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**Магістерська робота**

на тему: Building a go-to-market strategy and launching a sub-brand for an existing  
company in the IT recruiting industry

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Рогач М.Я. Створення та реалізація стратегії виходу на ринок суббренду існуючої компанії у сфері рекрутингу

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**Анотація:** У роботі досліджується процес запуску нового суббренду в галузі IT-аутсорсингу та аутстафінгу, з фокусом на нетехнічні посади. Дослідження включає в себе перевірку гіпотез, дослідження клієнтів, аналіз ринку, створення та реалізація стратегії виходу на ринок. Отримані висновки мають практичну цінність для компанії та надають уявлення для інших бізнесів, що розглядають подібну стратегію.

**Ключові слова:** IT-аутсорсинг, аутстафінг, суббренд, перевірка гіпотез, дослідження клієнтів, аналіз ринку, стратегія виходу на ринок, брендинг.

**Abstract:** This master thesis project explores the process of launching a new sub-brand in the IT outsourcing and outstaffing industry, focusing on non-technical positions. The research investigates the hypothesis testing, customer development, market analysis, go-to-market strategy, and success measurement involved in the launch process. The study employs a case study approach, combining primary data from interviews with key stakeholders and customers, and secondary data from literature, industry reports, and market data analysis. The findings provide practical implications for the company and insights for other businesses considering a similar strategy.

**Keywords:** IT outsourcing, outstaffing, sub-brand, launch process, hypothesis testing, customer development, market analysis, go-to-market strategy, success measurement, branding.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the IT outsourcing and outstaffing industry has experienced rapid growth due to the increasing demand for skilled IT professionals. Companies have been able to benefit from cost-effective and highly skilled workers from various countries. Ukraine has emerged as a key player in this industry, and our company has been able to take advantage of this by providing IT recruiting and outsourcing services primarily in Ukraine. However, we have been also noticing a growing demand for non-technical positions in the talent market and decided to study this niche to launch a new sub-brand to cater to this need.

The goal of this research is to explore the process of launching a new sub-brand for the company, and to provide insights into the successful steps as well as mistakes which were made and which managerial conclusions were obtained from this.

The object of the research is the launch of a new sub-brand by the company, while the subject of research is the process that was undertaken to achieve this. Specifically, the research examines the hypothesis testing, customer development, market analysis, go-to-market strategy, and success measurement that were involved in the launch process.

The first part of the work describes the background of this topic. We will consider how outsourcing arose, what are its features and types. Of course, the influence of global events on the development of this area did not go unnoticed. The impact of the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine was considered. Understanding global economic and political events, their connections and trends in certain areas is critically important for companies in the long term, so they were definitely taken into account.

The second part presents an analysis of the Trustshoring company and also considers the prerequisites for creating a new sub-brand. The third part of the work

describes the voluminous research part, namely conducting market, user and competitor experience. It highlights the methods used, as well as the results and insights obtained. This part is the foundation for building a marketing strategy, and is valuable because it can be used by other companies that want to conduct research, but do not know the algorithm of actions.

The fourth part is the transition from theory and research to practical implementation. It describes the process of developing positioning, branding, as well as creating marketing and sales strategies. The result of this part is the actual launch of the sub-brand and the acquisition of the first customers.

In the final fifth part, methods of measuring efficiency and progress in work are considered. Evaluation of results and retrospectives are incredibly important for every project because they allow us to understand whether we are on the right track. We will look at the concrete approaches and metrics used to evaluate whether the launch of a new sub-brand was successful or not.

The research methodology employed in this thesis is a case study approach. A case study approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the research question within the context of the company. The data was collected through a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the company and customers, while secondary data was gathered through an analysis of relevant literature, industry reports, and market data.

The findings of this research have practical implications for the company and other businesses looking to launch a new sub-brand in the IT outsourcing and outstaffing industry. Specifically, the research provides insights into the hypothesis testing, customer development, market analysis, go-to-market strategy, and success measurement that were involved in the launch process. These insights can inform the development of marketing strategies, product/service design, and customer acquisition plans for the sub-brand. Moreover, the research could serve as a reference

for other companies considering a similar strategy. Additionally, the success of the project can also contribute to the promotion of Ukraine as a great talent market and attract foreign companies' attention to Ukraine.

## PART 1

# REMOTE HIRING MODELS AND A PLACE OF THE NON-TECHNICAL POSITIONS

### 1.1 An overview and differences between remote hiring models: outsourcing, outstaffing, remote employment

The concept of outsourcing came from the American terminology “outside resourcing”, meaning to get resources from the outside. According to an article published in *The Economist*, it is stated that outsourcing is an old phenomenon that has made its presence felt since the time of the Second World War, knowing a remarkable trend especially after 1990 [1].

In the 1990s, organizations, initially manufacturing firms like Coca-Cola, began outsourcing functions and business processes to third-party providers as a means of cost-saving, and subsequently, IT-enabled services outsourcing saw significant growth due to the availability of reliable and affordable communication infrastructure following the expansion of telecommunications and the Internet in the late 1990s [2]. Services making use of low-cost countries included:

- back-office and administrative functions, such as finance and accounting, HR, and legal
- call centers and other customer-facing departments, such as marketing and sales services
- IT infrastructure and application development
- knowledge services, including engineering support, product design, research and development, and analytics.

The original term “outsourcing” is used to describe the activity in which one company transfers part of its business processes to another company. However, there



are also many ramifications and a certain classification of different uses of remote work and remote hiring.

Based on the type of relationship between the client (a company that is transferring their processes) and the executer (a company or a person that is performing tasks), we can distinguish a typical outsourcing model, outstaffing and remote employment.

Focusing specifically on the IT industry, the typical **outsourcing** works when a business owner has an idea, but there is no way to implement it on his own. Establishing the whole IT department is pricey and complicated, so such companies come to another company with an idea and get an application or website ready, paying a certain amount for it. This is a perfect option for both start-up owners who are just starting out and want to build a Minimum Viable Product at a low cost and the owners of a business that already works. Second can benefit from the outsourcing if their business needs to become more digitized or they have a new idea for their business and the technical team is essential for bringing this idea to life.

In this model, a company finds a technical partner (a software development agency) that takes over the whole development process and delivers the end result to the client. The client gets rid of practically all the headaches associated with project and employee management, code quality control and the technical side. Of course, in order to obtain the most satisfactory result, it is of the client's interest to be involved and constantly informed about the development stages.

Typically, agencies are working with multiple projects at the same time and compared to the in-house IT departments agency will not be dedicating all of the resources on one project.

To this model, we can also count in working with freelancers from platforms such as Upwork or Fiverr. They are also working with several projects at once and delivering the concrete result, not being involved in the client's company processes.

There are other situations in which the company needs 100% dedication to their project and may also not require a turnkey solution, but rather some expertise and input from a specific specialist. This is when “**outstaffing**” comes into play.

Outstaffing is a type of remote employment where a company is responsible for all, or nearly all, of an outstaffed employee’s time. So, the definition suggests that an outstaff team member would be dedicated to one client rather than working from project to project.

However, there is still the third player - IT services provider company. Basically, a client “employs” a dedicated IT outstaff team member, but the official employer that pays benefits, bonuses, equipment, holiday pay, and employer taxes is the IT service provider. Such a model is very convenient, as the company opens itself access to a global pool of talent, but at the same time bypasses a huge complexity - legal labor specifics in different countries, the tax system and other bureaucratic employment issues.

Finally, there is also direct **remote employment** in which employees are living in a location other than a central office operated by the employer. In this case, the company must legally comply with all the rules and regulations of employment in the locations of their representatives. This includes paying the employer's taxes, providing employees with all their rights. Taking into account the major differences in labor law this option might not be possible for many companies. Oftentimes it is mandatory to have a subsidiary in a given country to be able to employ people there. However, companies who have resources to study all the legal aspects, build the processes and if needed open the subsidiary in other countries can benefit from an access to the top specialists and cost-effective recruiting in a long-term perspective.

## 1.2 The state of an outsourcing & outstaffing market globally

Almost always, when talking about outsourcing, the first and main association is the outsourcing of technical tasks. However, the global outsourcing market is actually dominated by two sub-industries: IT outsourcing (ITO) and business process outsourcing (BPO).

ITO includes things like cloud computing services, web hosting, cybersecurity and data backups.

BPO contains a multitude of functions including payroll and other HR services, marketing, customer service and logistics.

Looking at the numbers, **businesses spent over \$700 billion on outsourcing in 2022**. Breaking this down by segment, **IT outsourcing spending is projected to reach \$519 billion in 2023** — a 22% increase over 2019's numbers. Business process outsourcing spending is forecast at \$212 billion in 2023 — a 19% increase over 2019 [3].

It is obvious that IT outsourcing has a much larger market share, but since these two directions are not competing, but on the contrary complementary, it can be expected that business process outsourcing will strengthen its position in the coming years.

Outsourcing encompasses companies of varying sizes, with both large corporations and small businesses utilizing this method to optimize their operations. While prominent players like Google rely on outsourcing giants such as Accenture and Cognizant for support services, there is a notable presence of small businesses engaging in outsourcing as well [4]. For instance, a startup founder from California may discover a promising marketing agency in Ukraine through LinkedIn and establish a cooperative partnership. Statistics from Clutch reveal that 37% of small businesses already outsource at least one business process, and an even larger proportion (52%) plan to do so in the foreseeable future. The decision to outsource

can bring benefits to businesses of all scales, whether it be enhancing efficiency, accessing specialized skills, or freeing up valuable time for employees to focus on other core tasks.

Delving into the perceived advantages of outsourcing, Deloitte's Global Outsourcing Survey discovered that 65% of respondents acknowledged that outsourcing enabled them to concentrate on core functions, while 63% identified cost-cutting as a primary benefit. Although outsourcing is often initially associated with cost savings, its impact extends beyond financial considerations. By delegating specific processes to experienced outsourced teams or individual specialists, businesses can witness an overall enhancement in performance, as their core team is unburdened and can allocate time to more critical responsibilities.

Therefore, when selecting an outsourced team, small businesses prioritize strong problem-solving skills. The ability to approach business challenges with innovative and creative solutions emerged as the most enticing characteristic for small businesses seeking outsourcing partnerships, surpassing factors such as years of experience, overall cost, and online reviews, as revealed by Upcity's 2022 poll [5].

The last important characteristic of the outsourcing market is the geography.

India is known to be a top outsourcing destination. India holds the highest score in the Global Services Location Index (GSLI) and is renowned for its attractiveness in terms of financial benefits, skilled workforce availability, business environment, and digital resonance. The Asia-Pacific region dominates the top outsourcing countries, including India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand.

The Philippines, known as "The Call Center Capital of the World," generates 9% of its GDP from business process outsourcing, offering a highly capable workforce at a lower cost [6].

Ukraine, although not on the same scale as India or the Philippines, is gaining popularity as an outsourcing destination. The country was recognized by the Global Sourcing Association (GSA) as the 'Delivery Destination of the Year 2021'. The Russian war caused instability, although there are many resources for hiring Ukrainian service providers.

When choosing the outsourcing destination companies usually look at factors like price, level of English, time overlap, cultural differences and expertise and choose the destination and partner which offers the greatest balance of these factors.

### 1.3 The influence of the COVID-19 and war in Ukraine on the outsourcing and the remote work

#### 1.3.1 The influence of COVID-19

Remote work used to be a cost-cutting measure called "outsourcing". It began with large corporations who tapped into the global talent pool by employing hundreds of phone support staff, engineers, analysts, and other employees offshore. This trend started growing, giving birth to a thriving outsourcing industry that enabled much smaller companies to take advantage of talent anywhere, as well as large freelancer platforms, such as Upwork or Fiverr. However, the scenery changed entirely in 2020: the COVID pandemic has accelerated the current transformation of the remote workspace.

Researchers from Ladders have been carefully tracking remote work availability from North America's largest 50,000 employers since the pandemic began. Remote opportunities leapt from under 4% of all high paying jobs before the pandemic to about 9% at the end of 2020, and to more than 15% today [7]. "This change in working arrangements is impossible to overhype. As big as it is, it's even bigger than people think," said Ladders CEO Marc Cenedella, who says it's the largest societal change in America since the end of World War II. "Hiring practices typically move at a glacial pace, but the pandemic turned up the heat so we're seeing a rapid flood of change in this space. It's really rather amazing."

The pandemic has also shifted the entire "outsourcing" industry (people who wanted to save money hiring overseas) to "remote work," a.k.a you can get a similar salary no matter where you are.

Remote work isn't (primarily) about saving money anymore. It's about accessing an international pool of qualified talent. A new work culture has been built that consists of deep work and goal- and vision-oriented management instead of employee surveillance. And "remote" doesn't equal "cheap" anymore.

**The outsourcing model has not only shifted from cost reduction method to remote work, but also has become an innovation driver.** Amid the turbulent changes brought by the pandemic, IT has become integral to strengthening business resilience. And the IT outsourcing industry is readily adapting to these new dynamics.

### 1.3.2 The influence of russian invasion in Ukraine

In Eastern Europe the tech industry has been thriving and the salaries of people working in IT have been going up 35% year-over-year for the past 3 years.

And Ukraine was in heart of this success and one of the most promising outsource or remote work market as of 2021 for three simple reasons:

- World-class engineering talent on hand
- Reasonably priced labor
- Great end products

In 2021, the Ukrainian IT industry grew by 36% from USD 5 billion to USD 6.8 billion in exports. At the same time, the number of specialists increased from 244 thousand to 285 thousand. Thus, over the past three years, the industry has more than doubled in exports and has grown by more than 50% in the number of specialists [8].

According to forecasts, 2022 should have been no less successful, but on February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. It turned the lives of all citizens upside down and incredibly changed both the public and private sectors.

Every sector of the Ukrainian economy felt its destructive power and IT was no exception. Despite significant changes and obstacles, the tech market was able not only to survive but also to operate on a stable level. The report by IT Ukraine Association indicates that in the 10 months of 2022, the industry brought \$6 bn in export revenue, up 10% from the previous year.

