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BUSINESS IN PRACTICE:
SELF-REFLECTION AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF TRANS4MOTIVE

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Abstract

The Business in Practice simulation placed me in an interactive, experiential learning environment where I served as Marketing Director at Trans4Motive, a fictional automotive company undergoing a full transition to electric vehicles. Over six simulated years, our seven-member team, each responsible for a key business function, collaboratively addressed strategic decisions and interpersonal challenges. This dissertation is divided into two key sections. The first section evaluates the strategic and functional performance of Trans4Motive, with a focus on marketing, operations, and innovation. Critical decisions including electric vehicle development, product launches, marketing expenditures, and ESG alignment are assessed using frameworks such as the 4Ps, STP, and Porter's Five Forces. The second section presents a personal reflection on two critical incidents that influenced my leadership experience. As the only member in the "yellow quadrant" of the personality model, I initially struggled to align with more analytical or directive team members. Over time, through feedback and self-awareness, I gradually learned to harness my creativity more efficiently by combining it with structure and clarity. This personal evolution reflects a broader insight: simulation-based learning, when integrated with strategic theory and reflective practice, can significantly enhance business acumen and leadership development in sustainability-oriented sectors.

Keywords

Business Simulation, Automotive Industry, Leadership Development, Strategic Management, Sustainability, Emotional Intelligence, Cross-Cultural Teamwork, Experiential Learning

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List of Acronyms

AI – Artificial Intelligence

BiP – Business in Practice

DoI – Days of Inventory

EBIT – Earnings Before Interest and Taxes

ESG – Environmental, Social, and Governance

EV – Electric Vehicle

FU – Factory Utilization

IoT – Internet of Things

OEM – Original Equipment Manufacturer

PESTEL – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal

SEI – Sustainability Efficiency Index

STP – Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

V2V – Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication

WACC – Weighted Average Cost of Capital

1. Introduction

With the global automotive industry going through a fundamental change, individuals are now opting to use electric vehicles (EVs) not only because of their novelty, but also because they are environmentally friendly, cost effective in the long term, and technologically advanced. Indeed, EVs have lower life-cycle ownership costs because electricity is generally less expensive than gasoline or diesel, they require less maintenance, and they align with the growing awareness of air pollution and climate change (McKinsey estimates that EV demand will increase almost six times between 2021 and 2030). In the meantime, stricter laws and social pressure drive conventional automakers towards greener transportation. When combined, consumers are transitioning to EVs not only because they have to, but also because this transition is economically rational and corresponds to new social values. To overcome this change, automakers have to change their business models to focus on sustainability, agility, and resilience. According to Doz and Kosonen (2008), strategic agility to change quickly and remain faithful to long-term vision is the key to success in such turbulent times.

Within this context, the Business in Practice (BiP) placed our team in charge of managing **Trans4Motive**, a fictional manufacturer of 100% EVs with global production facilities. The team's name reflects the dual essence of the company; "Trans" represents transformation; "4" is a deliberate reference both to Team 4's identity and to the four dominant industry megatrends shaping the future of mobility: Electrification, Automation, Connectivity, and Sustainability; and "Motive" ties back to the automotive sector. Throughout the simulation, we were guided by a strategic **vision** to redefine premium electric mobility through regionally tailored, technologically

sophisticated, and sustainably manufactured vehicles, alongside a **mission** to expedite global EV adoption with profitable, carbon-neutral EVs that satisfy local market demands.

According to Porter and Kramer (2011), the company's mission is to make money while also doing good for people and the environment. Achieving this balance required close collaboration among Marketing, Finance, Operations, Innovation and Human resources to ensure that Trans4Motive met its ESG commitments while remaining responsive to evolving global trends. Building on this foundation, we examined issues from a strategic perspective and adopted a holistic approach. Our goal was to generate sustainable long-term profits while responsibly fulfilling our obligations to the environment and our stakeholders, positioning ourselves as cost leaders in the market.

Before delving into the five core business functions — Marketing, Finance, Operations, Innovation, and Human Resources — we first conducted a strategic assessment of Trans4Motive. This analysis examined both the external and internal environments and evaluated the firm's vision, mission, values, goals, and key performance indicators. To structure this assessment, we applied a set of well-established strategic tools such as PESTEL (Aguilar 1967) (Figure 1), Porter's Five Forces (Porter 1979) (Figure 2), the Strategy Diamond framework (Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2001) (Figure 3), and a SWOT analysis (Figure 4) to evaluate the firm's positioning and long-term performance. As our professor João Baptista stated during the BIP simulation, **"It is reasonable for our strategy to have a strategy,"** reminding us that strong performance comes from aligning vision with adaptable and evidence-based planning.

2. Firm Analysis

2.1. Review of Function 1: Marketing Strategy at Trans4Motive

In firms that are driven by the market, the marketing function is particularly important since it helps make sure that customer value matches operational capabilities and the potential for innovation (Moorman and Rust 1999). To ensure that Trans4Motive's transition to a fully electric portfolio was both strategically sound and commercially viable, key marketing decisions focused on aligning production with market positioning, setting optimal pricing strategies, managing promotional intensity, and adapting to changes in the product lifecycle. With the corporation committed to becoming 100% electric by Year 3, marketing decisions played a critical role in shaping brand equity, driving global sales, and optimizing factory utilization.

2.1.1. Strategic Marketing Approach and Execution

Trans4Motive's marketing plan was based on data from the demand-side and the Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) model. We regularly examined key measures including the Sales/Production ratio, Days of Inventory (DoI), and Factory Utilization (FU) to improve market interventions. Vehicle models such as Veloze (40.5% margin), Lyvion (39.3%), Voltreon (38.2%), and Pixie (34.7%) received substantial marketing support. On the other hand, underperforming models like PU 225G and Hybrid were phased out to make room for new launches and to support the company's electrification objectives.

Indeed, we were able to relaunch a number of items, such as Pixie in Q22 and 4x4E in China, at the perfect periods for the market to be ready for them. When demand was low, these relaunches contained new features and messaging that were adjusted to increase consumer interest. Our

interventions were guided by the framework of the 4 Ps (Figure 5). These actions align with Kotler and Keller's (2016) recommendation to integrate tactical execution with strategic marketing planning.

2.1.2. Aligning Marketing Intensity and Production Capacity

Early simulation stages saw excess inventory (especially for 4x4E and LUX 225G), driven by low marketing intensity (1.8% of revenue) and misaligned production capacity. For example, 4x4E had a DoI of 164 days and LUX 225G reached 222 days by Q9, severely impacting FU and cash flow. We responded in Q10 by raising marketing spend to 3.2%, followed by a strategic increase to 4.5% by Q16, which allowed us to launch targeted promotional campaigns, reduce prices selectively, and adjust placement. As a result, DoI for 4x4E dropped to 88 days and LUX 225G to 97 days by the final quarter of the simulation. Where needed, we executed lean resets, such as downscaling and factory switches in Q17 to restore balance, consistent with Womack and Jones' (2003) concept of "stopping the line" to preserve system integrity and prevent overproduction.

By Q19, we achieved a disciplined cycle: relaunching Pixie and 4x4E, adjusting prices based on sales/production ratios, and continuously reallocating capacity. This operational cadence allowed us to operate four fully utilized EV lines in Europe, three in China, and three of four in the U.S., all while achieving strong model-level margins.

2.1.3. Integration of Sustainability

Capgemini (2020) stated that sustainability becomes an important consumer-purchase factor, especially in the case of Gen Z and Millennial buyers. In response to this shift, sustainability efforts were integrated into Trans4Motive's overall market positioning. To promote its products and

branding, the firm ensured that its strategies were compliant with the Paris Declaration on Electro-Mobility (UNFCCC 2015). Investments in **Scope 1** (reduction of water consumption, sustainable waste reduction, ISO 14001/EMAS certifications), **Scope 2** (solar panels, energy efficiency) and **Scope 3** (external battery recycling) were leveraged as differentiation assets in Trans4Motive's value proposition. These measures reduced emissions, enhanced resource optimization, and reinforced the perception of Trans4Motive as a company committed to the circular economy. Indeed, we aimed to minimize environmental footprint, promote fairness, and enhance circularity through reuse and recycling. This approach reflected the sustainability narrative of the Tesla brand, which fostered customer loyalty and justified premium pricing, as customers were willing to pay more for vehicles like Voltreon and Veloze.

