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DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS

Title

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DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS

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INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation, although it has already been underway in recent years. Currently, digitalization can be observed in several sectors, from services to industry, as well as from micro to large companies. Consequently, digital transformation increasingly assumes an essential role in the development of new business models and business growth.

The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) shows Portugal in 19th place in 2020 which is structurally lower than the European average (within a Europe of 28 countries). Also, a report from the Strategy and Studies Office of the Ministry of Economy and Digital Transition reinforces the lower position of Portugal in the Internet usage rate (71% against 84% of the European Union average).

Therefore, Portugal urgently needs to enhance the digital capacity of people and the digital transformation of companies. To face this strategic challenge and take the opportunities and trends that the digital world offers, companies must pay attention to the digital trends. In this respect, following digital trends is essential, namely, to help assess and define the way forward for business digitalization. In fact, technological and digital marketing developments, generally dictate the success of new digital marketing strategies.

Although it is difficult to make accurate conjectures in this unpredictable environment (with a pandemic that insists on not ending and with an absurd war underway), the present book aims to point out and analyse some digital marketing trends that might impact the activity of the companies in the digital world in the near future. In practice, the objective of this book is to share with digital marketing specialists a set of different analysis from researchers with distinct backgrounds on the main digital marketing directions that will shape the strategies of the companies.

The editors
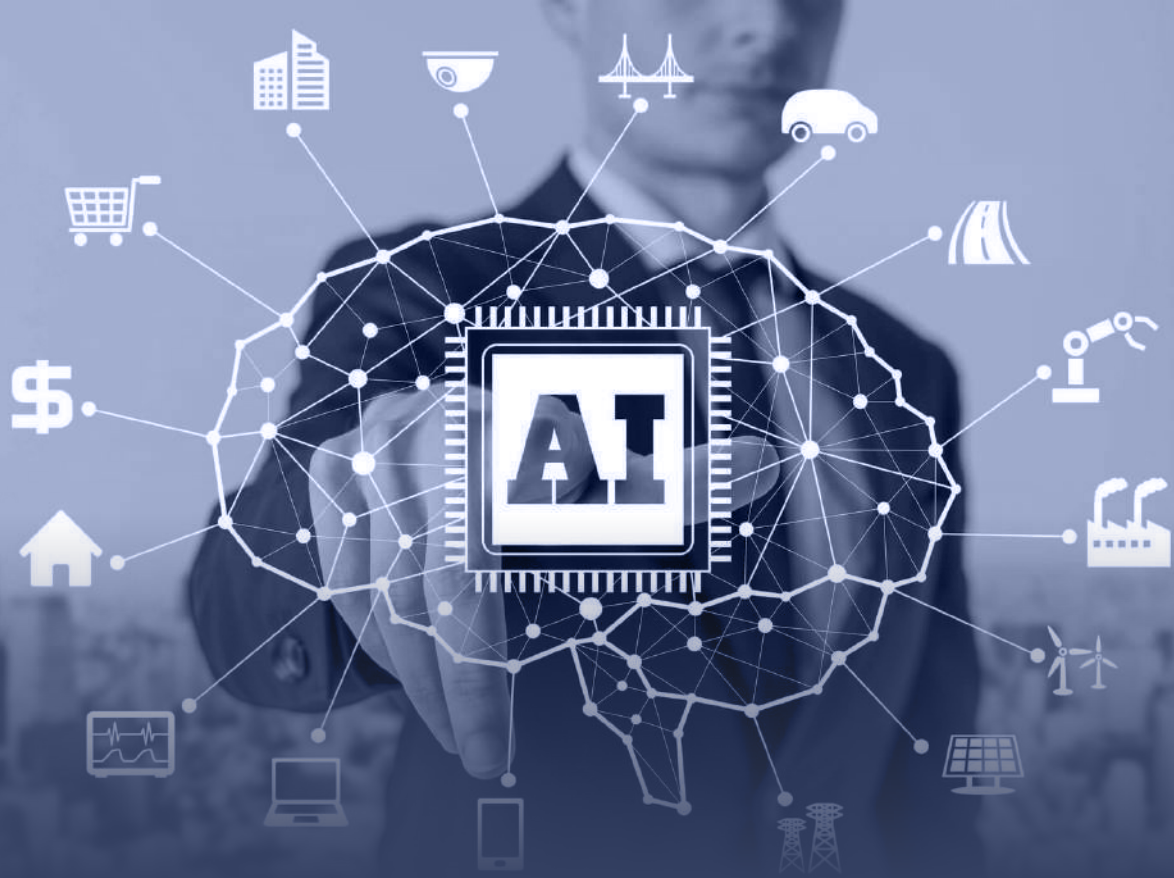
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IMPACT IN MARKETING

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To create a brand that people can trust, the company needs to predict intentions and needs along the consumer decision journey

Almost two thirds of the world's population will have access to the Internet by 2023. According to CISCO (2021), there will be 5.3 billion total internet users (66% of the world population) by 2023, were 3.9 billion (51% of the world population) in 2018. The number of devices connected to IP networks will be more than three times the world population by 2023. There will be 3.6 networked devices per capita by 2023, up from 2.4 networked devices per capita in 2018. There will be 29.3 billion networked devices by 2023, up from 18.4 billion in 2018. Machine-to-Machine (M2M) connections will be half of global connected devices and connections by 2023. The share of M2M connections will increase from 33% in 2018 to 50% in 2023. There will be 14.7 billion M2M connections by 2023. Given this scenario, it is understood that marketing will have to be based on data, using predictive and contextual models, using the capabilities of artificial (or augmented) intelligence, augmented reality, becoming augmented marketing.

Artificial intelligence enables computerised systems to collect data to perform the tasks of intelligent beings in a way that maximises their chances of success. There are different types of AI (computer vision, natural language processing, voice and audio processing, predictions/predictions on structured data, distributed AI: autonomous agents and autonomous systems: robots), but all are focused on trying to mimic human intelligence in computers to make their intelligent operations. The effort to develop computer-based systems that behave like humans includes natural languages, robotics, perceptual, expert systems, and "intelligent" machines! AI builds, through analogies, a system that seeks knowledge to solve any problem it faces. Some examples of algorithms that use AI are related to CBR, Collaborative Filtering, Genetic Algorithms, Neural Networks and Bayesian Networks. On the other hand, the evolution of algorithms associated with machine learning and deep learning allows tasks to be performed by learning, namely:

Pattern recognition (objects in real scenes, facial identities, facial expressions, spoken words). Anomaly recognition (unusual sequences of credit card transactions, unusual patterns of sensor readings in a nuclear reactor).

Prediction (future stock prices or exchange rates, which movies a person will like).

According to the AI Index Report of 2021, AI systems are generative of everything, as they can now compose text, audio, and images to a sufficiently high standard that humans have a hard time telling the difference between synthetic and non-synthetic outputs for some constrained applications of the technology.
 On the other hand, the industrialisation of computer vision has seen immense progress in the past decade, primarily due to machine learning techniques (specifically deep learning). Meanwhile, companies are investing increasingly large amounts of computational resources in

training computer vision systems faster than ever before. The same report highlights that Natural Language Processing (NLP) rapid progress has yielded AI systems with significantly improved language capabilities that have started to have a meaningful economic impact on the world. Google and Microsoft have both deployed the BERT language model into their search engines, while other large language models have been developed by companies ranging from Microsoft to OpenAI. According to the report by McKinsey & Company, 2020, high tech and telecom companies were most likely to report AI adoption in 2020 (more than 70%), in second place by both financial services and automotive and assembly (60%). Across industries, companies in 2020 are most likely to report using AI for Human Resources, Manufacturing, Marketing and Sales, Product and/or Service Development, Risk, Service Operations Strategy and Corporate Finance and Supply-Chain Management. By industry, the type of AI capabilities adopted by various companies in 2020 were most likely to identify other machine learning techniques, robotic process automation, and computer vision as capabilities adopted in at least one business function. Main Industries: Autonomous

Vehicles, Computer Vision, Conversation AI Interfaces, Deep Learning, NL Generation, NL Speech Understanding, NL Text Understanding, Other Machine Learning Techniques, Physical Robotics, Robotic, Process, Automation.

There are several types of technologies that are having and will continue to have more and more impact on the processes associated with logistics, namely those related to the use of artificial intelligence, Supply Chain Visibility (SCV) technologies, blockchain, tracking and mapping technologies, autonomous vehicles, automation and robotics, visual search engines, mobile apps, immersive experiences, IoT for connected products and packaging (smart products), voice picking, 3D printing, kiosks, coupon dispensers in sales centres, chatbots, virtual reality and augmented reality, machine learning, descriptive analytics and advanced analytics.
The consumer decision journey has been altered using Big Data, the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence. Consumers now have a variability of online and offline solutions to research and purchase products and services, just by using their smartphones 24/7. With this scenario, digital channels represent a cheaper

way to interact with consumers, but they are even critical to executing promotions, sales, and increasing customers. With the advancements in digital media capabilities, consumers are looking for an increase in their experience in 4 areas: Consumers want to interact anywhere at any time of day. Consumers want to do new things and receive information that creates value for them. Consumers expect all the data collected about them to be used to personalise their experience along their journey, meeting their journey, meeting their needs. Consumers expect all interactions across digital channels to be easy and accessible.

More than following consumers along their decision journey, marketers now need to predict consumers' intentions and help them in their process. In the study "Breaking the marketing old with machine learning" conducted by MIT and Google, 63% of marketers surveyed said that anticipating consumers' intent leads to better results for companies.

