Thesis topic

«Development of strategies for B2B and B2C markets for an AI-based Mental Assistant Startup»

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Students of the PRUE,
15.03Д-ММОа07/21б, 4th year

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РЭУ.РФ
РОССИЙСКИЙ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
ИМЕНИ Г.В. ПЛЕХАНОВА

Бизнес-инкубатор
РЭУ им. Плеханова

ФОНД СОДЕЙСТВИЯ ИННОВАЦИЯМ

Object and Subject

The object of the study is a technology-based startup in the field of Mental Health services – Fuh. The subject of the study is the development and implementation of strategic marketing, organizational, and operational approaches for scaling an AI-powered psychological support service in B2C and B2B markets.

Research Methods

The research applied a mixed-methods approach integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques. Observation was used to examine user behavior and collect feedback on early-stage interactions. Comparison involved the evaluation of business models and competitor strategies to identify market positioning. Measurement focused on estimating market size and profiling the target audience. Experimental methods were employed through beta testing to validate product features and engagement. Analysis and synthesis were conducted to interpret collected data and inform strategic planning.

Results

The Thesis has explored the Development of strategic approaches for launching and scaling an AI-powered Mental Health assistant Fuh within the B2B and B2C segments on the Russian market. The study confirms the high social and market relevance of Mental Health Tech services, especially in the context of rising emotional burnout, stress, and psychological disorders among young professionals.
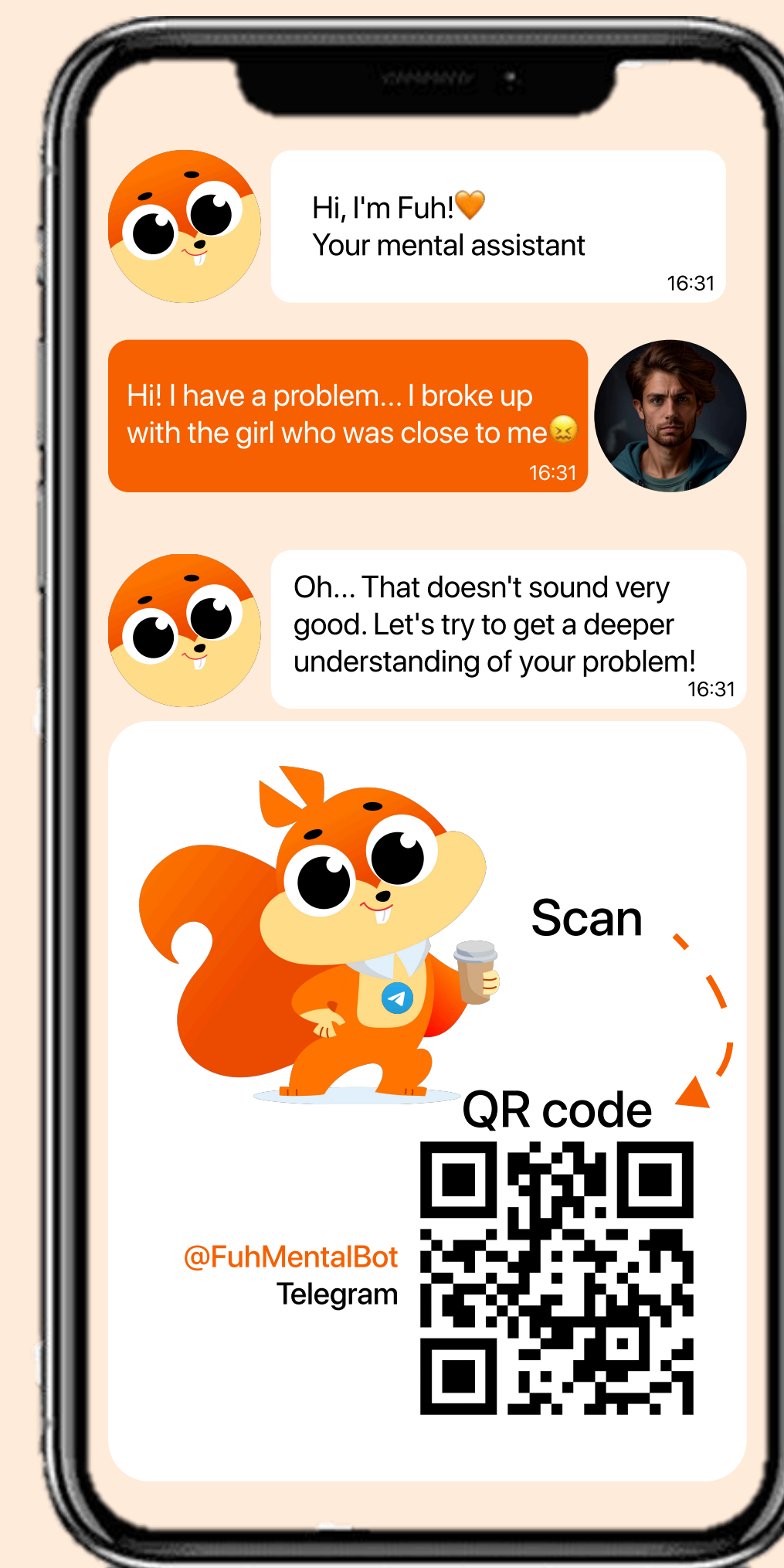
Mental Assistant

Anonymous

Available 24/7

Allows to help thousands at once

Can be used as a regular AI assistant

Low Barrier to Entry

Built-in SOS Features

Hi, I'm Fuh! Your mental assistant
16:31

Hi! I have a problem... I broke up with the girl who was close to me
16:31

Oh... That doesn't sound very good. Let's try to get a deeper understanding of your problem!
16:31

