

# DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

## IN NEW BUSINESS

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Times change, desires change. Communication in the digital age is born with the evolution of the market, understands the new behaviours and motivations of new consumers, seeks to understand needs, and establishes a close interaction and relationship between consumers and companies. Digital marketing, responsible for communication in new channels, seek to guide consumer choices. But what happens when the speed of technological evolution creates structural changes in the economy and communication, requiring the continuous rethinking of business and its way of relating with consumers?

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Plan, execute, and evaluate: aspects that have to be considered to create an effective communication strategy and the respective tools to advertise, measure, and evaluate on the Internet, as well as the tools to optimise the digital performance of businesses. When the entrepreneur decides to implement his communication and marketing strategies for his product or service, he should use a useful and efficient tool that helps him attract, convert, relate, and sell, which is the sales funnel.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

# Communication in the digital age

The Internet has been and continues to be responsible for the world's most significant transformations. According to Kotler, Kartahaya & Setiawan (2017)<sup>1</sup>, with the spread of the Internet, connectivity – which allows greater mobility and greater transparency in our lives – «**is possibly the most important agent of change in the history of marketing**» and communication, and the way we relate.

For young entrepreneurs who wish to launch their products and services and boost their start-ups, the Internet, in general, and digital communication, in particular, can do a lot for their businesses, namely in attracting new customers and building customer loyalty, which translates into sales and results.

Let's look at the global numbers according to statistics from DataReportal's Digital 2021 Report<sup>2</sup>: there are 5.22 billion mobile phone users and 4.2 billion active social media users. Given these massive connectivity figures, it is not surprising that our interactions with media have come to be facilitated mainly by smartphone screens, tablets, laptops, televisions, and smartwatches. With a reach of this size, «**connectivity transforms the way consumers behave**» (Kotler et al., 2017). Another report<sup>3</sup> shows that, in Portugal, people spend an average of seven hours and twenty minutes a day using the Internet, among which around two hours are on social networks (figure 1).

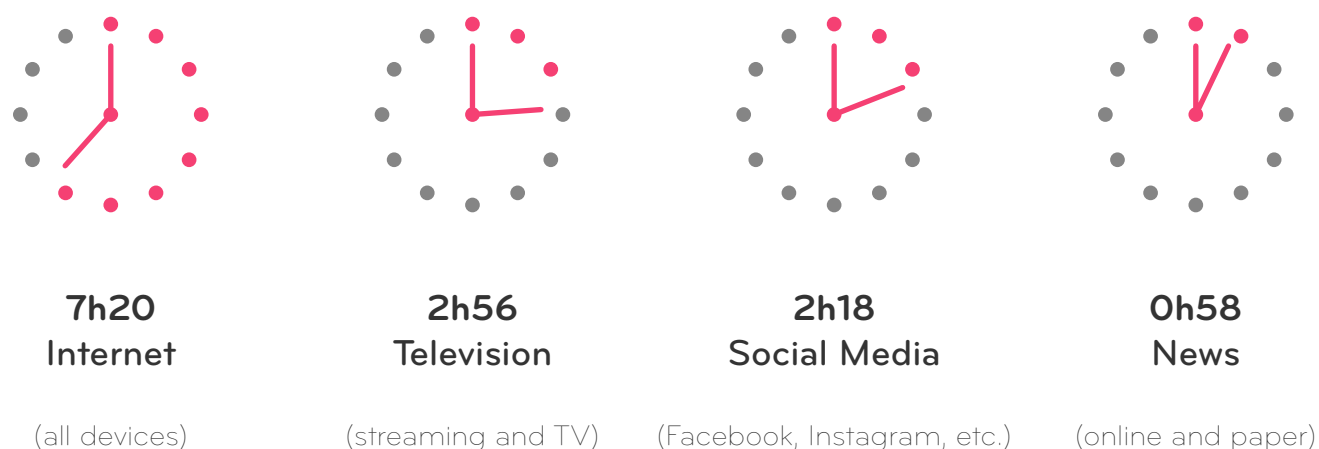


Figure 1. Daily time spent on media in Portugal in 2020.

Source: [DataReportal](http://datareportal.com)

<sup>1</sup> Kotler, P. Kartahaya, H. e Setiawan, I. (2017), *Marketing 4.0: Mudança do Tradicional para o Digital*, Actual Editora.

<sup>2</sup> Digital 2021 - Global Overview Report da DataReportal (<http://datareportal.com>)

<sup>3</sup> Digital 2021 - Local Country Headlines da DataReportal (<http://datareportal.com>) com referência a Portugal.



On the other hand, with the CoViD-19 pandemic (Kotler & Setiawan, 2021)<sup>4</sup>, companies and people have been forced to rapidly adjust their businesses and jobs to the limitations of mobility and confinement, becoming the pandemic a digital accelerator on a global scale. Given the growth of digital natives, **an organisation must be digital-ready**, know accurately how to assess the digital agility of its customers and which communication is most effective for each segment and each target audience.

### **The importance of digital communication in business and the power of connected consumers**

Especially in business, we can see that **connectivity** has considerably reduced operating, labour, and communication costs between companies, employees, and customers, while at the same time allowing the development of products and services and reducing the time needed to launch a new business. Connectivity gives countless opportunities in a product sampling (demonstration) phase and in sharing business information.

The **transparency** brought by the Internet enables, on the one hand, new entrepreneurs to be inspired by other successful entrepreneurs, adapting similar business models based on electronic platforms and allowing, on the other hand, to eliminate barriers between the various sectors. «**Faced with an increasingly transparent reality, authenticity is the most valuable asset**». (Kotler et al., 2017.)

Consumers now are considered to be friends of the brand, and the brand, in its turn, to be trusted, must reveal its authentic character and be honest about its value proposition. At the same time, we see that Chris Anderson's long tail hypothesis<sup>5</sup> is currently a reality, as the market is increasingly distancing itself from mass brands, preferring niche brands. The 'long tail' represents a curve that indicates a distribution of data in a decreasing form. At the beginning of the graphic, there is a data peak representing the products and services with more dissemination and advertising investment; following it, a 'long tail' appears that extends infinitely close to the zero level. The concept represents the paradigm shift in the commerce of products and services with the online medium, allowing niche products and small segments to gain sales and sustainably survive in the market without massive advertising investments.

### **The power of community**

In the digital age, economic and social powers have come to be concentrated in communities and social groups, as «we are in a reality in which horizontal, inclusive, and social forces override vertical, exclusive and individual forces, and consumer communities have become increasingly powerful» (Kotler et al., 2017).

The Internet, through social networks, has made it easier for entrepreneurs to launch new products and services by providing the necessary platforms and tools for their dissemination. At the same time, it also provides feedback on their businesses. Considering that in a few years everyone will be connected in Portugal (figure 2) as in the rest of the world, brands are directing their advertising to social networks, where the audience's profile is mostly between 18-44 years old<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Kotler, P. e Setiawan, I. (2021), *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity*, John Wiley & Sons.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, C. (2008), *A Cauda Longa*, Editora Campos.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Local Country Headlines, DataReportal (<http://datareportal.com>), reference to Portugal (extrapolation with reference to data from social networks - January 2021).

Share of the audience that marketing and communication professionals can reach with social media advertising

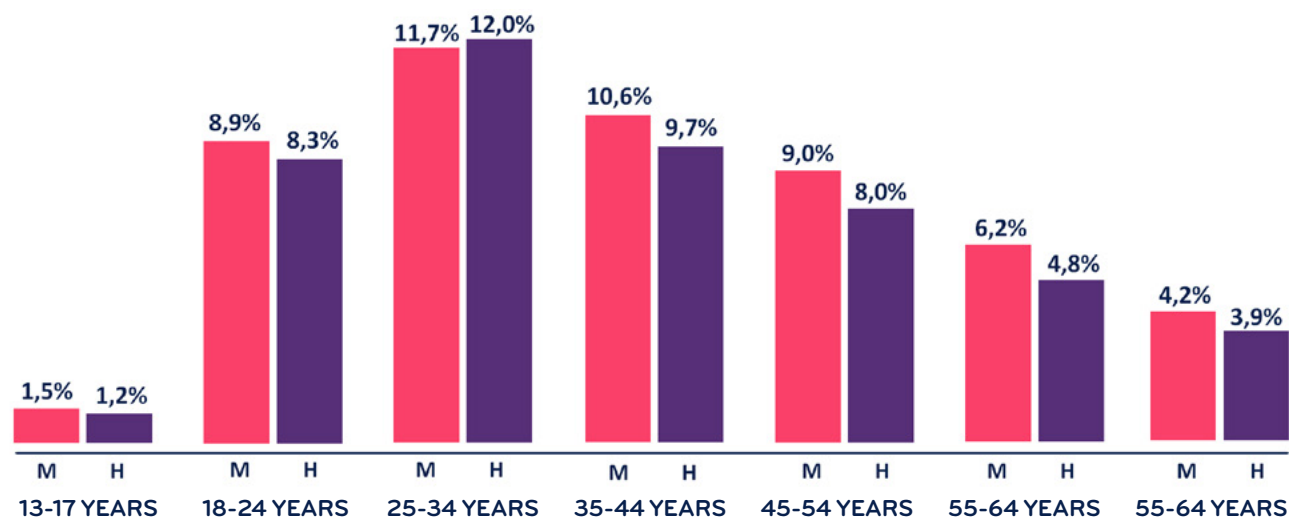


Figure 2. Audience profile on social networks in Portugal – January 2021  
Source: [DataReportal](#)

The feeling that we are all connected brings a great challenge as it is an opportunity for entrepreneurs and their businesses. In fact, there is a possibility of capturing the consumers' attention, yet bearing in mind that the consumer's attention is increasingly reduced by the growing distraction caused by the massive use of electronic devices and access to information.

**Keywords:** Communication, Digital, Business, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Social Media, Connectivity, Startups, Content, Influence, Internet, Strategy, Community, Audience, Sales Funnel, Customer Journey.



# 1. THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ON NEW BUSINESSES

The impact of technology has changed the type of relationships between companies and customers. The intensification of information and access to promotional content in digital channels proves that it is necessary to have a digital presence to promote new businesses and think of innovative ways to differentiate communication to gain a competitive advantage over other businesses. Therefore, it is important to identify the sources that contribute to a company's competitive advantage, such as investing in innovation and cost reduction.

Photo by [Elevate](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Technology has transformed the way businesses are built and how consumers relate to brands. Society has been affected by a technological revolution that has changed and will continue to change habits and attitudes.

## 1.1. The impact of digital media

The American magazine Time has mirrored the evolution and impact of digital on society with its "personality of the year" covers (figure 1.1.). First, it created a cover page in which the person of the year was all those who had the power to comment and share something to the world through the Internet: You. Years later, it addressed the power of connected people through the #metoo movement, which allowed an issue to no longer be isolated when others identify and connect with the issue amplifying the topic. Recently, Greta Thunberg, an environmental activist, was similarly prominent under the impact she matched with her thousands of followers who replicated Greta's local activist initiatives around the world.



Photo by Evgenia Arbugaeva for TIME.



Ilustração de Arthur Hochstein, Photo by Spencer Jones for TIME.



Photo by Billy & Hells for TIME.

Figure 1.1. Time magazine covers – The impact of technology mirrored in 'personality of the year' titles.

