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Lowkey Business Model: How to Improve It?

Tomás Ferreira dos Santos Laranjo

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Professor Ricardo Zózimo

Assistant Tomé Salgueiro

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Abstract

The research problem addressed in this thesis project is how to improve the business model of the Portuguese streetwear brand Lowkey. To investigate this problem, the business model canvas and the lean start up methodology were used. The main findings of this study are the importance of establishing a close and honest connection with the community that relates with the Lowkey concept, using the word to mouth as the main channel. These findings indicate that it doesn't matter how good a product can be, if people don't know it exists. Also, and in conclusion, these have significant implications for the continued sustainable growth of the business, as well as the positioning and progression of the brand. Overall, this study contributes new knowledge to the field of planning and launching new products through the community as being a local brand.



Keywords

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Business model

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WallRide

VitaNativa

Community

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Surf

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A quick introduction

First, to say that the theme was not the one chosen initially, having existed a period of almost a month, where the student looked for the theme that most motivated and passionate in order to elaborate it in the best possible way. The initial idea would be to create a platform for renting home equipment, directed to people, mainly students, who are living temporarily in a certain place, avoiding making them buy them permanently. Then, and after conversations with the professors responsible for tutoring my thesis development process, it was agreed that whether the idea was good or not, this was not the project that was motivating enough. That said, and after a few days of reflection about what would be the ideal project, the subject of soccer came up (even because I was wearing a shirt of the local club in one of the online meetings), and I thought that now I would be on the right track, focusing on what would be the training of young athletes in local clubs, and the proper impact on the city.

In one of the few conversations with the assistant professor, it was mentioned that I already had a streetwear brand manufactured in Portugal, and it was then that the "click" that is sometimes talked about happened. Immediately, all focus shifted to how it would be possible to improve the business model and increase its numbers. It's funny how sometimes the most obvious is right "under our noses" and that maybe because of this, we think there is a need to try and create something from scratch, when deep down the passion and motive to move forward was already there, just waiting for me to pick it up.

The final theme of the project to be developed was then found, but with a month's delay, there was a need to accelerate in order to conclude the processes that I would commit to.



LOWKEY: The story behind

About Lowkey

Lowkey is a Portuguese streetwear brand (registered trademark in Portugal) which, as the name implies, represents simplicity in its quality. It is marked by the same discretion shown by the chameleon and, therefore, it has its symbol in this magnificent animal. Having an Algarvian origin, Lowkey intends, in the medium/long term, to contribute to the preservation of the endangered species of the Algarve chameleon. Being created by young people, our habitat is surf and skate wear where we adopt the principles of freedom and union with nature. The team has now 9 members, and it's based in Faro, Algarve. Lowkey also intends to honour the vision and dedication of a founding member who is no longer with them.

Mission

As an adaptable, cooperative brand, Lowkey provides comfortable and quality streetwear by working with the community to provide impact a free spirit lifestyle through clothing.

Vision

To be the national reference streetwear brand, as an inspiration and link between the community, outdoor activities, and a relaxed lifestyle.

Purpose

Socially and environmentally impact the community through the dynamics and contribution created between sports culture and environmental and social causes.

Values

Promise to customers. Teamwork. Honesty. Quality. Passion. Integrity.



The beginning

It all started in March 2020, amid the quarantine derived from the unexpected appearance of what would come to be known as covid-19. It was at that time, when I could only leave home to go to the university to take exams, that after some time thinking about the subject in question with close friends, that a "click" suddenly came to me.

The idea of creating my own brand with some of my closest friends had been discussed for some time, but never seriously. It was when, and after an online class that I wasn't fitting in with, that I started trying to find reasons not to start the project. Of course, these existed, but when I thought otherwise, clearly the risk and the whole experience seemed worth starting. After a few calls, the group that would make up the structure of the brand met for days on end at the university, during breaks and after classes, to figure out and discuss which path we would take and how we would do it.

Motivations

The main reasons for creating this project had to do with: the desire to experiment with creating a business from scratch. Absorbing the networking and experience that would come from it; with the lack of simplicity in the streetwear market; with the will to create social and environmental impact. Using the brand as a link between the community, sports culture, and local associations, increasing the dynamics and awareness of important issues such as the preservation of nature and more specifically the species Algarve Chameleon.



The unexpected

The moment I am going to talk about is a sad one, but the group has tried to look at it in the most positive way possible. In the summer of 2020, just as things were lining up, we received the news that one of our friends, and in this case the founders of the brand, had died in a car accident on the way to the beach we so often went to.

On a personal note, it was the most complicated moment of my life. It had always been a friendship, and I spent more time with him than with my own family, because in the end he was also my family. Hard times followed, where the motivation and the reason to move forward started to be called into question. Maybe it was supposed to end there. But it didn't. As a group we reassured each other and after a pause period we decided that contrary to what all this could mean, the time was now to prove to Pedro that we would make it, and now it would be for him first and foremost.

PP collection Launching

Then began the search for our brand identity, where we would now have to come up with a name, logo, brand manual and website design. Here, and after some networking, we hired a communications designer, who had also studied at the University of the Algarve, to help us at this pivotal stage. With another friend, we had the first meeting at Starbucks in Forum Algarve, and from then on it was a natural process, where we kept in touch until the final product (presented in annex).

The first part was thus solved, but the hardest part was yet to come: finding a Portuguese manufacturer, willing to work with a group of young people without any kind of experience in



the area. After contacting sixteen companies, only one was willing to help us and enlighten us throughout the process, Confeções Regojo Velasco, Lda.

Several months went by in the search for the final product, both in terms of materials and designs, because suddenly another school year was starting, and time was running out. It was then, more than a year after the idealization phase, that in May 2021 we started the production of the first Lowkey collection, the PP Collection '21. In honour of our friend who unfortunately passed away, we decided to put his initials as the name of the collection. We sold out the initial 200 T-shirts, and the conditions were then met to continue.