Scan

QR code

@FuhMentalBot
Telegram

Empathetic Voice Assistant

Gamified Progress

Data Privacy by Design

Evidence-Based Techniques

Daily Check-In Rituals

Real-Time Sentiment Analysis

Analysis of the Problem Area

Problem

Mental health affects 1 in 8 people worldwide, with over 970 million individuals living with a disorder. The number continues to grow each year.
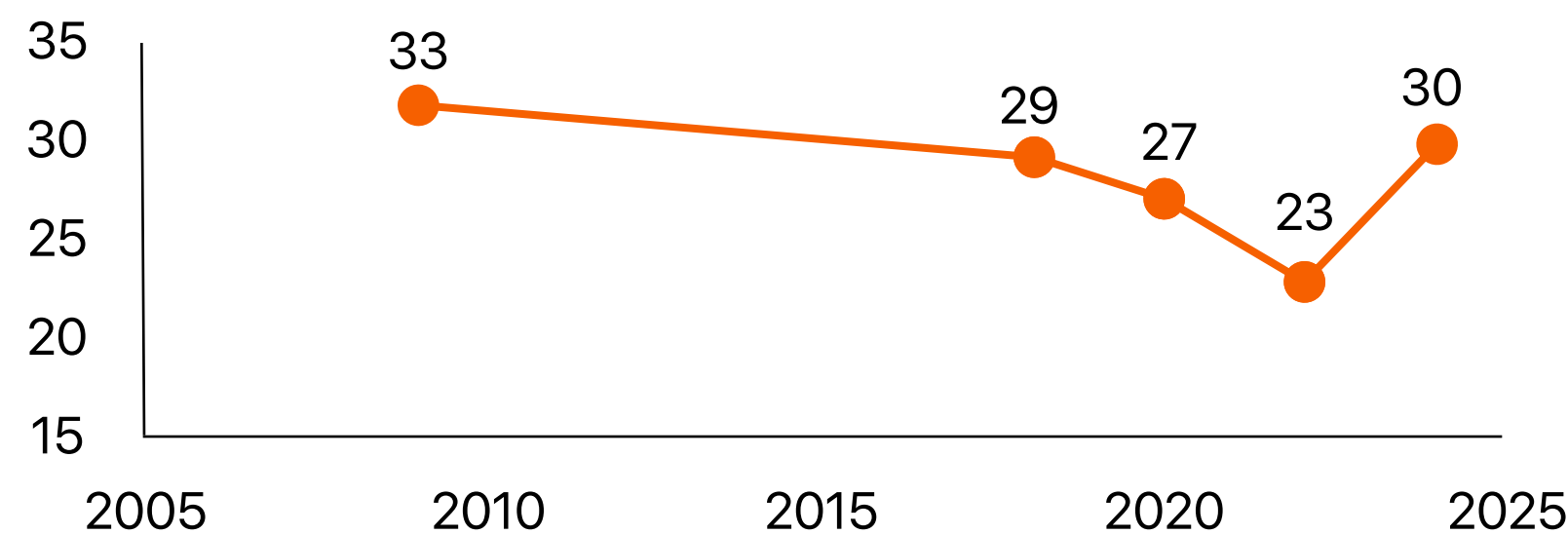
In Russia, while 4 million are officially diagnosed, around 25 million people have experienced mental health challenges but did not seek help.

Why? The top barriers include self-reliance (45%), distrust in specialists (31%), financial constraints (29%), stigma, and lack of access to trusted professionals. Men are especially vulnerable, often avoiding help due to traditional masculinity norms, fear of judgment, and emotional suppression.

The demand for help is rising – Russia's psychological need index reached a 6-year high in 2024 (VTsIOM).

Millennials and Zoomers are the most open to seeking support. They're digital-first, emotionally aware, and currently underserved.

Index of need for psychological assistance

```
35
       33
30                              29        30
                                     27
25                                 23
20
15
   2005    2010    2015    2020    2025
```

*The index is calculated annually by VTsIOM

Solution
Smart psychological self-help service that specializes in solving the problems of stress and burnout caused by lack of work-life balance among young and ambitious professionals.

1 The user describes problem.

2 Using AI algorithms, the bot asks clarifying questions and "goes deep"

3

The user receives:

Exercises and recommendations for improving the situation.

The ability to control condition using daily tracking.

Search for a suitable psychologist for problem-solving using AI-algorithms.

A personal AI friend, available 24/7.

Fuh

Anonymous

Available 24/7

Allows to help thousands at once

Can be used as a regular AI assistant

Low Barrier to Entry

Built-in SOS Features

Hi, I'm Fuh!🧡
Your mental assistant
16:31

Hi! I have a problem... I broke up with the girl who was close to me😡
16:31

Oh... That doesn't sound very good. Let's try to get a deeper understanding of your problem!
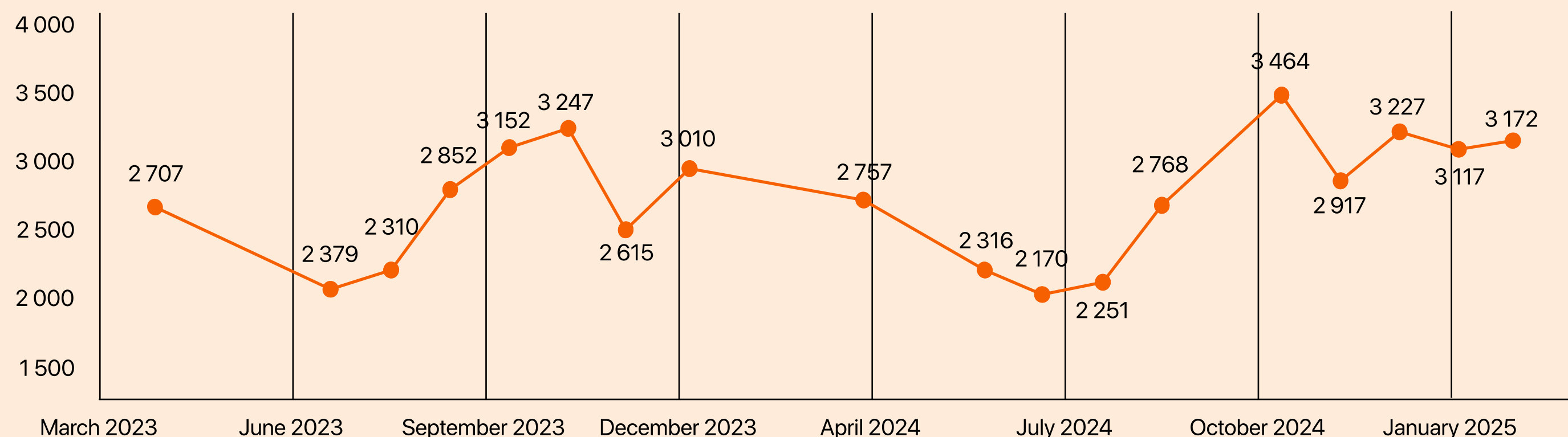16:31

