

**American University Kyiv**

A Capstone Project

DEVELOPING A GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY FOR A UKRAINIAN  
FURNITURE MANUFACTURER  
РОЗРОБКА СТРАТЕГІЇ ВИХОДУ НА РИНОК ДЛЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО  
ВИРОБНИКА МЕБЛІВ  
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## ABSTRACT

This Capstone project focuses on developing a go-to-market strategy for a Ukrainian furniture manufacturer seeking to enter the niche market of furniture adapted to the needs of people with functional disorders. Driven by increasing demand, particularly in the context of post-war rehabilitation for veterans, the project aims to explore market opportunities, understand customer needs, and recommend actionable steps for market entry.

The research employs a combination of qualitative methods (expert interviews) and environmental analyses (PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces) to assess the external and micro-environmental factors influencing the Ukrainian furniture industry overall. Insights from experts in universal design, rehabilitation therapy, and inclusivity highlight critical needs, such as ergonomic, modular, and height-adjustable furniture that balances functionality and aesthetics.

The market for adaptive furniture in Ukraine remains underdeveloped, creating opportunities for first-movers. Potential customers in B2C include individuals with functional disorders and members of their households, while the B2B segment encompasses rehabilitation centers, public spaces, and NGOs. Critical product features include customizable designs to meet specific needs, affordability to overcome market barriers, and aesthetics to encourage adoption.

The project concludes with a set of strategic recommendations to position the Client as a leader in inclusive furniture design, which could be achieved through cost-efficient product development, customer-centric solutions tested in rehabilitation centers, and close collaboration with experts in the field. Further steps are associated with profiling consumers and their needs through online surveys, developing MVPs, and testing these in focus groups.

*Keywords:* inclusivity, accessibility, adaptive furniture, universal design, rehabilitation, go-to-market strategy, Ukrainian furniture industry.

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A special acknowledgment goes to **Mr. Vitalii Pcholkin**, CEO of GAR (Group for Active Rehabilitation) and founder of InvaFishki, whose inspiring efforts in fostering accessibility and inclusivity in Ukraine have profoundly influenced my perspective. His commitment to creating a better future for all is truly commendable.

## **Dedication**

*“If you do not intentionally, deliberately, and proactively include,  
you will unintentionally exclude.”*

*(c) Joe Gerstandt, Inclusion Strategist*

I dedicate this work to all Ukrainian military personnel who have sustained injuries as a result of hostilities, with the hope that the results of this project contribute to the development of the Ukrainian furniture market, addressing the needs of people with functional disorders.

While developing a go-to-market strategy for a small furniture business, I aim to enhance the quality of social rehabilitation of veterans by improving their ability to create comfortable households and meeting their overall well-being needs through improved accessibility and functionality within public spaces.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this project, I am solving a consulting case for a furniture manufacturer (further, the Client, the Company), an established Ukrainian company known for its modern, minimalist designs. Established in 2015, the Company operates a manufacturing facility located in Kyiv and is planning to review its strategy in several areas of operations with the arrival of new co-owners in 2024.

The Client's management team considers several business developments, aiming to increase overall company value, and needs external support in testing potential scenarios and underlying implications. One of the scenarios considered is developing and launching a product line of furniture adapted to the needs of people with functional disorders. This idea originates from a potential customer request (one of the largest Ukrainian rehabilitation centers for veterans), which is seeking to equip its facilities for veterans who have lost limbs. Potential customer was not able to find any suitable products to satisfy their requirements, thus requested the Client to support them with developing furniture products that satisfy the requirements of veterans who undergo rehabilitation. This created a hypothesis that a larger demand exists and can not be satisfied with existing product offering, which creates an opportunity for the Client.

Together with the Client's management team, we agreed on my key objectives in assessing the market for adapted furniture, analyzing its structure, and key drivers specifically related to recent developments of demand. Respectively, I set my goal for this project to develop recommendations for the Client, elaborating on the market status quo, outline opportunities, and develop an action plan for commercial success.

An overarching research question is: "What is the right go-to-market strategy for the Client considering a new product line of furniture adapted for the needs of people with functional disorders?".

## CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Due to the project's multidisciplinary nature, several theoretical and practical inputs must be reviewed and further applied in this work. In line with the objectives, the core topic requires inspecting theoretical principles of developing a go-to-market strategy and outlining relevant marketing theory. At the same time, the following inputs are essential for developing practical deliverables for the Client: examining market conditions, investigating the peculiarities of the addressed market segment, and finally, assessing demographics within the target customer groups.

In my search for relevant insights, I rely on diverse sources such as textbooks, research papers, and blog posts by practitioners to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to developing a go-to-market strategy for the Client. Textbooks provide foundational theories, frameworks, and best practices that are widely recognized and validated over time; research papers contribute cutting-edge insights, data-driven analyses, and emerging trends that inform strategic decision-making in specific contexts, such as consumer behavior or market dynamics in the furniture industry. Meanwhile, blog posts and articles by prominent practitioners offer practical, real-world examples and innovative solutions that reflect current industry realities and entrepreneurial perspectives. Combining these resources ensures the strategy is theoretically robust and practically applicable, leveraging the latest trends and methodologies to create a competitive advantage.

In this chapter, I structure relevant sources within the following three blocks: (1.1) investigating related marketing theory, while focusing on the go-to-market strategy principles, market research concepts, and review of best practices in the marketing of new products; (1.2) analyzing competitive environment, understanding products and target groups; and (1.3) reviewing key sources related to the demography of the target customer groups.

### **1.1 Marketing theory**

#### ***Developing a go-to-market strategy***

According to Christina Wallace (an expert in early-stage go-to-market strategies and a senior lecturer at the Harvard Business School), for early-stage companies, success involves more than just creating a unique product and obtaining funding. It also hinges on executing a strong go-to-market

strategy to build awareness and attract customers to purchase the new offering. Effective go-to-market strategies focus on understanding the target customer, identifying the problem being solved for them, and analyzing their journey and purchasing behavior (Wallace, 2021).

In line with this goal of my work and with respect to the mission of the project, I deep dive into the theory of developing a go-to-market strategy, and for this, I refer to foundational authors, such as Lawrence Friedman and his book *Go-To-Market Strategy*. This serves as a highly regarded resource that provides actionable frameworks and strategic insights for effectively reaching and engaging target markets. This serves as a key pillar in this work, as it provides all of the techniques used by the world's top go-to-market practitioners, so for this project, there are several valuable insights – from basic definitions and fundamentals of a go-to-market strategy up to a thorough discussion on rethinking products and value proposition, aligning with customers, choosing the proper channels and partners, and gaining real go-to-market competitive advantage (G. Friedman, 2002).

In his work, Lawrence Friedman defines a go-to-market strategy as “a game plan for reaching and serving the right customers in the right markets, through the right channels, with the right products and the right value proposition”. The author addresses the challenge of offering customers the product and service choices they want while letting them decide how and when they want to do business with the seller (in our particular case – a furniture manufacturer). Finally, in line with the practical goal of this work, I am looking forward to assessing potential applications and further utilizing the approaches that aim to design and develop a go-to-market model that would allow more of what customers want for less than the company is currently investing.

A closer examination leads me to leverage the author's insights regarding the fundamental principles for developing a go-to-market strategy. These include analyzing customers, creating a winning customer experience, and leveraging the proper channels to meet customer needs. Here, the author highlights the need to center the developed strategy around customer preferences and behavior, which is critical when addressing the specific needs of people with functional disorders.

Further, I assume that the discussion should be centered on the right markets and referring to suggested rigorous methods for market segmentation and prioritization. I expect it to be especially insightful for understanding the micro-segmentation and how to identify high-opportunity niches. Finally, it can help define and prioritize customer groups and respective product segments that are most receptive to adaptive furniture.

To achieve alignment with customers, the author recommends exploring their behaviors and tailoring offerings to their needs. He also introduces tools for understanding customer decision-making processes, which is particularly relevant when developing strategies to align product design and marketing for individuals with functional disorders.

To implement the right channels and partners, Friedman reviews channel selection, partner strategies, and channel integration (highlighting the importance of matching channels to customer buying behaviors). Respectively, its particular relevance lies in the guides on how to distribute and promote perspective products through the most effective sales and distribution channels. This is also complemented by the insights regarding the integration of a multi-channel model, which focuses on integrating various channels into a cohesive system. The author emphasizes coordination to provide seamless customer experiences, which would be essential for creating a multi-channel strategy tailored to the target audience's needs.

Finally, developing a go-to-market strategy involves applying a combination of Friedman's (2002) Action Plan recommendations and complementing these with case-specific elements from modern practitioners, e.g. Wallace (2021).

### ***Market research***

As the context of the work is tightly connected to investigating the needs of consumers, it is essential to have a good understanding of the methods used in consumer behavior phenomena studies and respective requirements for me as a researcher in order to properly organize data collection. For this I refer to the publication of Chrysochou (2017), where the author investigates primary research methods, categorizing them into qualitative and quantitative approaches based on the objectives and nature of the data, outlining the key and most widely used methods within both categories. While in this project, the primary approach is to analyze qualitative insights from potential customers, I picked this article for its discussion on quantitative methods as they may be used at a later stage, when developing recommendations for defining specific features and characteristics of products. The discussion concludes with a comprehensive evaluation of these methods and suggestions for enhancing the quality of research techniques in the study of consumer behavior.

