



## DESIGN OF A STRATEGIC DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN ADAPTED TO SMES \*

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### Abstract

*The document presents a methodological review focused on the development of a strategic digital marketing plan. This approach is designed for small and medium-sized enterprises seeking to contribute to the achievement of their objectives, given that the environment is increasingly changing and highly competitive. In order to remain competitive, these enterprises must establish new mechanisms to respond to the current market requirements in which they operate. The methodological review enabled the identification of ten fundamental stages for the design of the Plan. These stages highlight the importance of the diagnosis of the current situation of the company, which involves the analysis of critical elements from the external, internal, and digital perspectives. This analysis determines the unique value proposition, establishes objectives, formulates strategies, establishes tactics and plans, as well as schedules and budgets, and the respective evaluation and follow-up mechanisms. These are further augmented by illustrative examples of the deployment of digital tools and the establishment of tactical, operational, and control activities with which it is intended to contribute to the fulfillment of the planned, taking advantage of the strategic elements available in social networks and search engines.*

**Keywords:** -Digital Marketing, Marketing Plan, Marketing Strategies, Digital Tools.

### Resumen

El documento presenta una revisión metodológica enfocada a la elaboración de un Plan Estratégico de Marketing Digital, cuyo enfoque se da hacia las Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas buscando contribuir al logro de sus objetivos, dado que el entorno cada vez es más cambiante y altamente competitivo y les exige establecer nuevos mecanismos que den respuesta a los actuales requerimientos del mercado en el que estas operan.

La revisión metodológica permitió definir diez etapas fundamentales para el diseño del Plan, resaltando la importancia del diagnóstico de la situación actual de la compañía, donde se analizan elementos críticos que deben considerarse desde la perspectiva externa, interna y digital, determinar



la propuesta única de valor, establecer objetivos, formular estrategias, el establecimiento de tácticas y planes, al igual que cronograma y presupuestos, así como los respectivos mecanismos de evaluación y seguimiento; las cuales se complementan con ejemplos para la utilización de herramientas digitales y el establecimiento de actividades tácticas, operativas y de control con las cuales se pretende aportar al cumplimiento de lo planeado, aprovechando los elementos estratégicos disponibles en redes sociales y motores de búsqueda.

**Palabras Clave:**

Marketing Digital, Plan de Marketing, Estrategias, Herramientas Digitales.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, organizations must devise and implement strategies that not only ensure their continued existence but also enable them to project themselves in a manner that is both sustainable and competitive. Furthermore, it is imperative for these organizations to remain at the vanguard of technological and marketing advancements, ensuring the continued viability of their products and services in the competitive landscape. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may still be at an early stage of digital intervention, particularly in terms of the activities required to achieve the expected competitiveness in their context (Bhatia, 2017). Similarly, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may be unaware of the fundamental elements that are taken into account in the construction of a digital marketing plan and that it is integrated into the strategic approach to be implemented.

The objective of this document is to contribute to the solution of the problem at hand. Its primary purpose is to provide a methodological guide based on the analysis of bibliographic information from various authors. This guide is intended to be accessible to individuals and entrepreneurs who are seeking to implement digital tools in their marketing activities. It is hoped that this guide will serve as a reference point for those who wish to develop such tools.

In essence, the conventional or comprehensive marketing plan has been regarded as a principal instrument that enables an entity to concentrate on the coordination and direction of all endeavors, investments, activities, campaigns, and other criteria pertinent to marketing. Consequently, this plan is typically constructed with a two-way alignment, the initial aspect corresponding to the strategic element and the subsequent aspect corresponding to the tactical element. In terms of strategy, it would be developed in accordance with the target markets and the value proposition to be offered to customers and consumers, taking into account their needs and expectations. In terms of tactics, it would be developed with a focus on specific actions to be implemented in order to meet the formulated objectives and strategies (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

The construction of the digital marketing plan must commence with the study of a general marketing plan (Alonso, 2008), from which the main objectives and marketing activities are extracted. These must be strengthened by analyzing the sector, the type of market, and the company, while observing and interpreting its digital trends. The components of a digital marketing plan may have some basic relationship with a traditional marketing plan. Therefore, its development is considered a methodical process whose main feature is to achieve framed in a continuous cycle of analysis, planning, and control. The more specific a company is with its plan, the more effective it will be in its implementation. (Opresnik, 2018).

