



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR RIFUTEC: A FLOOD PROTECTION COMPANY

Project to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a
Master's Degree in Communication Studies –
Communication, Marketing and Advertising.

By

Marc Alexander Fleischer

Faculty of Human Sciences

September 2024



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Abstract

Considering the progressing climate change, flood protection systems are becoming increasingly important as extreme rainfall and flooding cause severe damage to buildings. rifutec is a German company that specializes in flood protection solutions but currently has no marketing activities. The aim of this project was therefore to develop an initial marketing concept using the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach. The APTC Framework by Kliatchko and Uttamchandani (2023) was applied to create a detailed IMC Plan. The data for implementation was collected through an in-depth interview with the company's management and a content analysis of its external communication. The result is the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign, which is based on the Protection Motivation Theory and raises awareness for flood protection among German homeowners. This project also provides valuable insights into the perception of flood risks and natural disasters and underlines the need for more transparent communication about the advancing climate change.

Keywords: IMC, APTC Framework, Flood Protection, Climate Change, PMT

Resumo

Tendo em conta a progressão das alterações climáticas, os sistemas de proteção contra inundações estão a tornar-se cada vez mais importantes, uma vez que as chuvas extremas e as inundações causam graves danos aos edifícios. A rifutec é uma empresa alemã especializada em soluções de proteção contra inundações, mas atualmente não tem actividades de marketing. O objetivo deste projeto era, portanto, desenvolver um conceito inicial de marketing utilizando a abordagem da Comunicação Integrada de Marketing (CIM). A estrutura APTC de Kliatchko e Uttamchandani (2023) foi aplicada para criar um plano IMC detalhado. Os dados para a implementação foram recolhidos através de uma entrevista em profundidade com a direção da empresa e de uma análise de conteúdo da sua

comunicação externa. O resultado é a campanha “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” (Não deixe que as gotas de chuva se transformem em lágrimas), que se baseia na Teoria da Motivação para a Proteção e sensibiliza os proprietários alemães para a proteção contra as inundações. Este projeto também fornece informações valiosas sobre a percepção dos riscos de inundação e das catástrofes naturais e sublinha a necessidade de uma comunicação mais transparente sobre o avanço das alterações climáticas.

Keywords: CIM, Quadro APTC, Proteção contra inundações, Alterações climáticas, PMT

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1 Introduction

Climate change is progressing at an unnatural pace (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). Every year, we experience the consequences in form of natural disasters destroying millions of homes and existences. Heatwaves are increasing, temperature swings are becoming more pronounced and more intense and unusually heavy rainfall is leading to flooding worldwide (Clarke et al., 2022; European Environment Agency, 2023-b; García-León et al., 2021). In recent years, Europe has experienced extremely severe flood disasters. During the Ahr valley floods in Germany in 2021, at least 185 people lost their lives. In addition, around 9,000 buildings were destroyed, causing around 17,000 people to lose their homes and possessions (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024). Even three years after the disaster, reconstruction work is still ongoing. The Ahr valley flood is now considered one of the most devastating natural disasters in German history (Seidel, 2023). As shown in this example, the resulting damage caused by flooding is enormous. As this trend shows no sign of slowing down, people need to prepare for the consequences of extreme rainfall and flooding. Flood protection systems specifically focus on safeguarding against these damages. Considering the progressing climate change, these systems will be an even more important component in the fight against flooding in the future.

rifutec recognized this need for flood protection over 27 years ago and has established its position as a reputable and reliable flood protection provider in Germany. The medium-sized company develops and sells in-house flood protection system, which protects various building openings such as windows, doors and garages from water ingress. In recent years in particular, the company has seen an increase in demand from consumers who have suffered water damage due to heavy rainfall and flooding. Until now, rifutec has not engaged in any targeted marketing activities. But the increasing demand has shown the management that marketing measures could have the potential to increase the number of inquiries even further. In view of the advancing climate change, rifutec has therefore decided to implement its first marketing activities.

Therefore, this work should create a marketing starting point by developing an initial marketing concept. This concept is intended to serve as a pilot project and pave the way for the company's future marketing strategies. As a pilot project, it made sense to develop a time-limited marketing campaign. For this purpose, the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) approach was chosen. Therefore, the aim of this work was the development of an Integrated Marketing Communications Plan for the flood protection company rifutec.

The plan was built using Kliatchko and Uttamchandani's APTC IMC Framework from 2023. The data about the company and its customers required to create the plan was obtained through an in-depth interview with rifutec's management and a content analysis of current external communications. The work is divided into six main chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction. Chapters 2 and 3 are the literature review, first covering the area of Integrated Marketing Communications and then the area of climate change and flooding. Chapter 4 describes the data collection and Chapter 5 develops the IMC Plan. Chapter 6 concludes with a summary and reflection on the work.

The result of this work is an initial, structured and feasible marketing concept for rifutec based on a psychological strategy. For this purpose, the Protection Motivation Theory was applied. The outcome is the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign, which is the centerpiece of this work. As part of this campaign, various marketing actions were implemented visually, which are presented in the course of this work. In addition, this project provides valuable insights into the area of flood protection and climate change in general, which could also be interesting for further research. Many homeowners in Germany continue to underestimate the consequences and potential damages of flooding and often only acknowledge the need for flood protection systems when they have already suffered water damage. In the future, it will be crucial to communicate the consequences of climate change even more transparently and thus raise awareness of preventive measures.

2 Theoretical Review: The Field of Integrated Marketing Communications

This project begins with a theoretical section that forms a foundation further work can be built on. The field of integrated marketing communications is a highly debated and constantly evolving area (Kliatchko, 2005). Therefore, this chapter examines the existing literature ranging from marketing to the concept of integrated marketing communications. The aim is to introduce and discuss relevant concepts, frameworks and important evolution steps. Starting with a general and introductory overview of marketing, this chapter narrows and finally focuses on the concept of integrated marketing communications. As the overall objective of this project is to develop an IMC Plan, this chapter serves as a theoretical foundation that defines the scientific framework in which to operate.

2.1 An Overview of Marketing

To accurately address and discuss the field of integrated marketing communications this sub-chapter overviews the broad area of marketing and its development. The aim is to provide a brief introduction into the area of marketing to enable the next chapters to expand on this information.

Beginning with the most basic and fundamental information about marketing. Marketing is a process used by companies with the ultimate goal of selling products to consumers (Kotler et al., 2012). The term “product” in this context refers not only to physical products, but simply to anything that a company is trying to sell. For instance, services can also be described with the term product in this context. Marketing therefore always connects the efforts of a company with the needs and wants of consumers (Londhe, 2014). To provide an official definition, the American Marketing Association defines marketing as:

“[...] the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2023).

Companies have different options and various marketing tools to create these added values for consumers. For instance, price adjustments or promotions are marketing tools that can be used to generate added values. In addition to these two, there are plenty of other marketing tools. The set of marketing tools used by a company can be described with the term “marketing mix” (Wichmann et al., 2022). Introduced by Neil H. Borden in the 1950s, the marketing mix has established itself as a concept to select and coordinate marketing tools for more than 70 years (Londhe, 2014).

The metaphor that marketing can be seen as a "mixing of ingredients" is indicative for the marketing mix concept (Borden, 1964). Based on this, Borden divides the marketing mix into the twelve different elements which embody the ingredients from this metaphor: 1. Product Planning, 2. Pricing, 3. Branding, 4. Channels of Distribution, 5. Personal Selling, 6. Advertising, 7. Promotions, 8. Packaging, 9. Display, 10. Servicing, 11. Physical Handling, 12. Fact Finding and Analysis (Borden, 1964). Over the years the marketing mix has attracted a lot of attention in the literature and has found a variety of applications in almost every field of marketing (Londhe, 2014). Consequently, many different marketing concepts are based on Borden’s marketing mix.

2.1.1 The 4P’s of Marketing

One of the most famous concepts based on the marketing mix is the 4P's concept, which was developed in the 1960s by Jerome McCarthy (McCarthy, 1960). This concept simplifies Borden’s classification of marketing into twelve elements by dividing it just into the four main categories of 1. Product, 2. Price, 3. Place and 4. Promotion (McCarthy, 1960). Within these four categories, there are various marketing tools for implementation. Tools for implementing the third “P” (place) could be for example E-commerce, retail networks or points of sale (De Pelsmacker et al., 2013). The concept of the 4P’s has become famous and popular due to its tidy and organized division of marketing tools into different categories. This organization enables an obvious separation from other business areas within a company and makes marketing more transparent (Grönroos, 1994).

Until today, the concept of the 4P’s forms the foundation for many other marketing concepts. But as marketing in general always connects companies with consumers, the

field of marketing is always active and constantly evolving. Consequently, when consumer behavior changes, the field of marketing also changes and must adapt.

During the time when the 4P's concept was developed, consumer behavior was significantly different than it is today. Consumers had to physically buy their products in stores, and the range of products was limited (Goi, 2009). In addition, technological advances, digitalization and globalization have not only contributed to changing consumer behavior, but have also created new opportunities for marketing tools (Kitchen & Proctor, 2015). Compared to the 1960s, when only traditional media was available for marketing tools, today's digital landscape offers almost endless possibilities. The Internet enables consumers to compare products, order products within seconds and receive them the next day (Kitchen & Proctor, 2015). Due to these changes in consumer behavior and technological advances traditional marketing mix concepts, such as the 4P's experienced much criticism for placing the focus too heavily on companies and its products and not on the consumers (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

As a result, the marketing mix has experienced a paradigm shift from product-oriented concepts to more consumer-oriented concepts (Möller, 2006). Within a few years, a large number of new marketing mix concepts emerged that tried to develop new groundbreaking concepts and place a greater focus on the consumers.

Some authors stuck to the traditional 4P's approach and added new dimensions, such as Booms and Bitner, who developed the concept of the 7P's (Booms & Bitner, 1981). This concept expanded the 4P's to include the three additional dimensions of process, physical evidence and participants in order to make the marketing mix more suitable for other areas like service marketing (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995). Other authors have not supplemented the previous P's, but have created completely new concepts (Londhe, 2014).

2.1.2 The 4C's of Marketing: A new Perspective on the Marketing Mix

One important concept to mention is the concept of the 4C's. The 4C's repositioned the idea of the 4P's but from the consumer's point of view. The author of the concept was Robert F. Lauterborn, who realized that consumers gained more power in their purchasing and

decision-making process, and therefore built his concept around the consumer's point of view (Akbar et al., 2023). The four C's in his concept embody 1. Consumer wants and needs (equivalent to product), 2. Cost to satisfy the consumer (equivalent to cost), 3. Convenience of purchase (equivalent to place) and 4. Communication (equivalent to promotion) (Lauterborn, 1990). Although the concept of the 4C's was developed in 1990, at a time when the Internet was just starting to emerge, it is still up to date and leaves room for interpretation in today's digital landscape, due to its lean concept design (Akbar et al., 2023). The following section describes the four categories of the concept in greater detail.

Category 1: Consumer Wants and Needs

The first category replaces the product category from the 4P's concept. Due to much competition and the possibility for consumers to compare and look for substitute products on the Internet, companies must understand and adapt to the wants and needs of the consumers. Lauterbach realized that it was no longer sufficient to simply present a product to the consumer; the product had to be tailored to the consumer and fulfill a need or evoke a desire (Ozturkoglu & Tek, 2016).

Category 2: Cost to satisfy the Consumer

In contrast to the traditional 4P's concept, this category not only considers the pure product-price, but also all additional costs associated with the product. These can be, for example, transportation costs if the consumer has to pick up the product, or the time the consumer has to spend to find the right product online. The term "cost" should be interpreted more generally in this context and does not only refer to money. For example, time spent can also be considered as cost (Akbar et al., 2023).

Category 3: Convenience to purchase

This category visibly embodies the digital transformation and the change in consumer behavior. Compared to times when consumers had to physically buy products in-store, they now have the option of buying their products conveniently online. Therefore, this category describes not just the place where a product can be bought, but also how convenient it is for the customer to buy it. This could, be for

example, how easy it is to buy the product from the online shop or how fast the delivery service is (Schawel & Billing, 2017).

Category 4: Communication

The last category focuses on the interaction between the consumer and the company. In this context, communication refers to all tools that can be used to communicate with consumers (Akbar et al., 2023). Examples of communication tools could be advertising, public relations or branding. This category seems very similar to the promotion category from the 4P's concept, but it focuses much more on the interactive communication with the consumers. Unlike the traditional 4P's approach, which only focuses on the one-way communication from companies to consumers, the 4C's concept also considers the two-way communication. Therefore, this category also includes the feedback that comes back from consumers, for example through reviews and ratings (Ikechi et al., 2017).

Similar to the 4P's model, Lauterbach's 4C's was followed by several other concepts that attempted to expand on the idea. This process was always the same: vulnerabilities and criticisms were found in existing approaches and new concepts were developed to compensate for these weaknesses. However, particularly the last category of the 4C's concept (communication) is relevant for the next part of this work, as it focusses on the possible marketing communications that a company can use to communicate interactively with consumers (Akbar et al., 2023). The next sub-chapter will take a closer look at the field of marketing communications in order to lay the foundation for the final concept of this project, the concept of integrated marketing communications.

2.2 Marketing Communications

As already described in the previous sub-chapter, marketing communications can be categorized in the fourth category of the 4C's concept (communication). The term “marketing communications” in general describes any form of communication used by

companies to convey information about products to consumers (Smith, 1998). Based on this general description, companies have a wide range of tools available to communicate with consumers. Advertising, PR and sponsorships are just some of these tools. Each of these marketing communication tools is unique and has specific characteristics that can be used to achieve different marketing objectives, for instance enhancing sales, attracting consumers or strengthening brand awareness (Nesterenko et al., 2023). In addition, some tools are more effective for certain audiences and less effective for others. The implementation of a marketing communication tool nearly always involves costs and budget (Todorova, 2015). Some tools are cheaper to implement and some are more expensive. A company must therefore always consider several aspects to decide which tool is best suited in which situation to achieve the respective marketing objective. For this reason, it is worth creating an overview of the various marketing communications tools. A few years ago, classifying and grouping the various marketing communications tools would have been much easier because there were significantly fewer tools and options for marketing communications. But today, in the age of digital change, globalization and rapidly evolving trends, the possibilities for marketing communications seem endless. (Chen et al., 2021). A suitable approach to organize marketing communications is the POEM model, which divides marketing communications tools into the categories of paid, owned and earned media (Sciarrino et al., 2019).

2.2.1 The POEM Framework: Categorizing Marketing Communications

The POEM Framework stands for “paid, owned and earned media”. This classification helps to categorize the various marketing communication tools into three main groups (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Katz, 2022).

Paid Media

Paid media can be described as a tool that a company pays for in order to promote its products and can therefore be equated with the term “advertising” (Abdow, 2020; Alexandrescu & Milandru, 2018; Lovett & Staelin, 2016). In the broadest sense, advertising refers to the placement of content and messages (advertisements) controlled by companies in a specific place (American Marketing Association, n.d.;

Burns & Lutz, 2006). When the first research and publications on advertising emerged, it was limited to print, television and radio. (Huh & Faber, 2022). Nowadays, a wide range of advertising tools are available, some of which are digital or analog, are used by different target groups and involve different costs (Bagwell, 2007). Among these advertising tools are, for example broadcast advertising (radio ads, television ads), online advertising (banner ads, display ads, social media ads), out of home advertising (billboard ads, poster ads) and print advertising (newspaper ads, magazine ads) (Abdow, 2020; De Pelsmacker et al., 2013; Katz, 2022; McStay, 2016). The general advantages of paid media are its rapid reach and addressing of consumers, easy scalability and control (Abdow, 2020). But due to the cost aspect of advertising, it is important to consider and plan which advertising tool is most effective for which target group in which situation in order to avoid spending on ineffective advertising (Burns & Lutz, 2006).

Owned Media

Owned media are communication tools that are controlled and maintained by the company itself (Sciarrino et al., 2019). These tools are not incorporated with any costs like paid media (Jayson et al., 2018). Examples for owned media are any tools controlled by a company itself, like the website (blogs, landingpages, chatbots), content marketing (webinars, additional downloads), social media channels, email marketing or mobile apps (Abdow, 2020; Cuthill, 2013; Jayson et al., 2018). Although companies have to pay specialists to maintain the media, the difference to paid media is that the broadcasting and placement of the communications does not incur any costs. The main advantages of owned media are direct contact with consumers, control and reliability (Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

Earned Media

Earned media are tools that are controlled by external parties that convey content to consumers (Sciarrino et al., 2019). Earned media try to gain presence and visibility in the news and public opinion through press releases, cooperations or relationships (Abdow, 2020). The aim of these tools is to get third parties talking and reporting about the company (word-of-mouth) in order to promote the company (Chaffey &

Smith, 2022). Possible tools could be PR (press releases, cooperations) or community engagement (online forums, Q&A) (Cuthill, 2013; Lovett & Staelin, 2016). The advantages of earned media lie in its organic character, longevity and its high level of reliability (Chaffey & Smith, 2022).

The three groups have different characteristics and effects for the communication process between companies and consumers (Vasan & Gupta, 2021). Vasan and Gupta (2022) found out that paid media produces general awareness about a company or a product among consumers. In contrast, owned media captivates and entertains consumers, leading to greater brand presence and loyalty. Earned media leads to positive attitude towards the company (Vasan & Gupta, 2022).

Another study by Mattke et al. suggests that to achieve effective impact, paid media should convey relevant and entertaining information about a company's product, while owned media should use informative and helpful information about it. Earned media should rely on public and transparent opinions from external parties to maximize the effects described above (Mattke et al., 2019).

An experiment from Lovett and Staelin reflected that paid and owned media is having a reminding effect about a company on consumers, while earned media is having a more socializing and engaging effect (Lovett & Staelin, 2016). Although many other studies can be found, it can be stated that paid media increases awareness, owned media increases trust and reminds consumers of a company, and earned media increases trust and socializes a company making it more tangible for consumers (Lovett & Staelin, 2016; Mattke et al., 2019; Vasan & Gupta, 2022).

The POEM Framework provides a structured approach to organize and categorize all the different marketing communication tools available. Each of the three categories (paid, owned and earned media) offers different benefits for marketing. Depending on whether the aim is for example to strengthen awareness or increase loyalty, companies can use different tools. When implementing them, it is essential to carefully plan in advance in order to avoid unnecessary costs, ineffectiveness and incorrect reception among customers. A concept that deals precisely with this part of planning and can therefore be effectively

merged with the POEM Framework is the Integrated Marketing Communications approach.

2.3 Integrated Marketing Communications

As the name suggests, IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) is a concept that integrates marketing communication tools. This approach ensures that a company selects and uses the right marketing communications and coordinates them to create a consistent and effective message (Schultz & Schultz, 1998). The key idea of IMC is that all different marketing communication tools work together to ensure a unified and consistent message to a target audience (Clow & Baack, 2017). With the emergence of new communication tools and the resulting complexity of managerial decisions, the IMC approach has become a prominent concept offering companies several advantages that can be verified in various studies. Through strategic planning and coordination of communications, companies can reduce their media waste and thus effectively save budgets (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999). In addition, IMC increases the impact of marketing messages by combining and aligning several communication tools (Butarbutar et al., 2023; Navarro et al., 2009; Porcu et al., 2017). Furthermore, IMC generally leads to a stronger recognition value and increases awareness, because several communications incorporate the same elements and content for recognition (Butarbutar et al., 2023; Clow & Baack, 2017). Leading global companies, such as Nike, use integrated marketing concepts to effectively align their paid, owned and earned media (Keller, 2016). But the IMC approach has not only been widely used in practice; publications and articles on IMC started multiplying since the concept was introduced in the late 1980s (Kliatchko, 2005).

Since early concepts and publications, IMC is referred to as both a concept and a process, which makes it difficult to find a single correct definition (Duncan & Everett, 1993). Based on this, many authors and researchers tried to define IMC concretely. The early concepts defined IMC as a marketing-centric approach in order to address the increasing media fragmentation (Rehman et al., 2022). At that time, IMC tended to be a rather static part of

corporate marketing, with the aim of consistently conveying a message via various communication tools (Schultz, 1992; Schultz, 1996). Since then, the IMC field has been a highly debated area that has continued to evolve over time. This process of evolution was also enhanced by newly emerging technologies. Kliatchko described IMC as a conceptually old, but operationally new concept, because the idea of integration and consumer orientation is not merely new, but the technological possibilities are constantly updating and evolving (Kliatchko, 2002). This technological change was reflected in the development of several new IMC concepts.

In 2003, Peltier et al. developed the "Interactive IMC Approach", which emphasizes the interaction possibilities of new media (Peltier et al., 2003). In the same year, Schultz developed the "Next Generation IMC Approach", which was designed to fulfill the new requirements of addressing consumers (Schultz, 2003). This shows that changes in consumer behavior and technological progress have led to a constant development of new concepts and a continuous evolution of the IMC field (Kliatchko, 2005). As a result, the former marketing-centric IMC approach developed into a more general, organizational approach (Rehman et al., 2022). Today's IMC concepts therefore not only consider IMC as a sub-area of marketing, but also involve the whole organization into IMC to ensure even greater effectiveness of communication (Kliatchko & Schultz, 2014; Luxton et al., 2017; Tafesse & Kitchen, 2016). This following definition of IMC takes into account the complex nature of IMC and will be used for the course of this work:

“IMC is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs“ (Kliatchko, 2008, p. 140).

As in the past, there is no single correct IMC concept today. This means that every researcher has a slightly different view of IMC. Even the currently most important representatives, such as Philip Kitchen or Jerry Kliatchko, have different approaches and perspectives on IMC. Kitchen emphasizes this heterogeneity of IMC in an article as follows: “It would be impossible to find two teachers of IMC presenting the same materials, the same way, anywhere in the world... and this is GOOD” (Kerr et al., 2023, p. 190). Instead, there are a variety of different approaches and perspectives focusing on different aspects in IMC research.

Kitchen, for example, places a strong focus on continuous innovation and adaptation. Building on this, he sees the central aspect of IMC in the consistency of communication in a constantly changing marketing environment (Kitchen et al., 2008; Kitchen & Proctor, 2015; Kitchen, 2017). In comparison, Jerry Kliatchko puts a stronger focus on consumers. The creation of relevant values for consumers and the integration of consumer insights in order to convey a consistent message across all communication tools are the central elements of IMC for him (Kliatchko, 2002; Kliatchko, 2005; Kliatchko & Schultz, 2014; Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023). Other key IMC representatives for further research are Don E. Schultz, Vesna Zabkar and Ian Lings.

2.3.1 From Theory to Practice: Building an IMC Plan

As already mentioned, Integrated Marketing Communications is a concept and a process which makes it both theoretical and practical (Duncan & Everett, 1993). IMC as a theoretical concept, its history, the different perspectives and important representatives have already been discussed in the previous sub-chapter. To enable companies to implement IMC in practice, there are numerous frameworks that help with the creation of an IMC Plan. An IMC Plan works as a guideline that defines how the various marketing communications are strategically coordinated and integrated to convey a consistent message (Clow & Baack, 2017). The IMC Plan therefore translates the theoretical concept into a concrete plan for practice. To simplify the creation of an IMC Plan, the literature provides various frameworks that guide through the IMC planning process step by step. Depending on the author, the frameworks are based on different theoretical IMC concepts. The selection of the respective framework depends on the specific use case (Keller, 2016).

The first IMC frameworks emerged in the 2000s. In 2003, Schultz and Schultz proposed a framework based on their „Next Generation IMC Approach”, that consists of the following five steps: 1. Identifying consumers and prospects, 2. Estimating the value of consumers and prospects, 3. Planning communication messages and incentives, 4. Estimating the return on customer investment, and 5. Post programme analysis and future planning (Schultz, 2003; Schultz & Schultz, 2003). This framework was one of the first, which considered tracking performances with a closed-loop system. But this framework was

criticized for focusing too much on the financial aspect of planning and less on creating values for consumers (Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023).

A few years later, Percy published a new framework that took into account the newly changing media landscape and focused more on creating values for consumers (Percy, 2008). This framework consisted the same five steps but with one more pre-step analyzing the media and consumer landscape. Yet this framework was criticized for not focusing enough on the organizational aspect of IMC (Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023).

In the following years, a variety of other frameworks emerged. In 2021, Rishi and Kuthuru published a groundbreaking framework which for the first time specifically addressed the use of social media (Rishi & Kuthuru, 2021). But nevertheless, Kliatchko and Uttamchandani described this framework as not media-neutral, as it focused too heavily on social media (Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023). The two authors then developed the current APTC Framework, which compensates for the weaknesses of earlier concepts with a time-based approach that should be suitable for multiple companies and operations (see Table 1).

| | Percy (2008) | Blakeman (2018) | Rishi & Kuthuru (2021) | APTC Framework (2023) |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Number of steps | 5 (plus 1 pre-step) | 4 | 7 | 4 (various substeps) |
| Explicitly linked to IMC definition or principles | no | no | no | yes |
| Conducts business review | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Provision for identifying problem or opportunity | no | no | no | yes |
| Considers stakeholders | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Considers content | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Considers channels | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Considers results or measurement | no | no | yes | yes |
| Media-neutral | yes | yes | no | yes |
| Iterative | no | no | no | yes |

Table 1 Comparison of IMC Frameworks

Note. Redesigned and adapted from Kliatchko & Uttamchandani (2023)

2.3.2 The APTC IMC Framework

The APTC Framework consists of four consecutive steps: 1. Audit, 2. Problem, 3. Task at hand and 4. Campaign. These four steps also form the acronym for the name of the framework. The aim was to create a framework that could be used both for theoretical teaching purposes and for practical implementation and thus builds a bridge between industry and academia (Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023). By analyzing previous frameworks, Kliatchko and Uttamchandani tried to combine advantages and improvements to develop a relevant and contemporary framework. In creating their framework, the two authors also worked with two senior-level practitioners (a CMO of a tech company and a regional head for brand innovation) to fill the APTC Framework with practical experience.

The result is a well-considered framework to strategically plan IMC, that guides step-by-step through each of the four steps (see Table 2). As usual for Jerry Kliatchko, this framework puts a strong focus on the consumers (Kliatchko, 2002; Kliatchko, 2005; Kliatchko & Schultz, 2014; Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023). In addition, various feedback loops were implemented to make the framework agile and adaptable. The authors also state that the APTC Framework can be applied to both large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), making it applicable for multiple use cases. Each of the four steps is in turn divided into smaller sub-steps (see Table 2).

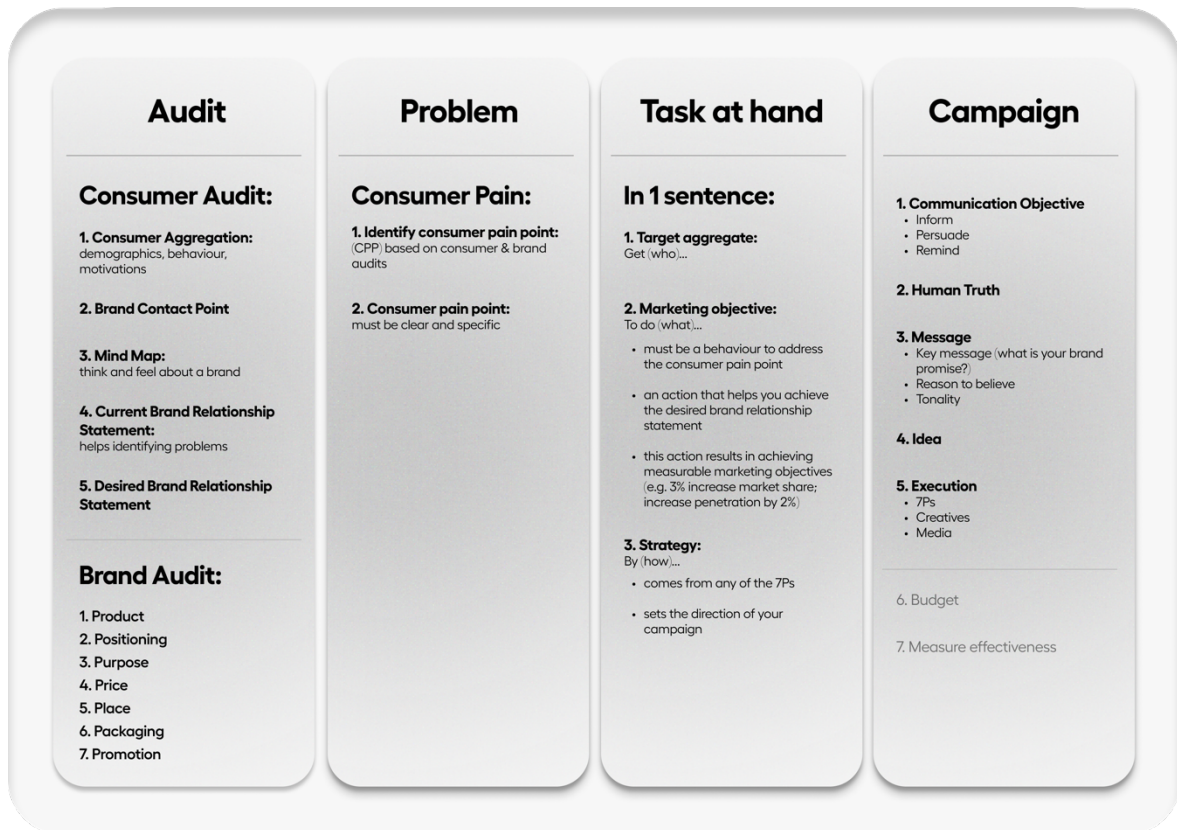


Table 2 *The APTC IMC Framework*

Note. Redesigned and adapted from Kliatchko & Uttamchandani (2023)

2.3.2.1 Step 1: Audit

The first step can be seen as market research and analyzes the business the company is working in. The authors subdivide this step into two parts, the consumer audit and the brand audit. In their article "A new framework for IMC planning", Kliatchko and Uttamchandani provide detailed audit guides for almost every sub-step, allowing companies to follow the framework in the best possible way.

As the APTC Framework is a human- and consumer-centered approach, it starts with analyzing the consumers. The aim of this audit is to gain an in-depth understanding of the consumers' feelings, opinions, values and relationships towards the company. To obtain this information, the consumer audit is divided into five parts:

Aggregation

Classification of consumers into the three different groups current, competitive and emerging aggregates (based on relevant criteria such as demographics, behavior and preferences). The aim of subdividing the consumer base is to gain deeper insights into the different needs and expectations of the various consumer groups.

Brand Contact Points

Analyzing the various points of contact between consumers and the company. Brand contact points could be any form of communication tools like social media or any tool of advertising.

Mind Map

Building on the findings from the previous steps, the information is summarized and presented visually and clearly in a mind map.

Current Brand Relationship Statement

After developing the mind map, a state that captures the current relationship between consumers and the company is being developed.

Desired Brand Relationship Statement

Based on the current relationship statement, a desired relationship statement is formulated. This statement outlines the desired state of the consumer relationship the company wants to achieve.

The consumer audit is followed by the brand audit, which is specifically dedicated to the company. The company, its problems, opportunities and strengths are analyzed using the 7Ps of marketing. The 7P's of marketing are 1. Product, 2. Positioning, 3. Purpose, 4. Price, 5. Place, 6. Packaging and 7. Promotions. This leads to the question why the 7Ps concept is not replaced by a more consumer-oriented concept, such as the 4C's concept. The answer could be that the brand audit focuses exclusively on the company itself, as consumers have already been dealt with in detail in the previous step.

2.3.2.2 Step 2: Problem

The second step of the APTC Framework results from the first Audit Part. By analyzing consumers and the company, possible problems, consumer pain points or even opportunities are revealed, which pave the way for the upcoming IMC Plan. The term "problem" should therefore not be interpreted necessarily negatively, as it can also refer to opportunities or strengths that can be further developed.

2.3.2.3 Step 3: Task at hand

This step is basically the formulation of the previous problem, meaning the task that arises from the problem and should be solved with the IMC Plan. The two authors advise keeping this step as short and concise as possible. They recommend formulating this task within a sentence that answers the questions: Get who? To do what? By how? The answers to these three questions define the target audience, the marketing objective and the strategy how this should be implemented.

2.3.2.4 Step 4: Campaign

While the first three steps can be seen as planning and rather theoretical parts, the Campaign is the final and practical part of the APTC Framework. Having formulated the rough strategy, this step now transfers the theory into practice. The campaign is divided into seven sub-steps in order to implement the strategy as effectively as possible.

Communication Objective

In this first sub-step, the content from the task will be more specified. It is determined which communication objective the IMC campaign should pursue. The two authors divide communication goals into three types: inform, persuade and remind. It is also possible to pursue several communication goals at once.

Human Truth

The human truth can be considered as a concrete consumer insight that could be uncovered in the Audit Part. This can be a deep-rooted, psychological truth about the

consumers (Florin et al., 2007; Moscato, 2018). The human truth fills the formulated marketing objectives with content and provides the campaign with a psychological and emotional dimension.

Message

The message describes how the human truth should be implemented. It defines what exactly the target group should take away from the IMC campaign. The two authors divide this sub-step into three parts: key message (what message exactly should be delivered), reason to believe (why consumers should believe the key message) and tonality (how the key message should be communicated).

Big Idea

The big idea is probably the most important part of the campaign formulation. All previous content and insights are compiled and transformed into a media-neutral creative idea that sets the theme for the campaign. Based on the human truth, the big idea should convey a concrete message that is based on psychological consumer insights. The big idea is therefore the final theoretical planning process before the campaign is practically implemented.

Execution

Once the final big idea has been formulated, it's time to put theory into practice. Concrete communication tools are created to spread the message. Kliatchko and Uttamchandani take a very general approach and do not provide a framework for the organization of communication tools. This leaves room to organize communications in the way that best suits the respective use case. The POEM Framework, for example, would be suitable here to organize the communications into paid, owned and earned media (Chaffey & Smith, 2022; Katz, 2022). In addition to the selection and creation of communications, this step also considers the time coordination and phasing for the release of the tools.

Budget

This sub-step describes the general calculation and overview of all costs arising from the execution part. Production, broadcasting and all other costs associated with the campaign will be taken into account.

Results

The final sub-step is measuring the success and the results of the campaign. The performance of individual tools, such as social media marketing, can be easily measured with digital analytics tools, but this step also describes measuring the success of the campaign as a whole.

2.3.2.5 Addition: Feedback Loops

Kliatchko and Uttamchandani have integrated potential feedback loops after each of the four steps in order to make the IMC planning process more agile. These feedback loops are optional to implement and allow the individual steps to be evaluated retrospectively and improved if necessary. These feedback loops can be very useful if the campaign is being developed by a larger team. After each step, the content can be reviewed within the team making it more transparent. The final step (campaign) is followed by a final feedback loop that reviews the entire IMC Plan. This allows to identify potentials and improvements for a next campaign in order to continuously improve quality and effectiveness of the IMC planning process.

2.4 Preview of the following Work

The overall objective of this project is to create an IMC Plan for the flood protection company rifutec. In this first part, the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications, its development, key proponents and a pioneering and current framework have been introduced to describe the theoretical framework of this work. The APTC Framework was explicitly described, as the subsequent IMC Plan will be created using this framework. It ideally fulfills the requirements for the use case of this work as the framework is applicable

to small and medium-sized enterprises, has a strong focus on creating value for consumers, was developed with practical experience and takes into account the modern media landscape (Florin et al, 2007; Kliatchko, 2002; Kliatchko, 2005; Kliatchko & Schultz, 2014; Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023; Moscato, 2018).

rifutec is operating in a more niche and defined business area. Flood protection systems protect houses and properties from water ingress caused by rainfall and flooding. Severe rainfall and flooding are highly current issues that affect almost all regions of the world and are closely linked to climate change (Ashley et al., 2020; Marx et al., 2021; Wehrli et al., 2019). To ensure that the content for the final IMC Plan is based on facts and accuracy, it is essential to take a closer look at this area ranging from climate change to heavy rainfall and flooding. For this reason, this communication-oriented theoretical review is followed by another literature review that analyzes the context in which the final IMC Plan will operate. In order to keep these two chapters separate and to differentiate them, this previous chapter is described as the "Theoretical Review" and the following chapter as "Contextual Review".

3 Contextual Review: The Connection between Climate Change and Flooding

The previous chapter (theoretical review) established the basic understandings of marketing communication and explored different perspectives and approaches on the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). After establishing the theoretical foundation on marketing communications, the following chapter deals with the scientific background of flooding and aims to provide a content connection between climate change and flooding. It discusses the origins and impacts of flooding in the broader context of climate change, providing a deeper understanding of the increasing frequency flooding events. The chapter will start with a general introduction into climate change, considering the concepts of global warming and the greenhouse effect. After this thematization the chapter will continue with the specific field of flooding also highlighting and discussing one specific case study.

3.1 Climate Change

The Earth, home of humanity and many other species is currently experiencing significant environmental changes, known as climate change. The term “climate change” has become omnipresent in discussions all over the world via various media channels. In general, climate change describes long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns (United Nations, n.d.). These changes are part of the natural ecosystem and evolution of the planet (British Geological Survey, 2021).