Respectively, due to the nature of the project and the need for thorough qualitative market research, a well-designed data collection process is vital for gaining foundational insights into consumer needs and sentiments. I refer to the publication by March (2024), where the author reassembles well-

structured and thorough instructions for designing the approach in questionnaires, that would serve as a guidance for researching how people perceive a product and business, as well as the reasons behind their opinions. Specifically, in this guide, the author explores qualitative market research methods, detailing various tools and techniques, their advantages, and real-world examples of qualitative research in practice.

### ***Marketing of new products***

For this sub-task within the project, it is important to collect insights from both foundational, and up-to-date sources to deliver top relevance recommendations in an ever-changing marketing landscape. For this purpose, Albrecht et al. (2023) provide reliable and academically sound guidance to ensure a strategy development aligned with recognized and credible marketing standards. Authors highlight well-structured concepts of market research, peculiarities of its application, and links to other sources. Insights about analyzing the marketing mix (4Ps) and customer-driven marketing strategy, are well aligned with the purpose of the project – here authors focus on creating solutions based on deep understanding and research of target customer needs, as well as sustainability and ethical marketing, as it particularly emphasizes creating products that are inclusive and environmentally friendly, aligning with modern market demands and social responsibility.

Upon closer examination, I have identified several chapters that serve particular value for the project. Namely, the authors explore strategic planning in marketing by providing a structure of a marketing plan and explain how marketing integrates into overall business strategy. I would use the discussion to support my recommendations on how to review marketing metrics and further utilize measured data to evaluate the success of the developed go-to-market strategy.

Further, authors provide key insights for market segmentation, targeting, and positioning through detailing tactics of segmenting markets and selecting target markets. This would support tailoring marketing concepts for products in the discussed niche segment (furniture for people with functional disorders). Albrecht et al. also discuss practical aspects of marketing research and market intelligence, outlining key steps when gathering and analyzing data to understand customer needs, which is crucial for assessing the unique requirements of individuals with functional disorders. Further, the authors investigate strategies with regard to consumer needs and respective product strategies, including branding, and how it creates additional value, also examining environmental considerations, which is

relevant and valid for the manufacturing industry overall and particularly for the discussed context (designing and manufacturing of adaptive furniture).

Finally, the discussed concept of sustainable marketing is specifically valuable for outlining marketing strategies that balance profitability and societal impact. When planning the project with the Client, we have pre-discussed a strong social commitment when implementing this initiative and agreed on the vital role of ethical considerations when targeting socially sensitive markets like the addressed one.

In my preliminary research, I have discovered that the addressed market is not mature yet, hence the considered products can be associated with innovation. It is reasonable to assess marketing peculiarities related to innovations, and for this I refer to “Innovation through institutionalization” by Vargo et al. (2014). According to the authors, “traditional innovation approaches, which center on the development of new products and corporate processes, limit the understanding of the co-created, systemic, and dynamic nature of market innovation”. Instead, a service-ecosystem perspective on innovation offers a valuable framework for rethinking the objectives and processes of marketing. This shift moves from focusing on managing firm activities within established markets (such as segmenting, targeting, and positioning) to emphasizing the maintenance, disruption, and transformation of institutions, as well as the ongoing co-creation of innovative solutions (Vargo et al., 2014).

Other valuable inputs are related to e-marketing, and here I would like to use the See Think Do Care Framework, developed by Avinash Kaushik, a well-known digital marketing expert, author, and speaker specializing in web analytics, data-driven decision-making, and digital marketing strategy. The author’s thought leadership has made him a respected figure in the world of digital marketing, and he is known for simplifying complex concepts, particularly around how businesses can leverage data to improve their online presence. If referring to the framework itself, it is relevant for designing the implementation of an e-marketing strategy and, particularly, for understanding the customer journey online. It breaks down the customer journey into four stages: See (awareness), Think (consideration), Do (purchase), and Care (loyalty). In our case, it would help to tailor messages, content, and engagement strategies at every stage of the customer journey (Kaushik, 2015).

Addressing the Client’s limited marketing budget, it is crucial to ensure overall feasibility and effectiveness of potential product placement strategy. To this end, I suggest leveraging the recommendations outlined in the article “How to Create a Small Business Marketing Strategy” by Salesforce, a globally recognized leader in customer relationship management and business solutions.

This resource offers actionable guidance on developing cost-effective marketing approaches tailored to the needs of small businesses, emphasizing strategies such as prioritizing high-impact channels, building strong customer relationships, and using data-driven tools to optimize limited resources. By adopting these practices, we can identify and implement essential, scalable solutions that maximize return on investment while staying aligned with the Client's financial constraints and business objectives (Salesforce, n.d.).

## **1.2 Analyzing competitive environment, understanding products and target groups**

### ***Analyzing competitive environment***

According to Bright and Cortes (2019), authors of Principles of Management, a clear definition and analysis of the external and internal environment and competitive advantages ensures a comprehensive approach when developing a business strategy, as it would help to both mitigate risks and identify growth opportunities. Specifically, for the purpose of the project I consider using PESTEL analysis in order to ensure alignment with the broader market environmental context and analyze Porter's five forces to comprehensively understand the industry's competitive landscape, thus providing a foundation for making informed decisions about market entry, positioning, and resource allocation.

Apart from the theoretical framework, I also consider leveraging resources that provide insights into the furniture market in Ukraine. For this, I refer to a recent industry report "Analysis of the Ukrainian furniture industry in conditions of full-scale war" by FAMA (2024). This industry report provides an up-to-date review of the furniture market in Ukraine, including relevant expert interviews, statistical data, and outlooks. Since the Client experienced a significant drop in their core market segments due to the outbreak of the Russian full-scale invasion, reported data could give more clarity regarding the competition and dynamics of the industry. Assessing discussed inputs could be supportive when identifying key common challenges for the industry and discussing potential opportunities for the Client. Also, leveraging experts' opinions and understanding their rationale regarding the recovery of Ukraine's furniture industry (including related trends and recommendations) could serve for better orientation, and informed planning when considering the possible allocation of resources.

Given that the addressed niche market is at a very early stage of development, coherent knowledge may be limited, leading me to assume a potential need to fill gaps through additional primary data collection. According to Maison (2019), qualitative studies are particularly valuable (and often

essential) for addressing specific categories of marketing problems and questions. The author highlights positioning of new products in the market, developing communication strategies, concept testing and evaluations at various stages of the development process, and understanding consumer behavior, encompassing the exploration of attitudes and opinions about products and brands, habits and needs, as well as identifying barriers and motivations related to brand or product usage.

If specifically working on the go-to-market strategy, qualitative research is one of the most common applications. While the core of the product creation process occurs within the company developing it, gathering feedback from potential customers during the early stages of development can help avoid costly errors and improve the likelihood of the product's market success (Mariampolski, 2001). I consider applying qualitative research throughout the initial product development process, including refining product characteristics, exploring positioning concepts, and specifically - evaluating both physical and functional features.

### ***Understanding products and target groups***

In addressing the needs of potential customers, several principles for designing space components with respect to the needs of people with functional disorders and other users in shared spaces. This is relevant for understanding the structure of the addressed market and respective considerations of future product design for the Client. In this project, I do not aim to develop specific designs, but instead, I focus on thoroughly analyzing possible options and developing a decision-making framework that would support the Client when deciding on specific product strategies.

Considering the area of user experience within the digital domain, accessibility serves as the foundational element and is integral to both inclusive design and universal design approaches. Although both approaches aim to accommodate the widest range of users, universal design focuses on creating a single solution that works for everyone, whereas inclusive design achieves this objective by offering multiple adaptations to meet diverse needs (Interaction Design Foundation - IxDF, 2016).

The area of architectural and space accessibility design appears to be less formalized, and the accessibility design of furniture remains rather at an explorational stage and not coherent. Under the scope of a broader study on the inclusive design of workspaces, Narenthiran et al. (2022) confirmed that specifically, the ergonomics of furniture makes one of the greatest contributions to the well-being of participants. Also, experts in the inclusiveness domain have highlighted the importance of implementing

universal design as a fundamental principle in the creation and arrangement of environments for people with functional disorders.

Since the Client has limited knowledge of the peculiarities of product features of furniture adapted for people with functional disorders, I review two sources that cover basic concepts of universal design in furniture and provide more details on the healthcare outcomes that are particularly relevant when assuming institutional end-market.

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, a prominent inclusivity research center established by the Irish National Disability Authority in January 2007, “is dedicated to enabling the design of the built and digital environments including services and systems that can be accessed, understood and used regardless of a person’s age, size, ability or disability”. In their article “Universal Design - Benefits and Drivers” experts from the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design highlight the importance of ensuring that the developed solutions are accessible, understandable, and usable by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability, or disability. The idea behind the universal design is to design products or services that cater to the needs of all individuals who interact with them. This approach is not a specialized requirement for a small segment of the population but rather a core principle of effective and inclusive design (Universal Design - Benefits and Drivers, n.d.).

Furthermore, when considering the institutional end-market, Malone & Dellinger (2011) have developed a practical Evidence-based design (EBD) checklist tool to facilitate furniture decision-making activities across the furniture life cycle to maximize investments for institutional applications. Despite a slight shift from the universal design, this study provides insights that could be applied when considering potential products designed for applications in the early rehabilitation phase, typically conducted within rehabilitation centers or similar institutions. In my pre-discussions with the Client, we identified the institutional end-market segment as one of the key segments within the potential client base. Respectively, this study serves as a valuable source for developing recommendations - authors highlight that through its development and use, the EBD checklist provides designers with a helpful evaluation and communication tool when developing furniture solutions for their clients in healthcare (Malone & Dellinger, 2011).

