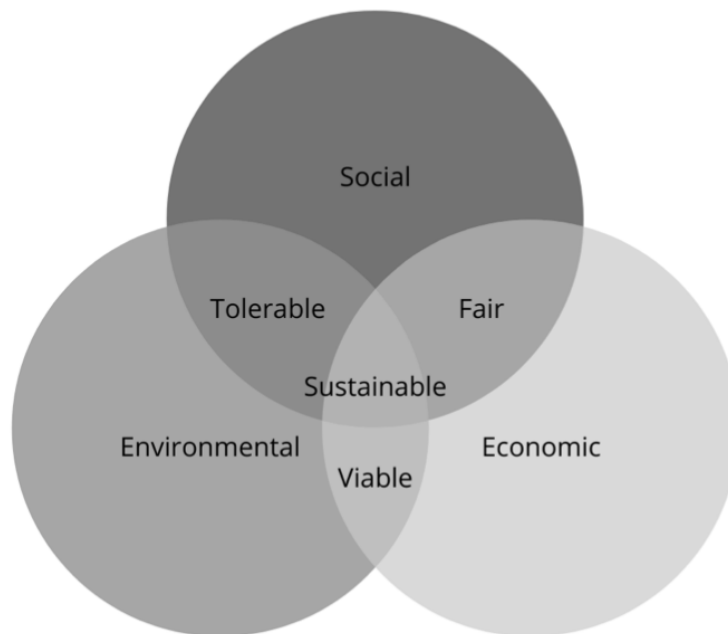


Figure 2: Three pillars of sustainable development (MŽP ČR, 2022)

The core concept of sustainable development is to present the current values and conditions of life. This encompasses five fundamental principles of sustainable development:

- **freedom** - everyone is entitled to it under any conditions,
- **determination** - strong attitude and will to protect values,
- **education** - general understanding of society, nature and its resources, and the concepts of sustainable development,
- **sense of context** - particularly concerning the interaction between people and the natural world,
- **respect for moral principles** - particularly concern for the environment and respect for the law to protect the lives of present and future generations (Moldan, 2001, pp. 32-44).

3.4 Threats of sustainable development

In today's world, the importance of addressing environmental, ecological, and sustainable development issues is greater than ever before. Our current lifestyle, which is

characterized by consumerism, wastefulness, and a fast pace of life that is moving away from traditional values such as thriftiness and reverence for nature, is the root cause of the need to address this problem on a global scale. Sectors that have an impact on the quality of life, such as road and air transport, are making efforts to reduce emissions. Retail stores are also a source of concern, characterized by the excessive use of plastic, the production of waste, and the disposal of garbage.

Despite the huge selection of products offered by retail chains, an increasing number of consumers are turning to farmers' markets, specialist shops for organic goods, and local regional products. The quantity of waste generated in the food industry must be decreased, particularly the use of single-use plastics. Part of the sustainable solution is to utilize the know-how of foreign business chains and foreign food producers. Moreover, 44% of Czech citizens find it crucial that the food they purchase adheres to sustainable development principles. Even 57% of the populace is willing to pay more for these goods. Given the abundance of goods available today, sustainable growth requires the participation of manufacturers, distributors, farmers, and, finally, the government. Providing enough food while also adopting a considerate approach to natural resources is critical for the world's ever-growing human population (IPSOS, 2022). Unless the current trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion are altered, the planet will reach its limits to growth within the next century (Caradonna, 2022, p. 14).

3.5 Social responsibility

At the turn of the century, the concept of social responsibility (CSR, or corporate social responsibility) began to gain public attention, although its precise meaning is still a matter of debate. Corporate social responsibility is based on the notion of being oriented towards the needs of its internal environment and the society that constitutes its external environment, and it is not limited by any boundaries or regulations. Typically, it involves promoting positive attitudes toward various societal issues, the resolution of which is linked to the implementation of numerous activities and entire programs. Overall, the company must adopt a socially responsible mindset that shifts its focus from solely on profit to broader interests, particularly those of people, the environment, and sustainable development, while still maintaining profitability, which is nevertheless relegated to the bottom rung of the imaginary ladder. The 3P model – people, planet, profit – describes the essence of social responsibility in general (Kašparová and Kunz, 2013, p. 12).

The path of social responsibility is tough and long, requiring a lot of time and effort, but it will pay off many times over in the form of all the advantages that can be gained by socially responsible presentation to the public. The profit that can be generated from socially responsible behavior, even if it is of a non-monetary character, often means more exciting and long-term benefits for society than astronomical financial profits. By accepting responsibility for the company, numerous opportunities for future growth can be obtained. The company builds an image and thus an attractive environment for investors. It has very confidential relations with customers, and the employees are also satisfied, which reduces their turnover significantly. Building a socially responsible position gives businesses a competitive advantage since consumers will remember a brand more fondly if they identify it with good deeds for society (Torelli, 2020, pp. 719-721). Therefore, marketers must have a grasp of CSR perspectives, as well as the intricacies of various programs and the complexities of setting targets. This knowledge is crucial for incorporating them into their own strategies. Consequently, awareness and education from the marketer's perspective are vital (Butler and Evans, 2021, p. 31).

3.6 Sustainable development in the Czech Republic

At the local level in the Czech Republic, the Ministry of the Environment deals with the topic of sustainable development. Naturally, the wording of the Agenda 21 document is respected and applied here. Moreover, based on the officially set goals of the UN until 2030, a similar development program within the Czech Republic is also drawn up, namely the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, which, like the global version, sets 17 local goals (MŽP ČR, 2022).

For companies to act responsibly (sustainably), it is necessary for them to evaluate all their activities and try to reduce negative impacts, both on the environment and employees and last but not least, on customers. The principles of sustainable business are already a common strategy worldwide, but there is still work to be done in the Czech Republic. Czech companies need to be much more active, for instance in the field of education, diversity, and the responsible use of natural resources.

Among the criteria that are nowadays primarily assessed as part of a sustainable approach to the environment are energy consumption, transport, water conservation, mental well-being, and materials used. However, the materials used to package goods are often unsatisfactory, making it necessary for companies to pay attention to environmentally

friendly packaging and use recyclable materials. Even product packaging can provide a competitive advantage for a company. If a customer has a choice between comparable products in a similar price range, most will show their responsibility towards the environment and choose a product that has information on the packaging's recyclability (Packhelp, 2023).

Another current trend is the protection of watercourses and the risks associated with water scarcity. For many companies, water consumption is a primary element of their sustainable development and business strategy since water is a strategic element for many industries (Sahota, 2014, p. 38). In 2013, a thematic expert group consisting of important companies such as ČEZ, ŠKODA AUTO, and Plzeňský Prazdroj was established in the Czech Republic to discuss how water is managed within companies. Key topics in this area include the responsible use of natural resources, efficient use of quality resources and raw materials, minimizing waste, and supporting small entrepreneurs in their regions of operation (Odpovědné firmy, 2019).

3.7 Sustainability in food industry

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Green Revolution was implemented, bringing with it the technology of industrial agriculture, such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and hybrid seeds (Scherr and McNelly, 2007, p. 400). This revolution was successful in increasing crop yields and eliminating the threat of mass famines. However, it has also caused environmental damage and has not been able to eradicate the issue of hunger.

Currently, more than one billion people around the world still suffer from hunger, and millions die from starvation annually (Wijkman and Rockström, 2012, 49). Although food production in developing countries has doubled or tripled in many places since the Green Revolution, the population has also nearly doubled, leaving the amount of food produced per person nearly the same. Additionally, the Green Revolution has caused harm to soils, waters, and ecosystems, and the full extent of damage is yet to be determined.

Consequently, the food industry is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and water pollution. As individuals become more aware of the environmental impact of food production and consumption, sustainability in the food industry is gaining greater significance. The emphasis on reputation management for brands has been strongly linked to the emergence of CSR, which has become a significant subject of discussion and a growing concern for organizations and their leadership teams (Butler and

Evans, 2021, p. 25). In terms of sustainable practices in the food industry, businesses aim to reduce the negative impacts on the environment there are four major areas: *sourcing*, *packaging*, *producing more plant-forward products*, and *reducing food waste in the supply chain*. As the world's population continues to grow, sustainability in the food industry is crucial to ensuring a healthy and equitable food system for generations to come.

3.7.1 Sourcing

Sourcing sustainable ingredients is an important factor to consider. This involves looking for ingredients that are farmed in an environmentally friendly manner. This could include local, organic, Fair Trade, or raw materials produced using sustainable agricultural methods. Consumers who are looking for more eco-friendly food products may prefer “clean label” items that have recognizable ingredients, no preservatives, and a farm-to-table philosophy. There are both altruistic and financial motivations for sourcing sustainably. Three crucial reasons are:

- **environmental stewardship** – 35% of manmade greenhouse gas emissions come from the food production systems and approximately 70% of all water consumed each year is used for agricultural purposes,
- **appealing to conscious consumers** – sourcing responsibly and communicating efforts transparently can be a key competitive advantage these days,
- **aligning with regulations** – choosing to work only with companies that follow all environmental regulations and guidelines.

Reconfiguring supply chains to work with more sustainable providers can be a challenge. However, there are three general recommendations that can help make the process easier: favoring organic and regenerative approaches, working with local providers, and working with individual farmers and smaller co-ops (McCurdy, 2022).

3.7.2 Packaging

Packaging is another important part of sustainability in the food industry. The primary goal of food packaging is to protect, preserve and maintain the quality of food. Sustainable materials such as recycled paper, cardboard, or biodegradable plastics can be used for packaging. Design for Environment (DFE) is a process that takes into account the type of material, the amount of material used, and the potential for reusable packaging.

Designers should look for materials that are sustainable and do not produce toxic emissions (Sand, 2022).

Additionally, companies are increasingly emphasizing packaging as a way to reduce the environmental impact of their products. Substituting petro-fossil carbon for biobased carbon from plant-biomass resources can provide a zero-material carbon footprint (Sahota, 2014, pp. 130-132).

Packaging involves the activities of designing and producing the container and wrapper for the product, which can offer convenience and promotional qualities (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 412). Furthermore, product packaging typically consists of several layers, which serve different functions. In terms of the food industry, there are four major layers of packaging:

- **primary** – comes into direct contact with the food product (i.e., plastic bags, jars, boxes)
- **secondary** – provides additional protection (i.e., cardboard boxes, plastic containers),
- **tertiary** – used for transportation and storage purposes (i.e., pallets or crates),
- **informational** – provides information about the product (i.e., ingredients, nutrition information, allergen warnings, promotional materials, or manuals) (Kadoya, 2012, p. 99).

3.7.3 Producing plant-forward products

The meat sector of the food industry is a primary focus for producing more plant-based product variants to promote sustainability. Plant-based meat and dairy alternatives are potential substitutes for animal-sourced foods and can contribute to more sustainable diets and food options. These alternatives can help protect and respect biodiversity and ecosystems, have a low carbon footprint, and are nutritionally adequate, healthy, safe, and both culturally and economically acceptable (Perez-Cueto, 2020, pp. 139-148). Compared to conventional meat production, plant-based meat production has many environmental benefits, such as using up to 99% less land, producing 90% less greenhouse gas and 99% less water waste, and causing up to 91% less nutrient pollution in water (GFI, 2022). By promoting plant-based meat and dairy alternatives, the food industry can contribute to a more sustainable future.

The food industry is increasingly focusing on sustainability. However, policy and market conditions are only beneficial for the short term. To expand business opportunities on a larger scale, consumer attitudes, views, and knowledge must be further transformed, especially for new options such as cultured meat, heavily processed plant-based meat substitutes, insects, and new protein sources (Van der Weele et al., 2019, pp. 505-512).

Marketing communication represents a great way to educate consumers, primarily by building trust and providing nutritional information. Encouraging people to try new plant-based and high-protein foods is also important. Moreover, the transition to sustainable diets should be based on local, unprocessed plant-based alternatives, with minimal food waste (Bastian et al., 2021). By promoting these options, the food industry can contribute to a more sustainable future.

3.7.4 Reducing waste in supply chain

The supply chain is a complex network of people and companies involved in the production and delivery of a product or service to the end-user. It begins with the producers of raw materials and ends with the delivery of the finished product. The components of the supply chain include producers, vendors, warehouses, transportation companies, distribution centers, and retailers. Supply chain sustainability is the effort to consider the environmental and human impact of the product's journey through the supply chain, from raw material sourcing to storage, delivery, and transportation. Therefore, supply chain management is a crucial process as an optimized supply chain can help reduce costs, improve production efficiency, and remain competitive.

Companies are increasingly adopting sustainable practices to reduce waste in their production, transportation, and retail processes. This includes using food waste in their products and reducing gas emissions. Green shipping is a term used to describe the process of improving processes and technology to reduce environmental impacts (Giuseppe et al., 2014, pp. 1306-1316). This involves using alternative means of transportation that are more eco-friendly, such as cars, buses, or airplanes, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Sustainable transport supports the mobility of society in an environmentally friendly manner that does not jeopardize the conditions for future generations (Rodrigue, 2020, pp. 2-5).

3.8 Ecolabels and certifications

In the Czech Republic, eco-labels are available to help consumers identify environmentally friendly products. Additionally, various quality certificates are also offered. However, it is important to note that fake or deceptive quality marks are prohibited by law. CENIA, a contributory organization of the Ministry of the Environment, is responsible for awarding the Bioproduct label to products that meet the principles of organic farming, such as avoiding soil damage and supporting biodiversity. This system operates by excluding agrochemicals and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Organic farming is seen as a potential future of agriculture production and is a part of the Czech Republic's agrarian policy (eAgri, ©2023).

Organic food producers and processors must meet strict awarding conditions and undergo annual inspections. In the EU, all organic food producers must be marked with the European logo, while Czech organic food must also include the optional "biozebra" logo, which is not required for organic food from other countries (Sovz, ©2023).

The Fair Trade label can also be found in the food industry. The main goal of this initiative is to promote fair trade and improve working conditions for small farmers in developing countries. These farmers often lack access to traditional markets and may be exploited by large multinational corporations, receiving low prices for their crops. The Fair Trade initiative strives to provide better conditions for farmers and ensure that they receive fair compensation for their labor. Therefore, consumers can feel confident when purchasing products with Fair Trade certification, knowing that their purchase supports Fair Trade and helps to improve the living conditions of small farmers in developing countries (Fair Trade, ©2023). Figures 3, 4, and 5 show all the logos.



Figure 3: European bioproduct logo (KEZ, ©2023)



Figure 4: Czech organic product logo (KEZ, ©2023)



Figure 5: Fair Trade logo (Fair Trade, ©2023)

4 SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

In today's world, businesses are under increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices in all areas of their operations, including marketing communication. Sustainable marketing communication involves using ethical and socially responsible methods to promote products and services, which aligns with the values of environmentally conscious consumers.

As consumers become more aware of environmental problems, they are increasingly choosing eco-friendly products and services. In response, marketers are investing in creating and advertising green products to meet the growing demand. The food sector is also adapting its products to meet the changing needs of its customers. Sustainable development communication is a distinct communication strategy that is effective in connecting different stakeholder groups (Mefalopoulos, 2005, pp. 247-260). This chapter outlines the most effective ways in which marketers can communicate sustainable practices in the food industry to their customers.

4.1 Target marketing

This strategy explains why sustainability plans are created and put into action. It is suitable for products that are well-positioned and can meet the growing demand for green products, such as those that are natural, organic, recyclable, made from recycled materials, dematerialized, or something else. According to multiple market segmentation studies, the majority of consumers now want more eco-friendly goods and services (Sahota, 2014, p. 242).

To guarantee the success of sustainability-related initiatives, communication campaigns should use various channels to spread the information, present the issues in a way that is relevant to each stakeholder, and include all forms of marketing. Examples of successful approaches include clear communication at the point of sale, eco-labels on products, involving customers in campaigns, and effective advertising (Sahota, 2014, pp. 11-12).

4.2 Green product marketing

Green product marketing is a marketing strategy to promote products and services that are beneficial to the environment. It emphasizes the product's sustainable features, such as renewable materials, energy efficiency, and reduced environmental impact during production, use, and disposal. Companies may use slogans like “reduce, reuse, recycle” and “eco-friendly” to attract environmentally conscious customers. They can also provide information on the sustainable materials used in the product, the carbon footprint reduction in the production process, and other sustainable practices adopted by the company. This type of marketing can also be used to educate consumers about the environmental benefits of a product and to encourage more sustainable consumption behaviors (Sahota, 2014, pp. 240-245).

To implement green product marketing, companies can use a variety of tactics, including advertising campaigns, product labeling, and eco-certifications, among others.

4.3 Eco-friendly packaging

Sustainable marketing communication can also involve promoting eco-friendly packaging, which is often the first point of contact between a consumer and a product. To demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, the marketing communication can highlight:

- **reducing waste** – by using minimal packaging material (primary, secondary, and tertiary layers) or eliminating unnecessary packaging,
- **using eco-friendly materials** – including *biodegradable plastics*, *paper*, and *compostable materials* and *reducing the use of single-use plastics*,
- **designing for recyclability** – to be easily recycled and reused.

These practices may help to reduce the negative impact on the environment, lower production costs, and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers, potentially differentiating products from competitors and increasing brand loyalty (Forbes, 2023).

4.4 Cause-related marketing

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a sustainable way of advertising products and services by collaborating with non-profit organizations to support social and environmental causes. For instance, a food company might collaborate with a local charity to donate a portion of its sales to support hunger relief programs. The marketing communication can

focus on the social and environmental advantages of the partnership and how the company is making a positive impact in the community.

In addition, CRM also includes information on how the product is made (or in compliance with environmental protection regulations), what ingredients it is composed of, and if it has been produced in accordance with Fair Trade practices. Consumer protection involves all measures to guarantee that the product poses no risk to its users (Hunt and Lambe, 2003, p. 89).

It is often mistaken that cause-related marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are the same. On the contrary, CSR incorporates social and environmental elements into the company and its relationship with shareholders, whereas cause-related marketing is the external communication of the company's CSR activities (Kurtz, 2009, p. 44). Cause-related marketing raises social issues that can be included in the product or service, resulting in various benefits for customers and companies. Consumers gain satisfaction from the "socially responsible" attitude, while companies enhance their image and potentially increase their sales.

4.5 Social media campaigns

Social media is a powerful tool for sustainable marketing communication. Companies can use it to promote sustainable practices such as reducing plastic waste, conserving water, and recycling. This communication can include helpful advice, educational materials, and inspirational messages to encourage consumers to adopt sustainable practices. Additionally, social media gives businesses the opportunity to not only communicate their eco-friendly values but also build strong relationships with their customers. It allows companies to engage with their customers directly and create lasting connections. Furthermore, due to open communication, businesses are held accountable for their consumer interactions. It is expected that sustainability communications will continue to grow across various businesses (Sahota, 2014, pp. 11-12).

4.6 Corporate social responsibility reporting

Sustainable marketing communication can be used by companies to share their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and achievements. CSR reporting involves disclosing the company's impact on the environment, social and economic aspects of their business, and outlining their plans for sustainability. Reporting serves to increase

accountability and transparency while enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions. The marketing communication can highlight the company's commitment to sustainability, transparency, and accountability to stakeholders while empowering them to make more informed decisions. This way, companies can showcase their dedication to sustainability and build trust with their stakeholders (Butler and Evans, 2021, p. 87).

Transparency is a crucial factor in building trust and reducing the gap between what stakeholders know. In response to demands for greater corporate transparency and responsibility, businesses now need to use marketing communication to share their social and environmental practices. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting is an effective way to promote transparency and show how much a company is contributing to society. Businesses that promote their CSR practices do so for several reasons, including ethical considerations, enhancing their public image, providing investment information to customers, strengthening stakeholder relationships, meeting the demand for transparency, reducing risk, building a positive reputation, and creating mutually beneficial opportunities. Therefore, companies should use sustainable marketing communication to communicate their CSR activities and achievements (Peloza and Shang, 2011, pp. 117-135).

5 MARKETING RESEARCH

Marketing research is a crucial process that connects the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer. It helps to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, generate and improve marketing actions, and monitor marketing performance. It is essential for understanding marketing as a whole. Marketing research involves a systematic approach to data collection, processing, analysis, and communication of conclusions and implications. The primary objective of marketing research is to gain insights into the market and consumer behavior (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 121).

Marketing research can be divided into two types: primary and secondary. Primary research involves collecting data, while secondary research uses data that has already been collected and analyzed (Esteban-Bravo and Vidal-Sanz, 2021, p. 24). In reality, primary research often complements and updates the results of secondary research, leading to a combination of primary and secondary research (Foret, 2012, p. 10). The end goal is to gain a better understanding of the marketplace (Schieffer, 2005).

Primary research can be conducted in two ways: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative studies usually use structured data to investigate a particular issue. Qualitative research is used by marketers and other social researchers to gain an understanding of a social system by collecting weakly structured data and interpreting them to form hypotheses about the system (Esteban-Bravo and Vidal-Sanz, 2021, p. 37). Surveys, tests, and observations are common methods used in quantitative research. The aim is to collect data from a large number of respondents and analyze it using research techniques (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 124-128). On the other hand, qualitative research is suitable when a deeper understanding of the problem is necessary. It usually works with a smaller sample of participants and aims to uncover the motives and attitudes behind certain behavior. Examples include surveys, controlled experiments, and certain observation methods (Esteban-Bravo and Vidal-Sanz, 2021, p. 24). The downside of qualitative research is the small sample size, which makes it difficult to generalize the results. In research, combining multiple methods is often the most effective approach. For this thesis, both an qualitative research (interview) and quantitative research (questionnaire survey) will be utilized to gather data.