But the current weather changes are no longer exclusively natural as they are primarily driven by human activities (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). Human activities that enhance the climate change can be for example burning of fossil fuels or deforestation processes (Marx et al., 2021; Maslin, 2004). These activities led to a range of climatic changes that are now predominantly anthropogenic (Abhijeet et al. 2023; United Nations, n.d.). Resulting from this human-induced climate change the Earth has experienced a significant increase in average temperatures, with recent years being among the hottest ever (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023b). This warming trend

is contributing to various environmental impacts, like rising sea levels or more frequent and severe weather (Parmesan et al., 2022; Abbass et al., 2022).

3.1.1 Global Warming

The most significant and threatening consequence of climate change are increasing global temperatures (Marx et al., 2021; Maslin, 2004). This temperature increase is commonly referred to as “global warming” (European Commission, n.d.-a). While the term climate change broadly describes the shifts in weather and temperature patterns over time, global warming can be quantified using the global mean surface temperature (GMST). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines this temperature as the average increase in both surface air and sea surface temperatures, measured over a global 30-year period (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). To accurately measure global warming, the GMST from the pre-industrial period (1850-1900) is compared to current GMST levels. This comparison allows for precise measurement of the temperature rise resulting from global warming. Given this brief explanation of the global mean surface temperature (GMST), it is important to highlight that the GMST has increased by 1.07°C between the pre-industrial period (1850-1900) and the decade 2010-2019 due to human activities (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023a). But this value represents a general average. Numerous regions have experienced significantly higher temperature increases. Approximately 20-40% of the global population has already faced temperature increases exceeding 1.5°C (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022).

The impact of rising temperatures is already evident through an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as longer and more intense droughts and heavy rainfalls (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023c). Additionally, sea level rise is causing coastal flooding and habitat loss (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023c). Agricultural sectors are facing significant challenges, including reduced crop yields and heightened food security concerns. Moreover, health impacts are becoming more pronounced, with a rise in heat-related illnesses and the spread of diseases (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023c).

If GMST continues to exceed the 1.5°C threshold, the IPCC predicts extreme intensified weather shifts and effects (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). This includes even more frequent and severe heatwaves, storms, and droughts, which will significantly impact ecosystems, human health, and infrastructure. Sea level rise will lead to increased flooding and erosion. A substantial loss of biodiversity is anticipated and many terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species will struggle to adapt to the rapid climate changes, with coral reefs expected to decline by 70-90% (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022).

3.1.2 Greenhouse Effect

The continuous rise in global mean surface temperature (GMST) is primarily due to an increased concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, overpopulation, and various industrial processes (Maslin, 2004). Greenhouse gases include Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), emitted through the burning of fossil fuels, solid waste, trees, and other biological materials; Methane (CH₄), released during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil; Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), emitted from agricultural/industrial activities and Fluorinated Gases, which are synthetic gases used in various industrial applications (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2024). Why these greenhouse gases remain in the Earth's atmosphere and why exactly they cause global warming can be traced back to the greenhouse effect (see Figure 1). The greenhouse effect allows the Earth to retain heat from the sun. Solar radiation reaches the Earth's atmosphere, where one-third is reflected back into space, and two-thirds are absorbed, warming the planet (Romm, 2016). The Earth then sends this absorbed energy as infrared radiation back to space, which is absorbed by the greenhouse gases. This process retains heat within the atmosphere, preventing it from escaping back into space (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2024).

In general greenhouse gases are natural and play a crucial role in maintaining the Earth's temperature. Without greenhouse gases, the Earth's surface would be too cold to sustain most forms of life (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2024).

But human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and overpopulation significantly intensify this greenhouse effect (Maslin, 2004). These activities increase the concentration of greenhouse gases like Carbon Dioxide, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide. Consequently, more heat is trapped in the atmosphere (European Commission, n.d.-a).

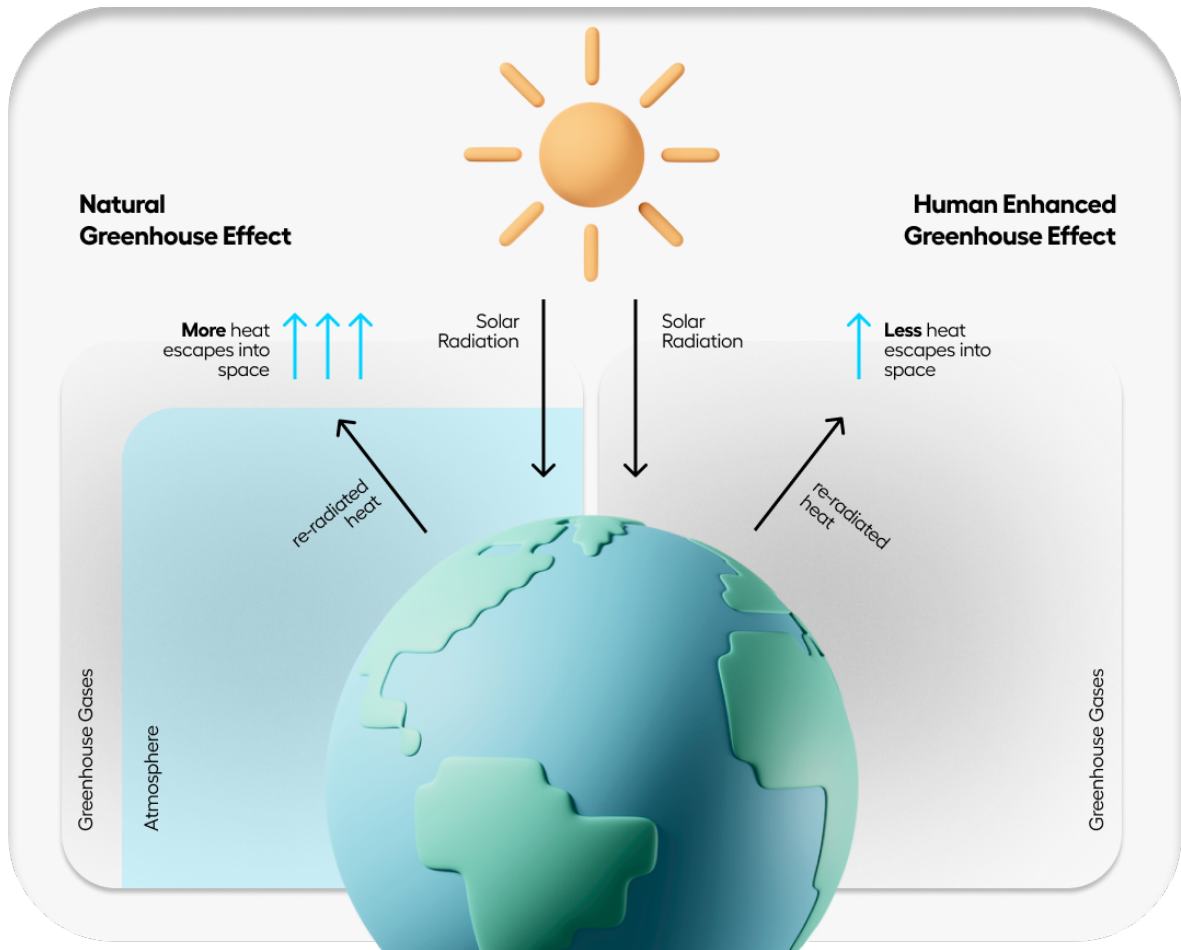


Figure 1 *The Human-Enhanced Greenhouse Effect*

Note. Redesigned and adapted from Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (n.d.)

The figure above illustrates the human-enhanced greenhouse effect compared to the naturally occurring greenhouse effect. It demonstrates that due to increased greenhouse gases from human activities, less heat escapes into space. Consequently, more heat is trapped within the Earth's atmosphere, leading to an overall warming of the planet.

The rise in temperatures driven by an increased concentration of greenhouse gases has profound and multifaceted impacts on weather patterns and the environment. These

impacts are evident both in the long term and short term. Long-term effects of global warming include the melting of polar ice sheets, rising sea levels and land loss, which pose significant challenges for the future stability of the Earth's ecosystems (Parmesan et al., 2022). In the short term, climate change manifests in more frequent and severe extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding, directly affecting present (Parmesan et al., 2022).

While extreme weather events in general are naturally occurring phenomena, their frequency and characteristics have significantly changed due to global warming (European Commission, n.d.-b; Marx et al., 2021). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, both the occurrence and intensity of these events have sharply increased compared to pre-industrial times (Marx et al., 2021; Wehrli et al., 2019). Extreme weather events encompass various types of severe weather patterns, including heatwaves, prolonged droughts, intense storms, and flooding (Clarke et al., 2022; Marx et al., 2021). A comprehensive analysis of each type of extreme weather event would go beyond the scope of this work. Given that the primary objective of this study is to develop an Integrated Marketing Communications Plan for a waterproofing company, the focus is on flooding.

3.2 Flooding

The rise in global temperatures leads to a significant change in frequency and intensity of temperature extremes. While cold extremes become less common heat extremes become more common (Clarke et al., 2022). This rise in heat extremes results in more intense heatwaves and droughts in the summer, along with significant changes in rainfall patterns in the winter and spring (Ashley et al., 2020; Blöschl et al., 2019; Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012; Rousi et al., 2021). These rainfall changes are characterized by more frequent and intense rainfall, and at the same time decreasing snowfall (Rousi et al., 2021). As temperatures rise, snow melts faster and earlier in the year, which contributes to increased water volumes in rivers and streams. In addition, the relationship between temperature rise and atmospheric water storage capacity is particularly significant. For every degree of

temperature increase, the atmosphere's capacity to hold water vapor increases by approximately 7% (Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012). This increased water storage capacity means that the atmosphere can hold more moisture, which leads to more frequent and intense rainfall events (Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012). In addition, the trend of global warming is closely connected to rising sea levels (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023b; Marx et al., 2021). The combination of increasing temperatures, increasing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels leads to a common natural disaster - flooding (Ashley et al., 2020; Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012; Rousi et al., 2021).

The term flooding generally refers to the phenomenon where water levels surpass the natural boundaries and overflow areas that are typically dry (Luino, 2016). This can occur in natural landscapes or regions protected by artificial structures such as banks or barriers (Luino, 2016). Flooding is regarded as one of the most dangerous natural hazards globally due to its extensive impacts on various systems and the immense destructive power of water pressure (Duijndam et al., 2023). The consequences of flooding can be severe, affecting ecosystems, infrastructure, and human communities (Duijndam et al., 2023). The causes of flooding are diverse, making a detailed examination of the various types important. Flooding can be broadly categorized into the two main types flash flooding and river flooding.

3.2.1 Flash Flooding

The first type is called flash flooding or flash floods. Flash flooding happens as a result of exceptionally heavy but short rainfall or as a result of thunderstorms accompanied by rainfall (Gaumé et al., 2009; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-a). Flash flooding especially impacts urban and populated regions, where impervious surfaces prevent the absorption of water, so that water drains very quickly into low-lying areas (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-a). The effects of climate change are increasing the frequency and intensity of rainfall all over the world, making flash floods more frequent and severe (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-a). Consequently, flash flooding can potentially occur anywhere in the world at any time (Ali et al., 2017).

The occurrence and intensity of flash flooding depend on various factors. The two main factors are rainfall intensity and rainfall duration (Lóczy et al., 2012; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-c). Rainfall intensity refers to the rate at which the rain falls, typically measured in millimeters per hour (Lóczy et al., 2012). It quantifies the volume of rainfall that falls over a specific period, indicating how heavy the rainfall is at that given time. In contrast, the rainfall duration refers to the time span during which the rainfall occurs (Lóczy et al., 2012). The heavier the rainfall intensity and the longer the rainfall duration, the more likely and severe flash floods are (Lóczy et al., 2012).

Ali et al. (2017) determined that rainfalls with more than 100 mm within six hours poses a significant risk of triggering flash flooding. Generally, flash floods can be seen as a direct consequence of rainfall with exceptionally high intensity (Lóczy et al., 2012; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-c). Despite the advances in weather technology, forecasting random heavy rainfalls still remains a complicated challenge due to the short period of time in which these events happen (usually within six hours) making flash floods unpredictable and dangerous (Ali et al., 2017).

3.2.2 River Flooding

The second type of flooding is river flooding. This type of flooding is characterized by water exceeding the boundaries of a river which then overflows surrounding dry areas (Alifu et al., 2022; Blöschl et al., 2019; USGS, 2022). The main cause of river flooding is heavy and long-lasting rainfall (USGS, 2022). Continuous rainfall causes the water level in a river to rise permanently, preventing the water levels from receding. As soon as the water exceeds the river level, the surrounding areas are flooded (Blöschl et al., 2019). Heavy snowmelt can also be a trigger that causes the water level in a river to rise and can no longer be maintained (USGS, 2022).

Different from flash floods, which occur within 6 hours and are triggered by short-term rainfall events, river flooding is primarily driven by sustained heavy rainfall over an extended period (Alifu et al., 2022; USGS, 2022). This differentiation highlights a key difference between the two types: while flash floods depend on both the intensity and the duration of the rainfall, river floods are primarily dependent on rainfall intensity (Alifu et

al., 2022; USGS, 2022). Consequently, river floods can persist for several days or even weeks, posing long-term risks to affected areas (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-b; USGS, 2022). Geographically, river floods typically occur near rivers or lakes making cities and settlements close to large water bodies particularly vulnerable to river flooding (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, n.d.-b).

3.2.3 Impacts and Consequences of Flooding

After broadly explaining the two different types of flooding and how they occur, the following discusses the consequences and impacts flooding is having on different systems. These impacts include economic impacts and psychological impacts (Duijndam et al., 2023; Kirch et al., 2005).

3.2.3.1 Economic Impacts of Flooding

Economic impacts of flooding include extensive financial losses resulting from damage to houses, urban areas, and infrastructure such as roads, bridges and vehicles (Duijndam et al., 2023; Kirch et al., 2005; Diakakis et al., 2020).

The total economic losses caused by extreme weather events in the European Union between 1980 and 2022 have been estimated at 650 billion euros (European Environment Agency, 2023-a). Flooding is assumed to account for 43% of this total (European Environment Agency, 2023-a). Among the various natural disasters, the most costly event during this period was a heavy flooding in Germany and Belgium in 2021, which resulted in economic losses amounting to 44 billion euros (European Environment Agency, 2023-a). To better understand the economic consequences of flooding, Diakakis et al. (2020) developed a comprehensive approach categorizing economic flood impacts into four distinct groups: impacts on the built environment, impacts on human-made mobile objects, impacts on the natural environment and impacts on the human population. Each category is followed by a severity scale ranking the severity of damage caused by flooding from one to ten. This framework helps in assessing the extent of flood impacts. Diakakis et al. created a severity scale for each of the four categories, but in the following only the severity scale

for the first category (Impacts on the built environment) is presented, as this is relevant for the following work.

Impacts on the Built Environment

The aim of this category is to describe the different impacts of flood damage on the built environment at both the macro and micro levels. This category is including impacts on public infrastructure, focusing on the effects of flooding on public assets such as roads, bridges, utilities and impacts on individual buildings, addressing the impacts on private properties, including residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. To evaluate the scale and scope of the damage caused by floods to different aspects of the built environment, Diakakis et al. (2020) developed a scale. This scale divides the level of damage into 10 levels of severity, ranging from minor impacts such as superficial water damage to catastrophic destruction requiring complete rebuilding (see Table 3). This table can be helpful to assess the strength and extent of a flooding event and will be applied later in the work to analyze a specific flooding event.

| Class | Description |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Yard/Garden/Piloti suffer inundation on individual buildings. Inundation occurs of road or sidewalk surface. Low water crossings are flooded. No structural damages appear on any infrastructure or individual buildings. |
| 2 | Flooding limited to basements. Only ground-based equipment and furniture affected. Underground passage/traffic lights out of order. Culverts and sewerage affected or blocked. No structural damages appear on any infrastructure or individual buildings. |
| 3 | Ground floors suffer flooding affecting only ground-based household furniture or equipment or floors and floor tiles. Absorbed moisture on walls. Basement flooding affects higher positioned equipment or furniture, central heating unit, and relevant equipment/boiler. Roads not passable due to inundation. Terminal stations flooded. No structural damages appear on any infrastructure or individual buildings. |
| 4 | Ground floor flooding affecting higher positioned equipment or furniture. Yard walls and fences suffer structural damage. Traffic lights and road signage suffer damages. Single span bridges inundate. Railway lines not passable due to inundation or debris. Bridges suffer damages at railing installations, telecommunication networks interrupted/power lines |
| 5 | Damages on wall coverings/plaster/veneer/false ceilings and walls, Garage doors, window frames and floor tiles/1st floors suffer flooding. Roads suffer damages due to asphalt surface or foundations scouring/levees scoured/artificial, reinforced concrete (RC) river banks suffer damages/water & sewerage mains break |
| 6 | Structural damage visible, subsidence or deformation of building elements. Roads together with their foundation suffer complete destruction/Small footbridges collapse/Rail lines suffer damages/Levees break |
| 7 | Partial structural damage of the building, deformation of supporting elements/Buildings made of wood or stone collapse |
| 8 | Complete collapse of RC or metal buildings. Single-span bridges suffer complete collapse/Damages in RC constructions of ports, docks/Partial damages in elements of large buildings (e.g. industrial), power plants, refineries, nuclear plants/ Multi-span bridges suffer partial collapses. |
| 9 | Large building (e.g. industrial) complete collapse. Multi-span bridges suffer complete collapses. |
| 10 | Large dams break/significant parts of large power plants, refineries, nuclear plants suffer complete collapse. |

Table 3 *Flooding Impact on the Built Environment*

Note. Redesigned and adapted from Diakakis et al. (2020)

Impacts on Human-Made Mobile Objects

The second category covers the impact of flooding on human-made mobile objects, which include household items, vehicles, and various other belongings. This category encompasses a wide range of objects, from small and lightweight items such as cardboard boxes and flower pots to larger and more substantial objects such as cars or buses (Diakakis et al., 2020).

Impacts on the Natural Environment

This category describes the impact of floods on nature. The impacts on the natural environment are divided into four different categories: vegetation, agriculture, geomorphology and pollution (Diakakis et al., 2020).

Impacts on the Human Population

This category includes any impact of flooding on human societies and their health. Such impacts can range from just the simple observation of flooding to serious consequences such as injuries and deaths. This category is very complex and includes a whole spectrum of impacts on individuals or groups of people who, for example, just become aware of flooding, suffer minor injuries, need emergency evacuation, become trapped, require rescue operations, suffer injuries of varying severity and also deaths (Diakakis et al., 2020).

3.2.3.2 Psychological Impacts of Flooding

In addition to economic impacts, flooding can also have psychological impacts on people. These impacts could include longer-term threats, such as mental health disorders, for example through the loss of property, homes or even family members (Kirch et al., 2005). Recent research has highlighted the psychological issues associated with the effects of flooding (Fernandez et al, 2015; Foudi et al, 2017; French et al, 2019; Laudan et al, 2020; Stanke et al, 2012). People who are or were directly affected by flooding often struggle with a variety of mental health issues, ranging from increased anxiety to depression (Foudi et al, 2017; French et al, 2019). In 2015, Fernandez et al. conducted a systematic mapping review that analyzed published scientific literature in five languages to investigate the relationship between floods and mental health. The results of this mapping review showed different dimensions of mental wellbeing in the context of flood events. The three main findings of the review are highlighted below (see Figure 2).

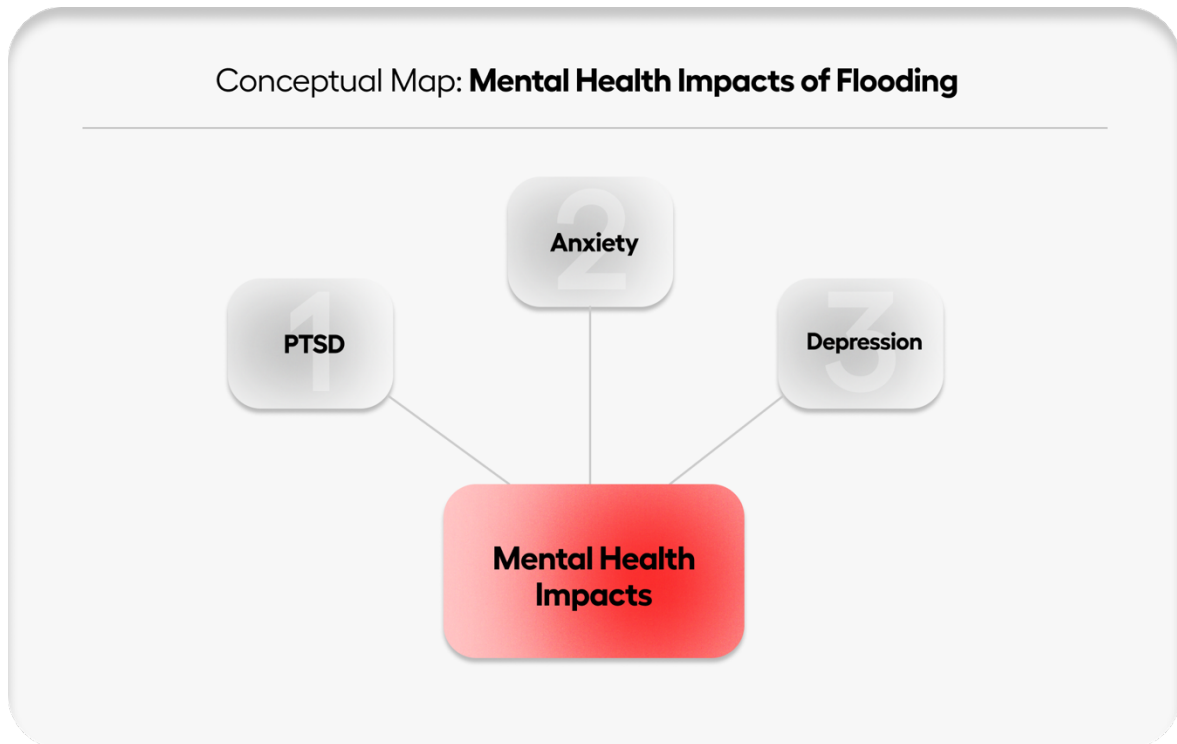


Figure 2 *Mental Health Impacts of Flooding*

Note. Redesigned and adapted from Fernandez et al. (2015)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

People affected by flooding often struggle with traumatic experiences, such as experiencing property damage, displacement or the loss of friends and family members. The consequences of such events often triggered the development of PTSD (Alderman et al., 2013; Azuma et al., 2013; North et al., 2004). To give an example, one study investigates the various health impacts experienced by residents following the significant flooding event in Brisbane, Australia from 2011. The results show that many residents experienced long-term mental health issues as a result of the disaster, including a significant rise in PTSD and depression (Alderman et al., 2013).

A case study conducted by French et al. in 2019 analyzed another flooding event in Southern England and provided further valuable insight into the ongoing psychological impacts of flooding. The study highlights the profound impact of flooding on mental health, showing increased levels of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in individuals affected by flooding (French et al., 2019).

Anxiety

Another psychological reaction to flooding is an increased level of anxiety in affected individuals and communities. Increased rates of anxiety disorder and panic attacks are often reported in flood-affected areas (Azuma et al., 2013; Wind et al., 2013). A study investigated the psychological effects of flood events in Japan between 2004 and 2010. The results clearly showed that the incidence of mental disorders and anxiety was significantly high six months after the flood event (Azuma et al., 2013).

Depression

The review found a notable increase in depression symptomatology in individuals affected by flooding. Flood-related stressors, such as financial loss, displacement and social disruption, can trigger depressive symptoms (Jones et al., 2011; North et al., 2004; Wind et al., 2013). In a study in Northern India, around 300 participants who had experienced a flood disaster were compared with 300 participants who had not been affected. The results showed that the affected group exhibited large to very large differences to the comparison group in terms of the symptoms of anxiety and depression (Wind et al., 2013).

Analyzing the causes of these psychological impacts, studies indicate that especially older adults are more susceptible than children to experiencing mental health problems following flood events (Collins et al., 2012). The extent of property and possession loss has been identified as a significant factor worsening psychological issues (Bokszczanin, 2007; Collins et al., 2012; Peek-Asa et al., 2012). People who suffered financial losses or the destruction of their homes due to flooding had higher levels of mental health problems, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Bei et al., 2013; Paranjothy et al., 2011). These findings highlight the profound impact that material and financial losses have on mental health. Given the intensifying effects of climate change and global warming, which are contributing to more frequent and severe rainfall events, it is anticipated that an increasing portion of the population will be exposed to flooding in the future.

3.2.4 Flooding in Germany: A Case Study of the 2021 Ahr Valley Flood

The Ahr Valley flood in July 2021 is considered one of the most devastating natural disasters in Germany's history. At least 185 people died in the flood of the century on the River Ahr in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia (Seidel, 2023). Approximately 9000 buildings and over 100 bridges were damaged, affecting about 17.000 people losing their home and property (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024).

The catastrophic flood event in the Ahr Valley occurred on the night of July 14-15, 2021. Within a 24-hour period, regions around the Ahr River received between 100 and 150 liters of rain per square meter (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024). The heavy rainfall began around midday on July 14, with the heaviest rainfall occurring in the first 10 to 18 hours, leading to a rapid rise in the water levels of the river and its surrounding tributaries (Seidel, 2023). Just a few hours after the rain began, the water level had risen to around 1.4 meters. By the same evening, the water level had surged to over 6 meters, flooding most of the houses in the affected areas. The intense rainfall caused widespread power outages, and critical infrastructure was destroyed or swept away. Residents were forced to evacuate their homes. A few hours later, homes within a 250-meter radius of the Ahr were submerged, and the water level exceeded to over 7 meters, even after the rain had stopped.

By the next day, the flood response efforts ranged over 40 kilometers on both sides of the river, with more than 1.300 people reported missing. Many individuals were evacuated and continued to be searched for in the ensuing chaos. On the evening of July 15, the water levels began to recede and the full extent of the devastation became visible. Approximately 9,000 buildings were destroyed, and at least 185 people lost their lives, with many more injured and hospitalized (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024).

This flooding event is considered one of the worst natural disasters in Germany's history (Seidel, 2023). The severity of the disaster was attributed to a combination of flash flooding and river flooding. The intense rainfall over a short period, a characteristic of flash flooding, caused the rivers to rise rapidly. The combination of torrential rain and overflowing rivers worsened the situation significantly. Furthermore, the towns along the river are situated in a valley, preventing the water from dispersing. Despite weather reports and disaster warnings predicting heavy rainfalls, the magnitude of the event was

unforeseen (Klimaanpassung, Hochwasser und Resilienz, 2022). The highest warnings were issued during the flooding, but by then, many areas were already flooded (Seidel, 2023). It remains unclear why the initial forecasts were not taken more seriously and why a more severe threat warning was not issued before (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024; Seidel, 2023). The characteristics of flash flooding, which involve intense rainfall over a short duration, make accurate prediction challenging, even with advanced technology (Ali et al., 2017).

Even three years after the catastrophic flooding in the Ahr Valley, the full extent of the damage continues to emerge. The flood disaster destroyed over 9,000 buildings, along with significant infrastructure, including roads and bridges. The total damages are estimated to exceed 40 billion euros, with only a small fraction covered by insurance (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024). The impact was felt across various sectors, affecting businesses, private individuals, and public infrastructure (Handelsblatt, 2021).

Approximately 17.000 private individuals lost their homes and properties (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024). Half of the affected households reported damages exceeding 100.000 euros, and nearly every household experienced water ingress in their basements (Klimaanpassung, Hochwasser und Resilienz, 2022). The rebuilding and damage compensation process has been slow, due to the complex and time-consuming application procedures. Assessing the damage requires professional evaluations, but many private individuals lack the financial resources to afford these assessments due to their significant losses caused by the flood. Despite these challenges, there has been a substantial support, with 655 million euros donated by private individuals and companies to aid recovery efforts (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024).

When evaluating the severity of the Ahr Valley flooding on the severity scale, it can be classified at level 9, indicating "Large building complete collapse", the second-highest severity level possible (Diakakis et al., 2020). It should also be noted that this extreme flood event (level 9) only occurred within a few hours and caused damage amounting to 40 billion euros.

In addition to the significant economic losses, the Ahr Valley flood has left enduring psychological impacts on the affected population. Analyses of health insurance billing data reveal a marked increase in services related to mental and behavioral disorders following the event (Augustin et al., 2024). Mental health issues have been a primary focus of treatment due to the aftermath of the flooding (Augustin et al., 2024).

A survey conducted in 2022, which included 516 participants who experienced the flood, provides further insights into the psychological impacts. The results indicated that 15.6% of respondents were still unable to return to their homes (Klimaanpassung, Hochwasser und Resilienz, 2022). 28% of the respondents exhibited signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a strong contrast to the general population's PTSD prevalence of 1.5% (Klimaanpassung, Hochwasser und Resilienz, 2022). Additionally, 42% of participants reported being strongly or very strongly affected by the event and the memories of it. Moreover, 15% of the respondents reported a death in their family or among friends due to the flood (Klimaanpassung, Hochwasser und Resilienz, 2022).

These findings underscore the severe and lasting psychological effects of flooding. The correlation between economic losses, such as the destruction of homes and property, and psychological disorders is particularly evident. The mental health impacts observed in this event are consistent with those already discussed, reaffirming that economic losses significantly contribute to enduring psychological distress.

3.3 Summary of the Connection between Climate Change and Flooding

The contextual review provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate connections and interactions between climate change, global warming, and the increasing frequency and severity of flooding events. This detailed examination lays a robust foundation for the development of the IMC Plan for rifutec. Given the complexity of information encompassed in this chapter, the following graphic is designed to summarize and simplify the key insights (see Figure 3).

Context Review summarized

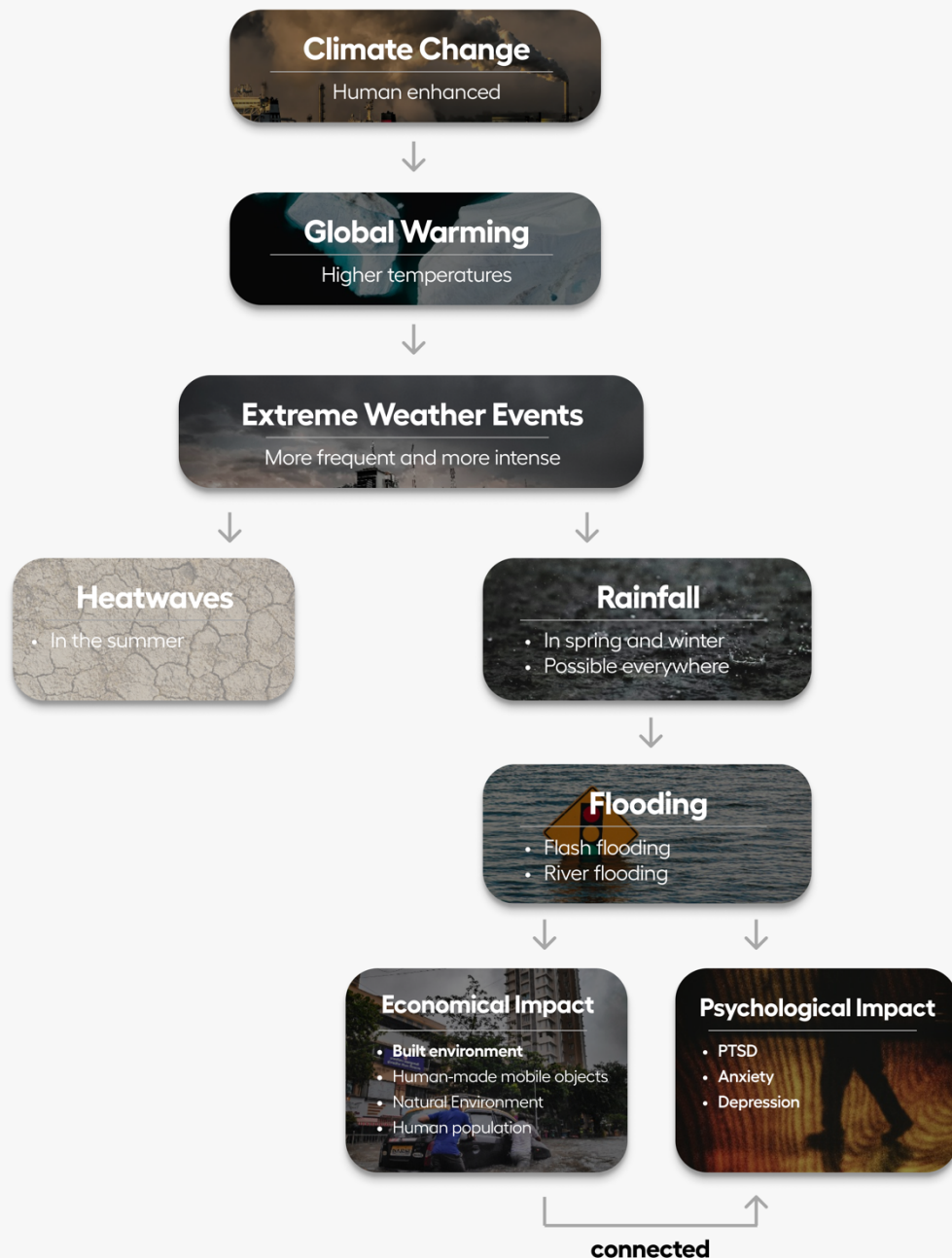


Figure 3 Context Review summarized

Note. Self-elaboration

The figure visualizes the close relationship between climate change and its impact on flooding events. It highlights how the human-enhanced climate change, primarily driven by activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, is causing a significant rise in global temperatures (Marx et al., 2021; Maslin, 2004). This temperature increase, resulting from the human-enhanced greenhouse effect, is commonly referred to as the term global warming (European Commission, n.d.-a; Romm, 2016).

Rising global temperatures are leading to an increase in extreme weather events (European Commission, n.d.-b; Marx et al., 2021; Wehrli et al., 2019). This phenomenon manifests in more intense heatwaves and droughts, particularly during the summer months (Clarke et al., 2022; European Environment Agency, 2023-b; García-León et al., 2021). At the same time, global warming is causing heavier and more frequent rainfall events, which are especially prevalent in Europe during the spring and winter months (Ashley et al., 2020; Blöschl et al., 2019; Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012; Rousi et al., 2021).

The increased frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events result in a rise in flooding events, including both flash floods and river floods, which have caused economic damage to infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities in recent years (Ashley et al., 2020; Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012; Rousi et al., 2021). Central and Northwestern Europe are particularly vulnerable to catastrophic flooding (European Commission, nd-b). These flood disasters not only bring significant economic losses but also cause profound psychological effects on the affected populations, including increased incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Alderman et al., 2013; Azuma et al., 2013; French et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2011; North et al., 2004; Wind et al., 2013).

4 Research Design

This section marks an important turning point in this work. While the previous chapters laid the theoretical and content-related foundations for this work, the focus is now on a more practice-oriented approach. The overarching aim of this project is to develop an IMC Plan for the flood protection company rifutec. The following section therefore explains how this plan is to be structured and which conceptual framework is to be used. The creation of the plan also requires precise information about rifutec, its products, target groups, goals and other relevant areas. For this reason, this section also describes how the required data and information about rifutec was collected. After outlining the conceptual framework, methodology and data collection, the creation of the final IMC Plan can begin.

4.1 Conceptual Framework

In the previous section, it was mentioned that the following IMC Plan will be based on the APTC Framework by Kliatchko and Uttamchandani. This framework has already been thoroughly discussed in the theoretical review (see Chapter 2.3.2).

The choice for this framework is based on several reasons. The APTC Framework is an extremely flexible concept that can be applied to multiple areas. The authors describe it as a bridge between industry and academia (Kliatchko & Uttamchandani, 2023). Given that this project is being developed as part of a master's thesis and will also serve as a pilot campaign for a company, this aspect was particularly important. Another crucial factor is that the framework can be used regardless of the size of the company. It can be used by large companies as well as small and medium-sized companies. As rifutec is a small company, this aspect was also important. In addition, the APTC Framework is a very contemporary model. It was published in 2023 and takes into account the latest developments in the media landscape, which older frameworks often fail to do. But probably the most important reason for choosing the APTC Framework is its consumer orientation. As usual for Jerry Kliatchko, this framework is strongly focused on the consumer's point of view. Given that flooding has significant economic and psychological effects on individuals, the promotion of flood protection measures should also be centered around the people affected.

The structure and individual phases of the APTC Framework have already been presented in detail in the theoretical review (see Chapter 2.3.2). Therefore, the framework will not be described again at this point.

4.2 Method

As the audit part of the APTC Framework analyzes both the company and its customers, in-depth insights and information are necessary. To ensure this, two different data collections were carried out. The first data collection consisted of an in-depth interview with the CEO and founder of the company. This data collection was focused on the consumer and brand audit. The second data collection was a content analysis of rifutec's external communication, with a special focus on the brand audit. Both data collections were closely aligned with the APTC Framework and were prepared to ensure that the information obtained could be used specifically in the audit part of the IMC Plan.

4.2.1 Primary Data Collection: Interview with the CEO and Founder of rifutec

The primary data collection was conducted through a structured in-depth interview with the CEO and founder of rifutec. The aim was to gain first hand and inside knowledge of the company in order to answer questions on all different phases of the audit part. For this reason, the questions were prepared to ensure that the necessary information on all phases of the audit part was available after the interview (see Table 4). For reasons of efficiency, only one in-depth interview was conducted, which was divided into three different parts.