Finally, assuming the demand from the target groups in both organizations and end-users, it is worth defining the concepts of consumers and customers. The term “consumer” is broader, while “customers” specifically refers to those who will have an established relationship with the Client. This distinction is crucial for two reasons. First, when crafting a marketing strategy, it is essential to anticipate

how both non-customers and customers will respond to the products. Second, insights derived from consumer behavior can inform a consumer-focused strategy, which in turn would help the Client to deepen its understanding of consumers and strengthen relationships with its customers (Hamilton, 2016).

### **1.3 Demography**

As it was mentioned in the introduction section, the initiative of the Client's management team was triggered by the client's request for equipping a rehabilitation center for veterans. Initially, the concept centered on targeting veterans as the priority customer group. However, in further discussions, the scope of potential customer groups has been expanded to encompass a broader demographic of individuals with functional disorders, those requiring modifications to conventional furniture designs to ensure comfort and usability.

From the demand perspective, there are three major components that constitute the total capacity of the addressable market – (I) statistics of people with disabilities before 2022, (II) statistics of developments since 2022, and (III) incremental number of veterans who suffered injuries as a result of hostilities. Respectively, I have identified several sources that will support data reconciliation. Statistics of people recognized as having disabilities before 2022 would be of great help for assessing the demography and could be acquired via a public data request from a state service or acquired in an interview with official representatives. Further articles provide additional inputs for the year 2023 - according to the Ministry of Healthcare, during 2023 more than 230 thousand people were recognized as people with disabilities, of which 138.1 thousand were men and 92.5 thousand were women, at the same time, according to the State Statistics Service, as of January 1, 2023, there were over 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine (Drabkina & New Voice, 2024).

Also, according to the Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine, during Jan-Nov 2023, “92,000 patients have already received free-of-charge rehabilitation assistance in hospitals, and 115,000 on an outpatient basis” (UNDP, 2023).

If extrapolating the statistics for the period before 2022, emigration is an important factor - from the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion and as a result of the ongoing hostilities, there was a larger outflow of population from Ukraine (Opendatabot, 2024), however, it might be challenging to assess the share of people with disabilities who left the country. Also, recently disclosed bribery cases of

illegal disability certification that took place during wartime need extra adjustments, especially when considering statistics for the male population (Suspilne Media, 2024).

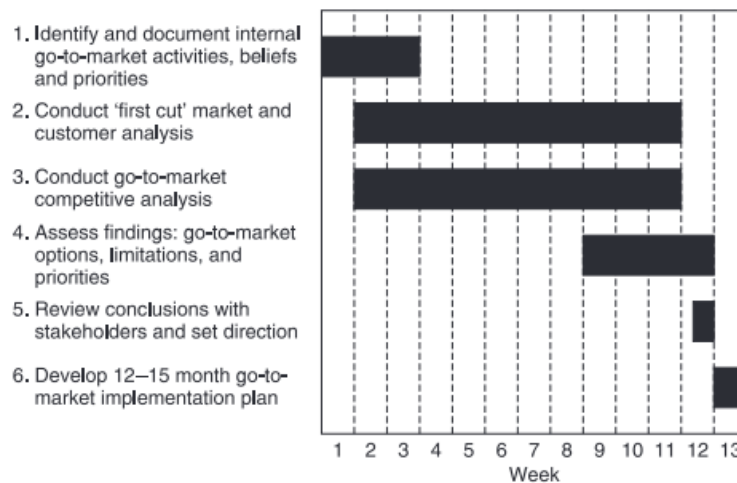
Given the key driver of changing demand in Ukraine—an incremental growth in the number of veterans—it is challenging to validate the number of military personnel who have suffered injuries due to hostilities since February 2022, as this information is not disclosed under the restricted access to public records imposed by martial law in Ukraine. At the same time, it is worth mentioning its contribution to the growing demand for furniture adapted to people with functional disorders – the Ukrainian state strategic policy for veterans for the period until 2030. According to the recently published program, the restoration of human capital and the well-being of veterans and their family members is the primary strategic objective. Within this objective, restoring the physical and mental health of veterans, as well as ensuring employment and education, are set as key pillars for implementation and require setting up inclusive public spaces suitable for accommodating public events, pieces of training, and educational programs (Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, 2024).

## CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I review five key methodological components for addressing the case: an overarching methodology for developing a go-to-market strategy, tools for conducting extrinsic and intrinsic market analysis, and methods for qualitative research.

### 2.1 Developing a go-to-market strategy

As mentioned in section 1.1, there are several foundational components to be included when developing an effective go-to-market strategy. Referring to Friedman (2002), a go-to-market strategy can be organized as an action plan (Figure 2.1), with key milestones including a review of current organization and activities with respect to established products, markets, customers, and channels, conducting initial market and customer analysis for the addressed market, conducting competitive go-to-market analysis, assessing findings, and presenting conclusions to stakeholders.



**Figure 2.1** The ninety-day go-to-market action plan

Source: Friedman (2002)

While not highlighted in the conventional go-to-market strategy guidelines, due to the unique volatile conditions in this project, it is important to apply strategic lens to address risks, capitalize on

opportunities, and develop recommendations that will support Client’s efforts in building its business resilience.

Further, I expand the above-mentioned steps by detailing the customer analysis step with recommendations by Wallace (2021) who conveys critical assessment of the customer groups, and understanding customers’ problems solved. Based on the mentioned inputs, I have designed a customized go-to-market framework for this project, that can be presented as a 9-week action plan (Table 2.1), including timing, defined tasks and expected output at the end of each step.

**Table 2.1.** Action plan for developing go-to-market strategy components

# of week	Task	Output / Goal
1	Examine external and micro-environmental factors	Summarized key findings from applying PESTEL and Porter’s Five Forces, emphasizing actionable insights
2	Identify current go-to-market activities with respect to markets, customers, channels, products, and message	Aligned and documented current go-to-market activities, stakeholders’ top priorities, as well as any important areas of competing viewpoints on go-to-market issues
3-4	Conduct initial market and customer analysis, focus on understanding who are the customers, what are their problems to be solved, and how customers would learn about the solutions	Uncovered and validated profiles of the target markets; defined customers’ needs and behaviors in those markets
5-6	Conduct competitive market analysis	Benchmarked development efforts and solutions by key competitors, their success or failure in promoting those solutions
7-8	Assess findings, structure options and limitations, define priorities	Defined best go-to-market opportunities and respective limitation, clearly defined scenarios, formulated as coherent sets of

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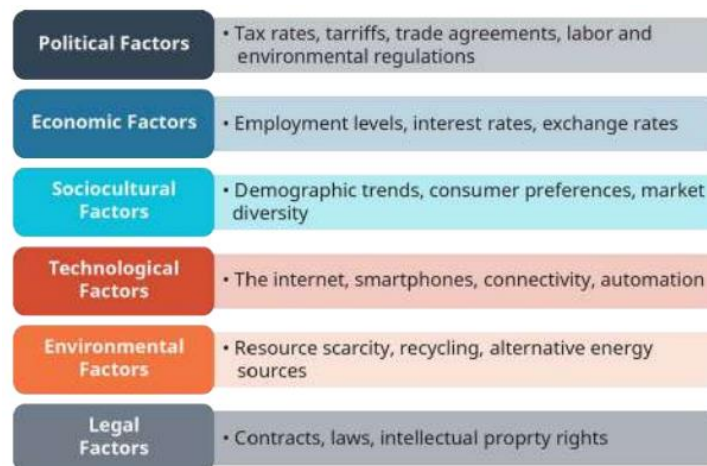
		“market, customer, channel, product, and value proposition”
9	Review of conclusions with stakeholders and align on the implementation timeline	Aligned and agreed position of stakeholders about potential go-to-market opportunities and agreed implementation timeline

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Source: Data adapted from Friedman (2002), and Wallace (2021)

## 2.2 Conducting extrinsic and intrinsic market analysis

Planning the initial market analysis involves referring to Chapter 1.2, where Bright and Cortes (2019) highlight the PESTEL framework as a core instrument for examining external macro-environmental factors and Porter’s five forces as a comprehensive tool for understanding the industry’s microenvironment (Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2** PESTEL analysis framework

Source: Bright and Cortes (2019)

Given the peculiarities of the wartime, I assume focusing on the Ukrainian domestic market and review the components of the PESTEL framework with respective considerations (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2.** Components of the PESTEL framework and respective consideration

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Key considerations for analyzing external environmental factors</b>
Political	Are there any governmental policies or initiatives promoting accessibility or supporting products for individuals with functional disorders? What funding opportunities, subsidies, or tax incentives are available for businesses focusing on inclusivity and accessibility? Any relevant cases for women leadership? Are there political risks, such as instability or changes in regulations, that could impact market entry or operations?
Economic	What is the outlook for the economic climate in Ukraine, and how does it affect consumer spending on adaptive furniture? What is the purchasing power of the target demographic (e.g., individuals, their caretakers, and employers)? How would inflation, exchange rates, or access to financing impact production costs and pricing strategies?
Social	What are the prevailing attitudes toward inclusivity and accessibility in Ukraine? What are the cultural or societal barriers to adopting furniture specifically designed for individuals with functional disorders? What demographic trends (except wartime) drive demand for adaptive furniture?
Technological	What technologies are available to enhance the functionality of adaptive furniture (e.g., ergonomic designs, smart features)? And how accessible are these technologies to the company given their resources and expertise?
Environmental	Are there consumer expectations for sustainable products in the furniture market? Could environmental factors, such as natural resource availability, impact production or supply chains?
Legal	What accessibility standards must the furniture comply with? Are there any specific product safety or ergonomic requirements for furniture targeting people with functional disorders? How does IP law affect the ability to protect developed designs or technology? What other laws or regulations might impact production or distribution?