Djinni, the biggest tech job marketplace in Ukraine summarized the year and presented key takeaways:

- The job market is now officially an employer's market.
- Hires are down by 13%. Given the circumstances, it could be worse.
- The number of candidates online is up 2.5 times, largely due to switchers.
- Monthly published jobs are down by 2x since January
- Requirements for candidates increase
- Salaries are maintained on the level of late 2021
- Over 50% of jobs are fully remote

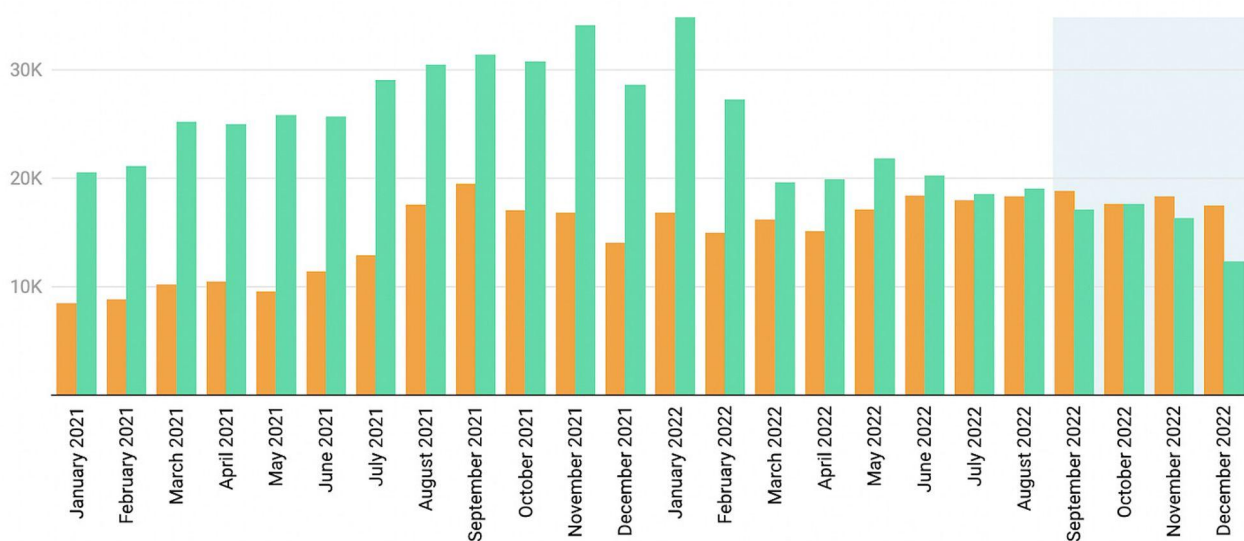
To understand the general state of the job market at the moment it is worth looking at the candidate/jobs ratio. On Djinni before September 2022 there were more jobs published monthly than candidates activated.

The number of candidates online is growing as it takes longer to find a decent position due to a lack of new opportunities, consequently, profiles stay active for longer.

## Activated candidates vs Published Jobs in 2021-2022

Until Sept 2022 there were more jobs published than candidates activated

Profiles activated Jobs published



Source: Djinni.co • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Img 1.1 Comparison of the activated candidates and published jobs on Djinni [9]

Jobs published monthly dropped from 35K in January 2022 to 20K in March 2022 and, eventually, to 12K in December 2022. The number of activated candidates stays on the same level of 17-18K per month; with notable drops to 15K in both February and April 2022 [9].

Lack of new opportunities is caused by fewer projects and orders from the Western clients. Companies understand the risks and worry about the reliability of working with Ukrainian partners, taking into account the war and the difficult energy situation.

But in practice, a lot of work is being done to dispel doubts and attract companies to work with Ukrainians and support the Ukrainian economy. Ukrainians are now actively participating in international conferences, taking advantage of the new opportunities and looking for clients abroad. The Ukrainian brand is now becoming more and more recognizable in the world. No matter how bitter and painful the circumstances are, they helped Ukraine to declare itself to the whole world and, in



particular, about its talents, about incredibly intelligent, creative and progressive specialists.

#### 1.4 An overview and a comparison of technical and non-technical positions for outstaffing

Landing a job in IT has now become a dream of many. And the good news for all those people is that you don't necessarily need to code to work in IT.

As in many other industries, businesses consist of many processes, departments, functions and need people of different specializations. We can compare the functioning of a company from the IT branch to how an automobile company works. Before the car can be manufactured, it needs to be designed, the design is tested, accepted or rejected. Then it needs to be presented and brought to the market through different marketing channels.

In part 1.2 it was mentioned that even though the outsourcing market is dominated by IT outsourcing (ITO), business process outsourcing (BPO) is on the rise as well.

BPO contains a multitude of functions including payroll and other HR services, marketing, customer service, sales, data entry, design, etc.

In the outstaffing model, which assumes that an employee actually becomes part of the client's team, BPO is the most effective when there is already a proven existing process, some senior managers that just need "hands" to help with the execution.

However, the senior positions can also be successfully outstaffed. The hiring, vetting, onboarding in such cases would typically be longer, and the cost higher.

If we compare the technical and non-technical positions, here are some of the major differences:

- **Lower entry barriers for candidates**

While technical positions often require programming knowledge and an analytical mindset, non-technical roles may prioritize soft skills or computer proficiency. For simpler positions like support or data entry, basic skills or completion of online courses can be sufficient.

- **More creative job for candidates**

Technical positions, although interesting for many, may be considered less creative due to their reliance on automation and reduced human interaction. Non-technical roles, on the other hand, encompass a wide range of tasks such as customer support, sales, web design, and social media management, allowing for more creative expression.

- **Rapid career growth for candidates**

Non-technical positions often offer faster career progression, with training typically occurring informally through hands-on tasks and observation. Companies are more inclined to invest in the development of non-technical employees who demonstrate potential, leading to quicker advancements compared to technical roles.

- **Easier to close for employer**

Hiring for non-technical positions is generally quicker and simpler, as it doesn't typically involve extensive technical tests. The screening and vetting process can be efficiently handled by the company's internal recruiter, requiring fewer recruitment steps.

- **Increased flexibility for employer**

Technical roles tend to have specific and precise scopes of work, requiring specialized skills in programming languages and development areas. Non-technical positions offer greater flexibility, allowing employees to adapt and acquire new skills, especially in startup environments where versatility is highly valued.

When looking at the outsourcing industry, it is seen that companies are not tied down to only tech positions. Quite the opposite, the fact that you can hire for any role from anywhere in the world means that the modern recruitment opportunities are unlimited. Done well, a company can build a diverse global workforce and outsource both technical and non-technical jobs.

## PART 2

### DEVELOPING A SUB BRAND

#### 2.1 Company overview and arising need for a new business direction

Trustshoring is a German company founded in 2016 that helps to **hire skilled software developers in Eastern Europe or Latin America** for foreign startups. It is not a recruiting agency, not a broker, the company positions itself as a "partner" for startups in the early stages of their development, which helps to gather the best team of specialists to work on the project. Specialists at Trustshoring can provide technical and development guidance as well as valuable business advice.

The company name "Trustshoring" appeared from a combination of two words "trust" and "offshoring". Those are the definitions that best describe the mission of this company - relocation of a business process to another company or partner you can **trust**.

Outsourcing or offshoring is a great cost cutting method but it comes with certain risks, especially for SMBs. When you are working with the in-house specialists you have much more control over the delivered results than when you outsource the process to a team or a specialist in a different country. The **internet makes it easy** to pretend to be better, be professional, and have the required expertise. When working with remote specialists, it is not always so easy to determine credibility and find a good partner that will deliver the expected result in time. That is why trust is an important aspect for entrepreneurs thinking about outsourcing.

TRUSTSHORING's BRAND MESSAGING			
BRAND PROMISE	We partner with bootstrapped SaaS founders to provide them with strategic advice and match them with reliable and proven software development solutions they can trust, for free		
POSITIONING STATEMENT	For bootstrapped SaaS founders, Trustshoring is a strategic partner that delivers advice, reliable and proven software development solutions because Trustshoring has industry knowledge, expertise and an established Eastern European network, to quickly enable SaaS founders to launch and scale software products		
MISSION	Our mission is to let founders scale their business with trustworthy, bespoke, timeous and pre-vetted software development solutions.		
TONE OF VOICE	Professional, caring, trustworthy, enthusiastic		
ELEVATOR PITCH	Trustshoring helps SaaS founders to scale their business with development solutions from Eastern Europe and tactical guidance. When you partner with us you get focused, strategic advice and a bespoke setup, as well as reliable and experienced software development partners that fit your company culture, create real progress, and won't break the bank. With a deep understanding of each client's needs and business context, a broad network of the best remote talents, and almost 10 years of experience in the field we quickly match you with professional and skilled developers who are the perfect fit for your project. This decreases your time-to-market by getting the right resources in place within days or weeks, instead of months and saves you money by using remote resources and avoiding false starts with unreliable partners.		
BRAND PILLARS	<b>Fast</b>	<b>Trustworthy</b>	<b>Customer first</b>
HEADLINE BENEFITS	Finding the perfect match within just a few days, fast replies, immediate reaction and availability when necessary	A broad network of the best remote talents pre-vetted based on each client's requirements	Build a strong partnership with clients to continuously go above and beyond, understand their "needs" and "wants", provide bespoke and strategic business advice with an effortless experience

Img. 2.1 Brand messaging framework for Trustshoring

Source: created by the author

Trustshoring has three main service offerings:

- **Software Agency Matching** - for clients who need a turn-key solution and don't have any tech talents in the team, Trustshoring finds the software agency/dev house that will manage all clients tech needs with experience in the particular domain
  - **Recruiting Software Developers** - for clients who wants to extend the existing tech team Trustshoring finds dedicated remote software developers
  - **Software Development and Business Consulting** - for clients who lack the experience and knowledge in the particular domain Trustshoring provides expert advice on all software development challenges, from MVP design to a full-scale app launch. The consulting includes individual workshops, helpful resources and continuous support

The company works in the B2B segment with a focus on SaaS businesses and especially the bootstrapped niche.

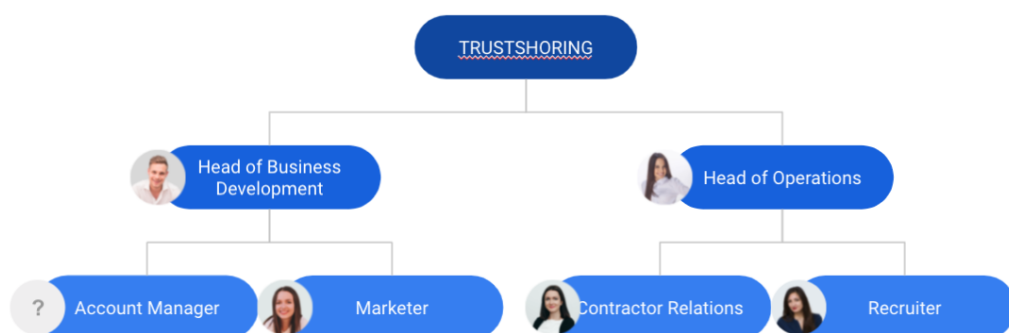
Trustshoring offers advice on scaling business, product strategy, implementation, team set up and technical requirements – really anything founders

need to understand to develop the best user/customer experience. Some of the clients are techies who rely on Trustshoring’s knowledge of scaling, outsourcing and vetting, while others are non-technical entrepreneurs who have market access and business experience but lack technical knowledge. With the pan-industry expertise Trustshoring is there to advise on all these aspects.

During its existence Trustshoring team has helped 253 startups and has made 927 successful “matches”. The expertise and trustworthiness is proven also by some publications in well-known industry portals such as Hackernoon, Mind the Product, The Next Web.

The team of Trustshoring is small and consists of two departments and six people in total. The Business Development department is led by a company founder and includes the marketer and the account manager. The main functions of the department are **setting goals and developing plans for business and revenue growth**, building the brand awareness, researching, planning, and implementing new target market initiatives and new business opportunities as well as researching prospective accounts in target markets, pursuing leads and moving them through the sales cycle.

The Operations department is taking over everything related to the legal side (agreements, NDAs), finance and payroll management and people operations.



Img 2.2 Team structure at Trustshoring

Source: created by the author

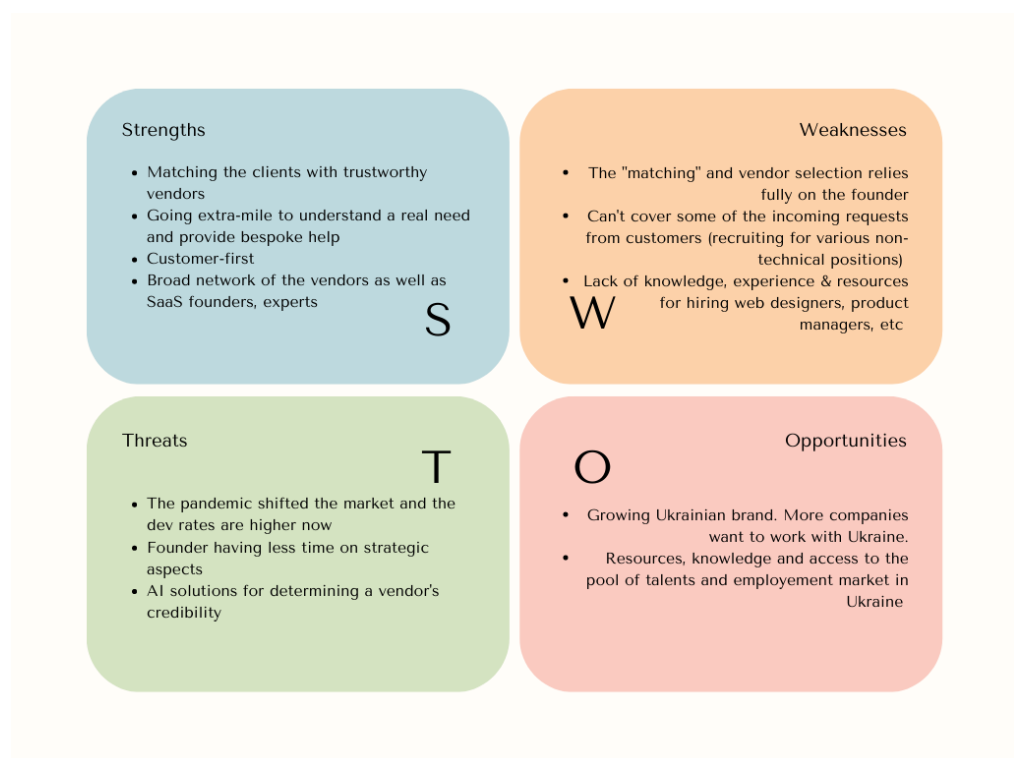
As one of the responsibilities of the Business Development department was researching, planning, and implementing new business opportunities we brought together the SWOT analysis to identify those opportunities.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis is a strategic planning technique that helps you assess almost any aspect of your business.

We analyzed the following:

- What's working for the business internally right now (strengths)
- What's not working (weaknesses)
- The external factors the business could capitalize on (opportunities)
- The external factors that could harm the business (threats)

This brainstorming exercise helped us uncover a new strategic direction for the business.



Img 2.3 SWOT analysis for Trustshoring

Source: created by the author

At that time, we were already seeing certain demand in providing recruiting services for non-technical positions. Trustshoring was positioned as a “partner” so oftentimes the clients who we’ve been working with on vetting the technical vendors were also coming later for more - personal assistants, marketers, designers, product managers, etc. In the beginning such requests were occasional and satisfied mostly by recommending someone from the founder’s personal network. However, a growing demand on the non-technical matches clearly showed the potential new niche for a business.