Amazon.com uses predictive machine learning models to make intelligent recommendations. Through machine learning models, it is possible, for example, to know which printer ink a consumer need. Knowing

a customer's preferences is just the beginning, the ability to personalise extends into optimising the next steps in the consumer's decision journey. The moment a customer engages, the company must analyse their behaviour and predict their next move. "Digital First" companies have been optimising the consumer decision journey in an increasingly systematised way. With an obsession to improve the consumer experience, Amazon.com has revolutionised the online shopping experience. Amazon.com bases every step of the consumer journey on algorithms, from passive search to customer recovery. In addition to the algorithms used in product recommendation and retargeting, Amazon.com also uses new AI services to recognise consumer needs for new products. This "programmatic sampling" model is based on offering a sample of a product, then with the combination of retargeting automation, conversions increase by an average of 15%.

To create a brand that people can trust, the company needs to predict intentions and needs along the consumer decision journey. Intentions are everywhere. They are signposted whenever people seek assistance on digital. The challenge is to know the customers, to be able to predict those intentions. Algorithms are

the key to this, without them, it is impossible to segment the audience and find the right customers efficiently and at the right time. In this sense, according to a report by the Boston Consulting Group and the MIT Sloan Management Review, companies that personalise their communications can increase their revenues by up to 20% and reduce costs by up to 30%. One of the key technologies used in this process is Artificial Intelligence. According to the report by Aquia's, about half of marketers (52%) say their organisation has prioritised making sure their branding remained consistent for customers in 2021. 80% of consumers say they expect brands to have a consistent message and appearance across their digital platforms. 84% feel pressure to deliver marketing content differently to attract attention when representing their offerings. 49% of marketers have created more content for customer engagement to adapt to new customer behaviours.

Caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, customer behaviours have shifted during the crisis and may not revert to pre-pandemic norms. McKinsey reports as many as 30% to 40% of U.S. consumers have switched brands or retailers, and the majority intend to continue their new shopping behaviour. Many switchers seek better prices,

but product availability, quality, and purpose are other motivators. The researchers also found that the e-commerce percentage of total retail sales remains about 35% above pre-pandemic levels. With customer loyalty to brands low - and the cost of acquiring new customers high - marketers need to focus on creating and sustaining engagement with every customer. It's not enough to recreate previously existing processes as digital ones. They must reimagine some Customer Experiences altogether, combining several technologies associated with AI. Based on the Constellation study, looking at the investment in all market sectors, there will be an investment of over 100 billion per year in Artificial Intelligence in 2025, while in 2015, only 2 billion were spent. The Marketing industry will be no exception, and there will be increasing investment in AI.

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HYBRID EVENTS

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Hybrid events offer different possibilities of interaction and engagement with the stakeholders

Hybrid events have been growing in popularity and this expansion exploded during the pandemic, essentially because of online meetings and/or conferences (Rubinger et al., 2020). Hybrid events are those that simultaneously takes on a face-to-face and virtual dimension (AIRMEET, 2021; Simons, 2019), in other words they are face-to-face events with live virtual broadcasts.

Encore Global (2021), which is a prestigious global organization that promotes events (in person, virtual and hybrid), suggests that the hybrid event format is here to stay. In the Encore Planner Pulse Survey, respondents (event promoters) said they intend to use a hybrid event strategy once post-pandemic face-to-face contacts are restored.

PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association), which is a world reference in the business events industry, organized the PCMA Convening Leaders 2021 Global Broadcast Hub in Singapore. This event took place in omnichannel format, combining remote and face-to-face participation and experiences. Hybrid events were a major topic of discussion. However, during the Convention it was verified that there are still many doubts about the engagement of people in the context of a hybrid event (PCMA, 2021).

Further, a recent study carried out by UFI (The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry) found a strong preference for live events among participants of international trade fairs,

using criteria of quality of networking, doing business, among others (UFI, 2021). Nevertheless, the study also demonstrates that there appear to be areas where digital events can add value, for instance, providing a complementary digital service and attracting new audiences.

Therefore, regardless of the event context, the current digital transformation suggests the exploration of hybrid events, where technology is used to support the participation of different stakeholders (Nelimarkka et al., 2018), be them attendees, organizers, sponsors, or suppliers.

Simons (2019) suggests that the elements inherent to an interaction can move from bodily co-presence to virtual co-presence and vice versa. In other words, the idiosyncrasies of a face-to-face moment (e.g. emotional energy) during the event can be leveraged to recruit people for online activities. On the other hand, the dynamics of online activities can also recruit people for offline activities during the event. So, hybrid events offer different possibilities of interaction and engagement with the stakeholders. This online/offline combination plays as an innovative marketing toolkit, for

example providing more personalized content that can be consumed anywhere and anytime. Simons (2019) also reveals that online interaction influences people's experience in offline interaction during the event. Therefore, there is a potential in hybrid events that deserves to be explored.

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THE POPULARITY OF DIGITAL AND HYBRID EVENTS ENTAILS SOME SPECIFIC TRENDS

CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing aims at creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content. In the context of hybrid events, content marketing will play an important role. The goal is to provide as much content value as possible to the event stakeholders

SOCIAL NETWORKING MARKETING

Social networks are facilitators of social connections between people, groups or organizations that share the same interests. Event organizers can increase its visibility by taking advantage of social networks that will increase their influence in the promotion of hybrid events

INCORPORATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Hybrid events require the use of appropriate tools and technologies that provide integrated experiences, connecting in-person and virtual stakeholders. For instance, virtual reality will be a great asset for future events, as well as artificial intelligence applied in events, 5G technologies, chatbots, among others

DIGITAL OR HYBRID EVENTS AS PLATFORMS FOR MARKETING ACTIONS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME)

Previously, events were normally considered in the marketing plans of big brands or companies. The opportunities and ease of use of hybrid event platforms allow access to small business

MOBILE MARKETING

Most people regularly use their mobile device to access Internet content. Thus, when the participants want to access the digital contents of the hybrid event, it is very likely to use a smartphone. So, it is important to develop mobile marketing strategies in order to interact, engage and influence event stakeholders

MULTIPLE MICRO-EVENTS

The technology or hybrid event platforms allow events at a scale adapted to the characteristics and objective of each organizer. This will lead to multiple micro-events

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Hybrid events will be data mines. Collecting, analysing, and interpreting data through analytical and logical reasoning will dictate the future of hybrid events

ATTENDEES' SECURITY

Ensuring the safety of participants will be a relevant factor. On the one hand, event virtualisation brings some problems related to cybersecurity, namely data protection. On the other hand, face-to-face events still have some problems related to the pandemic phenomenon. Specifically, sanitary security measures will continue to apply during COVID 19 pandemic with technology playing a relevant role, such as blockchains, quick virus diagnosis tests, facial recognition, environmental purificators, among others.

**In conclusion,
the event's strategy will certainly change in the coming times. In fact, most of the challenges of hybrid events revolve around the simultaneous networking and engagement of two groups of attendees (in-person and remote attendees). Therefore, the focus must be on the involvement of personal and virtual participation, thus enabling interactions between all participants to be facilitated, before, during and after the event.**

KILLING MARKETING: WHEN BRANDS PROFIT FROM CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES

Ana Maria Lima

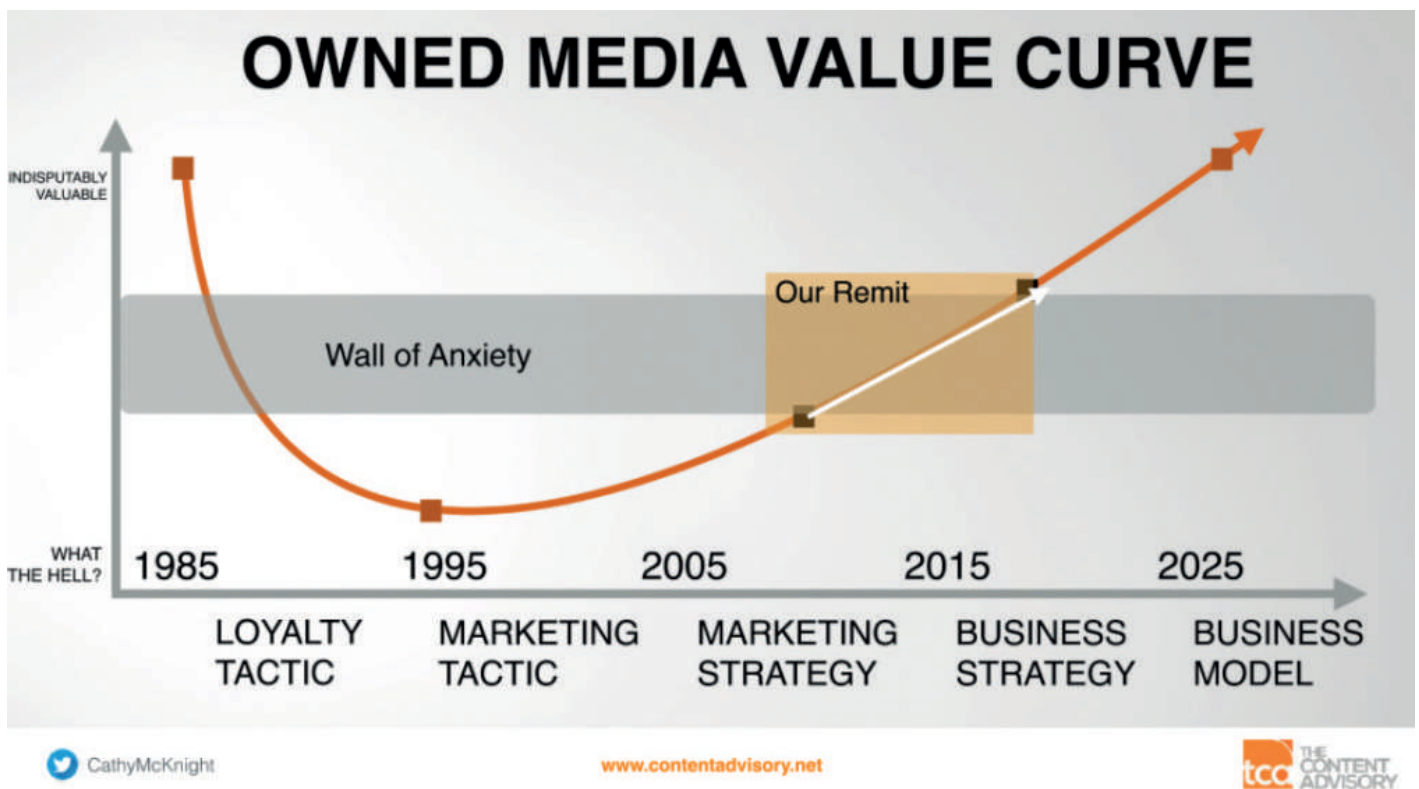Master's in digital marketing from ISCAP (Porto Polytechnic)