The first part focused on gaining general knowledge about rifutec as a company and its services. The second part was dedicated to the consumer audit component of the APTC Framework, using two comprehensive analysis guides developed by the authors. The third part dealt with the brand audit component, which was also based on a guide from the APTC Framework that actively explores the 7Ps of rifutec. Each part of the interview was accompanied by predefined questions tailored to the specific focus. The interview used a

semi-structured format that allowed the interviewer to dynamically adapt the script by asking additional questions, changing the order of questions or influencing the discourse if necessary. The interview was conducted via video call, recorded and then transcribed for further analysis. The entire interview had a length of approximately 50 minutes. The full transcript of the interview can be found in the appendix of this work.

| APTC Part | Objective | Question |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. General Audit</p> | <p>General information about the brand rifutec to get deeper insights</p> | <p>G1: What is the approximate ratio of B2C and B2B requests/orders?</p> <p>G2: At what time of year/month do you receive the most inquiries on average?</p> <p>G3: Are you receiving more requests after severe weather disasters (disasters that are reported in the media)?</p> <p>G4: From which area do you receive the most inquiries/orders (B2C, e.g. construction sector)?</p> <p>G5: Are you getting more inquiries during heavy rainfall events?</p> <p>G6: Are you receiving more inquiries after heavy rainfall events?</p> <p>G7: How does a typical customer contact work until it is converted to an order?</p> <p>G8: What is the biggest challenge for rifutec in acquiring new customers?</p> |
| <p>2. Consumer Audit</p> <p>Consumer Aggregation (using the aggregation summary sheet by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani)</p> | <p>Current Aggregates: Demographics</p> | <p>D1: What is the gender of the customer?</p> <p>D2: How old is the customer?</p> <p>D3: Where does the customer live (residence)?</p> <p>D4: What nationality is the customer?</p> <p>D5: What is the approximate education level of the customer?</p> <p>D6: What is the customer's profession?</p> <p>D7: What is the customer's approximate income?</p> <p>D8: What is the customer's marital status?</p> <p>D9: Does the customer have children?</p> <p>D10: Does the customer own a house?</p> |
| | <p>Current Aggregates: Psychographics</p> | <p>P1: How does the customer become aware of rifutec? (Know)</p> <p>P2: Why does the customer finally choose rifutec? (Choose)</p> <p>P3: What does the process look like until the customer chooses rifutec? (Buy)</p> <p>P4: How does the customer use rifutec after placing an order? Are there several consecutive orders per customer?</p> <p>P5: Are the customer's price expectations realistic or lower/higher?</p> <p>P6: What are the most important decision factors from the customer's point of view?</p> |
| | <p>Current Aggregates: Motivations</p> | <p>M1: Do most of the inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house?</p> <p>M2: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you?</p> <p>M3: How does the contact with the customer come about? Acquisition or on the customer's own initiative?</p> <p>M4: How urgent is the customer's request? Prevention/has the damage already occurred?</p> <p>M5: Which object usually needs to be sealed? Which object is most often affected?</p> |
| | <p>Competitive Aggregates: Demographics</p> | <p>D11: Are there any differences to current aggregates? If so, what demographics are different from the current aggregates?</p> |
| | <p>Competitive Aggregates: Psychographics</p> | <p>P7: Why didn't the customer choose rifutec in the end?</p> <p>P8: Are there any customers who were already rifutec customers but switched to the competition for a new order? If so, why?</p> <p>P9: Are the customer's price expectations realistic or lower/higher?</p> |

| | <p>Competitive Aggregates: Motivations</p> | <p>M6: Do most of the inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house?</p> <p>M7: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you?</p> <p>M8: How does the contact with the customer come about? Acquisition or on the customer's own initiative?</p> <p>M9: How urgent is the customer's request? Prevention/has the damage already occurred?</p> <p>M10: Which object usually needs to be sealed? Which object is most often affected?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>Emerging Aggregates: Demographics</p> | <p>D12: Are there any differences to current aggregates? If so, what demographics are different from the current aggregates?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Emerging Aggregates: Psychographics</p> | <p>P10: How should the customer become aware of rifutec? (Know)</p> <p>P11: What should the process look like until the customer decides to buy rifutec?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Emerging Aggregates: Motivations</p> | <p>M11: What is/should be the reason why the customer comes to you? (What is your favorite reason for commissioning?)</p> <p>M12: How urgent should the customer's request be? Prevention/has the damage already occurred?</p> <p>M13: Which object should be sealed? (house, cellar etc.)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Brand Contact Points (using the brand contact audit sheet by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani)</p> | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contact point with the brand</th> <th>Importance (high/low)</th> <th>Impression (+/-)</th> <th>Expectation</th> <th>Experience</th> <th>Message (optional)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>e.g. phone call</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e.g. website</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>etc.</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | | Contact point with the brand | Importance (high/low) | Impression (+/-) | Expectation | Experience | Message (optional) | e.g. phone call | - | - | - | - | - | e.g. website | - | - | - | - | - | etc. | - | - | - | - | - |
| Contact point with the brand | Importance (high/low) | Impression (+/-) | Expectation | Experience | Message (optional) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e.g. phone call | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e.g. website | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| etc. | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>3. Brand Audit (using the brand audit guide by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani)</p> | <p>Product (7Ps)</p> | <p>B1: What is your concrete product/What are your specific products? (can be a tangible product or service)</p> <p>B2: What makes your product different from the competition?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Positioning (7Ps)</p> | <p>B3: What is the rifutec brand DNA?</p> <p>B4: What is the most compelling reason why customers choose rifutec? (It can be a functional or emotional reason, or both)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Purpose (7Ps)</p> | <p>B5: What is the main reason for the existence of the rifutec and its positive impact on the world?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Price (7Ps)</p> | <p>B6: Is your brand priced low, medium, high compared to the competition?</p> <p>B7: Do you have room for price adjustments?</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Place (7Ps)</p> | <p>B8: In which areas is rifutec operating? (only Germany? Only Europe? etc.)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Packaging (adapted to services) (7Ps)</p> | <p>B9: Does rifutec have a certain communication to the outside during the provision of services? (e.g. do rifutec employees wear special outfits during work? Do the vehicles have certain designs that can be traced back to rifutec? etc.)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <p>Promotion (7Ps)</p> | <p><i>Information from brand contact points was used</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 4 Interview Questionnaire

Note. Created by the author

The collected data from the interview is mainly used to ensure a stable audit part. Therefore, this chapter does not contain a typical presentation of results. But before proceeding to the next data collection, there are some interesting main findings from the interview. These findings are especially interesting considering the content of the literature review.

rifutec currently only has three contact points with its customers, the website, telephone and social media, including Instagram and Facebook. The CEO of the company said that no other marketing activities are currently being used. Nevertheless, the company receives many inquiries via the website by contact form and email or directly by telephone call. In most cases, customers actively look for flood protection solutions on the Internet or visit the website as a result of word of mouth from friends. Especially in spring, more people contact the company looking for flood protection solutions for their homes. Storms and heavy rain are almost always the trigger for contact. This information is consistent with the findings from the content review, which revealed that rainfall increases especially in spring and winter. rifutec's management also added that inquiries are now spread over the whole year due to increased rainfall throughout Germany. This information is also consistent with the findings of the content review.

4.2.2 Secondary Data Collection: Analysis of rifutec's current Communication

The secondary data collection included an analysis of the company's current external communication. As the company currently only communicates information on its website, Instagram and Facebook, only these areas could be used, together with Google reviews from previous customers. As with the primary data collection, the collected information is used to develop the IMC Plan and is not explicitly presented in this chapter.

During the secondary data collection, it was noticeable that the company receives consistently positive reviews from customers (between 4 and 5 out of 5 stars), but does not communicate these anywhere on its website. The primary data collection revealed that

word of mouth is an important medium for the company, so it is unusual that no customer reviews are communicated on their website. rifutec uses its two social media accounts (Instagram and Facebook) to present products and to generally spread information on flood-related topics. In contrast, the website is used for the most in-depth information distribution.

4.2.3 Conclusion

The primary and secondary data collections provide relevant information and insights into the company for the creation of the IMC Plan. These two data collections were irreplaceable, especially for the audit part. When analyzing the data, it was noticeable that the company communicates remarkably little with its customers but still receives many inquiries. Although most inquiries are received in spring, the company gets inquiries about flood protection throughout the whole year. The interest in flood protection solutions appears to be very high. The effects of climate change and increasing rainfall are therefore also being noticed by rifutec. As a result, it is likely that the company will receive even more inquiries through targeted communication with consumers. With only four contact points being used so far, which do not include paid advertising, the potential to expand in promotional activities is very high.

This chapter briefly described how the information required for the audit part was collected. In addition, some generally conspicuous findings were outlined. However, these findings represent only a small fraction of the information collected during the data collection. The actual use of all information gathered will follow in the next chapter when the final IMC Plan will be developed.

5 Integrated Marketing Communications Plan

This chapter marks the transition from theory to the practical implementation in this work. The previous sections have described the theoretical foundations and the data collection in detail. This section now applies the information and insights practically to develop an Integrated Marketing Communications Plan. This plan is based on the APTC Framework by Kliatchko and Uttamchandani and will guide step by step through the various phases of the framework. The highlight of this chapter is the presentation of the final IMC campaign for rifutec, which will be developed as the result of this IMC Plan. The IMC campaign is also accompanied by a visual summary that captures the most important results of the campaign. This visual summary is the final outcome of this work, which will also be presented to rifutec's management (see Appendix A)

5.1 Company Overview

Before proceeding through the various steps of the APTC Framework, this sub-chapter provides a general overview of the company to introduce rifutec and its products (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 Overview of rifutec

Note. Self-elaboration

rifutec is a German company that specializes in waterproofing houses and buildings against water damage and external influences. Founded in 1996 in Iserlohn (Germany), rifutec has developed into a medium-sized company with projects covering all parts of Germany. The

company offers three basic services: flood protection, concrete waterproofing and masonry waterproofing. It was agreed with the company's management in advance that this project would only focus on flood protection. Therefore, the other two basic services, concrete waterproofing and masonry waterproofing, are not relevant to this work and are not covered here.

As already highlighted in the contextual review, heavy rainfall can lead to severe flooding (see Figure 3). When these water masses flood buildings, water can enter through openings such as doors, garages or basement windows, causing extensive damage. Flood protection systems exist to prevent this damage. These systems can be installed in a wide variety of building openings, for example in doors, windows or garages. rifutec has developed its own flood protection systems, which are always individually adapted to the size of the opening in the respective application (see Figure 5).

For implementation, a frame system is installed at a suitable location. In the case of a door, this frame system is often installed into the door frame. Once this frame system has been installed, the door can continue to be used as usual and the flood protection can be flexibly inserted into this frame system during rainfall (see Figure 5). This allows the door, garage or window to be used as usual and protects the house from water ingress during rainfall or flooding.

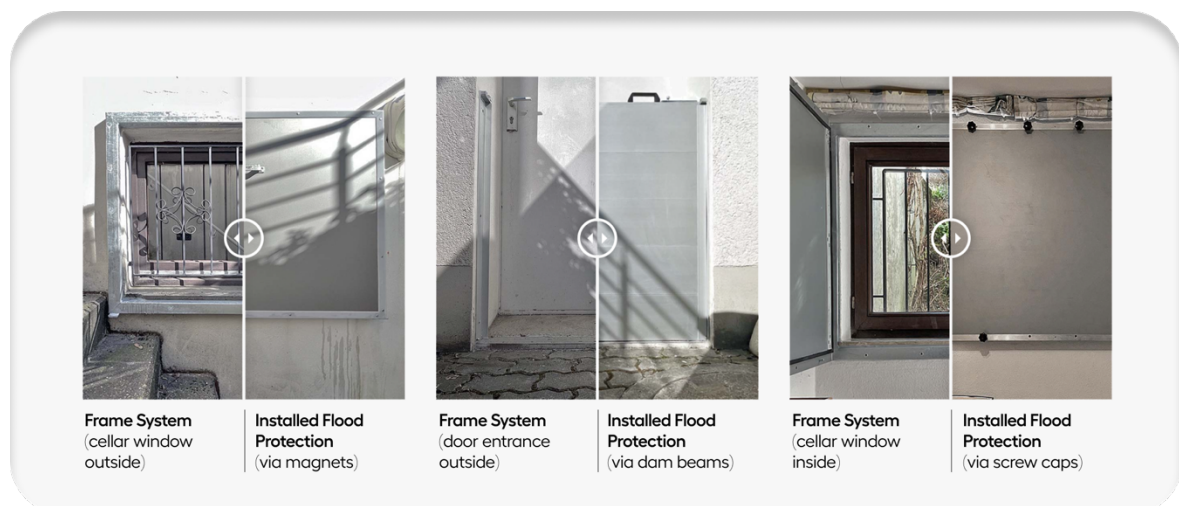


Figure 5 rifutec Flood Protection Systems

Note. Self-elaboration

As Figure 5 shows, rifutec offers flood protection systems for various applications. The picture on the left presents a basement window protection system from the outside. Basement windows are a frequent leak in the house as they are close to the ground. Once the frame system has been installed, the flood protection can simply be attached to it with magnets. But there are also other options for installation. The middle of the picture shows the standard flood protection for doors or other entrances, which is installed into the frame system from above using dam beams. The height of the desired protection can be individually adjusted. In areas at high risk of flooding, higher dimensions are recommended. The right side of the picture shows another use case. In contrast to the other two, this system is installed inside the building. This is often the case when there are no suitable installation options from the outside. The picture presents a cellar window from the inside. Here, the flood protection is installed into the frame system using screw caps. This system offers maximum flexibility, as the flood protection can be installed inside the house without having to leave the house to install the protection.

rifutec offers many other system types. For each application, the rifutec team first analyzes the area to be waterproofed and then recommends a specific system with an ideal solution. Flood protection systems are predominantly purchased by private customers. Although there are also inquiries from construction companies that waterproof new buildings, the ratio between B2C and B2B is around 95% to 5%. Over the last two years, the company has received an increasing number of inquiries for flood protection systems. Considering climate change and increasing global warming, which is reflected in more frequent and heavier rainfall, the number of inquiries is likely to increase further.

5.2 Audit

After the company has been roughly introduced, the implementation of the final IMC Plan can begin. The APTC Framework starts with the audit part. The aim is to create an analysis of the company and its consumers as precise as possible, which may reveal problems,

opportunities, strengths or weaknesses. This part is divided into two components: the consumer audit, analyzing the consumers, and the brand audit, analyzing the company.

5.2.1 Consumer Audit

The consumer audit analyzes all relationships between a company and consumers. For this purpose, this section is divided into five parts, with each part analyzing a different aspect of consumers.

Aggregation

Classification of consumers into the three different groups current, competitive and emerging aggregates (based on relevant criteria such as demographics, behavior and preferences). The aim of subdividing the consumer base is to gain deeper insights into the different needs and expectations of the various consumer groups.

Brand Contact Points

Analyzing the various points of contact between consumers and the company. Brand contact points could be any form of communication tools like social media or any tool of advertising.

Mind Map

Building on the findings from the previous steps, the information is summarized and presented visually and clearly in a mind map.

Current Brand Relationship Statement

After developing the mind map, a state that captures the current relationship between consumers and the company is being developed.

Desired Brand Relationship Statement

Based on the current relationship statement, a desired relationship statement is formulated. This statement outlines the desired state of the consumer relationship the company wants to achieve.

To ensure that the consumer audit is as accurate and detailed as possible, the content will be based on the information and findings from the two data collections (see Chapter 4.2).

5.2.1.1 Consumer Aggregation

rifutec's consumers were divided into three different groups: current aggregates (consumers who actively buy from rifutec), competitive aggregates (consumers who have decided for the competition) and emerging aggregates (potential new consumers the company wants to address). These three groups were analyzed and compared on the basis of demographic, psychographic and motivational characteristics (see Table 5).

| Aggregates | Demographics | Psychographics | Motivations |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Current Aggregates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly male (the person who takes care of the household) • German nationality • Between 40 and 70 years old (often pensioners) • Living anywhere in Germany • Predominantly homeowners • Any kind of profession • Middle class upwards (needs appropriate financial resources to afford flood protection system) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly People who have flood/water damage • Customer becomes aware of rifutec via the Internet (active search for flood protection solution) and through word-of-mouth advertising (Know) • Customer chooses rifutec because it provides an overall solution for the general problem of water damage (Choose) • Until the customer chooses rifutec, he first receives an individual consultation and analysis of the problem, then an offer and then decides either for or against rifutec (Buy) • The customer's price expectations are usually lower than the actual price of rifutec's services • The most important factors from the customer's point of view are intensive and good advice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer actively contacts rifutec • Common reason why customers come to rifutec is because they already have a flooding problem • Prevention is also a frequent motivational reason for orders • Most enquiries/orders from customers who already have a house • Most common objects that need to be sealed in a house are garages, various entrances and basement windows |
| Competitive Aggregates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differences to current aggregates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly People who have flood/water damage • Customer becomes aware of rifutec via the Internet (active search for flood protection solution) and through word-of-mouth advertising (Know) • Customer doesn't choose rifutec because he feels better advised by the competition or the offer is cheaper (Choose) • The customer's price expectations are always lower than the actual price of rifutec's services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No differences to current aggregates |
| Emerging Aggregates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people who own a house or property which are not proofed against water damage • Living in Germany (possibly also future expansion in Europe) • Middle class upwards (needs appropriate financial resources to afford flood protection system) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who not only already have water damage but could possibly get it one day (preventive measures) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are looking for preventive measures to protect their house • People actively contact rifutec to find out about preventive measures to protect their homes |

Table 5 rifutec Aggregation Summary

Note. Self-elaboration, using the aggregation summary sheet from Kliatchko & Uttamchandani (2023)

Demographic Characteristics

Current and competitive aggregates have identical demographic characteristics. Meaning that if a person consults rifutec regarding flood protection, they are usually male, between 40 and 70 years old, live in Germany and own a house or property. This person usually takes care of the household and is occasionally a pensioner. In

terms of income, it can only be stated that the person is middle class upwards. rifutec's emerging aggregates are aimed at every homeowner in Germany. According to the company's managing director, other demographic characteristics are not relevant.

Psychographic Characteristics

Psychographic characteristics between current and competitive aggregates are also almost identical. Most consumers have suffered water damage to their house. These people become aware of rifutec's website through internet research and then contact the company. After a personal exchange with the company the consumers ultimately decide for or against rifutec depending on price and advice. The only noticeable difference is that competitive aggregates who decide against rifutec always have a lower price expectation. Consequently, these consumers are probably likely to consider rifutec's prices to be too expensive. Consumers that rifutec would like to address include people who have not yet suffered water damage but want to protect themselves preventively.

Motivational Characteristics

There are also no differences in motivational characteristics between current and competitive aggregates. Consumers always contact rifutec from their own motivation because their house usually has suffered water damage and they are looking for restorative measures to protect it. Most objects that need to be sealed are garages, various door entrances and basement windows. As already mentioned, rifutec would like to address more consumers who do not yet have a water damage.

The consumer aggregation has shown that rifutec's customer base is quite homogeneous in terms of demographics. The typical person who contacts rifutec is between 40-70 years old, predominantly male, has an average to above average income and owns a house or property in Germany. From a psychographic and motivational point of view, this person has already suffered water damage and is now looking for a restorative solution to fix this damage. This person usually finds rifutec through internet search.

The company is currently reaching this group of people very well, but these people are motivated to actively look for a flood protection solution because the damage has already happened. In the future, the company would also like to reach homeowners who have not yet suffered water damage but would like to take preventative measures against it. The demographic characteristics for these people are irrelevant, the aim is to address all homeowners in Germany in general. Logically, every homeowner could be affected by flood damage. These consumers must therefore be made aware that they could also suffer flood damage and that prevention measures are important.

5.2.1.2 Brand Contact Points

rifutec only uses a limited range of brand contact points. The only contact points the company uses are the website, telephone and social media. None of these contact points include paid media. Consumers therefore only reach these contact points through their own motivation.

Website

The website provides consumers with general as well as in-depth information about rifutec and its services. From the homepage, where consumers can find general information about rifutec, they can access specific subject pages, such as a page on flood protection. Here, consumers can find detailed information about applications and possibilities of flood protection systems from rifutec. Consumers who have an urgent restorative concern, as well as consumers who are generally interested in preventive solutions visit the website. The website gives consumers several ways to get in touch with rifutec. They can either write a direct email, use the contact form or call the phone number. Consumers who visit the website because of an urgent need for restorative measures usually get in touch with rifutec using the telephone. Consumers who are more interested in preventative measures or visit the website out of general interest are more likely to use the contact form or email. The website refers to rifutec's telephone number, but has no chatbot or FAQs, which makes it feel quite impersonal and static. In addition, the website does not currently show any videos on flood protection systems and does not use reviews from previous

consumers. Addressing these aspects could give the website a more personal and interactive feel.

Telephone

The telephone call is the most personal contact point for rifutec. Consumers can find the phone number either via the website or via the google company profile. Whether it is an urgent problem or general interest, consumers receive personal advice via the telephone call. In addition, consumers get a feeling of professionalism through the call. In most cases, consumers contact the company by phone when they have an urgent restorative concern. In contrast to the website, the telephone call is therefore mostly used for restorative measures and less for preventative measures.

Social Media

Social media is used by rifutec to stay in touch with current consumers and to strengthen brand awareness. The company currently has an Instagram account with approximately 280 followers and a Facebook account with around 220 followers. The same content and images are posted on both platforms to save effort. Consumers can find general information about flooding and information about rifutec's products via the social media accounts. Every social media post focuses on a different topic and is accompanied by a descriptive text that refers to the website. The aim is to lead consumers to the rifutec website. Stories about projects and general insights into the company are also shared on social media, allowing consumers to experience a closer relationship with the company. Until now, no inquiries via social media have been converted into orders. Maybe the used platforms are not the best way to reach the target group. Instagram in particular is rather a platform for lifestyle content. Perhaps a more business-oriented platform such as LinkedIn could be considered here.

5.2.1.3 Mind Map

This section attempts to summarize and connect the most important findings from the two previous steps. For this purpose, a figure was created that links the various consumer aggregates with the brand contact points (see Figure 6).

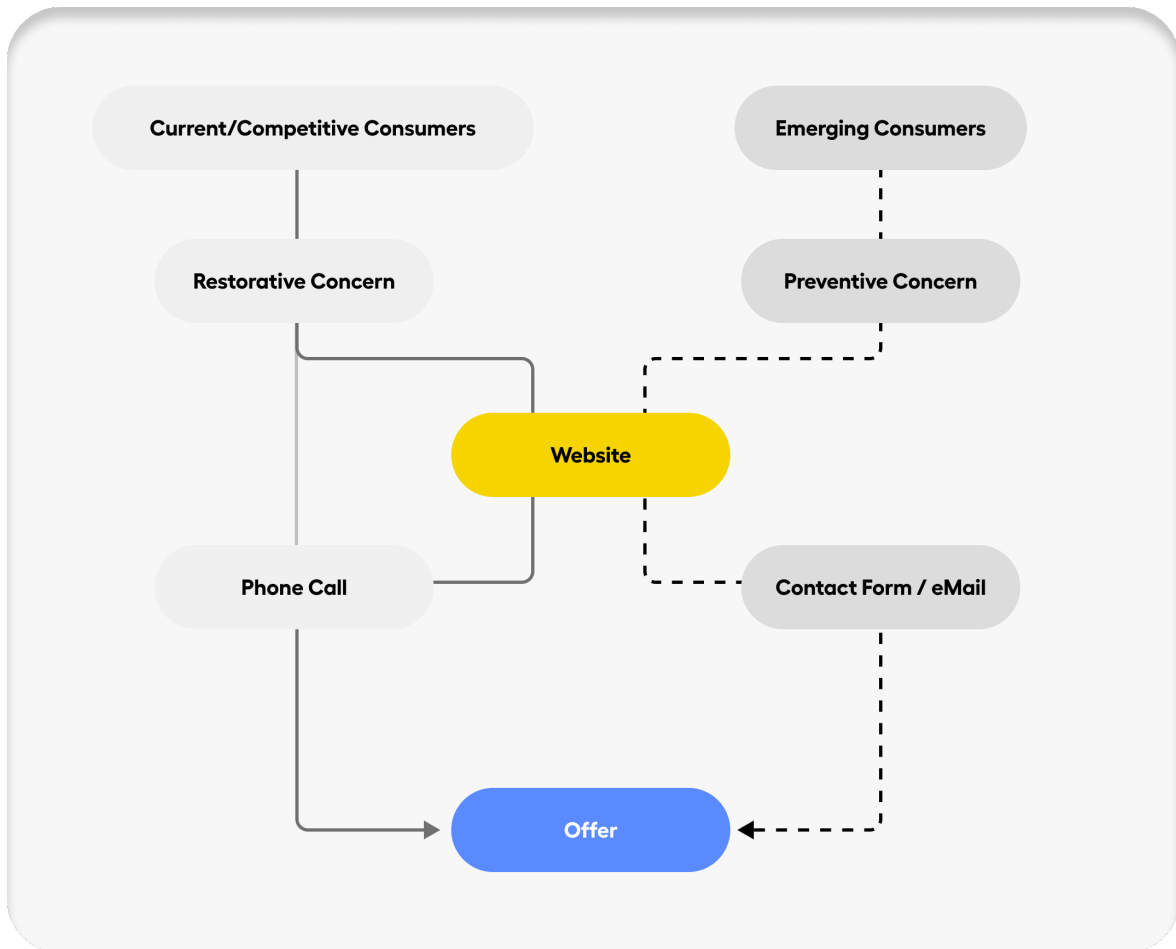


Figure 6 *rifutec Consumer Mind Map*

Note. Self-elaboration

The figure combines current and competitive consumers as they share the same demographic, psychographic and motivational characteristics. These consumers are German homeowners, 40-70 years old, responsible for the household, predominantly male with an average to above average income and living anywhere in Germany. In most cases, these people have suffered water damage and therefore have a restorative concern. They start their search for flood protection solutions on the internet and visit the rifutec website. Then they find the telephone number on the website and call the company, as the concern is urgent. After an exchange of further information with rifutec, an offer for a flood protection system is finally made.

For emerging consumers, meaning consumers that rifutec would like to reach in the future, the route could look as follows. rifutec would like to address all homeowners in Germany, as flood damage can potentially affect every person owning a house or property. These people have not suffered any water damage yet, but are already looking for preventive solutions to protect their house against potential flood damage in the future. These consumers therefore have a preventive concern and visit the rifutec website. Consumers then use the contact form or email contact, to get in touch with the company. After an exchange of further information with rifutec, an offer for a flood protection system is finally made.

5.2.1.4 Current Brand Relationship Statement

This section summarizes the current relationship between rifutec and its consumers. As current consumers consistently leave positive reviews (see Figure 7) and no negative reports emerge from the interview with the management, the statement for this consumer group is very positive. Competitive consumers consistently perceive rifutec's prices as too expensive and therefore chooses against them. For emerging consumers, it is not possible to make a current statement, as they do not currently exist.



Figure 7 rifutec Customer Reviews

Note. Self-elaboration, using data from Google Business Reviews

Current Consumers

"My house had suffered water damage and I was looking for restorative solutions to fix it. I felt very well advised by rifutec and have nothing to complain about, because the company delivers what it promises: my house is completely sealed and I don't have to worry about heavy rain in the future."

Competitive Consumers

"My house had suffered water damage and I was looking for restorative solutions to fix it. After an exchange and an offer, the prices were too high for me and I started looking for other options."

Emerging Consumers

Not possible

5.2.1.5 Desired Brand Relationship Statement

After defining a current brand relationship statement in the previous section, this part attempts to turn it into a desired statement. This will later help to set the concrete objectives for the IMC campaign. The previous statement for current consumers was already very positive, which is why there could only be the desire for recommendation. The goal for competitive consumers is to turn them into current consumers. In order to achieve this, the services and individual advice of rifutec would have to be promoted more strongly and it would be necessary to explain why rifutec is worth the price. In contrast to current and competitive consumers, the idea for emerging consumers is to emphasize preventive measures for flood protection. This may involve raising people's awareness for the dangers of flooding.

Current Consumers

"I felt very well advised and have nothing to complain about, because rifutec delivers what it promises: after the water damage, my house is completely sealed and I don't have to worry about heavy rain in the future. I will recommend rifutec to others."

Competitive Consumers

“In the beginning, the prices seemed a bit too high for me, but after a few exchanges, excellent advice and a professional appearance, it was worth the money. My house is now completely sealed and I don't have to worry about heavy rain in the future. I will recommend rifutec to others.”

Emerging Consumers

"I am aware of the effects and consequences of flooding and would therefore like to protect my house preventively with a flood protection system - I have found my solution with rifutec."

5.2.2 Brand Audit

After the previous section analyzed rifutec's consumers and already identified weaknesses and potentials, the following section examines rifutec as a company. For this purpose, rifutec is analyzed on the basis of the 7Ps: Product, Positioning, Purpose, Price, Place, Packaging and Promotion. The comparison of the brand audit and the consumer audit then enables the precise definition of the task to be achieved within the IMC campaign.

5.2.2.1 Product

rifutec distributes flood protection systems that protects various entries such as windows, doors or garages against the ingress of water caused by heavy rain or flooding. rifutec not only offers the systems for sale, it also provides a comprehensive installation service. For 95% of all orders, rifutec sells the system including the installation service. Only 5% of all customers buy the stand-alone product and install it themselves. This indicates that most people do not want to take any risks when it comes to flood protection and rely on the expertise of specialists.

Flood protection systems from rifutec are characterized by 100% watertightness, a simple design with perfectly matched materials from in-house production, easy handling for the

consumer and a comprehensive installation and consulting service. What also sets the product apart is its high level of flexibility. Once the frame system has been installed, the consumer has the flexibility to decide when to install the flood protection into the frame. This allows the consumer to install the flood protection at short notice (e.g. during a heavy rainfall event) or in advance if he or she is not at home for a longer time. Another unique selling point is the guarantee that there is always a suitable system available for every dimension and application. This is ensured because rifutec flood protection systems are always individually adapted to the required measurements and sizes of the application.

The rifutec team needs three parameters to flexibly configure the flood protection system for each individual application. First of all, the company needs to know the location where the system is to be installed. This includes both the exact address of the house and the conditions, e.g. whether the house is located in a valley. Secondly, photos of the area to be waterproofed are required, along with dimensions and measurements, e.g. whether the system is to be installed in a door entrance. Thirdly, the company needs the desired dam height, meaning how high the flood protection should waterproof. At every step, rifutec supports the consumer with specialist knowledge and gives recommendations. Afterwards, the company prepares an offer, which the customer either accepts or rejects. If the offer is accepted, rifutec then plans the implementation as quickly as possible.

5.2.2.2 Positioning

rifutec's positioning is based on the premise of providing reliable and competent waterproofing solutions. Their credo is being able to waterproofing any building. In 27 years, every project has been successfully completed and every building has remained 100% watertight. The company's core values are exceptional advice, guaranteed watertightness and customized solutions. rifutec's ability to assess each case individually results from its background in structural waterproofing. Other companies that offer flood protection systems often specialize primarily in steel or aluminium construction. rifutec's expertise covers the entire spectrum of structural waterproofing. Their team knows how different materials and structural conditions interact with water and which type of flood protection is best suited to each situation. Although the flood protection market in Germany is not overly competitive, two companies can be identified as main competitors.

Main Competitor 1: Prefa

Prefa is a leading supplier of flood protection systems based in Austria (Prefa, n.d.-a). The company has around 700 employees and does not specialize exclusively on flood protection (Prefa, n.d.-b). Prefa offers over 5.000 aluminum products, ranging from roof panels and drainage systems to flood protection systems and solar cells. The company is therefore not only focused on flood protection, but also on general aluminum products for house construction. The products are not installed by Prefa itself, but by various partner companies. Alternatively, the company offers tutorials and instructions for self-installation. Although Prefa is a competitor of rifutec, it operates on a different scale and offers other products besides flood protection systems. Prefa's flood protection systems are made exclusively from aluminum, while rifutec uses a variety of materials. In addition, the systems are already prefabricated in certain dimensions and therefore do not represent individual solutions, such as rifutec. Prefa therefore does not represent a direct competitor for rifutec, as the company pursues a different business model, is considerably larger and does not focus exclusively on flood protection. The core values of rifutec are not affected by Prefa and rifutec can continue to position itself as a specialist in flood protection alongside Prefa, although the company is larger.

Main Competitor 2: Hochwasserschutz-Profis

Hochwasserschutz-Profis is a German company that specializes exclusively on flood protection. The company has over ten years of experience and offers flood protection solutions that are very similar to those of rifutec (Hochwasserschutz-Profis, n.d.-b). In contrast to rifutec, the company does not manufacture its own systems, but uses systems from various manufacturers, such as Prefa. Hochwasserschutz-Profis offers the product, consultation and installation service and is therefore a direct competitor of rifutec. The size of the company seems to be very similar to rifutec and it only operates in Germany (Hochwasserschutz-Profis, n.d.-c). An analysis of the website reveals that the company communicates customer reviews, testimonials and customer logos much more openly. In addition, the company uses many call-to-action buttons that can be used to book appointments and consultations. Furthermore, the website

offers a subpage with general tips and tricks on flood protection. Although the website is not visually appealing, these features can make it seem more dynamic and interactive. The expansion of these features could also be interesting for rifutec.

5.2.2.3 Purpose

rifutec's purpose is based on the ambition to improve the safety of homes and houses in the face of climate change challenges. At its core, the company's mission is to provide more people with a safe living environment that offers protection against water damage. The overarching goal is to reduce fears about the future and provide people with security so that they can live without fear of water damages.

During the time when the company was founded, the flood protection sector was not well developed. The competition was small and solutions were needed to repair and prevent flood damage. Today, almost 30 years later, this topic is more relevant than ever. Several flood disasters and increasing heavy rainfall have shown that many buildings and infrastructures are unable to cope with the effects of climate change (see Chapter 3.2.3). The potential damage caused by flooding and heavy rainfall is enormous. Climate change and global warming will continue to increase in the future, as the previous contextual review showed.

Therefore, the company's purpose to improve the safety of houses in the face of climate change challenges should be better communicated and promoted. A more prominent communication of the company's purpose can create a stronger basis of trust and generate the impression that the company is not only focused on profit, but also on improving the public wellbeing. For instance, fundraising campaigns for flood victims or reconstruction campaigns, could help to support the company's purpose even more effectively.

5.2.2.4 Price

A precise price analysis of rifutec's product and a comparison with the competition tends to be difficult in the area of flood protection systems. Unlike other products, the price of a flood protection system depends on certain conditions and dimensions of facilities. In addition, most flood protection companies do not communicate their prices openly on their

website, as usually the final prices can only be obtained from the initial offer. Furthermore, rifutec usually sells the product as well as the installation. The price therefore always varies depending on the amount of work involved, travel costs and other factors.

Comparing the single product price for a dam beam flood protection system for doors with a width of 1000mm and a dam beam height of 400mm, rifutec operates in the medium price segment compared to competitors. A rifutec flood protection system with these dimensions cost approximately 600€. The direct competitor Hochwasserschutz-Profis offers an external online store selling a flood protection system with the same dimensions for around 1000€ (Hochwasserschutz-Profis, n.d.-a). For other competitors who sell systems with prefabricated dimensions, the price varies between 450€ and 1000€ (Loidhold GmbH, n.d.; Metallbau Onlineshop, n.d.). Buying a flood protection system from rifutec means that the consumer receives a well-thought-out, high-quality product directly from the expert at a medium to low price. The management added that certain price discounts are also possible depending on the size of the order. This favorable price and price flexibility is guaranteed because rifutec manufactures its own systems, which are significantly cheaper to produce than buying products from external manufacturers. The fact that rifutec has been a specialist for 27 years and manufactures its own systems can also be communicated and promoted more prominently.

5.2.2.5 Place

Currently, rifutec flood protection systems can only be purchased through personal contact by email or telephone. There are no additional sales points, such as sales platforms. While some competitors have their own online store where customers can find prices, rifutec's final point of sale is always based on an individual offer. Geographically, the company only operates in Germany. Within Germany, rifutec receives inquiries and orders from all regions, with the majority coming from North Rhine-Westphalia (Western part). According to the management, there is interest in expanding outside Germany, but the planning and personnel resources are limited. Expansion abroad is definitely planned for the future, as flooding is a problem in every European country and therefore all European countries are potentially interesting for rifutec.

5.2.2.6 Packaging

rifutec's product is not bought because of a special visual design or attractive packaging, but because it has a functional use. Consequently, there is no actual packaging that presents the product in any way. When a consumer buys the stand-alone product, he or she receives the flood protection system carefully packed in cardboard so that no damage occurs during shipping. But as 95% of consumers buy the product including the installation service, they don't usually see the packaging at all. When analyzing the product packaging, it was noticed that neither the cardboard packaging or the actual product, communicates the rifutec logo in any way. Displaying the logo on the packaging and the product requires just little extra effort and communicates the company much more prominently.