2.1.4. Performance Assessment of the Marketing Function

From a performance perspective, the marketing strategy achieved its goal of supporting a profitable transition to an electric fleet. Notably:

- Operating margins on top EV models were robust: Veloze (40.5%), TerraLux (40.5%), Voltreon (38.2%), Lyvion (39.3%), and Pixie (34.7%).
- Pricing agility helped balance demand and inventory. Price hikes on high-demand models coincided with high sales/production ratios, while corrective discounts cleared excess stock on others (Figure 6).
- Relaunches of Pixie (Q22) and 4x4E (China) effectively extended product lifecycles and increased FU (Figure 7).
- DoI peaked around Q10 but normalized by Year 5 after price corrections and marketing reinvestment.

- Customer perception and product differentiation were strengthened by embedding technological upgrades and sustainability into messaging.

Our approach reflected best practices in strategic agility, as emphasized by Doz and Kosonen (2008), enabling Trans4Motive to stay competitive amid complex portfolio transitions.

2.1.5. Benchmarking with Real Companies

Trans4Motive's marketing function drew inspiration from industry leaders. Tesla's focus on tech-led branding and direct-to-consumer strategies influenced our high-margin electric launches. Likewise, BYD's regional production alignment and flexible pricing informed our placement and demand-matching decisions.

According to McKinsey (2022), successful automotive firms integrate cross-functional coordination between marketing and operations to optimize lifecycle profitability; a strategy we deployed via marketing–operations synergy to manage stock and maximize margin.

2.2. Review of Function 2: Operations Strategy at Trans4Motive

Operations became the key strategic driver in Trans4Motive's transformation towards a 100 percent EV portfolio. The operations strategy focused on building a flexible, environmentally sustainable, and cost-efficient production system capable of sustaining electrification while balancing cost, quality, and speed.

Unlike the traditional view of operations as a function limited to cost management, we adopted a proactive approach in which operations were tightly integrated with marketing, finance, and innovation. This perspective aligns with Skinner's (1969) thesis that sustainable competitive

advantage stems from operational excellence, particularly when coordinated with corporate strategy.

The three main targets were as follows: (1) redesign the global production network to support electrification by Year 3 (Q15), (2) decrease DoI and increase FU, and (3) integrate sustainability in Scope 1-3 to increase resilience, minimize cost, and access green financing.

2.2.1. Strategic Design and Operational Frameworks

Following Hayes and Wheelwright's (1984) four-stage model, we moved from “internally neutral” operations that reacted to challenges to “externally supportive” systems that backed the company's strategic objectives. Initially, the simulation revealed an imbalance— too many products and insufficient production lines. By restructuring our global network, we streamlined operations and delivered high-quality EVs to customers more efficiently. In Europe, high-volume models such as Pixie, Veloze, and Voltreon were prioritized to capitalize on learning effects and economies of scale. These models were shipped in large volumes to maximize production efficiency. In China, fluctuating demand was managed by flexibly deploying models like Civita and 4x4E across multiple lines. Meanwhile, the U.S. market shifted toward margin-focused vehicles, notably Lyvion and TerraLux. To optimize capacity and reduce costs, one production facility was deliberately idled.

To set up the trade-offs, we used Slack et al.'s (2022) performance goals (cost, quality, speed, dependability, and flexibility) and the Sand Cone model (Ferdows and De Meyer, 1990). At first, we focused on quality, sustainability, and dependability. This gave us a solid foundation that allowed us to cut expenses and improve margins later on.

2.2.2. Operational Execution and Key Reconfigurations

The core of our execution lay in right-sizing and dynamically reallocating our plant structure, a strategy that directly shaped the regional configurations and performance outcomes described below. Europe's configuration reached full utilization by Year 6: two Pixie lines and one each for Voltreon and Veloze, collectively yielding operating margins of 34.7%, 38.2%, and 40.5%, respectively. China managed Civita (33.5% margin) on two lines and 4x4E (28.6%) on one, absorbing demand volatility in Asia. The U.S. plant, trimmed to three lines by Q17, ran Lyvion (39.3%), Falcon (34.5%), and TerraLux (40.5%), with one line idled to mitigate excessive DoI and protect Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT). This follows Goldratt's (1990) Theory of Constraints: instead of optimizing every line, we focused on removing system bottlenecks, demand and inventory congestion.

In addition to these capacity reconfigurations, we streamlined the portfolio by removing low-margin or low-demand product lines that constrained flow. By Q17, we had discontinued legacy models including Business 135H, City E, Hybrid, Pick-Up, and Sport E, enabling full capacity allocation to high-margin EVs. Tariff realignment also served as a lever: for example, when Europe's DoI spiked, we adjusted the region-wide price uplift from +3% to +1%, demonstrating how marketing and operations jointly managed stock clearance and demand pacing.

2.2.3. Capacity Planning and Flow Optimization

In the early phases of the simulation, our operations were challenged by imbalances between production output and actual market demand. Certain plants were overproducing, which led to inflated DoI and underutilized capacity in other regions. To address this, we applied lean principles and the Theory of Constraints (Goldratt 1990), focusing on reallocating capacity to high-demand

models while idling or discontinuing lines that created bottlenecks. As an example, the low-selling models like Hybrid, City E, and Pick-Up were discontinued in Q17, which released the production lines to more profitable EVs like Veloze, Voltreon, and TerraLux.

This reconfiguration enabled us to coordinate flow between our plants in Europe, China and the U.S. so that factory utilization was maximized and overstocking was minimized. This has helped us to attain operational efficiency and financial discipline through concentration of capacity on fewer models with higher margins. This strategy showed that efficient flow control in operations is not only about waste reduction, but dynamic reallocation of resources to meet strategy, demand signals, and sustainability goals.

2.2.4. Integration of Sustainability

The operating model embedded our decarbonization strategy into its core structure. Sustainability initiatives across Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 were deliberately aligned to ensure coherence and to prioritize actions that deliver the greatest overall benefit.

Examples of Scope 1 investments were water consumption reduction ($200M), waste reduction ($400M), ISO 14001 certification ($500M); these investments were made with the dual objective of reducing operating costs and lowering the Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) through the use of green bond financing. Scope 2 investments—such as Energy Efficiency ($150M), Solar Panels ($250M) and Energy Management Systems ($100M)—aimed at minimizing energy costs and reducing exposure to price volatility, consistent with the McKinsey (2009) carbon abatement cost curve, which identifies energy efficiency as the top priority area. Scope 3 investments, including Sustainable Suppliers ($20M), CO_2 Offset Suppliers (quarterly $78.58M), and Battery

Recycling ($200M), aimed to decarbonize the supply chain, extend product lifecycle sustainability, and minimize upstream and downstream environmental impacts (**Error! Reference source not found.**). These holistic investments helped shift our Sustainability Efficiency Index (SEI), with Scope 2 investments delivering the highest emissions reduction per dollar invested. Although the SEI was not explicitly provided, internal proxy metrics suggested Scope 2 initiatives as the most impactful.

This approach to sustainable operations was based on the operations of companies such as Tesla and Volkswagen, which have turned decarbonizing sales channels and production bases into one of the major aspects of competitive sustainability.

2.2.5. Benchmarking with Real Companies

Operating strategy, Trans4Motive drew inspiration from the leaders in its industry who successfully integrated sustainability and efficiency into their production models. The Gigafactory activity of Tesla gave the outline on how to increase production volume while combining renewable energy technologies with automation to reduce operational costs per part**.** On the same note, the lean manufacturing principles of Toyota influenced our focus on waste reduction, efficient resource utilization, and continuous improvement, which we aligned with Scope 1 and Scope 2 investing priorities. This approach was guided by the vertically integrated supply chain of BYD, helping ensure the availability of critical raw materials and minimize supply chain disruptions, which we replicated in Scope 3 supplier engagement. McKinsey & Company (2023) confirms this insight, stating that superior performance in the EV sector is achieved by investment-driven operational leaders—a philosophy that underpinned our investment roadmap and accelerated improvements in our SEI.

