



**UMBRA**  
the university management &  
business research association

Expanding Sales and Marketing for  
*OneSeventeen Media*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page.....	1
Contributors.....	2
About UMBRA .....	4
About OneSeventeen Media .....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Industry Research .....	6
Marketing .....	11
Technology.....	15
Finance.....	20
Conclusion .....	24
Works Cited.....	25

## **ABOUT UMBRA**

The University Management and Business Research Association- is a McCombs Associated Student Organization that represents the student voice for the Department of Management. Founded in the 1960s, UMBRA has evolved over the years from a lecture--based club to its current incarnation: an organization that utilizes an industry--proven consulting methodology to develop tailored recommendations for local businesses.

Through the course of a semester, UMBRA tackles a given problem area for a given system, process, or product that can be improved. Our proprietary methodology is derived from IDEO's Design Thinking and 3M's Lead User Generation. This methodology has a creative focus with primary research centered around in--depth experiences of users.

This process has four critical steps:

- 1) Design Research: in depth interviews
- 2) Ideation: Iterative creation of solutions to the emotive issues of our users
- 3) Prototyping: Actualizing the solution concepts into formats that are recognizable, user--friendly, and real
- 4) Experience Development and Implementation Factors: inclusive of all the experiences that may be involved in usage and framing the integrative solution

The UMBRA team is comprised of a five-member officer board and 18 Associates. The Associates are divided into four teams: Industry Research, Finance, Technology, and Marketing. Each team is led by a Lead Associate.

## **ABOUT ONESEVENTEEN MEDIA**

OneSeventeen Media is an education technology company based in Austin that aims to “to make the world a better place for all kids to thrive.” OneSeventeen Media is Texas’ first B Corp, which means that it is using good business practices to better society. OneSeventeen Media provides two AI-powered apps, ThinkingApp and reThinkIt! that are targeted to schools from Pre-K to 12th grade. Schools or school districts install the apps on their school computer or other devices. The apps are tailored to the individual student and act as a way for the students to express their thoughts in a non-judgmental atmosphere. This approach is highly effective, and OneSeventeen Media claims that students share five times as much information than in face-to-face interactions. Their applications reduce discipline related issues to improve students experience and help schools better understand students’ lives. Students’ mental health is one of the most visible and vital issues facing schools today, making Thinking App and reThinkIt! highly attractive to schools.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview of Problem Statement

OneSeventeen Media, Inc. has tasked The University Management and Business Research Association (UMBRA) at The University of Texas at Austin with addressing the following problem: How can OneSeventeen Media garner funding for its business while increasing sales across the United States?

### Purposes of the Report

UMBRA has broken down and categorized its solutions for OneSeventeen Media into four primary target areas: Industry Research, Marketing, Technology, and Finance. Through this report, UMBRA hopes to resolve OneSeventeen media's needs in numerous interrelated problem areas that provide for a cohesive solution to the overarching problem.

### Identified Problem Areas and Recommendations

UMBRA solutions fall into four primary categories:

- **Industry Research:** We examined the strategies of three prominent ed-tech companies and provide recommendations through industry analysis and trends. Our recommendations in this sector involve securing partnerships and revamping OneSeventeen Media's online presence.
- **Marketing:** The team focused on marketing strategies employed by competitors and OneSeventeen Media's current marketing strategy and its limitations. Through marketing analysis, we ultimately recommend that OneSeventeen Media enhance its social media by diversifying its content and appealing to an untapped market of private and charter schools.
- **Technology:** After studying OneSeventeen Media technological components, UMBRA has provided tech-based recommendations in two areas: web design and app enhancement. We have provided recommendations for OneSeventeen Media to better convey information through its website to potential customers while offering suggestions to enhance the usability and effectiveness of the mobile application the company offers to schools.
- **Finance:** UMBRA has identified how OneSeventeen Media can improve its financial performance through revamping its pricing structure, onboarding process, and customer targeting strategy while fundraising through grants.

### Impacts

By implementing these recommendations, OneSeventeen Media will be able to achieve its goal of raising funds from investors and increasing sales throughout the United States.

## INDUSTRY RESEARCH

### Comparative Analysis

We have chosen to focus our comparative analysis on three companies: *Emote Education, Panorama Education, and ShieldCampus*. Each of these companies is involved in the education technology industry, emphasizes the significance of Social Emotional Learning, and has products similar to OneSeventeen Media.

#### Emote Education

Emote is a school-wide communication platform that delivers real-time reports about student behavior and allows teachers and administrators to record student behaviors to monitor student conditions and respond in-time to student needs. Emote connects staff members to share intervention strategies for student problems, and the system itself analyzes student trends and growth to predict future behavior patterns. The company utilizes Social Emotional Learning techniques to approach and solve student issues. Emote tailors and customizes their product towards their partner school's current approach towards mental health, making it easily adaptable to any school's social-emotional paradigm. Emote is different from OneSeventeen Media in that the data is not entered into the system by students themselves, but by teachers who monitor student behavior and emotion. Additionally, Emote does not offer the live-chat and video features that OneSeventeen Media's module does. Currently, Emote is being used by 16 districts in more than a dozen states.

#### Panorama Education

Panorama helps schools conduct surveys of students, parents, teachers, and staff members. The surveys provide feedback about teachers and the school environment as well as student emotions. Panorama uses data analytics to present teachers and administrators with constructive feedback that they can use to improve their teaching and their schools. Unlike OneSeventeen Media, Panorama does not have live-chat or video features incorporated in their module system that directly interacts with students. Panorama Education supports over 9 million students in 11,500 schools across 46 states in the US and 15 countries.