**New behaviours and a new power of people through connectivity** open up opportunities to create new business and communication ideas, so technology should not just be seen as a tool or system. The changes created by technology have allowed small businesses to compete in a global world. Young entrepreneurs should be aware that their new businesses are driven by technology, which will cause transformations in

business model, distribution and communication with consumers. But **the presence in digital is not enough, you need to keep up with the evolution of technology to identify opportunities to differentiate a business or the customer experience.**



## 1.2. Main benefits of digital communication

**The benefits of investing in digital communication are enormous.** Firstly, digital communication lets entrepreneurs reach more people because, with no geographical limits, digital content can be accessed from anywhere; secondly, it allows **targeting an audience segmented in terms of geography, interests, and, above all, a moment of demand**; thirdly, it is a way for a new small business to invest a small budget in a defined target in Portugal or abroad; and finally, it allows **measuring** and verifying results, which allows assessing if the type of actions taken by the company is the right one (figure 1.2.).

### BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



**01**  
GREATER REACH

**02**  
QUALIFIED  
AUDIENCE

**03**  
COST  
REDUCTION

**04**  
MEASUREMENT

Figure 1.2. Benefits of investing in digital communication.

Research by Weill & Woerner (2018)<sup>7</sup> has identified some sources that contribute to the competitive advantage of an organisation or a new business, namely:

- **Content:** products and information;
- **Customer experience:** the quality of interaction between customers and content, influenced by the ease of use of that content.

Maintaining a practice of updating and enriching content can create a superior customer experience and also helps drive sales and increase revenue per customer.

<sup>7</sup> Weill, P., Woerner, S. (2018), *What's Your Digital Business Model? Six Questions to Help You Build the Next-Generation Enterprise*, Harvard Business Review Press.


## 1.3. Digital communication in physical and digital businesses

Digital communication is crucial for both new physical businesses (opening a shop, a service, or a production unit) and digital businesses (where the sale is made through the Internet, with physical delivery or even through the Internet if the characteristics of the product or service allow it).

The pandemic and the consequent confinements brought out the need and the opportunity for many entrepreneurs to launch digital businesses. It was the case of personal trainers who worked in gyms and had to create their own business, giving individual or group classes on digital platforms.

The success of the new business depends not only on how much the organisation spends on marketing and communication but also on how clearly its marketing and communication strategy is defined and how effectively the organisation executes it.

Successful companies have innovated by putting the focus on learning more about their customers and at the same time on opening the company's borders and relying on business partners, reducing costs more and more each year through simplification and automation. That was the case with

 [Talkdesk](#)'s solutions, a young Portuguese company that, in a dozen years, went from a small start-up to the third Portuguese unicorn (companies with a valuation of over a billion dollars) (figure 1.3).



### [TALKDESK](#)

It is an innovative business model that allows you to create a call centre in less than five minutes, only with a computer and Internet access. If a company can create a call centre in less than five minutes, the simplification should be felt in all contacts with the brand.

Figure 1.3. Image by [Talkdesk](#)



In this new reality – where purchasing decisions are made by digital means –, digital marketing has become an essential strategy to communicate with customers and new customers.





## 2. AUDIENCE (THE NEW COMMUNICATOR) AND THEIR BUYING JOURNEY

To understand the attitudes and the habits of the new consumer and their impact on communication and the relationship with brands. The consumer as a content producer and the relationship with buzz marketing, which encourages sharing and interaction on the various social platforms. To understand the customer's perspective to design the path of purchase and cross-reference it with the value propositions, essential to have knowledge of how people make the decision to buy, through the Five A Model.

Photo by [Karine Germain](#) on [Unsplash](#)



With a new consumer – more social, creator of content and opinions about brands –, the goal is to surprise and create experiences and emotions in a differentiated way that enhances loyalty and product value. This evolution requires quality, improvement, adaptation, and innovation in marketing techniques and means of communication, as today's contents are the axis of the message, which should be increasingly digital, interactive, and relational (figure 2.1).

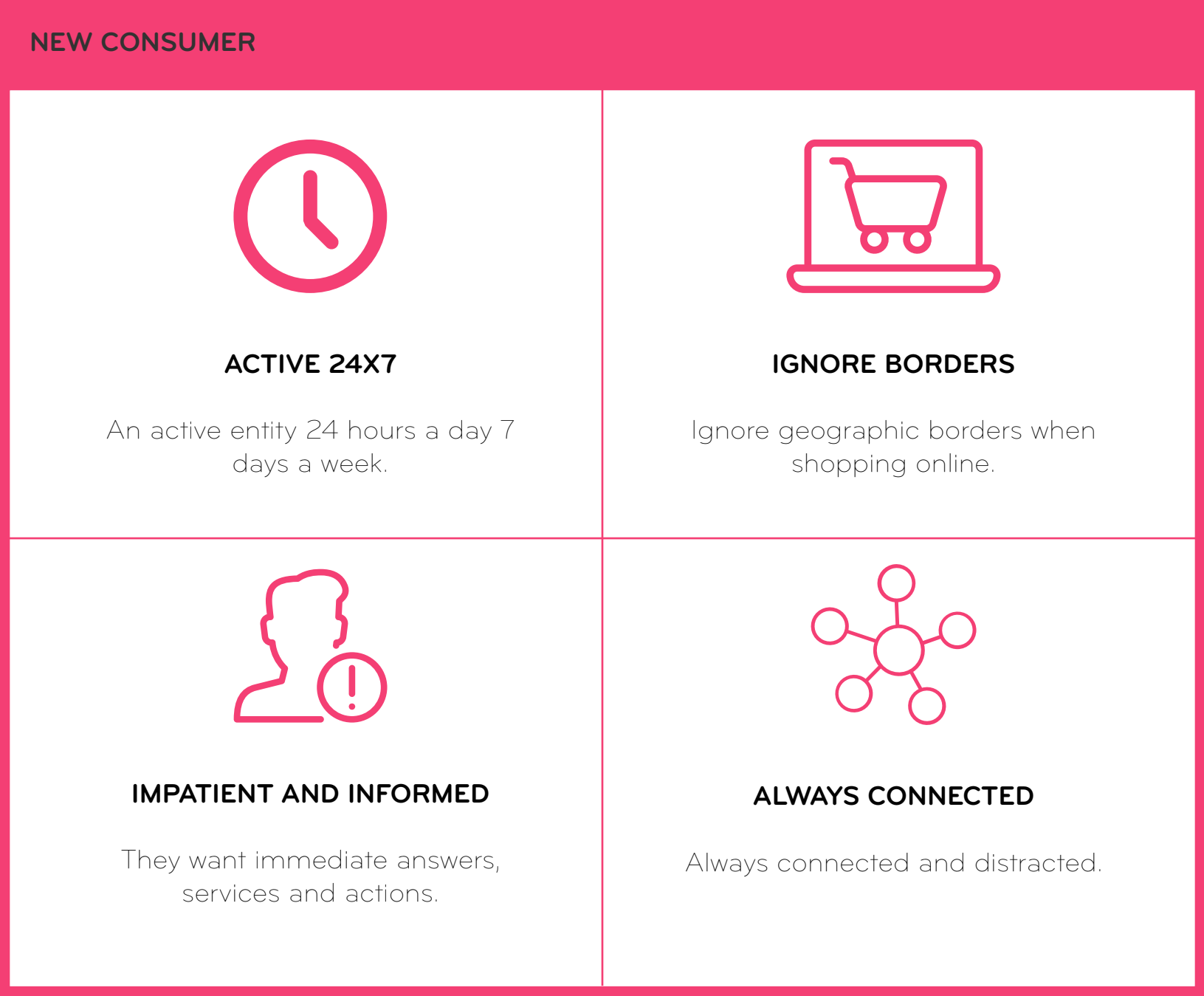


Figure 2.1. Attitude of the new consumer.

## 2.1. Content creator consumer

Nowadays, consumers cannot live without the Internet, Google searches, and online shopping. Younger generations spend most of their time on social networks, such as YouTube and TikTok and master image processing tools and thus becoming active content and information creators.

Unofficial information such as reviews, opinions, and consumer testimonials are relevant to other consumers. **Reviews can affect the purchase intention** of those consumers who pursue information to reduce the risk of a bad shopping experience making a safer choice of the products they wish to buy.

**Content created by consumers reveals an experience in all phases of their contact with a product** (pre-purchase, during the purchase and post-purchase). Considered to be honest content about a product's strengths and weaknesses, it conveys more credibility and trust than official business communication, which, naturally, only refers to the product's positive points.

The digital context we are living in gave birth to a new consumer creator of branded content who trusts real stories more than the official insights provided by the brands, as referred to by Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook (figure 2.2).



Photo by [Facebook](#)

**"People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a friend's recommendation."**

Mark Zuckerberg  
Founder, chairman, and CEO of Facebook.

Figure 2.2. Mark Zuckerberg, founder, chairman, and CEO of Facebook.

## 2.2. *Buzz Marketing*: Word of mouth communication

According to Chetochine (2006), author of *Buzz Marketing*, «**the consumer is fed up with advertising**», and the new consumer is anti-marketing. The consumer has become immune to the old tricks of advertising, traditional communication based on merchandising, packaging, and commercial communication.

The dissemination of a product, brand or service increasingly depends on the ability to stand out by using the word of mouth technique, which uses the Internet and exploits social networks to amplify brand communication.

With time and perfecting the technique, customers can become loyal consumers and promoters of the brands ensuring:

### 1. A quality product

The product must fulfil its purpose. Sharing will only be encouraged if the product surpasses the competition.

### 2. A good service

The recommendation comes not because the product is only of good quality, but because it exceeds expectations. This is the first stimulus for sharing. Even if the product is not as good as the competition's, if it offers exceptional service, the customer is likely to return and recommend it.

### 3. Good reputation

A brand faithful to ideals, values, and principles – these are important factors for success. It is not enough to have a good service or product, the whole story around a brand influences sharing on social media.

### 4. Getting celebrities to talk about the brand

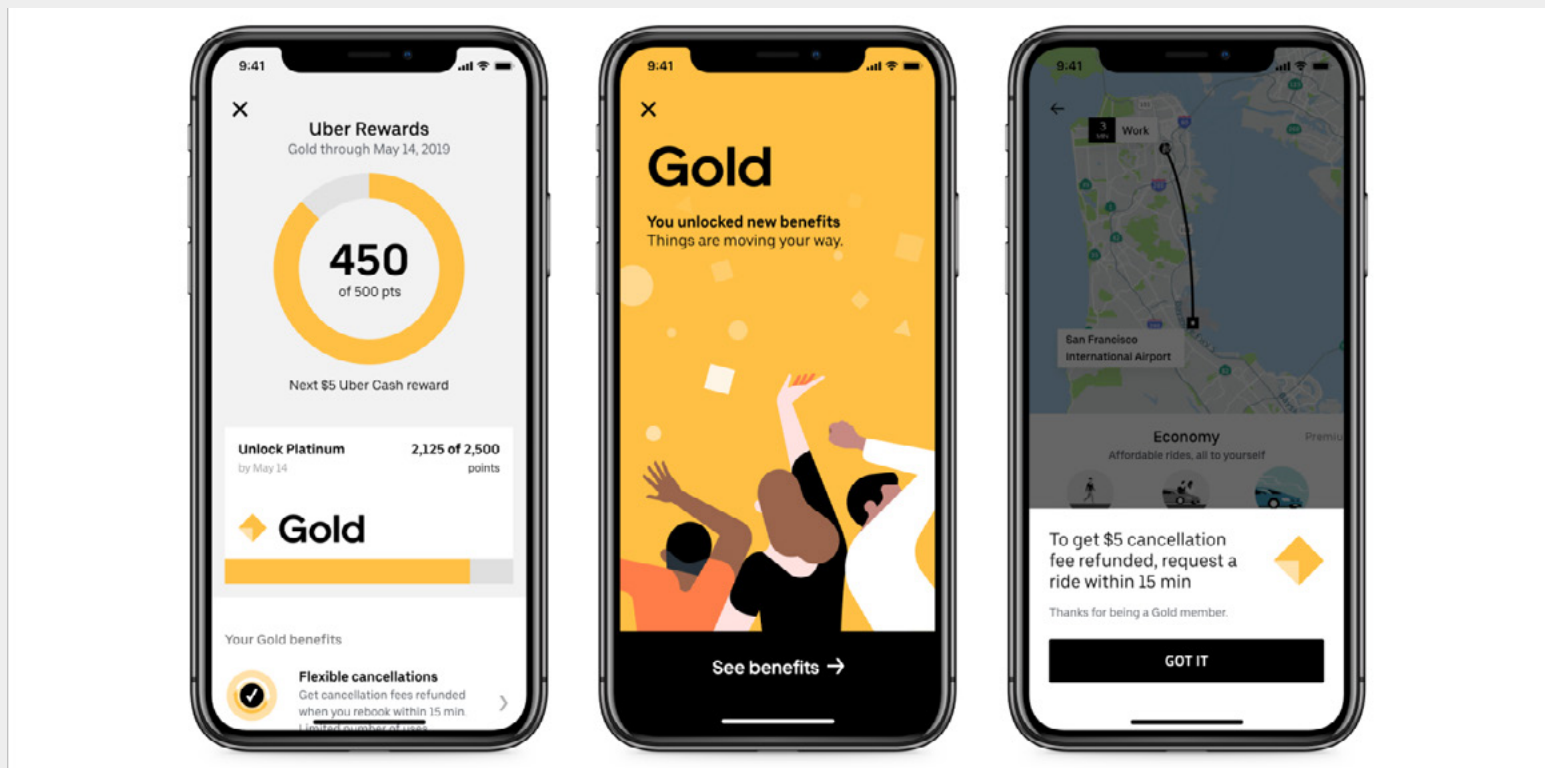
All it takes is one person with influence talking about the brand to get many of their followers and friends (community) to see it.

