

Digital Marketing and its impact on the commercial development of Guayaquil's microenterprises

Marketing Digital y su incidencia en el desarrollo comercial de la microempresa de Guayaquil

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ABSTRACT

This research work will analyze the use of digital marketing in microenterprises in the commercial sector of the city of Guayaquil and how the application of such marketing strategies affects the development of microenterprises, to know what happens when implementing digital marketing in their operations. In Ecuador there are numerous enterprises formed under the need or innovation, turning them into small businesses because of the few staff that compose it; however, these enterprises are formed in a very simple way without taking into account a strategic marketing plan, which leads them to disappear from the market. With the use of marketing, they allow not only to position their brand in the market, but also to improve their sales, allowing them to grow or maintain themselves in time. The methodology is descriptive field and documentary since the variables to be considered for

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the analysis will be described, apart from collecting bibliographic documentation of previous authors who have done similar work to reach an analysis in conjunction with the data collected while allowing to know not only the state in which microenterprises handle these terms but also the evolution of a microenterprise when applying marketing strategies, specifically digital marketing that in today's business world is used with increasing importance.

Keywords: digital marketing, micro-enterprise development, commercial sector, marketing strategies

RESUMEN

En este trabajo de investigación se analizará el uso del marketing digital en las microempresas del sector comercial de la ciudad de Guayaquil y como incide la aplicación de dichas estrategias de marketing en el desarrollo microempresarial, para saber que ocurre al momento de implementar el marketing digital en sus operaciones. En el Ecuador existen numerosos emprendimientos formados bajo la necesidad o innovación, convirtiéndolas en pequeñas empresas por el poco personal que lo compone; sin embargo, dichos emprendimientos se forman de manera muy simple sin tener en cuenta un plan estratégico de marketing, lo que las lleva a que desaparezcan del mercado. Con el uso del marketing permiten no solo posicionar su marca en el mercado, sino que ayuda a mejorar sus ventas, permitiéndoles crecer o mantenerse en el tiempo. La metodología es descriptiva de campo y documental puesto que se describirán las variables a considerar para el análisis, aparte de recopilar documentación bibliográfica de autores previos que han realizado trabajos similares para llegar a un análisis en conjunto con los datos recopilados permitiendo a la vez conocer no solo el estado en que las microempresas manejan esos términos sino también la evolución de una microempresa al aplicar estrategias de marketing, específicamente del marketing digital que en el mundo empresarial actual se utiliza cada vez con más importancia.

Palabras clave: marketing digital, desarrollo microempresarial, sector comercial, estrategias de marketing

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, day by day companies seek to innovate and stay in the market without their representation in it tends to decline, for the same reason these corporations allocate part of the income to the study and development of strategies that allow them to improve their performance and income; this is the case of the implementation of marketing in a company, marketing allows that through techniques and studies businesses or companies improve the marketing of their products. Every large company started as a microenterprise, either by the need of the owner to supply their basic needs

for lack of employment or by the desire to become independent and provide a distinctive service or product in the market. Microenterprises have lower levels of income, employees and capital than large corporations, so the income generated in the commercial exercise was mostly destined for their own consumption or that of the business. On the other hand, there are owners of microenterprises that do not have the adequate knowledge to formalize the operation of their business, which over time leads to the business remaining stagnant without a view to growth.

In Ecuador there are a wide range of microenterprises that are formed due to the desire of its citizens to undertake, however, they are not able to be maintained over time due to various factors such as educational, economic, political, among others that directly or indirectly affect the stability and permanence of the microenterprise. When we talk about education, we emphasize the little or no knowledge that entrepreneurs or microentrepreneurs have regarding the operation or organization of a business. This leads to not being able to take full advantage of the tools or mechanisms that exist for a business to thrive as in the case of marketing and as today, increasingly delve deeper into technological life, digital marketing is a way to enter that world. This work arises in order to conduct a study analyzing how the use of digital marketing in commercial microenterprises in Guayaquil affects or influences their development.

The work is composed of a literature review where basic and key concepts about marketing and the different types that exist of it are addressed, apart from also developing the concepts that allow understanding what it is to be a microenterprise. After the review of concepts, the methodology to be used in the article will be developed, detailing the type of research, the tools and methodological sources to be used. As a final point, the results obtained from the data collection and the analysis of the same with respect to the microenterprise development will be shown, without forgetting that the conclusions that the different authors reached with the realization of this work will be developed.

