



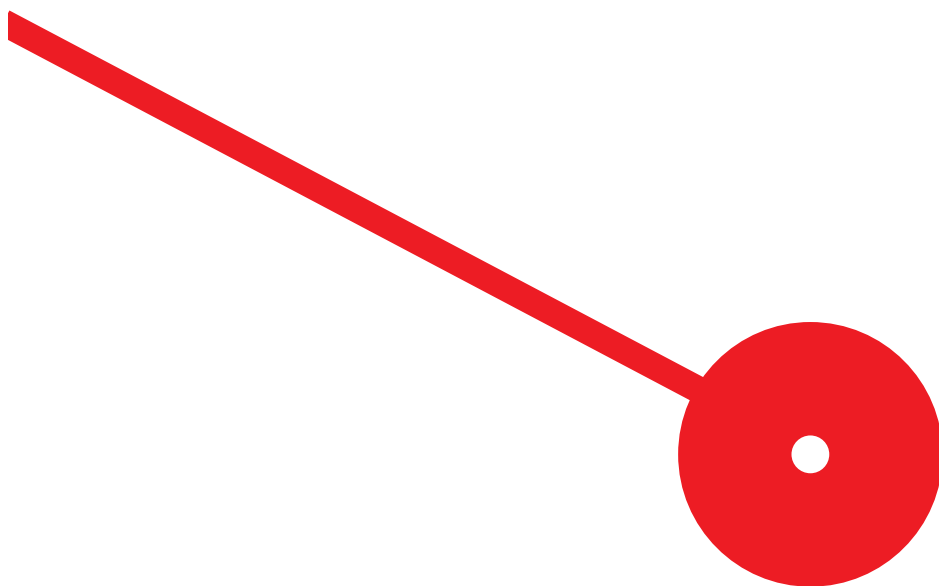
Navigating Sustainable Mobility: Key Learnings from a Marketing Internship at a Premium Transportation Start-Up

Adriana Maria Moreira Capelas

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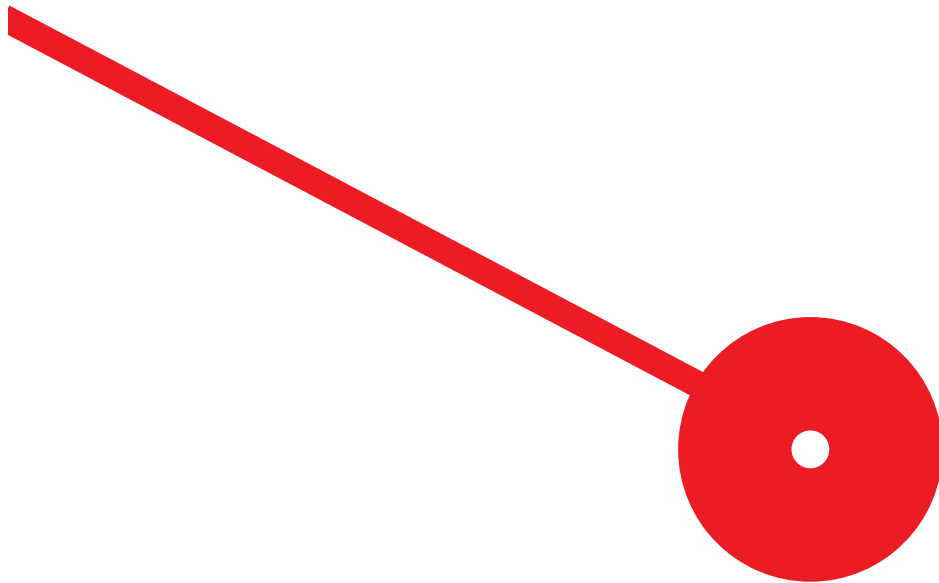
Adriana Maria Moreira Capelas

Internship Report

Presented to Instituto de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto to
obtain the master's degree in Intercultural Studies for Business,
under the supervision of Prof. Sara Cerqueira Pascoal

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First and foremost, I want to thank my parents, Clara and Nuno, and my sister, Camila, for all their support and encouragement. Your love and sacrifices have paved the way for my achievements, and I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done.

To my grandfather, thank you for always being there for me.

To my friends, thank you to my people for being a part of the most amazing book full of unimaginable stories. Each of you has contributed to the chapters of my life in unique ways, filling them with laughter, support, and unforgettable moments. The memories we have created together will always hold a special place in my heart.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Professor Sara Pascoal. Your guidance and patience have been instrumental in my development during this internship. You have provided me with invaluable insights and support. Your dedication is truly inspiring, and I am deeply thankful for all that you have done for me.

This experience has been a remarkable journey, and I am grateful to have shared it with all of you. Thank you for being there for me every step of the way.

Abstract:

This report is set as part of the requirements for completing my Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies for Business. The internship at Eel Rides, a start-up specialising in sustainable premium transportation, was an integral aspect of my academic journey, as it allowed me to directly apply the intercultural communication and business strategies I have studied. The purpose of this report is to document my experiences and reflect on how this internship has enriched my understanding of the intersection between culture and business in a dynamic, globalised industry.

I chose to undertake this internship not only to put into practice what my master's education has given me but also to gain practical experience that would prepare me for future career opportunities. By working in this start-up environment, I aimed to apply the knowledge acquired during my master's program, particularly in areas like intercultural communication, business strategies, and sustainable practices. This experience broadened my professional skills and equipped me with a more profound understanding of navigating and contributing to international business environments.

Throughout the internship, I was entrusted with several key responsibilities, including managing the marketing department, developing innovative ideas to enhance brand visibility, and conducting market research to identify new opportunities. These tasks challenged me to think critically and creatively, enhancing my problem-solving abilities and leadership skills. On a personal level, this internship has significantly boosted my confidence, adaptability, and ability to work effectively in a multicultural team. The combination of these experiences has profoundly shaped my career trajectory, providing me with the practical tools and insights needed to excel in the global business landscape.

Key-Words: Brand Visibility; Sustainable Business; EV Transportation; Content Creation; Marketing Innovation

Resumo:

Este relatório foi elaborado como parte dos requisitos para a conclusão do meu mestrado em Estudos Interculturais para Negócios. O estágio na Eel Rides, uma start-up especializada em transporte premium sustentável, foi uma componente fundamental do meu percurso académico, permitindo-me aplicar diretamente a comunicação intercultural e as estratégias empresariais que estudei. O objetivo deste relatório é documentar as minhas experiências e refletir sobre como este estágio enriqueceu o meu entendimento sobre a interseção entre cultura e negócios numa indústria dinâmica e globalizada.

Optei por realizar este estágio não só para pôr em prática o que a minha formação académica me proporcionou, mas também para adquirir uma experiência prática que me preparasse para futuras oportunidades de carreira. Ao trabalhar neste ambiente de start-up, pretendi aplicar o conhecimento adquirido durante o meu mestrado, especialmente em áreas como comunicação intercultural, estratégias empresariais e práticas sustentáveis. Esta experiência não só ampliou as minhas competências profissionais, mas também me proporcionou uma compreensão mais profunda de como navegar e contribuir em ambientes empresariais internacionais.

Durante o estágio, fui incumbida de várias responsabilidades, incluindo a gestão do departamento de marketing, o desenvolvimento de ideias inovadoras para aumentar a visibilidade da marca e a realização de pesquisas de mercado para identificar novas oportunidades. Estas tarefas desafiaram-me a pensar de forma crítica e criativa, aprimorando as minhas capacidades de resolução de problemas e liderança. A nível pessoal, este estágio aumentou significativamente a minha confiança, adaptabilidade e capacidade de trabalhar eficazmente numa equipa multicultural. A combinação destas experiências moldou profundamente o meu trajeto profissional, proporcionando-me as ferramentas práticas e os insights necessários para ter sucesso no panorama empresarial global.

Palavras-chave: Visibilidade de Marca; Negócio Sustentável; Transporte Elétrico; Criação de Conteúdo; Inovação em Marketing

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List of abbreviations

EVs – Electric Vehicles
ULEZ – Environmental, Social, and Governance
AI – Artificial Intelligence
GPS – Global Positioning System
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
NO₂- Nitrogen Dioxide
CO₂ - Carbon Dioxide
MaaS- Mobility-as-a-Service
UAE – United Arab Emirates
TFL – Transport for London
CAGR – Compound Annual Growth Rate
IoT – Internet of Things
B2B – Business to Business
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

This report is a comprehensive account of my internship experience at Eel Rides, a London-based start-up specialising in sustainable premium transportation. The internship was undertaken as part of the requirements for my Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies for Business, a programme that emphasises the practical application of intercultural communication and business strategies in global contexts. Through this report, I aim to provide an in-depth analysis of my contributions, the industry landscape, and the skills and knowledge I applied and gained during this period.

The choice to intern at Eel Rides was driven by my interest in business practices and a desire to put into practice what I have learned during these past academic years. Eel Rides presents a unique case study due to its innovative approach to merging luxury services with sustainability. The company's mission to offer environmentally responsible transportation solutions while maintaining a premium customer experience reflects broader trends in the global transportation industry, making it a fitting environment to apply my academic knowledge and gain relevant professional experience.

In today's rapidly globalizing business landscape, the ability to navigate and thrive in culturally diverse environments has become a critical competency for success. As organizations expand their operations across national borders, they face a myriad of challenges stemming from cultural differences, including communication barriers, divergent business practices, and the need for effective knowledge transfer.

This research paper presents a theoretical framework for developing intercultural competence, a dynamic capability that enables individuals and organisations to excel in the global business arena. At the core of this framework is the concept of cultural intelligence, which refers to an individual's ability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings. (Moon, 2010)

The multicultural reality of the modern business world demands a shift in perspective, where professionals must cultivate a deep understanding of 'the other' as well as 'the self'. This global mindset, characterized by empathy, adaptability, and a willingness to learn, is essential for bridging cultural divides and fostering successful international collaborations. (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Guillén-Yparrea & Soledad, 2020).

This report documents and analyses my internship experience at Eel Rides. It aims to reflect on how the theoretical knowledge I acquired, particularly in intercultural communication and business strategies, was practically applied in a real-world setting. Furthermore, it seeks to evaluate how this experience has contributed to a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between culture and business in a globalized, sustainability-driven industry.

The methodology used in this report follows an Action Research approach (Tripp, 2005). This involved a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting throughout my internship. By actively engaging in tasks such as marketing strategy development, brand visibility initiatives, and market research, I was able to continuously assess and adapt my strategies based on the outcomes and feedback from the multicultural team at Eel Rides. This iterative process enabled me to integrate both theory and practice, ensuring that each cycle of action led to refined and improved outcomes. The report draws on this reflective process to highlight key insights and learning points, grounded in both my experience and academic research on intercultural business practices.

Throughout this report, I will discuss several key aspects of my internship. First, I will provide an overview of the company and the industry, offering insights into the market dynamics and regulatory environments affecting sustainable transportation. I will then detail my specific role and responsibilities at Eel Rides, which included managing the marketing department, developing new strategies for customer engagement, and conducting market research. Additionally, I will reflect on the challenges I encountered, the problem-solving strategies I employed, and the personal as well as professional growth I experienced. Finally, I will conclude with an evaluation of how this internship has shaped my present and, perhaps, my future aspirations.

CHAPTER I – THE START-UP COMPANY: EEL RIDES

1.1. Growing a business (from a marketing p.o.v)

Market research and consumer insights are crucial components for driving business growth through marketing. The process begins by identifying and defining the target audience. Knowing who the potential customers are is essential to ensuring that marketing efforts are focused and effective. According to Kotler and Keller, "The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself." (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

This involves gathering demographic, psychographic, geographic, and behavioral data. Demographic factors, such as age, gender, income, and occupation, provide a foundational understanding of the customer base. Psychographic factors delve deeper, exploring the interests, values, and lifestyles of the audience, which help marketers create emotional and personal connections. Behavioral data, which looks at purchasing habits, brand loyalty, and product usage, is also vital for tailoring marketing strategies. Collecting this information through surveys, interviews, and focus groups enables businesses to form a comprehensive profile of their target customers, guiding their marketing decisions and actions.

Once the target audience is defined, it becomes essential to understand their needs, preferences, and challenges. As Dibb and Simkin point out, "Customer value propositions should be defined in order to cement the brand positioning and satisfy targeted customers." (Dibb & Simkin, 2013). This step involves analyzing what motivates customers to purchase and identifying the problems or pain points they are looking to resolve. Customer feedback, whether through surveys or online reviews, plays a significant role in this process. Businesses also observe trends in consumer behavior to identify any shifts in preferences or emerging demands. For example, increased interest in convenience might prompt a business to focus on streamlining its services or improving product accessibility. By aligning their offerings with these needs, businesses can position themselves as the best solution to the customer's challenges, which in turn helps attract and retain customers.

Staying informed about industry trends is another key aspect of market research. As markets evolve, so do customer preferences and expectations. Armstrong et al. emphasize the importance of trend analysis, stating, "Marketing needs to identify, evaluate, and

select market opportunities and lay down strategies for capturing them " (Armstrong, Kotler, & Opresnik, 2019). Businesses that keep track of these trends can adapt more quickly and capitalize on new opportunities. Researching industry reports, attending conferences, and monitoring competitors are all effective ways of staying updated on market shifts. For example, the growing demand for sustainability has influenced many industries, and businesses that anticipate these kinds of trends can adjust their marketing strategies to stay relevant. In doing so, they not only meet the changing preferences of their customers but also maintain a competitive edge.

