

Final Report Summary

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Executive Summary (English)

SharePower is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Limburg, whose main vision is to provide equal opportunities in Limburg, especially for women. The NGO approached the Think Tank project to reduce the perception of them as 'negative' or 'nagging', despite the harsh facts on gender gap. The goal for the Think Tank group is to provide solutions for SharePower to present those facts and increase awareness while not appearing as negative. To fulfil the group's goal, the Think Tank used a literature review, interviews with different organizations and experts, and a social media and website analysis to answer the ultimate research question "*How can SharePower approach the problem of receiving negative comments?*". The methodology guided the Think Tank towards concrete recommendations revolving around communication.

While the client claimed that the lack of awareness caused the negative comments, the Think Tank decided to center the recommendations around communication, a more approachable solution for SharePower. Indeed, focusing on the conservativeness of Limburg, the demonization of feminism and the lack of unity amongst women was problematic considering their external origin, making it difficult for both the Think Tank and SharePower to find clear solutions to resolve the negative perceptions. Findings of research also highlighted the importance of improving communication skill to gain popularity, either through content, design, or networks.

By focusing on communication and using the methodology presented above, the Think Tank created four categories of recommendations: (1) Corporate Identity, (2) Increase of credibility, (3) Specificity of content, and (4) Potential Projects. The first set of recommendations revolves around the presentation of the NGO and its goal as well as its target group. The increase of credibility concerns the use of academia, references as well as expansion of networks, a way for SharePower to increase its scope and improve its image. The third recommendation analyses the themes covered by SharePower and provides suggestions for improving the NGO's communication of content to remain consistent. The final set of recommendations suggest additional projects for SharePower to improve its communication skills with its audience while reducing its negative perception.

All these recommendations provide a concrete guideline for SharePower to follow, and all should be combined as each recommendations influence another. The Think Tank has also included examples to facilitate the visualization of such recommendations. By using those recommendations, SharePower can reduce the negative perception while enlarging its scope and gaining a wider audience.

Executive Summary (Nederlands)

SharePower is een in Limburg gevestigde niet-gouvernementele organisatie (NGO), met als belangrijkste missie om in Limburg gelijke kansen voor iedereen –en in het bijzonder voor vrouwen– te bieden. De ngo benaderde het Think Tank-project teneinde de over haar bestaande perceptie als zijnde 'negatief' of 'zeurpieten' te verminderen ondanks de voorliggende harde feiten over de genderkloof. Het doel van de Think Tank-groep is om oplossingen voor SharePower aan te dragen om het publieke bewustzijn te vergroten en deze feiten op zodanige wijze te presenteren zonder negatief over te komen. Hiertoe maakte de Think Tank gebruik van literatuur-onderzoek, interviews met verschillende organisaties en experts, alsmede een analyse van sociale media en websites ter beantwoording van de uiteindelijke onderzoeksvraag: "Hoe kan SharePower negatieve commentaren aanpakken?". Deze methodiek leidde de Think Tank tot concrete aanbevelingen op het gebied van communicatie. Terwijl de klant beweerde dat het gebrek aan bewustzijn de oorzaak was van de negatieve commentaren, besloot de Think Tank om haar aanbevelingen te centreren rond communicatie, een meer toegankelijke oplossing voor SharePower.

Een focus op het conservatieve karakter van Limburg, de demonisering van het feminisme en het gebrek aan eenheid onder vrouwen was problematisch, omdat zij externe factoren constitueren. Die maakten het moeilijk voor zowel de Think Tank als SharePower om duidelijke oplossingen aan te dragen om deze negatieve percepties weg te nemen. De bevindingen van het onderzoek benadrukten ook het belang van het verbeteren van de communicatievaardigheden om populariteit te winnen, hetzij door inhoud, ontwerp of netwerken. Zo zouden concrete aanbevelingen rond communicatie tot een meer toegankelijke oplossing voor SharePower moeten leiden.

Door de focus te leggen op communicatie en gebruik te maken van de hierboven gepresenteerde methodologie, creëerde de Think Tank vier categorieën van aanbevelingen: (1) Bedrijfsidentiteit, (2) Vergroten van geloofwaardigheid, (3) Nadere duiding van inhoud en (4) Potentiële projecten. De eerste reeks aanbevelingen draait om hoe de ngo zichzelf, haar doelen en doelgroep profileert. Het vergroten van de geloofwaardigheid betreft het gebruik van gremia, referenties en het uitbreiden van netwerken, een manier voor SharePower om haar bereik uit te breiden en haar imago te verbeteren. De derde aanbeveling analyseert de thema's die SharePower behandelt en geeft suggesties voor het verbeteren van de consistentie van NGO's inhoudelijke boodschap. In de laatste reeks aanbevelingen worden aanvullende projecten voor SharePower voorgesteld om haar communicatievaardigheden met haar publiek te verbeteren en tegelijkertijd haar negatieve perceptie terug te dringen.