As rifutec's installation service can also be seen as a product in a broader sense, the appearance of employees also counts as packaging. rifutec already has custom designed clothing that employees wear when providing their services. This consistent appearance is intended to symbolize professionalism and contribute to brand awareness. The workwear set consists of a work trousers, a T-shirt and a sweatshirt with special rifutec design. The only design feature of these clothes is the rifutec logo on the chest. The color of the clothing is always navy blue, matching the logo. Newly designed workwear that stands out with a contemporary and appealing design can be seen as an improvement for the future.

In addition to workwear, the company's vehicles are also specially designed. The vehicles are always white and covered with stickers. Contact details, such as the email and the telephone number, as well as the website are communicated here. The rifutec logo is prominently displayed and the slogan „Hat Ihr Haus nasse Füße?“ ("Does your house have wet feet?") is written on the right and left side of the vehicles. This slogan has been the company's tagline since it was founded and metaphorically addresses the case of a leaking basement (leaking basement = wet feet of a house). Although the slogan has existed since the company was founded, it is no longer contemporary, as rifutec's services now encompass much more than basement waterproofing. Consideration could therefore be

given to creating new vehicle designs. These could then match the style of the workwear to achieve an even more uniform appearance and also include a new slogan.

5.2.2.7 Promotions

rifutec is currently not pursuing any promotional strategies. As already analyzed in the consumer audit, the company currently only uses the website, telephone and social media as brand contact points. None of these points include paid media. The company therefore does not use any promotional activities to increase awareness of its products and services. Analyzing the competitors of rifutec has shown that the field of flood protection is in general weak promoted. Apart from search engine marketing, only a few direct competitors use other forms of traditional promotional activities. Several competitors use partnerships and associations to increase their brand presence. For example, the European Flood Protection Association brings together several companies from the flood protection sector (Europaverband Hochwasserschutz e.V., n.d.). These associations and partnerships promote themselves as helping consumers against flooding and not just as seeking to sell products to consumers. Consumers can also find information on how to prepare against flooding and heavy rainfalls in general and can read reviews and experience reports on various flood protection solutions. In addition, there is a lot of download material that visitors can use to further educate and inform themselves. Companies that are listed as partners on such websites therefore could enjoy a higher level of trust and credibility from consumers. Becoming a partner on these websites could therefore also have several advantages for rifutec in the future.

5.3 Problem

Analyzing and comparing the consumer audit and the brand audit provided various insights. These insights revealed possible issues, but also possible opportunities that will be addressed in the following course of this IMC Plan. The three most essential issues are presented below.

Issue 1: Brand Presence

The brand audit revealed one main issue: rifutec does not use any promotional strategy or activities and therefore does not promote its products in any way. The experiences, reviews of the consumers and the analysis of the product has shown that rifutec's flood protection systems are effective and guarantee a high level of consumer satisfaction. There is no doubt that the company's product is good, but it needs to be promoted in order to expand the consumer base. In addition, some opportunities to improve the current brand contact points have been identified. The main issue here is a lack of brand presence due to a lack of promotional activities.

Issue 2: Price Awareness

In contrast to the first issue, this one relates mainly to the consumer audit. The consumer aggregation has shown that the main problem why consumers decide against rifutec although they were interested is their price awareness. Competitive consumers perceive rifutec's prices as consistently too high. It is interesting to note that the price analysis from the brand audit showed that rifutec's prices are actually average to low compared to the competition. It is therefore possible that the problem relates more to the communication of the services and the product. Competitive consumers may not have been convinced by rifutec's communication of its services, which has nothing to do with the actual product. A more targeted and better communication of why rifutec's services are worth the price and what makes rifutec stand out from the competition could solve this issue.

Issue 3: Problem Awareness

Both the consumer audit and the brand audit have shown that rifutec receives 95% of all inquiries from homeowners who already have suffered water damage. This means that almost every order is based on a restorative concern. In the future the company would like to expand its customer base and also reach homeowners who do not yet have suffered a water damage but would like to protect themselves preventively. The reason why the company is currently not receiving any orders based on preventive concerns is probably due to a lack of awareness of flooding and flood damage. The literature research of this project has shown that climate change is leading to

increased and heavier rainfall. Flooding is therefore becoming a problem that affects every homeowner. The resulting consequences and damages to buildings and houses are immense. If consumers were aware of this, they would want to protect their homes against flooding and heavy rainfall. But currently it seems that many consumers do not yet have this awareness.

5.4 Task at Hand

After revealing rifutec's three main issues in the previous section, this part aims to formulate these issues as concrete tasks to be implemented with the IMC campaign. This formulation helps to keep focus on the tasks for the progress of this work. The APTC Framework suggests to formulate the tasks precisely in one sentence by asking the questions: Get who? To do what? By how?

Task 1: Increase the awareness and sensitivity of homeowners in Germany regarding the necessity for preventive flood protection measures by communicating the severity and likelihood of flooding.

This first task results from the issue of problem awareness. rifutec's aim is to expand its customer base and sell flood protection systems for preventive measures to German homeowners. To achieve this, these people need a greater awareness of flooding and flood damage in general. This problem awareness can be strengthened and triggered by highlighting the severity and likelihood of flooding. By doing so, more German homeowners should realize that they can also suffer flood damage and should therefore take preventive measures to protect themselves against it. This task therefore does not specifically focus on rifutec's products and services, but on the issue of flooding in general. As flooding is closely linked to climate change, global warming and heavy rainfall, broader topics can also be included here.

Task 2: Encourage more German homeowners to choose rifutec as their provider of flood protection measures by strategically highlighting the reliability and effectiveness of rifutec's products.

The second task focuses on the strategic communication of rifutec and its services to the outside and is intended to turn competitive consumers into current consumers and strengthen the brand presence. The task is formulated to explicitly address German homeowners, as they are the target group for current, competitive and emerging consumers. The consumer audit has shown that many people decide against rifutec due to their price awareness. These people should be encouraged to choose rifutec and not the competition. To achieve this, the reliability and effectiveness of rifutec's flood protection solutions need to be strategically highlighted. This should assist consumers in understanding why rifutec's prices are justified. This task is therefore intended to address the problem of the consumer's price awareness. At the same time, the strategic highlighting of rifutec's services and products leads to an increased brand presence.

5.5 Campaign

All previous steps served as preparation for the IMC campaign. The audit part served as an analysis, which revealed issues and problems. From these issues, specific tasks were formulated to be achieved and implemented with this campaign. Having completed these preparations, the next step is to create the final IMC campaign. This campaign should take up and implement the two tasks described in the previous section (see Chapter 5.4).

5.5.1 Communication Objectives

This first part results directly from the two tasks and defines the type of communication objective to be achieved with the respective task. The APTC Framework proposes the three communication objectives to inform, to persuade and to remind.

Communication Objective: Inform (regarding Task 1)

The regarding task is intended to inform consumers about flooding. The aim is to increase the consumers problem awareness of flooding and flood damage in order to preventively purchase flood protection systems. Consumers must therefore be informed about the dangers of flooding.

Communication Objective: Persuade (regarding Task 2)

The regarding task clearly has the goal of persuading consumers of rifutec, its products and services. The aim is to avoid consumers deciding against rifutec due to their price awareness. They must therefore be persuaded of rifutec and its services.

5.5.2 Human Truth

Based on the two communication objectives presented in the previous section, the IMC campaign requires a strategy it will be built on. This strategy is the creative concept behind all final creative implementations and will unify them all. As the APTC Framework places a strong focus on consumers, this section attempts to gain a helpful insight into their minds. This insight is called human truth and will set the foundation for the strategy of the campaign. The human truth is a psychological insight about consumers that may not be visible at first glance (Florin et al., 2007; Moscato, 2018). An effective human truth can generate a powerful emotional reaction and can change the way people see things (Stone et al., 2004). Successful campaign strategies therefore need a powerful human truth that impacts the mindset of consumers.

Considering the objectives of this campaign, understanding the processes that lead people to take preventative measures to protect themselves from threats would be an important human truth. Knowledge of these processes could be used to motivate people to invest in preventive flood protection measures. The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) provides a robust framework to explain these processes. This theory describes the cognitive processes that lead people to behave protective when they are exposed to dangers or threats.

5.5.2.1 The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT)

The Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) is a psychological concept that explains people's behavior towards threats (Rogers, 1975; Rogers, 1983). The theory helps to understand why and when people take certain protective measures when they are exposed to threats and danger (Boer & Seydel, 1996). Originally introduced by Ronald Rogers in 1975, the PMT has found wide application, for example in the field of health and safety behavior (Rogers, 1975). The theory has also received much attention in risk management, including responses to natural disasters such as flooding (Oakley et al., 2020; Richert et al., 2017; Rogers, 1975).

PMT consists of the two main components threat appraisal and coping appraisal. Before a person reacts to a danger, the person always assesses the situation. This includes assessing the potential threat (threat appraisal) and the options for dealing with this threat (response appraisal) (Rogers, 1983). These components are always the crucial factors in determining how people evaluate the need for protective measures and if they are willing to take these measures. The two components take place one after the other. The person first evaluates the threat and as soon as a certain level is exceeded, the person assesses the threat as dangerous and begins to evaluate their coping options (Babcicky & Seebauer, 2019).

Threat Appraisal

Threat appraisal depends on two factors: the severity of the threat and the vulnerability of the threat. Severity refers to how serious the individual perceives the potential threat to be (Boer & Seydel, 1996). For example, a person might perceive flooding as severe because it could cause significant financial losses. Studies have shown that homeowners who perceive the severity of a flood as high are more likely to invest in protective measures (Dittrich et al., 2016; Zaalberg et al., 2009). Vulnerability describes how likely the person believes the threat is to occur (Boer & Seydel, 1996). A person in a flood risk area assesses the likelihood of flooding as higher than a person who lives on a mountainside, for example. A study in New York

found that homeowners in flood risk areas are more likely to take protective measures due to the high vulnerability (Botzen et al., 2019).

Coping Appraisal

Coping appraisal depends on three factors: response efficacy, self-efficacy and response costs. Response efficacy refers to the confidence that the protective measure is effective (Babcicky & Seebauer, 2019). The response efficacy is high if a person is convinced that the installation of a flood protection system significantly reduces the risk of flood damage. If homeowners perceive protective measures as effective, they are more willing to invest in them (Zaalberg et al., 2009).

Self-efficacy describes the confidence of the person in their ability to successfully manage the protective measure (Rogers, 1983). A homeowner who is confident in their ability to maintain a flood protection system is more likely to invest in this measure. A study has shown that high self-efficacy and high response efficacy are key factors in the decision to take flood protection measures (Grothmann & Reusswig, 2006).

Response costs include the perceived costs and effort associated with the implementation of the protective measure (Rogers, 1983). Lower costs and less effort increase the likelihood of the implementation (Bubeck et al., 2012). Studies in Sweden have shown that many homeowners lack knowledge about available and affordable flood protection measures, which leads to a lower willingness to invest (Grahn & Jaldell, 2019).

In summary, the PMT states that if a person assesses a threat as severe and the probability of occurrence as high, the person will look for protective measures. If the person now perceives this protective measure as effective, self-manageable and affordable, the probability of investing in this measure is high. PMT has found wide application in risk management, including natural disasters such as flooding (Oakley et al., 2020; Richert et al., 2017; Rogers, 1975). A specific application of the theory to the case of flooding is described in the following section.

5.5.2.2 Application of PMT to Flooding

Because homeowners own property that can be damaged or even destroyed, their sensitivity for potential damage is high. The destruction of their property can lead to considerable financial losses and emotional distress (see Chapter 3.2.3).

If homeowners perceive flooding as a threat that is both serious (severity) and likely to occur (vulnerability), they experience a high threat appraisal. Based on this high appraisal, they start looking for preventive measures against flooding. If the flood protection measures are now perceived as effective (response efficacy), easy to implement (self-efficacy) and affordable (response costs), the willingness of homeowners to invest in these measures increases considerably. The likelihood of homeowners to invest in preventative measures is therefore high if they perceive flooding as a significant threat to their property and believe in the effectiveness and affordability of the flood protection system. Several empirical studies have examined the application of PMT to flood damage prevention behavior, and the results confirm the insight described above.

Zaalberg et al. (2009) found that people with previous flood experiences have a higher threat appraisal. These people perceive both the severity and the likelihood of flood damage as high. This enhanced threat appraisal leads to a greater willingness to invest in preventive measures, as they have directly experienced the consequences of flooding.

Bubeck et al. (2012) have shown that coping appraisal has a crucial impact on the decision to invest in flood protection measures. Their study found that homeowners who assess the effectiveness of protective measures as high and believe in their ability to successfully implement these measures are more willing to invest in them. The study underlines that the perception of the own ability to maintain protective measures is decisive for the willingness to invest.

Bubeck et al. (2013) confirmed these results and extended them by showing that the costs also play an important role. If protective measures are perceived as financially affordable, the willingness to invest in these measures increases.

Poussin et al. (2014) emphasized that the combination of high threat appraisal and positive coping appraisal significantly increases the likelihood of investing in protective measures. If homeowners perceive the threat of flooding as serious and likely to occur and at the

same time believe that the flood protection measures are effective and affordable, they are likely to invest in them.

Grothmann and Reusswig (2006) analyzed the role of social norms and experiences in flood damage prevention. They found that the behavior and opinions of neighbors and friends significantly influence the willingness to invest in flood protection measures. People who see positive examples of flood protection measures in their social environment are more willing to take similar measures.

These studies show that both the perception of the threat and the assessment of coping options are decisive factors influencing the willingness to invest in flood protection measures. As homeowners have considerable financial and emotional investments in their houses and properties, they are sensitive to the risk of property damage. A high threat appraisal encourages them to look for protective measures and a high coping appraisal encourages them to invest in these measures. Combining these findings with the communication objectives, it can be concluded that the campaign needs to increase the threat appraisal by communicating the severity and probability of flood damage. In addition, it is important to communicate and demonstrate the effectiveness and affordability of rifutec's flood protection systems.

5.5.3 Message

The previous section revealed the human truth on which the strategy for the campaign will be based. Before formulating the concrete campaign strategy, it is necessary to consider what and how exactly should be communicated. To this end, the three components key message, reason to believe and tonality are presented.

Key Message

The Key Message describes the actual message that the campaign should convey. In one sentence, the key message for this campaign could be: “Be aware of the devastating threats of flooding and protect your home with rifutec's reliable and affordable flood protection solutions.” This phrase addresses both the threat appraisal of flooding and rifutec's flood protection as coping appraisal.

Reason to Believe (RTB)

The reason to believe describes why the target group should believe the message. The reason why consumers should believe the first part of the message ("Be aware of the devastating threat of flooding...") can be proven scientifically and with facts. Numerous examples of flood disasters prove that flooding is a devastating threat. Flooding can cause immense damage, both financially and emotionally (see Chapter 3.2.3). There is also evidence that this trend will continue to increase due to climate change. The second part of the message ("...protect your home with rifutec's reliable and affordable flood protection solutions.") can be substantiated by rifutec's product. The consistently positive consumer reviews can be used here (see Figure 7). In addition, rifutec has been an expert in flood protection for over 27 years and offers affordable prices and excellent service compared to the competition.

Tonality

The Tonality describes the way in which the message should be communicated (e.g. funny, hopeful, serious, etc.). The campaign aims to strengthen homeowners' threat appraisal of flooding. Therefore, a serious and urgent tonality is essential. At the same time, rifutec should appear objective and trustworthy in order to gain the trust of the target group. Facts, data and real reports could strengthen both threat appraisal and coping appraisal. In addition, the tonality of the message should also be inspiring. The campaign should encourage homeowners that they can protect their homes effectively with flood protection from rifutec.

5.5.4 The Big Idea

This part formulates the concrete strategy of the campaign. All previous steps have paved the way so that the big idea for the campaign can now be formulated. This strategy will provide the campaign with a clear overall idea and attempts to evoke a strong emotional response in the minds of the consumers based on the human truth. All creative executions that will be presented later will be based on this strategy.

The strategy will strengthen the threat appraisal of German homeowners by highlighting the severity and likelihood of flood damage. The severity will be communicated through emotional images showing the devastating effects of flood damage. The likelihood will be communicated through providing scientific statistics and future predictions about flooding and flood damage. The message tonality here will be serious and urgent. Consumers with an increased threat appraisal are now aware of the effects and consequences of flooding. As a result, they realize the need for protective measures against flooding. From here, consumers will be directed to the rifutec website (brand contact point for preventive measures). At the same time rifutec will be positioned as a trustworthy solution for flood protection. The focus is creating a positive coping appraisal by communicating the effectiveness of rifutec's flood protection measures, the simplicity of installation and the affordability. For example, social proof such as consumer experiences and reviews are presented on the website to further strengthen trust and credibility. The tonality for strengthening the coping appraisal should be trustworthy, informative, hopeful and encouraging.

In summary, the strategy informs homeowners about the dangers of flooding, thus increasing their threat appraisal. At the same time, rifutec is presented as an effective flood protection solution and thus increases the coping appraisal.

After defining the content and approach for the strategy, the next step is to implement the strategy. The name for the campaign will be: **“Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops”**. This tagline was deliberately chosen as it contains a wordplay that embodies the threat appraisal. As analyzed in the literature review, heavy rainfall is the main trigger for flooding (Ashley et al., 2020; Coumou & Rahmstorf, 2012; Rousi et al., 2021). The tagline suggests that heavy rainfall leads to flooding, which in turn causes teardrops - a metaphor for financial and emotional losses. From a creative point of view, the wordplay with “raindrops” and “teardrops” can be particularly effective. Both words have the common element “drops”, showing the direct link between rain and tears. This not only reinforces the message, but also ensures that the slogan sticks in the minds of the consumers.

The tagline will be complemented by the subhead: **"Protect your Property with Flood Protection from rifutec."** In contrast to the emotional tone of the tagline, this subhead is

informational and prompting. It conveys that the process of turning raindrops into teardrops can be prevented with rifutec's flood protection solutions.

To execute this strategy, impactful images and videos showing the damages caused by flooding are used to convey the severity of flooding. Statistics and future predictions will be used to highlight the likelihood of flooding. Testimonials and case studies showing successful installations of rifutec's flood protection systems will be featured and detailed guides and tutorials will be provided to help homeowners to understand how to use and benefit from rifutec's solutions. In addition, recommendations and positive reviews from satisfied customers will help to build trust.

5.5.5 Execution

After describing the campaign strategy and unveiling the title of the campaign “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops”, the next step is to execute the strategy into creative tactics and actions. This chapter examines several tactics and actions that will be used to achieve the campaign's objectives. Each tactic and the corresponding actions are carefully aligned with the overarching strategy. Most of these tactics will be presented with detailed descriptions, including visual representations to enhance clarity and understanding.

5.5.5.1 Corporate Design Improvements

The main focus of an Integrated Marketing Communications campaign is to ensure that all marketing communications are aligned and convey a unified message (Clow & Baack, 2017). To communicate this message even more effectively, visual brand elements can be redesigned, on which all subsequent communications will be based. Given the fact that rifutec has operated without a rebranding since its foundation in 1996, and considering the ambition to reposition the company, there is a great opportunity for corporate design improvements. All subsequent marketing communications of the campaign will feature these reworked corporate design improvements.

5.5.5.1.1 Logo Redesign

Redesigning the logo is a strategic move aimed at modernizing the brand while maintaining its core identity and visual connection to its services and products. The previous logo, which had been in use since the foundation in 1996, contained the brand name “rifutec” and the subtitle “Bauwerksabdichtung und Hochwasserschutz” (structural waterproofing and flood protection). In view of possible future expansions into other countries, removing the German subtitle made sense to make the logo more universally applicable (see Figure 8). As a result, the logo could also be used internationally.



Figure 8 *rifutec Logo Redesign*

Note. Self-elaboration

The redesign of the logo involved several key changes. The old logo included an illustration of a house, symbolizing rifutec's service of protecting houses from water damage. The newly designed logo replaces this illustration with a water drop on the letter “i”. This change keeps the association with water while simplifying the design. The campaign title also contains the term “drop” twice. This makes the logo perfectly fitting and symbolic for the campaign. The old logo was also sharp and angular. The new logo contains rounder shapes, which is also symbolic of raindrops.

In addition, the brand name “rifutec” was changed to a thicker and more modern font to improve readability and brand recognition. The color scheme of the old logo was yellow and dark blue. The new logo takes a simpler approach. It is either dark blue on a light background (option A) or yellow on a dark background (option B). The water drop on the “i” can be switched to the contrasting color if it is required to make the logo more prominent (option C). Overall, the redesigned logo aims to be simpler, more memorable and more modern.

5.5.5.1.2 Color and Font Redesign

The color scheme was redesigned to better reflect rifutec's heritage and increase visual appeal. While the old color scheme contained a mixture of dark blue and yellow, the new color scheme contains a wider range of different shades and thus aims for more flexibility and visibility (see Figure 9).

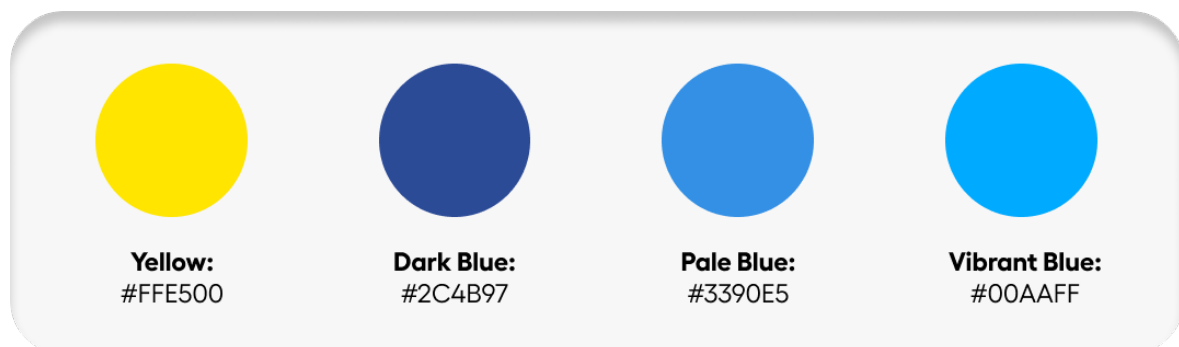


Figure 9 *rifutec Color Redesign*

Note. Self-elaboration

The dark blue color has been kept exactly as it was. For yellow, a much lighter shade (#FFE500) was chosen, resembling the typical yellow of rain jackets and rubber boots, which symbolize protection from rain and water. Additionally, the contrast between dark blue and brighter yellow is stronger and more attracting. The color scheme has also been expanded to include two additional shades of blue: a pale blue (#3390E5), intended for background content, and a vibrant blue (#00A AFF), which can be used for call-to-action elements or to highlight certain content. These four colors, together with black, white and

shades of grey, are the new color scheme that will make the brand more modern, memorable and attractive. This color scheme is much broader and offers more possibilities. The combination of yellow and blue creates strong contrasts and all four colors symbolize the connection to water. While all shades of blue are generally symbolic of water, the yellow shade communicates protection against water, for example in rubber boots or rain jackets.



Figure 10 *rifutec Font Redesign*

Note. Self-elaboration

The rifutec font family has also been adapted. The previous font (Futura), which is very thin and delicate, was replaced by the Hellix font family. This font is identical to the font used in the logo. Hellix embodies a more modern look, reflecting the brand's transition towards a modern visual identity. In addition, the font is easy to read and contains many different styles for flexible use. From now on, Bold will be used for headlines, Semibold for subheadlines, Medium for captions, Regular for body texts and Light for background texts that should be less conspicuous.

5.5.5.2 Branding Improvements

After corporate design improvements have been made, these updates can be applied to the company's branding. The company currently uses employee workwear and vehicles as mobile advertisements. It is therefore necessary to revise these in the new design and layout of the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign. In addition, further branding actions were added to further enhance rifutec's brand presence.

5.5.5.2.1 Workwear Redesign

As analyzed in the brand audit, rifutec already provides workwear for its employees. The newly redesigned workwear integrates the recent corporate design improvements and aligns with the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" strategy (see Figure 11 and Figure 12).



Figure 11 rifutec Workwear Redesign (Sweatshirts)

Note. Self-elaboration

The new workwear mainly uses rifutec's dark blue color. White and yellow accents are placed on the blue base color, for example through text or graphics. As shown in Figure 11, white text and an illustration of a house in a yellow color are displayed here. The contrasts of dark blue and white/yellow generate great attention and ensure that the messages are recognized even from a distance.

The front features the newly revised rifutec logo. The back of the clothing tries to strengthen the coping appraisal through targeted messaging. It was important to convey trustworthy and encouraging messages that are still easy to read from a distance. Slogans such as "We protect your Property from Water" and "We save your Property" are communicated here. These messages are intended to convey trustworthiness and credibility. The clothing thus serves as mobile advertising. For example, if a flood

protection system is installed in a neighborhood, residents see rifutec employees during their work. These employees now wear the newly designed workwear, which ensures that the surrounding neighbors are automatically addressed by rifutec.



Figure 12 rifutec Workwear Redesign (T-shirts)

Note. Self-elaboration

The company's new workwear repertoire includes sweatshirts and T-shirts. In addition to dark blue clothes, white T-shirts were also designed for employees to wear in the summer. (see Figure 12). The light-colored fabric heats up less quickly than dark blue, offers employees more options, and seamlessly aligns with the company's new corporate design.

5.5.5.2.2 Vehicle Redesign

Vehicles also follow the same principle as the workwear. These also serve as mobile advertising. The new design adapts to the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign and is intended to strengthen brand presence (see Figure 13).



Figure 13 *rifutec Vehicle Redesign*

Note. Self-elaboration

The redesigned vehicles now feature the updated rifutec logo, ensuring consistent brand awareness. The tagline “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” is strategically placed on the left and right side of the vehicle. Additionally, the subtitle “Protect your Property with Flood Protection from rifutec” is included to communicate the company's product. The front of the vehicle prominently displays the rifutec logo mirrored. This approach allows drivers to read the communicated content correctly in the rearview mirror. The redesign of the vehicles not only improves aesthetics, but also increases visibility and brand awareness.

5.5.5.2.3 Promotional Products

In addition to the previous branding improvements, the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign delivers two more promotional products. These include a specially branded adhesive tape and lanyards in the new corporate design (see Figure 14 and Figure 15). Both products can be used by the company itself, but can also be given out to consumers as merchandising or promotional products. When selecting these promotional products, it was important that the products match the business sector of the company.

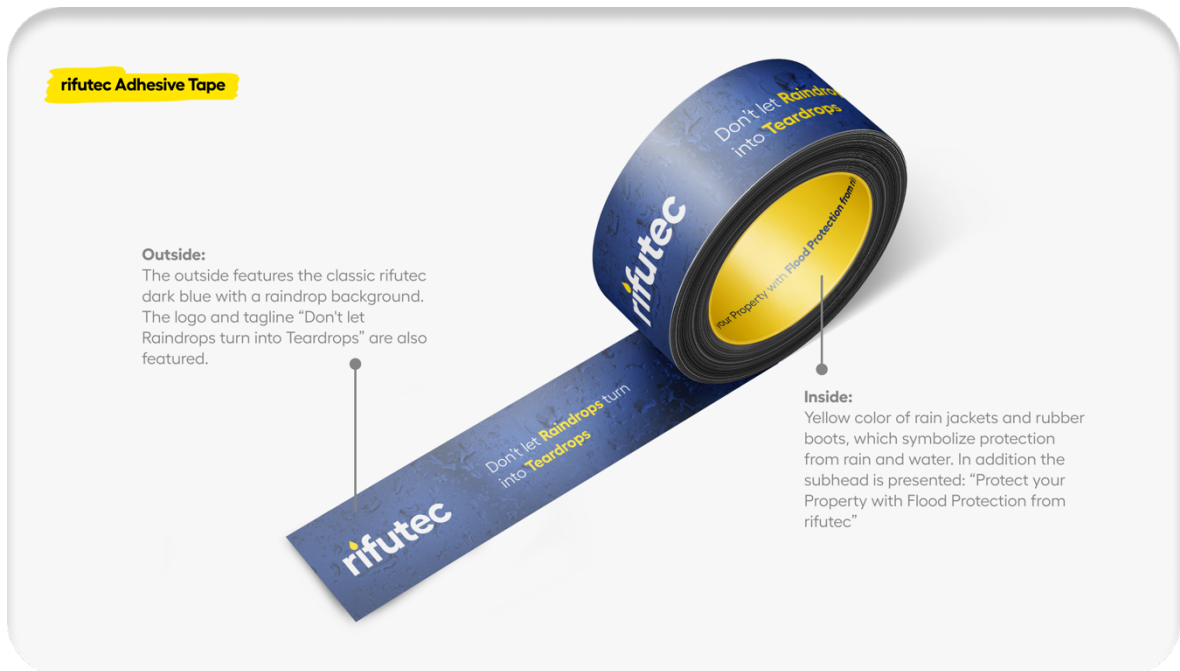


Figure 14 rifutec branded Adhesive Tape

Note. Self-elaboration

rifutec adhesive tape can firstly be used by the company itself. For example, it can be used to tape the packaging of flood protection systems. The brand audit showed that sold flood protection systems are only shipped in brown cardboard. If this packaging is now wrapped in this newly designed tape, it leads to a better brand presence.

Furthermore, the tape can be used as a promotional product, which can be given to customers or partners. Every time the tape is used, it means a stronger brand presence for rifutec, as more people see the logo and messages. The design of the tape was adapted to the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign and thus includes a mix of dark blue and highlights in yellow and white. This makes the tape visually appealing and the content easy to read from distance.



Figure 15 rifutec branded Lanyards

Note. Self-elaboration

The rifutec lanyards can also be used by the company itself as well as by consumers. For example, employees can use them to attach car keys. In addition, name tags can be attached to them during the installation of flood protection systems, which leads to a more personal relationship between the rifutec employee and the customer. The design of the lanyards is adapted to the campaign and features the same elements as the adhesive tape.

5.5.5.3 Public Relations

rifutec's brand purpose is based on the ambition to improve the safety of homes and houses in the face of climate change challenges (see Chapter 5.2.2.3). In order to communicate and promote this purpose to the outside, certain PR actions will be taken. Positive public relations should show consumers that rifutec not only acts in a profit-oriented manner, but also works for the common good. By contributing to initiatives that have a positive impact on the community and the environment, rifutec can showcase its commitment to its mission: provide more people with a safe living environment that offers protection against water damage.

5.5.5.3.1 Donations to Flood Victims

An annual donation initiative by rifutec for flood victims would underline the company's brand purpose and enhance its overall reputation. In addition to reputational benefits, donations to charity are tax-deductible in Germany. Under German tax law, donations to recognized charitable organizations can be deducted from taxable income (Forium GmbH, 2023).



Figure 16 Publication of donations on the website

Note. Self-elaboration

Publicizing donations via press releases, social media and via the rifutec website would highlight the company's commitment to flood protection (see Figure 16). An example of a donation could be the disaster fund of the German Red Cross (DRK). This donation program specifically aims to help people worldwide who are affected by the consequences of disasters, including natural disasters (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, n.d.-b).

5.5.5.3.2 Cooperations with NGO's

In addition to donations, cooperations with non-governmental organizations that are working to help flood victims can also be considered. Partnerships and cooperations with reputable NGOs would highlight rifutec's commitment to social responsibility. A key benefit of cooperations is the opportunity to display the NGO's logo on the rifutec website. This is not only a sign of a meaningful partnership, but also strengthens rifutec's credibility. Working with a reputable non-governmental organization such as the Red Cross would symbolize that rifutec is aligned with the high standards of humanitarian help and disaster management (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, n.d.-a). The German Red Cross offers a variety of partnership options tailored to different humanitarian needs. A partnership specifically focused on supporting flood victims would be ideal.

5.5.5.4 App Development

The development of a dedicated rifutec mobile app could guarantee even greater customer satisfaction. The app will be available for both iOS and Android devices and can be downloaded for free (see Figure 17). As soon as a person purchases a rifutec flood protection system, they will receive a unique system identification number. This number must be entered into the app. As soon as the number has been entered, the app functions are activated. The app now serves as a personal assistant for people who have purchased a rifutec flood protection system.



Figure 17 rifutec App

Note. Self-elaboration

The app has a weather function and predicts when a rain area is coming. If the rain area seems to be heavy and may lead to serious rainfall, the app will prompt the user to install the flood protection into the frame system (see Figure 18).

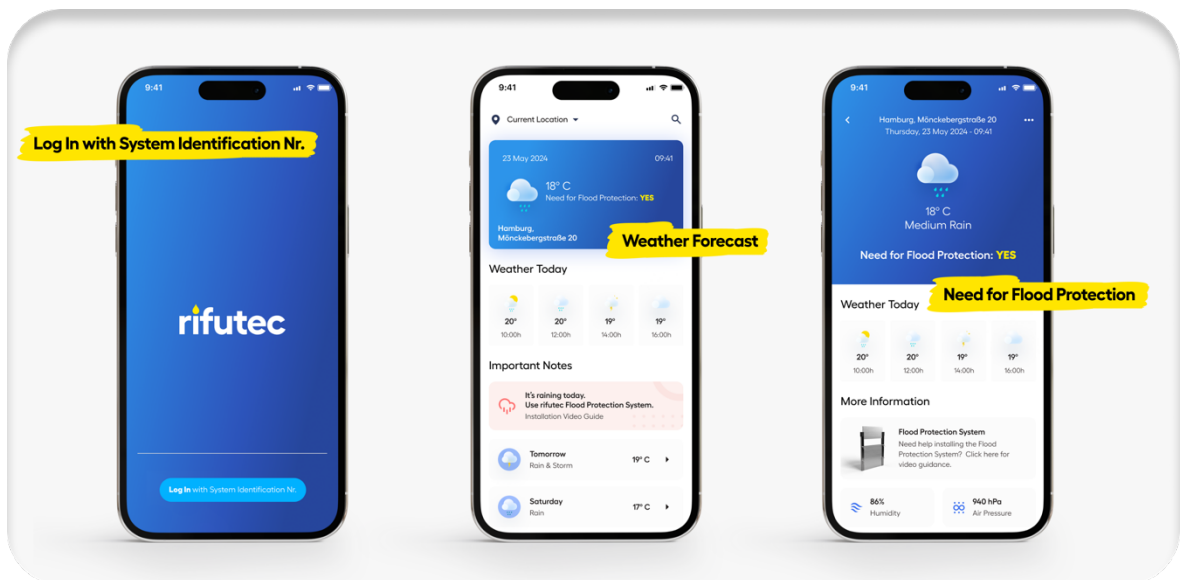


Figure 18 UI -Design for the rifutec App

Note. Self-elaboration

The users can decide to receive push notifications every morning to alert them when to install the protection system based on the latest weather data. The app also gives advice on how long the protection should remain installed to ensure optimal protection. In addition, the app works as a manual guide and provides video tutorials and access to a help hotline for installation and maintenance instructions. This provides consumers with all information needed to use and maintain the rifutec flood protection system in an easy and stress-free way.

5.5.5.5 Website Improvements

The website has already been identified as the most crucial brand contact point for consumers with preventive concerns. Additionally, the strategy of this campaign aims to drive more traffic to the website. Therefore, the website must be fully convincing to ensure that more homeowners choose rifutec for their flood protection needs. As part of the campaign, the following enhancements will be implemented on the website.

5.5.5.5.1 Website Redesign

rifutec's website is being completely redesigned to align with the new corporate design elements. This redesign will incorporate updated visual components, such as the new logo, color scheme and typography, to ensure a modern online presence. The following figures show some sections of the newly designed website (see Figure 19, Figure 20 and Figure 21). The entire website design can be found in the appendix.