#### ShieldCampus

ShieldCampus is a comprehensive student safety and behavior management platform. It enables school administrators and faculty to manage students, track and report attendance records, and account for students during a crisis. The application encourages open communication with students and faculty to coordinate conflict resolution and help parents stay informed of their child's safety and behavior in school. While ShieldCampus includes two additional features on their platform than OneSeventeen Media (Student Attendance and Crisis Management), we will only be focusing on their Behavior Management application as that is more relevant to the scope of our research. The Behavior Management application helps teachers manage behavior in the classroom. Teachers input data based on observations of student behavior and can quickly share the data with administrators and parents. The application streamlines communication between teachers, administrators, and parents and provides trend analysis that can allow teachers to predict student behavior patterns.

## Sub-Problem 1

### Lack of Investors and Partners Involved in the Education Sphere

#### Context

OneSeventeen is funded by Southwest Angel Network for Social Impact. While this group provides the necessary funding, they are not directly linked with the education technology industry and lack contacts and knowledge of the education industry. Competitors of OneSeventeen are funded by or partnered with organizations within the education industry, so they have the advantage of knowledge and industry connections.

#### Research

##### *Emote Education*

At its launch in 2016, Emote Education gathered \$120,000 of funding from Y Combinator, one of the high-profile startup accelerators in Silicon Valley. Emote is also funded by the Unreasonable Group, an investment firm that funds entrepreneurs and firms that are dedicated to social impact and innovation. Furthermore, Emote is partnered with multiple companies within the education industry, including Pearson, Imagine K12, and Tilly's Life Center.

##### *Panorama Education*

Panorama Education is funded by 28 investors and has raised \$32 million in venture capital. Lead investors include Emerson Collective, Spark Capital, and Owl Ventures. Owl Ventures is a venture capitalist group that exclusively invests in the leading education technology companies. Panorama has also worked with Casel (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) to promote their product. Casel is the world's leading organization in promoting integrated academic, social, and emotional learning for students from preschool to high school.

##### *ShieldCampus*

ShieldCampus is owned by EdTech Consultants, a company that has released multiple technology-based products into the education industry. EdTech Consultants is under Remake Learning, a network that promotes communication between innovative groups and provides an opportunity for contact between organizations that are committed to creating social and technological change.

#### Analysis

Emote, Panorama, and ShieldCampus are all funded by or partnered with investors, firms, and organizations who have experience with or are involved in the education sphere. Emote and Panorama, in particular, work with big-name education companies who have propelled them to great success. Having partners who have firsthand knowledge in what one's company is trying to achieve and prominence in the relevant field is extremely beneficial as they can promote products to the right audience and possess contacts who can provide further opportunity for company growth.

#### Recommendations

- 1) OneSeventeen could benefit from ***partnering with companies that have industry knowledge and experience***. For example, Owl Ventures could be an excellent potential investor because their

sole investment focus is within the educational technology industry. EdTech Consultants is another potential firm that could partner with or even acquire OneSeventeen Media in the future, as they have experience with managing firms involved in the technological side of education and have ample contacts with other organizations who are aligned with OneSeventeen Media's commitment towards social impact.

- 2) OneSeventeen Media should partner with **student information systems (SIS)** that track and store student information like grades and attendance records. SIS partnerships will allow OneSeventeen Media to implement their technology more efficiently in schools because there will already be existing infrastructure in place. Competitors like Emote have already begun such partnerships. OneSeventeen Media has the opportunity to eliminate this competitive advantage held by Emote. An SIS partnership will allow OneSeventeen to improve efficiency during implementation.
- 3) OneSeventeen Media should pursue partnerships with **private/charter schools**. Private schools and charter networks often have more bureaucratic leeway and funding when it comes to purchasing and implementing programs like OneSeventeen Media. There is a large opening in the market as networks of private schools across the nation are becoming increasingly interested in incorporating more education technology into the classroom and embracing Social Emotional Learning techniques. An [article](#) published by Education Week states that the increase in technological presence in public education has influenced private schools, creating a shift in attitude towards and a greater demand for education technology. On several private schools' websites such as St. Andrew's Episcopal School and St. Gabriel's Catholic School (both located in Austin), there are sections explicitly dedicated towards Social Emotional Learning and the methods each school is taking to incorporate SEL techniques in the classroom. This indicates an interest in Social Emotional Learning that OneSeventeen Media should capitalize on with their product.
- 4) Finally, OneSeventeen Media could partner with **blogs or news sites that report findings about the education industry** and are prominent sources of information for educators, customers, and investors. For example, Education Week, an independent national news organization that focuses on reporting practices and policies of pre-K-12 education, has written articles about both Emote and Panorama and has a robust presence of more than 1.5 million followers across social media networks. Another publication, EdTech Times reports stories about innovation in education technology. EdTech Times offers a variety of sponsorship opportunities including exhibits and webinars. OneSeventeen Media could benefit greatly from partnering with news sites such as the above two to further promote their product and gain more presence in the education field.

## **Sub-Problem 2**

### **Website Design**

#### **Context**

OneSeventeen Media's current website has a clean and straightforward user interface. However, the website lacks key features included by competitors. OneSeventeen Media does an excellent job of allowing customers to quickly request a demo of the product. By improving key features of the website, OneSeventeen Media can close the gap on the competitive advantage held by its competitors.



## Research & Analysis

### *Emote*

Emote's website is simple and includes an easy to understand user interface. Additionally, Emote includes statistics with a brief explanation. On the other hand, OneSeventeen's website includes statistics that appear arbitrary without proper explanations. Compared to Emote, OneSeventeen Media's website is difficult for a customer who does not come from a strong background in education or Social Emotional Learning to understand and digest.

