

*"In the waves of change, we  
find our true direction"*

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#### **Table of Contents was adjusted for publication**

*Disclaimer: Please note that this report bases itself on the student's own interpretations and knowledge. In case of missing information, wrongfully interpreted information or possible mistakes in data and research methods, THE ORGANISATION cannot be held accountable. This report is for assessment at the Hogeschool Leiden alone and the second version of the report.*

# 1. Management Summary

This research was conducted to be able to advise THE ORGANISATION on how to strategise its communications to accomplish its goals of creating more awareness for the problems and the solutions in the ocean. The starting questions of THE ORGANISATION were as follows:

- *Whom should we target and how should we communicate towards them?*
- *What similar initiatives are out there too, and could they provide important learnings?*
- *Are we relevant to current and future users, and are we headed in the right direction?*

Based on these three questions, the research question was concluded to be: **How can THE ORGANISATION strategically position itself concerning the needs of the market, the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION and a differentiated position towards its competitors?**

Based on the elements of the starting questions and how they each relate to either customer, corporation or competition, the conceptual framework used for this research is the three C model by Ohmae (1982). This model is initially a model for a positioning based on customer, corporation and competition in more commercial settings in which cost-benefit structures and modes of distribution are applicable. However, it still proved to be useful to offer THE ORGANISATION valuable insights in its positioning and communication.

The external, international research audience consisted of the Nature Minded. 25 interviews are the basis of the results of this research. Though the research was sometimes challenging because of language-barriers and connection problems, the outcomes are very useful and applicable.

*\*Paragraph not for publication\**

*\*Paragraph not for publication\**

For an insight into aspects such as limitations and methodologies and a quicker overview of this management summary, an infographic is shown in Appendix A, Infographic.

## 2. Preface

Just a little over a year ago, while travelling in Australia, I witnessed the Great Barrier Reef. Little did I then realise how life-changing this event would be. Even though I grew up by the ocean, it was at the Great Barrier Reef that I first realised that I could no longer be a bystander of the effects of rapid climate change and pollution. I was determined to take on an active role in the preservation of the oceans and especially the reefs.



While letting my new ideas and realisations sink in, I realised that I should start my journey of making a difference for the oceans and the reefs at the THE ORGANISATION. By coincidence, luck, destiny or a combination of those, there was a placement available at the oceans department. So here we are today, in the International Year of the Reefs, and I proudly present what I have been working on devotedly for the past months.

THE ORGANISATION is a (\*\*) THE ORGANISATION was the perfect place for me to combine my knowledge of communication with my passion for the ocean and interest in cultures. Speaking to the storytellers, listening to and documenting their stories has changed my lifestyle and perspective irreversibly.

Conducting this research and helping an initiative like THE ORGANISATION grow, allowed me to contribute to something so vital and close to my heart. Working on my thesis was quite the journey, including many valuable lessons, but remembering my goal and being trusted with personal stories from many different cultures always kept me motivated to keep going.

I would like to especially thank Mr Schriemer and the THE ORGANISATION for the counselling and support I received and allowing me to find my way through learnings and fitting in a commercial positioning theory into a non-profit initiative. Also, I would like to thank the 25 respondents from all over the world profoundly and all others that confided in me to help them share their story. After many hours on Skype and taking down a variety of hurdles along the way, I was able to develop a piece of advice for THE ORGANISATION on how to continue to collect and share these incredible stories and to involve even more people to work together towards a better-preserved ocean. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me unconditionally, from beginning to end.

### 3. Introduction

*\*Paragraphs not for publication\**

A couple of months after the original start of THE ORGANISATION, several questions arose when deciding on how THE ORGANISATION should continue in the upcoming year:

- *Whom should we target and how should we communicate towards them?*
- *What similar initiatives are out there too, and could they provide important learnings?*
- *Are we relevant to current and future users, and are we headed in the right direction?*

*\*Paragraph not for publication\**

This research is the bachelor thesis of Crystelle Reyes, a fourth-year communication student at the University of Applied Sciences Leiden. The research aims to answer THE ORGANISATION' questions in a practical positioning advice, including accessible and implementable steps to take in its communications.

Several chapters presented in this thesis lead up to the answers to the previously mentioned questions and a positioning advice. The thesis will begin with the problem statement in chapter 4, followed by chapter 5, Situation Analysis for insight into the roots of the problem. The theoretical framework in chapter 6 compares several positioning theories, resulting in a conceptual framework. The methodology in chapter 7 explains how the research will aim to find the necessary answers to THE ORGANISATION' questions. Finally, chapter 8, Results shows the outcomes of the research. Chapter 9, Conclusions, answers the questions of THE ORGANISATION based on these results, after which the recommendations and the implementation follow, containing the advice and how to implement this into the future of THE ORGANISATION.

## 4. Problem statement

*The following chapter introduces the inducement of the research and the research question: How can THE ORGANISATION strategically position itself concerning the needs of the market, the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION and a differentiated position towards its competitors? The sub-questions to answer this research question, are each built on one element of the research question: the market and its customers, the corporation: THE ORGANISATION itself, and the competition. The audience defined as the general, Nature-minded public by THE ORGANISATION, is considered the market in this research. The limitations of the research describe aspects to take into account regarding time, the number of respondents and the method of the research, further discussed in chapter 7, Methodology.*

### 4.1 Inducement

*\*Paragraph not for publication\**

### 4.2 Research question

**How can THE ORGANISATION strategically position itself concerning the needs of the market, the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION and a differentiated position towards its competitors?**

“In strategic thinking, one first seeks clear understanding of the particular character of each element of situation and then makes the fullest possible use to restructure the elements in the most advantageous way.” (Ohmae, 1982, p. 13) – Thus, by creating a clear understanding of the elements mentioned in the research question: the market, the strengths and the competition, a positioning advice can be given on how to best put these elements to use for THE ORGANISATION and its goals creating awareness for the problems and solutions in the ocean and inspiring more people to take action themselves. The positioning advice will help THE ORGANISATION to gain more focus, aid in decision-making and help to understand its relevance in the market. THE ORGANISATION will have more insight in what audience to target and what instrument and key-messages should be used to target these audiences. Also, an insight into these elements will help THE ORGANISATION to set and substantiate benchmarks and understand the achieved results.

