ASHESI UNIVERSITY

MARKETING PLAN FOR COSMA FASHION BRAND

Undergraduate Applied Project Report submitted to the Department of Business Administration, Ashesi University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration

B. Sc. Business Administration

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May 2020

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Applied Project Report is the result of my own work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ....

Candidate's Name: Francis Selorm Senaya

Date: ....May 2020................

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Applied Project Report were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of applied projects laid down by Ashesi University College.

Supervisor's Signature: ....

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Josephine Djan

Date: ....May 2020...........................

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cosma Fashion Brand was established in 2018 by Brenda Dzandu. The business produces high-end outfits that are simple yet unique with a target market consisting of middle-income earners in Accra, Ghana.

The business seeks to increase its sales and the number of its customers but is having trouble doing so. The purpose of this project is to develop a marketing plan for the business to help it achieve its goal.

Initially, the owner believed that the business's inability to meet customer demand could be a major reason why the business has been unable to improve its sales and customers. Hence, research was conducted to test the viability of this assumption. The research was also meant to uncover any underlying factors that may be preventing the business from achieving its goal.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the necessary data for research. The interviewees consisted of the business owner, her employee, and customers. After analyzing the data using the thematic approach, it was revealed that meeting customer demand was a problem caused by understaffing in the business. Thus, the root cause of the business's struggle to meet its goal was understaffing. The research also uncovered the underlying problem of the owner's inexperience as a manager and leader.

The solution suggested to address the management issue was the Blake and Mouton Management Grid. Understaffing was addressed under the 'People' aspect of the 7Ps marketing model. Additionally, the 7S marketing model was added to supplement the 7Ps model and provide a wholesome marketing plan.

Successful implementation of the proposed marketing plan would likely help Cosma achieve its goal of sales and customer growth.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this applied project is the creation of an effective marketing

plan for Cosma fashion brand. The business owner claims that the company is in need

of a new approach to boost its sales and meet the growing demand for the brand's

outfits. This desire for growth is understandable, especially when taking the

competitive nature of the fashion industry into consideration. This project is meant to

help the brand achieve the growth it desires.

1.2 Chapter Overview

The chapter introduces the reader to Cosma fashion brand, a private company

in the fashion industry and the focus of this paper. It begins with a brief profile to get

the reader familiar with the inner workings of the business. Additionally, there is an

in-depth analysis of the macro-economic factors that relate directly or indirectly to the

company's operations and overall wellbeing. Furthermore, a careful analysis of the

company's competencies and shortcomings yielded eye-opening results. All the above

is revealed here in this chapter.

1.3 Company Profile

Cosma is a Ghanaian clothing brand, founded in January 2018, which is

tailored primarily for women and aims to embody simplicity and uniqueness with

regard to clothing. The founder, Brenda Dzandu, has a passion for sewing and is

gifted at working with her hands. She loves to look good and wants others to look

good as well. This partly inspired her decision to establish the business. In addition to

this, she acknowledged the difficulty and accompanying frustration associated with

finding skilled seamstresses when she was younger. As a result, she sought to ease the frustrations of future generations by becoming an exceptional seamstress. For the purpose of furthering this goal, Cosma Fashion Ghana was born. It is the lovechild of Brenda Dzandu's dedication to hands-on work and passion for fashion. The business is currently located at Mile 7, Accra. Besides the owner, there is only employee. This employee, like the owner, graduated from the Riohs Originate Fashion Institute and opted to work for Cosma soon afterwards. The company structure is fairly simple due to this understaffing. The tasks are split fairly evenly between the owner and her employee. However, the owner has to review and approve of her employee's work before it reaches the customer. Tasks have to do with production of outfits for clients. The business targets middle-income earners in Accra with ages ranging from age 24 to 52. However, Cosma occasionally sews clothes for the elderly despite the fact that they are not part of the company's target market. Its business model is centered on using simple yet unique high-end clothing to differentiate itself and thereby provide value for customers.

1.4 Rationale for Choosing Cosma Fashion Brand

I decided to work on an applied project due to my desire to make lasting improvements to an organization. My aim is to make the organization better off than it was, when my contribution was non-existent. Furthermore, I chose Cosma fashion brand for my applied project because I relate strongly to the owner's vision and connect with the style that Cosma outfits portray. Indeed, the fashion industry tends to focus more on bright and or loud outfits as the criteria for uniqueness and originality in my opinion. I believe that beauty and uniqueness can be found in simple clothing as well. As such, my thoughts are aligned with Cosma's goal of embodying simplicity

and uniqueness for clothing in Ghana. Therefore, it is my desire to aid this budding business by contributing my time, effort, and knowledge to develop an effective marketing plan to increase Cosma's sales and customers.

1.5 Industry Overview

In the earlier analysis of the social environment, it was stated that Ghanaians express particular interest in dressing and the implications it has on social standing. There are dress codes for almost every occasion, be it formal or informal. It can be said that the fashion industry has evolved over the years, especially when considering the changes brought about in the 20th century. These changes led to increased production of clothing and the spread of kente across the nation. The current fashion industry we see today began in the early 2000s, with the popularization of the use of imported Dutch fabric to create unique outfits (Akwasi, 2018). Ghanaians developed a taste for these unique outfits and demand for these wears began to grow rapidly. The government supported this growth with the implementation of the National Friday wear initiative to promote African wear. This led to even further growth and made the industry what it is today (Akwasi, 2018). The fairly recent Wear Ghana initiative has also played a role in the growth of the fashion industry.

Pistis Ghana Limited is one of the leading fashion brands in Ghana. This company specializes in special occasions clothing such as gowns and kente. Not only does this company consider itself to be the frontrunner of fashion in Ghana, it is also making significant strides in the international market (Pistis Ghana, 2018). Christie Brown, another leading brand, is a fashion brand that focuses on crafting a unique experience for African women with outfits ranging from bespoke gowns to ready-to-wear clothes, inspired by African art and culture (Christie Brown Ghana, 2019).

According to the owner of Cosma, the brand's immediate competitors are AVONSIGE and MAUD by Dianne. AVONSIGE specializes in the design of Avant Garde outfits whereas MAUD by Dianne specializes in special occasions wear. Cosma differentiates itself from these competitors in the fashion market with its focus on the amalgamation of simplicity and uniqueness in clothing.

1.6 PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE Analysis is a framework geared towards the analysis of key external factors that could influence a business or organization (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2018). The framework acknowledges elements that are out of the organization's control but could impact business decisions and strategies. Considering the potential impact these factors could have on the business, it is crucial that these factors are properly examined to ensure that Cosma makes the necessary adjustments to its strategy and business decisions. It would be unfortunate if the business is unable to capitalize on the underlying benefits that some of these factors present.

1.6.1 Political Environment

Ghana happens to be one of the most democratically stable countries in West Africa. The country has an effective multi-party democratic system which has resulted in five free and fair elections in the past twenty years, and successful transfers of power (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2019). The 2016 World Press Freedom index ranked Ghana 26th globally and 2nd in Africa out of 180 countries. This index takes into account democratic factors such as the freedom of the media and the quality of legislative framework (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre,

2019). Hence, Ghana's stable political climate is attractive to and friendly towards investors.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is the body which is mainly responsible for the formulation and implementation of key policies relating to trade, industrial, and private sector development. It is responsible for growth and development in the aforementioned sectors and is thereby the entity with the most influence on Cosma. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has a 10-point agenda for industrial transformation (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2018). However, there are only a few that are directly relevant to the Cosma business. The first of these relevant points is domestic retail infrastructure. This is a plan to boost the value and competitiveness of locally manufactured goods. The activity of interest in this plan is the promotion of made in Ghana goods through the establishment of retail chains for said goods, and the enhancement of market visibility of local goods via a web-based gallery. Cosma is a Ghanaian brand that designs clothes locally. Thus, the above plan could promote and advertise Cosma wear in the market. The next point for consideration is business environment regulatory reforms. This is aimed at reducing the cost of conducting business in Ghana for the purpose of attracting foreign investment. Improving the ease of conducting business means that it will be easier for more businesses to be established. This implies increased competition for Cosma. It would be more difficult for Cosma to retain market share and remain competitive when there are more competitors in play. (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2018).

1.6.2 Natural Environment

Cotton is a vital resource for the operation and growth of the textile industry in Ghana. Cotton production also serves as a source of livelihood for many farms, especially in the Northern Region of the country. Despite the importance of this

resource to the growth and sustainability of the textile industry, cotton farmers are not given the attention befitting of their key role. Cotton production is plagued by major setbacks such as the lack of farm inputs, poor farm organization, outdated technology for the cultivation of cotton, and inadequate funding for research into improved seeds and improved cultivation techniques (Asinyo, Frimpong, & Amankwa, 2015). Fortunately, the are some good prospects for the future of this sector with the government's plan to revamp the sector and the introduction of new cotton production companies. Furthermore, the cotton industry is to receive an investment of $10 million from RMG Ghana, and agro-input company. This funding is meant to cover the costs of farming inputs as well as cater for some of the other setbacks mentioned earlier (Joy Online, 2019). Improvement in cotton production would undoubtedly benefit the textile industry and consequently benefit the Cosma brand because cotton fabrics would become more available on the market.

Climate change in Ghana is projected to influence crop production and other factors like food security and water resources. The three northern regions are the most vulnerable to the changes in weather conditions which include increasing temperatures and more intense rainfall (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2018). As stated earlier, cotton production occurs more in the Northern Region of the country. Hence, extreme and unpredictable weather could adversely affect cotton production. Even intense rainfall, which could be beneficial to crops, would likely lead to erosion thereby destroying farmlands.

1.6.3 Social/Cultural Environment

The significance of clothing with regard to culture in Ghana can be seen through its impact on the perception of morality. Ghanaians often use clothes or dressing as a yardstick of morality (Dzramedo, 2009). Thus, people that dressed in a

way that conforms to Ghanaian traditions are accorded a certain level of respect for their morality or decency. Furthermore, ethnic settings and events in traditional social life, including festivals and traditional rites like naming ceremonies, have specific traditional dress codes (Dzramedo, 2009). Even the music and dance performed by cultural groups have dress codes to make each cultural performance group identifiable and unique. Clothing has deep roots in Ghanaian culture and social behavior. Cosma offers timeless African designs to cater for a myriad of events and social gathering, both formal and informal. Hence, Cosma outfits could appeal to the cultural and social values of Ghanaians.

The nature of clothing in the modern Ghanaian society has changed significantly from what it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when clothes lacked western influence. In the past, the natives often wore pieces of cloth wrapped around their bodies without any stiches. However, after making contact with the Europeans, the style of clothing changed as the natives were influenced through trade and interaction (Dzramedo, 2009). Loincloths became more popular and the earlier forms of clothing began to change. Currently, foreign designs have greatly influenced Ghanaians' fashion tastes due to the individual desire to be the best in fashion or to keep up with the latest fashion trends, for the sake of attaining social prestige. This desire is mainly due to the dominance of western fashion in modern society (Dzramedo, 2009). Cosma creates western-inspired designs, with an African twist, which could cater to the current tastes of the Ghanaian market.