After the analysis, the initial hypothesis was to hire such specialists as designers, product managers, project managers. That is, positions that are directly related to the creation of the product itself.

To test this hypothesis we took a few clients on a risk-free basis. Clients were paying only if we found and matched them with a suitable candidate. However, at the same time, we also had requests for recruitment of slightly different positions - personal assistants for founders, data entry specialists and other types of assistants needed by our clients to help them with some routine tasks.

While working on the sourcing and interviewing the candidates we saw a clear pattern - it was much harder, longer, and though more expensive for us to vet designers, product managers, project managers. Plus, the recruiter should have certain expertise as well for the successful interviewing. The closing rates for such positions were not satisfying as well. In most cases, we didn’t manage to find a suitable candidate.

On the other hand, the personal assistants and data entry positions were being closed very well and in a short time. Those positions didn’t require a lot of checks and clients were very satisfied with the presented candidates and their final “hires”.



So the initial hypothesis was changed towards a slightly different niche, namely hiring dedicated assistants and entry level specialists for performing defined tasks.

Such positions are often addressed as “virtual assistants”. At first glance, this niche is already taken by Filipino-based companies that charge very affordable rates and already have a reputation of a business processes outsourcing destination. However, the initial signals and the high level of satisfaction of the first clients proved the need for further research and analysis.

## 2.2 The main reasons for distinguishing a new business direction and its place in the brand architecture

Trustshoring brand messaging and even the naming itself always had a focus on product development, technical guidance and consulting. In addition to this the company highly relies on the founder’s personal brand which is one of the main marketing and lead generation channels.

Both factors were pointing toward the need of distinguishing a new business direction into something different than Trustshoring. The goals were as following:

- To create a stronger appeal to a particular market or market segment (busy founders who need to free some time for more strategic tasks rather than routine processes)
- To keep Trustshoring highly relevant to a specific market or market segment (keeping the focus on tech)
- To highlight different amenity, benefit and values bundles offered by specific groupings of products or services (it was already clear that this offering would have different model, pricing, benefits)

Thus, we started exploring what are the types of relationship between the two companies that are best fit for our goals. That’s the moment when the concept of

brand architecture comes into play. Brand architecture defines the role of each brand and acts as a guideline for the interrelationship between the brands in the organization. It specifies the optimal portfolio of brands a company should maintain for comprehensive market coverage with minimal overlap, determines the scope and role of each brand in the portfolio, and designs a strategic, logical, and efficient architecture that knits the brands together into an interdependent system. The system is intentionally designed to promote complementarity while minimizing cannibalization, allowing each brand to function as a component piece working in relation to and in harmony with the company's other brands to maximize the value of the whole [10].

Brand architecture encompasses various approaches, including monolithic, endorsed, pluralistic, sub-brand, and hybrid, each defining the relationship and structure between master brands, sub-brands, and standalone brands within an organization.

Taking into account the goals that we defined previously we chose the sub-brand as the best option for the Trustshoring.

Sub-branding involves the pairing of a corporate or range brand with another brand in a combined relationship where both work in tandem to create and communicate meaning. Sub-brands help modify the parent brand's meaning for a particular customer or in a particular context, or signal that something is special or different from the other products the parent brand adorns. For example, Samsung uses its corporate brand with product descriptors on its computers, televisions, life insurance products, and household appliances, but pairs it with the Galaxy sub-brand for its mobile devices. The Galaxy sub-brand energizes the parent brand and establishes its own separate brand equity. A parent and sub-brand share responsibility for meaning-making and can operate on equal or unequal footing, depending on which is more influential in consumers' purchase decision journeys [11].

This structure gives credibility in new markets or categories *and* freedom to create a separate brand image for the sub-brand. It is thus a great way for Trustshoring to test out new territories whilst limiting the risk compared to launching everything under one name.

Such set-up is best in-line with the initial goals that were set by the Trustshoring team and makes the “sub-brand” architecture a right choice.

### 2.3 Mission & vision of the new sub-brand

A brand mission statement clearly communicates a brand’s purpose, objectives and how it plans to serve its audience. It is action-oriented and gives readers an idea of what the business does and what impact it wants to make. This statement may shift over time as the company grows and redefines its goals.

Whereas the **mission statement** defines the brand’s goals, objectives and approach, the **vision statement** describes the long-term impact a company wants to make with its mission.

Defining a clear mission for the brand definitely helps in **identifying the target audience and creating a better go-to-market strategy [12]**.

While working on our sub brand mission and vision statements, our first step was to research some of the mission statements of other brands in your industry. This greatly helped to draw inspiration from how other brands have defined their missions.

Next, we made a list of your brand’s goals and the impact we hope to make to your audience, and in the world.

Here are a few questions asked during the process of crafting a brand mission statement:

- *In what ways does the brand add value to its audience?*

It helps easily find dedicated remote employees and delegate routine tasks while keeping focus on more strategic and important business aspects.

- *What is the larger impact you want to achieve by offering this help?*

Let every small business and opportunity to build a remote team, grow and scale

- *Are these goals actionable and realistic?*

The goals are ambitious but realistic

- *Can the brand embody this mission in every aspect of the organization?*

Yes, it does. Those goals also resonate with the Trustshoring's goals making the future brand positioning in-line.

In the end we got next mission & vision statements:

***Mission statement:*** Our mission is to help digital businesses hire dedicated time-saving assistants with **no hustle for you (no pain, wasted time and money)**

***Vision statement:*** Make remote hiring transparent and easy for every digital business

On this step we also defined the main brand pillars.

Brand pillars are the core values and beliefs that your business stands for. These are the fundamental building blocks that guide our business decisions, shape the marketing messages, and help create an emotional connection with our customers [13].

A strong set of brand pillars helps to stay focused on what makes the business unique and communicates a clear vision of what we stand for.

## Brand pillars

<b>BRAND PILLARS</b>	<b>Full-service / turn-key</b>	<b>Picky</b>	<b>Risk-free</b>
<b>HEADLINE BENEFITS</b>	We take care of the full recruiting process: from sourcing, selecting, interviewing, testing candidates to setting up all the legal formalities and payment process. If needed also happy to help with the right team set up, consult on managing a remote team.	We work with busy people and know that if they don't have time for vetting, they also don't have time for teaching employees how to do their job. With our picky selection clients get employees who are easy to onboard and collaborate with.	We understand that sometimes things can go wrong and there can always be some misunderstanding. With us clients can count on individual approach, great understanding and support.
<b>SUPPORTING EXAMPLES</b>	- Our own designed infrastructure to employ and pay remote workers in various countries - Legal expert in our team - Own recruiter with an experience hiring for these specific roles - We are a remote first company by ourselves - We work with Eastern Europeans for already a decade - A lot of educational materials on this topic	- Individual requirement - No students - Require some industry background or role experience	- Only pay if we find someone - Replacements are free, forever - No recruitment fees

Source: created by the author

## PART 3

# RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ON THE WAY TO A SERVICE-MARKET FIT

### 3.1 A definition of the product-market fit and service-market fit

The term product-market fit was coined by Marc Lowell Andreessen the co-founder of Netscape. He described it as “being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market.” This term is well known in the start-ups world.

Many companies struggle due to the costly and time-consuming process of developing the wrong product, with over 98% of new product ideas ultimately failing. The lack of a structured testing process for business models leads to uncertainties in resource allocation and market evaluation. To address these challenges, companies are adopting a customer-centric approach, prioritizing customer needs and value propositions to avoid excessive product development without corresponding sales [14].

Whilst product-market fit is a frequently used term, you rarely hear it applied to service businesses. Indeed, if you do an exact match phrase Google search for “product-market fit”, you get nearly a million results. Doing the same search for “service-market fit”, delivers only just over 3,000.

Regardless of what industry you are in, or what business model you are operating, service-market fit follows the same principles as product-market fit but, of course, applies it to service-based offerings. This means you should find a target market, identify a need and/or problem and then analyze whether people would buy a service to solve it.

This approach was followed for developing Trustshoring’s sub-brand. Based on the initial hypothesis we were offering the service of recruiting virtual assistants and other entry positions.

Most recruiting agencies primarily rely on their skilled personnel rather than products to deliver services to clients. While technology plays a supporting role, clients essentially purchase the time and expertise of agency staff. One crucial step towards achieving product/service market fit is defining a target market, which many agencies hesitate to do. However, by narrowing down the target audience, agencies gain advantages such as targeting prospects at industry conferences, establishing expertise, and facilitating client interactions. This approach also allows agencies to identify their clients' specific problems, opportunities, and industry-specific needs, enabling them to tailor their services accordingly. Instead of focusing on a list of services, agencies should describe their business in terms of benefits and outcomes, as this provides a more focused and specialized market position, greater control over the business, improved measurement of results, and the ability to set prices based on value rather than market norms [15].

### 3.2 Process of finding a service-market fit

Trustshoring embraced service-market fit thinking when building new business. We moved to identifying what types of clients will benefit most from working with us and answering following critical questions:

- What issues or underdeveloped needs do our clients have?
- How can the services we offer (or maybe some that we currently don't) BENEFIT those clients? How can we improve their user experience?
- How are we BETTER than other alternatives they may have?
- How can we bring these elements together in a compelling value proposition that communicates how our company fits with our target market?

#### 3.2.1 conducting a customer research (customer interviews)

Adopting a customer-first mindset and prioritizing the value proposition is key for companies to avoid excessive product development costs and lackluster sales, forming the foundation of both product-market fit and service-market fit approaches.

To gather valuable insights, our initial step involved conducting a series of in-depth customer interviews, enabling us to deeply understand their experiences, needs, and feedback regarding our service. These interviews allowed us to test hypotheses, gain essential knowledge for a well-rounded strategy, and uncover unexpected patterns of customer behavior that were previously unknown through statistical analysis alone. By shifting focus from demographic profiles to understanding the pains, needs, and hidden motives of our respondents, we were able to achieve a comprehensive understanding of our consumers beyond quantitative data, providing valuable clarity to the business.

Our customer research process consisted of three phases. First was the preparation. We defined the purpose of our research and stated the hypotheses that need to be tested.

*“We already have several clients who have used the service of recruiting non-technical positions. Most of them needed assistants or beginners who would help them with specific tasks, but at the same time freelancers were not a good fit. Therefore, it is necessary to create a service for recruiting such specialists.”*

After forming the hypothesis, we moved on to compiling a list of potential respondents and sending out invitations. We decided, of course, to start with our current customers. However, we also decided to talk to our “lost” clients in order to find out in which cases our service does not suit customers and what are the reasons for this. We also decided to find several respondents who had not heard of our company before. We published information about the research in the relevant group on Facebook called “SaaS Growth Hacks”. Majority of the participants of this group are the founders of SaaS startups, which actually interested us the most. We decided to cover two categories of founders: those who already had experience recruiting assistants and those who have never done it but feel such a need.

One of the aspects that was also taken into account here - why should people spend time on such conversation and helping us? We assumed that most likely, people



will want to express themselves, and especially if they really have the pain we are trying to address, so there should be no problems with competent recruiting. However we were also ready to offer an incentive award: a certificate, discount, etc. But as expected, none of the respondents did request any reward.

The last part of the preparation was compiling a list of questions for the interview. On this step it is needed to understand the feelings, motives and experience of the customer on the different stages of his/her journey. We were asking about five main things:

1. What do prospects stress about? What are the challenges and pains? So we can play up that pain in ads & headlines as it usually converts better than talking about the product.
2. Where do they look for solutions? So we can turn up there (e.g. good search terms, complementary services that can send referrals).
3. Which alternatives did they try and how did those come up short? So we can position ourselves against them.
4. How do they describe success? So we can write a great landing page.
5. What are they nervous about? So we can call out and address each objection on our landing page and in the nurture emails.

The second step was holding the interviews. We had eight respondents and the interviews took place online during the timeframe of one month. The length of each interview was on average 40 minutes.

Our respondents could be described and divided according to the following characteristics:

- Three current customers, one lost customer, four external respondents (from Facebook group)
- Six founders, two managers
- Industries: six SaaS start-ups, one marketing agency, one real estate company

We transcribed each interview with the automated text transcription service and moved to the last phase - summary and results. The task was to group the received data according to the context, purpose, content of the discussed problem, such as: barriers, safety, emotional experience; and so on; Thanks to the good structure of the interview in was quite easy to categorize received data by stages and keywords: #actions, #needs, #pains, #touchpoints, #feelings, #opportunities; To organize the messages voiced by our respondents, look for parallels, contradictions and trends in them, we created the tables in Miro and added key information from each interview (below is an example of the interview summary table).

<p><b>This is the journey of</b> <b>Menachem</b></p> <p>Senior Director of Growth at IT Station</p> <p><b>What are their key goals and needs?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get the manual work done</li> <li>Spend less money</li> <li>Spend less time on finding the resources for it</li> </ul> <p><b>What do they struggle with most?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low quality work on Fiverr/Upwork</li> <li>Increasing rates</li> </ul> <p><b>What tasks do they have?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis: calculating metrics</li> <li>Data entry</li> </ul>	<p><b>Journey Steps</b> Which step of the experience are you describing?</p> <p><b>Actions</b> What does the customer do? What information do they look for? What is their context?</p> <p><b>Needs and Pains</b> What does the customer want to achieve or avoid? <i>Tip: Reduce ambiguity, e.g. by using the first person narrator.</i></p> <p><b>Touchpoint</b> What part of the service do they interact with?</p> <p><b>Customer Feeling</b> What is the customer feeling? <i>Tip: Use the emoji app to express more emotions</i></p> <p><b>Backstage</b></p> <p><b>Opportunities</b> What could we improve or introduce?</p>	<p><b>Discovery</b> Why do they even start the journey?</p> <p>He was not happy with the results he was getting from Fiverr/Upwork and he knew Victor was helping with recruiting VAs, so decided to try.</p> <p>Increase the quality of work by having a dedicated person</p> <p>Decrease a cost</p> <p>TS upselling</p> <p>Recruit faster</p>	<p><b>Registration</b> Why would they trust us?</p> <p>He hasn't been looking for sth, he just knew Victor</p> <p>Dedicated worker - this sounds the most promising to the customer</p> <p>Price and level of English matter the most</p> <p>Employer of record - is an obvious thing. And bench or pool is a good idea</p> <p>Website - Case studies. He wouldn't read them. But good to have. Better with numbers.</p> <p>Get a bench of candidates</p>	<p><b>Onboarding and First Use</b> How can they feel successful?</p> <p>Didn't need help with onboarding. He knew how to do it</p> <p>Expected the process to be faster. He is impatient a bit, but comparing with Fiverr's work our solution is a time investment.</p> <p>At the same time want on Fiverr to compare the quality of work from our VA and Freelancecity</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Write case studies</p>	<p><b>Sharing</b> Why would they invite others?</p> <p>Now he is not just getting tasks done but building a team that can perform.</p> <p>Other people from the team are trying to steal his VA as she adds a value</p>

Img 3.1 Customer interview summary

Source: created by the author

The interviews allowed us to identify the niche where our service makes the biggest impact and is the best fit. It also made clear what should be the benefits and key offerings of our service to make it relevant and stand out.