Source: Derived from PESTEL analysis framework, Bright and Cortes (2019)

Further, the Porter’s Five Forces analysis helps formulating a detailed understanding of the micro-environment – the competitive landscape (Bright and Cortes, 2019). In the Table 2.3, I outline key considerations, tackling which would help the Client identify key opportunities, mitigate potential risks, and strategically position itself in the market for adaptive furniture in Ukraine.

**Table 2.3.** Components of the Porter’s five forces framework and respective consideration

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Key considerations for analyzing micro-environmental factors</b>
Competitive rivalry	Who are the current competitors in the adaptive furniture market in Ukraine? Are they local or international players? How intense is the competition? What are the competitors’ strengths, weaknesses, and unique selling points? Are there opportunities for collaboration with competitors, such as partnerships or joint ventures?
Threat of new entrants	What are the barriers to market entry (e.g., capital, expertise, or legal compliance)? How likely is it that new competitors will enter the market? Are there factors making entry easier, such as low startup costs or a lack of strong incumbents? Does the company have strong brand recognition that could deter new entrants? How easily can competitors copy the company’s unique designs or technologies?
Supplier power	How many suppliers are available for the materials and components needed for adaptive furniture (e.g., adjustable mechanisms, ergonomic materials)? Do suppliers have the ability to dictate terms, such as pricing or delivery timelines? How easy is it to switch suppliers if needed, and are there risks of supply chain disruptions? Are there opportunities for vertical integration?
Buyer power	Who are the primary buyers for adaptive furniture? How price-sensitive is the target market? Do buyers have significant bargaining power due to the availability of substitutes or low switching costs? How can the company build customer loyalty and reduce buyer power (e.g., through quality, service, or customization)? Are institutional buyers (e.g., healthcare providers) a significant market segment, and how does their purchasing process affect negotiations?

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Threat of substitutes	What alternatives to adaptive furniture exist, such as custom-built furniture? How do substitutes compare in terms of price, quality, and accessibility? What factors might lead customers to choose substitutes over the company's product (e.g., availability, cost, or perceived value)? How can the company differentiate its offerings to reduce the threat of substitutes? Are there non-furniture solutions that might address the same needs (e.g., home modifications, assistive devices)?
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Source: Derived from Porter's five forces framework, Bright and Cortes (2019)

### **2.3 Conducting qualitative market research**

Referring to the Chapter 1.2, due to the nature of the project (where the addressed market is at an early development stage), there is a need for a thorough initial market and customer analysis, as well as competitive market analysis, where qualitative market research serves as a great tool on the way to defining fundamental elements of the go-to-market strategy.

Choosing a specific qualitative research technique, I prioritize in-depth expert interviews, which prove particularly effective in exploring undefined issues, attitudes, and motivations in market research scenarios. These interviews are valuable for providing detailed descriptions of processes, avoiding the influence of others' opinions (as it could have happened in focus groups), and enabling complex explanations and deeper understanding (Hague, 2021).

Considering the scope of the expert interviews and selecting profiles, I focus on solving the issue of limited knowledge in the addressed market with respect to product concepts, consumers, and customers. Referring to the differentiation between the customers and consumers described in the Chapter 1.2, in this project I prioritize investigating broader product concepts and defining most common furniture features necessary for people with functional disorders. For this I consider collecting insights from experts who have profound expertise in the inclusivity domain and directly work with rehabilitation of war veterans, as they can share valuable insights about the barriers experienced by potential consumers, and help formulating requirements for the solutions currently missing in the market. Specifically, I assume leveraging insights from experts within the domains of universal design, accessibility, inclusivity, and ergo-therapy

Based on the guidelines by Maison (2019), I consider developing following blocks of fundamental topics to be addressed in the in-depth expert interviews:

- Introductory questions about particular experience of the interviewee;
- Uncovering a top-view of experts towards their understanding of needs of people with functional disorders;
- Discovering special features in furniture design;
- Standards and legal aspects;
- Market and competition;
- Closure questions.

Referring to practical guides by Maison (2019), I consider minor script modifications and adaptations depending on the expert and also, if the pre-defined sequence fails to lead to good answer. In the latter case, the author recommends adapting the questionnaire accordingly, and not to push forward with an inappropriate tool.

## CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

In this chapter I provide the results of my research, that constitute the final deliverable for the Client as a result of this project. In line with the theoretical background, I developed key elements of the go-to-market strategy, including assessment of the external and micro-environment, outlining current positioning of the Client, as well as analysis of the addressed market, consumers' needs, and approach to customers key customers groups.

### 3.1 Analysis of the environment

#### *Assessment of the external environment*

As a result of conducting preliminary research, I discovered the absence of established players in the segment of furniture for people with functional disorders in Ukraine, with only a few examples abroad. This can be explained by significant customization requirements (thus a cost factor for end-users), lack of acknowledgment within sustained players, and overall underdeveloped concepts of inclusive solutions within the furniture industry. For this reason, when analyzing both external and micro-environment, I consider parent industry, where potential rivals operate – furniture industry in Ukraine.

To assess the external environment for the Ukrainian furniture market, I employed the PESTEL framework, which provides insights into the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors influencing the industry during challenging times, such as the ongoing war. In the table below (Table 3.1), I summarize implications that reflect the external environment for the discussed case with respect to key considerations for analyzing external environmental factors, outlined in the Chapter 2.2. For this I rely on the recently reported market report focusing on the Furniture market in Ukraine (FAMA, 2024), and the third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, a profound report by the World Bank, aiming for estimation of damage and losses, projecting the requirements for recovery and reconstruction over the next decade (World Bank, 2024).

**Table 3.1.** External environment factors and implication

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Implication</b>
Political	Impact of full-scale war	The ongoing war has disrupted production and supply chains, leading to significant challenges in securing raw materials and maintaining operations. This situation has forced companies to adapt logistics and shift operations to safer regions
	State support and policies	While some government grants and support exist, the industry faces limited financial and policy assistance compared to other sectors. Additionally, the lack of efficient worker mobilization policies affects workforce stability
Economic	Market contraction	The Ukrainian furniture industry's revenue declined by 44% over the past two years, reflecting broader economic difficulties
	Rising costs	Increased costs of materials, logistics, and energy have impacted the profitability of local manufacturers
	Export potential	Despite challenges, the industry remains a net exporter, with Europe accounting for 96% of total exports. Export volumes decreased moderately during the war, while import dependency for raw materials increased
Social	Demographics and workforce	Emigration, mobilization of male population, and aging workforce hinder the development of a skilled labor pool. Also, the younger population's preference for IT and other sectors exacerbates this issue
	Consumer sentiment	Domestic demand has declined due to reduced disposable incomes, while international markets continue to value Ukrainian craftsmanship

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Technological	Shift to outsourcing	Many companies now outsource design and production to mitigate operational risks
	Adoption of innovation	Ukrainian furniture makers demonstrate strong creativity but face difficulties in adopting cutting-edge production technologies due to high costs
Environmental	Resource dependence	Heavy reliance on wood and other imported components makes the sector vulnerable to environmental policies and supply chain disruptions
	Sustainability efforts	Although sustainable practices are increasingly valued, their adoption remains limited due to financial and operational constraints
Legal	Regulatory barriers	Stringent customs regulations and delays at borders increase operational costs and time. Corruption and opaque legal frameworks further challenge industry competitiveness
	Regulatory opportunities	Leveraging international support, government offers business development grant programs for small and medium businesses
	State programs for rehabilitation of veterans	Development of state programs support of veterans may drive the demand for adapted furniture, when considering both medical and social rehabilitation and further employment of veterans

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Source: developed by the author.

We can observe that the furniture manufacturers in Ukraine are exposed to an overall challenging circumstances – increased operational risks due to the ongoing war have disrupted supply chains and production, accompanied with rising costs and limited resources (both materials and workforce) may further lead to erosion of profitability unless mitigating this through efficiency improvements, alternative sourcing or innovation.

As the export opportunities amid challenges remain strong and offer a pathway for competitive positioning, the Client has not consider leveraging this opportunity yet, mainly due to limited resources for entering the European market.

The war-related demographic changes, such as emigration, intensified mobilization of male population and aging workforce create challenges in maintaining and developing skilled teams, potentially hampering productivity and innovation.

While facing complex legal regulations and increasing demand for sustainability practices, there are certain changes in the state policy towards rehabilitation of veterans, thus we may expect further development of programs aiming for support of veterans, thus driving both need for organizing work spaces and also the demand for private use of adapted furniture.

Based on the implications outlined above, I derive several initial recommendations with regard to the Client's strategic objectives:

- Consider improving supply chain resilience through diversifying sourcing strategies to include multiple suppliers and explore local alternatives where feasible. Invest in supply chain technology to improve forecasting and adapt to disruptions more effectively;
- Explore cost-effective technologies to enhance production efficiency, such as modular furniture designs or improved automation tools. Leverage outsourcing for non-core functions like design to reduce fixed costs and maintain focus on core competencies;
- Offer internal upskilling programs to equip the existing workforce with modern skills and knowledge. Consider collaboration with technical education institutions to develop specialized training programs tailored to furniture manufacturing needs;
- Revise and improve current production sustainability practices, such as using certified wood or recycled materials, to appeal to environmentally conscious markets. Seek grants or partnerships for funding sustainability projects;
- Consider developing innovative solutions for people with functional disorders, targeting veterans who undergo rehabilitation, as well as institutional organizations and the private sector, who organize rehabilitation and offer employment for veterans;
- Leverage grant opportunities through participating in grant programs to secure funding for developing new product offerings.