1.6.4 Technological Environment

Globalization involves the integration of local and foreign economies into a single, unregulated market economy (Guttal, 2007). Through globalization, countries can trade and transact goods and services with one another for mutual benefit. This

also means that local firms and businesses can transact with those outside of their

respective countries. Hence, raw materials that would be difficult to acquire for firms

in a country could be attained simply by trading with firms or institutions outside that

country. The same goes not only for raw materials but for techniques and skills as

well. Firms in the textile industry in Ghana, including Cosma, can acquire fabrics that

are rare in the country from other countries. This enables the Ghanaian firms like

Cosma to remain competitive especially when considering the dominance of foreign

fashion brands. Additionally, globalization provides an avenue for local fashion firms

to appeal to and acquire foreign customers. Thus, it provides an avenue for Cosma to

tap into a potential foreign customer base. The advancement in communication

technology made it possible for globalization to exist. Firms can transact with or hire

the services of foreign firms or foreign labor without the need for physical or face-to-

face communication

The internet allows goods, currencies, and services to be traded across the

globe, taking advantage of exchange markets and time differences of nations in

different time zones (Guttal, 2007). Furthermore, credit and debit cards have removed

the need for customers to make payments for goods and services in cash. This takes

away the hassle of carrying a lot of physical cash for massive transactions.

1.6.5 Demographic Environment

Based on data from the United Nations, the 2019 mid-year population of Ghana is

estimated to be 30,417,856. This accounts for about 0.39% of the world population

(Worldometers, 2019). In addition, the land area of the country is 227,540 Km^2. The

population density is 134 per Km^2, which is 346 people per mi^2. Furthermore, 56.1%

of the 2019 population is urban and the median age of the nation is 20.9 years

(Worldometers, 2019). The age group that accounts for the greatest share of the total

Ghanaian population (37.13%) is 0-14 years old. This is followed by the people aged

25-54 accounting for 35.24% of the population (Worldometers, 2019). The age group

25-54 covers most of the total working population and is therefore relevant to firms in

all industries because they represent the majority of the customer base and the

workforce. This age group is relevant to Cosma as well since the group consists of

potential customers and employees. The ratio of males to females in the country is

1.03 with 50.69% as male and 49.31% as female. Unfortunately, Cosma outfits do not

cater to the male population of the country. Considering the gender statistics, it can be

said that the business is missing out on a large customer base.

1.6.6 Economic Environment

The Ghanaian economy experienced growth in the first quarter of 2019 with a

recorded gross domestic product (GDP) of 6.7%. This economic growth was driven

primarily by a 7.2% growth in the services sector in 2019 when compared to 2018.

The economic growth is expected to increase to 7.6 by the close of the year (The

World Bank, 2019). Overall economic growth bodes well for Cosma. An increase in

growth indicates an increase in income, which means that there will be more

disposable income for Ghanaians to spend on products. Customers can now spend

more of their income on Cosma outfits. Additionally, inflation has remained in single

digits for the first half of 2019 and is expected to remain within the Central Bank's

target of 6-10% by the end of the year (The World Bank, 2019). Cosma usually

imports high-quality fabrics from outside Africa. Hence, if inflation remains within

projections, the business would not have to worry about unexpected price spikes

caused by the devaluation of the Ghana cedi.

1.7 Porter's Five Forces

The Porter's Five Forces is a framework that provides key insights in the assessment of an industry's attractiveness, the favorable industries that a company should enter, current trends that may influence industry competition, and how a company can effectively position itself to achieve success (Harvard Business School, 2019). Furthermore, industries are subject to structural changes over time due to factors such as the enhancement of technology, changes in regulations, and the choices of competitors. The Porter's Five Forces framework helps the company to anticipate these changes and effectively exploit them to improve market position (Harvard Business School, 2019). Thus, this framework would essentially equip Cosma with useful knowledge that could potentially improve the business's position in the fashion industry. Below are the elements of the framework and how they relate to the business.

1.7.1 Ease of entry

The threat of new entrants in the fashion industry is considerably high. Fashion designers do not require large amounts of capital to register their businesses. There are no special licenses or qualifications for a person to start designing outfits, unlike in other industries like the airline industry where certain unique licenses and qualification requirements must be fulfilled in order for new firms to enter the industry. Furthermore, customers in the fashion industry do not tend to pledge loyalty solely to a single brand. Customers often pick and choose any outfit that catches their fancy. This makes it easier for new entrants to capture some market share. The high ease of entry could potentially increase the difficult of retaining customers and market share for Cosma. The brand would frequently need to develop innovative ways to

retain customers and differentiate their products from others on the market, in order to remain ahead of the competition.

1.7.2 Bargaining Power of Buyers

The bargaining power of customers in the fashion industry is relative. The middle-class and low-class customers have the option to check the prices of different fashion designers and bargain accordingly when opting for tailor-made clothing. Customers can compare the prices that different designers are willing to accept for designing an outfit and pick the price that best suits them. This gives the middle-class and low-class customers a high bargaining power. On the other hand, high class customers tend to have low bargaining power when opting for outfits. This applies regardless of whether the outfits are ready-to-wear or tailor-made. Ready-to-wear outfits are those that have already been made and are displayed in stores. The bargaining power is reduced here because customers of high class are likely to purchase the outfits with little or no regard for the prices attached to said outfits. Cosma designs outfits mostly upon customer request. Furthermore, the target market for Cosma is the middle-class or middle-income earners. Thus, the brand's customers have more bargaining power.

1.7.3 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

The bargaining power of suppliers is considered low in the fashion industry. The key inputs for production in the fashion or textile industry are fabrics. There are locally produced fabrics like kente which is easily accessible and has a lot of suppliers available. The suppliers of kente and other locally produced fabrics would have low bargaining power due to the number of suppliers in the market. Also, kente production is not considered unique in Ghana. Besides the local fabrics, designers could also opt for cheap fabrics made in China. Hence, they are not at the bargaining

mercy of suppliers. However, the situation differs where high grade fabrics are concerned. These fabrics tend to be expensive because they are rare and more difficult to produce. Thus, the suppliers of such fabrics have more bargaining power. Cosma prides itself in its use of high-quality fabrics to create the finest wears. Hence, it is at the mercy of the suppliers of high-quality fabrics due to the higher bargaining power the suppliers possess.

1.7.4 Threat of Substitutes

There is a considerably high threat of substitutes for firms in the fashion and textile industry. There are several available alternatives for clothing in the market. Customers could get different designers to produce the same outfit with little to no difference in the design of the outfit. Brand loyalty in this industry is also low because there are so many brands and boutiques that produce clothes with similar or the same designs. Customers could opt for clothes from street boutiques in Kantamanto and Makola instead of Cosma outfits, so long as the designs are similar or the same. Furthermore, these substitutes are cheaper than Cosma outfits, making them potentially more attractive to customers in the market.

1.7.5 Competitive Rivalry

The fashion industry is very competitive in Ghana. This is so for various reasons. One of such reasons is the high ease of entry stated earlier. Since new fashion designers or firms can enter the market without much struggle, there is a high concentration of firms in the market. Additionally, the high concentration of fashion brands makes it easy for customers to switch between brands. As mentioned earlier, there are several brands that produce outfits with similar designs. Hence, the switching costs for customers is very low. Customers also benefit from this competition because they get to enjoy lower prices for the goods. As a player in the fashion industry, the threat of

competition is one that remains constant for Cosma, especially due to the

concentration of fashion businesses in the Ghanaian market. To remain competitive,

Cosma differentiates itself with its unique take on the combination of simplicity and

uniqueness in clothing.

1.8 Status Quo

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

Strengths (internal, positive factors)	**Weaknesses** (internal, negative factors)
Strengths describe the positive attributes, tangible and intangible, of your organization. These are within your control.	Weaknesses are aspects of your business that detract from the value you offer or place you at a competitive disadvantage.
Timeless Design: Outfits stay in fashion indefinitely because of their simple and unique design. **Attention to detail:** Cosma outfits exude master craftsmanship and meticulous design. **Time consciousness:** Outfits are designed and delivered according to strict deadlines. **Use of quality fabric**: Extensive Fabric Sourcing Procedures. **Top class Finishing:** Cosma prides itself in its finishing.	**Meeting customer demand:** Difficult to meet growing demand for outfits **Inadequate Specialized Designers:** The business needs more qualified fashion designers to meet growing demand. **Staff retention:** A lot of the staff that is employed leave soon afterwards mostly because they came temporarily to hone sewing skills. **Insufficient Funds:** There are not enough funds for the business to grow as the owner would like. **Designs are tailored solely for women:** Cosma designs are made specifically for women. The business has not tapped into the male market.
Opportunities (external, positive factors)	**Threats** (external, negative factors)

Opportunities are external attractive factors that represent reasons for your business to exist and prosper.	Threats are external factors beyond your control that could put your business at risk. You may benefit from having contingency plans for them.
Annual Glitz Fashion Week **Christmas Peak Season:** Weddings, Family Events, Parties. **Gift Giving Season:** The Christmas Season. **Customers think quite highly of Cosma:** This is due to the quality of the outfits. **Wear Ghana Project:** A campaign that encourages Ghanaians to wear local/made in Ghana clothes and accessories.	**Prices for materials and fabrics fluctuate** **New fashion designers pop up regularly:** Due to the ease of access in the industry, new designers enter the market frequently. **Design theft:** Some fashion designers steal the designs of others in the market. **Negative customer attitudes and behavior:** There are some customers that are rude and make unreasonable demands.

The above diagram is a representation of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, for Cosma fashion brand. It can be seen that the Cosma brand prides itself in its attention to detail, time consciousness when working with deadlines, and the quality and timeless nature of its outfits. Cosma's simple yet unique designs provide that timeless element that keep them in style regardless of the fashion trends at any given time. This, coupled with the other characteristics, gives the business a leg up in the competitive fashion market. Furthermore, Cosma seeks to capitalize on the Wear Ghana Project as well as events such as the annual Glitz fashion week and the events held in Christmas Season. According to the owner of the brand, Christmas is the peak season for fashion designers due to the availability of popular events and the demand for outfits suitable for gift-giving. The Wear Ghana Project is an initiative by players in the fashion industry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, that seeks to encourage people to wear clothes or outfits made in Ghana as well as locally produced accessories. Although the project

runs all year, it reaches the peak in March. That month is known as the Wear Ghana

Month (Folley, 2019).

Despite the brand's strengths and available opportunities, there are some

noteworthy challenges that Cosma endeavors to overcome to achieve further growth.

To begin with, inadequate funds retard the business's progress. This is a common

issue for small firms that are yet to fully establish themselves in the market. Another

problem is the inadequate quantity of staff, which consequently ties into the issue of

meeting customer demand. It is hard to acquire trained staff that can produce the high-

quality outfits required by the brand. As the old saying goes, 'It is hard to find good

help these days.'. According to the business owner, the issue of staff adversely affects

the number of orders that Cosma can accept for a time period, which consequently

affects sales despite the growing demand for the brand's outfits. Furthermore, Cosma

loses an average of two clients per week due to the business's inability to meet

demand. This amounts to roughly eight customers every month.

Besides all the above, there are some factors that are beyond the business's control

and could negatively affect its competitiveness and profitability. Chief among these is

the fluctuation of the prices of essential high-quality fabrics in the market. There are

some high-quality fabrics that are favorable to Cosma but have unsteady prices that

shift, sometimes without warning, over time. Furthermore, the fluctuating costs of

fabrics coupled with high costs of shipping foreign fabrics to Ghana, pose a

significant external threat to the growth of the Cosma brand. Besides this threat, there

are others such as design theft and the arrival of new competitors. These are constant

thorns to the side of the brand that aims to be the figurehead of simple and unique

clothing in Ghana.

CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter addresses the problems highlighted by the owner of the business and examines them to determine whether or not they are the root causes of the company's sales and customer growth dilemma. This is done with the help of thorough research. The research involves the use of an efficient data collection tool, a sample representative of the population, an adequate data analysis method, and results derived from the overall research process.

2.2 Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is a planning process or technique for identifying gaps between current results and desired results and placing these gaps or needs in order of priority (Kaufman, 1988). Identifying and addressing these gaps can help a firm to increase its overall efficiency. Hence, a needs assessment provides a firm with crucial information that could elevate its position in the competitive market. The objectives of my research are to understand why Cosma is unable to meet customer demand and

identify any essential underlying issues that may be hindering the growth in sales and customers of the business. To this end, the needs assessment is necessary.

2.3 Methodology

To properly assess the needs of Cosma, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with research participants. The participants included the owner and the firm's staff, as well as customers. Interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection because they provide detailed insight and context into the needs of the firm. Interviews may also reveal underlying factors that the interviewer failed to take into consideration.

The owner and staff of the firm were interviewed regarding the challenges they faced during the implementation of their duties and the achievement of the business's goals. Alternatively, the other stakeholders, specifically existing and potential customers were interviewed to provide customer insight into the firm's performance and shortcomings. Middle-income earners between age 24 to 52 were chosen exclusively as the interviewees because the firm targets this demographic of people.

2.4 Sampling Method

The sampling method used for this research was the convenience sampling method. This was deemed to be the optimum method of sampling because it is based on the availability or accessibility of the sample. Considering that the interview participants were working individuals, gathering the sample based on how available or accessible they were during the period of research proved to be more convenient for them. Besides being simple and having a low selection cost, convenience sampling is used to get different views on the aspects of a problem (Ferber, 1977). However, every sample for consumer research must fulfill three basic criteria. First,

the sample must be relevant to the topic under study (Ferber, 1977). Next, the sample

size must be adequate. For convenience samples, the sample should be large enough

to yield stable results. Even so, there is no precise or general answer for how large a

convenience sample should be (Ferber, 1977). Finally, the sample should be

representative of the population under study. Representativeness in a convenience

sample is much more subjective than it would be for a probability sample. A link

between the characteristics of the sample and the topic under study would have to be

established to display representativeness (Ferber, 1977). Thirteen middle income

earners from age 24 to 52 were chosen as part of the sample. Together with the owner

and her employee, the total number of participants for the research was fifteen. This

sample was representative of Cosma's target market, the size was adequate, and the

participants were relevant to the study. Hence, the sample satisfied the three basic

criteria.

2.5 Data Analysis

To efficiently analyze the data acquired through the interviews with

stakeholders, themes were generated based on patterns identified in the responses of

the research participants. This method is known as the thematic approach. The thematic

approach to research involves identifying, analyzing, organizing and describing the

themes found in research data. It is a method that, when done rigorously, can produce

insightful and trustworthy results (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). This

approach was chosen because it provides rich and detailed findings. It is also extremely

useful for analyzing the diverse perspectives of different research participants,

detecting similarities and differences in these perspectives, and unearthing underlying

or hidden insights (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017).

To achieve the objectives of the needs assessment, I followed the guidelines of the needs assessment plan (Refer to Table 1). This plan, consisting of timelines and expected outcomes, was meant to ensure the timely collection and analysis of relevant data from research participants.

2.5.1 Findings from the Owner

During the interview process, the owner of Cosma highlighted the greatest challenges facing the business as follows in descending order of importance: Meeting customer demand, Insufficient number of employees, going to Accra for fabric, and reaching the business's target market. She stated that the business often fails to meet customer demand because she does not have enough time on her hands to complete several orders at once. This feeds into the reason why she requires more employees to help her work. The business has only one employee in its employ.

In addition to the above, the owner believed that the business needed to advertise itself more and felt that social media was the best way to do so. Nevertheless, she felt that she was not ready to properly promote herself because certain things had to be put in place to make the business more presentable to the public. Currently, the business relies mostly on referrals from customers. This suggests the lack of a structured marketing strategy. She also mentioned that her rivals often make use of social media to get customers which gives them an advantage over her business. When questioned about why she does not feel ready to promote the business, the owner admitted that she did not have faith in her managerial and business abilities because she was inexperienced in these fields. Furthermore, she acknowledged that this influenced her reluctance to hire new employees to a certain degree.

According to the owner, the completion of an order begins with meeting the clients and finding out the designs they want. After drawing the designs, she moves on to cutting. This is followed by sewing. Finally, the client comes for fitting. If the client is not satisfied with the fit, necessary adjustments will be made to the outfit based on the client's feedback. Afterwards, the order is officially complete, and the satisfied customer pays for the outfit. The time it takes to complete an order varies depending on the style of the clothing. A simple dress could take a day to complete whereas a gown could take weeks depending on the style. Furthermore, the owner believed that the business's timeliness, for completing orders, and finishing were top-notch. Below is a process diagram for the business.

Figure 1:Cosma's Process Diagram
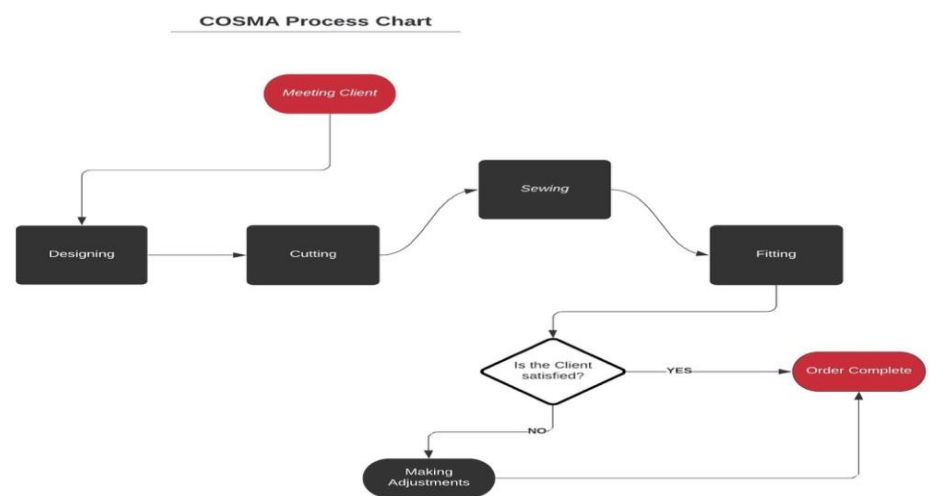
Source: Author's own research

About the business's pricing strategy, the owner stated that it was based primarily on the competition. Although she would prefer to charge higher prices, she had to cut prices due to a fear of losing customers. Ideally, the price she would charge for a gown would be 25% higher than what she currently charges. However, she confirmed the business is still making decent profit despite this price reduction.

The interview with the Cosma employee revealed that he shared similar views with the owner on several of the issues raised. The employee believed that meeting customer demand was the greatest challenge the business faces, much like the owner. However, he believed that the number of employees was satisfactory as is. In his opinion, there is no need for additional employees to be brought in. It seems as though this employee might be more concerned with preserving his position in the business than building the business. He may be perceiving new competitive co-workers as threats to his current position in the business. Like the owner, this employee thought that the business needed a greater presence in social media. He also believed that networking by building connections with clients could be a useful way to acquire more customers. When questioned about the work environment, he stated that it was very conducive for working. Furthermore, he mentioned that he is usually complemented for a job well done, which motivates him to do even better.

2.5.2 Findings from Customers

Per the thematic method of analysis, several themes were identified using extracts from interviews with customers. These themes were identified as 'Brand Promotion', 'Inadequate number of employees', 'Good Customer Service', 'Creative and Great Design', 'Affordability', 'Location'.

Brand Promotion

This theme captures the customers' opinions on how best the brand can promote itself to increase its customer base and capture more market share. It focuses on their thoughts concerning brand awareness. Furthermore, this theme addresses both promotions via social media as well as promotion using referral or word of mouth because these were the solutions that the majority of the customers suggested for improving brand awareness. This theme was chosen because it aligns with the

main objective of this project, which is the creation of a marketing and operations plan for Cosma Fashion Brand. Strategies and methods for promoting the brand and improving brand awareness should be considered in order to create an effective marketing plan.

Between the two solutions suggested by customers, most of the customers leaned towards promotion via social media. Although there were a few customers that said that promotion via word of mouth would be best, the majority believed that promotion using social media would produce the best results. One customer stated that: "Cosma could use more social media. Most people are on social media." Thus, Cosma could use social media to reach more people. In addition to this, another customer said: "Social media is less expensive and allows you to reach more people. We, as her customers, are already referring her to other people so she needs to work on social media." This statement shows the merits of promotion via social media and implies that promotion through word of mouth is unnecessary because the customers are already recommending the brand to others. To further cement this view, the interview revealed that the majority (11 out of 15) customers already recommend the brand to others.

Good Customer Service

This theme encompasses the business's response to feedback, its timeliness with regard to completing orders, and how the business is able to satisfy or please its customers. One of the objectives of this project is to increase sales and the business' customer base. Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to Cosma's ability to satisfy customers' needs and keep them happy with the business. Customers that feel that customer service is poor, are more likely to leave and less likely to recommend the business to other people. In terms of timeliness, a customer said: "I receive my

clothes minimum in a day and maximum within a week. Cosma never disappoints."

This customer expressed satisfaction with the time it takes to complete orders. This

was not an isolated incident.

Another customer said: "She took less time to create an outfit than expected.

She responded quickly to feedback and corrected mistakes in the outfit." Almost all

the customers stated that they were satisfied with the time it took to complete orders.

Another customer also stated: "Cosma accommodated my request to sew for my baby

even though Cosma hadn't done it yet. Cosma also delivers the clothes to me" Here, it

appears that Cosma is willing to go to great lengths to satisfy the requests of its

customers.

Creative and Great Design

This theme encapsulates the customers' opinions of Cosma's unique design,

attention to detail, and finishing. These are the traits that the owner considers the

business's greatest strengths. That being the case, the theme focuses on the

customers' take on these vital traits. Most of the respondents stated that the greatest

strengths of the business lie in its attention to detail and finishing. A participant

stated: "Cosma finishing is always on point. Cannot be matched." Similar responses

were given by most of the customers that were interviewed. The owner's faith in her

finishing is replicated by her clients.

Cosma's designs seem to have made a noteworthy impression as well. One

participant said: "Cosma's strength lies in its creative ideas and creativity with

designs and fabric." The business's unique portrayal of fashion appears to be making

a positive impact on the minds of customers.

Affordability

The theme is centered on the pricing of outfits and the customers' response to these prices. Cosma's target market is limited to middle-income earners in Accra ranging from age 24 to 52. Thus, the participants of the interview were people that satisfied those criteria. They were all within the brand's target market. When asked about the pricing of outfits, the majority of the customers claimed to be satisfied with the prices. Only a couple of the customers expressed dissatisfaction with the prices. These customers complained that the prices were a bit too high.

Location

This focuses on the accessibility of Cosma relative to its customers. The theme encompasses the convenience with which customers can reach the business as well as alternatives or solutions for customers that felt that location was a problem. The results of the interview showed that most of the customers thought that the business was in close proximity to them and not far enough to inconvenience them. However, when presented with the options of either a delivery service or a closer outlet, the bulk of the customers opted for a closer outlet because they need to try out the clothes to make sure that they fit, and make sure the style is perfect. A consumer commented:

"Clothes need to be tried out, so I would prefer a closer outlet."