In addition to monitoring industry trends, conducting a thorough analysis of the competitive landscape is essential. According to Porter's Five Forces model, understanding competitors is crucial for businesses as "competitive strategy has considerable power to make an industry more or less attractive. At the same time, a firm can clearly improve or erode its position within an industry through its choice of strategy." (Porter, 1985). Analyzing competitors' product offerings, pricing strategies, and marketing campaigns provides valuable insight into what is working in the market and where there may be gaps. Businesses can then position themselves more effectively by focusing on areas where they can offer unique value. For example, if competitors focus on premium products, a business could differentiate itself by offering more affordable alternatives, appealing to price-conscious consumers.

In today's data-driven world, businesses also have the advantage of using analytics to extract meaningful insights from customer data. Tools like Google Analytics help businesses track website traffic and understand visitor behaviour. Chaffey suggests that "To assess the contribution and effectiveness of digital marketing involves the organisation in reviewing how well its online presence is meeting its goals" (Chaffey, 2020). By analysing which content performs best or where customers drop off in the purchasing process, businesses can optimise their online presence to increase conversions. Social media analytics provide similar benefits, allowing businesses to track engagement, monitor follower growth, and refine their strategies based on real-time feedback. These data-driven insights allow businesses to continuously adjust their marketing strategies to better meet customer needs and ensure that their efforts remain effective.

Once sufficient data has been gathered, businesses typically segment their market into smaller groups. Market segmentation, as described by McDonald and Dunbar, is "the

process of splitting customers, or potential customers, within a market into different groups, or segments, within which customers have the same or similar requirements satisfied by a distinct marketing mix." (McDonald & Dunbar, 2013). Segmentation enables businesses to develop more targeted and personalized marketing campaigns. Segments are often based on factors like age, income, behavior, or specific needs. By addressing each segment with tailored messaging, businesses increase their chances of success. For example, younger consumers may respond better to digital marketing campaigns on social media, while older consumers might prefer email marketing. Segmenting the market in this way ensures that marketing efforts are focused on the most relevant groups, maximizing return on investment.

After gathering and analyzing data, businesses often formulate hypotheses about customer behavior or market opportunities. These hypotheses are based on the insights derived from market research and are tested through pilot programs or A/B testing. For example, a business might hypothesize that a certain customer segment will respond positively to a promotional campaign or that a new product feature will drive higher sales. Testing these hypotheses allows businesses to validate their assumptions before fully committing to new strategies, minimizing risk and increasing the likelihood of success.

It is also essential to continuously track changes in consumer behavior. As Kotler and Armstrong note, " Marketing operates within a dynamic global environment. Every decade calls upon marketing managers to think afresh about their marketing objectives and practices." (Kotler & Armstrong, 1999).

Economic changes, technological advancements, and cultural shifts can all affect how customers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. By regularly monitoring customer feedback, tracking social media activity, and analyzing customer satisfaction scores, businesses can stay attuned to these changes. This allows them to quickly adapt their marketing strategies, ensuring that they remain relevant and aligned with customer expectations.

In conclusion, market research and consumer insights are fundamental to any business's growth strategy. By identifying the target audience, understanding their needs, monitoring industry trends, analyzing competitors, and leveraging data analytics, businesses can develop informed and effective marketing strategies. These insights not

only help in creating more focused campaigns but also allow businesses to remain flexible and responsive to changes in the market. Ultimately, continuous market research is the key to maintaining competitiveness and fostering long-term business growth.

1.1.1. Mission, Vision and Values

Eel Rides is driven by a unified Vision, Mission, and set of Values that collectively define its approach to reshaping urban transportation in London. The company is focused on launching a unique carsharing service that exclusively utilizes electric vehicles (EVs). This strategy not only differentiates Eel Rides from other platforms like Uber but also aligns with their commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility¹.

Eel Rides' mission is to provide a safe, reliable, and eco-friendly alternative to urban mobility. By exclusively using electric vehicles, the company aims to significantly reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation in London. Their vision is to lead the way in sustainable transportation, contributing to London's ambitious goals of becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050, with key milestones by 2030. They aspire to set the standard for green mobility and become a major player in helping the city achieve its environmental targets.

London's goal of becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050 is a central part of its strategy to combat climate change and enhance urban sustainability. The city has set an ambitious interim target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, which involves significant reductions in emissions across all sectors, particularly in transportation, energy, and housing. Key initiatives supporting this goal include the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to diminish vehicle emissions, increased investment in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and the promotion of green technologies in both new and existing buildings, according to the article "What 'net-zero carbon' really means for cities," "Efforts such as London's congestion charge, its Ultra Low Emission Zone and

¹ Available at: <https://eelrides.com/>

the UK's plan to ban all new petrol and diesel cars by 2035 are the first steps towards achieving this" (Perry, 2020).

In addition to transforming its transportation system toward zero-emission solutions, including electrifying buses and the London Underground, the city is also focusing on improving energy efficiency in buildings. This involves retrofitting older structures and ensuring that new developments meet high environmental standards. London's zero-carbon strategy aligns with global sustainability goals, aiming to reduce energy poverty, improve air quality, and foster a circular economy where resources are reused and waste is minimized.

Despite the challenges, such as the need for substantial investment and the equitable implementation of these changes, London's comprehensive approach sets it on a path to becoming a leading global example of urban sustainability. The success of these initiatives could significantly enhance the quality of life for residents and position London as a frontrunner in the fight against climate change.

The company's values are deeply interconnected with this mission and vision. Sustainability is at the core of Eel Rides' operations, as it seeks to minimise the environmental impact of its services by operating a 100% EV fleet. Safety is another critical value, with Eel Rides ensuring that all drivers undergo rigorous professional training, including first aid certification, to guarantee that passengers feel secure and well cared for during their journeys. This emphasis on safety is designed to build trust with users, addressing common concerns associated with other car-sharing platforms.

Professionalism underpins Eel Rides' approach, from driver selection and training to customer service. The company is committed to delivering a premium experience that reflects its dedication to quality and reliability. By maintaining high operational standards, Eel Rides aims to position itself as a trustworthy and innovative leader in the car sharing market, one that prioritises both the environment and the well-being of its clients.²

² Available at : <https://eelrides.com/>

Eel Rides is not merely offering a transportation service; it is pioneering a movement towards sustainable and responsible urban mobility. Through their integrated mission, vision, and values, Eel Rides is set to play a significant role in shaping the future of transportation in London, contributing to the city's environmental goals while ensuring that safety and professionalism remain at the forefront of their operations.

1.1.2.- Business model and services

Eel Rides operates as a premium ride-hailing sector in London, focusing on delivering personalized transportation solutions with a strong commitment to sustainability and innovation. The company's overarching goal is to redefine urban mobility through environmentally conscious practices that not only enhance passenger experience but also contribute to a cleaner and more efficient urban environment. Eel Rides aims to reduce road congestion, promote cleaner air, and minimize overall environmental impact, aligning with the increasing demand for sustainable mobility options in today's transportation landscape.

At the core of Eel Rides business model is its electric vehicle (EV) fleet, which represents a significant shift towards zero-emission transportation. By offering an all-EV-only fleet, it stands out in a crowded market where traditional ride-hailing services often rely on fossil fuel vehicles. The decision to exclusively utilize electric vehicles is not merely a response to market demand but also a proactive measure to meet the rising regulations aimed at reducing carbon footprints and enhancing air quality in urban areas. The use of EVs is part of a larger trend driven by increased awareness of environmental issues and growing regulatory pressures from both corporate and governmental entities. For instance, aligning with the Mayor of London's 2030 sustainability goals positions Eel Rides as a leader in eco-friendly transportation, appealing to corporate clients who are increasingly prioritizing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) objectives.

Eel Rides provides luxurious rides in spacious Mercedes vans, accommodating up to four passengers per vehicle. This focus on spaciousness not only caters to individual clients seeking comfort but also positions it as an ideal option for corporate commutes and airport transfers. The vehicles are equipped with high-end amenities and are driven by highly trained professionals, ensuring that every ride is a premium experience. The emphasis on quality service extends beyond mere transportation; it includes personalized experiences

tailored to meet the specific needs of each passenger. For example, Eel Rides employs a specialized driver training program that prepares its drivers to provide top-notch service, ensuring that they are not only skilled in driving but also adept at customer service and understanding the unique requirements of different clients.

A significant aspect of Eel Ride's service offerings is its commitment to inclusivity, particularly through its AI-assisted care rides for disabled passengers. This innovative feature integrates advanced technology to assist drivers in catering to passengers with disabilities, ensuring that they receive the support and comfort necessary for a pleasant journey. By incorporating AI assistance, it enhances the overall riding experience for disabled passengers, demonstrating a commitment to accessibility that sets it apart from competitors. When a passenger with a disability books a ride through the Eel Rides app, the AI system collects information about their specific needs, including mobility requirements, whether they need assistance boarding the vehicle, or if they require special equipment such as wheelchairs. This information is crucial for preparing drivers to offer appropriate assistance. Once a ride is booked, the system alerts the assigned driver about the passenger's needs, ensuring they are well-informed and ready to provide the necessary support. For instance, the AI can inform the driver about the requirement for a ramp for wheelchair access or any specific support the passenger might need.

During the pickup and drop-off process, the AI system can provide real-time guidance to drivers. If a passenger is delayed or encounters challenges getting to the vehicle, the AI may suggest optimal approaches to facilitate boarding. It can recommend alternate routes or parking locations that minimize obstacles, enhancing the overall experience for the passenger.

Eel Rides vehicles are designed with various accessibility features, including ramps and spacious interiors to accommodate passengers with disabilities. The AI system can monitor these features to ensure they are functional and ready for use before the ride begins, further enhancing passenger comfort and safety. After the ride, passengers can provide feedback through the app, which the AI analyzes to identify areas for improvement. This continual feedback loop allows Eel Rides to adapt and enhance its services based on the experiences of disabled passengers, promoting a culture of responsiveness and improvement. The integration of AI in this ride-hailing service exemplifies a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. By using technology to assist

drivers and to tailor experiences to the unique needs of disabled passengers, it not only enhances service quality but also fosters a sense of belonging and independence for all riders.

Moreover, the company recognizes the growing trend towards car-sharing and multi-passenger services as effective solutions to urban transportation challenges. They are developing a driver car-sharing program, allowing multiple passengers to utilize the same vehicle for their journeys. This approach not only optimizes vehicle utilization but also contributes to reducing the number of cars on the road, thus alleviating traffic congestion and lowering emissions. By promoting shared rides, Eel Rides taps into the increasing consumer preference for sustainable transportation options while also maximizing the efficiency of its fleet.

Eel Rides' business model is designed to address the rising demand for sustainable mobility by leveraging its unique service offerings and innovative approach. With environmental consciousness at the forefront, it focuses on providing an exceptional transportation experience that aligns with the values of today's consumers, who are increasingly aware of the need for sustainable practices in all aspects of life. The company's commitment to reducing road congestion and promoting cleaner air reflects broader societal shifts towards responsible consumption and environmental stewardship.

Furthermore, they actively engage with corporate clients, offering tailored transportation solutions for employees. This partnership not only enhances employee satisfaction by providing efficient and comfortable travel options but also supports companies in meeting their sustainability goals. By choosing Eel Rides for corporate transportation needs, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to eco-friendly practices, fostering a positive corporate image and contributing to a sustainable future.

Several factors differentiate Eel Rides from other ride-hailing services in the London market. The all-electric fleet ensures that every ride is a zero-emission experience, addressing the growing demand for eco-friendly transportation solutions. Spacious vehicles designed for comfort and functionality cater to both individual and corporate clients, making them a prime choice for various transportation needs.

Additionally, the specialized driver training program enhances the quality of service, ensuring that drivers are equipped to provide personalized and high-quality experiences. The focus on AI-assisted rides for disabled passengers highlights Eel Rides commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, making it a preferred choice for a diverse range of customers.

In summary, their business model and services are built on a foundation of sustainability, innovation, and quality. By offering premium ride-hailing services through an EV-only fleet, spacious vehicles, and specialized care for disabled passengers, not only they address current transportation challenges but also positions itself as a leader in the shift towards sustainable urban mobility. Through its commitment to reducing environmental impact and enhancing the overall passenger experience, Eel Rides is poised to redefine what it means to travel within an urban environment.

1.1.3- Brand positioning

Eel Rides sets itself apart from conventional car-hailing services by offering more than just transportation. While competitors focus on moving passengers efficiently from point a to point b, they take a broader approach, emphasizing both luxury and environmental responsibility. The company aims to provide a more sophisticated travel experience, tailored to clients who not only seek convenience but also value excellence in service and sustainability as mentioned before. The commitment to luxury and sustainability allows the brand to cater to financially comfortable clients who are willing to pay a premium for an experience that aligns with their values.

A distinctive aspect of the company is its focus on family needs, specifically offering services that cater to parents who require safe transportation for their children. The company aims to provide real-time GPS tracking, ensuring that parents can always monitor their child's location. In an industry where safety assurances are often vague, they want to guarantee a level of protection that other services do not offer, making it a trusted choice for families. This feature not only addresses a practical need but also enhances the brand's appeal by combining convenience with peace of mind, positioning them as a reliable, high-end alternative to more basic car-hailing services.

Eel Rides aims to serve a broad audience, offering a premium service that appeals to those who value quality and sustainability. While it may not be the cheapest option, the focus

is on providing a high-standard, eco-friendly experience. This makes it ideal for people who are willing to invest a little more for added comfort, safety, and environmental responsibility, whether they are frequent travellers, families, or environmentally conscious individuals. Unlike budget-oriented services like *Uber*, which appeal to cost-sensitive customers, theirs is designed for those who are prepared to pay for more than just a ride. These clients are looking for an experience that reflects their values of quality, making them a natural fit for individuals who want their travel choices to align with their lifestyle.