In this section the key concepts, topologies or characteristics of the elements that make up the topic are developed for the understanding of the same. Among the variables to be considered is the concept of microenterprise with its characteristics, the concept of marketing along with the different types that exist, delving more into digital marketing among other aspects that will be based on references of authors who have previously developed similar topics.

The National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, 2019) catalogs microenterprises as those that maintain annual sales of less than \$100,000 and that are made up of one to nine people. With these characteristics, it is possible to have a general notion of what a microenterprise implies, basically they are businesses dedicated to any economic activity, usually not dedicated to manufacturing in their beginnings, and characterized by their small size in several aspects such as initial capital of the company, annual sales, number of employees, etc., taking into account the legislation and definition stipulated by each country.

Microenterprises generally arise from the owner's need to undertake an idea, either to satisfy basic personal needs or to achieve personal improvement. On the other hand, three types of microenterprises are identified according to the Etecé Editorial Team (2021) which are: Survival, without capital base because it is of immediate production as is the case of street vendors; Expansion, has income but without being sufficient to develop it; and finally Transformation, higher income that allows forming the capital that will allow them to grow; in this case the microenterprises used for the analysis belong to those that have certain structuring and handle good amounts of turnover. However, although microenterprises have an influence on the creation of jobs and dynamize the economy, there are barriers to their emergence and development, such as lack of liquidity, poor management, lack of government support, inability to access technology, etc. (Mendoza Miele, Macías Macías, & Parrales Poveda, 2021)

Economic activities are those processes carried out in an economy for the creation of products and services, these are divided into three major sectors known: the primary, secondary and tertiary sector; the first two sectors, unlike the third, are considered productive sectors for the purpose of obtaining a tangible product in the economy, on the other hand the tertiary sector does not perform the process of creating a commodity as such but is focused on offering different services, among the highlights are transportation, financial services, trade, health, tourism among others. (Salazar López, 2016) In addition to this, the commercial activity as indicated in the tertiary sector, consists of buying and selling goods, products or services where the merchant who acquired the product sells it to the final consumer either for his own consumption or to return with the resale cycle; although this activity is within the tertiary sector, the reality is that trade can be found between seller and consumer in the different processes for the creation of a product. (Editorial Grudemi, 2017)

In Guayaquil, most microenterprises operate in the commercial sector because, unlike other sectors, operating expenses are not as high as they would be for a manufacturing company, for example. However, it should be noted that this sector, due to its ease of operation, tends to be saturated, so there is a lot of competition, which at the same time generates little income.

The market and the companies that are part of it, are constantly competing with each other using mechanisms or tools that allow them not only to stay in the market but to scale and position themselves in a better way in it. Marketing is fundamental for a company to achieve its proposed objectives and grow as projected. Marketing not only seeks to improve sales strategies, but also to position the brand in the market. As pointed out by León and Medina (2019) agree that the use of marketing in business allows owners to achieve their objectives, thus enabling them to obtain what they want and need through the creation, supply and free exchange of products. By 2013 the American Marketing Association (known as AMA for its acronym in English) develops the most recent concept on marketing defined as the activity where "a set of relevant

practices and processes to create, communicate, release and exchange offerings that have value for customers, partners and for society in general." (Sixto García, 2014)

In other words, it is understood that marketing would be the rudder or steering wheel within the company that allows it to capture, retain and build customer loyalty, and seeks through the analysis of market and consumer behavior to satisfy those needs. Thanks to this, the company can better know the consumer with respect to their tastes and preferences and thus be able to offer the customer the expected product, maintain its existence and visualize its success. (Morante Asesores, 2016) Marketing concentrates several objectives that in the concepts of the different authors are constantly being repeated. Among the most outstanding are (Digital Elevation Group, 2022):

1. Selling more, building customer loyalty
2. Increasing the visibility of brands, products and services
3. Manage your brand
4. Building good relationships with consumers and partners
5. Educating the market
6. Engaging partners