The Brainstorm

The Lowkey team considered, after some meetings and hours of brainstorm, three main ways to improve the business model of a streetwear brand, Lowkey in case. Here are a few potential strategies:

1. Create a distinctive value proposition: To stand out in the crowded streetwear industry, it's critical to have a distinct value proposition that differentiates your brand from rivals. Sustainable production methods or a close bond with a specific group or culture could be examples of this.
2. Encourage a vibrant community and culture: Streetwear buyers are frequently drawn to companies with vibrant communities and cultures. To develop a devoted following and promote a sense of belonging among customers, the brand should think about sponsoring events, producing content, or collaborating with influencers.
3. Invest in sustainability: When it comes to clothes purchases, consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable solutions. Lowkey already have sustainable production methods, such as employing eco-friendly products and the Made in Portugal label, but maybe collaborating with groups that promote environmental reasons is the best next step. This can help distinguish the business and draw in eco-conscious customers.

With this, it was time to first note down the key components of the Lowkey streetwear brand, to after thinking and develop the right strategies to accomplish bigger numbers and recognition.



BM canvas & Lean start up | Mixed approach

Both the business model canvas and the lean start-up methodology place a strong emphasis on assisting business owners and entrepreneurs in creating and putting into practice winning strategies. A tool that aids businesses in mapping out their value proposition, client groups, channels, income streams, key resources, key partners, key activities, and cost structure is the business model canvas. On the other side, the Lean Start-up process is a methodology for creating and introducing new goods or services. It emphasizes the value of testing and learning throughout the development process and exhorts businesses to be adaptable and receptive to client feedback.

The brand can better grasp its value proposition and target market by using the business model canvas to map out the essential Lowkey components of the firm. This can assist it in locating the crucial assets and partners it will require to succeed, as well as possible client segments and revenue streams. Entrepreneurs can use the Lean Start-up methodology to test and validate their assumptions about the Lowkey once the business model has been laid out. Entrepreneurs can receive important feedback from potential customers and modify their business model by employing methods like customer interviews, prototype testing, and other kinds of market research. Entrepreneurs can create and market profitable products or services rapidly by using this iterative process of testing, learning, and refining.

Overall, the business model canvas and the streamlined start-up strategy can give Lowkey a potent set of tools for creating and putting into action successful business strategies. Together, these technologies help business owners comprehend their market more fully, test their hypotheses, and develop profitable goods and services that satisfy the needs of their target market.



BM Canvas

As mentioned before, and to improve the business model of the Lowkey brand, it is extremely important that all points are considered in an organized and sectorized way, so that the intervention made is thorough and highly effective. Hence the use of this model.

Key partners: Confeções Regojo Velasco, Lda; Greenbags Portugal; Human resources.

Key activities: Limited collections (from 30 to 100 pieces); 100% organic cotton t-shirts; Showcase the made in PT; People connection; Culture support.

Key resources: Sustainable materials (organic cotton); Portuguese production; Human resources; Ethical manufacturers.

Value Propositions: Slow- Collections from 30 to 100 items per product; Sustainability- All t-shirts are made of 100% organic cotton. Labels made of recycled plastic. Ethic- Made in Portugal manufacturer that ensures the quality and safety standards.

Customers relationships: Two “Lowkeyaway” (brand giveaways); “Keep it Lowkey” | Trick of the month- monthly contest on Instagram.

Channels: Website/online brand store; Online media (Instagram and Facebook).

Customer segments: Nationalities- Mainly Portuguese and Brazilian; Unisex; Age- Mainly from 18 to 35 years old; Interests: Sports (outdoor activities) such as surf and skate; Hip-hop type of music fans; Heavyweight clothing preference; Ethical and sustainable concerns; Cares about the production process, materials, and the fact that it is made in Portugal.

Cost structure: Winter collection '22 production; Marketing/ adds associated.

Revenue streams: Sales (directly); Advertisement; Influencer Marketing; Content production on social media (consumed by the customer).



Lean Start up by Eric Ries

Growth

Eric Ries defines a start-up as an organization dedicated to creating something new under conditions of extreme uncertainty, and given my experience so far, I couldn't agree more. I would like to highlight one of the statements that for me is more in line with what the real usefulness of this method is, from Tim O'Reilly, CEO of O'Reilly Media: “The Lean Startup isn’t just about how to create a more successful entrepreneurial business; it’s about what we can learn from those businesses to improve virtually everything we do (...)”.

In my point of view, and thinking in a more entrepreneurial way, I would say that the important thing about the processes carried out when creating a business is not about fully achieving the goals previously defined as ideal, but rather the whole journey itself. This is because many times, things don't always go as idealized at the moment, but later on they can be useful. The journey is everything.

Given that the Lowkey brand has already been in the market for about a year and a half, the focus was on what must be the acceleration of the business, and how one can face this crucial growth phase.

According to Eric Ries, sustainable growth is characterized by one simple rule: “New customers come from the actions of past customers”. Given that the four main ways that customers have beyond sustainable growth are Word of mouth, as a side effect of product use, through funded advertising and through repeat purchase or use, I would like to highlight the first two, using them as priority guides for improving the brand's business model.



Path to growth identified.

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
Confecções Regojo Velasco, Lda. Greenbags Portugal. Human resources. FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS.	Limited collections (from 30 to 50 pieces). 100% organic cotton t shirts. Showcase the Made in PT. People connection. ACTIVISM.	Slow- Collections from 25 to 50 items per product. Sustainability- All t shirts are made of 100% organic cotton. Labels made of recycled plastic. Ethic- Made in Portugal manufacturer that ensures the quality and safety standards. ACTIVISM.	Two giveaways. “Keep it Lowkey” Trick of the month- monthly contest. PARTNERSHIPS. EVENTS.	Nationalities: Mainly Portuguese and Brazilian. Unisex. Age: Mainly from 16 to 35 years old. Interests: Sports (outdoor activities) such as surf and skate. Hip-hop type of music fans. Ethical and sustainable concerns. Cares about the production process, materials, and the fact that it is made in Portugal.
Key Resources Sustainable materials (organic cotton). Portuguese manufactures. Human resources. Ethical manufacturers.				
Cost Structure Winter collection '22 launching. Marketing/ adds associated.		Revenue Streams Sales (directly). Advertisement. Influencer Marketing. Content production on social media (consumed by the customer).		