### *Panorama*

Panorama Education's website is too busy. However, Panorama's website excels in that it includes an easily accessible interactive demo of the product on the website to help the customer visualize the product. Panorama is dedicated to the transparency of both product and company information. Users and potential customers can view detailed case reports about their work with different school districts and success story videos on their website. The surveys that Panorama produces and have distributed to schools is also accessible online, making it simple for customers to see and experience the product firsthand without having to spend time requesting a demo.

## Recommendations

- 1) A unique advantage OneSeventeen Media holds over its competitors is its ***B-Corp status***. However, on OneSeventeen Media's website this is found under the "Social Impact" tab. Many potential customers may not click on this tab. OneSeventeen Media should include a short blurb on the homepage of the website with a link to the "Social Impact" tab to learn more. Therefore, customers will see the B-corp status faster and easier.
- 2) The ***current statistics are vague*** and without a proper explanation appear irrelevant. OneSeventeen Media should improve their statistics under "Results" so they are easy to understand. Teachers and administrators do not want to spend time deciphering a website when they can go with a competitor who has clear results.
- 3) OneSeventeen Media should include a way for potential customers to view an ***interactive demo on the website***. This can allow customers to visualize the product better. To access the demo, the potential customer will have to provide basic information such as name, email, role, and state. The interactive demo can include fictional data and allow the customer to briefly explore parts of the product.

## Risks

### *Partnerships*

The risk associated with increased investment and partnership is that working with another organization may lead to a loss of autonomy and agility in decision-making. Furthermore, investors with industry knowledge most likely have already invested in OneSeventeen Media's competitors, such as Emote or Panorama. These companies are already working with industry giants, so they may not be interested in a smaller firm. To mitigate concerns, OneSeventeen Media should take care to emphasize its growth potential and future expansion plan. As for partnering with SIS systems, the only risk would be a potential data leak or system malfunction; however, these situations can be prevented through thorough maintenance of the system and taking proper security measures to ensure that the SIS runs smoothly and safely.

### *Website Design*

The risk of our recommendation for OneSeventeen Media to emphasize their B-Corp status on their website is that by including the B-Corp status in multiple locations, users may be overwhelmed and confused by the overload of information. To offset this risk, OneSeventeen should include the information in a non-intrusive way. Additionally, creating an interactive demo and allowing users to access it directly from the website may lead to competitors taking ideas from OneSeventeen. Another potential risk is customers may use the demo and be dissatisfied. This can lead to decreased requests for the full demo. To minimize this risk, OneSeventeen should make the demo simple and without key features. The idea of the demo is merely to display the user interface and help the customer with visualization.

## MARKETING

### **A Shift Towards Social Emotional Learning**

Looking at the educational technology industry, we can see that there are multiple actors at play; school districts and similar education technology companies. Additionally, there are many target audiences within school districts, including teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents. Specifically, in schools, there has been a shift towards talking about the value of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Ready to Lead, a report by Civic Enterprises with Hart Research Associates, surveyed school principals across the nation. This survey reflected the message that principals across the country understand how fundamental SEL is to the development of students in and out of the classroom, but how they needed more support in order to have effective implementation. Only 35% of principals surveyed reported implementing SEL programs in their schools. Additionally, only around 45% feel that teachers in their schools were fairly successful to engage students in SEL. Currently in Texas, districts including Dallas ISD, Round Rock ISD, Houston ISD, El Paso ISD, and Austin ISD are working towards the goal of increasing SEL.

### **Competitors' Marketing Strategy**

When researching marketing strategies of comparable companies, we decided to look at Emote, Panorama Education, and ShieldCampus. All three companies had some form of testimonials, but Panorama Education was the most effective. They had video testimonials from administrators of multiple districts, as well as had a full page dedicated to how SEL functions in that district and its results. Additionally, both Emote and ShieldCampus had research tabs that were focused on website and articles focused on resources on mental health issues for young kids in the classroom. In doing so, these websites incorporate research from independent parties that describe the magnitude of issues these companies aim to solve. Because their products involve SEL, an intangible concept, it makes it hard for people to understand what these technologies are doing to solve problems in the classroom. Therefore, both Emote and Panorama Education have created webinar videos in order to succinctly describe their products. Another strong strategy that Panorama Education utilizes is the use of a live interactive dashboard of their product. So, people who can't immediately demo the product but are interested can see how it works firsthand. Finally, ShieldCampus addresses the issues of a diverse target audience by talking about how their product is beneficial to school administrators, teachers, and parents in terms of crisis management, attendance, and behavior management. They also include pages on their website that tell school administrators which grants to apply for as well as teaches them how to apply to that grant.

### **Current Marketing Plan:**

The current marketing strategy for OneSeventeen Media involves four types of avenues: *paid*, *earned*, *shared*, and *owned media*.

The strategy for paid media incorporates sponsorships and events. OneSeventeen's involvement primarily relies on speaking and exhibiting at these such conferences. OneSeventeen has created a strong connection between the brand and its co-founders, Beth Carls and Amy Looper. This connection personalizes ReThinkIt!™ and ThinkingApp™ from another any other EdTech tool to one that is backed by people that genuinely care about school safety. Furthermore, the current plan's strength lies in the cofounders' identity as females in technology. As seen in the document, Beth and Amy have actively searched and participated in media and events that promote female empowerment in STEM, such as Austin Women in Media. This network is very supportive of their members, and we believe that OneSeventeen should continue to build its engagement through events, podcasts, and conferences.

Another strength in the current strategy is OneSeventeen's owned media, which encompasses its original content and tools: videos, promotional materials, SEO, Google Analytics. However, the strength is in the owned media's quantity. Centralizing OneSeventeen's content into a few platforms would allow for better exposure to the company's owned media. Presently, the content is scattered across different podcasts, newspapers, and websites. As a result, potential clients could have more difficulty researching OneSeventeen because of having to comb through different sources.

