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Communication Audit for Groundswell Startups

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Communication Audit for Groundswell Startups

By:

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Bachelor of Science
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We the undersigned committee hereby approve the attached design project,
“Communication Audit for Groundswell Startups”
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Abstract

Title: A Communication Audit for Groundswell Startups

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This design project provides Groundswell Startups with a set of suggestions for its communication strategies based on a communication audit. The suggestions are based on marketing and communication literature, as well as, research conducted with internal and external members of Groundswell’s community. Qualitative research methods like a social media content analysis along with a focus groups and interviews were utilized to conduct the audit. The social media content analysis explores analytics features provided by Groundswell’s different platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The intent behind the communication audit and following suggestions is to support Groundswell in shaping a go-to high tech business incubator brand using social media and organizational events to promote such an image and identity.

Keywords: Communication audit, social media, events, business incubator, startups, new ventures, branding.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

Branding has been explored largely in literature, and can be seen as a way to communicate organizational values and position a product or service in the market (Ind, 1997; Smith, 2012). Much of the research on branding has focused on already established organizations and businesses, and lacked focus on branding new ventures and startups (de Chernatony & Daniels, 1994; LePla & Parker, 1999). Research by Abimbola (2001) found that businesses of small to medium size or Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) can use branding as a differentiation strategy. Startups and small ventures face different challenges compared to other larger pre-established organizations. Having a unique brand can provide them with a competitive advantage against the surrounding, possibly rapidly changing market environment (Abimbola, 2001).

Branding extends beyond just the service or product the stakeholder receives. According to Randall (2004) a brand may be formed around the original service or product, but the brand can also apply itself and its values to a new product or service because it is founded in organizational values rather than a single product. For instance, the brand for Melbourne-based business incubator,

Groundswell, originated and revolved around entrepreneurial meetups¹ and then carried those values of business and innovation to encompass the start-up and incubator scene (Randall, 2004). As a brand is created it is maintained, affected and shaped by key members of the organization and situational factors (Steiner, 2003). Steiner (2003) asserts that corporate identity can be “traced” back to the founder but over time can be altered to fit current management and leadership, thus communication and reinforcement of values must be done early in the life-cycle of the company to ensure its sustainability (Stuart, 1999; Steiner, 2003, 1990).

Social media has become a prominent player in communicating an organization’s brand. It has revolutionized the way organizations communicate by making communication faster, richer and more budget friendly, especially for startups or non-profits like Groundswell (Awad & Fatah 2015).

This design project will explore the concepts of branding and communication related to startups and new ventures accompanied by a communication audit exploring internal and external audience attitudes of Groundswell Startups.

Groundswell Startups is a business incubator closing on its third year of operation located in Melbourne, Florida. Groundswell’s mission, in short, focuses on building a Space Coast entrepreneurial community driving the area to thrive and

¹ Dictionary.com defines a Meetup as “a meeting, especially a regular meeting of people who share a particular interest and have connected with each other through a social-networking website.”

grow through the creation of more opportunities. As a relatively new enterprise and a non-profit with only three official employees Groundswell lacks a comprehensive communication audit. First, branding and social media communication literature is reviewed for the exploration of branding and social media elements leading to a better understanding of their nature, interplay and how they affect an organization. Second, qualitative research methods will be employed in order to better understand audience attitudes toward Groundswell's communication, its history, and current social media standing. Third, based on the literature and research data a set of recommendations and SWOT analysis will be created for Groundswell. The audit report, SWOT analysis and recommendations are included in a separate report for Groundswell in Appendix A.

Background and Rationale

For this design project, a communication audit is conducted for Groundswell Startups. Groundswell is a privately funded, non-profit business incubator and co-working space. With its headquarters in Melbourne, Florida, Groundswell's mission is to facilitate and inspire an entrepreneurial community around Melbourne and the Space Coast area. The audit's purpose will be to strengthen Groundswell's brand communication by increasing awareness and engagement, and thus encourage an entrepreneurial community around the area.

Groundswell's mission and main motivator is serving and growing the high-tech entrepreneurial community in the Space Coast area.

The Space Coast area includes Palm Bay, Melbourne, and Titusville.

According to the Milken Institute (2017) the Space Coast area is one of the 2017 best economically performing large U.S. cities, ranking 63 out of 200, coming after Columbus Ohio. The Space Coast area was also found to have jumped up 90 spots since 2016 and became the city with the biggest gains (The Milken Institute, 2017). The Space Coast area's ranking was based on many factors such as, job growth, wage growth, high-tech GDP concentration, among others. The area ranks number nine on the "Number of Industries with $LQ \geq 1$ "² for 2016. When an area's LQ is higher than one it implies "that an area has proportionately more workers than the larger comparison area employed in a specific industry sector." (Baer, & Brown, 2006, p. 1). Thus, the LQ ranking along with the other categories ranking indicates that the Space Coast area has a relatively large and concentrated population of high-tech or engineering professionals. The Economic Development Commission of the Florida Space Coast also supports those statistics and adds more including the fact that Brevard County is number one in Florida, and 53 in the U.S. for the most patents per 10,000 workers (Rothwell, 2013). Such statistics show the innovative, high-tech potential of the area which makes it attractive for a high-tech

² The Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business define Location Quotients (LQ) as the comparison between different area's business composition, enabling the comparison of large and small cities.

business incubator. Those facts can also be used to lure entrepreneurs into the area to start their own businesses in a thriving economy.

Starting off as coffee-shop meetups Groundswell has continued to evolve since its inception in 2015. Today Groundswell, a business incubator/coworking space supporting approximately 30 businesses in its space, aspires to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Melbourne Florida and challenging the myth that starting a startup in Florida and receiving funding is “impossible.”

Starting with a high tech focus Groundswell soon realized it was too narrowly focused on the tech industry due to lack of presence of solely tech startups. Thus, it evolved into an incubator that serves a broad spectrum of tech companies including businesses that operate *using* technology like fashion e-commerce, and an online cooking series.

According to Community Manager, Fumiko Shinkawa, Groundswell promotes its culture by the way the brand is presented in the physical sense. For instance the headquarters building being a former skate park with the original graffiti preserved, it is intended to be unconventional yet inspire results. Shinkawa said that Groundswell’s identity can be understood from visiting its space, the former skate park – casual, unconventional and unpolished but in a way similar to the startups in this area. The building features large coworking areas meant to inspire collaboration, which is one of Groundswell’s five values that also include: give first, inspiring, inclusive and honest.

Groundswell is not only unconventional in the sense of its building but unusual in the kind of services it offers, supported by findings that are discussed later in this paper. The concept of a business incubator is unfamiliar to the Space Coast area — home to large national corporations.

Beyond its physical space Groundswell communicates with its audiences through a number of channels, four social media pages and numerous events that include happy hours, Founder Talks and Brew and Brainstorm. Added to that list is Groundswell's internal communication tools like Slack and email, used to communicate with its current members.

Groundswell, like many other startups and businesses recognized the need for a social media presence (Nolan, 2015). With most of its communication conducted online, its online engagement and presence are major influencers of its image, as seen by its audience. The two-way communication style that social media allows enables businesses like Groundswell to make use of brand advocates and crowdsourcing, making it a good channel to use for a small staffed organization like Groundswell. Groundswell's identity is portrayed through its events and social media. Just as Groundswell offices are made of repurposed shipping containers, its media/communication content is repurposed information. A large portion of Groundswell's current communication is recycled content from news, entertainment and professional outlets.

Groundswell has depended mostly on word of mouth, both traditional and electronic, to reach the community without a formal strategy to do so. Groundswell realized the inefficiency of its actions to reach its goal of growing an entrepreneurial community with a tech focus. According to Groundswell, the biggest obstacle is complete lack of awareness that it exists, followed by the lack of engagement. Engagement can act as a tool for Groundswell to raise awareness and reach broader audiences. The goal of this design project is to provide recommendations for actions that will raise Groundswell's awareness and engagement. To do so this design project will review and assess Groundswell's alignment of its identity and image to both internal and external audiences, as well as, its social media presence.

In order to understand how Groundswell's communication affects its awareness and engagement three methods are used that include, a social media content analysis, qualitative interviews with current members, a focus group with college students and graduates.

Literature defines brand awareness and engagement as:

Awareness:

“Represents consumers' recognition of the brand, measured by how strongly or quickly consumers can recall the brand, its symbol and features.” In a social media sense, this can be understood as number of followers. (King, 2015; Awad & Fatah, 2015, p. 39).

Engagement:

Interactions between stakeholders and an organization, in the social media sense can be understood as the number of Likes, comments or shares on a post. (King, 2015; Ashley & Tuten, 2014)

To develop recommendations specific for Groundswell communication, research was conducted to better understand the current level of brand awareness and engagement with the organization. The next chapter will explain and discuss the three methods.

Literature Review

Branding

Elements

Corporate brand is made up of two connected parts, corporate identity and corporate image. While corporate identity represents the internal aspects of an organization, corporate image is the external view of the organization by its publics (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Thus, when looking at branding an organization it is important to consider all the aspects of a corporate brand, keeping the corporate identity and image consistent (Fombrun, 1996).

Corporate identity is a mixture of corporate behavior, design and communication with corporate culture as its core (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Brikigt & Stadler, 1980). The elements of corporate identity are correlated, where an

organization's mission or vision can shape its culture and consequently affect the other elements of corporate identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). For instance, the laid-back and entrepreneurial culture of Groundswell affects the dynamics of its corporate communication and behavior, whether within the organization itself or with its target audience (Denison, 1984; Calori & Sarnin, 1991). Corporate culture reflects the personality of the organization, the philosophy and values which in a way can shape future decisions (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Where traditional product brands rely on values based on their products, service brands are based around the culture of the organization and employee behavior (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Corporate behavior encompasses the internal interactions within an organization, and typically involves the human resources department (Rode & Vallaster, 2005).

The next two components of identity are more tangible compared to the former: design and communication. Corporate design embraces all the organization's visuals from logo, slogan typography, colors, etc. (Ind, 1992). In a qualitative study, interviewing nine start-up founders in Germany and Austria, Rode and Vallaster (2005) found that corporate design underwent changes soon after the startup was established. One of the nine startups linked the corporate design to the company concept, while the other eight altered their designs rather quickly, which gave them little time to focus on consistency with company values (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Corporate brands reflect an organization's different

values that make it unique (Doyle, 1989). In Rode and Vallaster's research (2005) this is shown through the different corporate communication techniques each startup used. As startups their meetings were mainly informal or through electronic communication channels like emails or a public calendar. Some of the startups ended up with meetings turning into social meetings rather than business related, while others were open to having 30 minutes at the start of the business day for social as well as business conversation time. Even with the emphasized uniqueness of each organization most of the startups recommended transparency, openness and storytelling as strategies for staff motivation through communication (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). With that in mind, corporate communication is said to be the most complex as its function is intertwined between internal and external audiences (Hatch & Schultz, 1997)

Turning the focus to the external brand, which is the corporate image, it is formed and reinforced through several points of contact between organization and audience (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Aker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). A point of contact can be any interaction the organization has with its audience, whether it is a social media post, special interest event or sponsorship (Bruhn, 1991). As the brand image forms it is important to stay consistent at every point of contact, to reinforce the same messages and avoid stakeholder confusion (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). For instance, Groundswell can achieve its

desired brand image as the go-to high-tech incubator by introducing more high-tech related topics throughout its communication.

Brand image in the service sector differs from brand image in the product sector, due to the nature of the services industry as it depends on the culture, training and attitudes of employees (Doyle, 1989). Employee attitude and service quality is thought to be an advantage for service organizations (Doyle, 1989). The more pleasant a customer's interaction experience is, the better it is for the brand and its reputation (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; de Chernatony & Segal- Horn, 2003). De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) state that a service, unlike a product, is harder to copy by others. Thus, the uniqueness of a service is very beneficial for a brand, yet must be managed sustainably in order to maintain the same customer experience (Berry et al., 1988; Doyle, 1989). Where the service brand's image contains components such as values, slogans, words and symbols, all have to remain uniform. According to De Chernatony and Riley (1999) in their qualitative study interviewing 20 service brand consultants, a brand is a reflection of an organization, it "mirrors" its values. A brand is an inseparable and intangible asset of an organization, whether in the way executives make decisions or employee-customer interactions. (de Chernatony & Riley, 1999; Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985).

Start-up branding and the role of the executive

Branding literature in the past has lacked focus on branding new ventures and startups. Most of the literature covers large established organizations (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Kapferer, 2004). Branding and branding knowledge are crucial for startups as they help with customer and employee recruitment and retention, yet branding knowledge concerning startups is considered to be in its “infancy” (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Boyle, 2003). Thus, following Steiner’s (2003) study of corporate identity of new ventures, this section will start by discussing the five factors he found that affect early corporate identity: vision, aesthetics, play, charisma and trust.

Steiner (2003) studied nine small to medium real-estate companies using qualitative methods. The researcher proposed the previous five factors as the roots of corporate identity creation with emphasis on the entrepreneur/manager’s role in creating the identity. The vision of an organization is largely dependent on the leader’s vision and personality (Olins, 1978), especially in startups where values and structure are still being developed (Kimberly & Miles, 1980; Freeman, Carroll & Hennan, 1983). The five factors are all somewhat interrelated. Where aesthetics is usually used when talking about art and beauty, Steiner (2003) talks about it in the context of competence theory where there are two “branches”, logical competence theory and aesthetic competence. Aesthetic competence is “situation-specific”, thus broadly used in management when it comes to decision making and

action for situations that aren't universal (Steiner, 2003). An example of aesthetic competence is learning the basics for building a startup versus actually building your startup and facing situations where spontaneity and following your gut may be your only options (Steiner, 2003).

Similar to how competence and vision are reliant on the leader or the decision maker, play and charisma are as well. Play and charisma are related in the sense that both are related to human traits and interactions. Play is “connected with the entrepreneur's realization of vision and the human wish for feelings of joy and satisfaction.” This is where play is considered the entrepreneur's act of decision making and ability to create solutions to problems they are not familiar with (Steiner, 2003, p. 183). Whereas, charisma is related to the interactions between leader and followers, the leader's characteristics (Yukl, 1998). Charisma can be considered as a part of play, as entrepreneur leaders use their realized vision to solve situational problems. When leaders have and utilize their charisma it can be inspirational to their employees (Steiner, 2003). The last factor, trust, is concerned with how much confidence the audience has in the leader's decision making (Steiner, 2003).

From the review of the five factors of corporate identity it seems that the entrepreneur is a central player in its creation. Other research also acknowledges the entrepreneur's role in branding a startup (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Nolan, 2015). Beyond their actions in the workplace, entrepreneurs can affect their brand

identity through their own personal branding, which can be displayed by using social media platforms (Nolan, 2015). In order to use personal branding as a tool to further the corporate brand, entrepreneurs are likely to adopt the same values as the corporation in their messaging (Nolan, 2015).

