Digital Marketing as a Promoter of Entrepreneurship in the Footwear Sector in Colombia

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship in Colombia has gained great importance in recent years, and it is thanks to this that, according to information from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, a large part of the formal employment in the country is generated, since with the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises the business dynamic has managed to position itself. Many of these undertakings are in the footwear sector, as the country has high consumption indicators in this line, so this research proposes to analyze how it could favor companies in the sector with the insertion of digital marketing, thus exploring the advantages offered by ICT in this regard. The research is based on a mixed design, as it combines quantitative tools with the revision of sector and qualitative figures, as it raises reflections on the inherent aspects of ICT and alternatives for trade today. The final results show growth opportunities for entrepreneurs in the sector, highlighting the importance of training and education for leaders and actors of organizations.
Keywords: entrepreneurship, competitiveness, marketing, globalization, footwear

1 Introduction

The footwear sector in Colombia has a large number of actors, and by the end of the year 2016 there were nearly 4,249 companies dedicated to the manufacture of footwear in leather and 469 companies dedicated to the manufacture of footwear in materials other than leather, according to information from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MINCIT) [1]. When analyzing the cells that make up this production line, the vast majority are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which generate a large number of jobs throughout the country [2]. On average, these SMEs can produce between 50-200 pairs per day, depending on the infrastructure, technological tools and number of employees available to them [3].

However, the above figures, MINCIT reports indicate that by 2012, national footwear consumption was only 45% on average, since globalization has opened up many channels of trade with international suppliers, in addition to smuggling issues affecting the local market [4]. In this way, and with the dynamism that information and communication technologies (ICT) have imposed on the universal economy, it is necessary for Colombian SMEs to be able to insert new tools to make their products known in a propitious manner, thus resisting the arrival of competitors and smugglers from the sector [5].

For this reason, initiatives to contribute to the improvement of the sector in the country have been oriented towards laws and the control of smuggling, and in conjunction with the training of leaders and actors in the sector in matters of competitiveness [6]. The insertion of innovations and the strengthening of business management are an option for these SMEs [7], since with the constant changes generated by globalization, they demand constant work in the development of strategies, especially those of a digital nature, since these are the ones that will allow small entrepreneurs to position their products to reach a greater number of people in both the local and international markets [8].

For all of the above reasons, the results of a mixed study are presented, combining the analysis of data from the sector in the form of graphs and tables that show the situation of footwear consumption. Later, a sequence of steps to be considered by SMEs for the insertion of digital marketing and ICT tools as a dynamic aspect for their business processes is suggested, so that this guide can be considered as a reference framework to be followed by those small entrepreneurs who require alternatives to survive in the midst of the changes in global trade.

2 Figures of the footwear sector in Colombia

When reviewing the figures of the footwear sector in Colombia, it can be seen that consumption at the national level is located in the four main cities that are in their order: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla. According to the Asociación Colombiana de Industriales del Calzado, el Cuero y sus Manufacturas (ACICAM)
[9], for the first quarter of 2017 national consumption was distributed according to the information in table 1.

Table 1. Consumo de calzado por ciudades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>$ Consumer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bogotá</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>605,545,830,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medellín</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>417,589,551,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>300,692,197,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barranquilla</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>198,170,810,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasto</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98,578,558,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucaramanga</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88,565,183,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manizales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77,199,156,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartagena</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70,053,009,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montería</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69,629,339,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pereira</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64,416,555,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villavicencio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50,713,879,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neiva</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48,375,842,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cúcuta</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47,375,842,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resto nacional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66,098,556,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Consumo Nacional</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,203,004,315,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data were extracted through the commercial intelligence system Legiscomex.com [10], with a perceived decrease between the 2015 and 2016 figures.

Fig. 1: Footwear sector exports 2015-2016
As can be seen when comparing the volume of exports in 2016 with 2015, there has been a decrease of USD 2.0 million, an aspect analyzed by state entities that has resulted in the promotion of the sector through training mechanisms, promoting aspects such as the training of the labor force, the insertion of credits, and so on. In analysing the products with the greatest participation in export schemes, the data illustrated in figure 2 below are available [5].

Fig. 2: Main products that are exported

On the other hand, when analyzing imports for the footwear sector, one finds that the countries of greatest choice are: China, Vietnam, Brazil, Indonesia, Ecuador, Mexico, Italy, India and Spain, among others [5]. The most purchased inputs are: soles, cleats, accessories and basic products for casual and sports footwear.

2.1 Digital marketing strategies and their importance for the footwear sector in Colombia

Digital marketing allows an integration between different ICT media, making it easier to take advantage of the possibilities offered by new technologies, thus generating greater interaction and attracting users to the participation and consumption of goods and services [11]. In accordance with the above, a digital marketing plan can enable organizations to integrate different media, hence the strategic focus of any company, must be determined in part by the type of virtual tools that can insert in its operation. If a company today, wants to reach more domestic and foreign customers necessarily will have to embrace ICT tools as part of their daily work [12].
When citing the most notorious advantages for SMEs when inserting ICT tools for marketing purposes, the following can be cited: retention of consumers, construction of a recognized name, greater visibility, greater ability to contact consumers, consumer-focused marketing and measurement of results [13]. Thus, it can be indicated that digital marketing promotes corporate objectives, essentially improving results for the company [14]. According to the above, the key aspects to be taken into account to promote ICT-supported entrepreneurship are those shown in figure 3 below.

Fig. 3: Key aspects of digital marketing in SMEs

- Research to know the market and its actors
- Define a strategy according to the products and customers of the company
- Establish indicators for monitoring
- Define a set of tools to use
- Allocate a budget to execute

Una vez definido los factores esenciales es primordial identificar las tácticas a seguir, las cuales hoy se fundamentan en redes sociales por el gran impacto de las mismas en todos los tipos de mercados [14]. De esta manera, se pueden citar las opciones que se reseñan en la figura 4 como las soluciones de primera mano que se pueden insertar en corto tiempo y con un presupuesto manejable, especialmente porque varias de las alternativas son gratuitas.
As it can be observed, the aspect that is found in the first instance is that of social networks, since they have managed to give a very marked dynamic to the issues of footwear sales, especially with potential customers under 40 [15]. However, the following options, such as email, blog and corporate websites, continue to be competitive alternatives for SMEs [16], as they can be incorporated at low cost and work massively, reaching a greater number of people with the ease of integrating traditional strategies [17].

The ICT alternatives are diverse at this time, making it easier for entrepreneurs and existing companies to insert mechanisms to compete dynamically [18] thus generating many options for growth in sales and income, while also providing new employment alternatives for personnel in these areas [19]. Considering the insertion of digital marketing for SMEs [20] is an almost obligatory step, since reaching a greater number of people and gaining visibility [21] can be one of the alternatives for positioning goods and services and constantly gaining customers [22].

3 Conclusions

Digital marketing is currently valued as an alternative for SMEs in Colombia especially for the footwear sector. This may represent a great opportunity for positioning and business dynamics, since this sector is a major player in the country's economy. The alternatives today are diverse and many of them even free, so that with the necessary training and monitoring of the key steps proposed could
Digital marketing as a promoter of entrepreneurship

reach a scenario of greater competition, reaching a large number of customers both in the domestic and international market. Economic globalization is a phenomenon that has led to dramatic changes, one of which is undoubtedly the inclusion of ICTs in all commercial activities.

References


[9] P. A. L. López, C. A. Hueza, Caracterización del sector cuero, calzado y marroquinería de la ciudad de Bogotá, en el marco de los TLC suscritos por Colombia,


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