Decision-Making Process

Key partners

Future Partnerships

The creation of a company has always been one of the topics on the table since the beginning of the brand. There were, however, some legal and financial burdens that put the brakes on the creation of such an entity right from the start. The existence of such an entity will facilitate all kinds of processes related to partnerships and sponsorships, give credibility to the project and will test the brand and its people in terms of what is the organization and its legal terms.

That said, Lowkey saw now the ideal time for the legal formalization of a Limited Liability Company, which will own the brand, to be under the finances as a company.

The company will be called ST Investimentos Lda., and will own 100% of the Lowkey brand, being responsible for its management and performance. The process has been going back and forth but it is believed that by the end of the year it will be completed.



Key Activities

Brand Activism

Since the conception phase of the brand, it was clear that the brand would also be used as a "platform" and example, to actively support certain causes that are related to the Lowkey concept. With that in mind, we started where we could, moving forward with the production of all t-shirts to date in 100% certified organic cotton.

"Brand activism" is also an excellent opportunity to, in addition to cooperating with the community and environment, strengthen the brand image by the society/customers, increasing the credibility of the brand and distancing it from other competitors

The brand felt that now the time was ripe to move on to contribute even more. After some reflection, the brand has concluded that it was going to produce the first line of Lowkey products, whose part of the sales value would revert to VitaNativa.

VitaNativa | Projeto Camaleão

The association chosen was VitaNativa, and this because it is the most responsible for the preservation and protection of the species Algarve Chameleon, the symbol of the brand, through the development of the Project Chameleon in the Algarve region to prevent the extinction of the species mentioned. Some important actions from them are:

- Creation of the Chameleon Interpretation Center
- Development of an environmental awareness campaign on the east coast of the Algarve
- Development of a citizen-science campaign to improve knowledge about the geographic distribution of the species



- Promotion of academic studies on the species
- Training of the Center for the Recovery and Research of Wild Animals (RIAS) for the recovery of chameleons

It is therefore considered that monetary aid, as well as proper publicity for the brand, is the kind of help needed for the goals of this noble association. The developed product was the Chameleon Tote Bag, where 3€ for each one sold goes to the association, as a donation.

Value Propositions

Activism

The partners have noticed that activism can be one of the brand differentiation factors against other competitors. This has as main objectives to demonstrate clearly and first-hand that the brand has this aspect in the core of its business, as well as to create a good first impression to other stakeholders.

There was a need to create concretely define a Mission, Vision, Purpose, and Values, to clarify and demonstrate to customers Lowkey's main objectives, the approach adopted, as well as the impact it intends to have in the medium-long term.



Customers Relationships

Events

In a phase of brand growth and acceleration, **crafting strategic partnerships can have a very significant impact on brand numbers**. Both in terms of product/customer interaction with associated advertising and marketing. Being associated with certain initiatives and events also brings a very positive charge to the brand in terms of market positioning and relationship with the target audience, even if in an initial phase this does not translate into sales.

Having as one of the missions, to have an impact on the community associated with the practice of sports such as skateboarding, **the support for culture was seen as one of the key points to be accomplished** as soon as possible. In this sense, the search for initiatives or organizations responsible for this has begun.

That said, Lowkey has successfully managed to get associated with two different types of events:

- ❖ WallRide Sundays
- ❖ Keep it Lowkey | Trick of the Month

WallRide Sundays

WallRide, founded in late 2021, is a non-profit Algarvian association whose main mission is to support the practice, promotion, and community of skateboarding in the region. They currently have the contract for Faro's skatepark for the next decade, given by the city's Municipal Council. This space is now under constant rehabilitation, being held skateboard classes and numerous events. This is a partnership we have long sought for the impact it has on the city, the sport, and



young people, fitting perfectly with the concept of the brand. This partnership is based on mutual support and dissemination between both parties, where the Lowkey brand will sponsor the main event of the Association through the provision of products monthly, which will serve as prizes in competitions. One of the main events, **WallRide Sundays**, takes place on the last Sunday of every month, bringing together the community from all over the Algarve for an afternoon of conviviality with prizes. Lowkey participated and sponsored the October edition, **which supported the most disadvantaged people by appealing for the donation of warm clothes**. Lowkey was present with an exhibition of its products as well as advertising. Also it provided 4 t-shirts as prizes for the participants.

Keep it Lowkey | Trick of the Month

Keep it Lowkey is a monthly contest created by Lowkey on Instagram to establish a greater proximity between the brand and its followers through social media. Its main objective is to establish a circular dynamic between both parties, while increasing levels of engagement.

To participate, our followers need to perform a trick from any type of outdoor sport (Skateboarding, BMX, Surfing, Snowboarding), share it on Instagram, tag and follow the Lowkey page. On the last Sunday of each month Lowkey choose the 3 favourite tricks. The brand will share them, and the video most voted by the followers will be the winner. The winner will have the right to choose any article of our brand (reserved to the existing stock).

The first edition started September this year, and to promote the contest, I personally developed some flyers to put in the skatepark, so the community could know about it, and it was created a page on the website to keep updating the most interested ones.



Channels

Retail

After a little over a year of experience in the market, the brand thought that the time had come to look for new sales channels in addition to direct-to-customer or through our website. As such, the most natural path seemed to be to go for retail sales through stores that identified with the Lowkey concept. This is because we believe that one of our strengths is the quality, durability, and softness of our fabrics, and as such, the most effective way to prove the value we place on our final product would be through a direct interaction between the customer and the garment.