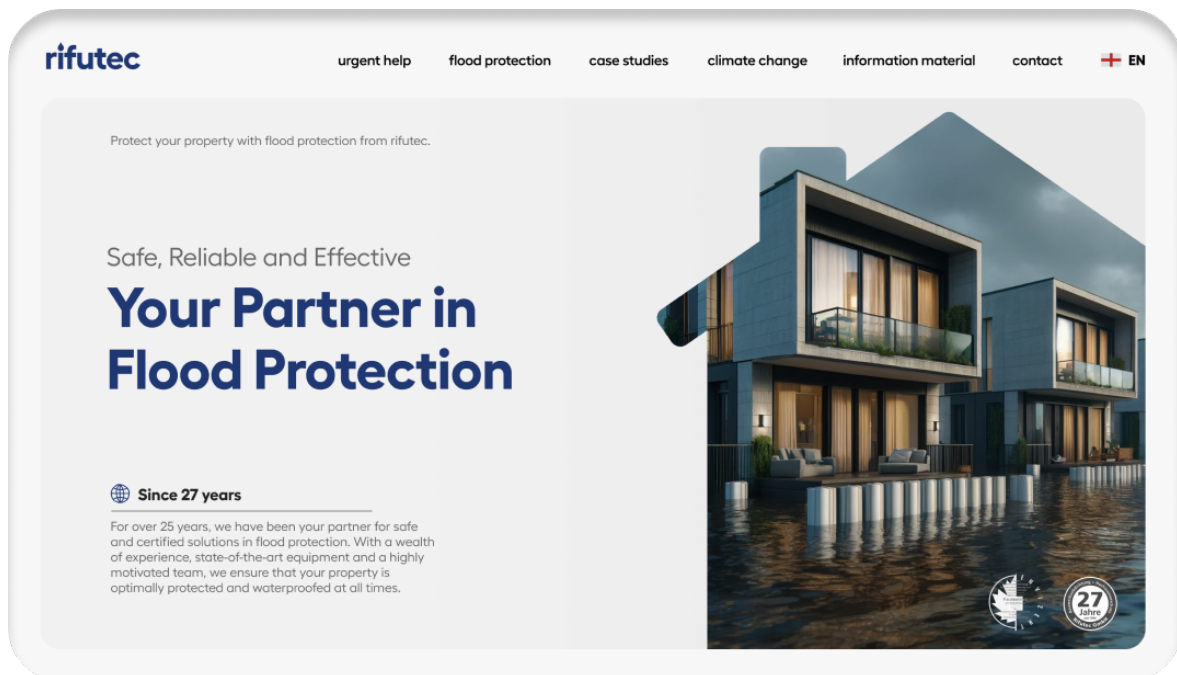


Figure 19 Section 1 for the new rifutec Website

Note. Self-elaboration

The redesigned website will feature a user-friendly interface that improves navigation and accessibility, making it easier for visitors to find relevant information. The website will highlight the company's expertise in flood protection for over 27 years, including detailed case studies and customer testimonials to build trust and credibility. In addition, the previously mentioned PR actions are mentioned on the website and more general reference is made to the purpose of the company (see Figure 20). rifutec should be presented on the website as a reliable and trustworthy partner in the fight against flooding.

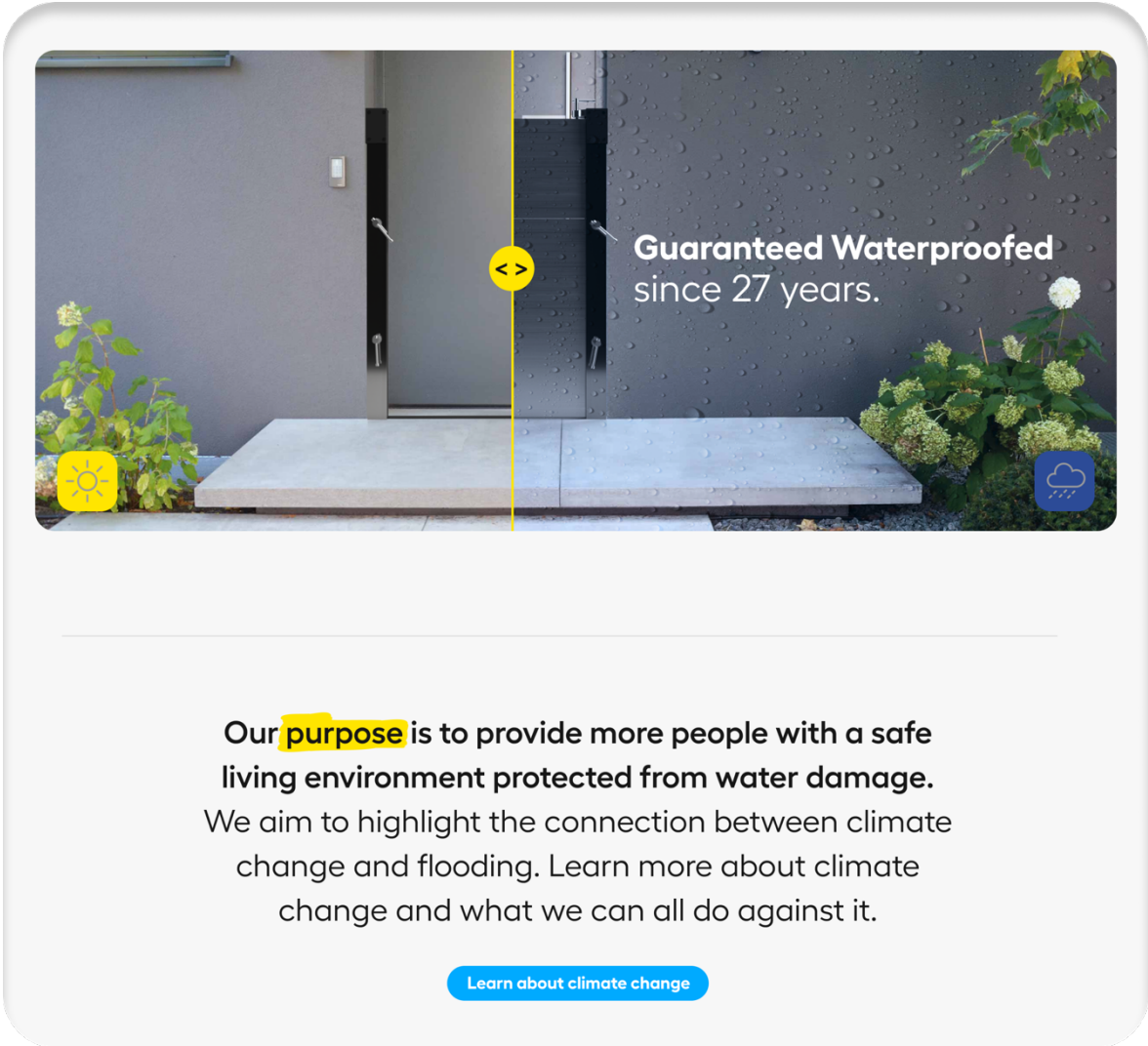



Figure 20 Section 2 from the new rifutec Website

Note. Self-elaboration

To make the website even more appealing, rifutec's flood protection systems have been completely recreated in a 3D design software (see Figure 21). This allows it to present rifutec's products in a more appealing way. Previously, only photos of installed systems were shown. The use of modern 3D graphics sets rifutec apart from the competition and enhances professionalism. In addition, the 3D graphics allow to explain exactly how rifutec's flood protection systems work.



How is the rifutec flood protection system working?


The installation of rifutec's flood protection system involves fitting a custom-designed frame at the entry points. The flood protection is then hung into this frame using sealing plates or dam beams. This allows the normal use of doors and windows, while the flood barriers can be installed quickly in the event of heavy rain or flooding.

[find your individual solution](#)

In case of heavy rain/flooding:
Dam Beams hung into frame

Frame System


During dry weather, you can use your door/window/garage entrance etc. as normal without any restrictions. The frame system offers maximum flexibility.



During normal dry weather

Flood Protection

In the event of heavy rain, you can simply hang the dam beams in the frame system. To make this easier, we offer you a flood warning system by email.



During rainy and stormy weather

Figure 21 Section 3 from the new rifutec Website

Note. Self-elaboration

The new website design and the addition of 3D graphics are intended to make the rifutec homepage stand out from the competition and appear modern and forward-looking. In terms of content, the homepage can be seen as a direct reflection of the campaign strategy. Through reports and statistics on flood damage, the threat appraisal of the visitors should be strengthened and through the strategic placement of rifutec flood protection systems, the coping appraisal should be strengthened. The homepage also promotes the newly developed rifutec app in order to create a unique selling point compared to the competition.

The website is the most important brand contact point of the campaign and therefore further improvements will be made.

5.5.5.5.2 Website Add-Ons

To provide valuable support for visitors, the redesigned rifutec website will include several key add-ons. To demonstrate how rifutec’s flood protection systems work, detailed step-by-step instructions will be available on the website. These instructions will show how to install rifutec's flood protection systems. In addition, a comprehensive customer support system will be set up with a chatbot, FAQs and video tutorials to enhance the user experience. The website will offer additional information material that can be downloaded for free. This material will include guidance on how to behave in the event of flooding and what measures individuals can take to protect themselves from flooding even without flood protection systems. As an example, the website could offer PDFs for download, such as an exclusive rifutec magazine that provides comprehensive information on everything from climate change to flood protection (see Figure 22).



Figure 22 rifutec Magazine Design

Note. Self-elaboration

This magazine will cover topics such as emergency response to flooding and practical flood protection measures. It will be updated annually to include the latest information and trends relating to climate change and flood protection.

Another addition could be subpages that provide detailed information on general topics. These subpages will include information explaining the climate change and its direct impact on weather patterns. By presenting scientifically validated data and expert analysis, visitors would gain a deeper understanding of the challenges of climate change and the importance of preventive flood protection measures. These subpages would increase rifutec's credibility, highlight the brand purpose and improve the threat assessment of the visitors.

5.5.5.6 Content Marketing

Content marketing is not only used to create brand awareness, but also to provide relevant and interesting content for the target group. The most important aspect of content marketing in the context of this campaign is that consumers gain a real benefit from the information shared. As the name content marketing suggests, the focus here is on the actual content. Sharing relevant content on topics such as climate change and flooding provides the target group with relevant information. This leads to an increase in their threat appraisal. Overall, this also strengthens rifutec's credibility and trustworthiness.

5.5.5.6.1 Organic Social Media Marketing

Social media offers a useful option to deliver relevant content to the target group and thus strengthen the threat appraisal. rifutec currently uses an Instagram and a Facebook account for this purpose. As the consumer audit revealed, the company's target group is between the ages of 40 and 70. Recent online studies on the use of social media in Germany show that Facebook appears to be the perfect platform for this age group. A study conducted by the Statista research department in 2023 shows that Facebook is the most frequently used platform among the age groups of 30 to 49 (50% usage) and 50 to 69 (28% usage) (Statista Research Department, 2024). Facebook should therefore be the top priority for organic

social media marketing. In addition to the two platforms which are already in operation, LinkedIn could be a useful addition. In general, the same content is posted on all platforms. The addition of LinkedIn therefore only requires minimal further effort. The more business-oriented character of LinkedIn seems to be a useful addition to the two other platforms, which are more focused on social interaction and lifestyle.

The content published on these platforms will range from general topics, such as climate change trends, to specific flood protection projects and case studies. The main focus of organic social media marketing is to offer consumers real added value. People should not have the feeling that rifutec only wants to sell its products. Instead, real and important knowledge should be shared that offers consumers real benefits. With frequent posts on how to avoid flood damage, advice on emergency preparedness or latest news on climate change trends, rifutec can build trust with its audience and position itself as an expert in flood protection. Sharing photos and videos of employees at work also increases transparency and engages the consumers. The rifutec employees will be seen wearing the new workwear, allowing the company to showcase its new corporate design and branding elements.

5.5.5.6.2 Guerrilla Marketing

As a part of content marketing, an easy-to-implement guerrilla marketing action was also planned. For this, umbrellas in an exclusive rifutec design were created first. These designs communicate content such as “Protecting you and your house from water” to strengthen the coping appraisal. In addition, the rifutec logo is prominently displayed and the new color scheme is used.



Figure 23 rifutec Umbrella

Note. Self-elaboration

These umbrellas will be distributed free of charge in various city centers in Germany during heavy rainfall. This showcases rifutec's commitment and purpose of protecting people in the fight against rain and water. The umbrella serves as a metaphor for rifutec. Both the umbrella and the company provide protection against water. This content is also actively communicated on the screens of the umbrellas. This establishes a direct connection between protection against water and rifutec. In addition, umbrellas are useful products that are essential during rainfall. It is therefore likely that many people will use the rifutec umbrella. If these people now carry the umbrella, it functions as mobile advertising and leads to greater brand awareness.

5.5.5.6.3 Email Marketing

Email marketing is another action for sharing relevant information with the target group. The website will offer an option of subscribing to a monthly newsletter. In the newsletter, people will receive the latest trends and developments in the field of flood protection and they will receive general information and news on climate change. This newsletter is not a traditional presentation of rifutec's products, as it focuses on increasing the threat awareness of the target group. The focus here is therefore on accurate information about flooding and how to protect yourself against it. For both email marketing and organic

social media marketing, the same content can be used, which results in low effort for content creation.

5.5.5.7 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing will be a key component of the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign. With the filter options of digital marketing, the target group of 40-70 year old German homeowners can be specifically addressed. This specific approach makes it possible to trigger the threat appraisal among homeowners with targeted messages.

5.5.5.7.1 Social Media Ads

The three platforms Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn have already been identified for organic social media marketing. In addition, paid social media ads will be used out via these channels. These ads will be specifically tailored to the target group of 40-70 year old German homeowners. The unique aspect of this campaign is that social media ads will only be shown in certain areas and cities that are affected by recent heavy rain and flooding. By analyzing weather forecasts in Germany, the ads can be targeted to areas affected by heavy rain or storms. For example, if heavy rain is predicted in the area around Hamburg, ads are only shown to the target group in this specific area (see Figure 24). The aim of social media ads is to trigger the threat appraisal. By only broadcasting ads in rainy areas, the threat appraisal can be triggered in a more defined way.

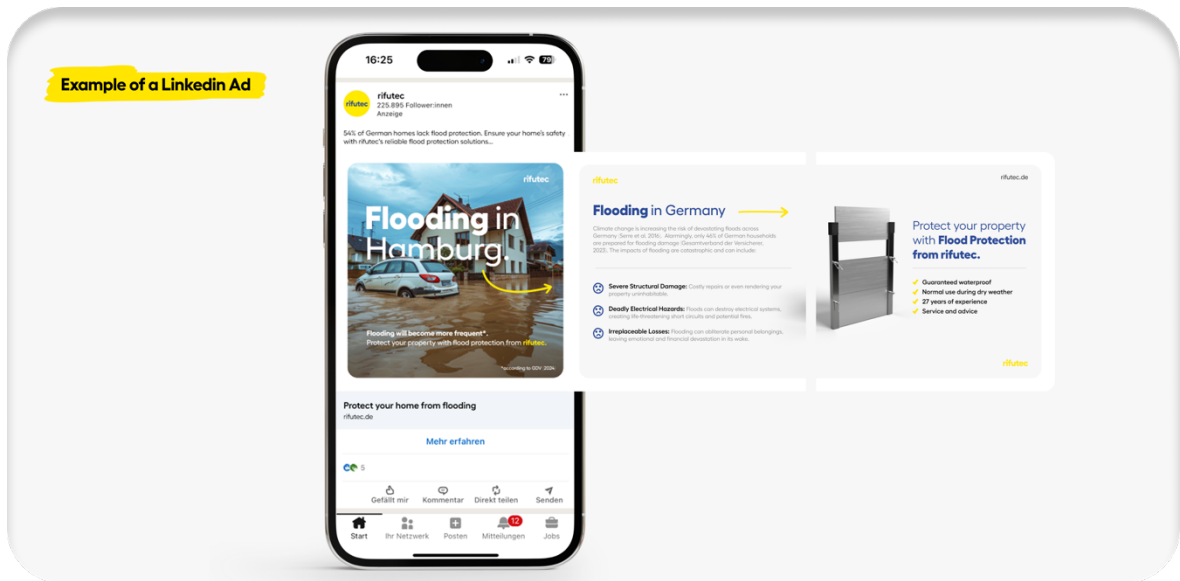


Figure 24 Example of a rifutec LinkedIn Carousel Ad

Note. Self-elaboration

The favored format for the ads is the carousel ad, which allows multiple images or videos to be presented in a single ad (LinkedIn, n.d.). The first slide of the carousel shows a compelling and emotional image of flooded areas, accompanied by a powerful headline that emphasizes the threat (threat appraisal). The special aspect is that the headline is customized to always refer to the specific city or region targeted by the ad, e.g. “Flooding in Hamburg”. In this way, the target group in the respective city or area is addressed even more explicitly. On the following slides, rifutec is then presented as an effective solution to this flooding threat (coping appraisal). These following slides present the rifutec flood protection systems and its advantages. The aim is to direct visitors to the redesigned website, where users can access more detailed information and engage with rifutec’s offerings.

In addition to using Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn for social media advertising, rifutec will also use YouTube video ads (see Figure 25). On YouTube, ads will not be targeted at specific locations, but at specific content. The ads are specifically placed to appear before and after videos that report on flooding events.

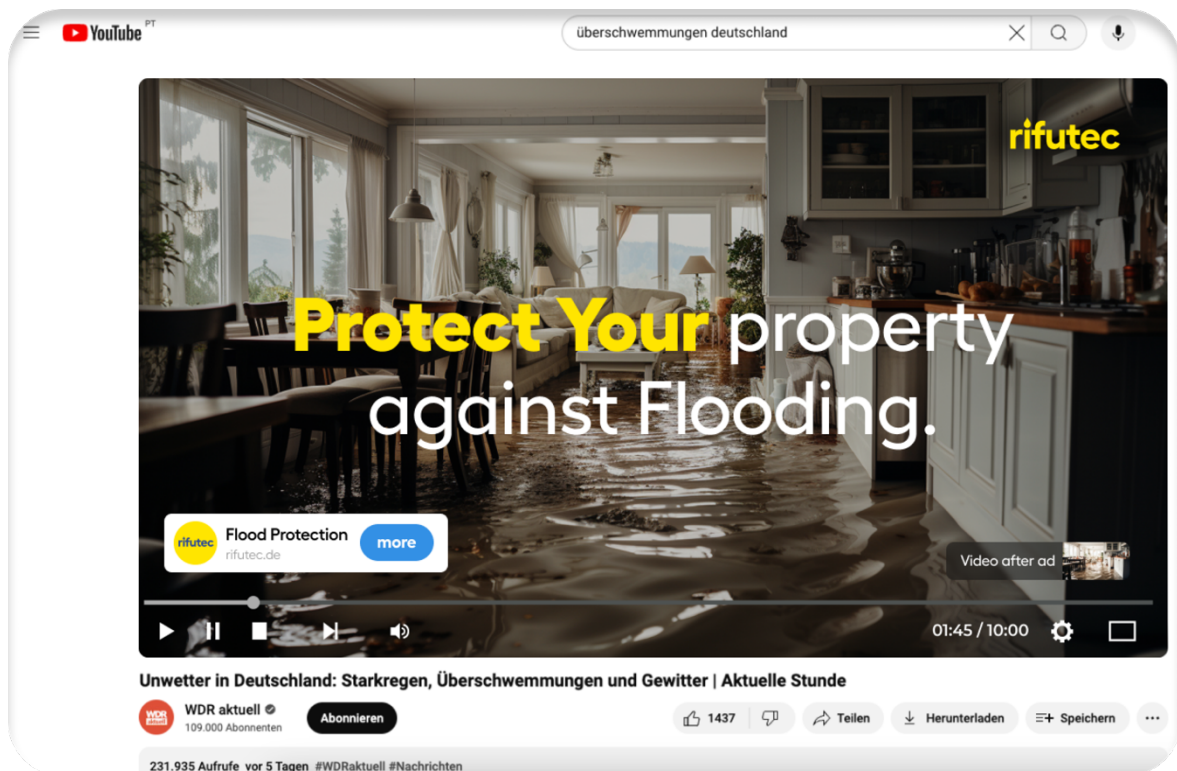


Figure 25 Example of a rifutec Youtube Video Ad

Note. Self-elaboration

For example, news channels regularly upload videos about flood disasters. The rifutec ads are placed before and after these videos. Viewers who watch these videos already have a high threat appraisal. If they now see an ad about flood protection, the threat appraisal is increased even further. The aim of YouTube ads is again to lead people to the rifutec website.

5.5.5.7.2 Search Engine Marketing

In addition to advertising on social media, rifutec will use search engine marketing (SEM) to increase visibility and drive more traffic to the website. Two main actions will be used in this tactic: Google Display Ads and Google Keywords.

Google Display Ads can be used to place ads on specific websites that are likely to be visited by rifutec's target audience (Google, n.d.). For this campaign, the ads are strategically placed on news sites and online newspaper websites (see Figure 26). When

these sites report on flood disasters and heavy rainfall, rifutec can take advantage of the already strengthened threat appraisal. By placing ads in this context, rifutec can effectively direct readers to its website for more information on flood protection solutions.



Figure 26 Example of a rifutec Google Display Ad

Note. Self-elaboration

The figure above shows how a possible Google Display Ad could look. The online magazine “Süddeutsche Zeitung”, a leading German daily newspaper, was selected here. The article reports on the consequences of a flooding event. People who read this report already have a high threat appraisal. The placement of an advertisement could therefore be effective and increase this appraisal even more.

Google Keywords is used to further increase rifutec’s online visibility (see Figure 27). This action involves using relevant keywords that potential consumers might use to search for flood protection solutions.

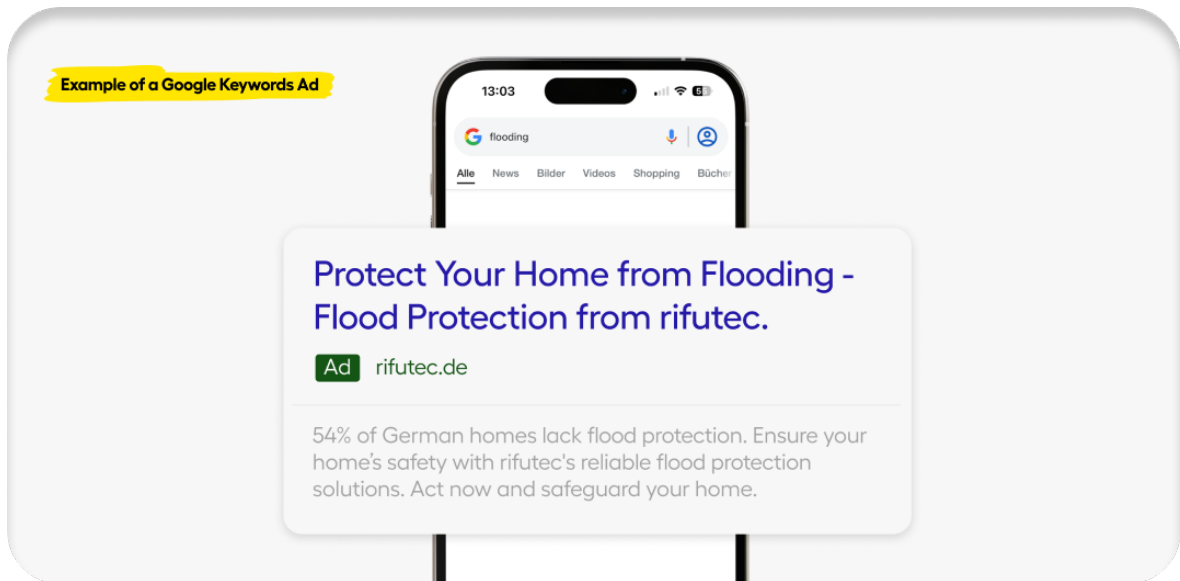


Figure 27 Example of a rifutec Google Keywords Ad

Note. Self-elaboration

Suggested keywords could be: “flood protection”, “flood prevention”, “flood barriers”, “protection against water damage”, “flood protection measures”, “flood protection in basements” and “flood protection systems”. As soon as consumers search for these keywords on Google, an ad from rifutec is displayed. The aim of these ads is to attract consumers to the rifutec website.

5.5.5.8 Out of Home Advertising

After the online area has been covered, the threat appraisal of the target group should also be triggered in the physical public space. OOH advertising will be used for this purpose. The advertisements will include emotional images that show the impact and effects of flooding and heavy rainfall. The images are intended to trigger emotional effects in the minds of the consumers and thus strengthen the threat appraisal. As the attention span in public spaces is relatively short, meaningful and large-scale headlines should also be used to evoke emotional reactions.

5.5.5.8.1 Posters

To effectively strengthen the threat appraisal, rifutec will strategically place posters in highly frequented locations (see Figure 28, Figure 29 and Figure 30). Locations such as bus shelters offer ideal space for this purpose. This is where people seek shelter from the rain while waiting for buses and trains. The design of these posters follows the objective of raising awareness and concern about flooding (threat appraisal). To achieve this, the posters show scenes of flooding affected areas (see Figure 28).

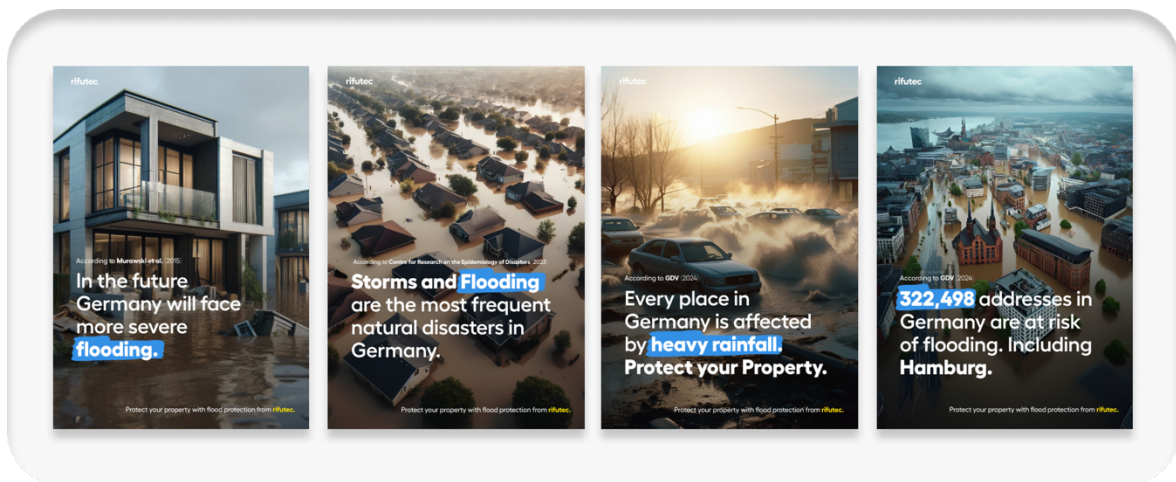


Figure 28 rifutec Poster Designs

Note. Self-elaboration

These images will be supported by clear and powerful headlines. The headlines will reference scientific sources, which will be quoted on the posters to emphasize the credibility and truthfulness of the messages. This approach ensures that the emotional messages resonate with the target audience and that they believe the message. At the bottom of each poster, the subhead of the campaign “Protect your property with flood protection from rifutec” is shown. This layout ensures that the top part of the poster triggers the threat appraisal, while the bottom part presents rifutec as the reliable solution. In addition, the headlines can be tailored to specific cities and locations to address local threat appraisal more effectively.



Figure 29 Example 1 of a rifutec Poster in Hamburg

Note. Self-elaboration



Figure 30 Example 2 of a rifutec Poster

Note. Self-elaboration

For example, posters displayed in Hamburg communicate the headline: "322,498 addresses in Germany are at risk of flooding. Including Hamburg". This allows the first part of the headline to always remain the same ("322,498 addresses in Germany are at risk of flooding..."), while the second part ("...Including Hamburg") adapts to the respective city in which the poster is displayed. The picture above shows an example of a poster in Hamburg. The image of the poster shows the cityscape of Hamburg, affected by flooding. This image was generated with AI. The prompts for creating this image can be easily reused for other cities. In this way, many different posters can be created for various cities without causing rifutec much extra work.

5.5.5.8.2 Billboards

In addition to posters, vertical billboards are also used for out-of-home advertising (see Figure 31). These billboards will be placed on building facades to visualize the direct link between flooding and potential damage to buildings. The content displayed on the billboards can be similar to the posters.



Figure 31 Example of rifutec Billboard Ad

Note. Self-elaboration

The billboard shown above uses the horizontal format for a before and after comparison. The background image shows the interior of a family home before and after flooding. The left half is aimed to address homeowners who have a family by showing personal items lying around. The right side shows the flooded house. The comparison is primarily intended to increase the threat appraisal. The message is further emphasized by an explanatory subtext: “Know the threats before they can occur. Protect your property with flood protection from rifutec.”

5.5.5.8.3 Construction Site Banner

Another action within out of home advertising are banners at construction sites where rifutec flood protection systems are being installed. These are specially designed in rifutec colours and feature the headline “This building will be proofed against flooding” (see Figure 32).



Figure 32 Example of rifutec Construction Site Banner

Note. Self-elaboration

These banners prominently display the rifutec logo and also combine it with illustrations showcasing climate change related topics. The design of the banners was adapted to the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign. This form of out of home advertising is ideal for communicating flood related content, as they directly refer to rifutec products on construction sites. In addition, rifutec vehicles and rifutec employees wearing the new workwear can potentially be seen on the construction site. This combination would lead to even greater brand awareness.

5.5.5.9 Print Advertising

Due to the partly older target group of the campaign, traditional print advertising is another tactic for the campaign. People who do not consume online news but read printed newspapers cannot be reached by digital marketing. To reach these people, print advertising can be used. In addition, the placement of flyers in neighborhoods affected by flooding can also be very effective. Print advertising is therefore the final piece of the puzzle for the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign.

5.5.5.9.1 Newspaper Ads

Empirical findings confirm the high interest in printed newspapers among older people in Germany. Accordingly, 51.8% of 40 to 59 year old people and 68.8% of over 60 year olds are regular reading daily printed newspapers (Liersch & Weißmann, 2022). The readership among pensioners is even higher. Almost 70% regularly read daily newspapers.

Newspaper ads are therefore effective in reaching the older segment of rifutec's target group. The ads will be placed in regional daily newspapers after flooding or a heavy rainfall occurred. In this way, the older target group can be reached and the threat appraisal can be increased. It also makes sense to include the company's telephone number in the advertisement. As older people may not use the Internet frequently, it makes sense to include the telephone number.

5.5.5.9.2 Flyers and Brochures

Another action within print advertising is the use of printed flyers and brochures (see Figure 33). This classic communication tool can be very effective when it is strategically distributed. The flyers and brochures will be placed in mailboxes in neighborhoods which are affected by heavy rainfall and flooding. Households in these areas already have a higher threat appraisal because of their direct experience with flooding. Therefore, the distribution of flyers and brochures that present a solution can be effective.

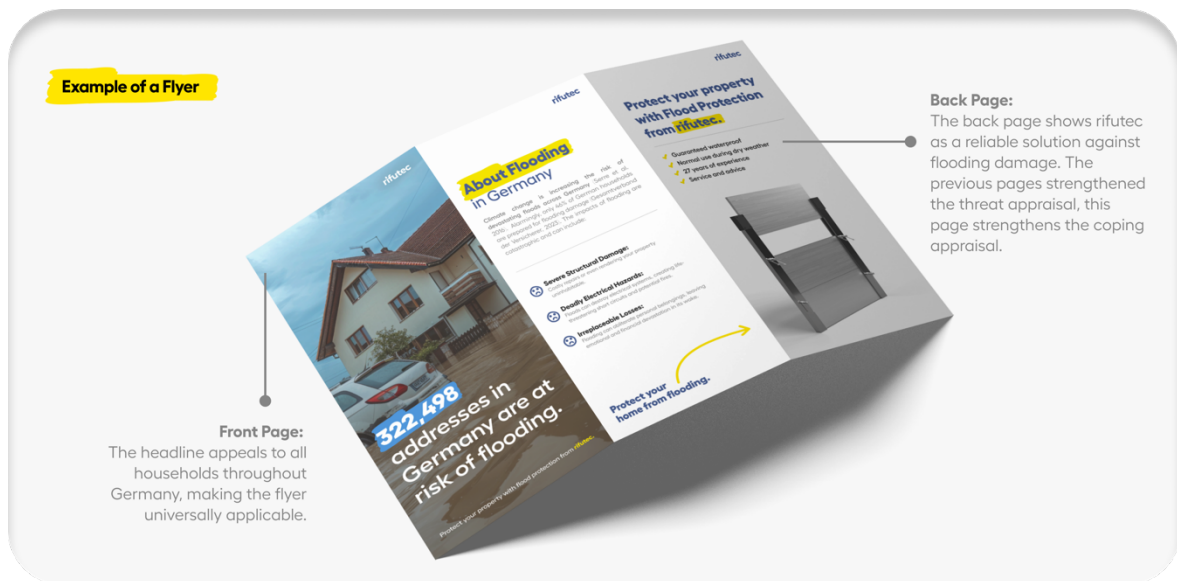


Figure 33 rifutec Flyer Design

Note. Self-elaboration

As a possible approach, every time a flood protection system is installed by rifutec employees, flyers could be distributed to 50 surrounding households. It is likely that if one house suffers flood damage, surrounding houses will have the same problem. In the best case, multiple orders can be generated from just one order. In addition, the distribution of flyers is not a major expense.

5.5.6 Summary of Tactics

The Protection Motivation Theory provided an ideal consumer insight to build the campaign on a psychological concept. On this basis, a carefully considered strategy was developed to achieve the defined tasks and objectives. All tactics and actions within the campaign are consistent and aligned with this overarching strategy. This ensures that the target group receives a unified and targeted message across all communications.

The previous pages have presented the various tactics that will be used for the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign. Within each tactic, a variety of practical actions are employed. Every action has been described in detail, including how it should be implemented, what needs to be considered, and what role it will play in the campaign. The complexity and amount of tactics and actions can make it difficult to keep track of them. For this reason, the following figure summarizes all tactics and describes the type of media they belong to (see Figure 34). In addition, these tactics are presented in a table to illustrate which appraisal should be strengthened with which tactic.

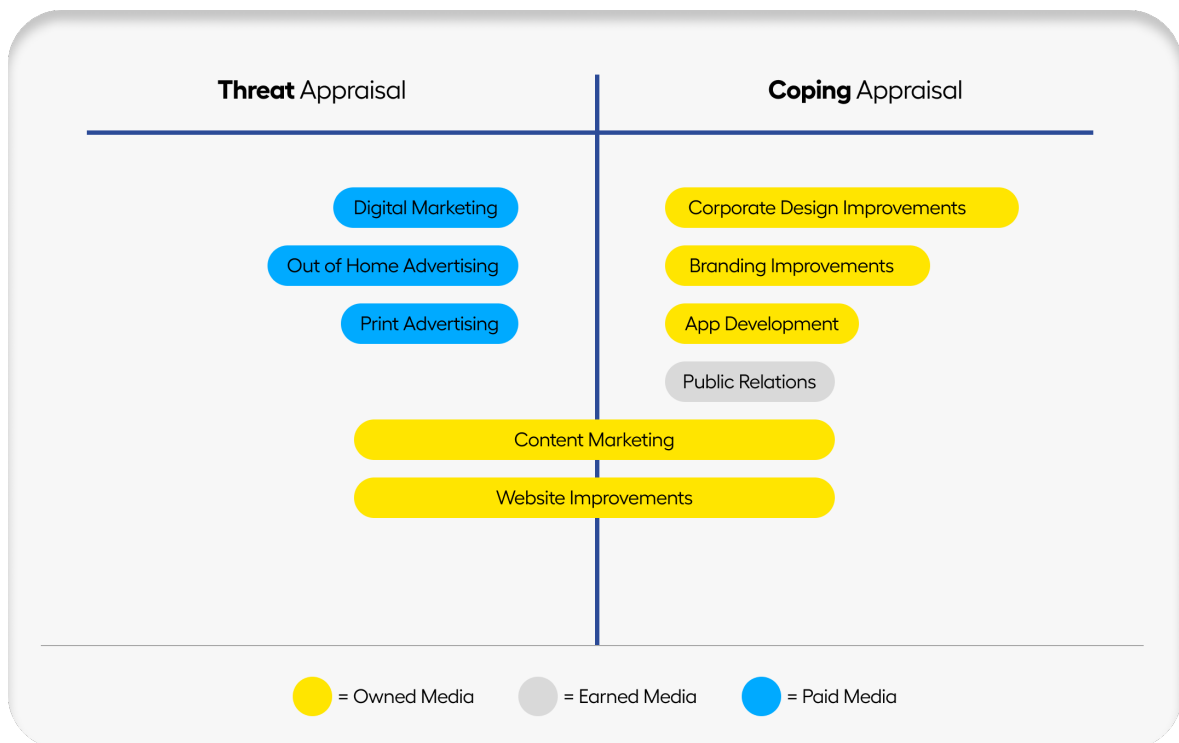


Figure 34 Summary of Tactics

Note. Self-elaboration

5.5.7 Campaign Schedule

After having described how the various tactics are used strategically, the following figure presents a possible time schedule for the campaign (see Figure 35). As this campaign is an initial pilot campaign, it will initially run for one year. But this period can be flexibly extended if the campaign achieves successful results.