Al deze aanbevelingen bieden SharePower een concrete koers om te volgen. Omdat de aanbevelingen elkaar beïnvloeden, moeten ze alle gecombineerd worden. De Think Tank heeft ook voorbeelden opgenomen om de visualisatie van dergelijke aanbevelingen te vergemakkelijken. Door gebruik te maken van deze aanbevelingen kan SharePower de negatieve perceptie verminderen en tegelijkertijd haar bereik vergroten en een breder publiek aanspreken.

Problem Analysis

SharePower's request:

"Write a report that provides recommendations on raising more awareness and giving insight into the gender gap without being an organisation that is perceived as 'nagging' and 'negative'."

Research Questions:

1. **Why** is SharePower perceived as '**negative**' or '**nagging**'?
2. **How** can SharePower **approach the problem** of receiving negative comments?

Think Tank's findings:

SharePower should address the **internal factor of communication** to **effectively** and **concisely** highlight the prevalence of the gender gap in Limburg.

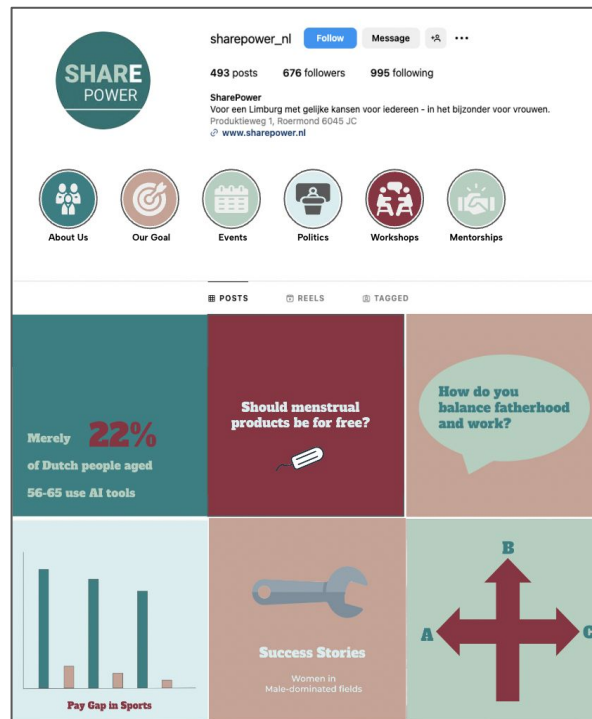
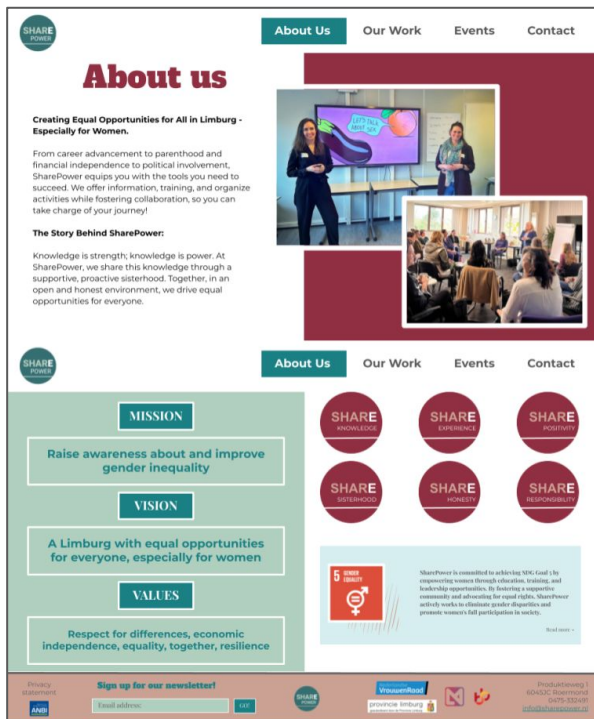
Recommendations

After conducting extensive literature search, numerous interviews, and analyzing SharePower's website and social media in detail, four concepts were identified which will allow SharePower to improve their communication.