**Buzz marketing**<sup>9</sup> is a technique that encourages sharing and interaction on social media. The goal is that the dissemination of the message about a brand is done organically, by the consumers themselves. For example, who has never shared the Uber service to win discounts on rides? (Figure 2.3.)





## UBER



Uber's growth strategy was ensured by its customers.

Word of mouth communication was reinforced with two digital initiatives: a code for the customer to give to a friend on their first trip and a voucher discount for the customer who referred them.

Figure 2.3. Uber's 2018 benchmark marketing strategy.

Photo by [TechCrunch](#)

Buzz marketing, or viral marketing, **is selling without selling**. The main objective is to pass on a message and not the commercial communication of a product or service. It is clear that the ultimate goal is to sell something, nevertheless, nowadays, new consumers are most influenced by communication from real people, who, by sharing their experience with the product, transmit greater relevance and empathy. **It is the viral stories that allow selling without selling.**

In 2005, Godin<sup>10</sup>, in *The Lies of Marketing*, reinforced that new consumers were «tired of advertising invading their lives» and they are attracted by true stories. Brands like [Starbucks](#), [Nike](#) and [Coca-Cola](#) use the power of storytelling: people don't buy the product, they buy the stories and the magic that surround the brands.



<sup>9</sup> Also known as referral marketing, word of mouth, member-get-member, recommendation, or viral marketing.

<sup>10</sup> Godin, S. (2005), *All Marketers Are Liars*, Penguin, USA

In the world of Portuguese companies, we have the example of Josefinas, a brand named after the grandmother of one of the founders and which produces women's footwear. The product, which focuses on flat shoes, has a story behind it that has led the brand to be in the limelight through international celebrities who have become fans of the brand.

✍ The [Josefinas](#) brand reveals the search for female identification, where shoes are facilitators for women to achieve personal and collective goals, raise their self-esteem and guarantee rights to equality and social well-being. From the beginning, the brand has supported [Women for Women International](#), a body that helps marginalised women. The whole narrative and purpose are present on the website (under "[History and values](#)"), and on Instagram content, on [@josefinasportugal](#) (figure 2.4).



## JOSEFINAS PORTUGAL

The history of Josefinas is present in all collections and all moments of communication of the brand. Images, collections, books, or celebrities, everything relates to women who seek to raise their self-esteem and the praise of women's empowerment.

[#ProudToBeAWoman](#)

[#JosefinasPortugal](#)

[#WomenPower](#)

Figure 2.4. Communication of the Portuguese brand Josefinas on Instagram [@josefinasportugal](#)

## 2.3. The consumer journey

The real power of the story – the experience with the brand – is in the details, which provide framings and scenarios that make us feel, smile, emote, act, relate, comment, or share. In this context, digital communication must be attentive to the consumer journey: **BEFORE and AFTER the purchase, as well as DURING the moment of consumption.**

The basic principle of communication is to understand the customer. Understanding the customer's perspective is crucial to designing the purchasing path and matching it with the value proposition.

Therefore, it is necessary to recon how people buy, that is, what stages a potential customer goes through from the first contact to the purchase. To this end, one of the most used models to describe the consumer buying path is the Five As model, originally conceived by Derek Rucker and adapted by Kotler (2017) (figure 2.5.).

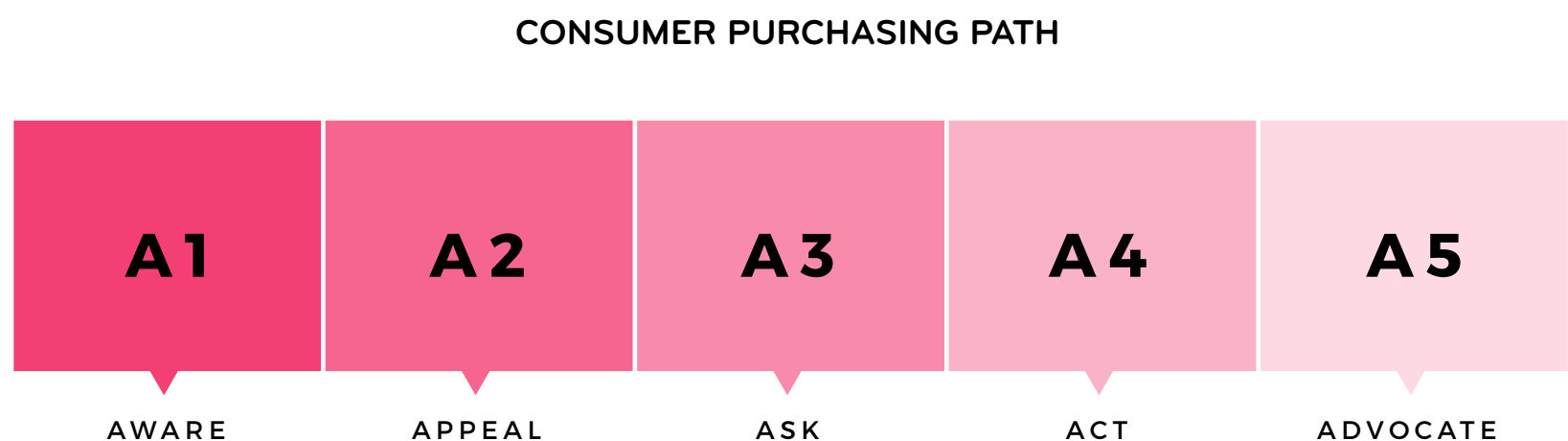


Figure 2.5. Five As model.

### First step (A1) Aware

It is the **discovery** stage and the first contact with the potential customer. The entrepreneur has managed, through his communication efforts in digital and physical media, to capture the potential customer's attention for their products or services.

### Second step (A2) Appeal

In this stage, it is important to provoke the consumer's **curiosity**, producing relevant content, especially on social networks, for the company to be found. Therefore, creating content that adds value to the target audience can be one of the best ways to attract people who, in some way, have already shown interest. Techniques such as remarketing, done through cookies, allow advertising to be shown only to those who have already shown interest in the product or service.



<b>Third step</b> <b>(A3) Ask</b>	This is when the potential customer wants to know the <b>opinion</b> of other consumers who have already experienced the product or service and have an opinion about it. This is where the brand advocates confirm that the product or service is safe and trustworthy, especially through digital media.
<b>Forth step</b> <b>(A4) Act</b>	This is the conversion phase because the potential customer becomes a consumer by deciding to make a purchase. Entrepreneurs must focus their work on customer satisfaction in order to achieve this stage.
<b>Fifth step</b> <b>(A5) Advocate</b>	It is the phase of turning customers into brand advocates through the comments, testimonials, or reviews that they post on social media or digital platforms, and thus enabling the brand to reach new customers.

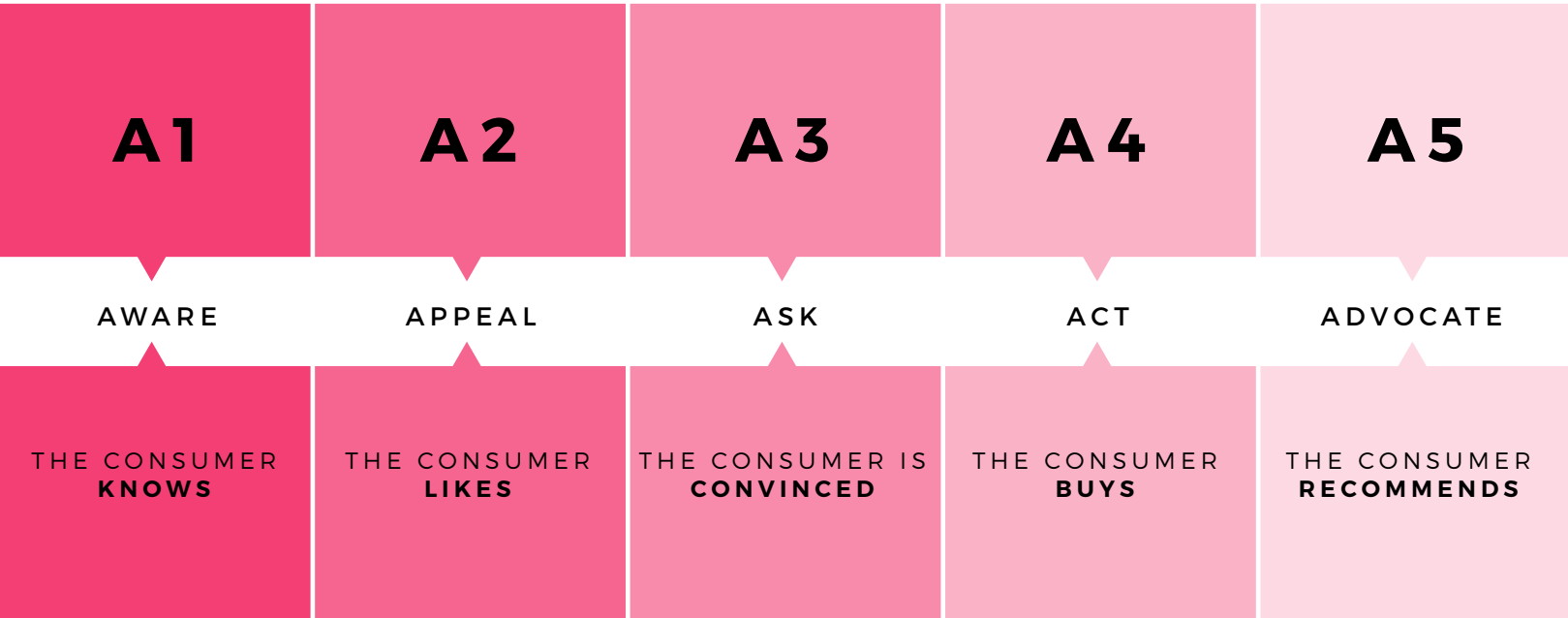


Figure 2.6. The Five As model and the consumers' behaviour.

The Five As model and consumer behaviour (figure 2.6.) is a flexible tool that can be adapted to all sectors. Entrepreneurs can prepare their customers' journeys and ensure that their brand emerges at all times and delivers a good customer experience.