### *Analysis of the micro-environment*

Understanding the dynamics of the micro-environment is essential for evaluating the competitive landscape of the Ukrainian furniture market. By examining the factors within Porter’s Five Forces framework, this analysis provides a structured view of the operating conditions within the furniture industry in Ukraine. These forces, including competition, supplier and buyer relationships, and the threat of new entrants and substitutes, highlight the pressures shaping the market. Referring to micro-environment considerations, outlined in the Chapter 2.2, I analyzed key factors and implications, which are specifically useful for identifying opportunities and challenges specific to the Client’s position (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2.** Micro-environment factors and implications

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Implication</b>
Threat of new entrants	Barriers to entry	High capital requirements for equipment and production facilities deter new entrants. However, the increasing trend of outsourcing design work lowers entry barriers for design-focused companies
	Government support	Limited financial incentives and grants restrict opportunities for larger businesses, while opening opportunities for smaller players, who can leverage grants for developing manufacturing capacities and creating new work places
Bargaining power of suppliers	Material dependence	Significant reliance on imported components, and limited capacities of domestic suppliers increase suppliers’ bargaining power
	Supply chain disruptions	War-induced logistical challenges and dependence on international suppliers exacerbate vulnerabilities
Bargaining power of buyers	Domestic and international buyers	International buyers’ focus on quality and compliance with sustainability standards strengthens their

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		negotiating power. Domestically, reduced purchasing power limits demand
	Product differentiation	Niche products for export markets allow some manufacturers to command higher prices
Threat of substitutes	Alternative products	Imported furniture, particularly from regions like Poland and Asia, provides strong competition due to cost-effectiveness and variety
	Customization	Unique, customizable designs offered by Ukrainian manufacturers help mitigate this threat
Industry rivalry	Market structure	With over 11,000 registered operators, competition is intense. Small-scale operators dominate, contributing to price wars
	Export markets	Competing with established players in Europe and beyond requires aggressive marketing and compliance with global standards

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Source: developed by the author.

The above-mentioned findings further emphasize the challenges in the micro-environment and help formulating a comprehensive view of the Ukrainian furniture industry's current state, providing more nuanced insights for developing strategic recommendations to further guide the Client.

Based on the observations of the status-quo of the Ukrainian furniture industry, the considered entry of the niche segment of furniture for people with functional disorders, requires careful navigation of challenges and leveraging opportunities effectively. Below I provide a list of broader recommendations to align the Client's capabilities with the unique demands, setting a strategic path for growth while reducing competition and leveraging social impact:

- Conduct in-depth market research regarding potential market niches through. Investigating the needs of people with functional disorders. Identify gaps in existing product offerings to develop unique solutions;
- Partner with specialists, e.g. collaborate with inclusivity experts, therapists, and design experts to ensure products meet user needs and accessibility standards.

- Focus on developing modular and adaptable designs that cater to a wide range of functional needs. Incorporate technologies such as height adjustability or smart features for added value;
- Seek funding through government programs or international organizations promoting accessibility innovations. Use grants to offset costs associated with product development and certification;
- Explore potential partnerships within institutional segments (NGOs and healthcare organizations) and businesses who operate workspace facilities to secure bulk contracts;
- Establish reliable sources for specialized materials, ensuring consistent quality and availability. Work closely with suppliers to negotiate favorable terms for high-quality components;
- Position the company as a leading provider of functional and accessible furniture. Highlight social responsibility and inclusivity in marketing campaigns to resonate with institutional buyers and socially conscious consumers;
- Adopt a Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) and Institutional Strategy. Build an online presence with resources to educate consumers about functional furniture. Target institutions, such as hospitals and rehabilitation centers, with tailored sales approaches.

### **3.2 Market positioning of the Client**

The Client is an established Ukrainian company known for its modern, minimalist designs. Established in 2015, it operates a single manufacturing location in Kyiv and employs more than 15 people. It operates a well-designed online shop and leverages efficient collaboration with postal services for deliveries in Ukraine. Its current product offering includes:

- Tables;
- Furniture for seating;
- Furnitures for storage;
- Accessories.

While serving both B2C and B2B clients, there was a significant shift in sales split over the last year, with an increasing component of the B2C purchases. Within the B2B component has a long-list of customers in:

- HoReCa;
- IT companies and Media agencies;
- Operators of public spaces;
- Retailers in electronics and fashion;
- Private businesses with larger offices from Energy and Utilities, Telecom, and Healthcare sectors, etc.;
- Non-for-profit organizations.

Referring to the case, the considered business-development (entering the market of furniture for people with functional disorders) is well-aligned with the core strategic objective set by the new co-owners – an overall brand value development.

The Client has no prior experience in developing furniture adapted to needs of users with functional disorders but is eager to invest in designing and manufacturing a set of minimum viable products (MVPs), as the simplest versions of products that further could establish a foundation for a product line to be marketed.

### **3.3 Addressed market, consumers' needs and customer groups**

#### ***Estimating the addressed market***

For estimating potential market demand, I utilize publicly available statistics and insights collected from the expert interviews. According to UNDP (2024), in Ukraine nearly 3 million people are living with disabilities, this number increased up from approximately 2.7 million people in 2022, highlighting urgent needs in developing capacities and significant inflow of resources in infrastructure for rehabilitation.

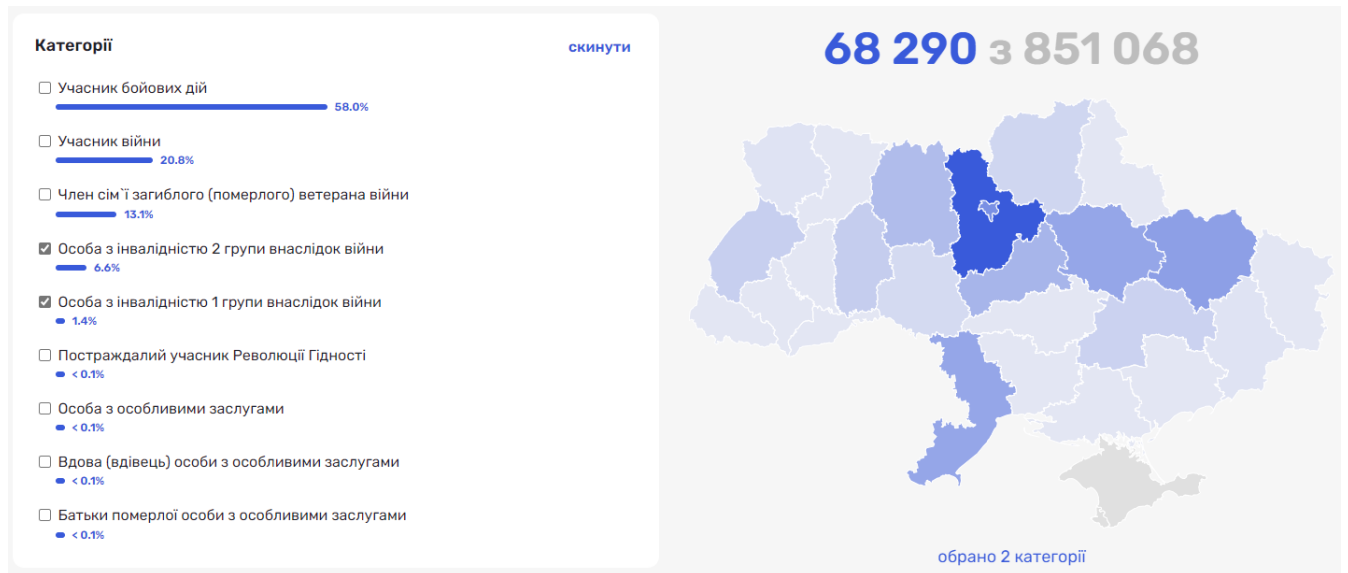
In order to assess the number of potential consumers of adapted furniture, I rely on the state guidelines that define 3 groups of disability (iGov, n.d.):

- I group, where individuals who have completely lost their ability to work and require constant care;

- II group representing individuals capable of self-care but unable to work under regular production conditions;
- III group, assigned to those who can work under lighter or adjusted conditions.