Structurally, the document begins with an introduction to the subject, then presents the methodology used, and finally describes the results obtained by breaking down the stages of the plan's development, highlighting the importance of the diagnosis of the company's current situation, where critical elements to be considered from an external, internal and digital perspective are analyzed. The plan allows understanding the context in which the company finds itself, in order to establish strategic proposals linked to the organizational objectives that seek to focus on the growth of the organization, starting from the recognition and repositioning of the brand and the publication of



content aimed at the needs and expectations of customers and consumers in specific digital segments.

### METHOD

The literature review process consists of describing a topic based on the search, classification and rigorous analysis of relevant information published in a given field of study, using a methodology that allows the results obtained to be placed within a perspective or line of thought structured by the authors.

This document has been prepared on the basis of two methodological proposals, the first by Garcés and Duque (2007), who highlight six essential elements that should be taken into account when carrying out a correct analysis of research articles. First, it is necessary to identify the basic characteristics of the article, recognizing the central problem addressed, its importance, relevance and impact, analyzing the objectives pursued by the authors and their contribution to the research carried out, which is usually mentioned in the introduction.

Second, to verify the reflection on the academic literature considered, here the conceptual framework is confronted, considering its relationship with the problem addressed based on the theoretical approaches presented. Thirdly, to make a new reflection on the methodology used, interpreting in the best way how it is used and if it keeps a close relationship with the analysis of the results, which must be coherent with the studied reality, which would be the fourth element. Finally, elements five and six have to do with the examination of the discussion and the implications and conclusions. Thus, with this methodology it is possible to check whether an article meets the basic criteria to be included in the constructed bibliography.

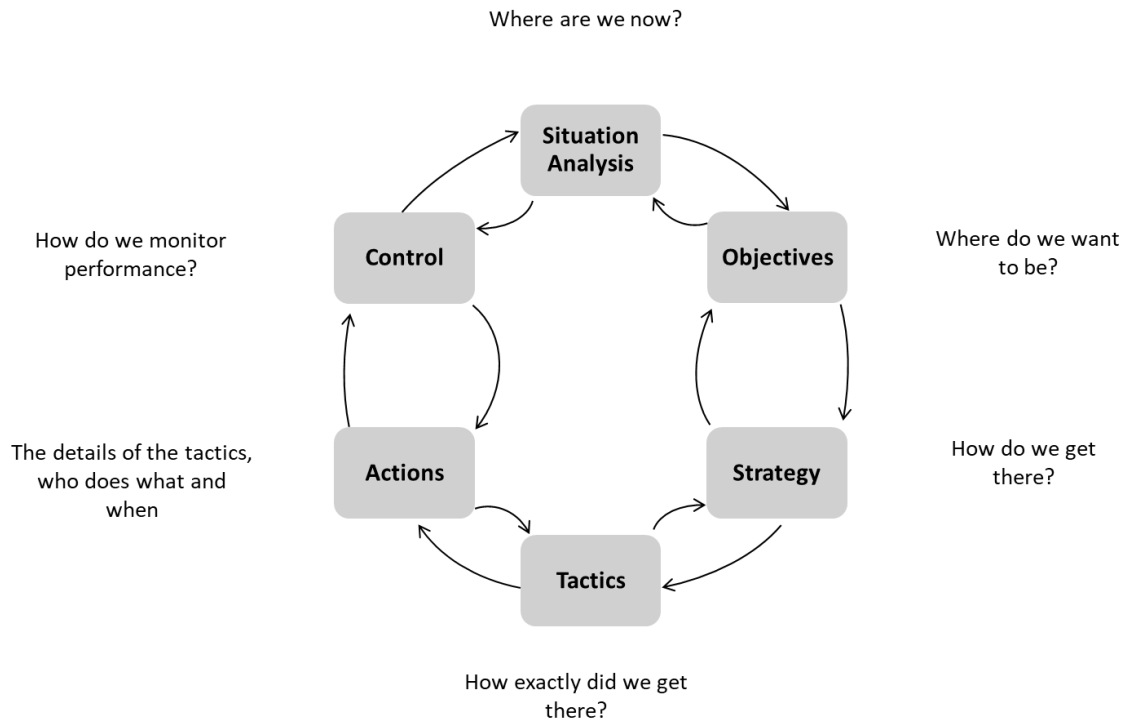
The second proposal comes from Gómez, Navas, Aponte and Betancourt (2014), which is developed in four stages. The first corresponds to a careful review of the definition of the problem in the said publication, trying to associate the bibliographic review with the needs of the person conducting it. The second is the search for information in books, journals, web sites and other materials that provide the necessary information required. To develop this stage, the authors took advantage of the access they have to recognized databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, Sage Journals, Scielo, Dialnet, Science Direct, Springer Books, Springer Enlace, Google Books and Ebsco, where they were able to analyze, select and discard different documents, taking into account in their selection some descriptors or keywords in English and Spanish such as Strategy, Marketing Plan, Digital Marketing, among others.