The company has strategically developed its brand messaging to reflect these core values. The communication efforts are primarily focused on building a network of environmentally conscious individuals and businesses.

*LinkedIn*³ plays a central role in this strategy, allowing Eel Rides to connect with companies and professionals who share similar environmental goals. A notable example of this was Eel Rides' engagement with '*Trashy Bags*,' a Gana-based business that collects plastic waste from oceans and transforms it into reusable bags. They see this organization as emblematic of its own mission. "*Trashy Bags* exemplifies the kind of innovative, environmentally responsible business model we want to be associated with," a spokesperson for Eel Rides noted after attending one of the company's presentations.

In addition to *Trashy Bags*, Eel Rides has also formed a connection with '*Rare Earth*,' a company focused on developing a hemp supply chain platform that produces decarbonised products. At a more recent *Rare Earth* business presentation, the company's representatives met with *Suneet Shivaprasad*, co-founder of *Rare Earth*, and discussed similar ideas and exchanged business advice. This interaction led to a social media post on Eel Rides' LinkedIn page, which was later reposted by *Shivaprasad*, generating valuable exposure and additional networking opportunities. According to *Rare Earth*'s website, the company "has secured demand for over 1 million tonnes of carbon-neutral products to be delivered by 2030," making it a highly relevant associate for Eel Rides in its pursuit of environmentally sustainable practices.

³ Available at : www.linkedin.com/in/wellingtoneel

These affiliations illustrate the importance of building strong connections with like-minded businesses, which is a core element of the company I did an internship in's brand strategy. By aligning itself with companies that share its values, they reinforce its image as a forward-thinking, environmentally conscious brand. This approach extends beyond social media to other media outlets. The corporation actively reaches out to websites, magazines, and blogs that focus on startups and green initiatives, seeking to increase its visibility through media features that highlight its unique value proposition.

In terms of how the brand wants to be perceived by the public, Eel Rides aims to strike a balance between professionalism and innovation. By associating with businesses like *Trashy Bags* and *Rare Earth*. The company positions itself as an emerging player in green mobility, committed to making a positive impact on the environment. Through its focus on sustainability and innovative practices, it aims to build a reputation as a brand that prioritizes environmental responsibility while delivering a high-quality transportation experience. As the company expands its communications efforts and continues to engage with environmentally focused businesses, it strengthens its position as a premium service that delivers both luxury and sustainability, ensuring that it stands out in a competitive market.

In summary, the brand positioning is built on its commitment to providing more than just transportation. By focusing on a premium experience, environmental consciousness, and family safety, the company appeals to a specific segment of the market that values quality and sustainability. Its targeted communication strategy, which emphasizes partnerships with other green businesses and proactive media outreach, supports the company's mission to be recognized as a leader in eco-friendly, high-end transportation.

1.1.4- Sustainable practices

London stands at the forefront of sustainable urban development, with a robust regulatory framework designed to encourage environmentally responsible practices across various sectors, particularly transportation. Among these initiatives, the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) has emerged as a pivotal strategy aimed at reducing air pollution and promoting cleaner modes of transport. Implemented in April 2019 and expanded in 2021, ULEZ imposes charges on vehicles that do not meet stringent emissions standards, effectively incentivizing the adoption of electric and low-emission vehicles (Transport

for London, 2023). This regulatory landscape not only helps mitigate the city's notorious air quality issues but also paves the way for businesses like Eel Rides to operate within a framework that prioritizes sustainability.

At the core of Eel Rides' business model is its commitment to an all-electric vehicle (EV) fleet. This strategic decision aligns with the growing regulatory emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and serves to distinguish Eel Rides from traditional ride-hailing services that continue to rely on fossil fuel-powered vehicles. The transition to electric vehicles is more than just a compliance measure; it is a proactive response to the rising demand for sustainable mobility solutions among consumers who are increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of their transportation choices. According to a study conducted by McKinsey & Company (2022), consumer demand for electric vehicles is projected to grow significantly, driven by heightened awareness of climate change and government initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability.

Incorporating advanced technologies into its operations, Eel Rides utilizes smart routing systems that optimize travel paths for efficiency, thereby reducing energy consumption and emissions further. The application of artificial intelligence (AI) allows it to analyze traffic patterns and real-time data, ensuring that the vehicles operate in the most efficient manner possible. This technological integration not only benefits the environment but also enhances the customer experience by minimizing wait times and improving service reliability. By implementing these innovative technologies, Eel Rides positions itself as a forward-thinking company that actively contributes to sustainable urban mobility.

It not only aligns its operations with these regulatory frameworks but also embraces the principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The company recognizes that CSR encompasses a commitment to ethical practices that contribute to the well-being of the community and the environment. In London, where corporate clients are increasingly prioritizing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria, the company positions itself as a reliable partner in meeting these objectives. By providing eco-friendly transportation solutions, the startup enhances the corporate image of its clients, allowing them to showcase their commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices. This alignment not only attracts environmentally conscious consumers but also creates a competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded market.

Moreover, the business aims to actively collaborate with local authorities and environmental organizations to promote sustainable practices in urban transport. Partnerships aimed at expanding electric vehicle infrastructure, such as the installation of charging stations, are crucial for facilitating the widespread adoption of EVs. According to the Mayor of London's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2021), the city aims to increase the number of public charging points to support the growing EV market. Eel Rides can play a vital role in this initiative by advocating for infrastructure development that benefits both its operations and the wider community. Such collaborations demonstrate the potential for public-private partnerships to drive significant progress towards sustainability goals in urban settings.

Community engagement is another critical aspect of fostering sustainable practices, and Eel Rides is well-positioned to contribute to this effort. By educating the public about the benefits of sustainable transportation and the advantages of using electric vehicles and other sustainable actions, the company can inspire a shift in consumer behavior towards more eco-friendly choices. Research indicates that consumer education and awareness are essential components of promoting sustainable mobility (Sustainable Cities International, 2022). Through targeted marketing campaigns, social media outreach, and community workshops, the company can raise awareness about its services and the positive impact they have on reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. Collaborating with local schools and community organizations to promote awareness of electric vehicle benefits can also foster a culture of sustainability within the community.

The shift towards electric vehicles and sustainable practices directly correlates with improvements in air quality and public health in London. The city has long struggled with high levels of air pollution, contributing to serious health issues such as respiratory diseases and cardiovascular problems. The adoption of low-emission vehicles is a crucial step in addressing these challenges. A study by the London Air Quality Network (2021) found that the implementation of ULEZ has led to a significant reduction in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels in the areas surrounding the zone. By exclusively operating an electric vehicle fleet, they contribute to this positive trend, further enhancing the overall health and well-being of London's residents. Moreover, the health benefits of improved air quality extend beyond the immediate environment; they contribute to reduced healthcare costs and increased quality of life for urban dwellers.

Looking to the future, Eel Rides must remain attuned to emerging trends in sustainable mobility. The integration of smart technologies and shared mobility solutions is reshaping urban transport, offering new opportunities for companies committed to sustainability. For instance, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in ride-hailing services allows for more efficient routing, reduced wait times, and optimized vehicle utilization, all of which contribute to a lower environmental impact. They can leverage these advancements to enhance its service offerings and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market. Furthermore, the rise of mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) platforms presents an opportunity for Eel Rides to collaborate with other transportation providers, creating an integrated ecosystem that promotes sustainability and convenience for users.

In comparison to other global cities, London's approach to sustainability in transportation highlights both the challenges and opportunities faced by urban centers. Cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen have made significant strides in promoting cycling and public transport, yet London's emphasis on electric vehicles and regulatory frameworks offers a unique model for sustainable urban mobility. By benchmarking against successful initiatives in these cities, they can identify best practices and innovative strategies to further enhance its sustainability efforts. Additionally, the global movement towards decarbonization is creating a shift in consumer preferences, with more individuals seeking out sustainable transportation options. This presents an opportunity for the company to position itself as a leader in the burgeoning market for sustainable mobility.

Finally, Eel Rides recognizes that its commitment to sustainability extends beyond operational practices; it encompasses customer engagement and behavior change. The company aims to educate and incentivize customers to choose environmentally friendly transportation alternatives, contributing to a collective movement towards sustainability. This can be achieved through loyalty programs that reward eco-friendly choices, transparent communication regarding the environmental impact of rides, and initiatives that encourage the sharing of rides to reduce overall emissions. By fostering a culture of responsible consumption, Eel Rides empowers its customers to be active participants in the transition to greener urban mobility.

In conclusion, the company operates within a dynamic framework of sustainable practices that reflect the broader trends and regulatory initiatives in London. By leveraging its all-electric fleet, engaging in community outreach, and collaborating with local authorities,

the company not only addresses pressing environmental challenges but also positions itself as a leader in the sustainable transportation landscape. As urban mobility continues to evolve, Eel Rides is well-equipped to adapt to emerging trends and contribute meaningfully to a greener, more sustainable future.

1.2 Key findings

Throughout my internship at Eel Rides, several key findings emerged that have significant implications for the company's marketing strategy and my role within the organization. These insights not only contributed to a deeper understanding of the sustainable transportation market but also highlighted the importance of aligning marketing efforts with evolving consumer preferences and regulatory frameworks.

One of the most compelling insights was the growing demand for sustainable transportation solutions in urban areas. As cities around the world grapple with climate change and air pollution, consumers are increasingly prioritising eco-friendly options when choosing transportation services. According to a study conducted by the International Energy Agency, "electric vehicles are one of the driving forces in the new global energy economy that is rapidly emerging – and they are bringing about a historic transformation of the car manufacturing industry worldwide".⁴ This trend is particularly pronounced in London, where public awareness of environmental issues is high, and regulations such as the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) incentivise the use of low-emission vehicles. The implications for Eel Rides are significant; the company's all-electric fleet positions it favourably to capture this emerging market segment. As a marketing intern, understanding this demand allowed me to tailor campaigns that emphasise the company's commitment to sustainability and align with consumer values.

Additionally, the impact of regulatory frameworks cannot be overstated. The ULEZ and other initiatives introduced by the Mayor of London play a critical role in shaping the operational landscape for transportation companies. By imposing fees on high-emission vehicles, these regulations create a competitive advantage for businesses like Eel Rides that prioritize environmentally friendly practices. I leveraged this information to develop messaging that not only highlights the startup's compliance with regulations but also to try to position the company in a sustainable urban mobility path. This approach not only

⁴ Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2023/executive-summary>

builds brand credibility but also resonates with corporate clients who prioritize Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria in their operations.

Understanding consumer behaviour and preferences was another critical finding that shaped my marketing strategies during the internship. Insights gathered from market research indicated that customers value personalized and high-quality services. Eel Rides' offering of luxurious rides such as spacious Mercedes vans for instance, accommodating up to four passengers minimum, aligns perfectly with these preferences. Furthermore, the inclusion of AI-assisted care rides for disabled passengers represents an important innovation in accessibility, catering to a demographic that is often underserved in the transportation sector. The ability to communicate these unique selling points effectively was crucial to my marketing role, allowing me to craft targeted campaigns that emphasize the corporation's commitment to inclusivity and premium service quality. According to a report by Deloitte (2022), personalized customer experiences are key drivers of brand loyalty in the modern marketplace, reinforcing the importance of this approach in Eel Rides' marketing strategy.

In addition to consumer preferences, the differentiation of service offerings emerged as a fundamental aspect of the business competitive strategy. The company's exclusive focus on an electric vehicle (EV) fleet not only meets regulatory requirements but also positions them as a forward-thinking alternative to traditional ride-hailing services. The growing trend of corporate social responsibility (CSR) among businesses presents an opportunity for Eel Rides to strengthen its market position further. By aligning its operations with the sustainability goals of corporate clients, it can enhance its value proposition and foster long-term partnerships. In my capacity as a marketing intern, I tried to identify opportunities to highlight Eel Rides' CSR initiatives in promotional materials, showcasing the brand as a socially responsible choice for businesses seeking eco-friendly transportation solutions.

Collaboration and partnerships emerged as critical elements in promoting sustainable practices within the transportation industry. The company has the potential to engage with local authorities and environmental organizations to advocate for expanded electric vehicle infrastructure, such as charging stations. The London Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2021) outlines a plan to increase the number of public charging points, which is essential for supporting the growing EV market. During my internship, I

worked on promoting Eel Rides' involvement in these collaborative efforts, emphasizing the company's commitment to creating a sustainable transportation ecosystem. This alignment with public initiatives not only enhances the brand image but also fosters community goodwill and customer trust.

The insights gained during my internship also revealed the importance of technological advancements in optimising operations and enhancing customer experiences. Eel Rides ambitions to utilise smart routing systems powered by artificial intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption. These technologies enable the company to analyse traffic patterns in real time, ensuring that vehicles operate in the most efficient manner possible. This technological integration supports sustainability goals while enhancing customer satisfaction. As a marketing intern, I utilised these insights to emphasise its commitment to innovation in promotional campaigns, showcasing how technology drives both operational efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Looking ahead, Eel Rides must remain attuned to emerging trends in sustainable transportation to stay competitive in the evolving market. The rise of mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) platforms presents an opportunity for them to collaborate with other transportation providers to create integrated solutions that promote sustainability and user convenience. By exploring these trends, I contributed ideas for potential partnerships and service expansions that could further solidify Eel Rides' position on the right path to sustainable urban mobility.

Finally, the key findings from my internship underscored the importance of consumer education and engagement in promoting sustainable practices. The company recognizes that its commitment to sustainability extends beyond operational practices; it encompasses customer behaviour and choices. Through targeted marketing campaigns and community engagement initiatives, they aim to inspire customers to choose eco-friendly transportation alternatives. The opportunity to develop educational content and outreach programs during my internship highlighted the significance of fostering a culture of sustainability among consumers. By empowering customers to make responsible choices, they can cultivate a loyal customer base that aligns with its sustainability objectives.