Insufficient Number of Employees

The theme captures the most prominent concern of both the owner and the customers. That is the inadequate number of employees at Cosma. Currently, the business only has one employee besides the owner. When questioned about the business's greatest weakness, most of the customers addressed the issue of insufficient employees. The customers said that the owner needs more people to help her so that the business can grow and expand. A customer stated: "Cosma may not be

able to respond to requests that are wholesale. She should get more hands to help

her." This problem of inadequate staff feeds into the problem of meeting customer

demand.

Meeting customer demand was dubbed the business's greatest weakness by

the owner. The results of the research align with this claim to a degree. However, the

fundamental problem is not the inability to meet customer demand but rather the

inadequate number of employees. One customer said: "Cosma gets overwhelmed with

work so she can't meet everyone's demand." The cause is the inadequate number of

employees and its effect is not being able to meet customer demand. Thus, the root

cause of the brand's inability to increase its sales and customer base is its insufficient

number of employees.

2.5.3 Summary of Findings

The owner was convinced that the Cosma's biggest issue was meeting

customer demand and her employee thought likewise. Besides this, the owner stated

that the business needed to promote itself more on social media instead of relying

solely on referrals from customers. However, she felt that she was not ready to do this

promotion because she lacked experience in management and business. Moreover,

she admitted that this inexperience as a manager partly explains her lack of urgency in

hiring new employees. She felt that she might not have the skills to manage them

properly. Her employee's apparent desire to protect his current position from

potentially competitive co-workers also does not help this matter.

The results of the interviews with customers showed that most were satisfied

with the business's location, price, product design, and customer service. For brand

promotion, most of the customers agreed that social media was the best method.

When asked about the brand's biggest weakness, majority of the customers pointed to

the inadequate number of employees at the business. Some commented that the business would not be able to handle certain orders without more hands helping out.

In conclusion, the research revealed that the fundamental problem for the business was not meeting customer demand but rather the inadequate number of employees. The inability to meet customer demand is caused by the inadequate number of employees. Hence, the root cause of Cosma's difficulty in increasing its sales is its insufficient number of employees. However, there is another underlying factor that warrants equal consideration. That is the owner's inexperience as a manager and her lack of confidence in making business and management decisions because of this inexperience.

CHAPTER 3: MASTERY OF SUBJECT

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter analyses literature related to understaffing and identifies potential models and frameworks for designing an effective and practical marketing and operations plan for Cosma Fashion Brand.

3.2 Understaffing

The term understaffing refers to a situation in which the available employees are too few to accomplish the essential tasks and functions of a group (Hudson & Shen, 2015). In this definition, two key aspects need to be acknowledged. Chiefly, this definition applies to the completion of tasks that are essential or important. Not all tasks have the same level of importance. Lastly, understaffing occurs at a group level and not at an individual level. Although individuals in the group are affected by it, research has typically analyzed the phenomenon at a group level.

Understaffing can be understood as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three dimensions, namely: the severity or degree of the staffing shortage, the type of resource shortage, and the time or duration of the staffing shortage (Hudson & Shen, 2015).

3.2.1 Severity Dimension

Wicker, McGrath, and Armstrong (1972) defined three criteria for accessing staffing levels. The first criterion is the maintenance minimum, which is the minimum number of employees required for the group to function properly. Next is the setting capacity. This is the maximum number of employees that can be in a group at any given time. The setting capacity could be determined using regulations, such as the limit of 11 footballers on a team, or by physical characteristics like the number of chairs or desks in an office space. The final criterion is the number of applicants that seek to join the group and can do so. Using the criteria stated, a general staffing continuum was designed.

Figure 2:Staffing Continuum
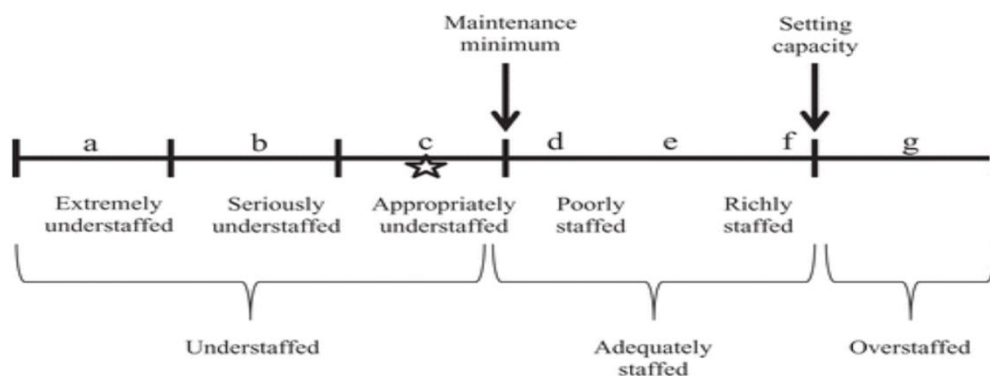
Source: Hudson & Shen, 2015

A group is adequately staffed when the number of applicants exceeds the maintenance minimum while remaining below the setting capacity. Alternatively, when the number of applicants falls below the maintenance minimum, the group becomes understaffed.

The degree of understaffing depends on how far the number of applicants falls below the maintenance minimum. Also, as the applicants exceed the setting capacity, the group becomes overstaffed. A situation where the number of applicants falls below the maintenance minimum can be viewed as the responsibilities placed on the group outweighing the resources (manpower or expertise) of the group. When the demands exceed resources, negative outcomes are more likely to occur. However, if the resources are just as high as the demand even when the demand is high, it can be seen as a challenge or an opportunity for growth (Hudson & Shen, 2015).

3.2.2 Resource Dimension

This dimension concerns the type of resource shortage. Here, manpower understaffing and expertise understaffing are defined and explained. Manpower understaffing operates on the assumption that employees in a group have the skills, knowledge, and expertise to accomplish essential tasks but lack the sufficient number of group members to adequately complete said tasks. With this type of understaffing, the resource shortage is manpower. On the other hand, expertise understaffing refers to a shortage of employees that have the skills, knowledge, and expertise to adequately complete essential tasks. In such situations, manpower is adequate whereas expertise is lacking. A simple example of expertise understaffing is a person that is not skilled at playing football brought into a football team simply to fulfill the requirement of 11 players on a team. There is an incorrect assumption that greater expertise makes up for less manpower (Hudson & Shen, 2015). Groups need to be careful about these two distinct types of understaffing and the potential impact they could have on productivity.

3.2.3 Time/Temporal Dimension

This dimension is focused on how long a group has remained in its current staffing situation or condition. There are two types of understaffing that are captured in this dimension. They are acute understaffing and chronic understaffing. Acute understaffing is a temporary shortage of employees that is expected to end shortly. This usually occurs when a group loses a member, but management is making swift efforts to find a replacement soon or a member is temporarily absent due to sickness or injury (Hudson & Shen, 2015). Chronic understaffing happens when a group is operating with insufficient resources, be it employees or expertise, over a long period. In these cases, employees tend to be anxious and experience, low motivation and productivity (Hudson & Shen, 2015). Chronic understaffing often happens when organizations are facing economic hardships or restrictions.

3.3 Management Frameworks

The interview with the owner of the business revealed that she lacked confidence in her ability to make business decisions. As stated earlier in the data analysis, she believed that she was not ready to enhance the brand's marketing efforts because she was not 'ready'. When pressed further about this, she admitted that she lacked experience as a manager and that this is likely a weakness for the business. This revelation explains to a large extent why she does not have the confidence to push the business's marketing efforts further. It also explains her reluctance to hire new staff because she feels that she may not be experienced enough the manage a large number of employees. The following are management frameworks to counter this problem and hopefully push this business forward concerning management and decision making.

3.3.1 Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid

This framework is based on behavioral studies of leadership and management for businesses. The studies highlighted two aspects of managerial behavior that are important when running a business. These are the concern for task completion and the concern for people or employee wellbeing (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Task completion has to do with managers instructing and directing employees towards the business's goal or objective. It involves emphasizing deadlines, establishing strict quotas, and detailed work schedules. On the other hand, concern for people is about the manager ensuring the wellbeing of employees. This could be the mental and physical wellbeing of employees and involves establishing trust, developing teamwork, and mutual respect (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Blake and Mouton from the University of Texas devised a two-dimensional grid for management which consists of the concern for task completion (production) and the concern for employees (people). This grid makes it possible to explore four different types of management styles (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Figure 3:Blake and Mouton Management Grid

Source: Business-to-you, 2020

Impoverished Management (1,1)

This is for managers that have the lowest concern for both production and management as shown in Figure 2. Such managers only put in the minimum effort to make sure tasks are completed and do not care much for interpersonal relationships in the workplace. A reason for this behavior might be that the managers do not want to be held responsible for mistakes (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Country Club Management (1,9)

Country Club style managers have a high concern for employees and a low concern for production. These managers pay close attention to the wellbeing of employees while neglecting work outputs. This is due to the belief that ensuring the needs and wellbeing of employees will eventually lead to improved work outputs. As a result of this style, work environments tend to be lax which makes workers less productive (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Authority-Compliance/Produce-or-Perish Management (9,1)

The managers have a high concern for production and low concern for people, thus this style is very dictatorial. It is fundamentally a 'do or die' environment where employees that do not meet targets are punished. Managers also use tangible incentives like bonuses to encourage employees to complete tasks. Efficiency in the completion is placed above all else, with little regard for the wellbeing of employees (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Middle-of-the-Road Management (5,5)

This management style is for managers that have medium concern for production and medium concern for people as shown in Figure 2. They are attempting to achieve a balance between task completion and employee wellbeing. This usually

results in managers seeking moderate work output while trying not to step on the toes

of employees. Hence, there is always the danger that neither concerns would be

achieved at satisfactory levels (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Team Management (9,9)

This is when managers have a high concern for both people and production. This style

relies chiefly on making employees feel that they are important parts of the

organization by involving them in decision making, encouraging teamwork and

commitment, and showing mutual respect and trust. Team management operates on

the theory that employees are intrinsically motivated, enjoy their work, and want to

work to improve themselves without any direct reward in return for their efforts.

Blake and Mouton deemed this style as the best one for implementing sound

leadership (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

3.3.2 Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model

Contrary to the idea behind the Blake and Mouton Management Grid, Hersey

and Blanchard suggested that the most effective leadership style depends on the

circumstances the leaders find themselves in (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). In essence,

the theory states that leadership is most effective when the leaders adapt to certain

situational factors in their environment instead of trying to alter the environment as

Blake and Mouton suggested. Hersey and Blanchard discovered that leaders have to

modify their style of leadership as the ability (task readiness) and willingness

(psychological readiness) of their subordinates to perform tasks change over time.

Consequently, the relationship between leaders and their followers goes through

different stages as the follower changes (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Four styles of

leadership are implemented, depending on the ability and willingness of followers. The styles are directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating.

