

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

MyHammer

 *Instahelp*

For the purpose of creating my own expert app, I carried out a competitive analysis for two similar services. The problem was that, in the German market, there are no exactly similar services available. What I am planning to build is an app that works as a platform for, on the one hand, experts and, on the other hand, people in need of help. Via this app, the users are able find help for all kinds of problems they have in their everyday lives. The app would provide vetted experts whom they can call and send messages.

So, the closest ones that I found were apps called MyHammer and Instahelp. The first one is for finding local craftsmen. So, the app does not work as a conversation platform for users and experts but more like the good old Yellow Pages providing users the contact details of the local craftsmen. Of course with many improvements though.

The latter one is a service that provides online consultation from psychologists. In comparison to the app that I am developing, it has the same online chat feature. It is a platform where psychologists meet their patients and the other way around. However, as it is limited to mental health, which is naturally a very delicate issue, it has several very particular characteristics that are not applicable to other kind of apps.

I also carried out a usability analysis for MyHammer as its structure with the expert search and profiles is very close to what I am doing. Instahelp works differently which is why it was impossible to analyse it. It is more guided chat service for people in crisis.



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS:

MyHammer

COMPETITIVE PROFILE

Overview

Like said, MyHammer is a service that provides contact details of local craftsmen. After giving the search information, the user gets a list of rated and reviewed craftsmen with details and photos. It is also possible to leave a work assignment and to wait for offers. MyHammer is an old and well-established product that started in Germany as a web service already more than ten years ago.

Key Objectives

Finding good craftsmen is traditionally so difficult that it has become an endless source of very dark humor. However, MyHammer has found a perfect solution to that problem. The craftsmen and the people, who hire them, come usually from different backgrounds and have often very different kind of habits and preferences. Whereas people search help mostly in internet nowadays, the craftsmen are usually not people with lot of time, skill or money to make nice websites, etc. Here comes MyHammer to the picture by providing an easy way for craftsmen to create a profile and present their skills. And for the users they provide a portal of local craftsmen with ratings and recommendations. The service was just what the world needed.

Bottom line

- The user can either search for craftsmen himself or upload an assignment.
- The craftsmen create profiles and search for assignments.
- Free for users, the craftsmen pay a flat monthly rate.

Overall Strategy

MyHammer has a long history in serving both the craftsmen and the people hiring them. Most likely their website is still the most common place of business, even though they have brought the app to the market. Interestingly, it seems that this process has not gone so well as they hoped.

The ratings for the app are namely rather bad. In iTunes, it gets 3.9 from 24 users but, in GooglePlay, catastrophic 2.2 from 189 users. It seems that they have lot of problems with Android and that many users are furious. However, according to the replies from the customer service, they try to deal with these problems by bringing out new updates.

Bottom line

- They are the biggest player in the craftsmen portal business.
- Their website is still the main function for them.
- They have or have had some serious problems with their Android app.

Market Advantage

MyHammer is already a big and well-established product that has won prizes and is very popular. A google search brings all kinds of articles about it and, when trying "handwerker finden" [*find craftsmen*], MyHammer is the first match that one gets. They have been around for a long time, and that means that they are likely to have the biggest base of craftsmen too. However, if they do not improve their app, the frustrated customers may start to look for other services.

Bottom line

- A well-established product ruling the market.
- They are likely to have a huge base of craftsmen.
- According to their website, they have more than 3 000 000 registered users.

Marketing Profile

Their goal has been the same all through their long history and, at least until today, they have managed well in meeting the demands of the fast developing world. For example, in 2016 MyHammer Holding AG had 60 employees and turnover of 9 500 000 euros.

Bottom line

- They are already a huge company.
- Their biggest advantage seems to be their large user and craftsmen base.