The only time the Lowkey was physically on sale was at a rooftop party held in July, at Hotel Eva in Faro, where in just three hours of presence available, there was a high curiosity of people to the project, design and the touch of the products, where it was possible almost 300€ in sales. By analysing this behaviour, as well as feedback from friends and peers, it was considered possible to assume that **touch could be seen as one of the brand's strengths**. The idea would be to focus locally, for now, in Faro, ensure market positioning in the region and then move on to regions linked to outdoor sports.

Taking the aforementioned methodology into account, conversations were initiated with the two main local streetwear stores in Faro, **Jump** and **Flow**. In both cases, the response was negative. Although the response was not the best, there was a concern to try to understand a little more about the retail process. Some aspects were completely unknown to the brand members, such as how far in advance the product catalogue should be presented (about a year in advance), or the margins that are normally applied.

For a small brand, and one that produces its products nationally, raising production costs brutally, this doesn't seem to us the fairest and most financially favourable solution. As such, the focus is now on the presence in future pop-up stores that arise, and in the medium term on



opening its own store, where we can physically and yet directly, have our products available to customers.

My Portuguese Friends

Although, there was the possibility to make the first "internationalization" as a brand. After some networking and conversations with friends of friends, it was possible to physically put our products on sale at My Portuguese Friends, **near Brussels in Belgium**. This is a store, owned by Portuguese emigrants, dedicated to selling exclusively Portuguese products in the country where they now reside. It can be an excellent opportunity to establish ties with the Portuguese community outside our own country. The whole process will be free of charge for Lowkey, due to the good will of the owners.

It was analysed as an important step for the brand because it involves the Portuguese community, even if it is not in the country of origin. With confidence in the product, it was believed that Word of Mouth can play a strategic role through this partnership. For example, if someone gets to know the brand in the store and communicates its existence to friends or family who are still in Portugal, and through this create a more sentimental connection with the Lowkey project.

E-commerce

Lowkey has a website created from scratch in terms of design and code. Although the site is professionalized and automated with respect to customer purchases, for example by sending e-mail confirmation of payment and product shipment, the percentage of sales made through this channel is less than desired, about 5%. However, it is understandable since we still do not have



a high awareness by possible future non-local customers, combined with the fact that the only payment methods allowed are Bank Transfer or PayPal, which nowadays are very rudimental. This is also why it was decided to form a company, mentioned later, because only in this way is it legally possible for the customer to pay through his credit card or through MBway (exclusive for Portugal), for data protection and invoicing reasons.

It is thought that by substantially increasing sales through this channel, the growth and financial capacity of the brand will increase exponentially.

Partnerships

In a phase of brand growth and acceleration, crafting strategic partnerships can have a very significant impact on brand numbers. Both in terms of product/customer interaction with associated advertising and marketing. Being associated with certain initiatives and events also brings a very positive charge to the brand in terms of market positioning and relationship with the target audience, even if in an initial phase this does not translate into sales.

In this sense it can be said that 2 successful partnerships were made:

- ❖ WallRide
- ❖ VitaNativa

WallRide & VitaNativa

The VitaNativa association, through the development of a line of tote bags whose part of the revenue reverts to Projeto Camaleão and already mentioned above, was also one of the important partnerships established, helping Lowkey to strengthen its image as a brand activist and concerned with the environment. It gives coherence and credibility to the message and concept conveyed by the brand.



Key Influencers

This is one of the most important topics and one on which the necessary brainstorming should be done before action is taken. The key influencers of a brand must follow the concept/message of the brand, for example through the lifestyle they have, the style of clothes they wear or the causes they support and must be fully connected to the target audience pre-established by the brand. An initial list of eight people with whom it would make sense to work was drawn up, and after discussion a conclusion was reached. From the pre-conceptualized list, and for the launch of the new winter collection, Lowkey identified the two that best fit the intended goal.

Name	Area
Sara Megre	Influencer
Mario Potoco	Surf coach
Sarah Tuvera	Model
Joaquim Chaves	Surf
Matilde Pia	Influencer
Bianca Nicoleta	Surf
Tomás Fernandes	Surf
Francisca Veselko	Surf

Table 1: Initial potential key influencers list.

Surf

As a streetwear brand that connects with outdoor sports, we thought this would be the ideal collection to highlight the practice of surfing, since we think we are better positioned in relation to skateboarding, being these the sports with the greatest influence in the area. As such, a partnership was established with **Mario Potoco**. Mario is a surf coach at Naval Surf Team, in Madeira, and has more than 3000 followers on Instagram. We saw in him a double advantage,



because in addition to sponsoring someone from the surf area, It also attracts the attention of the community present on the islands, and is mostly made up of young people with the ambition to practice the sport. The partnership went as follows: Mario chose his favourite product from the new collection, received it and in return made a post advertising the Lowkey brand. In addition to this he was given a 5% discount code throughout the site, so that whoever buys through him can have that benefit.

Social Media

If on the one hand we look at outdoor sports and the kind of person that serves as an example to represent Lowkey in this context, it is also that there is the same presence in the digital and modern world as today.

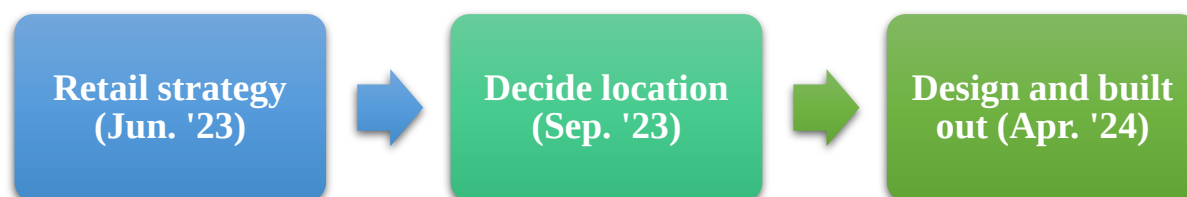
TikTok is a social network with exponential growth over recent times, conquering a lot of market share within the same kind of app. This cannot be ignored, and although Lowkey's presence is not of high relevance in this same social network, it was thought that this could be an interesting channel, serving as a link between the brand and what is most trendy. As such, an agreement was reached with **Matilde Pia**, which has over 9000 followers. Matilde corresponds to the type of spirit that the brand wants to be associated with, that is, someone fun, beautiful, young, who practices sports and who opts for a more discreet lifestyle, despite the influence that he has in the environment. The details of the partnership are the same as the one elaborated with Mario. In this way, we cover different channels of propaganda, never neglecting our main purpose, and always demonstrating the maximum coherence in the message.