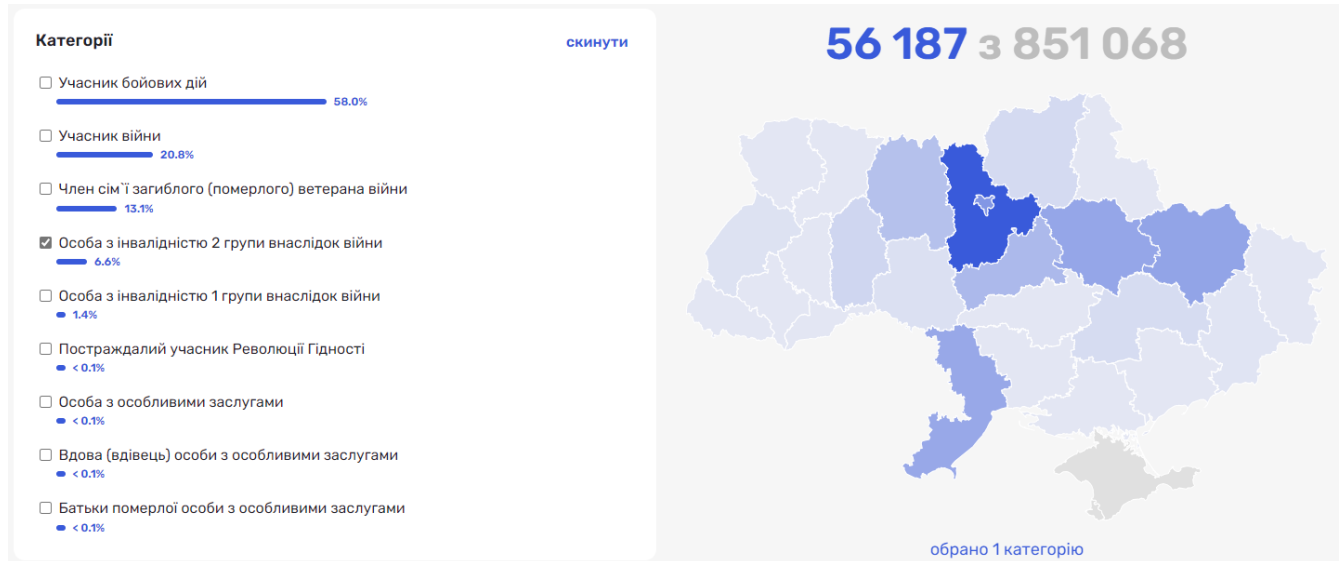
According to the insights collected in the expert interviews A and B (Appendix A), individuals suffering from limited mobility and using assistive mobility equipment, e.g., wheelchairs, highlighted as those facing a larger number of barriers including lack of adaptations in furniture and represented the majority of the II group. Referring to the statistics of 2021, nearly 33% of the total number of people with disabilities constituted the II group, which extrapolating to the 2024 data (3 million people with disabilities), results in nearly 990 thousands of individuals with majority suffering from limited mobility.

Since the project was triggered in response to the increasing number of individuals with disabilities due to hostilities, another important input is the number of veterans who suffered injuries and thus were assigned a respective disability status. According to the estimated figures (Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, 2024a), as of today, out of approximately 850 thousands veterans, nearly 68 thousand people total I and II group of disability (Figure 3.2), with nearly 58 thousands of individuals with the II group of disability (Figure 3.2).



**Figure 3.1** Number of veterans with the I and II groups of disability

Source: Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine (2024a)



**Figure 3.2** Number of veterans with the II group of disability

Source: Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine (2024a)

While I expect the total number of people with disabilities as a larger consumer group for the addressed market, the segment of veterans with disabilities provides an opportunity to focus on particular target audience in the early product development stage, thus enabling easier outreach to customers and consumers through a unified approach.

### *Exploring consumers' needs*

In order to formulate the initial understanding of the product concepts, I have developed a base questionnaire to analyze insights in the expert interviews (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3.** List of questions in the base questionnaire

Category	Question
Briefing and profiling	Thank you for accepting our invitation! In this interview, we would like to discuss the project where we develop the concepts of furniture for people with functional disorders. Please introduce yourself and describe your

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	background and expertise with respect to the inclusivity domain and know-how in products for people with function disorders?
Entry questions	Have you had any prior experience dealing with furniture products for people with functional disorders? How do you assess the need of people with functional disorders in using adapted furniture?
Needs of people with functional disorders	What typical issues do you think people with functional disorders experience when using conventional furniture? What special needs (with regard to furniture) are there in the context of different functional disorders? What are specific types of furniture that require adaptation? What are possible universal requirements to furniture design? How important is aesthetics of adapted furniture? What features do you think are the most relevant for this type of furniture? How do you think, how does furniture adaptation (accessibility) improve independence of clients in everyday life?
Standards and legal	Are you aware of any standards or requirements with regard to the furniture for people with functional disorders?
Market and competition	How do you estimate current market of furniture adapted to needs of people with functional disorders? Can you name any specific companies / brands? What do you think are key barriers when considering development of the furniture market for people with functional disorders?
Closure questions	Are there any specific types of furniture / design elements / features that you would like to realize?  Are there any other insights you would like to share?

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Source: developed by the author.

For developing a comprehensive understanding of the market, I aimed to select experts who can relate to the topic with their practical experience, yet represent different professions. For this project I selected following profiles:

- Expert A is an architect and physical accessibility expert. She is a leading advocate for accessibility and universal design, with extensive experience in creating inclusive spaces. She has contributed to key accessibility resources in Ukraine, including

- guidebooks like Accessibility of Rehabilitation Departments and the nationally recognized Album of Barrier-Free Solutions. Her expertise extends to education, having played a significant role in developing the online course People First: Accessibility in Healthcare Institutions for the National Health Service of Ukraine;
- Expert B has years of experience in occupational therapy and rehabilitation. He is a leading ergo-therapist in a larger rehabilitation center in Ukraine, conducting daily rehabilitation procedures for veterans with a deep focus on vision imparities and polytrauma;
  - Expert C has a solid background in physical accessibility and ergotherapy domains. He is a co-founder of a company that produces accessibility features in home environment for people with disabilities, specifically focused on people with spinal injuries and those using wheelchairs;
  - Expert D has year of background in the physical accessibility domain. He has solid experience in consulting operators of public spaces and offices in developing and implementing inclusive design features.

All mentioned experts have highlighted the necessity of conducting a detailed profiling of potential consumers at a later stage, including a thorough examination of individual barriers, they were able to provide valuable inputs regarding needs of people with functional disorders, highlight possible features in furniture design to answer the needs, commented on market and competition, and suggested several extra recommendations for the development of the project.

I reassemble key inputs from experts and related implications for the Client that would be applied for the MVP concepts development with a focus on responding to the barriers experienced by larger groups of potential consumers (Table 3.4). The findings may serve as a foundation for further research of the topic within focus groups and consequent detailing of product design and features by the Client.

**Table 3.4.** Key inputs from experts and implications for the Client

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Key input from experts</b>	<b>Implication for the Client</b>
Needs of people with	Users require customization of furniture for independence during post-	Focus on ergonomic design features tailored to common barriers, such as

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functional disorders	rehabilitation; specifically, people using wheelchairs most commonly face height-related barriers (e.g., reaching high shelves or low surfaces); those with upper limb loss struggle with grasping handles for opening/closing	adjustable heights, easy-to-use handles, and intuitive designs that promote independence
Special features in furniture design	Adjustable-height surfaces and modular furniture designs are critical for accessibility; furniture must combine functionality with aesthetics to avoid the “medical look” and guarantee enhanced safety and ergonomics to reduce the risk of accidents.	Focus on designing adaptable elements that blend practical features (e.g., modularity, adjustability) with modern design, ensuring usability and visual appeal
Market and competition	Market for adaptive furniture is underdeveloped in Ukraine; high prices and limited availability of adaptive furniture are significant barriers; collaboration with NGOs and initiatives like “Invafishki” could address awareness gaps	Targeting affordability through cost-efficient designs would address key barriers, while collaboration with NGOs and local experts to leverage existing knowledge would promote awareness
Extra inputs	Prioritize post-rehabilitation furniture designs that are familiar to users during their recovery phase; focus on user testing (e.g., focus groups) to identify barriers and refine solutions; inclusive designs must accommodate both users with and without disabilities.	Design products inspired by rehabilitation centers but adaptable for application in homes and public spaces. Conduct focus groups with recently injured individuals to test MVP designs

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Source: developed by the author.

Based on the expert interviews, it is evident that functional furniture for individuals with disabilities must address both practical barriers and the emotional needs of the users. As mentioned by Expert A and Expert C, critical issues include height accessibility, difficulty grasping handles, and the need for intuitive designs that promote independence. These barriers are not only functional but also affect users' confidence and autonomy in post-rehabilitation.

Furthermore, Experts B and D emphasize the importance of combining functionality with aesthetics. Many users prefer furniture that does not resemble medical equipment but instead blends seamlessly into their households. This combination promotes social rehabilitation and creates a sense of normality for users and their families.

From a market perspective, the adaptive furniture segment in Ukraine remains significantly underdeveloped. According to Expert B, affordability is a key barrier, as imported solutions are too expensive. Partnering with NGOs like “Invafishki” and further involving rehabilitation centers can help fill this gap while improving awareness of adaptive solutions.

Finally, the experts agree on the importance of user testing. As noted by Expert C, working with individuals who recently transitioned from rehabilitation allows for better identification of barriers and refinement of solutions. This feedback will guide the development of prototypes and help the Client deliver impactful and user-centric products.

By prioritizing affordability, aesthetics, and modular design, the Client can address key challenges in the market while enhancing the independence and quality of life for individuals with functional disorders.

### ***Exploring customers***

Based on the input from experts, exploration of the public policies, and current offering by the Client, I have outlined initial customer profiles, including their needs and motivation. When targeting the customers in B2C segment (Table 3.5) a messaging should focus on independence, comfort, and aesthetics, while addressing the customers within the B2B segment (Table 3.6) with solutions tailored to functional needs and compliance goals (which is particularly relevant in the context of public spaces), the Client will be able to position discussed adapted furniture as a trusted and inclusive solution. Also, the initial marketing efforts should focus on developing further collaborations with rehabilitation centers, public space operators, thus building advocacy groups to raise awareness and develop credibility, thus creating momentum in both addressed markets.

While a detailed marketing campaign itself will be arranged in close cooperation with the Client's marketing team at a later stage, there are several implications that should be outlined at this stage. When engaging with the B2C customer group, the Client should focus on the value messaging related to benefits of improved independence and aesthetics of adapted furniture, thus promoting dignity and comfort. For this, the Client should leverage its' presence on the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) with testimonial videos, showing users benefiting from the furniture, thus promoting their online marketplace with detailed product descriptions and customer reviews.