2.3. Review of Function 3: Innovation Strategy at Trans4Motive

Innovation constituted the essence of Trans4Motive's differentiation approach, establishing the basis of its competitive advantage in a rapidly changing mobility environment. As the automobile industry experiences a transformation towards electrification, connectivity, and autonomy (Capgemini 2020; McKinsey 2022), the Innovation Function was assigned the responsibility of converting these overarching trends into feasible product solutions and internal competencies. This encompassed more than $7.5 billion in strategic investments in product development and enabling technologies, including the creation of new models such as Veloze, TerraLux, Falcon, and Lyvion, as well as digitization efforts like Cloud Connection and Personalized Services through IoT.

The Innovation department oversaw launch sequencing and product positioning in collaboration with Marketing and Operations, assuring alignment with market maturity and factory availability. This encompassed synchronized relaunches (e.g., Pixie and 4x4E), feature updates (e.g., cybersecurity, AI integration), and technology-driven improvements that augmented pricing power and brand equity. Innovation was not a supportive function; it was the driving force behind Trans4Motive's transformation into a fully electric, high-margin, and sustainable automobile manufacturer.

2.3.1. Disruptive Innovation Strategy

Our innovation roadmap reflected Christensen's (1997) theory of disruptive innovation: new technologies that initially underperform but redefine the basis of competition. Battery EVs, historically limited by range and charging infrastructure, have now become the benchmark for sustainable mobility, with regulators and consumers aligning behind zero-emission goals (UNFCCC 2015) (Figure 9).

The fact that Trans4Motive has ceased production of its combustion-based models, including the PU 225G, Hybrid, and Pick-Up, was a clear indication of its intention to disrupt. Simultaneously, we spent more than 5 billion dollars on disruptive EVs; e.g., Voltreon ($801M), Pixie ($628M), Civita ($686M), Lyvion ($1.03B), Falcon ($1.136B), TerraLux ($832M), and Veloze ($901M). These moves were not only product-based, but they were also a sign of a wider disruption of the business model. Cars were fitted with AI ($500M), V2V communication ($200M), and battery innovation such as sodium-ion modules ($250M) to enhance performance and readiness in the future.

Tesla's case serves as a reminder that innovation can be leveraged not only to enhance vehicles but also to transform the entire EV ecosystem (David et al. 2020). Similarly, Trans4Motive was able to use a combination of product innovation and strategic pivot to electrification to place itself on the edge of mobility transformation.

2.3.2. Open Innovation and Cross-functional Synergy

Chesbrough's (2003) concept of open innovation emphasizes that valuable ideas may originate outside the firm and require ecosystem collaboration. While the simulation restricted external partnerships, our internal open innovation processes, coordinating across R&D, Marketing, and Operations, mirrored this principle. Market data shaped our product decisions. The relaunch of Pixie in Q22, for example, was aligned with demand signals and supported by new connectivity features enabled by Cloud Connection ($300M, Q16) and cybersecurity ($400M, Q14), directly targeting customer concerns about digital trust. Similarly, Personalized IoT Services ($250M, Q18) extended our user engagement capabilities, enhancing differentiation without hardware changes; an approach aligned with digital Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) like BYD

and Rivian (McKinsey 2022). Moreover, sustainability-focused innovations were embedded across all three scopes. For Scope 3, sustainable suppliers ($20M, Q12) and external battery recycling ($200M, Q10) reflected openness beyond the product, incorporating external resources into Trans4Motive's value chain to lower emissions and secure long-term resource availability. For Scope 2, energy-efficient technologies and solar panel investments reduced operational costs while enhancing brand positioning. Importantly, Scope 1 innovation initiatives, such as water consumption reduction systems (Q6) and sustainable waste management (Q14) lowered direct emissions and improved resource efficiency, contributing to our SEI gains. As Chesbrough (2003) argues, the boundary of innovation is porous; Trans4Motive's innovation flow spanned beyond labs into strategy, operations, and marketing narratives, delivering both profitability and ESG value.

2.3.3. Innovation Performance Assessment

Evaluating performance requires more than cost tracking; it demands strategic alignment. First, our investment in product development (Figure 10) paid off: despite initial capital intensity, the resulting electric models achieved robust margins, Veloze (40.5%), Voltreon (38.2%), Lyvion (39.3%), and TerraLux (40.5%), validating our innovation-led value creation strategy. Second, launch timing was strategically managed. The Falcon's development ($1.136B) enabled timely entry into the U.S. market, while relaunching 4x4E in China allowed us to extend product relevance in maturing segments. These decisions improved plant utilization and contributed to stable margins even in late simulation stages. Lastly, innovations have also improved sustainability across all three scopes. Indeed, improved energy efficiency due to AI modules ($500M), sodium-ion batteries ($250M), and V2V communication ($200M) were the factors that drove Scope 2 and Scope 3 performance. Also, automation of the process and the use of modern water-recycling

technologies minimized on-site energy intensity and direct emissions, which Scope 1 results in. These combined effects strengthened Trans4Motive's SEI, contributing to reduced emissions and operating costs, as suggested by carbon-abatement curve research (McKinsey 2009). Our innovation investments, thus, were not just cost sinks — they were growth enablers, resilience enhancers, and ESG value generators.

2.4. Integrated view across functions

The shift made by Trans4Motive towards sustainable, fully electric and high margin automaker happened as a result of a thoughtful cross-functional collaboration between Marketing, Operations Innovation, Finance, and Human Resources. These functions were not stand-alone silos; instead, they interacted dynamically to balance portfolio electrification with market demand, operational efficiency and technological leadership. This synergy enabled the pursuit of intricate trade-offs between growth, profitability, and sustainability, while exercising remarkable agility in strategy.

Insights on STP guided pricing activations, relaunches and even new product launches, based on data-driven analysis from Marketing. Real-time operational requirements, including real-time demand metrics, were used to strategically target the relaunch of Pixie Q22, and targeted promotional campaigns aimed at placing models such as Veloze and Voltreon into the market. Operations, price adjustment, and promotional intensity were closely coordinated to maintain sales/production ratio and control DoI to avoid costly overstocking, ensure maximum factory utilization.

Operations provided the framework on which Marketing and Innovation strategies were executed. Q17 production line reallocations and selective plant idling to avoid bottlenecks, together with

prioritizing capacity for high-margin EVs, ensured that marketing campaigns were supported with adequate and cost-effective supply. Lean workplace practices and inventory management systems, e.g., specific DoI reduction of 4x4E and LUX 225G, helped stabilize cash flow and free up capacity for innovation-driven product launches. This operational responsiveness was a prerequisite for maintaining credibility and amplifying Innovation's influence within Marketing.

Innovation served as the driver of differentiation that resulted in product and process improvement enhancing both the Marketing narratives as well as Operations. Connectivity features such as Cloud Connection (Q16) and cybersecurity (Q14) elevated perceived value, enabling premium pricing strategies. Sustainability-oriented investments across Scope 1-3 supported brand positioning in eco-friendly markets. Product development timelines were synchronized with marketing launch schedules and operational readiness, ensuring timely deliveries of models such as the Falcon in the U.S. and the 4x4E in China.

Sustainability was embedded across all three core functions, with Scope 1–3 (Figure 11) initiatives integrated into manufacturing, marketing communications, and innovation priorities. These efforts did not only strengthen the SEI but also increased brand credibility and opened green financing. In practice, operational efficiency and green energy investments lowered the cost of production, innovation provided ESG-oriented features, and marketing turned these successes into value propositions (Figure 12) that appealed to target markets.

Essentially, market pull, operational capability, and technological push were coordinated in a reinforcing loop that underpinned Trans4Motive's success. Marketing generated and shaped demand, Operations delivered products at optimal cost and quality, and Innovation continually

refreshed the value proposition—creating a virtuous cycle that reinforced profitability, resilience, and competitive advantage as the evolving EV market challenged established corporate strategies.