Brand advocacy — increasing engagement

Beyond just the entrepreneur a corporation can utilize its audience to promote its brand and values through brand advocacy. Awad and Fatah (2015) explore social media's role in promoting brand advocacy. They recognize that social media is revolutionizing our world, from lowering advertising costs to increasing reach it aids both corporation and consumer, thus for startups with limited resources brand advocacy can be a viable solution for low brand awareness. With the growth of social media platforms, and rise in the “influencer” population, the corporation is not the only player controlling the brand. Influencers are social media users, usually with a large following, and are targeted by corporations to look at and review products. Influencers make it easier for corporations to target a smaller number of people, rather than the general audience, through which they can spread the electronic word of mouth (Awad & Fatah, 2015). Additionally, since the influencers are seen as a separate non-commercial entity they are considered a more credible, less biased source of information about a corporation, its products or services.

Other than influencers, loyal brand customers are another option for brand advocates. High brand loyalty is a characteristic of customers who have a commitment to repurchase and support the brand; this can be a result of continuous positive experiences with the brand (Oliver, 1999). In their research, Awad and Fatah (2015) hypothesize five drivers of brand advocacy: perceived value, electronic word of mouth, brand image, brand community and brand trust. Brand advocacy has been found to be a prime indicator of growth, as advocates act as a facilitator of credible knowledge about the brand by allowing the brand messages to reach their own social networks (Awad & Fatah 2015; Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014).

Communication

A major factor in any organization's operations, communication is the way corporations share their brands and spread their message. The techniques for handling this are vast but for the sake of this design project, social media and events will be discussed as they are the two major channels Groundswell uses to communicate with both its internal and external audiences.

Social media

As mentioned earlier, social media is changing the way we send and receive information. It has become a tool for both corporation and consumer to gain information and interact. The growth of social media has left us with numerous possibilities of applications and software that help connect us, with some software designed especially for group or organizational internal communications. An

example is Slack, a communication platform that connects team members through different channels based on their roles or teams. Organizations also make use of the mainstream social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. for both internal and external communication. Both internal and external communication are crucial for startups.

Internal communication, as discussed previously, allows for corporate identity to be shared with all internal stakeholders. Cleaver (1999) states that internal communication is necessary to have a successful service brand. As the service brand is created through customer interactions with an organization, it depends on the attitudes, training and service of the employee (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Albrecht and Zemke, 1985; Doyle, 1989). Thus, internal communication is a must to insure complete, consistent understanding of corporate identity (Normann, 1984). In order to insure fast and consistent reinforcement of organizational values, systems such as Slack can be introduced to members of the organization. The importance of such communications systems was emphasized by De Chernatony and Segal- Horn (2003) in their qualitative study, noting that communication systems can also be used as a tool to grow and spread office culture. The use of social media to reinforce such values and culture can lead to internal loyalty and possibly positive word of mouth by organizational members (de Chernatony & Segal- Horn, 2003).

As for external communication, social media has changed the way organizations interact with their stakeholders (Awad & Fatah, 2015). Social media changed the conversation from a one-way, publicity model or public information model, to a two-way communication model (Awad & Fatah 2015; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The two-way communication model, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, allows the flow of feedback from customer to organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The feedback, sometimes in the form of public comments and post interaction, plays a key role in how stakeholders view the organization (Awad & Fatah 2015) changing the direction of conversation and making the customer more influential to the brand with which they interact, thus changing the customer's role from passive to active (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Kozinets et al, 2010). Whether a conversation between customer and corporation, or a customer viewing the conversation as a third party, the two-way communication model opens the door for many benefits, including resolving conflict, conducting research, humanizing the organization, and others (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Beyond that, social media allows external stakeholders to gain more information about an organization, which can reduce brand uncertainty and consequently can improve brand recall (Crespo-Almendros & Barrio-García, 2014; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). If organizations utilize the interactive nature of social media, they are more likely to appeal to a portion of the audience's personalities. In that case increased brand loyalty is argued to result (Nienstedt et al. 2012). Other than a platform for creating conversations and

relationships with stakeholders, social media can be used as a channel to advertise more than just services, but also to promote events.

Events

Events can be seen as a form of communication where the topic or theme of the event can communicate certain values to stakeholders. Examples of events Groundswell has hosted can convey that idea. Groundswell regularly hosts member lunches at its headquarters, where all startups and coworkers can come together for lunch and interact, connect and network. Such internal events help promote Groundswell's culture and values as it gives all the members a chance to interact with each other as well as Groundswell staff, where the staff can communicate and reinforce Groundswell values through casual conversation. Such internal events also promote Groundswell's entrepreneurial and innovative culture through conversations that can possibly stimulate creativity. Similar to internal events, external events can also push the Groundswell culture of entrepreneurship and innovations by hosting expert speakers, startup founders and mentors at their events to benefit the community and, in turn, benefit themselves by encouraging the entrepreneurial culture. The above claims can be supported by Dowling (2002) who contends that interpersonal communication between organizational members and external audiences is important and more effective for shaping audience attitudes than any communication by the organization itself promoting its corporate image. Groundswell events can be seen as a form of interpersonal communication through

which Groundswell connects its values through the event topics and themes to its stakeholders. An example of this is Groundswell's Cyber Security conference, where cybersecurity fundamentals were discussed in one area while there was a lock picking station in another. This event reflected Groundswell's technical focus while still portraying the laid-back or fun culture of a startup.

The integration of both social media and event planning can help a non-profit startup such as Groundswell to better reach its audience, and increase its engagement, involvement and support.

Chapter 2: Methods for project development

This design project is intended to help Groundswell increase brand awareness and engagement among stakeholders and potential clients. The following research methods were used to provide a set of detailed recommendations: social media content analysis, qualitative interviews, and focus group. The choice of qualitative methods is due to the method's exploratory approach to the data, thus providing a rich understanding of audience experiences with the brand (Coffman, 2004; Silverman, 2000).

Three methods were used in order to review Groundswell brand communication for different audiences. First, the social media content analysis explored the general audience, internal and external members who follow Groundswell on its social media platforms. Next, the interviews explored Groundswell's internal members, who are the most familiar with Groundswell brand communication. Last, the focus group investigates an external Groundswell audience, understanding the brand perception of an audience unfamiliar with Groundswell. Researching different audience views allows for a more holistic understanding of the brand communication performance. Each method was conducted individually then the findings were reviewed collectively to discover any similarities in the data.

Social Media Content Analysis

The main goal of this method is to see if the brand intent is being delivered through the organization's communication to all of its stakeholders. In turn answering the questions: What are the brand characteristics being communicated through social media and are those characteristics consistent with the organization's image of itself? And, what types of messages are most effective in generating engagement?

The content analysis reviewed three out of the four most used Groundswell social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The three platforms were chosen due to the presence of similar engagement tools and measures. For instance all three platforms have an equivalent for a like, comment or share. The content analysis examined Groundswell's posts from the past six months, beginning at the start of 2018 for both Facebook and Twitter. LinkedIn on the other hand was only analyzed for the months May and June as the platform only provides the post analytics for 60 days (LinkedIn Help, 2018), and Groundswell did not have historical data stored.

The analysis was based on a study by Rahman, Suberamanian and Zanuddin (2016) which explores the effects of different media, and different types of image and video posts, on the engagement for Facebook fan pages of 17 global electronic brands. In this study, audience engagement activity is defined as the number of likes, comments and shares of each brand post.

This content analysis took a mixed methods approach, reviewing the language and post content qualitatively and looking at the engagement numbers quantitatively. First, the qualitative part of this analysis worked on viewing the posts individually. Each post was examined for its language and content. For instance, the formality of the language or the topic of the post: Groundswell event, article repost, etc. Next, for the quantitative portion, the content was segmented into categories explained in Table 1. For each category the maximum, minimum and mean engagement were found along with the mean impressions³ for each post.

Table 1: Post categories

Category name	Characteristics
Only Image post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Profile/cover picture post. ● Service/event image post. ● No detail or caption.
Image ⁴ with Details post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Image with details about service. ● Image with details about event. ● Image with link to another platform. ● Image with link to website. ● Images that include people, the space, interactions. ● Illustrations/infographics.
Link with Details post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Link to article with Details (caption) ● Link to website/blog/newsletter with details (caption)

³ Impressions: the *number* of times content is displayed on the screen of people’s social media feed.

⁴ “Image with Details” has a specific criteria that *includes* images of Groundswell members, the space, a Groundswell event image, infographic...etc. *Excluding* stock images, article link display, logos and event art/flyer, in other words visuals that do not capture people, interactions and the Groundswell space.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excludes “Image² with Details post” visuals.
Event Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Event link with details, call to action ● Event link without details ● May contain event art visual but excludes “Image² with Details post” visuals.
Feature Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Profile/cover video post ● Video demonstrating company image ● Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) ● Other entertaining videos, e.g. event glimpse.

It is important to note that each of those platforms serves a different purpose, where individuals use them to fulfill different motivations. For instance LinkedIn is a professional platform with content that reflects its professional nature (Moe & Schweidel, 2017; Toubia & Stephen, 2013). Thus, this study also reviewed content on each platform to assess its relevance to the audience and purposes of each platform since Groundswell posts are usually identical on all three platforms, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Interviews

The goal of conducting interviews was to understand Groundswell members’ perception of Groundswell brand communication. In other words, is Groundswell’s identity matched up to its image when it comes to its most familiar stakeholders (message consumers) and what is their level of satisfaction?

Interviewees were recruited through the help of Groundswell’s Community Manager, Fumiko Shinkawa. Seven interviews were conducted. The number of

interviews was chosen to gain as much insight into Groundswell members' experiences, while still fitting this project's timeline. Interviewees were Groundswell members who hail from different business backgrounds. The segmentation of the interviewee backgrounds aims to collect feedback from current members who might provide insight into Groundswell's communication strengths and weaknesses, making it easier to focus on the experiences members have had, as well as the potential differences between them. Since one of Groundswell's goals is to become known as the "go-to high tech incubator," such insights based on participating businesses' level of technical involvement or focus might be vital to their understanding of members' needs and help them adjust accordingly. Each interviewee has been given an alias based on the order of interview. Interview length varied from 39 minutes to an hour and 36 minutes.

A semi-structured interview guide was created to lead the interviews. The guide contained 11 questions, which include "What do you think of Groundswell and did your perception change after interacting with them? And Why?" and "What do you think of Groundswell's communication? Are you always up-to-date?" (For full guide, see Appendix B).

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for member experiences. Transcription was done with the help of Trint transcription software. A code is a word or phrase that represents a salient, cumulative, expressive attribute found in a portion of the data (Saldaña, 2009). Once a code is found it was

documented and all following attributes that fall under that code were added to it. Each interview was coded individually by the researcher, but the codes were input into one document and visualized in a table (Appendix C). The data was later “codified”⁵ allowing the grouping or linking of the data “in order to consolidate meaning and explanation” (Grbich, 2007, p. 21). Thus, looking at the Code Map in Appendix C codes were consolidated into categories and the categories were grouped to create themes. Later in the findings themes were grouped further into three overarching motifs to simplify the large dataset.

In addition to the qualitative research with audience members, an interview was conducted with Fumiko Shinkawa, Groundswell community manager. Shinkawa has been with Groundswell since its early stages and witnessed the change in leadership. The twenty-three minute interview explores Groundswell’s past as well as future vision and plans.

This audit will ensure the use of the appropriate approach and measures to best accomplish Groundswell’s goals. As stated in the rationale section, Groundswell’s goals are to increase brand awareness and engagement. The goals will be tailored to reinforce Groundswell’s mission of creating and growing an entrepreneurial community around Melbourne and the Space Coast area.

⁵ To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize (Saldaña, 2009).

Focus Group

This focus group aimed to tackle any alignment and communication issues that might affect Groundswell's brand identity and brand image. In other words, it addressed the degree to which participants understand and perceive Groundswell's messaging and services as presented on social media and web-based platforms.

The focus group had six participants, which is consistent with the average number of participants from a marketing perspective, and seemed appropriate for this scenario (Morgan, 1996). Participants were recruited using homogenous purposeful sampling, where their affiliation with Florida Institute of Technology is the common characteristic among them. This sampling method was chosen based on the innovative atmosphere on college campuses. Research has shown that college graduates are more likely to become a part of a start-up than others (Kwong et al., 2007). Additionally, according to the Harvard Business Review, diversity is a driver of innovation. Based on that research, considering Florida Institute of Technology's significantly diverse population of 36.8 percent international students, it is possible to conclude that the university's population has the characteristics of an innovative environment (Office of Institutional Research at FIT, 2017). Sampling participants from the diverse and innovative community of Florida Institute of Technology appeared to be a practical potential audience for Groundswell. Recruitment was conducted through the university's email forum, FITforum. Throughout the recruitment process, volunteers were asked about their

level of familiarity with Groundswell where minimal knowledge of Groundswell was required. Volunteers who have interacted with the brand or attended events were declined participation. The average age was between 20 to 26, with a 2:4 female to male ratio. All participants have a high school degree or higher, two are enrolled in a STEM undergraduate program, three are enrolled in master's programs and one is a recent MBA graduate.

The focus group started off with the six participants viewing Groundswell's website and social media platforms, followed by a group discussion led by the researcher. Each participant was provided with a tablet to navigate the website and social media pages. The first few minutes of the group session were reserved for the participants' navigation of Groundswell's website and social media pages. Thereafter, participants engaged in discussion monitored by the researcher based on a semi-structured discussion guide (See Appendix D). Questions covered the participant's knowledge, attitude, and perception of Groundswell. For instance the guide includes "How did you feel about Groundswell's values, if you were able to grasp or find them in the materials?" The focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes.

The data were recorded, transcribed and coded for participant perceptions. The data was handled similarly to the interviews. Trint was used to aid in transcription, codes were created and added into the codebook and code map found in Appendix E.

The following chapter details the findings from the interviews, focus group, and content analysis which are later used to create recommendations for Groundswell.

Chapter 3: Findings

With this understanding of Groundswell's unconventionally inspiring identity, the media content analysis worked on assessing the identity's alignment with the image.

Social Media Content Analysis

This content analysis tackled a few questions, about Groundswell's social media communication characteristics, its alignment with the organizations and the level of engagement different post types generate.

Groundswell has garnered a social media following over its last three years of existence. The highest followed platform is Facebook with 620 followers, next in line is Twitter with 461 follows, and finally LinkedIn with the lowest number of followers of 219. It must be noted that before LinkedIn comes Groundswell's Instagram following of 292 followers on the page. Looking at the following totals Groundswell seems to have relatively low engagement for an organization that aims to inspire change in the overall community, yet its numbers seem to be consistent with similar organizations. For instance comparing it to a similar organization in Orlando, Catalyst which opened in 2015, it has a Facebook following of 648 and Twitter following of 210.

Looking at Groundswell social media posts qualitatively each platform has almost all of the same content, yet some show different sides of Groundswell.