Market Research

The Russian market for psychological services is steadily growing, with 2.7 million monthly Yandex searches for "Psychologist" peaking in winter and dropping in summer. Most interest comes from Moscow and the Central region, with overall national affinity at 104%. The PAM–TAM–SAM–SOM assessment shows strong market potential. With a global value of 35.27T rubles and a Russian TAM of 119.25B rubles, the psychological services sector offers solid growth prospects. The SAM of 26.8B rubles and an achievable SOM of 128.6M rubles indicate a realistic entry point and clear investment opportunity.
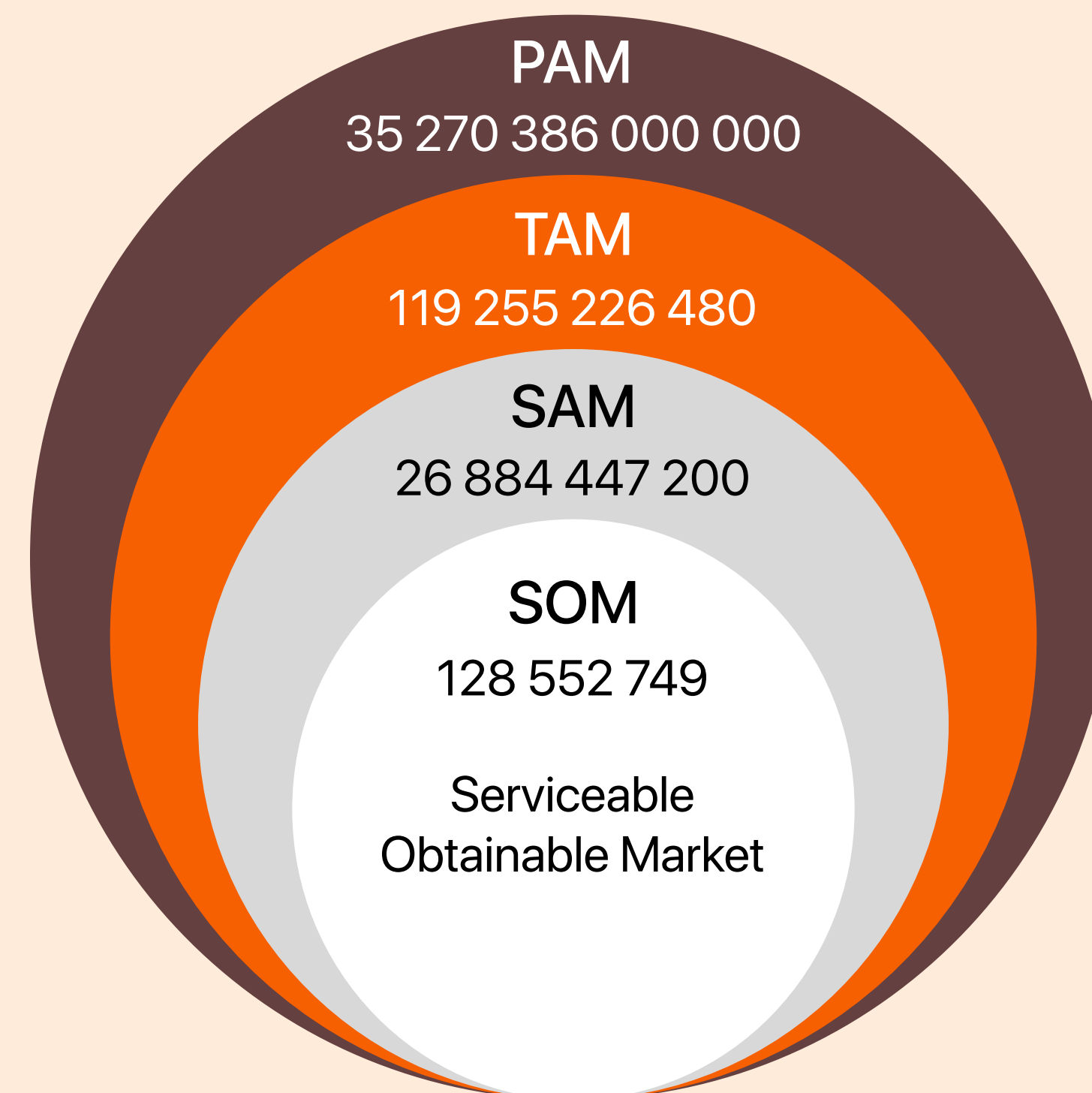
Frequency of Queries with the word "Psychologist"

Data points: 2 707 (March 2023), 2 379, 2 310, 2 852, 3 152, 3 247, 2 615, 3 010, 2 757, 2 316, 2 170, 2 251, 2 768, 3 464, 2 917, 3 227, 3 117, 3 172 (January 2025)

Frequency of queries "Psychologist" by region

Region	Number of quaries	Share of Total, %	Share of All quaries, %	Affinity Index, %
Moscow and Region	651 186	19,59%	2,84%	110,8%
Center	986 186	29,65%	2,71%	105,7%
North-West	330 144	9,92%	2,79%	109,4%
South	250 414	7,53%	2,68%	104,7%
Volga region	470 001	14,13%	2,43%	95,0%
Urals	238 344	7,16%	2,62%	102,3%
Siberia	297 942	8,96%	2,67%	104,4%
Far East	101 932	3,06%	2,53%	99,4%
Total	3 326 615	100%	2,66%	104%

Market size of Psychological Services (in rubles)

PAM
35 270 386 000 000

TAM
119 255 226 480

SAM
26 884 447 200

SOM
128 552 749

Serviceable Obtainable Market

Target audience

Based on research we were able to create target groups of people, they were split by different problems:

Young careerists-zoomers aged 20 to 27
Ambitious zoomers chasing growth but battling imposter syndrome

Working students aged 22 to 26
Juggling studies and work, with no time for themselves

Sufferers in unloved jobs aged 24 and older
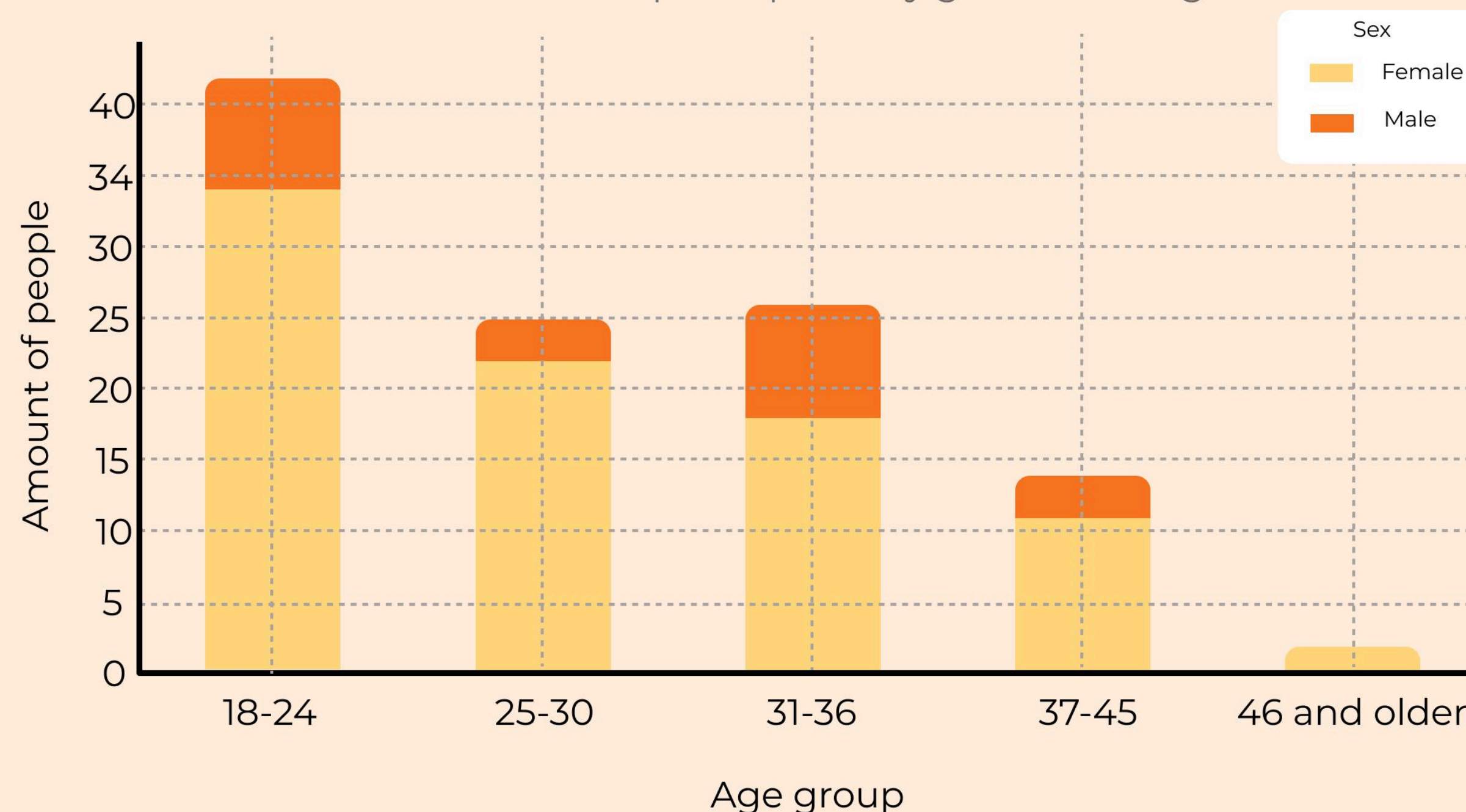Stuck in careers they doubt, feeling trapped

