DEVELOPMENT OF A SHOE BRAND AND DESIGN OF A SHOE

THESIS
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wave
FOOTWEAR

ABSTRACT

In my thesis I describe and present visually a brand development project. The task was to create a brand identity for a new Canadian athleisure shoe company, and to design a shoe concept, that fits the brand identity and can be manufactured by using a special knit technology.

Athleisure trend has been a rising trend and reaches to the shoe industry, too. Still, there occurs a market gap in the industry. A shoe, that is flexible, comfortable and lightweight like a sneaker, but also waterproof and windproof so that it can be used in any weather and environment. The client, Andy Wang, invented a new water and windproof technology for sneaker manufacturing, and had a vision of putting up a shoe business. My role in the project and the subject of my thesis was to put this vision into practice.

The outcome of the thesis is a finalized brand identity that is ready to be launched, as soon as the first shoes are prototyped and the manufacturing got started.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyössäni selostan sanoin ja visuaalisesti brändin rakennusprosessin. Aiheenani oli rakentaa brändi-identiteetti Kanadalaiselle "athleisure" kenkiä tarjoavalle startup-yritykselle. Tehtävään kuului myös itse kengän suunnittelusiten, että se istuu luomaani brändi-identiteettiin. Kenkä valmistetaan käyttäen erityistekniikalla valmistettua neulosta, mikä tuli myös huomioida kengän suunnittelussa.

"Athleisure" trendi on ollut nousussa ja ulottuu kenkämarkkinoille asti. Kuitenkaan markkinoilla ei ole vielä nähty kenkää, joka on lenkkitossun tavoin joustava, kevyt ja istuva, mutta samaan aikaan veden- ja tuulenpitävä. Projektin asiakas, Andy Wang, kehitti perheineen uuden, veden- sekä tuulenpitävän valmistustekniikan, jonka hän halusi viedä markkinoille oman kenkäbrändinään. Minun roolini projektissa oli auttaa tekemään tästä visiosta totta, muotoilun keinoin.

Projektin lopputulema on brändi-identitteeti, joka on viimeistelty ja valmis käytettäväksi, heti kun kenkien valmistus on aloitettu prototyyppi- sekä testausvaiheen jälkeen.

CONTENTS

1
BACKGROUND

This chapter is a scope into the backgrounds of the project. I will be explaining the project brief and the goal. I will also tell about my own role in the project and introduce the branding team and the client.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In my thesis I describe and analyze a brand development project. The task was to create a brand identity for a new Canadian athleisure shoe company, and to design a shoe concept, that fits the brand identity and can be manufactured by using a patented knit technology (chapter 3.4). Outcome is a polished brand that is ready be launched. The brand identity consists of multiple different elements, which I will be presenting in chapter 5.

I implemented a five-staged brand design process which follows similar pattern to other design processes but fits better to branding needs. The process starts with a research stage which in my case is more about gathering background data. It's followed by stage two, in which the collected data is being analysed, and in this stage I and the branding team determined a brand brief. After that, the brand identity was designed step by step in stage 3. The last element was the shoe itself. I found that it was more efficient to set the overall style, look and feel of the brand first by focusing on the brand identity elements, such as logo, color palette, voice and so on. After a consist brand identity was created and a style guide made, we were able to move to the product design stage, which in the branding process is a stage 4. In the same stage would include creation of all the touchpoints the company needs. In

our case, the shoe was priority number one because the manufacturing process takes time and needs a few prototyping rounds before the actual producing can begin. The other touchpoints, such as stationery, package, tags, signage and so on, will be designed later.

The project started in February 2017 and continued all the way to May 2017. In the very beginning, there was nothing else on the table but the shoe technology and the client's vision of having a shoe company. The whole brand was built from a scratch, from the name to the finished product.
In three and a half months, the brand identity was built and the first shoe concepts taken to the factory. The project was executed in Vancouver, Canada. The branding team gathered up in once-weekly meetings. In these meetings, we went through the findings and design work I had done during the week. I got feedback and comments from both the marketing team and the client, and if ever I had concerns or I got stuck we would think of the solutions together by brainstorming. In each meeting, we also set a goal for the next week.

■ ■ ■

I got involved in the project through the marketing company, Periphery Digital. I was picked for the project not only because they needed an industrial designer's help with the shoe design but also due to my background in competitive sports and interest towards healthy and active lifestyle. The years I've spent in a gym or running and walking outside have forced me to get familiar with different training equipment and sport brands, which I found useful along the process.

The thesis structure follows the five-staged brand design process. In the first chapter I will explain the project brief and the goal. In the second chapter I will first tell about the client, the whole branding team and my own role in the project, followed by a compact overview into what is branding and the design process I followed. Chapter 3 dives into the background investigation

I conducted, in order to begin the actual design work. From there starts chapter 4 which sums up the findings of the previous chapter and clarifies a strategy for the brand. After the brand strategy is done, the design work for the brand identity could begin. Chapter 5 is a walk through the process of designing the brand identity, with all its element. The final outcome and the next steps are included in the chapter 5 as well.

I will be showing a lot of visual material I have created during the process. My intent is that the visual material along with the overview of the project flow and the design decisions that I made on the project will give a clearer image of the journey and the outcome.

I found the project interesting mostly because of the challenges on the way. The client had a strong vision for the shoe and for the brand itself, which I needed to take into account in every decision I made, and I needed to have solid arguments for all my design decisions. In a case done for an actual client, it looks nice simply doesn't do as an argument.

1.2 BRIEF

Core brief in the project was to create a brand identity for a shoe business. The brand identity elements consisted of a logo, brand colors, typography, tone and style of the brand and a photography style. I would say that the shoe design was also a part of the branding work, since the brand was built for the shoe and the shoe was designed to fit in the brand.

Shortly after the project started, came out that the client needed some other elements too, such as an online store, package design and infographic pages and tags to implement the technology. As the timeline and schedule were already made, it wasn't possible to fit these aspects on the timeline of the thesis. They will be created later on in the future.

The outlines for the shoe design work was relatively strict and narrow. Main reason for this was the material and technology that already existed and, also the budget the client had. There was a certain vision the client had for the shoe to be like. The shoe was wanted to be a sock like sneaker which means that it has no shoe laces and it sits tightly on user's foot. I was allowed to play with different knit styles, patterns and colors to make the shoe unique looking and appealing.

At first I was limited to focus on only the upper of the shoe, the knitted part and not think about the sole of the shoe. The sole was supposed to be one of the soles the client's company manufactures and sells to other brands. After the shoe concepts were finished, the client decided to invest in custom designed soles after all.

1.3 GOAL

As an outcome of the branding process, I compiled a brand style guide with all the identity elements. The style guide shows how the brand should be represented across media. The most important thing when a brand is created is the company to use the elements in a consistent and appropriate way. This will strengthen the brand value and image and won't leave consumers confused.

Outcome for the shoe project was a shoe concept that could be taken to the factory and be manufactured. We ended up choosing not just one but two concepts. The factory needed 2D render pictures with all the relevant information such as color codes and knit patterns.

2

HOW

This chapter covers background information about the branding team, the design process and the subject.

2.1 TEAM

The core branding team consists of five people. Two of them are the owner and his co-worker from Periphery Digital, the marketing company. They are the marketing professionals in the project. Third and forth are the client and his business partner. The fifth person is me, the designer.

Beyond the core team, there are also more people influencing on the decisions made along the way. The client needs to negotiate with his business partners, when making decisions concerning the project.

Everyone in our team was sort of forced to jump outside of their comfort zone during the project. The client hadn't worked in a branding project before, so for him the whole process; how everything works, what has to be taken into account and of how many moving parts the brand itself actually consists of, was completely new. For the marketing team on the other hand, the branding process wasn't anything they haven't done before, but the unknown field for them was the footwear industry.

CLIENT AND STAKEHOLDERS
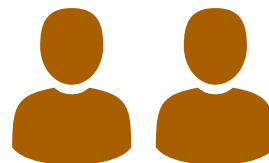
MARKETING

DESIGN

2.1.1 CLIENT

The client, Andy Wang, works in a shoe manufacturing field. He and his family own a shoe manufacturing company which manufactures and sells sneakers and shoe soles for well-known sneaker brands, such as Adidas and Nike. The client and his family recently came up with a new shoe material technology, which they patented. The client came up with an idea of having an own start up company along with his regular job.

2.1.2 MARKETING TEAM

The marketing company and the company that I worked for is called Periphery Digital. It is a marketing company based in Vancouver BC in Canada. They've specialized in real estate related projects, but every now and then they get to work in other type of projects, too. The company consists of marketing team of 4 people and 1 designer.

2.1.3 MY ROLE

My role in the project was to be in charge of the design decisions, and to create all the elements. For me, the whole branding process was new and exciting. I've got experience from two smaller branding projects before this particular one. The Wave branding project was the largest one I've been involved in. Also, this was the first time I worked on a footwear project.

2.2 DESIGN PROCESS
FOR BRANDING

During the branding work I followed five staged brand design process. It follows quite similar pattern to most of the other design processes, but this particular one works better in branding projects.

1
Conducting research

2
Clarifying strategy

3
Designing identity

4
Creating touchpoints

5
Managing assets

(Picture 1)

1
Conducting research

2
Clarifying strategy

The first stage is a research stage and the purpose is to gather relevant information to create a strong base for next stage, in which the brand startegy will be clarified. Besides knowing the target market and the competitors, what also have to be clear are the company's mission, vision, brand values, personality, strengths, weaknesses and its value proposition. (1)

I started my research, or in better words; background investigation, by interviewing the client about his vision and needs. This was followed by a market investigation and competitor analysis. I also analyzed company's strenghts and weaknesses in SWOT analysis and created a positioning graph to indicate where Wave would place in Canadian athletic footwear market.