Looking at LinkedIn, as expected, the content present includes links to articles that may add professional value, or events that do the same. The language used in the post captions reflects the professional business side of Groundswell, and strays away from the “unpolished” or scrappy identity communicated through the space. Even with the lack of a causal Groundswell identity Groundswell’s event topics and structure substitute for such brand characteristics on a professional platform. For instance, Groundswell’s recently revived Tech Tuesday asks people to go and “‘mingle’ with Space Coast entrepreneurs...” This event hosted at the Mansion Restaurant encompasses Groundswell’s laid-back characteristics with a caption that remains professional but conveys the identity by using the word “mingle” rather than “network.” In the mentioned posts Groundswell’s casual identity was expressed on a professional platform that has been ranked number one for “choice of professionally relevant content and the lead in business-to-business (B2B) lead generator (Lua, 2017).

While LinkedIn promotes Groundswell’s professional identity, Facebook and Twitter have much more relaxed characteristics. Facebook and Twitter posts are more laid-back with slang and popular phrases integrated into posts, unlike its LinkedIn posts and more representative of Groundswell’s identity, as shared by Shinkawa. An example of this is “Get sweet merch” when promoting a t-shirt fundraising campaign for an upcoming pitch competition. LinkedIn reflects the more serious side of Groundswell stemming from its nature of work. Facebook and

Twitter represent Groundswell's culture more accurately, being playful with posts like posting a silly candid photo of the CEO with the message "shoot for the stars," with the hashtag Motivation Monday.

The quantitative part of the analysis shows that the average Likes, Comments and Shares of each category (See Appendix F) are low in comparison to the number of average impressions. This leads the researcher to believe that Groundswell posts are not effectively engaging its audience.

First, looking at the general mean of interactions each platform undergoes, Facebook seems to be the best performer with the average likes of 5.5 in the "Image with Details" post, with room for major improvement to achieve Groundswell's goals of entrepreneurial community creation. Facebook seems to be the best engagement platform with engagement means higher than the other two platforms, followed by Twitter and then LinkedIn. The next best engagement mean was in the same category "Image with Details," with the mean of 3.25 likes on Twitter. Lastly, is LinkedIn with the highest engagement mean of 1.75 likes in the "Event Link" category. The category that seemed most engaging was the "Image with Details" that constantly encountered post engagement compared to the other categories that may have high engagement on one post and nothing for the next few published posts.

There is presence of outliers yet most of Groundswell's posts have engagement below five interactions, which is reflected in the engagement averages.

On the topic of outliers, a few posts received higher engagement compared to the rest of the content. Facebook had the highest two engagements, with 16 and 19 likes as the highest number of likes on “Link with Details” and “Image with Details,” respectively.

From the data it can be concluded that liking is the most popular engagement type Groundswell audience uses. Facebook and Twitter have close engagement with Facebook slightly higher, whereas LinkedIn has low engagement concentrated in likes. The most engagement was generated by posts including images that fit the image criteria stated in methods. Additionally, as Groundswell recently introduced video- and image-only posts, the data might imply that Groundswell is still testing their performance.

Interview

In this communication audit and through thematic analysis of seven in-depth interviews 90 codes were created, grouped into 24 categories and nine themes (visual in Appendix C). In order to discuss the most prominent ideas from the data three overarching categories were created. They include: communication awareness, audience interaction and Groundswell identity.

The categories above are created from the code motifs to answer this method’s research question concerned with understanding Groundswell members’ perception of Groundswell brand communication. The question being “is Groundswell’s

identity matched up to its image when it comes to its most familiar stakeholders (message consumers) and what is their level of satisfaction?”

Communication awareness

This category is concerned with Groundswell communication issues and assets. It includes codes that emphasize communication gaps, as well as, communication strengths. The communication addressed in this categories include both internal communication between the staff and the members, as well as, external communication that the members are exposed to on Groundswell social media platforms.

Communication assets include: content, uniqueness and going beyond the headquarter walls. Communication issues include: vague communication, incomplete or missing information and lack of knowledge of service processes.

All interviewees seemed to enjoy Groundswell content. Whether reposted articles or event speakers, the content adds value to the members, who have expressed their appreciation for learning about real entrepreneurial road bumps and how to get past them.

Groundswell has recently started taking some of its events beyond its four walls with the reintroduction of Tech Tuesday meetups at the Mansion restaurant. Such initiative allows Groundswell to familiarize the community with its brand.

Groundswell is somewhat of a foreign concept in the area, with only one other professional business incubator around, TrepHub. The uniqueness of

Groundswell to the area is both an asset and a threat. Its uniqueness means lack of competition. Members who were introduced to both organizations mentioned the different atmospheres of each, as well as the fact that Groundswell was more structured in its messages and activities. Yet, to the general community of the area the concept of Groundswell is not familiar, which can make their community penetration and awareness more difficult.

The awareness of Groundswell is also compromised by its own actions. Members have commented on the presence of vagueness in Groundswell communication. For instance one member believed Groundswell can improve on their event communication by providing more information about their event prior, followed by feedback on event turnout and main takeaways. Vague communication to another member meant lack of a clear and unified voice that may be affecting its brand awareness. This is supported by the literature review on branding that explained the need for a consistent and concise messaging.

Taking a look at Groundswell internal communication, solely with its members, presence of incomplete or missing information and lack of knowledge of certain services and processes is present. Almost all members were unaware of one social or communication outlet which can hinder their awareness of important information or events. Another finding that may hinder member awareness is issues

with Groundswell email database. For instance, a few members mentioned problems with receiving regular emails or the newsletter.

Even though members seem to have a generally good understanding of Groundswell and its purpose, they also have a good grasp of the values, especially collaboration. Yet, interviews indicated members are not aware of Groundswell's specific collaborative processes. For instance Bud and John are two important mentors but it seems as if some members are unaware of the process of mentorship to where they don't explore the option of connecting with the other 26 mentors listed on the website. This represents a lack of awareness and understanding of Groundswell's full range of services that is possibly driven by the communication issue: lack of knowledge of services and processes. Another communication issue resulting from lack of knowledge is conference room booking confusion. Members were found to have problems finding the page needed to book a room and once they are there find themselves resulting to Shinkawa, the Community Manager, for help to deconflict scheduling issues.

Audience Interaction

This category is concerned with the members' experiences of interacting with Groundswell. It includes codes that explore interactions, both good and weak. The interactions or engagement activities addressed in this category include both direct interactions between the staff and the members, as well as, indirect interactions such as social media engagement. This category highlights codes or

themes found in the data that include: dull and passive messages, breaking barriers, after-hours idleness, incomplete or missing information and hesitation.

Some of Groundswell's communication issues mentioned above, like lack of knowledge of services and processes, can be a result of or result in engagement issues. For instance, one of the codes found was dull communication where a member said that they usually don't pay attention to messages on whiteboards in the space due to the lack of eye-catching elements, lack of attention to messages results in lack of knowledge or understanding. This issue translates into Groundswell social media platforms where members have commented on the passiveness of the communication. Much of the Groundswell posts are reposts of articles with captions that reiterate the headline or include a pull quote, failing to attract attention and to call to action.

Groundswell puts forth initiatives that encourage interactions within the space, like ping pong tournaments and member lunches, yet members are not familiar with everyone in the space. This can be a result of never reading about new companies in the newsletter or the growing size of the organization, however, one member suggested incorporating more activities, daily or at events that warm people up to each other.

Possibly partly driven by lack of knowledge or receiving incomplete information, a few interviewed members commented on their reluctance to attend after-hours events. Some members said that after a full day's work they do not want

to spend any extra time at the office if they didn't have to. Members have also brought up why many in their network are reluctant to join, according to one interviewee a previous coworker of his was skeptical about attending an event due to the advertised tech focus, even though events sometimes cover startup or business advice. The previous example highlights how vagueness in communication can result in lack of awareness and engagement.

Even though members have some frustrations when it comes to communicating with Groundswell they still seem to enjoy being in the space and a part of the network. This can be understood in the next section, Groundswell Identity.

Groundswell Identity

This category is concerned with the members' experiences or knowledge of Groundswell identity. It includes codes that represent the understanding or satisfaction with the Groundswell culture. This category highlights codes or themes found in the data that include: the staff, staff relationships and the space, the people, and the culture.

As mentioned in the background and rationale section Groundswell has broadened its audience pool to encompass more than only high-tech producers, including businesses like e-commerce. This change was attributed to Groundswell CEO, Micah Widen, by a member who mentioned how Micah's observed feedback to other decision makers was the reason Groundswell steered away from being

hyper exclusive. The above example represents Groundswell's efforts to improve, which was also mentioned by some interviewees. A few members brought up the fact that Micah has personally gone up to them and asked for feedback or suggestions, which some say has encouraged them to voluntarily share their own feedback afterwards.

Such interactions are driven by Groundswell's staff attitude or even the laid-back culture. The culture has allowed the creation of friendly relationships. The culture, a part of Groundswell's overall identity, direct the staff attitudes, approachableness and friendliness that in turn facilitate relationships between members and staff. The staff's approachability was apparent as whenever a frustration or convenience is mentioned during an interview it usually ended by "I'll just ask Fumiko," the Community Manager. Fumiko, as mentioned in the rationale, said that Groundswell promotes itself by its space that is in line with the laid-back culture being a former skate park.

In sum, Groundswell has both strengths and weaknesses when it comes to its awareness and engagement, yet it seems that the culture and attitude in the space make up for inconveniences. Yet this next section will look at the perception of the outsiders.

Focus Group

The focus group administered for this communication audit yielded the creation of 45 codes that were, grouped into categories and organized into themes

(visual in Appendix E). In order to discuss the most prominent ideas in the data, the themes in Appendix E were grouped further to fit the same three categories: communication awareness, audience interaction and Groundswell identity.

The categories are created from the code motifs to answer the focus group's research question concerned with understanding the alignment of Groundswell identity and image for an external audience not familiar with the brand. The question being to what extent do participants understand and perceive Groundswell's messaging and services as presented on social media and web-based platforms. Findings anticipate that Groundswell's awareness is low among college students as it was fairly simple recruiting students who have never heard of Groundswell.

Communication awareness

This category is concerned with Groundswell communication issues and assets. It includes codes that emphasize communication gaps, as well as communication strengths. Starting with communication assets that include: content. Followed by the communication issues that include: vague communication and incomplete or missing information.

Looking at participant awareness after being exposed to Groundswell communication is still fairly low due to vague communication. Focus Group participants were not able to find a clearly labeled mission statement, clear service offer description, or information about initial visits. While most of the information

not found was present in different website pages or the Frequently Asked Questions page, participants were not able to find it, at least the first couple of times scrolling through. One participant commented on how the frustration from missing information can cause people to give up on the website and consequently the brand.

As for a communication strength the participants, similarly to the members, are interested in Groundswell social media content. Whether a repurposed article or event post they thought it is interesting and beneficial but still agree it is mostly passive.

Audience Interaction

This category is concerned with the participants' experiences or perception of interacting with Groundswell. The interactions or engagement activities addressed in this overarching category include indirect interactions such as social media engagement. This category highlights codes or themes found in the data that include: dull and passive messages, hesitation and beyond the four walls.

Looking at interactions, specifically online engagement, participants noticed repetition of the same messages on all the channels, thus attributing the lack of engagement to repetition along with the passive voice behind most of the posts they viewed. One participant commented on the lack of character behind the post captions.

The vagueness of Groundswell communication along with the passive online voice may lead to frustrations and misconception with the brand. For

instance, Groundswell’s tech focus is still advertised even though not as exclusive as before, yet the fact that events are mostly beneficial for any business owner was not emphasized. Thus one participant who doesn’t see herself starting a tech business but would open a bakery said that she probably will not visit Groundswell, overlooking any beneficial events like “Putting strategy to work in your business.”

This hesitation to visit Groundswell can be changed by a code mentioned in the focus group, beyond the four walls. One participant wondered why Groundswell would not make use of the proximity to Florida Tech, a largely technical and engineering university. The participant suggested outreach programs that allow students to engage with the brand while enrolled, and create connections or opportunities beyond graduation.

Groundswell Identity

This category is concerned with the participants’ perception of Groundswell identity. It includes codes that represent the understanding of the Groundswell culture. This category highlights codes or themes found in the data that include: the slogan and community.

One message was the key to understanding the overall identity of Groundswell — the slogan. Only one participant accidentally found the slogan, “Great Entrepreneurs Make Waves,” in a social media photo. Yet the slogan helped the whole group connect the pieces of Groundswell identity.

Groundswell's identity seemed to be fairly understood, where participants grasped the flexible, collaborative aspects of the space. One participant commented on the emphasis on the word community, which helped him understand the culture of the brand but misled him into assuming that a community is all that Groundswell is, rather than a business incubator also providing services and space.

In sum, Groundswell as a brand was well understood in terms of its culture, with uncertainty when it came to specific services or information. Participants hoped for more clarity and transparency.

Chapter 4: Discussion

After exploring social media content, interviews and focus group individually this section will discuss them collectively, looking at how the findings play a role in Groundswell's current communication awareness and engagement. This section will explain the formation of recommendations based on the findings, as well as, review their position in a SWOT analysis format.

It must be noted that codes mentioned under one category can also be attributed to a different category. For instance, uniqueness is included in communication awareness, yet in terms of a SWOT analysis it is a threat on engagement.

Communication Awareness

Content

Engagement strength — Groundswell members and focus group participants enjoyed the quality of the content provided by groundswell. Both event topics and repurposed article topics were said to offer added value. Members specifically enjoyed events like Founder Talks where they are exposed to a real entrepreneurs who have faced real world issues and explain how they got over them.

Recommendation: Continue providing information or speakers that add tangible value.

Uniqueness

Engagement threat — As entrepreneurial momentum grows in the area, which was attributed to Groundswell by some of its members, competition may appear. From copycats to slightly similar businesses Groundswell must keep future competition in mind.

Recommendation: Be ready or prepare for competition.

Beyond the four walls

Awareness opportunity — With the opening of the headquarters building Groundswell activity has been centered in that space rather than being truly integrated into the community, but Groundswell brought back their Tech Tuesday event at the mansion showing their awareness of the issue. This was supported by members and focus group participants.

Recommendation: Develop outreach programs for near-by college students and continue events like Tech Tuesday.

Vague communication

Awareness weakness — Vague communication can cause frustrations and possibly result in giving up on the organization. From participant confusion due to their inability to find a defined and clear set of offerings, to member's lack of satisfaction on event reporting and feedback vague communication was a reoccurring code.

Recommendation: Avoid vague or incomplete communication messages.

Awareness opportunity — Due to the lack of a unified Groundswell brand voice, as mentioned by interviewees Groundswell communication can be seen as vague or inconsistent. Clarity and consistency are important for successful brand communication. This can be avoided by creating a brand communication style guide that can include Groundswell terminology, hashtags, etc.

Recommendation: Create a Groundswell communication style guide.

Incomplete or missing information

Awareness weakness — Almost all interviewees were unaware of one of more communication outlet thus missing possibly important or interesting information. Unawareness can cause lack of engagement. Promotion of the different channels across channels can be a solution. For instance tweeting a link to an event's Facebook live-stream.

Recommendation: Make all Groundswell communication channels known.

Engagement weakness — Some members have issues receiving Groundswell messaging. One member said she subscribed to the newsletter but stopped receiving it, another member said he was hit or miss on the email list. This leads the researcher to believe that there is an error in Groundswell contact databases.

Recommendation: Review contact databases, including email and newsletter.