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In 2017 Joe Pulizzi and Robert Rose were publishing another book together, "Killing Marketing". These were the foundations for the study and deepening of the thematic of content marketing associated with a new kind of profit, not always expected, in different companies.

Let's analyse this step by step. We know that Content Marketing is one of the most important and vital strategies for any brand to reach an audience today. It represents an unavoidable investment within the marketing field and companies can no longer live without it.

The big Digital Marketing companies are now positioning themselves in the audience creation market, much more than in supporting the digital presence of brands. Because they know that content is king, they know that content is the great market power at the moment. It generates credibility, relationship and empathy with brands.

But what the authors point out is that often this strategy is so well done and so innovative that it can even lead to different business models for the company that produces it.

In other words, what starts as a content strategy to reach a particular brand's audience, often turns into highly successful parallel businesses.

Let's take a look at the case of Michelin stars, for example, which emerged after a successful content strategy from the tyre brand, a strategy

Source: Harvard Business Review

OWNED MEDIA VALUE CURVE

Wall of Anxiety

Our Remit

INDISPUTABLY VALUABLE

WHAT THE HELL?

1985	1995	2005	2015	2025
LOYALTY TACTIC	MARKETING TACTIC	MARKETING STRATEGY	BUSINESS STRATEGY	BUSINESS MODEL

CathyMcKnight   www.contentadvisory.net   tca THE CONTENT ADVISORY

Source: Harvard Business Review

that branched into the restaurant recommendation business until the present day.

Many brands still look at marketing the same way they did many years ago, missing the opportunity to build relationships with their audience...

It all started in the year 1900, when the company decided to deliver value to its audience, drivers and chauffeurs. Without asking for anything in return, Michelin began to offer complete and informative maps of the city of Paris, which were then used by everybody as a reference. The goal would be to place the brand as a reference within its audience,

which we know today to be the foundation of a successful content marketing strategy. To deliver relevant, useful and unique content to the audience is the basis of a trusting relationship between brand and consumers.

The initial goal was surpassed and the creation of maps and the referencing of restaurants became a very interesting business for the brand, which never stopped being a companion for drivers throughout the last few decades, with free maps and guides, but realized that this represented another very interesting business model. And the evolution has been continuous until the present day, making them a world reference in the evaluation and recommendation of restaurants, and everyone wants to have a star from the original tyre brand. And, yes, it also remains one of the reference brands when it comes to changing tyres.

This is the best known and oldest example, but it is not the only one. Red Bull is another success story whose content is recognised

worldwide. It now has several very successful businesses, with clients from different areas, taking advantage of the know how gained from its own content strategies.

Pepsi and Mondelez also created their media divisions. In both cases they talk about self-sustaining marketing and, often, profitable marketing. On the same path are IBM, General Motors, Cisco Systems, and many others.

Let's look at Disney example. In the first image we can see the content model of the brand in 1957.

At the center we have animated and live-action films, the content that Disney have always used to create a loyal audience. And it is this same audience that will then be interested in the other content properties, such as publications, comic strips, merchandise, Disneyland and so on. But it is interesting to see how in this model we can perceive the central positioning of (profitable) films as the basis of a strategy to reach an audience of fans and followers of the Disney brand. (Pulizzi & Rose, 2017) The goal of creating a content marketing strategy should always be the original one, the one of creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, conquer and engage a certain target audience, clearly defined and understood, with the aim of driving consumers to profitable actions (Pulizzi, 2013).

But the power of content is so strong that it is often inevitable that the work outlives the creator. And that it is possible, as stated by the authors who created the concept, for marketing to be transformed into direct profit, that is, that investment in marketing becomes revenue.
In the curve above, created by Content Advisory (Petrova, 2019) we see the evolution of the content value. And we realise, essentially, that in the coming years it will become more of a business

model than a marketing strategy. But above all, it remains essential to keep the audience connected and relevant, with content that is pertinent, interesting and unique.

Authors Pulizzi and Rose (2017) take this even further, and are convinced that one of the biggest trends in 5 to 10 years is going to be brands buying media companies, as well as blogs or publishers.
If we look closely at this phenomenon and then take a look around, we realize that there is still a long way to go. Most of the businesses we know are just now taking their first steps into content marketing, and many aren't even doing it from top to bottom. They are still a long way from this revolution in content.

Many brands still look at marketing the same way they did many years ago, missing the opportunity to build relationships with their audience, gain and build customer loyalty and, as this analysis shows, even be able to profit from their marketing actions. Owned media still have a structuring role, but this can also shift to a performance role and direct financial return for brands. Successful companies in this area start to benefit from the relationship with their audiences by finding different business horizons. Either way, the revolution in marketing is here, and content is at the heart of this revolution.

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OMNICHANNEL MARKETING HUBS

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The omnichannel concept is defined as an integrated strategy of the different communication channels with the objective of strengthening the relationship between brands and customers by sharing and exchange information (Mimoun, et al., 2021). Information and communication technologies offer multiple ways of companies to interact in an effective way with its customers. In fact, customers will increasingly engage with brands, products or services looking for memorable experiences regardless of the communication channel. In a hyper-connected and hyper-personalized context, the collection and interpretation of data generated at each touching point of the customer journey will be critical for companies. Consequently, omnichannel platforms should be designed with intelligent features and contextually focused on "knowing" and empowering customers as well as delivering effective solutions (Hsia, et al., 2020). Faced with this changeable and agile reality, where loyalty is increasingly challenging, omnichannel marketing hubs will continue to growth. For instance, in March 2021 the prestigious agency Verint launched the customer engagement hub (Bucci, 2021). This platform is based on the latest advances in artificial intelligence to connect work, data and experience. The purpose is to develop lasting relationships, offering differentiated experiences for customers and employees, through efficient process of collecting and analysing interaction data at competitive costs for the company.

Another example is the BT Business and Public Sector, which is a retail division of the UK telecommunications company. In October 2021, BT launched the digital marketing hub (BT, 2021).

In practice, this BT product is a digital advertising platform that aims to offer digital tools for companies implement digital marketing campaigns. Thus, companies can create ads, apply and track omnichannel marketing campaigns from a single platform. BT highlights that this platform is designed to help mainly resource-poor companies to manage digital campaigns.

Microsoft (2021) also offers omnichannel engagement hub for Dynamics 365, which is a cloud-based intelligent service of information gathered across various engagement channels and the underlying business data. This service is modern, customizable and with high productivity, helping companies to instantly connect and interact with their customers through different channels. For instance, this service offers integrated communication

A new era of digital communication will transform the relationship between the brands and the consumer

tools, historical and real-time visibility and insights into operational efficiency, contextual customer identification, among other functionalities.

The challenge of these platforms is to collect and evaluate data from multiple contact sources with a continuous and integrated effort across a company's entire value chain (upstream and downstream).

It includes the monitoring of internal and external environment, through accurate and appropriate indicators in the most diverse business spheres. In fact, the stark reality in many companies is that they end up delivering a fragmented and disconnected customer experience.

So, in practice, omnichannel marketing hubs aggregate information from multiple touchpoints and then they turn it into actionable information, offering individual and effective solutions for companies. This trend gains relevance in the context of small and medium enterprise (SME), which generally suffers from scarce resources. Thus, omnichannel marketing hubs will help SMEs decide on where to spend marketing budget for the best return on investment.

A revolution is expected with the introduction of the 5G technology in the market, improving the mobility of the consumer and displaying more augmented and virtual realities. A new era of digital communication will

transform the relationship between the brands and the consumer and the customer experience will be enhanced. Therefore, omnichannel marketing hubs will be sources of marketing intelligence that allow for a unified interface with customers and operational efficiency gains.

The pace of today's market is vertiginous and uncertain which requires companies to be able to react quickly to constantly changing conditions. Only with marketing intelligence systems it is possible to take complex decisions with precision (Persis et al., 2021). Therefore, through a hub omnichannel system it is possible to create a unified interface of all possible channels inherent to the business and in any value chain operation. This system allows the contextual customer identification and integrated mentoring actions,

thus ensuring more efficient and customizable solutions.

The ability to analyse and act based on data is increasingly important for companies. A deep view of the company's context and access to strategic data and intelligence related to the company's business will help the company's performance in line with its market reality. Concretely, it increases the capacity for customer orientation, reading scenarios, identifying market niches, and new opportunities for partnerships and investments.