In conclusion, the key findings from my internship at Eel Rides provided valuable insights into the sustainable transportation market and highlighted the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer preferences, regulatory frameworks, and technological advancements. These insights not only informed my contributions to marketing efforts but also underscored the critical role of sustainability in shaping the future of urban mobility.

1.3 Methodology

Action research (Tripp, 2005) was employed in the study to enhance Eel Rides' marketing techniques and sustainability efforts as a developing startup navigates London's competitive ride-hailing industry. Through iterative and participatory methods, this approach provided a structure for acquiring understanding and enacting positive changes. This approach was particularly well-suited for Eel Rides because adaptability and quick marketing reactions were essential for aligning the company's actions with the values and expectations of a sustainability-focused audience.

The iterative process of action research, involving planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages, facilitates dynamic development and enhancement. I started my research by exploring industry trends, sustainable practices, and consumer expectations in depth. This phase involved reviewing a variety of reliable sources, such as academic journals, industry publications, and government reports on the adoption of electric vehicles and sustainable transportation in urban areas. Studies conducted by the International Energy Agency have demonstrated the potential for growth in the market for electric vehicles in crowded cities like London, which is a key factor supporting Eel Rides' establishment in this particular market.

During the development of the company's social media strategy, I analysed and assessed trending content across different platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and TikTok. Short videos that are visually appealing have been shown to be highly captivating for viewers, particularly for environmentally conscious brands such as Patagonia, which leverage them to build compelling narratives around environmental sustainability. By incorporating storytelling and compelling visuals into Eel Rides' content, I could ensure that it followed current industry trends emphasising brand identity as a way to engage with customers. This research further supported the start-up's endeavours to enhance its

brand image by emphasising authenticity, transparency, and eco-friendliness, deepening its bond with urban dwellers concerned with environmental sustainability.

The iterative cycles of action research, along with secondary research, were crucial in the development of marketing strategies that relied on real-time feedback. I learned about effective sustainability communication techniques by analysing rivals like Green Tomato Cars and Zipcar. An example is Green Tomato Cars, which emphasises community involvement, transparency, and a strong focus on decreasing environmental harm through social media, illustrating the significance of establishing trust for eco-friendly brands. Similarly, Zipcar's commitment to eco-friendly urban mobility highlights the importance of maintaining brand identity and mission alignment in building strong customer loyalty, offering valuable lessons for Eel Rides' communication approach.

Diving into more than just transportation, I delved into various eco-friendly brands, like The Good Life Eatery, a well-known eatery that advocates organic ingredients and zero-waste strategies. Their marketing approach often involves educating customers about sustainability, emphasising the importance of consumer involvement and emotional connection. Inspired by these examples, Eel Rides began using simple language in their communication to educate users about the environmental benefits of electric vehicles and the potential impacts of reducing individual carbon footprints through shared transportation.

While exploring potential collaborations, I looked into partnering with groups such as Sustainable Travel International. Collaborating with sustainable-focused organisations may strengthen the company's brand, attract more customers, and establish the company as a leader in eco-friendly transportation. Furthermore, my supervisor introduced me to key industry contacts and publications in order to bolster Eel Rides' presence and support growth efforts. Recognising the opportunity for global expansion, I also explored potential strategies for penetrating the UAE market, where sustainability and environmentally friendly approaches are gaining increased popularity. Understanding the UAE's dedication to sustainability provided insights into how the start-up could establish partnerships and grow in regions where eco-friendly efforts align with governmental policies.

Thematic analysis was crucial in helping me organise data into significant themes, such as customer preferences, market trends, and sustainability practices, throughout this process. This approach enabled a complete understanding of the data, ensuring that the conclusions had a direct impact on Eel Rides' strategic choices. The emerging motifs highlighted market opportunities, stressing the appeal of sustainable transportation options to London's environmentally aware audience and the importance of tailored, informative material to capture this demographic.

Ethics were crucial in the research process. I adhered to rigorous ethical guidelines, ensuring transparency in data collection and engaging only with reliable sources. Eel Rides needed to maintain integrity and clear communication when developing external relationships to enhance credibility in outreach initiatives, which is necessary for building trust with stakeholders.

Each phase of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting in action research builds upon the last, creating a robust feedback loop for ongoing enhancement. For instance, the first post, based on my secondary research and comparative analysis, laid the groundwork for the start-up's social media engagement plan. I modified upcoming posts based on users' engagement with them, including likes, comments, and shares, to better align with their preferences and behaviours. The continuous improvement process was crucial in refining a marketing strategy that responded to audience feedback and evolving trends.

An important advantage of this method was its capacity to seamlessly integrate fresh information. Following brief LinkedIn surveys on sustainability and transportation, I collected data on user preferences that influenced Eel Rides' marketing content to match the values and interests of its target audience. These surveys served as informal yet informative tools to gauge public opinions on eco-friendly transportation, underscoring the crucial role of flexibility in marketing to accurately reflect consumer values.

The usage of digital tools like *Jira*, *Slack*, *Blaze AI*, and *CapCut* improved my research process further. *Jira* and *Slack* enhanced project management and team communication efficiency, while *Blaze AI* and *CapCut* advanced content creation and analysis capabilities. *Blaze AI* was instrumental in analysing engagement patterns and facilitating data-driven adjustments to social media strategies. Conversely, *CapCut* enabled the creation of engaging visual content that aligned with current *TikTok* and Instagram trends,

enhancing Eel Rides' presence on these social media platforms. Using these tools showcased how technology can enhance efficiency and creativity in marketing and utilising them more helped me better understand digital marketing ecosystems.

After reflecting on the situation, I realised that Action research was a good match for the rapid environment of a start-up. The effectiveness of my marketing role at Eel Rides improved as I was able to adapt strategies based on real-world results and gain insights, thanks to its flexible and iterative nature. The method encouraged a learning environment where each cycle provided new perspectives, ensuring that Eel Rides' advertising tactics remained current, flexible, and sustainable. This extensive, adaptable approach achieved the objectives of the internship and gave me a profound understanding of how action research can make a substantial difference in fast-changing, innovation-driven areas like sustainable urban transportation while offering a valuable framework to develop my internship report.

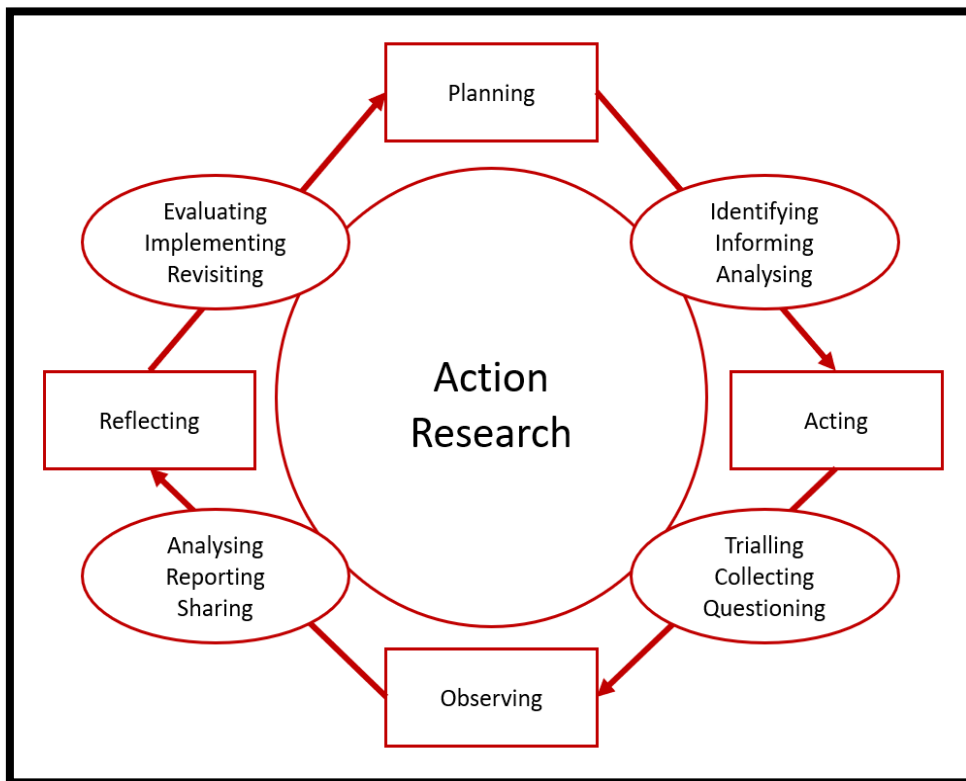


Figure 1: Action Research Overview (Source: Western Sydney University, 2024)

CHAPTER II – ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRY

2.1- Market overview

Major shifts in London's urban transportation industry are occurring in the car-sharing and electric vehicle sectors as a result of market pressures and rigorous environmental regulations. This industry is significantly influenced by the city's primary goals of reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, which are vital issues in a city with over 9 million residents. Recently, the car-sharing sector in London has grown substantially due to increased urbanisation, changing consumer preferences, and significant focus from the government on sustainable transportation. The market forms part of a broader trend seen across Europe, with the shared mobility sector, such as car-sharing, expected to reach \$18.5 billion by 2025. The rise of car-sharing options in London is supported by the city's commitment to reducing the number of privately owned cars to ease traffic congestion and lower emissions. Traditional car rental companies, like *Zipcar*, are established in London; however, the market is witnessing growth in more specialised providers, such as Eel Rides. These new arrivals focus exclusively on electric cars, aligning with London's environmental goals. This shift is partly prompted by regulations such as the Ultra-Low Emission Zone, which includes charges for older, more polluting vehicles.

The expansion of the ULEZ in 2023, covering a larger area, has significantly boosted the demand for low and zero-emission vehicles. Market Dynamics, In London's carsharing market, is characterized by a mix of established players and new start-ups, each vying for a share of rapidly evolving market. In 2023, there were more than 145,000 registered electric vehicles in London, indicating a significant increase from previous years due to growing consumer demand and backing from the government. The rise in electric vehicle usage has presented a chance for companies like Eel Rides, which exclusively utilize EVs, to appeal to environmentally conscious customers and capture a share of the market.

Moreover, the increasing number of charging stations within urban areas is contributing to the expansion of the electric vehicle industry. By 2023, there were more than 11,000 public charging points in London, with the expectation of further growth due to continued government investment in this essential infrastructure. Electric vehicles in car-sharing programmes need charging points to succeed, as they allow for convenient recharging and ensure the continuous use of the vehicles. The car-sharing and EV market in London

hold significant economic potential and environmental implications. The transition to electric and shared transportation is projected to result in substantial economic advantages, such as generating new employment opportunities in EV production, upkeep, and charging infrastructure industries.

However, decreasing the number of privately owned cars could improve the utilisation of urban areas, potentially making land available for other purposes and enhancing the city's overall lifestyle. After analysing the situation carefully, it is clear that the increase in Electric Vehicles (EVs) and the expansion of car-sharing services could have a significant impact. At present, transportation contributes to approximately 28% of carbon dioxide emissions in London.⁵

Shifting to electric vehicles has the potential to significantly decrease emissions, especially if the cars are powered by renewable sources. In this instance, companies such as Eel Rides are not only offering a service but also contributing to achieving larger social objectives, such as decreasing air pollution and addressing climate change. The car-sharing and EV industry in London is facing heightened competition as more companies enter the market. Existing firms such as *Zipcar* and *DriveNow*, which provide a variety of traditional and electric vehicles, are being challenged by new competitors that specialise solely in electric transportation. These new participants rely on consumers' growing awareness of environmental concerns and the increasing desire for eco-friendly options. The company is ready to establish a distinct presence in the industry, thanks to its focus on safety and professionalism, as well as its all-electric fleet. Nevertheless, obstacles persist. New arrivals face major challenges in meeting the significant initial expenses of purchasing and managing an electric vehicle fleet, the continual requirement for funding charging infrastructure, and the rivalry from options such as biking and public transportation.

Furthermore, it is difficult to persuade a significant portion of the population to transition from owning private cars to utilising shared electric transportation, despite increasing

⁵ Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6604460f91a320001a82b0fd/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-provisional-figures-statistical-release-2023.pdf>

interest in car-sharing and electric vehicles, due to consumers' reluctance to change their habits.

The regulations in London play a significant role in influencing the car-sharing and electric vehicle (EV) industry. Along with the ULEZ, the city's wider set of rules provides encouragement for the adoption of EVs, such as financial aid for buying electric vehicles and setting up home charging points. These measures aim to increase the affordability and accessibility of electric vehicles in order to accelerate their uptake.

In addition, Transport for London (TfL) aims to develop a more environmentally friendly transport system in the city, which involves transitioning all buses to electric vehicles by 2037 and implementing zero-emission zones by 2025. The current state of the car-sharing and electric vehicle industry in London is essential. The intersection of environmental policies, technological advancements, and evolving consumer preferences drives the rapid expansion and innovation in this industry. Companies like Eel Rides, which focus on sustainable, safe, and professional transport options, are well positioned to thrive in this evolving market. However, the sector's success will depend on continued investments in infrastructure, supportive regulatory frameworks, and the ability to meet the diverse needs of London's residents. Transitioning to car-sharing and electric vehicles in London is a complex journey filled with numerous benefits and challenges.

This adjustment is in line with London's ambitious environmental goals, particularly its aim to reach a zero-carbon status by 2050. The growing implementation of EVs, supported by initiatives such as ULEZ and increased funding for charging infrastructure, is expected to lead to a significant reduction in carbon emissions and improve air quality. This shift also brings economic benefits, such as creating new job opportunities in the electric vehicle sector and maximising urban space by reducing reliance on owned cars through car-sharing.