In stage 2, the information that is gathered in stage 1 will be analyzed and used to create a brand brief. The brand brief considers attributes, competitive advantage, value proposition, key competitors, key stakeholders, key products and services, target market and vission and mission. (2)

This stage was implemented by simply sitting down with the team and coming up with a the brand brief together using the learnings from the research stage. The most important point is to make sure that there's a common understanding about the brand.

3
Designing identity

4
Creating touchpoints

5
Managing assets

When the resarch is done and the brand brief is clear, the work on the identity design can begin. This means creating the brand elements.

The elements me and my team considered relevant at this point were name, logo, brand colors, tone of voice, photography style, and of course, the shoe itself. I designed each element one at the time, and all of them required at least one revision round. When the elements were finalized, I compiled them into a brand style book. This helps the future employees and designers to keep the brand image coherent, use the elements properly and represent the brand in a certain manner.
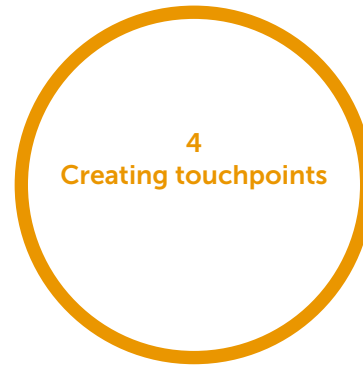
Stage 4 is executed when the brand identity is finalized. Touchpoints mean all the channels throuch which the brand can be seen, heard or experienced. Some examples of the touchpoints are advertisements, social media, websites, speeches, word of mouth, products, stationery, letterheads, vehicles and so on. (2)
In this project by the strict timelines, we decided to leave the stationery and advertisement design for later and focus on creating a layout for an online store and designing the actual product; the shoe.

The last stage simply means following the defined brand strategy and style guide consistently and keeping a tight grip of the values in order to work the company's way towards its goals. If changes in the strategy or identity need to be done, a new startegy or a style guide will be made to replace the old one. Although it's better not to alterate the brand and it's elements continuously as it confuses the consumer and brings down the reliability of the brand.

2.3 BRANDING

I would describe brand as the personality of a company or business.

Let's say that the company or the business is a person. The person has a body, a structure. He has a job, a product or service it delivers. He also has different capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, just like companies do. And so on. It's all about what the company or business is and what it does.

As then again the brand is the personality of the company or the business. A personality of this person. It's the way the person talks, the way others can see, feel and hear him. It's how he moves, the tone of his voice and the way he communicates and behaves. It's a combination of all the factors that makes this person unique. The brand is about how the company is experienced by others.

9 PRINCIPLES OF A GOOD BRAND

Coherence

Meaning · Durability

Vision · Differentation · Value

Authenticity · Commitment

Flexibility

(Picture 2)

*"A mental image in the minds of people.
That's it.
Not a logo, not a product –
simply **an idea.**
Their perception."* (3)
- Dan Ratner, Frog Book

*"A brand is the **relationship** between an organization and an audience."* (4)
- Jeremiah Gardner, Brandisty Blog

*"A brand is not what you say it is.
It's what **they** say it is."* (5)
- Marty Neuemeier, The Brand Gap

2.4 KEYWORDS

BRAND

Brand is the personality of a product, business or company. Brand is a promise about who you are and what do you offer that gets reinforced every time people come in contact with any aspect of you or your business.

BRANDING

The verb to brand means the process of discovering and communicating the image of the business. As a noun, it means the image that is intended to give in the market to the target audience.

BRAND IDENTITY

Everything that defines the brand in any way are attributes of the brand identity. It includes logo, business name, products and services, business cards and so on.

BRAND ELEMENTS

Elements that are used to differentiate, identify and represent the brand in the market. Logo, colors, packaging, business name are examples of brand elements.

BRAND IMAGE

How a brand is perceoved by target audience. The image of the brand that evokes in their minds when they see a product or a logo of the business. Brand image is the set of beliefs in customer's mind about what the brand is and what it stands for.

BRAND POSITION

The way the brand fits in with the range of other brands in the competitive industry, and how it relates to the others.

BRAND STYLEGUIDE

Rules for how to use the brand elements and represent the brand in a coherent and meaningfull way.

(6)

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3

INVESTIGATING BACKGROUNDS

My research section was more of an investigation of the backgrounds in order to start working on the design.

First I will be going over the history of atheltic shoes, and opening the term athleisure. I conducted history research to understand shoe industry a little better and to get an insight of where it all started and where the industry is heading. Next I will tell about Wave technology that will be used in shoes and needs to be reflected in the brand identity. This is followed up by market investigation, segmentation, analysis and target audience definition. In the end of the chapter I present Wave's main competitors, and the shoe benchmark I conducted.
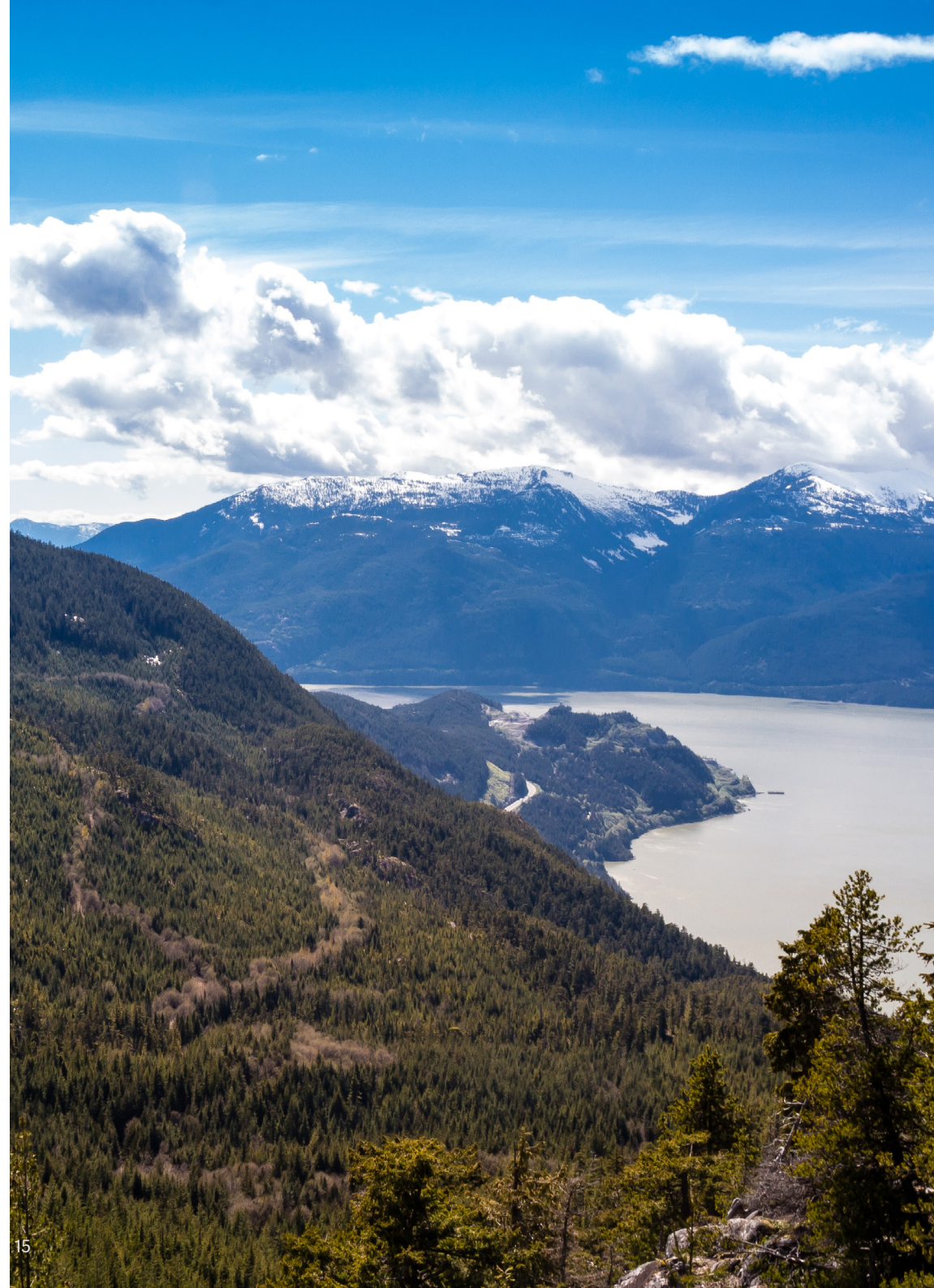
3.1 HISTORY OF ATHLETIC SHOE BRANDS

Rubber soled shoes were started to call sneakers because they didn't make a sound when the user walked in them, making it easy to sneak around.

1800 -1900

Sneaker's history reaches far back to the late 1800s and early1900s. The first sneaker like shoes were called plimsolls and they were the first shoes with rubber soles. They were manufactured by small rubber companies that produced bicycle tiers as their main business. Using rubber as a sole material made the shoes cheap to make and that's why at first only poor people wore them. These ancient sneakers weren't too comfortable as they didn't have left and right shoe. These shoes were used in everyday crafts such as gardening and walking to places.

20's

The shoe industry evolved and in 1890 the first actual sneaker was born by Goodyear who started manufacturing Keds, rubber soled shoes with canvas upper. Shortly after that Reebok started manufacturing running shoes. By the year 1924 several new companies Converse, New Balance and Adidas were born. Adidas shoes were handmade by the brothers Adi and Rudolph Dassler in their mother's

40's

washroom. After getting in to a conflict with his brother, Rudolph Dassler started his own company that we now know by name Puma, in 1948.

50's

During a couple of decades sneaker culture changed drastically and the shoes that previously were worn only by athletes were now used in every day life by normal people. In the 50's sneakers became popular among the youngsters. Sneakers were easy to purchase and relatively cheap, which made them perfect choice for students. Sneakers represented rebelism. If they weren't in fashion before, they certainly became fashionable after James Dean was photographed in Levi's jeans and white sneakers.