Finally, the current action plan covers shared media such as social media. We will go into further depth into diversifying OneSeventeen's shared media in the recommendation section.

### **Sub-Problem 1. Diversifying Content**

#### **Context**

Other companies have strong deliverables that prove their effectiveness. While OneSeventeen Media may be effective, their current testimonials page lacks a cohesive narrative to convince schools. While getting these testimonials are a long term goal, OneSeventeen Media needs short-term solutions to interest other school districts. Additionally, in order to make a sale, OneSeventeen Media has to reach a diverse audience including teachers, administrators, and parents.

#### **Research and Analysis**

Emote and Panorama Education have made webinar videos that focus on how their product works and why it's important in the school setting. These videos are succinct yet effective in delving into the aspects of the product that would most appeal to school districts. Additionally, OneSeventeen Media's success at the 2018 TX PTA Conference as an exhibitor shows the level of interaction between various audiences needed to gain a school's trust.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1) We recommend that OneSeventeen Media ***expand outreach through other education conferences*** similar to TX PTA. For example, we looked into places such as TedX, SXSWEDU, and Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) Convention. Additionally, we recommend exhibiting at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Conference. Austin ISD and El Paso ISD have started CASEL led SEL initiatives, and going to this conference would help gain publicity through CASEL. By going to these conferences and giving presentations/exhibiting, OneSeventeen Media can get sponsorships that will build credibility.
- 2) OneSeventeen Media can ***gain credibility through bloggers***, specifically those who review ed-tech products. Because edtech bloggers already have an audience relevant to our target market, the reviews they post on their websites will generate the right kind of publicity towards the company. For example, OneSeventeen can request reviews from bloggers such as Erin Klein, "an award winning educator, national keynote speaker, and author." On the bottom of Klein's website, the company can request a review for its ReThinkIt!™ and ThinkingApp™ products.

## **Sub-Problem 2.**

### **Marketing to Private/Charter Schools**

#### **Context**

One of the barriers to OneSeventeen Media's growth has to do with length of time it takes to sell its product to a school. In order to look attractive to investors, the company has to make a large amount of sales, and with its current model, this will take a while to achieve. Currently, the model is focused on selling to public schools over private schools, yet private schools may have more flexibility in budgetary decisions.

#### **Research and Analysis**

The National Center for Education Statistics has found that private school principals have more influence in deciding the curriculum taught than public school principals. Additionally, private schools aren't influenced by governmental bodies including the State Department of Education. Finally, due to smaller class sizes, there is more hands on participation and access to technology for each individual student, which can be helpful in seeing results at a faster rate.

Charter schools have also found similar results, and have greater autonomy due to freedom from some of the regulations imposed upon district schools. Additionally, charter schools have a spillover benefit in that if OneSeventeen Media is successful in one school, that may lead to opportunities for easier expansion into other schools of the same charter.

#### **Recommendation**

OneSeventeen Media should *expand their model to reach out to private schools* such as St. Michael's Catholic Academy of St. Stephen's Episcopal School, and charter schools such as Harmony as a way to sell their product at a faster rate.

## **Sub-Problem 3.**

### **Social Media**

#### **Context**

As mentioned in the discussion of the current marketing strategy, OneSeventeen has a plethora of content in its arsenal. However, the company lacks engagement on its posts, especially on Facebook and Twitter. On the other hand, its Instagram page has more activity from followers, but its brand message is more convoluted.

#### **Research and Analysis**

The average likes on a OneSeventeen Facebook post is one, while a OneSeventeen tweet averages at around two likes. Because both platforms have both quality and quantity in content, the issue isn't the content itself— it's the disconnect between OneSeventeen and followers that are engaging, relevant, and supportive of OneSeventeen's cause. In contrast, on OneSeventeen's Instagram platform, each post generates around 13 likes. The company's Instagram account differs from its Facebook and Twitter pages because while it has more activity, its posts range from professional promotions to personal pictures with family and friends. Because the page's biography states that it's "an AI EdTech company" uploading personal pictures in the company account takes away from OneSeventeen's focus on school safety.

#### **Recommendation**

Our recommendation is to *gain active followers by following the strategy "F4F,"* or when a user follows in expectation for a follow back. While this is not ideal for the follower/following ratio, the additional numbers of followers will improve the chances of engagement per post. However, we do not recommend doing the second step for "F4F," as it involves unfollowing an account after it follows the original account. This is because this tactic decreases likeability among accounts that have been unfollowed. Furthermore, representatives of OneSeventeen at speaking events, conferences, or teaching workshops, can more actively push for the company's social media. Followers gained at these events are more likely to become involved with OneSeventeen's social media because they would have more personal relations with the company. Furthermore, as stated in the current marketing plan, we advocate for continuing with Youtube TruView. Videos are some of the most engaging content a company can offer to clients, and currently, the views on OneSeventeen's YouTube videos are lacking. "Information from activity associated with users' Google accounts (such as demographic information and past searches) may be used to influence the ads those users see on YouTube," says Diya Jolly, Director of YouTube Product Management. This means that the videos will be more visible to audiences that are relevant to school safety and edtech.

## **Risks**

### *Creating Diverse Content*

One of the risks associated with presenting and exhibiting is the cost of time it takes to attend these events. Going to more conferences would mean less time to partake in direct interaction with schools and school districts. To offset this cost, OneSeventeen should train representatives to either focus on existing clients or go to conferences and promote OneSeventeen.