However, it is essential to consider some challenges, namely regarding the transparency of transactions and data protection, in order to increase trust and the quality of the relationship, for instance, using blockchain technology (Nguyen et al., 2021). In

addition, new skills and activities must be developed to be able to properly use these intelligence systems, such as the omnichannel marketing hubs.

In short, one of the first steps to evolve in this digital transformation scenario is to recognize the importance of strategic data analysis in the decision-making process.

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SOCIAL SELLING

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Organizations must provide tools, platforms and strategies to promote social selling among the sales force.

In the last past decades' sales have noticed the importance of social media in the contemporary business to business selling market. Social media play an important role in the sales management as the digital era take advance and become a way to do business worldwide. Social media has grown into a central tool for B2B salespeople to identify leads, understand buyers, embrace relationships, and start building a personal brand through the systematic presence, sharing and engaging content through digital platforms (Agnihotri, Mani, Chaker, Daugherty, & Kothandaraman, 2020).

Many sales representative have accepted social selling as a strategic approach to reach organic visibility among customers, building leadership relations and driving revenues. Even traditional industrial firms are using social media strategies and investing in technological platforms to increase the effective use of social media (Moncrief,

2017). Recent literature has notice the importance of social media in B2B selling from both perspectives, the individual salesperson, and organizational (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2020). This studies lead to reinforce the clear evidence about outcomes of using social media in B2B selling. The use of social media in selling has been mentioned as any social interaction using technology that can be deployed by sales professionals to generate content (e.g. blogs, microblogs, and wikis) and to develop networks such as social networks, online communities, etc (Agnihotri et al., 2020). Social media has an important role in selling, because is shaping communication between sellers and customers, and empowering customers' buying processes through the social touchpoints (Agnihotri, 2020).

Social media in sales

In the field of sales, research indicates that social media

offers a variety of benefits for salespeople: help them to identify new leads, develop insights about customers and competitors, build contacts, and raise long term relationships (Bill, Feurer, & Klarmann, 2020). Generally, the use of social media has been found to improve salesperson selling performance and customer satisfaction.

Antecedent studies have examined both side in sales: the individual salesperson and sales organization factors. At the individual level, the salesforce capabilities related to: products and customers, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, commitment, learning goal orientation and positive attitudes towards social media, are all positively connected to social media use in selling (Bill, Feurer, & Klarmann, 2020).

At the organizational level, management can facilitate social media use through organizational social media commitment and competence by offering training and support, ensuring upper management support and providing a social media strategy (Bill, Feurer, & Klarmann, 2020). Generally, in larger firms or in those with

a structured salesforce, social media use in selling is more effective.

Terho, H., Giovannetti, M., & Cardinali, S. (2022) define social selling as a salesperson selling approach which leverages social and digital channels for understanding, connecting with, and engaging influencers, prospects, and existing customers at relevant customer journey touchpoints for building valuable business relationships. Social selling is a three-dimensional construct with three formative dimensions of:

insight acquisition

connecting

engagement

The dimensions could be correlated, but they do not need to occur simultaneously, as a salesperson can score highly in the insight acquisition dimension but not in engagement. The social selling construct is determined by the contributions of its key dimensions (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003).

The first dimension of social selling refers to the acquisition of insights into prospects, existing customers, and other relevant actors through social channels. This dimension is related with the opportunities of 'social listening' to monitor customers' conversations to develop a better understanding of the customers' needs, as well to identify sales opportunities from existing customers (Agnihotri, 2020).

The second dimension of social selling refers to connecting to prospects, existing customers, and other relevant actors through networking and consistent

interaction during the customer purchasing journey touchpoints (Agnihotri, 2020). This dimension highlights the role of social media in building and maintaining a network of personal contacts through consistent conversation: chatting, commenting, questioning, or answering relevant questions with the market into an active two-directional exchange (Bocconcelli et al., 2017).

The third dimension of social selling refers to the engagement of customers and other actors through valuable content (Ancillai et al., 2019). Precisely, by systematically sharing valuable content, salespersons can influence

customers' willing to invest resources, time and attention, creating common ground for a future relationship.

Nowadays, customers and buyers are highly informed and empowered, so, salespeople must capture their attention by providing relevant, timely, and valuable content that addresses substantial customer business problems or drives interation (Bocconcelli et al., 2017).

To summarize, is important to highlight that insight generation activities are related to aspects of using social media in identifying and qualifying prospects and sales opportunities as well as understanding customer organizations, stakeholders, and customer needs. In turn, connecting activities refers to the efforts for creating professional connections and networking with relevant stakeholders, as well as maintaining the created relationships with active interaction in social media.

To close, the engagement of relevant audiences refers to efforts to systematically share helpful and valuable content to keep the market involved (Terho, et al., 2022).

It is undeniable that salesperson social selling has a positive relationship to selling performance. Thus, organizations must provide tools, platforms and strategies to promote social selling among the salesforce. Social selling can drive salesperson outcome performance, mainly by helping salespersons to attain the position of trusted advisor as well as by helping in customer acquisition rather than customer retention.

Therefore, managers can effectively drive salespersons' social selling by investing in a social media strategy with social media goals and social media activities for sales team. Additionally, salespeople need to have access to relevant social media sales tools, that is, technologies that helps to build insights on prospects and customers; to access and share content; to manage social media activities across different channels. Is also relevant to notice that normally, the salesperson's customer orientation is not driving for social selling.

Instead, sales technology orientation represents the primary orientation behind social selling activities.

Organizations should, invest in developing and maximizing a positive relationship with technology among their sales team (Terho, et al., 2022).

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The goal of creating a content marketing strategy should always be the original one, the one of creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, conquer and engage a certain target audience, clearly defined and understood, with the aim of driving consumers to profitable actions (Pulizzi, 2013).

THE GROWING AND CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

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We live in a society addicted to new mobile technology and social media where the dream of younger generations is to get the next model o iPhone and be a famous digital influencer. Brands and digital marketers want to engage and relate with customers in a more personal, mobile and social way. Then, marketing budgets have to reflect on this changing consumer behavior. The critical question is what proportion of the budget should stay off-line and how to best integrate the digital in an integrative marketing strategy to create a relevant buzz for a brand (both off and online) to provide the new customer an unforgettable experience and entertainment.

Digital marketers all over the world are increasingly explore social media, mobile, content and video prioritizing the quality of the fan/followers than quantity while focusing on targeted, passionate, and influential digital influencers and brand ambassadors. Therefore, brands rely more and more on digital influencers to continuously growing sales and conversion rates.

According to the Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report the value of influencer

marketing as an industry is projected to increase from USD 9.7 billion in 2020 and 13.8 billion in 2021 to USD

15 billion in 2022 (Business Insider Intelligence).

Digital influencers are everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blog or social media posts (Abidin, 2015).

Several categories of digital influencers can be identified by their range, which is connected with the number of people who follow them. In this context, several categories of influencers can be distinguished: celebrities (over 5 million), mega influencers

(1 million–5 million), top influencers (over 500 thousand), macro-influencers (100–500 thousand), middle level influencers (20 thousand–100 thousand), micro-influencers (less than 20 thousand) and nano-influencers (1 thousand–10 thousand) (Wielki, 2020). It is expected that nano and micro influencers will continue to rise due to better engagement rates in niche community brands. In fact, Later and Fohr Influencer Marketing Report revealed that nano influencers have 4% of average feed post engagement rate and micro 2%, while mega influencers have only 0.8% of engagement with the followers. Indeed, although nano and micro influencers may not have massive followings, still have significant social presence and their product recommendations seem to be more trusted as if they are coming from a friend or confidante. Therefore, it is expected that nano and micro influencers will continue to growth, specifically in Instagram and YouTube.

According to the magazine Forbes the content developed by digital influencers could be: inspirational when influencers tell a great story that instantly elevates brand image and fosters strong

brand affinity among their fans; educational when influencers answer the most commonly asked questions or the features of the product that are unique; testimonial when influencers generate reviews and testimonials, showing their fans something that they have experienced and create a desire to purchase; promotional when influencers weave announcements about the sales events into nicely packaged posts that entice their fans to take actions through the offering of unique promo codes; delightful, when influencers are able to turn customer into advocates, thus engaging customers to actively spread the word as ambassadors who can continue the brand's sales cycle automatically.

Influencers will continue to integrate their social media activities with their own content and the content provided by the brands. However, in order to create more individual brand relationships, influencers will start to reduce cooperation with brands for content creation and increase in-house

content production engaging consumers in sharing ideas and co-creation. To increase content attractiveness it is expected that thanks to the younger target group preference for short viral videos, picture sharing and micro-video applications digital influencers will continue to innovate in new video formats.