We would focus on the growing stage companies that reached the product-market fit, have consistent sales and cash flow, and long term strategy. Even though we identified that the need for personal assistants is also present in early stage start-ups and so-called “one-man” companies, however this niche is connected with

more risks for our company. Mostly financial risk as such companies may face a lack of funds, payment delays or simply fail.

Company stage and approximate job title (this is either the founder/CEO or someone from the senior management) are the only specific characteristics that can be used to describe our persona. In the standard approach to personas, age, country of residence, gender, and other characteristics are also usually indicated. However, as the research showed, generalizing our persona was impossible and would not make any sense. Instead, we approached it from the side of specific requests and “jobs to be done”.

The jobs-to-be-done theory is an approach to developing products based on understanding both the customer’s specific goal, or “job,” and the thought processes that would lead that customer to “hire” a product to complete the job.

When using this framework, a product team attempts to discover what its users are actually trying to accomplish or achieve when they buy a product or service.

This approach was used in our research. We interviewed people asking the questions that were mentioned earlier and instead of personas, filled out a “Job Card”.

Here are the most important conclusions taken from the interview process:

### **Biggest pain points**

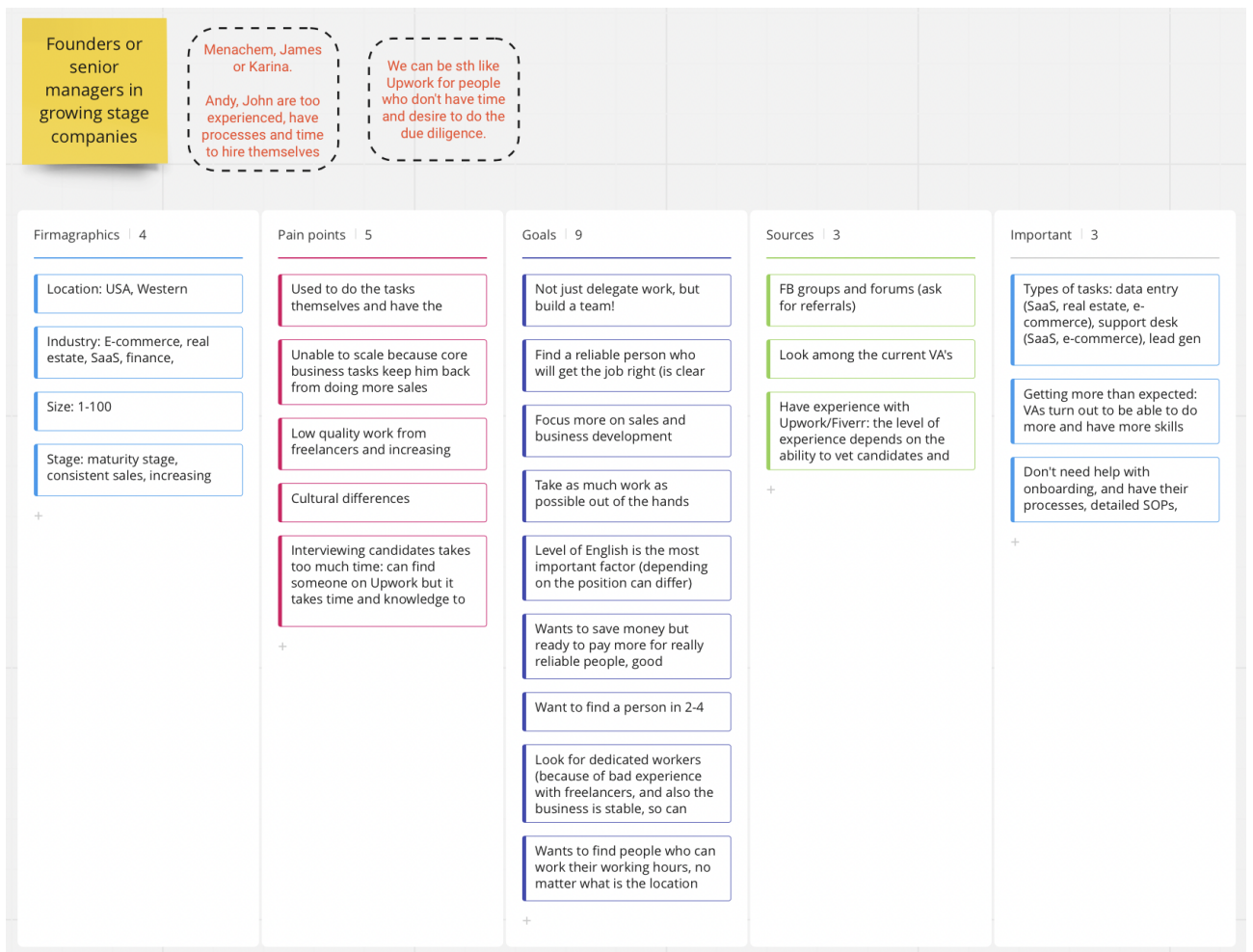
- Used to do the tasks themselves and have the process, but lack the time;
- Unable to scale because core business tasks keep him back from doing more sales;
- Low quality work from freelancers and increasing rates;
- Cultural differences;
- Interviewing candidates takes too much time: can find someone on Upwork but it takes time and knowledge to weed out the candidates that are not good.

### **Main goals:**

- To not just delegate work, but build a team! Though, need a DEDICATED employee;
- Find a reliable person who will get the job right (is clear on the brief);
- Focus more on sales and business development;
- Take as much work as possible out of the hands;
- Level of English is the most important factor (depending on the position can differ);
- Wants to save money but ready to pay more for really reliable people, good candidates;
- Wants to find a person in 2-4 weeks;
- Wants to find people who can work their working hours, no matter what the location is.

**Other:**

- Types of tasks: data entry (SaaS, real estate, e-commerce), support desk (SaaS, e-commerce), lead gen and outbound (SaaS, finance, real estate), content creation (SaaS, marketing);
- Getting more than expected: VAs turn out to be able to do more and have more skills;
- Don't need help with onboarding, and have their processes, detailed SOPs, briefs.



Img 3.2 Target audience description

Source: created by the author

### 3.2.2 competitors analysis (market research)

Competition is inherent in business, driving strategic planning by influencing firms' actions, uncovering weaknesses, and revealing opportunities and threats. Analyzing competitors is essential for managers formulating strategies, as it informs decision-making and helps assess an organization's standing in the industry [16].

Competitor analysis begins with identifying present as well as potential competitors. It portrays an essential appendage to conduct an industry analysis.

Yet not every competitor warrants the same level of attention in the strategic plan. A firm's competitors can also be classified as direct, indirect and future competitors.

Direct competitors are businesses that offer identical or similar products or services, posing intense competition as customers can easily choose to buy from them instead of the focal firm. They are compared based on prices, features, and deals during the shopping process. On the other hand, indirect competitors provide close substitute products or services, targeting the firm's markets with a similar value proposition but delivering a different product. While they may offer the same or similar products in a limited number of areas, their target customers rarely overlap with the firm's.

In the first stage we will identify the four main options of our competitors (partly based on the information from the customer interviews).

### 1. **Job boards (direct)**

With job boards, a person can post the job position and find the suitable candidate. The outcome would be the same, but the process - completely different.

With job boards there is lots of work involved - sourcing, vetting, interviewing, short-listing. Job boards don't provide the "Employer of Record" service, which limits your options in terms of hiring globally. **An employer of record (EOR)** enables companies to legally hire and collaborate with employees overseas without opening their own local entity in that country, while fully complying with local employment and tax laws.

Among other downsides is also that most job boards require upfront commitments - you need to pay for placing the job offering even if you don't end up hiring someone.

### 2. **VA agencies (direct)**

As mentioned earlier the entry-level positions in which you are responsible for a set of defined in advance tasks are often addressed and known as “virtual assistants”. A virtual assistant is a remote employee who offers administrative support for you and your business, usually part-time. They can do tasks that an executive assistant would typically handle, such as scheduling appointments, making phone calls, arranging travel, or organizing emails but not exclusively. Some VA agencies may also offer customer support, copywriters, data-entry VAs etc.

Such agencies offer custom recruiting services, provide a turn-key solution with an infrastructure to manage and effectively work with your VA. However, typically there is not a high level of dedication from the VA side, customers need to know exactly what they need and provide instructions and such services have little industry focus. This makes them similar to freelance platforms but with the vetting done in advance.

### **3. Outsourcing Specialists (direct)**

Such companies provide trained staff for concrete services. You get qualified employees who get the things done, but similarly to the previous option you get very little dedication, no "team" feeling. You'd feel like working with the agency.

### **4. Employer of Record (indirect)**

As mentioned an Employer of Record is **the legal employer of your workers**, which means that they will handle a variety of compliance aspects that you don't have to worry about such as: Producing the employment agreement. Processing payroll. Filing employer payroll taxes. Filing employee taxes. However, they provide no recruiting at all. Companies need to find the remote employee themselves and the Employed of Record will only help you deal with the issues of recruiting overseas. However such services are very expensive.

Job Boards	VA Agencies	Outsourcing Specialists	Employers of Record
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No dedication to SaaS</li> <li>Lots of work involved</li> <li>Don't help with EOR</li> <li>Upfront commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turn-key</li> <li>Client needs to know exactly what they need</li> <li>Little industry focus</li> <li>Custom recruiting</li> <li>Provide infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency feeling</li> <li>Focus on other industries</li> <li>Trained staff, but only concrete services</li> <li>Little dedication, no "team" feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No recruiting at all</li> <li>Very expensive</li> <li>International payments and employment</li> <li>No dedication to SaaS or any role</li> </ul>
<p><b>jobrack</b> <a href="http://www.jobrack.eu">www.jobrack.eu</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically targeting Eastern Europe</li> <li>Offering a dedicated recruiting service (done with you and done for you)</li> <li>Not targeting SaaS</li> <li>Most clients have to write the JD and source themselves</li> <li>\$199 post / \$1,250 dmy / \$4,500 dly</li> <li>Large upfront commitment and payment (but money back-guaranteed)</li> <li>Client has to employ and pay themselves</li> </ul>	<p><b>iworker</b> <a href="http://www.iworker.co">www.iworker.co</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on LatAm</li> <li>Screening and recruiting dedicated people</li> <li>Social impact</li> <li>Focusing on VA, Sales, e-commerce, research, web development, and similar roles</li> <li>No dedication to SaaS</li> </ul>	<p><b>VASTAFFER</b> <a href="http://www.vastaffer.com">www.vastaffer.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on personal assistants and a few concrete marketing tasks</li> <li>No dedication to SaaS</li> <li>No personal feeling</li> <li>From VA-staffers team - little dedication</li> </ul>	<p><b>deel.</b> <a href="http://www.letsdeel.com">www.letsdeel.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No recruiting at all</li> <li>No dedication to SaaS or any role</li> <li>International payments and employment</li> <li>Very expensive</li> </ul>
<p><b>WE WORK REMOTELY</b> <a href="http://www.wworkremotely.com">www.wworkremotely.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically for remote team building</li> <li>Have to write the JD and source themselves</li> <li>Big engineering focus</li> <li>Not targeting SaaS</li> <li>Any sorts of roles</li> <li>\$299 per ad</li> </ul>	<p><b>AVIRTUAL</b> <a href="http://www.avirtual.co.uk">www.avirtual.co.uk</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on South Africa</li> <li>Enterprise, business focus</li> <li>Turn-key</li> <li>Targeting UK</li> </ul>	<p><b>LTVplus</b> <a href="http://www.ltvplus.com">www.ltvplus.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on e-commerce</li> <li>No public pricing</li> <li>Little dedication or team building</li> <li>Specifically customer success outsourcing</li> </ul>	
<p><b>upwork</b> <a href="http://www.upwork.com">www.upwork.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any roles, any jobs</li> <li>Handles payment, but not really any legal</li> <li>Mostly for on-demand or part-time gigs</li> <li>Expensive for the freelancer</li> <li>A lot of work to find good talent</li> </ul>			

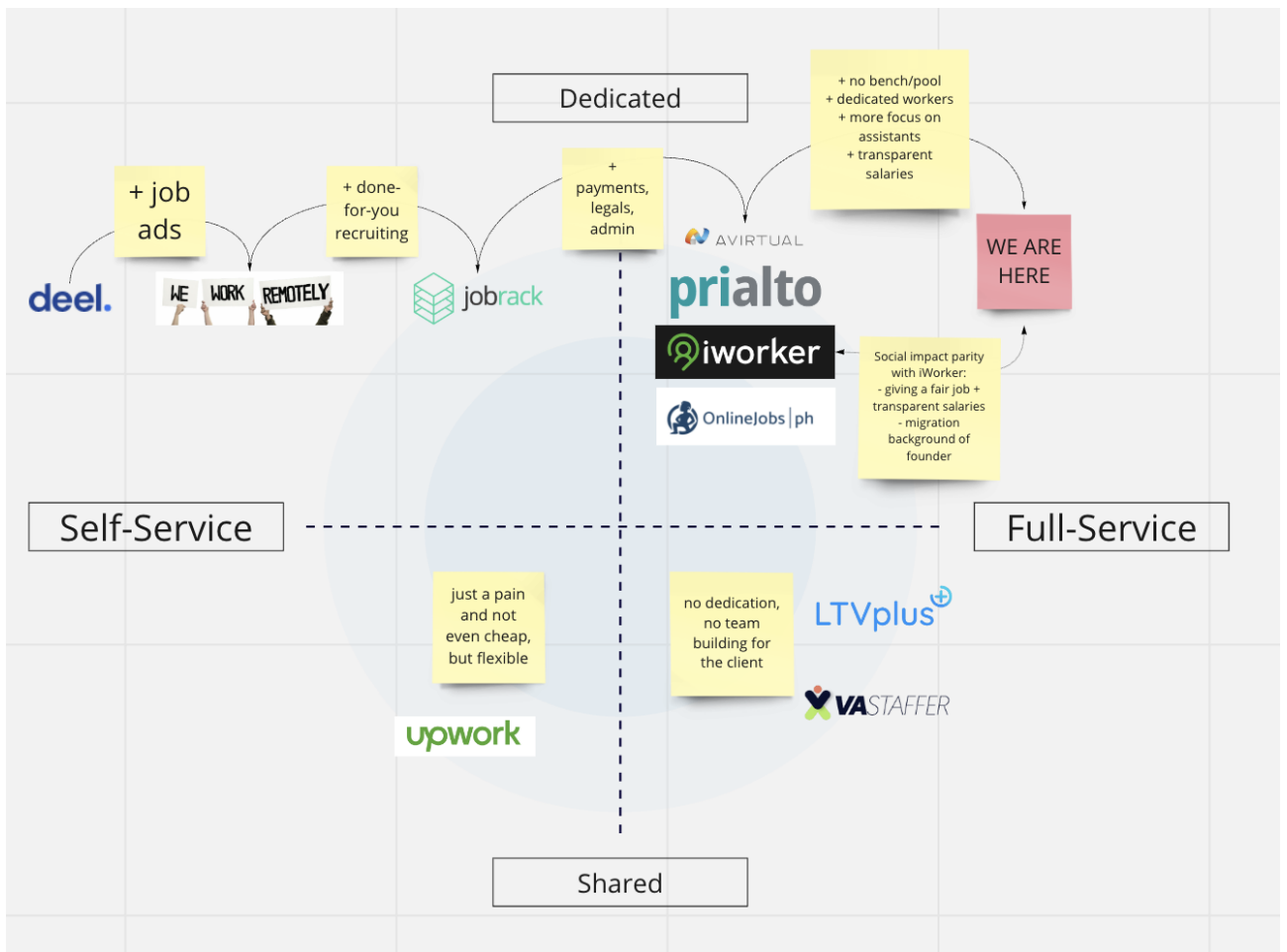
Img 3.3 Competitor analysis

Source: created by the author

When we identified our competitors, the next step was to determine what exactly we needed to know about them in order to facilitate our strategic success. This list included: segmentation strategies; branding and image; advertising and promotions; customer service emphasis; likely growth vectors; market research capability, among others. While some information was not publicly available and was impossible to collect, we managed to gather the main competitors' characteristics and used the Perceptual Mapping framework to find our place among the competitors.