**Table 3.5.** B2C Customer profiles

<b>Category</b>	<b>Profiles</b>	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
People with functional disorders	Individuals who require adapted furniture to improve independence, safety, and comfort in their daily lives. This includes wheelchair users, individuals with limb loss, and those recovering from injuries or post-rehabilitation	Ergonomic designs, height-adjustable surfaces, easy-to-use mechanisms, aesthetically pleasing furniture that blends into household settings	Improved functionality, restored autonomy, and enhanced quality of life
Members of households of people with functional disorders	Family members, caregivers, or partners who purchase furniture on behalf of individuals with functional disorders	Solutions that promote ease of care, safety for the user, and products that integrate seamlessly into shared living spaces	Supporting the individual's independence while ensuring convenience and inclusivity for the whole household

Source: developed by the author.

Assuming the industry in a phase of early adoption, for the Client, partnerships with rehabilitation centers and NGOs are essential to engage directly with individuals functional disorders and their families. An extra effort to be considered is related to developing value-added services (also in collaboration with inclusivity and accessibility experts), such as home consultations, furniture customization options, and installment plans to enhance well-being.

**Table 3.6.** B2B Customer profiles

<b>Category</b>	<b>Profiles</b>	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
Rehabilitation facilities	Facilities providing post-injury and rehabilitation support, including hospitals and specialized centers	Durable, highly functional furniture tailored for rehabilitation exercises and transition to home environments	Enhancing treatment outcomes and improving patient experience through practical, adaptive solutions
Operators of public spaces	Managers of cafes, offices, hotels, and other shared spaces seeking to improve accessibility for visitors with disabilities	Universal design furniture that is inclusive, space-efficient, and visually appealing	Attracting more visitors, meeting accessibility regulations, and promoting inclusivity
Companies employing people with functional disorders	Businesses prioritizing workplace accessibility for employees with disabilities	Customized desks, chairs, and storage units that accommodate diverse needs in professional settings	Supporting employee productivity, inclusivity, and meeting corporate social responsibility goals
State institutions	Government entities, and educational facilities aiming to comply with accessibility regulations and inclusivity mandates	Affordable, compliant furniture solutions suitable for high-traffic public use	Meeting legal requirements and improving public service delivery

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Organizations promoting inclusivity	NGOs, social enterprises, and advocacy groups dedicated to improving accessibility in physical spaces	Adapted educational outreach, demonstration purposes	furniture for educational programs, and show casing inclusive design	Promoting practices and showcasing inclusive design	best and inclusive
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Source: developed by the author.

Similar to the B2C case, I identified key elements for planning the B2B marketing strategy that could be used for developing a detailed plan at a later stage. The value messaging in case of B2B should position the developed products as a solution that enhances accessibility and enables compliance with legal standards.

With a rising number of veterans in post-rehabilitation phase engaging in social rehabilitation activities, the Client's potential B2B customers would profit with their contribution to inclusivity goals. In this case, key targeted channels would include direct outreach to rehabilitation centers, public space operators, and institutions, as well as participation in and promotion during public events, and healthcare conferences. Again, collaborating with NGOs and accessibility experts to establish credibility and expand outreach is essential for the case.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this project, I have developed core components of the go-to-market strategy to guide the Client, a Ukrainian furniture manufacturer, in entering the niche market for furniture adapted to the needs of people with functional disorders. This initiative responds to growing societal demand, driven by the increasing number of individuals requiring rehabilitation support, including veterans recovering from injuries sustained during hostilities.

The external environment analysis revealed both opportunities and challenges for the Client. While war-related disruptions have strained supply chains, rising costs, and workforce availability, new policies and programs for veterans' rehabilitation present a significant driver of demand. The market remains underdeveloped, offering a unique opportunity for the Client to establish itself as a pioneer in adaptive furniture in Ukraine. The micro-environment analysis highlighted particular opportunities in differentiation, focusing on innovative, customizable, and affordable solutions for people with functional disorders. The results of expert interviews highlighted critical consumer needs, such as height-adjustable surfaces, modular components, and easy-to-use mechanisms that would enable independence for users.

To capitalize on this opportunity, the following steps are recommended:

- The Client should focus on developing product design that addresses both functional and emotional needs, ensuring modularity, safety, and modern aesthetics;
- For the Client it is essential to further develop collaboration with NGOs, rehabilitation centers, and accessibility experts to promote awareness, gain credibility, and test MVPs;
- When considering the development of the marketing plan, the Client should target institutional buyers (B2B segment), such as rehabilitation facilities and operators of public spaces, while leveraging online platforms and targeted campaigns for the B2C segment;
- For funding the development, the Client should seek grant funding and cost-efficient production techniques to ensure affordability without compromising quality.

By aligning its strategic goals with societal needs, the Client can create value both commercially and socially, contributing to the well-being of individuals with functional disorders and enhancing accessibility in Ukraine's evolving market.

We agreed for further collaboration with the Client, and outlined key objectives related to deeper profiling of consumers' barriers and needs, in order to precisely formulate requirements for the MVPs

designs. Further we consider engaging institutions when developing and testing the MVP concepts within focus groups in rehabilitation centers and veteran hubs. Specifically, next steps are associated with the following activities:

- Conducting online surveys within veteran communities, who undergo rehabilitation in order to collect statistical inputs on their profiles and barriers they are exposed to in everyday life;
- Formulating key features and requirements of the MVP designs. This step will require alignment with results of expert interviews mentioned in the Appendix A;
- Conducting in-depth analysis of MVPs' features via focus groups within rehabilitation centers and veteran hubs, to assess overall feedback and use this for further product improvement.

Further collaboration with the Client is planned for the Q1 2025, starting with mid-term status-quo presentation is to take place beginning of January 2025.

Finally, reflecting on the project done, current results, and next steps, I see particular value in not only supporting a Ukrainian manufacturer in its business development, but also in contributing to the development of a market-creating innovation that would serve a larger audience of people with functional disorders and particularly help veterans to undergo more convenient rehabilitation and social reintegration.

## APPENDIX A. RESULTS OF EXPERT INTERVIEWS

**Table A.1.** Concise summary of the expert interview A – Universal design expert

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
<i>How do you assess the need of people with functional disorders in using adapted furniture?</i>	When considering the adaptive furniture, a differentiate between furniture for rehabilitation process and post-rehabilitation is necessary. While the rehabilitation process requires solutions for particular barriers within the rehabilitation process, the design of furniture used for post-rehabilitation requires examination and structuring of barriers that will not change over time. For this reason, it is necessary to thoroughly analyze a larger number of potential consumers, profiling their disabilities (e.g. according to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), and defining common barriers that can be tackled with adaptive solutions.
<i>What typical issues do you think people with functional disorders experience when using conventional furniture?</i>	This can be related height of objects and surfaces, shapes and diameters of handles, and mechanics of interaction with furniture. The latter point is especially relevant for cases when people have lost their upper limbs or parts of upper limbs, thus do not have ability to grasp object (typical barrier for opening, closing and pulling actions within households).
<i>What special needs (with regard to furniture) are there in the context of different functional disorders?</i>	
<i>What are specific types of furniture that require adaptation?</i>	Most of furniture that people use require adaptation when considering people with functional disorders. It is important to focus on physical barriers, as mentioned above - this should focus on height, accessibility to reach
<i>What are possible universal requirements to furniture design?</i>	

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<i>How important is aesthetics of adapted furniture?</i>	elements, utilize them and limit possible traumatic accidents in case of limited orientation in space. The
<i>What features do you think are the most relevant for this type of furniture?</i>	latter point is extremely important when people face the
<i>How do you think, how does furniture adaptation (accessibility) improve independence of clients in everyday life?</i>	change in post-rehabilitation, where spaces and objects differ from the convenience they were used to when undergoing rehabilitation.
<i>Are you aware of any standards or requirements with regard to the furniture for people with functional disorders?</i>	For structuring the data, one may rely on International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. When designing the objects and elements, you may require specific guidelines by ISO standards.
<i>How do you estimate current market of furniture adapted to needs of people with functional disorders? Can you name any specific companies / brands?</i>	I am not aware of any prominent market players in adaptive furniture, but you may refer to such projects as “Invafishki”, developed by Vitalii Pcholkin. The team of Invafishki are developing assistive solutions for people with disabilities, primarily focusing on features for accessibility. There are also experts who work in the field of universal design, potentially you could leverage their know-how and collaborate. As an example, you may refer to Volodymyr Vysotskyi,
<i>What do you think are key barriers when considering development of the furniture market for people with functional disorders?</i>	When considering the research on this topic – focus on the barriers faced by your potential consumers. Identifying the barriers should be the leading step that will further guide you towards developing MVPs that you will further be able to test within focus groups. When organizing focus groups, consider selecting participants that have similar functional disorders. Ideally, as a result, you will be able to further work on a set of “barrier-solution” items.
<i>Are there any specific types of furniture / design elements / features that you would like to realize?</i>	
<i>Are there any other insights you would like to share?</i>	

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**Table A.2.** Summary of the expert interview B – Ergo-therapist

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
<p><i>Have you had any prior experience dealing with furniture products for people with functional disorders?</i></p> <p><i>How do you assess the need of people with functional disorders in using adapted furniture?</i></p>	<p>Yes, I have experience working with furniture adapted for people with functional disorders, particularly in the context of our Rehabilitation Center. Our focus has been on helping individuals prepare for post-rehabilitation through the use of adapted furniture. For instance, we have developed solutions tailored to veterans who have suffered injuries and lost limbs. This group often requires highly specific and functional furniture adaptations. I assess the need for adapted furniture as critical. It ensures safety, convenience, and independence in everyday activities. People with functional disorders face unique challenges, and customized furniture solutions can greatly enhance their quality of life.</p>
<p><i>What typical issues do you think people with functional disorders experience when using conventional furniture?</i></p> <p><i>What special needs (with regard to furniture) are there in the context of different functional disorders?</i></p>	<p>The primary issue with conventional furniture is its lack of accessibility. For example, individuals using wheelchairs struggle with reaching high shelves, adjusting to fixed surfaces, or maneuvering in spaces designed for able-bodied users. Standard furniture does not account for these challenges. Special needs vary based on the type of functional disorder. For instance, people with limited mobility require adjustable-height surfaces, while those with limb loss might need easy-to-reach storage or ergonomically designed handles and controls. Overall, adapted furniture must cater to the user's ability to perform tasks independently, without relying on third-party assistance.</p>