SWOT Profile

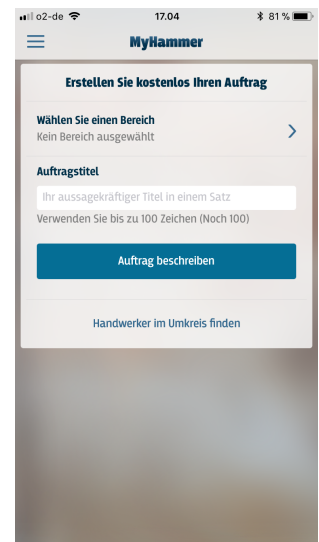
STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The market leader• Very established• A huge base of craftsmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A better working app• A service for video calls with experts• Perhaps better deals for craftsmen?
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems with their app• Their overall UX needs bit of simplifying• Does not always feel clear and reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New apps which work better• Allegations of malpractice (eg. promoting black market and hiding negative reviews)



UX ANALYSIS

Layout

MyHammer has clearly chosen the path they want to walk and they stay faithful to that decision all the way. On the one hand, it is not pretty and feels a bit too packed with things but, on the other hand, it feels like a good fit for its purpose. After all, it is a service for people looking for professional craftsmen, and that is why the official, informative and a bit boring appearance is perhaps the right bet. However, many options, small texts with stiff fonts, and almost no pictures is a pretty heavy combination. Also the basic layout is quite strange at times. For example, the start screen and the menu bar use only half of the screen leaving the rest just empty.



The start screen

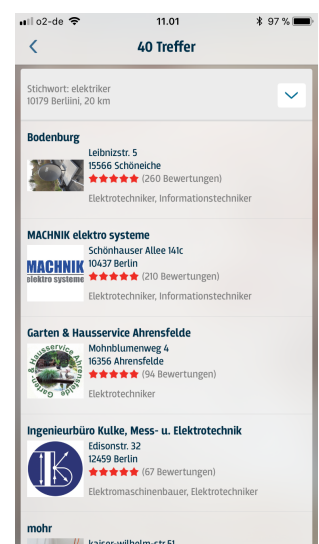
Usability

The overall experience is not totally hopeless, but there is much room for improvement. Even though one is likely to find what he is looking for, it is not always so straightforward and pleasant.

"Clumsy" is the word that is likely to come to one's mind. Like I said, it can be that, when it comes to such a service, people appreciate things like a good selection of craftsmen and detailed information about them, but it would still not hurt to make the experience a bit smoother.

For example, even though the main search engine is efficient and fast to use, it is hard to say what is the logic behind the huge amount of little craftman options it provides? Are they sorted after location or rating or what? It does not help with this information overflow that all craftsmen seem to have an almost perfect rating. It just gives the user a bit of a dodgy and unrealistic feeling especially as in real life it is more common that people complain about the workers they hire than that they praise them.

It is just the general feeling that there are too many options. Often one ends up clicking around without really knowing where he is going. Like for example the *magazine* option gives one an endless amount of articles and categories, whereas the *settings* only the



The craftsmen options

option to choose between Germany and Austria. It all gives one the feeling that they should really find someone who knows a bit about information architecture.

Navigation Structure

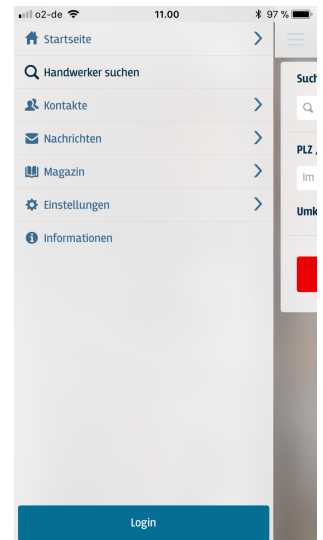
While the craftsmen search and the option for uploading an assignment are the two most important features here, it is important that one can find them already on the start page. They also work pretty well, so that it is a clear plus. Other than that, everything works through a menu bar on the left hand side. I find that there are a bit too many options. Also the search results and introductions are a bit too packed. It is sometimes difficult to say where one should click.