The Biggest Next Step

After having a concrete and already improved definition of what the Lowkey business model is, one of the next big goals as a brand will be to open its own physical space.

Aiming for the spring of 2024 as the date for its realization. These would be the next big steps:



Choose a retail strategy: Choose whether we want to build a standalone store, a kiosk, or a pop-up shop when it comes to the type of retail space you want to use. Consider elements like location, rent, and foot traffic.

Decide on a location: Consider considerations like rent, foot traffic, and closeness to your target market when we investigate several locations. Look for a location that fits with the brand's image, is visible, and is simple to get there.

Design and build out the retail space: Create a design strategy that mirrors the brand's aesthetic as we build out the retail space. Working with a general contractor or hiring an interior designer may be required. Think about the design, lighting, fixtures, and any additional.



Lowkey Winter Selection 22'

All these improvements in the business model of the Lowkey brand, aim to positively affect the performance of the brand in terms of market positioning, demonstration of value and sales, starting in the winter of '22, in the winter selection of the brand that after "putting its house in order" with all the processes mentioned above, then moved to the production of its new products.

The Lowkey winter selection '22 consists of **three new products**:

Product	Number of pieces	Sales price (€)
Swell Hoodie	40	40
Cutback Sweatshirt	40	35
Chameleon Tote Bag	30	15

Table 2: Lowkey winter selection '22 description.

The tote bag is made of 100% cotton, and as already mentioned a few times, is the one in which part of the sale revert to Projeto Camaleão. Both the hoodie and the sweatshirt are made of 50% cotton and 50% polyester. Pastel colours (blue and salmon) were chosen, to escape a little from the normal pattern, and the size sequence went up a size, i.e., an original M corresponds to an S, an L to an M, and so on, providing a more oversized style.

In all the processes carried out by the brand, and in this case in the launch of the new collection, Lowkey tries to tell a not that obvious story, culminating in the launch of the products. The entire pre-launch campaign follows a logical reasoning, from the type of publications on social networks, the type of photography for the website, as well as the video announcing the launch date, directed, and edited by me.



Following this cadence of thoughts, the name of the new clothes has a meaning. They correspond to technical terms used in the practice of surfing, with the intention of creating an even greater interaction with the practitioners who may become clients.

Cutback: this is a very functional manoeuvre and serves to get the surfer back toward the part of the wave with more energy. It is a kind of slower and longer rip, in which the surfer brings the board back into the foam.

Swell: English word that means swell. Very often used in surfing, even more than the word in Portuguese.

All products are **Made in Portugal**, obeying the standards of quality, ethics, and safety at work, as we have been able to prove by ourselves.



Metrics That Matter

KPI's to measure the success

All these processes of improvement in what the business model of the Lowkey brand is, obviously have the goal of increasing the number of people interacting in the most diverse ways with the brand. Whether it's through visiting our website, and therefore getting closer to purchasing a product, through increasing the number of direct sales but also online, among other factors that can bring advantages.

Six main KPI's were identified as the most relevant ones to be analysed:

1. Features.
2. Website visits.
3. Promotions.
4. Social impact.
5. Environmental impact.
6. Sales.

Features

Mainly due to the partnership established with WallRide, and the events related to it, the Lowkey brand was mentioned in several regional newspapers and blogs, due to the contribution made together with WallRide at the WallRide Sundays event, where one of the main missions was to collect warm clothes and blankets for the underprivileged. such as:

- ❖ Jornal Barlavento.
- ❖ The Portugal news.



Website visits

Compared to the same time interval, website visits were as follows:

24/7 – 1/10: 2274 total visits → **975 visits a month.**

2/10 – 11/12: 2556 total visits → **1096 visits a month.**

This represents an increase of 12,41% over the previous period. The result is positive but can be improved. Analysing what happened, we believe that the **main reasons were:** improvement of the e-commerce section of the brand's business model, where there was an upgrade in product photos and a re-design; the inclusion of a promotional code through the partnership with Mario, increasing the exposure and curiosity of potential customers.

Promotions

Black Friday | Or should we say, crazy week

Throughout the period of preparation of the thesis, occurred one of the largest discount periods that exists in retail sales, known as Black Friday.

Lowkey saw in this period the ideal time to liquidate a little the stock, namely the one corresponding to the summer (t-shirts), and decided to move not to a Friday discount, but to a full week between November 20 and 26. The price range of the t-shirts varies between 20€ and 30€, and in this period they were all at 19€. The sweats, which varied between 35€ and 37€, went down to 30€.

Total Black Friday sales: 279€.



Social Impact

One can consider the impact at the social level as positive. Considering the brand's contribution and participation in an event like WallRide Sundays, where the October edition contributed to the **collection of more than one hundred of warm clothes for the underprivileged**. If we connect this with the fact that the event also has an aspect of **bringing together the skate community in the Algarve**, it is considered that being one of the brands behind it is of extreme relevance on a social level, and this is the path to pursue from here on in.

The partnership with the VitaNativa association, in our view, has not only an environmental but also a social impact. The fact that there is a constant **sharing of the initiatives promoted by the association**, in the brand's social networks, **and how people can participate** in them as volunteers, is in our view an act of promoting citizenship.