60's

The sneaker industry kept growing and in 1962 an Oregon based company called Blue Ribbon Sports, BRS was founded. Their specialty was in making low cost and high tech athletic shoes. Later, in 1968, BRS changed its name to Nike, which is the name of Greek God of Victory.

70's

In the 70's jogging became popular as a form of excercise. New Balance developed the first rippled shoe sole, which was great for outdoor activities. Nike followed by inventing a waffle sole, which they prototyped by pouring rubber onto a waffle iron.

80's

Revolution of the shoe industry didn't seem to end as 1976 the world's first women's sneaker was created. In the 80's bright colors were pop and it reached all the way to the shoe trends, too. Bold colors made their way on to the surfaces of the iconic shoes.

90's

From that time on the sneaker industry has been moving on and changing continuously. New concepts, new ideas and new purposes are brought to the market one after another. In the 90's Puma introduced the first laceless sneaker, which was originally designed for A1 pilots as a fireproof shoe. And another remarkably extraordinary invention was Nike's five toe shoes in 2000's.

2000's - now

Musicians started wearing sneakers around 2000's which had made them even more popular and fashionable among especially young folks. The iconic shoe models and the big companies behind them are still the leaders in the market. In addition to these giants, there are now loads and loads of new companies, small ones and big ones. The prices of sneakers vary from a few dollars to thousands of dollars per pair. Sneakers are made, or more specifically, they are marketed, for a specific use or purpose, unlike in the ancient times when there was one pair of the same foot shoe used for everything.

(7, 8)
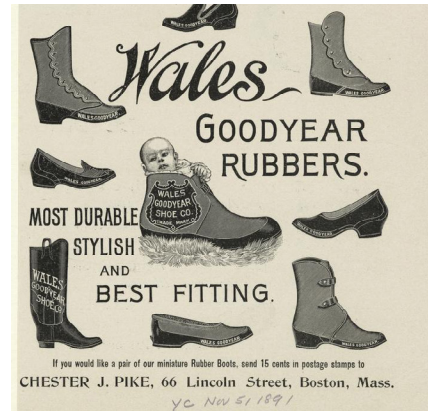
Goodyear shoe advertising from 1891 (Picture 3)

Branding of BRS a.k.a Nike (Picture 4)

First logo of Adidas (Picture 5)

First logo of Puma (Picture 6)

Keds advertising in 70's (Picture 7)

3.2 MARKET SEGMENTATION

These days shoes come in all shapes and forms. Athletic shoes can be bought from the near by supermarket for a few dollars and at the same time the designer sneakers or limited edition shoes can cost easily thousands of dollars. The market is worldwide and the competition is harsh. New brands and companies are born continuously, and thus it is extremely important for a new start up company to do the base work properly before jumping into the market. By base work I mean creating a strategy or a plan for the company and a well built brand to differate from the mass of brands.

Below is a market segmentation graph that shows the different categories of athletic footwear industry and indicates in which category Wave will be placed.

FOOTWEAR

NON-ATHLETIC   ATHLETIC

INDOOR TRAINING   HIKING   RUNNING   ATHLEISURE   COURT GAMES

wave
FOOTWEAR
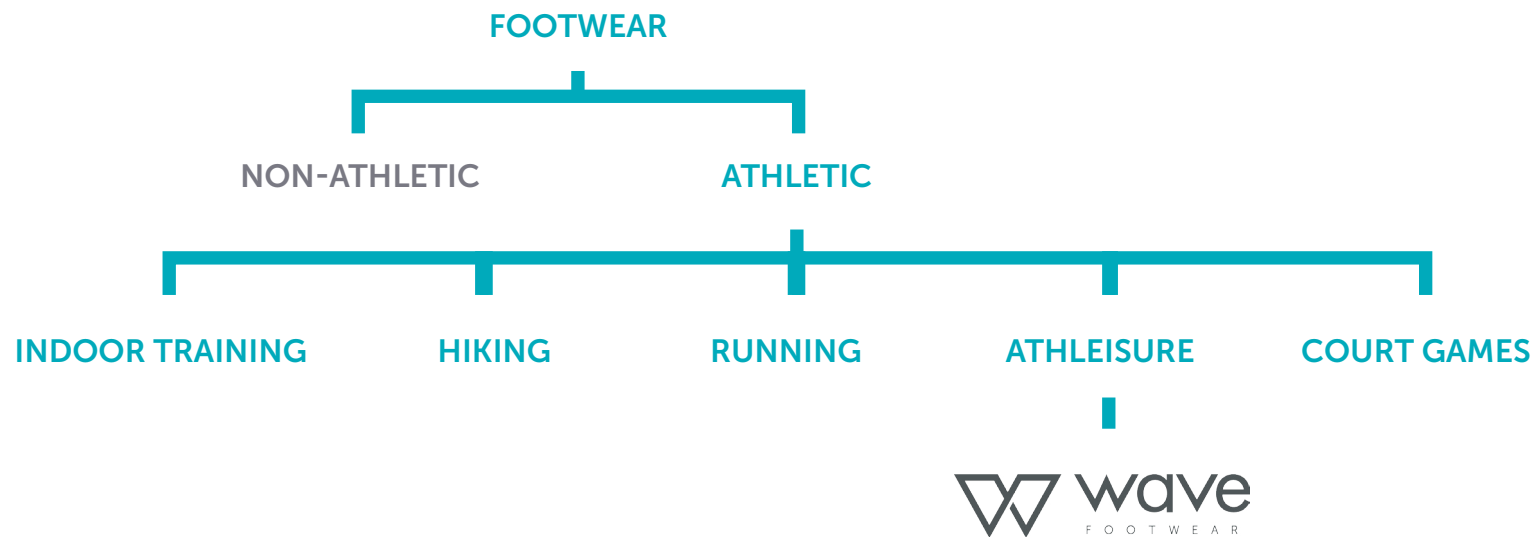
3.3 ATHLEISURE TREND

ATHLETIC+LEISURE = ATHLEISURE

Athletic clothing is often seen as inapropriate for work environment or simply just not stylish enough. Whereas business casual wouldn't particularly work well as gym clothing. Simply put, there was a gap in the market. The revolutionary millenials evoken a trend called athleisure, to fill this gap. Athleisure is an ongoing trend in clothing, apparell and footwear industry. It is a mix of business casual and athletic wear. It's comfortable and tech enough to be worn while exercising, but still casual and smart enough to be worn at work.

The demand for a category between business casual and athletic wear occurs due to the busy lifestyle of modern people. It's normal to rush to the gym after work and vice versa or head to meet friends straight after a yoga class. Busy schedules, active lifestyles and the crave for comfort creates a demand for a way of clothing that can be worn in every situation both by the looks and the functionality.

Athleisure reaches to the footwear industry, too. They are the shoes that are not specifically made for running or any other specific sport. They can be used in light exercising, as well as they can be worn in office. Athleisure shoes look sporty, yet still casual enough to fit for everyday use.

(9, 10)

(Picture 8)

(Picture 9)

(Picture 10)

(Picture 11)

(Picture 12)
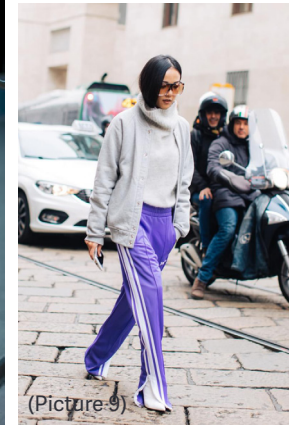
3.4 WAVE TECHNOLOGY

SOCK SNEAKER

The shoe won't be just a regular sneaker. The style of the shoe is called a sock sneaker. This means that the upper of the shoe is knitted like a sock and glued together with the shoe sole. The first shoe model comes without laces unlike the usual sneakers. Sock sneaker sits tightly on the user's foot and can be easily put on and taken off thanks to the elasticity of the knit. The shoe is also washing machine safe which makes it easy to clean.

KNIT

Knit as a material is very lightweight, breathable and elastic. The knit can be manufactured in almost any colors and color combinations. Besides playing with colors, one way to create contrast and patterns is to use different knitting techniques.

SOLE

The sole will be made of foamy plastic, which is also a light material. In the first prototype the sole will be a simple, flexible (cutted) one. Later on, the shoe will be made with a sole designed particularly for it.