Freelancers and relocators aged 22 and older
Living the dream but struggling with comparison and procrastination

Creativity as a job aged 20 and older
Passion-driven but burned out by unstable gigs

Distribution of participants by gender and age

The research was done to better understand the core audience of the project, it was taken by the men and majority of women (4 times more).
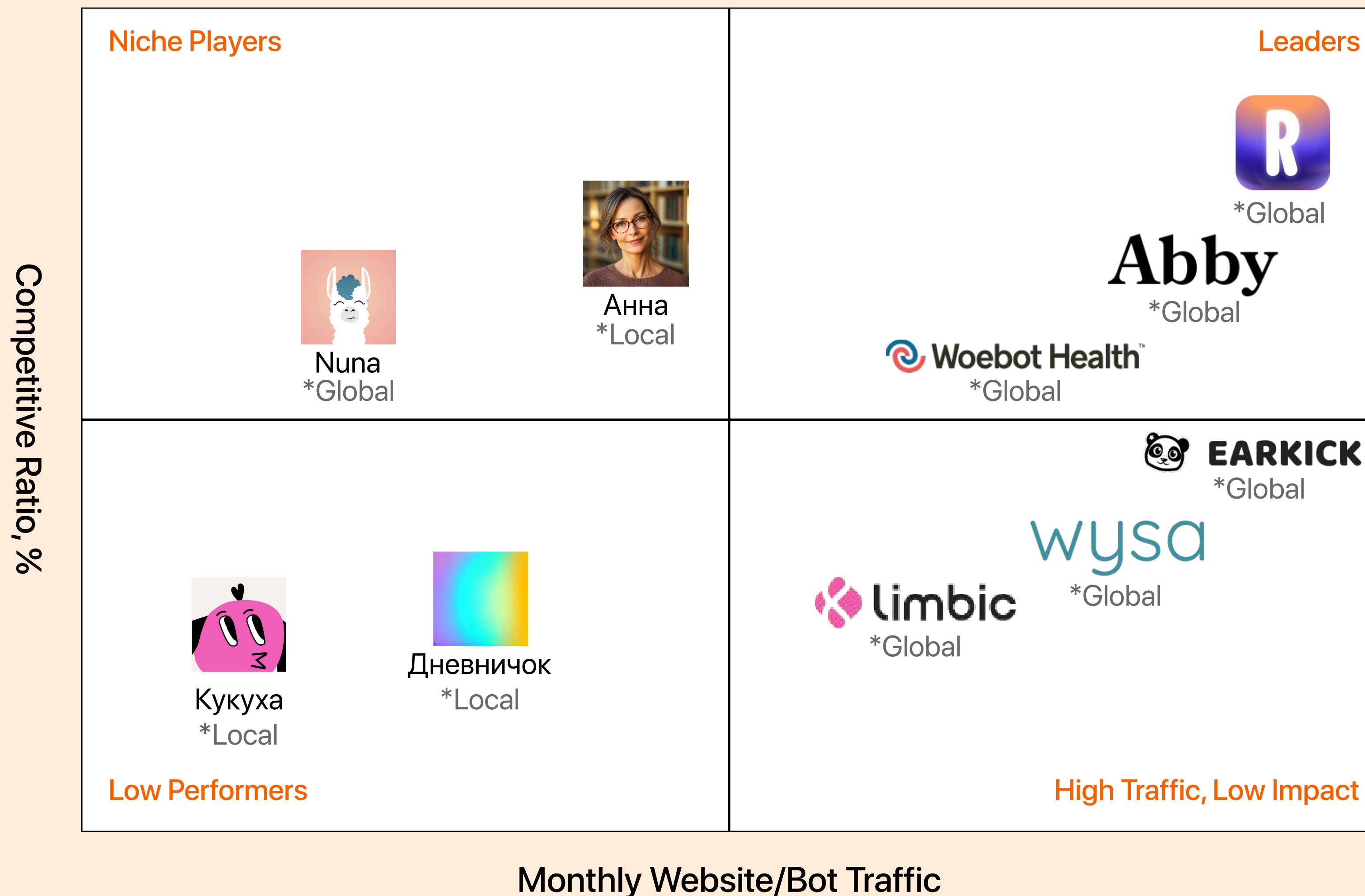
The main activity for the responders was work (54 people) and combining work and study (45 people).