3. Personal Reflection

The BiP project is a real-life simulation of managing and collaborating within a multinational, multifunctional team. The program challenges students to compete in the management of a fictional automotive company within the complexities of global business, while simultaneously developing leadership and teamwork skills in a time-constrained, high-pressure environment. Our team was diverse, comprising individuals of various nationalities, personalities, and experiences. As Trans4Motive, we operated in a working environment that was rich in both opportunities and challenges.

According to Haas and Mortensen (2016, p.72), the modern team is more diverse, dispersed, and dynamic than ever before and effective collaboration cannot be achieved through mere competence, but it needs profound emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and adaptive leadership. This reflection discusses two important incidents that influenced my personal and professional growth during BiP. The first focuses on cultural misunderstandings and personality conflicts, while the second examines issues of accountability and emotional control under pressure in my role as Chief Marketing Officer.

In both cases, I reflected deeply on my actions, my internal reactions, and how these impacted the team. Based on the tools used during the leadership sessions, including the personality quadrant model, and other important literature on teamwork, such as Hofstede cultural dimensions (2011) (Figure 13), Belbin team roles (2010) (Figure 14), and Goleman (1995) theory of emotional intelligence (Figure 15). I examined my responses to the challenges and the lessons learned. My

self-evaluation, especially as someone in the yellow quadrant, was often in conflict with how others initially perceived me, providing valuable insights into self-awareness and feedback processing.

3.1. Incident 1: Cross-Cultural Misunderstanding and Personality Clashes

In the initial phases of BiP, We, as a team comprising members from different countries, languages, and educational as well as professional backgrounds, faced friction as we tried to align on roles, expectations, and working styles. The team reflected all four quadrants of the personality traits model: red (direct), blue (analytical), green (supportive), and yellow (creative and sociable). I was in the yellow zone, characterized by enthusiasm, big-picture thinking, and sociability, alongside two other members.

Nonetheless, I quickly realized that aspects of my personality that I found energizing were often misinterpreted by others, particularly those with red or blue styles, as either a lack of focus or excessive enthusiasm. This tension surfaced during a simulation session when the team member assigned as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reacted strongly after I misinterpreted a function in IndustryMasters (an online business simulation platform used in the BiP program to replicate real-world corporate decision-making across Marketing, Operations, Finance, Human Resources and Innovation*)* and drew an unverified conclusion. She raised her voice, struck the table, and accused me of not completing the task properly and of failing to ask clarifying questions beforehand.

3.1.1. Personal Reflection and Emotional Regulation

This incident was emotionally challenging, as I felt misunderstood, embarrassed, and defensive. Nevertheless, I consciously managed my emotional response by refraining from reacting impulsively and by reminding myself that each team member had a different cultural and

emotional outlook. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (2011), I interpreted her reaction as an expression of high uncertainty avoidance and assertiveness, likely shaped by her cultural background. Consequently, I chose to approach the situation with empathy and openness

The following day, the team member assigned as CFO volunteered to assist everyone on technical matters, marking a turning in our group dynamics. From that moment, I began adapting my communication style to align with the preferences of others—becoming more concise, fact-based, and timely in my responses. This adjustment reflects Goleman's model of emotional intelligence (1995), particularly the competencies of self-regulation and social awareness.

Also, one of the most emotionally impactful moments occurred during the first Client Role Play & Team Dynamic Clinic**.** I was responsible for presenting on behalf of *Trans4Motive* in front of the client-delivering a carefully prepared pitch that emphasized innovation, strategic partnership, and market agility. We had practiced the script as a team and felt confident that our proposal—including below-benchmark margins for early adoption and access to real-time market feedback—would resonate with the client. Nevertheless, we lost the client, although we thought we delivered well and with confidence. This outcome was a blow, triggering emotional responses within the team characterized by disbeliefs and frustrations.

I chose to view this instance as a wake-up call and an opportunity to deliver a special training lesson, rather than as a failure. I realized that confidence in delivery alone is not the key to effectiveness; the client's perception and emotional connection are equally crucial. High performance, as argued by Goleman (1995) and later by Brown (2018), is only possible through self-awareness, social-awareness, and empathy, especially when dealing with external stakeholders. This insight led me to reinterpret the team's spirit during our post-debrief session. I

explained that mistakes can sometimes reveal blind spots that we should aim to reduce, rather than simply being viewed as weaknesses. This perspective helped motivate the group, change the mood, and prepare us to perform much better in the next role-play, in which we ultimately succeeded.

3.1.2. Theoretical Integration

This event reflects Tuckman's storming stage (1965) (Figure 16), a phase where teams often face tension and conflict as they try to align during early collaboration. In our case, the clash was not only triggered by my mistake of entering the wrong data into the simulation, but also by deeper differences in expectations, communication styles, and decision-making pace among team members. I relied on principles of adaptive leadership (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002) to address the situation, which guided me to depersonalize the conflict and focus on getting our team back on track. Instead of being defensive, I took that opportunity to suggest more explicit distribution of duties and implement a daily morning report These check-ins helped clarify objectives, reduce friction and establish a shared work cadence. This approach was also reflected in Katzenbach and Smith (2005), who emphasize that a strong sense of team purpose and mutual accountability emerges from such turning points, which was evident in our improved team performance after this intervention.

3.2. Incident 2: Overwhelm and Seeking Support as Chief of Marketing

As Chief of Marketing, I carried significant responsibilities. Brand positioning, customer segmentation, product line extensions, and sales forecasts were directly influenced by my decisions. Furthermore, marketing was highly dependent on other departments, particularly Operations and Finance. I had to process large amounts of data daily, interpret dashboards, and generate real-time insights to support joint decision-making.

At one point, I became overwhelmed by the volume of required reports, frequent updates, and the lack of coordination between departments. I feared that I was falling behind and that my team's confidence in me might be affected.

3.2.1. Problem Solving and Internal Response

Instead of isolating myself, I took a proactive step forward. I called the team to a relaxed lunch meeting, shared my challenges, and asked for their support. Surprisingly, all of them reacted sympathetically and promised to be more active in knowledge sharing and including me in future inter-departmental discussions.

This experience taught a valuable lesson: vulnerability and honesty are effective leadership tools. Brown (2018) asserts that showing weakness in high-performance teams can be used to develop trust and psychological safety. I understood that I do not need to carry the burden alone, but by reframing leadership as a shared responsibility, I contributed to cultivating a more supportive and collaborative team culture.

This experience made me reflect on how tasks were distributed within the team. Reflectively, it would have been beneficial to allocate two people to the marketing department. The volume and complexity of the data were such that thorough analysis and communication were required, and having an additional perspective could have helped validate decisions, reduce errors, and enhance the quality of insights. Studies have shown that decision-making improves when there is a combination of perspectives and assumptions are questioned (Nemeth and Goncalo, 2005). Therefore, I will encourage role-sharing in information-intensive positions whenever the team organization allows, especially in time-sensitive simulations or real-life interdisciplinary collaborations.

3.2.2. Theoretical Integration

This project aligns with Belbin's (2010) team role theory, namely the coordinator role, as I helped align cross-functional teams and foster shared responsibility for results—an essential aspect in simulated corporate environments. By expressing my difficulties, I showed caring leadership (Goleman 1998), which promoted the normalization of vulnerability and strengthened trust within the team. This created a psychological safety (Edmondson 1999), encouraging team members to express their concerns more openly during clinics and debriefs.

Based on the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984), I transformed the emotional discomfort of overload into reflective observation, which led to active experimentation. This included starting earlier cross-departmental syncs (short, focused meetings to align teams and share updates), and co-checking marketing data. These behaviors not only improved my ability to manage pressure but also increased the team's responsiveness and engagement in subsequent decision-making rounds.

However, with the support of regular peer reviews and the radar evaluation (Figure 17), I started to identify areas for improvement. Although I rated myself fairly high in the majority of teamwork dimensions, my peers rated my contributions in categories such as *Contributing to the Team* and *Expecting Quality* lower than I had anticipated. For instance, the radar chart highlights a notable discrepancy between my self-assessment and my peers' perceptions in these areas, revealing a blind spot: my enthusiasm may have at times, overshadowed clarity, follow-through, or the prioritization of tasks.