Task readiness of a follower refers to the person's competence or ability to do what is asked of them. This ability is influenced by their skills, knowledge, and experience. Also, the follower's ability is expected to grow over time (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Psychological readiness has to do with the degree of willingness of a follower to complete a given task and take responsibility for his or her actions. This also consists of the followers' motivation, drive, and confidence in their ability (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Figure 4: Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model

Source: Business-to-you, 2020

D1: Unable and Willing (Low Ability and High Willingness)

A follower that falls in the D1 category, as shown in Figure 3 above, cannot complete a task but is willing to attempt the task regardless. Simply put, such a follower is driven but lacks the skills, knowledge or expertise to get the job done.

Followers in this category are at the lowest stage of development, usually beginners at

an organization, and are eager to please supervisors (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

D2: Unable and Unwilling (Low Ability and Low Willingness)

Followers in the D2 category have neither the skills nor the willingness to

complete a task given to them. Followers in the D1 category eventually grow to reach

D2 as they gain more experience and some ability. However, their motivation drops

as tasks become more complex due to their increased competence. This results in a

low willingness and ability to complete tasks. This is the second stage of follower

development (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

D3: Able and Unwilling (High Ability and Low Willingness)

A follower that falls in this category has the skills necessary to complete tasks

but is unwilling to do so. Two things could explain this. The follower may lack the

motivation to complete a task or simply be nervous and lack the confidence to

complete a task without support or encouragement from the leader. Both of these

reasons could be responsible for this. This is the third stage of development so the

follower does not yet have the confidence to complete tasks individually (Hersey &

Blanchard, 1969).

D4: Able and Willing (High Ability and High Willingness)

This is the final stage of follower development. The followers in this category

have the skills and motivation to work. They are willing and able to complete the

tasks given to them. The followers have gained enough experience and knowledge to

complete tasks confidently (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

After analyzing the followers, the focus is shifted to how the leaders adapt

their leadership to suit the needs of followers at different stages of development. To

do this, leaders employ either a directive behavior or supportive behavior to varying

degrees. The directive behavior is very similar to the concern for production stated in

the Blake and Mouton Management Grid. The leader emphasizes the completion of

tasks because the primary goal is getting the job done. The level of directive behavior

used will depend on the follower's level of development (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

On the other hand, supportive behavior is similar to concern for people. This is when

a leader focuses on the wellbeing of followers as well as building and maintaining

interpersonal relationships with them. The appropriate level of this behavior used also

depends on the followers' level of development (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Below

are the four leadership styles.

S1: Directing

This style places a higher emphasis on directive behavior than it does on

supportive behavior. The focus of the leader is on the completion of tasks with less

attention given to the needs of the follower. Typical traits of this leadership style are

step-by-step instruction and close supervision. This leadership style is ideal for

enthusiastic beginners (D1) that lack the skill and experience to get the job done.

These beginners are already willing to complete the task thus they do not require

motivation. This reduces the need for supportive behavior (Hersey & Blanchard,

1969).

S2: Coaching

 Coaching incorporates both high directive behavior and high supportive behavior.

The focus of the leader is to improve the confidence and skills of the follower so that

he or she can take on more responsibility (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). This style is

geared towards D2 followers because these followers become disillusioned after receiving more complex tasks, thereby making them lose confidence in themselves. The followers here need a leader to help them regain confidence while helping in building their skills further (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

S3: Supporting

As the name suggests, this style implements high supportive behavior and low directive behavior. This involves a high level of interaction and mutual trust between the leader and follower to build and maintain a strong relationship. Also, the leader trusts the follower to complete tasks as the follower's competence grows (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Hence, this leadership style is for D3 followers that have a high ability but have low willingness or confidence to complete tasks.

S4: Delegation

The last style is aimed at D4 followers and uses low directive behavior and low supportive behavior. At this point, the follower is fully developed and no longer requires a lot of supportive or directive behavior. The follower will perform tasks properly and with great confidence and responsibility. The leader can encourage autonomy while keeping an eye on the follower to provide support when necessary (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

3.4 Marketing Models

There have been various models and frameworks that have been created and implemented for planning and managing marketing activities. Four of such models are of particular relevance to this study. They are the 7Ps Model, the 7S framework, AIDA, and SOSTAC.

3.4.1 7Ps Model

The traditional model developed by McCarthy consisted of 4Ps, namely: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. This model was further developed to include three additional Ps. These additions were People, Physical Evidence, and Processes. The Product does not necessarily have to be tangible but must provide value for the consumer. This aspect of the model typically involves introducing new products or improving upon already existing products (Lin, 2011). The price consists of the pricing strategy the business implements. Prices must generate profits and be competitive on market. Typical pricing strategy could involve discounts, offers, and other similar methods (Lin, 2011). As the name suggests, the place has to do with location and accessibility. This is about where the consumer purchases the product and how the product reaches the customer (Lin, 2011). Promotions involves the variety of ways through which a business can communicate the benefits of its products to its customers. The focus is less on the features and more on the actual benefits (Lin, 2011). The People aspect of the model consists of customers, employees, and basically anyone else involved in the business. The focus here is on how the business can positively impact these people (Lin, 2011). Process refers to the methods and procedures employed by the business to provide a service or satisfy its customers. Feedback from customers is extremely helpful for improving the process. Lastly, physical evidence is the experience of utilizing a product or service (Lin, 2011)

This model allows for an organization to define and review key issues that impact the marketing of its products and services. Besides, it is easy to explain to anyone that seeks marketing advice but is not an expert in the field (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Need to elaborate on what each P stand for.

3.4.2 7S Model

This framework, also known as the McKinsey 7S framework, is handy for assessing the marketing capabilities of an organization from different viewpoints or perspectives. It can be used to review the organizational effectiveness concerning marketing operations, assessing changes required to support the digital transformation of an organization, and provide useful insights for creating a plan of action (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Strategy, Structure, Systems, Staff, Style, Skills, and Shared Values make up the 7S framework.

The strategy refers to the key approaches that the organization implements to achieve its goals and objectives. Structure is the division and organization of the business's human resources into different teams and groups (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Organizational systems are the business processes or procedures, as well as the technical platforms that are used to support business operations. As the name suggests, staff refers to the variety of employees and the employee recruitment and retention strategies that the organization implements (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Style is all about the organizational culture with respect to leadership and stakeholder interactions. The stakeholders include the staff of the business. Simply put, skills are the capabilities of the staff and organization as a whole to complete various tasks. Finally, shared values basically define the organizations goals and reason for existence. This is mostly found in the organization's mission and vision statements (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015).

Figure 5: 7S Model

7S Element	Scope
Strategy	The definition of key approaches for an organisation to achieve its goals.
Structure	The organisation of resources within a company into different business groups and teams.
Style	The culture of the organisation in terms of leadership and interactions between staff and other stakeholders.
Staff	The type of employees, remuneration packages and how they are attracted and retained.
Skills	Capabilities to complete different activities.

7S Element	Scope
Systems	Business processes AND the technical platforms used to support operations.
Shared values	Summarised in a vision and or mission, this is how the organisation defines its *raison d'etre*.

Source: Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015

3.4.3 AIDA

The AIDA model is one that was developed by Elias St. Elmo Lewis and dates back to the 19th century. The model follows four cognitive steps that customers use when purchasing a new product. These steps are Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. Specifically, awareness of the product's existence, interest in the potential benefits of the product, desire to acquire the product, and action which involves purchasing the product or making inquiries (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). It enables the organization to understand the sales process and thereby review its marketing campaigns. This model basically helps in analyzing the customers' thought processes or buying habits and adjusting the organization's marketing efforts, based on this analysis, to make the product more appealing to customers. However, the model is more of a communications framework than a strategic decision-making model because it is primarily used to review the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and

develop innovative communications to improve effectiveness of these campaigns

(Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015).

Figure 6: AIDA
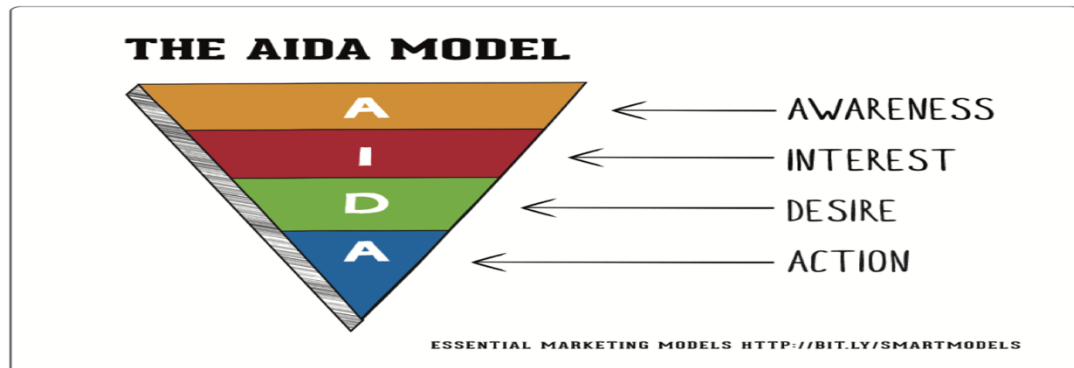
Source: Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015

3.4.4 SOSTAC

The SOSTAC is a planning framework that aids in structuring and managing

the implementation of various types of plans including but not limited to marketing

strategy, business plans and communication plans (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). The

acronym, SOSTAC, stands for Situation Analysis, Objectives and Strategy, Tactics,

Action, and Control. This model is also useful for setting targets or goals and

developing tactics to achieve these goals.

Figure 7: SOSTAC Planning System

Source: Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015

CHAPTER 4: SOLUTION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the solution for the company based on the findings and review of the literature.

4.2 Proposed Managerial Framework

The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid would be the framework best suited to the owner of Cosma currently. First and foremost, this model is significantly less complex that the Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model (Business-to-you, 2020). The management grid is relatively simple and easy to understand. This is especially well suited to an inexperienced manager like the owner of Cosma since it does not require the adaptability and leadership ability that is necessary to successfully implement the Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model.

Besides this, the managerial grid has merits that make it the superior choice for Cosma as it is right now.

The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid facilitates the growth and development of the leader. Unlike the management grid, the Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model focuses on the development of the followers. Hence, the situational leadership model requires the leader to be experienced and very competent at leadership to be effective. For a budding manager that lacks experience, the management grid is more suitable. Besides, the management grid helps a leader to understand his or her natural leadership style (Business-to-you, 2020). Leaders that understand their current situation can effectively implement changes or improvements to themselves. Knowing the problem is the first step to solving it.

4.2.1 Leadership Style

As stated in chapter 3, the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid identifies four different styles of leadership. The best style for Cosma is the Team Management leadership style. Managers that use this style have high concern for people and high concern for production. According to research from Blake and Mouton, this is the best style for exercising sound leadership and is recommended for managers (Blake & Mouton, 1964). This approach is all about maintaining good relationships with employees while encouraging teamwork for the completion of tasks. Although it seems similar to the middle of the road leadership style, they differ because the middle-of-the-road approach is a more mediocre approach to achieving a balance between concern for employees and concern for production. Thus, this approach always has the danger of accomplishing neither of these objectives.

To properly implement the team management style, the leader must establish mutual trust and respect with followers and encourage teamwork. An effective way to

establish trust and mutual respect is to involve the employees in decision-making (Blake & Mouton, 1964). This would also make the followers more committed to the task because they feel more responsible after contributing to the business decision.

4.2.2 How to implement the framework

The first step for the manager is to identify your position on the management grid. Begin by listing recent initiatives you have undertaken as a leader. Score your concern for people and production for each initiative and place the score on the grid each time to reveal your current leadership style (Mind Tools, 2016). Be honest with yourself when scoring and place yourself where you believe you fit on the grid (Mind Tools, 2016).