Participants expressed interest in obtaining a tracking system which provides professional feedback and assists in better emotional understanding abilities.
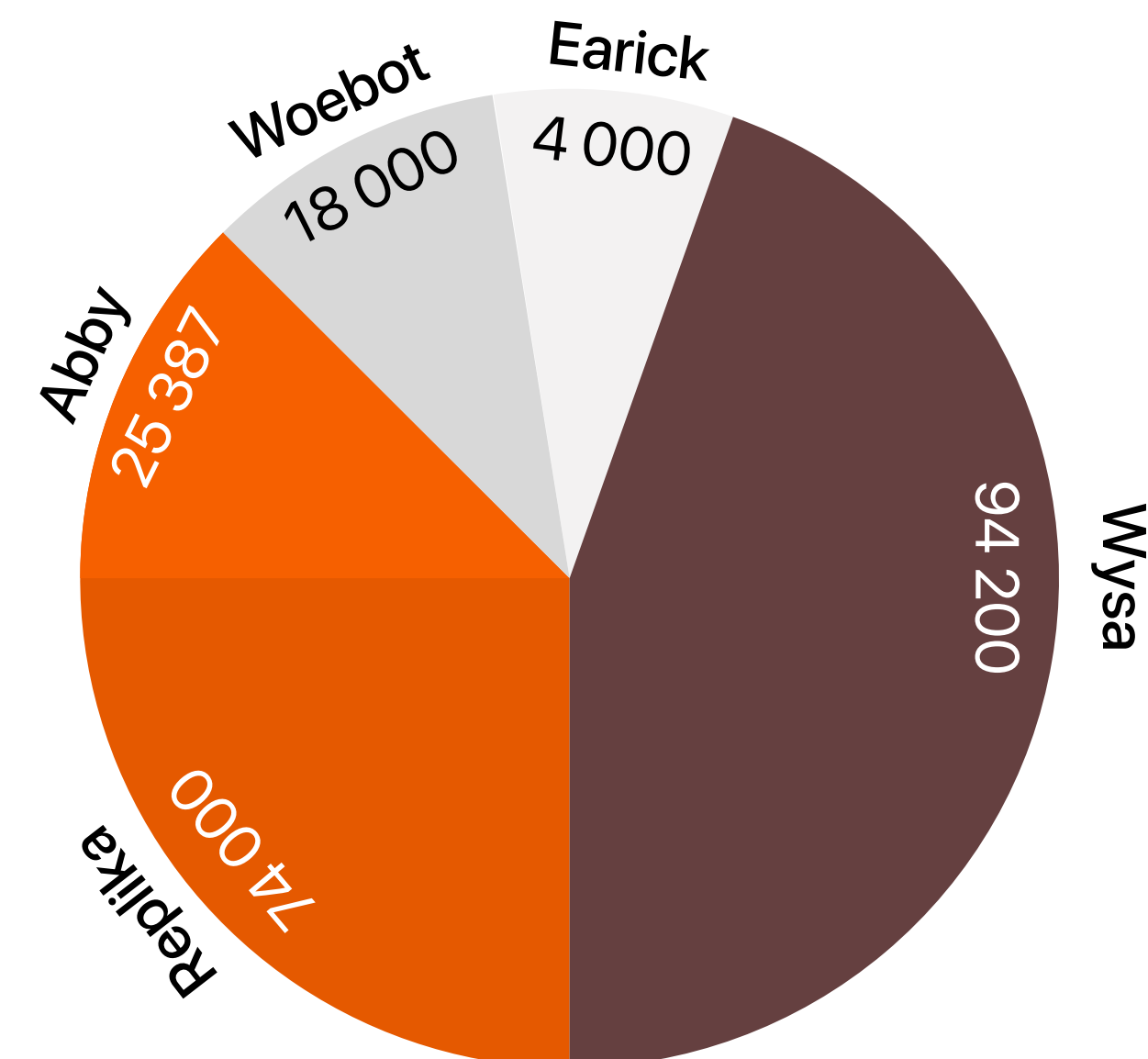
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Competitors Analysis

Competitors Matrix (Local & Global)

Niche Players

Leaders

*Global

Abby
*Global

Анна
*Local

Nuna
*Global

Woebot Health™
*Global

EARKICK
*Global

wysa
*Global

limbic
*Global

Кукуха
*Local

Дневничок
*Local

Low Performers

High Traffic, Low Impact

Competitive Ratio, %

Monthly Website/Bot Traffic

Top-5 Competitors by Social Media Followers

Earick
4 000

Woebot
18 000

Abby
25 387

Wysa
94 200

Replika
74 000

Well-known competitors abroad have made their way to reaching a broader audience of more than one hundred thousand users per month, such as Woebot, Abby, Replika, and Wysa.

Most of them actively maintain social media accounts on popular platforms and engage actively with audience.

Brand identity

Bossy
Friendly   Energetic
Curios
Caring

Mission

Is to help young and ambitious people who spend their daily time dealing with stress, anxiety, and burnout, regain their strength and direct it toward achieving their career and personal goals.

In other words, Fuh's aim is to make a product that will help people effectively solve their internal problems, work on themselves, and become better individuals

Vision

Is to become a top-of-mid service for all people who don't want internal problems to stop them from achieving their goals

Values

- Evidence-based – grounded in research and clinical guidelines.
- Accessible – 24/7 support for everyone, everywhere.
- Personalized – tailored plans for each unique situation.
- Secure – encrypted data to ensure full confidentiality.
- Win-win – mutually beneficial partnerships.

According to the legend, "a squirrel has gone through all the difficulties of the corporate world, and the expression "like a squirrel in a wheel" is forgotten, because Fuh is successful and independent" – said Angelina, Startup's Marketer and main strategist of Brand Identity.

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Tone of voice

Characteristic	Description	Do	Don't
We speak the same language on common topics Relatable	We talk about work problems and funny life situations that our audience lives in. Are you delaying things until the deadline? Are you looking for yourself anew every six months? — An example of relevant and not boring topics for conversation at the intersection of work and psychology	"It's time to admit to yourself that weekly thoughts about quitting — not the norm! If your colleagues or boss create reasons to think about leaving, take note of our cheat sheet 📝 In which we told you how to distinguish..."	"If symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and loss of motivation appear, you need to self -diagnose your psychoemotional state to avoid..."
We speak only in simplified language Comprehensible & clear	Even when we talk about psychological terms and difficult -to-understand phenomena, we always try to convey the essence as clearly and simply as possible. We avoid long sentences and the accumulation of nouns.	"To reduce anxiety , try exercise "X" It will help you shift your focus from your inner tension to the world around you. That's how it should be done..."	"One of the most effective methods of dealing with anxiety is exercise X. It helps a person experiencing stress to ground himself, redirecting the focus of his attention from the inner to the outer."

Development of the Strategy for B2C and B2B Markets

B2B (Employee Well-being)

LLC XYZ + **Fuh** =

- 24/7 access for employees to manage stress and mental health
- Anonymous insights into team engagement and well-being
- Weekly HR reports with actionable recommendations
- Simple admin dashboard for HR and leadership
- Scalable monthly subscription

B2C (Integration with Psychologists)

Therapist That Fits You

Feeling Burned Out?
Get Matched With The Right Psychologist In Minutes.
Chat, Call, Or Stay Anonymous Your Choice.
Affordable. Personal. Always Here.

Start Your Journey With Fuh

Dr. Elena Morozova

DR. Alexey Petrov

S (Specific)	Launch an AI-based psychologist Matching toold based on users' problems and preferences.
M (Measurable)	10-15 psychologists with diverse backgrounds, 400 paid sessions (all types), 250,000 rubles revenue in 4 months.
A (Achievable)	Use current MVP, Telegram, and simple admin tools for psychologists.
R (Relevant)	Supports Fuh's mission to provide accessible, personalized Mental Health care.
T (Time-Bound)	Launch in 2 months; reach income and usage goals in 4 months.