### 3. TECHNIQUES FOR AN EFFECTIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Techniques that can make a difference in a communication strategy: the use of mental triggers that will influence the consumer to buy and storytelling, the art of storytelling, a communication technique used by entrepreneurs with the aim of engaging their customers.

Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)



*«As an element of the marketing mix, communication brings together methodologies and techniques at the service of marketing objectives that, together with the product, price, distribution, people, and process management, operationalise the marketing strategy.»*

Baynast, Lendrevie, Dionisio e Rodrigues (2018)<sup>12</sup>

Communication should not only transmit messages it must generate and produce them to reach its target audience. On the other hand, communication must examine and interpret the messages it receives and respond appropriately to the market, organising the communication channels to facilitate its interpretation by the market. Thus, we start from the marketing strategy to the communication strategy with the following basic principles:

- Contribute to the fixed marketing objectives;
- Consider the marketing targets as your targets;
- Respect and reinforce the defined positioning.

From an operational perspective, there are two techniques that can make a difference in a digital communication strategy: **mental triggers** and **storytelling**.

<sup>12</sup> Baynast, A., Lendrevie, J., Lévy, J., Dionísio, P., Rodrigues, V. (2018), *O Marketing na Era Digital*, D. Quixot



### 3.1. Mental triggers: how to influence the consumer

An effective and well-made communication should contain in its message **mental triggers** that will influence the consumer to buy. These triggers will work as stimuli to our brain, directly manipulating – and often unconsciously – our decisions. Knowing how to stimulate these triggers is a powerful weapon of persuasion, and it generates businesses results.

In this sense, when entrepreneurs communicate with consumers, they must incorporate specific triggers in the message they want to convey, such as those identified by Ferreira (2019)<sup>13</sup>: **specificity**, **authority**, **demonstrated social proof**, **scarcity**, and **simplicity**, among others (figure 3.1.). For a greater result, these triggers should be strategically worked together.

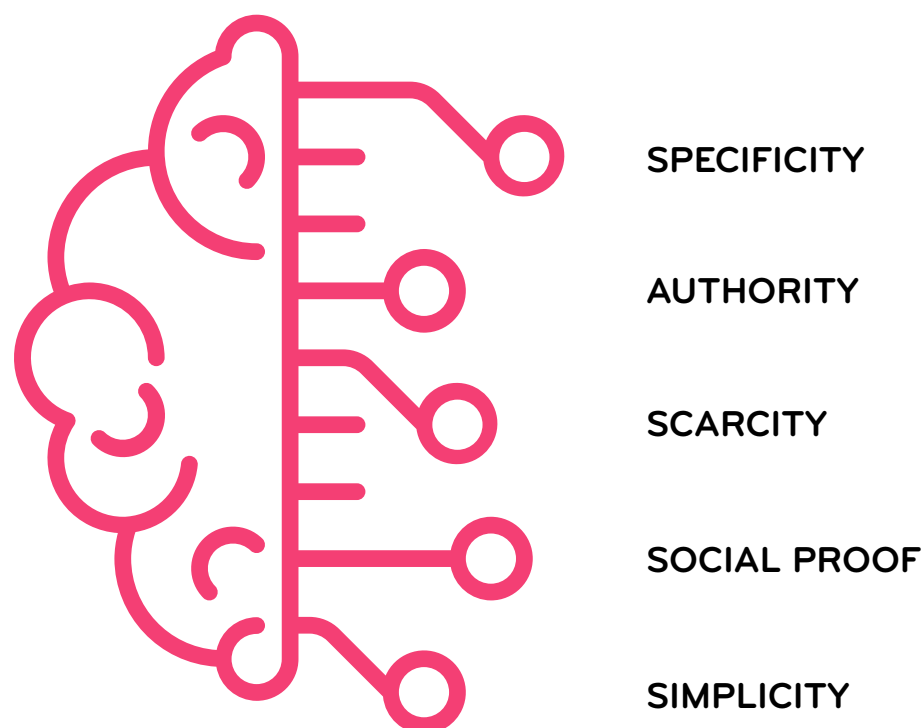


Figure 3.1. Main mental triggers that influence the consumer to buy.

<sup>13</sup> Ferreira, G. (2019), *Gatilhos Mentais*, DVS Editora



## SCARCITY

Amongst all triggers, scarcity is the most used one. Many consumers only buy something when they feel that the good or service will be available only for a certain period and/or at a certain price. It can be used by communicating limited vacancies or a special promotional price, for example, the Early Bird campaign by Slide & Splash (figure 3.2.).



### Slide & Splash

Figure 3.2. Early Bird campaign by Slide & Splash on Twitter (March 2020).



## SPECIFICITY

Specificity aims to activate the consumer's confidence. The entrepreneur must be able to describe his service or product in such a way that people will understand what the service or product is exactly, dispelling any confusion or doubt that the consumer may have that may lead him to give up making the purchase (figure 3.3.).

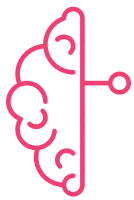


### Restaurant BAIRRISTA

The Instagram profile of this restaurant in Lisbon, which specialises in roast chicken, gives clear information about the service. The highlights are organised by specific and more detailed information on each topic related to the service: price, menu, delivery, payment, accompaniments, sauces, promotions and reviews.

Figure 3.3. Instagram of Bairrista restaurant, [@bairrista.pt](https://www.instagram.com/bairrista.pt) (March 2021).





## AUTHORITY

The most widely used way to trigger authority in the minds of consumers is to create content that is useful to them. Entrepreneurs should be able to create relevant and attractive content about their business through publications on social networks, video conferences or training. For example, the Portuguese business As Colmeias da Joana campaign (figure 3.4.).



### As Colmeias da Joana

A business based on the experience of visiting hives, contact with its environment and learning about related subjects. This kind of business, although not focused on training, has all the authority to ensure a course on the subject – Initiation to Organic Apiculture.

Figure 3.4. [As Colmeias da Joana \(@ascolmeiasdajoana\)](#) (May 2021)



## SOCIAL PROOF

Consumers increasingly base their choices on seeking references, testimonials or experiences from other consumers. Social proof can be a key trigger for them to decide whether to purchase or not a product or a service (figure 3.5.).



### Urban Foods

— Irina P.

"We ordered the Sampler pack to try them all and the hard part will be choosing which ones to order next time. They are all top!"

On the Instagram feed of Urban Foods, a Portuguese healthy snack company, it is common to find reviews that customers have sent through the website and the brand's Instagram profile.

These customers' reviews on social and opinion channels are selected and published by the company on its social channels to influence other consumers.

Figure 3.5. [Urban Foods Snacks](#)





## SIMPLICITY

When using simplicity as a trigger, a company wishes to convey transparency. When entrepreneurs communicate with simplicity, it is virtually certain that the consumer will assimilate and remember the message. Ferreira (2019) even states that companies with the highest sales have communication strategies that can be understood by a 12-year-old child (figure 3.6.).



### [360 Imprimir](#)

Created in 2013 by six young people, by 2020, it already had 140 employees and was active in 21 countries.

A campaign of a 62% discount on 2,000 units of stickers graphically reinforces the idea that the more you buy, the more you save.

A clear message that is reinforced with an image and does not try to pass on more information that might compete with the main message: **buy more, save more.**

Figure 3.6. Online campaign [@360imprimir\\_mx](#)





### 3.2. O Storytelling: The art of telling stories

With the spread of social media, companies are obliged to create compelling content to feed the various channels and platforms that consumers use to find and interact with the products and/or services they are looking for (Anderson, 2019)<sup>14</sup>. To this end, **the art of telling stories**, also known as **storytelling**, has become a communication and manipulation technique used to successfully engage customers and cultivate more followers.

In the business world, those who can find a way to be engaging, rather than just communicating, for example, a promotion, are at a competitive advantage. **A powerful narrative** is the best way to create a long-term relationship between a brand and consumers because humans identify with powerful stories.

Anderson (2019) provides us with tips for those who want to communicate well through the storytelling technique:

BEING HONEST

Building real narratives so as not to confuse and disappoint consumers is the right way to bring potential customers closer. That is the case of Musa beer, a traditional Portuguese beer brand that started production in 2016 as a result of the enthusiasm of two friends who left their careers in a consulting firm to fulfil their project (figure 3.7.). It is important to remember that people detect lies, and any made-up story will make a negative impression on a brand. Authenticity is the most valuable asset in the art of storytelling (Vaynerchuk, 2018)<sup>15</sup>.




Figure 3.7. @cervejamusa Share inspirations recorded on a wall by the production team (October 2020)

<sup>15</sup> Vaynerchuk, G. (2018), *Crushing It: How Great Entrepreneurs Build Their Business and Influence-and How You Can, Too*, Harpers Collins

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BEING PERSONAL

In digital marketing and communication, storytelling is not a conventional sales pitch. You first need to identify and create the character your brand represents and put it at the centre of the action (figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8. @cervejamusa Personalisation of the Muse brand, which, on the anniversary day, communicates that it 'pays' something to the community.



BEING NICE


Knowing your target consumer's tastes and preferences will allow you to include in your story references to his obstacles or personal struggles. These are points that will lead to greater identification with the brand (figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9. @cervejamusa Mitigation strategies in time of pandemic (May 2020).





BEING LINEAR



MUSA

cervejamusa • Seguir

...

MUSA

cervejamusa Novo mês, novo pacote Ale My Friends 🍻🍻  
Em Julho convidamos os amigos da @cervejabarona, @cerveja\_dos\_diabos\_, @oitavacolina e @ophiussabrewing a brindarem-nos com as cervejas mais frescas que tinham no fermentador.  
  
A nova remessa já está a seguir para casa dos caros subscritores e pode seguir para a tua já de seguida se fores ao link da bio.  
  
Boa para beber com amigos, ou com o Fábio.  
Saúde! 🍻

18 sem

♡💬📌

1 998 visualizações

1/7

😊

Adiciona um comentário...

Publicar

When telling a story, you should have a plot with a beginning, a central point, and an end. The beginning should be strong, your client’s problem should be in the middle, and, finally, you should show a solution that only your product or service may offer (figure 3.10.).

Figure 3.10. [@cervejamusa](#) Friends club.

As we tell stories, people will remember them. That is why stories should be about how the business started, what it stands for, and how it has impacted people's lives. Consumers identify with stories, and stories based on the theme or purpose of the business will resonate and help gain a loyal customer base. For example, Nespresso built its image from storytelling with George Clooney. The company was so committed that put up for vote three versions of the end of a commercial's story on a website so consumers would decide how the story would end.

In short, we must determine **who we want to influence, find out exactly what people are looking for, present a solution to their problems and make sure we provoke emotions** through the mental triggers previously mentioned as well as through storytelling. This narrative should be adapted according to the interests of the target audience and the characteristics of the media used (text, photos, sound, and video).



## 4. PLANNING, EXECUTION, AND EVALUATION OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

Plan, execute, and evaluate: aspects that have to be considered to create an effective communication strategy and the respective tools to advertise, measure, and evaluate on the Internet, as well as the tools to optimise the digital performance of businesses. When the entrepreneur decides to implement his communication and marketing strategies for his product or service, he should use a useful and efficient tool that helps him attract, convert, relate, and sell, which is the sales funnel.

Photo by [Firmbee.com](https://www.firmbee.com/) on [Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com/)



In this chapter, we intend to show the aspects to take into account to create an effective communication strategy, especially for young entrepreneurs who want to launch new businesses. **PLANNING**, **EXECUTION**, and **EVALUATION** are the three main phases of a good communication action plan.