The next step is to identify the areas where you can improve your leadership capabilities. This meant to move the manager further up to the top right side of the grid, towards the team management leadership style. Moving up the grid requires the manager to improve communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills. If you realize that your leadership style is too task-oriented, you can change this by involving employees in decision-making, encouraging problem-solving through teamwork, and generally improving communication with employees. Conversely, if your style is too focused on people, you can place more emphasis on meeting deadlines and schedule management (Mind Tools, 2016). Be sure to check progress fairly often and make adjustments when necessary to get the best leadership style.

4.2.3 Justification

Cosma's objective is to increase its sales and customers. Initially, the brand's inability to meet customer demand was perceived to be the reason why it could not increase its sales. The data analysis revealed that the root cause of the Cosma's sales issue was understaffing. However, simply acquiring more staff would not necessarily

guarantee a boost in sales and an ability to meet demand. The employees have to be

productive to meet demand and thus improve sales. Effective management and

leadership are crucial for making employees as productive as they can be. Poor

management of employees could potentially lead to lower sales due to reduced

productivity. For this reason, the management grid framework is necessary for

improving the productivity of workers and consequently increasing sales.

Furthermore, the management framework will help the inexperienced owner of

Cosma manage incoming employees properly and boost her confidence as a manager.

This confidence boost would significantly reduce her reluctance to make business

decisions.

<center>4.3 Proposed Marketing Model 1</center>

Two marketing models would work best for Cosma. These are the 7Ps model

and the 7S model. The 7Ps model was developed from Jerome McCarthy's 4Ps

marketing mix model. This model would enable the company to easily identify the

key factors or issues that affect its marketing efforts. The first four Ps are designed to

address the company's products whereas the remaining three Ps tackle the service

aspect of marketing (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Each of the Ps would be explained in

detail below to provide a clear understanding of how they apply to Cosma.

<center>*4.3.1 Product*</center>

This considers how the business can develop or improve on its product so that

it more adequately satisfies the needs of customers (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). The

business looks for any new approaches to product design or branding that could

increase the value that customers place on the product. Cosma primarily designs

simple outfits. The business could explore the possibility of designing more

extravagant clothing to attract a whole new set of customers that prefer this type of clothing. When analyzing the product aspect of the marketing model, the business must take an introspective look at its current product to figure out its shortcomings and develop new ways to make the product more desirable to customers. Improving the quality of the product or the outward design are just some of the ways to increase the value of the product in the minds of consumers.

4.3.2 Price

This is the analysis of the business's pricing strategy or models. Cosma currently uses the penetration pricing model. This model focuses on charging low prices to gain market share quickly. The price reduction is meant to be temporary and would be raised when the business gains sufficient market share. This model is often implemented by businesses that are launching a new product (The Economic Times, n.d.). The owner of Cosma says that she charges prices that are lower than they should be because she is new to the fashion industry and does not want to risk losing customers by charging high prices.

4.3.3 Place

The business must assess its distribution channels and seek out more efficient distribution options for getting its products to customers. Cosma Fashion Brand was initially located in a small garage in Dome, Accra but eventually moved out of the garage to a building in Mile 7, Accra. The new office space is much larger than the garage, thereby allowing the business to design and store more outfits than it did previously. The business currently has no branches or outlets. Hence, the single-story building at Mile 7 doubles as the headquarters of the business and the pick-up location for customers. Furthermore, Cosma does not have an online platform for customers to purchase clothes. The aforementioned conditions are some factors that

limit the business's ability to access its customers. Cosma could consider creating an online platform to allow customers to purchase outfits with ease and comfort. Also, establishing an outlet store to increase the ease of access for customers would be beneficial. Conversely, the business could develop a delivery system to save its consumers the hassle of picking up clothes from the headquarters. The owner would have to assess its distribution channels and determine which new approach works best for the business.

4.3.4 Promotion

Cosma should evaluate its media channels and figure out the best way to reach its target consumers. The business primarily promotes itself through word of mouth or referral from customers. Occasionally, the owner appears on talk shows of local television networks to promote the brand. One such occasion was the owner's appearance on the TV Africa show called Breakfast Live. However, the business should explore more avenues for promotion. Social media is an efficient and cost-effective method of promotion that the business is yet to fully explore. Interviews with customers revealed that most of them believed social media was the best method for the brand promotion that Cosma could use. The owner herself conceded to the fact that social media promotion gives her rivals a competitive edge over her company. This is a promotion avenue that could yield good results once explored fully.

4.3.5 Physical Evidence

This factor has to do with reassuring customers of the quality and prestige of the brand (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). This could be done by having an impressive website, well-trained staff, a nice building. These are just a few of the ways to convince customers that the brand is doing well. Although Cosma has well-trained staff, this staff is limited to just one employee. Also, the business does not have a

website. Moving from the garage to the building in Mile 7 was an effective way to

reassure customers. However, the business would need to explore other ways to do so.

4.3.6 Processes

This looks at methods for improving customer service and the overall

customer experience. This involves analyzing the service delivery process and

identifying unnecessary or detrimental aspects of the process. The parts that make the

customer jump through hoops must go or be improved (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015).

Below is a diagram of Burberry's business model. Burberry is a prominent British

high-end fashion brand with products sold internationally through retail and

wholesale (Burberry, 2016). A comparison can be made between the model below

and Cosma's process diagram to see if any potential improvements can be made to

customer service.

Figure 8: Burberry Business Model
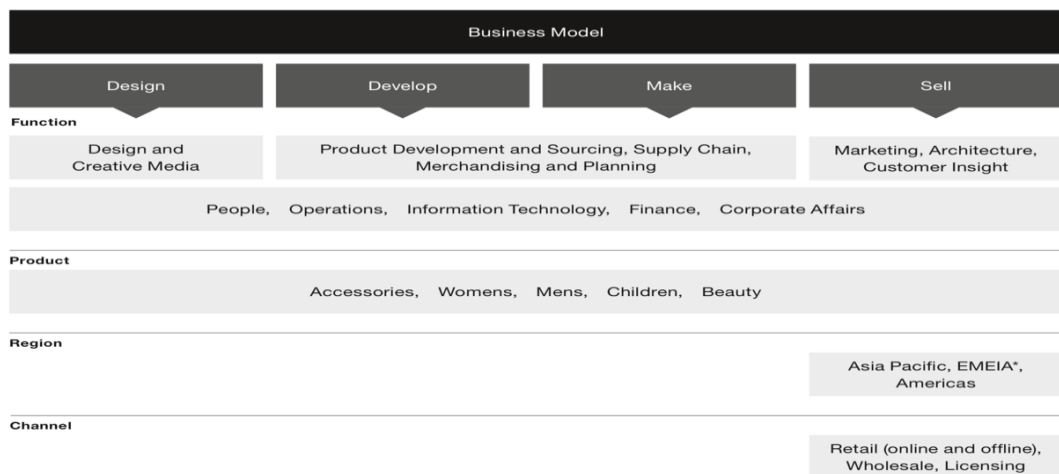
Source: Burberry Annual Report 2015/16

One difference that sticks out is the distribution channels. According to Burberry's

2015/2016 annual report, retail accounted for about 73% of the brand's revenue while

wholesale covered 25% (Burberry, 2016). Additionally, the brand's retail consists of

both online and offline ventures. It includes 215 mainline stores, 58 outlets, and

digital commerce. For 2015/16, Burberry's digital commerce was its fastest-growing channel with up to 22% growth at constant exchange rates. This growth was mostly due to the popularity of direct shopping on mobile platforms and the growth of mobile commerce (Burberry, 2016). Hence, the influence of digital commerce here cannot be ignored. The brand also benefitted greatly from its wholesale efforts. This includes sales to department stores and distributors worldwide (Burberry, 2016).

Currently, Cosma does not have the manpower to engage in wholesale distribution of its products. The business could be losing out on potential revenue that could be made through the wholesale distribution of its products. Wholesale distribution to clothing retailers could make Cosma products more accessible to its existing customers as well as introduce the products to new customers.

Unlike Burberry, Cosma does not engage in digital commerce. Furthermore, its local competitors, Pistis and Christie Brown, actively engage in digital commerce and marketing via social platforms. Both of these rivals have websites for customers to place orders and make purchases. This puts Cosma a step behind its competitors in terms of customer service. A digital platform would be more convenient for some customers to place orders when compared to Cosma's current method of having customers drive to her shop at Mile 7 to place orders.

4.3.7 People

This has to do with considering the number of people employed by the company as well as the level of expertise or skills that these employees possess. Skill gaps should also be taken into consideration when evaluating people (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Cosma is currently understaffed. The customer demand exceeds the available resources, which is manpower in this case. Hence, negative outcomes are likely to occur. The business has only one employee besides the owner. Like the

owner, this employee is a graduate of Riohs Originate Fashion Institute. This speaks

highly of the skills that they both possess as fashion designers. However, the business

is unable to boost its productivity because of how understaffed it is.

As stated in Chapter 3, understaffing is analyzed in three key dimensions:

severity of the resource shortage, the type of resource shortage, and the time or

duration of the shortage. The severity of the shortage depends on how far the number

of employees falls below the maintenance minimum. The owner confirmed that the

maintenance minimum for Cosma is four employees. Thus, it is accurate to say that

the business is seriously understaffed because it has only one employee. Besides this,

the type of resource shortage for the business is a lack of manpower. The one

employee the business has possesses the experience, knowledge, and expertise to

complete tasks. Unfortunately, this employee lacks an adequate number of group

members to properly complement the tasks. Expertise is sufficient whereas manpower

is lacking. Furthermore, Cosma is currently dealing with chronic understaffing. The

business has been operating with insufficient employees for a long period.

In a nutshell, the business is seriously understaffed and has been for a long

time. Also, it is in dire need of manpower to adequately complete its essential tasks.

In cases like this where the business is understaffed for a long period, employees tend

to be anxious, which leads to low motivation and low productivity. This coupled with

the excess responsibility brought on because of serious understaffing, could severely

impact the productivity of the business if not handled correctly. The situation would

only worsen as understaffing continues. More manpower should be hired as soon as

possible to prevent the situation from escalating further. The owner and her employee

are both graduates of Riohs Originate Fashion Institute and therefore share a valuable

connection with the school. It would be advisable for the owner to seek out and hire

fresh graduates or interns from the fashion institute to solve the understaffing issue.

Also, these graduates would likely have the skills and expertise to get essential tasks

done. Below is a table that Cosma could use as a guideline for assessing the 7Ps.

Figure 9: Guide to using 7Ps Model

Mix Element	Our assessment	New approaches to consider?
Products / Services	How can you develop or amend your products and services?	
Prices / Fees	How can we change our pricing models?	
Place / Access	What new distribution options are there for customers to experience our product, e.g. online, in-store, mobile	
Promotion	How can we add to or substitute the combination within paid, owned and earned media channels?	
Physical evidence	How we reassure our customers, e.g. impressive buildings, well-trained staff, great website?	
Processes	How can we improve service? What hoops do we make customers jump through?	
People	Who are our people and are there skills gaps?	
Partners	Are we seeking new partners and managing existing partners well?	

Source: Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015

4.3.8 Justification for 7Ps Model

The objective of the business is to increase its sales and overall customer base.