Digital influencers will increasingly focus on giving a spark to brands via using multiple formats (video, micro video, live presentations, etc.) and multiple screens (tablet

vs. mobile), blending them with newer digital marketing channels. The priority will be given to Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest, in addition to Facebook. The growing popularity of TikTok and Instagram Reels, the vertical video is rapidly becoming the must-have format for influencer marketing. Social media strategist Christina Galbato recommends "focusing on your niche and creating related video content on Instagram Stories and Reels – it's a great way to engage your
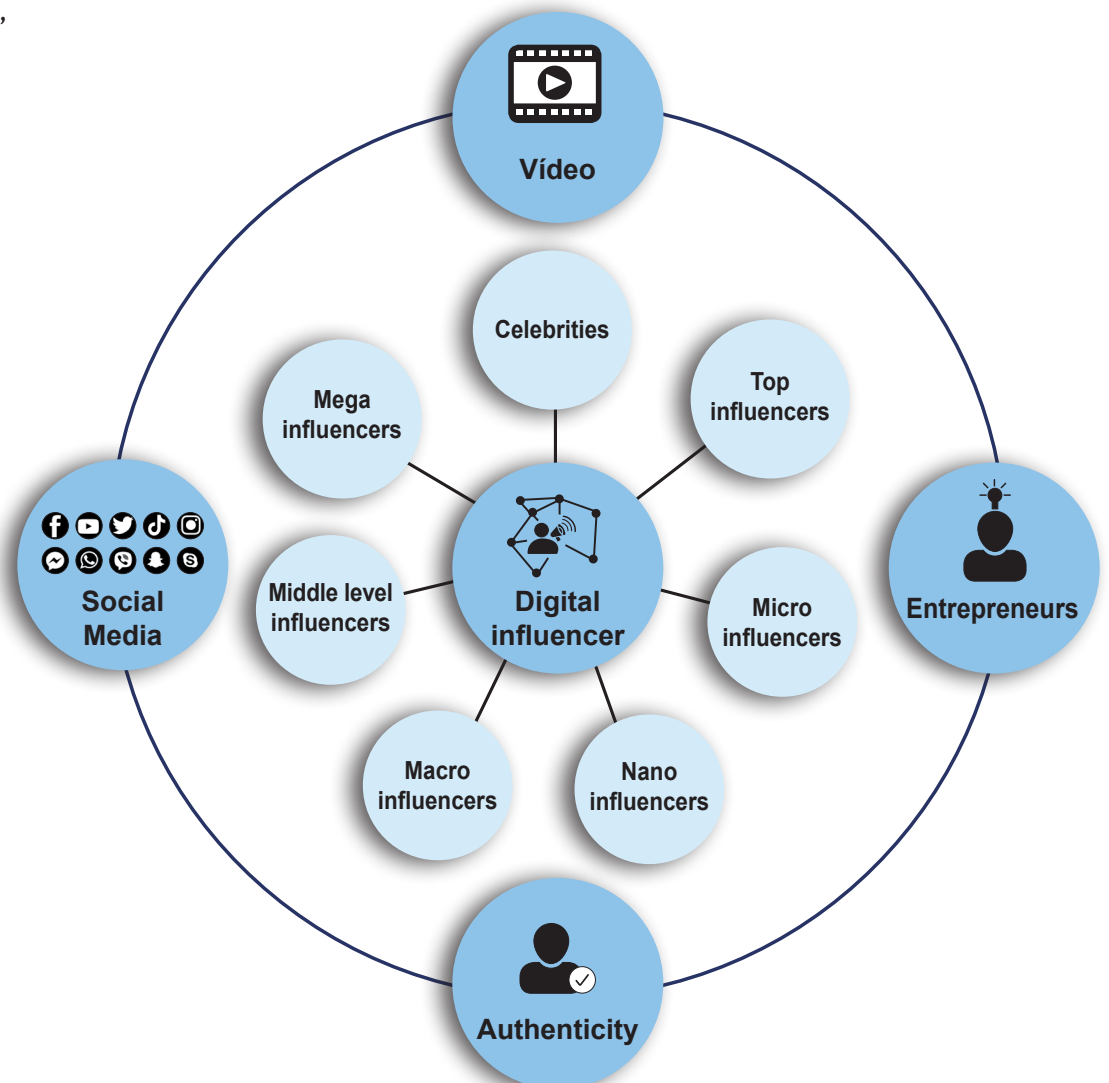
As digitalization progress, social media and technological literacy will become a must-have skill for most jobs, not just in digital marketing

community on a deeper level and provide a ton of value". Social media platforms are launching creator-focused marketplaces introducing new tools and features that help creators and brands connect and collaborate on TikTok and Instagram through brand partnerships, commerce and more.

The mobile usage trend will boom in the whole world with direct impact on the creation of content by digital influencers that is almost consumed entirely in a mobile environment. The route to success will lead via user-friendly responsive designs (both for content and product placement), via more actionable and shorter posts and location based content marketing, enabled by GPS technology.

Another trend that can be observed in the influencer marketing industry is the appearance of entrepreneurs that turned their influence into their own business. Some of them have launched their own products, while others

are open up opportunities for future partnerships with brands. Thus, rather than to do a one-off post or video, digital influencers will be looking to partner with brands on a more ongoing basis, as investing in a long-term relationship is a win-win for both parties. Not only does it build trust with the influencer's community, but it adds a level of legitimacy.

Finally, another growing digital marketing influencer trend is authenticity over perfection on social media. One of the most effective ways to build a digital community is to be authentic and digital influencers are shifting away from the perfectly curated feed aesthetic, and choosing to share less filtered and more in-the-moment photos of their lives. Nichole Ciotti, co-founder of design app, Storyluxe, thinks this trend will continue evolving:

"In the beginning, everyone was forced to be super polished. Now, after some time has passed, people are finding their true voices on social". In this context, brands should

partner with digital influencers who foster real relationships with their community and offer valuable authentic content.

As digitalization progress, social media and technological literacy will become a must-have skill for most jobs, not just in digital marketing. Professionals will be required to master content development and its management, information search, and aggregation of multiple data points for decision making in real time. The digital landscape will become an even more inseparable part of our professional and personal lives.

Major changes in the digital sphere are around the corner, and only those influencers and brands, which are able to find and build their unique digital "footprints" and "meaningfully different" brand experiences, that will be flexible and fast enough to adopt their business models, strategies and plans to these changes, will be the ones, who are able to remain relevant for the years to come.

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THE RISE OF VIDEO AS A MARKETING TOOL

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When we talk about video, the first thing we want to know are the facts and figures, to make an evaluation of the size of this topic. The European Audiovisual Observatory through the ACT (Association of Commercial Television) analysis shares some interesting facts:

119 billion euro is the annual turnover of the European TV sector.

1,122 million people work in the audiovisual industry in Europe.

20 billion euro per year is reinvested in content by Europe's largest commercial broadcasters.

50% of the revenues are reinvested in the creation of audiovisual content

223 minutes per day is the average viewing time of linear TV in the EU.

11,416 TV channels are available in Europe.

298 news channels are available in Europe of which 60% are privately owned.

451 kid's channels are available in Europe of which +300 are privately owned.

Well, this numbers are of traditional media, more specific of television, but we are interested in the digital media, it's a fact that we can watch television in our smartphone, tablet, pc, etc.... And the benefit of the digital is the instantly access to all the media, wherever we are. But this was possible because of the growth of the networks speed, since 1973, the year of the first mobile phone call, until nowadays with 4G (up to 1Gbps), and the promise of 5G to be ten times faster (up to 10Gbps), according to the NOS company, the first Portuguese mobile company with the 5G network, now the streaming of a 4K or 8K video is made without interruption. According to the last report of GSMA, about the state of mobile internet connectivity 2021, 51% of the world's population, in December 2020, were using mobile internet, it's more than 4 billion people, and the global 4G coverage is nearly 85%.

In the next figure/table we can see that in the high-income countries we have almost 75% of the population with high-speed connections in their mobile phones, and has shown in the last paragraph, this enable the

possibility to more and more video to be streamed, and the ease of use of the video has a marketing tool to be more accessible and generalized by companies.
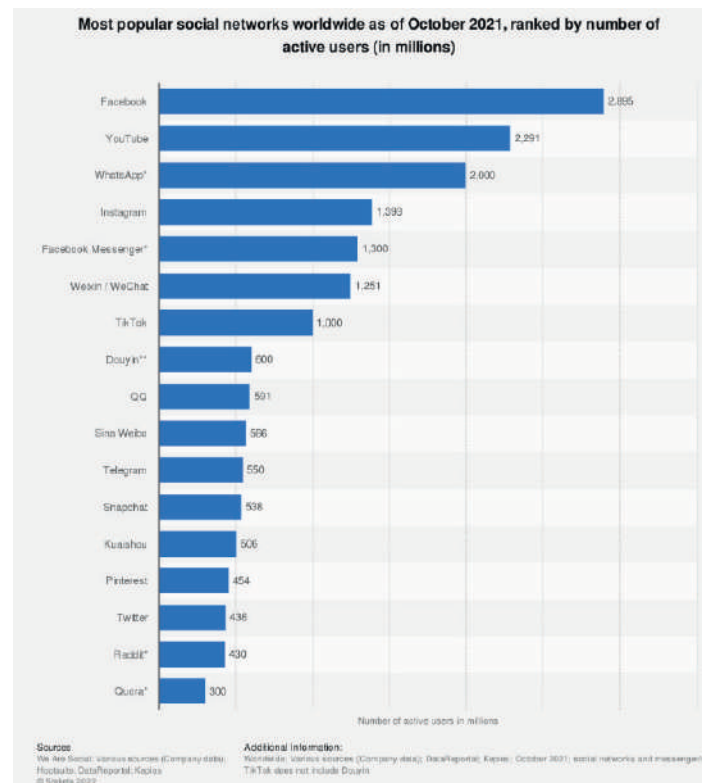

Mobile connections by device type for high-income countries and LMICs (by region), 2020
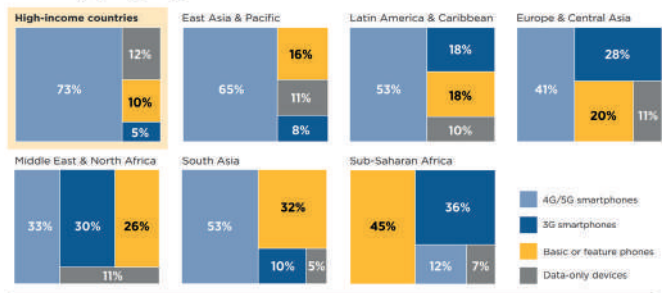
Source: GSMA Intelligence

Video in social platforms

To talk about video in social platforms is important, once more, to see the figures and facts of it. In the next figure/table we can see the main social platforms, and their users knowing that are users with more than one social platform.