Environmental Impact

We also consider that there is an environmental impact promoted by Lowkey, although it is not easy to measure concretely. If we consider the donations promoted by the sale of the Chamaleon Tote Bag, which will be **90€ by the end of the year through the sale of 30 items**. However, we know that the money will be applied to the Chameleon Project, previously mentioned, in the quest to continue pursuing the goals to be achieved, and it is still too early to realize where it will be spent concretely. This help in preserving the species Camaleão Algarvio is one of the missions assumed by the brand, and there will therefore continue to be support in this direction.



Total Sales

In terms of sales made by the brand, both online and physically, and compared to the same period in the previous year: 24/7 – 1/10: **1275€** | 2/10 – 11/12: **2858€**.

This represents an increase of 124,16% over the previous period. Analysing this positive result and what happened, **this can be justified by:** improvement of the brand's business model, through the processes developed during the work project; launch of three new products, compared to the previous period. The bigger the offer, the bigger the demand; greater credibility in the target audience, due to the partnerships made and the consistence presented along the time, by never missing producing more products.

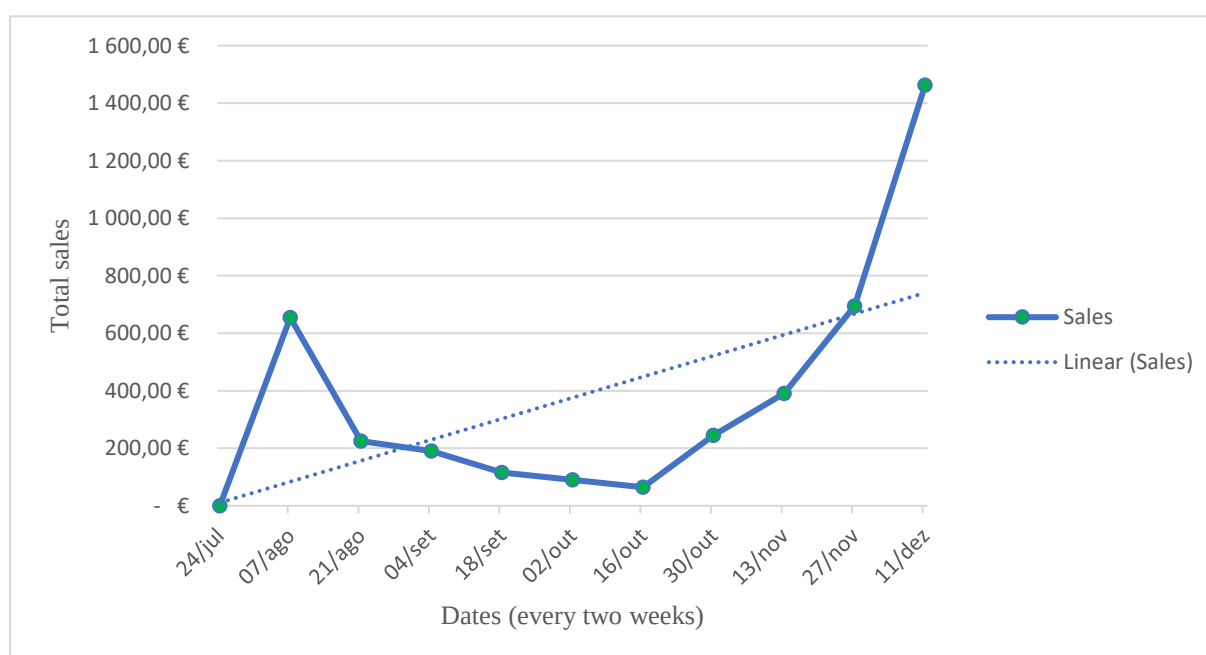


Table 3: Lowkey total sales per two weeks.

Analyzing the chart number 1, we can see a constant decrease from August 7th to October 16th, provided by the "dead time" between the end of one season and the beginning of another, as well as the non-launch of products associated with it.



A steady growth begins to be noticed as of October 16, mainly promoted by the announcement and execution of the partnerships made with the associations VitaNativa and WallRide. The most accelerated and accentuated growth began to be noticed from November 13, initially due to the Black Friday promotions and later the launch of the Lowkey winter selection '22, with the sale of practically 50% of the stock in the first days.

The line represented with separate blue dots indicates the growth trend at the sales level of the Lowkey brand, despite the ups and downs presented.



Conclusions & Insights

First, to make it very clear that there were many reflections drawn from the results obtained throughout the development of all the processes carried out in the project.

In conclusion, the research carried out in this thesis project showed that it is necessary to invest a lot of time in planning any kind of detail or strategy (having several plans prepared) in a market as competitive and saturated as streetwear: "failing to plan, is planning to fail"; the business is the people, and more specifically the customers, because it is at an early stage, based on their opinion that the business grows; consistency is the key, and when things don't go as planned, which is most likely, it doesn't stop. These findings have significant implications for the continued sustainable growth of the business, as well as the positioning and progression of the brand in a saturated market.

Based on these results, the improved points have positively affected Lowkey's business model, although the user experience on the website needs to be improved to increase the number of online visits and sales.

More research is needed to continue to differentiate Lowkey from other competitors at a national level, and to demonstrate to the community the real value of the brand and thereby increase sales, mostly by studying in more detail opportunities that allow us to sell our products physically to the customer, such as presence in local fairs or pop up stores in strategic areas related to surfing and skateboarding (Costa Alentejana, Ericeira and Peniche for example). . Overall, this study has contributed with new knowledge to the field of planning and short-term management of a Portuguese clothing brand, mainly in what concerns its growth phase.