The 7Ps model allows the business to thoroughly assess the key aspects that affect the

marketing of its products and services and thus improve its marketing approach. This

improved approach would attract more customers to the brand. Also, improving its

products and customer service would raise the value that customers place on the

products, thereby raising the maximum amount that customers are willing to pay for

the product. This would increase the business's sales and earnings.

Below is a table of Cosma's marketing mix.

Table 2: 7Ps Framework for Cosma

Mix Element	Assessment of Cosma	New approaches to consider
Products/Services	Simple yet uniquely designed outfits.	Designing more extravagant outfits to attract a new set of customers.
Prices/Fees	Charges relatively low prices to rapidly gain market share (Penetration pricing).	Cosma could charge higher prices for its product because its top-notch finishing and unique design give the brand competitive advantage (Premium pricing).
Place/Access	One building at Mile 7 that acts as both the headquarters and pick-up point for clients.	Developing a delivery system for clients. Creating an online platform or customers to make orders and purchases.
Promotion	The use of referrals and word-of-mouth to promote its brand.	Using social media to promote the brand.
Physical evidence	One well-trained employee and a building at Mile 7	Hiring more employees and ensuring that they are qualified for the job. Setting up an impressive website.
Processes	Involves receiving orders from clients at the brand's headquarters, designing the outfits according the clients' specifications, and having the client pick up the outfit at the headquarters.	Wholesale distribution of outfits to clothing retailers. Engaging in digital commerce to make purchases and orders more convenient for customers.
People	There is only one employee working for Cosma.	Hiring more employees, preferably graduates or interns from Riohs Originate Fashion Institute.

Source: Author's own research

4.4 Proposed Marketing Model 2

The 7S marketing model is very useful for assessing the effectiveness of an organization's marketing efforts. Hence, it would prove essential to reviewing Cosma's marketing efforts and highlighting the key issues that are associated with the business's marketing operations. The diagram below is an example of the 7S model being used to assess the issues associated with introducing digital technology into an organization. This diagram gives a fair idea of how to go about the process of using the 7S model. For Cosma, the objective is to increase its sales and the number of its customers. Hence, the model would help identify and assess the key issues with the marketing operations that are geared towards achieving this objective.

Figure 10: Practical example of 7S Model

Element of the 7S model	Relevance to digital transformation	Key issues
Strategy	The contribution of digital business in influencing and sup-porting organisations' strategy.	☑ Gaining appropriate budgets and demonstrating/delivering value and ROI from budgets ☑ Annual planning approach ☑ Techniques for using digital business to impact organization strategy ☑ Techniques for aligning digital business strategy with organisational and marketing strategy
Structure	The modification of organisational structure to support digital business.	☑ Integration of digital marketing or e-commerce teams with other management, marketing (corporate communications, brand marketing, direct marketing) and IT staff ☑ Use of cross-functional teams and steering groups ☑ Insourcing vs outsourcing

Element of the 7S model	Relevance to digital transformation	Key issues
Systems	The development of specific processes, procedures or information systems to support digital business.	☑ Campaign planning approach-integration ☑ Managing/sharing customer information ☑ Managing customer experience, service and content quality ☑ Unified reporting of digital marketing effectiveness ☑ In-house vs external best-of-breed vs external integrated technology solutions
Staff	The breakdown of staff in terms of their background, age and sex and characteristics such as IT vs marketing, use of contractors/consultants.	☑ Insourcing vs outsourcing ☑ Achieving senior management buy-in/involvement with digital marketing ☑ Staff recruitment and retention. Virtual working ☑ Staff development and training
Style	Includes both the way in which key managers behave in achieving the organisation's goals and the cultural style of the organisation as a whole.	☑ Defining a long-term vision for transformation ☑ Relates to role of the digital marketing or e-commerce teams in influencing strategy — is it dynamic and influential or a service which is conservative and looking for a voice?
Skills	Distinctive capabilities of key staff, but can be interpreted as specific skill-sets of team members.	☑ Staff skills in specific areas such as supplier selection, project management, content management, specific e-marketing media channels.
Shared values	The guiding concepts of the digital business or e-commerce organization which are also part of shared values and culture.	☑ Improving the perception of the importance and effectiveness of digital business amongst senior managers and staff it works with (marketing generalists and IT)

Source: Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015

4.4.1 Strategy

The strategy consists of the actions that the organization takes to achieve its objective (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Cosma's initial strategy was to rely on referrals from customers to draw in new customers and thereby boost sales. However, the analysis of this strategy using the 7Ps model proved that this method was less than ideal. Instead, the preferred method would be to use digital marketing, specifically social media, to attract more customers. Even so, there are still some noteworthy issues that come with social media marketing.

The first key issue is establishing an authentic connection with the audience (Peters, 2019). It is usually more difficult to establish a genuine connection with people when there is no personal or face to face interaction. A lot of businesses make

the mistake of simply posting content without trying to build authentic relationships with potential clients online.

Another issue is the content quantity over quality (Peters, 2019). It is very easy to fall into the habit of posting frequently without much care for the quality of the information. The internet is undoubtedly a big place. This makes it easy for the audience to get lost in all the new content the internet provides. Content that lacks quality will hardly get the attention of an audience.

One last issue to consider is reaching a larger audience (Peters, 2019). Even with great content, there is not much benefit to the business if the number of people that follow the content is low. Getting more people online engaged and interested in your business can be challenging and frustrating.

4.4.2 Structure

The structure is dependent on the strategy. The basis of the structure is to ensure that responsibilities are decentralized so that no single person or group becomes burdened with too much pressure. Structure divides tasks and encourages teamwork to ensure that different groups can focus on different tasks to maximize productivity (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980). When a person focuses on completing a single task, he or she can devote more time and effort to it and therefore complete it with high efficiency. Currently, Cosma does not have enough employees. Still, the business would have to adjust its organizational structure to cater to digital marketing after it has hired enough employees hopefully soon. However, much like with strategy, some issues come with modifying organizational structure.

The first problem is whether to rely on insourcing or outsourcing. Establishing a strong presence on social platforms would require employees dedicated to the task of managing the business's social media matters. There is the option of either using

the employees currently available to the business or outsourcing the digital marketing services from a marketing firm. Insourcing is the less expensive option. However, outsourcing provides highly skilled marketing professionals that are dedicated to the success of the business's marketing operations.

The other issue to note here is whether to create a department consisting of multiple employees dedicated to marketing operations or to simply have one or two people in charge of marketing affairs. This issue only applies if the business decides to choose to insource.

4.4.3 Systems

Systems are the processes and procedures, formal and informal, that are used to support the operations of the business (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980). For Cosma, these systems would be the procedures and processes that support digital or social media marketing. These procedures could range from things like identifying your ideal customer online to creating content for publishing on an internet platform. The following issues should be noted.

Managing the client's personal information is very important. If handled poorly, there could be serious repercussions. For starters, the business would lose the trust of its clients. In extreme cases, legal actions could be taken against the business. It is very easy to leak a person's details online. Hence, extra care must be taken when dealing with matters of online privacy.

Besides the above, there is also the matter of managing content quality and customer service online. A lot of businesses find it difficult to practice good customer service online. They simply post content and leave customers to their own devices. If you follow this example, you are likely to lose customers. Going out of your way to assist customers is a good way to keep them coming back. This is sometimes hard to

do because it is easy to get overwhelmed by the volume of questions and feedback. Managing the quality of content is also very challenging. It can be hard to consistently deliver quality content that captures the attention of clients online.

4.4.4 Staff

The staff refers to the types of employees working for the business, the recruitment of new employees, as well as remuneration and retention strategies (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). As mentioned earlier, Cosma is understaffed. When the business is eventually adequately staffed, there would be a couple of key issues to consider.

Once more, there is a choice between insourcing and outsourcing. The owner would have to decide whether to acquire the services of a marketing firm or use its staff to handle its marketing operations.

Another problem is staff recruitment and retention. Cosma might have to recruit marketing personnel to spearhead the business's marketing efforts. Getting access to qualified people is a challenge. Retaining these employees after hiring them is another challenge.

4.4.5 Style

This has to do with the organization's culture and its leaders' approach to the achievement of the business's goals (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980). Culture can play a large part in how an organization treats its shareholders and conducts its business. It also has an impact on the employees' attitude towards work. A company with a counterproductive culture could have employees with low productivity and a disregard for task deadlines. Hence, style is important. The following issues, if handled poorly, might adversely affect Cosma's style.

Leading by words and not by actions is a vital issue that a lot of managers fail to properly deal with. A leader cannot get his subordinates to buy into a culture by using words alone. The leader must practice what she preaches to convince her followers. Leading by example often reinforces a message or nudges the followers thinking in the desired direction (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980).

The next issue is getting everyone in the organization to buy into the culture. The culture should not only apply to the top management. The people at the bottom of the organizational ladder also have to practice and believe in the culture. However, getting every person, especially those at the bottom, on the same page can be difficult.

4.4.6 Skills

These are the special capabilities of employees that are used to complete various tasks (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980). In this case, the skills in question are the marketing capabilities of the employees. These skills would be crucial to the success of the business's marketing operations. There is only one major issue here which warrants concern. That is whether or not the employees have the necessary expertise to complete digital marketing tasks and objectives. This is less of a problem when outsourcing from a marketing firm. The problem becomes more pressing when insourcing is adopted.

4.4.7 Shared Values

An organization's shared values explain why the organization exists, what it does and what it aims to be (Hanlon & Chaffey, 2015). Furthermore, it serves as a guide for all members of the organization so that they act not only in the interest of the organization but in the interest of the customer as well. For Cosma, concerning social media marketing, the shared value could be valuing the privacy of its online audience to capture and retain the trust of its clients. Privacy matters to clients. Some

businesses cross the line when it comes to privacy. It is not uncommon to hear of the

invasion of a person's online privacy. This is a line that Cosma should not cross.

Crossing this line is morally wrong and would cause customers to lose faith in the

brand. The key challenge for Cosma would be emphasizing the importance of privacy

to its employees to ensure that they do not cross this line.

4.4.8 Justification for 7S Framework

Whereas the 7Ps model helps the business to adjust its marketing approach by

assessing the key factors that influence the marketing of its product and service, the

7S model enables the business to review the effectiveness of the adjusted marketing

approach. The 7S model complements the 7Ps model and paints a more detailed

picture of the business's current marketing situation. Thus, the 7S model helps the

business to achieve its goal by contributing to a more detailed marketing plan that will

help Cosma increase its sales and customers.

Below is a table that highlights the elements of the 7s framework as well as

the key issues associated with them.

Table 3: 7S Framework for Cosma

Element of the 7S Model	Relevance to Cosma's marketing plan	Key Issues
Strategy	The use of social media marketing to increase sales and attract customers.	• Establishing a genuine connection with audience. • Focusing on the quality of content instead of the quantity.

Structure	Adjusting the organizational structure to suit social media marketing.	• Insourcing vs outsourcing • Creating a whole marketing department with several workers vs appointing only one or two workers to handle marketing operations.
Systems	Procedures and processes that support digital or social media marketing.	• Careful management of clients' personal information. • Managing content quality and customer service online.
Staff	The recruitment, management and retention of marketing staff.	• Insourcing vs outsourcing. • Staff recruitment and retention.
Style	The organization's culture and its leaders' general work ethics or attitudes towards work.	• Leading by words instead of by actions. • Getting all employees to buy into the organization's culture.
Skills	The capabilities of employees that are specific to marketing operations.	• Whether the employees have the capabilities to successfully complete marketing tasks.
Shared values	The principles of digital marketing that are incorporated into the firm's values. This includes respecting the online privacy of clients.	• Prioritizing and protecting the privacy of clients online.