S (Specific)	Launch a service to support employee well-being and provide partners with valuable HR metrics through an admin chatbot.
M (Measurable)	Onboard, 10 companies reached more than 500 active users and generated 400,000 rubles in subscription revenue in 4 months.
A (Achievable)	Use existing MVP, expand analytics features, and offer scalable monthly business plans for partners.
R (Relevant)	Aligns with Fuh's mission by promoting Mental Health at scale and providing companies with actionable HR data.
T (Time-Bound)	Launch in 2 months; achieve usage and revenue targets in 4 months.

Marketing

150,000 RUB

June	July	August

Daily posts with CBT-based recommendations and self reflection (Telegram)

Bite sized lessons for cogntive-behaviral therapy (Telegram)

Start of Short reels that analyse scenes from popular movies (Instagram*)

Viral photo post with situational humor to capture emotions (Instagram*)

Explanations of common feelings, coping strategies and mechanism (Telegram)

Instagram stories with polls, questions and reactions (Instagram*)

Hire of SMM manager

Behind the scenes content, how the AI helper works, Q&A (Telegram)

Instagram stories with polls, questions and reactions (Instagram*)

90,000 RUB

September	October	November

Behind the scenes content, how the AI helper works, Q&A (Telegram)

Daily posts with CBT-based recommendations and self reflection (Telegram)

Bite sized lessons for cogntive-behaviral therapy (Telegram)

Email marketing for business clients

Start of video podcasts with well-known psychological experts and blogers (Youtube)

Start of video podcasts with well-known psychological experts and blogers (YouYube)

Copy short form content on other platforms (YouTube)

New Q&A with developers of the bot (Telegram)

Video about creation of bot (YouTube)

New guest on YouTube podcast

*Restriction on Instagram (*Meta is banned and prohibited in Russia) advertisement, complete exit from the platform before September
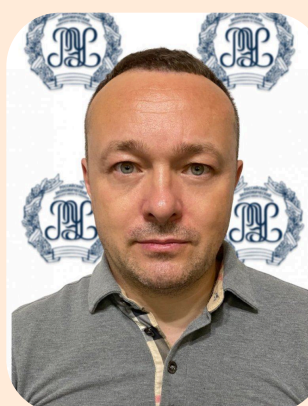
Organizational plan

Scientific advisers
Maksimov Maksim
Gretchenko Aleksandr

Sales Manager
Maksimov Danila
Marketing, B2B-Sales

Founder
Trunov Yury
Project Management,
B2B-Sales

Co-Founder
Grishin Egor
Project Management,
Finance and Analytics

Project Manager
Shmelev Maksim
Project Management,
Risks and Marketing

Chatbot Developer
Matvienko Alexey
Python, NLP, Database
Management

SMM Manager
We are hiring!
We are hiring!   We are hiring!

Outsourcing

Designer
Kokorina Anastasia

Accountant
Yaguzhinskaya Olesya

Psychologist
Vasilkova Vika

Development
Sozdav.ai
*MVP stage

Mentorship Support

Business Incubator Tracker
Nevostruev Petr

Brand-Manager
Shevela Angelina

Residents

Financial plan

The financial model of the project is calculated for two years, taking into account the Unit-economics, the logic of which includes more expensive attraction of the first clients in the first months and stable CAC in the future

It is planned to reach the break-even point in 1.75 years with an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 20%.

Other financial indicators were also calculated. It is possible to find more details about them via QR.

Financial Metrics

		Two Years
ROI	62%	
IRR	20%	
NPV	45 949,3 ₽	

Payback Period	638,29	Days
	20,97	Months
	1,75	Years

Financial Model

Unit-Economics

*One Year

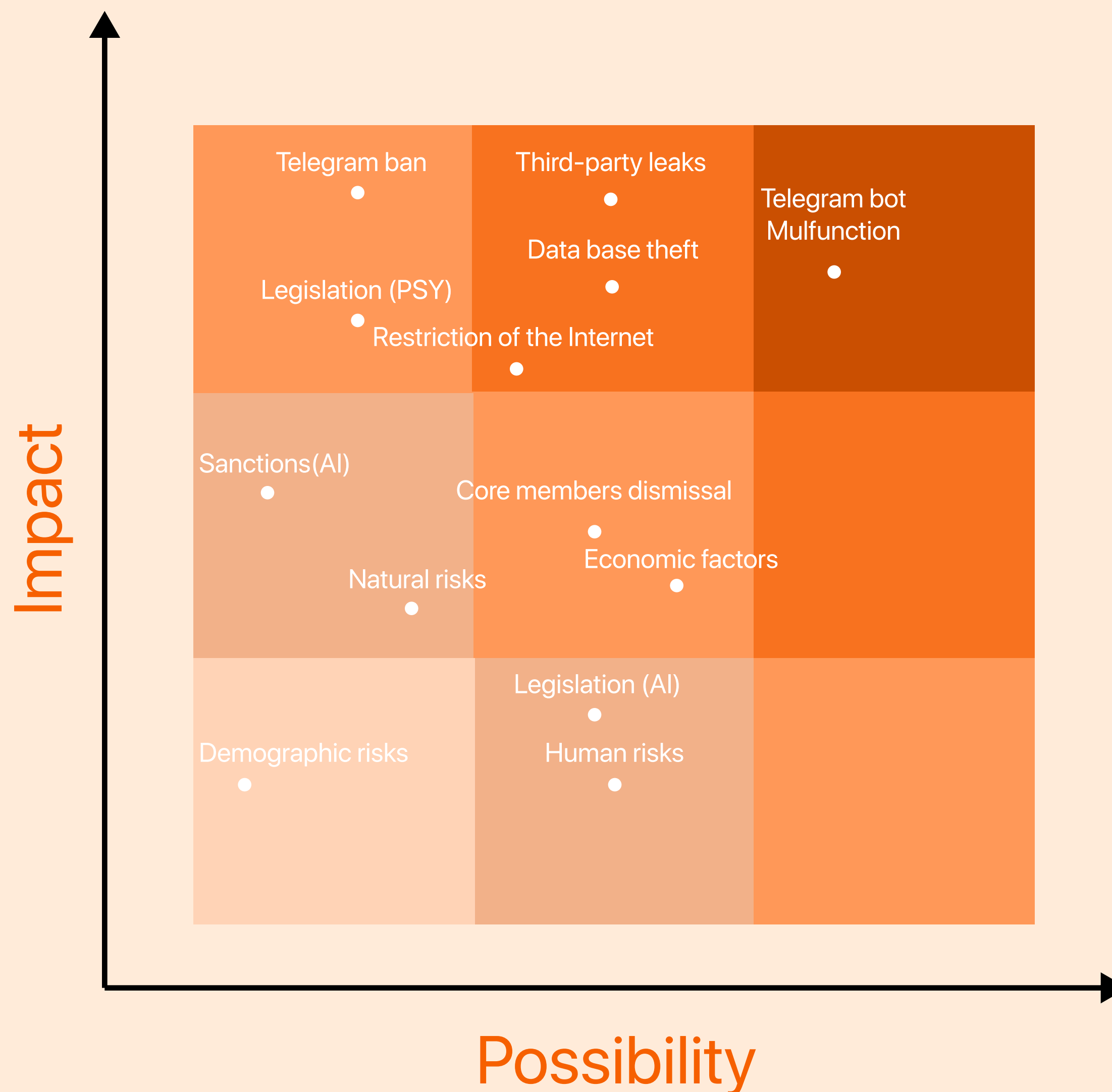| Range					
	LTV	930 ₽		LTV/CAC	3,30
	*IF 20 days			*For the purpose of testing	
	LTV	1 162 ₽		LTV/CAC	4,13
	*IF 25 days			*For the purpose of testing	