Lack of knowledge

Awareness weakness — All members are focused on the two co-founders, Bud and John, and none of the 26 listed mentors on the website. One interviewee was aware of the range of mentors as she came during a pitch competition that paired mentors with members, but said she hasn't heard anything about it since. One interviewee was a mentor and said that there have been no mentorship requests for the past six months.

Recommendation: Reintroduce mentorship.

Awareness weakness — Members mentioned at least one instance where they could not find information like pricing or had problems reserving space. Members seem to generally have a difficult time locating important sources. Members may result to the Community Manager for help, yet this is unsustainable as Groundswell grows in size.

Recommendation: Create a visible 'member login' portal on the website, that includes all important sources or their explanation.

Recommendation: Consider researching and employing new conference room reservation process or system.

Awareness opportunity — Members seem to generally face numerous issues with finding information about certain services or processes. Combining all of that information in a single document may minimize that confusion.

Recommendation: Introduce a member support packet

Audience Interaction

Dull messages

Engagement weakness — Caused by lack of attention to possible important information due to its lack of eye-catching elements. For instance a member commented on whiteboard messages that lack color. A solution can possibly be repurposing the T.V. in lounge to display animated, or eye-catching visual content.

Recommendation: Incorporate color and eye-catching elements on whiteboards.

Passive messages

Engagement weakness — A conclusion of all three methods, reiteration of content was not favored. Solutions given by members and participants included adding rebuttals, opinions, or questions.

Recommendation: Avoid restating article content in post caption.

Break down barriers

Engagement strength — Allowing members to connect beyond just business by continuing to introduce unconventional, fun activities. For instance,

repurposing a whiteboard and posting questions on it for members to answer, this may be less intimidating and more subtle than a Ping Pong tournament.

Recommendation: Continue to break down the barriers.

Hesitation

Engagement threat — The previous tech hyper exclusivity is discouraging to members and possible future members. Members in the past have felt less important and marginalized compared to tech focused startups in the space.

Recommendation: Continuously avoid hyper exclusivity.

Groundswell Identity

The staff

Engagement strength — Members have all expressed their satisfactions with the staff and their appreciation of their friendliness, approachableness and helpfulness. The approachability of the staff has influenced members to voluntarily give feedback. Relationships formed due to such staff qualities allows for increased awareness and engagement.

Recommendation: Continue fostering interpersonal relationships with members.

The space, the people the culture

Engagement opportunity — The attractive space, the laid-back people and culture are in a way differentiating assets of Groundswell and its brand. Supported

by social media numbers, consistent engagement was highest with image posts that feature actual Groundswell space, people or events.

Recommendation: Incorporate more image posts on Facebook and Twitter.

Slogan

Awareness strength — Focus group members were able to grasp Groundswell’s identity through the slogan. The slogan “Great Entrepreneurs Make Waves” acted as a missing puzzle through the slogan. The slogan “Great Entrepreneurs Make Waves” acted as a missing puzzle piece of Groundswell’s identity, yet was only spotted by one member, in an Instagram image background.

Recommendation: Use the slogan beyond the space.

Other — includes recommendations for social media

Engagement opportunity — To attempt increasing awareness and engagement social media can be a good outlet. An example can be a social media treasure hunt with a prize that can be a free month of service. This is expected to encourage members to interact with different platforms and become more aware of them.

Recommendation: Introduce social media “challenges” or “competitions”.

Awareness opportunity — Creating more digital awareness. Introduce things such as social media takeovers by contacting influencers in a specific field or even members.

Recommendation: Exploring the option of recruiting more brand ambassadors and influencers.

Engagement opportunity — Give external audiences a reason to attend an event by introducing more event feedback or takeaways on social media. Being less vague, providing a nudge and reassurance.

Recommendation: Incorporate event status, feedback, etc. into social media communication.

Engagement opportunity — In efforts to get members more engaged, as well as, promote current businesses to reflect the nature of the Groundswell “ecosystem”.

Recommendation: Explore and expand social media member spotlight.

Awareness and engagement opportunity — With the explosion of social media there has been an increase in free social media and general web aid tools. Groundswell uses SumAll to monitor Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in one place. It will be an opportunity to use free tools to assess their website’s SEO or engagement abilities.

Recommendation: Make use of free website evaluation tools like Website Grader.

Overall Groundswell’s main audience is satisfied with its communication and content, yet little frustrations discovered may be a threat in the future as competition appears. When considering the big picture, it seems like past the

technical communication issues like booking, Groundswell can improve its communication by being more clear and consistent with its brand identity. For instance, Groundswell can become more clear and consistent through the creation of the recommended brand communication style guide. Clarity and consistency are important for all brands, as mentioned multiple times in this paper. Both elements allow the audience to gain a complete understanding of brand characteristics that when reinforced can possibly create brand recall (Crespo-Almendros & Barrio-García, 2014; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

In order to guide Groundswell in the right strategic direction, a strategic communication plan template is presented to the organization with its official report. The template works on providing Groundswell with a clear idea of what a strategic plan entails, as well as its typical structure. It is expected that if Groundswell successfully implements and monitors the strategic communication plan, it will make its efforts more effective.

Recommendations

Based on member interviews, a focus group and social media analysis, the following are recommendations for Groundswell startups.

Awareness

- *Use the slogan beyond the space.*
- *Reintroduce mentorship.*
- *Make all Groundswell communication channels known.*
- *Create a visible 'member login' portal on the website.*
- *Go beyond the four walls.*
- *Avoid vague or incomplete communication messages.*
- *Ensure transparency with audience.*
- *Update 'About' page — especially 'Our Story'.*
- *Create an internal brand identity document.*

Engagement

- *Continue providing information or speakers that add tangible value.*
- *Incorporate more image posts on Facebook and Twitter.*
- *Incorporate event status, feedback, etc. into social media communication.*
- *Review contact databases.*
- *Continue to break down the barriers.*

- *Incorporate color and eye-catching elements on whiteboards.*
- *Introduce social media challenges or competitions.*
- *Make use of free website evaluation tools.*
- *Explore the option of recruiting more brand ambassadors and influencers.*
- *Avoid restating article content in post caption.*
- *Continue fostering interpersonal relationships with members.*
- *Develop outreach programs for near-by college students.*
- *Explore and expand social media member spotlight.*

Strategic Planning

- *Continuously avoid hyper exclusivity.*
- *Be ready or prepare for competition.*
- *Consider researching and employing new conference room reservation process or system.*
- *Create a Groundswell communication style guide.*
- *Introduce a member support packet.*

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Appendix A — Groundswell official report

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Executive Summary

This document is a summary of the communication audit for Groundswell Startups, it includes an overview of purpose, goals and methods, followed by a SWOT analysis and finally the recommendations based on the findings.

Overview

This audit was created to identify and provide recommendations for Groundswell's communication awareness and engagement that will be used in creating a formal communication strategy.

Three main methods were used to complete this audit including, social media content analysis, Groundswell current member interviews and a college student focus group. The methods work together to provide a holistic approach by covering multiple audiences at different interest levels.

The centralized recommendation of this project is for Groundswell to employ clarity and consistency at each point of brand contact with the audience. That is, to clearly communicate the Groundswell brand identity with all audiences — casual, unconventional and collaborative. This can be done by ensuring the presence of and accessibility to information such as mission, values, goals, etc. Where this information can also be used by Groundswell staff to make decisions, create strategies and tactics, while staying true to Groundswell values of inclusivity, inspiration, collaboration, etc. For Groundswell to achieve its strategic

decisions it can employ a strategic communication plan, which will be explained further in Overall Recommendation and Appendix A1.

SWOT Analysis

■ Strengths
 ■ Weaknesses
 ■ Opportunities
 ■ Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uniqueness to competition. ● Flexible and collaborative nature. ● Staff presence and relationships result in approachability. ● Continue asking for feedback. ● Slogan’s ability to clarify brand identity. ● Community emphasis. ● Engaging Image posts. ● Recognized by members to be the driver of entrepreneurial momentum in the area. ● Content that provides real experience and tangible value (events and articles). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of knowledge of mentorship and its process. ● Vague communication with event and website information. ● The reiteration of article summary as post captions. ● Passive content resulting in low social media engagement. ● Lack of awareness of communication channels. ● Contact database error. ● Inability to identify important resource pages or channels. ● Dull content that lacks eye-catching qualities like color (whiteboard content is easily overlooked due to this.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff approachableness and friendliness. ● Continue the creation of mutually beneficial relationships between staff and members. ● Connection with more brand ambassadors. ● Considering a partnership with a social media influencer (in a related field) ● Expressive slogan ● Youthful area population (college students). ● Breaking down barriers with more unconventional activities. ● Uniqueness of space. ● Adding a visual brand timeline story in ‘Our Story’ webpage. ● Streamline feedback survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unique concept, can result in more difficult market penetration. ● Hyper exclusivity for tech startups. ● Uncertainty. ● Lack of unique brand voice. ● Unplugged members (from communication outlets) ● After-hours idleness affecting event attendance. ● Dull content or overload of content can lead members to become unplugged (stop notifications) ● Communication channel failure. ● Future competition. ● Website usability or difficulty finding information on website.

Recommendations

Beyond its mission of growing resources for the benefit of Space Coast entrepreneurs Groundswell also aims to grow itself, in order to be able to provide better resources and help more startups. Yet, this research has shown that Groundswell awareness and engagement need improvement. The recommendations bellow are first steps Groundswell can take to increase awareness and engagement, and consequently grow the organization.

Overall Recommendation

Beyond the specific recommendations provided below Groundswell is advised to ensure clear consistent communication that reflects its identity. In order to do so Groundswell is advised to develop a strategic communication plan. Groundswell currently has a document similar to a strategic communication plan, labeled “Marketing Plan”, yet the document needs to be improved for structure and the specificity of some of its objectives. A strategic communication plan typically includes: situation, mission and vision, audience, strategy, tactics, timeline, budget and evaluation. Some information from this document, like the mission and vision, must be communicated with internal and external audiences. For instance, this can be done by including Groundswell mission, vision and values in the website ‘About’ page to make it easily accessible by anyone. The

document can help Groundswell improve by setting a list of SMART⁶ goals, a goal timeline, and a way to evaluate goal performance. A template for a strategic communication plan is found at the end of this report (Appendix A1).

Specific Recommendations

Based on member interviews, a focus group and social media analysis, the following are recommendations for Groundswell startups.

Awareness

- *Use the slogan beyond the space.*
 - The slogan “Great Entrepreneurs Make Waves” acted as a missing puzzle piece of Groundswell’s identity. Through it participants made sense of the logo, name and general Groundswell culture.

- *Reintroduce mentorship.*
 - Almost all interviewees mentioned only mentorship by Bud Deffebach and John Vecchio, without addressing the 26 other listed mentors. Some interviewees were aware of other mentors but just have not noticed mentorship being promoted.

- *Make all Groundswell communication channels known.*
 - Almost all interviewees were unaware of one of more communication outlet, this can be a cause of lack of engagement. Some of the unknown channels were: Newsletter and Instagram.
 - Promote the different channels with cross-promotion on all channels (Groundswell current example, linking newsletters on Twitter).

⁶ S.M.A.R.T. – An acronym used for goal setting. The letters stand for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

- *Create a visible ‘member login’ portal on the website.*
 - Most members mentioned at least one instance where they were confused and did not find information like conference room booking link, pricing information or general member sources. This will be beneficial to streamline all processes instead of members drowning the staff with questions as Groundswell grows.

- *Go beyond the four walls.*
 - As recently revived Tech Tuesday takes place at the Mansion restaurant it matches findings that encourage Groundswell to get back into the community to connect and engage with audiences they might not have exposure to otherwise.

- *Avoid vague or incomplete communication messages.*
 - Vagueness or lack of information have been reported to cause frustrations, as this audit findings show. Both factors have been said to result in giving up on the organization or task. With members this resulted in contacting staff.
 - For example, lack of clearly labeled or easily found mission statement, difficulty accessing complete and detained offerings of Groundswell, etc.

- *Ensure transparency with audience*
 - Transparency reinforces Groundswell’s “Honest” value. This can be done by addressing the “How is Groundswell funded” in the ‘About’ page on the website rather than just briefly in FAQs.
 - One focus group member suggested offering the public financial statements, as there are numerous non-profit fraud scandals such information can add reassurance.

- *Update ‘About’ page — especially ‘Our Story’*
 - Include, clearly labeled, mission statement and values. This allows audience members to more easily locate such information in a relevant page.
 - Possibly add a timeline graphic that tells a visual Groundswell progress story. This can be a tool to visualize how the brand vision

is becoming a reality. The timeline can include major milestones: inception, starting at coffee shops, finding the building, first startup, etc.

- *Create an internal brand identity document*
 - The document is a tool to ensure alignment of decisions with the Groundswell brand mission.
 - This document can be edited to provide any outsourced employees, potential sponsors, etc. an in-depth understanding of Groundswell's brand.

Engagement

- *Continue providing information or speakers that add tangible value.*
 - Information or speakers that address real issues faced in the real world, accompanied by how such issues were solved.
- *Incorporate more image posts on Facebook and Twitter.*
 - The social media content analysis showed that consistent engagement was highest with image posts that feature actual Groundswell space, people or events.
- *Incorporate event status, feedback, etc. into social media communication.*
 - Some members have expressed the need for better reporting on upcoming and past events. The additional information is supposed to give the overall audience of event structure as well as turn out to aid in future event decision making.
- *Review contact databases.*
 - Some members who have subscribed to the newsletter do not receive it, while others are a hit or miss on the email list.
- *Continue to break down the barriers.*
 - Continuous introduction of unconventional engagement methods, similar to the Kona truck featured on Instagram in June 2018.
 - A second recommendation is to repurpose a whiteboard, place it in a strategic traffic area. Post a new question on the board daily or

weekly. Encourage members to participate by verbal encouragement, writing prompts on the whiteboard and providing numerous markers.

- *Incorporate color and eye-catching elements on whiteboards.*
 - Some members reported their lack of awareness or interest in whiteboard content, one interviewee explain it is the lack of color and attractiveness that is not appealing.
 - Consider repurposing the T.V. as a digital board.
- *Introduce social media “challenges” or “competitions”.*
 - This is expected to encourage member to interact with different platforms and become more aware of their existence.
 - E.g. An example can be a social media treasure hunt with prize that can be a free month of service.
- *Make use of free website evaluation tools*
 - As some members and participants commented on website confusion, use free tools like Website Grader to receive a quick overview of website performance, can assist in locating issues and weaknesses.
- *Exploring the option of recruiting more brand ambassadors and influencers.*
 - Introduce things such as social media takeovers by contacting influencers in a specific field. This technique has been explored by different brands, and can be beneficial keeping in mind the Six Degrees of Separation theory.
 - This is predicted to generate more awareness and engagement with the brand as it exposes it to new audiences.
- *Avoid restating article content in post caption.*
 - A conclusion of all three methods, reiteration of content was not favored, while opinions, rebuttals or question article captions is expected to drive engagement.
- *Continue fostering interpersonal relationships with members.*
 - As those relationships allow for increased awareness and engagement. A member expressed the value of such relationships

by saying that if the staff did not establish relationships early on and approached her she would be less likely or willing to share feedback.

