



Marketing & Research

Project report

Milieu-Specific Marketing Strategy for VIAN TIS AG

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flow consulting gmbh advised VIAN TIS AG on the development of the marketing strategy and accompanied both the linguistic and graphic implementation (corporate design, image brochure, flyers, web presentation) in collaboration with the Hurtig-Design Agency (www.hurtig-design.de) and the SCHRÖTER Advertising Agency GmbH (www.schroeter-werbung.de). VIAN TIS AG gave flow consulting gmbh their consent to the publication of this project.

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Milieu-Specific Marketing Strategy for VIANTIS AG

The Initial Situation: To Reach New Target Groups Without Losing The Regular Customers

VIANTIS AG is a newly established company of Sparda-Bank West eG and offers the whole range of services of the real estate business: real estate assessment, project development and project management,¹ also by collaborating with other business partners.

Before having established this new company, Sparda-Bank West managed the real estate business on their own. It became, however, obvious that the goals set could not be achieved. The new establishment of an independent company promised a faster and more flexible way of acting. Moreover, it will be possible to benefit from a wide range of new opportunities:

- New target groups can be reached by means of an independent market approach, i.e., target groups which can hardly be reached by Sparda-Bank West as a cooperative bank with a specific image.
- Other banks would have problems when asking for the services of Sparda-Bank West, because, thus, the attention of the final customer is directly drawn to a competitor. As VIANTIS AG, this disadvantage becomes irrelevant and therefore, new target groups, i.e. small banks without their own real estate business, can now be reached.

The goal to reach new target groups, however, must not make unsure or „deter“ the regular customers with mainly simple backgrounds. To manage this balancing act was the special challenge for the development and implementation of the marketing strategy.

The Solution: A Milieu-orientated Marketing

The marketing strategy, on which the corporate design and all other communication media have been based, was determined during a workshop with the members of the board of directors of VIANTIS AG.

We used the Sigma Milieus for the implementation.² These milieus were analysed and discussed considering the background of the regular customers and on account of the specific expectations of all target groups concerning the subject of “building a house and living in it”. One aspect became soon very evident: It is not recommended to simultaneously approach all target groups with the new VIANTIS AG. It is indispensable to develop a marketing concept with appropriate target groups able to manage the balancing act

¹ See www.viantis-ag.de

² See www.sigma-online.com

between „old“ and „new“ milieus. Thus, we excluded the milieus with the widest gap between them, i.e. the established and hedonistic milieu, for example. Moreover, the refined luxury segment should be neglected as well concerning the acquisition and project development of VIANTIS AG. In order to deal with this segment, a specific approach or presentation would be necessary which would hardly be compatible with the expectations with the “milieu of traditional workers”.

The implementation also intends to achieve a clear and positive difference to the competitors. The competitors mainly describe the technical aspect of the product “Living”. VIANTIS, however, intends to point out the emotional aspect of the product „Living“ and will therefore directly reach the emotional moral concepts of the target milieus.

The following messages are to be fulfilled by the brand presentation:

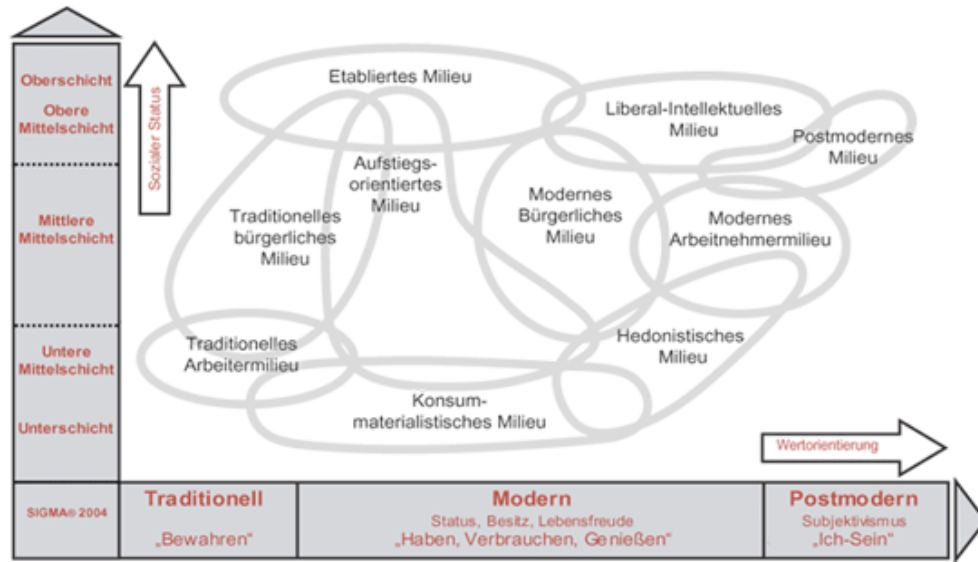
1. VIANTIS will offer individual solutions with personal advice to meet the residential requirements of the customer.
2. VIANTIS will offer fair and affordable services.
3. VIANTIS will offer comfortable and simple solutions (from one source).