WAVE ALL-WEATHER TECHNOLOGY

What makes the shoe waterproof and windproof is the patented knitting technology. The basic concept is that there is to layers of knit and one layer of a waterproof material in between the knits. The knit also dries quickly. The waterproof technology doesn't block the material from breathing, which makes it suitable for every weather, even for the hottest summer days. (11)

By the client's wish I won't go into in depht details on how the special knit is made. The technology hasn't been seen in the shoe market before. Although some of the big names in the footwear industry have bought a lisence for the patent, they still haven't had launched any products made with the technology.
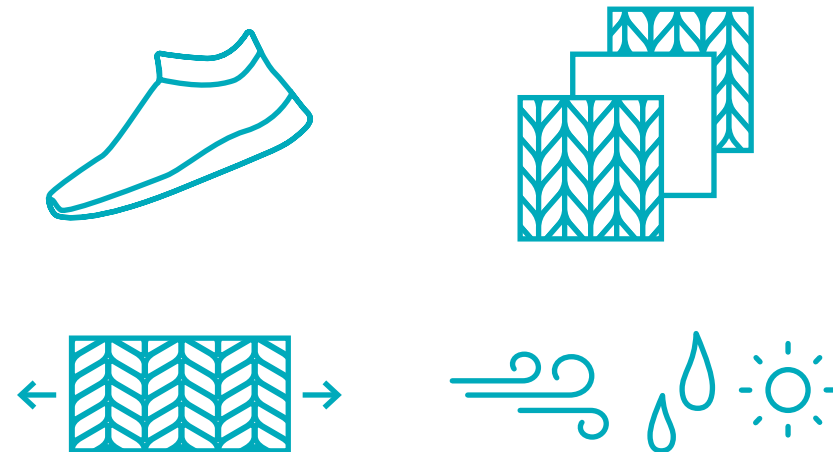
3.5 FOOTWEAR MARKET SITUATION

GLOBAL ATHLETIC FOOTWEAR MARKET SIZE (USD)

2015

$80 billion

By **2022**

$114.8 billion

(12)

NORTH AMERICAN FOOTWEAR MARKET SIZE (USD)

2014

$80.59 million

By **2021**

$89.71 million

(13)

95 million U.S. citizens bought athletic shoes during the year 2015.
(14)

MARKET LEADERS IN ATHLETIC FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY (2013)

Others **18%**

Nike **31%**

Skechers **5%**

K-Swiss **2%**

Converse **4%**

Asics **5%**

New Balance **6%**

Puma **7%**

Reebok **6%**

Adidas **16%**
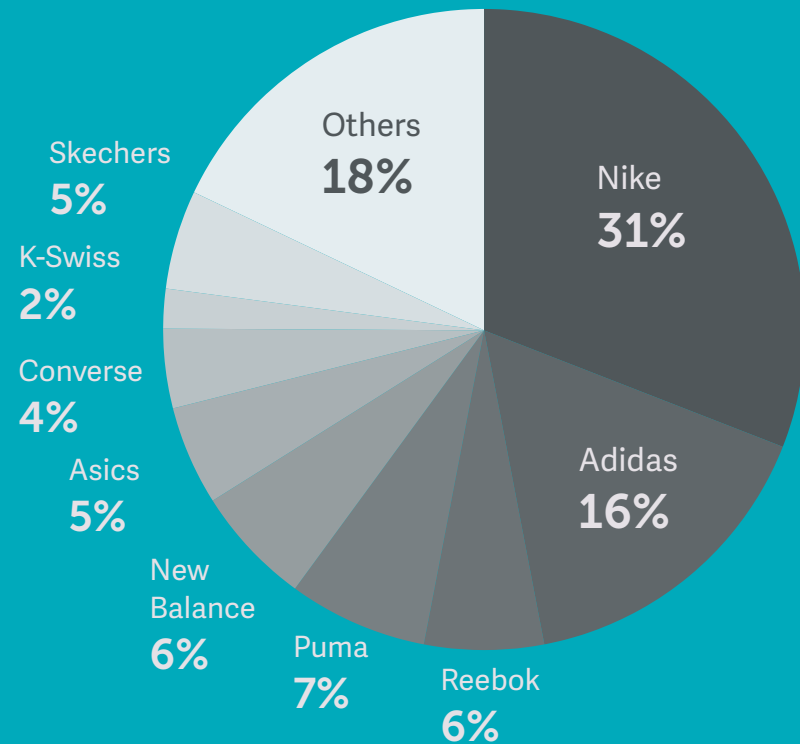
(Picture 13) Remade diagram of athletic footwear market share

3.6 DIFFERENTIATION
STRATEGY

The competition in shoe industry is cruel, and without competitive advantage of any kind it's basically impossible to success. The competitive advantage can be the price, in which case the quality usually comes down, as the manufacturing costs must be brought down first. The advantage can also be bringing something new to the market, or doing some things better, or differently than others.

Wave's competitive advantage is in the new technology that it uses, and also the price. Flexible sneaker that is waterproof and windproof is something that hasn't been seen in the industry yet, and Wave will be the first one to fill this market gap. I used blue ocean strategy to compare Wave's strategy to other athleisure shoes in the market. Orange indicates big global companies and grey one of Wave's competitors, a start up company Skye Footwear. Blue stands for Wave.

● TRADITIONAL WAY (MARKET LEADERS)   ● SKYE FOOTWEAR   ● WAVE FOOTWEAR

PRICE   STYLE   COLOR OPTIONS   PERFORMANCE   LIGHTNESS   FLEXIBILITY   WATERPROOF   WINDPROOF   WASHABLE

22

3.7 SWOT

STRENGHTS

First shoes made of the new material

Local brand

Affordable price

WEAKNESSES

Financial situation (start up)

Narrow range of products

Production in Asia

OPPORTUNITIES

Athleisure trend

More health conscious people

Social media as a marketing channel

THREATS

Big companies will be using the same material in the future

Changing trends

Growth in competition

3.8 TARGET AUDIENCE

The shoe will be launched in Canadian footwear market. It's possible that the company will broaden its market to other countries in the future, but at first the main focus is in local market. The people in Canada, especially in the area of British Columbia are seemingly active and appreciate the time spent outside. Jogging, walking, running and hiking are popular activities which is easily seen in a cityview. These statements are based on my own observations during the time I spent in Vancouver.

At this point, the shoe will be targeted to grown up men and women. Kids sizes might be added to selection later on. Canada is known for it's gorgeous nature and outdoor opportunities. We determined the target audience together with the marketing team and the client. The target audience is divided into two groups. Based on this target audience segmentation, I created three customer personas, which will be presented in chapter 4.2.

ADVENTUROUS CITY MILLENIALS

As athleisure is a trend created by the millenials, it was quite obvious that they would be in the target audience. Wave's water and windproof technology lets the user to move from one environment or weather smoothly to another, which is great for outdoorsy and active people. Usually adventurous city millenials live in urban environments and outside work they spend time in different type of activities outdoors or indoors. They buy shoes for the style and the function. Usually they are aware of the new trends.

COMFORT AND STYLE SEEKERS

Besides just the city millenials, Wave's target audience considers also people from all adulthood age groups, who are seeking for comfortable yet stylish shoe that they can use everyday in all occasions. An example of this group would be stay-home moms, who need a shoe to wear when playing outside with children and also when heading to meet friends, to do groceries or to a yoga class.

3.9 COMPETITORS

The main competitors of Wave are the local athleisure shoe brands. Later on when the technology will be used by big global companies, these companies will become main competitors as well. At first I wouldn't consider the market leading big names as main competitors because their position in the market is quite different from Wave's target position at this point.

In the next three pages I will list three of Wave's main competitors and their main brand elements.

GLOBAL SHOE COMPANIES WHICH WILL BE USING WAVE TECHNOLOGY

(Pictures 17 and 18)

LOCAL ATHLEISURE SHOE COMPANIES

(Picture 14)

(Picture 15)

(Picture 16)

OTHER GLOBAL COMPANIES

(Pictures 19, 20 and 21)

LOGO

SKYE
FOOTWEAR

BRAND COLORS

SKYE FOOTWEAR

Skye Footwear is a new start up company. It's born in Vancouver and launched on a kickstarter champaign. Their mission is to provide comfortable and good looking athleisure shoes. Their overall style is clean and simple. Their main brand color is pale red, which gives energetic and fresh feeling. Their logo is a logotype a.k.a text logo made with custom font. The typography they use in marketing consists simple sans serif fonts.

Skye shoes come in three different styles and each of them in 2 different colors. They're made of soft and elastic fabric and the combining asset is the strap feature that goes over the shoe upper. The straps play the role of shoe laces. Brand color is used in insole and other details such as tags and loops.

"A beautiful everyday shoe that pairs with every outfit (the mark of a true favorite), built for real comfort and long, long wearing." - Skye Footwear (15)

WEB
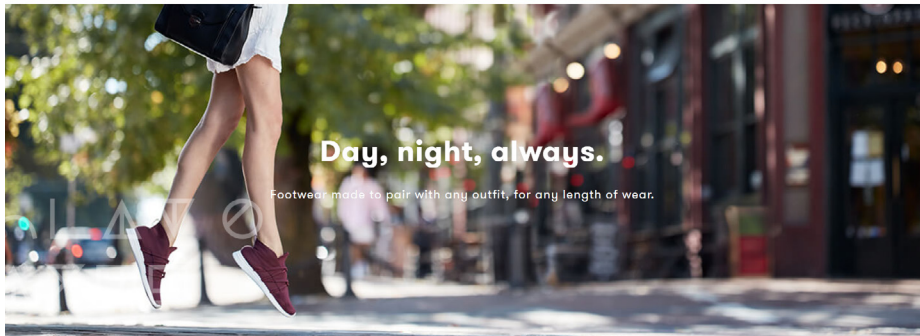
(Picture 22)

PRODUCTS

(Picture 23)

(Picture 24)

(Picture 25)

LOGO

People
FOOTWEAR™

BRAND COLORS

PEOPLE FOOTWEAR

People Footwear is another British Columbia based shoe company, of which headquarter locates in Vancouver. They're main focus is on canvas leisure shoes, but just recently they have launched a new collection of knitted athleisure sneakers. They're mission is to produce new kind of shoes by using innovative technologies.

Much like Skye, People's branding is kept simple and they've selected just one brand color, which is light blue. The logo is very simple text logo. Even though the brand color palette consists of just one color, the overall brand image is quite colorful because of the lively images they use in marketing and the colorful shoe designs.

People Footwear has a variety of different shoe models. Besides sneakers, their selection also includes sandals and puffy winter shoes. They come in multiple different colors and color combinations. They've known of using 3D printing technology in the shoe uppers.