5.1 Interview

Interviews are a widely used market research method that involves questioning a selected group of individuals to obtain qualitative and quantitative data on their opinions,

attitudes, behaviors, and preferences. Interviews can be conducted in various formats, including face-to-face, phone, or video conferencing (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 133-135).

Generally, there are three kinds of interviews: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. Unstructured interviews are informal and open two-way conversations, with little direction about the content. Semi-structured interviews are a more formal approach that follows a one-way flow of information, where the interviewer has a list of topics to cover using open-ended questions. Structured interviews are one-way information exchanges in which the interviewer goes through an ordered list of specific closed-ended questions with minimal adjustment to account for the interviewee's answers. Most qualitative research questions are based on semi- or unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are usually used in surveys, since they are more suitable for quantitative research (Esteban-Bravo and Vidal-Sanz, 2021, p. 38). Nevertheless, interviewing can be time-consuming and costly, and the quality of data collected depends mainly on the interviewer's skills and the respondents' willingness to give honest and accurate information.

5.2 Questionnaire survey

Questionnaire surveys are one of the most widely used methods of quantitative research (Esteban-Bravo and Vidal-Sanz, 2021, p. 571). The high frequency of results and standardization allows for statistical analysis of representative data. Due to standardization, questionnaires are primarily used to measure attitudes and opinions, but not behavior (Kozel, 2006, p. 186). The answers are mostly anonymous, so respondents can answer more honestly than in a personal conversation. However, there is some distortion due to voluntary participation (Kotler and Keller, 2016, pp. 128-130).

The questions used in the survey can be divided into open, closed, and semi-closed. For quantitative data collection, closed questions are used, supplemented by semi-closed questions, which provide additional options. According to the answers, the questions can be divided into dichotomous (offering two options), trichotomous (offering three possible answers), and polytomous (offering more options) (Reichel, 2009, p. 92).

This thesis will use a standardized questionnaire survey with a variety of closed and semi-closed questions.

6 METHODOLOGY

The thesis focuses on analyzing the marketing communication of company XY regarding sustainability. Its primary objective is to evaluate the current state of the company's sustainability communication and suggest recommendations for its improvement. It is important to note that a communication plan cannot be developed without a marketing plan, and therefore, other elements of the marketing mix will also be considered.

6.1 Research problem

As consumers increasingly prioritize sustainability, companies must demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practices through effective marketing communication strategies. Despite implementing various sustainability initiatives, it is unclear whether company XY's current marketing communication effectively conveys these efforts to its target audience. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of company XY's current marketing communication of sustainability and identify potential areas of improvement. The goal is to provide insights into how company XY can adjust its marketing communication strategies to better convey sustainability, ultimately enhancing its reputation and brand image among customers.

6.2 Research objective

O1: To identify the current marketing communication strategies of company XY in relation to sustainability, including the channels, messages, and target audience.

O2: To provide recommendations for further improvement of the company's marketing communication of sustainability.

6.3 Research questions

RQ1: What is the current state of marketing communication of sustainability for company XY?

RQ2: How can the company XY adjust its marketing communication to better convey sustainability?

6.4 Hypotheses

H1: The sustainability marketing communication of company XY is significantly different from the sustainability marketing communication of its competitors.

H0: There is no significant difference in the sustainability marketing communication of company XY compared to its competitors.

H2: There is a significant change in the marketing communication of company XY that would improve the conveyance of sustainability.

H0: There is no significant change in the marketing communication of company XY that would improve the conveyance of sustainability.

6.5 Research methods

The research employs several methods. Firstly, the current state of the company's sustainability marketing communication is analyzed. Primary research is conducted through a quantitative survey aimed at the company's current and potential customers, as well as qualitative research (semi-structured interview) with the company's marketing manager. The results of these analyses will be combined in the SWOT analysis framework.

6.5.1 Situational analysis of the company

The situational analysis aims to evaluate the current state of marketing communication for sustainable topics at company XY and identify resulting opportunities and threats. This part of the work will involve analyzing the external and internal environment of the company. The external environment will be analyzed through a competition analysis, while the internal environment will be analyzed through a marketing communication analysis to answer RQ1. Additionally, the current marketing and communication mix will be presented and evaluated.

6.5.2 Primary research

The primary research aims to address RQ1 and RQ2, which focus on the current state of marketing communication of sustainability for company XY and how the company can improve its communication of sustainable topics. To achieve this, the research will conduct a situational analysis of company XY and its competitors, as well as qualitative

research in the form of semi-structured interviews with the company's marketing manager. Additionally, a questionnaire survey will be conducted based on data from situational analysis and qualitative research. The purpose of the primary research is to understand the attitudes, opinions, and priorities of current and potential customers regarding sustainability and sustainability marketing communication, as well as their demographic profile.

II. ANALYSIS

7 INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPANY

Company XY specializes in importing, processing, and selling products that fall under the category of healthy nutrition. Their product range includes a variety of nuts and seeds, dried and freeze-dried fruits, fruit and nut bars, private brand of fruit and nut mixes, nuts and fruits coated in chocolate, snacks, cooking and baking ingredients, superfoods, and more. The main sales channel is the e-shop, which generates approximately 85% of sales, while the company also has six physical stores.

The company operates in both the Czech and Slovak markets, with around 70% of its sales coming from the Czech market. It is classified as a medium-sized, fast-growing company with an annual turnover of over 55 million CZK and a year-on-year growth rate of almost 60%. The company is a limited liability company (LLC) that conducts sales at both B2C and B2B levels.

The company sources raw materials from verified global and local suppliers, processes them, and packages them in-house. They prioritize the high quality of their products, with most of them being free from additives such as added sugar, sweeteners, artificial flavors, or dyes. Additionally, almost 95% of their products are sold under their private label. The company has its own factories for producing fruit and nuts bars, granolas, and chocolate-covered nuts and fruits, which allows them to create unique and premium products in the area of a healthy lifestyle.

The company's typical customer is a young woman between the ages of 25 and 34 who is passionate about healthy eating and values premium ingredients. The next largest customer segment is women aged 35-44, who are typically from the middle and upper classes, largely due to the company's pricing strategy. In the B2B segment, the company caters to businesses in the gastronomy industry seeking high-quality ingredients, as well as packaging-free stores and companies looking for corporate gifts for their employees. The company's mission is to provide premium raw materials to the Czech and Slovak markets while emphasizing their value. Its vision is to achieve self-sufficiency, particularly in terms of maximum control over the entire supply chain, from cultivation and processing to packaging and sales. The company's long-term goal is to become the leader in the Czech and Slovak markets and expand its reach to the European market as well (O nás, 2021).

8 MARKETING MIX OF THE COMPANY

As part of its marketing activities, company XY employs a combination of the 4P and 4C models, which were described in the theoretical part. This chapter aims to explore the specific tools used by the company to implement its marketing strategy.

8.1 Product

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the company specializes in selling products that fall under the realm of healthy eating. The company's core product can be defined as food that satisfies taste, hunger, or nutritional requirements. Some examples of specific products include dried fruits, nuts, and superfoods, which are packaged in clear, resealable plastic containers that are recyclable and available in various sizes. Although many of XY's customers consider plastic the least desirable packaging material, the company favors it due to its full recyclability and ability to maintain the highest quality of raw materials (XY's marketing manager, 2023).

For nuts and dried fruits, which make up approximately 55% of the company's revenue, the company typically offers 200-gram and 500-gram options. However, the company also provides larger variants of its products, weighing approximately 12-25 kilograms of best-selling products (mainly) for its B2B customers.

The desired outcome of the product is its taste, which should correspond to its price and the quality, durability, and texture communicated to the customer. The extended product includes supplementary features, such as the option to choose transportation and payment methods, as well as customer care services. Additionally, the company provides extra information concerning consumption and storage, which can be found on the product sheets of individual ingredients, blog articles on the e-shop, social media platforms, and regular company newsletters. The company also offers a complimentary tasting with every purchase, providing three different options for customers to choose from. This is typically how new products are introduced, but it also serves as a means for the company to manage excess stock or products that are nearing the end of their shelf life to avoid waste.

The final potential product is enhancing the brand's position in the customer's minds by expanding the range of products and services, including post-purchase service.

8.2 Price

The company's pricing policy is heavily influenced by the high demands for product quality and premium standards. These standards are associated with the higher input prices of suppliers, resulting in an average product margin in the range of 35-40%. This means that there is little room for significant discounts or price reductions while still ensuring growth. Compared to the competition, XY's raw material prices are slightly higher or comparable, which significantly influences the purchasing behavior of XY's customers.

According to XY's marketing manager, customers' interest in sustainability is linked to their wealth, as they are more open to sustainable options and willing to pay more for eco-friendly products. However, the manager notes that customers of XY currently prioritize quality over sustainability (XY's marketing manager, 2023).

8.3 Place

The primary sales channel for XY is its e-shop, which offers customers the convenience of shopping from the comfort of their own homes at any time. In addition to the e-shop, XY operates six physical stores in the Czech Republic, with two stores each in Olomouc, Zlín, and Brno. These stores serve as additional distribution channels, and customers can visit them on weekdays from 9 am to 6 pm and on Saturdays between 9 am and 12 pm. Customers can also order and collect packages from the e-shop free of charge (for orders over 500 CZK). Unlike the e-shop, customers at the physical stores can purchase goods by weight and even sample any of the available products for free before making a purchase.

Orders typically take 2-3 working days to be delivered from the time they are created. However, during busy periods such as Christmas, delivery times may be extended by up to a week, which can result in negative feedback from customers. Customers can choose from several carriers, including PPL, Zásilkovna, and Česká pošta, and they have the option to pay by credit card or cash on delivery.

The 4C model emphasizes the importance of customer convenience throughout the entire purchasing process. This includes improving customer service and transportation, as well as optimizing the shopping experience both in-store and online. Feedback from customers is often the main source of information for these improvements. Customers can provide feedback through the customer line via phone, email, or social media. Additionally, customer visits to stores are also a source of valuable feedback, which is reported regularly.

8.4 Promotion

XY heavily promotes the quality of its products and the added value they provide to customers. The communication element of the 4C model aligns with this principle. The company's communication style is influenced by the superhero archetype, which emphasizes endurance and courage.

The company places a strong emphasis on quality, which is particularly noticeable in its product selection. To maintain the quality of its products, the company is willing to take risks and be courageous. The company's mission is also grounded in the aforementioned superhero archetype, which states that „*the world will be a better place when XY inspires the market to realize that mastery cannot be achieved through compromise*“ (O nás, 2023).

The company assumes that high-quality products will impress customers primarily with their taste and aroma, and therefore do not require any additives. The company's core values are openness, honesty, and trust in the product, which is carefully selected from the highest quality products available on the global market.

XY's communication strategy can be divided into two distinct lines: communication of products to the customer and communication of the company to the customer. When communicating about products, the company adopts a confident attitude, boasting about the uniqueness and premium quality of its products. The communication style is moderately to strongly informal and can be perceived as rude at times. In contrast, when communicating with customers, the company adopts a formal tone and relies heavily on facts and reliable sources to emphasize the premium quality of its products.

9 ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATE OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Apart from the marketing mix, it is crucial to analyze XY's communication mix. This chapter primarily focuses on identifying XY's target groups and the distribution of the fourth P (promotion) through various communication tools.

9.1 Target groups

To effectively target marketing communications, XY has identified specific target groups consisting of economically active individuals between the ages of 25 and 65 who are interested in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. According to XY's marketing manager (2023), the primary target audience consists of women between the ages of 25 to 45. These women are often responsible for making meal decisions for their families and have a strong interest in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and well-being, as they are either starting a family or considering it. The main target groups are listed and described below.

Interest in high-quality food and a healthy lifestyle

Individuals interested in high-quality food often prefer to prepare their meals and are willing to invest time and money in selecting ingredients. They recognize the importance of nuts and other dried fruits in a healthy diet. This group also includes individuals with health issues seeking ways to address them, and those wanting to lose weight, modify their lifestyle, or maintain overall fitness.

Athletes

It can be challenging for adults to differentiate between an athlete and an individual who leads a healthy lifestyle. The primary distinction is that athletes consume a healthy diet to support their performance, while healthy individuals combine exercise and a nutritious diet for overall physical and mental well-being. Athletes are XY's target audience because they require effective energy replenishment before, during, and after physical activity. Dried fruits, nuts, and particularly bars (both protein and fruit bars) can serve as a beneficial dietary supplement for them, containing the necessary macro and micronutrients while also serving as a natural alternative to easily transportable and storable food supplements.

Dietitians

This target group includes individuals who focus on reducing calorie intake and those who follow specific dietary habits that exclude certain food components for various reasons (such as vegetarians, pescatarians, and vegans).

Productive people

Another target audience is the productive lifestyle group, defined by XY as individuals who work and have limited time but still desire to consume a nutritious diet to maintain productivity. These potential customers primarily value practicality, which is the benefit that XY provides.

Mothers with children

XY has a specific interest in mothers with young children and pregnant women as its target audience. These women are especially mindful of their diet as they want to ensure the healthy development of their children. Therefore, they seek nutritional information that is beneficial for children and carefully select quality foods that will provide them the best nutrition. The marketing manager of XY concludes that, in terms of sustainability, *“especially when you have babies, you're more considerate about the fact that the strawberries they're eating are without any additives and it's completely healthy for them and the sustainability comes next”* (XY's marketing manager, 2023).

B2B target groups

XY's attention is also directed towards the commercial target group, which consists of companies that need raw materials for further processing or sale. These companies include cafes, pastry shops, and restaurants that focus on producing high-quality desserts and delicacies. Additionally, XY aims to reach out to health food stores to offer its products for further sale. The company also offers its goods to package-free stores, which can order raw materials in cost-effective cardboard packaging.

9.2 Advertising

Company XY rarely uses traditional forms of advertising, especially those related to individual physical stores. Instead, posters in store windows and leaflets that promote specific stores are the main forms of advertising. Although XY has used radio advertising in the past, it is not currently using it due to its lower efficiency and higher costs. The company prefers to invest in online advertising instead.

9.3 Personal selling

Company XY conducts personal sales exclusively through its physical stores, where it prioritizes training its staff to have extensive knowledge of the products and provide exceptional customer service. Positive customer feedback indicates that the well-trained and friendly staff is a key factor in customer retention and contributes to a favorable company image. The staff is capable of assisting customers with their purchases, guiding them through the entire process, suggesting appropriate products, and providing product samples. In stores, sustainability is promoted through the option of purchasing products by weight and using paper packaging. Customers are incentivized to bring own packaging by receiving a 5% discount on their purchase. Retail staff members are frequently approached with sustainability-related questions from customers, so it is crucial for them to receive adequate training to provide accurate and helpful responses (XY's marketing manager, 2023).

What is more, company XY conducts personal sales through B2B collaborations, in addition to its physical stores.

9.4 Sales promotion

Company XY uses free tastings as a significant sales promotion strategy, which is accessible to customers through the e-shop. Customers can select from three different types of products in smaller weight packages and add them to their basket. This approach helps the company stay up-to-date with the latest customer preferences and manage its inventory more effectively. If the company has excess products approaching their minimum shelf life, it offers them to customers for free through tastings while supporting sales. This is one of the ways in which the company actively works towards minimizing product waste and promoting sustainability. In stores, customers can sample products before purchasing, which

are advertised both in-store and on the e-shop. This step also helps the company reduce the risk of waste.

Moreover, company XY offers a discount to customers who register and provide their e-mail addresses for future communication through newsletters. This discount is applicable on the first purchase. As the company is aware of the high customer turnover rate after the first order, it also provides a discount on the second order through the customer's e-mail. Customers can also find discounted products in a special section of the e-shop, which includes products on sale and those with a minimum shelf life. The discount amount is proportional to the remaining shelf life, which helps the company to reduce waste. Additionally, in stores, a special section is dedicated to discounted products. Although the company offers regular discounts, they cannot be combined.

9.5 Direct marketing

Although company XY does not frequently use conventional direct marketing tools, it does send personalized letters to customers with every purchase to express appreciation and feature a photo of the company's staff. Additionally, the company's e-shop can be considered a direct marketing instrument, as it contains other promotional components such as banners or pop-ups.

Furthermore, direct marketing has evolved to include modern and powerful tools such as e-mail marketing and SMS marketing, which will be discussed in detail in the next subsection.

9.6 Public relations

Company XY has successfully undertaken various public relations projects by actively participating in socially significant projects related to sponsorship and corporate social responsibility. In addition to providing financial assistance, the company also offers material support. They have been involved in projects that promote gender equality, support for civilians affected by conflicts, assistance for families and children in need, and blood donation. The company presents this support through its e-shop, where it has previously donated a portion of their profits from specific products to contribute to these projects. Apart from financial support, company XY also helps many projects by raising awareness about the issue through social media.

Additionally, the founders of the company actively engage in discussions related to business and a healthy lifestyle, which aligns with the company's values.

9.7 Online advertising

As a primarily e-commerce business, XY places significant importance on online advertising as a key component of its communication strategy. Paid advertising on search engines such as Google and Seznam (PPC) generates roughly 65% of the website's total traffic. The company utilizes various types of ads, including content, search, and product ads, through the Google Ads and Sklik advertising systems.

In addition, XY utilizes banner and native advertising to a lesser extent, which generates a small percentage of website traffic as an additional form of paid advertising. The company also employs affiliate marketing, which is a valuable conversion tool that incurs minimal costs. XY operates under a seven-day conversion window for affiliate partnerships, which attributes individual purchases to partners. As a result, it is crucial to carefully evaluate conversion paths.

What is more, social media advertising is another crucial aspect of XY's online advertising strategy, accounting for approximately 8% of total website visits. Social media ads serve primarily as a tool for initial customer engagement, in contrast to search engine ads which often represent the final touchpoint before purchase. The relatively small percentage of visits attributed to social media ads is due to the company's attribution model, which assigns credit for visits or purchases to the last media used. As a result, the conversion rate for both types of media is comparable.

9.8 Content marketing

Content marketing plays an incredibly significant role in the communication mix of the company XY, both in terms of acquisition and conversion. This trend is evident in the organic search results of their website, which accounts for 17% of its traffic. Higher search engine rankings are achieved primarily through search engine optimization (SEO) of the website, as well as other related activities such as link building, technical website optimization, and, last but not least, the creation of high-quality content.

The personal brand can be observed already in the creation of the product description. These descriptions often personify the products, emphasizing their benefits, premium

quality, and added value for the customer. The primary section of the product description typically contains fundamental information about the raw material, highlighting its premium quality or top features. If the product is sustainably sourced, this information is prominently displayed in the description, as well as in graphic elements like separators. Additionally, the product description features a “buyer’s note,” in which the buyer of the products themselves communicate their unique properties.

Apart from product descriptions, the company’s e-shop also features a blog. The blog comprises various sections of articles, including recipes that use the sold ingredients, information about the products, and helpful tips and tricks. In addition, there is an article dedicated to the company’s sustainability, which outlines the fundamental values that guide the company’s socially responsible business practices. Company XY aims to promote sustainability by prioritizing customer education. It achieves this by creating social media posts and blog articles based on verified data sources which go into depth of the topic. The company strives to ensure that customers understand their sustainable practices without resorting to greenwashing practices.

Previously, the company XY slightly engaged in greenwashing by overstating its sustainability efforts to customers. However, about two years ago, the company decided to abandon this type of communication and adopt a more authentic and credible approach. They now base their sustainability claims on real data and issues, rather than wishful thinking. The company prioritizes educational and research articles, as well as brand writing, to communicate their sustainability efforts. Customers now appreciate the company’s focus on transparency and credibility, which is evident in their use of credible resources rather than greenwashing tactics (XY’s marketing manager, 2023).

Other platforms for which company XY creates content are social media, to which a separate subsection is dedicated. Within all the platforms, the company makes extensive use of content created by customers (user-generated), employees, or influencers, primarily for its authenticity.

9.9 E-mail marketing

For company XY, e-mail marketing is the most effective direct marketing tool, alongside SMSing. Customers are frequently notified about discount events, current campaigns, of the latest blog posts through e-mails. Additionally, the company uses automation for reactivation, which sends customers discounts or special events for specific

products at regular intervals after their last purchase. Customers also receive a birthday discount via e-mail. The company has around 25,000 active contacts, meaning contacts who have opened at least one e-mail from the company XY in the last 6 months.

9.10 Social media marketing

Social media platforms play a crucial role in XY's communication strategy. The company actively produces content for Facebook and Instagram, and to a lesser extent, TikTok. In the past, XY also created content for YouTube, primarily focusing on educational videos about its products, some of which are still included in product descriptions today. On LinkedIn, XY creates content mainly for its B2B partners, focusing on news about the company and its product offerings.

XY produces unique content for both Facebook and Instagram. Facebook posts typically focus on educating followers about interesting facts related to the raw materials sold, discounts and events, sharing blog articles, current topics, or recipes using the products sold. Additionally, competitions for products take place on Facebook regularly once a month. On the other hand, Instagram content primarily features recipes and infographics promoting a healthy lifestyle, often including links to the ingredients sold. Although sustainability is rarely discussed, both Facebook and Instagram occasionally mention purchasing products in customers' own packaging, sustainable methods for obtaining raw materials, or supporting the purchase of larger quantities to reduce packaging waste.

XY also has a private Facebook group where customers can share tips and tricks for using ingredients and packaging in creative ways.