The third stage is the systematic organization of the information; in this case, a spreadsheet was used as a bibliographic analysis matrix, considering the title, author, journal and contributions to the analysis as the basic elements of the material analyzed. In the same way, this activity was used to build the list of bibliographic references, which were later processed using the End Note Web reference manager, which facilitated the citation process.

Finally, the information obtained was analyzed, selecting the most relevant and useful contributions to the central theme, which took most of the time of the bibliographic review. In this way, the process of writing and connecting ideas based on the knowledge gained from the activities carried out begins.

### RESULTS

In order to have a frame of reference that clearly and coherently reveals the process of building a strategic digital marketing plan, we analyze what is proposed by Chaffey and Smith (2017), who first propose six stages that it should contain according to the methodology called SOSTAC® (Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control), shown in Figure 1, which is used by different professionals to create all types of plans, among others: business, advertising, human resources, health and safety, etc.




**Figure 1. Sustac® planning framework applied to the development of digital marketing strategies.**

Source: Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2015; Dave Chaffey and Smith, 2013.

Now, authors such as Sainz de Vicuña (2018); Bhatia (2017); Chaffey and Smith, (2017); Kingsnorth (2016); Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2015) consider some additional stages (Table 1) that are relevant in the construction of an effective Digital Marketing Strategic Plan; which denote perspectives and common elements for several authors and that through the literature review developed managed to identify, additional tools and examples that add value to the construction of the Digital Marketing Strategic Plan are mentioned.

**Table 1. Stages in the construction of a strategic digital marketing plan.**

Stages	Sainz de Vicuña, 2018	Bhatia, 2017	Chaffey and Smith, 2017	Kingsnorth, 2016	Chaffey y Ellis-Chadwick, 2015
External Situation Analysis (External Situation Analysis)	X	X	X		X
Internal Situation Analysis (Internal Situation Analysis)	X	X	X		X
Digital Situation Analysis (Situation Analysis for Digital Marketing)		X	X	X	X
Determination of Unique Value Proposition (USP)		X	X	X	X
Establishment of Digital Marketing Objectives (KPI's) (Objectives - Goals)	X	X	X	X	X
Formulation of Digital Marketing Strategies (Strategies)	X	X	X	X	X



Establishment of Tactics -					
Action Plans (Tactics - X	X	X	X	X	X
Action Plans)					
Elaboration of Timeline -					
Calendar (Shedule - X	X	X	X	X	X
Timeline - Frequency)					
Elaboration of a Budget	X	X	X	X	X
(Budget)	X	X	X	X	X

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Source: Own elaboration based on the cited authors.

### Analysis of the External Situation

This first part of the plan allows to consider, from the external perspective, some factors related to the competition and the competitive position in the market, the national and global economic situation, the behavior of the society and the consumers, new technological trends, political and legal decisions, among others, which, in particular, could act as direct or indirect, driving or restrictive forces in the activities and marketing strategies considered by the company (Ferrell and Hartline, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to make a clear and complete analysis of the environment, considering for its development some tools mentioned below, which corresponds to a complex process, because the amount of information available in the environment is too much, in addition, the organization has no influence, participation or ability to decide on these elements, but if they will affect it positively or negatively (Mendoza, 2011; Angriawan and Abebe, 2011; Dess, Lumpkin and Rivera, 2003).