Appendix

Contacts

Lowkey

Website: lowkeythebrand.com

Instagram: [@lowkey.thebrand](https://www.instagram.com/lowkey.thebrand)

Mail: lowkey20st@gmail.com

WallRide

Instagram: [@wallride.pt](https://www.instagram.com/wallride.pt)

VitaNativa

Website: vitanativa.org

Instagram: [@vita_nativa](https://www.instagram.com/vita_nativa)



Logo, Symbol, and Signature



Brand Book (some pages)

Logotipo

Principal



Alternativas

Monocromáticas



Alternativas

Bicolores



7

Símbolo

O símbolo criado enaltece o animal Camaleão e transmite a preocupação da empresa com a preservação de animais em extinção.

Segundo o jornal Terra Ruiva :
"O camaleão comum, em Portugal, só existe no litoral Algarvio e a sobrevivência desta espécie encontra-se ameaçada pela fragmentação do território, bem como pelos constantes atropelamentos e capturas ilegais.

O símbolo do Camaleão é simples e fácil de memorizar, é o ícone de representação da marca.

Pode ser utilizado em sombra, onde a parte vazada assume a cor do fundo.



8



Tipografia

Uma Tipografia sem serifa, simples e fácil de memorizar foi escolhida para o logotipo, a qual permite destacar a palavra LOWKEY.

Essa tipografia poderá ser utilizada nas formas demonstradas ao lado.

É a tipografia oficial e faz parte da identidade corporativa da marca, deve ser sempre respeitada e mantida para que todo o material de comunicação seja coerente.

Seja a nível da comunicação interna, seja a nível da comunicação externa (publicidade, publicações, entre outros).

A tipografia selecionada foi a "Flama".

Flama

Flama Light
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890?!*+(.,)

Flama Regular
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890?!*+(.,)

Flama Book
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890?!*+(.,)

Flama Black
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890?!*+(.,)

Flama Italic
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890?!*+(.,)

11

Cores

Os códigos de cor aqui referidos são imutáveis e deverão ser respeitados em todas as situações, quer em apresentação digital quer na sua reprodução física

PANTONE
Verde 368 C

C 62 M 0 Y 100 K 0
R 102 G 205 B 0

C 80 M 10 Y 100 K 2
R 36 G 151 B 0
C 62 M 0 Y 100 K 0
R 102 G 205 B 0
C 52 M 0 Y 95 K 0
R 133 G 236 B 85
C 42 M 0 Y 93 K 0
R 159 G 255 B 86

PANTONE
368 C

PANTONE
White 000 C

C 0 M 0 Y 0 K 0
R 255 G 255 B 255

C 12 M 45 Y 89 K 43
R 67 G 87 B 14

PANTONE
000C

PANTONE
Black 6 C

C 12 M 45 Y 89 K 43
R 67 G 87 B 14

C 0 M 0 Y 0 K 0
R 255 G 255 B 255

PANTONE
Black 6 C

12



Fundos de cor

As cores de fundo preferenciais para a marca "LOWKEY", são o Preto, Branco e Verde.

O princípio básico da utilização do logotipo sobre um fundo de cor é simplesmente manter a integridade cromática, criando o máximo de contraste possível entre o logótipo e a cor de fundo.

Os exemplos demonstrados nesta página deverão servir de guia, de forma que a legibilidade e integridade do logotipo sejam preservadas em qualquer utilização do mesmo.



13

Malha

A malha poderá ser utilizada em tamanhos variados, mas sempre com a utilização de um fundo.

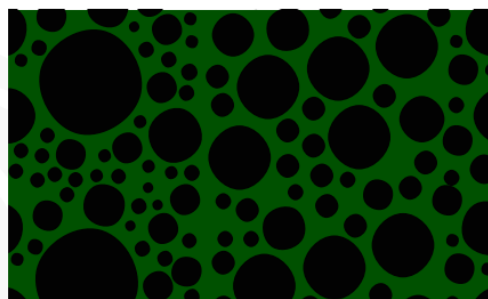
A malha foi criada em vetores, por isso pode se alterar o tamanho sem se perder a qualidade da imagem, a fim de simular a textura da pele de um camaleão.

Preferencialmente a cor utilizada no fundo é a verde, com referências:

CMYK - C 88 M 41 Y 100 K 43

RGB - R 0 G 82 B 0

Também podendo ser utilizado no fundo os outros tons de verde mencionados no item "cores", bem como em "fundos fotográficos".



14



Lowkey winter selection '22

Testing Process







VitaNativa

Product & Marketing associated (by Tomás Laranjo)