#### **Needs of the market:**

The wants of the customers on the market. It is important to understand all shades of these wants, as the value the customers perceive in the product will differ according to their wants. A careful analysis of the needs of the market will often lead to strategically effective segmentation (Ohmae, 1982).

#### **Differentiated position:**

A favourable difference between the company and its competition, whether in products and

services as perceived by customers, costs or functional performance. The differences can influence all corporate results (Ohmae, 1982).

**Competitors:**

To THE ORGANISATION, the competition consists of other initiatives that want to create more awareness for the problems and solutions in the ocean (personal communication, 2018).

**Functional strengths:**

The functions that are critical to success in the industry. Maintaining a positive differential key in the functional strengths is vital to retain an advantage in performance and market share. A detailed understanding of customers and competitors is needed to identify the functional strengths (Ohmae, 1982).

**Awareness of problems and solutions:**

The problems in the ocean according to THE ORGANISATION are rising sea levels and - temperatures, declining oxygen levels and overfishing (THE ORGANISATION, 2017a). Solutions encompass both policies and larger-scale solutions such as MPA's, as well small-scale solutions such as purchasing decisions and recycling customers can implement themselves, as well as people starting their own (non-profit) initiatives for ocean conservation (THE ORGANISATION, personal communication, 2018).

**People taking action themselves:**

The small-scale solutions such as purchasing decisions and recycling customers can implement themselves, as well as people starting their own (non-profit) initiatives for ocean conversation (THE ORGANISATION, personal communication, 2018). Even sharing a story, whether one's personal story or sharing an existing story on social media or signing up to the newsletter or following on social media is considered "being part of the solution" by THE ORGANISATION (THE ORGANISATION, n.d.).

### 4.3 Sub-questions

According to Ohmae (1982), an organisation must ask itself the following questions to reassess the legitimacy of the unit initially chosen:

- "Are customers wants well defined and understood by the industry, and is the market segmented, so that differences in those wants are treated differently?
- Do competitors have different sets of operating conditions that could give them a relative advantage over the business unit in question?
- Is the unit equipped to respond functionally to the basic wants and needs of customers in the defined segments?" (Ohmae, 1982, p. 98)

Even though this is a very commercial approach, it can be matched to the questions asked by THE ORGANISATION before the start of the research:

- Whom should we target and how should we communicate towards them?
- What similar initiatives are out there too, and could they provide important learnings?



- Are we relevant to current and future users, and are we headed in the right direction?

The sub-questions for this research are therefore as follows:

1. What are the needs of the market towards THE ORGANISATION?
2. Can segments be formulated based on the needs of the market?
3. How does THE ORGANISATION differentiate itself from other initiatives that want to create more awareness for the problems and solutions in the oceans?
4. What are THE ORGANISATION' functional strengths according to the market?

## 4.4 Objective

Identify the needs and segmentation of the market, the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION as identified by the market in comparison to the functional strengths as identified by the internal environment, and the differentiating factor from the competition. The identification of these elements will result in a positioning advice for THE ORGANISATION. Also, the results will give THE ORGANISATION an insight into the accuracy and effectiveness of the positioning elements put into place internally, by advising THE ORGANISATION on its positioning from the external point of view that was missing previously. This research will help THE ORGANISATION to become more focused, set goals and benchmarks, aid in future decision-making and also offers insight into what audiences to target and how to reach them.

## 4.5 Research Audience

THE ORGANISATION has identified the Nature Minded as the general public (THE ORGANISATION, 2017a). Therefore this group is considered the market in this research. Being able to address the total market is essential to gain a total market perspective and identify all needs and segments within the market to retain a competitive advantage (Ohmae, 1982). According to THE ORGANISATION, the Nature Minded public consists of people known to have a particular affinity with climate-oriented initiatives, work for environmental NGO's, live eco-consciously, recycle and so forth (THE ORGANISATION, 2017a). Describing the Nature Minded this way is an example segmenting by AIO-variables. AIO-variables are the activities, interests and opinions of the customer, often relating to a set of needs (Nederstigt & Poiesz, 2014). Otherwise explained: the activities, interests and opinions of the Nature Minded are an indicator that they are prone to have an interest in THE ORGANISATION.

Identifying the market in a non-demographic way is in line with what Ohmae (1982) states about creating segments: "Obvious differences in age, race, profession, region, family size and so forth, may be the basis of segmentation, but usually these constitute convenient statistical classes rather than strategic segments. Differences per se are not good enough unless each segment has differentiable objectives that can be reflected in the way the corporation approaches the market." (Ohmae, 1982, p. 101). – In short, a segmentation based on demographics or socio-economics is not good enough, unless each segment identified has

differentiable objectives, reflected in how THE ORGANISATION can approach them. Also, describing the market in a non-demographic way makes the Nature Minded audience applicable to a larger, international group of people that share the same values and lifestyles.

However, due to the lack of detail in which this describes the Nature Minded, the market is considered too broad to be considered a research audience for this research. External resources have been used to map further details of the Nature Minded to narrow down the market to a research audience, after which the relevance of this way of segmenting is discussed and compared to the VALS-typology as used by Mitchell in 1983.

Nature Minded people can be both male and female. They are likely to be married or cohabiting and have a college education or above. They enjoy nature-based experiences (Chen, Prebensen, Chen & Kim 2013).

Most people involved with NGO's, by for example donating, tend to be involved because of an idealistic belief, such as personal or ethical values or being convinced of a good cause (Charities Aid Foundation, 2014) or religion (Philanthropy Roundtable, n.d.).