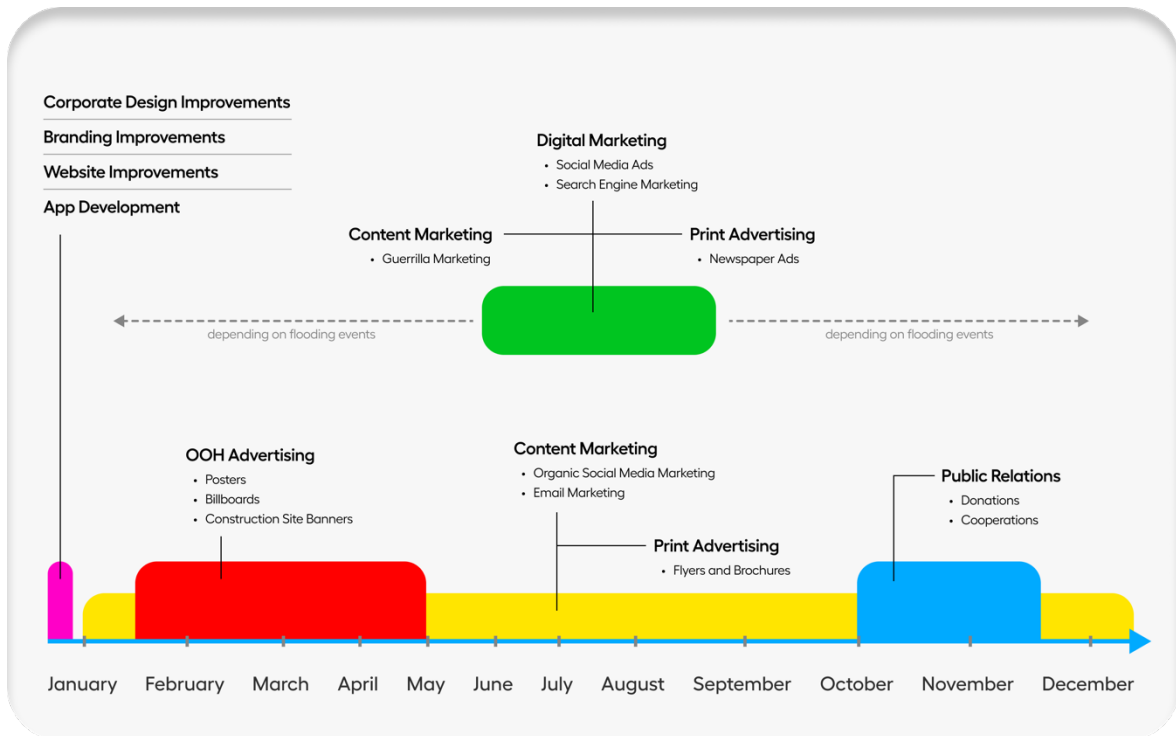


Figure 35 Campaign Time Schedule

Note. Self-elaboration

The “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign starts on January 1 and initially ends on December 31 of the same year. During this period, the tactics and actions described above are used at various points of time.

Pink Color

Before the campaign starts, the tactics of corporate design improvements, branding improvements, website improvements and app development have already been implemented. This is essential, as all subsequent tactics build on and refer to them.

Yellow Color

The campaign will then begin in January with content marketing (actions: organic social media marketing and email marketing) and print advertising (action: flyers and brochures). These two tactics will be used throughout the entire duration of the campaign. That means that content will be shared via organic social media marketing and email marketing throughout the whole year and flyers and brochures will be distributed to neighborhoods every time a flood protection system is installed.

Red Color

Out of home advertising (actions: posters, billboards, construction site banners) starts slightly later. This tactic begins in mid-January and lasts until May. Since the use of OOH advertising is associated with higher costs, this tactic cannot be used throughout the entire year. The literature review revealed that rainfall is most common in the winter to spring period. The aim of out-of-home advertising is to strengthen threat appraisal. Combining this tactic with increased rainfall can further increase the threat appraisal. Therefore, this tactic is used in the months from January (winter) to May (end of spring).

Green Color

Digital marketing (actions: social media ads, search engine marketing), print advertising (action: newspaper ads) and content marketing (action: guerrilla marketing) are used throughout the entire year, but in a flexible way. As described above, these actions are only activated when a specific area is affected by heavy rainfall or flooding. For example, if flooding affects an area in January, social media ads, search engine marketing and newspaper ads are used in that area. But the same happens if the area is flooded in November. These tactics are therefore used throughout the entire duration of the campaign, but only in response to heavy rainfall and flooding.

Blue Color

Around the end of the year, between October and December, public relations (actions: donations and cooperations) will be used. All previous tactics and actions

have already strengthened the brand awareness of rifutec and the threat appraisal and coping appraisal of the target group. This means that more people may become aware of rifutec's public relations work, which in turn further strengthens the coping appraisal.

5.5.8 Budget

As agreed with the rifutec management in advance, this IMC campaign serves as a pilot campaign. As a result, no fixed budget was set. The main goal of the campaign was to develop an initial creative marketing strategy and establish a starting point for future marketing measures. Since the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign is the company's first marketing campaign, it should test various tactics and actions, with the aim of making more precise budget decisions in the future based on the insights and results gained. As rifutec is a small company, financial resources are limited. This was taken into account when planning the campaign, which includes only three paid media tactics: digital marketing, print advertising, and out-of-home advertising (OOH). These tactics will be used flexibly and depending on external factors such as weather changes. For example, digital marketing will only be utilized during periods of flooding or heavy rainfall to respond to relevant events and trigger the threat appraisal. In each individual case, the exact budget will be determined in consultation with the management team.

5.5.9 Results

There are various approaches to measure the effectiveness of a marketing campaign. But effectiveness is always relative and depends on the predefined objectives of a campaign. Some campaigns have very specific goals, such as an increasing sales by a certain percentage. However, the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign has two overarching objectives. Firstly, to encourage more German homeowners to choose rifutec as their provider of flood protection measures, and secondly, to raise awareness and sensitivity among homeowners in Germany for the necessity of preventive flood protection measures. While the first objective is relatively easy to measure, the second is more difficult to measure.

An approach for evaluating the success of this campaign is the Creative Effectiveness Ladder by James Hurman and Peter Field (Hurman & Field, 2020). This model assesses the effectiveness of marketing campaigns on six different levels. It was developed to create a unified language for evaluating the effectiveness of campaigns (Hurman & Field, 2020). While many other approaches measure effectiveness using only quantitative results such as market share or sales, the Creative Effectiveness Ladder considers the success of a campaign in a broader context, taking into account psychological and long-term effects. According to this model, a campaign will be considered effective on a six-step ladder, with each level reflecting different campaign effects.

Level 1: Influential Idea

Campaigns at this level increase brand visibility and drive engagement and sharing.

Level 2: Behaviour Breakthrough

These campaigns lead to a change in consumer behavior towards the brand, for example a change in purchasing or usage behavior.

Level 3: Sales Spike

At this level, campaigns generate short-term increases in metrics such as sales, market share, and profitability.

Level 4: Brand Builder

These campaigns strengthen long-term brand awareness, brand preference and brand positioning.

Level 5: Commercial Triumph

These campaigns sustainably increase sales and market share over a longer period of time.

Level 6: Enduring Icon

These campaigns ensure continuous brand growth and sales growth over a period of three years or more.

With each step, the commercial value of the achieved effect increases. This means that campaigns are effective at any level of the ladder, but at higher levels they make a stronger economic contribution to the company. Which level a campaign reaches depends heavily on the specific objectives of the campaign. For example, a short trend campaign should only pursue a short-term effect (Hurman & Field, 2020).

The desired effectiveness of the “Don’t let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign aligns with the second level of the Creative Effectiveness Ladder (Behavior Change). The campaign's objective is twofold: to encourage more German homeowners to choose rifutec as their provider of flood protection measures, and to increase the awareness and sensitivity of homeowners in Germany for the necessity of preventive flood protection measures. The campaign is therefore aimed at specifically influencing the consumer behavior. To measure the effectiveness of this level, behavioral metrics need to be used. For the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign, the following three metrics are particularly relevant:

Penetration

The percentage of people who buy the product. A distinction should be made between sales resulting from restorative and preventive concerns. These values will be compared with the percentages before the campaign.

Loyalty

The willingness of consumers to purchase again and their overall satisfaction. In addition, the bounce rate of potential customers should be analysed to see how it has changed compared to before the campaign. Consumer reviews and feedback can also provide important qualitative indicators.

Preventive Consultation

The amount of people contacting rifutec for preventive flood protection solutions. To verify if the campaign is really improving the threat and coping appraisal, it should be analyzed if the amount of consultations for preventive measures increases.

These three metrics provide an effective way of measuring consumer behavioral change in relation to the campaign's objectives. Firstly, the campaign should encourage more homeowners to choose rifutec as their provider. This will be measured by the metrics “Penetration” and “Loyalty”. The “Preventive Consultation” metric focuses on the second objective: it measures whether the number of preventive inquiries is actually increasing as a result of the campaign. This is done by comparing the number of inquiries before and after the campaign. An increase in preventive inquiries would indicate that the threat and coping appraisal of consumers has been effectively strengthened.

In addition, specific questions can be asked during these consultations to find out why the homeowners made contact and how they became aware of rifutec. These follow-up questions provide valuable qualitative insights into the psychological motivations of consumers.

These metrics will be used after the campaign has ended to evaluate its overall effectiveness. But in addition, these metrics can also be applied to assess the effectiveness of each tactic within and during the campaign. As shown in the campaign time schedule, different tactics will be employed at various points of time throughout the campaign. Analyzing the metrics (penetration, loyalty, and preventive consulting) for each tactic can indicate if the tactic was effective or not. For example, after completing the red phase (OOH advertising), it can be evaluated whether the metrics (penetration, loyalty, and preventive consulting) decrease or remain stable.

By evaluating the effectiveness of each tactic, rifutec can identify which tactics are best suited to influence the behavior of the target group and which are less successful. This evaluation is important because the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign will be used as a pilot campaign. Which means that, in addition to achieving the general campaign objectives, this campaign should also be used to investigate which tactics are effective for the future marketing of rifutec and which are less effective.

In addition to measuring the effectiveness of the campaign and the tactics, it is also important to regularly review the performance of the new website. Since the website acts as the main brand contact point for this campaign, its effectiveness is essential for the

overall success. A monthly analysis of the website performance allows optimizations to be made quickly and the user experience can be continuously improved. The following metrics are particularly relevant for measuring the effectiveness of the website:

Number of Visits

The number of visitors on the rifutec website. These are compared with each other on a monthly basis. It is also possible to check from which areas the visitors come. This can be helpful, to see whether more visitors come from affected areas during or after heavy rainfall events.

Bounce Rate

How many visitors visit the website and leave it again without any interaction. A high bounce rate can have several reasons, such as unattractive content, confusing navigation or a suboptimal header design.

Session Duration

How long visitors stay on the website. If visitors leave the website after a short time, this may indicate that the content is not working properly and should be revised.

Contact Requests

The measurement of inquiries via contact and call-to-action buttons in general. For example, if the number of inquiries is low, the position of call-to-action buttons can be adjusted.

Monitoring and analyzing these metrics ensure that the website is constantly being improved. As nearly all tactics of the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign are aimed at the website, it is extremely important that this brand contact point is as effective as possible.

6 Conclusion

This master's project applied the APTC Framework from the field of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) to the company rifutec, which is operating in the flood protection sector. The aim of this work was to develop a first marketing strategy, as the company is not using any targeted marketing activities so far.

The economic potential of flood protection is enormous, as it is becoming increasingly important in the face of ongoing human-enhanced climate change. As global temperatures rise, the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events increase, leading to more frequent flooding. The damage to buildings caused by flooding is immense and will continue to increase due to climate change. Flood protection solutions are therefore crucial for the future protection of homes and infrastructure. The timing to start promoting rifutec's flood protection solutions therefore seemed ideal. The management of rifutec requested the development of an initial pilot campaign that should pave the way for future marketing strategies and activities. Therefore, only a few limitations and requirements were set for this campaign. The budget was not specified, only the indication that the campaign should not be too complex and expensive, since rifutec is a small company. An explicit goal for the campaign was also not defined, this should arise from an in-depth interview with the management itself. This freedom allowed room for developing a creative marketing concept. But at the same time, a comprehensive analysis of the business environment, the company and its customers were required to guide the marketing strategy in the right direction. Since rifutec never used any targeted marketing activities before, it was necessary to start from scratch.

To this end, the first part of this work reviewed the field of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). Relevant concepts and the latest developments of the field were presented and it was argued why the APTC Framework by Kliatchko and Uttamchandani (2023) was chosen as a suitable concept for this work. This framework was then described in detail. The next chapter focused on the contextual review of flooding. This second literature review was particularly important for the content direction of the final IMC Plan. Through an in-depth analysis of the relationship between flooding and climate change,

important insights and information were gained that were later used to develop the campaign. After this theoretical foundation, the next chapter explained how data and information for the IMC Plan was collected. For this purpose, an extensive interview was conducted with the management of rifutec. In addition, a secondary data collection was used to obtain information about the current communication and the overall structure of the company. These two data collections provided the necessary data to enable the creation of the IMC Plan. The fourth chapter focused on the actual creation of the IMC Plan. The plan was built using the APTC Framework, which is divided into four main parts: Audit, Problem, Task at Hand and Campaign. The audit part included a detailed analysis of the company and its consumers. The problem part defined challenges that the campaign should address. The task at hand section translated these problems into specific tasks and objectives for the campaign. Based on all previous steps, the campaign part developed the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign, which was strategically built upon the Protection Motivation Theory. Specific tactics and actions were then designed and it was explained how, where and when they would be deployed. Finally, it was described how the effectiveness of the campaign can be measured sustainably.

The “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign lays the foundation for rifutec's future marketing activities. Besides the redesign of corporate design elements, the website and the creation of various marketing actions, an overarching strategic concept was developed, on which future marketing can consistently build. It was particularly important that this concept is both feasible and flexibly adaptable for a small company, while still being effective. While the exact effectiveness of the campaign can only be evaluated after its execution, the strategy is based on the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), a framework that has been successfully applied in many areas and thus provides a solid foundation. In addition, a set of clear metrics has been defined to continuously monitor the campaign's effectiveness and adjust it as needed.

An important feature of the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign is its close link to real-time weather changes. Many tactics within the campaign are only deployed in certain areas when heavy rain and flooding is occurring. This approach ensures that the tactics are used when they will have the greatest impact, while also ensuring that the

budget is used efficiently. The creative combination of a strategy based on the Protection Motivation Theory and the dynamic alignment to weather changes could make this campaign an extremely effective pilot project. Furthermore, the campaign addresses real and urgent issues that affect society as a whole. Climate change is constantly progressing with an increasing frequency of flooding. Awareness of these risks is therefore crucial for the future of our society.

This project not only developed an IMC campaign for rifutec, it also highlighted the connection between climate change and flooding issues. The outcome is a carefully considered Integrated Marketing Communications Plan that will serve as the basis for the company's future marketing efforts. At the same time, this work highlights the urgency to prepare for the consequences of climate change and to take concrete actions. This work demonstrates the importance of preventive solutions such as flood protection in a world that is evolving due to climate change.

6.1 Reflection on Work Process and Limitations

This concluding chapter reflects on the overall work process of this project, discussing limitations, challenges, and experiences. In general, the APTC Framework proved to be very suitable for creating this campaign. The two authors Kliatchko and Uttamchandani (2023) guide the user through the individual phases of the framework in a clear and understandable way, making this framework very user-friendly. For example, the audit part provided entire sheets that can be used to execute the specific phases. This makes working with the framework more efficient. However, some parts of the framework seemed to overlap and may not be necessary for every campaign creation. For instance, in the consumer audit, the psychological and motivational characteristics often overlapped. It is therefore recommended to carefully examine the individual phases of the APTC Framework and to determine which are relevant before using it. In this case, the feedback loops from the framework were integrated more fluidly. Normally, the APTC Framework suggests individual feedback loops after each phase, which can be helpful when

developing a campaign in a team. But in this case, the campaign was developed as a master's project and written by only one person. Therefore, it was not necessary to address feedback loops after each part.

In addition, the analysis of the competition seemed to be a bit too short during the brand audit. In the area of flood protection, this issue is less pronounced. But if the APTC Framework is used for a company that has a highly competitive product, the lack of discussion and analysis of competitors could be a weakness in this concept. Although the analysis of competition is part of the positioning section of the brand audit, it might be recommended to include a dedicated part specifically for competitor analysis. In general, the APTC Framework should be used in an agile and flexible way. It should not be used as a rigid concept that is always applied to every use case with the same structure.

Subdividing the literature review into a theoretical part, which sheds light on the field of Integrated Marketing Communications, and a content-related part, which deals with flooding and climate change, proved to be extremely important. This structure made it possible to provide a solid foundation for both the theoretical principles and the practical content for the IMC campaign. Building on this, future research could further explore the role of marketing and communication in the field of climate protection and disaster warnings. The connection between effective communication and preventive measures in disaster protection represents an interesting research field. But for this work, an in-depth examination of this topic would have gone beyond the scope, since the focus was on the development of a specific IMC Plan for rifutec. Another key limitation of this work was the data collection. It would have been useful to conduct interviews with existing rifutec customers to gain more insights into consumer behavior. But the company's management stated from the beginning that customer contacts and information would not be released. In addition, a specific budget would have been helpful to plan the campaign even more effectively. Another challenge was the lack of empirical data about previous marketing activities. The fact that rifutec had no marketing strategy before and did not use any marketing activities complicated the planning process. These two factors made the planning and development of the campaign difficult at some points. But since this campaign was intended as a pilot project, these factors were manageable. For following

marketing campaigns, the results of this pilot campaign should serve as a starting point to avoid these problems in the future.

7 Bibliography

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Appendix

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A. IMC Campaign Summary

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a view of Earth from space. The Earth is shown as a curved horizon with green landmasses and blue oceans, set against a deep blue sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

rifutec

Don't let **Raindrops** turn into **Teardrops.**

IMC Campaign

Master's Project

September 2024

Before

About this Work

This document is a visual summary of the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign. This campaign is the result of an IMC Plan for the flood protection company rifutec and was created as part of a master's project at Católica Portuguesa. This document does not contain the entire IMC Plan, only the final IMC campaign.

Considering the progressing climate change, flood protection systems are becoming increasingly important as extreme rainfall and flooding cause severe damage to buildings. rifutec is a German company that specializes in flood protection solutions but currently has no marketing activities. The aim of this master's project was therefore to develop an initial marketing concept using the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach. The APTC Framework by Kliatchko and Uttamchandani (2024) was applied to create a detailed IMC Plan. The data for implementation was collected through an in-depth interview with the company's management and a content analysis of its external communication.

The result is the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign, which is based on the Protection Motivation Theory and raises awareness for flood protection among German homeowners. This document does not present the entire master's project, but only the practical implementation of the campaign.

Keywords: IMC, APTC Framework, Flood Protection, Climate Change, PMT

Climate change is progressing at an unnatural pace (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). Every year, we experience the consequences in form of natural disasters destroying millions of homes and existences. Heatwaves are increasing, temperature swings are becoming more pronounced and more intense and unusually heavy rainfall is leading to flooding worldwide (Clarke et al., 2022; European Environment Agency, 2023; García-León et al., 2021). In recent years, Europe has experienced extremely severe flood disasters. During the Ahr valley floods in Germany in 2021, at least 185 people lost their lives. In addition, around 9,000 buildings were destroyed, causing around 17,000 people to lose their homes and possessions (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2024).

As shown in this example, the resulting damage caused by flooding is enormous. As this trend shows no sign of slowing down, people need to prepare for the consequences of extreme rainfall and flooding. Flood protection systems specifically focus on safeguarding against these damages. Considering the progressing climate change, these systems will be an even more important component in the fight against flooding in the future.

rifutec recognized the need for flood protection over 27 years ago and has established its position as a reputable and reliable flood protection provider in Germany. The medium-sized company develops and sells in-house flood protection system, which protects various building openings such as windows, doors and garages from water ingress. In recent years in particular, the company has seen an increase in demand from consumers who have suffered water damage due to heavy rainfall and flooding.

Until now, rifutec has not engaged in any targeted marketing activities. But the increasing demand has shown the management that marketing measures could have the potential to increase the number of inquiries even further. In view of the advancing climate change, rifutec has therefore decided to implement its first marketing activities. This document presents an initial marketing campaign for rifutec, which was written as part of a master's project at Católica Portuguesa.

Before

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A brief roadmap of this document

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rifutec

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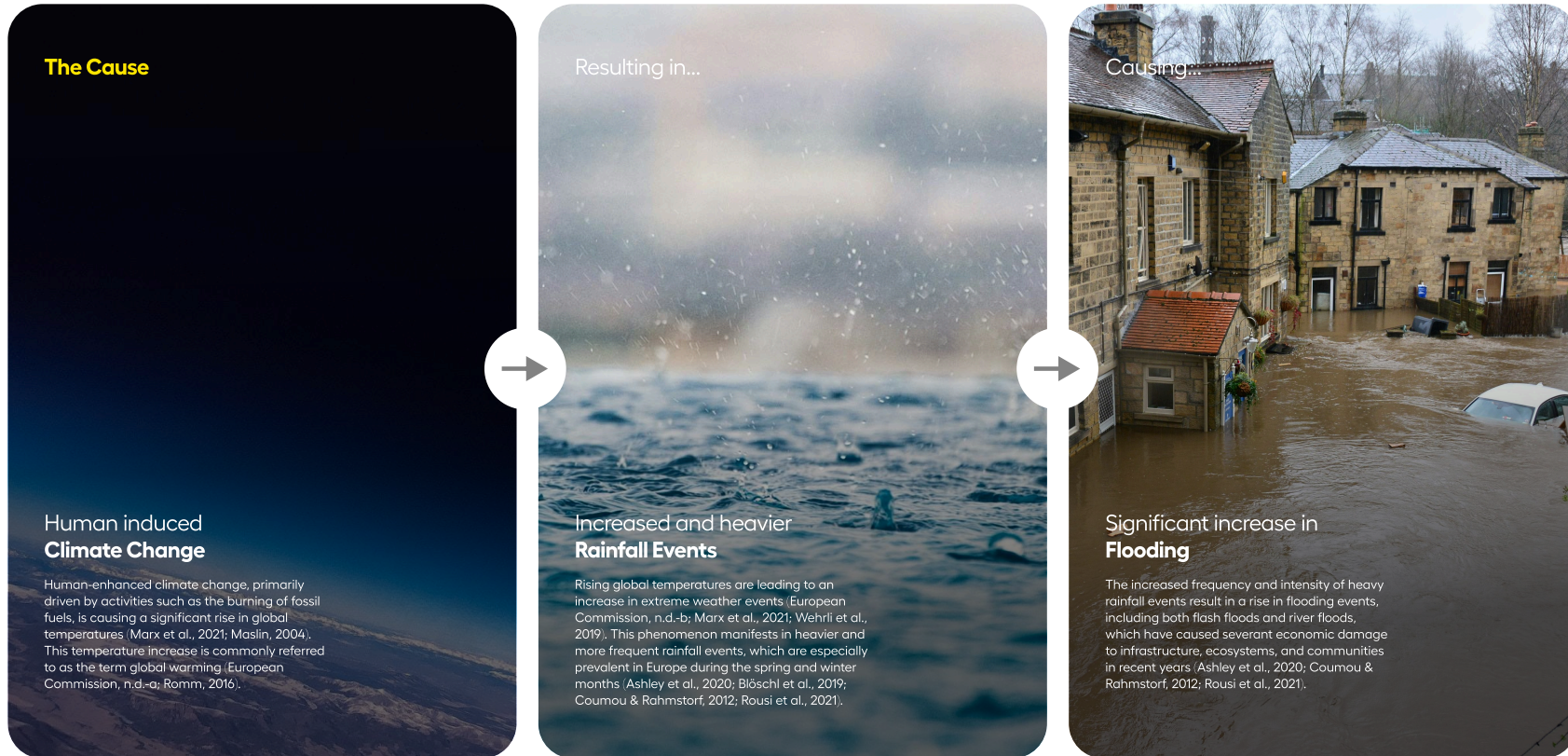
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Flooding

The Solution: **rifutec**

rifutec has specialized in the protection against these natural hazards and offers its own in-house Flood Protection System.

Flood protection systems are designed to prevent damage caused by water ingress. These systems can be installed in a wide variety of building openings, for example into doors, windows or garages. **rifutec** has developed its own flood protection systems, which are always individually adapted to the size of the opening in the respective application.

For implementation, a frame system is installed at a suitable location first. In the case of a door, this frame system is often installed into the door frame.

Once this frame system has been installed, the door can continue to be used as usual and the flood protection can be flexibly inserted into this frame system during rainfall. This allows the door, garage or window to be used as usual and protects the house from water ingress during rainfall or flooding.

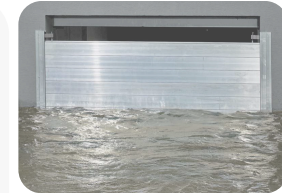


Dam Beams that are inserted into the frame system during rain or flooding (The height of the protection can be customized depending on the application)

Frame System which is installed in various openings (doors, windows, garages etc.)

Dam Beams protecting the opening from water ingress during rainfall or flooding

Systems for various openings:



Flooding

The Solution: **rifutec**

The following illustrations demonstrate how rifutec's flood protection system work in a doorway.

About rifutec

rifutec offers many other systems for various entrances and openings. For each application, the rifutec team first analyzes the area to be waterproofed and then recommends a specific system with the ideal solution. Flood protection systems are predominantly purchased by private customers.

In the past, rifutec received 95% of all requests for restorative solutions, meaning after water damage had already occurred. In the future, rifutec would like to sell preventive flood protection systems.

Frame System

During dry weather, the door/window/garage entrance etc. as can be used as normal without any restrictions. The frame system offers maximum flexibility.



Always installed



Flood Protection

In the event of heavy rain, the dam beams are simply hooked into the frame system to protect the door from water ingress.



During rainy and stormy weather



rifutec wants to reach German homeowners who have not yet suffered water damage but want to protect themselves preventively. Many people are not aware of the effects and dangers of flood damage. These people must therefore be made aware of the consequences and dangers of flooding.

Campaign
Objectives:



INFORM

Regarding from the Task: Increase the awareness and sensitivity of homeowners in Germany regarding the necessity for preventive flood protection measures by communicating the severity and likelihood of flooding.



PERSUADE

Regarding from the Task: Encourage more German homeowners to choose rifutec as their provider of flood protection measures by strategically highlighting the reliability and effectiveness of rifutec's products.



rifutec

The "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign lays the foundation for rifutec's future marketing activities. It was particularly important that this concept is both feasible and flexibly adaptable for a small to medium company, while still being effective.

Don't let **Raindrops** turn
into **Teardrops**

Based on the the Protection Motivation Theory

The Campaign Strategy

The Protection Motivation Theory states that if a person assesses a threat as severe and the probability of occurrence as high (threat appraisal), the person will look for protective measures. If the person now perceives this protective measure as effective, self-manageable and affordable (coping appraisal), the probability of investing in this measure is high (Oakley et al., 2020; Richert et al., 2017; Rogers, 1975). This strategy was used to create the campaign strategy.



Strengthened Threat Appraisal

INFORM

The strategy starts with strengthening the threat appraisal of German homeowners by highlighting the severity and likelihood of flood damage.

The severity will be communicated through emotional images showing the devastating effects of flood damage. The likelihood will be communicated through providing scientific statistics and future predictions about flood damage. The message tonality will be serious and urgent.

Consumers with an increased threat appraisal are now aware of the effects and consequences of flooding.

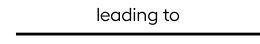


Strengthened Coping Appraisal

PERSUADE

At the same time rifutec will be positioned as a trustworthy solution for flood protection.

The focus is creating a positive coping appraisal by communicating the effectiveness of rifutec's flood protection measures, the simplicity of installation and the affordability. The tonality for strengthening the coping appraisal should be trustworthy, informative, hopeful and encouraging.



Requests for Preventive Measures

ORDER

After successfully strengthening the threat appraisal and the coping appraisal, more homeowners recognize the need for flood protection and perceive rifutec as a reliable solution.

Thus, rifutec receives more inquiries from homeowners seeking for preventive flood protection solutions.

Strategy Summary:

The strategy informs homeowners about the dangers of flooding, thus increasing their threat appraisal.

At the same time, rifutec is presented as an effective flood protection solution and thus increases the coping appraisal.

Protect your Property
with **Flood Protection**
from rifutec



Don't let
Raindrops turn
into **Teardrops**

Campaign

A Preview: **The Highlights**

Some highlights of the “Don’t let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign are presented below. These will also be described in greater detail in the following slides.

Extensive OOH Advertising

One of the centerpieces is out-of-home advertising, which is designed to actively strengthen threat appraisal. For example, posters, billboards or construction site banners are used to highlight the danger of flooding and climate change.

Posters, Billboards and Construction Site Banners



Guerrilla Marketing

In this guerrilla marketing tactic, rifutec umbrellas are distributed for free in various German cities during heavy rain. The umbrellas not only serve as mobile advertising, but also subconsciously establish an association between protection against rain and rifutec, strengthening the coping appraisal.



Corporate Design Improvements

Reworked corporate design appearance, from logo design to a new color spectrum and font. These improvements were taken into account in all further tactics of the campaign.

Branding Improvements

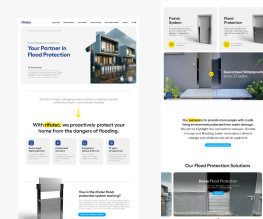
In addition to corporate design, the current brand identity was also revised.



Website Improvements

The entire rifutec homepage was improved and adapted to match the campaign. In addition, sub-pages were conceptualized for specific topics.

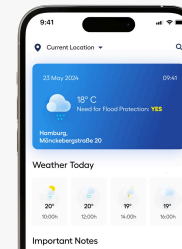
Website Design Prototype (Figma)



App Development

The concept for an exclusive rifutec app was designed to provide consumers of the brand with assistance in installing and using the flood protection systems.

App Design Prototype (Figma)





Tactic

Corporate Design Improvements

This tactic aims to strengthen the Coping Appraisal, meaning to present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

The main focus of an Integrated Marketing Communications campaign is to ensure that all marketing communications are aligned and convey a unified message (Clow & Baack, 2017). To communicate this message even more effectively, visual brand elements can be redesigned, on which all subsequent communications will be based.

Given the fact that rifutec has operated without a rebranding since its foundation in 1996, and considering the ambition to reposition the company, there is a great opportunity for corporate design improvements. All subsequent marketing communications of the campaign will feature these reworked corporate design improvements.

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

Logo Redesign

Redesigning the logo is a strategic move aimed at modernizing the brand while maintaining its core identity and visual connection to its services and products.

Color and Font Redesign

The color scheme was redesigned to better reflect rifutec's heritage and increase visual appeal.

Action

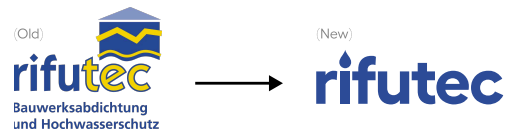
Logo Redesign

Redesigning the logo is a strategic move aimed at modernizing the brand while maintaining its core identity and visual connection to its services and products. The previous logo, which had been in use since the foundation in 1996, contained the brand name "rifutec" and the subtitle "Bauwerksabdichtung und Hochwasserschutz" (structural waterproofing and flood protection). In view of possible future expansions into other countries, removing the German subtitle made sense to make the logo more universally applicable.

The redesigned logo involved several key changes. The old logo included an illustration of a house, symbolizing rifutec's service of protecting houses from water damage. The newly designed logo replaces this illustration with a water drop on the letter "i". This change keeps the association with water while simplifying the design.

In addition, the brand name "rifutec" was changed to a thicker and more modern font to improve readability and brand recognition. The color scheme of the old logo was yellow and dark blue. The new logo takes a simpler approach. It is either dark blue on a light background (option A) or yellow on a dark background (option B). The water drop on the "i" can be switched to the contrasting color if it is required to make the logo more prominent (option C). Overall, the redesigned logo aims to be simpler, more memorable and more modern.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Action

Color and Font Redesign

The color scheme was redesigned to better reflect rifutec's heritage and increase visual appeal. While the old color scheme included a mix of dark blue and yellow, the new color scheme aims to achieve more flexibility and visibility.

The dark blue color has been kept exactly as it was. For yellow, a much lighter shade (#FFE500) was chosen, resembling the typical yellow of rain jackets and rubber boots, which symbolize protection from rain and water. Additionally, the contrast between dark blue and the brighter yellow is stronger and more attracting. The color scheme has also been expanded to include two additional shades of blue: a pale blue (#3390E5), intended for background content, and a vibrant blue (#00AFFF), which can be used for call-to-action elements or to highlight certain content. These four colors, together with black, white and shades of grey, are the new color scheme that will make the brand more modern, memorable and attractive.

The font used in rifutec's communication was also changed to better match the new logo. The previous font (Futura), which is very thin and delicate, was replaced by the Hellix font family. This new font is thicker and offers a wider range of styles, making it more flexible. In addition, Hellix embodies a more modern look, reflecting the brand's transition towards a modern visual identity.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal

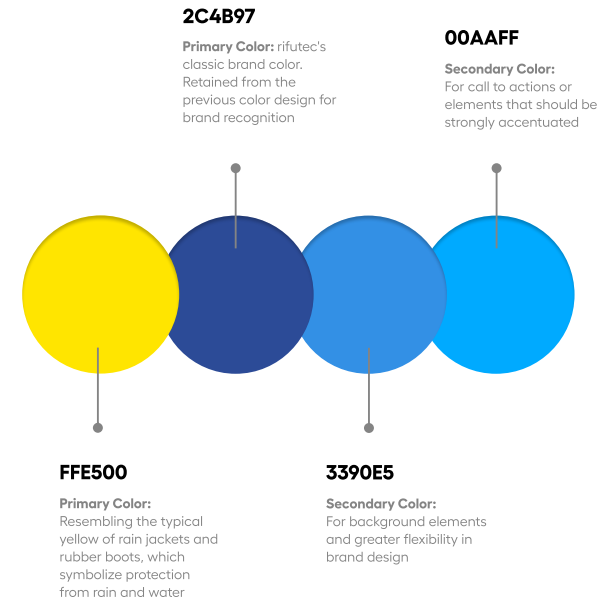
Hellix Bold: Headlines

Hellix Semibold: Subheadlines

Hellix Medium: Captions

Hellix Regular: Bodies

Hellix Light: Background



Tactic

Branding Improvements

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Coping Appraisal, meaning to present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

After corporate design improvements have been made, these updates can be applied to the company's branding.

The company currently uses employee workwear and vehicles as mobile advertisements. It is therefore necessary to revise these in the new design and layout of the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign.

Vehicle Redesign

Also vehicles receive new designs that incorporate the new design improvements and aligns with the campaign strategy.

Workwear Redesign

The company's new workwear repertoire includes sweatshirts and T-shirts. In addition to dark blue clothes, white T-shirts were also designed for employees to wear in the summer.

Promotional Products

In addition to the previous branding improvements, the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign delivers two more promotional products. These include a specially branded adhesive tape and lanyards in the new corporate design.

Action

Workwear Redesign

The new workwear mainly uses rifutec's dark blue color. White and yellow accents are placed on the blue base color, for example through text or graphics. The contrasts of dark blue and white/yellow generate great attention and ensure that the messages are recognized even from a distance.

The front features the newly revised rifutec logo. The back of the clothing tries to strengthen the coping appraisal through targeted messaging. It was important to convey trustworthy and encouraging messages that are still easy to read from a distance. Slogans such as "We protect your Property from Water" and "We save your Property" are communicated here. These messages are intended to convey trustworthiness and credibility. The clothing thus serves as mobile advertising. For example, if a flood protection system is installed in a neighborhood, residents see rifutec employees during their work. These employees now wear the newly designed workwear, which ensures that the surrounding neighbors are automatically addressed by rifutec.

The company's new workwear repertoire includes sweatshirts and T-shirts. In addition to dark blue clothes, white T-shirts were also designed for employees to wear in the summer. The light-colored fabric heats up less quickly than dark blue, offers employees more options, and seamlessly aligns with the company's new corporate design.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



(dark shirts)

(light shirts)

Action

Vehicle Redesign

Vehicles also follow the same principle as the workwear. These also serve as mobile advertising. The new design adapts to the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign and is intended to strengthen brand presence.

The redesigned vehicles now feature the updated rifutec logo, ensuring consistent brand awareness. The tagline "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" is strategically placed on the left and right side of the vehicle. Additionally, the subtitle "Protect your Property with Flood Protection from rifutec" is included to communicate the company's product. The front of the vehicle prominently displays the rifutec logo mirrored. This approach allows drivers to read the communicated content correctly in the rearview mirror. The redesign of the vehicles not only improves aesthetics, but also increases visibility and brand awareness.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Action

Promotional Products

The campaign delivers two more promotional products. These include a specially branded adhesive tape and lanyards in the new corporate design. Both products can be used by the company itself, but can also be given out to consumers as merchandising or promotional products.

Product 1

Adhesive Tape

rifutec adhesive tape can firstly be used by the company itself. For example, it can be used to tape the packaging of flood protection systems. The brand audit showed that sold flood protection systems are only shipped in brown cardboard. If this packaging is now wrapped in this newly designed tape, it leads to a better brand presence.

Furthermore, the tape can be used as a promotional product, which can be given to customers or partners. Every time the tape is used, it means a stronger brand presence for rifutec, as more people see the logo and messages. The design of the tape was adapted to the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign and thus includes a mix of dark blue and highlights in yellow and white. This makes the tape visually appealing and the content easy to read from distance.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Product 2

Lanyards

The rifutec lanyards can also be used by the company itself as well as by consumers. For example, employees can use them to attach car keys. In addition, name tags can be attached to them during the installation of flood protection systems, which leads to a more personal relationship between the rifutec employee and the customer. The design of the lanyards is adapted to the campaign and features the same elements as the adhesive tape.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Tactic

Public Relations

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Coping Appraisal, meaning to present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

rifutec's brand purpose is based on the ambition to improve the safety of homes and houses in the face of climate change challenges. In order to communicate and promote this purpose to the outside, certain PR actions will be taken.

