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## Teaching Notes

# From the gym to happy hour: The case of OurSound

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### **Study Objectives**

The purpose of this teaching case is to lead students to discussion and reflection on the following topics:

- Marketing Administration,
- Marketing Channels, and
- Management of Micro and Small Companies.

## Learning objectives and recomended use

Teaching notes guide how teachers can use the teaching case with their students, starting with identifying the teaching objective.

#### **Teaching objective**

This case portrays the added value of the OurSound application to the gym, bars, and restaurant sectors and the challenges of expanding sales by the proprietary partners Eduardo and Vinícius. The case aims to offer students experience in micro and small companies' management by providing them with the opportunity to put themselves in the partners' place to discuss the dilemma presented.

#### Relationships with the objectives of a course or discipline

It is possible to identify aspects that lead to the creation of value by the creators of OurSound and their actions and efforts to sell the application to new customers. This material is suggested for application in Undergraduate courses in Administration and Marketing Management. It promotes debates and reflections on themes, such as customer orientation, product value creation, and brand strengthening.

#### Possible tasks to propose to Students

The discussions prompted by the case study become relevant because the students contribute with ideas and notes, given the theory's enrichment and the dilemma now exposed. To this end, it is important to allow students to read the case in advance to understand the behaviors of partners Vinícius and Eduardo, putting themselves in their place, as managers, to improve what has been done and determine what can still be done in order to add value to the business.

Therefore, the class's contributions must be following the data and information presented in the case. Therefore, the teacher needs to provoke the following initial questions:

- What is a music application?
- How to use this type of service offered by OurSound?
- How do the music apps that you (the students) know about work?

In this direction, students tend to explore some music applications' characteristics: the modes of use, the musical styles available, and the practicality of this sound modality. The students' responses, more analytical than descriptive, serve to stimulate reflection and encourage all.

The analysis questions, in turn, were structured so that the student initially points out the improvements in the actions performed by OurSound. In the sequence, he should point out new actions to help the company add value and increase its sales, giving an opinion on whether OurSound can expand its differentials and competitors' proposals.



## **Source and Methods**

- The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the company's owners and the analysis of printed documents and the internet.
- The case is based on a real story; however, the characters' names are fictitious to preserve the entrepreneurs' identity.
- Also, it was necessary to create dialogues to enrich the wording of the case and propose the students' reflection, given the partners' decision, described in the case outcome section.

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The suggested questions for this case are:

- 1. From the actions already taken by OurSound to create value for the customer, point out the improvements that you believe are necessary.
- 2. Introduce new actions for the company to create value for the brand, both customer and user.
- 3. How could OurSound increase the number of establishments served and, consequently, increase its sales?
- 4. In your opinion, given the differentials pointed out by competitors and the strategies for creating value and expanding sales, do you believe that OurSound has potential for expansion? Justify your answer.

#### CASE ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE CONNECTION

#### 1. From the actions already taken by oursound in creating value to the customer, maintain the improvements you believe as necessary

Any business's mission is to provide value to the customer without renouncing profit (Kotler e Keller, 2012). The creation of value can allow the company to expand its operation area and its capacity to serve new markets (Borges e Lima, 2012). In this way, three perspectives can define value: price, consumer behavior, and strategy.

In the price literature, value is defined as the trade-off perceived by consumers concerning the benefit and investment made (monetary and non-monetary) to purchase a product or service. In the consumer's behavior, the value is characterized by the satisfaction of the consumer's needs and desires regarding the purchased product/service. In the strategic perspective, the value is linked to how much the buyers are willing to pay for their goods and services.

Therefore, in this direction, the greater the value offered by the product/service, the greater the customer engagement. This means that it is essential for the company to offer value to its brand, making consumers more and more satisfied (Correio et al., 2015).

To be competitive in the market, the company can choose to adopt the cost leadership strategy (reducing its costs) or the differentiation strategy (which makes the performance of its product superior), taking into account the market in which it operates (Porter, 1985; Chernatony, Harris e Riley, 2000).

OurSound, then, can improve its actions to add value to its product through the proposals outlined below.

Regarding the training of commercial representatives, mentioned in the case, it is proposed to bring the representative and the owner of the establishment closer together, in order to strengthen the relationship marketing between the parties, with the creation of incentive campaigns and goals, in order to reach new users. For example, the salesperson and the company participating in the campaign (bar, gym or restaurant) who obtain the greatest number of users, in a period of thirty days, win an award (travel, a television, etc.).