Another research that aimed to create an audience segmentation for global warming initiatives identified six target audiences. The one most similar in objectives to the Nature Minded is the segment "The Alarmed". This segment has democratic, egalitarian values and believes climate change is an urgent threat caused by human activity. They want to be involved in solutions. Their sources of information are scientific resources and information from NGO's (Maibach, Leiserowitz, Roser-Renouf & Mertz, 2011). This description is more narrow than the description of the Nature Minded as it describes their values and objectives instead of their activities alone. In conclusion, the Nature Minded audience consists of:

- Males and Females,
- College Education or above,
- Likely to be married or cohabitant,
- Idealistic and/or religious,
- Democratic and/or Egalitarian,
- Enjoys nature-based experiences,
- Works for an NGO or has another affinity with NGO's,
- Wants to be involved in solutions,
- Believes human activity is damaging to our environment,
- Lives eco-consciously (recycling, for example),
- Uses scientific resources and information from NGO's to learn more about environmental issues.

A psychographic description of the market is essential for the development of a positioning strategy. In combination with the socio-demographic details of an audience, it provides a rich and insightful character of the market. When, based on the psychographic and socio-demographic market, segments are in place, the strategy can further describe these segments by researching their demographics and behaviours (Floor & Van Raaij, 2010).

This way of segmentation is inspired by a comparable way of segmentation previously used: the

segmentation model of the VALS-typology, as used by Mitchell in 1983. He used the VALS-typology to segment the American population into eight segments. The segment of the 'Thinkers' is most likely to match the Nature Minded as identified for this research. Idealism motivates this group and order, knowledge and responsibility are important values. Generally, they are highly educated, making scientific information an important factor in their decision-making. Despite their high income, they are innovative, sober-thinking and practical. Sustainability and functionality are important to the 'Thinkers' (Mitchell, 1983).

## 4.6 Limitations

The research will take place between February 1st, 2018 and May 25th, 2018. The research is based in the offices of the THE ORGANISATION in the Netherlands but makes use of an international group of respondents. The results of the research are confidential and only made available to the THE ORGANISATION, THE ORGANISATION and additionally Hogeschool Leiden for assessment. Names of the respondents are confidential and not made available at all.

Due to the limited timeframe for the investigation and the use of in-depth interviews, there is a limited number of respondents. An estimated number of 20-30 respondents is considered feasible, considered the method of the research. Further elaboration on the method whether or not this number is representative, can be found in paragraph 7.7, Operationalization. THE ORGANISATION can complement this research by, for example, researching the demographics of the Nature Minded group.

The outcome of this research is carried out as an advice. THE ORGANISATION can supplement where necessary and decide which recommendations are suited for implementation.

Also, whether the segmentation bases itself on external literature, compares to 'the alarmed' in climate change or 'the Thinkers' from the VALS-typology, it is important to note that while not constrained to demographic data, these groups are likely to be constrained to high incomes and college-educations, making socio-demographic or demographic bias likely. Also, most people affected by or most vulnerable to the problems in the ocean that THE ORGANISATION is trying to create awareness for are the coastal communities. Especially the communities dealing with poverty or other kinds of social vulnerabilities are expected to suffer the consequences of climate change and other environmental issues most severely (Dolan & Walker, 2006). In other words, the Nature Minded audience as identified by THE ORGANISATION and narrowed down for this research is probably the group with the most interest and (financial) abilities for THE ORGANISATION and similar initiatives. However, this group may not be the group that has the most benefits from an initiative like THE ORGANISATION. Research studying these communities or the people telling the stories may provide more insight into these groups or the effects of THE ORGANISATION' efforts on these groups. Even though they may be harder to reach considering the online channels THE ORGANISATION uses.

## 5. Situation Analysis

*According to THE ORGANISATION, several elements of a positioning- or communicational strategy are already in place. This situation analysis makes use of the Brand Key Model (Riezebos & Van der Grinten, 2015). The Brand Key Model is a model used by large organisations such as Unilever (Eurib, 2010) to map out the eight steps towards a positioning strategy. By using these steps from the Brand Key Model and analysing them separately, this situation analysis gives an overview of what elements of a positioning strategy are currently in place, the elements still missing, as well as more insight into THE ORGANISATION and the inducement of this research.*

### 5.1 Root Strengths

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.2 Competitive Environment

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.3 Target groups

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.4 Customer-Insights

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.5 Benefits

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.6 Values and Personality

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.7 Reasons to believe

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.8 Discriminators

*\*Not for publication\**

### 5.9 Brand Essence

*\*Not for publication\**



## 5.10 Conclusion

*\*Not for publication\**

## 6. Theoretical Framework

*Because the research aims to advise THE ORGANISATION on its positioning strategy, the theoretical framework first defines communication in relation to strategy and positioning and is then followed by a variety of theories possibly applicable to this research. These theories are then discussed, followed by an explanation of the strategic triangle as the conceptual framework. Finally, the statement of the three hypothesis follows, based on the conceptual framework.*

### 6.1 Strategy and Communication

A strategy is the way in which a corporation endeavours to differentiate itself positively from competitors, using its functional strengths to satisfy customer's needs. The object of such a strategy would be to bring about conditions most favourable to one's own side (Ohmae, 1982). Positioning, an essential element of strategy, is a set of choices needed to make: trying to be everything to everyone, will result in being nothing to anybody. The positioning should represent the identity of the brand, be relevant to the market, and clearly be differentiated from competitors to naturally stand out in a market (Riezebos & Van der Grinten, 2015).

Communication is an essential tool for any positioning or strategy. Communicational goals are set up to accomplish and maintain a differentiated position towards competitors in the market and the minds of the customer (Floor & Van Raaij, 2010). A positioning strategy gives focus internally as well as externally and allows THE ORGANISATION to take on a differentiated and relevant position towards target audiences. Positioning is also the bridge between identity and image (Michels, 2013).

According to Ohmae's theory (1982), customer-based strategies are the basis of all strategies. A corporation's foremost concern should be the interest of its customers, rather than the ones of stakeholders or other involved parties. If a corporation consistently succeeds in serving customers more successfully than its competitors, profit will follow (Ohmae, 1982).