### *Marketing to Private/Charter Schools*

One of the risks associated with focusing efforts on private and charter schools is that it may be harder to achieve long term growth. Public schools are part of bigger districts that also communicate with each other. Private and charter schools don't have as much access to these diverse networks. What mitigates this risk is the fact that private and charter schools have more influence over their budget, so OneSeventeen can sell to more schools on a faster timeline. We feel that making short term sales is more important than long term growth at the moment in order to attract necessary investors.

### *Social Media Content*

One of the risks associated with promoting social media is that growth requires monitoring and active management in order to see real benefits. This requires time and engagement every day. Additionally, greater exposure has the potential to attract risks including inappropriate behaviour, negative feedback, information leaks, or hacking. To minimize these risks, OneSeventeen should focus their social media towards a clear message. Additionally, they should have one employee or intern dedicated to social media management in order to have cohesive pages that are active and responsive, and to be able to manage risks immediately.

## TECHNOLOGY

### WEBSITE

Because the website can serve as the first point of contact for schools, parents, and students, it is integral that we analyze the current functions of the OneSeventeen Media website and evaluate potential areas for growth. We found that **content**, **usability**, and **clutter** are the three most impactful factors and can be improved to streamline website functions and augment consumer engagement.

#### Sub-Problem 1

##### Website Content

##### Context

Studies have reported that content is more important than navigation, visual design, functionality, and interactivity. During a user's time spent on a website, how they perceive the content will play a big role starting with their first impression and lasting until they leave. Furthermore, content also relates strongly to user action which for most websites, translates to returning and revisiting the website. In the case of OneSeventeen Media, this represents pursuing a further interest in the product and potential sales.

##### Recommendations

- 1) A **larger photo to text ratio** creates better user appreciation and reception of the website. Furthermore, in regards to content, the photos should also be **relevant and applicable** to the app/product at hand, allowing the user to make a quicker and stronger connection to the products and website. The website uses various snapshots of the apps when discussing different aspects of it (such as those located in the What We Do section). Having images and content pertaining directly to the subject matter, as in this case, will add to the value of the content within the website.
- 2) In the same way that photos can provide "contact point" references, **further information on the philosophies and studies** behind why the app works should be more transparent on the website. This includes information on what SEL or social justice principles are and how they drive the app. In regards to content, this could translate into a section of the website (possibly added onto the Social Impact section) that can provide facts, information, or relevant studies about the mentioned principles such as SEL and its applications to the apps.
- 3) In order to identify the most important content on the website, OneSeventeen Media should **implement a survey** to find which data points and content areas are most relevant for administrators and parents. Avenues for consumer interaction on the website through support lines, interviews, etc. can all help with collection of data. This research can allow OneSeventeen to develop "use cases" and modify the website through consumer interactions.

## Sub-Problem 2

### Usability

#### Context

In order to create a more positive impression with future customers, OneSeventeen can simplify navigation to meet the users' needs and streamline their experience. By reducing the steps for the user to gain information and access to the product, the user would be more willing to pursuing further contact and eventually make a purchase.

#### Recommendations

- 1) OneSeventeen Media should **reformat its "Contact Us" page** to provide clarity for the user. Currently, the bottom of the web page provides an email address as the contact info, but when the user navigates to the "Contact Us" page through the tabs at the top, they are provided with a phone number as well. This mismatch of information should be fixed to provide a seamless continuation of information between pages. Furthermore, on the same page, there is a space for the physical address, but it simply reads "HQ Austin, TX." This may detract from the transparency between the company and the user, so OneSeventeen Media should consider providing the full address. Lastly, when the user navigates to request a demo, they are redirected to a page similar to the contact information page, but the phone number for the same desk reads a different number. If this is for a different desk then the title of the desk should be reflected there, and this information should be included on the "Contact Us" page.
- 2) A very important issue is the **separation between the two products ThinkingApp and reThinkIt!** Currently, the only evident difference between these two products is on the main page where the user has to scroll to the middle of the page and make the distinction for himself. There should be tabs that help distinguish the two different products or talk about them in their separate contexts. It also appears that the two products names are used interchangeably throughout the website, and there are no visible features to separate them from each other.

Another key change that could be made to tab formatting is market segmentation. By separating tabs into tabs for teachers, students, and administrators, OneSeventeen can keep the same content while making it easier to navigate based on the specific customer visiting the site.

- 3) On the main page, there is a section detailing the news coverage of the company on various networks. However, the **color and formatting** of the icons does not immediately signify to the user that they provide pop-up information from its respective news network. Further, there is an **inconsistency** between the the logos as some are pop-up videos while another navigates to a web page of more news articles. The different end results should be evident to the user indicating that one will redirect to a page while another will not.

Along the top of the web page are different tabs that, when moused over, reveal a drop-down list of subsections within that tab. As the user is directed to one of the pages of the subsection, there is no place within that page to redirect to another subsection. The user is left to return to the top of the



page and interact with the drop-down menu again to navigate to another page that was placed in the same category. These pages within the same category should have a sense of continuity between them by either combining each into a larger page and redirect to different headers, or the page should simply include hyperlinks at the bottom to facilitate this navigation.

### Sub-Problem 3

#### Clutter

##### Context

OneSeventeen can improve the aesthetics of the website by condensing descriptions and limiting word count on their website. Currently, with the company's web design, great diversity of information can make "the cognition of information more complicated" (Harper, Michailidou, & Stevens, 2009). Therefore, a cluttered user interface makes it more difficult for a company to inform potential consumers about its product.