Our new brand combines two main aspects - 100% employee dedication and full-service recruiting. We would do the dirty work for the client (sourcing, vetting, initial interviews), present best candidates to the client, and take care of all the legal aspects so that the client pays one single invoice each month with no need to deal with employee taxes, etc. On the candidates side, we ensure the qualified specialists, dedicated to the client's project.



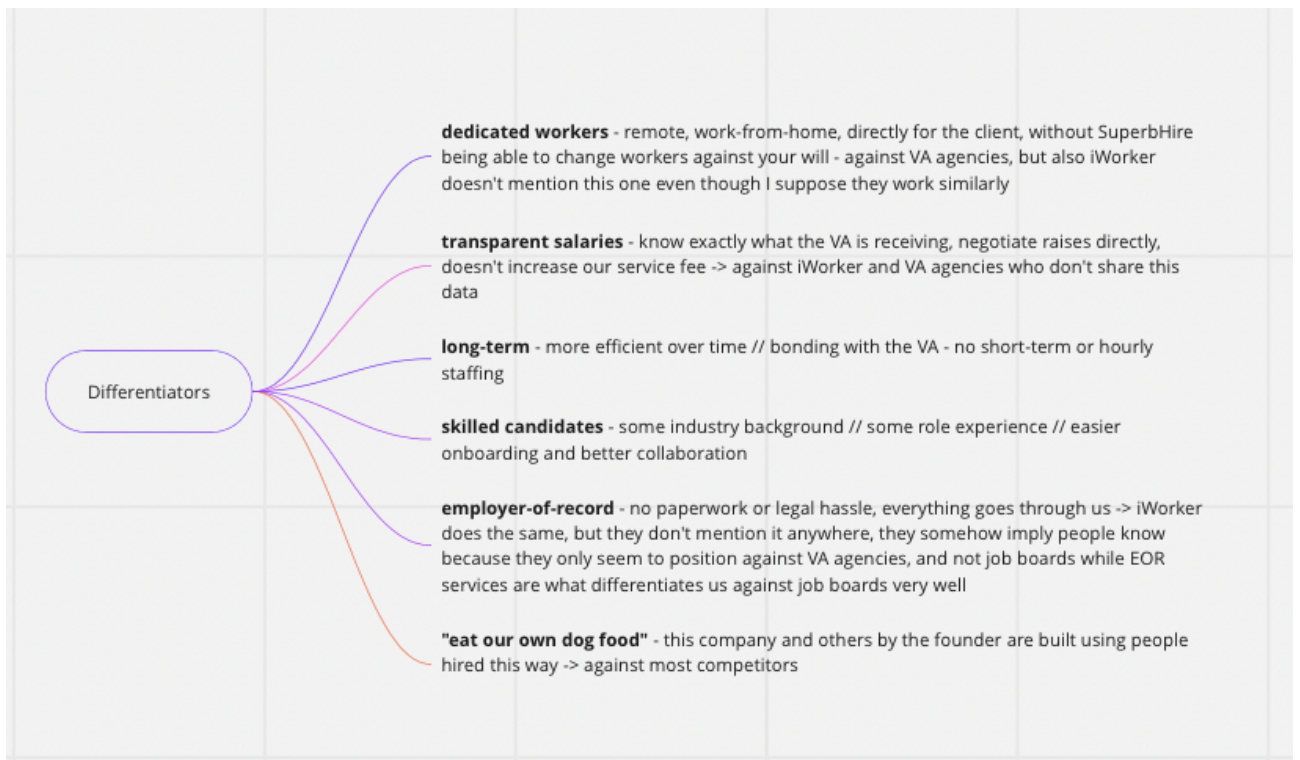


Img 3.4 Competitive matrix

Source: created by the author

As a result of the competitors research we defined the main differentiators.

Competitive differentiation is the strategy used by brands to distinguish themselves from their competitors. The competitive differentiators are key parameters that would help buyers distinguish our brand from others. As the name suggests, the function of differentiators is to create a clear line between the desirable attributes of our products with others. Considering this, defining the differentiators would help to effectively market our new brand.



Img. 3.5 Brand differentiators

Source: created by the author

### 3.2.3 creating a value proposition (Golden Circle Framework)

Value has various definitions, but understanding its essence starts with a definition that encompasses the following ideas. Value refers to the worth, usefulness, or importance a possessor finds in something, such as the value of education. In business, demonstrating the value of a product, service, or solution is crucial. This is where a "value proposition" comes into play. A value proposition outlines the measurable value and tangible benefits a product or service offers to customers, highlighting the return on investment and other positive outcomes that set a particular service provider apart from competitors [17].

Value propositions are integral to sales and marketing strategies, appearing in various forms like advertisements, white papers, and case studies. However, not all value propositions are equal. Many are mere statements of features, lacking fully

developed value statements. Our goal was to avoid this situation when creating the value proposition for our new brand.

Instead of using the standard customer profile and value proposition canvas, we adopted Simon Sinek's Golden Circle framework. Sinek, a renowned leadership expert, explains how successful organizations inspire cooperation, trust, and change by starting with why. The Golden Circle model taps into the neuroscience of human response, connecting with emotions, behavior, and decision-making.

Since, as Sinek says, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it,” the question of “why are we in this business?” should be the focal point of any brand.

**The “why” behind the brand defines the overarching purpose of the company beyond the bottom line, giving customers and employees a more meaningful reason to support your business.**

Following those principles and based on the data collected on previous steps we asked ourselves what is our “Why?”. The new brand is not about hiring remote employees, it is about doing more with less effort.

*Founders and senior managers are notoriously overwhelmed with fire fighting and micro management. They can't clone themselves, but they can delegate. And dedicated team members build up crucial knowledge over time, and are invaluable long-term.*

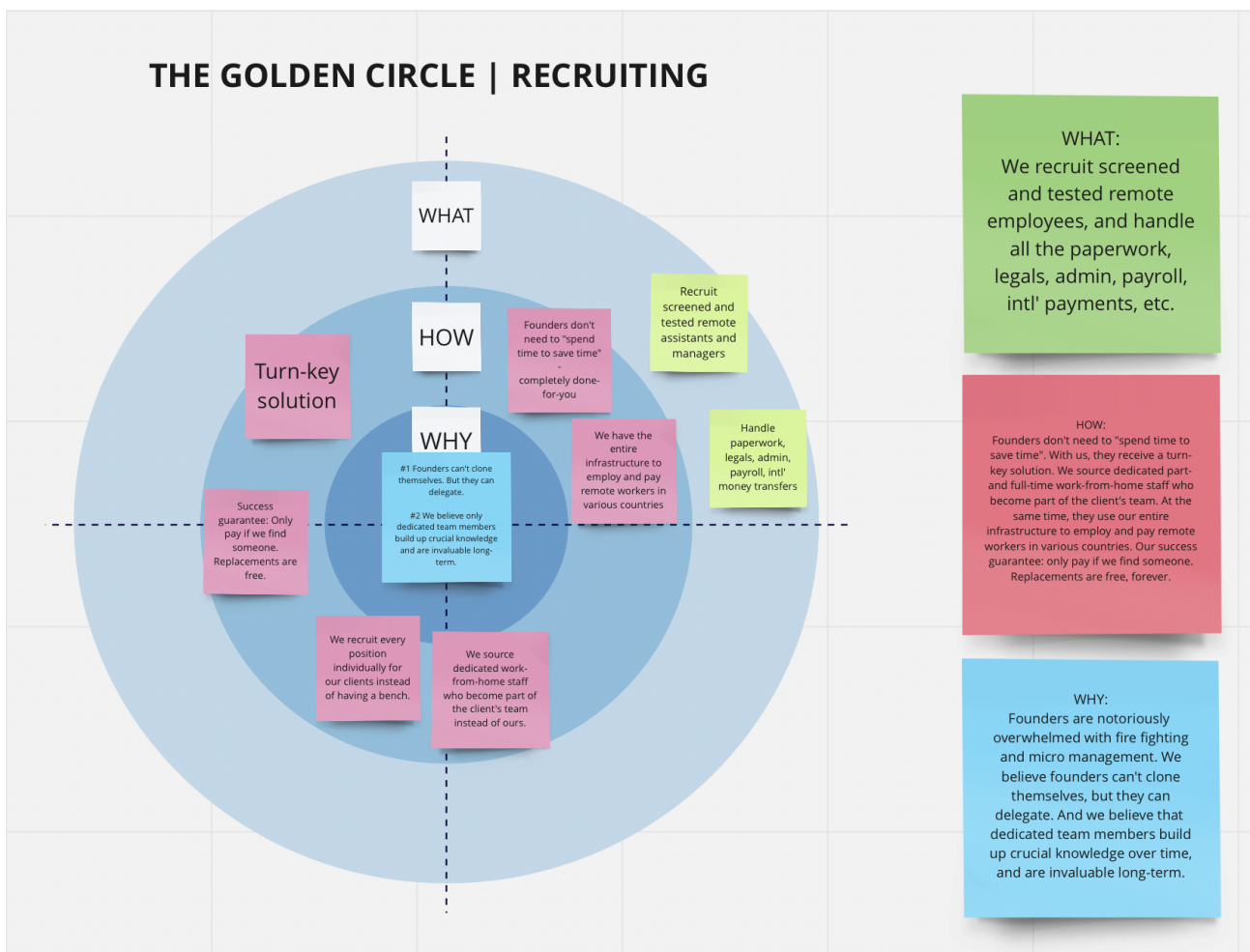
The next part of the Golden Circle theory addresses how your brand achieves its “why” objective. This includes the processes or systems that separate your business from competitors [18]. And our answer to this is the following:

*Founders don't need to "spend time to save time". With us, they receive a turn-key solution. We source dedicated part- and full-time work-from-home staff who become part of the client's team. At the same time, they use our entire infrastructure*

*to employ and pay remote workers in various countries. Our success guarantee: only pay if we find someone. Replacements are free, forever.*

The final aspect of a Golden Circle brand is what the company actually does in terms of the products or services it provides. This portion of the Golden Circle theory should position the company in the market as a distinctly unique and innovative industry leader.

*We recruit screened and tested remote employees, and handle all the paperwork, legals, admin, payroll, intl' payments, etc.*



Img. 3.6 The Golden Circle of a new brand

Source: created by the author

## PART 4

# FINISHING AND IMPLEMENTING A GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY

Go-to-market (GTM) strategy is a comprehensive plan that outlines how a company will bring its products or services to market and reach its target customers. It includes various elements such as product development, market segmentation, branding, distribution, pricing, and promotion.

The stage of product development is not described in detail in this work, since the new brand is not an innovation and the service itself was not created from scratch, but became an offshoot of the main Trustshoring brand. The already established general recruiting mechanism was used, but the specifics of non-technical positions were taken into account. The CEO and account manager were responsible for this process.

The market research and segmentation was described in the previous chapter, while now we dive into the last elements of the go-to-market strategy - positioning, branding, promotion, distribution and pricing.

### 4.1 Creating brand positioning & messaging (based on the Golden Circle framework)

Creating a strong brand is vital in today's competitive market. It enhances recognition and fosters customer loyalty through emotional connections. While advertising can attract customers, trust and brand positioning are built by consistently meeting customer expectations. Our goal was not just to sell a new service, but to build brand value and user loyalty.

In the Trustshoring case the customers already existed and the first user acquisition channel was working. But in order to expand this service more, and appeal better a new sub brand with its own positioning and messaging was needed.

More than a tagline or a fancy logo, brand positioning is the strategy used to set the business apart from the rest. The analysis done in the previous part (customer research, competitor research) and creating a value proposition were used in defining the positioning.

There are four questions that were answered when creating our positioning statement:

- Who is the target audience?
- What's our product or service category?
- What's the greatest benefit of our product or service?
- What's the proof of that benefit?

Positioning a brand can seem overwhelming at first — with so many touchpoints, it can be hard to prioritize a key message. That's why certain frameworks might be helpful to structure the findings and thoughts.

This framework uses a top-down approach, starting with the big idea first, and ending with sample touchpoints which will be later used in tactical instances like social media captions, headlines for blog articles, and advertising copy.