9.11 Influencer marketing

Finally, it is important to acknowledge influencer marketing as a component of the communication strategy. Company XY has approximately 60 ongoing partnerships, with a primary focus on collaborations through Instagram and Facebook. Additionally, there are several collaborations taking place on the YouTube platform. Despite the increasing popularity of TikTok, company XY has not yet found appropriate influencers to collaborate with on this platform. However, the company is actively seeking similar partnerships, particularly to appeal to a younger target audience, specifically those from generations Z and Alpha.

The main priority for company XY is to establish long-term partnerships. The company frequently collaborates with influencers who share a similar target audience, such as mothers with children interested in a healthy lifestyle, athletes, and food enthusiasts, including food bloggers and pastry chefs. While there are occasional collaborations with celebrities, company XY does not currently engage with influencers who actively promote a sustainable lifestyle.

Influencers are provided with specific guidelines regarding the frequency and quality of their output but are given creative freedom in their content creation. Company XY assesses the success of collaborations based on the number of discount codes used by influencer's followers. Additionally, influencers are given unique UTM links to direct their followers to the company's e-shop, which is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership. Influencers are compensated through barter agreements, financial compensation, or a percentage of sales in the case of affiliate partnerships. Collaborations are tailored to each influencer, considering their audience engagement, quality of content, and the amount of followers.

10 ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Performing a competitive analysis is a crucial component of developing a marketing strategy, as it offers valuable insights into how competitors position themselves in the market and target their audience. To analyze competition in the realm of sustainability marketing communication, the first step is to identify individual competitors and evaluate their marketing communication. Next, the sustainability marketing communication of both competitors and XY company will be compared. Finally, the primary trends and challenges in sustainability marketing communication will be identified.

10.1 Competitors' identification

Company XY has several competitors in the competitive environment, including Grizly, Mixit, Aktin, Ochutnej ořech, Diana company, and Koro.

Grizly started by selling sports nutrition and has expanded its range to include healthy food, nuts, dried fruits, vitamins, dietary supplements, coffee, and natural cosmetics. They sell products from various suppliers and have a broad range of products, including snacks, flours, teas, sweeteners, cereals, legumes, and nut butter. However, the unrefined style of the website may reduce customer loyalty since customers don't feel that the range is tailored to their needs. Grizly sets lower prices for its products, but the quality is difficult to compare due to incomplete information on their website. They provide undisclosed gifts with orders, and their website is user-friendly, with products arranged by categories and accompanied by bear and tree graphics. Grizly's online marketing and SEO are well-optimized, and their website appears among the top search results for "nuts" and "dried fruits" in both paid and unpaid search results. They maintain reasonable social media activity to avoid overwhelming their followers and regularly engage with them. Their approach reflects a balance between promoting their products and engaging with their audience. What is more, Grizly opened its first physical store in 2022.

Mixit encourages customers to mix their own muesli and porridge by combining a variety of cereals, fruits, nuts, chocolates, and supplements. The company also offers mixes of dried fruits, nuts, and chocolates, lyophilized fruit mixes, bars, cookies, pre-mixed small bags, tableware, self-made chocolate, drink mixes, and nut pastes. Customers can customize their product by choosing their own design for the special tube packaging. Mixit club subscribers receive a monthly package of the best products at a discounted price with free

shipping, while registered users can earn credits to apply as a discount for future purchases. The Mixit website is user-friendly, with an attractive design that features the company's bird logo. The site is easy to navigate, with high-quality product images in a compelling composition that encourages customers to buy. Mixit has good SEO and paid advertising placement, making it easy for customers to find their products.

Aktin company, which is gradually changing its name to Vilgain, offers a wide range of products from various categories, including sports and healthy nutrition, clothing, cosmetics, and sports equipment. It also provides articles and recipes written by the company's editorial team. Aktin is among the leading players in the field of sports nutrition in the Czech market, offering up to 120 brands with a rich range of products. In addition to offering products, the company also focuses on active communication with its target audience through various marketing and communication channels, such as social media, blogs, and newsletters. It also seeks to build a close relationship with customers through educational events and training sessions that it organizes. The planned expansion into foreign markets shows that Aktin/Vilgain has ambitions to become a leading player in the European sports nutrition market.

Ochutnej ořech is a company that focuses on producing and selling high-quality nuts and dried fruits. The company's product range is carefully selected and of the highest quality, sourced from trusted suppliers, and offered in a variety of packaging options to cater to different customer needs. Ochutnej ořech's pricing strategy aims to provide value to customers while maintaining profitability, offering competitive prices that reflect the high quality of its products, and providing discounts and promotions regularly. The company place strategy focusing on making its products easily accessible to customers by offering them in its physical store and through online channels. Lastly, its promotion strategy aims to build brand awareness and attract new customers by using various marketing communication channels such as social media, email newsletters, and collaborations with influencers and food bloggers.

Diana company is another close competitor of XY, primarily focusing on the sale of nuts, dried fruits, various types of nuts and fruit in chocolate, confectionery, and a category of healthy foods, including, for instance, nut butter, crisps, plant-based proteins, and jerky. Additionally, it offers a category of ingredient for cooking and baking. The quality of raw materials is a bit lower compared to XY. What is more, some products with additives, added sugar, or even dyes can be found here. As a part of a promotion, Diana collaborates with a leading influencer from the field of a healthy lifestyle to educate the public about the

quality of its products. It mostly uses non-resealable packages. Sustainability is not communicated much, and the product descriptions only indicate the BIO quality of the product through icons. In general, it can be concluded that Diana is somewhat lagging behind its competitors in terms of sustainability communication and sustainable practices.

Koro's primary objective is to procure raw materials directly from the source, which enables the company to collaborate with farmers in developing and enhancing products at the product level. Customer feedback is crucial for product improvement, and the company initially sells wholesale packages in the Czech market to test the frequency and relevance of the market. Afterward, Koro shortens the product's commercial path and offers it to retail customers. The use of larger packaging is beneficial to farmers as it reduces the consumption of packaging materials and labor associated with packaging. Koro intentionally avoids fancy packaging and prioritizes quality because the company believes that “good taste is not a matter of appearance”. Koro's packaging is simple and functional, with transparent labels. The company limits the labels to necessary information, such as the product's name, composition, and nutritional value, and allows the suppliers to print the labels themselves. Considering all these aspects of Koro, it is likely that Koro will emerge as the closest competitor to XY in the future.

All of these companies compete with company XY for customer attention and try to gain their place in the market by offering quality products and attractive marketing communication, frequently with a focus on sustainability.

10.2 Multicriteria analysis of competitors

The nearest competitors of company XY has been evaluated using multicriteria analysis. The analysis summarizes the information about competing companies in a clear table. The evaluation is based on several criteria, all of which are given equal weight. These criteria include product quality, range of products, prices, additional services, website, communication on social networks, online marketing, and offline marketing activities. The criteria are set as minimization, with values ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = the best. 5 = the worst). When evaluating individual criteria, the following factors were considered:

- **product quality** – commercial grade, BIO/organic quality, additives used in raw materials,
- **range of products** – the number of categories used (whether it offers additional categories such as natural cosmetics, dietary supplements, etc.) and

the number of offered species within the category (e.g., how many types of pistachios are offered),

- **prices** – comparison to 1 kg of the corresponding product,
- **additional service** – gifts for orders, loyalty programs, transport options,
- **website** – clarity, loading speed, appearance, user-friendliness,
- **social media communication** – frequency and adequacy of distributions, engagement,
- **online marketing activities** – SEO, PPC,
- **offline marketing activities** – PR, sponsoring, advertising in the media and press, participation in events.

For each company, a grade was determined for individual criteria. The resulting sum of marks was the factor determining the ranking of the competition (the lower the sum of marks, the better the position).

Table 2: Multicriteria analysis of competitors (author's own work)

	G	M	A	O	D	K	XY
Product quality	2	1	1	3	2	1	1
Range of products	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
Prices	1	2	1	1	2	3	3
Additional service	1	1	1	2	2	3	2
Website	2	1	1	3	2	2	2
SM communication	2	1	1	3	2	3	1
Online marketing	1	1	1	3	3	3	2
Offline marketing	2	1	2	3	3	4	3
Total points	12	10	9	20	17	21	16
Rank	3.	2.	1.	6.	5.	7.	4.

Explanation: G = Grizly, M = Mixit, A = Aktin, O = Ochutnej ořech, D = Diana company, K = Koro

In the multicriteria analysis of the competition, the companies were ranked in the following order:

1. Aktin

2. Mixit
3. Grizly
4. XY
5. Diana company
6. Ochutnej ořech
7. Koro

Therefore, the main three competitors of XY are Aktin, Mixit, and Grizly. Although Aktin and Mixit have slightly different concepts, they are still considered competition due to the composition of their products. Additionally, Diana company is also a close competitor as it sells a very similar range of products as XY.

10.3 Comparison of competitors' approaches to sustainability

Many companies in the food industry, including company XY and its competitors, have implemented sustainability practices in order to reduce their environmental impact and meet the demands of customers who are increasingly concerned about sustainability. XY's competitors have their own sustainability approaches, which can vary significantly depending on the company and its products.

This section is specifically aimed at highlighting the primary areas that companies involved in promoting healthy eating. These areas include sourcing, packaging, offering plant-based products, reducing waste in the supply chain, and obtaining eco-labels and certifications. Table 3 summarizes the sustainable practices of XY's competitors in terms of sourcing.

Table 3: Comparison of competitors' approaches to sustainability in sourcing (author's own work)

Sourcing			
	BIO products	Local products	Regenerative agriculture
Grizly	X	X	X
Mixit		X	X
Aktin	X	X	X
Ochutnej ořech	X	X	
Diana company	X	X	

Sourcing			
	BIO products	Local products	Regenerative agriculture
Koro	X		X
XY	X	X	X

Table 3 shows that the majority of XY's competitors provide BIO products and actively promote them as a part of their sustainability marketing communication. In contrast, XY offers these products but cannot include their sales in the company's sustainable activities due to the lack of a separate warehouse for BIO products, which is mandatory under the legislation governing the resale of such products. Therefore, owning a warehouse for BIO products and being able to effectively communicate the organic quality of the raw material would be a step forward for XY.

Furthermore, while many companies prioritize supporting local products, the XY company places greater emphasis on quality rather than locality. As a result, if a foreign country offers superior quality raw materials, XY will naturally opt for them (XY's marketing manager, 2023). Nonetheless, XY recognizes the growing interest of their customers in local products and has therefore created a special category of locally produced products, which are prominently displayed in the e-shop's secondary menu. Although the physical stores do not have a dedicated section for local products, customer feedback suggests that this would be a positive addition. Along with its competitors, XY is actively committed to the principles of renewable agriculture, primarily collaborating with suppliers who adhere to these principles and purchasing non-GMO products. Only Ochutnej ořech and Diana company do not openly promote this type of sustainable activity.

The prioritizing of quality over locality has been a topic of discussion and criticism by XY's customers many times. However, despite facing backlash for importing products from various countries, the company stands firm in their belief that quality should always be the top priority. They are committed to providing their customers with the best possible products, even if it means sourcing from other countries. For instance, they import plums from France because they are of superior quality and production. However, customers often question why the company does not choose Czech products instead. In response, the company must explain that the quality of Czech products is lower. Additionally, XY's marketing manager (2023) concludes, that this highlights the importance of quality in their decision-making process, rather than solely focusing on the sustainability of the product. To

accommodate the diverse preferences of its customers regarding product locality, company XY sometimes provides the same product from both Czech Republic and abroad. This allows customers to choose which option they prefer.

Apart from sustainability practices in sourcing, companies in the food industry, including XY and its competitors, are also prioritizing sustainability in packaging. Customers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of packaging waste, and companies are responding by developing more sustainable packaging options. Table 4 compares the sustainability approaches of XY and its competitors in packaging.

Table 4: Comparison of competitors' approaches to sustainability in packaging (author's own work)

Packaging				
	Biodegradable materials	Recyclable primary layer	Recyclable secondary layer	Reusable packaging
Grizly	X	X	X	X
Mixit		X	X	X
Aktin	X	X	X	X
Ochutnej ořech			X	
Diana company			X	X
Koro		X	X	X
XY		X	X	X

Regarding packaging, there are already some noticeable differences between XY and its competitors. Grizly and Aktin, in particular, stand out for their sustainable packaging efforts, which they actively promote on their blog and website. For a fee of 25 CZK for Grizly and 35 CZK for Aktin, they provide customers with the option of eco-packaging their orders without the use of plastics, a service that none of the other selected companies offer. Additionally, Grizly recycles used boxes, a practice that XY attempted but had to discontinue due to customer complaints (XY's marketing manager). Grizly even creates its own material from used boxes, which it uses to line orders.

When it comes to recyclable primary packaging, most companies use plastic or glass resealable packaging. Mixit is the only exception, as it uses paper tubes that seem to be the most environmentally friendly option. However, these tubes actually contain plastic packaging inside to prevent moisture and maintain the quality of the raw material. This is

also the main reason why XY still uses plastic packaging for its products. XY's marketing managers concludes, that *“I feel like we are often getting into arguments with customers when it comes to plastic, because they often consider it to be the worst option. They often prefer paper or glass packaging while they do not realize that, for example, paper packaging worse the quality of the products. Therefore, we need to focus on educating our customers about this topic...because for us, the quality of the product and also the quality of the packaging would always be the first and then the sustainability comes next”*.

As can be observed, using recyclable secondary packaging materials (usually made of paper) has become the norm. It is worth mentioning, that companies use various types of packaging depending on the product. Table 4 has been compiled based on whether the majority of their products adhere to the stated principles. As the demand for plant-based foods continues to grow, companies in the food industry are expanding their offerings to include more plant-forward products. This shift towards plant-based foods not only appeals to vegetarians and vegans but also to health-conscious consumers who are looking to reduce their meat consumption. Table 5 compares the sustainability approaches of company XY and its competitors in producing plant-based products, focusing mainly on the offer of clean eating products, plant-based alternatives, and high-protein foods.

Table 5: Comparison of competitors' approaches in producing plant-forward products (author's own work)

Producing plant-forward products			
	Focus on clean eating	Plant-based alternatives	High-protein foods
Grizly		X	X
Mixit		X	X
Aktin	X	X	X
Ochutnej ořech			X
Diana company		X	X
Koro	X	X	X
XY	X	X	X

Moreover, there is a difference in the approach of XY and its competitors in producing plant-forward products. Aktin, Koro, and XY are among the companies that actively promote themselves as advocates of clean eating, which involves using raw materials with a simple composition and no additives, added sugar, or preservatives. Grizly

and Mixit also seem to be moving in this direction, while Ochutnej ořech and Diana still prioritize products with a more complex composition.

All of the mentioned companies have a readily available product portfolio, which makes it easy for them to produce plant-based alternatives. Typically, these alternatives consist of plant-based proteins, with XY competing in this area by offering plant-based jerky. Among its competitors, only Aktin and Grizly offer meat products, but only in limited quantities.

For high-protein foods, these companies often provide protein powders, porridges, or bars. Communication regarding the availability of plant-based raw materials usually emphasizes the benefit of this type of diet, with little difference between XY and its competitors. Education primarily occurs through product descriptions, social media posts, or blog articles. The exception is Aktin, which, as the only representative of sports nutrition, excels in promoting high-protein foods. This is often supported by customer and influencer experiences. XY's marketing manager (2023) concludes, that the company aims to promote healthy eating habits by encouraging people to consume more fruits and vegetables and incorporate alternative diets into their lifestyles. However, the company does not blindly promote vegetarian options, it prioritizes the healthy aspect and quality of the food in the marketing communication instead – if meat is necessary for a balanced diet, they recommend it accordingly.

All the companies have also taken various approaches to reduce their environmental impact and promote social responsibility in the supply chain, mainly in terms of offering to pick up orders at their physical stores or pickup points and reducing waste in production. By reducing waste in the supply chain, companies can not only minimize their impact on the planet but also save money and resources. Table 6 shows the comparison of XY and its competitors' approaches to reducing waste in the supply chain.

Table 6: Comparison of competitors' approaches in reducing waste in supply chain (author's own work)

Reducing waste in supply chain		
	Owning store/pickup point	Carbon footprint reduction
Grizly	X	X
Mixit	X	X
Aktin	X	X

Reducing waste in supply chain		
	Owning store/pickup point	Carbon footprint reduction
Ochutnej ořech		
Diana company	X	
Koro		X
XY	X	X

Company XY and its competitors share an interest in minimizing waste in the supply chain, albeit through different approaches. Owning a store or pickup point and focusing on reduction waste in production, which is also related to the reduction of carbon dioxide and methane emissions, are among the most significant activities in this area. Except for Ochutnej ořech, which has not disclosed any efforts to reduce waste in the supply chain, each company appears to be more or less invested in this issue. Koro, on the other hand, is the only company without a physical store or pickup point, but this is primarily due to its location outside the Czech Republic.

The primary approach to reducing the carbon footprint involves emphasizing local suppliers, decreasing meat consumption, particularly beef, and minimizing packaging consumption. In this context, XY tries to encourage to purchase bigger weight packages to minimize the wastage of packaging material (XY's marketing manager).

Owning ecolabels and certifications in the food industry is another method that companies use to demonstrate their dedication to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Company XY and its competitors have taken measures to obtain such labels and certifications, which not only demonstrates their commitment but also help to communicate their sustainability efforts in marketing communications. Table 7 displays whether individual companies have obtained recognized certifications in the food industry.

Table 7: Comparison of ownership of certifications and eco-labels (author's own work)

Certifications and eco-labels					
	BIO label ownership	BIO quality communication	BIO label products	“Product of organic farming” communication	Fair Trade products
Grizly	X	X			X
Mixit					X

Certifications and eco-labels					
	BIO label ownership	BIO quality communication	BIO label products	“Product of organic farming” communication	Fair Trade products
Aktin	X	X	X	X	X
Ochutnej ořech	X	X			X
Diana company	X	X			
Koro	X	X	X	X	X
XY		X		X	X

The most significant contrast between company XY and its competitors is evident in their approach to certifications and eco-labels. While almost all competitors, except Mixit, provide BIO products and actively promote their sales through their website or social media, XY is unable to advertise or endorse the BIO quality of their products anywhere, despite selling BIO products. This is due to the fact that they would require a separate warehouse for BIO products, which they currently lack. As a result, XY is losing its competitive edge in terms of supporting organic farming and sustainability. This is also linked to the inability to display the BIO label on the product packaging, as Aktin and Koro actively do, contributing to the credibility of their sustainable practices. However, XY does communicate the BIO quality through the marking “product of organic farming”, which is permitted by legislation. While obtaining BIO certification would undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of XY’s marketing communication of sustainability, it is currently not a relevant pursuit for the company (XY’s marketing manager, 2023).

It should be noted that XY and the majority of its competitors are keen on selling Fair Trade products. More comprehensive information about the principles of Fair Trade and BIO production can be found in blog articles on the websites of XY and its competitors.

10.4 Summary of competitors’ marketing communication of sustainability

All the mentioned companies strive to showcase and promote their sustainability commitments through their marketing communication. However, each company has opted for different approaches to address sustainability and how to present it. Generally, companies that aim to promote healthy eating can prioritize certain areas such as sourcing, packaging,

offering plant-based products, reducing waste in the supply chain, and obtaining eco-labels and certifications.

In terms of sustainable packaging, Grizly, and Aktin stand out for their efforts, offering eco-packaging without the use of plastics for a fee. While most companies use plastic or glass resealable packaging, Mixit is the only exception, using paper tubes that contain plastic packaging inside to prevent moisture and maintain the quality of the raw material. XY uses plastic packaging for its products and focuses on educating its customers about the quality of the product and packaging.

In response to the growing demand for plant-based foods, companies in the food industry, including XY and its competitors, are expanding their offerings to include more plant-forward products. XY competes in this area by offering plant-based jerky. While Aktin, Koro, and XY actively promote themselves as advocates of clean eating, which involves using raw materials with a simple composition and no additives, added sugar, or preservatives and offering plant-based protein products.

In addition, companies in food industry are also prioritizing waste reduction in supply chain. This involves finding ways to minimize waste generated during production and distribution, as well as reducing food waste at the retail and consumer levels. While most companies prioritize supporting local products, XY places greater emphasis on quality rather than locality, although it has created a special category of locally produced products.

What is more, XY's competitors offer more BIO products and actively promote them as part of their sustainability marketing communication. To improve its sustainability efforts, XY could consider owning a separate warehouse for BIO products and educating its customers about the sustainability of its packaging. What is more, if XY were able to communicate the BIO quality of its products (since it already sells some of them), it would significantly enhance the context of marketing communication of sustainability, particularly in terms of its social and environmental aspects. If the products are certified as BIO, XY has the opportunity to include the BIO label in their sustainability marketing efforts. This would entail incorporating the label in product names, descriptions, and icons on product sheets or packaging.

In conclusion, the food industry is shifting towards more sustainable practices in sourcing, packaging, and product offerings. Companies such as XY and its competitors are prioritizing renewable agriculture, reducing waste in the supply chain, and obtaining eco-labels and certifications. Sustainable packaging options are being developed, and plant-based alternatives are being offered to meet the demands of health-conscious and

environmentally-conscious consumers. While XY may have some areas for improvement, such as the lack of a separate warehouse for BIO products, they are actively committed to sustainability and continuously working towards enhancing their practices. As consumer demand for sustainability grows, companies in the food industry must continue to adapt and improve their sustainability efforts to meet this demand.