Aspects such as defining priority targets, analysing both internal and external surroundings of the organisation, defining targets and key performance indicators, establishing timelines and budgets are discussed at the strategic marketing planning stage. After this planning phase, the data is gathered, allowing to move on, more assertively, to the implementation phase and, finally, to measuring the results.

## 4.1. Planning digital communication in business

The planning phase involves the business strategy because it clarifies the mission, objectives, and value proposition. Thus, the communication strategy plan naturally includes content and media strategy, and the spreading of the message.

According to Quesenberry (2016)<sup>16</sup>, all organisations can use digital platforms. To take advantage of the powerful benefits of these platforms, companies – either small or large – should learn how to use social media skillfully and with agility since campaigns on digital platforms can be ideal to win new customers, increase brand loyalty, and boost sales.

According to Osterwalder & Bland (2020)<sup>17</sup>, to be prepared, organisations must define objectives, target audiences, channels, contents, and timelines (figure 4.1.).

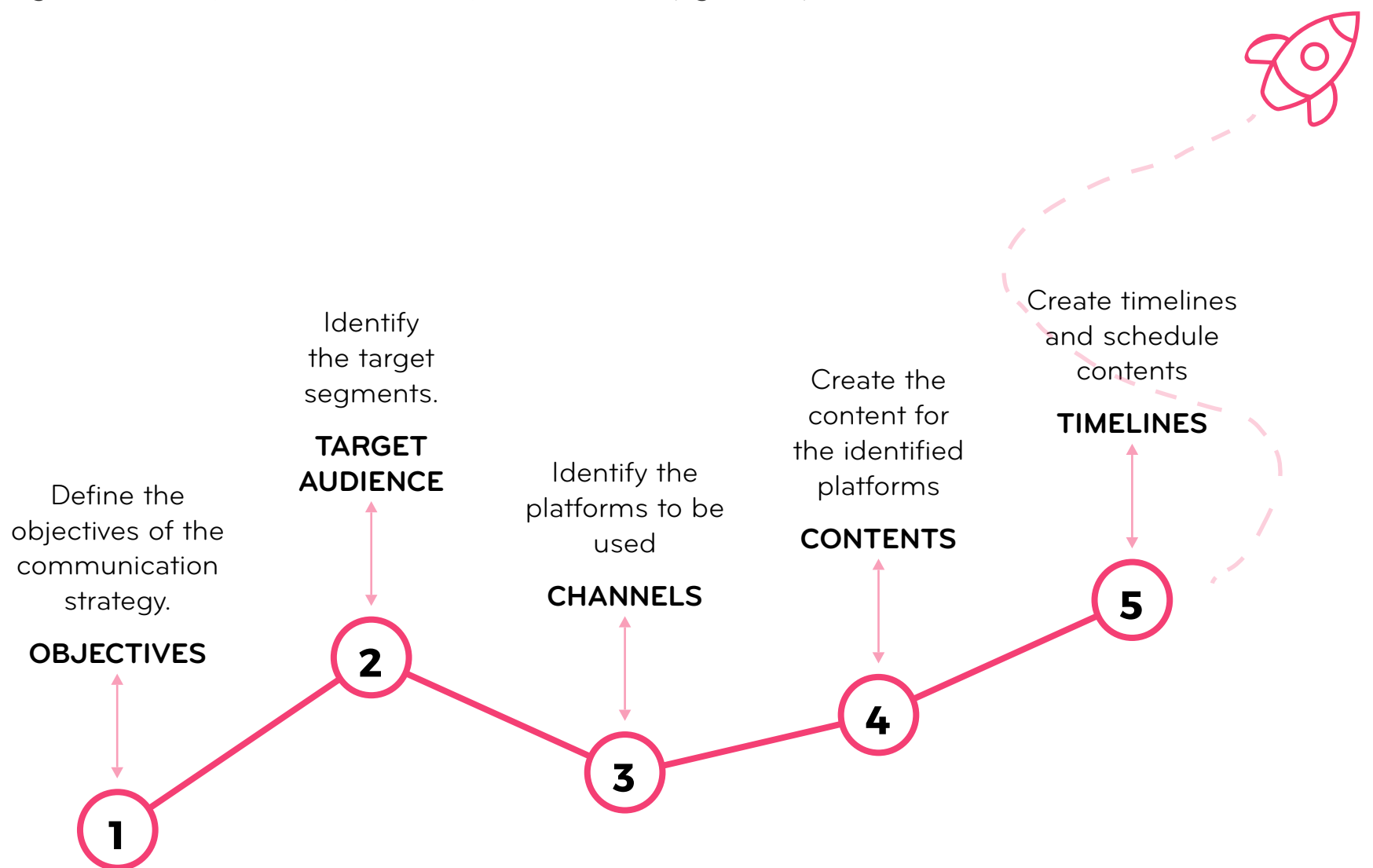


Figure 4.1. Steps to plan an efficient digital communication strategy.

<sup>16</sup> Quesenberry, K. (2016), *Social Media Strategy: Marketing, Advertising, and Public Relations in the Consumer Revolution*, Rowman & Littlefield.

<sup>17</sup> Osterwalder, A., Bland, D. (2020), *Testing Business Ideas*, John Wiley & Sons

# 4.1.1. Objectives



Before defining initiatives and communication pathways, the objectives must be clear. Thus, the planning phase should contemplate the answer to three questions, as indicated in figure 4.2. below.

WHERE ARE WE?	WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the value proposition?</li><li>• What is and isn't working at the current content and channel level of the business?</li><li>• What is the current perception of the brand?</li><li>• What is the current moment that can impact communication?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who are the competitors?</li><li>• What are they doing right and what are they doing wrong?</li><li>• Who is following them?</li><li>• What motivations and contents do they explore? *</li></ul> <p><i>*Tools to be used: social listening</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the brand's path?</li><li>• What is the business objective?</li><li>• Who is the target audience?</li><li>• Who influences communities in the brand context?</li><li>• What trends impact the business?</li></ul>

Figure 4.2. Planning stage issues.



## 4.1.2. Target audience



The success of the plan will be directly related to the selection of the target audience (segments) and direct and specific communication to it. When promoting content, the use of social platforms, websites or other digital forms requires segmentation based on the choice of segmentation criteria that may respond to different characteristics:

- **Sociodemographic:** age, sex, education, marital status, race, religion;
- **Psychographics:** values, beliefs, interests, personality, lifestyle;
- **Behavioural:** buying or spending habits, interactions with the brand;
- **Geographical areas:** neighbourhood, city, region, country.

In the case of digital communication, given the proactive attitude of the consumer – for instance, in a Google search –, we are facing a situation of auto segmentation, since it is the consumer himself who decides which keywords to use and on which content to click.

Social platforms are also relevant for young entrepreneurs to understand the needs and interests of consumers, how they relate to products and services and monitor the competition. In this sense, no digital communication strategy is complete without the practice of **social listening**, that is, “listening” to conversations, interactions, and shares that allow us to identify what people are interested in, what they talk about, and what they like and dislike.

All this is crucial to plan concrete actions to improve the relationship with the target audience.



Most commonly used tools for social listening practice

HubSpot

FALCON.IO

### 4.1.3. Digital channels



Digital communication channels are tools used by businesses and brands to communicate and establish a relationship with their target audience. Thus, it is important to make a distinction between two categories of channels: **owned** and **paid** (figure 4.3.).

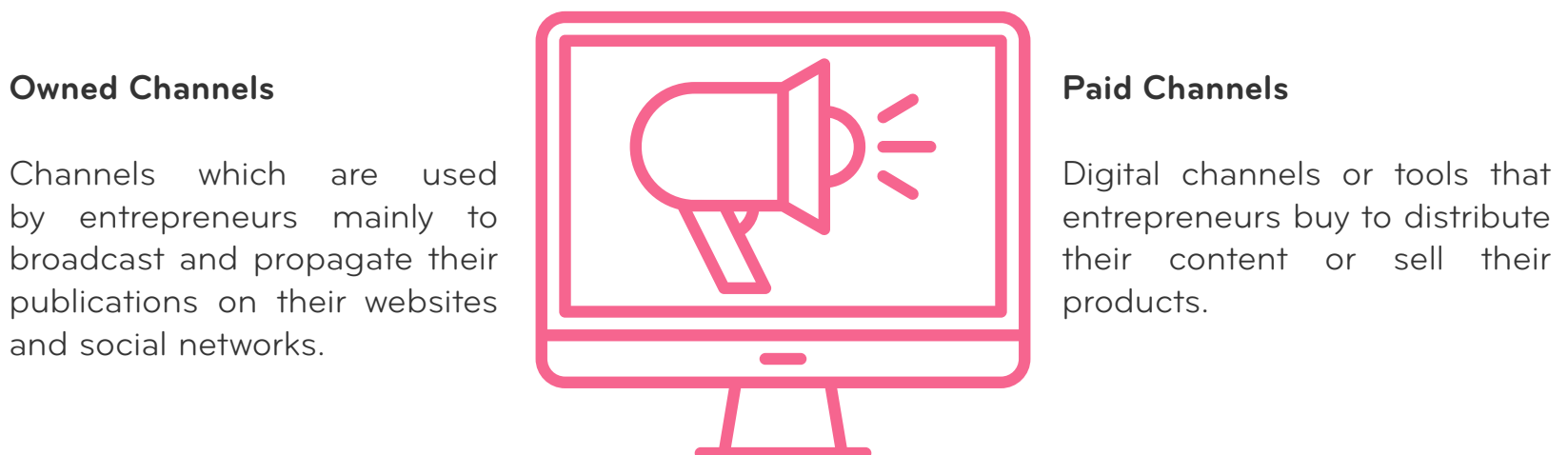


Figure 4.3. Digital channel categories.

**Owned channels** are used by entrepreneurs to broadcast and propagate content on their websites and social networks. These contents are targeted at the **existing customers or people who are already in the database or that already follow the company on social networks**. However, it should be noted that, if the content is excellent and of great use to other consumers, it can be shared and targeted to those who may also be interested, thus creating a community without monetary investment. However, although free, the use, management, production, and publication of content on owned channels requires time, dedication, and organisation, which new entrepreneurs often do not have.

**Paid channels** are digital channels or tools that entrepreneurs buy to distribute their content or sell their products. The paid communication or dissemination channels most used by companies are sponsored posts on social networks (Facebook Ads), banners or links on websites or search engines (Google Ads). It is necessary to determine how much the company can invest to reach its target segment.

In the case of Google Ads, the use of **key words** is essential for the success of a digital communication campaign. These are words used in content creation to match the phrases and terms used by people searching for a product or service. Using a relevant keyword in a paid communication campaign will help reach the target segment of the business. For an ad to come up at the exact moment it is searched for on Google, the **key words** need to match the words people are searching for. The moment a person searches for a phrase that matches the keyword, the ad participates in a sort of a real-time auction, to determine how much it will pay and in which order it will appear in the search.





Figure 4.4. Examples of key word matching types available from Google support.

The cost of the key word changes according to Google's criteria, such as the [relevance and quality of the ad](#) for people and the number of competitors in the auction (increase the demand, increase the value). It is an auction, but if you try to meet the quality indicator, it is possible to appear at the top and have the lowest cost among the other advertisers.

The value of the word will be given by the score that considers the expected click-through rate (CTR), the relevance of the ad and the experience of the landing page. **Ads with more quality and relevance to people's searches usually enjoy lower costs and better positions.** To better understand keyword match types, which allows you to select exact words or broad, related matches, go to the Google [support](#) page.

Google charges per click on the promoted ad. It also takes into account the impressions and frequency that the ad is displayed. If the number of clicks is divided by impressions, it is possible to know the click-through rate.

In the next phase (execution of the plan), the young entrepreneur should consider both channels (owned and paid), which should act in complete balance and complementarity, always considering a timeline to record the main actions of the plan and ensure that both channels and content are aligned.