However, the success of such strategies lies in consistency and development; a corporation should never aim to reach out to everyone. Instead, it should distinguish the easily accessible customer groups from the hard-to-reach ones. After all, every competitor has different abilities to respond to a particular set of needs. Focussing on one suitable segment and to answering the needs of this group, will eventually establish a strategic edge over competitors (Ohmae, 1982). The meeting of the needs of these subsets or niches by altering the offerings is called customer intimacy. Companies who excel in customer intimacy combine a detailed customer knowledge with operational flexibility so that they can respond to almost any need. These companies usually accomplish tremendous customer loyalty (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993).

However, being customer-led increases the risk of being a follower of those customers and begs the whole question of who the customers exactly are. Although it is essential to ask how satisfied customers are, it is equally important to ask which customers are unserved. However well a corporation meets the needs of current customers, it runs a high risk if it does not have a

view of the needs customers cannot yet articulate but would love to have satisfied. Any corporation that can do no more than responding to the articulated needs of existing customers will quickly become a laggard (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994).

When aspects like the performance of products and services or modes of distribution are challenging to differentiate, a corporation may have to choose to differentiate on image and customer-relationships. However, a strategy built on an image is risky and needs constant monitoring, as cultural differences and mass-media structures are always in motion (Ohmae, 1982).

## 6.2 Theories

The following paragraph is an overview of other theories applicable to the problem statement. The paragraph summarises and reviews the following theories in their usability for this research: The strategic triangle by Ohmae (1982), the theory on being customer-led by Hamel and Prahalad (1994), the Value Disciplines by Treacy and Wiersema (1993), Strategic Images by Park, Jaworski & MacInnis (1986), Brand Equity by Aaker (1991), Core Competencies by Hamel and Prahalad (1990) and the Integrating Factors framework by Chew and Osborne (2008).

### 6.2.1 The Strategic Triangle

The construction of any business strategy, includes the consideration of three main players: the corporation itself, the customer and the competition. THE ORGANISATION best establishes strategic planning when it can freely address all key segments of customer groups that are similar in needs and objectives. Also, all key functions of the corporation so that they can deploy whatever functional expertise is needed to establish a positive differentiation from the competition in the eyes of the customer and all key aspects of the competitor (Ohmae, 1982). Though commercial in its approach, in, for example, cost-benefit structures and modes of distribution being important elements of functional strengths and competitive strategies, this theory can be a helpful tool to gain a deeper insight into the elements THE ORGANISATION currently needs.

### 6.2.2 Beyond Customer-led

The strategic triangle combines customer, competitor and corporation, however, approaches strategic success out of the perception of the customer towards the corporation and competitors and how well they can meet their needs. Hamel and Prahalad's theory can offer a critical sidenote to the strategic triangle and states that corporations should look further than existing needs within articulated segments and markets. The strategic success of a corporation lies in being able to predict undefined needs and unarticulated segments. A corporation that can do no more than respond to already existing needs will soon become a laggard (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). (\*\*)

### 6.2.3 Value Disciplines

On the contrary, a theory a bit closer to the strategic triangle is a theory that does look at customers, as well as functional strengths in comparison to competitors: the Value Discipline theory. However, the difference is that the theory states that a corporation can only excel in one area, either operational effectiveness, product-leadership or customer-intimacy (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993). However, this model is difficult to apply to THE ORGANISATION, due to THE ORGANISATION' non-profit structure, in which costs made are not redeemed. Operational effectiveness or product-leadership would be difficult to examine, and the theory requires extensive knowledge of customer needs. The strategic triangle offers more insight into the elements needed for a positioning strategy and finding focus.

### 6.2.4 Strategic Images

Positioning Strategies do not typically indicate how to manage an image over time. While according to Ohmae (1982) image may be the only source of differentiation sometimes. This theory does, however, and states that positioning maintains over a long-term period by the use of communicational activities and repositioning. The final perception of the brand by the customer forms a basis for possible re-positioning (Park, et al. 1986). The strategic triangle theory does consider positioning a long-term approach to strategy but also focusses on functional strengths and competitors, where the strategic images theory does not. Therefore, the strategic triangle would be more insightful to THE ORGANISATION at this stage.

### 6.2.5 Brand Equity

Brand Equity is a set of liabilities and brand assets linked to a brand. These assets can add or subtract from the value provided by a product or perceived by a customer. This theory then matches positioning with a segmentation strategy. Identifying a brand with its target segment is usually an effective way to appeal to that segment (Aaker, 1991). However, the influence of functional strengths or competitors is missing in this theory. Also, it needs more insight into segmentation than currently available to THE ORGANISATION. Also, THE ORGANISATION still needs to be able to address the market as a whole, before even considering appealing to a specific segment alone. Also, this theory focusses on customers mostly, where the strategic triangle also focusses on the influence of competition and the strengths of the corporation, making it a better for a positioning strategy for THE ORGANISATION at this stage.

### 6.2.6 Core Competencies

Where Brand Equity looks at the elements for positioning from a customer perspective, the Core Competencies theory looks at these assets, or functional strengths, from an inside-out perspective (Hamel & Prahalad, 1990). (\*\*) Therefore, this theory is not considered to give enough insight to be applicable for THE ORGANISATION in comparison to the strategic triangle.



### 6.2.7 Integrating Factors

A model that combines all factors: corporation, consumers and competitors from an outside-in as well as an inside-out perspective like the strategic triangle is the Integrating Model of Factors Influencing Positioning Strategy in NGO's (Chew & Osborne, 2008). A framework especially developed for the NGO-sector, thus being more relevant regarding perspectives on, for example, costs and budgets. However, to make use of this framework, other strategies such as corporate strategies, marketing strategies and knowledge of target groups should already be in place in such way that the framework can be filled out as an overview and starting point for further positioning. While useful and more recent than the strategic triangle, THE ORGANISATION currently does not have the elements needed to make use of this theory for a positioning strategy at this point, though it could be a useful framework to keep in mind for the future.