11 SUMMARY OF SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Company XY specializes in providing healthy nutrition products. They sell their products through their e-shop and six physical stores, with 85% of their sales coming from the e-shop. Their target customers are primarily young women aged 25-34 who value premium ingredients, as well as businesses in the gastronomy industry and packaging-free stores. The company places a high priority on using high-quality, additive-free raw materials and clear, recyclable plastic packaging. They offer a range of sizes and complimentary tastings with every purchase. The company's pricing strategy is influenced by the premium quality of its products and higher input costs, resulting in an average product margin of 35-40%.

The target audience of company XY primarily consists of economically active individuals who are interested in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, with a particular focus on women aged 25 to 45. Additionally, the company targets B2B audiences such as cafes, pastry shops, restaurants, health food stores, and package-free stores. The promotion is distributed through various communication tools to effectively reach these groups.

Company XY employs a variety of marketing strategies to promote its products, reduce waste, and maintain sustainability. They prefer online advertising over traditional forms of advertising due to its lower cost and higher efficiency. Personal selling is conducted through well-trained staff at physical stores and B2B collaborations. Sales promotions include free tastings, discounted products, and providing paper packaging to customers who bring their own packaging. What is more, the company undertakes public relations projects to support various socially significant projects related to sponsorship and corporate social responsibility. They primarily rely on online advertising through various types of ads, including content, search, and product ads, using Google Ads and Sklik advertising systems. Social media advertising is also used to engage with customers, and content marketing plays a significant role in promoting the company's products. The company's marketing strategies aim to promote the quality of the products rather than reducing waste, promoting sustainability, and raising awareness about socially significant issues.

In the Czech Republic's healthy nutrition market, company XY faces competition from several companies, including Grizly, Mixit, Aktin, Ochutnej ořech, Diana company, and Koro. Grizly offers a broad range of products, while Mixit allows customers to customize their orders. Aktin aims to establish itself as a leading player in the European sports nutrition market and has an active communication approach with its target audience.

Ochutnej ořech provides high-quality nuts and dried fruits with a focus on accessible pricing and promotions. Diana company has a lower quality of raw materials and limited sustainability communication, while Koro emphasizes sustainable sourcing and minimal packaging. Overall, Mixit, Aktin, Ochutnej ořech, and Koro adopt sustainability approaches in their strategies, which is in line with company XY's values.

The sustainability practices of company XY were compared with those of its competitors in the healthy food industry, with a focus on promoting sustainability through sourcing, packaging, offering plant-based products, reducing waste in the supply chain, and obtaining eco-labels and certifications. XY's competitors provide BIO products and promote them as part of their sustainability marketing communication. While XY also offers these products, they cannot include their sales in the company's sustainable activities due to the lack of a separate warehouse for BIO products. XY prioritizes quality over locality but recognizes the growing interest of customers in local products and has created a special category of locally produced products. Grizly and Aktin stand out for their sustainable packaging efforts, which they actively promote on their blog and website. Regarding plant-based products, Aktin, Koro, and Mixit offer a wider range of plant-based alternatives and high-protein foods. Overall, sustainability practices in sourcing, packaging, and plant-based products are emphasized by XY and all its competitors, with each company paying attention on different areas. However, since most of these companies offer raw materials from all over the world (except Aktin), sustainability communication is partly more in the background to avoid greenwashing.

12 RESEARCH

The situational analysis is followed by primary research. This will take the form of a quantitative questionnaire survey, which follows the data obtained from qualitative research (interview) with the marketing manager of company XY.

12.1 Participant selection

The main source of data collection is the subscribers of company XY's newsletter, who are primarily current or potential customers. The company's e-shop serves as the primary sales channel and has an email database of these contacts. Initially, the company's sustainability attitudes, and communication are determined through a semi-structured interview with the marketing manager. Subsequently, a quantitative questionnaire survey is conducted to determine the opinions, and attitudes of customers on this issue. Out of all registered B2C contacts, 40,385 contacts were contacted, which is half of the total. The remaining half of the contacts were used for other research purposes, utilizing A/B testing to avoid overwhelming subscribers.

The open rate of XY company emails is 23%, so it can be assumed that approximately 9,300 subscribers will receive the questionnaire. The segment of current and potential customers was selected to create a representative sample of respondents who have at least a basic understanding of company XY and its marketing communications.

12.2 Interview

The data was obtained, and the questionnaire survey questions were verified using the qualitative interview method. The interview was conducted with the marketing manager of company XY, who is responsible for the company's marketing communication, including communication on sustainable topics. The interview helped determine the company's attitudes towards sustainability and the channels, methods, or forms of communication used. The output from the interview was used to create the questionnaire, which was sent to a larger sample of current and potential customers. The interview output is available in the thesis appendix (*Appendix P I*).

12.2.1 Summary of qualitative research

Initially, it was essential to determine the attitudes of company XY towards sustainability and the role sustainability plays in its marketing communication. It was found that while sustainability is considered important, it is not the primary marketing USP communicated by the company. Instead, the focus is on the quality of the product and packaging, with sustainability being a secondary consideration. The company aims to avoid being seen as a greenwashing company and thus avoids making sustainability the focus of its marketing communication.

Subsequently, it was crucial to investigate how customers perceive the current marketing communication of sustainable topics from the company's perspective and how it approaches the distribution of such communication within individual target groups. According to the interview, customers hold various assumptions about the company's marketing communication on sustainability, with the most significant one being the belief that glass or paper packaging is always more sustainable than plastic. The company targets women between the ages of 25 and 45, who are often mothers and responsible for making food decisions in the family. The main target group is health-focused, with sustainability being a secondary concern. Nonetheless, the company is gradually shifting its focus towards targeting a broader audience, which includes Generation Z, a demographic known for their keen interest in sustainability.

Consequently, the interview centered on the obstacles that XY encounters in its marketing communication of sustainability, as well as strategies that the company can employ to enhance its customers' access to and comprehension of this subject. The main barrier the company faces when communicating sustainability to its target audience is that sustainability is not the primary concern for many of its customers. The company ensures that its sustainability marketing communication is accessible and easy to understand by providing articles on important topics. Overall, while the company considers sustainability important, it is not the primary focus of its marketing communication.

The responses obtained were then utilized to refine and organize the questions included in the questionnaire survey.

12.3 Questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey followed qualitative research (semi-structured interview) with the marketing manager of company XY. Half (due to A/B testing with another

questionnaire) of the historically registered B2C subscribers were contacted, which amounted to 40,385 contacts. The open rate was approximately 17% with a click-through rate of 1.25%. Customers were motivated to complete the questionnaire with a purchase discount reward. The total number of returned questionnaires was 454.

The questionnaire was structured into three sections. The first part focused on the respondents' general perspective on sustainability and its communication. This was followed by a section dedicated to the marketing communication of company XY's sustainable practices, aimed at gauging the respondents' opinions and attitudes towards this matter.

The third part of the questionnaire collected demographic data to segment the respondents. The research included potential customers who are already subscribers of XY's newsletter and therefore can be converted into current customers through marketing communication. The final sample size consisted of 450 respondents, with four respondents excluded due to incorrect answers to the control question, which tested their attentiveness while completing the questionnaire.

12.3.1 Analysis of quantitative research

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire gathered responses from a total of 450 participants, consisting of 365 females (81.1%) and 57 males (12.7%). The remaining 6.2% (28) chose not to disclose their gender. **Question 1** examines the purchasing behavior of the respondents towards company XY and categorizes them into current and potential customers. As shown in Figure 6, the major group, 277 respondents (61.6%), consists of customers who make purchases from company XY (both online and in-store) once every few months.

Out of the respondents who shop at the company once every few months, 87.2% were women. The largest group of women respondents were aged 35-44, with 91 respondents (20.2% of all respondents), followed by women aged 25-34 with 72 respondents (16% of all respondents). These segments also happen to be XY's strongest segments.

In contrast, only 1 respondent makes weekly purchases from company XY. The graph in Figure 6 also indicates that 10.4% of respondents (47) have not yet made a purchase from company XY, and therefore represent potential customers, because, in the past, they have shown interest in subscribing to XY's newsletter.

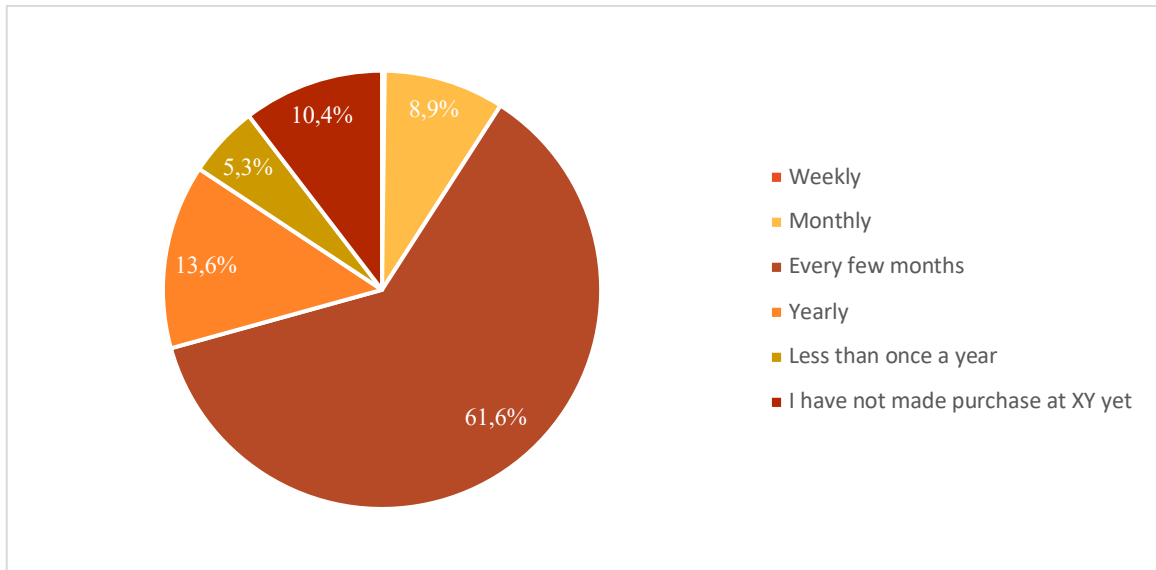


Figure 6: Frequency of purchases at company XY (author's own work)

The rate of purchases made by the participants aligns with the trend that XY company has noticed. Nevertheless, the company's ultimate objective is to establish a customer segment that will place regular orders every 4-6 weeks, while also increasing the average order value, which currently stands at approximately 1,300 CZK.

Question 2 focused on the perception of marketing communication, specifically on which type of marketing communication attracts respondents' attention the most. Respondents were given the option to choose from five multiple-choice possibilities or provide their own responses. Among the custom responses (18 respondents), the promotion of discounts dominated (2.2% out of 3.6%). However, the majority of respondents (80%) are primarily interested in the promotion of the quality of products and services, which corresponds to the main goal of current XY's communication strategy. The second most popular response was promoting sustainability and eco-friendliness of products, which attracted 31.6% of respondents (142).

Nevertheless, stories about the brand and products, as well as emphasizing the availability and added value of products and services, are also familiar to respondents, with each of these aspects attracting approximately 25% of them. The graph in Figure 7 illustrates the responses, specifically from current and potential customers. Among the 47 potential customers, most of them (64%) favor marketing communication that emphasizes the quality of products and services.

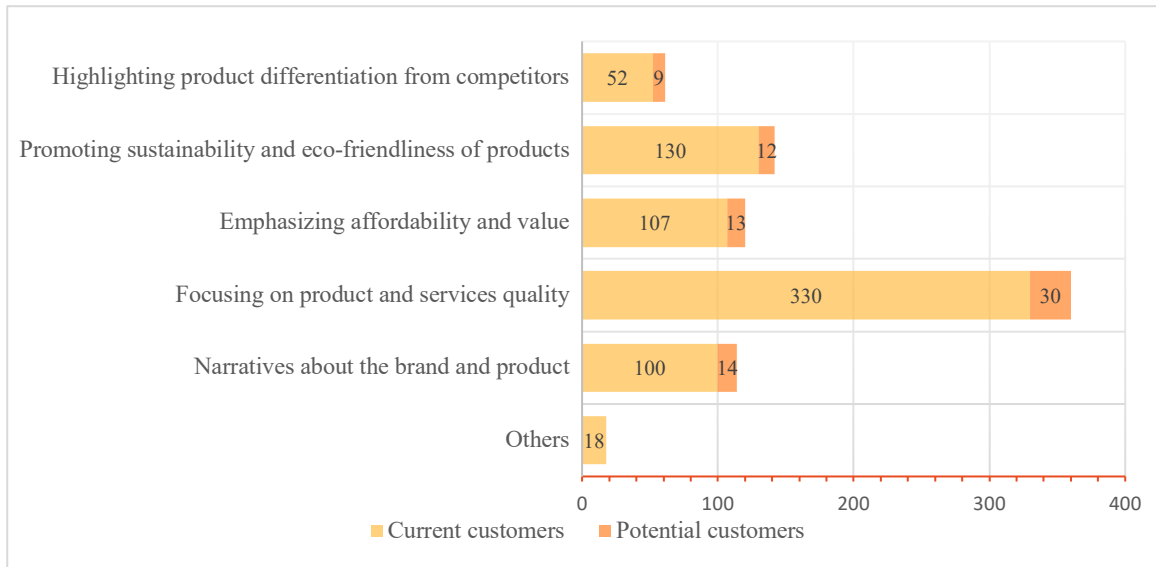


Figure 7: Most favorite forms of marketing communications (author’s own work)

Question 3 focused on participants' views on sustainability. They were given five options to choose from to describe their relationship with sustainability. The results showed that the majority of participants had a positive view towards sustainability. Specifically, 43.1% of the participants (194) mentioned that they prioritize sustainability and make an effort to reduce their environmental impact. Meanwhile, 39.8% of the participants (179) acknowledged the importance of sustainability but found it challenging to consistently integrate it into their daily routine.

The survey results also indicate that 6.2% of the respondents (28) do not consider sustainability a priority, while 7.8% of the respondents (35) do not have a strong opinion on the matter. Additionally, 3.1% of the respondents (14) mentioned that they are not very familiar with the concept of sustainability. Figure 8 captures the respondents’ attitude to sustainability.

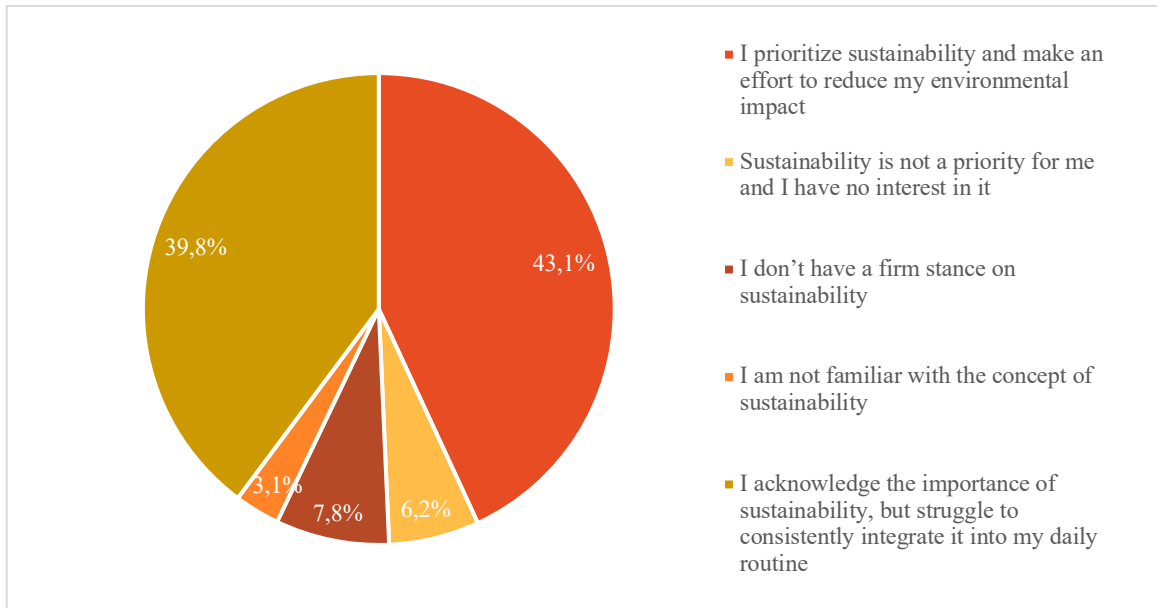


Figure 8: Relationship to sustainability (author's own work)

Question 4 focused on respondents' interest in environmentally friendly products. Figure 9 shows that 80.2%, the vast majority of respondents (361), are interested in environmentally friendly products, while only 7.1% of respondents (32) are not. A total of 12.7% (57) of respondents did not wish to state whether they were interested in environmentally friendly products.

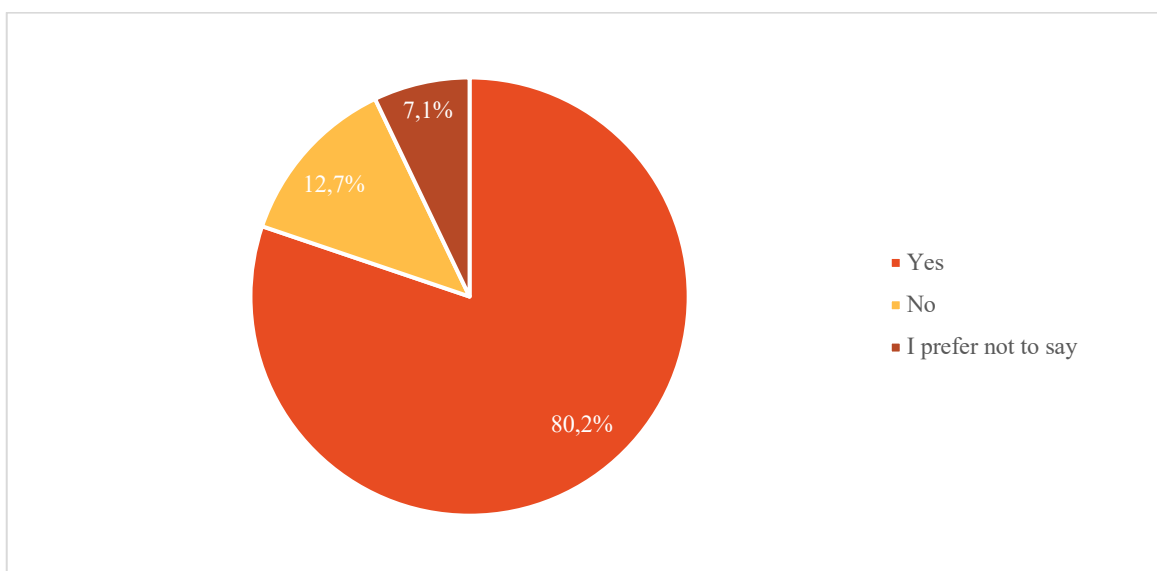


Figure 9: Interest in environmentally friendly products (author's own work)

Question 5 inquired about the frequency of purchasing eco-friendly or sustainable products among the respondents. They were given three options to choose from, which

categorized them based on their purchasing habits. The results showed that almost half of the respondents (49.8%) purchase such products more than 10 times a year, indicating that eco-friendly products are a regular part of their monthly shopping. What is more, 19.8% of respondents (89) purchase sustainable products 5-9 times a year, while 30.4% of respondents (137) buy environmentally friendly or sustainable products 1-4 times a year. The responses of the participants are illustrated in Figure 10.

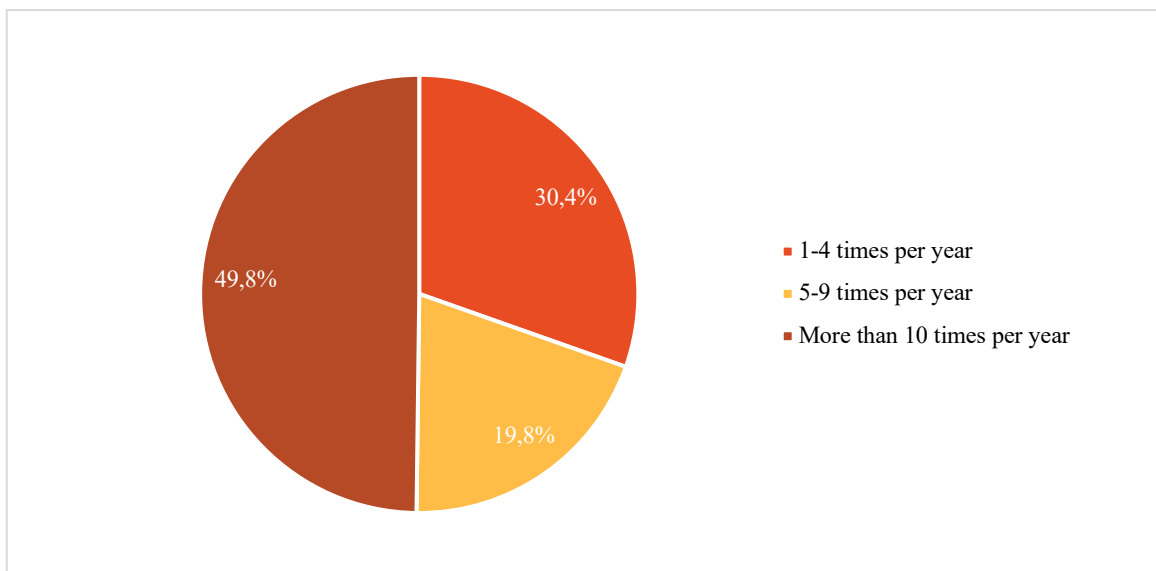


Figure 10: Frequency of purchasing environmentally friendly/sustainable products (author's own work)

Question 6 asked participants about the importance of sustainability in their purchasing decisions. The results showed that 67.3% of the respondents consider sustainability important when making a purchase. Out of this, 8.4% of the respondents (38) consider sustainability to be very important, while 58.9% of the respondents (265) consider it rather important. Furthermore, 20.9% of the respondents (94) were unsure about how sustainability relates to their purchasing decisions. Only 11.7% of the respondents (53) considered sustainability unimportant when making a purchase, with only 1.3% of them considering it very unimportant. Therefore, it is efficient for XY to pay attention to sustainable topics, which is not only because sustainability is important to the majority of current and potential customers when making a purchase, but also because there is still an opportunity to influence the opinion of the 20% of respondents who are unsure about their relationship to sustainability. The responses are captured in the graph in Figure 11. By

engaging them with sustainability marketing communication, it is possible for company XY to convert them into customers who prioritize sustainability.