## 4.1.4. Content



**Content marketing** involves creating and distributing content that is relevant to a defined audience to generate conversations and shares about that content. This is also an ideal type of communication for entrepreneurs who want to make their services or new businesses known for they usually do not have the necessary budget to invest in digital influencers. Note that this is also where you can use the storytelling technique about your brand.

For instance, a young entrepreneur that creates a completely offline business, related to physical activities of adventure sports, can use the content shared by those who already have participated in his activities to attract new customers.

This type of marketing has tested and proven results, as long as it has a defined plan and strategy. It is necessary to think about what to write, which format to use, when to publish, in which channel to promote, which audience to reach and what result you want to obtain. Content can take on various formats and can be shared on various digital platforms: blogs, social networks (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest), e-mail marketing, landing pages, among others.



Regarding **social networks**, for many consumers, it is the first channel to absorb content and news, in addition to being very accessible channels that can generate very positive results for their high power of propagation. Social networks are also an excellent vehicle for generating traffic that can direct many visitors to the company's website or landing page.

Another format widely used for content production – especially after the CoViD-19 pandemic started – are **webinars** (or **video conferences**). Webinars are an excellent opportunity to contact the desired target audience without a high cost. Don't forget to use a quality camera and microphones, and careful lighting, for a professional image of the company.

**E-books** also are another popular format these days. E-books are a form of **content marketing** because they offer educational and learning material that adds value to your readers. They convey an image of authority on the subject, passing reliability to the target audience. To access an e-book or other useful content, interested parties must fill out a form available on a **landing page** which are conversion-oriented pages where the entrepreneur can provide content. In return, the entrepreneur asks for contact information, usually name, e-mail, and some other data relevant to the activity, thus creating an excellent database of interested parties.

## 4.1.5. Scheduling



By programming the strategy of the content to be published and disseminated, it becomes clear when and what will be published, thus facilitating the organization of the type of content that will be necessary to produce and to forecast publications. Nevertheless, the decision to publish on a particular day and time and particular social network is directly related to several expected metrics, such as website traffic, lead volume, and conversion rates.

Entrepreneurs should record the following information in their schedule:

- Days and times to publish content;
- Themes of each of the content.
- Target audience to whom the content is directed.
- Keywords to be used in the scheduled contents

Entrepreneurs should also compare the above information with the results obtained to improve planning in the future.

One of the most used tools for scheduling content on digital platforms is [Hootsuite](#), as it allows the creation and scheduling of posts on several platforms at the same time, the planning of upcoming campaigns and the analysis and evaluation of the results of the posts made.



## 4.2. Implementing digital communication in business

After having conveniently elaborated the planning phase, the entrepreneur must move on to execution, considering four points:

- Creativity adapted to the channel.
- Building audiences.
- Targeting campaigns.
- Testing.

### 4.2.1. Creativity adapted to the channel



Creativity begins by being conditioned by the characteristics of the channel, which can privilege or overshadow key features of the message, such as sound or image..

For instance, on a channel like YouTube, the sound is automatic, and consumers are expecting to hear a video with sound, but in a channel like Facebook or Instagram, most consumers do not turn on the sound. In a noisy place, like public transport, the video may become incomprehensible, and consumers may not understand its message, leading them to prefer other content.

### 4.2.2. Audience construction



A campaign may not be created to sell. Some strategies, in the first moment, just aim to attract attention, gaining notoriety and affinity so that, at a later moment, performance campaigns focused on sales may be developed using, for instance, remarketing. However, for this, **it is necessary to prepare the first campaign to gradually build up a customer base** that may have various formats, including:

- The most complete campaign, with forms with several fields (which should be only those strictly necessary, so as not to drive consumers away);
- A campaign that has only one pixel on the site for future remarketing, which does not require any effort from the consumer.

### 4.2.3. Campaign targeting



In the digital environment, any campaign, whether on paid or unpaid media, such as social media posts, must direct the consumer to an organization's website or a relevant address (e.g., a marketplace or a social media page) to close a sale or engage with them.

Entrepreneurs should think about the **type of page they want to direct the consumer to**. Whether, for example, for information consultation (homepage) or a more action-oriented page with fewer distractions and links ("vanishing points").

### 4.2.4. Testing



In digital communication, **the watchword is test, test, test**. Unlike the physical domain, in digital communication, it is possible to test, learn, and improve – as, for instance, the Portuguese company [360imprimir](#), presented in chapter 2, does.

It is possible to measure results, in a logic of A/B testing, situations as different as:

- Audience types, selecting different groups and measuring the results;
- Value propositions and products that are shown to potential consumers;
- Days of the week and times when the campaign is on air;
- Graphic aspects, from colours and fonts to buttons;
- Copy text used in the messages.

However, **to take advantage of testing, you need to properly choose the options** where it makes sense to test and then **draw conclusions to incorporate that knowledge into subsequent campaigns. To draw conclusions, you should only test one variable at a time.**



## 4.3. Analysis and evaluation of digital communication in business

One of the most advantages of digital marketing is that everything can be measurable. Whatever strategy is set, there is a wealth of data that can be collected, analysed and optimised to improve the results of a business, track performance and support decision making.

The main KPI (key performance indicator), or digital marketing indicators, are:

- **Cost per acquisition** (CPA) – how much it costs to acquire a customer;
- **Number of leads** – number of potential customers;
- **Cost per click** – the value of ads such as Google Ads and Facebook Ads (a division of the total cost of the campaign by the number of clicks achieved);
- **Conversion rate** – number of results achieved with the campaign against a larger starting universe (for instance, the number of requests for a quote on a form divided by the number of people who enter the page where that form is located);
- **Click-through rate** – total percentage of clicks on the ad relative to the number of times the ad appeared.

When evaluating, it is essential to map visitors' behaviour. For that, it is necessary to have website analytics to link each campaign to behavioural patterns. Thus, it is necessary to do the conversion set-up of channels such as Google, Facebook or LinkedIn, inserting a code from each tool on the website to be able to identify the consumer in future visits. A fundamental procedure is to test one variable in each verification so as not to be induced by the cross-effects of several variables.

The main data sources that a company can use come from **social media** (Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook). They provide insight into the type of traffic the company receives or may receive through online **engagement reports** that provide data on how customers interact with the company's website.

### Key measurement and analysis tools

Analytics and measurement tools are important for finding out what works and what doesn't on a business's website and social media. They allow users' feedback on a large scale through actual user clicks and movements. Getting that feedback is essential to improve the user experience (UX) of the website, in turn, it will improve communication with potential customers, leading to new conversions.



✎ [Google Analytics](#)<sup>18</sup> provides the free tools a company needs most to analyse its business data. It makes it easier for the entrepreneur to make smarter decisions regarding traffic from the search engine.

Another tool increasingly used is the aforementioned **A/B test**. An A/B test is the best way to optimise the conversion rate of web pages and improve your results in marketing and digital communication. The A/B test is quite efficient. It consists in dividing the traffic of a certain page into two versions, a normal one and a "bolder" one, with some modifications. Then, one measure which of the versions has a higher conversion rate. There are several tools for A/B testing, but [Google Optimize](#)<sup>19</sup> is an



Whichever tool is used, the entrepreneur must be sure to establish the performance of his business using Google Analytics to know the conversion rates before doing any changel.

Schmidt e Rosenberg (2014)<sup>20</sup> mention the most important point: **deciding based on data**. One of the most transformative developments of the Internet century is the ability to quantify almost any aspect of a business. Decisions that were once based on subjective opinions and casual hints now rely primarily on data.

<sup>18</sup> There are other equally interesting tools such as Abobe Analytics, Heatmap Analytics, as Hotjar and CrazyEgg, and Real Time Analytics (Clicky and Chartbeat)

<sup>19</sup> Other tools forA/B testing: [Optimizely](#), and [Unbounce](#), among others.

<sup>20</sup> Schmidt, E., Rosenberg, J. (2014), *Como Funcionaa Google*, Vogais

## 4.4. The sales funnel

This is the **time to communicate to sell**. When the entrepreneur decides to implement a communication and marketing strategy for his product or service, he can follow a rather useful and efficient model to **attract, convert, relate, and sell**<sup>21</sup>, the **sales funnel**, also called pipeline, as illustrated in figure 4.5.

The sales funnel is a tool that represents the steps that a brand wants the potential customer to follow from the first contact to the conclusion of the sale. The funnel includes the moment of attracting, turning traffic into opportunities and turning it into a sale.

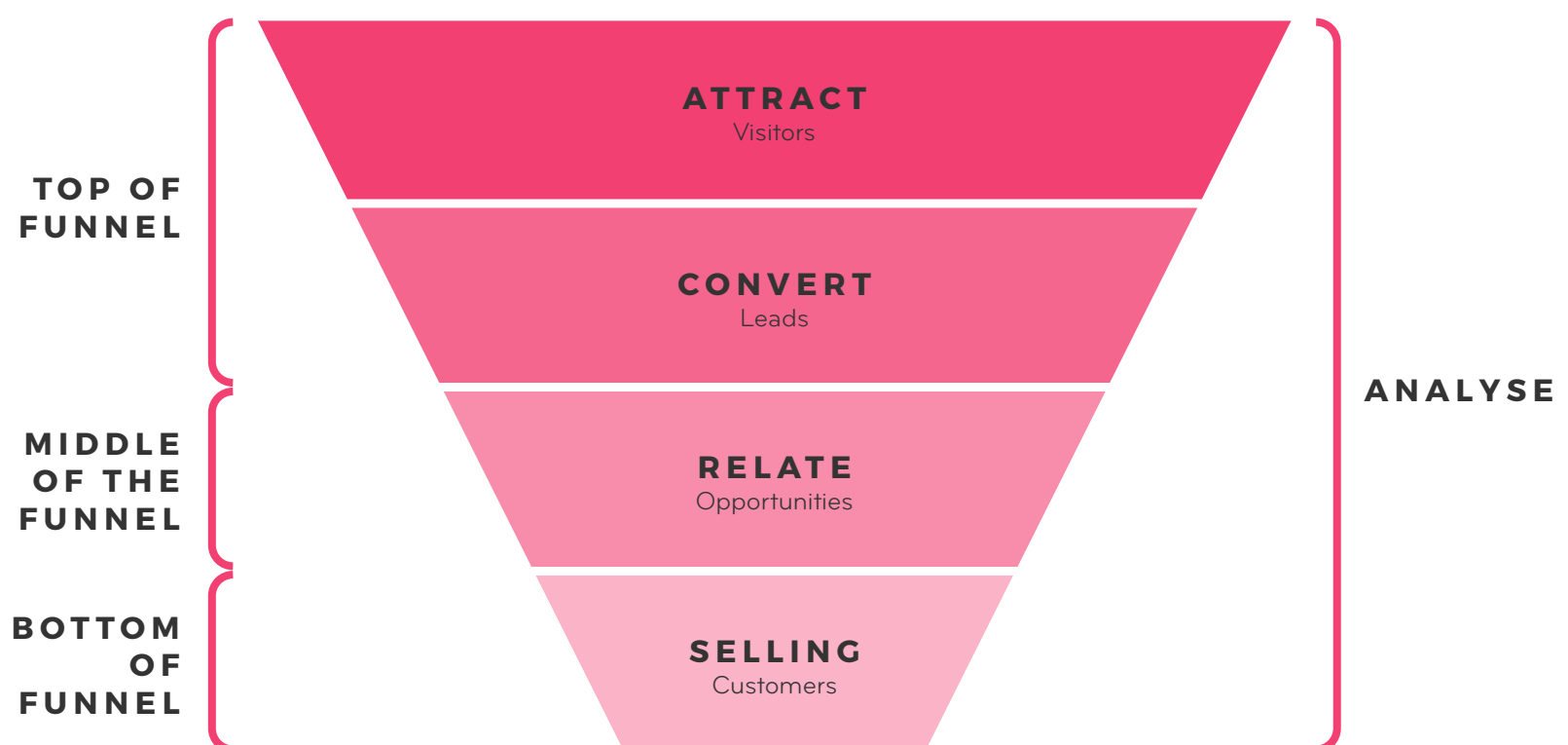


Figure 4.5. The sales funnel.