Regarding the free availability of the application, it is suggested to increase the test to 90 days so that the establishment owner has more time to analyze the product's advantages. As for the price, it is proposed to present a goal to the owner of the establishment, that is, if in a certain period (one semester, for example), the gym, bar, or restaurant gets 500 users/customers for the application, the price fixed monthly fee of R \$ 99.90 will be R \$ 79.90 in the coming months.

Another measure to be improved is the use of merchandising materials to show the product and its characteristics and win over the customer to make the purchase. Considered a way to visually present a product in an attractive way (Pegler, 2012), merchandising has the role of creating a link between the brand and the consumer (Bailey e Baker, 2014). Among the types of merchandising, OurSound focuses on the use of materials at the point of sale. Then, it is suggested the expansion of tools outside the point of sale to strengthen the brand, such as the creation of caps, glasses, parasols, visors, and bags of garbage for cars, all personalized with the logo of the company. Also, we propose the creation and financial sponsorship of interactive posts on social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram, with relevant content and advertising on regional radios with good reach and affordable cost (mass merchandising).

The company must also negotiate with other record companies and increase the amount of music available in the application, offering various musical styles. Also, attention is needed about "viral" hits, that is, those that are successful in a short period of time but that is very hard and quickly become references.

#### 2. Present new actions for the implementing company, in order to create value to the brand, both in relation to the customer and to the users

As seen, OurSound executes some strategies that guide its customers' brand value; however, new actions must be taken to bring the company and its target audience closer together to demonstrate its principles and meaning to the consumer (Scharf, Paasch e Silva, 2018). For this, the company's business model needs to be directed and systematized with what it offers of value to its customers (Osterwalder, Pigneur e Tucci, 2005).

In this direction, some strategic partnerships are fundamental to strengthening the principles defended by OurSound, as described below.

In partnership with the owner of the place (bars, restaurants, or gyms), OurSound is recommended to provide training to waiters and personal trainers to detail the application's functionality and strengthen the option of chat available to customers, providing interaction through connectivity. This can be done with gifts to motivate them to reinforce the usefulness and how much fun the app is. The control of the gift can be done when the user makes his registration, which will have a field to highlight how he learned of the application's existence on the spot. The waiter, who registers 50 users in the month, and the personal trainer, who registers 35 users, will receive a JBL speaker, with 16W power for IOS and Android, personalized with the OurSound logo. This award will be valid monthly; however, the prize may be replaced by other objects whose values are equal to this suggestion of a gift to avoid discontent on the part of employees due to the repetition of the bonus offered.

Partnerships with digital influencers are also suggested, due to virtual dissemination experiences, to motivate the target audience and carry out monitoring through tools available on



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social networks (Silva e Tessarolo, 2016). Trendy bloggers can, for example, convey to their followers the credibility and principles served by OurSound, as well as encouraging people to become users of the application. Therefore, when interacting with the public, the influencer's emotion is significant to generate value in the relationship between the consumer and the brand (Silva e Tessarolo, 2016). Thus, in addition to strengthening the brand, OurSound creates value for customers and confidence in renowned partnerships.

Another action to create value for the company is the partnership with musical bands, who wish to promote their music on the application. Artists save time, reach expressive numbers of listeners and publicize their work quickly and in a fun way.

In addition to the punctuated strategies, it is necessary to indicate other sources of revenue for OurSound, such as offering the subscriber the Premium category, allowing some exclusive benefits and services to users registered in this modality, such as accessing the application without the presence of advertisements, facilitating their process of choice of songs. He may also have exclusive music folders, with the most current music on the market (as long as they are consistent with the musical style of the environment); and/or have the right to choose twice as many songs (ten) as the average user (five) per visit.

Merchants and OurSound can benefit from the customer database in the application registration so that marketing actions can be worked on. Merchants can e-mail promotions or offer exclusive discount codes to customers using the app; OurSound, in turn, can forward information regarding the app's new features, such as new songs made available, in addition to offering the subscription to the Premium package.

Another way for the company to create value for the brand and users is to allow/get contact and feedback with/ from customers through e-mails, commercial representatives, and other means of communication. OurSound argues that the experience lived by the customer of the establishment is essential to the application's progress and success because it depends on accepting the proposal by people. Customers are not only looking for the tangible benefits provided by a particular company but the experience associated with the brand (Ong, Lee e Ramayah, 2018). With after-sales performance, the company can obtain relevant information from people who use it to improve its functionality. This can allow consumer loyalty and, consequently, the growth of the company.