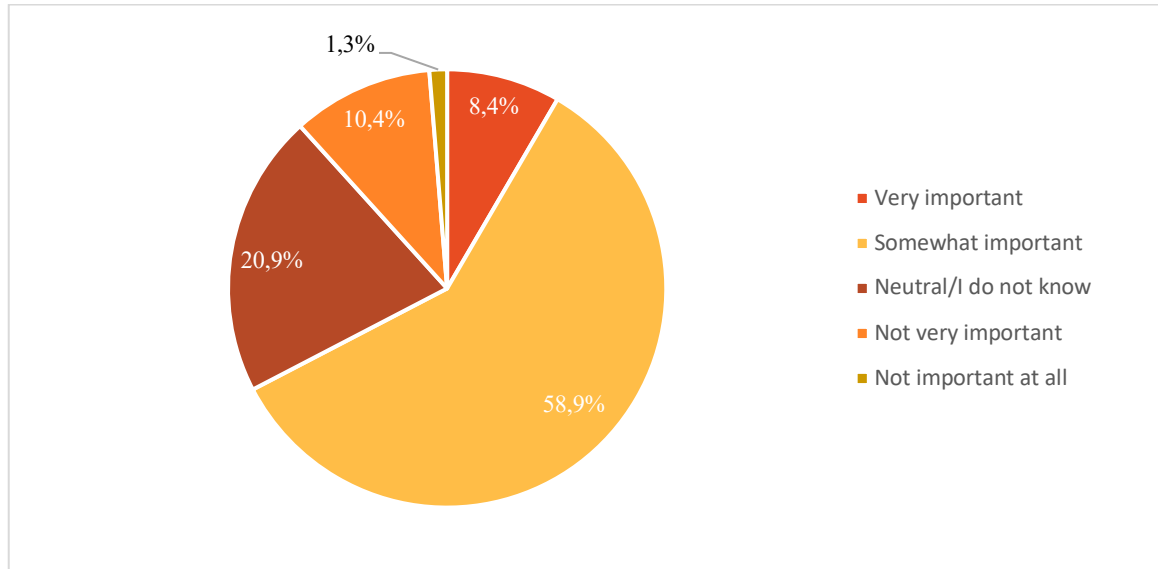


Figure 11: Importance of sustainability when shopping (author's own work)

Moreover, the survey focused on participants' preference for consistent elements in sustainability marketing communication. **Question 7** was multiple-choice and semi-closed, with respondents given five prominent options for sustainability marketing communication to choose from, as well as the opportunity to provide their own answer about their preference for marketing communication related to this topic.

It was found that 84.7% of respondents prefer sustainability communication that is linked to the support of local suppliers. Additionally, 64.7% of customers (260 current and 31 potential customers) prefer marketing communication that focuses on the use of eco-friendly packaging. What is more, 42% of respondents (170 current and 19 potential customers) seek communication of sustainable products that are supported by certificates. Renewable energy sources are also of interest to some customers, with 28.9% of respondents (114 current and 16 potential customers) indicating an interest in this area. The respondents are least interested in communication about the reduction of greenhouse gases (21.8%). In the open response section, customers also expressed an interest in marketing communication that focuses on not testing on animals, not damaging the environment at the point of production, ESG filling, and returnable packaging material. The graph in Figure 12 shows all the responses.

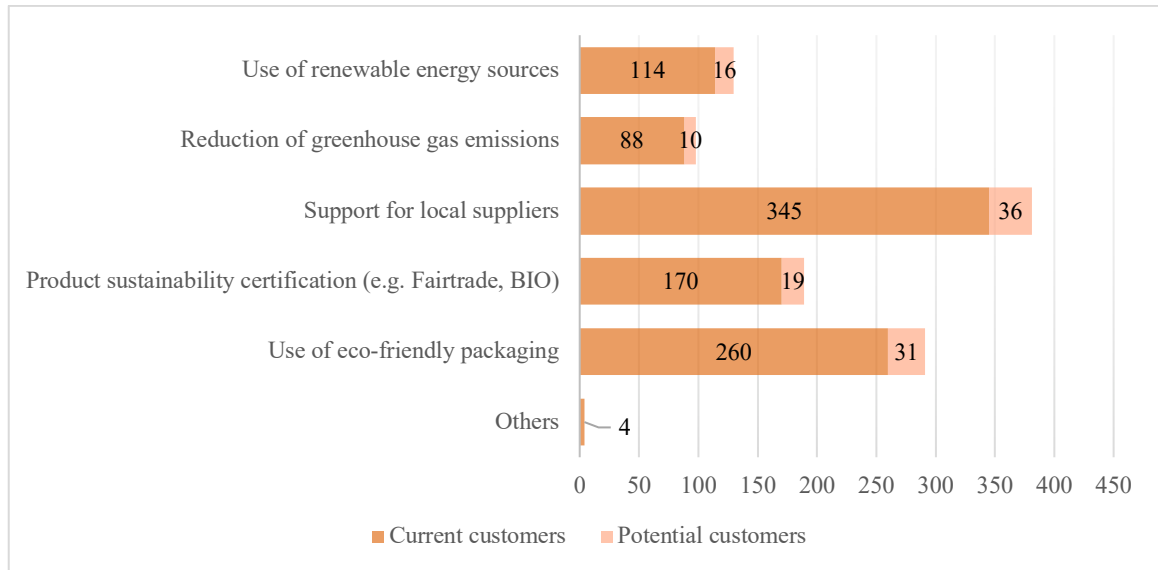


Figure 12: Preference of elements of sustainability in marketing communication (author's own work)

What is more, the survey focused on whether participants considered company XY to be sustainable. The results of **Question 8** in Figure 13 shows that 54.7% of the respondents (246) considered XY to be sustainable, but only 8.7% of the respondents (39) considered it to be highly sustainable. The question also revealed that 42.4% of the respondents (191) were unsure whether to consider XY as sustainable, with only 19.4% of the respondents (37) who had not yet made a purchase from XY. This raises the question of whether XY is communicating its sustainability initiatives effectively. Fortunately, only 2.9% of the respondents (13) considered XY to be unsustainable.

The survey also included an open **Question 9** asking why respondents rated XY as an unsustainable company. The responses could be summarized into three areas: the use of plastic packaging (17 responses), the large carbon footprint created by importing raw materials from around the world (8 responses), and the lack of communication about sustainability initiatives by XY (3 responses). In connection with the use of plastic packaging, respondents also often mention the inability of reusing this packaging, for example, at home.

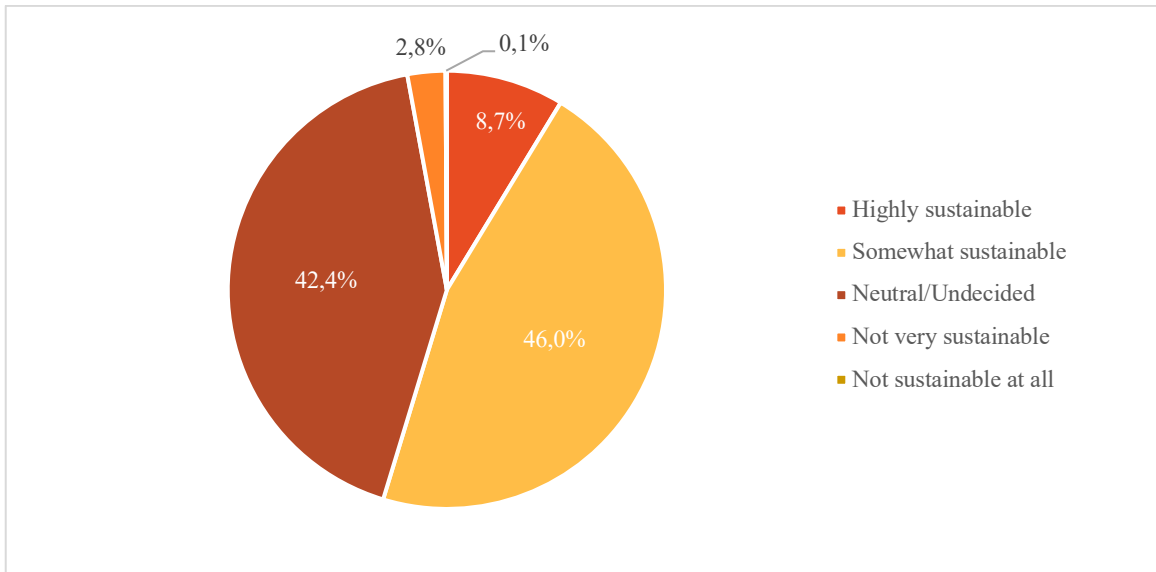


Figure 13: Evaluation of sustainability of company XY (author’s own work)

Furthermore, **Question 10** asked participants to rate XY's marketing communication regarding sustainability. The results in Figure 14 show that 55.1% of the respondents (248) rated XY's marketing communication positively, with 22.2% (100) rating it very well. However, 30.9% of the respondents (139) evaluated XY's sustainability marketing communication neutrally or were unsure how to evaluate it. Out of these, 75.5% were current customers. Additionally, another 12.4% of the respondents (56) rated XY's marketing communication as average, and only 1.6% of the respondents considered the company's marketing communication to be poor.

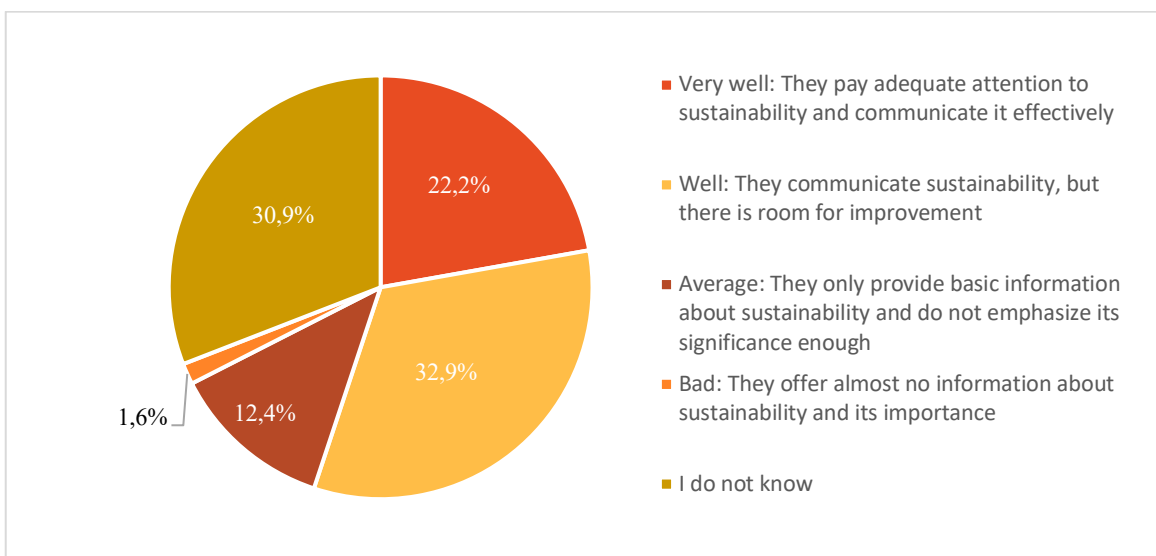


Figure 14: Evaluation of sustainability marketing communication of company XY (author’s own work)

The previous question raised **Question 11** focusing on whether XY's marketing communication's messages are clear to the respondents. The results showed that 15.8% of the respondents (71) found XY's marketing communication to be very clear, while 35.8% of the respondents (161) found it to be rather clear. However, a significant 45.3% of the respondents (204) considered XY's sustainability marketing communication to be neutral or were unsure how to rate it. Only 3.1% of the respondents (14) found XY's communication of sustainable topics to be unclear. These results raise the question of whether company XY is effectively communicating its sustainable initiatives, as 48.4% of the respondents (218) found the marketing communication of the company to be neutral or unclear. Out of this group, 18.8% were potential customers. Figure 15 displays the clarity of XY's sustainability marketing communication as perceived by the respondents.

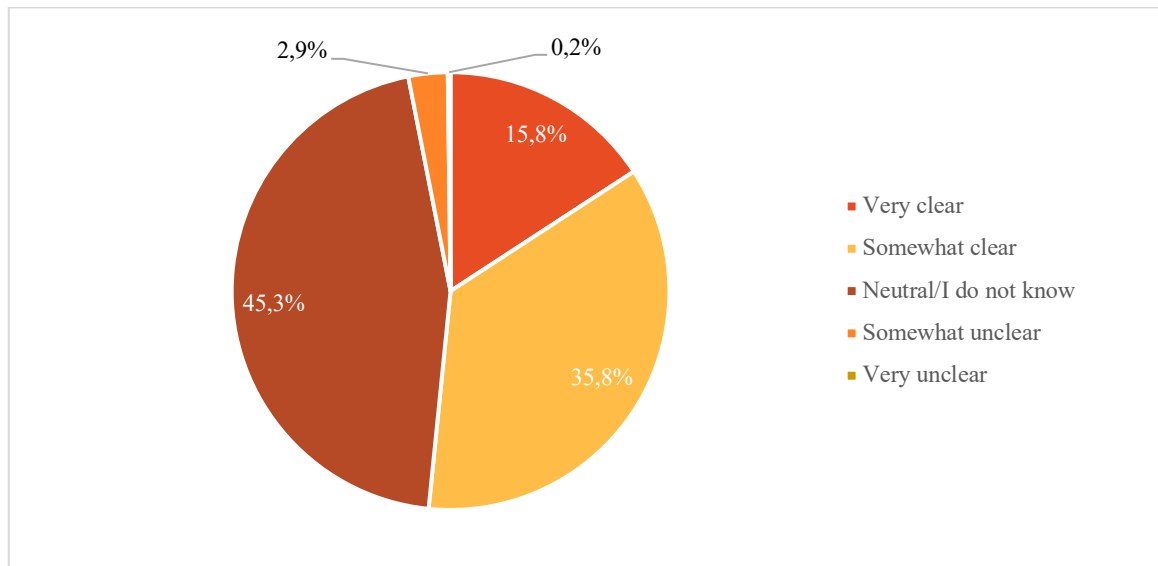


Figure 15: Evaluation of clarity of sustainability marketing communication of company XY (author's own work)

The **Question 12** investigated how respondents perceived sustainable practices in XY's marketing communication. They were given a total of seven closed answers to choose from, as well as an open answer where they could state their own observations about sustainability practices at XY. Respondents were allowed to choose any number of answers. In Figure 16, the responses of the company's current and potential customers are highlighted. Two answers were chosen by more than half of the respondents: support for purchasing larger product packages (52.2% of respondents) and sale of products approaching their minimum consumption date at a discount (53.8% of respondents). What is more, the use of

recyclable packaging was noted by 32.4% of respondents (138 current and 8 potential customers), and the support of local farmers and suppliers was noted by 26.7% of respondents (111 current and 9 potential customers). Only 21.1% of respondents (91 current and 4 potential) were aware of the possibility of purchasing in their own packaging. Moreover, 10.4% of respondents (47) did not notice any of the mentioned sustainable practices in XY's marketing communication, with 42.6% being current and 57.4% potential customers of XY. In other communications, the company has emphasized its commitment to selecting high-quality products and packaging to prevent spoilage.

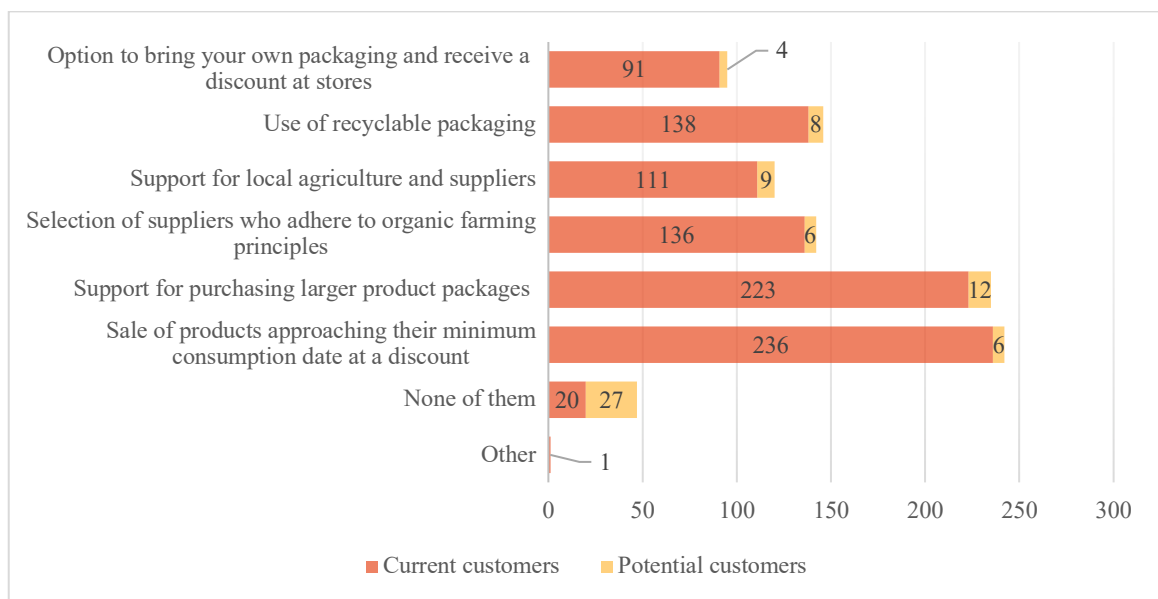


Figure 16: Perception of sustainable practices in marketing communication of company XY (author’s own work)

To identify the weaknesses in XY's sustainability marketing communication, respondents were given a semi-closed question with multiple answers regarding different types of sustainability communication (**Question 13**). Respondents were able to select any number of answers to indicate what sustainability information they felt was missing from company XY. Figure 17 displays the responses to this question.

It was found that the majority of customers (159 current and 27 potential) do not lack any of the mentioned information within the marketing communication of the XY company. Of these 186 respondents, only 41 (22%) stated in another question that they were not interested in environmentally friendly or sustainable products. Regarding sustainable practices, 30.9% of respondents (130 current and 9 potential customers) felt that information

on cooperation with local suppliers was lacking. Another 22.2% of respondents (94 current and 6 potential customers) felt that information about efforts to reduce waste at XY was missing, and 23.1% of respondents (95 current and 9 potential customers) felt that information about the use of recyclable materials was lacking. A total of 20.2% of respondents (82 current and 9 potential customers) were not interested in information about the support of sustainable agriculture, which was missing from XY's marketing communication. Details about energy sources (11.1%) and the effort to reduce greenhouse gases (10.4%) were among the information that respondents least missed in the company's marketing communication. Respondents also had the option to provide additional information that they felt was missing from the company's marketing communication. However, a total of 14 respondents stated that they did not know enough about the company's sustainability marketing communication to be able to rate it.

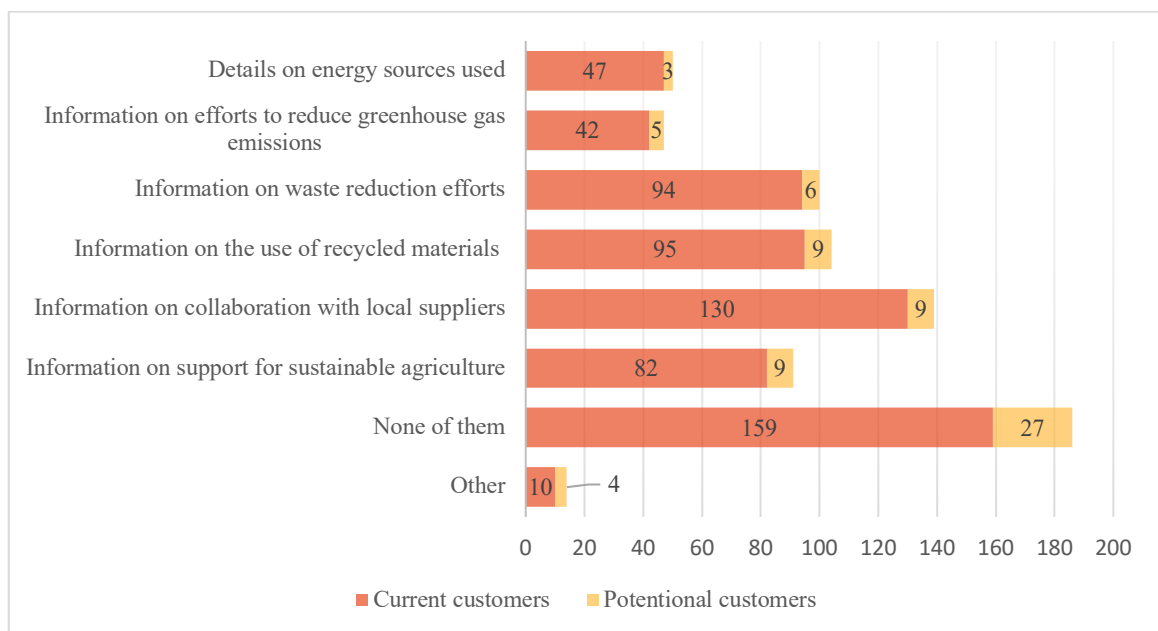


Figure 17: Missing information on sustainability in XY's marketing communication (author's own work)

In the **Question 14**, the respondents were asked to suggest ways to enhance XY's marketing communications. They were given the option to choose from semi-closed responses that listed the seven most important methods to support sustainability marketing communications. Additionally, they were provided with an open-ended response where they could share their own ideas to improve XY's marketing communications. The graph in Figure 18 illustrates the feedback provided by the respondents.