There are two aspects to consider in the sales funnel:

### Converge and align digital and physical actions      Content serving each stage

As the funnel is a graphic scheme that reflects the marketing and sales function of a business, **it is through it that the young entrepreneur should integrate all actions – digital and physical – and evaluate both effort and results.** By converging actions, the young entrepreneur will know, for example, how the conversions from leads to opportunities and from opportunities to sales are. The funnel model makes it is possible to scale marketing and communication efforts.

Content should be produced according to the goals of each stage in the funnel. The top of the funnel is wide, showing you reach more people through more inspiring content. The middle and the bottom of the funnel narrow with tactics, actions and formats recommended converting.

<sup>21</sup> Chaffey, D., Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2000), Digital Marketing Strategy, Implementation and Practice, Pearson.

Typically, and as seen in figure 4.5., a sales funnel consists of three stages:

FIRST STAGE – THE TOP OF THE FUNNEL

This is the time to attract attention (reach), generate perception – or awareness – about the brand. It is the stage of discovery and learning. Through social media traffic, **visitors** get in touch with the company or its product, and it is important to offer content **to increase traffic to the proper channels** and **capture contacts** by offering, for instance, an e-book, which can be downloaded after filling out a form (name and e-mail). By providing the data, the visitor becomes a lead. At this stage, it is also important to guarantee the visitor's security and consent to use data for commercial purposes<sup>23</sup> (figure 4.6.).

PURPOSE			
ATTRACT			
ACTIONS	CHANNELS	TOOLS	INDICATORS
1.Publish and promote content with sharing potential to amplify the message.  2. Attract and direct people to the proper channels (e.g. website)	Search engines  Social networks: <a href="#">Facebook</a> , <a href="#">YouTube</a> , <a href="#">Twitter</a> , <a href="#">Pinterest</a> , <a href="#">Instagram</a> , <a href="#">TikTok</a> , <a href="#">linkedin</a>  Blogs  Content type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• blog post</li><li>• e-book</li><li>• videos</li></ul>	<a href="#">Google Trends</a> <a href="#">Google Ads</a> <a href="#">Facebook Ads</a> <a href="#">Linkedin pages</a> <a href="#">SEO</a> *	Fans Followers Visitors (site and blog)

Figure 4.6. Attracting potential customers.

\*SEO – Search Engine Optimization is a technique that optimises organic search in search engines. This technique suggests small modifications in the development of the site. These changes may seem like small details. Yet when combined, they are optimizations that create impact in terms of user experience, greatly improving organic search results. Google provides a guide for site implementers that is very useful in the development phase.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, do we need to attract more? Do we need to get more leads or do we need to improve the quality of leads to increase conversion and thus be able to increase sales?

<sup>23</sup> For more information on this topic, see the e-book **Digital Security in New Businesses**



Following attraction, **lead conversion** is an action the user takes on the website or campaign that is measured, such as clicking a button or filling out a form. With each conversion, the user moves one step forward to reach the expected goal, usually a page on the website or the online shop. After this conversion, the user should be impacted by messages that lead them to the purchase.

The more information a conversion collects, the more effective the result. A conversion on a form where an e-mail is collected is more effective than just a click on a link. The actions of the conversion phase require a CTA (call to action). This is actually a button or a link that guides the user to the execution of the conversion. It is important that it is clear and objective to stimulate action.

PURPOSE			
CONVERT LEADS			
ACTIONS	CHANNELS	TOOLS	INDICATORS
<div>3. Receive traffic from other actions.</div> <div>4.Boost conversions (event registration, or buying a product, or requesting a quote)</div>	<div>Website</div> <div>Blog</div> <div>Online Shop</div> <div>Facebook or LinkedIn form.</div> <div>Type of content:</div> <div><div>• Webinar</div><div>• Study</div><div>• Whitepaper</div></div>	<div><a href="#">Facebook</a> <a href="#">Linkedin</a></div> <div><a href="#">E-mail Marketing</a> (<a href="#">Mailchimp</a>, <a href="#">e-goi</a>, <a href="#">sendinblue</a>)*</div>	<div>Clicks on the button</div> <div>Clicks on the link to open another page</div> <div>Ad clicks</div> <div>Subscribe to newsletters</div> <div>Create an account</div> <div>Fill in a form:</div> <div><div>• Quote</div><div>• Buy online</div></div>

Figure 4.7. Como converter potenciais clientes

\* E-mail marketing is the sending of information in an automated way from tools that allow the management of databases of current or potential customers (figure 4.6.). Its popularity has led to the emergence of unwanted e-mails known as SPAM (unsolicited messages). To ensure proper message receipt, one must follow good practices, including compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Figure 4.8.).

SECOND STAGE – THE MIDDLE OF THE FUNNEL

With the database built in the previous phase, the purpose now is to contact (e.g., through e-mail) and help leads (potential customers) with tips or techniques on subjects of their interest related to the entrepreneur’s business, making them ready to take another step in the sales funnel. At this stage, leads become **opportunities** as they are almost ready to be approached by the physical sales team – or other forms of personalized digital contact – which will offer solutions of their products or services (figure 4.9.).

PURPOSE			
INVOLVING AND RELATING			
Stimulating communication			
ACTIONS	CHANNELS	TOOLS	INDICATORS
5. Support decision making with a useful and inspiring narrative to put the product in the moment of consumption and be shared  6.Promote relationship and interaction with the brand.	Website Blog Community Bot CRM (Customer relationship management)  Marketing Automation* Content type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Webinar</li><li>• Trial</li></ul>	<a href="#">Facebook</a> <a href="#">Linkedin</a> <a href="#">E-mail Marketing</a> ( <a href="#">Mailchimp</a> , <a href="#">egoi</a> <a href="#">sendinblue</a> )* Landing page Lead scoring	Time on site Shares Comments Likes Leads and conversions

Figure 4.9. How to involve and relate potential customers.

\* Marketing automation tools can save time when it comes to implementing marketing strategy and favour even faster growth. Marketing automation masters the moments of contact and acts in a personalized way with the user in the most diverse digital channels. It understands and respects the person’s interest in the purchase journey, presenting necessary information at key moments, which encourages them to evolve in the funnel. Some useful tools for new businesses are: [OptinMonster](#), [SendinBlue](#), [Drip](#) and [HubSpot](#).

THIRD STAGE – THE BOTTOM OF THE FUNNEL

The bottom of the funnel. At this stage, potential consumers make the purchase and effectively become **customers**. Here, the goal is for the customer to purchase the product or service. For this, the brand must present relevant and personalized content to demonstrate and convince the consumer that what it offers is the best solution for the client’s needs (figure 4.10.).

PURPOSE			
PURCHASE			
Close the purchase and keep the customers satisfied			
ACTIONS	CHANNELS	FERRAMENTAS	INDICADORES
7. Transforming leads into clients  8. Focus on product/ solution benefits  9. Purchase and use of the product	e-Commerce Product detail Price Discounts   Free trial Promotion Testimonials Type of content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demos</li><li>Trial (test the service)</li></ul>	Free Trial	No. of orders No. of demos No. of sales No. of references

Figure 4.10. How to influence potential customers to buy.

At this stage, it is essential to reinforce **personalisation** and **credibility**. Customer testimonials can also be interesting to position the company’s product or service as the right choice. Discounts, offers and free trials are messages and content that can help refer leads to your sales team.

There is a priority step related to post-purchase, which is **to keep the customer loyal**. Soon, the focus is on keeping customers happy with the product or service they have purchased and making them your ambassadors. As previously discussed, this strategy is one of the best ways to attract new customers. For this reason, [HubSpot](#) approaches the funnel as a flywheel, reinforcing that customers should become fans since they tend to share brand moments and bring more customers.





## 5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL MARKETING

The new communication reality – marked by factors like interactivity, network speed, information sharing, communities – has changed the way of delivering the message and guiding consumer choices. These are the times of collaborative and interactive marketing focused on the consumer experience. Both product and purely commercial content are no longer the focus of the message. They were replaced by a new concept, to build a relationship with a brand when consuming a product and the emotion of using it.

Photo by [Matheo JBT](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## 5.1. Global market

In digital business, even a **local business idea may have global aspirations and opportunities**. The market is global, and people from all over the world can enter a website, an online shop and access the social networks of any business. One main challenge for those who want to undertake and communicate is to **interact and ensure a good experience with the different needs of their audiences around the world**.

An example of young Portuguese entrepreneurs thinking globally is reported by Pedro Andrade, with his Hunter Board electric skateboard project (figure 5.1.), developed from the beginning for the global market, namely the North American one, after having already done the same with the Craft Wallet project.



Figure 5.1. Hunter Board managed to obtain two rounds of fundraising worth a total of 720 thousand euros. The media impact of the project and the penetration in the skaters' community certainly contributed to that, which allowed creating a list of potential customers interested in buying a skateboard for 1,949 dollars (around 1,600 euros).



<https://www.imagensdemarca.pt/artigo/a-tesla-dos-skates-eletricos-e-portuguesa/>

How to serve and respond in different languages at different times and meet cultures from every point of the world?

Communicating in a global marketplace is a challenge. Nevertheless, communication and business strategies may be translated into won opportunities, both brand and commercial, if the right tools are used:

- ✍ • Use monitoring tools to "listen" to who is talking about the brand. [SocialMention](#) lets you know which searches are made on social networks and in different languages.;
- Owned social media's platforms show in which regions fans are;
- ✍ • Tools like [GoogleTrends](#) enable companies to find what people are searching for on the web. This data allows companies to develop customised products and services that meet consumers' needs;
- ✍ • Interest forums are a good place to find target audiences and what motivates them. Platforms such as [Boardreader](#) allow us to identify communities and the languages used.
- ✍ • [Google Analytics](#) tracks and observes traffic by market.

Nowadays, in addition to all those tools that guide towards an overall digital strategy, the entrepreneur has other formats that make business-critical tasks easy and much less costly, such as lead solicitation (figure 5.2.).



### PRIMETAG

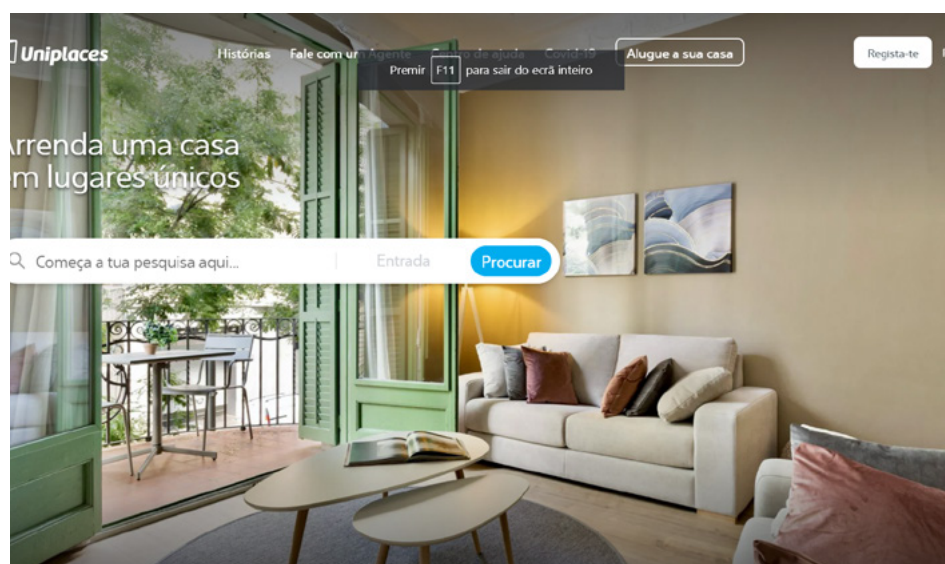
By providing an online report on its website, the Portuguese start-up Primetag attracts and raises leads (potential customers) in any market. In a traditional communication context, the same report would have to be printed and made one event per market for its distribution.