- *Develop outreach programs for near-by college students.*
 - Creating outreach programs, like workshops, that can help guide students. In turn, reaching back out after the students graduate to offer them Groundswell services and stimulate the entrepreneurial community.
- *Explore and expand social media member spotlight.*
 - Some members showed interest in learning more about other startups in the space. This can motivate current startups and benefit from engaging with their unique following allowing for future reach.

Strategic Planning

- *Continuously avoid hyper exclusivity.*
 - Prior to expansion of audience, members in the past have felt less important and marginalized compared to solely tech focused startups in the space.
- *Develop outreach programs for near-by college students.*
 - Creating outreach programs, like workshops, that can help guide students. In turn, reaching back out after the students graduate to offer them Groundswell services and stimulate the entrepreneurial community.
- *Be ready or prepare for competition.*
 - Members said that Groundswell has contributed greatly to the entrepreneurial momentum in the area currently, as that momentum grows competition may appear.
- *Consider researching and employing new conference room reservation process or system.*

- As a recurring inconvenience, conference room reservation current system needs adjustment. Employ a system that avoids conflict, allow for easier accessibility, editing and booking. Explore Slack applications or Sagenda.
- *Creation of social media or general communication style guide.*
 - This can aid in the unification of a Groundswell voice. The style guide can include Groundswell hashtags, terminology, post formatting, etc. create and maintain a consistent social media personality and voice.
- *Introduce a member support packet.*
 - The packet can tackle the issues of scarce entrepreneur time, and possibly lack of area knowledge, to link startups with different service providers like bankers, accountants...etc.

Conclusion

In this communication audit Groundswell's communication awareness and engagement were assessed to create usable recommendations.

From the research, starting with the social media content analysis, Groundswell's social media engagement is notably low for a community organization. Yet when compared to other incubators, in Orlando for instance, Groundswell seems to have an average following. Most posts are passive and have been that way since the inception the brand presence, making it difficult to suddenly break the patterns. Groundswells seems to be on the right track to increasing engagement with the recent incorporations of image and video posts to its social platforms.

As for member interviews the feedback was mostly positive highlighting Groundswell perks, traits and casualness. Yet a number of issues are affecting the member's communication efficiency. For instance, Groundswell's conference room booking system was an issue a few interviewees faced. Overall current members have a good understanding of the brand and its presence in the community.

Lastly, the focus group findings were as follows, lack of information availability or accessibility. For instance, members were confused about the location of official offerings. Additionally, the group also reaffirmed findings with participants' discussion on Groundswell's passive brand voice. On the other hand, Groundswell's culture and identity were well communicated, and made whole after reading the slogan.

Based on the research and its findings it is advised that Groundswell continue its current efforts of monitoring social media analytics through the platforms, as well as SumAll which provides all the analytics on a single platform. Additionally, Groundswell is advised to keep monitoring the engagement of image posts and its performance on different platforms closely. Groundswell shared, in early 2018, that it doesn't have a formal strategy to raise awareness and engagement and solely depended on word of mouth. Groundswell is advised to incorporate the recommendations provided previously into the creation of a structured plan. Groundswell is advised to continue its primary

market research by reaching out to its members and possibly use the interactive whiteboard to collect anonymous member feedback.

In sum, Groundswell must work on its clarity and consistency. This can be achieved by making sure that at every point of contact, between Groundswell and its audience, identity elements like values and culture are reinforced and incorporated. Consistent reinforcement of brand elements can be achieved by employing a strategic communication plan, the following section includes a template of a typical strategic communication plan.

Appendix A1 — Strategic Communication Plan Template⁷

Situation Analysis

Groundswell has low social media engagement. Increasing enjoyment can positively influence Groundswell's overall awareness in the area and in turn making it one step closer to achieve its vision.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Engaging Image posts.
- Content that provides real experience and tangible value.

Weaknesses

- Passive content resulting in lack of social media engagement.
- Lack of awareness of communication channels.

Opportunities

- More engaging post captions.
- Social Media treasure hunt.

Threats

- Unplugged employees from social media outlets (stopped notifications)
- Dull or reiterated post caption.

Mission and Vision Statement

Mission:

Groundswell's mission is to grow resources for the benefit of Space Coast entrepreneurs. Groundswell startups leverage a robust mentor community, networking opportunities and tailored programming.

⁷ This is only a template, plan it is based off one finding from the research. A real plan will include more thorough information, for instance the situation analysis. This report uses both real and unofficial, inferred from data collected (real: mission, fictional: vision).

Vision:

Become the go-to high tech incubator in the Space Coast area.

Target Audience & Communication channels

Target Audience:

Groundswell must address both internal and external to ensure success:

Internal: Remote-workers, fledging companies, established companies and single consultants.

External: surrounding community (Melbourne/Palm Bay), University students.

Target Audience Communication Channels

- *Internal Audience:* Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Slack.
- *External Audience:* Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram.

Objectives & Strategies

The following S.M.A.R.T. objectives are suggested

- **Objective 1** – Increase Groundswell engagement on Facebook at least 10% by the end of the first quarter.
 - **Target Audience:** Internal – Groundswell members
 - **Strategy:**
 - Establish member following on platform.
 - Identify posts that generate large engagement.
 - **Tactic:**
 - Ask members to participate in whiteboard poll. Question can be: “Do you follow us on Facebook.” — include message- or ask members to join.
 - Create winning guidelines and communicate them on Facebook, possibly on a whiteboard or the T.V. in the lounge.

- Create any necessary hashtags for members to use.
- Determine treasure hunt timeframe, e.g. 1 week, as well as exactly when, where and how will the winner be announced.
 - On Facebook only Friday evening, or at “Friday Fest Happy Hour” accompanied with a Facebook post.
- Announce social media treasure hunt on Monday with incentive “25% off your next membership renewal” both on social media and by word of mouth in the office.
- Send a reminder on slack on Thursday.
- After the treasure hunt concludes, ask for feedback on Facebook and/or Slack.
- **Evaluation:** Record participation by tracking the number of times the created hashtag was used and the engagement on Groundswell’s treasure hunt announcements/reminders.

Timeline

Before treasure hunt:

- Bring awareness to social media platform, this can be done on slack, the whiteboards or by word of mouth.
- Create guidelines, deadlines, communication materials (hashtags)
- Announce treasure hunt.

During treasure hunt:

- Post reminder on Facebook and in the space the day before the last day and the morning of the last day.
- Post updates if possible, if a member is caught participating in the space.

After treasure hunt:

- Ask for feedback through a Facebook poll, Slack, or word of mouth.
- Measure engagement and make a decision if this proves effective with current members.
- Consider measurement tools like Objective & Key Results (OKRs), used by Uber, Google, etc.

Budget

More necessary when hosting events or conferences, yet social media budgets account for post “boosts” and any other materials if necessary.

Event title /strategy	Details (items needed)	Amount Requested	Amount Granted
Establish member following on platform	Whiteboard message	\$0	\$0

Evaluation

This template provides a structured example for Groundswell of a typical strategic communication plan. The template acts as a starting point for Groundswell to create other objectives and strategies for different situations.

This template does not include a full timeline. Timelines can include annual and quarterly sections depending on the situation or goals of the plan.

It is important to measure and evaluate the degree to which each objective is being achieved. As mentioned above OKRs is more than a measurement tool, it allows the organization to place numerical values for each objective to better evaluate the effectiveness of strategies and tactics. OKRs can also aid in performance based decision making. OKR is a framework that can ensure strategic success, similar frameworks are Theory of Change and Balanced Scorecard.

It is important to note that the evaluation process must be ongoing so adjustments can be made as Groundswell moves forward to continuously reach its goals effectively.

Appendix B — Semi-structured interview guide

Warm up questions:

- Where are you from? What do you do?
- Was entrepreneurship your first choice or did you try the corporate life first?
- How often do you use the internet in general on a daily basis?
- Do you have social media accounts? How active are you on IG, Twitter, FB, LinkedIn?
- Do you notice a lot of content from businesses on your feed? — Do you think it is because you follow a lot of business pages or you're just more aware because of your own business?

Semi-structured interview guide

1. Can you tell me more about yourself, your business (start-up)?
 - a. How long have you had your business for?
 - b. Stage it is at, major achievements (milestones)
2. How did you hear about Groundswell, and when did you join after hearing about it?
 - a. (Can you tell me more about) Why? (why did it take you long/short time to decide, did you need more convincing?)
 - b. If they joined before Micha (new CEO): Did your experience with Groundswell change after Jenna left? Was it for the better, worse or “good different”?
3. How would you describe your relationship with Groundswell?
4. What do you think of Groundswell and did your perception change after interacting with them? And Why? Let's say hearing about them to visiting for the first time and then visiting for the first time to becoming a member.
5. What do you think of Groundswell's communication? Are you always up-to-date? * **NL&WEB**
 - a. Can you tell me about a time when Groundswell communicated well or poorly?

- b. — do you personally have any suggestions to improve that/keep it going??
- 6. Do you follow Groundswell’s social media, and which platforms do you follow?* **SM**
 - a. What do you think of Groundswell’s social media effort?
 - b. — why do you say that?
 - c. Can you remember any posts that stuck out? Tell me more.
- 7. What do you think of the content Groundswell puts out on social media? Do you ever read it, comment or like posts? And why/why not?
 - a. — can you remember a time where you genuinely liked a specific post (which platform)? OR disliked
- 8. What is your favorite event or type of event at Groundswell?
- 9. If you were to change things at Groundswell what would you change and why?
- 10. Tell me more about why you’re at Groundswell? What do you like, what are they doing that is working for you or not.

Is there anything I didn't ask about your experience with Groundswell that you think I should know as I work on this project?

Appendix C — Interview Codebook and Code Map

Label — Investment

Definition: Giving real-life unique attention to members, from conversations, to asking for opinions to networking and other support.

Example: “And it was John and Bud who then went out and found these six investors, including themselves. And they were like we’re gonna give you this little bit of money to go to New York and make a show and we’re also gonna provide you a desk here to work—”

Label — Socialization

Definition: The ability to meet new people and interact with others during the work day.

Example: ...it gives me structure, its a good environment, you know I have— I can have some social interaction during the work day which otherwise I’d be here like just streaming RuPaul’s drag race in the background as a coworker, and possibly talking to my dogs too much [chuckles].”

Label — Uniqueness

Definition: Being different than any other place or offering in the area, unique to corporations, other businesses and startup incubators.

Example: “...as just kind of a like-minded community of entrepreneurs and you know folks that were really interested in growing startup scene and doing something other than big corporate.”

Label — Staff presence

Definition: Ability to identify key Groundswell staff and their roles. As well as staff’s ability to engage and communicate with members in the space that may convey the culture of the business.

Example: “My opinion has definitely evolved since seeing Micah in action with the bringing people together... it felt a little more like individual people off doing their own things before that...”

Label — The building, the space.

Definition: The role of the building itself in people’s decision making and possible motivation to join.

Example: “Just I mean you come in here and get the— I don't know the way the walls are, its just— it just the f— I don't know its what I envision for working. I mean like my offices I have before we just had crazy stuff, we just put stuff all over the place and it's just more exciting.”

Label — Laid-back culture

Definition: Definition: The way members of Groundswell interact, which is governed by similar values, attitudes and characteristics.

Example: “so startup culture and being Groundswell and all that it's I like that I can do— communicate the way I want to. You know, of course... It's just more open it's more relaxed.”

Label — Refinement of effort

Definition: The effort by Groundswell to constantly improve and maintain their “quality” of service, communication and interaction with members.

Example: “But I know Micah said he was gonna address it and work on it and it hasn't happened since...”

Label — Internal market research

Definition: Gaining insight from Groundswell community members in hopes to better cater to their needs and wants, as well as, reach the broader Melbourne and Space Coast community.

Example: “ ... it's funny 'cause Micah talked to me about this and every once in a while, you know 'case he came up and he was like what do you think about... because he was trying— there was a day where he was trying to come up with other ideas about where to sort of advertise them...”

Label — community interest regardless of personal irrelevance,

Definition: genuine interest in information beneficial to the community and its people regardless of the information's personal relevance.

Example: “Yeah I'd love to read that, even though it's nothing that— probably nothing that I personally would... relate to for my line of work, I have a lot of people who would be interested in that sort of thing. So a lot if this is sort of word of mouth—”

Label — Media/communication channel ignorance

Definition: Lack of knowledge or information about the existence and content of Groundswell’s communication channels.

Example: “Wait, they have newsletter?”

Label — unplugged

Definition: Stopping notifications from or not paying attention to communication channels.

Example: “I think it's great. You know, to be totally I can't— I skim through it. So I haven't read it too closely but that's that's true for every newsletter I get so... [laughs].” — Page 7

Label — Proactive communication

Definition: Quick, timely and dynamic Groundswell communication which leads “to creating or controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to it after it has happened.”

Example: “there was a car accident that knocked out power to an entire block that included Groundswell and... in the morning before most people ... and Fumiko was on it and got on Slack and was sending out everybody messages...”

Label — Networking

Definition: Facilitating the building of mutually beneficial relationships within and beyond the Groundswell space.

Example: “There's a lady named [REDACTED] who is starting a [REDACTED] company. You know and as a for instance, you know I've had some professional contacts I've been able to relate to her. So you know in that for instance you know exchanging information like that...”

Label — After hours idleness

Definition: Lack of motivation, willingness or ability to stay at Groundswell after official business hours to attend events and such.

Example: “So I'm much more fan of that. So as a for instance, you know when they do the late afternoon or evening stuff I mean you know so for me you know I'm working all day, you know I come in work all day and then you know, “Hey do you wanna sit at Ground— you know til 9:00 o'clock at night?”. “Ehh no,”

Label — Direction — Networking

Definition: Groundswell’s ability, through its network and knowledge, to guide businesses guaranteeing valuable introductions.

Example: “I feel like I was asking all the wrong people. I— somehow I met— anyways I met Jenna who was sort of like heading up you know Groundswell at the time and...so and I kinda owe it all to her, for the most part.”

Label — Hesitation or intimidation due to Tech focus

Definition: Doubt or worry that the non-tech nature of your startup will not fit in or be good enough for a Tech focused space.

Example: “There was a almost like there's, "Well you can be here but you're not really fitting in," you know kind of verbalized actually which is really funny.”

Label — Hesitation

Definition: Doubt or worry that the lack of backgrounds and knowledge in business will lead to scrutinization by others in the community.

Example: “I was a little intimidated when I first went in, you know I didn't know what to expect. My thought is you know this whole startup thing its new to me, so I definitely was like a little nervous going in. But I mean now I'm super comfortable there and everyone's really approachable.”

Label — Past Marginalization

Definition: Past instances where non-tech startups felt or were communicated with as insignificant compared to the tech members.

Example: “Someone told me because you know we're asking about various spaces that were open and literally they said, ‘Yeah! you know we can get you into this space but you know if we get a company that's like a really cool tech startup we'll probably ask you to just give up the space for them.’ [laughs]”

Label — Multi-layered entrepreneurship

Definition: Looking beyond a startup’s field or line of work, not putting people in boxes as many entrepreneurs are involved in or have interests beyond their startup.