One teammate highlighted the importance of being "more structured and focused during deliverables," while another appreciated my "positive mindset but suggested more attention to

concrete execution." These reflections illuminated the necessity of integrating my "yellow" energy with enhanced planning, active listening, and accountability—competencies linked to the blue quadrant. Over time, I deliberately embraced clearer communication and coupled ideas with action plans, resulting in improved alignment between intention and impact.

One important turning point in shaping my leadership mindset was reading *I, Leader* by Armenio Rego and Miguel Pina e Cunha. Gifted to me by the Fellowship Program for Excellence the book gave me powerful guidelines for developing authentic leadership. One quote, in particular, stood out to me: *"Effective leaders are those who can simultaneously be true to their essence and adaptable to the context"* (Rego and Pina e Cunha, 2020, p. 87). This concept resonated deeply, because it validated my natural "yellow-style" energy while also pushing me to adapt my communication and behavior to different audiences. I began preparing more detailed analyses, speaking in a more structured manner, and aligning my tone with others' working preferences. My teammates recognized this evolution in their feedback, noting my improved focus, clarity, and collaborative contribution.

3.3. Key Learning and Future Applications

The profound and lasting lessons that I gained from this project helped me better understand myself and identify the abilities that I should rely upon to work successfully in a multicultural, high-stress team environment. A key insight was that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in managing interpersonal conflict and miscommunication. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence encompasses the capacity to understand and manage one's own emotions while demonstrating empathy toward others and their emotional needs. Developing these competencies

enabled me to cope with personality differences, cross-cultural conflicts, and cases of failure in an objective and non-reactive manner.

I also learnt that adaptability should not be seen as a passive reaction, but a strategical ability, which should be learned and practiced purposefully by leaders, especially in multicultural and interdisciplinary teams. Being in the yellow quadrant meant that I needed to adjust my communication style, particularly when interacting with more directive and results-oriented team members. This pushed me to add structure to creativity, speak less and listen more, and allow other working styles to have their space without compromising my originality. Hofstede's (2011) work on cultural intelligence was particularly relevant in this context, as it encouraged me to consider how the culture of a given nation or organization influences communication preferences, emotional expression, and decision-making.

Another valuable lesson was the power of weakness, openness, and trust in leadership. I began sharing my struggles with the team, and rather than trying to appear as though I had everything under control, I discovered a new avenue for connection and encouragement. Psychological safety can be enhanced when leaders are willing to show their fallibility, seek assistance from others, and create an environment where team members feel comfortable doing the same (Edmondson 1999) (Figure 18). This experience will remain with me throughout my future leadership roles, and I aspire to cultivate inclusive spaces where people feel free to express themselves, challenge ideas, and grow.

In the future, I will carry these lessons into my career, particularly in global or cross-functional roles where teamwork is inherently complex. I plan to continue developing my skills in empathetic communication, cross-cultural sensitivity, collaborative problem-solving, and the regular use of

feedback as a tool for self-improvement. Reading *I, Leader* (Rego and Pina e Cunha, 2020) confirmed my belief that effective modern leadership is not about controlling people, but about identifying a meaningful purpose and combining it with flexibility and humility. Reflective leadership will be a practice I embrace throughout my professional growth, applying experiential learning (Kolb 1984) to continually assess and learn from real-world experiences. My goal is to be a leader who not only delivers results but also builds bridges, fosters trust, and inspires people to move forward together.

4. Conclusion

The Business in Practice (BiP) simulation offered a rare opportunity to get a taste of the challenges of being in charge of a global automotive company transitioning toward an all-electric portfolio. Steering Trans4Motive required balancing market forces, operational constraints, technological innovation, and team dynamics. Throughout the simulation, I saw firsthand how cross-functional alignment between Marketing, Finance, Operations, Innovation, and Human Resources was the source of sustainable growth. Marketing generated demand and shaped brand positioning, Operations ensured efficient delivery, Innovation provided differentiation through new capabilities and technologies, Finance managed resources and investment decisions to support growth, and Human Resources aligned talent and organizational capabilities to sustain performance.

Finally, the BiP simulation highlighted that success does not come from excelling in a single function, but from coordinating multiple levers around a shared vision. Only by aligning strategy with execution and balancing profitability with responsibility was Trans4Motive able to transform into a fully electric and sustainable automaker.

On a personal level, I emerged from this experience with enhanced analytical skills and, more importantly, a deeper appreciation for adaptive and empathetic leadership—capabilities I will carry forward in my professional career, as industries increasingly require leaders who can deliver results while driving sustainable change.

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6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: Strategic Analysis Tools for Assessing Trans4Motive's Strategic Position and Performance