The most impactful risks

1. Legislation of Psychological services in Russian Federation
which will make harder psychological services

2. Sanction in Artificial Intelligence sector in Russian Federation
which will diminish access to Chat GPT

3. Data base theft of the Telegram bot users data
which will negatively impact on the company's reputation
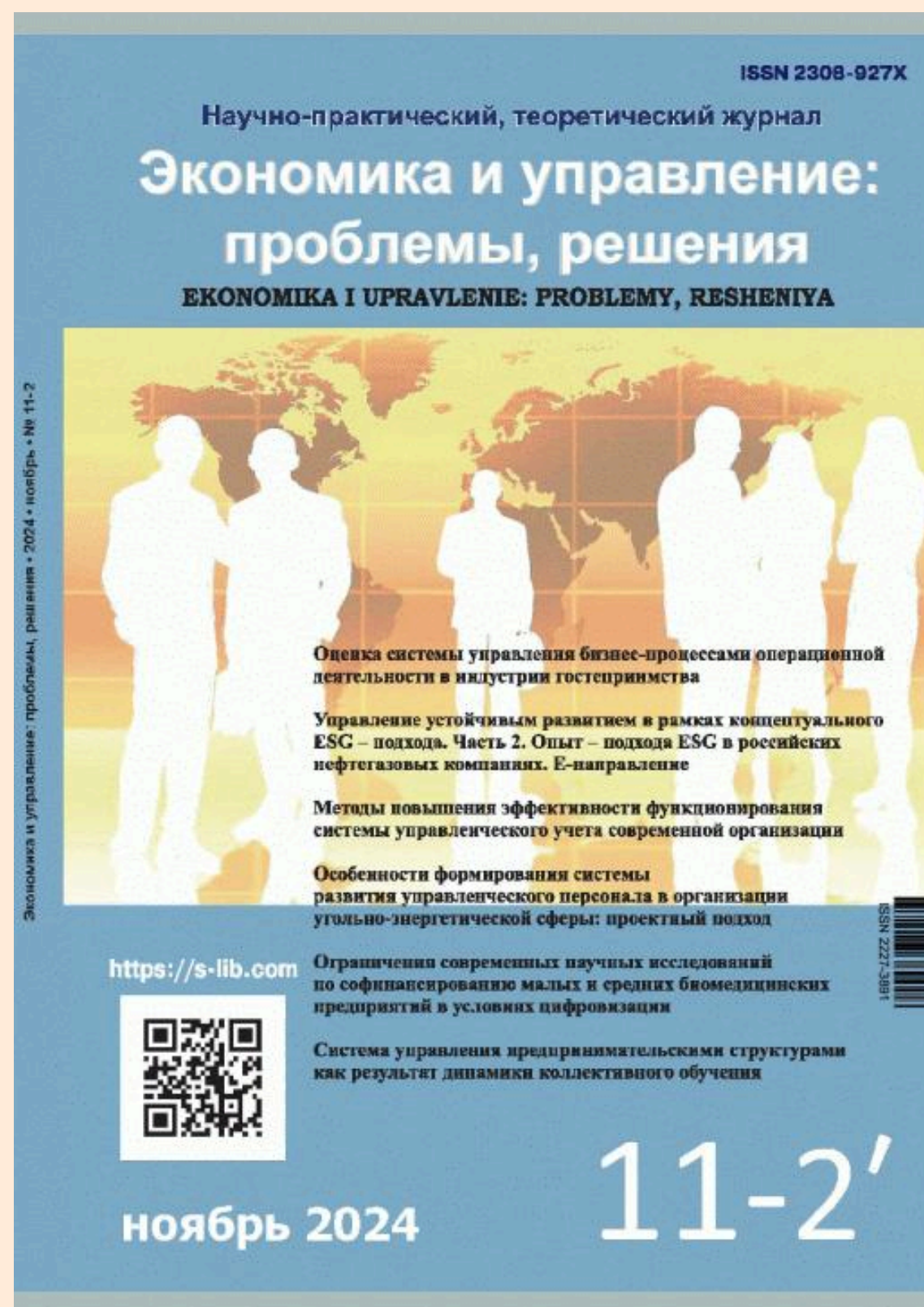
Solutions

1. Develop flexible infrastructure, to be able to adapt to such changes
in our case having a system of selecting specialists

2. Prepare alternative to current Artificial Intelligence model
use of DeepSeek together with Yandex GPT

3. Preparing for the worst case-scenarios
use defensive system against malware and prepare employees

Impact

Telegram ban

Third-party leaks

Telegram bot Mulfunction

Legislation (PSY)

Data base theft

Restriction of the Internet

Sanctions(AI)

Core members dismissal

Economic factors

Natural risks

Legislation (AI)

Demographic risks

Human risks

Possibility

Authors:
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Egor G. Grishin,
Maksim A. Shmelev,
Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow, Russian Federation

APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MANAGING BUSINESS PROCESSES AND OPERATIONS

Издание предоставляет широкие возможности для обмена мнениями, опытом работы, презентации авторских проектов. Тематические разделы журнала позволяют размещать на его страницах материалы по актуальным вопросам бюджетирования, планирования, государственного регулирования экономики в условиях институциональной трансформации, управленческого учета и аудита, инвестиционной и инновационной деятельности, оценки собственности, налогового администрирования, корпоративного управления, а также другие темы, полезные профессионалам и заинтересованным читателям.

Решением Высшей аттестационной комиссии при Министерстве науки и высшего образования Российской Федерации (ВАК при Минобрнауки России) журнал включен в Перечень рецензируемых научных изданий, в которых должны быть опубликованы основные научные результаты диссертаций на соискание ученой степени кандидата наук, на соискание ученой степени доктора наук (номер 1683 в перечне ВАК от 07.03.2023 г).

Всероссийская научно-практическая конференция «Инновации в управлении социально-экономическими системами» (RCIMSS-2025), РЭУ им. Г.В. Плеханова, 29 мая 2025 года, тема выступления «Применение ИИ в управлении стартапом в области ментального здоровья: стратегический подход».