According to the question, the results showed that 40.7% of the respondents (157 regular and 26 potential customers) would like to see an increase in brand sustainability awareness through social media and website. Additionally, 33.3% of the respondents (133 current and 17 potential customers) would appreciate the better promotion of recycling and waste sorting. Similarly, 33.8% of the respondents (140 regular and 12 potential customers) would prefer more sustainability information on product packaging. Some respondents (14.7%) expressed interest in obtaining sustainability certification, while 26.7% (111 regular and 9 potential customers) were interested in expanding the range of sustainable products. Furthermore, 16.9% of the respondents suggested that XY company should collaborate with non-profit organizations that focus on environmental protection and social responsibility. Other responses (3.6%) indicated a desire for sustainability information to be available directly at XY company stores.

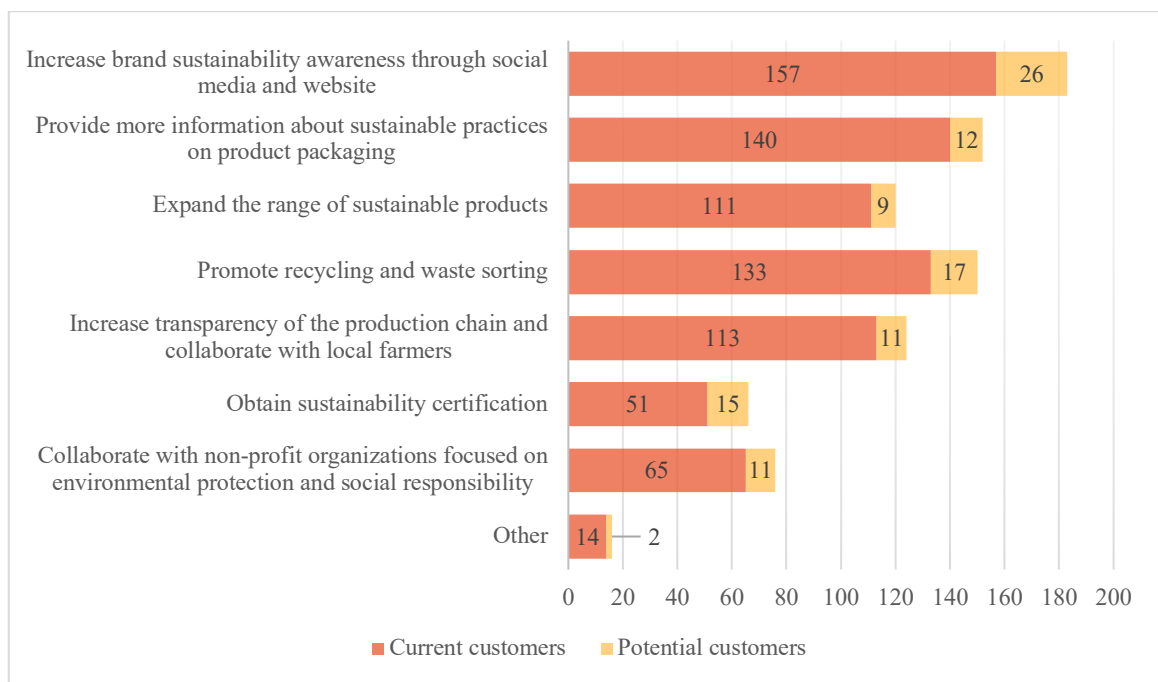


Figure 18: Improving sustainability marketing communication in company XY (author’s own work)

To assess the effectiveness of XY's marketing communication, **Question 15** was given to the respondents. The results in Figure 19 show that 49% of the respondents found the company's sustainable marketing communication to be effective, with 11% considering it very effective. However, 47% of the respondents (including only 8.4% of potential customers) had a neutral perception of XY's sustainability marketing communication or were

unsure how to evaluate it. On a positive note, only 3% of the respondents found the company's sustainability marketing communication to be somewhat ineffective, and only 1% found it to be very ineffective.

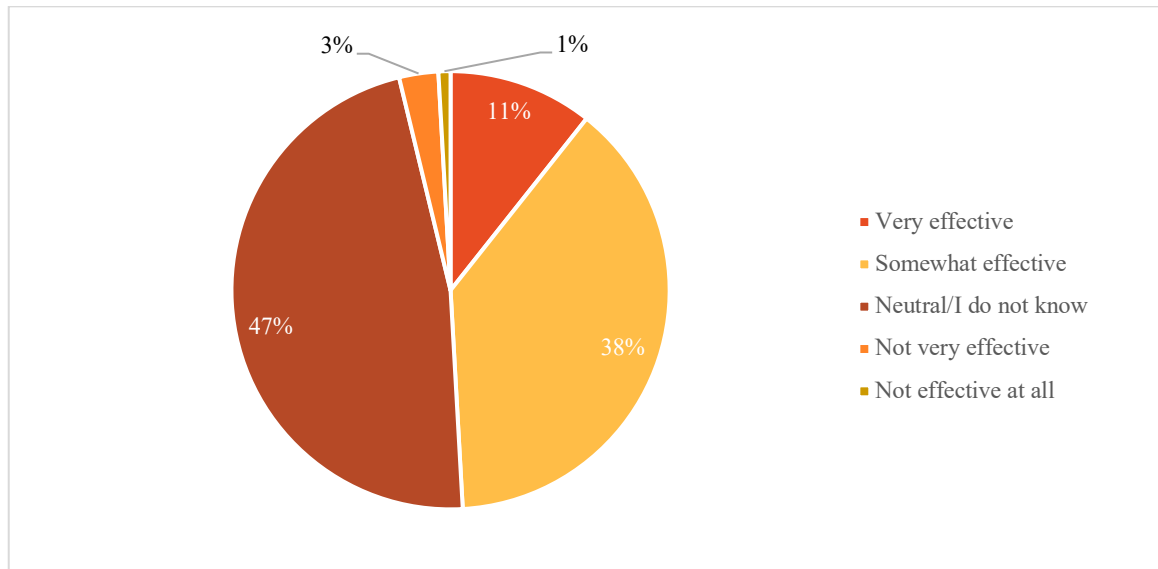


Figure 19: Assessing the effectiveness of XY's sustainability marketing communication (author's own work)

The questionnaire also included questions about the demographics of the respondents. The first question was about the gender of the respondents, which was already addressed earlier in the analysis (**Question 16**). The next question (**Question 17**) was a closed question about the age of the respondents. They were given seven options to choose from. The most common age groups were 25-34 years (32%) and 35-44 years (31%), which are also the target audience of XY company. Moreover, 12% of the respondents were aged 18-24, while 15% were aged 45-54. What is more, 8% of the respondents were aged 55-64, and only 2% were aged 65 and above. Figure 20 displays the age distribution of the respondents.

The analysis revealed that sustainable practices and their communication were particularly significant to younger customers (18-24 years old) and working-age customers (mostly 25-54 years old). However, for respondents over 55 years old, sustainability and its communication were not considered important topics. If they were, they often supported traditional topics such as the local origin of raw materials or recycling and sorting.

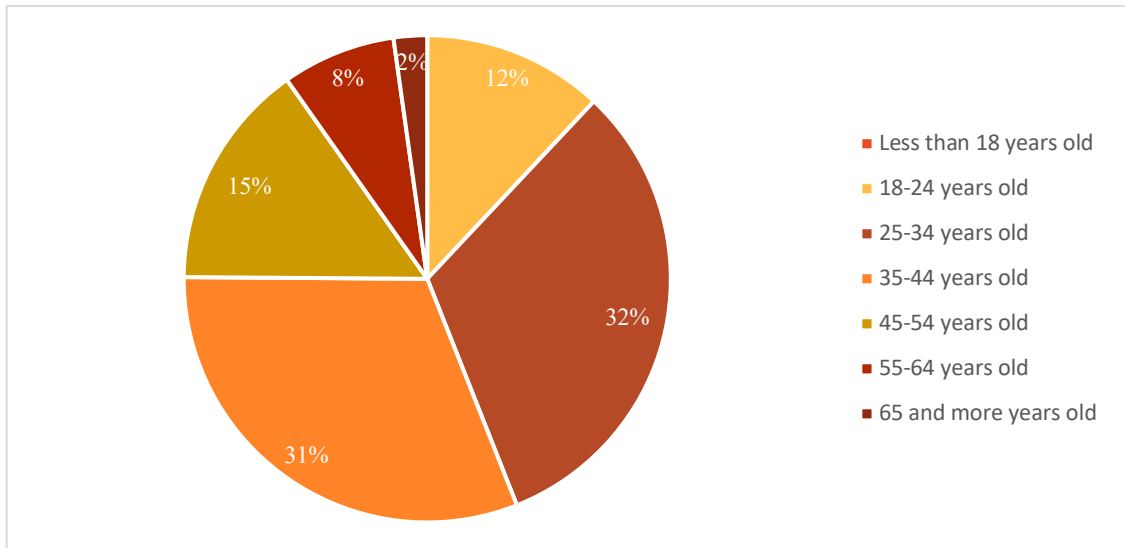


Figure 20: Respondents' age (author's own work)

Question 18 focused on the respondents' education levels. Respondents had a variety of educational backgrounds, with the largest group having a university degree. As shown in Figure 21, within this group, 18% held an undergraduate degree, 38% held a postgraduate or higher degree, and 8% held a doctorate or higher degree. The second largest group (28%) had a high school certificate, while the smallest group (1%) had only completed elementary school. Additionally, there were groups of respondents with vocational education (2%) and higher vocational education (5%).

The question revealed a significant proportion of respondents with a university education, indicating a diverse educational level among the respondents. The analysis revealed that the attitude towards sustainability and its communication by XY did not show significant differences across individual groups with different levels of education. The differences in attitudes towards sustainability and its communication by XY were found to be more noticeable in demographic data such as age and monthly income, rather than in the educational background.

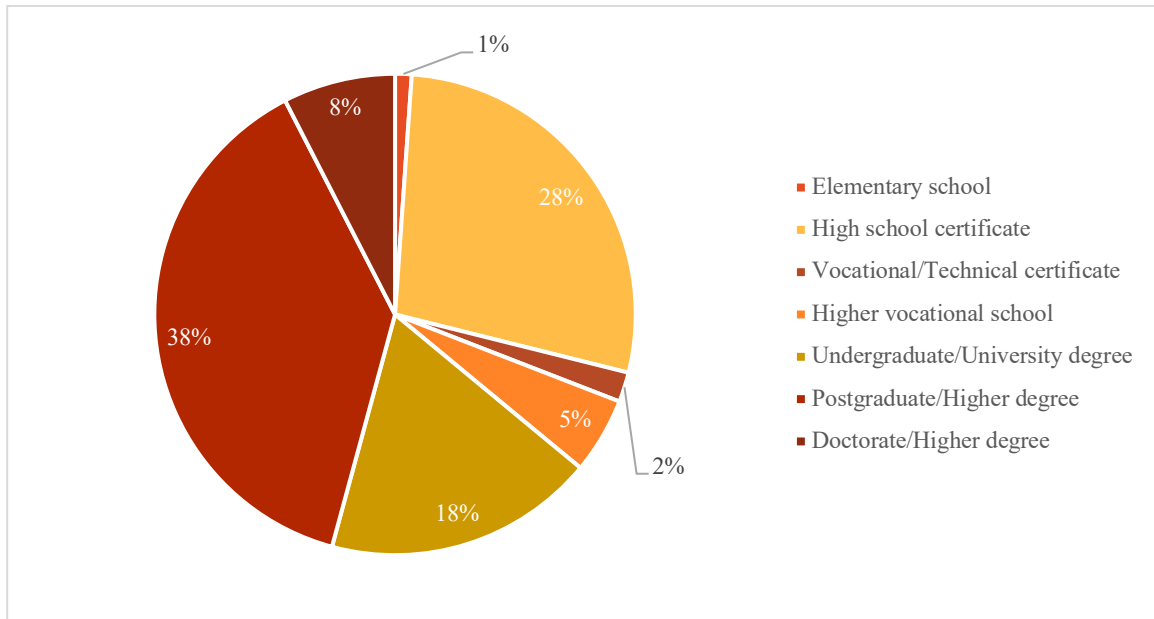


Figure 21: Highest level of education of respondents (author's own work)

The respondents' household income was divided into several groups, with varying numbers of individuals (**Question 19**). The largest group (26%) chose not to disclose their income, while the second largest group (26%) reported an income in the range of 20,000-39,999 CZK. Another similarly sized group (25%) reported an income in the range of 40,000-60,000 CZK. The smallest group of respondents (6%) reported an income of less than 20,000 CZK. Finally, 17% of the respondents reported an income of more than 60,000 CZK. The monthly household income of respondents is shown in Figure 22.

When compared to the previous questions, it is evident that households with higher incomes (above CZK 40,000) tend to purchase sustainable products more frequently, which corresponds to the often-higher prices of sustainable products. This group also includes the most respondents who buy sustainable products more than 10 times a year. On the other hand, households with lower incomes (below 20,000 CZK) are often interested in affordable ways to support sustainability, such as waste sorting, supporting local suppliers, and purchasing recyclable materials. As income increases, respondents become more interested in lesser-known forms of sustainability, such as supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, learning about energy sources, or supporting farmers who follow the principles of organic farming or have their own sustainability certification, which bring with them higher financial demands.

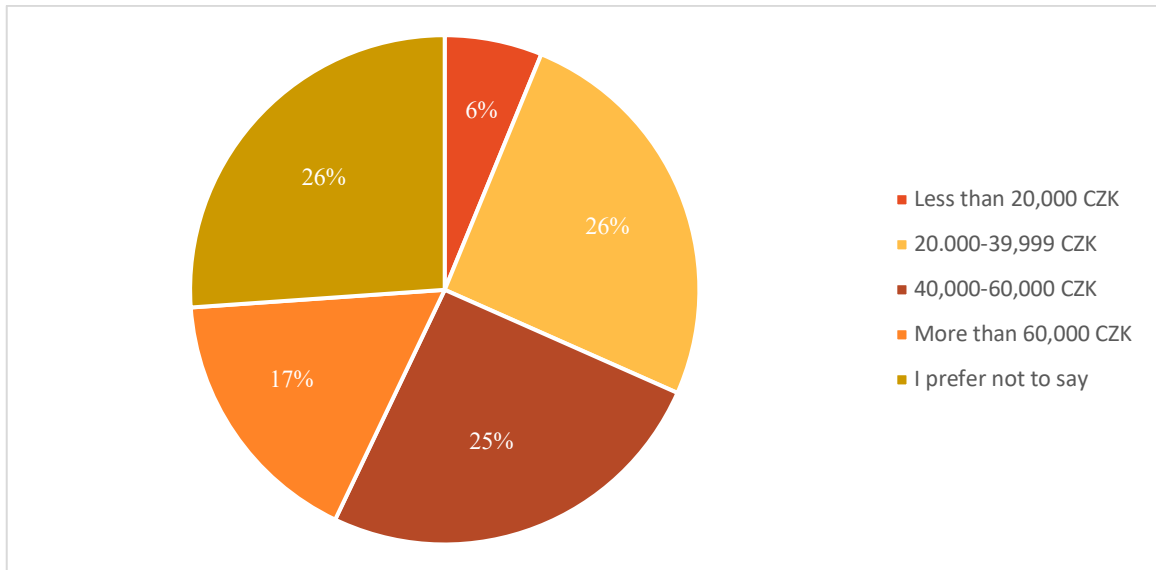


Figure 22: Monthly household income of respondents (author's own work)

12.3.2 Summary of quantitative research

The output of the questionnaire survey builds on the results of the qualitative research conducted with the marketing manager of XY company. The survey focuses on customer preferences, opinions, and attitudes towards sustainability, specifically XY company's macro marketing communication of sustainability. The majority of the respondents were regular customers who shop at XY company once every few months.

The results show that sustainability and environmental friendliness are the second most popular form of marketing communication among respondents, after communication of the quality of products and services. Respondents are often divided between those for whom sustainability and reducing the impact on the environment is a priority and those who sympathize with sustainability but find it challenging to integrate it into everyday life. However, the vast majority of respondents are interested in sustainable products.

Sustainability plays a significant role in purchasing decisions for most respondents, with half of them buying sustainable products more than 10 times a year. They prefer information about local suppliers, environmentally friendly packaging, and ecological certifications as part of sustainability marketing communication.

Half of the respondents rate XY company as sustainable, but almost half are unsure about its sustainability. This presents an opportunity for XY to capture this segment of existing and potential customers with its sustainable marketing communication. Approximately half of the respondents evaluate the marketing communication of XY

positively, while the rest are undecided, but only a small percentage evaluate it negatively. However, sustainability information disseminated by companies is often unclear to customers.

The respondents mainly associate XY's sustainability marketing communication with the sale of products with a minimum shelf life at a discount and the promotion of the sale of larger weight variants of products. However, there is not much widespread information about the possibility of purchasing one's packaging at XY stores with a discount or the support of local suppliers, which is rated as the most popular element of sustainability marketing communication among respondents. Respondents also lack information about waste reduction, support for sustainable agriculture, and recyclable materials.

Respondents prefer to learn about this information via social networks or the website. They also prefer information about recycling and sorting packaging and how to use product packaging. Additionally, they focus their interest on BIO certification of products and support of non-profit projects in the area of sustainability.

In conclusion, approximately half of the customers perceive XY's marketing communication of sustainability as effective, but a significant portion of them (both existing and potential) do not have a strong attitude towards the communication of sustainable topics by this company. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize clear communication of sustainability to capture the attention of these customers.

12.4 Limits of research

The limits of the research are mainly understood as the limitation of the sample set to the subscribers of the company XY's newsletter, to whom the questionnaire survey was sent. These subscribers include both current and potential customers of the company, in order to create a representative sample of respondents.

Furthermore, the research indicates a difference between the recipient of the marketing communication messages and the individual who makes the purchasing decision within the household. Lastly, the questionnaire also highlights the drawbacks of online surveys, which makes it impossible to verify the accuracy of the responses.

13 SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis (Table 8) links the findings of the situational analysis and primary research, providing an overview of the key strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T) of company XY focusing mainly on the marketing communication of sustainability.

Table 8: SWOT analysis of company XY (author's own work)

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Range of natural products with no additives, flavors, or added sugar	No sustainability communication on the products packaging
Cooperation with local suppliers	Ineffective use of TikTok for sustainability communication
Special category of local products	Low level of event marketing
Regular updating of product portfolio	Lack of education about sustainability within social networks
Fully recyclable and reusable eco-friendly packaging	Plastic packaging that customers perceive as unsustainable
Highly trained staff (also in the field of sustainability)	Lack of transparency in sustainability communication
Discounts on products that are approaching their minimum shelf life	No BIO certification
Support for the purchase of larger weight variants of products	No measure of the effectiveness of sustainability communication
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
New target group focusing on sustainability (Generation Z)	Lack of customers education and awareness about sustainability
The growing interest in organic food	Threat of greenwashing in inappropriate sustainability communication
The growing interest in packaging-free stores	Lack of quality local suppliers
Collaboration with influencers interested in sustainability	Lack of quality sustainable suppliers
The growing interest in sustainability from customers and companies	Increasing competition in sustainability
Organization and sponsorship of events related to sustainability	Stricter legislation in sustainability and its communication
Increasing transparency within the supply chain	Decrease in customers' interest in sustainability
Obtaining BIO certification	Small budget for sustainability promotion and marketing

13.1 Internal factors

Company XY has several internal factors that give it a competitive edge in the market. Its biggest strength is its range of natural products that are free from additives, flavors and added sugar. The company also collaborates with local suppliers and offers a special category of local products, which sets it apart from competitors. Another strength is the regular updating of its product portfolio and the use of fully recyclable and eco-friendly packaging. The highly trained staff, particularly in the field of sustainability, is also a significant advantage for the company. However, the company also faces weaknesses such as the absence of sustainable communication on product packaging, low levels of sustainability promotion on social media, poor event marketing, lack of transparency in sustainability communication, and a lack of sustainability certification. Furthermore, many customers consider plastic packaging as unsustainable, which leads to the company itself being viewed as unsustainable.

13.2 External factors

In terms of external factors, the company has many opportunities in the area of sustainability. It can focus on a new target group - Generation Z - which is more environmentally conscious. There is also a growing interest in organic food and packaging-free stores. Collaboration with sustainability-minded influencers and the organization of events related to sustainability are other opportunities for the company. However, the company must also address threats such as the lack of education and awareness among customers about sustainability, the possibility of greenwashing in inappropriate sustainability communication (XY actively communicates that sources products from all over the world), the lack of quality local and sustainable suppliers, increasing competition in sustainability, stricter legislation regarding sustainability and its communication, decreasing customer interest in sustainability, and a small budget for sustainability promotion and marketing.