Corporate Identity

→ RESTRUCTURE YOUR WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA



- Use consistent design to appeal to the target audience
- Convey the message clearly and confidently
- Define SharePower's goal through highlight summaries

→ INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH AUDIENCE

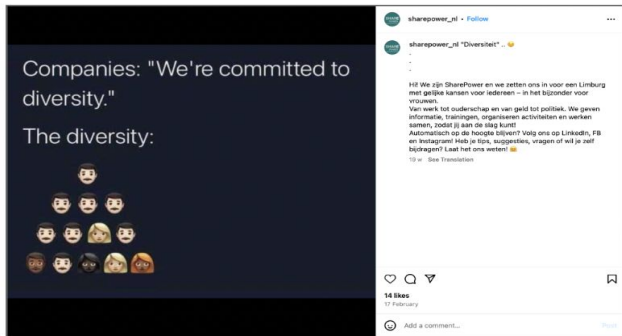
Understand your audience to be able to communicate more effectively. This will allow the **viewer to be seen** and be more **connected** to SharePower's content. Therefore, people will **listen more attentively** and become **aware** of the hidden sexism in everyday life.

- Create surveys in Instagram stories
- Collaborate with different organizations in posts

Credibility is Key

→ IMPLEMENT ACADEMIA

Using **sources** for posts increases SharePower's **credibility** and decreases the risk of “**assumed issues**”.



- Reference other sources when sharing information
- Use more statistics and facts in posts

→ EXPAND THE NETWORK

Broadening SharePower's outreach will help **establish its value** and become **more respectable**. This will in turn **increase its performance** and **resource mobilization**. Starting **partnerships** with other NGOs will be a win-win szenario.

- Reach out to local businesses / Dutch Chamber of Commerce
- Clearly define the mission statement and give possible partners concrete reasons for collaboration

Specificity of Content

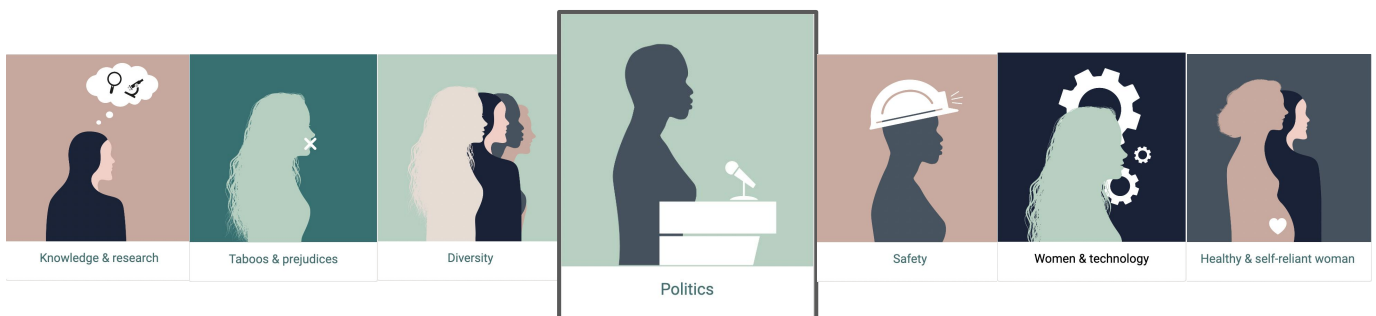
→ RECOLLECTING STORIES

The women that generally provide negative feedback to feminist discourse, claim to have **never been subjected to gender inequality** and **don't consider it as a relevant issue**. By **collectivizing** these stories together, they are seen as pertaining to a **larger structural problem** rather than **individual micro problems**.

- Gather stories of women overcoming gender based discriminations
- Compile a book or film retelling these stories

→ SPECIFYING THE CONTENT

Address the **hidden aspects** of the gender gap, with which the target audience might **identify better with**:
Focus on **politics**, and highlight unseen sexism **within that theme specifically**.



- **Focus** on one or two themes to improve the **consistency** and **specificity** of content

Potential Projects

Projects to increase SharePower's public profile without increasing negative comments or nagging perceptions.

→ **MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS**

Create a mentorship project aimed at connecting SharePower with local companies facing labor market shortages. The companies can advertise their elimination of the gender pay gap, creating a win-win situation for both parties. This can unite the community and directly connect the older and younger generations in a beneficial way.

→ **SHAREPOWER WORKSHOPS**

Sharing stories might lead women to recognize and acknowledge the discriminatory practices. Workshops that break into smaller groups can be used to discuss, listen, and share personal experiences and raise awareness about the impact of 'hidden' sexism.

→ **COMMUNICATION SKILLS WORKSHOPS**

Training other employees or board members on how to communicate more effectively will greatly impact how the audience receives the message. Workshops that SharePower itself will attend could cover: message content, body language, attitude, and tone.

→ **ENGAGING WITH LOCAL POLITICIANS**

SharePower could highlight female success stories by collaborating with local female politicians as role models. These provide tangible examples of how activism surrounding gender inequalities are successful. This collaboration could be in the form of workshops or mentorship programs.