##### Research and Recommendations

- 1) Visual complexity (VC) is the perceptual judgement of "quantity of objects, clutter, openness, symmetry, and variety of colors" on a web page (Harper, Michailidou, & Stevens, 2009). High VC is commonly associated with complex pages that have high density of content, such as OneSeventeen Media's site, and can lead to a negative user experience. Thus, the company should **implement greater concision** in its site. Furthermore, the balance between text and graphics greatly influences visual appeal. *A ratio between text and images should be 3:1 or 1:1* "to elicit the best ratings of visual" satisfaction (Lin et al., 2013). Additionally, a design category utilized on websites known as SAPAT (same amount of pictures as text) "were perceived as more aesthetic and led to the best memory performance" (Harper, Michailidou, & Stevens, 2009). **Proportionate amounts of text and graphics** is also regarded with more professionalism among users. As a result, OneSeventeen Media can lower its visual complexity by revising texts and incorporating more relevant graphics onto their site.
- 2) Because limited wording and organization are fundamental in a user's website analysis, each workspace within a site should be distinctive in purpose. For example, on every interior pages, OneSeventeen Media displays a "Get A Demo" button at the header. Though consistent **visual elements can help reinforce messages** and guide user interaction, the over repetition of "Get A Demo" rather disrupts navigability. An interior page focused on company results should exclusively concentrate on delivering the company's response and impact. By linking the web page to another task, the "Get A Demo" button gives consumer's an opportunity to diverge their attention from the intended purpose of a specific interior page.

#### APP

It is important to keep up with the constant evolvement of technology in today's society. Because the app works directly with student and scientific communities, there is a need to re-evaluate the content and organization of the OneSeventeen app. In this section, we explore **potential modifications to the OneSeventeen Media app** that will align with modern trends.

## Sub-Problem 1 Functionality

### Research and Recommendations

- 1) Because the wording of questions frame and suggest responses, it is important that the app's 17 questions are impartial to best analyze user behavior. Therefore, question 15 prompting "What do you think is the best consequence for what you did?" risks using targeted language. Rather than using positive or impartial wording, the phrase "consequence for what you did" assumes fault and can make a student feel ashamed (Drexler, 2013). Furthermore, most of the inquiries are descriptive and concerned with the what's and how's of the incident. To expand more upon the introspective questions, *the app should also examine the why's of the incident*. This specifically concentrates on the student's motivation and emotions that caused them to behave poorly.

Asking users to identify their feelings before the seventeen questions would also increase their self-awareness and emotion recognition. In doing so, users will be able to "discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately" prior to in depth introspection (Foster, 2016). This emotional information can also help guide their thinking and behavior (Foster, 2016). A research study further stated that "altering the information or considerations available to individuals, frames may influence not only opinion, but also the emotional responses that people report" (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004). Re-formatting the app can thus encourage better user responses. Yet, among the emotions listed in the "What were you feeling..." section, additional improvements can be made. This question represents a closed structure in which the limited feelings offered restrict the user's response. Instead, a more extensive list of both positive and negative feelings should be provided (e.g. ashamed, depressed, nervous, self-conscious, tired, calm, inspired, motivated) as well as a customized response option. Positive feelings should be included as the emotional recognition questions can be asked regarding the user's feelings at the moment, during the incident, and after the seventeen questions. To increase user interface, these emotions should also be listed in alphabetical order for effective usability.

- 2) A *recording function should be employed* into the app system to provide user's another means of expressing their thoughts and experiences. Some adolescents find it easier to articulate their feelings verbally as opposed to writing them. Therefore, each of the seventeen questions could offer a recording feature that allows the student to share their response as an audio clip. Verbal responses are also beneficial as intonations and verbal cues can contribute to understanding the context of the user's narrative.
- 3) To measure the success of the app, it is important to *outline what constitutes as success*. To test if the app is successful, one has to also decide how it is successful compared to the status quo. This can be done by simply claiming to improve certain aspects of the school, or it can be done by setting a goal for criteria that it promises to meet. To ensure that the success of the app is measured accurately, there are a few requirements for the measurements. These measurements should be measured against the same population over the course of at least 2-4 years and in the context of the school environment as well as individual student performance. The measurements should also be done quickly and often, in a format that can accurately compare schools, and should include

qualitative as well as quantitative measurements. Qualitative measurements include teacher-student interactions and critical thinking, which can be measured through surveys of the staff, parents, and students. The quantitative includes standardized test scores, graduation rates, attendance, violence, suspension rates, dropout rates. There are many criteria that can be measure, and it is important to measure the ones that are in line with the goals and missions of the company. The company can then market the data that it has measured, especially those that it has decided are most representative of their goals and missions.

#### 4) Versions

- a) OneSeventeen Media currently separates the apps into two age groups. We believe that the latter age group bracket (3rd - 12th) is too wide and could be ***modified to create a bracket with more similar ages within the age range***. Research into student discipline and conflict resolution has shown that students have different approaches depending on age (among other factors such as gender). In the specific study, older students were found to be more conflict averse as compared to younger students, who tend towards competitiveness. Research also identifies differences in discipline styles between high school and elementary teachers. In both cases, the research shows a difference in attitude and thinking of age groups. Therefore, an age range spanning 3rd to 12th grade is very large and cannot accommodate these differences in age groups as well. While new age ranges/apps do not need to be developed, the difference in the two current age ranges could be reduced.
- b) The current applications connect students to the teachers/administrators. However, the discipline system could be ***improved with a parent component*** that allows parents or guardians to be involved within the process, which many experts in education encourage. In the case of OneSeventeen's applications, there is opportunity to facilitate parental involvement in the process. While the specifics of implementation remain open-ended, a good start would be sharing some data on the students such as frequency of discipline or incidents. In addition, parents could contribute to the questions/process given towards students. Overall, allowing the students' parents to take a supplemental role could lead to improved effectiveness of the discipline process.