However, these advancements have their drawbacks. The major challenge for new businesses entering the market is the high upfront expenses of purchasing and managing an all-electric fleet. This may result in higher costs for clients, limiting the availability of these services to a broader population.

Additionally, while the expansion of charging infrastructure is underway, it remains insufficient to meet the anticipated demand, particularly in less affluent areas. This could lead to disparities in access to green mobility options, exacerbating existing social inequalities. Moreover, the environmental benefits of EVs are not absolute. The production of EV batteries requires the extraction of rare earth metals, which has significant environmental and social impacts.

Furthermore, if the electricity used to power these vehicles is generated from non-renewable sources, the overall reduction in emissions is less substantial. Urban congestion remains another concern, as carsharing services could contribute to increased vehicle miles travelled and exacerbate parking shortages in densely populated areas.

Lastly, the reliability of EVs, particularly in cold weather conditions, and the evolving nature of the technology present additional challenges that must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of this transition. In summary, while the move towards carsharing and electric vehicles in London aligns with the city's environmental objectives and offers numerous potential benefits, it also brings with it significant economic, environmental, and social challenges. These challenges must be carefully managed through strategic planning, investment, and policy-making to ensure that the transition is both equitable and effective in achieving the desired outcomes.

2.2- Key segments

In London, the transportation sector is undergoing a noticeable transformation due to the growing popularity of electric vehicles (EVs) and car-sharing services. The main drivers of this change are consumers becoming more aware of sustainability and strict urban air quality regulations. The rapidly expanding car-sharing industry is currently at a critical point, offering a new perspective on conventional car ownership. Invers (2023) reported that an increasing number of consumers are opting for "access over ownership," resulting in a surge of car-sharing as a convenient alternative for urban dwellers facing restricted parking and growing congestion.

The Ultra-Low Emission Zone in London has been instrumental in promoting the shift towards environmentally friendly transportation. Forced to address pollution, ULEZ

imposes fees on older, more polluting vehicles, prompting individuals and businesses to choose cleaner options. The regulatory framework helps companies like Eel Rides by enabling them to follow the city's sustainability goals and emphasising the importance of integrating eco-friendly practices into their business activities. MDPI (2022) emphasises the significance of sustainable urban mobility due to the growing importance of sustainability and the necessity to transition from conventional transportation to sustainable alternatives. Thus, linking it to broader environmental objectives enhances its ability to compete and assists the city in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, the increase in electric vehicle usage is restructuring the competitive landscape in the car-sharing industry. By 2023, more than 145,000 electric vehicles were registered in London, showing a notable rise in consumer interest in environmentally friendly transport choices (Invers, 2023). Government incentives aimed at making EV adoption easier are contributing to the growth, along with the rapid expansion of charging infrastructure in the city. With more than 11,000 public charging points provided (London Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, 2022), companies like Eel Rides experience a significant boost in operational feasibility. The availability of charging stations is essential for businesses to ensure they can continue providing efficient service without interruptions, which helps keep customers satisfied and loyal.

To boost the start-up's market presence, it is crucial to form strategic partnerships. While interning, I engaged in thorough research and contacted potential collaborators such as green hotels, travel agencies, and aviation hubs. These collaborations are growing in importance as companies understand the necessity of partnering with sustainable transportation options to attract eco-conscious customers. According to Green.org (2023), car-sharing services play a crucial role in the sustainable transportation landscape by greatly reducing urban congestion and pollution. By working together with these organisations, Eel Rides can enhance its presence and establish itself as a leading player in eco-friendly city transportation.

The company aims to focus on a wide range of customers from different demographics, with a special focus on environmentally aware individuals and businesses in market segmentation. Studies show that millennials and Generation Z, renowned for their dedication to sustainability, are leading the push for environmentally friendly transportation choices (Ceres, 2022). These generations place a high value on the

affordability and sustainability of services, making them perfect clients for Eel Rides. The company should continue to promote its dedication to sustainability and the advantages of opting for electric carsharing instead of conventional transport options in its marketing strategies.

The car-sharing and EV market in London is becoming more competitive, with more players entering the industry. Traditional companies such as *Zipcar* and *DriveNow*, which provide a range of traditional and electric cars, now face competition from new players concentrating solely on electric transportation. These new players are taking advantage of the growing consumer awareness regarding environmental concerns and the rising demand for sustainable options. With its focus on safety and professionalism, along with a dedication to using only electric vehicles, Eel Rides is well-positioned to establish a unique presence in this changing market.

Although the market conditions are in their favour, it must tackle various challenges in order to secure long-term success. The significant obstacle of high initial costs in obtaining and maintaining an all-electric fleet may result in increased service costs for consumers. This financial burden may restrict the service's potential growth by limiting accessibility to a broader audience. Additionally, although the growth of charging facilities is progressing, it remains inadequate to cater to the expected demand, especially in poorer regions. The unequal availability of eco-friendly transportation options may worsen existing social disparities, highlighting concerns about fair access to sustainable methods of travel.

Additionally, although EVs offer significant environmental advantages, they also come with complications. Manufacturing EV batteries involves extracting rare earth metals, which have major environmental and social consequences. Moreover, if the electricity used to power these vehicles comes from non-renewable sources, the expected decrease in emissions may not be as substantial. Urban congestion poses a different obstacle, as car-sharing services may increase the number of miles driven by vehicles, worsening parking shortages in crowded areas.

It is worth noting that there is significant economic potential in London's shift towards car sharing and electric vehicles. The move towards electric and shared transportation is anticipated to result in considerable economic advantages, such as the generation of jobs

in EV production and maintenance fields. According to a Green Alliance report from 2021, the electric vehicle industry's expansion could lead to the creation of 200,000 new jobs in the UK by 2030, making it even more appealing to potential investors and collaborators. Moreover, with the decrease in traditional car ownership, urban space has the opportunity to be used more effectively, possibly freeing land for alternative purposes and improving the overall quality of life within the city.

The broad use of EVs and the growth of car-sharing services could have a notable impact on the environment. Currently, the transportation sector is responsible for around 28% of the total CO₂ emissions in London. Electric cars could significantly reduce emissions, especially if they are charged with sustainable energy sources. In this scenario, Eel Rides and similar businesses are not just providing a service but also assisting in reaching the broader societal goals of reducing air pollution and tackling climate change.

In the end, the future of transport in London will consist of a mix of benefits and challenges. Eel Rides and similar companies have a unique opportunity to capitalise on the growing emphasis on eco-friendly transport; however, they must manoeuvre through a complex market landscape. Ongoing infrastructure investments, favourable regulations, and solid partnerships are crucial for the success of the new company and other businesses in this expanding industry. MDPI (2022) emphasised the importance of cooperation between stakeholders, creative business tactics, and a firm commitment to environmental conservation in order to achieve a sustainable urban transport system. The success of sustainable transport solutions in London and other regions will rely on the level of integration of these components.

2.3- Competitive landscape

The electric mobility sector, including electric vehicles, electric scooters, electric bikes, and other sustainable transportation choices, is undergoing significant development. The growth is driven by a combination of factors such as increased environmental consciousness, favourable regulations, and advancements in battery and connectivity technologies. An Allied Market Research report predicts that the worldwide electric vehicle market will reach \$802.81 billion by 2027, showing a strong compound annual

growth rate of 25.4% from 2020 to 2027⁶. This growth presents significant advantages for new businesses like Eel Rides, despite facing a more competitive environment with established and new competitors.

The electric mobility industry is characterised by a diverse competitive landscape, featuring established global leaders and agile startups, each with their own strengths to offer. Leading in the electric car sector are major companies like *Tesla*, *BYD*, and *Nissan*, utilising substantial research and development funds, extensive supply networks, and well-established brands. At the same time, *Lime*, *Bird*, and *Spin* prioritise micro-mobility options by providing electric scooters and bikes for quick city travel. Start-ups such as Eel Rides need to stand out from the competition in this congested market. Numerous thriving start-ups are trying out new models like subscription services or pay-as-you-go options, providing flexibility to consumers who value accessibility more than ownership. For example, subscription plans that enable users to use e-scooters or bikes without buying them are in harmony with city living, serving the desires of urban residents looking for economical, eco-friendly transportation options with no extended obligations.

Having a deep understanding of market segmentation is essential for meeting the diverse requirements of the electric mobility sector. The market can be divided based on vehicle type, propulsion method, power output, application, and geographical region, as well as by other factors. Typically, these products are targeted at city dwellers, environmentally conscious individuals, and younger customers. McKinsey & Company's research shows that a significant market opportunity exists for companies that can successfully attract the under-35 demographic, as they make up 60% of urban mobility users in metropolitan areas. Customising communication to highlight the environmental impact, convenience, and lifestyle advantages of electric transportation resonates with younger, technology-savvy individuals.

Regulatory conditions have a significant impact on determining the competitive environment for electric mobility start-ups. Governments around the world are offering incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies, and more stringent emissions regulations for traditional vehicles in order to accelerate the transition to electric options. An example of this is the European Union, which aims to reduce CO₂ emissions from new cars by 37.5%

⁶ Available at : <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/europe-electric-vehicle-market-A09376>

by 2030, playing a major role in the shift towards electric vehicles. The regulations for Eel Rides present both opportunities and challenges, with each market having distinct safety, vehicle emissions, and usage standards to meet. Certain cities have implemented stricter regulations due to safety concerns stemming from the rapid growth of electric scooters. Consequently, start-ups need to navigate intricate regulatory environments, adapting their approaches to fulfil various local conditions, which could potentially impede expansion efforts and raise operational expenses.

Advances in technology, especially in batteries, play a crucial role in the competitiveness of electric transport. Battery technology plays a direct role in the range, cost, and efficiency of vehicles, which in turn affects user experience and adoption rates. Emerging technologies, such as solid-state batteries, offer the potential for higher energy storage capacities, quicker recharge rates, and improved safety compared to conventional lithium-ion batteries, which could lead to decreased expenses in the future. Progress in vehicle connectivity and autonomous driving is transforming the market, as intelligent technology enables startups to provide distinctive value propositions. AI-powered navigation can enhance the user experience and safety, while fleet management systems based on IoT technology improve operational efficiency, simplifying fleet management and making it more data-oriented. PwC projects that the worldwide shared mobility market could reach \$770 billion by 2030, demonstrating the opportunities for businesses that leverage these technological innovations and incorporate connectivity and smart systems into their offerings.

The availability of funding also significantly affects the growth and scalability of start-ups in the electric mobility industry. According to CB Insights, global investments in the mobility-focused start-ups sector exceeded \$50 billion in 2021, with an increasing number of investments from venture capital firms. Nevertheless, fledgling companies at the beginning stages, especially those targeting specific markets or with untested revenue strategies, frequently encounter challenges in obtaining financial backing. Investors favour start-ups that have clear paths to profitability, proven success, and scalable, original solutions. For Eel Rides, this involves showcasing a robust business plan and expansion strategy that emphasises unique product attributes or possible collaborations. Collaborating with existing industry leaders or complementary services can provide

access to essential resources, knowledge, and infrastructure, leading to competitive advantages in customer outreach and operational capabilities.

Even with ideal growth conditions, the electric mobility industry faces various obstacles. Major established players with significant financial backing and recognised brands control specific sectors, creating barriers for new competitors to enter the market. The intricate nature of local regulations, especially regarding safety and environmental criteria, forces new businesses to constantly adjust to regional rules, potentially limiting their ability to expand across borders. Furthermore, the industry's rapid pace of technological advancement requires ongoing creativity, as businesses that do not embrace cutting-edge technologies face the possibility of lagging behind their rivals. The sector was affected differently during the COVID-19 pandemic, with ridesharing services experiencing decreased demand while personal electric vehicles such as e-scooters and e-bikes benefited from socially distanced transportation. The changing landscape has highlighted the importance of flexibility in the sector, prompting new businesses to broaden their range of products to match evolving consumer tastes.

It is anticipated that there will be ongoing growth in the electric mobility market due to changing consumer preferences and advancements in technology, pointing towards a promising future. The International Energy Agency forecasts that the worldwide electric vehicle fleet will reach 145 million by 2030, up from 10 million in 2020⁷. This route exhibits potential and heightened rivalry, as new and established businesses vie for market dominance in a rapidly evolving sector. Start-ups like Eel Rides can stay competitive by staying updated on market trends, prioritizing meeting customer needs through innovation, and being adaptable to changing market conditions. In the end, the key factor for the success of businesses in this fast-changing and competitive setting will rely on their capacity to mix innovation, strategic collaborations, and customer-focused strategies.

Focusing on specialized markets, targeting niche segments, and forming strategic partnerships can help Eel Rides and other emerging businesses carve out distinctive positions in a competitive market. New companies in the electric mobility industry have numerous chances to thrive by targeting neglected markets, improving user interactions

⁷ Available at ; <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2023/executive-summary>

with cutting-edge technology, or championing unique sustainability values. Progressing in Eel Rides entails committing to grasp customer needs, adjusting to tech advancements, and navigating rules to build a strong, lasting transportation brand.

**CHAPTER III – UNDERTAKING OF THE INTERNSHIP (FROM A
MARKETING POSITION)**

3.1- Role and responsibilities

Throughout my internship, I was given a range of tasks that played a key role in the marketing operations of the startup. In my role as a marketing intern, I was responsible for overseeing the startup's social media accounts, interacting with key audiences, creating marketing plans, and researching B2B prospects and partnerships. My objective in this position was to assist in building a dedicated and active following for EelRides, preparing the company for its official release in the summer of 2024. I reported directly to Wellington Chiwara, the Founder and CEO, which provided me with valuable insights into the startup's business strategy and operations.