## 6.3 Conceptual Framework

Ohmae's strategic triangle (1982) serves as the conceptual framework for this thesis. The strategic triangle can provide an answer to THE ORGANISATION's questions regarding its market and targeting, the functional strengths as well as the competition and its relevance.

The strategic triangle combines an inside-out and outside-in approach where other theories were usually inside-out or outside-in alone. Also, most theories focus on one element of positioning or strategy, such as internal strengths or customers. The strategic triangle combines multiple elements: customers, corporation and competition, also matching the questions THE ORGANISATION currently has.

Another aspect that makes the strategic triangle most applicable is that many theories either missed elements THE ORGANISATION needs insight in or used elements that are not currently relevant to THE ORGANISATION, such as costs and operational excellence. Others required more insights than currently available to THE ORGANISATION whereas the strategic triangle gives a complete overview of all elements necessary for a positioning strategy.

The strategic triangle states that every strategy should take three central players into account: the corporation, the customer and the competition. Each of these C's is a living entity on its own, yet together, they form the strategic triangle. A successful strategy is one that ensures a better matching of the functional strengths to the customer needs than those of competitors (Ohmae, 1982).

- Customer: the wants of the customers should be well-defined and understood by the industry from a total market perspective. Out of this market perspective, the company

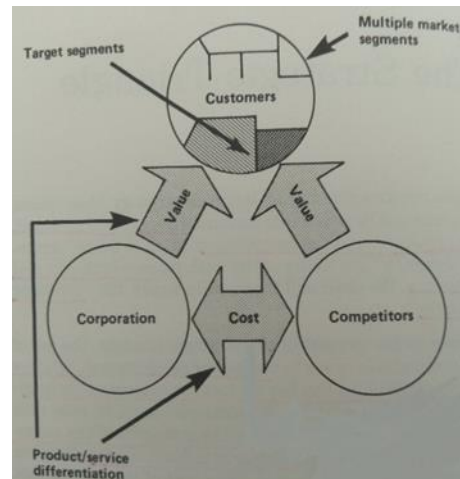


Image 1 The Strategic Triangle (Ohmae, 1982)

chooses one or more strategic segments, defined by differences in wants that can be treated differently in the way the company answers these wants (Ohmae, 1982).

- Corporation: the business should be equipped to respond functionally to the wants and needs of customers in the defined segments. These functional strengths should maximise the corporation's strengths critical to success in a given industry (Ohmae, 1982).
- Competition: a company should be aware of the different sets of operating conditions that could give them a relative advantage over the corporation, their behaviour and relative strengths and weaknesses. Differentiation from competitors lies in its functional strengths, image or customer-relationships (Ohmae, 1982).

A strategy is the way in which a corporation endeavours to differentiate itself positively from competitors, using its functional strengths to satisfy customer's needs. The object of such a strategy would be to bring about conditions most favourable to one's own side (Ohmae, 1982). In conclusion, to develop such a strategy, a corporation must first be able to address the total market, not just sections of it. In this market, easy-to-reach customer groups should distinguish from hard-to-reach ones. A corporation should focus on meeting the needs of the easy-to-reach groups (Ohmae, 1982).

Within these segments, it is essential to differentiate from competitors positively. Usually, differentiation lies in either cost, volume or price. As it may be difficult for THE ORGANISATION to differentiate based on product or mode of distributions, image and customer-relationships may be the only source of differentiation. However, it is crucial to monitor segments continuously, as environmental forces are continually changing the likes and dislikes of customers.

A detailed understanding of customers and competitors are needed, to identify the functional strength with which a corporation can positively differentiate itself. Like customers, there should be a focus on one or more strategic functional strengths. No company can afford to improve or invest in all its functional strengths. (Ohmae, 1982).

## 6.4 Hypothesis

For each C of the strategic triangle, a hypothesis can be formulated and applied to the development of a positioning strategy. The hypotheses originate from the book 'The Mind of the Strategist' (1982) by Ohmae. In short, the hypotheses state that THE ORGANISATION will have to meet needs of the target group, promote the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION and focus on the customer relationships and image to differentiate from the competition.

1. If an organisation segments the market and focuses the strategy on meeting the needs of strategically segmented target groups, then these target group will prefer THE ORGANISATION over its competitors.

*"To establish a strategic edge on its competition, therefore the corporation wants to segment the market - it must identify one or more subsets of their needs." (Ohmae, 1982, p.99)*

*"Differences per se (red. Between segments) are not good enough, and each segment has different objectives that can be viewed in the way the corporation approaches the market."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.101)

2. If an organisation focuses its efforts on customer relationships and its image, then THE ORGANISATION can create a competitive advantage.

*"Competitor-based strategies can be constructed by looking at possible sources or differentiation in functions ranging from purchasing, design and engineering to sales and servicing."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.126) *"When product performance and mode of distribution are very difficult to differentiate, the image may be the only source of positive differentiation."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.130) *"Likewise, customer relationships can be a source of differentiation."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.131)

3. If an organisation wants to differentiate itself positively, then the functional strengths that differentiate the position of THE ORGANISATION in the market must be found and expressed in its strategy.

*"Maintaining a positive differential key in functional strengths is vital to retain an advantage in profit and market share. A corporation that analyses customers and competitors, who are critical for success in the industry is like a staff-dominated military with a weak combat force."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.111) *"Their object (functional strategies) is the specific functional performance required to succeed in a given industry."* (Ohmae, 1982, p.115)

## 7. Methodology

*The following chapter explains the methodology of this research. It explains why the research makes use of qualitative interviews, the limitations and benefits of the computer-mediated communication of Skype, the recruitment of the respondents using the snowball-technique and finally the methodology per sub-question, followed by three hypothesis and the operationalisation. Additionally, an extra paragraph summarises the review of the methodology used.*

### 7.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is suited for situations not researched previously or as often and for subjects that may be subject to cultural and practical influences (Boeijen, 2014). Also, qualitative research studies opinions and experiences rather than causalities. The qualitative research investigates subjective meanings in an interpretative and inductive manner (Verhoeven, 2014).