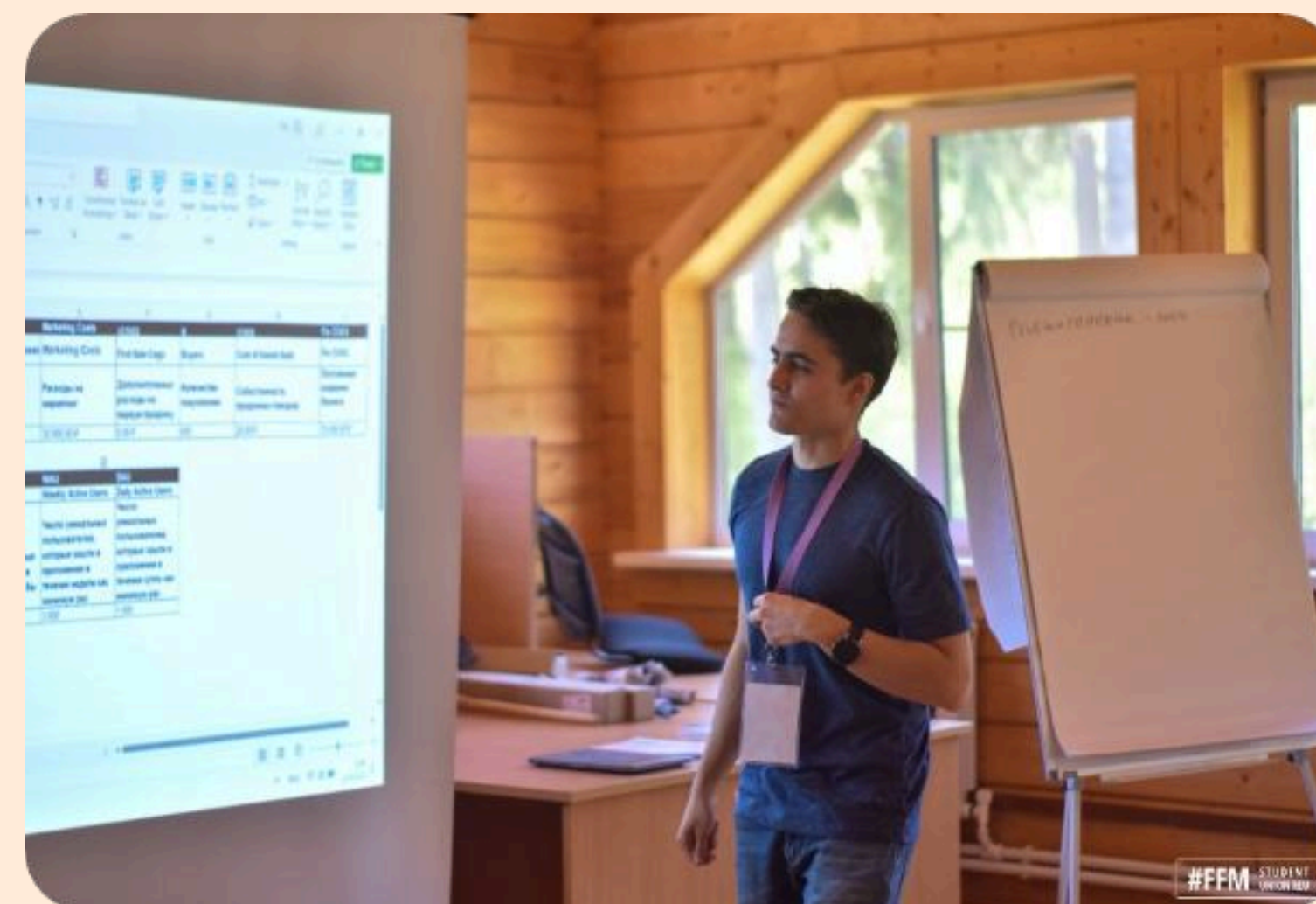# Achievements

Active student life

Active members of
Plekhanov Russian University of Economics team analyzing innovation management with AI (2023-2024)

Volunteered at

-LLC "Ecovika"

-MKU "Youth Center

-Edu. centre "Omega"

Activist of Project Department
Sep 2022

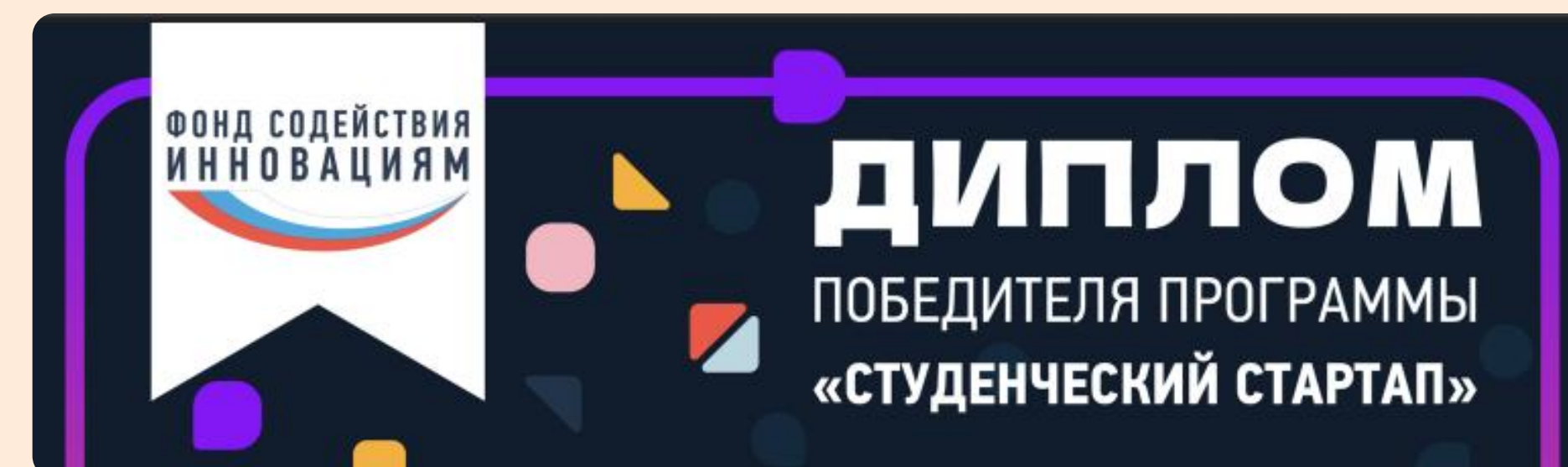**Project Department**
Head
Dec 2023

Business Incubator
Resident
Now

Case Championships
Changellenge Cup Moscow (Semifinalist)
Plekhanov Case Club & Groupe SEB (Winner)

10 articles of the RSCI (РИНЦ), **2 articles** of the Higher Attestation Commission (ВАК)

The winners of the Student Startup competition from the Innovation Assistance Foundation for 1,000,000 rubles