"People Footwear™ is dedicated to producing the next generation of casual footwear through the use of innovative materials and the latest in high–tech manufacturing." - People Footwear (16)

WEB

People
FOOTWEAR™

MENS   WOMENS   KIDS   COLLECTION   ABOUT US   STOCKISTS   BLOG   ACCOUNT   CART

THE STANLEY

SHOP NOW
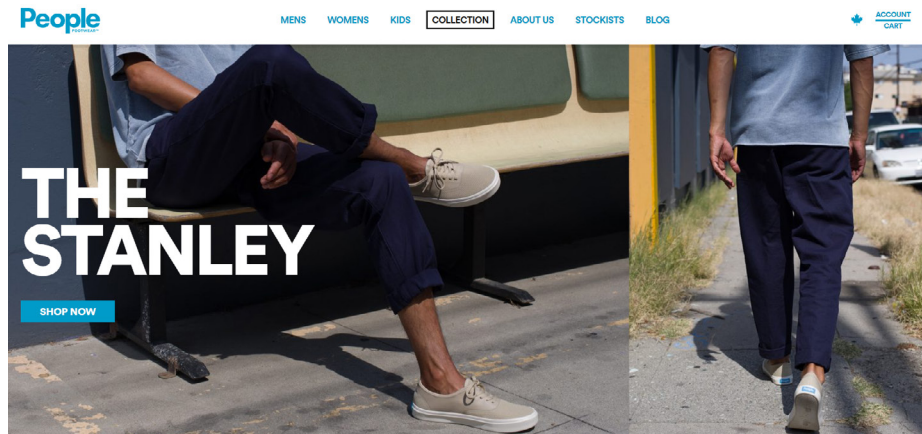
(Picture 26)

PRODUCTS

(Picture 27)

(Picture 28)

(Picture 29)

(Picture 30)

(Picture 31)

(Picture 32)

LOGO

BRAND COLORS

NATIVE SHOES

Native Shoes is yet another shoe company from Vancouver. Their designs are inspired by Canadian aboriginal culture.

Native's main brand color is light blue, like People's, but just a bit brighter. Their secondary color is yellow-toned red. They use a lot of bright and pastel colors in their marketing, which creates playful, easy going and energetic feeling. The logo combines words Native and Shoes in a playful way. Same feeling continues across the whole brand. Even the fonts are selected to follow the same theme.

Native's selection of shos consists of canvas, knit and plastic sneakers, sandals and winter shoes. Native Shoe's signature feature is having circular holes on the front part of the shoe. The shoes are easy to recognise not only for the holes but also for the blue tag that has their logo on it.

"...combining innovation, originality, and the key ingredient — lite-ness. The result is a bonafide selection of iconic styles paired with the best of evolving technology." - Native Shoes (17)

WEB
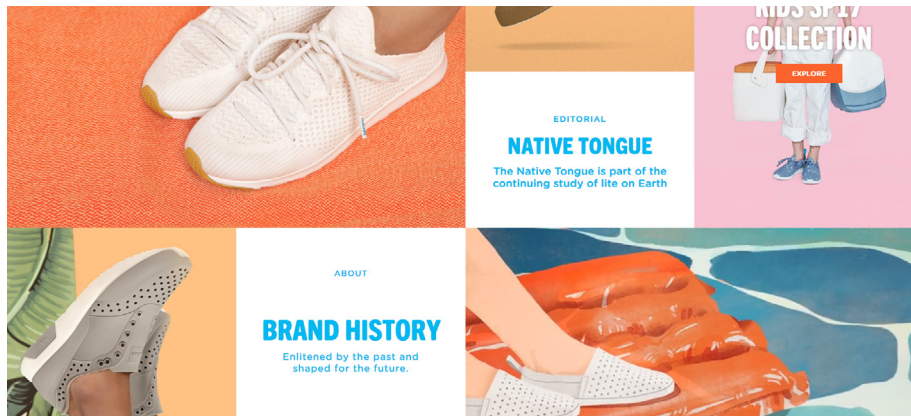
(Picture 33)

PRODUCTS

(Picture 34)

(Picture 35)

(Picture 36)

(Picture 37)

(Picture 38)

(Picture 39)

3.10
BENCHMARK

(Pictures 40-48)

29

(Pictures 49-57)

4

STRATEGY

4.1 BRAND STRATEGY

MISSION

To create all comfortable all weather shoes

VISION

To create shoes that allow people to go seamlessly from one environment to another.

VALUES

- Keeping it simple
- Customer is a friend
- Quality matters
- Keeping it affordable

Keeping it simple means keeping everything simple and easy. Starting from the brand identity continuing to shoe designs and the business plan.

Saying that customer is a friend means that Wave doesn't consider itself to be in a higher position than the people who are buying the products. Wave is a humble, honest and down to earth shoemaker, which treats their customers as friends.

Quality is a high priority for Wave. The shoes will be prototyped and tested before launching to ensure that no leaking will happen.

Affordability of the shoes is not only for competitional value but also to making it possible for people from all groups to afford keeping their feet comfortable and dry.

GOAL

To expand the business from Canada to Asian market

4.2 PERSONAS

In this page I present the personas I came up with based on the market investigation. As Wave is aimed to be a shoe brand for diverse people, I saw it necessary to have an example cutomer for three different ages and who are in different life situations.

CUSTOMER 2
Catherine

Age	41 years old
Occupation	House wife
Status	Married with two kids
Location	Toronto, suburb
Salary	Own small business (Husband's salary 100,000$)
Education	University
Needs & expectations, interests	Mostly comfort. Buys shoes based on commecials and friends' recommendations

#Mom
#Traditional
#Family oriented
#Own business
#Comfort first

(Picture 59)

CUSTOMER 1
Steve

Age	30
Occupation	Project manager, works in an office downtown
Status	Lives together with his partner
Location	Vancouver, Downtown
Salary	40,000$
Education	University
Needs & expectations, interests	Style, new technology, functionality. Follows new technology trends, likes to try new things

#Urban
#Adventurous
#Outdoorsy
#Active
#Open-minded

(Picture 58)

CUSTOMER 3
Sarah

Age	19 years old
Occupation	University student
Status	Single
Location	Victoria BC
Salary	Lives with parents' money
Education	University
Needs & expectations, interests	Style, she's aware of the newest trends. Gets inspired by the fashion styles of her friends, celebrities and bloggers

#Young
#Sports
#Studies
#Friends
#Having fun

(Picture 60)

5

DESIGNING A BRAND

This chapter covers the design of the brand identity and the shoe. The whole brand, including the shoe, was designed by keeping in mind the brand strategy and the personas.
In the end of the chapter I present the outcome of the project.

5.1 NAME

After we had made clear what the brand strategy was, the first element to create before anything else was a name. The client had an idea for the name but he wished us to come up with different concepts as well in case something better and more interesting would appear.

The basic guidelines for naming a brand or company are that it should fit the concept, it should be pronounced easily and it should be durable across time, cultures and categories. As the target market of the company is at first in North American market and will possibly widen abroad later, we wanted to have a name that is easy to pronounce worldwide. We wanted it to either represent the waterproof technology or the shape of the shoe.

For coming up with a name we held a brainstorming meeting with the team. We sat down and started shooting name ideas while one of us wrote them down. We played around with different languages besides English, including Finnish, Hebrew, Chinese and Japanese. We wrote down words describing the shoe concept and tried translating them into different languages. Ideas follow one another and soon we had a marker board full of names.

In the end of the brainstorming session every team member marked down three of their favorite name concepts and told the rest of the group why they had chosen those three. Based on this elimination round we were left with two names that were clearly favored over the others. One of them was the client's original name idea; Was. The idea came from chinese language in which the word *wazi* means *socks*. The other name was Wave. The name Wave simply comes from the actual meaning of the word. Giving the brand a water related name would likely help creating a brand of waterproof shoes in people's minds.

The reason we ended up choosing Wave over Was was mainly the meaning of the word was. It's a past form of the word is and thus it might be associated with looking back, the past, staying in place. Whereas Wave looks and sounds frsh and young and is easy to pronounce in almost every language.
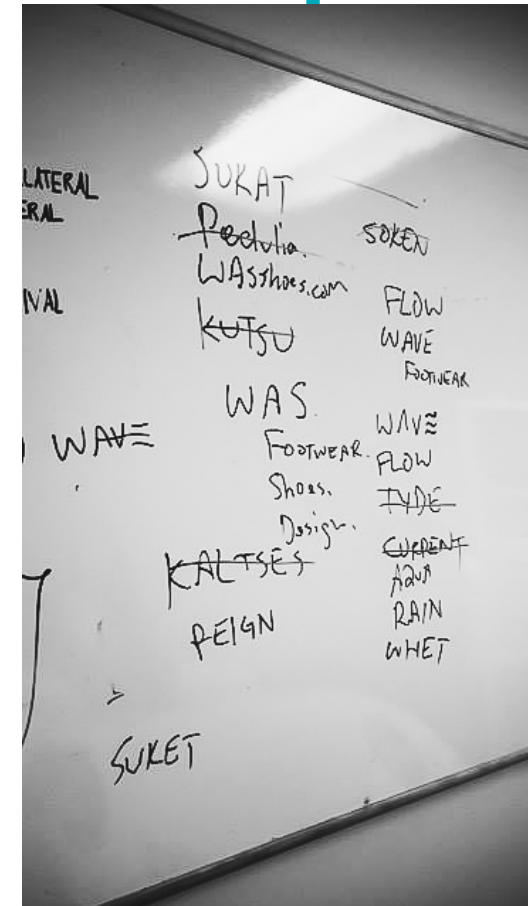
5.2 BRAND COLORS

I decided to start building the identity by defining the brand colors and the style way. Choosing the brand colors is an important step in branding. Brand colors should match the brand's personality and create a visually pleasing combination. I took a dive into color psychology to find out about the meanings of different colors and what kind of emotions each color and shade and tone create in our minds. I also used my knowledge from color studies to combine colors in a way that works in a way that pleases the eye of the viewer and attracts target audience.

In a process of choosing the colors I looked at what the other brands in the industry had been using as their brand colors. Both to find out what is the most used color or color combination, because obviously that works, and to make sure we wouldn't end up copying some of our competitor by choosing the exact same colors without knowing it. At the moment, one big trend is to have no colors at all, just black, white and gray. The reason for having brand colors for Wave was that it would give more personality to the brand.

