Hit the Bull's Eye...

No matter what medium we are using, advertisement and brand messages come across. Some are eye catchy, some are just annoying. Let us be honest here, who has not switched to another channel when the commercial break starts or just left out the magazine page where a model presents the new Tommy Hilfiger summer collection.

Media are part of our everyday life. We start the morning with the newspapers, the morning show on TV and/or listen to the radio on the way to work. We buy magazines about fashion or about our hobbies. On the medium of the future, the Internet, animated banners try to get our attention, while checking emails or reading the latest news. Research found out: The average city inhabitant is now exposed to 3,000 to 5,000 ad messages a day! No wonder many consumers feel they are becoming increasingly invasive and actively avoid and ignore them.

Invasion for a reason

However, for companies media are a way to transfer and convey information about goods or services to the consumer, who is a potential buyer of that item. This information placed in the right context might also present an orientation in the buying process. Some consumers even say that they find advertising very helpful. So the question arises for companies: where to put the message, so that consumers perceive the information as helpful and will most likely to react positively to it.

The Dutch horse feed manufacturer Pavo, was asking themselves this question for their market activities in Germany. Claudia Spanjaard, member of the Pavo marketing communication, says: "As Germany is not our home market, it is really interesting for us to see what print and online vehicles are available. But most importantly: Which ones can help us reach our target group the most effectively? " In order to answer this question they assigned a research, which gives a helicopter view on the German equestrian print and online media environment and suggestions how Pavo can reach its target group effectively over long term.
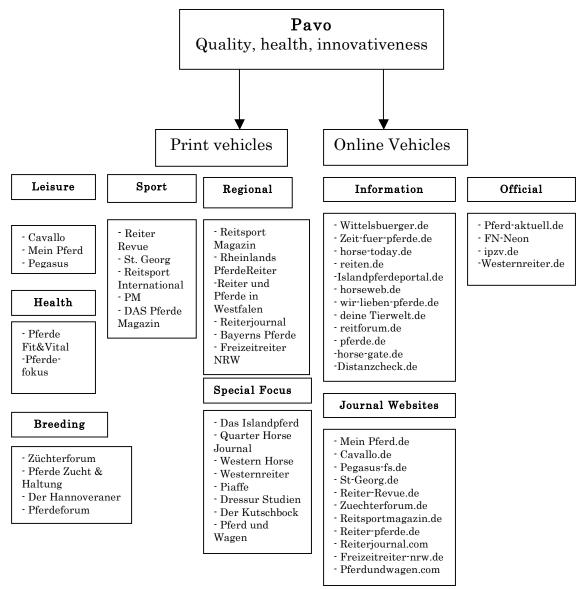
Drawing the Map

The biggest obstacle for the research was the collection of print and online message carriers, called vehicles, as there is no official listing how many equestrian related websites and journals there are in Germany. The researcher found 61 journals and 76 websites that are available for follow up information, news and entertainment for horse interested people.

So much for the helicopter view. But which ones are the best ones for the company? Quality, health and innovativeness were the most important criteria as these are the values Pavo stands for. But also the target group of each website and journal was an important criterion. So the vehicles were checked after these criteria

and the ones that could meet Pavo's needs were considered to be suitable. The table below shows the suitable message carriers.

Pavo
Quality, health, innovativeness

Print vehicles

Online Vehicles

Leisure
- Cavallo
- Mein Pferd
- Pegasus

Health
- Pferde Fit&Vital
- Pferde-fokus

Breeding
- Züchterforum
- Pferde Zucht & Haltung
- Der Hannoveraner
- Pferdeforum

Sport
- Reiter Revue
- St. Georg
- Reitsport International
- PM
- DAS Pferde Magazin

Regional
- Reitsport Magazin
- Rheinlands PferdeReiter
- Reiter und Pferde in Westfalen
- Reiterjournal
- Bayerns Pferde
- Freizeitreiter NRW

Special Focus
- Das Islandpferd
- Quarter Horse Journal
- Western Horse
- Westernreiter
- Piaffe
- Dressur Studien
- Der Kutschbock
- Pferd und Wagen

Information
- Wittelsbuerger.de
- Zeit-fuer-pferde.de
- horse-today.de
- reiten.de
- Islandpferdeportal.de
- horseweb.de
- wir-lieben-pferde.de
- deine Tierwelt.de
- reitforum.de
- pferde.de
- horse-gate.de
- Distanzcheck.de

Journal Websites
- Mein Pferd.de
- Cavallo.de
- Pegasus-fs.de
- St-Georg.de
- Reiter-Revue.de
- Zuechterforum.de
- Reitsportmagazin.de
- Reiter-pferde.de
- Reiterjournal.com
- Freizeitreiter-nrw.de
- Pferdundwagen.com

Official
- Pferd-aktuell.de
- FN-Neon
- ipzv.de
- Westernreiter.de

Further information about the vehicles was collected as well such as circulation for print and unique visitors and prices for advertisement and number of subscribers. These facts are important to know because they tell how many people can be reached with the vehicle and how much it costs to use it.

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With the data from the media, Pavo and market knowledge, the recommendation for the effective media exposure was developed. In general messages are more effective in an environment which has a connection to the message. Therefore regional

journals, that are targeting active riders in Pavo's target area, are a good partner for the future. They are reliable sources of information because they are official organs of regional equestrian sports and breeding associations. However a national leisure journal in this case Cavallo should also be a partner as it is the biggest magazine for leisure riders in Germany, which next to its ideal target group, is found to have an excellent quality of content and is focused on health related topics, which is important to Pavo.

Messages for special focus target groups by means people that are interested just in one particular discipline or breed, should be put preferably on websites that are aiming at this particular group as the websites reach more people at low prices, which is an advantage because this way Pavo saves money. The only point for discussion would be the quite low level of credibility of these websites.

For an interactive communication with the consumer Pavo should use the community website Wir-lieben-Pferde.de as this growing community is connected to the German equestrian association, which raises the credibility of the website. Moreover, this platform represents a direct communication channel to the user at a low price. Banner advertisement is recommended to be placed on websites with a high contextual environment e.g. banner advertisement for Icelandic horses on websites for Icelandic horse rider.

If Pavo is taking this route in the German equestrian print and online environment they can reach their target group effectively.