Figure 5.2. Connectivity in attracting and identifying potential customers (September 2021).

## 5.2. “Unintermediation”

“*Unintermediation*” is a model that sprang in the digital context. Numerous start-ups use it to stand up to established companies in the marketplace, allowing people to access products and services directly, without processes and chains of intermediaries. Intermediaries are no longer needed to buy something, and marketplaces allow consumers to buy directly through links connecting them with suppliers.

In this sense, opportunities arise when entrepreneurs look at the business value chain and identify moments where they can, through a **more direct relationship**, improve and surprise the experience. The platforms that bring together demand and supply bring together all moments of communication in accessing a product. They are true inspirations, both in terms of business model and communication. In figure 5.3, we can see an inspiration of a business model that arises out of the need for an audience and a type of platform to match demand and supply.



### UNIPLACES

Inspired by business models that unite demand and supply through a platform, the Portuguese start-up Uniplaces is a concept that offers students and teachers rooms and houses, allowing landlords to direct access students and teachers who are looking for accommodation.

Figure 5.3. Business model based on electronic platform.





### 5.3. Community

The concept of community arises with the growth of social networks. People now have the power to research brands before the purchase decision and to share their opinion with the whole community. A power and a voice in a context where people are influenced by the opinions of others.

One big challenge for entrepreneurs occurs when the official voice of the brand loses strength in the community. It often happens when the brand adopts a traditional monologue strategy, where only the brand "speaks" and expects people to follow its message.

The importance of community interaction and dialogue around a business and a brand in this context creates the opportunity to capture valuable feedback. Consumers feedback allows the brand to better change and adapt its products to people's needs and aspirations (figure 5.4.).

Communities are groups of people connected by a common interest, thus creating the opportunity to foster a positive connection and interaction with all members and the brand. The way to create and maintain a community around a business is the ability to understand what attracts, moves, and keeps people connected to a brand's product or service. By working this relationship, the entrepreneur may have the opportunity to bring the community into the centre of the communication strategy itself (figure 5.5.)

VODAFONE

The Vodafone community on Facebook interacts with all the brand's publications, always giving feedback on its communication and services.

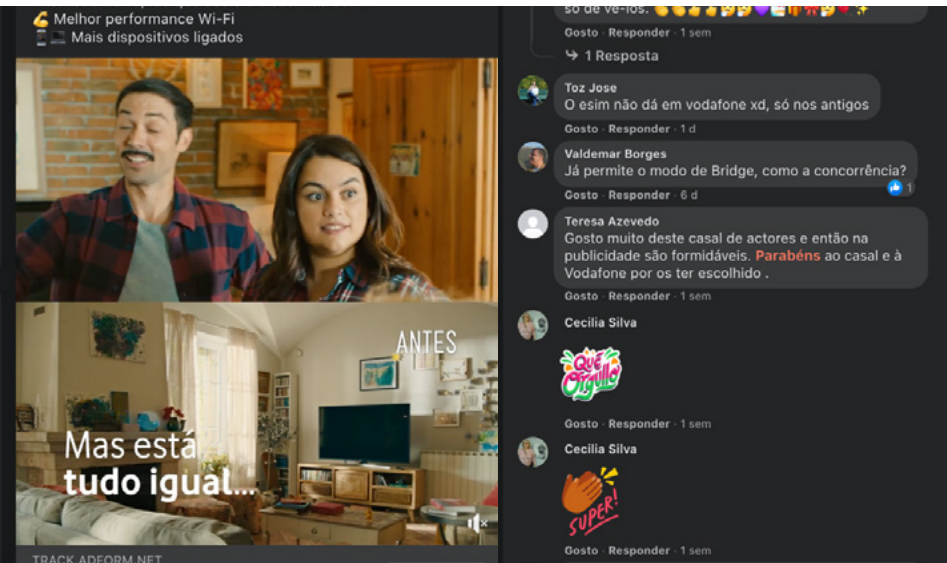


Figure 5.4. Vodafone Portugal community (September 2021).

DANIEL WELLINGTON

Daniel Wellington's content strategy is based on community. It is the community itself that creates content on social networks and in the brand shop. A brand's communication is organically created by its followers' community.



Figure 5.5. Instagram shopping | Reach of the brand's digital content.



## 5.4. Test and learn

In a world of constant evolution, it is necessary to know how to adapt and create communication with new formats and channels to obtain a competitive advantage. How to act in a constantly changing market and face actions always in a test and learn mode?

Yet, most entrepreneurs are driven by the anticipation of success and the fear of failure. The great challenge will be to combat the fear of failure and take risks in communication where you can gain competitive advantages.

Test and learn is a concept rooted in the digital context. Nothing is guaranteed, the world is in continuous evolution. Testing can be regarded as something constant. For instance, the aforementioned A/B tests (see chapter 4 of this e-book) are tactics to compare the performance of the options of a variable and optimise the results.

Test and learn constitutes a set of agile practices that allow a company to test real products with real customers, to understand the impacts on the experience. So, it is possible to learn what needs to be improved repeatedly. It is efficient and cost-effective.

## 5.5. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a profound business paradigm shift that makes it possible, **transparently** and **simply**, to raise collective funding for a project through a community that shares the same interests. It is a project funded by a group of people rather than by traditional investors.

The challenge is to gather information about the project and create a promotional campaign. **The most critical thing is to sell the idea to the public to capture people's interest and donations.**

To sell the idea, the entrepreneur will have to implement an efficient communication strategy, create a relevant message in the campaign that arouses interest for the product or service and create a reward programme to strategically maximise the return of investment (ROI).

Thus, through crowdfunding, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to create a support base available to finance and disseminate the project. This form of financing minimises the risks associated with business creation and the investment inherent to new projects.

To start a crowdfunding campaign, young entrepreneurs should access an online crowdfunding platform, create a campaign with their business idea, set a funding goal, and disseminate all the information on social media.

## CONCLUSION

# "Technology should be leveraged for the good of humanity"

Kotler (2021)

Digital technologies know no geographical limits or time constraints, allowing digital communication to take place anywhere and anytime. This potential offers countless opportunities for young entrepreneurs, from the creation of the idea to the relationship with their new customers.

The young entrepreneur should avoid valuing product development over digital marketing. The whole experience that the consumer has with the product or service, that is, the whole experience related to the business, is considered at a stage of purchasing or sharing opinions about it. Having a good digital footprint builds value for the brand.

The customer's first experience with a product or service is likely through a website or a social network, long before they can touch, use or enjoy a product or service in person. In this sense, digital communication is a force in favour of a business idea and translates into clear advantages:

- **Low costs for the results you can achieve.**  
To achieve the same results through traditional marketing, one would need a large marketing team and allocate large budgets.
- **Correct and accurate segmentation.**  
Digital marketing ensures that one's message is only viewed by potential customers who represent the right segment for the nature of the business.

- **Brand building.**

Building a brand is one of the critical steps to a successful business. Contents that show the brand creates a mutually beneficial relationship are a step for creating loyalty towards the company and everything it stands for.

- **Quick and clear results.**

Results are measured in real-time on the digital platforms and with great precision, namely allowing one to know the size of the audience on the social networks and the growth achieved daily, weekly, monthly, and annually.

**Accelerating digital marketing and communications execution is critical to business success.** Customers' preferences change and put pressure on companies to profit from a shorter window of opportunity. To address this challenge, entrepreneurs can draw inspiration from the practices of lean start-ups<sup>24</sup>, which rely heavily on technology to conduct fast market experiments, validate in real-time, and accelerate the go-to-market.

**Excellence** in a digital communication strategy is important to achieve business success, but achieving excellence requires time, effort and knowledge through experience. Testing content, channels, and innovative approaches to try and achieve results is the ideal combination to learn and evolve access and influence in target segments.

<sup>24</sup> Ries, E. (2011), *The Lean Startup*, Penguin Books.

# Glossary

- **Cookie**

A cookie is a small computer file sent to a user's browser when the user visits a website. Each time the user visits that site again, the browser sends the cookie back to the server to notify prior user activity. Cookies improve user navigation and increase search efficiency.

- **Crowdfunding**

It is a method of raising investment. It consists of raising capital for initiatives of collective interest through the aggregation of multiple funding sources.

- **Go-to-market**

The go-to-market strategy focuses on planning and structuring how a company will place its product or service in a specific market to serve a particular target audience.

- **Key Performance Indicator**

It is a key performance indicator. KPIs are management tools to measure and evaluate the level of performance and success of an organisation or a process. There are different categories of indicators: quantitative, qualitative, leading indicators, input indicators, process indicators and financial indicators, among others.

- **Landing Page**

It is a single web page that aims to capture potential consumers (leads) and convert them into customers. Usually, these pages appear, for example, in a search result of a search engine, or a marketing promotion, or as a link accessed via social media. It is a sales page, usually quite attractive, simple, and straightforward.

- **Leads**

Consumers that show interest in a product or service and may become a company's customers are referred to as leads. In marketing, the primary objective of digital communication is to generate (attract attention) and convert leads into customers, to transform consumers into clients.

- **Marketplace**

It is an e-commerce, mediated by a company, where various suppliers sign up and sell their products or services from several categories. It is a virtual platform where customers can access and purchase items from different suppliers, all in a single shopping cart..

- **Digital natives**

We call digital natives to individuals born after 1980 who grew up with digital technologies and are familiar with the technology.

- **ROI – Return of Investment**

It is the rate of profit or return. It measures the ratio between the amount of money earned (or lost) and the amount of money invested.

- **SEO - Search Engine Optimization**

It is a set of techniques to optimise websites and blogs so that they appear in Google search engine searches, preferably in the front places.

- **Start-up**

It is a new, emerging company with strong growth potential, usually technology-based, that aims to develop or perfect an innovative business model that is scalable, disruptive and repeatable.

- **Storytelling**

In communication, it is the art of storytelling has become a popular communication and manipulation technique that entrepreneurs use to successfully engage their customers and cultivate more followers.

- **A/B Test**

A tool to optimise the conversion rates of web pages and improve their results in marketing and digital communication. It consists of dividing the traffic of a page into two versions, the current one and one with bolder modifications. After that, one will measure which of the versions has a higher conversion rate.

- **CTR (click-through rate)**

It is the rate that shows how often people who see an advert for a product or service end up clicking on it. CTR is useful for evaluating the performance of keywords and ads. CTR is the number of clicks an ad receives divided by the number of times it is displayed:  $\text{clicks} \div \text{impressions} = \text{CTR}$ . For instance, with five clicks and 100 impressions, the CTR would be 5%. Each of the ads and keywords have their own CTR, which appear listed in the company's account.

- **Unicorn**

It is a start-up with a market value of more than one billion dollars. The term was created by Aileen Lee, a venture capitalist in the USA. In Portugal, there are four start-ups classified as unicorns: Farfetch, OutSystems, Talkdesk and Feedzai. By 2021, there were more than 800 unicorn companies, including Airbnb, Facebook and Google.

- **UX (user experience)**

UX, or user experience, is a set of elements related to the user's interaction with a given product, service, application, or website. If the interaction is excellent, the consumer is likely to buy again. Several factors contribute to a good user experience, such as an attractive, simple, and organised design or the ease of use.



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