Positive public relations should show consumers that rifutec not only acts in a profit-oriented manner, but also works for the common good. By contributing to initiatives that have a positive impact on the community and the environment, rifutec can showcase its commitment to its mission: provide more people with a safe living environment that offers protection against water damage.

Donations to Flood Victims

An annual donation initiative by rifutec for flood victims would underline the company's brand purpose and enhance its overall reputation.

Cooperations with NGO's

In addition to donations, cooperations with non-governmental organizations that are working to help flood victims can also be considered.

Action

Donations to Flood Victims

An annual donation initiative by rifutec for flood victims would underline the company's brand purpose and enhance its overall reputation. In addition to reputational benefits, donations to charity are tax-deductible in Germany. Under German tax law, donations to recognized charitable organizations can be deducted from taxable income (Forum GmbH, 2023).

Publicizing donations via press releases, social media and via the rifutec website would highlight the company's commitment to flood protection. An example of a donation could be the disaster fund of the German Red Cross (DRK). This donation program specifically aims to help people worldwide who are affected by the consequences of disasters, including natural disasters (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, n.d.-b).

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Don't let **raindrops** turn into **teardrops**.

We are dedicated to supporting victims of floods and natural disasters. Through annual donations and targeted campaign initiatives, we strive to offer assistance wherever it is needed most.



Get Support

At rifutec, we offer personalized support to address your unique flood protection needs. Our expert team provides tailored advice, custom solutions, and dedicated assistance to ensure your home remains safe and secure.



Annual Donations

Each year, we make significant donations to support victims of floods and natural disasters. This commitment reflects our dedication to providing immediate relief and long-term support, helping communities rebuild and thrive after devastating events.

Action

Cooperations with NGO's

In addition to donations, cooperations with non-governmental organizations that are working to help flood victims can also be considered. Partnerships and cooperations with reputable NGOs would highlight rifutec's commitment to social responsibility.

A key benefit of cooperations is the opportunity to display the NGO's logo on the rifutec website. This is not only a sign of a meaningful partnership, but also strengthens rifutec's credibility. Working with a reputable non-governmental organization such as the Red Cross would symbolize that rifutec is aligned with the high standards of humanitarian help and disaster management (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, n.d.-a). The German Red Cross offers a variety of partnership options tailored to different humanitarian needs. A partnership specifically focused on supporting flood victims would be ideal.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal

(Possible cooperation/partnership)

rifutec

X



**Deutsches
Rotes
Kreuz**

Tactic

App Development

This Tactic is divided into the following Action...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Coping Appraisal, meaning to present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

The development of a dedicated rifutec mobile app could guarantee even greater customer satisfaction. The app will be available for both iOS and Android devices and can be downloaded for free.

As soon as a person purchases a rifutec flood protection system, they will receive a unique system identification number. This number must be entered into the app. As soon as the number has been entered, the app functions are activated. The app now serves as a personal assistant for people who have purchased a rifutec flood protection system.



Action

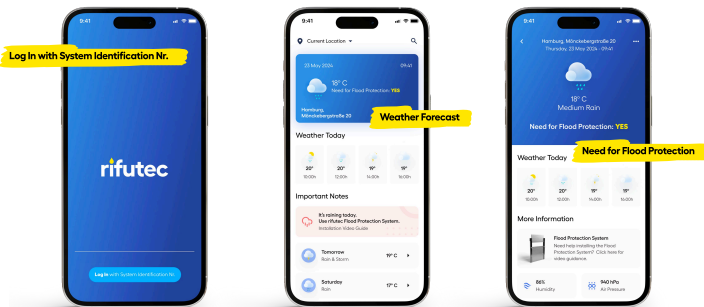
rifutec App

The development of a dedicated rifutec mobile app could guarantee even greater customer satisfaction. The app will be available for both iOS and Android devices and can be downloaded for free. As soon as a person purchases a rifutec flood protection system, they will receive a unique system identification number. This number must be entered into the app. As soon as the number has been entered, the app functions are activated. The app now serves as a personal assistant for people who have purchased a rifutec flood protection system.

The app has a weather function and predicts when a rain area is coming. If the rain area seems to be heavy and may lead to serious rainfall, the app will prompt the user to install the flood protection into the frame system.

The users can decide to receive push notifications every morning to alert them when to install the protection system based on the latest weather data. The app also gives advice on how long the protection should remain installed to ensure optimal protection. In addition, the app works as a manual guide and provides video tutorials and access to a help hotline for installation and maintenance instructions. This provides consumers with all information needed to use and maintain the rifutec flood protection system in an easy and stress-free way. The app will also be promoted on the website.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal



Tactic

Website Improvements

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Threat and the Coping Appraisal, meaning to raise the awareness of flood damage and at the same present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

The website has already been identified as the most crucial brand contact point for consumers with preventive concerns. Additionally, the strategy of this campaign aims to drive more traffic to the website. Therefore, the website must be fully convincing to ensure that more homeowners choose rifutec for their flood protection needs.

rifutec's website is being completely redesigned to align with the new corporate design elements. This redesign will incorporate updated visual components, such as the new logo, color scheme and typography, to ensure a modern online presence.

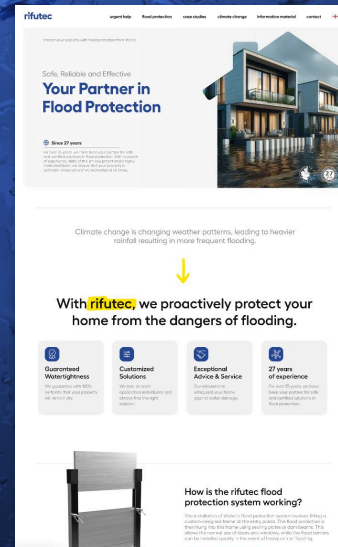
The redesigned website will feature a user-friendly interface that improves navigation and accessibility, making it easier for visitors to find relevant information. The website will highlight the company's expertise in flood protection for over 27 years, including detailed case studies and customer testimonials to build trust and credibility.

Website Redesign

rifutec's website is being completely redesigned to align with the new corporate design elements.

Website Add-Ons

To provide valuable support for visitors, the redesigned rifutec website will include several key add-ons.



Actions

Website Redesign and Add-Ons

The website has already been identified as the most crucial brand contact point for consumers with preventive concerns. Additionally, the strategy of this campaign aims to drive more traffic to the website. Therefore, the website must be fully convincing to ensure that more homeowners choose rifutec for their flood protection needs.

rifutec's website is being completely redesigned to align with the new corporate design elements. This redesign will incorporate updated visual components, such as the new logo, color scheme and typography, to ensure a modern online presence.

The redesigned website will feature a user-friendly interface that improves navigation and accessibility, making it easier for visitors to find relevant information. The website will highlight the company's expertise in flood protection for over 27 years, including detailed case studies and customer testimonials to build trust and credibility. In addition, the previously mentioned PR actions are mentioned on the website and more general reference is made to the purpose of the company, rifutec should be presented on the website as a reliable and trustworthy partner in the fight against flooding.

Aim: Strengthening Threat and Coping Appraisal

To make the website even more appealing, rifutec's flood protection systems have been completely recreated in a 3D design software. This allows it to present rifutec's products in a more appealing way. Previously, only photos of installed systems were shown. The use of modern 3D graphics sets rifutec apart from the competition and enhances professionalism. In addition, the 3D graphics allow to explain exactly how rifutec's flood protection systems work.

The new website design and the addition of 3D graphics are intended to make the rifutec homepage stand out from the competition and appear modern and forward-looking. In terms of content, the homepage can be seen as a direct reflection of the campaign strategy. Through reports and statistics on flood damage, the threat appraisal of the visitors should be strengthened and through the strategic placement of rifutec flood protection systems, the coping appraisal should be strengthened. The homepage also promotes the newly developed rifutec app in order to create a unique selling point compared to the competition. The website is the most important brand contact point of the campaign.

To provide valuable support for visitors, the redesigned rifutec website will include several key add-ons. To demonstrate how rifutec's flood protection systems work, detailed step-by-step instructions will be available on the website. These instructions will show how to install rifutec's flood protection systems.

In addition, a comprehensive customer support system will be set up with a chatbot, FAQs and video tutorials to enhance the user experience. The website will offer additional information material that can be downloaded for free. This material will include guidance on how to behave in the event of flooding and what measures individuals can take to protect themselves from flooding even without flood protection systems. As an example, the website could offer PDFs for download, such as an exclusive rifutec magazine that provides comprehensive information on everything from climate change to flood protection

This magazine will cover topics such as emergency response to flooding and practical flood protection measures. It will be updated annually to include the latest information and trends relating to climate change and flood protection. Another addition could be subpages that provide detailed information on general topics. These subpages will include information explaining the climate change and its direct impact on weather patterns. By presenting scientifically validated data and expert analysis, visitors would gain a deeper understanding of the challenges of climate change and the importance of preventive flood protection measures. These subpages would increase rifutec's credibility, highlight the brand purpose and improve the threat assessment of the visitors.

rifutec Magazine:
Example design of the front page of the rifutec magazine. This magazine is updated at different intervals. The cover always shows devastating effects of flooding.



Before Climate Change rifutec The Strategy **The Campaign**

Safe, Reliable and Effective
Your Partner in Flood Protection

Since 27 years

Climate change is changing weather patterns, leading to heavier rainfall resulting in more frequent flooding.

With **rifutec**, we proactively protect your home from the dangers of flooding.

- Guaranteed Watertightness**
- Customized Solutions**
- Exceptional Advice & Service**
- 27 years of experience**

How is the rifutec flood protection system working?

The installation of rifutec flood protection system involves fitting a custom-designed frame at the entry point. The flood protection is then raised into place by the closing of a door system. This allows the normal use of open and air doors, while the flood barrier remains installed in place for heavy rain or flooding.

[Find your individual solution](#)

Frame System
 During dry weather, you have your normal door opening and closing. It is normal to have a door that is not waterproof. For flood protection, a frame is installed in the doorway.

Flood Protection
 In the case of heavy rain, you can simply bring the door down in the doorway. To ensure this system, we offer a flood warning system for your home.

During normal dry weather

During heavy and stormy weather

Guaranteed Waterproofed since 27 years.

Our purpose is to provide more people with a safe living environment protected from water damage. We aim to highlight the connection between climate change and flooding. Learn more about climate change and what we can all do against it.

[Learn about climate change](#)

Our Flood Protection Solutions

Doors Flood Protection
 If there is a risk of flooding, lightweight or simple products are attached to the door's frame.

Why is our system different?

| | Other Protection Systems | rifutec Protection System |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Installation | High and elaborate - Clear installation - Installation with complexity | Made by rifutec experts - 27 years of experience - Service-oriented - Guaranteed waterproof |
| Flexibility | Low and static - Risky system - No flexible use | Very high & easy to use - Normal use during dry weather - Just use the system when needed |

Don't let raindrops turn into teardrops.

We are dedicated to supporting victims of floods and other disasters. Through annual donations, and to good causes, we strive to offer assistance wherever it is needed most.

Get Support
 At rifutec, we offer personalized support to address all your flood protection needs. Our experienced professionals will provide you with the best advice and solutions, ensuring your home is protected and secure.

Annual Donations
 Each year, we offer a dedicated system to support victims of floods and other disasters. This commitment reflects our responsibility and dedication to help those in need, ensuring they can rebuild and move forward.

Contact us for individual advice or if you simply need help.

We understand that every case is unique and therefore always respond to the individual needs of each person.

[Contact us](#)

Tactic

Content Marketing

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Threat and the Coping Appraisal, meaning to raise the awareness of flood damage and at the same present the brand as a reliable and trustful partner.

Content marketing is not only used to create brand awareness, but also to provide relevant and interesting content for the target group. The most important aspect of content marketing is that consumers gain a real benefit from the information shared.

As the name content marketing suggests, the focus here is on the actual content. Sharing relevant content on topics such as climate change and flooding provides the target group with relevant information. This leads to an increase in their threat appraisal. Overall, this also strengthens rifutec's credibility and trustworthiness.

Guerrilla Marketing

As a part of content marketing, an easy-to-implement guerrilla marketing action was also planned.

Organic Social Media Marketing

Social media offers a useful option to deliver relevant content to the target group and thus strengthen the threat appraisal.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is another action for sharing relevant information with the target group. The website will offer an option of subscribing to a monthly newsletter.

Action

Organic Social Media Marketing

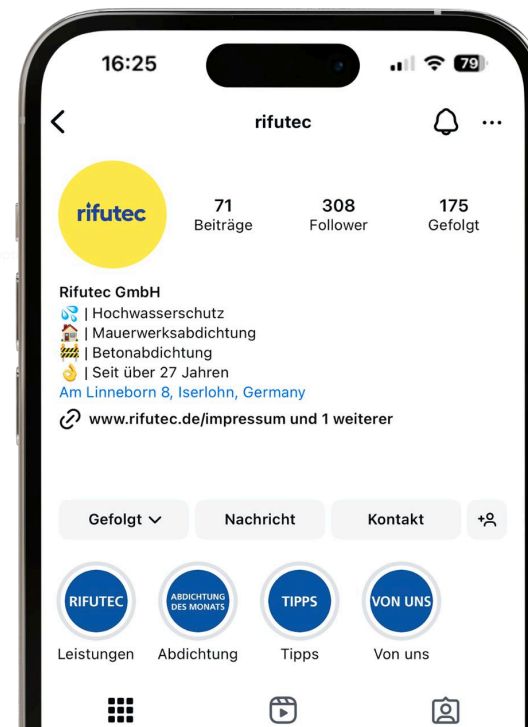
Social media offers a useful option to deliver relevant content to the target group and thus strengthen the threat appraisal. rifutec currently uses an Instagram and a Facebook account for this purpose. As the consumer audit revealed, the company's target group is between the ages of 40 and 70. Recent online studies on the use of social media in Germany show that Facebook appears to be the perfect platform for this age group. A study conducted by the Statista research department in 2023 shows that Facebook is the most frequently used platform among the age groups of 30 to 49 (50% usage) and 50 to 69 (28% usage) (Statista Research Department, 2024). Facebook should therefore be the top priority for organic social media marketing.

In addition to the two platforms which are already in operation, LinkedIn could be a useful addition. In general, the same content is posted on all platforms. The addition of LinkedIn therefore only requires minimal further effort. The more business-oriented character of LinkedIn seems to be a useful addition to the two other platforms, which are more focused on social interaction and lifestyle.



The content published on these platforms will range from general topics, such as climate change trends, to specific flood protection projects and case studies. The main focus of organic social media marketing is to offer consumers real added value. People should not have the feeling that rifutec only wants to sell its products. Instead, real and important knowledge should be shared that offers consumers real benefits. With frequent posts on how to avoid flood damage, advice on emergency preparedness or latest news on climate change trends, rifutec can build trust with its audience and position itself as an expert in flood protection. Sharing photos and videos of employees at work also increases transparency and engages the consumers. The rifutec employees will be seen wearing the new workwear, allowing the company to showcase its new corporate design and branding elements.

Aim: Strengthening Threat and Coping Appraisal



Action

Guerrilla Marketing

As a part of content marketing, an easy-to-implement guerrilla marketing action was also planned. For this, umbrellas in an exclusive rifutec design were created first. These designs communicate content such as "Protecting you and your house from water" to strengthen the coping appraisal. In addition, the rifutec logo is prominently displayed and the new color scheme is used.

These umbrellas will be distributed free of charge in various city centers in Germany during heavy rainfall. This showcases rifutec's commitment and purpose of protecting people in the fight against rain and water. The umbrella serves as a metaphor for rifutec. Both the umbrella and the company provide protection against water. This content is also actively communicated on the screens of the umbrellas. This establishes a direct connection between protection against water and rifutec. In addition, umbrellas are useful products that are essential during rainfall. It is therefore likely that many people will use the rifutec umbrella. If these people now carry the umbrella, it functions as mobile advertising and leads to greater brand awareness.

Aim: Strengthening Coping Appraisal

rifutec Umbrellas:
Distributed free of charge in various city centers in Germany during heavy rainfall. This showcases rifutec's commitment and purpose of protecting people in the fight against rain and water.



Action

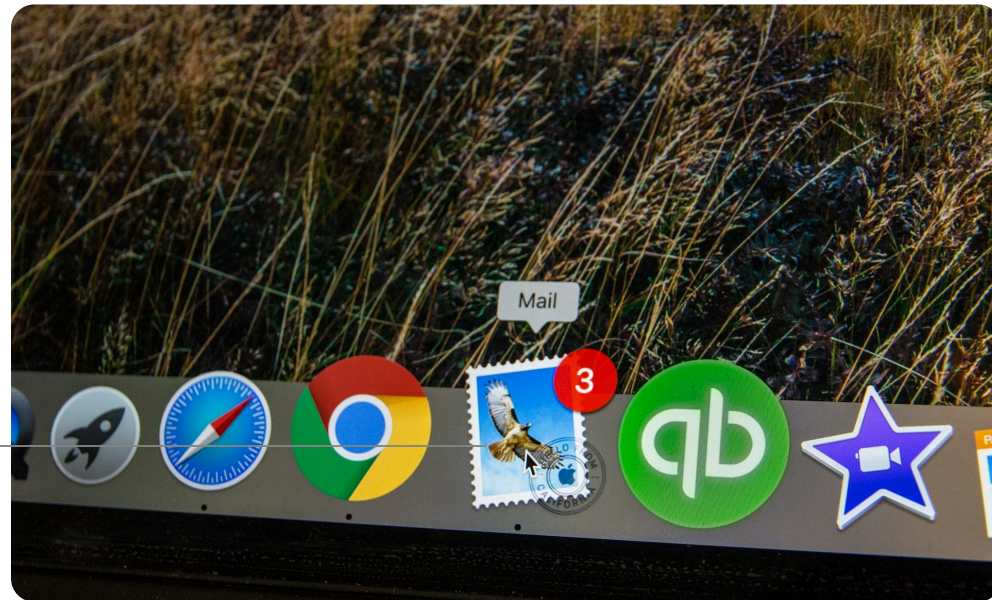
Email Marketing

Email marketing is another action for sharing relevant information with the target group. The website will offer an option of subscribing to a monthly newsletter.

In the newsletter, people will receive the latest trends and developments in the field of flood protection and they will receive general information and news on climate change. This newsletter is not a traditional presentation of rifutec's products, as it focuses on increasing the threat awareness of the target group. The focus here is therefore on accurate information about flooding and how to protect yourself against it. For both email marketing and organic social media marketing, the same content can be used, which results in low effort for content creation.

Aim: Strengthening Threat and Coping Appraisal

Email Marketing:
Consumers have the opportunity to sign up for an exclusive rifutec newsletter.



Tactic

Digital Marketing

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Threat Appraisal, meaning to raise the awareness of flood damage.

Digital marketing will be a key component of the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign. With the filter options of digital marketing, the target group of 40-70 year old German homeowners can be specifically addressed. This specific approach makes it possible to trigger the threat appraisal among homeowners with targeted messages.

Social Media Ads

The unique aspect of this campaign is that social media ads will only be shown in certain areas and cities that are affected by recent heavy rain and flooding.

Search Engine Marketing

In addition to advertising on social media, rifutec will use search engine marketing (SEM) to increase visibility and drive more traffic to the website.

Action

Social Media Ads

The three platforms Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn have already been identified for organic social media marketing. In addition, paid social media ads will be used out via these channels. These ads will be specifically tailored to the target group of 40-70 year old German homeowners. The unique aspect of this campaign is that social media ads will only be shown in certain areas and cities that are affected by recent heavy rain and flooding. By analyzing weather forecasts in Germany, the ads can be targeted to areas affected by heavy rain or storms. For example, if heavy rain is predicted in the area around Hamburg, ads are only shown to the target group in this specific area. The aim of social media ads is to trigger the threat appraisal. By only broadcasting ads in rainy areas, the threat appraisal can be triggered in a more defined way.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal

The favored format for the ads is the carousel ad, which allows multiple images or videos to be presented in a single ad (LinkedIn, n.d.). The first slide of the carousel shows a compelling and emotional image of flooded areas, accompanied by a powerful headline that emphasizes the threat (threat appraisal). The special aspect is that the headline is customized to always refer to the specific city or region targeted by the ad, e.g. "Flooding in Hamburg". In this way, the target group in the respective city or area is addressed even more explicitly. On the following slides, rifutec is then presented as an effective solution to this flooding threat (coping appraisal). These following slides present the rifutec flood protection systems and its advantages. The aim is to direct visitors to the redesigned website, where users can access more detailed information and engage with rifutec's offerings.

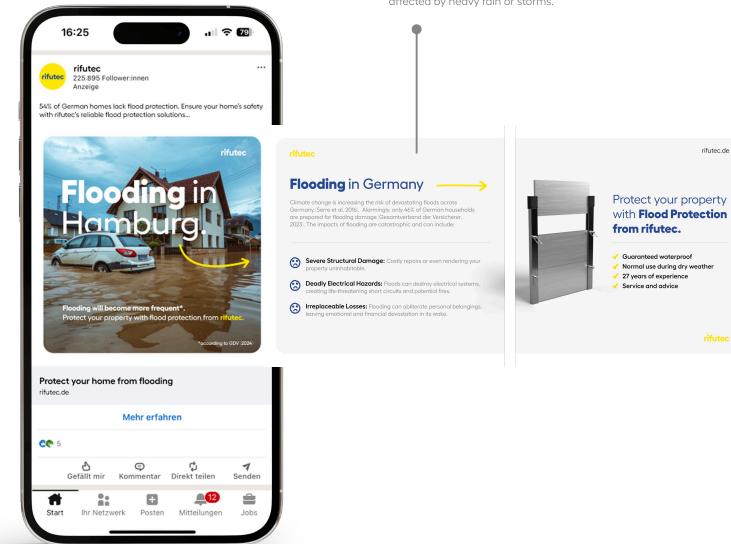
In addition to using Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn for social media advertising, rifutec will also use YouTube video ads. On YouTube, ads will not be targeted at specific locations, but at specific content. The ads are specifically placed to appear before and after videos that report on flooding events.

For example, news channels regularly upload videos about flood disasters. The rifutec ads are placed before and after these videos. Viewers who watch these videos already have a high threat appraisal. If they now see an ad about flood protection, the threat appraisal is increased even further. The aim of YouTube ads is again to lead people to the rifutec website.



Example of a LinkedIn Carousel Ad:

These ads will only be shown in certain areas and cities that are affected by recent heavy rain and flooding. By analyzing weather forecasts in Germany, the ads can be targeted to areas affected by heavy rain or storms.



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "überschwemmungen deutschland". The video content depicts a modern living room with large windows, where the floor is completely flooded with water. Overlaid on the video is the text "Protect Your property against Flooding." in large, bold, white and yellow font. In the top right corner of the video frame, the "rifutec" logo is visible. At the bottom left of the video frame, there is a button that says "rifutec Flood Protection" with "rifutec.de" below it and a "more" button to its right. The video player controls at the bottom show a progress bar at 01:45 / 10:00. Below the video player, the video title is "Unwetter in Deutschland: Starkregen, Überschwemmungen und Gewitter | Aktuelle Stunde" from the channel "WDR aktuell" (109,000 subscribers). Engagement icons show 1437 likes, a share icon, a download icon, and a save icon. At the very bottom, it says "231.935 Aufrufe vor 5 Tagen #WDRaktuell #Nachrichten".



Example of a Youtube Video Ad:
On YouTube, ads will not be targeted at specific locations, but at specific content. The ads are specifically placed to appear before and after videos that report on flooding events.

For example, news channels regularly upload videos about flood disasters. The rifutec ads are placed before and after these videos. Viewers who watch these videos already have a high threat appraisal. If they now see an ad about flood protection, the threat appraisal is increased even further. The aim of YouTube ads is again to lead people to the rifutec website.

Action

Search Engine Marketing

In addition to advertising on social media, rifutec will use search engine marketing (SEM) to increase visibility and drive more traffic to the website. Two main actions will be used in this tactic: Google Display Ads and Google Keywords.

Google Display Ads can be used to place ads on specific websites that are likely to be visited by rifutec's target audience (Google, n.d.). For this campaign, the ads are strategically placed on news sites and online newspaper websites. When these sites report on flood disasters and heavy rainfall, rifutec can take advantage of the already strengthened threat appraisal. By placing ads in this context, rifutec can effectively direct readers to its website for more information on flood protection solutions.

For example the online magazine "Süddeutsche Zeitung", a leading German daily newspaper reports on the consequences of a flooding event. People who read this report already have a high threat appraisal. The placement of an advertisement could therefore be effective and increase this appraisal even more.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal

Google Keywords is used to further increase rifutec's online visibility. This action involves using relevant keywords that potential consumers might use to search for flood protection solutions.

Suggested keywords could be: "flood protection", "flood prevention", "flood barriers", "protection against water damage", "flood protection measures", "flood protection in basements" and "flood protection systems". As soon as consumers search for these keywords on Google, an ad from rifutec is displayed. The aim of these ads is to attract consumers to the rifutec website.



Example of a Google Display Ad:
The figure above shows how a possible Google Display Ad could look. The online magazine "Süddeutsche Zeitung", a leading German daily newspaper, was selected here. The article reports on the consequences of a flooding event.

Tactic

Out of Home Advertising

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Threat Appraisal, meaning to raise the awareness of flood damage.

After the online area has been covered, the threat appraisal of the target group should also be triggered in the physical public space. OOH advertising will be used for this purpose.

The advertisements will include emotional images that show the impact and effects of flooding and heavy rainfall. The images are intended to trigger emotional effects in the minds of the consumers and thus strengthen the threat appraisal. As the attention span in public spaces is relatively short, meaningful and large-scale headlines should also be used to evoke emotional reactions.

Billboards

These billboards will be placed on building facades to visualize the direct link between flooding and potential damage to buildings.

Posters

To effectively strengthen the threat appraisal, rifutec will strategically place posters in highly frequented locations.

Construction Site Banners

Another action within out of home advertising are banners at construction sites where rifutec flood protection systems are being installed.

Actions

Posters

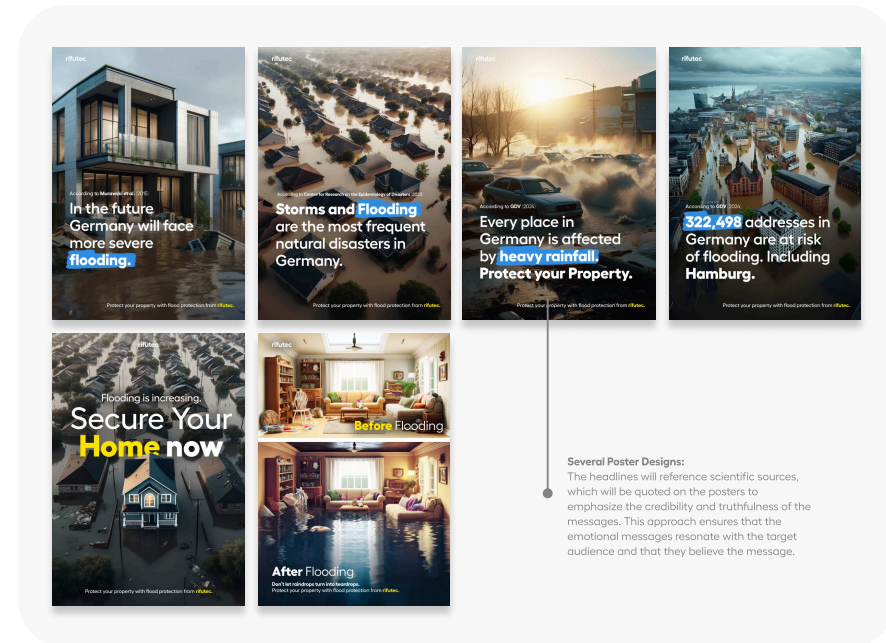
To effectively strengthen the threat appraisal, rifutec will strategically place posters in highly frequented locations. Locations such as bus shelters offer ideal space for this purpose. This is where people seek shelter from the rain while waiting for buses and trains.

The design of these posters follows the objective of raising awareness and concern about flooding (threat appraisal). To achieve this, the posters show scenes of flooding affected areas. These images will be supported by clear and powerful headlines. The headlines will reference scientific sources, which will be quoted on the posters to emphasize the credibility and truthfulness of the messages. This approach ensures that the emotional messages resonate with the target audience and that they believe the message. At the bottom of each poster, the subhead of the campaign "Protect your property with flood protection from rifutec" is shown.

This layout ensures that the top part of the poster triggers the threat appraisal, while the bottom part presents rifutec as the reliable solution. In addition, the headlines can be tailored to specific cities and locations to address local threat appraisal more effectively.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal

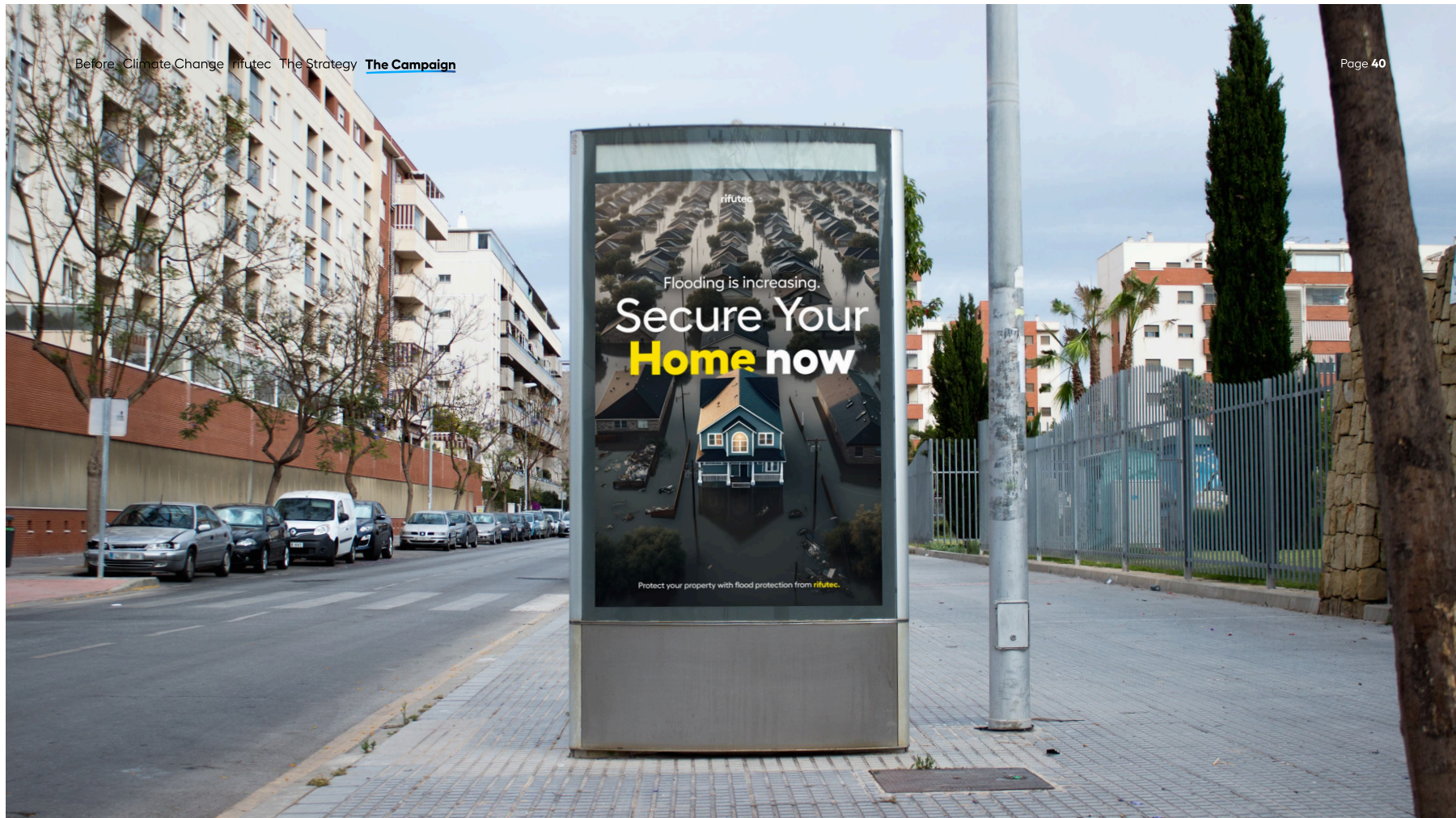
For example, posters displayed in Hamburg communicate the headline "322,498 addresses in Germany are at risk of flooding. Including Hamburg". This allows the first part of the headline to always remain the same ("322,498 addresses in Germany are at risk of flooding..."), while the second part ("...Including Hamburg") adapts to the respective city in which the poster is displayed. The images for the posters are generated with AI. The prompts for creating these images can be easily reused for other cities. In this way, many different posters can be created for various cities without causing rifutec much extra work.



Several Poster Designs:
The headlines will reference scientific sources, which will be quoted on the posters to emphasize the credibility and truthfulness of the messages. This approach ensures that the emotional messages resonate with the target audience and that they believe the message.









Action

Billboards

In addition to posters, vertical billboards are also used for out-of-home advertising. These billboards will be placed on building facades to visualize the direct link between flooding and potential damage to buildings. The content displayed on the billboards can be similar to the posters. The horizontal format of the billboards also opens up new possibilities for design and messaging.

The billboard shown on the right uses the horizontal format for a before and after comparison. The background image shows the interior of a family home before and after flooding. The left half is aimed to address homeowners who have a family by showing personal items lying around. The right side shows the flooded house. The comparison is primarily intended to increase the threat appraisal. The message is further emphasized by an explanatory subtext: "Know the threats before they can occur. Protect your property with flood protection from rifutec."

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal



Action

Construction Site Banners

Another action within out of home advertising are banners at construction sites where rifutec flood protection systems are being installed. These are specially designed in rifutec colours and feature the headline "This building will be proofed against flooding".

These banners prominently display the rifutec logo and also combine it with illustrations showcasing climate change related topics. The design of the banners was adapted to the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign. This form of out of home advertising is ideal for communicating flood related content, as they directly refer to rifutec products on construction sites. In addition, rifutec vehicles and rifutec employees wearing the new workwear can potentially be seen on the construction site. This combination would lead to even greater brand awareness.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal



Tactic

Print Advertising

This Tactic is divided into the following Actions...

This tactic aims to strengthen the Threat Appraisal, meaning to raise the awareness of flood damage.

Due to the partly older target group of the campaign, traditional print advertising is another tactic for the campaign. People who do not consume online news but read printed newspapers cannot be reached by digital marketing. To reach these people, print advertising can be used.

In addition, the placement of flyers in neighborhoods affected by flooding can also be very effective. Print advertising is therefore the final piece of the puzzle for the "Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops" campaign.

Newspaper Ads

Newspaper ads are effective in reaching the older segment of rifutec's target group.

Flyers and Brochures

The flyers and brochures will be placed in mailboxes in neighborhoods which are affected by heavy rainfall and flooding.

Action

Newspaper Ads

Empirical findings confirm the high interest in printed newspapers among older people in Germany. Accordingly, 51.8% of 40 to 59 year old people and 68.8% of over 60 year olds are regular reading daily printed newspapers (Liersch & Weißmann, 2022). The readership among pensioners is even higher. Almost 70% regularly read daily newspapers.

Newspaper ads are therefore effective in reaching the older segment of rifutec's target group. The ads will be placed in regional daily newspapers after flooding or a heavy rainfall occurred. In this way, the older target group can be reached and the threat appraisal can be increased. It also makes sense to include the company's telephone number in the advertisement. As older people may not use the Internet frequently, it makes sense to include the telephone number.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal



Newspaper and Magazine Ads:
Placed in regional daily newspapers
after flooding or a heavy rainfall
occurred.

Action

Flyers and Brochures

Another action within print advertising is the use of printed flyers and brochures. This classic communication tool can be very effective when it is strategically distributed. The flyers and brochures will be placed in mailboxes in neighborhoods which are affected by heavy rainfall and flooding. Households in these areas already have a higher threat appraisal because of their direct experience with flooding. Therefore, the distribution of flyers and brochures that present a solution can be effective.

As a possible approach, every time a flood protection system is installed by rifutec employees, flyers could be distributed to 50 surrounding households. It is likely that if one house suffers flood damage, surrounding houses will have the same problem. In the best case, multiple orders can be generated from just one order. In addition, the distribution of flyers is not a major expense.

Aim: Strengthening Threat Appraisal and Coping Appraisal

Flyer Design:
As a possible approach, every time a flood protection system is installed by rifutec employees, flyers could be distributed to 50 surrounding households.



The Campaign

Time Schedule and Budget

The “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign starts on January 1 and initially ends on December 31 of the same year. During this period, the tactics and actions described are used at various points of time.

Before the campaign starts, the tactics of corporate design improvements, branding improvements, website improvements and app development have already been implemented. This is essential, as all subsequent tactics build on and refer to them.

The campaign will then begin in January with content marketing (actions: organic social media marketing and email marketing) and print advertising (actions: flyers and brochures). These two tactics will be used throughout the entire duration of the campaign. This means that content will be shared via organic social media marketing and email marketing throughout the whole year and flyers and brochures will be distributed to neighborhoods every time a flood protection system is installed.