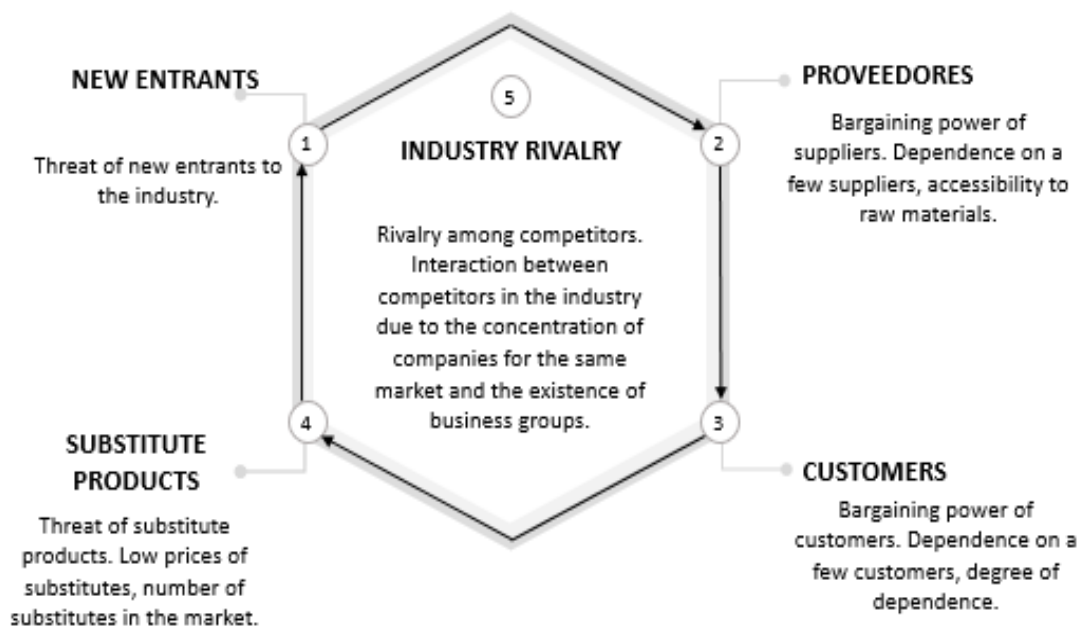
#### - PESTEL Analysis.

A tool used to identify the critical variables of the macro-environment of companies, which examines the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (Pestel) factors that must be listed, analyzed and evaluated according to their potential impact, implication and importance, and probability of occurrence in the company, in order to formulate strategies that take into account such context; The construction of a resulting matrix with links to websites or secondary supporting information is suggested (De la Rosa, Cárdenas, Cárdenas, Cárdenas, Cabezas, & Sandoval, 2019; Song, Sun, & Jin, 2017).

#### - Competitive Position and Competitive Analysis.

To survive the competition, it is necessary to know it deeply (Tzu, 2006), in this way, it will be possible to identify Competitive Advantages that enable the organization to face it; therefore, it is necessary to master and interpret the information of the sector, contained in databases and sources that allow collecting reviews of those strong competitors and their percentage of market share (Martinez and Milla, 2012). Based on these results, it is necessary to carry out deeper research in the digital area, finding common and divergent elements to formulate effective strategies; something that will be discussed in the Digital Situation Analysis section.

Porter (2008) established a methodology related to the five forces of competitiveness (Figure 2), where relevant and strategic factors of the organization are analyzed and described, answering specific questions that contemplate the criteria on which the competitive analysis is focused, the key forces of the environment, the behavior of competitors in the face of these forces, the strengths and weaknesses that act in this scenario and how managers will influence in some way those forces that directly affect their company, in addition, the influence that can be had on the power of suppliers or customers and finally influence the reduction of rivalry between competitors (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008).



**Figure 2. Five competitive forces that shape strategy.**

Source: Porter, 2008.

- Market Segment and Target Audience Identification.

Consumers of products, services and digital content have different tastes, desires and specific preferences that must be identified in order to establish marketing activities that allow interacting with them as closely and personally as possible, thus determining the focus of the strategies and tactics formulated. Therefore, it is necessary to have information that helps the organization to understand how the changes that occur in customers become needs to be satisfied in the same way in specific segments (Ferrell and Hartline, 2012). For Kotler and Keller (2016), this segmentation can be niche, customized, firm, consumer, geographic, demographic, demographic, psychographic, behavioral, sequential, among others.