BRAND POSITIONING FRAMEWORK			
<b>BRAND PROMISE</b>	We search for dedicated time-saving virtual assistants with <b>no hustle for you (no pain, wasted time and money)</b>		
<b>POSITIONING STATEMENT</b>	We are a <b>full-service recruiting partner</b> for digital businesses that recruits individual candidates to find screened and tested part-time or full-time assistants who will become a dedicated part of the team in a long run and take care of routine tasks while the owner can fully concentrate on growing the business		
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	<b>SaaS, e-commerce, and other business founders</b> on a stage of scaling, who realize that there are more a more things coming up and they cannot handle everything by themselves anymore. They need support.	<b>Managers or other senior roles</b> in already established companies, who realize they spend a lot of time on manual tasks while there is no real progress made because they lack time for strategic side.	<b>Other business owners</b> , who do everything by themselves and struggle to find reliable team that can "get the things done".
<b>MISSION</b>	Make remote hiring transparent and easy for digital businesses		
<b>TONE OF VOICE</b>	Professional, helpful, heroic		
<b>ELEVATOR PITCH</b>	<p>Busy entrepreneurs and professionals always have so many things on their plate that keeps them from doing more important things. That's why we individually vet and hire professional remote VAs for digital businesses.</p> <p>Your VA takes care of all the manual and micro-tasks, while we take care of all the formalities and paperwork and you can finally fully concentrate on scaling the business.</p>		
<b>BRAND PILLARS</b>	<b>Full-service / turn-key</b>	<b>Picky</b>	<b>Risk-free</b>
<b>HEADLINE BENEFITS</b>	<p>We take care of the full recruiting process: from sourcing, selecting, interviewing, testing candidates to setting up all the legal formalities and payment process.</p> <p>If needed also happy to help with the right team set up, consult on managing remote team.</p>	<p>We work with busy people and know that if they don't have time for vetting, they also don't have time for teaching employees how to do their job. With our picky selection clients get employees who are easy to onboard and collaborate with.</p>	<p>We understand that sometimes things can go wrong and there can always be some misunderstanding. With us clients can count on individual approach, great understanding and support.</p>
<b>SUPPORTING EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our own designed infrastructure to employ and pay remote workers in various countries</li> <li>• Legal expert in our team</li> <li>• Own recruiter with an experience hiring for these specific roles</li> <li>• We are a remote first company by ourselves</li> <li>• We work with Eastern Europeans for already a decade</li> <li>• A lot of educational materials on this topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual requirement</li> <li>• No students</li> <li>• Require some industry background or role experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only pay if we find someone</li> <li>• Replacements are free, forever</li> <li>• No recruitment fees</li> </ul>

Img. 4.1 Brand positioning framework for a new brand

Source: created by the author

Important to highlight that brand positioning isn't a quick way of gaining a competitive edge. It's a long-term investment that requires tons of time and energy. That's why we changed two versions within five months. The very early version that is presented mentions virtual assistants only, while at this moment the brand focuses on **virtual employees**. This seems to be a minor change but it opens up a completely different and broader market where the brand:

a) don't compete mainly with Philippines that is a top destination for VAs hiring

b) cover a broader range of positions and specializations such as **administration, design, customer service, digital and social media, copywriting, data entry etc.**

Moreover, brand positioning and messaging need to be periodically revisited to ensure it serves well. When we know what we're about - we're able to build a reputation as a trustworthy brand.

## 4.2 Branding & naming

### 4.2.1 Archetype

Corporate branding is vital for establishing a unique brand identity and differentiating from competitors. A well-developed corporate brand builds trust, fosters loyalty, and drives sales.

Defining the brand archetype is a crucial step in the branding process. Archetypes, rooted in collective consciousness and cultural myths, serve as shortcuts for consumers to emotionally connect with brands. By leveraging archetypes as building blocks in brand-consumer relationships, businesses can strengthen recognition, preference, and sales [19].

**There are twelve brand archetypes:** The Innocent, Everyman, Hero, Outlaw, Explorer, Creator, Ruler, Magician, Lover, Caregiver, Jester, and Sage.



Looking at the brand positioning we are able to see what are the main values and traits that should define the choice of the archetype. However, in some cases, and particularly in this one as well, the choice of one archetype is not so obvious and easy. Moreover, it seems that the brand does not fall 100% under only one archetype, because it combines many features. And this is not a disadvantage, but as research shows, it can, on the contrary, strengthen the marketing strategy and play in favor of the brand.

Brands using multiple archetypes in their storytelling achieve long-lasting success. Most successful brands employ 2 or 3 archetypes simultaneously, enriching their narratives without dilution or confusion. These brands are not only highly valuable but also experience rapid growth, challenging previous beliefs.

With this in mind we examined the brand positioning framework to find out the traits of the new brand. What immediately becomes clear is that the customer is at the center of the brand, the company is flexible, and sets the main task of simplifying the life of its customer by giving him exactly what he needs. Such features point us to the caregiver brand archetype.

- **The Caregiver:** Protects and cares for others, is compassionate, nurturing and generous.

Such definitions very accurately reflect the service provided by Trustshoring, and of course the new brand. Clients who come for our services often feel overloaded and insecure. Our mission is not just to give them a vitamin and help them achieve some small milestone, but to cure their problem in the long run, strengthening their business with reliable team members.

On the other hand we can pull out some other traits of the brand from its positioning. Specifically, a new brand is all about saving the client who is always firefighting, trying to keep up on all tasks and desperately needs more pairs of hands. Clients need a hero who will give them a solution - bring in reliable employees that will take over specific tasks and allow the business to grow, scale and achieve more.

- **The Hero:** On a mission to make the world a better place, the Hero is courageous, bold, inspirational.

This definition corresponds to our brand as well. This archetype also took on a slightly different form in the later stages of developing site copy and site design. We see our customers as heroes too. They are those busy people who have many tasks at the same time and actually do a lot of work. Therefore, in our communication, we will address them as heroes as well. But all heroes need help too.

#### 4.2.2 Naming

Brand naming is a crucial aspect of branding strategy, as it shapes a brand's identity and positioning. A well-chosen name can attract and retain customers, differentiate from competitors, and contribute to overall success. Despite limited research on the naming process, a six-step approach has been identified: establishing objectives, generating names, screening for appropriateness, researching consumer preferences, conducting trademark searches, and selecting the final name. Common selection criteria include product benefits, memorability, fit with company image, and trademark availability. Consumer research is often conducted, involving target market surveys and small focus groups [20].

Indeed, the process of choosing a brand name is quite ambiguous and there is no one correct approach. That is why, in our case, choosing a name required testing several attempts and approaches. The traditional methods of individual creative thinking and brainstorming were most commonly used in the beginning. We took into account the brand's target audience, values, mission, archetype. The name should align with these elements and evoke the desired emotions and associations in the minds of customers. Among other criteria we also wanted to make the name memorable, easy to pronounce (because the company is aimed to enter different markets internationally), and not too similar to existing brands in the market. The main associations behind the brand name should have been around:

- **heroic** - this characteristic could set us apart from the competitors, make more emotional connection with the customers.
- **premium** - company services are more expensive than alternatives offered on the market. However, higher price corresponds to better service.
- **excellent customer service** - company is extremely customer-centric, flexible and helpful.

The marketing department is usually most actively involved in the process. Since in the Trustshoring case the marketing department consists of only one person, the CEO and the contractor copywriter were also involved and generated ideas for the brand names.

Even though we understood very well what exactly the name of our brand should speak to the customers and we were able to come up with many ideas, none of them felt 100% right. We also tried the computer software programs in the generation of names but it also didn't give the expected result.

At that point, the decision to turn to the help of an outside agency was done. We used the Clutch ranking platform to shortlist the agencies we would want to hire. Based on the testimonials, experience and price we selected an agency. After the briefing session where we described the brand's target audience, values, and mission agency started working on the brand naming concepts. The main expectations for the brand name were that it should sound confident and decisive, broadcast that we are able to really solve the client's problem and find reliable employees for him. After two iterations, unfortunately, we weren't able to choose the naming concept.

Analyzing the reasons for the failure, it became clear that the biggest problem was that we chose contractors for whom English was not their native language. Some options they offered were completely incomprehensible to our target audience, and more could cause negative associations. Also, most of the domains for the proposed names were already taken and this further limited the choice. We wanted to put a lot of senses into the name itself, thereby somewhat confusing themselves and the

agency. However, this gave an understanding that we should simplify the requirements and select one clear focus for our naming.

The last method we decided to use in the search for the exact name for the brand was to find a creative freelancer who specializes in brand names. At the Fiver freelance platform, we used filters to find a specialist in the USA (because as we already saw it was important that a person think like our target audience). Focusing on freelancers with the best rating, we sent proposals for cooperation to several and chose one with whom we started work. The brief was greatly simplified to give a clear direction for working on the naming. As a result of two iterations, we were finally able to choose the options that were most interesting and suitable.

We tested this final list of seven titles on our existing customers and target audience during in-depth interviews. When their feedback was collected, we used the naming checklist to structure all of the findings and make a final evaluation of the ideas.

The criteria used included:

- **Meaning;**
- **Memorability** - is it memorable and catchy;
- **What will the core message takeout be? What are we saying?** - is there a direct link to our key messaging?;
  - Will it **limit the business** in any way in the future?;
  - How will it live as a **sub brand or endorsed brand** with Trustshoring?;
- **Domains?** .com? Availability, etc.;
- **Meaning in various languages? And cultures** - VERY important!;
- **Target audience key checks** - will it resonate with online businesses? In North America and Western Europe?;
  - **Premium and professional feel?** Is it smart and inspiring?;
  - Has it been **checked against competitors/landscape?**;

- How does it **translate across marketing platforms**? Branding? Audio/visual/formats?;
- Easy to **rank** for?;

The final choice was also not so obvious, but based on this checklist (attachment 1), the most suitable option turned out to be “Superbhire”.

Definition of the word “superb” is explained as “*marked to the highest degree by grandeur, excellence, brilliance, or competence*”. This word corresponds very well to the premium quality and excellent customer service of the brand. The second part “hire” is obvious and gives an instant understanding of what the company is about, what services it might offer.

#### 4.2.3 Logo and brand identity

Unique brand elements like logos, colors, and characters play a crucial role in establishing a strong brand identity. Research indicates that characters, logos, and logotypes offer the best potential for unique brand ownership. However, developing a unique brand identifier through color is more challenging due to widespread competition in the market [21].

As a sub brand of Trustshoring, one of the important requirements for the Superbhire’s branding was keeping the similarity to the parent brand - in shapes, colors, style. The brand identity of Trustshoring consists of geometric elements and a minimalist, clean style. This formed the basis of Superbhair branding. However, he also had to get his unique features - heroism, care, greater closeness to the client.

Speaking of the brand colors, the 12 brand archetypes concept has the corresponding color palette. Johnson (2007), Frank and Gilovich (1988), and Sabanovich (2008) studied which characteristics colors have, when used in a logo. These color characteristics show similarities with the characteristics of the different archetypes.

Following these characteristics the best fit for the Superbhire's brand colors was:

Table 4.1

## Brand colors meaning [22]

<b>Color</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Purple	Elegance - luxury - authority - spirituality - mysterious - flamboyant	The Hero and the Magician are both in the cluster of ego and stability. These clusters stand for authority, elegance, and luxury. The spiritual and mysterious character of purple also fits the archetype Magician very well.
Pink	Femininity - softness - innocent - calming - love - sympathetic	Pink has some similarities with red, but is more feminine. The social cluster could be the best fit for this color. Because of the softness and loving character, the archetypes Caregiver and Lover could be the best fit.

Since the introduction of the twelve archetypes in 1919, times have changed. In reality, every archetype is exclusive on its own and it therefore is difficult to place them in a cluster and strictly limit the choice of brand colors on these frameworks.

Thus, when selecting the brand colors for Superbhire we didn't fully followed the suggested by the concept purple and pink colors. To keep the similarity with Trustshoring one of the main colors of Superbhire become dark blue and it's shades, pink and yellow.

Contractors were engaged to work on the branding. Given some unsuccessful experience with the selection of a contractor to work on a brand name, the selection of a designer was thorough. One of the main criteria was the maximum number of iterations until the desired result is achieved. Design agencies, freelance designers and SaaS companies that provide design services were considered. After conducting an analysis and talking with potential contractors, the choice fell on the last option - a SaaS company that provides design services on a subscription basis. It was this option that seemed to be the most convenient, flexible and fastest. They are giving an opportunity to work with several designers, quickly provide feedback and make corrections.

It took almost two weeks to develop the brand identity, which included colors, logos, fonts, banners, signatures for e-mails, patterns, and a brandbook.

The constraints for the branding were the following:

- No comic-book type hero branding
- No childish branding
- Definitely not superman underwear as the logo :D
- Must include a focus on people, and allow for photos

The task was challenging as it was necessary to depict the heroic spirit of the brand, but not to turn it into a Superman story and a kind of cartoon, as it would not fit the premiumness of the brand. As a result, the logo we received perfectly met the requirements - the square shape is similar to Trustshoring and at the same time resembles the shape of the Superman logo. The clean and concise style and use of characters on the banners conveys the mood of the brand.

The brand book and the logo can be found in the attachments.

### 4.3 Establishing marketing & sales channels

Marketing and sales channels play a vital role in reaching and engaging the target audience, converting them into customers. Selecting the right channels is crucial for achieving sales targets and business objectives. In today's competitive landscape, a well-planned marketing strategy is necessary to stand out and reach the target audience effectively. Analyzing audience behavior and preferences, as well as the competitive landscape, helps in choosing the appropriate channels. As David Meerman Scott emphasizes, understanding the audience is key to selecting the right marketing channels.

One of the parts of the customers interviews was focused around sources of information and places where our target audience looked for solutions. This gave the best understanding of what marketing channels should dominate in our strategy.

Based on the feedback collected from the respondents, we defined search in Google and recommendations from other people to be the most popular and reliable sources for our target audience and this is totally expected. One reason why people trust Google and referrals is that they provide unbiased and objective information. Google's search algorithm is designed to display the most relevant and authoritative information based on the user's search query, without any biases or preferences. Referrals, on the other hand, are based on personal experiences and recommendations from people who have used a particular product or service, which makes them more trustworthy than advertisements or marketing messages.

This indicates that the marketing strategy should focus on building the visibility of the Superbhire brand in the search network, as well as building partnerships and encouraging customers to recommend us. However, since it is quite difficult for new sites and brands to get to the top of the search network, additional marketing & sales channels were also chosen to strengthen the result.



### 4.3.1 Marketing channels

#### 1. *Website and blog*

A website is one of the most important tools in the marketing arsenal. It's often the first point of contact that potential customers have with the brand, and it's crucial that it leaves a positive impression.

Creating a website includes, first of all, developing its structure, writing the text that should be placed on the website, creating a design and layout of the website. Given the multi-stage nature of this process, it can sometimes take longer if you build a large, developed site at once. That is why it was decided to approach the development of the site as follows:

- **Stage 1:** launch a one-page landing page on which all basic information will be placed
- **Stage 2:** launch a blog, for which an SEO strategy will be developed with the aim of getting to the top positions of search results
- **Stage 3:** launch service pages and expand the site structure

In terms of SEO strategy, many companies want their home page to rank high on top business queries. In the case of Superbhire it would be something like “hire virtual employees”, “hire remote employees”, “company to hire remote employee”, etc. However, it's very unlikely to happen. In order to rank for those terms we need to have a page highly optimized for them. Moreover, if we Google most of the keywords like “best companies to...”, “top companies to...” we would see that listicles are ranking Google top.