Most popular social networks worldwide as of October 2021, ranked by number of active users (in millions)

Facebook is in the top of the social platforms, with more than 2,89 billion active users. And where is video? Can we see the potential of the possible interaction with all these users that companies can have?

According to Wibbitz, in 2022, 82% of all consumer internet traffic will be produced by online videos, since

2017 this number as multiplied 15 times. Video is the main storytelling medium among brands, publishers, friends and family. 500 million unique viewers, are attract every day by the Facebook videos, and Twitter, a 140-character base social platform, has 82% of their users watching video content.

Let's dive a little deeper in a study of Socialinsider of July 2021, about Facebook video, where they analyze 3.977.410 video posts, from May 2020 to May 2021, and these are the findings, that will help the strategy of marketers with video in Facebook. The video usage as increase to 15,5%, from the previous 12% in 2020, we can see the rise of this tool. As the type of posts, we see that bigger brands with bigger accounts/profiles are posting 16,83% Facebook video while small accounts/ profiles publish only 12,51% of video content. We see a shift of content creators from their home studios to the live-video-on-the-go, it's a TikTok and Instagram (reels) trend, so videos in Facebook are also shifting to vertical with 10 words, of maximum description length, such a simple call to action, is the best option to increase the engagement rate from 0.29% to 0,44%. The average of CTR for video posts in 2021 is 7,97%, but for small accounts the CTR rise to 29,66%, so if you are a small business videos will multiply, almost, by four the average CTR. On Facebook pre-recorded videos represent 81,13%, and live videos 18,87%, an increase of 55% from 2020, its true that we have more control with editing a video, and exclude what went not so well, but people search authenticity not perfect videos that look unreal, and a live video is more of a real people experience.

Facebook average engagement rate by live video by profile size

Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: May 2020 - May 2021

As the previous figure shows the difference in the engagement rate of live vs non live video by profile size, as we can see in small accounts, until 50.000 it duplicates it. About the length of the video we have two important facts, between 2 and 5 minutes for non-live videos, and more than one hour to live videos where they will generate an average engagement rate of 0,46%, independently of the size of the Facebook account. These strategies, reported in the Socialinsider study will help companies to get more results with video in Facebook.

Another topic of growth is the repurposing video for social media, the big brands have the resources to have videos everywhere. According to Wistia if you repurpose your videos across the social platforms you are saving time and money. To Wistia, the four main social media platforms, to repurpose the existing videos, of your company, for organic content are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. A little research, and editing, is the main work to repurpose the videos that you have already. Facebook is the largest social media platform, and we should be present, with videos, in two ways, in the News Feed videos and in Facebook Stories. News Feed videos appear in the main feed of the followers of the company, they can be square or horizontally, or vertically oriented. From previous studies, presented here, we know that the best video length is between 2 and 5 minutes, for the best engagement the vertical ones have a superior rate on average, according to Socialinsider. Facebook Stories are short, disappear after 24 hours, are vertical videos that appear right at the top of the company's followers' feeds, you only have 20 seconds. According to Wistia Facebook reports that more than 60% of people that saw Facebook Stories became more interested in a brand or product. In Twitter the video watch time is increasing 67% year over year, and because people go to Twitter to find new and interesting things, you can edit your past live videos, that are in your website, or advertise upcoming events, like webinars, product launches or other presentations. Wistia goes deeper about the aspect ratio of the videos, that should be
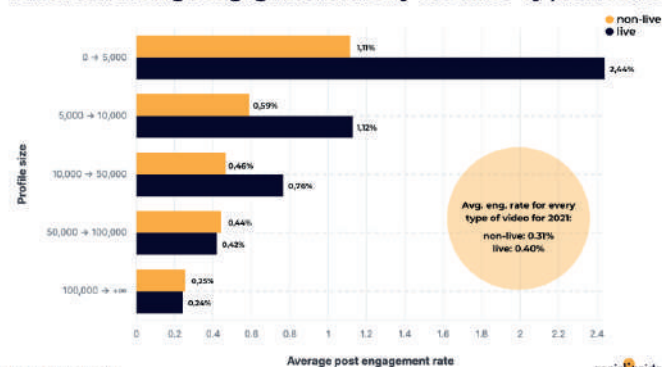
1:2.39 and 2.39:1, so you can edit normal videos to this ratio without cutting too much content. Twitter allows videos from 0.5 seconds to 2:20 minutes (140 seconds) in length, like the character limit for Tweets. Wistia also suggest that since Twitter content has a short lifespan you shouldn't be shy about Retweeting or reposting your videos so you can get the most possible value from them. About Instagram Wistia presents that video content engages 49% more than static posts. The best types of videos that work for B2B brands are product tutorials, behind-the-scenes content, and previews. If you will have a webinar you can promote it, with a trailer. Instagram organic feed videos can be up to 60 seconds long, show up in your followers feed and live on your profile page. Instagram supports 3 aspect ratio, 16:9 (landscape), 1:1 (square), and 4:5 (slightly vertical) so when editing your videos for repurposing be in mind to not cut important things. Wistia calls the attention for Instagram Stories, the 15 seconds videos, that are vertically-oriented and you can add text, stickers and emojis, and if your videos are longer than 15 seconds the platform will automatically cut it into several consecutive videos. And the last format in Instagram is IGTV, that is their answer to YouTube, the videos can be up to an hour in length if you use the desktop version or 15 minutes videos on mobile. Your Instagram profile page host these videos and also the IGTV tab, Wistia suggests vertical videos for Stories and IGTV. The last platform, that Wistia submits for repurposing is LinkedIn, and in their own research, its user are 20 times more likely to share video than any other type of content. Videos in LinkedIn can be square, landscape or vertical, with 10 minutes of maximum length, but as Wistia, also, suggests, since LinkedIn videos are autoplay as users scroll, the first seconds should show an engaged content, otherwise users will keep scrolling. Videos under 30 seconds see a 200% lift in completion rate, says a LinkedIn internal study. Well as resume from this Wistia study the 3 best practices for social media videos are to grab the attention in the first two to three seconds, add captions or subtitles, because about

85% of online video is watched with the sound off, Facebook, LinkedIn and IGTV offer auto-captioning, in Twitter and Instagram feed videos you have to create captions before uploading and finally upload directly to each platform, is tempting to make a YouTube link, or from other video platform, but in a Facebook study native videos received 168% more engagement than links to YouTube. Don't give the opportunity to your users to open another window and lost their attention.

We would like to present a last study from Content Marketing Institute to manufacturing marketers, and as a resume the top three types of content created in the last 12 months were videos (86%), short articles/posts (83%) and virtual events/webinars/online courses (70%). Videos were the content type that produce the best results, and 85% of the respondents expect their organization to continue to invest in video in 2022.

Well, to finish this article about video, we will give a list of type of videos, that are advised from Wistia, to complement your marketing strategi. Remember video is a tool, and can have many forms... Product videos, explainer videos, onboarding videos, internal training videos, testimonial videos, promotional videos, company culture videos, video voicemails, sales presentations, social videos, teaser videos for social media, live streams, podcast videos, videos series, and full-length features and documentaries. And remember you have always a camera with you, your phone... start record and make videos.

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https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/manufacturing-research-report-2022-FINAL.pdf. Accessed 20 January, 2022onsumers to profitable actions (Pulizzi, 2013).

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SHOPPING IN THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL COMMERCE

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In addition to TikTock, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Snapchat, it will not be surprising if Twitter, LinkedIn and Reddit develop more initiatives in social commerce in the future, although this movement depends on the interest of its users

More and more companies seek to contact customers through various channels, provide new forms of interaction, allowing the customer to have integrated experiences, have access to products and services without great effort, and preferably be able to acquire them without having to change platforms or open a new window in the browser. Therefore, it is not surprising that the concept of social commerce, created in 2005 by Yahoo, will present a new breath in 2022 and, also contribute to the realm of another concept, another concern of marketers, which is the development of an omnichannel strategy.

According to Statista (2022), the worldwide sales volume through social commerce between 2021 and 2025 is expected to show annual growth of about 30% and in 2026 a growth of 35%, from a sales volume of 792 billion dollars in 2021 to 2,900 billion dollars in 2026.

Social commerce involves using social interactions and user-generated content to promote through social media the purchasing and selling of items and services. So, social commerce occurs, for example on a social media platform through price comparators, taking from the experience that the customer has on this platform and integrating a simplified purchasing process. It differs from e-commerce, which takes place on a company's digital store, branded app, or in a marketplace. Or, looking at social commerce in another way, it is the e-commerce supported by social media marketing and can be categorized into evaluations and reviews, recommendations and references, blogs, social networks, communities, forums, aggregators of content, price comparators, participatory commerce, social cashback and social shopping.

Social Commerce presents advantages for the seller, for the consumer, and also for other entities, promoting, for example, the emergence of new applications or new forms of payment. In relation to the advantages for the seller, we can mention, for example, increased sales, improved customer relationships, allowing for ultra-precise audience targeting, increasing brand reach, improving SEO, and providing a focus group with convenient, frictionless buying. Also, it offers a seamless shopping experience, provides a social experience and facilitates feedback from other buyers.