From the beginning, my main priority was to increase the company's online visibility, specifically its *LinkedIn* profile, since this site is crucial for networking. Even though my job entailed being creative and proactive, the startup's lack of a well-defined marketing team forced me to handle various tasks and constantly adjust and improve. I will detail my primary responsibilities, demonstrating how my work helped achieve the startup's marketing goals.

My primary and ongoing duty was overseeing the company's *LinkedIn* page. As EelRides sought to connect with corporate clients and other B2B entities, *LinkedIn* was regarded as the leading platform for outreach and increasing visibility. My responsibility was to enhance the company's follower base by producing meaningful and engaging content that would resonate with our target audience. I analysed comparable electric ride-hailing services, examining how they bolster their online presence. Next, I would create *LinkedIn* content centred around sustainability, innovation, and corporate social responsibility that aligns with the company's goals.

Not only did I generate posts for *LinkedIn*, but I also crafted material for Instagram and *TikTok* and even made promotional videos. Nevertheless, as the company had yet to be officially introduced, we were cautious with our communication and reserved most of this material for future utilisation. However, the valuable experience of developing content for multiple platforms helped me improve my abilities in ensuring a company's message is consistent across various social media platforms, adjusting the tone and visuals to suit each one.

A significant aspect of my job was researching and ensuring that our marketing plans aligned with the latest trends in the ride-hailing industry and the broader sustainability movement. Due to the company's distinctive focus on promoting EV transportation, I investigated the rising popularity of environmentally friendly transport options in London. I also examined competitors and overall trends in the sustainable business industry.

To stay current on the latest social media and marketing trends, I dedicated a significant amount of time to observing content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. I studied viral marketing strategies and observed how environmentally conscious companies interacted with their customers in different sectors. For instance, I analysed how *Oatly* and *Tesla* used humor, customer testimonials, and educational material to attract environmentally aware customers. Next, I would share these results with my manager and suggest ways to incorporate comparable approaches into Eel Rides' marketing efforts.

Besides tracking trends, I needed to identify potential partnerships and collaborators. Researching and reaching out to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and environmentally conscious companies that shared our values was a key responsibility of mine. I compiled a detailed roster of these firms, with a primary emphasis on London-based companies but also including research in the UAE, as my boss was preparing for a business trip there to meet potential investors. I reached out to magazines and vlogs that highlighted sustainability and startups to try and get Eel Rides featured and increase the brand's exposure in local and international markets.

Aside from conducting research, I was also in charge of creating content. While I concentrated on *LinkedIn*, I also created content for *Instagram* and *TikTok*. For instance, I created posts showcasing the company's eco-friendly electric vehicle fleet and our AI-supported rides for disabled riders. During my internship, I collaborated closely with an experienced photographer who came on board halfway through, assisting in the development of visually striking material that highlighted our stylish, eco-friendly vehicles.

One of the difficulties I encountered in this process was ensuring the content was interesting enough to grab attention, despite the company not being officially launched yet. Due to the absence of engaged clients for our posts, we concentrated on producing

informative and promotional material highlighting our distinct qualities: luxury, sustainability, and innovation. For example, I created content detailing the ecological advantages of electric cars, connecting it to London's sustainability objectives for 2030.

My boss allowed me to be very creative when managing these posts, but he still needed to approve all content. For the initial six weeks, we had daily virtual meetings, during which I shared my research results and brainstormed new blog topics. After receiving approval, I would arrange and publish the content to ensure it matched our wider marketing objectives. Throughout my internship, an essential part of my responsibilities was monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the social media posts I designed. Even though the company had not officially started, it was important to observe how the audience interacted with the posts in order to improve future strategies. My main focus was on LinkedIn, as it was crucial for creating professional relationships and increasing the company's presence in the business-to-business industry.

I used *LinkedIn's* analytics tools to monitor important measures such as post impressions, engagement rates, and follower growth. This information provided us with a better understanding of the content that resonated most with our desired audience. For example, social media posts that focused on Eel Rides' sustainability objectives and its modern electric vehicle collection received more interaction than less specific content. Posts that highlighted the environmental advantages of our emission-free rides and our dedication to reducing carbon footprints garnered higher engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments. This demonstrated that our audience was curious not just about our transportation services but also about the overall environmental impact of our company.

Analyzing the metrics of engagement enabled me to observe distinct patterns. Posts containing in-depth visuals, such as pictures of our electric vehicle fleet or graphics on urban sustainability, outperformed those centred-on text. Moreover, content showcasing the special features of Eel Rides, like AI-supported rides for passengers with disabilities.

or our support for London's sustainability objectives, captured the interest of corporate clients and advocates for sustainability. This feedback loop aided me in improving upcoming content, ensuring that every post was visually appealing and aligned with our central message of innovation and sustainability. Monitoring the increase in followers was also crucial. While consistently sharing content that engaged our audience, I observed

a gradual rise in LinkedIn followers, particularly from professionals in fields such as eco-friendly transportation, business sustainability, and urban development. This increase demonstrated that our content strategy successfully reached the relevant audience groups and formed a community that aligned with the startup's objectives. This data analysis also offered useful information for customizing posts to meet particular business objectives. For instance, to grab the interest of possible B2B customers, I concentrated on making posts that demonstrated how Eel Rides could assist companies in reducing their carbon footprint by providing sustainable rides for their staff. Likewise, I emphasized the company's dedication to innovation and long-term sustainability when targeting investors or stakeholders in the environmental sector.

Utilizing a data-focused content creation method was crucial in developing our social media plan. Each post was influenced by past performance data, enabling me to adjust the content for improved audience satisfaction and engagement. Engaging in content creation, analysis, and refinement iteratively assisted in expanding the company's social media presence and maintaining consistent, engaging messaging in line with broader business goals. This analytical method laid the groundwork for sustained success beyond my internship, as the knowledge acquired would continue to influence the company's digital marketing strategies.

One of the most difficult yet distinct parts of my internship was reaching out to magazines and vloggers for possible features. I compiled a selection of environmentally friendly business magazines and thought leaders, with a particular focus on those located in London. I reached out to multiple publications, such as Sustainable Cities International and Green Business Magazine, to introduce Eel Rides' services as a startup offering a distinctive and original ride-hailing service. My main responsibility was to initiate connections, while my boss handled the final negotiations. Still, this encounter gave me an important understanding of how startups can use external media to enhance their brand. Although I was unable to plan events myself because of the company's debut timing, I did contribute by looking into possible events for Eel Rides to join. I was tasked with researching eco-friendly conferences, green tech expos, and networking events to increase the company's visibility. This involved creating in-depth reports on these opportunities and sharing event updates on social media platforms.

Another important task was supporting business presentations for prospective investors. During my internship, I collaborated with two additional interns who were hired later to develop detailed presentations highlighting Eel Rides' value proposition. These presentations included the company's goals and aspirations, as well as its special features and opportunities in the market. Even though we did not conduct the financial analysis ourselves, we collaborated extensively with data analysts to ensure that our presentations contained pertinent market data and consumer insights.

Around halfway through my internship, two more interns were added to the marketing team: one with marketing experience and the other a professional photographer. I had to adjust my work process to collaborate, coordinating with their availability and ensuring our work was in sync. The photographer played a major role in enhancing the visual appeal of our marketing, contributing to the creation of sophisticated and professional posts. We collaborated on tasks like establishing the company's visual identity and producing in-depth marketing materials to attract investors and customers. Working together in this shared workspace helped me enhance my project management abilities by ensuring that our combined efforts were completed on time and followed the company's branding criteria.

Moreover, by handling the company's LinkedIn account and producing relevant content, I contributed to enhancing the online visibility essential for the company's official launch. Studying market trends and competitor strategies helped to shape our marketing strategy, and reaching out to magazines and vloggers laid the foundation for upcoming collaborations. Although Eel Rides had not been launched when my internship ended, the tasks I completed prepared the company for its impending launch.

In summary, my position at Eel Rides demanded a strong level of initiative, creativity, and adaptability. In the startup setting, I had to handle a variety of tasks such as managing social media, conducting market research, creating content, and reaching out to external parties. This opportunity helped me build a wide range of marketing skills, especially in the realm of sustainability-focused startups, and gave me valuable understanding of how startups expand and succeed in challenging markets.

3.2- Projects and tasks

While interning at Eel Rides, I was involved in various marketing efforts that played a pivotal role in the company's strategic expansion, especially in improving its online visibility. The LinkedIn growth plan focused on creating an engaged audience by targeting initiatives to boost followers, improve engagement, and create interesting content.

I helped enhance the Eel Rides logo as part of my contributions, creating a more dynamic brand identity that extends beyond a single design. This revamp was intended to represent the company's dedication more accurately to sustainability and innovation, aligning with the changing brand vision. The updated logo choices boosted brand awareness and visual appeal across various platforms, strengthening Eel Rides' market presence.



Figure 2: Optional Eel Rides Logo (Source: Eel Rides)



Figure 3: Eel Rides Logo 2024 (Source: Eel Rides)

A core aspect of our approach was developing shareable content that could resonate with our audience. This content was categorised into three main types: inspirational, informative, and entertaining. Each post's engagement metrics were meticulously analysed to refine our approach, maximising reach and resonance with our audience. Visual content also played a significant role in our strategy; we prioritised producing engaging weekly videos, including "day in the life" vlogs, which provided relatable insights into the day-to-day operations of Eel Rides. This behind-the-scenes glimpse humanised the brand and fostered a deeper connection with our audience.

To further enhance our community engagement, I took charge of creating and implementing a dynamic posting schedule. This timeline was crafted to ensure at least three posts per week, each tailored to maintain engagement and keep our content fresh. We began the week with light-hearted posts on Mondays that highlighted green spaces and hidden gems in London, establishing a fun and relaxing start to our content cycle. Mid-week posts on Wednesdays were more serious, addressing key urban transportation challenges in London, discussing the role of sustainable transport, and exploring other pressing local issues. By the time we reached Fridays, we concluded the week with a recap, encouraging our followers to share their experiences and thoughts on what changes they would like to see in urban mobility or sustainable practices.



Figure 4: LinkedIn Engaging Post for Eel Rides (2024)

Humorous quotes were strategically incorporated into our content, adding a relatable touch to our brand and appealing to a broad spectrum of audience segments. Additionally, interactive elements such as polls and questions were utilised to stimulate conversations, allowing us to gather valuable insights into our followers' perspectives on topics ranging from sustainable products to broader business innovations. By analysing engagement metrics from each post, we refined our content strategy to ensure it remained relevant and met audience expectations. Such as:



Figure 5: LinkedIn Engaging Post for Eel Rides (2024)



Figure 6: LinkedIn "Quote of the Day" Post for Eel Rides (2024)

I also took the initiative to develop presentations and various content pieces that showcased Eel Rides' business model and mission. These materials proved to be versatile tools, utilised in business pitches and as shareable assets that effectively communicated the company's core values and its commitment to sustainable transport solutions. The narrative conveyed through these presentations not only supported our marketing goals but also positioned Eel Rides as a forward-thinking player in the electric mobility sector, reinforcing its brand identity.

In combination with consistent, varied content and interactive strategies, we aimed to build a stronger community around Eel Rides, reinforce its branding, and advance the company's growth objectives across digital platforms. To foster meaningful connections, our team set a goal of connecting with at least 100 new users each week. Each new connection was complemented by friendly introductory messages, creating an inviting atmosphere for potential followers. Regular engagement on our posts, including responding to comments and actively participating in discussions, helped maintain dynamic interactions and foster a sense of community while providing potentially useful information on posts and fun facts.

Going into our posts was essential in making the brand more approachable and memorable. This human element allowed us to resonate with followers on a personal level, making Eel Rides not just a company but a brand that people could relate to. Bold

branding became another critical aspect of our strategy, where we embraced daring content that emphasised eco-friendly challenges, provided interesting facts, and invited discussions about sustainability and entrepreneurship. For instance, our association with *Rare Earth Global* and *Trashy Bags*.



Figure 7: Product from Trashy Bags event in London, attended by Eel Rides (2024)

Our content plan also included diverse initiatives such as weekly vlogs, photos showcasing our workspaces (since the majority of the team worked remotely from around the world), and promotions for "hidden gems" in London. Encouraging team members to share photos and reviews of local businesses not only connected us with the community but also emphasized our commitment to supporting local initiatives and showcased our hybrid working method.

I developed social media strategies to drive engagement, created multimedia content aligned with our sustainability values, and produced materials that highlighted Eel Rides' strengths. My contributions were designed to build brand awareness and foster meaningful interactions with stakeholders, supporting the company's overarching business development efforts. This experience enriched my understanding of digital marketing while allowing me to make a tangible impact on Eel Rides' branding and outreach strategies.

3.3-Skills utilized from my master's curriculum

The master's programme at ISCAP was vital during my internship at Eel Rides. Every class was carefully crafted to improve my comprehension of the diverse aspects of business, especially in a start-up setting, where flexibility and creativity are crucial.

One of the fundamental classes in my program centred on entrepreneurship. This course was especially helpful in providing me with an essential understanding of creating and expanding new businesses. We examined key concepts like value proposition design, customer discovery, and strategic market entry. This information was very useful during my internship when I had to carry out market research to discover consumer preferences and new trends in the sustainable transportation industry. An example is when I used the Business Model Canvas framework to explain Eel Rides' distinct value proposition, which focused on offering eco-friendly transportation options. This strategic method assisted the company in defining its objectives and determining key performance indicators (KPIs) to gauge success.