(\*\*)

### 7.2 Research Methods

The research makes use of open interviews with the Nature Minded audience as defined in paragraph 4.5, Research Audience. These open interviews make use of a Topic guide, as enclosed in Appendix E, Topic Guide, but also allow for input from the respondent, leaving more space to ask questions about underlying motivations. Also, open interviews are suited to find out more about the motivations and experiences of the respondent (Verhoeven, 2014).

The research makes use of an international research audience. Which is why interviews take place via Skype, a form of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

More detailed, a Skype interview is a one-to-one, synchronic CMC-method, as it involves two individuals online at the same time. The difficulty of this method is that technical skills of the respondent as well as those of the researcher are necessary to make the interview work. Non-verbal communication and social conventions are challenging factors too when using a CMC-method, in comparison to a face-to-face setting. For example, reading real-life responses to questions and facial expressions happens via a computer screen. Therefore, the CMC-method can result in less involvement of the respondent, or even a more informal setting. Because the non-verbal communication is less visible, it is difficult to make use of silence or facial expressions as an interview technique. Because of this difficulty, it is much more important to ask questions directly and literally, making it difficult to let the conversation take a natural course and reach the intended depth and insights. However, participating in a CMC-method is also low-threshold and accessible, and allows for more extensive sharing of examples, such as links and images than, for example, a face-to-face interview would (Bruins, 2016).

Even though many reasons exist to prefer a face-to-face interview considering the loss of spontaneity and non-verbal communication, Skype remains one of the few options to interview



an international research audience within reasonable budgets. All interviews use English as their primary language, with respondents from the Netherlands too, to make sure the execution of all interviews is equal.

Desk research is part of the used method as well, to better understand THE ORGANISATION, the current situation and the elements of positioning in place. The desk-research makes use of the internal documents of THE ORGANISATION and also serves to substantiate the importance of this research, as can be found in the situation analysis in chapter 5, Situation Analysis.

Finally, comparison of the results found to what elements of positioning were put in place internally will jointly form a new positioning strategy. Also, results are carefully analysed to look for segments or possible categories of audiences and their needs. Paragraph 7.3, Methodology per sub-question further elaborates on the analysis of results.

The method of card sorting, in which cards with elements or products are categorised and sorted by respondents, is an effective way to identify key-steps and sub-steps in a process (Spencer, 2009). In this case, card sorting is used to identify what elements of THE ORGANISATION are important and why, and why some are less important, and why. The respondents pick a top-three out of the existing cards in the topic guide and discuss their choices. Also, the card-sorting at the end of the interview is a good way to follow up on results found and to be able to see whether previous answers repeat themselves or not. Rather than an insight into a hierarchy, it also provides an insight into the thoughts and processes of the research audience (Gotz, 2010). However, using Skype, it is complicated to see or share the cards as the respondent sorts them. Therefore they are asked to discuss their top-three of the cards shown verbally. The card-sorting also makes use of blank cards, to allow the respondent to add elements not included in the cards.

### 7.3 Methodology per sub-question

*Sub-question 1*: “What are the needs of the market towards THE ORGANISATION?” Is answered by topic 1 of the Topic guide: *Online Behaviour* and topic 2 on the Topic guide: *THE ORGANISATION preferences*. These topics funnel questions about the online behaviour from respondents towards channels and the following of NGO’s in general, towards the opinion and preferences of THE ORGANISATION and the personal use of social media and participating in action themselves. The questions formulated base on the statement that the wants of the customers should be well-defined and understood by the industry from a total market perspective. Out of this market perspective, the company chooses one or more strategic segments, defined by differences in wants that can be treated differently in the way the company answers these wants (Ohmae, 1982). The needs, however, will change according to the changes in the macro-environment and the ability to answer these needs previously or by competition (Nederstigt & Poiesz, 2014). The mentioned theory is why this topic investigates the general needs of the market as well as their behaviour towards other organisations and how these organisations behave on the market. Investigating these topics will give THE ORGANISATION an overview of what the market looks like, what is already on the market, how

this responds to the needs of the market and what needs exist on the market.

Therefore, the methodology of this sub-question tests hypothesis 1: if an organisation segments the market and focuses the strategy on meeting the needs of strategically segmented target groups, then these target group will prefer THE ORGANISATION over its competitors. However, the hypothesis also needs analysis of topic 3 from the topic guide, to analyse the preferences of respondents towards similar initiatives to be compared as well.

*Sub-question 2: "Can segments be formulated based on the needs of the market?"* The answering of this sub-question makes use of analysis of the results after completion of the interviews, to compare and analyse the online behaviours and preferences of respondents, to look for possible segmentation for THE ORGANISATION, further discussed in the following paragraph. The analysis bases itself on the statement of Ohmae (1982) the wants of the customers should be well-defined and understood by the industry from a total market perspective. Out of this market perspective, the company chooses one or more strategic segments, defined by differences in wants that can be treated differently in the way the company answers these wants (Ohmae, 1982).

This sub-question in combination with the first sub-question will test hypothesis 1: if an organisation segments the market and focuses the strategy on meeting the needs of strategically segmented target groups, then these target group will prefer THE ORGANISATION over its competitors. However, the hypothesis also needs analysis of topic 3 from the topic guide, to analyse the preferences of respondents towards similar initiatives to be compared as well.

*Sub-question 3: "How does THE ORGANISATION differentiate itself from other initiatives that want to create more awareness for the problems and solutions in the oceans?"* is answered by topic 3, *THE ORGANISATION and others* in the topic guide, but also by the card-sorting in topic 4, *THE ORGANISATION strengths*. These topics combine funnel questions about similar initiatives, why they are considered similar to questions about personal preferences between initiatives. Topic 4, *THE ORGANISATION strengths*, can be used subsequently to confirm the advantages mentioned, to confirm or exclude socially acceptable answers about preferences. Analysis of the results is then used to see how the functional strengths of THE ORGANISATION compare to the preferences of respondents and the identified similar initiatives.