Example: “but just not being hyper exclusive because you don't always know what else someone is thinking or doing. For example, my business partner— a lot

of folks thought that he did one thing and in the end he's got tech development ideas that have got a couple people really excited.”

Label — Satisfaction

Definition: fulfillment of wishes, expectations, or needs.

Example: “And I mean I think they're pretty good at putting out a broad content for like early stage, a little bit more established etc... So yeah I mean I don't know I don't think I would change much.”

Label — Positive reinforcement

Definition: Member acknowledgement and support of content they appreciate or like.

Example: “...but I like them because I just want to yeah like, ‘This was good.’”

Label — Effective visual communication

Definition: Satisfaction with visual communication in the space, like the whiteboards

Example: “I'm a visual person. so, everything I like I have to see it to remember it. So it's just like— it's just easier for me.”

Label — Well rounded events

Definition: Events that highlight different perspectives from different backgrounds and fields, encouraging discussion and insights that otherwise wouldn't happen.

Example: “Usually it's focused around events, which is which is good. I think they cater to a wide swath of people that are doing, you know anything from stuff we're doing, like cloud infrastructure to like you know a freelance photographer.

Label — Helpful content

Definition: Enjoying content from Groundswell that can add value, knowledge or inspiration.

Example: “But I like when they... send out tweets to articles, like helpful articles 'cause every time they've done that I think, "this is a really helpful thing for me to read.”

Label — Real world experience

Definition: Receiving advice and learning from mentors and speakers who have “been there done that.”

Example: “Just the fact that they— kind of been there and done that you know they've done so— you speak to folks who've started— you know done the startup thing and they can kind of give you insight into what to expect or what works the best.”

Label — In-house content

Definition: Interest in original content created by Groundswell staff, mentors or members.

Example: “And if it's been written by one of the folks at Groundswell I'm likely to read it because I already know kind of their their values their perspective on the thing. It's always neat to see, something that's well written.”

Label — Member content criteria

Definition: The type of content members will stop and read, or continue reading. Criteria they use to evaluate the quality of the post.

Example: “depending on kind of what the source of it is, is kinda how I filter what I take the time to actually read. So I know there's a there's a few outlets that have generally high quality articles that I can get through quickly and then I personally have noticed that when I open an article if I can't digest it very quickly, if its not laid out well I just keep moving.”

Label — Break down barriers

Definition: Incorporating unconventional and different tactics into events and communication that ensure people open up and become more comfortable.

Example: “I mean it's kinda just like breaks down the wall and they've made a much easier to be able to— to feel like you could just go and approach people or what.”

Label — Go beyond the four walls

Definition: Thinking back to before the headquarters, become more integrated in the community by having events and meetups outside the headquarters

Example: “So one of the things I noticed too is when— once Groundswell had a building it was all about the four walls if you will. It was like...suddenly the entire

community network had to be inside those four walls. And from my perspective that's exactly the opposite thing you should be doing because you should be everywhere connecting to everyone... ”

Label — Challenge the status quo

Definition: Need for creating, introducing and conveying content and events in nontraditional ways, not reiterating the same information but accompanying it with challenges or questions.

Example: “And just kind of challenging the accepted like, ‘Okay, you just recycled content,’ and then the interactions that start they are always interesting and sometimes you want to jump in and comment kind of you know support someone when you're like, ‘Oh thank you for not you know just repeating the same thing everyone else just said.’”

Label — Effortless

Definition: The desire for tasks like setting reminders and calendar events to require the least effort, become embedded in the ask.

Example: “because the thing and I have actually given them this feedback directly before I was like, ‘If you want me to show up in an event? Like make it super clear and let me just add it to my calendar,’ ”

Label — Polar opposite events

Definition: Putting together more non-tech or artistic events to balance out the event diversity, while ensuring that they are still appealing to the everyone.

Example: “so none of it bothers me directly but I do think that they're missing out by not having entirely non-technical ones. There's been a couple recently which is kind of good and I think they intend to give more but if they really want to capitalize that figuring out how to make those non-technical ones really appealing to the technical people and vice versa.”

Label — Message reinforcement

Definition: The reiteration of messages, invites and announcements through different channels as not all members are following or keeping up with everything, yet tailoring the content to be platform specific.

Example: “And then the day before or day of a reminder either— however they choose to do it text, Slack, you know maybe you know, stick something on the

office door just like, "Hey see ya at this time tonight," I'll be like, "Oh yeah definitely, gonna make that happen." So different mediums are good for sure."

Label — Curious

Definition: Being unaware of and interested in the all the startups of the space, what they do, how they're doing.

Example: "cause I honestly can tell you that I work out of that space. I don't know what any of the other companies do there and I think I just see a lot of stuff going on— I see the same people every day I'm bad with names..."

Label — Startup feature content

Definition: Appreciation and desire for startup or member features, highlights or stories in Groundswell communication.

Example: "example, so when we went to the Florida Venture forum. Micah did a post on our company, and so that's one that you know, certainly I saw and was very appreciative..."

Label — Report on the community

Definition: Lack community coverage that is mostly more relevant to the audience here.

Example: "They get mo— stuff like that though, even though it's not Grounds— stuff you see in Groundswell per se but it's something that affects the area. Stuff like that though I mean wherever those events or something like that happens it's good to see. So more like the community based stuff. You know, it's not just all about business it's also about the area, so maybe if there's more stuff like that."

Label — Lack of outside resources

Definition: The desire for more direction for business resources beyond the space.

Example: "because we moved in here we didn't have to waste basically any time on real estate stuff, which was great right because you know you're leasing a place you know you gotta figure out the lease terms, you're buying all the equipment, furniture, you're building it out whatever. A lot of money out the door, a lot of time out the door, right?"

Label — Repurposing

Definition: Repurposing some channels of communication to communicate more relevant and wanted content.

Example: “There is one there, but it's always just streaming news stuff and I'm never gonna stand there and read a news article headline, if I want news article headline I'll open my phone skim through stuff... If that one was in a better position and it had like some interesting things like, ‘Oo, highlighted company of the week,’”

Label — Groundswell is foreign

Definition: The area lacks the foundation for entrepreneurial community, culture, knowledge and hubs.

Example: “most of my friends live in New York City so when they said what’s— what is this place that, you know, work at of I just say, “oh it’s like industry city,” because in New York... places like Groundswell exist all over the place, like its not— its not a new idea I feel like Melbourne is just...”

Label — Revolutionary

Definition: Groundswell is revolutionizing the startup scene in the area and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Example: “Well I really like the way that they pulled the community together, I think it's— they're responsible for a lot of the momentum in the area around— look at what's happening to the startup community down here, they're kind of at the nexus of it and then driving the momentum and you hear people talk about them in other parts of Florida, and even Atlanta.”

Label — Future

Definition: Expectations and hopes of members for Groundswell and its community to expand.

Example: “it would be really nice to see more people— and more diverse people. I mean I love everyone who goes there, but you see a lot of the same people at the events, which is great for you know getting to know everyone, but it would be really nice if they could get a bun— lots— more people to be involved.”

Label — expectations / future

Definition:

Example: “As I was saying continue to grow I would like to stay within Groundswell so you know like some things that I’m thinking of like... a test kitchen where we can test recipes, where we can take photographs stuff like that...”

Label — Transformation

Definition: changes in the space or communication due to change in leadership.

Example: “But certainly there was a big change in the general like personality of the group, the— in the community, the mix of individuals shifted pretty quickly as well.”

Label — Quick / informal communication

Definition: Desire for quick one-on-one electronic communication, for instance using Slack rather than email.

Example: “Even if it means just being able to message Fumiko or Micah directly instead of having to email them.”

Label — Call to action

Definition: Include a call to action or request in the messaging to encourage people to act on it.

Example: “Yeah. Like I think if I were sent a calendar invite in an email a week beforehand like, “Hey! We’ve got this coming up, you should definitely be here. ‘Here’s a calendar invite just add it now.’”

Label — Electronic Word of Mouth — EWoM

Definition: Hearing about Groundswell or their events through one’s own following on social media.

Example: “I musta saw the post like just a month or two before that— whatever event they had... so I you know I clicked on that and I just learned about them and I just thought it would be a good resource given that we had just started our company...”

Label — Plugged

Definition: Paying attention to and noticing Groundswell’s internal communication.

Example: “Slack and the whiteboard over here, I mean those two things, so I’ll pay attention to ‘em.”

Label — Founder presence

Definition: Ability to identify the founders, and appreciation of their knowledge and presence.

Example: “You know the other partners that are part of Groundswell certainly are not as active as John and Bud. you know, and certainly that’s for a variety of reasons. But you know again I mean the people I interact with is you know been great.”

Label — Approachable staff

Definition: The friendly and easy to talk to qualities of the staff, which allows members to comfortably go up to them or direct message them with questions or comments.

Example: “mean I know I would just ask Fumiko about anything. I mean get to Slack just send a message and say, ‘what’s the story with this, how do we do this?’”

Label — Staff relationships

Definition: Creation of relationships with staff both pleasant and unpleasant.

Example: “So very personal approachable but also just super real. And everyone is busy but if you’re having a conversation with her she’s always present, and that’s a little bit unique to her.”

Label — Staff’s personal content

Definition: The organic content Groundswell staff post on their personal social media that affects the audience’s perception and awareness of the brand itself.

Example: “you know over the last few years and I’d say I probably started seeing those social media posts I would guess about two years ago?...I don’t know. So I you know I connected to Micah and I don’t know initially how I started getting them but now I get them all the time because of you know he post stuff or...”

Label — Sincerity of mission

Definition: Groundswell’s genuine care and effort to improving the community and accomplishing their mission.

Example: “But again I think you know from a sincerity perspective knowing that they have other draws on their time, you know I think they are sincere, their hearts are in the right place, they're trying to do a good thing for these new businesses that are here, as well as you know the local community.”

Label — Real expectations

Definition: Groundswell (staff and founding mentors) do not sugar coating the truth when it comes to the nature of the path.

Example: “you know they sort of put me at ease like, "you're gonna fail sometimes and you may not reach a goal that you want to reach.”

Label — Pleasing everyone

Definition: Groundswell’s challenge to cater to all its members and make them all comfortable.

Example: “I recognize that Groundswell has a real challenge in that some folks just want [whispers] a quiet space to work. Okay that's fine, and that's cool because we want those people in the community too, because they've got you know all of the different thoughts and views and things that they bring to the table.”

Label — Perks

Definition: Enjoying and appreciating perks that come with Groundswell memberships that cannot be found in all other similar facilities.

Example: “the fact that you can go there and everything is all inclusive. So you know if maybe you rented an office space somewhere else you might have to get your own phone line and pay for your own internet and you know they have multiple meeting rooms that you can use... conference rooms and stuff.”

Label — Affordable pricing

Definition: Groundswell’s reasonable pricing plans and offerings as a factor in joining and staying with Groundswell.

Example: “I mean it's a good price point so I can't complain about that.”

Label — Flexible Plans

Definition: Having multiple plans and offers to fit different needs, durations and businesses. Giving members freedom and rid them of long commitments.

Example: “Where it was kind of an easy entry point,”

Label — Time flexibility

Definition: The freedom members get with they join, no time restrictions or operating hours allowing Groundswell to serve people on their own time.

Example: “at night like I'll be here sometimes 12:00, 1:00 in the morning...”

Label — Lack of competition or its presence

Definition: Lack of activity or awareness of other incubators, which can be seen as a differentiation and an advantage is one reason why members join.

Example: “and there are not many coworking spaces in Melbourne. So who you know obviously that makes their lives even easier. But I think it was the way they positioned it was great and we obviously want to be as supportive as we can.”

Label — Phone booth reception

Definition: Inadequate reception in the phone booths causing issues.

Example: “So in this room and those phone booths out there the Wi-Fi and the cellular signal for whatever reason is spotty. So what— Yesterday I'm on a call with... So I spent a week getting this call scheduled and everything's going great, and literally in the last two minutes the phone cuts-out because of a cellular signal. And I'm like, ‘ughh,’ ...It's happened to me on investor calls, you know it's just like you're killing me here right”

Label — Echo

Definition: Echoey conference rooms

Example: “The sound in some of those rooms is not that great...”

Label — Available Mentor Network

Definition: Having a diverse group of mentors available for members.

Example: “I just like what they had a good network of mentors in it and it was kind of the only thing around here like that and just I knew...”

Label — Venturesome

Definition: Having or showing a disposition to undertake risky activities; daring. Willing to take risk to build a community of entrepreneurship.

Example: “then in 2017 we raised a seed round— that was after we sorta had our— the first round of the product and they decided to— they wanted to see where we could take this.”

Label — Support system

Definition: Having access to help and support financially and strategically.

Example: “at some point... a small group of— a couple of mentors their along with a small group of their friends like, “we’ll give you a little bit of money and see what you can do with this.”

Label — Serious business

Definition: Regardless of the casual atmosphere Groundswell has a serious side when it comes to business aid.

Example: “You know there’s nobody watching what you’re sort of doing... and it— but but [sic] at the same time the corporate part of it there if you need it to be. Like if I’m... you know like right now I’m putting together a new deck and getting a new financial plan ready and all that’s really serious business that I need really serious help with umm so they’re there for that”

Label — Collaboration and synergy

Definition: True coworking space, allowing people to get together, brainstorm and collaborate, possibly creating value.

Example: “we’ve spun some older companies into a new one to kind of have this full on capability and that’s really only ramped up the beginning of 2018.”

Label — Like-minded

Definition: having similar or identical interests, disposition, passion etc.

Example: “it’s just nice to have other people in the same boat sort of around...”

Label — Accommodating space and people

Definition: Providing an accommodating atmosphere for members, while it is fun and active members and staff are still respectful and professional and will not bother individuals working.

Example: “I go to Groundswell and put on my headphones and that’s really where I sort of focus on things that I need to achieve. You know my dogs aren’t there, my partner’s not there, I don’t have to like— nobody bothers me—”

Label — Single platform

Definition: Following or paying attention to only one social media platform rather than all.

Example: “Only on LinkedIn.”

Label — Deserting the website

Definition: Lack of use or visits to the Groundswell website.

Example: “Yeah I don’t— I haven’t been on the site probably in a year and so I don’t— I realize I don’t really use that but I mean...”

Label — Checked out

Definition: mentally checking out, zoning out or not paying attention to speakers or topics that are predictable.

Example: “The other ones um... they’re good, but they are— right now they’re kind of you know exactly what to expect and if you already know the speaker. Here it’s a little tempting to just kind of check-out because you’re like, “Oh, I know exactly what they’re gonna say and it’s not really going to be conversational. Even though they probably intended to be...”

Label — Scarce time

Definition: Scarcity of an entrepreneur’s time, lack of free time can deter some from long or complicated content, unclear event descriptions. Busyness can lead to lack of attention, e.g. to whiteboards.

Example: “I kinda wanna know specifically, ‘cause with people who work or have startups or whatever their time is precious, so you have to really decide.”