Out-of-home advertising (actions: posters, billboards, construction site banners) starts slightly later. This tactic begins in mid-January and lasts until May. Since the use of OOH advertising is associated with higher costs, this tactic cannot be used throughout the entire year. The aim of out-of-home advertising is to strengthen threat appraisal. Combining this tactic with increased rainfall can further increase the threat appraisal. Therefore, this tactic is used in the months from January (winter) to May (end of spring).

Digital marketing (actions: social media ads, search engine marketing), print advertising (action: newspaper ads) and content marketing (action: guerrilla marketing) are used throughout the entire year, but in a flexible way. As described above, these actions are only activated when a specific area is affected by heavy rainfall or flooding. For example, if flooding affects an area in January, social media ads, search engine marketing and newspaper ads are used in that area. But the same happens if the area is flooded in November. These tactics are therefore used throughout the entire duration of the campaign, but only in response to heavy rainfall and flooding.

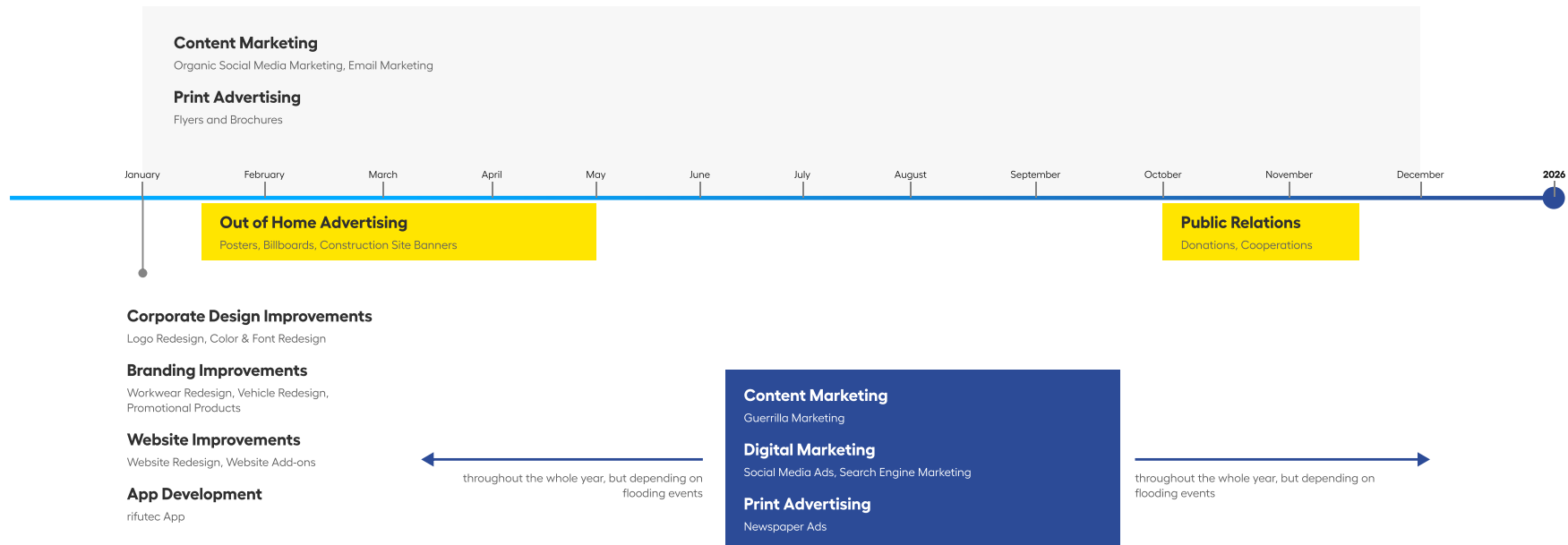
Around the end of the year, between October and December, public relations (actions: donations and cooperations) will be used. All previous tactics and actions have already strengthened the brand awareness of rifutec and the threat appraisal and coping appraisal of the target group. This means that more people may become aware of rifutec's public relations work, which in turn further strengthens the coping appraisal.

As agreed with the rifutec management in advance, this IMC campaign serves as a pilot campaign. As a result, no fixed budget was set. The main goal of the campaign was to develop an initial creative marketing strategy and establish a starting point for future marketing measures. Since the “Don't let Raindrops turn into Teardrops” campaign is the company's first marketing campaign, it should test various tactics and actions, with the aim of making more precise budget decisions in the future based on the insights and results gained.

As rifutec is a small company, financial resources are limited. This was taken into account when planning the campaign, which includes only three paid media tactics: digital marketing, print advertising, and out-of-home advertising. These tactics will be used flexibly and depending on external factors such as weather changes. For example, digital marketing will only be utilized during periods of flooding or heavy rainfall to respond to relevant events and trigger the threat appraisal. In each individual case, the exact budget will be determined in consultation with the management team.

2025





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rifutec

For Tomorrow.

Don't let **Raindrops** turn into **Teardrops**.

Master's Project

September 2024

B. Consumer Aggregation Summary Sheet

CONSUMER AUDIT

| AGGREGATES | Behavior | Motivations | Demographic |
|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| Current | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">KNOW</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">CHOOSE</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">BUY</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">USE</div> </div> | | |
| Competitive | same | | |
| Emerging | same | | |

Consumer Aggregation Summary Sheet from Kliatchko & Uttamchandani (2023)

C. Brand Contact Point Sheet

Brand Contact Point Audit Sheet

| Brand Contact | Importance (high/low) | Impression (+/-) | Expectation | Experience | Message Sent |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Brand Contact Point Audit Sheet from Kliatchko & Uttamchandani (2023)

D. Brand Audit Guide

| | |
|-------------|--|
| product | What is your product? What are the product attributes relevant to consumers (e.g., creamy? sweet? fruity or flowery scent?) What's the product formulation, ingredients, made of what? Remember this is product not emotional attributes, uses, etc. What about your competition: product, attributes, etc. Are you superior vs. competition? What makes your product distinctive from competition? |
| positioning | Your brand DNA. What sets the brand apart from competition? Most compelling reason why consumers choose the brand: it could be functional or emotional reason, or both. |
| purpose | Core reason why the brand exists and its positive impact in the world. What your brand believes in, what values it espouses. How is your brand making the lives of people better? Purpose must align with the brand's DNA. |
| price | Get prices per unit (per ml, per gram, per combo meal, etc.) of relevant brands in the category and get the average price. Identify where your brand is. Is your brand priced low, mid, high vs. competition? Do you have room for price increase because you offer more benefits than competition? Is there need for limited discount offers? etc. Price considerations always take into account your other Ps: e.g., cost of packaging, premium positioning, benefits, perceived value, etc. |
| place | Where is your product available? Malls, supermarkets, sari-sari, E-commerce? Is your brand in the relevant distribution channels? e.g., smaller packs fit better in convenience stores because of grab & go behaviour, etc. |
| packaging | Formats, Pack Sizes, visibility in shelves, is packaging appealing (overall look and feel)? Is your packaging easy to find? Any innovations we can do? |
| promotions | (1) In-store merchandising, tactical promos, other promotional efforts, bundle packs, "buy-one-get-two;" sampling (2) Communications (refer to your Brand Contact Point Audit): review ATL, digital, BTL (OOH - out-of-home), PR efforts of your brand and competition |

E. Interview Structure

| APTC Part | Objective | Question |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. General Audit</p> | <p>General information about the brand rifutec to get deeper insights</p> | <p>G1: What is the approximate ratio of B2C and B2B requests/orders?</p> <p>G2: At what time of year/month do you receive the most inquiries on average?</p> <p>G3: Are you receiving more requests after severe weather disasters (disasters that are reported in the media)?</p> <p>G4: From which area do you receive the most inquiries/orders (B2C, e.g. construction sector)?</p> <p>G5: Are you getting more inquiries during heavy rainfall events?</p> <p>G6: Are you receiving more inquiries after heavy rainfall events?</p> <p>G7: How does a typical customer contact work until it is converted to an order?</p> <p>G8: What is the biggest challenge for rifutec in acquiring new customers?</p> |
| <p>2. Consumer Audit</p> <p>Consumer Aggregation (using the aggregation summary sheet by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani)</p> | <p>Current Aggregates: Demographics</p> | <p>D1: What is the gender of the customer?</p> <p>D2: How old is the customer?</p> <p>D3: Where does the customer live (residence)?</p> <p>D4: What nationality is the customer?</p> <p>D5: What is the approximate education level of the customer?</p> <p>D6: What is the customer's profession?</p> <p>D7: What is the customer's approximate income?</p> <p>D8: What is the customer's marital status?</p> <p>D9: Does the customer have children?</p> <p>D10: Does the customer own a house?</p> |
| | <p>Current Aggregates: Psychographics</p> | <p>P1: How does the customer become aware of rifutec? (Know)</p> <p>P2: Why does the customer finally choose rifutec? (Choose)</p> <p>P3: What does the process look like until the customer chooses rifutec? (Buy)</p> <p>P4: How does the customer use rifutec after placing an order? Are there several consecutive orders per customer?</p> <p>P5: Are the customer's price expectations realistic or lower/higher?</p> <p>P6: What are the most important decision factors from the customer's point of view?</p> |
| | <p>Current Aggregates: Motivations</p> | <p>M1: Do most of the inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house?</p> <p>M2: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you?</p> <p>M3: How does the contact with the customer come about? Acquisition or on the customer's own initiative?</p> <p>M4: How urgent is the customer's request? Prevention/has the damage already occurred?</p> <p>M5: Which object usually needs to be sealed? Which object is most often affected?</p> |
| | <p>Competitive Aggregates: Demographics</p> | <p>D11: Are there any differences to current aggregates? If so, what demographics are different from the current aggregates?</p> |

| | Competitive Aggregates: Psychographics | P7: Why didn't the customer choose rifutec in the end? P8: Are there any customers who were already rifutec customers but switched to the competition for a new order? If so, why? P9: Are the customer's price expectations realistic or lower/higher? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Competitive Aggregates: Motivations | M6: Do most of the inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house? M7: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you? M8: How does the contact with the customer come about? Acquisition or on the customer's own initiative? M9: How urgent is the customer's request? Prevention/has the damage already occurred? M10: Which object usually needs to be sealed? Which object is most often affected? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Emerging Aggregates: Demographics | D12: Are there any differences to current aggregates? If so, what demographics are different from the current aggregates? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Emerging Aggregates: Psychographics | P10: How should the customer become aware of rifutec? (Know) P11: What should the process look like until the customer decides to buy rifutec? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Emerging Aggregates: Motivations | M11: What is/should be the reason why the customer comes to you? (What is your favorite reason for commissioning?) M12: How urgent should the customer's request be? Prevention/has the damage already occurred? M13: Which object should be sealed? (house, cellar etc.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brand Contact Points (using the brand contact audit sheet by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani) | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contact point with the brand</th> <th>Importance (high/low)</th> <th>Impression (+/-)</th> <th>Expectation</th> <th>Experience</th> <th>Message (optional)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>e.g. phone call</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e.g. website</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>etc.</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Contact point with the brand | Importance (high/low) | Impression (+/-) | Expectation | Experience | Message (optional) | e.g. phone call | - | - | - | - | - | e.g. website | - | - | - | - | - | etc. | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Contact point with the brand | Importance (high/low) | Impression (+/-) | Expectation | Experience | Message (optional) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e.g. phone call | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e.g. website | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| etc. | - | - | - | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Brand Audit (using the brand audit guide by Kliatchko & Uttamchandani) | Product (7Ps) | B1: What is your concrete product? What are your specific products? (can be a tangible product or service) B2: What makes your product different from the competition? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Positioning (7Ps) | B3: What is the rifutec brand DNA? B4: What is the most compelling reason why customers choose rifutec? (It can be a functional or emotional reason, or both) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Purpose (7Ps) | B5: What is the main reason for the existence of the rifutec and its positive impact on the world? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Price (7Ps) | B6: Is your brand priced low, medium, high compared to the competition? B7: Do you have room for price adjustments? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Place (7Ps) | B8: In which areas is rifutec operating? (only Germany? Only Europe? etc.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Packaging (adapted to services) (7Ps) | B9: Does rifutec have a certain communication to the outside during the provision of services? (e.g. do rifutec employees wear special outfits during work? Do the vehicles have certain designs that can be traced back to rifutec? etc.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Promotion (7Ps) | <i>Information from brand contact points was used</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

F. Interview Transcript

Introduction

[Speaker 1]

Thank you very much for taking the time to take part in this interview. We greatly appreciate your willingness. This interview forms an important part of the development of an integrated marketing communication plan for the flood protection company Rifutec.

The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of Rifutec as a company. The insights gained will be instrumental in creating a thorough consumer and brand audit, which will serve as the basis for developing the integrated marketing communications plan. In order to gain the deepest possible insights, this interview is conducted with the company's CEO and founder, Mr. Dirk Fleischer.

This interview is divided into three parts. In the first part, we ask general questions about the company and its services. In the second part, we focus specifically on its customers. The aim is to obtain as accurate a picture as possible of your customers and buyers in order to tailor the IMC plan even more precisely. The third part is to be seen as a brand analysis and therefore asks specifically about the company Rifutec.

Everything is clear so far, isn't it?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, all good.

Part 1: General Questions

[Speaker 1]

Well, let's start with the first part. The first part consists of some general questions about Rifutec as a company. The first question, also marked here, is,

G1: What is the approximate ratio of B2C and B2B inquiries and also orders?

[Speaker 2]

The ratio in favor of B2C is, I would estimate, 95 percent. B2B inquiries mostly come from construction companies and are correspondingly fewer. So 95% B2C and 5% B2B.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, let's move on to the next question.

G2: At what time of year or month do you receive the most inquiries on average?

[Speaker 2]

Most inquiries come in spring, depending on the weather. This means that the rainy season in Central Europe is currently more in the months of March, April and May. Then there is also heavy rainfall, so most inquiries come in at this time of year.

However, it is now also the case that the inquiries are otherwise evenly distributed throughout the year. Many people contact us if the house has been in water or if it has been renovated and the next step is to protect it from water in the future. So you can't really pin it down one hundred percent. But the period from March to May is definitely the most intense.

[Speaker 1]

G3: Do you receive more inquiries about severe weather disasters? These can be general disasters that are simply reported in the media, such as the flooding in the Ahr valley.

[Speaker 2]

Basically, of course. As soon as there has been a storm disaster, the number of inquiries increases. And in some cases, it's even those who weren't directly affected, but then realized, oh, there was something and then remembered their own damage and asked about it.

[Speaker 1]

So you could also talk about preventative measures here, i.e. people see the effects in the media and get scared or are afraid that something like this could happen to them and contact you based on this.

[Speaker 2]

Yes, that is certainly a part of it, yes.

[Speaker 1]

G4: From which sector do you receive the most inquiries? (B2B)

[Speaker 2]

So one area is private customers, which we talked about before, but of course B2B inquiries also come from the construction sector, but then when a new building is being built and flood protection is to be incorporated into the new planning in principle.

[Speaker 1]

G5: Do you receive more inquiries during heavy rainfall events?

[Speaker 2]

So heavy rainfall events are only ever an hour or two or half a day at most. No inquiries actually come in during these heavy rain events. They usually come a day or two later, even a week later, because people are naturally preoccupied with their own damage and their own problems and then start to think about the future.

[Speaker 1]

Well, that answers G6, so to speak. That is:

G6: Do you receive more inquiries after heavy rainfall events? The answer here is definitely yes.

[Speaker 2]
Yes.

[Speaker 1]
G7: How does a typical customer contact proceed until it is converted into a concrete order?

[Speaker 2]
There are actually only two ways of contacting us. One is via the Internet, via our website, where people are made aware of rifutec and then contact us and usually ask us to call them back. Or directly over the phone, where we then have the customer directly on the phone.

As we supply customers throughout Germany, we always request three parameters from each customer at the beginning. Firstly, of course, we need to know where the customer comes from. Secondly, we need photos, meaningful photos of the situation, i.e. of the entrance or window, whatever. We need the exact width of the pipe or passageway. And we need the desired height of the barrier. In other words, how high should the protection be? With these parameters, we can prepare the quotation without having to be on site. The customer then decides whether they want to work with us or not.

[Speaker 1]
Okay. Then we come to G8.

G8: In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge for Rifutec in acquiring new customers?

[Speaker 2]
The biggest challenge I see is that we need to bring more of our products to the market that we manufacture ourselves or that we manufacture ourselves in order to attract new customers with lower prices. And secondly, of course, the entire marketing, which is switching more to the Internet. And we're still a bit in our infancy in that respect. We do have a website, but our entire online marketing is still in its infancy.

[Speaker 1]
Okay. That was the first part, in which we simply asked general questions about the company. Now let's move on to the second part.

Part 2: Consumer Audit

[Speaker 1]
This is now specifically about your customers. This section of the interview aims to get a detailed picture of rifutec's typical customers who use or buy its services and products. These customers are divided into three groups.

We are talking about existing customers, customers of the competition and potential new customers. In this sense, existing customers are simply your specific customers, your current customers. Basically, they are simply customers of Rifutec.

Competitor customers are customers with whom you have had contact but who have then moved on to the competition. This means, for example, that an initial offer was made but no actual order was placed. Potential new customers are basically customers that you want to approach and acquire as new customers.

For each of these three groups, I will ask you a few questions about the demographic, psychographic and motivational characteristics. To do this, we'll start with current customers, or existing customers. Just think of the typical and current Rifutec private customer.

Current Aggregates

[Speaker 1]

D1: What is the typical gender of the customer?

[Speaker 2]

As a rule, it is a male customer who takes care of the technical things in the household.

[Speaker 1]

D2: How old is the customer, typically approximately? You can give a specific age figure. But you can also say 30 to 40, 35 to 40, for example.

[Speaker 2]

My estimate is between 40 and 70, and mostly homeowners.

[Speaker 1]

D3: Where does the customer typically live? This can also simply be a federal state. It doesn't have to be a specific city or town.

[Speaker 2]

You can't say that. Germany-wide. Mainly in affected areas, of course.

[Speaker 1]

D4: What is the customer's nationality?

[Speaker 2]

Predominantly German, because most houses in Germany are still in German hands. In other words, older people or the succession that then occurs.

[Speaker 1]

D5: What is the customer's approximate level of education?

[Speaker 2]

I don't know that. Because of course I don't ask customers what they used to do.

But you can assume a higher level of education. Because the people who take this money in their hands to buy flood protection also have the necessary means. And I think, this is just my guess, that they will automatically have a higher level of education to earn this money.

[Speaker 1]

D6: What is the customer's profession?

[Speaker 2]

I don't know, the customers don't tell me that either. But I would say it's across all professions.

[Speaker 1]

D7: What is the approximate income of the customer?

[Speaker 2]

I can't make a concrete statement about that either. But I think it will be the middle class for the most part.

[Speaker 1]

D8: What is the customer's marital status? I can't say anything about that either.

[Speaker 2]

I can't comment on that either. But the majority of our customers tend to be pensioners.

[Speaker 1]

D9: Does the customer have children?

[Speaker 2]

No statement possible, I don't know.

[Speaker 1]

D10: Does the customer own a house?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, it is usually the customer's house that is then sealed.

[Speaker 1]

Right, now let's move on to the psychographic characteristics of the existing customer.

P1: How does the customer become aware of Rifutec in the first place?

[Speaker 2]

Via the Internet or word of mouth.

[Speaker 1]

P2: Why does the customer ultimately choose Rifutec?

[Speaker 2]

Because Rifutec provides a complete solution to the problem of flooding. Because Rifutec has several different flood systems and not just one.

[Speaker 1]

P3: What does the process look like until the customer decides in favor of Rifutec?

[Speaker 2]

The customer receives advice and an offer and decides whether he is prepared to pay the price and places the order or not.

[Speaker 1]

P4: How does the customer use Rifutec after an order? Are there several consecutive orders per customer?

[Speaker 2]

No, there is usually only one order from the customer, which is then divided into different parts of the house. Be it basement windows, be it doors - various entrances where water could enter.

[Speaker 1]

P5: Are the customer's price expectations realistic or are they usually lower or usually higher?

[Speaker 2]

The customer's price expectations are usually lower.

[Speaker 1]

P6: What are the most important decision factors from the customer's point of view? This can be just one, but it can also be several.

[Speaker 2]

The customer usually decides after a consultation. So whoever takes the most care of the customer will usually get the order. In terms of price, the systems on the market are actually all the same. The only thing that matters is who has a more specialized or better product.

[Speaker 1]

In other words, if a customer calls Rifutec, for example, and is satisfied with the service and advice and the price is right, then they usually decide to go straight for Rifutec and don't ask for a second quote?

[Speaker 2]

I don't know, because I don't get any information from the customer as to whether or not they are looking for alternative offers.

[Speaker 1]

Then we come to the motivational characteristics of existing customers.

M1: Do most inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house?

[Speaker 2]

From customers who have a house.

[Speaker 1]

M2: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you?

[Speaker 2]

Because he has a flooding problem. Because water is seeping into his house, which he would like to stop.

[Speaker 1]

So it's usually after damage has occurred and not preventative?

[Speaker 2]

Most of the time, yes. Mostly when damage has occurred. However, there are of course also cases of prevention, where people know they live in a flood zone and would like to secure their home in advance as a preventative measure.

[Speaker 1]

Can you say roughly what the ratio is?

[Speaker 2]

50-50.

[Speaker 1]

M3: How does the contact with the customer come about? Is it acquisition or on the customer's own initiative? In other words, do you actively call the customer or does the customer actively contact you?

[Speaker 2]

The customer actively contacts us.

[Speaker 1]

M4: How urgent is the customer's request? We have already answered this question. Is it more of a preventative measure or has the damage already occurred?

[Speaker 2]

50/50.

[Speaker 1]

M5: Which object usually needs to be waterproofed? Is it usually a house, a cellar or a garage?

[Speaker 2]

There are usually several objects in the house. It is the garage as well as the entrance and basement windows.

[Speaker 1]

Okay. Those were the characteristics of existing customers. Now let's move on to the competition's customers.

Competitive Aggregates

[Speaker 1]

Now think about customers who have opted for a competitor instead of Rifutec. I realize that there is probably little difference in the demographics because it's basically the same people that are being targeted. That's why there is only one question here and that is:

D11: Are there any differences to existing customers and if so, which demographic characteristics are different to those of existing customers?

[Speaker 2]

No, there are no differences, because basically exactly the same people are being addressed.

[Speaker 1]

P7: Why did the customer ultimately not opt for Rifutec?

[Speaker 2]

Because the other offer was probably cheaper and/or he felt better advised there.

[Speaker 1]

P8: Are there customers who were already Rifutec customers but then switched to the competition for a new order?

[Speaker 2]

No, not to my knowledge.

[Speaker 1]

Now think of the customers who did not choose Rifutec, even though there was a contact.

P9: Were his asking prices realistic or lower or higher?

[Speaker 2]

Lower.

[Speaker 1]

M6: Do most inquiries come from customers who already have a house or want to build a new house?

[Speaker 2]

From people who already have a house.

[Speaker 1]

M7: What is the most common reason why the customer comes to you? Is it probably the same as the first question?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, as with existing customers. Because the person has a flooding problem.

[Speaker 1]

M8: How does the contact with the customer come about? Acquisition or on your own initiative?

[Speaker 2]

The same as for existing customers. On our own initiative.

[Speaker 1]

M9: How urgent is the customer's request?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, most of the time when customers call, it's urgent. They usually have damage then.

[Speaker 1]

M10: Which object usually needs to be sealed or waterproofed?

[Speaker 2]

Various objects on the house. Garage, front door, cellar window.

[Speaker 1]

So there are generally no real differences between customers who don't end up giving you the order and people who do?

[Speaker 2]

No. All the answers are exactly the same as before. The gender is the same, the age of the customer is the same.

Emerging Aggregates

[Speaker 1]

And now please think of potential customers you would like to approach. This means you can say, for example, that you would also like to address women in the future. You can also say, for example, that you would like to address younger people in the future. The age demographic would then be lower.

[Speaker 2]

I don't know that at all. Because I don't even know who I want to speak to, because I don't know who my counterpart is. I have no idea who has done any damage. And that's why I can't say that this house is managed by a woman.

[Speaker 1]

Well, you could say that in future you would prefer to address younger families who have just built a new house. That could be a new target group that you would like to address, for example. It's just a question of which groups of people you might want to address in the future. For example, as I said, this could be a young family that is currently building a house, which you have not yet reached or addressed in this way, but which you would like to reach in the future.

[Speaker 2]

Yes, basically anyone who has an interest in flood protection. But, sorry, I could say young people, older people, middle-aged people, anyone. There's no sensible answer to that, because in principle I'm interested in those who have a problem with flooding or changes in heavy rainfall. But since I don't know who this person is, whether they are a young family or a pensioner, I can't say who I want to reach. Instead, I naturally want to reach everyone who has a problem.

[Speaker 1]

So you would rather approach people who have a problem than take preventative action?

[Speaker 2]

That's right. Those are the most important ones for now. And I can't address anyone preventively because I don't know who has a problem preventively. Because these rainfalls, these heavy rainfalls, which then lead to flooding again, occur in different places throughout Germany. One year it's more in the south, the next year more in the north, then again more in the west or more in the east. This means that if I want to approach someone as a preventative measure, the Internet is actually the perfect way to do this, because anyone can feel addressed and contact us. But of course I can't call or contact 70 million people in Germany on the off chance, because I don't know who it is or who it affects.

[Speaker 1]

Yes, but you generally prefer to address people who already have the problem, rather than preventively?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, because the problem is simply more urgent for them and we don't have the potential or the staff to take care of everyone and everything.

[Speaker 1]

Let's come back to M11, because that's interesting.

M11: What is your favorite reason why a customer comes to you? For example, basement windows, leaky garage. Where you might have the highest margin, which might mean the least working time.

[Speaker 2]

We don't have a specific favorite use case. For flood protection, there is no difference between a garage, window or door.

Brand Contact Points

[Speaker 1]

This part also belongs to Part 2, but it is no longer specifically about potential customers, current customers or customers of the competition, but about all customers in general. This is about the point of contact with your customers. However, you have already hinted at this. You said that there is a difference between making a phone call and making contact via the website.

[Speaker 2]

Yes, exactly.

[Speaker 1]

Which contact point would you say is more important? Phone call or website?

[Speaker 2]

Contact via the website is more important because there is more information there that the customer can deal with in advance.

[Speaker 1]

However, we are now talking more about how important it is to the customer. In other words, how urgent is the customer's request if they contact us by phone or via the website? Is the issue more urgent if they contact us by phone or via the website?

[Speaker 2]

Phone is more urgent, of course.

[Speaker 1]

What is usually the first impression after talking on the phone or via the website? Is it better on the website or on the phone?

[Speaker 2]

Phone is more positive and direct because it's more personal, yes.

[Speaker 1]

What is usually the expectation when a customer calls you on the phone? In other words, when a customer calls you, what do they usually expect?

[Speaker 2]

That he gets the information from us on how he can seal his house.

[Speaker 1]

So it's basically also a kind of consultation?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, he expects a consultation from us, yes. And an offer usually afterwards.

[Speaker 1]

And is it the same with the website?

[Speaker 2]

The same in principle, yes. It's just more impersonal because it's done via e-mail.

[Speaker 1]

Is it sometimes the case that when a customer contacts you via the website, the use case is more preventative than on the phone?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, definitely.

[Speaker 1]

What is your general experience of a phone call?

[Speaker 2]

What do you mean by experience?

[Speaker 1]

You have already received a few phone calls from potential customers and clients. What is your general experience after phone calls? Is it better than on the website? Is it worse than on the website?

[Speaker 2]

You can't say that. Some people are bored and only call to get advice. So there's no trend that you can say. Sometimes it's positive, sometimes negative. But it's the same with the website. There are always people who just ask a question but aren't very interested. And there are also people who are struggling with an order.

[Speaker 1]

What would you say the ratio is? Is it more common for people to get in touch by phone or on the website, but then not actually converted into an order?

[Speaker 2]

This is more common on the website.

[Speaker 1]

Does that mean the quality of the phone is better?

[Speaker 2]

Yes.

[Speaker 1]

When customers call you on the phone, do they sometimes leave a message about the service or advice? For example, are they satisfied with the advice? Of course, this can only be optional. Did the customer somehow say afterwards that they were satisfied with the service? Did he leave a message?

[Speaker 2]

No. Well, if we did the job there, then yes, the customer said he was satisfied. But in general, the customer is satisfied if it's sealed. But for them to say again that they were satisfied with the advice or something, no, that only happens very rarely.

[Speaker 1]

These are the only two contact points, right? Or is there another contact point?

[Speaker 2]

No, these are actually, yes no, not actually, these are the two contact options.

[Speaker 1]

Do you advertise your website in any way? Or do people only find you through search engines?

[Speaker 2]

As a rule, everything runs via search engines.

Part 3: Brand Audit

[Speaker 1]

Okay, now we come to the last part. The brand analysis. Here we simply ask explicitly about the Rifutec brand and its services. I ask in seven different categories. I'll introduce that again in a moment. And this is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Rifutec. The first category is about the Rifutec product in general.

Product: MA1: What is Rifutec's specific product?

[Speaker 2]

The concrete product, we stand on three pillars. These are flood protection, concrete repair or concrete waterproofing and masonry waterproofing.

[Speaker 1]

And what exactly are you selling there? Is it products, is it services? Is it a mixture of a product and a service? We are now talking specifically about the pillar: flood protection.

[Speaker 2]

In flood protection, we sell a product and the associated service. In other words, the product: the flood system, and the service: the installation of this product.

[Speaker 1]

Do you also sell only the product and only the service?

[Speaker 2]

We also only sell the product, but very rarely. So I would say a maximum of five percent who only buy the product and install it themselves.

[Speaker 1]

So it is usually the case that the customer buys the product and service directly from you?

[Speaker 2]

Yes.

[Speaker 1]

Okay.

Product: MA2: How does your product differ from the competition? We are now talking about flood protection.

[Speaker 2]

In flood protection, our product stands out from the competition thanks to its simple design, easy installation and high quality.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, let's move on to the next category, which is positioning. Here we're basically talking about positioning yourself alongside your competitors.

Positioning: MA3: Do you have a brand DNA? This could simply be a slogan that you follow, for example. What is the most important credo for your work? This could be, for example, that you have a lot of experience, that you know what you are doing, that you are tried and tested.

[Speaker 2]

So the credo is that we haven't gotten anything yet, that we have 27 years of experience and that we provide very good advice.

[Speaker 1]

Okay. Then we come to MA4.

Positioning: MA4: What is the most convincing reason why customers choose the Rifutec brand?

[Speaker 2]

Rifutec comes from the complete field of structural waterproofing and not, like many other manufacturers of flood protection systems, from the metal trade. This means that we can also assess a building in other areas of waterproofing masonry, concrete and so on. And that gives us a huge advantage over the competition because, as I said, most of them come from the steel construction industry and don't know anything about houses.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, let's move on to the fourth P, the reason.

Purpose: MA5: What is the main reason why Rifutec exists in the first place and what is a positive impact on the world? For example, simply making houses and families' homes safer, working against climate change?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, you've already answered my questions yourself haha. That's exactly what I wanted to say.

[Speaker 1]

Okay. Let's just move on to the price, i.e. how they stand in terms of price. Again, compared to the competition.

Price: MA6: Does your brand tend to be low, medium or high priced compared to your competitors?

[Speaker 2]

We move more in the high range.

[Speaker 1]

Price: MA7: Do you still have room for price adjustments?

[Speaker 2]

We definitely have room for price adjustments, yes.

[Speaker 1]

For example, if a larger order is placed, can you still work on price?

[Speaker 2]

Are we also in a position to reduce prices, yes.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, let's move on to Place.

Place: MA8: In which area is Rifutec in operation? Is it only Germany? Is it also Europe?

[Speaker 2]

Yes, that's only Germany. We haven't installed anything abroad yet.

[Speaker 1]

Are you interested?

[Speaker 2]

In any case. That is also interesting. But it's not really possible at the moment, because we don't have the human resources to develop it further.

[Speaker 1]

In the past, this has always involved a lot of traveling. Now, when work is carried out abroad, for example in France or Spain, it has to be transported there first. The materials have to be transported.

[Speaker 2]

That probably also stands in the way a little.

[Speaker 1]

And then we come to the last point, which is packaging. Basically, communication to the outside world.

Packaging: MA9: Does Rifutec have any specific external communication when providing its services? This could be, for example, that your employees wear special outfits at work with your logo on them. It could be, for example, that your cars have certain paintwork that can be traced back to Rifutec. Do you have any external communication?

[Speaker 2]

That's right. We have clothing with Rifutec advertising on it. We have vehicles with Rifutec advertising on them. And of course we also have flyers that we can distribute locally to other households in the neighborhood of our property.

[Speaker 1]

Is something specific communicated on these, let's say, items of clothing and cars? Or is it just the logo and the website?

[Speaker 2]

It is the logo and the website. However, we also use the slogan "The trade rocks" to promote the trade and the potential recruitment of new job applicants.

[Speaker 1]

And on the flyers? What is generally communicated on the flyers? Basically the content from the website?

[Speaker 2]

The customer should be made curious with the slogan that is also on our cars, "Does your house have wet feet?"

[Speaker 1]

How long have you been using this saying?

[Speaker 2]

Since 1996, i.e. right from the day it was founded.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, that brings us to the end. Thank you very much for taking part in this interview!

And now as a final follow-up question:

Is there anything specific planned for the future? Do you have any specific plans?

[Speaker 2]

Not at the moment.

[Speaker 1]

Thank you for your participation and have a nice day.

[Speaker 2]

No problem, have a nice day too.

G. Declaration of Consent (English)

Monday, April 8, 2024

Declaration of Consent

Interview: Company and consumer audit of rifutec

Hereby I, Dirk Fleischer, voluntarily agree to participate in an interview for Marc Fleischer's master's thesis.

Purpose of the study: The goal is to gain a broader understanding of rifutec as a company. The insights gained will be instrumental in creating a thorough consumer and brand audit, which serves as the basis for developing the integrated marketing communications plan.

Procedure: The interview will be conducted and recorded virtually. After the interview, the conversation will be transcribed. It is expected to take an hour. The interview follows a semi-open format in which the interviewee, Dirk Fleischer, is asked a series of questions to which he can respond openly. In addition, the participant will be given the opportunity to add their own thoughts and experiences.

Confidentiality: All information discussed during the interview will be treated confidentially. The data will be anonymized and used exclusively for scientific purposes.

Voluntary participation: I understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without negative consequences for me.

Consent to recording: This interview will be recorded to ensure that all information is accurately recorded. The recording will be used for transcription and research purposes only and will be kept confidential.

I have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in the interview.

[Place], [Date]

[Signature]

H. Signed Declaration of Consent (German)

Montag 08. April 2024

Einverständniserklärung

Interview: Unternehmens und Verbraucher-Analyse von rifutec

Hiermit erkläre Ich, Dirk Fleischer mich freiwillig dazu bereit, an einem Interview im Rahmen der Masterarbeit von Marc Fleischer teilzunehmen.

Zweck der Studie: Das Ziel ist es, ein umfassenderes Verständnis für rifutec als Unternehmen zu erlangen. Die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse werden maßgeblich dazu beitragen, ein gründliches Verbraucher- und Markenaudit zu erstellen, welches als Grundlage für die Entwicklung des integrierten Marketingkommunikationsplans dient.

Verfahren: Das Interview wird virtuell durchgeführt und aufgezeichnet. Nach dem Interview wird das Gespräch transkribiert. Es wird voraussichtlich eine Stunde dauern. Das Interview folgt einem halboffenen Format, bei dem dem Befragten Dirk Fleischer eine Reihe von Fragen gestellt wird, auf die offen geantwortet werden kann. Zudem wird dem Teilnehmer die Möglichkeit gegeben, eigene Gedanken und Erfahrungen hinzuzufügen.

Vertraulichkeit: Alle während des Interviews besprochenen Informationen werden vertraulich behandelt. Die Daten werden anonymisiert und ausschließlich für wissenschaftliche Zwecke verwendet.


Freiwillige Teilnahme: Ich verstehe, dass meine Teilnahme an diesem Interview freiwillig ist und dass ich jederzeit das Recht habe, meine Teilnahme ohne Angabe von Gründen abzubrechen, ohne negative Konsequenzen für mich.

Zustimmung zur Aufzeichnung: Dieses Interview wird aufgezeichnet, um sicherzustellen, dass alle Informationen korrekt erfasst werden können. Die Aufzeichnung dient ausschließlich zu Transkriptions- und Forschungszwecken und wird vertraulich behandelt.

Ich habe die oben genannten Informationen gelesen und verstanden und erkläre mich damit einverstanden, an dem Interview teilzunehmen.

[Ort], [Datum]

[Unterschrift]

Iserlohn 9.4.24



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I. Declaration of Authorship

Thursday, September 5, 2024

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that all graphics, visuals, and other creative content in this thesis, which are labeled with the note "Self-elaboration," were created by myself. These materials have not been copied or plagiarized from any external sources and are the result of my own work.

All other content, visuals, or materials that are not my own have been properly referenced and cited in accordance with academic standards.

I confirm that the work presented in this thesis complies with the requirements of originality and academic integrity.

*Iserlohn (Germany), September 5
Marc Fleischer*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "m. fleischer". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.