The questions in the topic guide base on the theory that to customers, competition is about making choices. The extent and force of the competition measures in the way in which they successfully bargain for more customers and audiences. The easiest way of assessing this is by finding an indication of their success on the market (Floor & Van Raaij, 2010). A company should be aware of the different sets of operating conditions that could give them a relative advantage over the corporation, their behaviour and relative strengths and weaknesses (Ohmae, 1982). The chosen approach in the topic guide will give THE ORGANISATION an overview of who else the audience is aware of, and in what way they either answer to the needs of the customer and what needs remain unanswered.

The methodology of this sub-question therefore also test hypothesis 2: If an organisation wants to differentiate itself positively, then the functional strengths that differentiate the position of THE ORGANISATION in the market must be found and expressed in its strategy.

**Sub-question 4:** "What are THE ORGANISATION' functional strengths according to the market?" is answered by topic 4 in the topic guide: THE ORGANISATION strengths. This topic identifies strengths, weaknesses and points of improvement and is also a check to see if previously given answers are confirmed or contradicted. Analysis of the results is then used to compare and analyse the answers given to see how they relate to other sub-questions and so how they answer to the needs of the market or differentiate from similar initiatives. The topic in the topic guide builds on the theory of sustainable competitive advantage. Which explains that a sustainable competitive advantage exists when the functional strengths strongly anchor into the DNA of a corporation, is relevant to the audience and differentiates itself from its competitors (Riezebos & Van Der Grinten, 2015). The topic will give THE ORGANISATION an overview of what possible functional strengths could be, why and how they are relevant and in what way they differentiate from competitors.

The methodology of this sub-question therefore also tests hypothesis 3: If an organisation focuses its efforts on customer relationships and its image, then THE ORGANISATION can create a competitive advantage.

## 7.4 Topic Guide

A theory with a similar approach in the questions asked in the topic guide is the one of Mariampolski (2001). Besides the theories in the previous paragraphs supporting the topics in the topic guide, the questions in the topic guide are based on the proposed questions as formulated by Mariampolski (2001), for the testing a new product or concept or advertising copy or evaluating a new concept:

Theory	Examples from Topic Guide
Is it believable?	<i>*not for publication*</i>
Is it unique?	
Does it increase, have no impact or decrease your liking for the product?	
Does it provoke curiosity and what else would you like to know about it?	
Does it make you want to buy the product?	

Is there a need for this product?	
Who is likely to be interested or uninterested in the product?	
For those that are interested, what benefits are they seeking?	
What are the main objections of those uninterested?	
Would this be a one-time purchase or would a pattern of repeat purchase develop? What would be the benefits of repurchase?	
What would you like to hear about the product if it was being promoted?	
Where and in what format would you expect to hear about this product?	

*Table 1 Theoretical approach Topic Guide*

## 7.5 Respondent recruitment

Respondents for this research are explicitly selected by the researcher, based on to what extent they fit the Nature Minded as clarified in paragraph 4.5 Research audience. Screening, as explained in the following paragraph is part of this recruitment, however. An overview of respondents, their age, country of origin and residence, in what way they can be considered a Nature Minded and the total make-up of the research audience refer to Appendix F, Renewed Respondent Schedule. Respondents are selected first and foremost because the research needs a particular psychographic and socio-demographic population (Verhoeven, 2014). Therefore, the sample is purposive, meaning the characteristics are looked for explicitly to be able to research most typical cases of Nature-Minded and collected through snowball-sampling. The snowball sampling method is a method in which personal networks are used to find respondents (Verhoeven, 2014). However, this can quickly lead to a biased population. To overcome this bias, the snowball method can be executed by asking the network to provide the names of those that would meet the requirements. Out of those names, the one furthest from the personal network is chosen (Boeijen, 2014). Finally, the snowball method ensures a higher willingness to participate (Verhoeven, 2014). Appendix D. Recruitment shows the email sent to the respondents.

As shown, the research audience was not selected demographically but based on their values and lifestyles. The research audience is, therefore, an international one too. Advantages in



communication systems are further advancing, linking markets through flows of information, images and ideas across national boundaries. At the same time, increasing cultural diversity makes it important to collect information and insights in changing lifestyles and consumption patterns around the world to correctly position new products and services (Craig & Douglas, 2005). Also, THE ORGANISATION operates on an international level as it addresses problems in the ocean. The stories THE ORGANISATION shares originate from all over the world. Researching a Dutch audience alone would lead the research to miss out on valuable information and insights. Also, culture is a significant influence in regards to the point of view of better conservation, in for example conflict avoidance, social responsibility and dependence on authorities (Boyle, 1998). This information is important to gather from the audience, as it may eventually explain differences in opinions or underlying motivations.

## 7.6 Screening

Effective recruitment of the respondents depends largely on its screener - the questionnaire used to ascertain that potential respondents match the definition of the intended research audience. Screening quality is critical to the validity of the study results, as the research should talk to the 'right' people (Mariampolski, 2001).

Because this research makes use of the snowball method, the networks of the research play a large role in the recruitment of the respondents as well as in screening them. The network provides multiple possible respondents, from which the screener-questions can exclude the respondents that fit the research audience as described in paragraph 4.5 Research Audience. Because the research audience bases on lifestyles and values, the screener makes use of lifestyle questions and attitudinal (opinion) questions. A lifestyle question seeks to establish the respondent in a daily lifestyle category: such as being married or cohabitant, education, profession and so forth (Mariampolski, 2001).

An attitudinal question seeks to establish the respondents' mindset in connection to a brand or market, such as being open to new products or brand loyalty. Alternatively, these types of questions seek to uncover a respondent's broad approach to life, such as a concern about environmental issues (Mariampolski, 2001).

The screener should be kept realistic and brief, over-defining respondents makes them difficult to find and disconnects the group from the actual market. The screener should not include more than 12 to 15 questions, as it could risk respondents to become bored and produce disincentives to participate (Mariampolski, 2001).