#### RISKS

There are a few concerns worth noting in terms of these modifications to the website and app. First, with all changes, there can be mixed results, so if a change to the website leads to a decrease rather than increase in consumers, it is important to think about how to reverse that change. Rather than going through the time-consuming process of testing each component over and over again during prototyping, the risks of changing the website can be mitigated by saving drafts. Moreover, due to the volume of proposed changes, a more gradual change that allows OneSeventeen Media to adjust and measure each component can be useful to gauge success and to ease the customer base into the modifications. Finally, these modifications are not financially straining but can be time intensive. The risks of having to spend a lot of time or resources implementing these changes can be mitigated by offloading tasks to volunteer student groups who are passionate about mental health in education.

## FINANCE

### Change in Sale Process

In order to accomplish OneSeventeen Media's goals of national expansion and increased sales to schools across the country, the sales process needs to be more flexible and scalable. Flexibility will come by paring down the sales process to make it easier to maneuver, focus, and pivot, if needed, to different methods of selling to schools. Scalability will come through developing replicable sales infrastructure that can be applied to targeted schools and districts.

### Sub-Problem 1

#### Product and Pricing

##### Context

The pricing structure of OneSeventeen's products is crucial when making a sale. In order to discern much of the comparative pricing in the EdTech industry, we analyzed market trends and the pricing structure of other educational technologies.

##### Research

We have compared the prices of companies that explicitly state their pricing model on their website to analyze the market prices of the educational technologies. Since most products are curriculum-based educational technologies, we analyzed mental health wellness technology such as YOU at college, Moodnotes, and iCBT. YOU at college cost ranges from \$0.75 to \$3.00 per student per year depending on campus enrollment, Moodnotes is offered at \$3.99, and iCBT is offered at \$4.99 per student per year. When compared to the prices of OneSeventeen Media of \$12.50 per students, it is evident that the current pricing model is more expensive than other mental health wellness technologies. This is not inherently negative given the different types of technology and services, but it means that OneSeventeen needs to alter the approach in integrating its product with schools.

##### Recommendations

- 1) OneSeventeen Media should change its product implementation model to ***highlight the demo and integration process*** to match the higher pricing of the product. Many strong products in the industry offer a more in-depth demonstration of the technology before purchase. While it might be difficult to give non-paying customers full access to OneSeventeen's product, having a process by which the school system can analyze the technology will allow for a more tailored approach to sales that the OneSeventeen Media team can adapt to each school and staff. Furthermore, OneSeventeen Media will be able to adjust the sales and integration process based on a slower, more maneuverable roll-out. This can impact the success OneSeventeen Media has in renewing current sales and completing future transactions with schools around the country. It will also enable OneSeventeen to demonstrate growth in the sales and customer experience which are critical in expanding to schools throughout the nation.
- 2) OneSeventeen Media should ***not explicitly state its pricing*** on their website. According to the research in "Edweek Market Brief," since educational technology is a relatively new business, placing a monetary value to the product might be disadvantageous since it will push consumers away to lower priced products. OneSeventeen Media does not yet have a recognizable brand name that

automatically communicates value like Apple or Facebook. Therefore, without prior knowledge of the company or its technology, the customers are more likely to make a decision by comparing the explicit monetary values instead of evaluating the technology itself. Instead, prices can be negotiated with the school districts, which will allow the sales team to tailor their pitch and pricing to the specific school system building on a set of pre-established product prices.

## **Sub-Problem 2**

### **Onboarding and Training**

#### **Context**

Onboarding in educational technology is a critical part of the sales process. We believe that making the onboarding process more efficient will accelerate the entire sales process. At the same time, we recognize that the onboarding process with educational technology is complicated and time-intensive given the necessity to make sure that accurate information is conveyed to the teachers and administrators who will be engaging with the product.

#### **Research**

One of the key inefficiencies we have identified in OneSeventeen Media's process is the lack of individuals who can conduct the training. Beth has to be on site for the training to occur, which automatically lengthens the onboarding process due to scheduling and availability. Similarly, if multiple different schools in different regions express interest in the product, we think this could pose a threat to completing a sale if there are scheduling conflicts between schools.

#### **Recommendations**

- 1) OneSeventeen Media should increase *the number of people who can train schools*. The new hires can be involved in actively going to schools to onboard the users or in developing a more intuitive onboarding system. Formalizing a new system will make it easier for schools to schedule and implement the program and allow OneSeventeen Media sales representatives to facilitate the onboarding process. Training others to facilitate onboarding would also enable the company to execute multiple sales during the same period and hold training events on the same days.
- 2) The second suggestion is to *minimize the length of training sessions*, possibly by offering parts of the training as online modules to be completed. We recognize that it can be difficult to reduce the length of training sessions because using the OneSeventeen technology in the classroom requires a deep understanding of how best to interact with students. However, shorter training sessions will increase the efficiency of sales by allowing for more tailored training sessions and dynamic integration of the product into the school system. Changing the structure of the onboarding process will save money by reducing the time spent at schools and allowing more sales to occur.

## **Sub Problem 3**

### **Customer Acquisition and Targeting Strategies**

#### **Context**

One of the core metrics that OneSeventeen Media should look at is their customer acquisition costs (CAC). Currently, OneSeventeen Media's main cost for customer acquisition comes from training schools to use their

product. Current costs do not reflect the most desirable CAC for OneSeventeen Media. Additionally, to increase sales, OneSeventeen Media should focus on certain times of the year to sell their product.

## Research

Most estimates online say that 8-10% of a company's budget should be devoted to marketing.

Increasing funding for marketing will help OneSeventeen's customer acquisition become more efficient and streamlined. While increasing spending on marketing and advertising may increase CAC in the short term, OneSeventeen Media may see a gradual increase in customer acquisitions in the long run as a broader customer base interacts with their product.