14 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: *What is the current state of marketing communication of sustainability for company XY?*

XY's marketing communication is dominated by online communication, including content marketing, social media, and PPC systems. Direct marketing and sales promotion are also used, primarily through the store environment and email marketing. Paid or barter cooperation within the framework of influencer marketing or events supporting a healthy lifestyle is also a significant element of the communication mix.

XY has defined basic target groups, including people interested in quality products and lifestyle, athletes, dieters, productive people, mothers with children, and B2B target groups such as packaging-free stores and pastry chefs. Although the company is aware of the increased interest in sustainability, it has not targeted its communication to the segment of customers preferring sustainability, primarily due to concerns about greenwashing. What is more, the company is currently placing the communication of the quality of its raw materials higher in importance than sustainability.

Compared to its competitors, company XY has limited sustainability communication due to the absence of BIO certification, which is a well-known indicator of sustainable practices. However, it has a sufficient range of plant-based product alternatives and is reasonably transparent in terms of communication within the supply chain. XY's marketing communications are consistent and supported by relevant information and resources.

RQ2: *How can the company XY adjust its marketing communication to better convey sustainability?*

To enhance its sustainable practices and attract a new segment of sustainably-minded customers, XY can prioritize transparent communication of its sustainable practices, supported by credible sources. This can be achieved by creating a new category of sustainable products, which will complement the existing category of local products. To support product sustainability, XY can also test customer interest in sustainable product packaging, both for primary and secondary packaging. Customers have expressed dissatisfaction with the plastic packaging used by XY, so exploring more sustainable alternatives is recommended.

To make information on sustainable activities more accessible, XY can provide clear details on the product sheets of raw materials and on the blog, which will now include a category of articles communicating sustainability. Email marketing can be used to spread awareness of these articles and build a database of sustainable customers. Social media can also play an important role in improving sustainability marketing communication. Topics that are important to customers, such as sorting materials, use of product packaging, information on local suppliers, and sustainable agriculture, can be communicated. Event marketing can serve as a tool for communicating XY's sustainable practices with the public. However, it is important to be consistent and moderate in the communication of sustainability to avoid overwhelming the audience and greenwashing.

III. PROJECT

15 SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING COMMUNICATION PROJECT

The theoretical part of the thesis presented the fundamental principles for communicating sustainable topics. In the practical section, an internal analysis of the company was conducted, along with an evaluation of all factors that influence the marketing communication of sustainable topics. Additionally, XY's sustainability marketing communication was benchmarked against its closest competitors. The analysis was supplemented by a qualitative interview with the company's marketing manager on the topic of communication of the company's reliability, followed by quantitative research of existing and potential customers in the form of an online questionnaire, which was sent through the email database of the company XY's contacts.

The marketing communication strategy for sustainable topics will be designed to consider the company's current marketing and communication mix, while also optimizing and supplementing them with areas that have untapped potential. It will also aim to address the needs and desires of customers.

The project's main objective is to enhance communication activities in the **e-shop**, **social networks**, and **event marketing**. This optimization is deemed necessary based on the analytical findings of the thesis. The second part of the project aims to create marketing collaborations that target a new segment – **sustainable consumers**, thereby supporting and increasing the number of existing marketing collaborations.

15.1 Objectives of communication strategy

Based on the data provided, the primary objectives of sustainability marketing communication are:

- **to inform the market about XY's sustainable practices** - reaching out to existing and an additional 30,000 potential customers within the first 3 months of sustainability communication.
- **to generate interest in sustainability among the target group** - driving traffic to the new category of sustainable products with a minimum of 1,000 impressions per day within the first 3 months of sustainability communication.
- **to motivate the target group to purchase sustainable products** - generating at least 15 purchases per day from the category of sustainable products while maintaining a minimum 10% PNO within the first 3 months of sustainability communication.

15.2 Project for enhancing sustainability marketing communication

15.2.1 E-shop

XY's e-shop currently prioritizes product-oriented content, with sustainability communication taking a backseat. To address this, the project suggests adding a “sustainable products” category to the secondary menu of the e-shop. The success of this category will be monitored, and if it performs well, it can be moved to the primary menu. This category will include the already popular “local products” category and expand the emphasis on sustainable practices in the selection of raw materials. The new “sustainable products” category would include subcategories such as:

- **local products,**
- **package-free products** (e.g., bars without packaging, which XY already sells),
- **larger product weight variants** (to save packaging material),
- **certified products** (BIO, Fair-trade, etc.),
- **zero-waste products** (to test interest in products in ecologically degradable packaging).

Specifically, the zero-waste products subcategory would feature a selection of 10 bestsellers packaged in environmentally friendly (degradable) primary packaging, with adjusted prices. The interest and marketability of this new packaging would be monitored. If successful, the possibility of expanding ecological packaging to other products or adding an “ecological packaging” label to all products would be considered. Only raw materials that are not affected by this type of packaging would be selected. Customers would have the option to choose ecologically degradable packaging for an additional fee. The option to pack the entire order ecologically (secondary layer) would also be added to the basket for an additional fee, with the possibility of reusing already used boxes. This approach would avoid potential complaints from customers who have had issues with reused boxes in the past.

Blog

To improve education related to sustainability communication, the project plans to publish one article per month on the topic of sustainable practices on XY's blog. These articles will be labeled “sustainability” to simplify customer navigation on the blog. The first few articles will focus on XY's sustainable practices, followed by popular sustainability-related topics. Suggested topics for the first few articles include:

- *Local products – why they are important and how to find them,*
- *How to buy dried fruit and nuts sustainably – tips and tricks,*
- *Advantages and disadvantages of bulk packaging – how to choose the right packaging for sustainable shopping,*
- *Sustainable recipes with nuts and dried fruits – how to use raw materials fully and minimize waste,*
- *Seasonal fruits and nuts – how to contribute to sustainability by buying in season.*

Compelling articles that can draw visitors to the website can be promoted on Facebook as sponsored posts. All blog posts should be composed at a level that is supported by scientific evidence from professional sources or authorities to enhance their credibility and value to readers. Nevertheless, expertise should not be prioritized over engagement and entertainment, as this may discourage readers.

Emailing

Newsletter subscribers will have the option to subscribe to blog articles related to sustainability, which will be sent directly to their email addresses through regular newsletters. To avoid sending unsolicited or irrelevant emails, subscribers must click this option when providing their contact information. The newsletter will include a click-through on products from the “sustainable products” category, along with a time-limited discount on products in the category. Subscribers will be motivated to sign up for the newsletter by the opportunity to buy products in degradable packaging at a reduced price (with the help of a discount code sent as part of the welcome email after subscribing to the newsletter).

Product content

The product sheets of individual raw materials will now include information on sustainability. Products that meet sustainability criteria will be labeled as “sustainable products” and will have bullet points placed directly below the product name and annotations, highlighting the reasons for their sustainability. An infographic will also be added to the product sheets as a separator, featuring sustainability topics associated with the specific product. The infographic design is as follows:

- **sustainable packaging** (use of raw materials that offer this option),

- **local product** (the route of the raw material through the Czech Republic marked with the place of origin),
- **reduction of water consumption** (for lyophilized fruit that is already dried at the place of cultivation and collection),
- **social responsibility** (for products meeting Fair-Trade principles).

In addition, the basic specifications of products will include information about the specific supplier. As a part of a competitive struggle, so far only at the local products' level. The name of the supplier can be supplemented with information that it is published for the reason that company XY supports quality Czech suppliers and increases transparency within the supply chain.

Efforts will be also made in searching and for listing new sustainable products, with the objective of having a minimum of 30% of the products meet sustainability standards. If there is an increase in demand for these products, their proportion will be gradually increased.

15.2.2 Social media

Sustainability communication activities will be also carried out on social media platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The aim is to provide customers with information from legitimate sources based on facts. The primary goal is to educate and inform customers, with entertainment being a secondary objective in some cases. The format of sustainability-related posts will be tailored to the specific social media platform and its target audience.

Facebook

Facebook will be used to share emerging blog articles on sustainability. To avoid overwhelming followers, sustainability-related posts will be limited to once a week. However, this topic will be presented on regular basis. In addition to blog articles, posts will also include news about sustainable products in the range, individual sustainable activities of the XY company, and infographics related to sustainability, which will also be shared on Instagram.

A platform will be provided on Facebook for followers to express their opinions on individual sustainable activities, such as the sale of raw materials without packaging, the use of degradable packaging, the possibility of purchasing in your own packaging at the store,

and the possibility of packaging the purchase in already used boxes. Additionally, products from the newly created category of sustainable products will be gradually introduced.

Paid promotions will also be used, for example, within the framework of competitions taking place on Facebook. One such competition could be for the best use of reusable packaging, with the condition of sending a sample in the comments below the post. The best contribution would be rewarded with a package of raw materials from the category of sustainable products. A blog article would also be created from the best posts, and the authors would be rewarded with sustainable products.

Instagram

The marketing communication on Instagram will prioritize visual content, with a focus on creating infographics that promote XY's sustainable practices. Sustainability-themed infographics will be interspersed with regular infographics and posts and will be published approximately once every 2-3 weeks. The topics of these infographics will be:

- how to use reusable products packaging,
- tips on local products,
- demonstration of how much water and energy is needed to produce selected sustainable products,
- demonstration of simple changes in everyday life that contribute to sustainability,
- tips for sustainable shopping.

TikTok

The primary purpose of using TikTok for communication is to attract the young generation (Generation Z) who are actively interested in sustainability and to create a new customer segment from them in the future. The content on TikTok would focus on personal experiences and activities that promote sustainability within the XY company's framework. Short TikTok videos will showcase the unique sustainable activities of the company and the process of obtaining raw materials or packaging in a fun and educational way. The content of the videos would focus on:

- package-free purchase at the store,
- visiting Czech suppliers,
- demonstration of product packaging recycling,
- demonstration of how to minimize food waste,

- tips for sustainable eating,
- a visit to the store with a demonstration of sustainable products.

Collaborating with influencers on TikTok can help promote sustainable activities and increase awareness of XY's sustainable practices. Influencers can create authentic content that resonates with younger audiences. The specific influencers that XY will use for promoting on TikTok are mentioned in the Influencer Marketing chapter.

YouTube

The main purpose of YouTube videos is to promote individual suppliers, which is a popular sustainable aspect. The videos will showcase local suppliers and their raw materials, providing customers with a personal and educational experience. These videos will be shared on the product pages. If they are well-received, similar videos will be made for sustainable foreign raw materials. The videos will feature the supplier, the ingredients grown, and the sustainable practices involved in production. The primary function of the videos is to educate customers, with entertainment and information being secondary. On the other hand, TikTok videos are shorter and aimed at a younger audience. YouTube videos can be several minutes long and serve as a source of information for both younger and older generations. Influencers can also be used to create this type of content and keep customers on the e-shop longer. However, it is important to strike a balance between the video's form, content, and length. It is also crucial to provide only factual information and avoid greenwashing. Only the top 10 most interesting sustainable products will have videos to avoid overwhelming customers.

15.2.3 Event marketing

The primary objective of the project is to identify events that promote sustainability and that XY can participate in as part of its sustainability marketing communications. The following activities will mainly be used for communication purposes:

- degradable packaging,
- recycling of plastic packaging (currently used),
- cooperation with local suppliers,
- strategies for selecting sustainable global suppliers.

Company XY would have a stand at these events, offering free tastings and products for purchase. Additionally, discount coupons would be given out, with the condition of filling out a form with name and email. This would allow XY to expand its email database

with contacts interested in sustainability, to whom they could send relevant sustainability newsletters regularly. The project includes selecting events of various types and sizes, all with a focus on sustainability communication. The events include both sustainability-focused events (festivals, educational events) and film and music festivals that have sustainable activities in their program. The Table 8 below displays the chosen events in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in which XY could participate as part of the project.

Table 8: Events promoting sustainability (author's own work)

Event	Date	Place	Type of event
ECO planet	27 th -28 th May 2023	Kromčříž	Ecological festival
Votvírák	16 th -18 th June	Milovice	Music festival with ecological aspects
Sustainable Summer School	1 st -8 th July 2023	Prague	Summer school for students
Colours of Ostrava	19 th -22 nd July	Ostrava	Music festival with ecological aspects
Mácháč	18 th -19 th August	Doksy	Music festival with ecological aspects
Fair for ecological education	30 th August-2 nd September 2023	Litoměřice	Educational event
European Mobility Week	16 th -22 nd September	Olomouc	Event focused on mobility
Ekotopfilm Festival	25 th -29 th September 2023	Bratislava	Film festival

In addition to the aforementioned events, XY would also participate in supporting sustainability communication within event marketing, as well as hosting its own “Open Day” event at all 6 brick-and-mortar stores on 5th June, which is World Environment Day. On this day, store hours would be extended until 10 pm, and staff capacity would be increased. Promotional materials for this event would also be created.

During regular opening hours (9 am-6 pm), tastings of locally and sustainably sourced ingredients would be offered. On this day, customers would also receive free shopping in ecologically degradable packaging, along with promotional material highlighting its benefits and positive impact on the environment. A shelf containing sustainable products (from the same category as on the e-shop) would also be created, and interest in this category within the store would be monitored. If necessary, the shelf would be maintained after the event.

After regular opening hours, free entertainment would continue with a presentation of the company's sustainable activities. The presentation would be attended by both company

owners and raw material buyers, who would discuss the sustainable strategies used in sourcing raw materials, packaging, future plans in the framework of sustainability certifications, energy savings, and other sustainable topics. The event would be documented, and its outputs would be used for promotion on XY's social networks.

15.3 Marketing communication project with a new target group

Focusing on sustainable users can be an effective strategy for company XY to raise awareness of its products and services. Sustainable users are individuals who aim to minimize their environmental impact and organize their purchases and lifestyle in an eco-friendly manner. To reach this target group, company XY can use communication channels such as social networks, environmental organizations, and sustainable lifestyle communities. Collaborating with these organizations and influencers can also be beneficial. Expanding the product line to include organic products suitable for sustainable users and partnering with businesses that offer these products can be advantageous. Creating content that appeals to sustainable users, such as organic food, sustainable agriculture, and reducing package consumption, can also be part of the marketing strategy. Collaborating with package-free shops, restaurants, cafes, and other businesses that focus on sustainability and offer regional products can increase brand awareness. As sustainability and environmental protection are increasingly important topics, targeting sustainable users can contribute to the growth and development of the company XY.

15.3.1 Online media

This particular project is solely focused on online media, as it is more challenging to measure advertising in print media and there is less incentive to take action. In contrast, online banners offer easy measurability through UTM links and straightforward visibility of the event with a single click, leading the reader to the e-shop. On websites that prioritize sustainability and organic products, an appealing advertising banner with graphic content showcasing the sustainable ingredient offerings will be displayed. By using UTM links, it will be possible to access the XY e-shop with a single click.

This type of advertising should be combined with affiliate cooperation, which involves a commission for each transaction that occurs by clicking on the banner. The number of websites that XY will collaborate with in the project will depend on their

willingness to cooperate, but the goal is to establish partnerships with at least ten websites with diverse topics in the sustainability field.

Aside from advertising banners, it is also appropriate to utilize native advertising in the form of an article that discusses sustainability and the sustainable practices of the XY company. This article would be displayed among other articles in the medium with a similar theme and would be shown based on user preferences stored in the browser. This type of advertising is highly targeted and does not need to be limited to articles with a specific topic. Native advertising can be used through Google Ads and Sklik, just like XY already does within PPC advertising.

The content of native advertising could be new sustainable products that will need to be changed regularly. The cost of native advertising varies depending on the cost per click, just like PPC advertising. Therefore, it is advisable to set a test budget of 10,000 CZK at the beginning. Once the budget is exhausted, the ad will stop being displayed. Subsequently, it is recommended to evaluate its effectiveness and possibly adjust its content and budget to effectively reach the audience.

15.3.2 Social media campaigns

In order to reach the segment of sustainably minded users, XY should also use paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram, which can be targeted relatively precisely based on the location, behavior, and interests of users. It is interesting that can be used to target advertising to a segment of sustainable users. The goal of paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram can be both to increase brand awareness among those who are likely to pay attention to the ad and to convert and increase the number of actions on the XY e-shop.

The content of the advertising message can be very similar to the content proposed for advertising banners on websites dealing with sustainability and the media. For the Facebook and Instagram campaign, within the budget, an investment of CZK 300 per day is expected during the entire project.

15.3.3 Sustainability influencers

To enhance XY's sustainability efforts and promote its initiatives, influencers who focus on promoting sustainability will be used. These influencers create content for social media and blogs, which can also be used for XY's purposes. Influencers have a significant impact on their followers and can use their popularity to support sustainable initiatives. The

project will focus on influencers who promote the prevention of natural resource waste, recycling, the use of own packaging, local suppliers, and global suppliers that follow sustainable practices in the cultivation and production of raw materials.

Cooperation with sustainable influencers will primarily take the form of barter or paid promotion, depending on the size of their fan base and level of engagement. Influencers will receive a package of products and promote XY's sustainable practices on social media. Company XY is interested in influencers who create video content for TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube. Affiliate cooperation can also be established with influencers and sustainable websites. The number of influencers for barter or paid promotion will be limited to 10 due to costs. Influencers with a loyal fan base and quality content will be selected. The number of affiliate collaborations is not limited, and influencers will be paid 10% of orders from newly referred users. Cooperation with influencers can be supported by UTM links, and customers who click on the e-shop via these links will receive bonuses in the form of free products or postage.

15.3.4 Sustainable and package-free stores

Healthy food stores, packaging-free stores, and fitness and wellness centers are ideal partners for cooperation. Both marketing and business cooperation can be established, or a combination of both. As corporate partners, company XY can arrange for the collection of their products for sales purposes and promotion of sustainability, especially for packaging-free stores. Marketing cooperation can be created by offering bonuses to visitors to these stores.

15.3.5 Nesnězeno application

The Nesnězeno app helps users buy food with an approaching expiration date and therefore, reduces waste. XY has been using the app for two years to sell expiring raw materials at some of its stores, but it has not promoted it openly. As part of the project, XY will extend the use of the app to all its stores and actively promote it on social media. This initiative will prevent raw material waste and help XY reach a target group that actively uses the app, creating an even more positive image of the company's sustainable activities.

16 TIME, COST AND RISK ANALYSES

The analysis of the project aimed at enhancing the marketing communication of sustainability in the XY company will be conducted to reach a new target audience. This analysis will only be carried out if all the communication channels proposed in the project are utilized.

16.1 Time analysis

The project is scheduled to take place from May 2023 to December 2023. Upon completion, its success will be evaluated, and the next steps will be determined based on this assessment. Some less successful collaborations may be terminated or modified during the project to maximize their benefits for both parties.

Table 9: Time analysis (author's own work)

Communication channel	Period							
	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Content creation								
Online media								
Social media campaigns								
Events								
Sustainable influencers								
Sustainable & package-free shops								
Nesnězeno application								

The fields marked in gray indicate the use of the given communication channel. Most communication channels are used continuously, as marketing cooperation is typically a long-term commitment. Active search and initiation of collaborations will mainly take place at the beginning of the marked period, while established collaborations will continue to run

during the project period, with fewer new collaborations being established. At the end of the project, cooperation does not necessarily have to be terminated.

On the contrary, it is advantageous to maintain affiliate cooperation, as they can generate profits if they work, and if they do not, they do not create new costs. The only non-continuous form of communication is event marketing, which will only take place during the months in which events are scheduled for the company XY to participate.

16.2 Cost analysis

In addition to the time analysis, it is also crucial to consider the costs of the entire project. Table 10 captures the costs for all communication channels that will be utilized within the project. Additionally, Table 11 calculates the average costs for each of the events that the XY company will participate in during the project, as this is a significant item in the cost analysis.

Table 10: Cost analysis (author's own work)

Cost items	Responsible person	Costs in CZK
Category on e-shop	Content specialist	3,000
Blog posts about sustainability	Content specialist	12,000
E-mailing	Email specialist	6,000
Creation of advertising banners	Graphic designer	2,500
Social media posts	Social media specialist	8,000
Social media campaigns	Social media specialist	110,400
Affiliate commissions	Influencer specialist	3,000
Influencers	Influencer specialist	15,000
PPC advertising	PPC specialist	10,000
Sustainable packaging	Product specialist	25,000
Events	Influencer specialist	113,600
Total costs		308,500

Employee salary costs are determined based on their hourly wage and the estimated number of hours they will spend on the activity. The first activity that needs to be completed is the preparation of the 'sustainable products' category on the e-shop. This task will be carried out by a content specialist at a wage rate of 300 CZK per hour, and it will take 12 hours to complete. The content specialist will also be responsible for creating blog articles, with one article to be published per month at a cost of 1,500 CZK per article. Additionally,

an email with a sustainability topic will be created once a month, with a total cost of approximately 6,000 CZK.