Differentiation

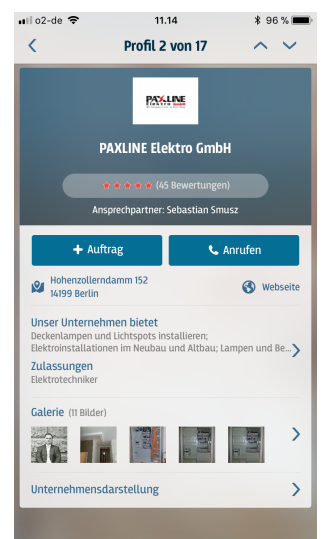
Even though the app I am creating is very different from MyHammer, we can still learn many things from it. For example, how to make the app work better and how to present the experts so that it is easier for the user to choose. Most importantly, how to pass the user the feeling of trust and transparency. This is something that MyHammer should have done much better.

Calls to Action

The app has a lot of room for improvement. Starting from the basic layout and information structure. Also the experts should be presented better. If every expert has a perfect rating, it is impossible to make a difference between them. And what is worse, it does not feel right. When trying to make everything look too perfect, they fail and just make it look suspicious. These feelings find backing when reading the critique from the app store. Some users claim that the negative reviews are ignored. Perhaps a map would be good too to show how far the craftsmen are located.



The menu bar



The craftsman info



COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS:

Instahelp

COMPETITIVE PROFILE

Overview

This second app differs very much from the first one; instead of hammers and nails, this is about mental constructions. Instahelp is a service that provides online consultation from psychologists. It is originally an Austrian product that has worked both as a web and mobile application since 2015.

Key Objectives

“Online counselling from experienced online-psychologists”. That is Instahelp’s main message and it packs the whole service nicely. Beside connecting the users to psychologists giving online counselling, it can also help finding local experts for in-person meetings. The users are of course charged for the online counselling, but finding psychologists for in-person sessions is free. The psychologists will be charged a flat rate for having their profile on the portal.

As it should be when dealing with such delicate issues, Instahelp emphasises trustworthiness, anonymity, and short waiting times. When turning on the app, the almost only viable option is to start a chat with a personal assistant who again helps the user to find right kind of help. With questions about mental health, it is important to

maintain the personal approach even when using a mobile app. However, Instahelp keeps reminding that it is not suitable for acute crises and emergencies.

Bottom line

- The user can either look for online counselling or local experts for in-person sessions.
- Great way for psychologists to widen their clientele and forget about the geographical limits.
- The service charges both the users and experts.

Overall Strategy

Like MyHammer, Instahelp is a pioneer and the main player on the given field. Another similarity is that also for Instahelp the web app seems to be the main function. However, given the uncontrollable nature of mental problems, the mobile app can be airreplaceable part of the package. For example, the paying customers have unlimited amount of messages they can send to their psychologist.

The mobile app is generally well rated. In GooglePlay, it has the rating of 4.1 from 38 users. In iTunes, it has only 3 reviews, but they all give 5 stars. Such a small amount of reviews does not give a very reliable overlook, but it all sounds very promising.

Bottom line

- The biggest player in the market.
- The users are mostly using the web application.
- The mobile app seems to work well too.

Market Advantage

Instahelp has managed to establish themselves very well. As their whole project is also socially important, they have created a service that radiates reliability, caring, and good will. It has also won many prizes and it has been praised for the help it provides. This kind of acknowledgment and recognition is priceless for a product that really has to win the trust of its users and experts.

A google search for Instahelp gives 50 000 hits with many interesting articles and, when looking for "online psychologists", it is the first hit.

Bottom line

- The best known application for psychological online counselling.
- The mobile app seems to be less popular than the website.
- According to their website, they have already helped more than 9000 people.

Marketing Profile

Instahelp is only a few years old, so there has not been any big changes on the way. They have managed well to combine light and easy applications, convincing professionals in psychology, and a discreet and trustworthy atmosphere. It is hard to see what could be done better here.

Bottom line

- Only a few years old product.
- Very successful in bringing all the important but very different aspects together.

SWOT Profile

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established market position• Convincing and trustworthy appearance• Discreet personal touch• Well working applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A similar service but of various fields• Perhaps better prices?
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A limited scope• The mobile app gives the user very little room and freedom, and is a bit aggressive in this sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are also other similar services, like Mentavio, which look very good too• Some psychologists offer online counselling just on their own website