Label — Forgetful

Definition: Likely to not remember messages communicated.

Example: “then I have to go convert all those information over into my calendar, I’m never going to, which means it’s never going to pop up and remind me which I’m never going to show up.”

Label — Newsletter contact error

Definition: Incorrect, incomplete, not updated contact lists which results in receiving some, not all Groundswell messaging.

Example: “I feel like when I first joined I swear I subscribed maybe I should go back and try subscribing... [chuckles].”

Label — email contact list error

Definition: Incorrect, incomplete, not updated contact lists which results in receiving some, not all Groundswell messaging.

Example: ” I— I've just been kind of just been kind of hit and miss on the email list. ”

Label — Dull Communication

Definition: Uninteresting, dry communication or messages. Lacking colors, eye-catching elements.

Example: “I see it and it doesn't stand out.”

Label — Wordy

Definition: Lengthy messages that may discourage members to read.

Example: “But if I don't— if I have to read three paragraphs down to find it then I have to go convert all those information over into my calendar, I'm never going to,”

Label — Vague communication

Definition: Groundswell's lack of complete clarity when communicating with the public, like event descriptions and announcements.

Example: “I kinda wanna know specifically, 'cause with people who work or have startups or whatever their time is precious, so you have to really decide. if I'm on the fence if it's like, it might be good might be bad. I probably won't go, you know.”

Label — Better use of time

Definition: Adding more structure to some events to ensure maximum value added.

Example: “It seemed kind of very open and free flowing where I think if it had been curated or structured a little bit more you know the amount of information

we could have transmitted to a community could have been a little better... I've talked to Mark Sokol a couple times, he's a smart guy. And you know I think that we didn't leverage in his time as effectively as as possible."

Label — Reservation confusion

Definition: Issues reserving conference room space at Groundswell.

Example: "...helped us coordinate, you know make sure we get the room squared away, deconflict some of those issues with scheduling."

Label — Reintroducing mentorship

Definition: The need to reintroduce mentorship to the community due to lack of requests and knowledge of process.

Example: "And there really hasn't been a focus on it recently, nobody's called me up and said, "Hey can you help out of this company with this." Like I've actually sought it out more than it's they've asked me to help out. So in the last four or five months I probably would not have mentored anybody if I hadn't sought them out."

Label — Novice confusion

Definition: Confusion by new members on how everything works, who to talk to and exact roles.

Example: But at first it was sort of like starting a new job you're like— you don't know you don't know who's— what what everyone's role is."

Label — Website user experience

Definition: Lacking some interactivity and simplicity on the website.

Example: "for a long time it was it was a little bit confusing like where, you know where do I find the pricing and know the— Yeah the user experience like even right now I was trying to find the pricing just as an example... but I can't so..."

Label — Lack of brand voice

Definition: Perfecting and unifying the brand voice.

Example: "that's a good question 'cause I think— I think it's getting better now but I think really figuring out what that brand voice is and then really running with it."

Figure 1.1 – Qualitative Interview code map

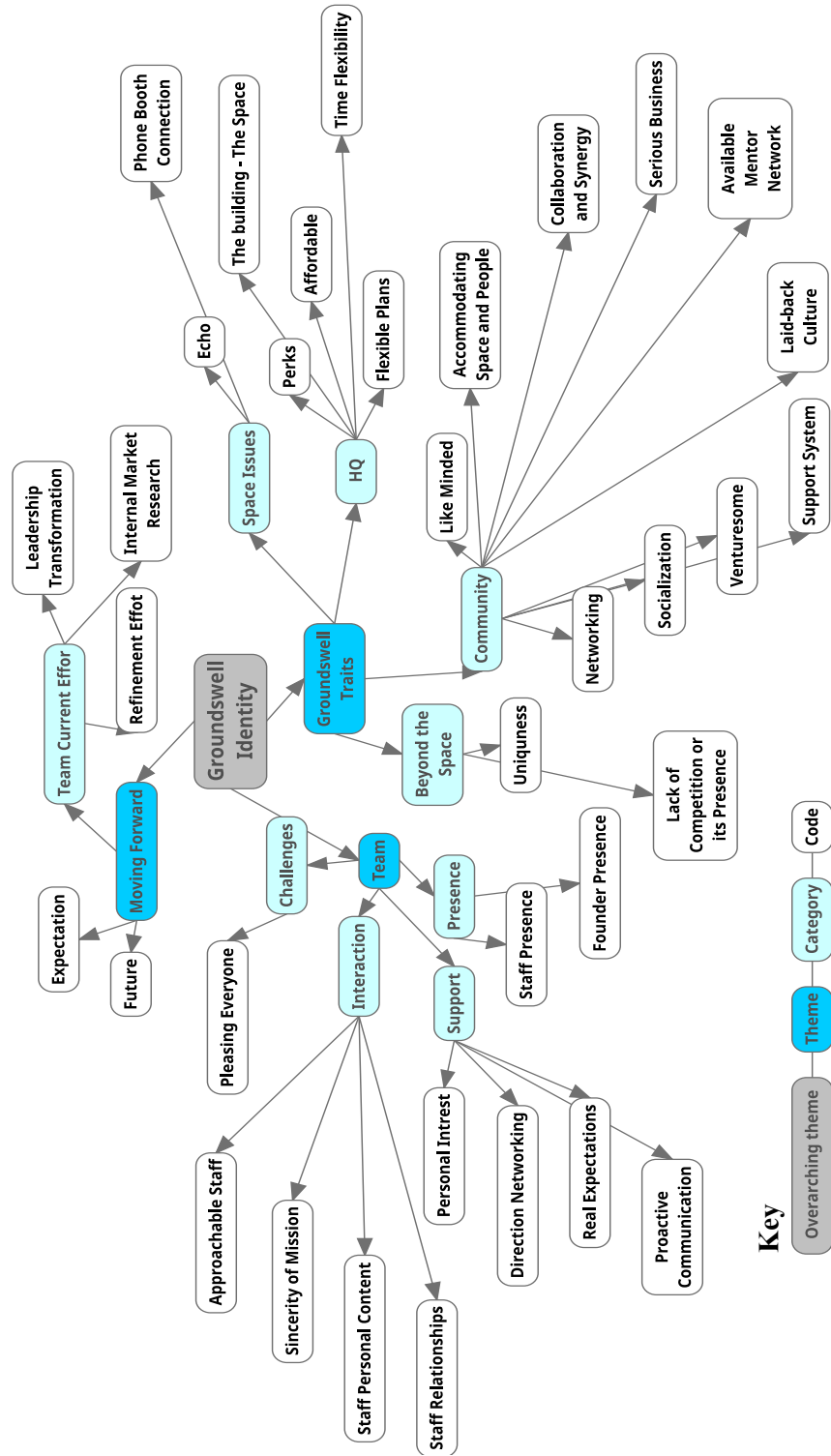
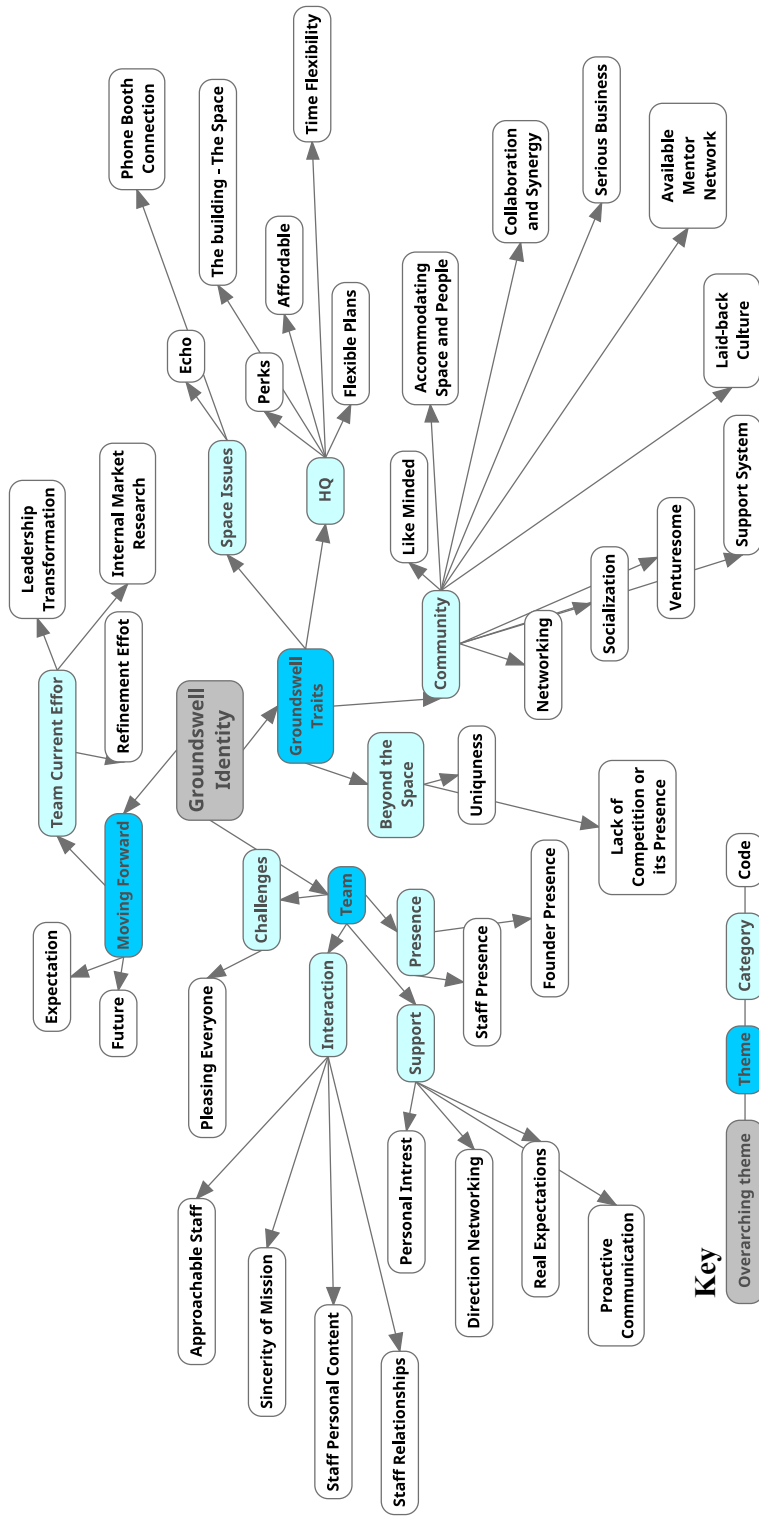


Figure 1.2 – Qualitative Interview code



Appendix D — Focus Group discussion guide

1. From looking at the website, what kind of business do you think this is?
 - a. Can you tell what services they provide?
2. What kind of audience do you think they attract or look for?
3. What benefits do you think this business provides to its audience?
4. From navigating the website/social media what would you say Groundswell's main goal or mission is as a business (purpose)
5. How did you feel about Groundswell's values, if you were able to grasp or find them in the materials?
 - a. What [business] values do you think Groundswell adopts and practices?
 - i. E.g. Coke: Quality, diversity leadership.
 - ii. Do you think they're very formal or laid back? Concerning culture.
6. What did you think of their name and slogan?
7. Can you tell me more about what you like/dislike (best) about their website?
 - a. While scrolling was there anything that caught your eye as good or bad? Well done or not well done?
8. Did you at any point not find a piece of information that you thought would be helpful?
 - a. If yes what information do you think is missing from this website
9. From your own social media following and web experience what communication trends are you noticing to be useful or not at all?
 - a. How do you feel Groundswell can improve?

10. Have you ever thought of starting your own business? How did Groundswell (their website and social media) influence that urge — encouraging or discouraging
11. Are there any other aspects of Groundswell social media or web communication that you would like to discuss that this discussion hasn't touched on?

Appendix E — Focus Group Codebook and Code Map

Label — Key information

Definition: Ability to easily find and understand key information about Groundswell and their operations.

Example: “It’s kind of like what we do here at FIT with the mentorship program and they’re trying to help entrepreneurs, you know, people start up their business give them more skills.”

Label — Repetitive information

Definition: Finding the exact same information on different channels

Example: “so you see the same information everyone of their websites.”

Label — Young

Definition: The impression that Groundswell is a young company through their, messaging and appearance.

Example: “I mean I’m getting it but it’s young. I’m— it’s kinda Google. My first thing was Google. So the big space and we all come in and I think it’s good for young people.”

Label — Well-known person

Definition: Impressed by information or mentions of community business figures associated with Groundswell.

Example: “I see Beth Gitlin is on the re and she was at the women’s center. So she’s involved in it they’re just taking it one step further.”

Label — Curious

Definition: Left wanting more information about Groundswell.

Example: “I’d be interested, or be curious to see if these mentors the legitimacy that they sort of try to put upfront in their website of these mentors is actually translated in in real life and in the interactions that I or someone else would have with those mentors.”

Label — Lack of information

Definition: Inability to find information that can aid or affect decision asking

Example: I go knocking at the door. I don't know what kind of information I need to be bringing with me and just being myself and my idea... Or if you're somebody new and you want to start up a business it's not really saying what shouldn't be bringing to the table for you to consider me, or it doesn't say it's a good time, you know what's the experience like.”

Label — Initial impression

Definition: First impression of Groundswell after viewing the website and social platforms.

Example: “Kind of like a young, hip SBA you know where you can go in there and be comfortable.”

Label — Community

Definition: Noticing the emphasis on community in Groundswell messaging.

Example: “...they use the word community a lot. So that's really attractive I feel like, you know it welcomes all people who just need resources or are interested startups.”

Label — Brand understanding

Definition: Ability or inability to identify main brand characteristics and personality

Example: “So it's flexible.” — Page 2

Label — Brand values

Definition: Ability or inability to identify main brand values.

Example: “it was a community that really stood out. At least when I when I first saw the website it definitely you know you get this big sense of community and you know sharing the space so.”

Label — Brand culture

Definition: Ability or inability to get feel of the culture from Groundswell communication.

Example: “I get that. I think it's such a cool idea but is it stress free, is it really you know if you say something you know are you free this exchange or ideas, I'm

not getting that...you don't know what a culture is until you're in the culture so you can try to drive it. But are they managing that?"

Label — Values

Definition: Found information about Groundswell's values

Example: "Give first I think was one of their values, and I was kind of interested in that one"

Label — Brand Identity

Definition: Ability or inability to identify the brand identity, slogan.

Example: "More than just a coworking space is that the slogan?"

Label — Design, look and feel

Definition: Comments on design and look of the website and communication channels.

Example: "But everything has a very kind of clean and modern look..."

Label — Leave you wanting more

Definition: The impression that Groundswell leaves some information out on purpose as a strategy to get people to visit.

Example: "So what it seems to me is that they want you to be attracted to what it is they do whether or not you fully understand or not. And then you come in and then get a feel for their space and then hopefully keep coming back and then you can find us. I think they're kind of encouraging a hands-on approach to understanding what they do."

Label — Welcoming

Definition: Messaging that conveys a welcoming environment.