TURQUOISE AND GOLD

The reason I ended up choosing turquoise as main color of the brand was, besides its youthfulness and freshness, also that it is a color of water. I tried different combinations for finding a secondary color for the color palette. A brand doesn't necessarily need more than one color, but I wanted to make sure that Wave differentiates enough of its local competitors, which both use slightly similar color; light blue. I ended up using split complementary color schemea as shown in picture 61. Later I chose to ditch the red color and so, the brand colors were determined to be turquoise and golden orange.

Before choosing the colors I had a meeting with the team where I brought up my ideas and explained the reasons why just these colors would be a good choice. The hard part was to determine the final color codes. Colors look different depending on the screen you're looking or the way it is printed, which led the client and the rest of the team bit confused sometimes. I also needed to find matching pantone colors, for the shoe design.

(Picture 61) Split complementary color scheme

spiritual
freshness
protection
sophisticated
(19)

happy
energetic
excitement
enthusiasm
warmth
sophistication
change
(19)

	Light/bright/pale	Energetic, friendly, open
	Dark/saturated	Intense, corporate, serious
	Bright/Intense	High-energy, powerful
	Pure	Child-like, unaffected, trustworthy
	Grayed-down	Low-key, neutral, non-threatening

(20)

FINAL COLOR PALETTE

	RGB	0, 170, 187
	HEX	#00aabb
	CMYK	75, 7, 27, 0

	RGB	234, 150, 0
	HEX	#ea9600
	CMYK	0, 45, 100, 6

	RGB	80, 87, 89
	HEX	#505759
	CMYK	64, 49, 48, 40

	RGB	229, 225, 30
	HEX	#e5e1e6
	CMYK	12, 11, 8, 0

5.3 LOGO DEVELOPMENT

The logo development started as soon as the name concept was chosen and the brand colors defined. Logo a.k.a brand mark is the face of a business. It's what the consumers see first and what will appear on their minds when they think about the business later on. When I generated ideas and when we finally chose the concept, we kept on mind the personas created in stage 4. The logo should appeal to the target audience over out own preferences. In designing a logo I aimed for simple and clean design, to stay consistent to the brand. (21)

GEOMETRIC W

W + SHAPE OF A WAVE

SOFT W WHICH FORMS A WAVE SHAPE

TEXT ONLY

TYPES OF LOGOS

There's a few different types of logos. One is a text logo; logotype. It's brand name typed using an existing or custom made font. Then there's pictorial logos, which usually relates to the brand somehow, or can be completely abstract. It is also possible to combine pictorial logo and logotype. (21)

CREATING CONCEPTS

When I created ideas for Wave logo, I kept on mind the brand, it's values and the product, as well as the target audience. I started out by sketching my ideas on paper, and chose the best ones to be converted into vector format on computer. I presented the logo suggestions on one our weekly meetings.

CHOOSING THE CONCEPT THROUGH PERSONAS

We chose the best three concepts by doing a voting round, in which each of us chose the three that they thought would represent the brand best. The voting was quite unanimous, because every one of us chose the geometrical logos.

To being able to choose between these three logos, we needed to see them in use. For the next week's meeting I delivered these three concepts polished and presentation of how each of them would look like on a website. The final decision about the logo was made by the client.

LOGOTYPE AND TYPOGRAPHY

The text style in the logo and the typography that will be used across media were chosen to continue with the intended simple and modern overall style.

GENERATING IDEAS AND PRESENTING CONCEPTS

SELECTING 3 CONCEPTS

SELECTING 1 FINAL CONCEPT

FINALIZED LOGO CONCEPT

→ Typography
→ Website mockup

→ Final touchups
→ Combining with the logo type
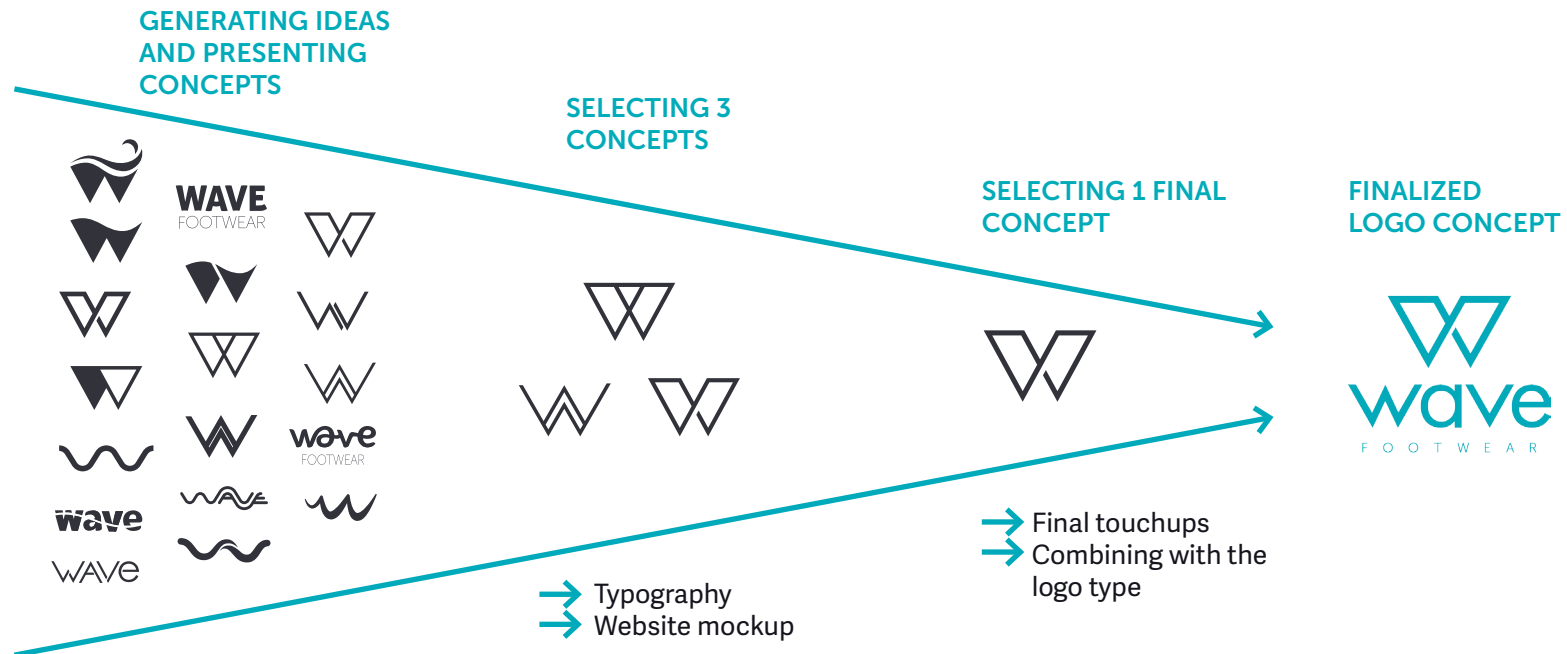
5.4 SHOE DESIGN

START

In the first meeting, where we investigated the client's needs and visions for the project, we also went slightly over the shoe design and his expectations for it, and the technology. Although the main focus at first was in branding, the shoe project followed on the background. This means that I started the base work for the shoe design at the same time when working on the brand.

The criteria for the shoe design was that it should be doable by knitting, it can't have any added elements such as laces, except for small sewed on loops or tags, and it should fit in the brand. The basic idea was that I would be deciding on the knit pattern. The shoe sole that was supposed to be used is very basic flexible sole, that is widely in use of different shoe companies.

I started the base work by benchmarking and collecting inspiration wherever I went. Every time I walked in the city I observed people, and more specifically, their shoes. I conducted benchmarking on the internet by searching for interesting shoe styles as well as walking in sport and shoe stores to actually see and hold on my hand the shoes that are in the market.
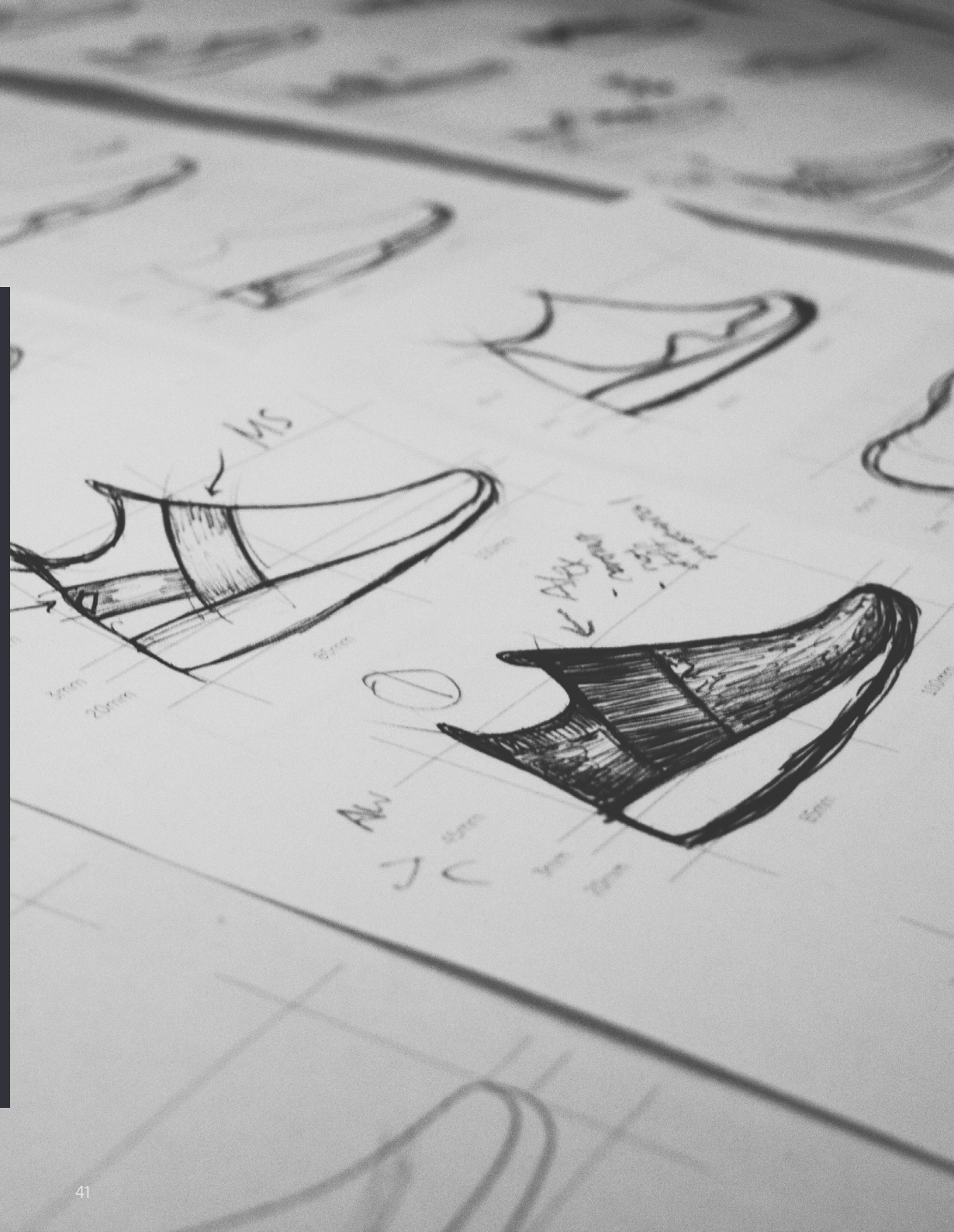
The actual design work began when the brand identity was finalized and the style guide created. At that point, I already had quite clear sight of the client's wish and vision about the shoe, and what my task was. We still needed to go over the material related facts and limitations there would be, before I could start sketching ideas.