So, instead we would focus on developing the blog in stage 2 and putting our efforts on driving traffic to the blog first. This includes writing high quality listicle articles optimized for a keyword we want to rank for and writing other niche content focused on the long-main narrow keywords, highly relevant to the audience. SEO is a

marathon, this is a long-term strategy that would not give quick results but for brands that consider it an important channel in their marketing, investing in SEO is crucial.

In addition to writing articles for our own blog, it was also planned to publish expert articles on other popular sites and blogs related to recruiting. Articles like these should build brand trust and generate new leads, but not only that. For a recruiting company, it is important to have not only a customer base, but also a candidate base in order to be able to close vacancies efficiently and quickly. This paper will not describe in detail the work on developing our own database of candidates, since this task was handled by the HR department. However, of course close cooperation and marketing support was foreseen. And within this cooperation, we published an article on the Ukrainian portal DOU. This article talked about the possibilities of remote professions in Western companies, especially entry-level. The article received 1,819 views, and after it we received several requests from candidates who were added to our database.

Coming back to the first stage, namely launching a landing page, it was necessary to form the structure of the page, write the copy and also choose contractors for the development of the design and layout of the site who will implement the plan.

The structure of the page was developed following the best practices for the high converting web pages and consisted of:

- A first screen with the one sentence explanation of what the company does and a call-to-action
- A video testimonial that would show the credibility and trustworthiness of the company
- Services described, so that customer know what he/she can get by working with a company
- Benefits, so that customer know why a company is better than competitors

- More testimonials
- A process explained, so that customer knows how everything works
- Pricing, so that customer understands in advance what budget he/she can count on
- About us - short description of the team and a picture that shows our faces. As people nowadays what to see who stands behind the brand, it is crucial to include the picture of people who are working on delivering the services to the client.
- FAQs with more information that typically bothers the potential customer
- Multiple call-to-actions and buttons across the page to boost conversion
- A booking page where customers may book a call with the account manager. This is the main goal expected to be taken on the website.

The previously formed brand positioning framework and messaging became the basis of the website copy. Like the positioning itself, the text of the site was also subject to iterations, and as for today sounds differently from the initial version.

The design and layout of the site was handled by a contractor with whom the company had previously cooperated more than once under the Trustshoring brand. That is why, after the brief session, the site was successfully developed in less than 2 weeks.

## ***2. Social Media***

Social media plays a big role in the marketing strategy for a new brand. Social media platforms provide an opportunity for new brands to build awareness, engage with their target audience, and drive conversions. Similarly to SEO, social media strategy is not likely to give quick wins without promotion and ads. However, a high quality content and a well-designed content strategy gives excellent results in the long-run.

Main expectations set for Superbhire's social media profiles were:

- Building brand awareness: Social media platforms allow new brands to reach a large audience quickly and cost-effectively.
- Creating brand personality and voice: Social media provides a platform for new brands to establish their personality and voice.
- In the future - generating leads and conversions: Social media platforms allow new brands to target specific audiences with highly relevant and personalized content. This can serve as a good top of the funnel touch point.

For the Superbhire brand, we created the LinkedIn profile and Facebook profile. Those are the best platforms to reach other businesses and decision-makers. We also created a three-months content plan with posting content three times a week. The types of posts included quotes, short educational content, checklists and infographics.

On LinkedIn we also used the feature to invite existing connections to like the page and gathered 150 followers in the first month.

### ***3. Leveraging Trustshoring brand***

Leveraging the parent brand for a sub brand marketing involves using the reputation, brand equity, and other assets of the parent brand to build awareness and trust for a new sub brand.

It helps to establish brand recognition and credibility for the new sub brand quickly. Also, it can provide a cost-effective way to launch a new product or service and generate leads. By using existing marketing channels and assets, such as social media accounts, email lists, and website traffic, the sub brand can reach a large audience quickly and efficiently.

This approach is some kind of the low hanging fruit strategy, which is a business strategy that involves targeting the easiest, most accessible opportunities for growth or improvement in a business.

Superbhire started from the requests from existing Trustshoring's clients for hiring non-technical people for them. Thus, continuing leveraging the parent brand's clients and contacts was a logical step. Even though the Superbhire's audience is broader, a part of it overlaps for both brands.

The following steps were done within this strategy:

- Adding the information about Superbhire on Trustshoring's website.

Trustshoring website has the dedicated services section which describes all company offerings. The information about the non-technical recruiting service was also added among the services highlighting that this service is offered under the other brand by Trustshoring. When clicking on it, users are sent to the Superbhire website.

- Upselling to existing clients and contacts

Upselling involves encouraging customers to purchase a more expensive or higher-end version of a product or service, or to add additional products or services to their order. This is an effective strategy to increase the life-time-value of the customer and when done correctly, upselling can benefit both the customer and the business.

Several existing Trustshoring customers already showed the need and the interest in hiring non-technical remote employees. Thus, it was decided to proactively offer our new service to Trustshoring's customers - current and past. It was important not to reach out to everyone, but to understand where we can really create a win-win situation and help the client. For this, a database of customers was extracted and analyzed at what stage their company is now, how many employees it has, and whether there are any open vacancies.

As a result, a list of 146 contacts that were most relevant was obtained. They were sent an email newsletter consisting of a sequence of 3 letters that were sent over a period of 2 weeks. From these contacts, we received a total of 19 responses and 11 booked calls.

- Announcement of the new brand launch through the Trustshoring channels

The ability to use the marketing channels of the main brand to promote and strengthen the trust of the sub-brand is an advantage of such a brand architecture. Since Trustshoring has been around for much longer and has more developed marketing channels, information about the new brand was spread through them. First of all, 2 publications were published on the LinkedIn page of the brand and on the personal page of the CEO. An announcement was also added to the Product Stories podcast, which is released every two weeks under the Trustshoring brand and receives about 200 listens each. Finally, information about the new brand was also added to the Trustshoring newsletter, which has about a thousand subscribers.

These activities were aimed at creating initial brand awareness, so a specific result in the form of booked calls or leads was not measured.

#### 4.3.2 Sales channels

##### **1. LinkedIn outreach**

When determining the sales channels that can be used for lead generation, the choice was between cold email mailings and outreach through LinkedIn. Given the feedback received during the interview, as well as the general trend that people are more inclined to trust people, LinkedIn prevailed. This social network immediately tells you everything about the person who writes to you. Considering that the CEO of the company is actively working on his personal brand, has more than 5 thousand connections on LinkedIn and regularly publishes content, his account can be effectively used in lead generation for new business.

We used the LinkedIn automation tool to set up a sequence the goal of which is to reach out the existing contacts (this is already a warmer contact than outreach via email even if the CEO is only contacted with this person on LinkedIn and has never spoken with). This strategy is of course not for massive lead generation

campaigns, as LinkedIn has tight limits for sending new connection requests and messages. When you exceed the limits the account might be blocked.

Taking the risks into account, we set up the first campaign. This was a passive lead generation campaign as we only needed to write a sequence, define the target audience (all contacts) and respond after people respond to us. The downside is that such campaigns are not personalized which is considered to give worse results than a more targeted approach. During the first month of campaign running, we managed to get 8 responses and 2 booked calls.

The LinkedIn automation tools also allow for experimenting and testing different campaigns, so in the future it is planned to test them as well. Specifically, reaching out to companies that have open vacancies we can help with or reaching out to people who have similar profiles to our existing customers.

## **2. Referral program**

As mentioned earlier, people tend to trust recommendations from other people most. Thus, a need for a referral program becomes obvious. Referral programs are an effective marketing strategy that incentivizes existing customers to refer new customers to a business. Referral programs offer rewards, discounts, or other incentives to customers who refer friends or family members to the business.

It is also important to mention that during the first three years of Trustshoring existence 90% of leads were coming through referrals. As for now, with the new marketing strategy the lead sources were diversified but referrals still make up more around 50% of leads.

The Trustshoring referral program already has a built-in terms & conditions, tracking system, management and commission payments system. That is why it was initially decided to use the architecture of Trustshoring and the referral base for the new brand as well. Trustshoring Referrals receive an email every quarter with an overview of their results for the quarter - the number of leads they sent, the

commission received and also the total commission received over time. Leveraging the Trustshoring brand, together with the quarterly summary, information about the launch of the new brand was also sent to the referrals. Out of 68 referrals, we received 7 people interested in collaboration with Superbhire. Interestingly enough, responses were coming from the referrals who received the most commissions from Trustshoring and thought were most interested in using additional methods of increasing their income through us. By potentially working to increase the engagement of other Trustshoring referrals, they will also become more inclined to collaborate with Superbhire as well.

#### 4.4 Pricing strategy

Pricing is crucial in go-to-market strategies as it directly affects revenue and profitability. It is the only element that generates revenue. Thus, pricing decisions should align with the overall strategy, considering the value proposition and cost factors.

With this in mind, while developing the pricing for Superbhire the following aspects were taken into the account:

- target audience
- competitors
- value proposition

When developing a pricing strategy, it's crucial to consider competitive positioning. Pricing decisions should factor in the competitive environment, including competitors' strengths, weaknesses, and market position. Companies must determine their competitive focus, whether it's price, quality, or other factors, and adjust their pricing strategy accordingly.

In the case of Superbhire, the competition in the virtual assistant market primarily consisted of Philippine companies. Since Superbhire targeted the Eastern European talent market, competing on price would be challenging due to higher



average rates in that region. Recognizing this, the focus shifted to other aspects such as excellent service, dedication, and expertise as value propositions and differentiators.

To determine Superbhire's market perception and choose an appropriate pricing strategy, we utilized Kotler's Pricing model. This model provides nine strategic options by analyzing the intersection of quality and price in a 3x3 matrix [23].

		Price		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Quality	HIGH	Premium	High value	Superb value
	MEDIUM	Over charging	Average	Good value
	LOW	Rip-off	False economy	Economy

Img. 4.3 Pricing matrix [23]

Among the given options we find the Superbhire brand somewhere between premium and high-value pricing models. However, considering the brand positioning, the premium option seems to be a better fit.

Premium price point is where the quality is deemed to be high and the price point is deemed to be high. It can be used for new innovative products, where competition is low, or where a brand is positioning itself as premium.

Premium Pricing allows for high margins and helps the perception of high quality.

Having decided on the model itself, it was also important to think about the packages, and what would be included in them.

The clients with whom we spoke at the stage of in-depth interviews could be divided into two types - those who needed help with the legal side of employing remote workers, and those who could take care of it themselves and were only interested in getting a candidate. That is why two options were selected in the pricing - direct hiring and Employer-of-Record.

Direct hire included:

- Expert Consultation
- Candidate Sourcing
- Candidate Vetting
- 3-Month Replacement Guarantee

For this service the client pays only once and only after the suitable candidate was found and accepted the offer. The price of this service starts from \$2799 and is typically calculated as 20% of the potential yearly salary of the candidate.

In the Employer-of-Record option on top of the features included in direct hire client also gets:

- Lifetime Replacement Guarantee
- Payroll
- International Payment Processing

This option is similar to a subscription-based service, as the client monthly pays the commission to Superbhire, which starts at \$399 / month. The commission also depends on the candidate's salary and seniority.

Both models are fully transparent for the client, he clearly knows how much his employee will receive, and how much Superbhire will take for his services. The payment process itself is as convenient as possible for the client - he pays the invoice to the company's European or American account as a fee for services. In the EOR model, this happens every month, and after receiving payment from the client, Superhire transfers the salary to the employee's account, taking care of all the questions and responsibilities related to paying taxes and reporting.

Such pricing strategy that aligns with the value proposition, competitive environment, and customer behavior should help to maximize revenue and profitability and ensure the success of the overall go-to-market strategy.

## PART 5

# SUCCESS FACTORS AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Measuring the success of a go-to-market strategy for a new brand can be a challenging task. Regardless of all the work done, there is still a lot of uncertainty at the beginning, so brands need to be as flexible as possible, ready for criticism, constructive feedback and able to react quickly and improve the service.

Effective methodologies like Outcome, Risk, and Key Performance Indicators (ORCs) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) helped Superbhire to track the progress and effectiveness of our go-to-market strategy in the beginning but also along the further existence.

### 5.1 OKRs methodology for planning & progress tracking

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) is a method for defining and tracking objectives and their results. Its main purpose is to define company and team "objectives" and define the measurable "key results" of each achievement of the objectives. OKRs is defined as a method of critical thinking and continuous discipline designed to ensure that employees work together to focus on measurable contributions [24].

The implementation of OKRs at Superbhire was divided into four steps: the first step was to set quarterly goals of the company. The goal is a qualitative target within a period of time. The second step was to determine the key results for each target. The main outcome was to measure whether the specific target requirements have been met at the end of the period. The third step was to implement the established plan. The fourth step is regular feedback.

Work on the new brand started in January 2021, so we developed the goals for the first quarter. An appropriate table for tracking our goals was created and

information about the objectives, key results, OKR leads and team members involved was added.

OKR Owner	Timeframe	Progress	OKR Lead	Team
<b>Marketing Plan</b>		Q1 2021		Victor
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Get visibility on the web</b>			
Aligned to:	SEO & Website			
Key Result	Get the naming and the branding done	100%	Marta with the agency	
Key Result	Launch a landing page	50%	Marta	
Key Result	Post 3 guest posts on the websites with high credibility and authority	33%	Marta	
Key Result	Conduct 5 customer interviews to build brand messaging	175%	Marta	Victor
Key Result	Record customer video testimonial and collect 3 written testimonials	100%	Marta	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Build awareness for the brand</b>			
Aligned to:	Leverage TS brand			
Key Result	Create a promo for the brand and add to the podcast episodes	50%	Marta	
Key Result	Add a page/block on TS website with the recruiting information and links to the new landing	100%	Marta	
Key Result	Create social media strategy for the CEO personal LN account and company page and get 100 first followers	0%	Marta	Anna
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Grow the business (financial OKRs)</b>			
Aligned to:	Outbound			
Key Result	Bring 10 SQL(sales qualified leads) from marketing activities and upselling	40%	Marta	
Key Result	Open 5 new positions during the quarter	50%	Marta	
Key Result	Increase revenue to €30,000.00	55%	Marta	

Img. 5.1 Superbhire's OKRs

Source: created by the author

The main objectives included:

- Get visibility on the web
- Build awareness for the brand
- Grow the business (financial OKRs)

To understand the effectiveness of the implementation of the go-to-market for Superbhire at this stage, we present the financial statistics of the company as of the end of May 2022 (see tab. 5.1) and key metrics. As mentioned in previous chapters, Trustshoring already had clients for whom we were providing services of hiring and managing remote non-technical employees in 2021. From the financial side, the direct impact on the revenue had the number of qualified leads brought into the funnel and the number of new positions we got. In Q1 2022 we started executing the marketing strategy for Superbhire and the progress we managed to achieve is represented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1

## Financial tracking

Metric	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Explanation
# new positions opened	1	7	In Q4 2021 there was only one new position opened, and there were no new deals in the funnel. During Q1 2022 we opened 7 new positions, 2 with an existing client and 5 with new clients.
# positions staffed	8	13	As of the end of Q1 2022 Superbhire had 13 staffed positions within 4 clients compared to 8 staffed positions in Q4 2021 within 2 clients.
Revenue (monthly)	€11,241.08	€17,093.10	Over the four months of Q1 we grew the revenue to €17,093.10 not reaching the goal of €30,000.00 but improving the result by ~52%.