#### 3. How could oursound expand the number of establishments served and, therefore, increase its sales?

OurSound has to study the market very well and, mainly, its target audience, in order to be able to serve them in the best way. Despite many bars, restaurants, and gyms, the company needs to segment the market, checking which niches have innovative profiles and are ahead in searching for opportunities to stand out in the market.

Lobos (1993) defines segmentation as the division of the market into populations of customers who have certain specialties, and Kotler (1996, p. 257) corroborates this ideaby conceptualizing segmentation as "the act of dividing a market into different groups of buyers with different needs and responses."

It is impossible to provide equally excellent services to every imaginable customer; hence the need to segment the market served and intended to serve in the future to adapt to the business survival needs (Lupoli Junior, 2002). However, one of the main problems of micro and small companies is still not to segment the market they operate. The company needs to achieve the desired image to achieve more satisfactory results with its customers (Bernardez, 2005). With segmentation, OurSound can invest its time and resources more assertively.

Besides, OurSound can expand its consumer market beyond gyms, bars, and restaurants, given other businesses with background music conducive to consuming the application, such as medical and dental offices, shopping centers, and department stores. To this end, the company needs to focus on developing its sales team so that it has the ability to improve relations with existing customers and prospect new potential customers with this innovative profile. Also, OurSound must prove its value to the consumer market by increasing the number of customers in the establishments served and providing greater visibility among its target audience, which will promote new partnerships and new acquisitions of its product.

Therefore, adopting new actions, such as those mentioned in the previous question, will help the company attract more customers to establishments, demonstrating the value of OurSound. By promoting its brand on social networks, the company adds value and develops content to its active and potential customers (Sant'Anna, 2018). This calls for the creation, by OurSound, of annual strategic planning, which selects the region to be reached first, and, from that, marketing actions to attract the attention of prospects. According to Kotler (1992, p. 63), "strategic planning is defined as the management process of developing and maintaining a reasonable fit between the company's objectives and resources and the changes and market opportunities." In this sense, OurSound will guide and reorient its business and its product to generate satisfactory profits and growth.

#### 4. In your opinion, in face of the differentials pointed by competitors and strategies for creating value and expanding sales, do you believe oursound has potential for expansion? Justify your answer

Motivated by technologies, young people have the act of listening to music in their routine and as a company (Souza e Torres, 2009), which shows space for the growth and development of companies in this segment to win over this audience.

Although there are consolidated competitors in the market. OurSound has an important differential - interactivity. Young people like to socialize and show what they are feeling through images, videos, and music, and being able to choose music in the environment they are in is a way of showing their identity and style. From a song, the user expresses his feelings, and the fact that he can choose music in a bar, restaurant, or gym can generate a feeling of authority, power, and status. Besides, the application is modern, and the owners of establishments often do not have time to update the lists of songs that play in their environment. The service guarantees convenience and constant updating.

The arrival of technology in recent decades has changed the way people relate to the world. Currently, there is a digitally native generation, that is, those born in the mid-1990s, who understand



many of these discoveries as essential and every day. Technology appears to be like air for younger people: essential but invisible (Tapscott, 2010). Thus, OurSound should take advantage of this market opportunity and cell phone applications to expand its national territory activities. Its product is innovative and brings an interesting proposal to entrepreneurs and users.

#### POSSIBLE CLASS ORGANIZATION FOR CASE USE

This case serves as a didactic tool to improve learning through students' reflection on the studied dilemma. Thus, it is suggested to read the study in advance, and the teacher may also request additional readings during the course of the course to deepen the theory addressed.

To assess student participation, considering that the case study does not have exact and correct answers, it is recommended that the teacher request a group activity at the end of the discussion. The approach can be initiated by questioning who the main characters are and the work's central dilemma. After the introduction to the debate, it is proposed to the teacher to ask students, if possible, divided into small groups, to elaborate improvement and value creation actions to OurSound, through the SWOT analysis, known as FOFA - strategic planning technique used to help individuals or organizations to identify strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats related to the internal and external environments of an enterprise. Finally, students are recommended to present the actions to OurSound. It is up to the teacher to intervene in each presentation's placement and tie the case with value creation theory.

Students may be curious to know the veracity of the data; therefore, it is suggested that the teacher end the discussion with the whole class, deal with the outcome of the case, and allow students to express themselves, proposing different solutions to the same problem. The teacher must also evaluate the responses, considering the need for students to respond in-depth, with the theories evidenced to what was initially proposed. Next Table 1, it is recommended to allocate time for the use of the case.