In addition, the course stressed the significance of innovation in the field of entrepreneurship. I found that start-ups need to constantly adjust to evolving market conditions to stay competitive. Participating in brainstorming sessions for Eel Rides' marketing strategies was extremely beneficial. I recommended using social media platforms and collaborating with influencers to generate excitement about our services, in line with consumers' increasing preference for sustainable choices. This concept was put into action, resulting in higher visibility and interaction with our intended audience.

My studies in culture and development expanded my outlook, sharpening my critical and creative thinking skills regarding business challenges. This course explored how cultural settings influence consumer behaviour and business practices. Comprehending these factors enabled me to create marketing messages that connect with various audiences. For instance, I developed specific marketing strategies that highlighted Eel Rides' dedication to sustainability, resonating with eco-conscious customers who value environmentally friendly options. This heightened cultural awareness not only improved our marketing effectiveness but also fostered trust and loyalty with our clients.

The English culture course was especially useful because my internship was at a London start-up. This course enhanced my understanding of British business customs, negotiation

techniques, and consumer trends, which are necessary for building strong connections with stakeholders. Equipped with this understanding, I was more ready to interact with possible collaborators, such as environmentally conscious hotels and tourism establishments, entering conversations with sensitivity to cultural differences. My skill in adjusting how I communicate contributed to building a connection, leading to effective communication in reaching out for possible partnerships.

Additionally, my exploration of communication technologies equipped me with the necessary resources for successful research and sharing information. In the current era of digital technology, it is essential to have a strong skill set in communication technologies to navigate the challenges of the business world effectively. During my internship, I made use of different digital platforms that helped to simplify our operations. For example, I employed *Jira* for managing projects, which enabled us to efficiently monitor tasks and deadlines. This system facilitated clear communication among team members and ensured everyone was on the same page regarding project objectives. In the meantime, *Slack* played a key role in promoting immediate communication, allowing us to quickly exchange ideas and updates, which was crucial

Furthermore, I utilized *Blaze AI* for data analysis, in addition to these tools, to assist in interpreting market data and consumer behaviour patterns. Analysing data was crucial in evaluating the potential of partnerships and improving our marketing tactics. Finally, *CapCut* was instrumental in helping us create content by enabling me to create dynamic promotional videos showcasing our services and sustainability projects. These technologies have not just boosted our operational effectiveness but also strengthened our capacity to engage with potential clients via engaging visual material.

Additionally, my experience in research methodology has provided me with a systematic method for performing in-depth analyses and collecting information that influenced our marketing strategies. I acquired the skills to create research inquiries and develop surveys for gathering important information. While interning, I carried out brief *LinkedIn* surveys to collect data on sustainability and transportation choices. These surveys provided us with important information about how consumers think and what they want, which helped us improve our services and align them with market demand. This feedback loop played a critical role in ensuring that Eel Rides met the changing demands of our customers.

Studying French culture in business has also enhanced my abilities by stressing the significance of cultural understanding in global business interactions. Throughout the duration of this course, we engaged in a project that involved developing a business plan from the beginning, taking into account the cultural aspects that impact commercial operations. This lesson has shown me the importance of incorporating cultural perspectives into strategic planning and decision-making processes. I used these insights for the company to guide our approach with potential partners, ensuring that our proposals were culturally appropriate and aligned with their sustainability objectives. By utilising this cultural knowledge, I was able to explain how collaborating with Eel Rides could enhance their corporate social responsibility programmes, ultimately establishing our start-up as a valuable partner in their sustainability endeavours.

The knowledge and understanding acquired from my graduate program in Intercultural Studies for Business played a crucial role in my success at Eel Rides. The combination of entrepreneurial principles, critical thinking from culture and development studies, contextual knowledge from English culture, effective communication technologies, and perspectives from French business culture enabled me to enhance the company's marketing strategies and growth initiatives. This internship not only improved my skills but also increased my knowledge of the challenges of starting and maintaining a business in a competitive market. As I progress in my professional journey, I believe that these skills will continue to shape how I tackle business challenges and opportunities.

3.4 Interview with the Founder (Wellington Chiwara)

I decided to interview Wellington Chiwara, founder of Eel Rides, to understand both Eel Rides' unique value proposition and its alignment with broader market trends in sustainable, premium transportation. To explore the motivations and challenges of starting a new business, and to understand how the company's objectives align with contemporary sustainable transportation trends. This provided valuable insights into the difficulties of launching a new company, highlighting the importance of having an entrepreneurial attitude to tackle challenges and make the most of opportunities in a cutthroat industry. By examining these observations, my aim was to identify crucial factors that impact Eel Rides' market standing and future outlook in the electric vehicle sector. As a pioneering start-up dedicated to delivering environmentally responsible

transportation solutions in London, Eel Rides positions itself as a disruptor in an industry dominated by traditional ride-hailing giants.

His reflections on his career trajectory reveal a gap in the market for premium, eco-conscious ride-hailing services. Observing that industry leaders like Uber have been slow to adopt sustainable practices, Chiwara positions Eel Rides as a brand that prioritizes both environmental consciousness and driver welfare. This market insight underscores a competitive strategy that could be effectively communicated through campaigns that highlight Eel Rides' sustainability efforts and its commitment to drivers as core parts of its identity.

In a competitive field where brand values are increasingly scrutinized, an in-depth understanding of Eel Rides' core principles and market positioning is essential for devising effective marketing strategies. As part of this internship's focus on enhancing brand visibility and customer engagement, the interview, available on Appendix offers a firsthand account of Chiwara's vision for Eel Rides, including his strategic approach to eco-consciousness and premium service. This perspective is particularly relevant in the current market, where sustainability is not only a growing consumer priority but also a key differentiator for brands. By aligning marketing efforts with the company's founding values, this internship report aims to develop a marketing strategy that resonates with Eel Rides' target audience of eco-conscious, corporate, and premium clients.

Chiwara shares that early-stage challenges, such as securing funding and building the right team, required significant resilience and resourcefulness. His solution involved equity-based partnerships and a deliberate approach to hiring, ensuring a team with aligned values and a shared vision. This commitment to team cohesion and sustainable growth is reflected in Eel Rides' brand image, suggesting a strong foundation of authenticity that could resonate with consumers who prioritize values-based brands. Narratives that highlight Eel Rides' grassroots strength and its dedication to a sustainable model could reinforce trust and brand appeal.

Additionally, Chiwara discusses the company's strategic focus on corporate clients and eco-conscious travellers, emphasizing that consumer interest in environmental accountability is on the rise. Eel Rides' business model, therefore, caters to this socially responsible audience, pointing to specific marketing approaches that would resonate with

this demographic. Targeted messaging, tailored to convey the brand's sustainability values and premium service, could establish a deeper connection with environmentally conscious customers, enhancing the company's market position.

Sustainability emerges as a central pillar in Eel Rides' strategy, with Chiwara introducing the concept of an "Eel Card" to help customers track and offset their carbon footprint. The integration of this innovative tool underscores the company's commitment to sustainability as a unique selling point. Gauging customer engagement with the Eel Card could provide valuable insights into how the brand's environmental initiatives enhance loyalty and align with consumer values, solidifying Eel Rides' position as a leader in eco-friendly transportation.

For Chiwara, the focus on building a dedicated team and drawing from mentors' guidance highlights a growth philosophy centered on resilience, adaptability, and strong team culture. This perspective is valuable in a competitive industry, where differentiation is key. Marketing that emphasizes Eel Rides' unique market position, driven by sustainability and a cohesive, mission-driven team, could resonate with audiences looking for an alternative to mainstream ride-hailing services. Managing an all-electric vehicle fleet brings with it specific operational challenges, including the need for reliable charging infrastructure and the long-term commitment required from team members. Chiwara's transparency about these challenges presents an opportunity to foster consumer trust through proactive communication, particularly with eco-conscious customers who value a brand's honesty about its sustainability journey.

Looking ahead, Chiwara envisions Eel Rides as a global platform for eco-conscious travelers, with the Eel Card playing a central role in its international growth strategy. This approach calls for culturally adaptable messaging that communicates the brand's environmental mission effectively across different regions. Testing various messaging strategies could refine Eel Rides' international outreach, making it a relevant and appealing option for eco-conscious travelers worldwide.

Finally, Chiwara's advice to new entrepreneurs, focusing on the importance of self-belief, adaptability, and continuous learning, encapsulates the spirit that drives Eel Rides forward. This mindset reflects a culture of innovation and purpose, which could be woven

into brand communications to attract consumers who value companies committed to learning and social responsibility. Wellington Chiwara's insights offer a roadmap for a marketing approach that centers on sustainability, resilience, and adaptability, positioning Eel Rides as a pioneering force in premium, sustainable transportation and building a strong reputation among eco-conscious consumers.

In examining the interview with Eel Rides' founder, Wellington Chiwara, alongside the objectives and reflections of this report, it becomes clear that the insights offered by Chiwara not only inform the company's vision but also directly reinforce the action-research approach underpinning this internship. The theoretical framework outlined here—emphasizing cultural intelligence, adaptability, and intercultural competence—aligns with Chiwara's emphasis on resilience, strategic adaptation, and cultural responsiveness within a competitive, sustainability-focused industry.

Chiwara's observations on the market gap he identified, particularly the demand for premium, eco-conscious ride-hailing services, illustrate a practical response to shifting global consumer values. This strategic focus on environmentally responsible, customer-oriented services offers a tangible application of intercultural business strategies: Chiwara's approach reflects a nuanced understanding of eco-conscious consumer values, which are increasingly prevalent among globally minded and socially responsible clients. This aligns with the broader industry trends discussed in this report, underscoring Eel Rides' potential as a progressive market player within sustainable transport.

Through Chiwara's insights into the challenges of securing both financial and human resources in the startup's early stages, we gain a practical perspective on the action-research methodology adopted for this internship. His description of overcoming high development costs and his focus on assembling a committed team resonate with the cyclical planning and adjustment processes central to action research. These challenges required strategic adaptation—mirroring the reflective cycles that allowed for continual reassessment of marketing strategies, brand visibility tactics, and project goals during this internship. Chiwara's account validates this iterative approach, demonstrating how Eel Rides' initial strategies were re-evaluated and tailored to the startup's evolving needs.

Moreover, Chiwara's discussion of Eel Rides' future growth strategy—particularly the planned launch of the “Eel Card” for carbon tracking and offsetting—points to an intercultural and globally adaptable strategy that aligns with contemporary expectations for sustainability in business. His ambition to scale Eel Rides globally suggests a roadmap

for expanding into markets where eco-consciousness is a key cultural and regulatory driver. From an intercultural communication standpoint, this commitment to environmentally responsible travel echoes the importance of aligning brand values with diverse market expectations, a concept foundational to intercultural business competence. As Eel Rides moves toward international expansion, cultural intelligence and adaptability will be essential to successfully engaging new audiences with varied cultural values surrounding sustainability.

The reflections Chiwara shared on team-building and resilience provide a direct link to this report's emphasis on intercultural competence and the importance of fostering a culturally aware, cohesive team. His insights on identifying and retaining team members who are both skilled and mission-aligned speak to the critical role that cultural intelligence plays in creating an inclusive, effective team environment. This focus on team cohesion, combined with Chiwara's advice to be discerning about external guidance, reinforces the importance of cultivating a reflective and adaptable mindset, especially within a culturally diverse team structure. The report's findings indicate that, through a commitment to shared values, Eel Rides has cultivated a corporate culture that embraces adaptability and mutual learning—qualities essential for navigating the globalized and culturally diverse landscape of sustainable transport.

In triangulating these insights with the practical objectives of this internship and the overarching themes of intercultural competence and action research, it is clear that Chiwara's experiences serve as both a model and a case study for applying theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges. His approach to sustainability, team dynamics, and global strategy provides a meaningful framework for understanding how Eel Rides' mission aligns with broader global trends, which is particularly relevant given the emphasis on cultural responsiveness and adaptability in this report. Ultimately, Chiwara's reflections not only provide a strategic roadmap for Eel Rides but also deepen the internship's relevance, situating it within a dynamic intersection of sustainability, intercultural business practice, and the evolving needs of the global market.

The internship at Eel Rides has been a priceless educational opportunity, offering a thorough understanding of the sustainable transportation industry. During this time, I acquired a hands-on understanding of the complexities of marketing in a startup setting and how these tactics connect with larger industry patterns. Gaining insight from the obstacles encountered by a new business trying to break into the electric vehicle industry made clear the significance of flexibility and creativity.

An important lesson I learned is the urgent requirement for companies to adapt to changing consumer preferences, particularly from the younger demographic who value sustainability. This particular group is not only affecting market trends; they are insisting on them. Noting how Eel Rides strives to meet these preferences emphasized the importance of matching business offerings with the values of prospective customers.

The difficulties of starting a new business in a fiercely competitive setting were also a central focus of my internship. Although Eel Rides is still being developed, it is positioned to significantly impact solving urban transportation problems like traffic jams and pollution. The increasing focus on electric vehicles as a sustainable option shows a growing awareness of the necessity for creative solutions to urgent environmental issues.

Additionally, working together with different stakeholders was identified as a key factor for achieving success in this field. A major takeaway was the recognition of the significance of collaborations in achieving sustainable business practices. It was evident that working together with local governments and other businesses can improve the efficiency of sustainability efforts and advance towards common objectives.

The abilities I honed in data analysis and customer engagement tactics will be crucial in my upcoming pursuits. Using data for actionable insights is essential for improving marketing strategies, and I discovered how these insights influence decision-making in a startup.

To conclude, this internship has strengthened my grasp of the electric vehicle industry and the larger impacts of sustainable transportation. Eel Rides is showing great potential, and I am thrilled to have contributed to its initial strategies. The experience I gained during this time will definitely impact my upcoming profession, especially in fields that value sustainability and innovation. The road ahead for Eel Rides may present difficulties,

yet it also holds potential for growth, and I am excited to witness its evolution in the future.