Source: created by the author

## 5.2 NPS tracking and relationship building with customers

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a valuable measure of go-to-market strategy success. It gauges customer loyalty by asking about the likelihood of recommending a product or service. Monitoring NPS helps businesses assess the impact of their strategy on customer satisfaction and loyalty. A high NPS score indicates that the strategy effectively meets customer needs and drives satisfaction. Since its introduction in 2003, NPS has been widely utilized as a key customer metric in various contexts [25].

Superbhire already had past and existing clients so we started the NPS measuring with them. The channel that was used to measure the metric was e-mail. We sorted clients into two groups - past and present, and created two letters that had a

small introduction and the single question - How likely are you to recommend our service to your friends, acquaintances, colleagues?

The email was sent to our customers through an email marketing automation service. Automation was also immediately set up to survey the following customers. A rule was created - when the status of a lead changed to "won" in our CRM system, that is, it meant that he became a client, 30 days later this contact received a letter to evaluate our service. A notification about a new answer came immediately to our slack channel. Clients who rated us 9-10 points were then sent a request to leave us feedback, as well as information about the referral program in case this client is interested in recommending us to someone and receiving a commission.

During the first campaign, we sent 7 emails, received an average rating of **9, 4** written testimonials, and also one of the clients agreed to record a video testimonial, which is posted on the Superbhire website.

Overall, NPS is a very good metric for measuring a brand's success because it measures customer loyalty and satisfaction, and has been found to be a strong predictor of future business growth. Additionally, it is a simple and easy-to-understand metric that can be used to track changes in customer sentiment over time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Creating and bringing new brands and companies to the market requires painstaking work on research, testing your hypotheses, developing and implementing specific steps and strategies. In this master's thesis, the complete process of bringing the company's sub-brand to the market was described - from the idea to the execution and successful launch of the company. Based on this work we came to certain conclusions and recommendations that might be used across the organizations in the B2B industry.

1. The importance of keeping a pulse on market demands and adapting to changing customer needs.

The idea of launching a new sub brand did not appear by chance, but due to incoming demand and interest from existing customers in the new service. One of the managerial decisions and conclusions was that it is necessary to always be as close as possible to your client and follow his needs and expectations. Today, there are many sources from which you can get an idea for a new business, but in my opinion, being inspired by the feedback of your own customers is probably the best way to find new directions for your company. By launching this new sub brand for non-technical positions, Trustshoring was able to expand their services, open new revenue flow and provide job opportunities in a challenging economic environment.

2. Having a holistic approach and being flexible.

There are many approaches and frameworks for creating marketing strategies, research, however, while working on this project, we still faced certain moments of uncertainty and doubts about the next steps. The frameworks themselves undoubtedly carry a lot of value, but when implementing a project from scratch, it is important to have a holistic vision and understanding of the process step by step. We built this



process on our own, making certain mistakes, completely changing our thoughts and assumptions in the process. However, this is quite normal. Another management conclusion made in the process of working on the project is that it is necessary to be sufficiently flexible, especially in the early stages, and ready for many iterations and improvements.

3. Never underscoring the value of customer insights in shaping successful business decisions.

The process of creating a new brand went through multiple stages, but the most important and helpful part was conducting in-depth interviews with existing clients and people who matched our target audience. These interviews were instrumental in forming a strong value proposition and served as the basis for defining the brand's positioning, personality, and overall branding. This was followed by another crucial step - creating a comprehensive marketing and sales strategy which was also highly based on the customer insights.

4. Defining clear expectations and vision and communicating it effectively.

For small companies lacking an extensive in-house team, navigating the process of engaging third-party entities such as agencies and freelancers can pose significant challenges. Similarly, larger companies may encounter difficulties in effectively implementing project components due to miscommunication and the failure to meet expectations. We have discovered that commencing with a clear vision and mission, and effectively communicating these to all project stakeholders, is of utmost importance. This approach enhances clarity and promotes a comprehensive understanding of the desired end result. Additionally, dedicating ample time to brainstorming, briefing, ideation, and iterative processes has proven instrumental in bringing us closer to achieving the anticipated outcome.

5. Establishing progress tracking from the beginning and looking in the retrospective.

Undertakings such as the introduction of a sub-brand or the development and testing of novel marketing strategies demand substantial time and resources. Consequently, promptly assessing the progress made and ensuring alignment with desired outcomes becomes challenging. The establishment of goal-setting and retrospective processes assumes critical importance in comprehending the efficacy of strategies employed and decisions made. Moreover, this framework affords the opportunity to enhance, redefine, or retrace steps when necessary, while minimizing risks for the organization. Employing a goals-oriented approach significantly aids managers in making informed and judicious choices.

Ultimately, the successful launch of the new sub brand demonstrates the company's ability to innovate and adapt in a competitive industry, and serves as a testament to the importance of strategic planning and execution.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Naming checklist

	HIRE THE GAP	THE REMOTE LEAP	SUPERB HIRE	POWERHIRE	TALENT ICON	NeedDOER	ChooseDone
<b>Meaning</b>	a play on the idiom 'Bridge the gap' meaning to make things efficient, to connect	'Remote' for virtual candidates, and 'leap' meaning a big jump (for growth & development).	excellent, extremely good candidates	implies 'authority' or superior candidate selections	'icon' meaning widely admired for having great influence or significance	very direct, using trends around freelancers/VAs and them being the true doers behind the scenes, this creates a theme that gives each VA a heroic feel, 'need' also pushes a CTA angle too, for those that truly need quality assistance	for those that choose to have it all done and done well, very results-driven, send needs, we send those that get it done, it's that easy, great 'care-giver' angled appeal
<b>Memorability - is it memorable and catchy</b>	100%	80%	60%	60%	60%	70%	70%
<b>What will the core message takeout be? What are we saying? - is there a direct link to our key messaging?</b>	When you are trying to fill in all of the gaps and fire fighting, we offer to "hire" this gap. Find a VA who can take care of the gaps, while you focus on growing the business.	Remote assistants are a secret weapon for the growth and development, as they take care of routine tasks while the owner can fully concentrate on operations and bizdev.	We are delivering the best candidates, only reliable and experiences professionals.	Get the power to grow the business with the best candidates hired for you.	Find the iconic and talented VA who will help you to keep the business running by completing the required tasks.	There are tones of work behind the successful companies. While CEOs and managers like to share all of the achievements that are people in the shadow, who are actually making this progress, those are REAL DOERS.	It's very simple - you want to get things done? Hire the VA, stop fire fighting and finally get some sleep without worrying about sth being missed
<b>Will it limit the business in any way in the future?</b>	Some companies might not feel there is any "gap", they are just expanding the team and need more people.	Can't think of any, we are not likely to start hire locally, so "remote" is ok, "leap" as well	No	NO	No	It sounds good for simpler positions, VA, DA, PA, but if in the future we would plan to hire Marketing Leads or other more senior, managerial roles it might be not the best fit.	Also sound more like a solution for tasks, to get simple tasks done, can limit in terms of more difficult positions
<b>How will it live as a sub brand or endorsed brand with Trustshoring?</b>	Low connection, sound much more informal	They don't have any commonalities but also are not controversial, so should be ok	Trustshoring has the "trust" part and Superbhire has the "superb" both showing the same reliability	Is also simple, quick but in terms of "mood" doesn't really implies the same reliability and trust.	At Trustshoring we are also hiring talented, best of the best candidates, so it kinda has the same idea.	Don't have commonalities, messaging would be different but also isn't controversial in any way.	Don't have commonalities, messaging would be different but also isn't controversial in any way.
<b>Domains? .com? Availability, etc.</b>	hirethegapnow.com   hirethegaphub.com   letshirethegap.com	theremoteleap.com	superbhire.com	thepowerhire.com	thetalenticon.com	NeedDoer.com	ChooseDone.com
<b>Meaning in various languages? And cultures - VERY important!</b>	OK	in English we have a saying "it's a leap of faith" meaning you are taking a chance or taking a RISK doing something. It has a negative connotation.	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK
<b>Target audience key checks - will it resonate with online businesses? In North America and Western Europe?</b>	It is memorable for them, but also has a negative connotation as "Hire the Gap" may sound like you are not filling the get, you are "Hiring another one"	Mostly this was the favorite option, people associate hiring VA with hiring remotely however: • it makes me think like doing sth for the first time, like first "leap". So if I were looking for a first VA is ok, but for a bigger team - no. • "leap of faith"	Many people liked it, didn't have a lot of comments, because it is simple, but indicated that they like this naming idea. Negative - it is flat	Didn't get the attention from the audience, only one comment that it is flat	Sounds good and interesting, but not sure if "talent" says "VA". Talent makes people think about the roles like developers or VP roles.	Was't presented to the audience	Was't presented to the audience
<b>Premium and professional feel? Is it smart and inspiring?</b>	Inspiring but nothing in it sounds premium and professional	More less, "leap" has the empowering connotation	YES	It is inspiring, maybe a bit premium, but nothing in it says "professional"	YES	Inspiring, professional, not premium (but can fix it with the right messaging)	Inspiring, professional, not premium (but can fix it with the right messaging)
<b>Has it been checked against competitors/landscape?</b>	OK	OK	OK	There is a company <a href="https://powerhire.uk.com/">https://powerhire.uk.com/</a> , they are not competitor, different industry, but same name	OK	OK	OK
<b>How does it translate across marketing platforms? Branding? Audio/visual/formats?</b>	Can come up with some creative, catchy tag lines, but visuals and logo will be a challenge	Also should be more less ok, "leap" can be illustrated like a jump	Should be ok in terms of tagline, sth with the premium tone, and logo and branding can be similar to Trustshoring as the general "mood" of those two brands is similar	Should be ok for all: creative empowering tag lines and messaging, branding, visuals. It is easy to illustrate the power	Should be ok for marketing	Should be ok for marketing	Should be ok for marketing
<b>Easy to rank for?</b>	Should be very quick to rank for this name	Should be very quick to rank for this name	might be some difficulties with "superb" because of Skoda Superb car model, the search results are all around it. But superbhire should be ok	Branded keyword is taken by <a href="https://powerhire.uk.com/">https://powerhire.uk.com/</a>	There are a lot of SEPR results from online libraries with icons (icon of a talent that can be used in visuals)	There is a lot of content for DOER, but needDoer should be easy to rand for	Two general words Choose + Done, a lot of generic results, related to one of the words. But for branded should be ok

# Appendix B

## Brand book



**Icon Logotype**  
The SH icon can be used independently from the text





BRAND COLORS

PRIMARY COLORS



C:73 M:60 Y:0 K:0	R:78 G:117 B:254	C:94 M:75 Y:0 K:0	R:34 G:73 B:158	C:99 M:87 Y:4 K:18	R:33 G:46 B:120	C:100 M:84 Y:9 K:40	R:14 G:37 B:96
#4E75FE		#22499E		#212E78		#0E2560	

SECONDARY COLORS



C:71 M:61 Y:57 K:84	R:24 G:24 B:24	C:74 M:67 Y:58 K:89	R:13 G:13 B:13	C:0 M:53 Y:16 K:0	R:245 G:149 B:172	C:3 M:20 Y:91 K:6	R:239 G:195 B:17
#181818		#0D0D0D		#F595AC		#EFC311	



FONT FAMILY

FONT

# Cambay

# Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmno  
pqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

HEADINGS

# Cambay

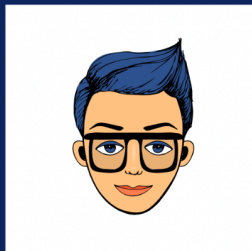
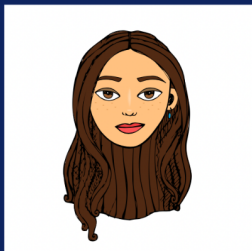
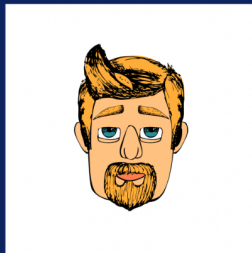
SUBHEADINGS

## LOREM IPSUM DOLOR SIT AMET

BODYTEXT

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam.


BRAND ARCHETYPE



SOCIAL MEDIA



Background pink and yellow:  
Use white logo

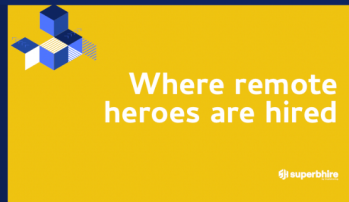
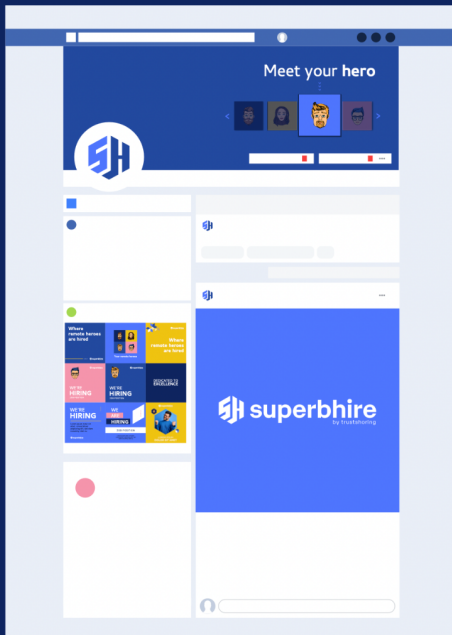
Gradient:   
Merge of the brand colors can be used



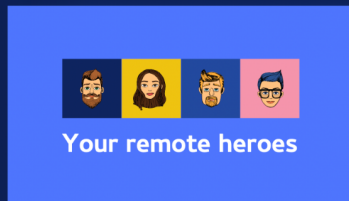
Title: Cambay Bold.  
Subtitle: Cambay Regular.  
Use Uppercase and tracking: 50

Icons  
Combination of elements, elements can be used with line or shadow

SOCIAL MEDIA



Use of the pattern



In images like this use the light blue color #4E75FE, Multiply effect.