Since the definition of marketing has accompanied society throughout time, it is understandable that, just like society, its concept has evolved due to different changes. For this reason the study of marketing is very broad due to the constant updating that it has and that goes according to the growth of society; among the main types of marketing that have been identified are. (Mare Nostrum Edition, 28):

1. Offline or traditional marketing: those actions that take place outside the Internet, such as merchandising or telemarketing.
2. Digital Marketing: online strategy
3. Outbound Marketing: active approach by companies to win new customers.
4. Inbound Marketing: used as a strategy to attract consumers, converting them into leads and then into real customers.
5. Content marketing: offer relevant and valuable content to the consumer to hook them into buying.
6. Email marketing: essential in digital marketing, content and offers are sent by email to approach the consumer and get them to buy.
7. Social Media Marketing: it is mainly used to inform, observe and interact with the target audience.
8. SEO and SEM: (Search Engine Optimization) techniques applied to the website to improve its position in search engines. SEM (Search Engine Marketing) practices carried out on a website to obtain greater visibility through advertising campaigns.
9. Neuromarketing: measures the neural activities of customers or target audiences when they are exposed to campaigns or advertisements.

Marketing over the years has been evolving and adapting to the current circumstances that society has to deal with, in this case the consolidation of the internet has been a

new challenge for companies in the adequacy of marketing strategies. According to Uribe & Sabogal (2021) there is currently talk of "digital" marketing, which apart from considering the typical criteria of traditional marketing, also takes into consideration the "integration of technologies associated with technological evolution and the management of massive data." In addition to the above, digital marketing consists of the set of marketing strategies that occur in the online world and seek some kind of conversion by the user." (Selman, 2017) For (Afrina, Tasneem, & Kaniz, 2015) digital marketing incorporates a wide selection of marketing tactics for services, products and brands that primarily use the Internet as the primary mode of promotion, apart from radio, mobile, television and other traditional media.

In the case of the use of marketing through television, this is still one of the sources to promote products or services which in joint action with digital media can cover a broad sector without discriminating the information to anyone, since using traditional media reaches those people who do not have the conditions to use digital media either by economic difficulties or lack of internet connection where the family could live.

Digital marketing has several tools that allow the company to use the one that best suits the needs of the same in order to improve the organization considerably, the following tools are listed below (Toledano, 2015)

- Online advertising: The company can deliver the message about the products or services through the Internet.
- Email marketing: Similar function to the previous one with the difference that this one focuses on sending information to the customers' email.
- Social networks: The most important marketing channel, allowing the creation, exchange of ideas, information and images about the company's products or services.
- Text messages: By using cellular devices to send text messages, information about the product or service offered by the company is sent.
- Affiliate marketing: This is performance-based, the company rewards its affiliates for each visit or customer they bring to the business.
- Pay per click (PPC): Pay per click is good for search engines and advertisers, it is a way to "earn" clicks to your website by using advertising.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Since the purpose of the research work is to analyze the impact of the use of digital marketing in a commercial microenterprise in Guayaquil, the methodology to be used is descriptive, together with field and documentary methods, because through observation and comparison of historical data collected from microenterprises regarding sales and use of digital tools used to achieve market positioning and growth. The descriptive methodology is used because it allows to know the characteristics of the elements that make up the research work. For the author Salkind (1997) the descriptive method had

the objective of describing the situations, characters, predominant attitudes of this research, highlighting the most relevant facts so that the researcher can carry out a complete analysis of these components. On the other hand, the approach used for the work is qualitative, which consists of the examination of a situation or problem studied and that as the research develops, a coherent theory is formed based on what is observed. (Esterberg, 2002) In other words, it gathers factual data to analyze them and reach a general conclusion, as an inductive process.

Regarding the modality of the research, due to the bibliographic compilation that is carried out to obtain the data, the field and documentary modality is used; the analysis of the real events that took place in a place of study, such as Guayaquil, is what makes it a field study. (2022) the data needed to conduct the research are taken in real, uncontrolled environments; on the other hand, the historical review of previous works with respect to their opinions or conclusions, as well as the review of statistical data over time on the subject, is what allows us to consider the work as documentary. For this, both primary and secondary sources are considered to obtain the concepts of digital marketing, microenterprise, among others, and at the same time the statistical data of microenterprises over the years, as well as the use of technology in citizens to make purchases.