SKETCHING

To make the sketching more efficient and faster, I developed a sketching canvas. I had specified dimensions for the shoe and based on them, I created simple shoe outlines which I duplicated to fill the whole paper. I printed out several copies of these, and several with only dimension guidelines for more free sketching. This way I didn't need to focus on the sketching the shape of the shoe every time I wanted to illustrate a new idea.
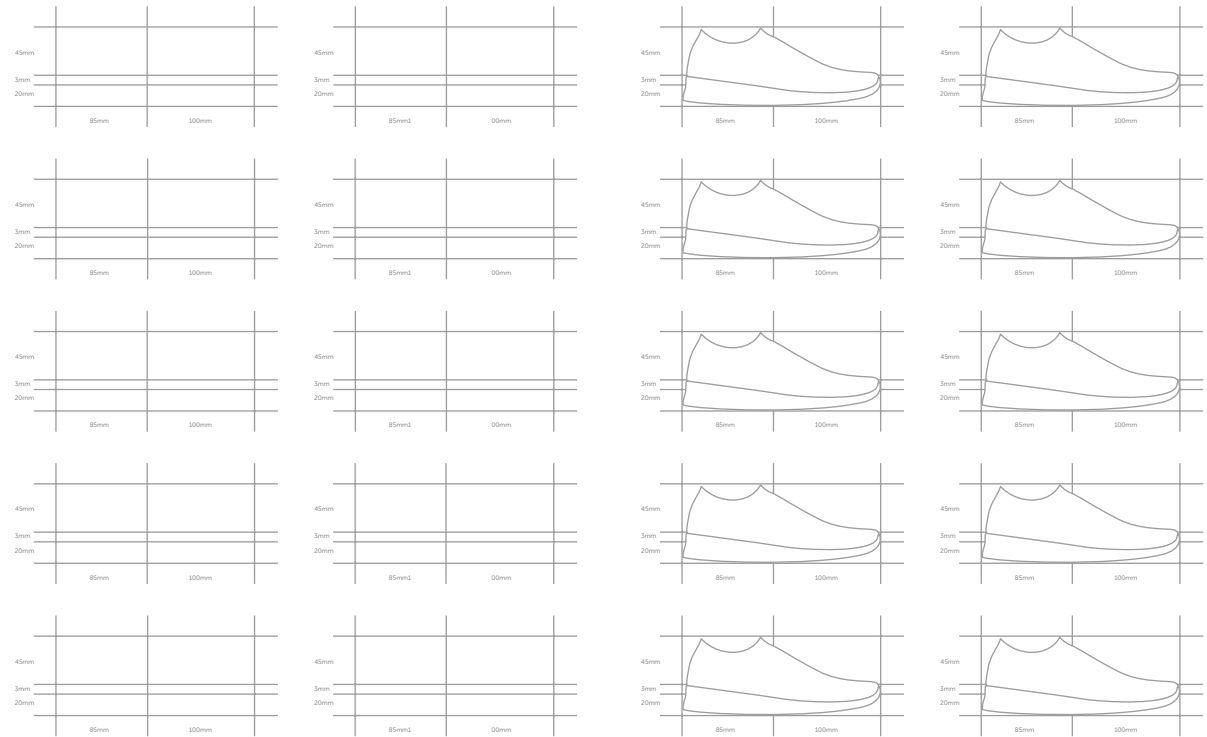
Sketching canvas

SKETCHING

2 CONCEPTS

I spent a week just sketching and in the second shoe meeting, I presented my first sketches. Most of my ideas were based on playing with color or pattern, whereas some of them were more outside-the-box. We chose two concepts from the first round. When choosing, we reflected them to the personas, and instead of thinking of what we personally liked, we tried to empathize with the personas and what they would choose. We also thought took into account the existing trends in shoe industry, and the aim to differentiate.

1. UNCONVENTIONAL
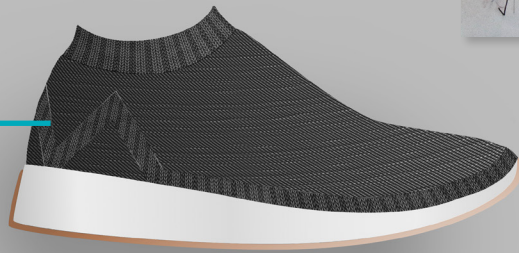
Sock shape

Contrasting striple that forms wavy W-shape on the back of the shoe
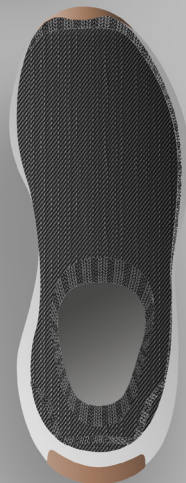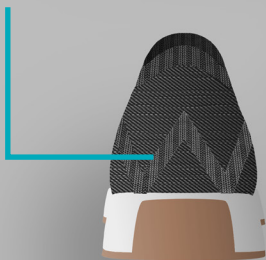
2. TRADITIONAL

A strip of knit that goes over the shoe, creating an association of shoelaces

Possible to create different patterns by altering the knit

FINAL CONCEPT

We chose the unconventional style to be the first model to be taken to manufacturing at this point. The choice for the final concept was done based on the criteria that the shoe can't have any added features on it. The Unconventional shoe would be made of solid knit, whereas the Traditional shoe needs to have two separate knit layers attached together. We decided to make the Unconventional shoe in two different styles. One with the wavy W-shape and one with a new pattern, that forms Wave's logo on the side of the shoe.

Next step was to refine the two styles of the chosen concept, and create 2D pictures of them for the factory. I created multiple color options and presented them for the client. As a team, we chose three color combinations. Different colors can be added on the selection later on or taken off, so the color aspect wasn't crucial.

5.5 OUTCOME

STYLE 1
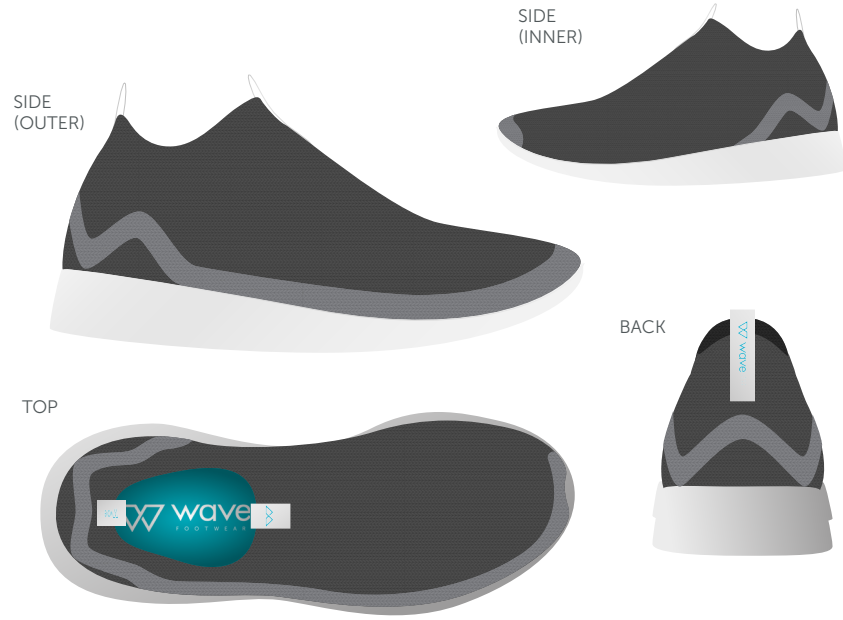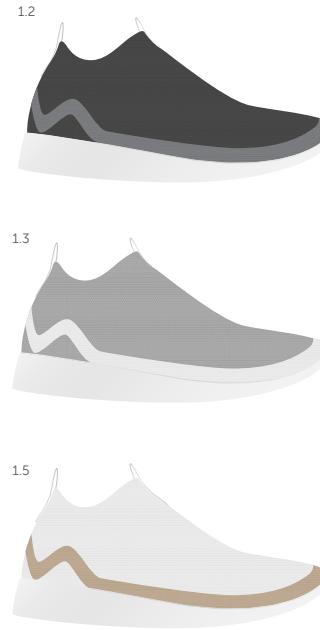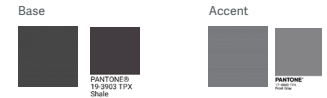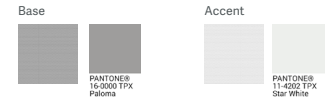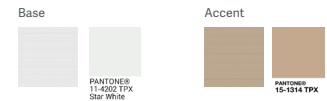
SIDE (INNER)