Activities	Duration (in minutes)
Case reading	15
Discussion of the case	10
Explain the SWOT analysis and identify the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats together with the class.	20
Time to answer the proposed analysis questions (in groups, defined according to the number of enrolled, suggesting a maximum of five people per group).	20
Presentation and discussion of analysis questions with the class	55
Total	120 minutos

Tab. 01

Suggested times for programming the application of the teaching case Source: Elaborated by the authors.

#### POSSIBLE SWOT ANALYSIS RESOLUTION

The SWOT analysis is an important tool for the managers of the company OurSound, since it will assist in decision making, based on the information gathered. It is possible to say that this analysis has a strategic complementary role, allowing to interpret and support the most recommended strategic marketing selection for the company (Platt e Rocha, 2016).

Following (Table 2), there is a possible resolution, with the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats of the company. Based on the elements placed in the matrix, it is possible to put together an action plan, thinking about the business strategy as a whole, specifically with regard to the dilemma of the case presented.

int	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal environment	1. Qualified team	1. Difficulties of introduction
iro	2. Interactivity	2. Small team
I VI	3. Innovation	<ol><li>Lack of financial resources</li></ol>
e	4. Differentiation	4. Non-patented application
	Opportunities	Threats
rnal 1ment	1. Unique in Brazil	1. There is no patent, only
	<ol><li>Technology and social</li></ol>	trademark registration.
	networks constantly growing	2. There are no financial
	in the market.	resources for expansion.
External environment	<ol> <li>Promising market for other markets, including those already served by the company (gyms, bars and</li> </ol>	3. Technological changes
	restaurants).	

Tab. 02

Possible resolution of the SWOT analysis Source: Elaborated by the authors.

#### Strengths and opportunities

With the advent of technology, people will increasingly use the internet and digital media; thus, OurSound stands out for offering an innovative application with the possibility of interaction between users. The opportunity for growth is immense, given the number of users who adhere to the networks. Unique in Brazil, OurSound promotes a differentiated product in the market to offer technology and a change in the way people listen to music in the establishments served.

#### Strenghs and weaknesses

A communication system's ability to enable interaction is an advantageous market opportunity, as the audience is large and, currently, people are increasingly valuing this product/ service format. However, when a business profile is targeted, competition is inevitable. In Brazil, there are still no laws regulating applications and software. The risk of copying is great, which would make the OurSound application obsolete in the market.

#### Weaknesses and opportunities

There is great resistance to introducing the product in the establishments in which OurSound wishes to work. Although this perspective, at the moment, is negative due to the advance in the growth of social networks, this scenario tends to change since having a tool with this potential will be a strategic differential. However, the company must embrace the opportunity and create value for the application so that business owners can buy this idea.



#### Weaknesses and threats

The lack of a well-structured sales team can threaten the company's growth. The OurSound application is innovative. However, it needs a focused team that is willing to grow and expand its business. The absence of professionals in the main regions, where the company intends to act strongly, makes it impossible to implement strategies. The lack of financial resources to progress in the desired expansion is another problem. Besides, it is a threat to the innovative and competitive idea of the market that it is not a patented application, which further weakens the benefits of being a company user.

#### **CASE OUTCOMES**

OurSound ended its activities in 2017 since the partners, participating in other business partnerships, decided to focus on different projects, which did not coincide with its sector and niche. OurSound served young audiences, in gyms, bars, and restaurants, with the offer to listen to their favorite music in the environment through an application. Some difficulties were encountered along the way, and turning the company into a profitable business did not materialize.

#### **Teaching Notes**

This teaching note is an integral part of the case study: Santos, D. P.; Souza, F. M.; Silva, L. H.; and Schmitt, T. (2021). From the gym to happy hour: The case of OurSound. Iberoamerican Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business. 10(2), Case Study e1815. https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.e1815

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#### Authors' statement of individual contributions

	Authors Contributions			
Roles	Santos, DP	Souza, FM	Silva, LH	Schmitt T
Conceptualization	Х	Х	Х	Х
Methodology	Х	Х	Х	Х
Software	-	-	-	-
Validation	-	-	-	-
Formal analysis	Х	Х	Х	Х
Investigation	-	-	-	-
Resources	-	-	-	-
Data Curation	Х	Х	-	-
Writing - Original Draft	Х	Х	Х	Х
Writing - Review & Editing	Х	Х	Х	Х
Visualization	Х	Х	Х	-
Supervision	Х	-	-	-
Project administration	Х	Х	Х	Х
Funding acquisition	Х	Х	Х	Х

#### **Conflit of interest statement**

The authors hereby confirm that there are no competing interests to declare.

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