RESULTS

According to previous research, apart from the statistical collection of national governmental institutions, it is obtained that commercial microenterprises are concentrated in the city of Guayaquil and that they are generally engaged in the purchase and sale of clothing or food such as restaurants or neighborhood stores. However, although they represent a large number in the national territory, in terms of sales volume they are still among the last in the ranking. The year 2020 was a difficult year for the whole Ecuadorian society, companies (regardless of their size) suffered the economic ravages of what was implied by a pandemic that led to an economic paralysis of at least two months. In the case of microenterprises, the number of companies in the territory of Guayaquil had been declining since 2015 so 2020 was no exception to that, however it should be noted that the decline in that year was not very significant but maintained its steady trend, which shows and can be verified with the reality that as well as some companies had to close, others instead arose before the opportunity to sell medical products that society desperately demanded. (INEC, 2022)

On the other hand, technology in the country has been gradually increasing and is that currently adults under 65 years of age belong to 97% who use social networks at least once a month, within that group there are people who use social networks to promote their products or services, being 76% part of the users who perform commercial activities through Facebook and 51% of Instagram users, use their social network to advertise. (Cordero Linzán, 2019). According to Arteaga, Coronel and Acosta. (2018) "The influence of digital marketing in companies in Ecuador is evolving more and more,

due to innovation and adaptation to new technologies that have made it possible to replace traditional activities that previously took a long time." With the pandemic it could be seen that digital marketing is the only one that allows the adaptability of businesses in the circumstances of social isolation that prevented consumers to go to physical stores, which complicated not only the sales of these businesses but also the communication with their customers and in turn forced consumers to use e-commerce as an alternative to make their purchases, which shows that digital marketing is the only way to help the e-commerce business to grow. (Baque Cantos, Baque Moran, & Jaime Baque, 2021)

In Ecuador, the top 5 of the most visited pages today, which generally remain the same over time, first is Google, which allows people to find information of any kind or in this case to search for a company that offers what they want. Followed by YouTube and then Facebook, although between these two it should be noted that Facebook is the most used for the marketing of products or services, as noted at the top. And is that Facebook has also adapted to the needs of its users by creating a kind of Facebook virtual marketplace where you can find the products, apart also that allows you to pay for advertising space in the news of the social network so the use of FB is very interesting for the development of a digital marketing. Finally as indicated in table I, Instagram also appears in the top of the most visited, what makes Instagram stand out from the others is that when using it you can see how much it is used by businesses to sell their products, some are more prominent while others keep a simple use about showing their products apart also that the same app has improved or fixed its interface to give a better service to entrepreneurs so that people can buy in the application without any problem.

Table I. *Ranking of most visited websites in Ecuador 2022*

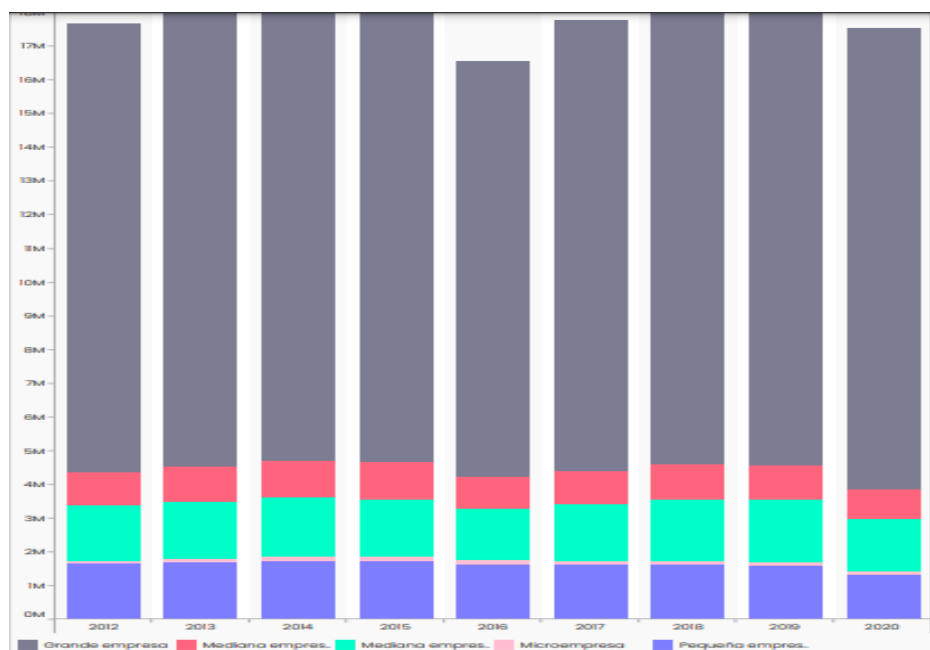
TOP	Site	Daily time on site	Daily page views	% of traffic per search	Total number of linked sites
1	Google	14:50	17.87	0,20%	6,458,120
	YouTube	16:24	10.66	12,90%	4,562,408
	Facebook	14:59	8.11	8,80%	11,492,297
	Newspapers	6:54	3.77	73,10%	11,762
5	Instagram	7:59	9.91	15,10%	6,238,426