One of the strands of social commerce that made news in August 2021 was social shopping, due to the beginning of the use of the social network TikTok, based on an agreement with Shopify to allow consumers to make purchases in a simple way, by clicking on the option "Shopping", lighting a mini window that is connected to the online store. But the potential of social commerce increased even more when purchases at TikTok were also made possible through Square,

Ecwid, Prestashop (still waiting for Wix, Shopline, OpenCart, and Base). The integration of the catalog directly into TikTok and the possible use of it as organic content will further enhance the business.

In addition to TikTock, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat, it will not be surprising if Twitter, LinkedIn, and Reddit develop more initiatives in social commerce in the future, although this movement depends on the interest of its users.

Social shopping sites make the presentation more personal by giving members the ability to create catalogs associated with their personal style, product lists, and search. The goal is to build a community that functions as a tribe, creating dynamics that encourage members to talk about products and/or services, and make suggestions for sharing, that spreads among social contacts, increasing the desired market penetration but also widening the brand's area of influence.

Thus, one of the trends in 2022 will be the continued development of social commerce, with new experiences, new social media propensities, and in particular, social networks will incorporate new technologies and new features that allow them to make the customer experience increasingly unique. For this, it is necessary to continue to develop and improve a customer journey that also integrates the possibility
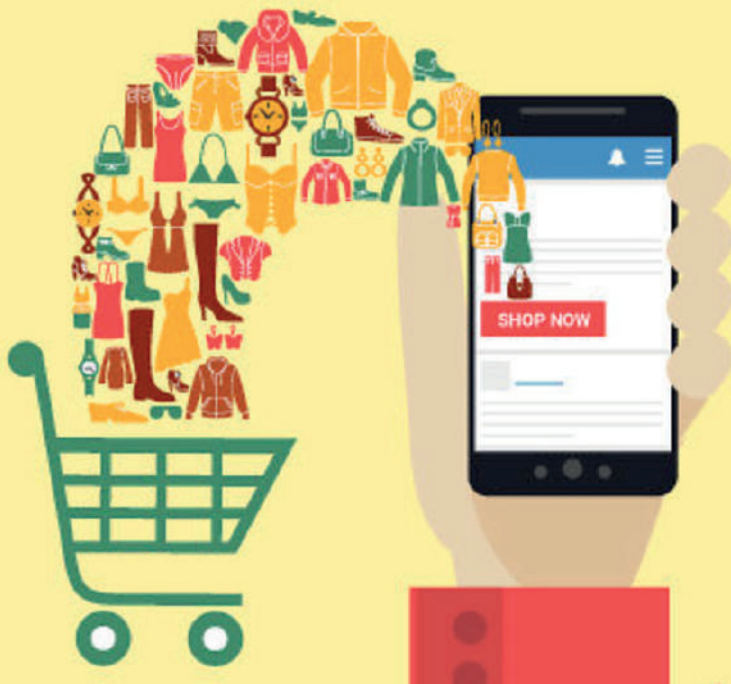
events, the increase in mobile marketing, live video shopping, augmented reality, micro communication segmentation, partnerships between brands of different sectors that impact the same customer and eventually complement each other, and increased marketing budgets allocated to paid ads, which may refer to specific social commerce initiatives, thereby enhancing consumer exposure.

of the customer interacting with the brand through social commerce, specific content, but taking into account marketing trends, such as inclusive marketing. Inclusive marketing can be used in various aspects of offline and online marketing, but as a result of the ability of viral marketing to act more immediately and with other repercussions on social media and more specifically on social networks, it can be combined with the objective of boosting buying immediately, but also increasing brand awareness through social commerce. As examples of inclusive marketing, we can mention the use of communication in a comprehensive way of the race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, language, nationality, education, income, beliefs, and upbringing. Thus,

in 2022, there will be the possibility of incorporating inclusive marketing into social commerce, making it more human and bringing the brand closer to its followers and customers.

In addition to the communication campaigns, it is also expected that brands develop specific sales promotions supported by the various features of social media, namely using storytelling more oriented to each medium, but also bearing in mind the phase of the sales funnel in which the customer is seeking to monetize social commerce as much as possible.

Also in social commerce, in 2002, it was possible to follow other trends in digital marketing, namely the use of video, the transmission of purely online or hybrid

Social commerce will contribute to a better consumer experience and the consumer journey will be increasingly through, incorporating what they want and not what marketing wants. And, just as in 2021, the consumer wanted social commerce and is expected to continue to want more and more, regardless of the business area, although there are products that will continue to have some primacy.

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THE SOPHISTICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Studies on the use of the social networks carried out by We Are Social and Hootsuite have shown a continuous rise in the number of users of social networks and other digital platforms all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic led to significant growth in the penetration rate of the social networks, and greater sophistication resulting from new features and functionalities. In this backdrop, companies have been perfecting how they use social networks and digital platforms, with many managing them by integrating them into their communication and marketing plans. Hence, the marketing and distribution of products, services and experiences increasingly makes use of the social networks and other digital platforms, which all contributes to making social media an integral part of a marketing strategy.

The social networks that have the most potential for development are TikTok and Instagram. However, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp have also become more sophisticated.

TikTok, the social network for short videos, which is extremely popular worldwide, especially among the young, is testing a similar tool to the Twitch subscriber model, where users pay to access private content. This Chinese social network is still testing a tipping tool, whereby its users can donate money to content creators. Another test being carried out amongst a restricted group of users involves the inclusion of a new functionality: the "repost" button. Two further strategic features of the social network for brands – TikTok Ads and live events – are being fine-tuned. They provide two excellent opportunities for brands to increase their visibility through fun, spontaneous and creative content.

Instagram, a mainly visual social network but one which is seeing a growing number of messages in video form, is exploring two new feeds that can complement the current one. First, the chronological feed with no recommendations and with more transparent functioning rules. Second, a favourites feed, which allows users to create a list with their preferences. Another functionality that may undergo development in this social network is the possibility to synchronise videos and images with
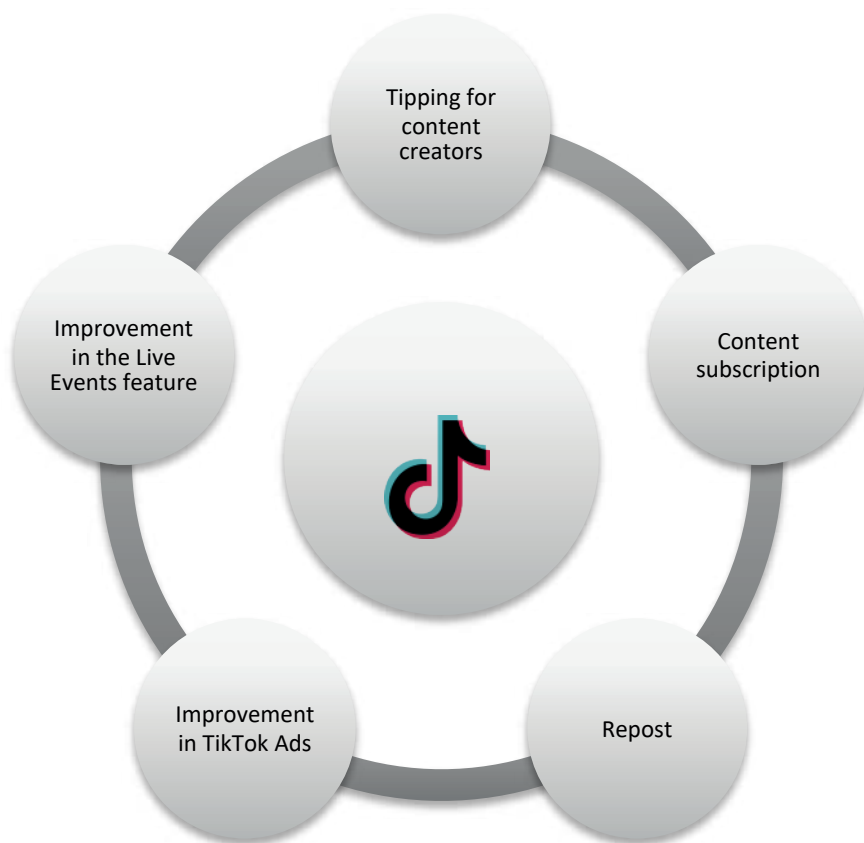

Figure 1. TikTok Trends

music, like TikTok does. As such, users will be able to select music on Instagram to edit fun, spontaneous and creative content, just like on TikTok.

Instagram has announced the creation of a Parental Control tool to allow parents to define time limits for using the social network. Moreover, the new tool aims to generate graphs showing the time youngsters spend on Instagram. This functionality also has the goal of allowing users to report suspicious profiles, for greater protection and well-being.

Digital specialist Marco Gouveia highlighted on his Instagram profile that the social network will allow "secret" likes to be given to Stories, editing of carousels without deleting them, a full-screen Reels/Stories feed, moving away from the static, and also allow responses to comments on posts through Reels. But additional the new features that the specialist has been announcing entail Instagram creating paid subscriptions to access exclusive content from content creators, and an account status that details the situation of the accounts, such as if any content has been removed from it and

why. This resource will allow the users of the social network to permanently know what is happening with their account. After the social network blackout in 2021, Instagram is testing a new resource in USA that will alert users when the service is experiencing technical difficulties. Also noteworthy is the permission to publish the date and time of the next Lives in the profile of the content creators, which Instagram is preparing to make available, and the option to add a reminder. Finally, a higher number of possible answers in the opinion polls of Stories to

increase engagement will probably be another upgrade in the sophistication of this social network.