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<i>What are specific types of furniture that require adaptation?</i>	The types of furniture that require adaptation include kitchen cabinets, countertops, bathroom fixtures, and desks. These are spaces where people perform daily essential tasks like cooking, personal hygiene, or working. Universal requirements for furniture design should include adjustability, modularity, and accessibility. For instance, adjustable-height surfaces allow wheelchair users to access countertops or workstations comfortably. Easy-to-use mechanisms, like push-to-open cabinets or accessible shelving, are also essential. Aesthetics is important but secondary to functionality. While clients may prefer visually appealing designs, our focus remains on practicality and usability.
<i>What are possible universal requirements to furniture design?</i>	
<i>How important is aesthetics of adapted furniture?</i>	
<i>What features do you think are the most relevant for this type of furniture?</i>	Key features include ergonomic designs, adjustable heights, and durable materials that can withstand intensive use. These adaptations improve independence by allowing clients to perform tasks safely and efficiently, promoting confidence and reducing reliance on others.
<i>How do you think, how does furniture adaptation (accessibility) improve independence of clients in everyday life?</i>	
<i>Are you aware of any standards or requirements with regard to the furniture for people with functional disorders?</i>	Unfortunately, I am not aware of specific standards or requirements in this field. From my perspective, it remains largely unexplored. In our Rehabilitation Center, we developed custom furniture solutions to meet the needs of our clients. These include a unique setup of kitchen elements in our training rooms, which serve as test environments for individuals to learn independent living skills. However, these setups are not commercially available and were developed on demand. This gap in standardized solutions highlights the need

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<i>How do you estimate current market of furniture adapted to needs of people with functional disorders? Can you name any specific companies / brands?</i>	for broader efforts to create adaptable furniture based on well-defined guidelines.
<i>What do you think are key barriers when considering development of the furniture market for people with functional disorders?</i>	The market for adapted furniture is underdeveloped. I am not aware of any specific brands or companies providing comprehensive solutions, even internationally. When we searched for options for our center, we struggled to find suitable products. The key barriers are price and lack of offerings. Many western or European brands offer solutions, but they are prohibitively expensive. For individuals in the post-rehabilitation phase, purchasing furniture at four to five times the cost of regular items is simply not feasible. Additionally, the limited availability of adapted furniture means there is little to choose from, particularly for those with severe mobility challenges or functional disorders.
<i>Are there any specific types of furniture / design elements / features that you would like to realize?</i>	If given the opportunity and resources, I would prioritize designs that clients are familiar with from their rehabilitation process. This ensures a smooth transition to post-rehabilitation and inspires them to invest in solutions that promote their independence. It is important to focus on creating furniture that not only meets functional requirements but also instills confidence and comfort. For example, adjustable kitchen counters or modular shelves allow clients to perform daily tasks without frustration or difficulty. These solutions reinforce their independence and enhance their quality of life.
<i>Are there any other insights you would like to share?</i>	

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**Table A.3.** Summary of the expert interview C - Accessibility expert

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
<i>Have you had any prior experience dealing with furniture products for people with functional disorders?</i>	Yes, my organization supports people in post-rehabilitation and advises how to efficiently adapt their households to new reality. This also includes certain
<i>How do you assess the need of people with functional disorders in using adapted furniture?</i>	adaptations with respect to furniture. Also, as a person with a disability, I have developed own design of the furniture elements for kitchen applications.
<i>What typical issues do you think people with functional disorders experience when using conventional furniture?</i>	You may need to splitt your analysis by spaces or functional zones and prioritize those spaces where people with functional disorders face barriers most frequently.
<i>What special needs (with regard to furniture) are there in the context of different functional disorders?</i>	For example, conventional workplaces can cause similar barriers at home, in educational institutions, in offices etc. I can mainly comment on the needs of people who use wheelchairs - it is essential to implement height adaptation and limit depth to objects on surfaces, so that they can be reached without leaning.
<i>What are specific types of furniture that require adaptation?</i>	It is extremely important to include design and aesthetics aspects, when designing the adaptive furniture. Furniture
<i>What are possible universal requirements to furniture design?</i>	for people, who are in the post-rehabilitation must be not only functionable, but also well-designed and have an
<i>How important is aesthetics of adapted furniture?</i>	overall well fit in the context of their households. It is important to disconnect people from the medical context
<i>What features do you think are the most relevant for this type of furniture?</i>	through offering conventional furniture look combined with adaptive design, thus facilitate their social
<i>How do you think, how does furniture adaptation (accessibility) improve independence of clients in everyday life?</i>	rehabilitation.

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<i>Are you aware of any standards or requirements with regard to the furniture for people with functional disorders?</i>	Yes, there are state standards, for example you can refer to state construction norms “ДБН В.2.2-40:2018”, however this field is in its transformation phase. With the outbreak of the russian full-scale invasion and increasing number of people with severe injuries, there are more efforts from the state to regulate this field and more initiatives contribute to developing and implementing standards and regulations to improve accessibility.
<i>How do you estimate current market of furniture adapted to needs of people with functional disorders? Can you name any specific companies / brands?</i>	Price is the key barrier when considering adaptive furniture. There are examples of Danish companies, who manufacture adaptive furniture, but the products are rather expensive both at when purchasing, but also at a later stage in case if repair is required. An optimal scenario would include a product line of adaptive furniture, that enable accessibility, but also possess smooth design, and are affordable when purchasing and are cost-efficient in case of repair.
<i>What do you think are key barriers when considering development of the furniture market for people with functional disorders?</i>	When developing adaptive furniture or universal design concepts, you should focus on engaging potential consumers, who recently suffered an injury and have just entered the post-rehabilitation phase. Such people can provide better assess their needs and provide more qualitative feedback on barriers they are exposed to comparin to those who have longer experience of living with an injury, and thus have adapted to the barriers.
<i>Are there any specific types of furniture / design elements / features that you would like to realize?</i>	
<i>Are there any other insights you would like to share?</i>	

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Source: developed by the author.

**Table A.4.** Summary of the expert interview D – Inclusivity expert

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Inputs</b>
<i>Have you had any prior experience dealing with furniture products for people with functional disorders? How do you assess the need of people with functional disorders in using adapted furniture?</i>	Yes, we provide consulting services to operators of public spaces, such as cafes, and office spaces regarding the design of common spaces, including furniture elements, so that they could be inclusive with respect to needs of wheelchair users. While we were not focusing on adaptive furniture, we considered universal design elements, that could let all visitors have equal access.
<i>What typical issues do you think people with functional disorders experience when using conventional furniture?</i>	Typically, people who use wheelchairs, are limited when reaching objects that are too high or too low, e.g. is the wardrobe shelves are too high. In the case of my household,
<i>What special needs (with regard to furniture) are there in the context of different functional disorders?</i>	where my wife has no disabilities, we have different shelves, but ideally hangers should be adjustable. If looking at the other category of functional disorders, blindness and vision impairment, you should consider solutions with enhanced contrast - this could be a design element to highlight edges and help people distinguish surfaces.
<i>What are specific types of furniture that require adaptation?</i>	Adaptive solutions in public space, offices, and overall workplaces improve the accessibility of spaces beyond the
<i>What are possible universal requirements to furniture design?</i>	households (where a person with disability may implement certain level of adaptation improve) thus
<i>How important is aesthetics of adapted furniture?</i>	enabling independence of clients in everyday life. If looking at particular cases - let's take people using
<i>What features do you think are the most relevant for this type of furniture?</i>	wheelchairs, who are visiting cafes. When selecting furniture, preference should be given to products with universal design. Furniture elements should contrast with surrounding objects and adjacent surfaces, also one should

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<i>How do you think, how does furniture adaptation (accessibility) improve independence of clients in everyday life?</i>	carefully adjust levels of edges - tables must have free space under the tabletop with a height of at least 700 mm and a depth of at least 600 mm, ensuring easy access for wheelchair users.
<i>Are you aware of any standards or requirements with regard to the furniture for people with functional disorders?</i>	I would advise you to have a look at the "Hospitality without barriers" guideline, and the "Guidelines for equipping medical facilities"
<i>How do you estimate current market of furniture adapted to needs of people with functional disorders? Can you name any specific companies / brands?</i>	Overall very limited offering and underdeveloped market. There are several reasons for limited market offering. Lack of expertise, limited awareness and poor education about the needs of people with functional disorders within community (valid for both groups with and without disabilities)
<i>What do you think are key barriers when considering development of the furniture market for people with functional disorders?</i>	
<i>Are there any specific types of furniture / design elements / features that you would like to realize?</i>	For implementing inclusivity it is essential to design furniture elements (and furniture concepts overall) that will be suitable for all members of the households, including those without disabilities. Specifically, our organization can offer consulting and advise what elements need adaptation and include certain recommendations for solving typical issues - yet specific details will depend on particular case.
<i>Are there any other insights you would like to share?</i>	

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Source: developed by the author.

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