Source: Author's own research

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Chapter Overview

The chapter integrates the results from the data analysis and the solutions of the previous chapter to develop appropriate recommendations for Cosma.

5.2 Staffing (First Priority)

This is the issue that has the most urgency and should, therefore, be treated as the number one priority. Moreover, staffing deserves the most attention because it will feed into the other recommendations. Cosma has been seriously understaffed for a long time. This type of staffing issue typically places a serious strain and excessive responsibility on the existing employees, resulting in reduced productivity and motivation. This is worrying because the situation will only worsen as understaffing continues. The business owner needs to hire more manpower as soon as possible to prevent the situation from escalating further. She and her employee are both graduates of Riohs Originate Fashion Institute and therefore share a valuable connection with this fashion school. It would be advisable for the owner to seek out and hire fresh graduates or interns from the fashion institute to solve the understaffing issue. Also, these graduates would likely have the skills and expertise to get essential tasks done.

5.3 Management (Second Priority)

The most important thing after staffing is management. Management is necessary to ensure that employees are productive and business decisions are made. The business owner should use Blake and Mouton's Management Grid to improve her competence and confidence as a manager. However, the simplicity of the management grid means that it ignores certain facets of management and leadership

(Business-to-you, 2020). It would be better for the manager to swi tch to the Hersey and Blanchard Situational Leadership Model after she has developed her leadership ability and gained more experience. For now, the managerial grid model is best. The leadership style she should be aiming for is the team management style. Besides, developing her competence as a manager would require more than just the management grid. The business owner needs to work on her communication and leadership skills to become a team management style leader. She can make use of local resources such as the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) management training and the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) training to improve her management skills. Taking management courses and leadership training at these institutions would be beneficial. She can also take management classes online if the previous option is less convenient for her. These classes could be taken at her leisure or whenever she has free time. However, I suggest that she make space in her schedule for these management courses.

5.4 Marketing -7Ps Model (Third Priority)

After settling the affairs of management, the business can move forward with the marketing plan, which is the focus of this project. Cosma can set up a digital platform for commerce to improve its overall customer experience. Such a platform for customers would take away the stress of having to journey to the business store at Mile 7 to place orders or make purchases. Establishing outlet stores could also make Cosma products more accessible to customers. Moreover, the business should consider going into wholesale distribution after the staffing problems have been resolved. Wholesale distribution is a great way to generate more revenue, make

products more accessible to customers, as well as creating awareness for products that are sold by clothing retailers in stores.

Simply relying on referral is not enough to effectively grow market share. Promoting the brand through social media is a much more effective method of creating awareness for the brand and increasing the customer base. Feedback from the customers during the interview process revealed that the vast majority of interviewees thought that a strong presence on social media was the way to go, especially for a fashion business. Business rivals Pistis and Christie Brown have a strong social media presence which gives them a competitive advantage over Cosma. Promotion via social media is relatively inexpensive which makes it all the more appealing.

5.5 Marketing -7S Model (Last Priority)

The 7S model has the last priority. However, this does not undermine the importance of this model. The model should be used after the 7Ps model to provide a more holistic marketing plan. The key issues for each factor of the 7S model can be challenging and demanding. Fortunately, there are feasible ways to solve them.

5.5.1 Strategy

The first issue with the digital marketing strategy is building a genuine connection with the online audience. To resolve this, Cosma should frequently monitor its online social platforms and respond to customer feedback and questions. This must be done in an authentic way to establish authentic relationships. The business can come across as authentic by offering to help customers or providing useful insights. You could even go a step further by creating an online forum to allow customers to express their thoughts and opinions (Peters, 2019). The second issue with strategy was content quantity over quality. It is easy to get into the habit of

posting content excessive without verifying the quality of said content. This can be resolved by monitoring popular social media platforms to get an idea of what the consumers' interests are and how you can capitalize on these interests to make your business's content more appealing. Also, Cosma can be more open and transparent with its online audience to generate interest. People online are curious and thus often interested in an inside into a firm's culture and values (Peters, 2019). The final issue with strategy is getting a larger online audience. The key to solving this issue is to actively seek out people that you know will likely benefit from the business's content instead of sitting back and passively waiting for people to come to you or share your content. Be sure to email your friends and family to share your content, join forums or online social groups that consist of your target market, and contact online influencers to share your content (Peters, 2019).

5.5.2 Structure

For structure, the first issue that came up was insourcing versus outsourcing. Although outsourcing would grant the business access to a marketing firm that would handle all the marketing operations, insourcing would be the best option for Cosma. Outsourced expertise would be more productive because they specialize in marketing and marketing operations. However, outsourcing is expensive. Cosma is a small business that started not long ago. Hence, taking on such expenses right now would not be best. Moreover, social media marketing is a relatively inexpensive option. This makes insourcing all the more appealing to Cosma because it would not cost much to implement. The other issue is whether to create a marketing department with multiple employees or simply have one or two employees responsible for all the marketing operations. It would be better for Cosma to choose the latter option. The business does not even have enough employees to efficiently handle production. It should

focus on acquiring employees for production first and foremost. Considering that the firm is small, it most likely cannot hire a large number of employees. Thus, getting just one or two people in charge of social media marketing should suffice for now.

5.5.3 Systems

The first issue for systems is managing clients' personal information online. The business should respect the privacy of its clients by putting measures in place to prevent information from leaking. Employees that handle the personal information of clients should be held accountable for this information. Also, establishing a privacy policy is a great way to hold the business accountable and make customers feel safe. Next, there is the issue of managing customer service and content quality. A good way to maintain good customer service online is to create a helpline dedicated to addressing the customers' grievances and collecting feedback. To ensure content quality, make sure to provide useful insights, post useful information, and monitor popular platforms to understand the consumer's interests.

5.5.4 Staff

Insourcing versus outsourcing is an issue for staff as well as structure. The solution remains the same. Insourcing is the better option for Cosma. The more pressing issue has to do with staff recruitment and retention. For digital marketing, Cosma is suffering from expertise understaffing. Even after recruiting employees from Riohs Originate, these employees would most likely not have the skills to effectively perform digital marketing. Fortunately, social media marketing is less technical and easier to grasp relative to other forms of marketing. Cosma can either train some of its existing employees to do it or recruit one or two marketing experts to do it instead. Hiring a couple of experts would be better because it would enable specialization which boosts productivity. The designers can focus on designing outfits

while marketers focus on marketing. To retain the recruits, or even the existing employees, the business can offer incentives like monetary bonuses, train and develop them, and create an attractive work environment that allows them to be flexible.

5.5.5 Style

Some leaders tend to lead by words instead of by example. This is a major issue that affects the style of the business. It is difficult to get followers to buy into a company's culture if the leader does not demonstrate or embody that culture. A culture of hard work can only be developed if the leaders themselves are hard working. To prevent this leadership by words from happening, the manager of Cosma has to practice what she preaches to her employees. If hard work and efficiency are the business's culture, she has to show these qualities in her work. Getting everyone, from top management to low-level employees, to practice business culture can be an issue. The good way for the owner of Cosma to get everyone on board is to communicate with and establish good workplace relationships with employees. This should be regardless of whether the employees are high on the corporate ladder or low.

5.5.6 Skills

A major problem that could setback marketing operation is finding or recruiting employees that have the skills to perform digital marketing. A good way to solve this is to have a strict and thorough recruitment process to make sure that only qualified people are hired to do the job.

5.5.7 Shared Values

Cosma's shared values about digital marketing would be to protect and value the privacy of its online audience. The problem with this is emphasizing the

importance of privacy to the marketing staff. This can be solved through training and development.

5.6 Conclusion

Provided that Cosma follows the above recommendations, the business is more likely to achieve its goal of increasing its sales and customer base.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Needs Assessment Plan

Date	Research Participant	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis Method	Expected Outcome
5th February 2020	Business Owner (Brenda Dzandu)	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Approach	Insights into challenges associated with achieving business goals
5th February 2020	Cosma Fashion Designers	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Approach	Insights into challenges associated with achieving business goals
10th February 2020 - 13th February 2020	Middle-Income Earners (Customers)	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Approach	Customer insights on Cosma's performance and associated recommendations for brand improvement.
15th February 2020 -25th February 2020	Researcher (Francis Senaya)	-	Thematic Approach	Accurate analysis and interpretation of data collected from interview participants

Source: Author's own research

Appendix 2: Interview Questions for the Owner

Interview Questions for Owner

1. Please list the problems that the business faces in order of importance. The scale being 5 for most important and 1 for least important.
2. What are some of the measures the business has put in place to address the problems stated earlier?
3. In your opinion, what would you say is the business' greatest strength?
4. Alternatively, what would you say is the business' greatest weakness?
5. What would you say is the best way for the company to increase the number of its customers and sales?
6. What is the process that goes into completing an order? How long does it take to complete orders?
7. How would you rate the efficiency of the business' operations (in terms of meeting customer demand) on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 5 being highly efficient and 1 being low efficiency?
8. What would you say gives you the competitive edge/advantage when compared to other fashion brands in Ghana? (Is it finishing? Cut? Responsiveness? Timeliness? Price?) There is no answer limit.
9. What goes into your pricing strategy?
10. In your opinion, what do your rivals do that keeps them competitive in the fashion industry? (What are others doing that you're not doing?)
11. Are the opening and closing times optimum for profit-maximization?

Source: Author's own research

Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Employee

Interview Questions for Employee

1. Please list the problems that the business faces in order of importance. The scale being 5 for most important and 1 for least important.
2. What are some of the measures the business has put in place to address the problems stated earlier?
3. In your opinion, what would you say is the business' greatest strength?
4. Alternatively, what would you say is the business' greatest weakness?
5. What would you say is the best way for the company to increase the number of its customers and sales?
6. What is the process that goes into completing an order? How long does it take to complete orders?
7. How would you rate the efficiency of the business' operations (in terms of meeting customer demand) on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 5 being highly efficient and 1 being low efficiency?
8. What would you say gives you the competitive edge/advantage when compared to other fashion brands in Ghana? (Is it finishing? Cut? Responsiveness? Timeliness? Price?) There is no answer limit.
9. In your opinion, what do your rivals do that keeps them competitive in the fashion industry? (What are others doing that you're not doing?)
10. Is the ambiance or work environment comfortable or pleasant for employees?
11. Are employees recognized or rewarded for a job well done?

Source: Author's own research

Appendix 4: Interview Questions for Customers

Interview Questions for Customers

1. In your opinion, what would you say is the business' greatest strength?
2. Alternatively, what would you say is the business' greatest weakness?
3. Provide a scenario where you received good customer service from Cosma.
4. Are there any improvements or changes you would like to see implemented by the business?
5. What would you say gives Cosma the competitive edge/advantage when compared to other fashion brands in Ghana? (is it finishing? Cut? Responsiveness? Timeliness? Price?)
6. Would you recommend the brand to others?
7. How do you think the brand can promote itself? (Social media? Advertisement? Others?)
8. Is the location of the business too far? If so, would you prefer a closer outlet or delivery service?
9. How long does it typically take for Cosma to complete your orders? Are you satisfied with this time?
10. Are you comfortable with the pricing of Cosma outfits?

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