WallRide Sundays event

DIA 30 DE OUTUBRO
A PARTIR DAS 13H, NO SKATEPARK DE FARO
WALLRIDE & C.S 8125 APRESENTAM

HALLOWEEN BENEFIT RIDE

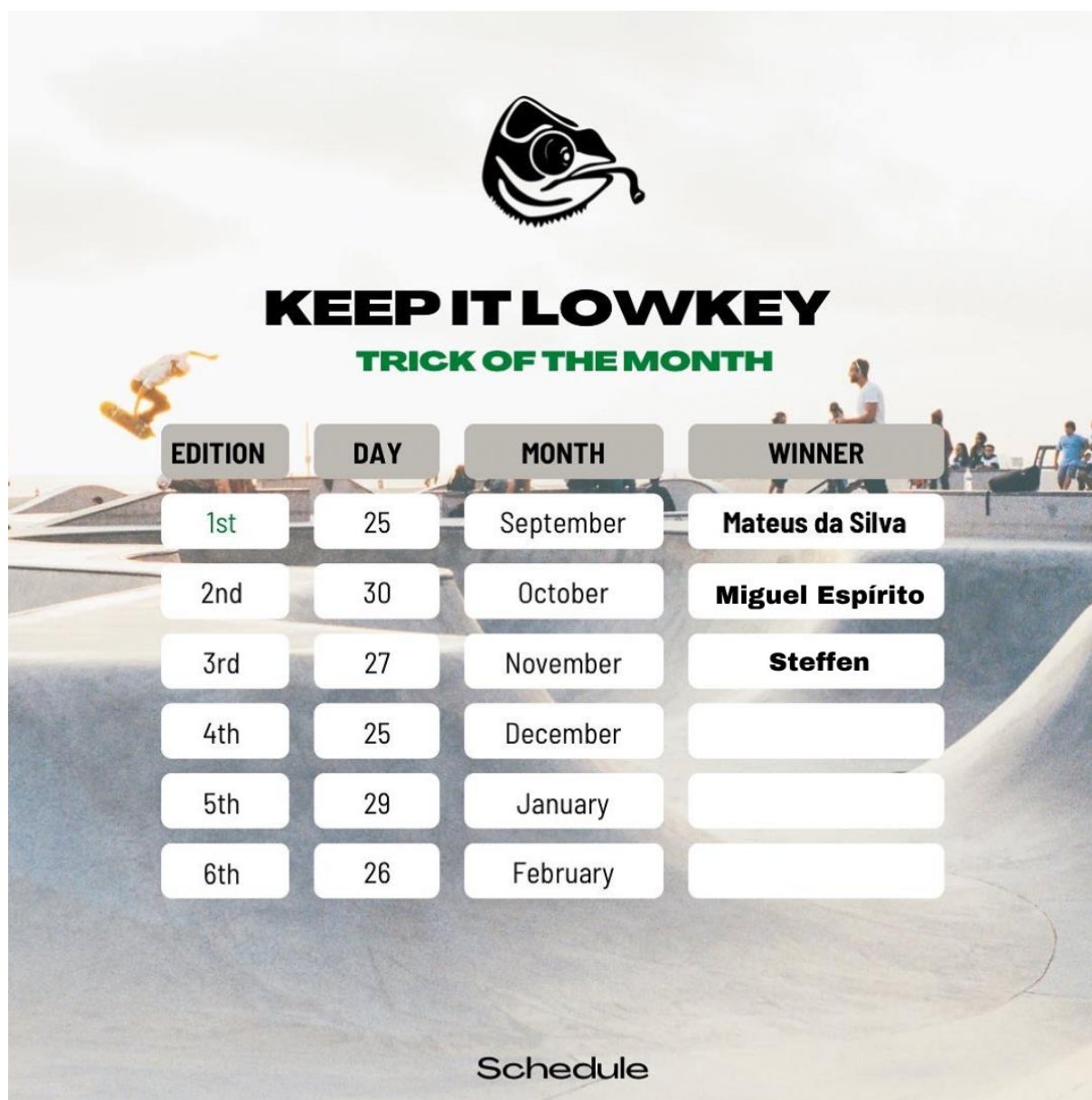
RECOLHA DE ROUPA/MANTAS P/ CARIDADE
TREATS 4 TRICKS ⊗ CASH 4 TRICKS
BEST COSTUME ⊗ AIR MAIS ALTO
OLLIE MAIS COMPRIDO ⊗ MINIRAMP MASH

WALL RIDE **C/S** **LOBO** **WALLRIDE CONSTRUCTIONS** **LOWKEY** **Domino's** **MADNESS** **FALLEN** **BAKER** **SILVER** **TENSOR**



Keep it Lowkey | Trick of the month

Schedule



The graphic features a background image of a skateboarder performing a trick in a skatepark. At the top center is a stylized logo of a fish head with a single eye and a small fin. Below the logo, the text "KEEP IT LOWKEY" is written in large, bold, black capital letters, and "TRICK OF THE MONTH" is written in smaller, bold, green capital letters. Below this is a table with four columns: EDITION, DAY, MONTH, and WINNER. The table lists the schedule for the first six editions. The word "Schedule" is written in a large, light gray font at the bottom center of the graphic.

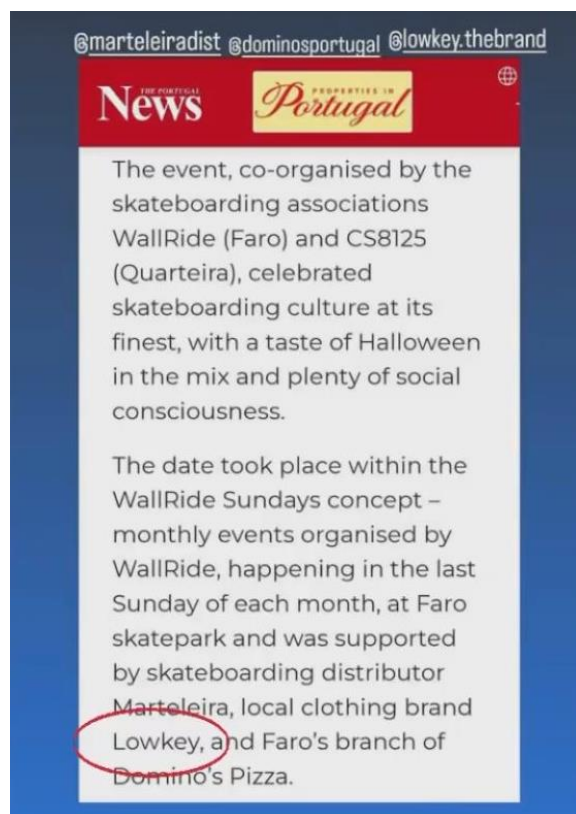
EDITION	DAY	MONTH	WINNER
1st	25	September	Mateus da Silva
2nd	30	October	Miguel Espírito
3rd	27	November	Steffen
4th	25	December	
5th	29	January	
6th	26	February	

Schedule



Features

WallRide, Jornal Barlavento and The Portugal News



Black Friday | Or should we say, crazy week

LOWKEYTHEBRAND.COM

Black Friday

OR SHOULD WE SAY, CRAZY WEEK.

LOWKEY

LOWKEY

ALL SWEATS & HOODIES 30€

ALL TSHIRTS 19€

20-27 NOV.



Winter selection '22

Photoshoot (by Tomás Laranjo) & Products