As Instagram becomes more sophisticated, it is increasingly providing essential features resembling those provided by TikTok. Hence, video content, namely momentary short and vertical video in Reels and Stories, will tend to occupy the same importance as the images traditionally posted on Instagram. The increased sophistication of the social networks is not exclusive to TikTok and Instagram, but it is these two that have proven
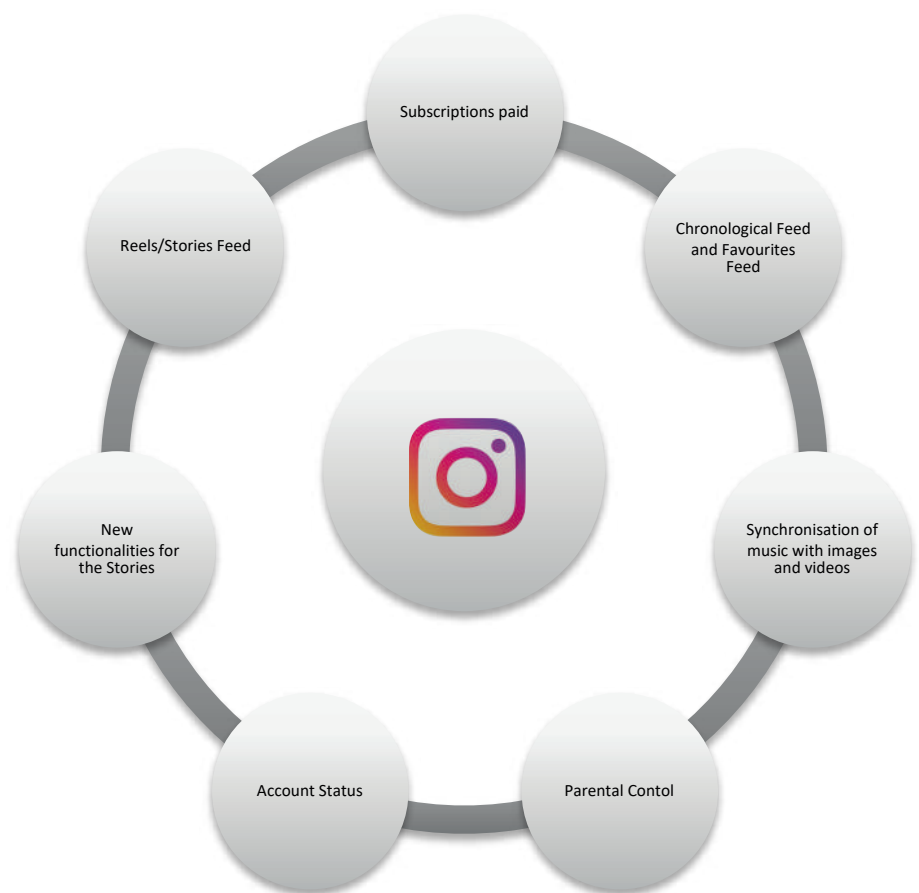

Figure 2. Instagram Trends

most innovative. The social media platforms in general, and the social networks in particular, are constantly changing.

As regards the sophistication of the social media platforms and especially the social networks, other trends can also be identified, such as:

Advanced social commerce applications;

New augmented reality technologies for the social networks and social commerce;

More frequent audio content, including on Facebook;

Development of virtual communities and metaverse worlds;

Increased sophistication of social media intelligence platforms.

Keeping track of the latest developments in the digital platforms is increasingly important to define the strategy and tactics for the digital marketing of brands. In the background of the strategic management of social networks, it is essential to know about the advanced development of the monitoring tools and social media intelligence and reporting, which provide essential support to measure the business dynamics, the competition, trends, opportunities, and most importantly, the consumers' perceptions and feelings. Monitoring and social media intelligence platforms

help increase competitive intelligence which is more and more decisive to make sure brands keep ahead of their competitors.

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TRENDS IN THE USE OF BIG DATA

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Concepts such as the internet of things, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing and big data are some of the buzzwords of digital technology that improve storage capacity and the progress of machine learning, contributing to a considerable increase in the volume of data (Li et al. al., 2017). The International Data Corporation (IDC) produced the Data Age 2025 report for Seagate, which predicts that the global data sphere will reach 175 zettabytes by 2025, demonstrating that the amount of information produced is so tremendous that there is no simple method to collect, store and analyse it. Big Data is a complicated concept to define precisely since the very notion of big varies in terms of the volume of collected data . On the other hand, data is a concept that refers to a set of data that exhibits various characteristics, such as:

Volume alludes to the large volumes of data generated daily from various sources.

Velocity refers to specific technologies' data collection and processing speed to deliver desired results.

Veracity concerns bias, noise and abnormality in the data.

Variety refers to structured, unstructured, and semi-structured data collected from multiple sources.

Value is one of the most significant data characteristics, as valuable information must be extracted from large data sets.

Volatility is one of the biggest challenges facing big data today. It is the process by which the relevance of information is measured.

Visualisation refers to the way data is presented, which needs to be accessed and interpreted easily.

In summary, the concept of big data can be defined as a large set of data that, after being processed through specific software, are quickly made available to users.

The term big data is spread a little everywhere, whether in the form of handling structured data, such as traditional organisational databases (for example, Customer Relationship Management - CRM) or unstructured data, driven by new communication technologies and user editing platforms (e.g. text, images and videos). However, advanced data analysis software systems have emerged with technological innovations that have increased the number of data and significantly shortened their analysis time. The increase in the speed of big data analysis is one of the most powerful technology trends and is transforming

countless business processes and operations around the world. Big Data helps thwart hacker intrusions and prevent fraud by setting strict security and privacy standards. It is important to create policies that regulate data access, use, and privacy in this sense. The legislation emerging around the world on data protection is a good start, but there is still a lot of room to evolve.

Big data allows for predictive analytics combined with data analysis and "smart" machine learning. Predictive analytics is the practical result of business intelligence and big data. Many companies already use predictive analytics to apply artificial intelligence algorithms and perform data mining and predictive marketing to optimise their processes. Data mining is a process of extracting insights from a given set of data, being the basis for business intelligence and big data analysis (Choi et al., 2017). Business intelligence tools make big data more available for use by lowering the computation and experience required to interpret the data. Users of these tools, even if they are not data mining experts, can perform analytical functions such as exploring datasets or performing data mining tasks as long as they know how to use these tools. However, for more demanding analysis, the roles of data analysts and data directors have emerged, and the need for these specialists is already high. In 2019, a Harvey/Nash/KPMG study surveyed 3,600 CIOs and technology executives from 108 countries and found that 67% of them faced skills shortages. The top three most scarce skills were big data/analytics, security and artificial intelligence (AI).

Predictive analytics based on big data explicitly designed for marketing purposes aims to provide knowledge to marketers to define strategies, operations and actions appropriate to the target audiences and customers they are intended for. From this concept, the term "marketing intelligence" arises, which refers to the development of information from data about consumers and customers to make marketing decisions. The data mining technique can help achieve this goal by extracting or detecting patterns or predicting customer behavior in large databases. Decision-making support is a vital issue for organisations and digital marketers, providing insights to help answer critical questions such as: what is the most suitable product for a specific market; which communication channels to use; what is the right price; which type of promotional and advertising actions are most appropriate.

AI is a technology that allows computers to perform tasks that usually require human intelligence. Some of the popular AI applications include automated customer service systems such as machine learning which is a system that can autonomously modify its behavior based on its own experience. This behavior change consists of establishing logical rules, which aim to improve the performance of a task or, depending on the application, make the most appropriate decision for the context. These rules are generated based on recognising patterns within the analysed data.

I will be embedded in a significant part of big data and analytics solutions. This AI integration will

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help automate and improve decision-making processes and increase the accuracy of data analysis. AI will help organisations analyse large data sets more efficiently and discover patterns and insights that would otherwise be hidden.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is another trend to add to the list of big data and analytics trends. IoT refers to the network of physical objects or "things" connected to the internet. These objects can include anything from wearable technology and home appliances to cars and industrial equipment. The number of devices connected to the IoT is expected to grow exponentially. As more and more electronic devices are connected to the internet, the volume of data generated will also increase.

With the IoT, Big Data has more and more data. Understanding purchase intentions, behaviors, needs, wants, and patterns are relevant to marketing. The IoT allows you to collect and store information in real-time about the product's status, how long ago it was purchased, the frequency of use, and other data that allow you to more accurately identify the

most relevant moments and messages for each individual.

Streaming data analysis and interpretation allows IoT data to be analysed and deciphered as it is collected in real-time. This makes organisations take appropriate action before an issue becomes critical. In inbound marketing, which is a strategy focused on attracting, converting and delighting customers, the relevance of messages is extremely important, not only in their content but also when they are delivered, in what channel and space.

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have led organisations to incorporate information from these platforms into their marketing solutions. In addition to the so-called leads obtained via Inbound Marketing tools, a new way to attract potential new customers is to use Outbound marketing tools based on technologies that

blend BigData and Artificial Intelligence.

This is very important when designing Outbound campaigns, as data about consumers (from demographics to everyday preferences) is needed to attract and engage them with products or services. In this way, resources that are usually used to find the right users (such as test campaigns, focus groups to define personas, remarketing, etc.) are saved and invested in Outbound. And so, campaigns are more accurate, attract highly qualified leads, and achieve higher conversions. Spotify, a music streaming platform, already uses Big Data as an ally of its Outbound Marketing strategies. In addition to personalised lists based on each listener's choices, interests, and preferences, the company provides advertisements tailored to the user's profile.

In conclusion, the use of Big Data by companies is a trend that will grow in the coming years associated with AI and IoT. In digital marketing, big data can be a differentiating element in several processes, whether in the consumer behavior predictability or in creating marketing strategies to conquer new consumers, make sales and increase profits.

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