The screener did not exclude people who were not married or cohabitant. By not excluding them, a wider variety in age was kept and also, the theory states that the Nature Minded are likely to be married or cohabitant, meaning they not necessarily are. Apart from the general chat to put the respondent at ease, the following questions were asked before the start of the interview.

Screening Questions	Inclusion Criteria
• What is your highest education?	• College education or above
• What is your current living situation?	• Preferably cohabitant, but not necessary for inclusion
• Are you married?	• Preferably married, but not necessary for inclusion
• Do you identify as idealistic or religious?	• Yes
• Do you identify as democratic or egalitarian?	• Yes
• Do you enjoy nature-based experiences?	• Yes
• What is your affinity with NGO's?	• Working for, donating, general interest
• Do you want to be involved in solutions for environmental issues?	• Yes
• Do you believe human-activity is damaging to our environment?	• Yes
• Do you live eco-consciously? How?	• Yes
• How do you learn about environmental issues?	• Scientifical resources and information from NGO's

*Table 2 Screening questions*

## 7.7 Interview techniques

Recommended interviewing techniques are non-verbal communications such as a posture and the use of body language, consciously dropping silences, humming and nodding, and summarising and asking questions about previously given answers (Verhoeven, 2014). As interviews take place over Skype, it is challenging to use the right interview techniques. For example, non-verbal communication is less visible than in a face-to-face setting. The use of silence to encourage a respondent to continue talking can be confused for losing connection or sound. Humming and nodding, are also less audible or visible than in a face-to-face setting. Therefore, the recommended interview techniques rely more strongly on the use of short summaries based on the answers of the respondents and formulating questions based on previously given answers.

## 7.7 Operationalisation

Analysis schedules will be made to analyse the answers of the respondents after the interviews. The analysis schedules will be the basis for the results of the interviews, after which conclusions and recommendations follow. Also, the analysis of the results will aim to find segments in the audience that could be treated differently by THE ORGANISATION, and find approachable and understandable categories in the needs of the market with possible use for positioning. The

following paragraph explains several aspects relevant to the operationalisation of the research by external validity, population and selection, the standardisation and the triangulation and what they mean for the results and conclusions of the research.

### 7.7.1 External Validity

The population of the research is selected to take part in the research, due to the particular characteristics of the nature-minded, as recorded in paragraph 4.5, Research Audience. The respondents are also selected purposive, meaning the characteristics are looked for explicitly to be able to research most typical cases of nature-minded. Therefore, the respondents are recruited through the snowball method, for further clarification see paragraph 7.5 respondent recruitment. However, this adds to the risk of selection bias, which could cause the research to find results about the opinions of this particular group only. Also, the topic of the survey is subject to a history-bias, meaning that in cases of recent events, experiences and opinions about the importance of THE ORGANISATION may change (Verhoeven, 2014). Though history bias is hard to prevent, the use of second-degree connections aims to prevent the selection bias.

### 7.7.2 Internal Validity

Internal validity is not very high, due to the selection of respondents and the snowball method of recruitment. Also, the respondents derive from personal networks, possibly leading respondents to give socially acceptable answers (Verhoeven, 2014).

Because the research makes use of qualitative research, a variety of measures exist to safeguard internal validity. Because making use of face-to-face interviews, many socially acceptable answers and other conversational factors and even the language barriers could lead the questions asked to be misunderstood by respondents, or answers interpreted differently. Even the appearance of the researcher and his or her experience with interviews may affect the interviews with a researchers-bias. Brink (1993) states that the following measures can prevent the researchers-bias in the topic guide:

- by making sure the respondents are clear on the nature of the research,
- by first building a trust-relationship with the subject and staying in that setting for a period,
- by comparing the results obtained with other evidence,
- confirming findings and analysis with the respondents,
- by keeping accurate and detailed notes and logs.

### 7.7.3 Population

The form of generalisation applicable to this research is a substantive generalisation. This form of generalisation lies in the comparability of results that would occur in similar situations (Verhoeven, 2014). For example, the 25 respondents are Nature Minded. Within this population,

a variety of characteristics can be found in the literature, as well as in the results of the interviews. For example, their need to be involved in solutions. Substantive generalisation means that these characteristics would repeat in similar situations with the Nature Minded audience as a whole, which have not been included in this research, making the range of the conclusions bigger than the 25 respondents alone (Mertens, Schaardenburgh-Verhoeve & Sillem, 2012).

#### 7.7.4 Standardization

Standardisation will contribute to the reliability of the research which is why before the start of the interviews, the researcher holds a pre-test. The pre-test will show if respondents interpret questions as intended. Also, the researcher keeps logs, as seen in Appendix I, Verbatim. The questions remained the same after the pre-test. However, after the first test conversation seemed to flow better in the following interviews and took on a more natural course.

#### 7.7.5 Triangulation

Concerning triangulation, the interview makes use of card-sorting. The triangulation adds to the reliability of the results, by reassessing the answers given by respondents using a different method (Verhoeven, 2014).

#### 7.7.6 Instrumentation

Instrumentation is the gradual adjustments in the interview taking place as the research progresses (Verhoeven, 2014). Considering the interview is likely to be undertaken amongst 20-30 respondents, the research can be sensitive to instrumentation, for example, the researcher is starting to expect specific answers heard of often or if it turns out that the topic guide needs adjustments. The interviews are scheduled a few hours apart of each other and are not turned into logs until completion of all interviews, to prevent instrumentation.

#### 7.7.7 Usability

The results of the research can be used to advise THE ORGANISATION on a positioning strategy. The usability of the research is, therefore, instrumental usability (Verhoeven, 2014). Furthermore, the results can be useful for later reference or follow-up research and insights. The usability is aimed to increase by looking for segments and categories in results, making them approachable, easier to understand and easy to apply to a positioning strategy.

### 7.8 Review of methodology

*\*Paragraph not for publication\**

## 8. Results

*\*Chapter not for publication\**

## 9. Conclusions

*\*Chapter not for publication\**

## 10. Recommendations

*\*Chapter not for publication\**

## 11. Implementation

*\*Chapter not for publication\**