Six Milieus for the Target Group Marketing of VIANTIS

Jörg Ueltzhöffer (partner of the Sigma Institute) carried out a first research concerning the milieu concept at the end of the 1970's.³ In the 1980's and 1990's, the milieu concept revolutionised the classic solution of the target group marketing. Today, it is principally used in the world of media (development, distinction and marketing of magazines) and in the car industry (development, distinction and marketing of car types). The classic marketing segmentation of target groups according to individual categories, i.e. demographic information (income, sex, age, etc.) has been changed to an integral way of looking at the consumer. The milieu solution tries to capture the everyday worlds of the consumers from their own points of view and ways of living. The milieu matrix, which has become very popular in the meantime, connects the criterion of the social class regarding the income with fundamental attitudes and values.

³ See Ueltzhöffer, Flaig, Lebensweltanalyse: Explorationen zum Alltagsbewußtsein und Alltagshandeln (Life World Analysis: Exploring the Everyday Consciousness and Acting), Heidelberg, Munich, 1980

The Sigma Milieus in Germany⁴



For the implementation of VIANTIS' marketing solution, the following six milieus were chosen:

- The milieu of the modern employee
- The modern middle class milieu
- The milieu of social and professional advancement
- The liberal-intellectual milieu
- The post-modern milieu
- The traditional middle class milieu

⁴ http://www.sigma-online.com/de/SIGMA_Milieus/SIGMA_Milieus_in_Germany/ (Access on 03/09/2009), copyright: SIGMA, Gesellschaft für internationale Marktforschung und Beratung mbH

Translation:

Etabliertes Milieu	Established Milieu
Aufstiegsorientiertes Milieu	Milieu Of Social and Professional Advancement
Traditionelles bürgerliches Milieu	Traditional Middle Class Milieu
Traditionelles Arbeitermilieu	Traditional Working Class Milieu
Konsum-materialistisches Milieu	Consumer-Materialist Milieu
Modernes bürgerliches Milieu	Modern Middle Class Milieu
Hedonistisches Milieu	Hedonistic Milieu
Modernes Arbeitnehmermilieu	Milieu Of The Modern Employee
Postmodernes Milieu	Post-modern Milieu
Liberal-intellektuelles Milieu	Liberal-Intellectual Milieu

In order to manage the balancing act to reach all milieus at the same time by means of an image brochure, we made a clear distinction between the treatment of photos and texts. The necessary distinction of the milieus is ensured by means of the photos (the world of images). The milieus are linked to a uniform message by a uniform, non-milieu-specific text making the „VIANTIS Language“ clear which is intended to reach all milieus (with the help of the photos) in the same way.

The Photos for the Milieu Distinction

The photos are the central element of distinction and offer the emotional basic access to the selected milieus. The people living in the house of their dreams are to be shown. In addition, there are photos with decorations telling us something about the people living there. Furthermore, a regional reference is made to the towns and cities where VIANTIS is active.

Then, a testimonial quotation indicating the central value of the respective milieu is set. The following examples refer to two milieus.

Example 1: The liberal-intellectual milieu.

The liberal-intellectual milieu with the example of Francine

A high emphasis is laid on self-fulfilment and self-identity both in the professional and in the private life. Superficial and trivial values are rejected, however, the authentic, noble, and select lifestyle on a high level is held in high esteem. The new home is both suitable for living and for working. The furniture chosen by Francine are design classics and ecologically correct indicating a responsible dealing with the environment and emphasising the desire for social justice.

„I love fanlights and rooms bathed in sunlight.“

The Implementation by Photos



Example 2: The modern middle class milieu

The modern middle class milieu with the example of Joan L.