Example: "they sort of advertise themselves as a really welcome alternative to go into a coffee shop or some other place to do work."

Label — Advertising of perks

Definition: Communicating membership perks clearly.

Example: "So you know mentioning the free coffee and the fact that they have beer, and that they're close to downtown."

Label — Event confusion

Definition: Having trouble or misunderstanding event name, description or information

Example: "I thought that was a bizarre name. No offense. Eight thirty-nine o'clock in the morning Brewing & Brainstorming, and you know I I think of brew I think of bear...I do not associate that with coffee and I just had to take a look at that and I haven't looked into details, you know to figure that out. I just don't think that was a good."

Label — Event promotion

Definition: Reflections on effectiveness of event promotion

Example: "They did a good job of promoting those events on social media, especially on Facebook."

Label — Perceived audience

Definition: The perception of Groundswell's target

Example: "Young entrepreneurs, I don't think this one is appealing necessarily you know to me, but that's because I have you know the crunches of my generation which is the SBA, the Small Business Association. You know where—it's very clear, as a matter of fact you could go from page, to page, to page, to page of boring facts that you need to be able to provide...It's just that for my age I have to get rid of the old stuff and say, "You know what this is a great new idea."

Label — Transparency

Definition: The perceived clarity and honesty of Groundswell and their messaging.

Example: "I like more transparency. You know, a lot for 401Ks will actually post their year end, to show you, "this is what we're putting," you know and that gives you a sense of trust. You know that you're not being snookered. I'm not saying you know these aren't good programs, but I like transparency."

Label — Stuck out

Definition: The words, information or ideas that stuck out and were noticed by the group.

Example: "One of the words that I noticed they use is the word idea which is just a really strong design word. I could definitely imagine or see this space being a

space used for a lot of things like wireframing and prototyping, you know for the web-designer or app world.”

Label — Lack of reassurance

Definition: Lack of clear communication in areas where it may be perceived as questionable or dishonest.

Example: “You come in with an idea you're raw, you're dumb, you don't know a lot, what's to prevent that from taking your idea?...But no I don't see anything protecting—you know if you have a great idea, you go in there. They're skilled—Okay I know one of the guys that's the founder of this and he's a serial entrepreneur. Yeah. And I'm not saying that they're built like that. No way.”

Label — Perceived mission

Definition: The understanding of Groundswell’s mission from viewing the website or communication platforms.

Example: “Centralize resources and opportunities for I feel like other like-minded people. Kinda brings that Silicon Valley atmosphere to a very central part of Brevard County,”

Label — Perceived services

Definition: The understanding of Groundswell’s range of serviced by viewing the website or communication platforms

Example: “One of the things I noticed is that when they talk about mentorship they also kind of quote unquote sell it as a consulting business, to a certain extent. Not in the like industrial or financial consulting sense...but more as a way of presenting a network of mentors.”

Label — Missed information

Definition: Information that is not easily found or clearly displayed but present of the website and or social media pages.

Example: “I struggled to find information about pricing, I did not get there. And I don't know if it's purposely buried or if I wasn't looking hard enough...No yeah, I sort of given up on it.”

Label — Brand comparison

Definition: Comparison of Groundswell with other well know companies, local or global.

Example: "I'm— it's kinda Google. My first thing was Google. So the big space and we all come in and I think it's good for young people."

Label — Second take

Definition: The need for more than a skim to find some information or messages.

Example: "I don't know why I didn't pick it up the first time we were going through it but I went to their blogs and I don't know if you even saw that [talking to Yasmine] they're actually give a series...Yeah I didn't see that either. So you know I was nosing around a little extra hard."

Label — Proof

Definition: Need for proof to legitimize Groundswell

Example: "I definitely to see what other companies that they've worked with and see what they've been able to accomplish with the help of Groundswell. And see what kind of resources that they used and what they sort of took and learned and were able to sort of make their own from from the resources that Groundswell provided."

Label — Event variety

Definition: Opinion of event variety.

Example: "I think overall the events seem like they presented— They targeted a variety of audiences people that are already entrepreneurs and people that want to become entrepreneurs. But as I mentioned before I think they don't necessarily target different fields enough though"

Label — Clear focus

Definition: Being able to clearly identify Groundswell's goals from viewing the website.

Example: "I mean it's on their front page they say high-tech, they talk about themselves as a high-tech incubator."

Label — Jargon

Definition: Specialized language that some people may not understand due to different factors, field, age, background

Example: “no explain to me, what's a digital nomad?”

Label — Name appreciation

Definition: Having a liking for the brand name, due to personal preference or association or essence.

Example: “I like the term ground in the name of the company, because it makes me think of being grounded as an individual that's important. For for— it kinda goes-in with that idea of nurturing that I was talking about before nurturing ideas. I think that they maybe that's not part of why they chose the term Groundswell, but I don't know it makes me think of like, "if you've got an idea you got to hit the ground running," things like that.”

Label — Website usability

Definition: The ease of use of a website.

Example: “One thing I did notice with the events is when you click on some of the events to look— to look for more information, and this is this is really nitpicking because I have been working on a website recently myself...when you click on one of the events if you want to read more about it read more link is hidden by the RSVP button. And that is a usability problem in itself because you don't necessarily want to RSVP... It's little frustrations that I promise you can you know, and if they multiply themselves, can frustrate and can— can make the most experienced web-page and website users just walk away from the company really.”

Label — Website content

Definition: Liking of disliking the content, including copy and visuals, presented on the website.

Example: “I agree that the inspiration part and stuff about the building doesn't certainly belong in the coworking spot. The other thing too is I think that "the inspiration begins with more than three decades of graffiti." I mean...To me it's like how does three decades of graffiti have anything to do with entrepreneurship...But to me it's too disconnected with it and then it goes back to what you're saying it's really just that— you know, don't lie to yourself. It's really

just that this building was a cool building and it was a space that was available to be reused that you did something even cooler with it.”

Label — Vague Communication

Definition: unclear messaging on website or social media channels

Example: “For other programs, which again is a vague term, and they go into it and talk about Explore Program and all that. But yeah if you go through the ‘Join our Community’ tab and click on each link there it’s not exactly clear what the offer is what the offers are.”

Label — Reviews

Definition: Group’s impression about online Groundswell reviews.

Example: “The Facebook review seems too perfect...Anything with a perfect score I’m just like...”

Label — Good content

Definition: positively perceived social media content

Example: “ I definitely like the presence of the company has an Instagram. I feel like it’s a little bit more relaxed and I feel like it definitely shows more of the day-to-day things that go on in the office there. and I don’t know I really like the presence that they have on Instagram.”

Label — Engagement

Definition: the group’s view of Groundswell’s engagement on social media

Example: “I definitely agree that the you know just kind of regurgitation of articles that are out there is not something that always sort of drives me to click on any anything, or even drives me closer to to the company.”

Label — Staff influence

Definition: Having Groundswell staff be active and share or add to Groundswell’s social media effort.

Example: “Make it personal, whoever it is. If the ambassador or you know one of the founders puts himself out there and says, “hey you know I read this and this is what I found.” And I the idea of engaging I don’t know if that really happens but you know...”

Label — Brand personality

Definition: The voice and tone of the company to its followers, the “human face” behind the brand.

Example: “they're just restating whatever the article is that they're sharing, you know. It's not like, "oh this is what we thought of the article," or you know things like that. There's one here about whether or not you should walk out of a meeting. I feel like I'd really like to see what they say about this, you know, 'Oh totally walk out of a meeting,' you know 'if it's not important you know whatever,' ...I would love to see what they think about this.”

Label — Appeal

Definition: The most interesting or appealing thing group participants took from viewing Groundswell communication.

Example: “I'm definitely looking forward to like meeting up with— probably doing some of the events and just networking with some people, that's the biggest appeal to me. [Talking to other participant] and you mentioned Carol Craig and there's a lot of high profile people that are on the mentor list...it's impressive but then again how much interaction do you get with these people? I don't know.”

Label — Collaboration

Definition: Anticipated collaboration of the Groundswell community

Example: “For me it's the space the appeal of really getting out of my head. I've been in those situations where either I'm designing something for my job or I'm thinking of an idea of a business, or for a website or for whatever it is I might be working on sometimes I feel like yeah you need you need to kind of get out of your own head and get another perspective, fresh perspective on it.”

Label — Tech focus effect

Definition: How Groundswell’s tech focus affects the audience that is not tech focused.

Example: “Just because like I feel like it's reaching more towards, like what you said like the tech side, and if I were to open a business I like— I could care less about that stuff. I would personally open like a baking business and like I said I feel like I wouldn't wanna go here.”

Label — Good communication

Definition: ability of Groundswell to highlight useful information

Example: “I thought they did a good job, saying that its free.”

Label — Suggested opportunities

Definition: The group’s ideas for potential Groundswell implementation

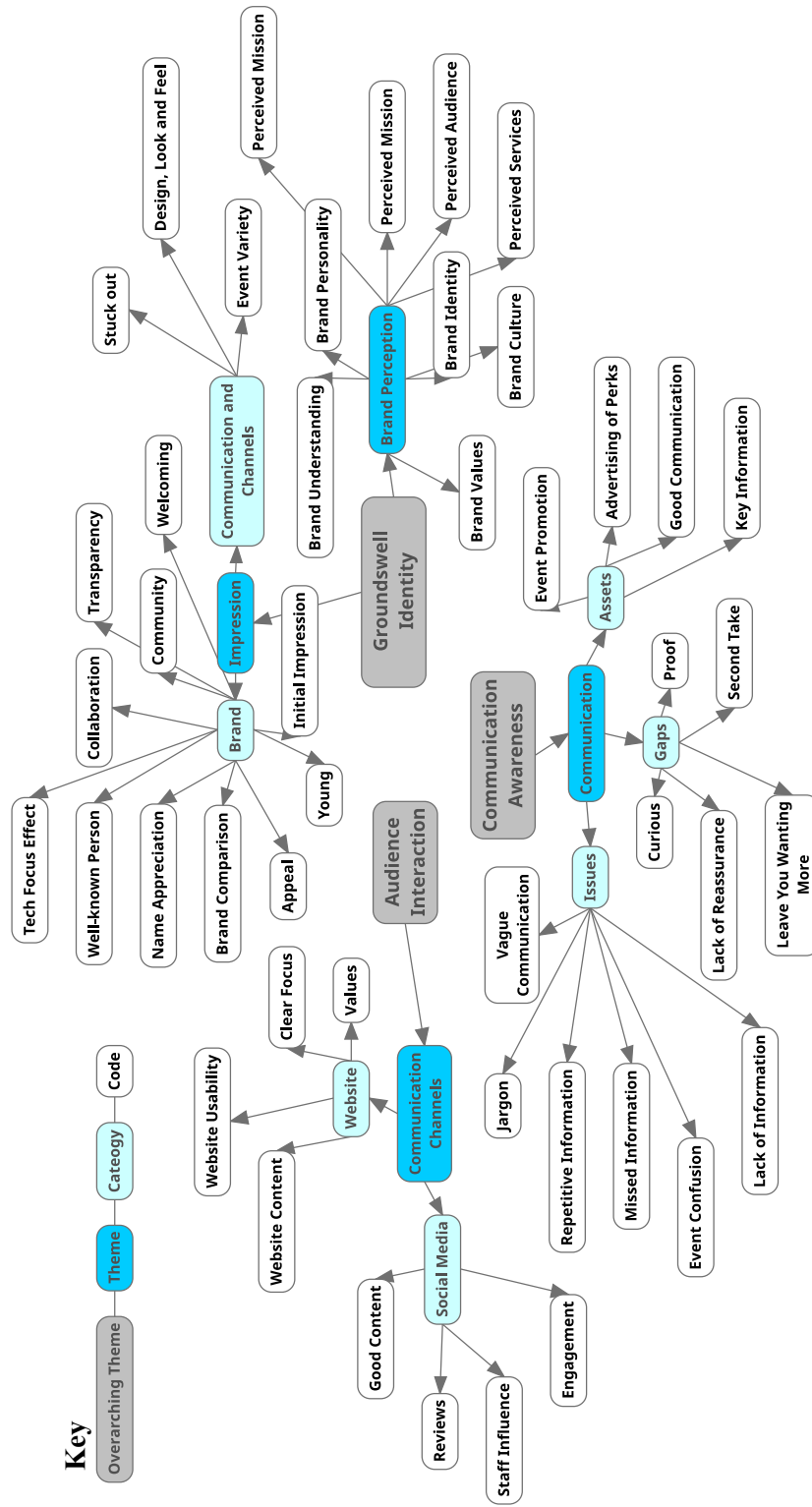
Ideas

Example: “Yeah you could definitely have a like a company profile, sort of series, where you know you have you know Company X and they explain, ‘OK. You know we had trouble with ABC and we came to Groundswell and we came up with a solution you know one two three...’”

Social media

Example: “I would definitely like to see more of the personal side of the business on Twitter and Facebook.”

Figure 2 – Focus Group code map



Appendix F — Social Media Analytic totals

Table 3 – Facebook Tables

Likes

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	5	0	0	0
Image with Details post	18	0	16	5.5
Link with Details post	182	0	19	1.68
Event Link	38	0	3	1.92
Feature Video	1	0	10	10

Comments

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	5	0	0	0
Image with Details post	18	0	4	2.5
Link with Details post	182	0	3	2.5
Event Link	38	0	2	2
Feature Video	1	0	0	0

Shares

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	5	0	0	0
Image with Details post	18	0	5	2.2
Link with Details post	182	0	5	1.75
Event Link	38	0	4	1.75
Feature Video	1	0	0	0

Impressions

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	5	0	99	69.25
Image with Details post	18	94	754	286.53
Link with Details post	182	20	830	119.44
Event Link	38	39	565	106.14
Feature Video	1	0	0	140

Table 3 – Twitter Tables

Favor - Like

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	19	0	8	3.25
Link with Details post	214	0	4	1.45
Event Link	41	0	4	1.74
Feature Video	4	0	0	0

Reply - Comment

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	19	0	1	1
Link with Details post	214	0	1	1
Event Link	41	0	1	1
Feature Video	4	0	0	0

Retweet - Share

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	19	0	2	1.5
Link with Details post	214	0	3	1.29
Event Link	41	0	3	1.47
Feature Video	4	0	1	1

Impressions

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	19	143	843	345.89
Link with Details post	214	70	817	203.6
Event Link	41	67	923	268.93
Feature Video	4	126	344	196

Table 5 - LinkedIn Tables

Likes

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	1	0	6	6
Link with Details post	75	0	5	1.57
Event Link	20	0	4	1.75
Feature Video	0	0	0	0

Comments

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	1	0	0	0
Link with Details post	75	0	1	1
Event Link	20	0	1	1
Feature Video	0	0	0	0

Shares

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	1	0	0	0
Link with Details post	75	0	0	0
Event Link	20	0	0	0
Feature Video	0	0	0	0

Impressions

Particulars	N	Min	Max	Mean
Only Image Post	0	0	0	0
Image with Details post	1	172	172	172
Link with Details post	75	15	186	51.14
Event Link	20	9		65.16
Feature Video	0	0	0	0