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Appendix I – LinkedIn Posts

(See point 3.2 for more information)

1.

Hey guys! As you know publicity and advertising are important so here are some websites and magazines that might interest you! I thought I could share some of these absolute goldmines that I stumbled upon when embarking on this startup adventure and starting Eel Rides. 💡🤔

Startup Grind– *A community that just gets it! Real stories, real struggles, and amazing insights! 📖*

*There's **Startups Magazine**- A window to global trends and tales. Because let's face it, the startup language is universal. 🙌🙌*

Start Your Business Magazine – *There you can find practical tips and strategies. It's basically a roadmap for your startup journey. 📖*

*But wait, there's more! **Startup Observer** - Updates on emerging trends in the startup panorama. 🌍*

*For my fellow European innovators, **EU-Startups Magazine**- Explores the European startup scene. ✨*

*And a special mention to **Black Business Magazine!** - Focus on empowering Black entrepreneurs' stories and innovative business strategies. 🤝*

These aren't just helpful resources; they're like reliable guides through the ups and downs of startups. And just like these, there are maaaaany more! As they say knowledge is power and you can never have too much of it (knowledge you guys👀). 🎉📖

Sooo, fellow founders, have any of these impacted your journey? How so? Also, do you know any others? Drop your stories and insights in the comments! 🌍🌟


2.

Hey, LinkedIn innovators! 🙌📖

So, let's chat about something important in our startup game – the power of soaking up insights from fellow founders and staying in the know about what's new in the market. 🌍💡


That's why I love going to new events that are not just interesting but very helpful in getting a perspective on how I want Eel Rides to roll. It's a great learning opportunity! 🚀🌟


Check out some of these platforms:

 **AllEvents** – From conferences to meetups, it's a network of ideas. 🌐🚀

 **Eventbrite** – The event hub! All the information you need on each event is here! 📅

 **F6S** – For the startup enthusiasts! Updates on emerging trends and opportunities. 🔍💡

 **Startup Voyager** – Navigating the startup galaxy! All the details you need! 📖🚀

 **StartupGrind** – The essence of the startup scene! Authentic narratives and eye-opening perspectives.

Have any of these platforms played a role in your professional journey? Which one's your top pick? Alsoooo, do you know any good upcoming events? 🤔🌟

3.

Hey Hemp users? 😎

What do you use cannabis for? – Did you know its countless purposes extend far beyond what meets the eye...and the lungs? 🌿

Last week I had a meeting with a sustainable hero- Suneet Shivaprasad, the co-founder of Rare Earth Global, that left me truly inspired! Their commitment to sustainability and innovative use of hemp is paving the way for a greener future, one that aligns with Eel Rides' vision. 🌍

At Rare Earth, they specialise in harnessing the power of hemp for eco-friendly solutions like using hemp for developing biodegradable plastics and exploring the potential of hemp in biofuel production. This VERY versatile plant 🌿 allows for a wide range of functions, ones that also contribute to more sustainable practices across various industries. 🙌

It goes without saying that I'm always eager to connect with other like-minded businesses and organisations and I'm very grateful for the positive feedback and insight on our sustainable approach. Suneet was impressed about Eel Rides' objectives and goals, whilst appreciative of our initiative! Knowing we are on the right track is empowering, and I'm excited about the direction we are headed! 🚀

So, did you know about this green game-changer? With its countless uses, what's your top pick for using hemp? 🌿💜

4.

From trash to trendy.

I recently attended an eye-opening event in London where I had the honour of hearing Philip Foster, the driving force behind the remarkable Trashy Bags Africa as well as Aqua Africa. 🌿💧

Trashy Bags is not just a brand; it's a movement towards a cleaner, greener planet. 🌍 Plastic pollution has turned into a major global environmental issue, causing significant problems around the world and they've redefined recycling by transforming discarded plastic waste, including water sachets, into stylish and functional products.

What struck me the most was their commitment to making a tangible impact on local communities in Ghana. By engaging local artisans in the collection and upcycling process, Trashy Bags isn't just reducing environmental impact; it's creating jobs and contributing to social and economic empowerment. Did you know that they collect nearly 200,000 plastic sachets each month? Since their debut in 2007, they managed to recycle over 30 million plastic bags! 🙌👏

They go beyond creating fashionable items – they're environmental guardians. Their approach isn't just about making products; it's about fostering education for those in need and sustainable practices for a cleaner, healthier planet. 🌿📖

What's also impressive is their corporate consciousness. Their unwavering commitment to ethical business practices is to be highlighted. Trashy Bags is a shining example of how a company can thrive while prioritizing environmental sustainability and ethical principles. Their business model is a powerful reminder of the positive change businesses can drive in the world. 📈👏

Cheers to companies like Trashy Bags for their innovative and conscious approach! 🎉 Together, we can support initiatives that are making a real difference. 💪

*#TrashyBagsAfrica #Sustainability #Innovation #EnvironmentalConsciousness
#LondonEvents #EcoFashion*

5.

Beyond the office walls: Embracing the hybrid spirit 📁⚡

Since the beginning of Eel Rides, we have been working from home. Our office, being a place to wherever Wi-Fi connects. Alongside our co-founder, this has provided us with finding the best talents across the world and building our amazing team with people in

almost every continent. From India to Nigeria to the U.K., our workspace knows no boundaries! 🌍🏠

Yet, even with our global reach and flexibility, there is no denying that there is something special about a common workspace with your co-workers because working alone isn't always ideal (let's be honest, who wants to stay at home 24h/7 looking at their computer?). 🌐💻

The hybrid model breaks down geographical barriers and is full of benefits such as:

- Reduced commuting costs and time.
- More autonomy
- Better work-life balance
- Increased productivity
- Flexible schedule

This is why we are looking into setting up a hybrid work situation here at Eel Rides in London. We want to provide our team with a better life-work harmony. A place where we can have coffee, where we can brainstorm ideas together, chat and form alliances. Because, if 'The Office' has taught us something is that sometimes, going to work with others is fun and cultivates a positive and sustainable work culture! 🇬🇧🌟

But hey, I want to hear from YOU. Question for start-up founders: what do you guys prefer? Are you all for fully remote, stick to the office or hybrid? 🏢👤

6.

Hey! Ready to turn those Monday blues into a Monday mood boost?

Who said that Mondays have to be dreadful? I mean, it's no Saturday, I know...no brunch with bottomless mimosas, just bottomless emails. But we got this, one coffee at a time! ☕🚀

Speaking of which, let me share a few hidden gems in London that'll make your week start with a delicious twist. 🌈🌟

Ever explored Neal's Yard? Picture this: vibrant colours, creative vibes, and the aroma of one of the best doughnuts in London from St. John's Bakery. Because, hey, Mondays are made for treating yourself, right? 🍩

Brunch, anyone? Elevate your brunch experience at Petersham Nurseries Café, where not only your taste buds are treated but also the planet. With a Michelin Green Star gem, it's a place where sustainability meets culinary excellence. A little pick-me-up for your palate and the planet! 🌱🍃

And for the coffee lovers, Caravan has a sweet deal – bring your cup, save some pennies. Your coffee, your way, and a little extra in your pocket. ☕💰

Now that you have your coffee, why not drink it in Saint Dunstan-in-the-East is an overlooked green spot nestled in the midst of the city's hustle? Ancient ruins turned into serene escape. It's like stepping into a time capsule where history meets tranquillity.



Hey, still not sold on the 'Brekkie'? Then head to Pop Brixton. From innovative startups to delicious bites. Elevate your Monday lunch game.

What's your go-to Monday ritual or favourite hidden spot in the city? 🍷🚗

Appendix II – Interview

- 1. What inspired you to start EELRIDES, and what gap in the market did you identify that led to the development of a premium ride-hailing service with an electric vehicle (EV) fleet?**

It was because I used to work for Lyft, which is Uber's competitor in the States, and right after that I also worked at a car rental company, which made me realise that there was a need for better service and also a service that helps the planet. So, yes, Uber was just being slow with its ideas, egos involved, saying they'd change in 2020, 2025, 2030. They're probably going to say it will be 2050 soon. There was a huge gap in the market because none of the major players seemed to take sustainability seriously, and they also took advantage of drivers by not offering them benefits; like, you know, they don't treat this as a job; they look at this as part-time work. So there was that time and need for a professional premium service that is also affordable.

- 2. What were your biggest challenges in the early stages of starting this business, and how did you overcome them?**

I would say that building a good team, which is one of the most difficult challenges that people don't really understand, or similar issues, is often undermined. So, building a good team and ensuring financial support is essential. One of the first quotations we wanted for the app to be developed... so basically, we reached out to a Ukrainian lady at another company of app developers, and we contacted those developers. They said that... I think they provided us with a quotation of €495,000, which seemed like a really big challenge. By the way, the way we overcame that was that it looked like we couldn't make that up at all; we couldn't develop the website, we couldn't do anything if those were going to be the range of prices for what we were looking at, you know, to get something done. But we did that by finding a good team on a solid equity basis. That's how we overcame that. In terms of building a good team... we overcame that challenge by taking our time and looking for the right people. To be honest, time is important in a start-up, so it is much better to take your time and find the right people because that would save time at the end of the day.

3. How did you determine your business model, and what factors influenced the decision to focus on corporate clients and eco-conscious passengers?

I can say that people at this point in time, they're starting to care more about the environment than anything else and also the big organisations that are there in the UK, you know, just as an example, in London they seem like they did not care about the carbon footprint that they're meeting with transport so that's why my main focus on the business was trying to tell this big giants of this big businesses or just travellers coming to the UK they you also need to care about your carbon footprint, and you also need to care about the carbon you emit and also speaking to those eco-conscious travellers already that are already there that there's an option for you available when you need it, and that's something that they couldn't get with other players. I know Uber has the... what is it called?... The Uber green, but it doesn't come with a professional service, so this is also something that we wanted to provide to the eco-conscious travellers.

4. What role does sustainability play in the overall business strategy, and how do you see it shaping the company's future?

You know, as I told you, we're actually going to do something called an "Eel Card", which is a sustainability passport, to be honest, to trace your carbon; you will be able to offset it, so sustainability plays the biggest role, you know, organisational. That's our main selling point, that's our unique point, it's not just for, you know, for ground travel, we're also getting into even people using public transportation flying, having the option to offset it so here the sustainability plays a very, very big role.

5. What do you consider to be the key factors for growing a startup like EELRIDES in a competitive industry such as ride-hailing?

Good team. I think the founders are the ones who make a good team. You'll find that 99.9% of the people you meet are not going to work out, and most people you speak to will tell you why it didn't work for them. It's not going to work, and this, I think, is within the founders or the team. When you're having a conversation with someone like that, you need to understand. For instance, if someone says, 'I want you to do something similar, but I was working five hours a week,' then you understand what the problem is. Maybe five hours a week is not enough; you need to do 20 or 40. But I would say that the team and the drive are what truly make us successful. One other point I would add is the importance of having mentors and advisors—people who believe in you. It's just about guidance. You might hear, 'Yeah, OK, cool, this is great,' but again, you don't need to depend on everything they say. Sometimes they might suggest things that don't align with where you want your start-up to be. So, you also need to sit down and think for yourself. They are there to guide you, but not to babysit or spoon-feed you everything. So yes.

6. What challenges have you encountered in building and maintaining an all-EV fleet, and how have you addressed those challenges?

The challenges that were there were especially with start-ups, you need to take, at least in the beginning, this can take months. Like 48 months or 24 months, so that's long, that slow, that's a long-time commitment for a new start-up, so yeah, I would say that's one and two... I guess that's the main one, to be honest. I don't see any other one other than, obviously, there's just a basic need to charge (the cars), which is cheaper than putting fuel, so that's not really a problem about where we are at right now, I think that's that was the major challenge.

7. Where do you see EELRIDES in the next five years, and how do you plan to scale the business both within London and potentially internationally?

To be honest, everywhere, global, 100%. Because of the Eel Card that we're trying to introduce, it is not something that will only be used in London. It means we can launch Eel Rides here, and that tax represents just about 20% of the business, really. Or we can be in the States... in a few months, we can be anywhere people will be booking flights through our platform. We work with local taxi companies if we're not there. So, scaling the business involves going to countries where they promote sustainability; they're trying to be sustainable by providing that Eel Card as the travel card. So, it becomes like a travel card, yeah? Therefore, I think everywhere, to be honest, even in Africa, where we wouldn't be getting paid as much, is where most of the offsetting happens anyway, like real frustration and things like that. So, we'll be there with different projects, maybe actually doing reforestation and things like that. So, in five years, everywhere.

8. What advice would you give to other entrepreneurs who are starting in sustainable transport or tech-driven industries?

If it's in sustainable transport, I wouldn't want anyone in sustainable transport, but if it's tech driven, I guess it's just the drive you need to believe in yourself, and that's number one. Everything else doesn't matter after that; if you believe in yourself, that's the most important thing. But there's no number two, there's no number three, number four—maybe there's number five, which is you need to

trust in yourself and in people who are probably more intelligent than you as well. You need a good team, and you will go anywhere. That's my advice. But number one is believing in yourself; if you don't, then no one's going to be like, "Why is someone going to believe in you when you don't even believe in yourself?" You know, for you to be able to sell something, people need to see that you believe in yourself. It's like, "OK, cool, I'll give this guy a chance," you know? But if you doubt, then no one cares. And also, you need to be willing to learn new stuff, by the way. Like last year, where I am now and where I was last year is totally different. Last year, I knew a lot of stuff that I didn't know before. I probably think I know a lot of stuff now, so yeah, you need to be willing to learn; you need to read things—books, stuff... that's where the knowledge is hidden, to be honest.