In addition to looking at CAC, it is imperative to understand the timing for making educational technology sales. Schools start looking for new products about a year in advance to their implementation. In the fall, around August or September, schools usually start looking for new products for the following school year. This would be the best time to initiate conversations with school districts and administrators about what OneSeventeen Media could provide to the district. If the district is convinced that OneSeventeen Media's products would be beneficial, they would likely ask for a trial period the following February and March, during which the training would take place. Finally, schools will look to finalize a contract during June/July, and the product will be introduced to the district the following August. It is recommended that OneSeventeen Media adheres to this timeline to maximize its customer outreach and sales.

## Recommendations

- 1) OneSeventeen Media should **target school administrators** as they are directly involved in choosing whether or not to implement OneSeventeen Media's products. OneSeventeen Media can directly access administrators at national conferences such as the National Principals Conference or the ACSD Conference on Teaching Excellence. These conferences represent the best opportunity for OneSeventeen Media to get quick national exposure to a variety of school districts.
- 2) OneSeventeen Media should also **focus on marketing to teachers**. Their input on how the products could be integrated into a classroom setting provides valuable data for school administrators. OneSeventeen Media should advertise on sites targeting teachers, especially Common Sense Media, which functions as a review site for teachers regarding educational products. Additionally, in-person advertising at national teacher conventions such as TCEA or SXSWedu could be very useful if OneSeventeen Media employs a demo product to allow quick and efficient displays of the strengths and capabilities of its products. Overall, OneSeventeen Media should focus on administrators and teachers in different advertising capacities, as they will have the highest impact on whether or not OneSeventeen Media can conduct a sale with a district.

## Sub-Problem 4

### Grant Funding for Schools

#### Context

Many schools do not have the budgeted funding to purchase new EdTech products, so it is necessary to pursue external funding for cutting-edge technology. Grants present one of the best options for schools to seek outside funding to purchase from OneSeventeen Media. Grants allow for targeted use of funds for OneSeventeen Media's products so schools can make purchases within the broad bounds of the grant's

restrictions. There are a number of grants that allow for funding opportunities for schools to purchase OneSeventeen's products.

## Research

Many programs operate nationally, allowing for independence from state-specific targeting restrictions. These include the State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship grants and the Youth Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Initiative Grant (\$30,000). However, there are also state and county specific grants, such as the Stronger Schools Grant (\$5,000) in northern Washington counties, available to serve as nexus points for spreading in other states.

There are several key characteristics defining the current trend of most grants available. First, they tend to be small, focused impact grants that provide only several thousand dollars. Second, they tend to be designed for individual schools to utilize. Third, they tend to be made for the purchase of one specific product or program.

## Recommendations

- 1) OneSeventeen Media should compile a list of ***potential grants*** in areas where expansion is sought and then pitch to schools who may need funding assistance with a proposition of both OneSeventeen Media products and the grants to fund them.
- 2) OneSeventeen Media should highlight grant funding for schools in their ***sales pitch*** while developing a new, expansion-minded sales strategy.
- 3) OneSeventeen Media should ***create a strategy*** that outlines how schools can secure the grants that they need. Many schools may not be familiar with applying for grants specific to mental health and will need guidance.

## Risks

### *Product and Pricing*

The main sales process recommendation is to create a more flexible and scalable approach. The first aspect of this is to adjust product integration with an extended demo approach that allows for tailored training and onboarding and more organic integration of the technology into the school or school system. This recommendation carries with it the most significant risk - by reducing the upfront implementation, OneSeventeen Media will be reducing barriers the customers might have both to adding on further services and to discontinuing service altogether. However, embedded in this risk is the evaluation of the quality of product and training from OneSeventeen Media; if the school system feels that both of these aspects are positive, the risk is significantly mitigated.

### *Onboarding and Training*

The onboarding and training system is the critical piece we identified that will most likely determine the efficiency of the sales process as a whole. While the length of training is important to have informed users, we think that there may be areas that could be improved to make the process more efficient. Many schools have similar days for teacher work days, and because Beth has to be there to train the teachers, there is a possibility that deals may fall through. In general, the 6-8 hour training sessions also pose a threat to sales because teachers may not have that kind of free time to complete training. If the follow-ups occur in person, this

same issue may arise. However, a more modular training and onboarding process pose the risk of a school only partially integrating the OneSeventeen Media technology. This could mean they are assessing an incomplete product or simply do not apply it correctly. However, if the training is completed in a certain time frame with shorter and more adjustable training sessions, the benefits could outweigh the risks.

#### *Customer Acquisition and Targeting Strategies*

The targeted marketing spending strategy contains minimal risks. This proposal outlines a more nuanced and targeted strategy to marketing that directs OneSeventeen's products towards the main actors in the technology implementation process.

#### *Grant Funding for Schools*

Similarly to the targeted marketing strategies, the external funding recommendations are mostly additive or neutral in their possible risk. Adding on a positive component to the sales process in pitching schools does not take a significant amount of time or monetary commitment on the part of OneSeventeen Media, so it carries minimal inherent risk. However, it does require some person within the company to gather all possible information regarding grants available to schools, which is a potential cost.

## **CONCLUSION**

OneSeventeen Media offers a promising solution to social and emotional well-being among school children in an age when self-care has never been more highly prioritized. However, it must adapt to the current market and utilize new solutions in order to thrive and differentiate itself from the competition. By focusing on tech-based solutions, developing partnerships, and adjusting its marketing and financial strategies, OneSeventeen Media has the potential to significantly increase its revenue through sales across the United States and deliver a powerful social impact.



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