Harmony-orientated milieu, the striving for a steady, pleasant and sheltered life without any risks or extremes is of utmost importance. Social relations are equally important. This down-to-earth and home-loving and nevertheless modern milieu forms the more traditional wing of the modern mainstream. The main subject is "Family and Kids" – That is what life is all about. Both the material and emotional well-being is essential.

„A good neighbourhood is very important to me.“

The Implementation by Photos



Logo and Slogan

The logo is intended to create an integrated whole of the target milieus. The central message of VIANTIS – as an allied company of Sparda-Bank West – appealing to all six target milieus is implemented by a clear symbol:

- The V of VIANTIS stands for Vita = Life
- It is symbolised by two petals
- These petals are index-linked
- The blossom stands for life, the symbol also looks like a flag
- Living with nature is symbolised
- The future becomes an issue

The slogan should reflect the attitude and lifestyle of the milieus and therefore represent the VIANTIS' message. In several creative meetings, the following slogan had been developed: *Leben Raum Geben - To Make More Room For Life.*

Illustration: Logo and Slogan of VIANTIS AG⁵



Text

Completely independent from the milieu of the individual target groups (which do not really exactly correspond to a marketing segmentation), especially a new provider like VIANTIS AG has to be of particular credibility, because real estates of all kinds are always connected with high investments and therefore are a matter of trust for each target group. Thus, the style of the image brochure should be respectable and serious on the one hand but on the other hand, also human and understanding, however, without any ingratiation.

Therefore, the contents have to consist of a paramount argumentation and must, above all, take a clear stand.

⁵ Translation: Leben mehr Raum geben – To Make More Room For Life

Two Text Excerpts of the Image Brochure**MAN TO MAN**

As an allied company of Sparda-Bank West eG, we feel obliged to the people and to the community. Therefore, our customers are our partners and fellow human beings with the right to individually create their residential surroundings for their own personal development. To ensure this in the best possible way, we accept the challenge to fulfil our customer's demands. A positive attitude when dealing with each other is of essential importance to us.

A MATTER OF TRUST

VIANTIS is a reliable partner. It is especially important to us to ensure friendly and fair dealings with our customers and to communicate at eye level. We respect the individuality and personality of our partners. In addition, we are in the position to grant an indispensable aspect of the real estate business: We are absolutely down-to-earth. We are confident that you will confide in us.

Result

The marketing strategy was determined with the board of directors of VIANTIS AG during a start workshop. The implementation of a corporate design by a graphic and linguistic principal message for the web presentation and an image brochure was developed during several smaller work sessions. All this has been used since the market introduction of VIANTIS in early 2009 to become a flexible and powerful enterprise making use of a wide range of opportunities. The first feedback from the board of directors of Sparda-Bank West eG, from the partners of the real estate business and from the financial economy was very positive, and the first test runs with consumers revealed a highly positive feedback as well.

In contrast to the general scepticism of the consumers regarding the real estate business, VIANTIS will present a clearly positive message creating confidence and trust by means of this innovative and milieu-orientated marketing concept; and this concept is not only about a text on paper or on screen, but all people participating are really living it as a real attitude and value, because the development of the marketing strategy did not only influence the communication with the customers, but the principal message also had a profound impact on the whole enterprise of VIANTIS and is considered as an obligation concerning the business relations with partners and customers. Therefore, we will now repeat the three principal messages. The future will show how successful VIANTIS will be when translating them into practice.

That is how the real estate business is perceived	This is the position of VIANTIS
Everything is standardised (i.e. the house shapes) and then the customer will get talked into buying that.	VIANTIS will offer individual solutions with personal advice and assistance to meet the residential requirements of the customer.
The prices and provisions are too high as well as the hidden costs.	VIANTIS' services are fair and affordable.
You have to talk to a lot of different people to make everything clear for the building of a house or for the purchase of a real estate.	VIANTIS will offer comfortable and simple solutions (advice, finding, building, financing from one source)

Reference

„We are right with our marketing strategy: A clear distinction can be made between us and our competitors, our message matches our way of acting and we can reach new target groups with an emotional and precise presentation. flow consulting gmbh advised us on the development of this strategy. The flow-consultants gave us the necessary new impulses, always acted in a quick and flexible way on the highest professional level. That is what we expect of a good partnership.“

Joachim Sedlacek, spokesman of the board of directors of VIANTIS AG
www.viantis-ag.de

Appendix

On the following pages, you can find the image brochure of VIANTIS AG as a pdf-file, published in February 2008.

For more photos and worlds of images see: www.viantis-ag.de

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