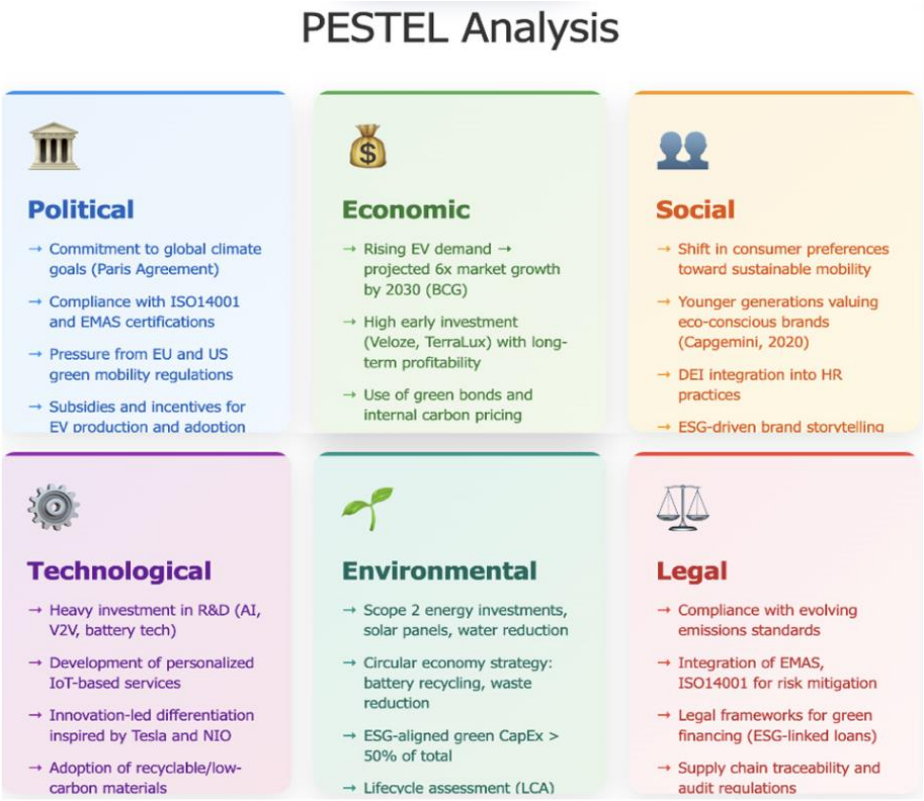


Figure 1: PESTEL analysis of Trans4Motive

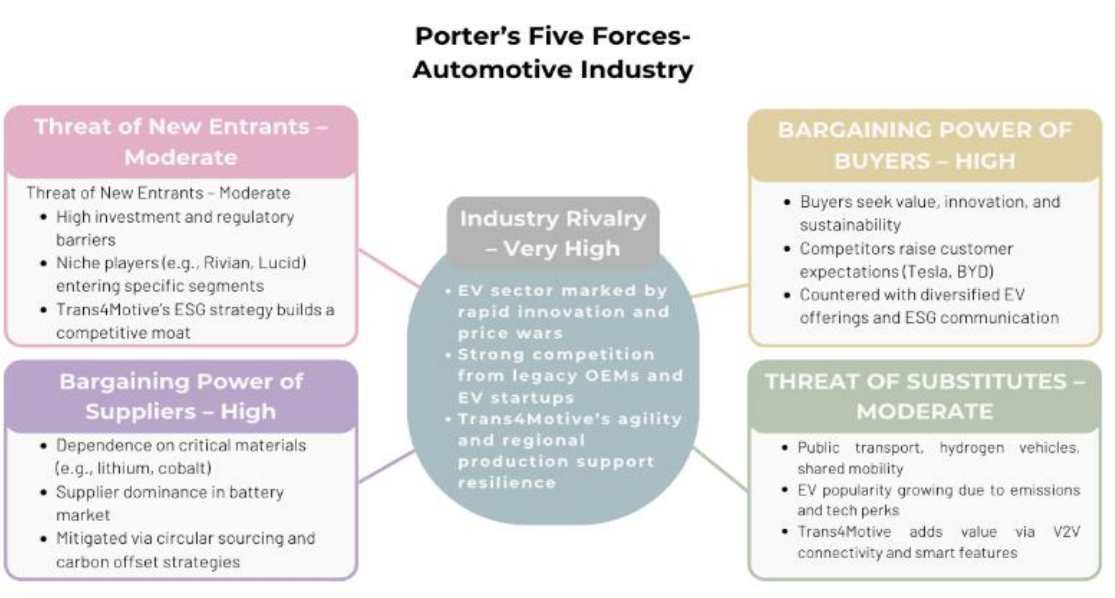


Figure 2: Porter's Five Forces of Trans4Motive

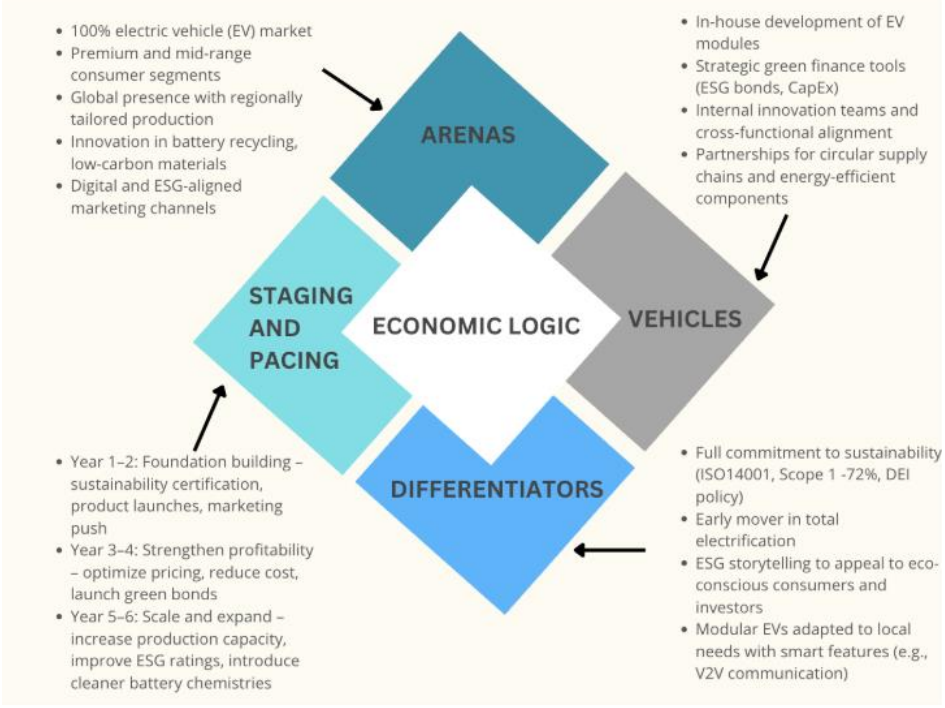


Figure 3: Strategy Diamond framework of Trans4Motive

Figure 4: Swot Analysis of Trans4Motive

6.2. Appendix 2: Simulation Results and Performance Metrics

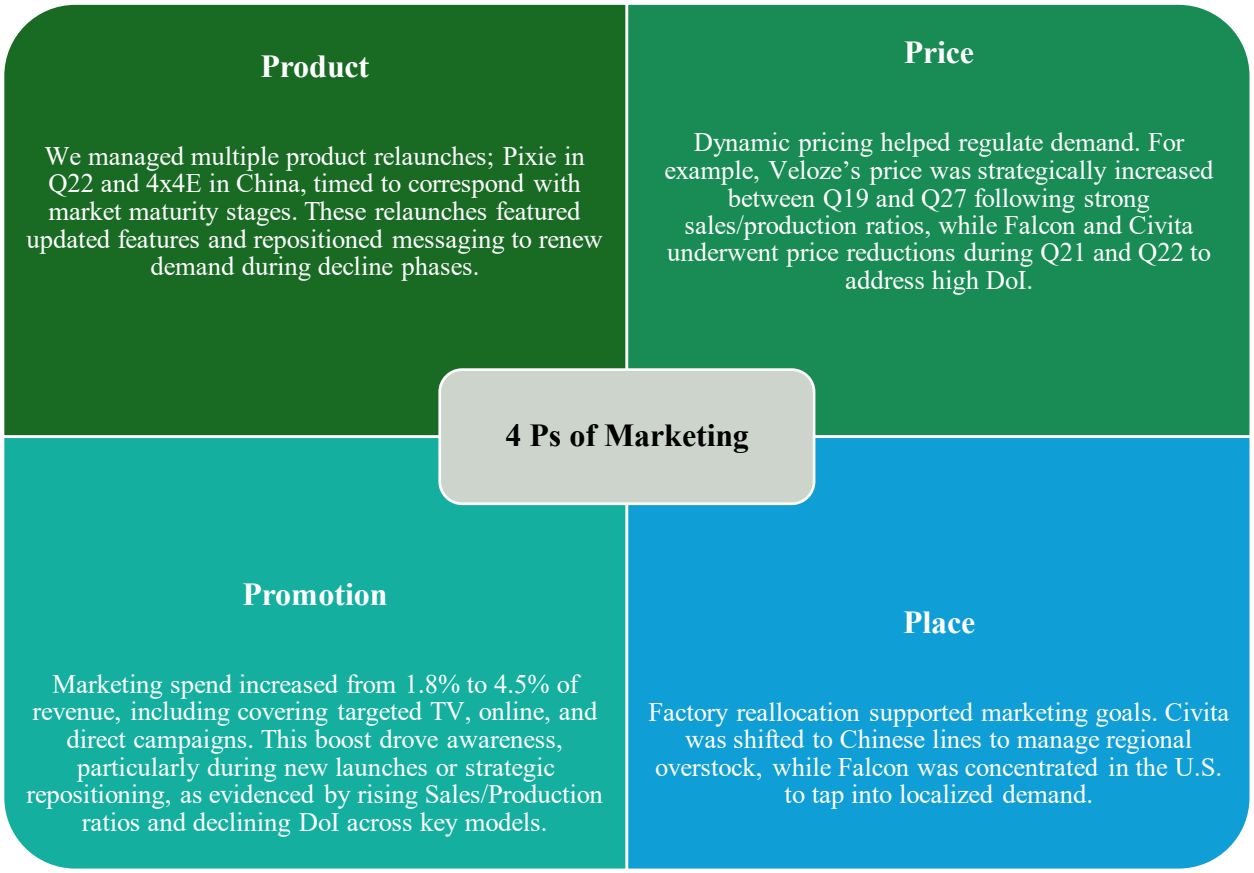


Figure 5: Analysis of Trans4Motive using the 4Ps of Marketing

Total Sales by Product

Segment Selection

Rank	Product	Manufacturer	Sales	Price	Revenue	Segment Market Share
1	Lux 4 100E	Competitor B	13,003	$101,254.29	$1,124M	8.1%
2	SUV 3 100E	Competitor A	17,866	$68,352.10	$1,065M	7.7%
3	City E	Trans4Motive	41,003	$27,715.67	$929M	6.7%
4	City 1 100E	Competitor A	35,381	$29,470.55	$922M	6.6%
5	Business 2 100H	Competitor A	23,619	$44,877.29	$899M	6.5%
6	Business 135H	Trans4Motive	24,392	$41,238.80	$895M	6.5%
7	Business 1 100H	Competitor B	23,366	$42,683.94	$889M	6.4%
8	4x4 E	Trans4Motive	14,119	$66,901.69	$850M	6.1%
9	City 5 100G	Competitor B	31,419	$30,373.31	$807M	5.8%
10	4x4 2 100D	Competitor B	11,611	$77,250.66	$803M	5.8%
11	Lux 225G	Trans4Motive	8,234	$101,507.33	$753M	5.4%
12	Sport E	Trans4Motive	13,500	$60,407.50	$717M	5.2%