SIDE (OUTER)

TOP

BACK

INSOLE

COLORS

1.2

1.3

1.5

STYLE 1

SIDE
(OUTER)

SIDE
(INNER)

TOP

BACK

INSOLE

PANTONE®
16-4728 TPX
Peacock Blue

COLORS

2.2

2.3

2.5

Base

Accent

PANTONE®
19-3903 TPX
Shale

PANTONE®
11-4501 TPX
Pearl Gray

GRAY & WHITE

Base

Accent

PANTONE®
16-0000 TPX
Paloma

PANTONE®
11-4202 TPX
Star White

WHITE & BEIGE

Base

Accent

PANTONE®
11-4202 TPX
Star White

PANTONE®
15-1314 TPX
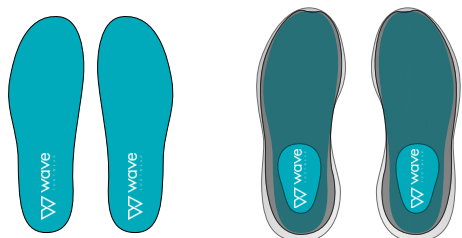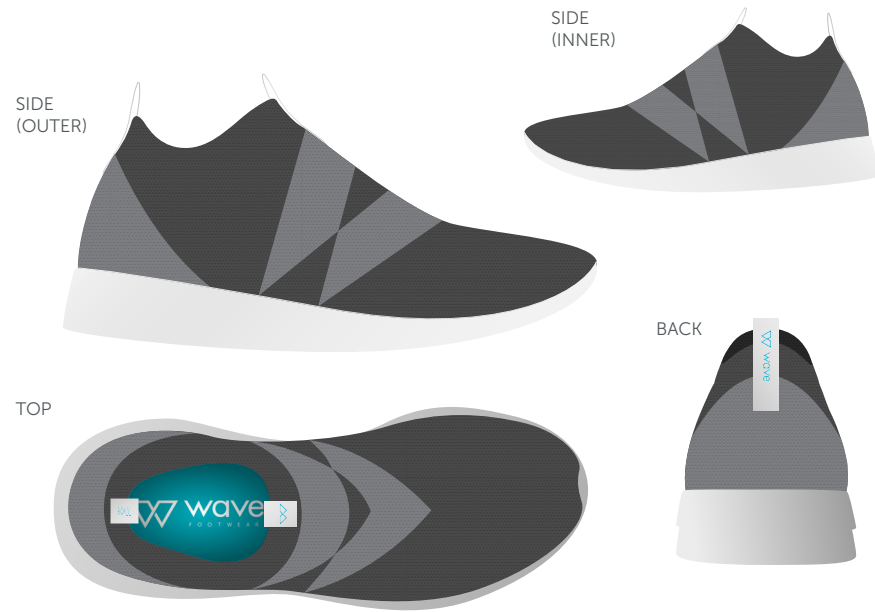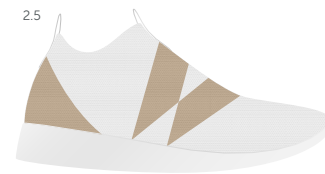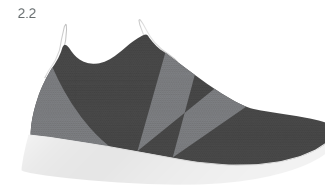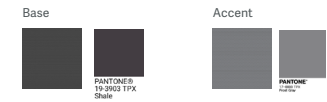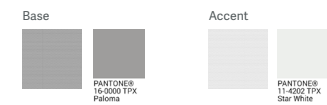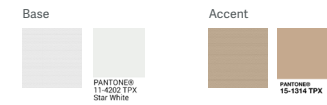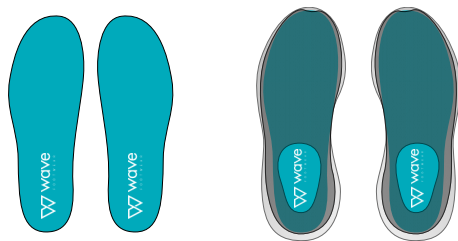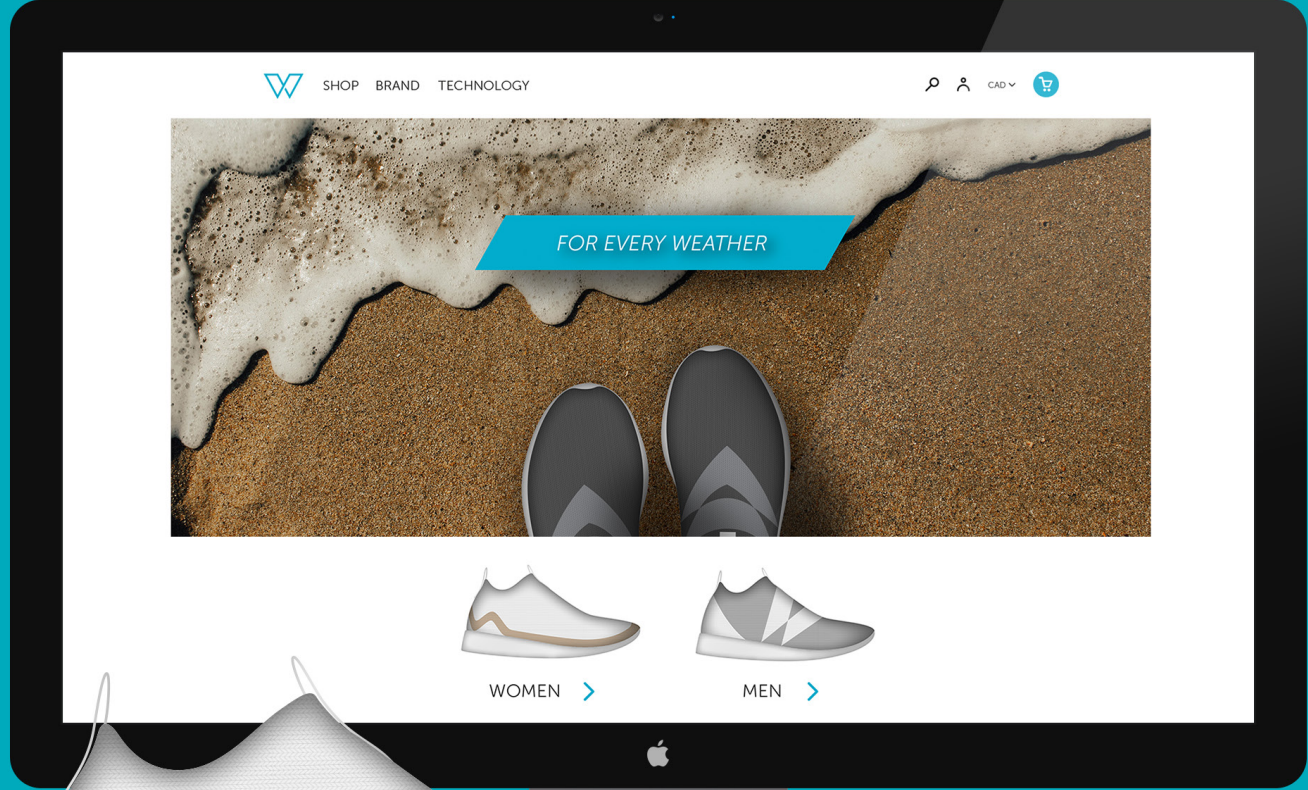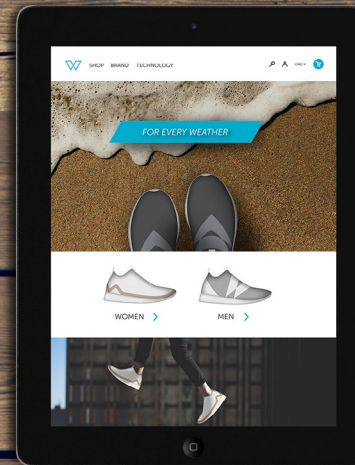
5.6 NEXT STEPS

The shoe design is now in a stage where the shoe drawings have been taken to the factory. Next step in the project will be prototyping the shoe concept. After prototyping, the factory starts the manufacturing process. More shoe styles will be added to selection later, when the company is launched.

Wave will be launched via kickstarter campaign probably during the summer 2017.

Next assets, that need to be designed are shoe box, online store and stationery. I will most likely continue my work for the branding process until all the necessary elements are finalized and the shoes are launched.

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Other photography, that I used in cover letter and in chapter covers, are taken by me.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Three logo concepts and
a concept for logotype

LOGO 1

FUTURA PT (BOOK)

MUSEO SANS (100)

LOGO 2

FUTURA PT (BOOK)

MUSEO SANS (100)

LOGO 3

FUTURA PT (BOOK)

MUSEO SANS (100)

LOGO 4

FUTURA PT (BOOK)

MUSEO SANS (100)

2. Styleguide