The graphic designer will also need to create banners that will encourage people to click through to XY's e-shop via PPC advertising. It will take a total of 5 hours to create a banner at a graphic artist's wage rate of 500 CZK per hour. Additionally, content for social media posts will need to be created, with a total cost of 8,000 CZK at a social media specialist rate of 400 CZK per hour. A total of 110,400 CZK will be invested in social media campaigns within the project, with a budget of 300 CZK per day for Facebook and Instagram. Fees associated with affiliate collaborations will also need to be paid, amounting to a total of 3,000 CZK. The costs of barter and paid promotion from influencers will amount to 15,000 CZK. If one of the collaborations is not effective, it can be abandoned during the project. PPC advertising will also be utilized with a basic (trial) budget of 10,000 CZK, with the possibility of increasing the budget during the process depending on its success. It is also necessary to consider the costs associated with sustainable packaging of raw materials, with 25,000 CZK allocated for testing.

The final item is events, for which a total of 113,600 CZK will be spent within the project. A total of eight events will be held between May and September 2023, at a rate of 14,200 CZK per event. The breakdown of individual cost items within the events is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Cost of event (author's own work)

Cost items	Costs in CZK
Creation of promotional flyers	500
Print of promotional flyers	1,200
Travel expenses	2,000
Labor expenses	4,000
Tastings	5,000
Presentation of sustainable materials	1,500
Total costs	14,200

16.3 Risk analysis

In conclusion, it was necessary to develop a risk analysis, which is presented in table 12. The likelihood of risks occurring is assessed on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means it is almost impossible and 5 means it is almost certain. Additionally, the impact on the company if the risk is realized is evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means it is almost imperceptible

and 5 means it is catastrophic. The level of risk is then calculated by multiplying the probability of the risk occurring by its impact on the company XY.

Table 12: Risk analysis (author's own work)

Risk	Probability	Impact	Risk level
Disinterest of the new target group	2.2	2.5	5.25
Reluctance of stores to cooperate	3.1	2.3	7.13
Reluctance of influencers to cooperate	2.1	1.9	3.99
Poorly chosen banner content	2.5	2.6	6.5
Poorly chosen article content	2.2	2.7	5.94
Disinterest of event visitors	3.1	2.5	7.75
Low number of conversions	3.8	2.5	9.5

The success of company XY is not solely dependent on attracting a new group of sustainable customers, so the level of risk associated with this endeavor is relatively low. The company already has an established presence in the market and a specific customer base that it targets through its marketing efforts. Expanding to a new target group is more of a growth opportunity that can potentially increase revenue and solidify company XY's position in the market. The probability of the new target group showing complete disinterest in company XY's offerings is relatively low, but the impact of such an event would be significant. The risk associated with influencers being unwilling to collaborate is relatively low. The use of inappropriate banners and article topics carries an average level of risk.

The most significant risks are the **reluctance of health food stores and packaging-free stores to collaborate, the lack of interest from event attendees in company XY's products**, and the **low conversion rate** (due to the high likelihood of this occurrence).

16.3.1 Countermeasures against the highest-level risks

There is a relatively high risk that company XY may struggle to find suitable health food stores or packaging-free stores that are interested in collaborating on this project. It is not common for these types of stores to engage in this type of cooperation, as they typically prefer sponsorship arrangements where they receive products or financial compensation without having to be directly involved. However, the success of marketing cooperation is

heavily dependent on the partner's level of activity, and a more active partner can lead to greater profitability for both parties. Therefore, it is important to focus on a select few potential partners and personalize the cooperation offer. This will significantly reduce the risk of reluctance to cooperate.

Low interest from event attendees in sustainable products can be addressed through several effective strategies. One such strategy is to promote sustainable products in advance through social media or other channels. It is also important to create an engaging and imaginative event program that effectively targets the desired audience and explains how company XY's sustainable products help protect the environment. Additionally, it is recommended to use attractive forms of presentation, such as tastings and demonstrations of sustainable packaging, to help visitors better understand the products and see them in action. Finally, linking sustainable products with the overall entertainment at the event can help increase interest in the issue and contribute to the overall success of the event.

A low conversion rate is a significant risk, as marketing collaborations or campaigns that fail to generate conversions are essentially useless. To mitigate this risk, it is important to select partners who have a significant reach within the target segment. Before approaching potential partners, take the time to observe their engagement with their audience, such as their posts and contributions. Additionally, try to immerse yourself in the community to gain a better understanding of their preferences, content consumption habits, and behavior. This will help ensure that the cooperation is tailored to the target segment's needs and preferences, increasing the likelihood of successful conversions.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to analyze the current marketing communication of sustainable topics by company XY, understand customer opinions and attitudes towards it, and propose recommendations for improvement. The research focused on two main questions: “*What is the current state of sustainability marketing communication by company XY?*” and “*How can company XY improve its marketing communication to better convey sustainability?*”. To answer these questions, a situational analysis of the marketing and communication mix of company XY and its closest competitors were conducted. This analysis was complemented by quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire, which was based on the results of a qualitative interview with the marketing manager of company XY.

As part of the situational analysis, the principles that influence the development of marketing communication in the area of sustainability were presented. The main focus of this analysis was to evaluate the current state of marketing communication of sustainable practices by company XY and its competitors. The analysis revealed that XY's marketing communication of sustainability has several shortcomings, particularly in terms of product packaging. Many customers perceive the packaging as unsustainable, and there is a lack of sustainability communication on the packaging. Additionally, the company does not have BIO certification, which could be a potential area for improvement.

To supplement the analysis outputs, the follow-up customer research was conducted to gather information on customer preferences regarding the method and content of marketing communication related to sustainable topics. The research also aimed to determine the extent to which sustainable elements within marketing communication influence purchasing decisions.

One surprising finding of the research was the high level of interest among customers in sustainable products and sustainability-related activities. Customers expressed a preference for quality ingredients, locally sourced products, and environmentally friendly packaging. This highlights the importance of informing customers about these activities through marketing communication of company XY.

The outputs of the practical part were subsequently linked within a SWOT analysis, which provided an overview of the most significant strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for sustainability marketing communication development. The main strengths for setting the communication strategy are the existing brand positioning and a strong

communication mix that can be utilized to introduce a new segment of sustainable products. Weaknesses were identified in the low transparency of the supply chain and the lack of sustainability communication elements on product packaging. A significant threat is the lack of high-quality local or global suppliers who adhere to sustainable agriculture principles. Opportunities were identified in the growing interest in sustainable products and the potential to target a new group of customers (especially from Generation Z), who are characterized by an increased interest in sustainability.

All of the aspects mentioned above, including the details resulting from individual analyses and research, were taken into account during the development of the communication strategy in the project part of this thesis. The strategy considers the company's current marketing and communication mix, which is optimized and supplemented with areas of untapped potential. In terms of content, the proposal targets a new audience and addresses their needs. The planning phase includes a six-month schedule for the introduction of individual parts of the marketing communication plan. The most important steps include creating a new category of sustainable products within the e-shop, developing content that communicates the company's sustainable activities, and utilizing social media promotion and sustainable event marketing. To facilitate implementation, the project section also includes time, cost, and risk analyses.

The results of this thesis provide a professional benefit not only to the author but also to the company XY. The proposed communication strategy will be utilized to target a new segment of customers who prioritize sustainability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to customer
CRM	Cause-related marketing
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CZK	Czech koruna
DFE	Design for environment
ESG	Environmental, social, governance
EU	European Union
GMO	Genetically modified organism
LLC	Limited liability company
PPC	Pay per click
PR	Public relations
SEO	Search engine optimalization
STP	Segmentation, targeting, positioning
UTM	Urchin tracking module
WECD	World Commission on Environment and Development
XY	Company XY

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APPENDICES

Appendix P I: Interview: Marketing manager of XY

Appendix P II: Questionnaire survey

APPENDIX P I: INTERVIEW: MARKETING MANAGER OF XY

How does the company define “sustainability” and how does it incorporate sustainability into its marketing communication?

I feel like sustainability is probably not the biggest marketing USP the company currently communicates and values, because for us, the quality of the product and also the quality of the packaging would always be the first and then the sustainability comes next. So, in the communication, we always try to focus on the aspect of the quality, which goes, for example, hand in hand with packaging in plastic bags.

And it may seem like a lot of customers think that actually plastic is the worst option, but, for example, if you take our competitor, which is Mixit, they use the packaging which is absolutely not recyclable, which compared to plastic, is way worse because we use the clean plastic you can perfectly recycle.

What about the current marketing communication strategies that company XY uses to promote sustainability and how effective they are?

So, I feel like we take sustainability definitely into account, but it's not the priority we would focus on in the marketing communication, also because we realize that there is a lot of waste we produce and it will basically be greenwashing and we would be doing that, and we try to avoid being the greenwashing company, which is also probably the biggest reason why we don't incorporate it into our communication because we realize that it will be superficial.

And you can consider sustainability the way that we communicate the reduction of mass consumption and a meal market, and we always try to encourage people to eat healthy and to eat as many veggies and fruits as possible and how to incorporate alternative diets into their life and stuff like that. So, there's definitely a sustainable aspect of our marketing communication, but when it comes to health aspects, we're not like blindly communicating, just like the veggie options, we always go for meat recommendations if it's needed for your body. So again, it shows that like the healthier aspect and the quality of like the food in your life is always the priority for us and not the sustainability itself.

Are there any assumptions that customers have about the company's marketing communication of sustainability?

There are definitely lots of assumptions about sustainability, for example, they feel like if you pack everything into glass or paper, it's always more sustainable than, for example, using plastics. Or if you eat soya stuff and veggie stuff, it's always more sustainable than eating meat. And that's not the case. So, I feel like we have to educate people a lot about what actually plastic means and that you can actually recycle it. And for a glass you can really recycle glass, so either you have it at home or it's like a way worse ways than plastic is. So, I feel like we sometimes could be effective in educating people about that, but I feel like we are often getting into arguments with customers when it comes to plastic, because they often consider it to be the worst option. They often prefer paper or glass packaging while they do not realize that, for example, paper packaging worse the quality of the products. Therefore, we need to focus on educating our customers about this topic.

And what are the main target segments of the company?

Our main target group is women who are in the age of 25 to 45 years old. They are quite often the person who makes food decisions in the family. Quite often they are also moms who are building families or starting families or considering families, so you get the baby aspect a lot. So again, I think we're coming to the first question, because they always focus probably more on the health of the baby and of developing of the family than sustainability itself because I feel like sustainability is also aspect of like your wealth being.

So, do you think there is a connection between the wealth of your customers and sustainability?

Actually yes, because like if you're wealthier you're more open to sustainability options and you're willing to pay more for sustainable products. But we try to really grow and get more of more and more people from the segment.

And what is the approach to sustainability of your target segments?

We are very slowly reaching people who are not so wealthy anymore and we're targeting basically the upper class. For middle class I don't really feel like sustainability is the biggest issue they consider, because they are more focusing more on the product and on the quality of the product itself. And for our target group, it's definitely the health aspect of it. And especially when you have babies, you're more considerate about the fact that the strawberries they're eating are without any additives and it's completely healthy for them and the sustainability comes next.

What are the main barriers that the company faces when it comes to communicating sustainability to its target audience?

We usually get feedback from people that...it's like few people per week...they would appreciate more sustainable packaging, but it's not, definitely dozens of people. So, I don't feel like it's the most important thing for the community. And also like except for the target group, the next target group is actually the elder people. So, it's like 50-60 years old women. And for them, they are like from a completely different generation. It's basically the boomers and the sustainability is usually not an issue for them at all. So, I don't see any point in like putting it first in our marketing communication because you would like overtake the product. This is the main focus for us.

How does the company ensure that their sustainability marketing communication is accessible and easy to understand for customers of all educational levels?

This is a tough question. I feel like for the most important topics we always try to write the whole articles. It's definitely better than putting one line somewhere and leaving it up to people to interpret it. But we always try to explain a lot and go into the depth and educate on the topic. You know, not just say like "hey, we're sustainable", but we always like try to explain it a lot and go into depth. And also, for our community, we always try to have a healthy discussion with the people and like explaining our points of view and stuff.

And yeah, so it's about it. I think it's about the educational aspect and going into like a real depth. And I just like throwing some slogans in the air and not explaining anything.

What channels does the company currently use to communicate its sustainable initiatives?

So yeah, it's as mentioned – it's mostly our blog articles because we prefer to educate and explain things. And you can also find some parts of it on our social media, which is Facebook or sometimes Instagram. But again, if we share it on social media, we also always prefer to go into the educational aspect of it. And I feel like maybe sometimes people talk to our retail staff about this issue. So, it's also the staff directly offline explaining to our customers the sustainability aspects. And yeah, that's about it.

What about the authenticity and credibility of company XY's sustainability messaging?

Yeah, I think that it has changed a lot like two years ago when we decided that we are going to stop greenwashing and just use what we have because at the beginning the company would try to communicate stuff like we dried the food in Asia so we don't have to carry the water all over the globe, which from my point of view, is really brainwashing people. So now, we really try to focus on being authentic about it, credible about it and we consider always educational articles, and research articles and brand writing our articles.

And how does it actually work in practice?

So, it's always based on like real data and real issues, and it's not just based on our feeling or wishes to be sustainable. So yeah, I think, the customers do pursue debt after all, like if you really read or be right about sustainability, of course, you can argue there is always some space to argue. But I think they could really see that the work with like credible resources and not just with our feelings or like greenwashing victories or something like that.

What are the common misconceptions about sustainability among the company's target audience – does the company address them in its marketing communication?

Yeah. I think we mentioned that, and the biggest aspect is that people think that plastic is the worst thing you can have sustainability wise, which we have to educate people that it's not. Also, they feel like the targeted audience believes that you can pack our product into paper, which we constantly have to explain that it's not possible because it would lose the quality. And also, we're usually getting attacked for carrying or importing products from all around the globe, but as I mentioned before, for us quality of the product always stands first.

So, in our portfolio, you can find things that are actually produced in the Czech Republic, but we don't have only the Czech products. We have, for example, a French product or some Asian product whatsoever – so, when it comes to plums, for example, we have them from France because they're way better and the production is way better and the quality is better. But our customers are always like: “yeah, but you have them in the Czech Republic too, so why they're not Czech?”

I see. So, what arguments you use then?

We have to explain that the quality (Czech) is lower. So that's also that they believe that you can get the same product with less or with like lower impact on the planet. So, we always must explain that it's not all about the sustainability.

So, this is actually the biggest misconception regarding sustainability, right?

Yeah, and I think it is the way that the plastic is the worst thing you can have, and that the product can be packed in paper, which is not possible. And also, they usually compare it with the companies selling their product in the non-recyclable paper packaging, which is usually like foil and paper. So, we actually cannot really recycle it, but it looks brown. So, they believe it's sustainable and recyclable, but it's really not. So that's also a misconception, which is, I think, nice to mention.

It definitely is. And what are your long-term plans for sustainable business and how do they translate into the marketing strategy?

Our main aim now is to motivate customers to buy a bigger amount of the product. For example, when it comes to nuts, we always encourage them to buy bigger packaging and then have it at home, for example, in like glass bottles or something like that. And not to buy like 4 different daypacks of half of the kilo of cashew or something.

So that's definitely one aspect of it, that we try to motivate people to buy bigger amounts with less packaging.

Is there any other sustainability strategy?

I think the second part is also to introduce more and more products. It doesn't have to be necessary only for the Czech Republic, but it's also for Slovakia and Ukraine right now for example. We can say local or like staying at least within Europe and as far as for production and expedition, I don't think that there is any sustainable business plan because it's already pretty optimized. And the only thing we could do is to change our packaging which is definitely not on the table right now. So yeah, I would say like those two things probably.

So, when it comes to the production and distribution of products – what sustainable approaches does the company currently implements?

We try to always educate. That was like the most important thing for us. I think that we just like stopped using the slogans and greenwashing and stuff and switched to educating people and explaining. And apart from that, we cannot really use like anything to highlight our sustainability of the packaging. The other thing we do is that it's recyclable and for the BIO products, we cannot really communicate it – like for the eco products – we cannot communicate it because our production is not prepared for like repacking the eco products. So, it's probably just educating I would say there is definitely a lot which could be done, but it's not a priority at the moment.

How does the company measure the effectiveness of its sustainability marketing efforts?

There is basically no way to measure it. And in terms of data, I think the only way how we measure that is through some sort of feedback we get from the customers. But like understanding what sustainability means for us and also the feedback we get for like listing the local products like from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, people appreciate it that it's more sustainable and also like the local aspect to it has a different value which is not.

The same thing as sustainability, but it kind of goes hand in hand. And it's about it – we cannot really, yeah, we cannot really say we do anything else for that.

Let's talk about some potential risks and benefits for the company when it comes to improving your marketing communication of sustainability.

Benefits? There are definitely some. I think the biggest one is that the millennial generation and the Generation Z are getting older and more financially stable, which means they are becoming slowly a bigger and bigger part of our target group. And for those two target groups, the sustainability aspect is way more important than, for example, for boomers.

So, the benefit for improving our sustainability communications would be reaching this type of audience and also being closer to the target group.

What about the risks?

I would say the potential risks, with the product we have, we could easily lose the biggest competitive advantage we have and it's the quality and the variety of our portfolio if it will only focuses on sustainability, we would lose our best sellers basically, such as pineapple and mango, which are obviously being shipped from around the globe and also if we try to push it harder, I think we could again be perceived as a greenwashing company. And if we start portraying ourselves as a strongly sustainable company, they could easily be called the green washing.

I have no choice but to agree, so, my last question is: how can this be prevented?

Well, we need to educate people because it's probably the best way how we can manage that – explain and educate. And I think the biggest step should be separating the production for the eco product. So, we could actually start selling them because they're eco and we just cannot call them that way. And then that could be really, really nice for the arbitrary groups because we're usually missing that. And yeah, that's about it.

APPENDIX P II: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Hello,

my name is Tereza Poštulková, and I am conducting research on sustainability communication and sustainable consumption for my master's thesis. By completing this questionnaire, you will not only contribute to research on environmentally friendly products and sustainable consumer behavior but also help improve the quality of marketing communication for sustainable themes at company XY.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. As a "thank you for your time" gift, you will receive a discount code for shopping at XY upon completion.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Questionnaire survey questions:

1. How often do you make purchases of company XY's products, either in a physical store or online?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Yearly
- Less than once a year
- I have not made a purchase at XY yet

2. What kind of marketing communication attracts your attention the most?

- Highlighting products differentiation from competitors
- Narratives about the brand and product
- Focusing on product and services quality
- Emphasizing affordability and value
- Promoting sustainability and eco-friendliness of products
- Other:

3. How would you describe your relationship with sustainability?

- I prioritize sustainability and make an effort to reduce my environmental impact
- I acknowledge the importance of sustainability, but struggle to consistently integrate it into my daily routine
- Sustainability is not a priority for me and I have no interest in it
- I don't have a firm stance on sustainability
- I am not familiar with the concept of sustainability

4. Are you aware of your sustainable consumer eco-friendly products/ sustainable products?

- Yes

- No
- I prefer not to say

5. How often do you buy eco-friendly products /sustainable consumer goods?

- 1-4 times per year
- 5-9 times per year
- More than 10 times per year

6. How important is sustainability to you when making purchasing decisions?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral/I do not know
- Not very important
- Not important at all

7. Which of the following sustainable elements in marketing communication are important to you?

- Use of eco-friendly packaging
- Product sustainability certification (e.g. Fairtrade, BIO)
- Support for local suppliers
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Use of renewable energy sources
- Other:

8. Do you consider the company XY to be sustainable?

- Highly sustainable (→ Q10)
- Somewhat sustainable (→ Q10)
- Neutral/Undecided (→ Q9)
- Not very sustainable (→ Q9)
- Not sustainable at all (→ Q9)

9. Why not? (open answer)

10. How would you rate company XY's current marketing communication of sustainability?

- Very well: They pay adequate attention to sustainability and communicate it effectively
- Well: They communicate sustainability, but there is room for improvement
- Average: They only provide basic information about sustainability and do not emphasize its significance enough
- Bad: They offer almost no information about sustainability and its importance.
- I do not know.

11. How would you rate the clarity of company XY's sustainability marketing communication?

- Very clear
- Somewhat clear
- Neutral
- Not very clear
- Not clear at all

12. Which sustainable practices of company XY have you observed in their marketing communication?

- Option to bring your own packaging and receive a discount at stores
- Use of recyclable packaging
- Support for local agriculture and suppliers
- Selection of suppliers who adhere to organic farming principles
- Support for purchasing larger product packages
- Sale of products approaching their minimum consumption date at a discount
- None of them
- Other:

13. What sustainability information do you miss from XY's marketing communication?

- Details on energy sources used
- Information on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Information on waste reduction efforts
- Information on the use of recycled materials
- Information on collaboration with local suppliers
- Information on support for sustainable agriculture
- None of them
- Other:

14. In your opinion, how can company XY improve its marketing communication regarding sustainability?

- Increase brand sustainability awareness through social media and website
- Provide more information about sustainable practices on product packaging
- Expand the range of sustainable products
- Promote recycling and waste sorting
- Increase transparency of the production chain and collaborate with local farmers
- Obtain sustainability certification
- Collaborate with non-profit organizations focused on environmental protection and social responsibility
- Other:

15. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of XY's sustainability marketing communication?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Neutral
- Not very effective

Not effective at all

16. What is your gender?

Female

Male

I prefer not to say

17. What is your age?

Less than 18 years old

18-24 years old

25-34 years old

35-44 years old

45-54 years old

55-64 years old

65 and more years old

18. What is your highest education?

Elementary school

High school certificate

Vocational/Technical certificate

Higher vocational school

Undergraduate/University degree

Postgraduate/Higher degree

Doctorate/Higher degree

19. What is your monthly household income?

Less than 20.000 CZK

20.000-39.999 CZK

40.000-60.000 CZK

More than 60.000 CZK

I prefer not to say