Figure 6: Total sales at the Beginning of the Simulation (Q5) (IndustryMasters Ltd 2025)

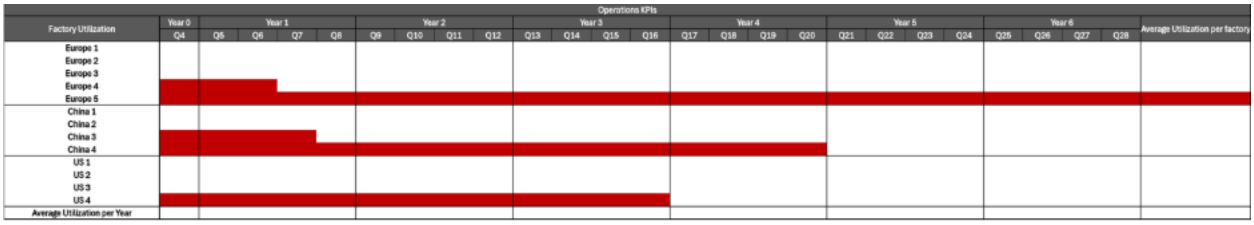
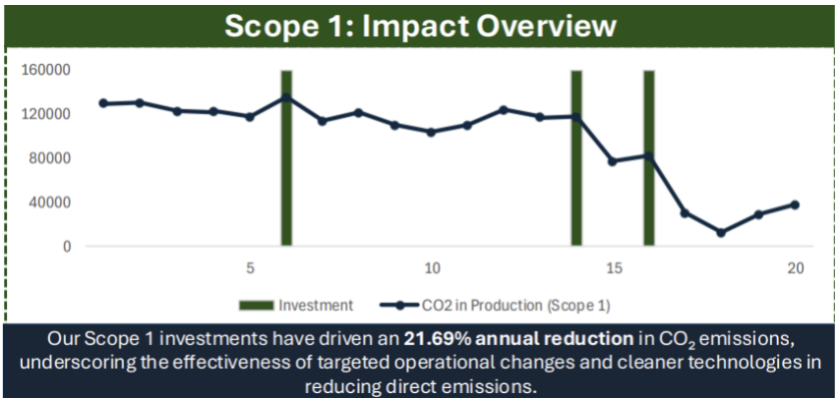
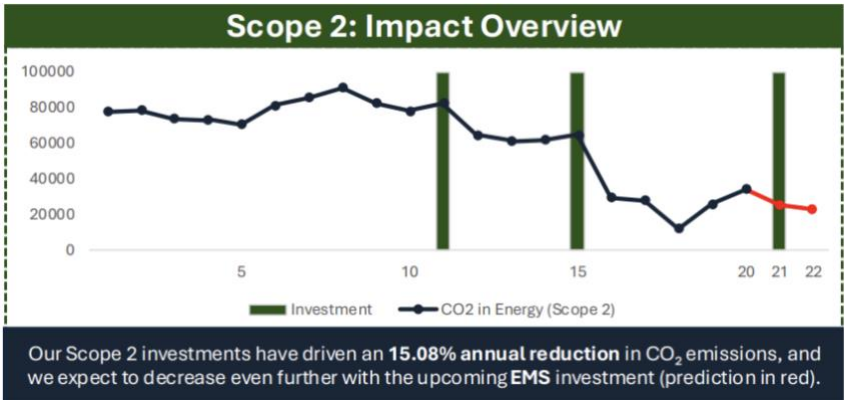


Figure 7: Factory Utilization Timeline by Region and Quarter

Scope 1: Building the Future of Manufacturing with $1.1B in Scope 1 Emissions



Scope 2: Driving Carbon Reduction Through Smart Energy Decisions



Scope 3: Strengthening Supplier Decarbonization to Unlock Value and Mitigate Risks

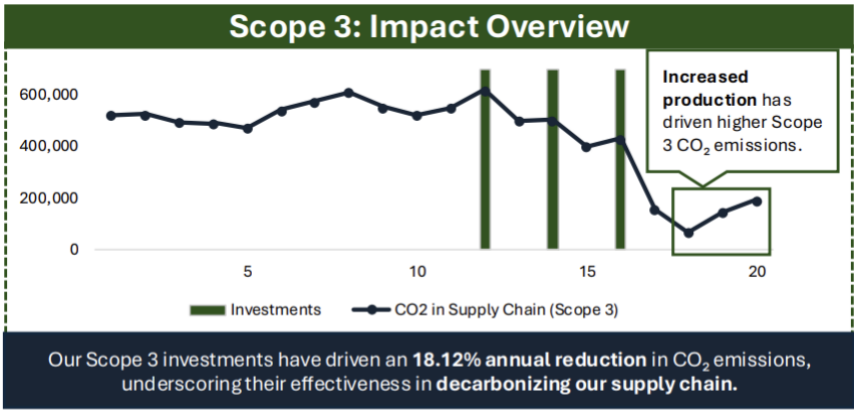


Figure 8: Scope 1-3 Emission Impact

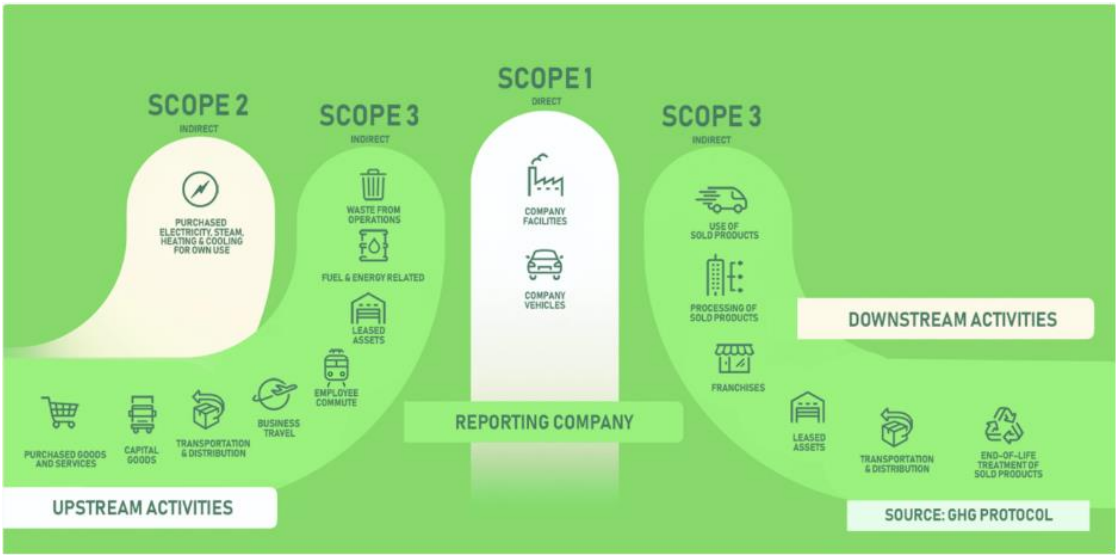


Figure 9: CO2 Emission Reduction Scopes in Production (IndustryMasters Ltd 2025)

Innovation Expenses

Investments	Cost ($M)	Year 0 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year 1 Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Year 2 Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Year 3 Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Year 4 Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Year 5 Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Year 6 Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28
Sodium-Ion Batteries	250				250																								
Next Generation E-Drive Modules	300						300																						
Power Charging Network	400								400																				
Charging Network Expension	400																												
AI Implementation	500					500																							
Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication	200							200																					
Cyber Security	400											400																	
Cloud Connection	300																												
Personalized Services (IoT)	250																												
Total Expenses Investments	1650				250				1000				400				0				0				0				0

Car Development	Cost ($M)	Year 0 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year 1 Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Year 2 Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Year 3 Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Year 4 Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Year 5 Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Year 6 Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28
Biz Electro	800								800																				
City Electro	700																												
Sport Electro	900												900																
4x4 Electro	1100																												
Lux Electro	1050																		1050										
Micro Electro	700						700																						
Pickup Electro	850																												
Total Expenses Car Development	3450				0				1500				900				0				1050				0				0
Total Expenses Innovation	5100				250				2500				1300				0				1050				0				0

Figure 10: Innovation and Product Development Expenditures by Quarter

Scope 1: Future Goals

- **Promote innovation in core manufacturing processes** to set new standards for sustainable industrial performance.
- **Lead the industry in transparent emissions practices**, ensuring that every step of our operations reflects our environmental values.
- **Invest in long-term solutions** that eliminate the need for fossil fuels in our operations and encourage the adoption of breakthrough clean technologies.
- **Continuously benchmark against global leaders** in Scope 1 performance to maintain our role at the forefront of sustainable manufacturing.