Taken from: (Alexa, 2022)

According to the compilation of other research works, consumers with respect to the score that microenterprises have in customer service is not the best so that when they want to buy the product again, they may desist from buying it again, affecting the sale of microenterprises. On the other hand, the lack of information that the microentrepreneurs provide regarding the product also influences the purchase by the clients, without considering the lack of interest in training or knowing better marketing methods to leave aside the obsolete method. (Guerrero Manzaba & Vera Ortiz, 2016). Part of what has been said can be seen in Figure 1, where sales in thousands of dollars

cannot reach a significant representation with respect to the others, in any case the difference between the sales of the small and the micro are significant, which demonstrates a lack and certainty of what has been said above that does not allow micro businesses to take off. Although the graph shows that sales have remained the same over time and that 2020 had a drop in sales, like the other sectors, the situation was also similar, with COVID-19 being the main cause. Microenterprises, although they have begun to use technologies to improve their income, the truth is that very few take full advantage of this marketing strategy to raise their business to the other level, at the same time the lack of knowledge as in previous research has been pointed out along with the lack of own income of subsistence businesses, which have similar products with other businesses, do not allow to allocate a part of the economic income to the management of technologies to improve their digital marketing, apart from the fact that to be in the networks promoting and positioning the brand, requires a significant amount of time that usually businesses cannot do it since another feature that influences it is the lack of staff for someone to dedicate only to that.

Chart 1. Sales of the commercial sector by company size 2012-2020.



CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the use of digital marketing is beneficial not only for companies, but also allows the consumer to know through the reviews and opinions of others, the quality of the products offered by a company, as well as the quality of service provided.

For commercial microenterprises, the use of digital marketing is a way to improve their sales because it allows them to reach niche markets beyond their physical possibilities thanks to the magic of the internet with the interconnection that allows their products to reach an international market. Digital marketing should not be confused with e-commerce since the latter is the result of a proper use of marketing on the intranet; digital marketing goes beyond buying virtually and with proper use, the creation of strategies and efficient use of the tools a business can be enhanced and achieve growth in the market. Digital marketing is the creation of valuable content that goes according to the products offered, with such content and educate users of social networks, allows to engage new customers by the curiosity of the product; And not only that, but at the same time digital marketing allows the business owner to conduct research or search for what most sounds or stands out in society today and based on that create appropriate strategies to attract new attention or create loyalty of consumers and finally helps to take better control and reduce costs and administrative processes that indicate the improvement of the business.

Finally, the use of digital marketing in the commercial processes of a company positively influences sales or brand positioning in a market, however, in commercial microenterprises in the city of Guayaquil no significant change is seen when using it and that is due to the way in which these microenterprises are formed, there are some businesses that are created out of necessity, which do not seek to have a structure or organization to improve processes apart from having no knowledge in the administration of a business. Although microenterprises have gradually entered the use of digital tools, the same has been so poor that does not allow to make the most of its potential. An example of this is when users use their social networks to show their products and in the same there is not much interaction with consumers, nor is there any knowledge regarding the business or product offered, which causes that potential customers are not hooked.

In other words, in order to see amazing results with respect to the use of digital marketing in the operations of microenterprises, the ideal would be for the owners to manage basic knowledge that goes beyond the use of networks to promote themselves, which implies a series of strategies that the owner can apply and thus significantly improve the business.

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