SDGs

Scope 2: Future Goals

SDGs

- **Implement the Energy Management System (EMS)** in Q21 to further optimize energy use and reduce CO_2 emissions across all facilities
- **Track and publicly report progress annually**, ensuring transparency and accountability on Scope 2 performance
- **Strive to become the greenest automotive company** in the industry and a sustainability pioneer, inspiring competitors to follow and contribute to a cleaner future
- **Expand on-site renewable energy capacity**, including additional solar installations where technically and economically feasible.

Scope 3: Future Goals

SDGs

- **Science-Based Targets (SBTi-Aligned)**
  Committed to absolute GHG reductions (Scopes 1–3) in line with a 1.5°C pathway, with external validation and public reporting.
- **Responsible Sourcing & Full Traceability**
  End-to-end traceability of critical minerals (lithium, cobalt, nickel) via audited supply chains; conflict-free sourcing and adherence to OECD guidelines.
- **Digital Emissions & ESG Reporting**
  Use of a supplier portal for real-time energy and emissions data sharing, enhancing accuracy of Scope 3 tracking.
- **Innovation in Low-Carbon Chemistries**
  R&D collaboration on next-gen chemistries (e.g., lower-cobalt or cobalt-free formulations) to reduce material impact.

Figure 11: Future goals and SDG's applied to Trans4Motive Functions

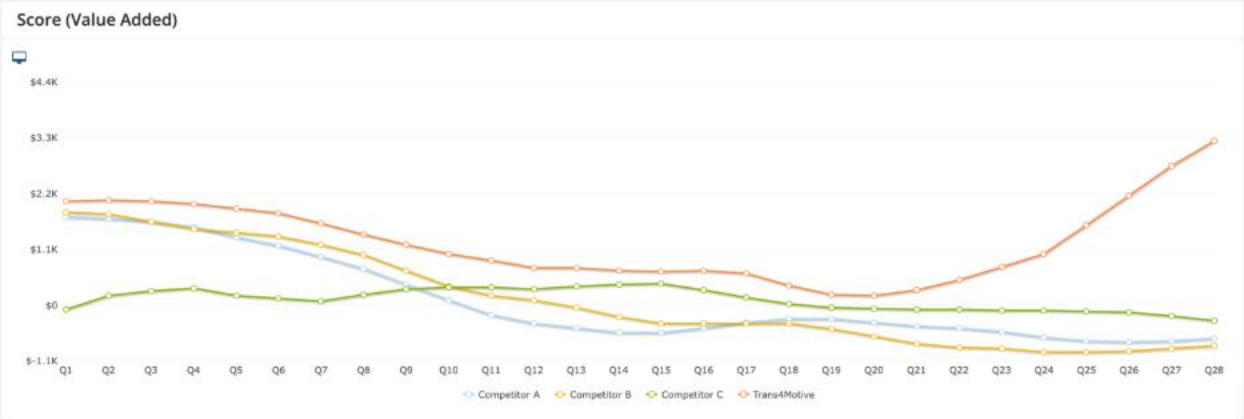


Figure 12: Development of Trans4Motive's value score

6.3. Appendix 3: Leadership and Organizational Behavior Models

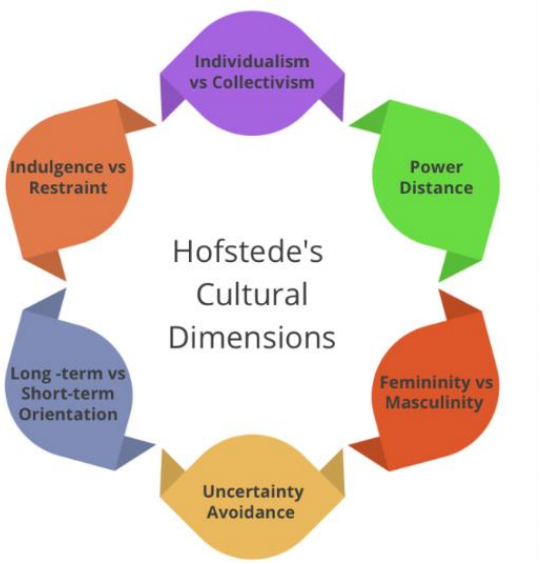


Figure 13: Hofstede's Cultural dimensions

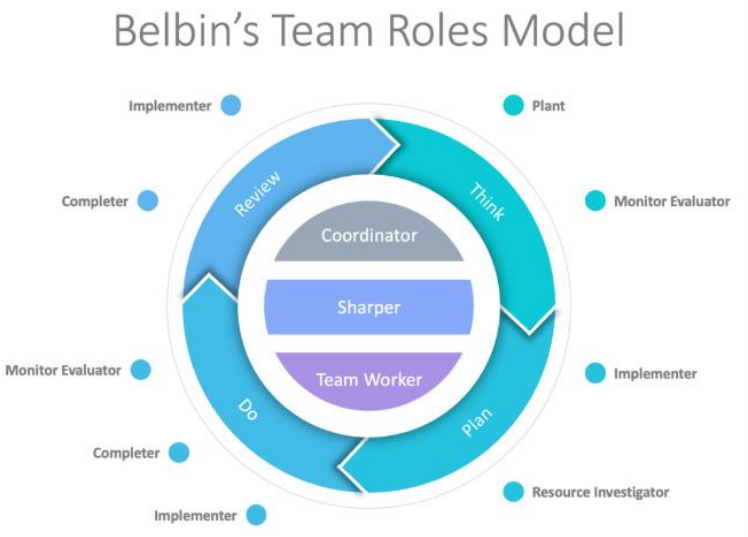


Figure 14: Belbin's Team Roles Model

Figure 15: Goleman emotional intelligence Theory used in Trans4Motive

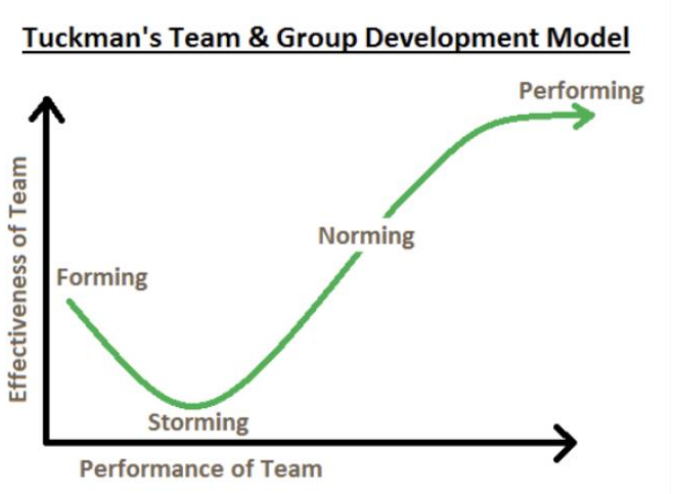


Figure 16: Tuckman's Team Model

Figure 17: Peer evaluation and self-evaluation at Trans4Motive

Figure 18: Edmondson Psychological Safety Chart and how it affects the team performance