Until a few years ago, it was very complicated and required a lot of effort on the part of the companies, but nowadays there are web tools that facilitate this process and contribute to generate frequent interactions with a target audience that can be classified as customers and consumers: Business to Business (B2B), Business to Consumer (B2C), Business to Government (B2G), Consumer to Business (C2B), Customer to Customer (C2C) and others, with the aim of making them ambassadors of a brand in the digital and traditional space at the same time (Müller, Pommeranz, Weisser and Voigt, 2018; Velilla, 2010; Gutiérrez, 2003).

#### **Internal Situation Analysis:**

The analysis of the internal situation allows company managers to answer the question "Where are we now? (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2015), taking into account the current organizational elements of transcendence for the formulation and execution of strategies, the establishment of objectives and performance evaluations of marketing areas, examining the availability of competent human capital within the organizational structure, the capacity of the work team, available technology, internal processes and activities, and financial resources (Ferrell and Hartline, 2012; Navas and Guerras, 2012). Below are referenced two important tools that are useful in the realization of this stage.

- Value chain analysis and competitive advantage identification.

A tool that facilitates the observation and disaggregation of the primary and support activities that must be carried out for the purpose of selling a product or service (Porter, 2011; Porter, 2002); each element that represents a high level of importance is mentioned and classified (Figure 3), at the same time considering its contribution to the generation of value or cost optimization; thus, it is concluded how willing customers would be to pay for what the company offers them. In this way, it will be analyzed whether positive margins or benefits are generated by the development of their work as part of the system, subsystem or suprasystem (Navas and Guerras, 2012). According to the proposed analysis, it will be possible to find sources of competitive advantage aimed at the formulation of differentiation strategies, cost leadership, concentration, among others. This analysis will make it possible to easily identify what will be explained below in terms of the unique value proposition (USP).

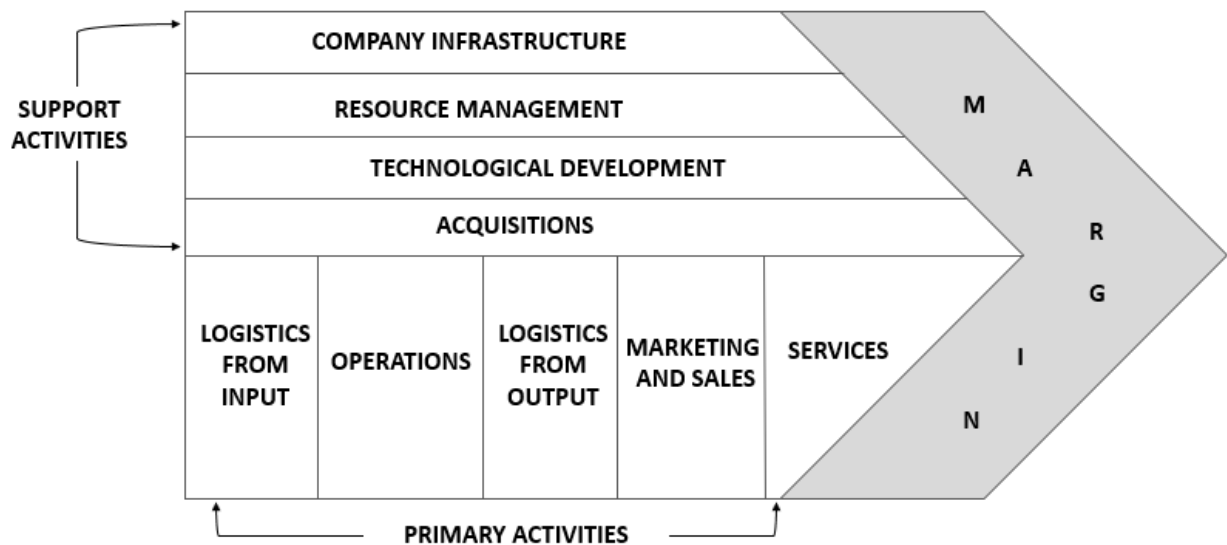


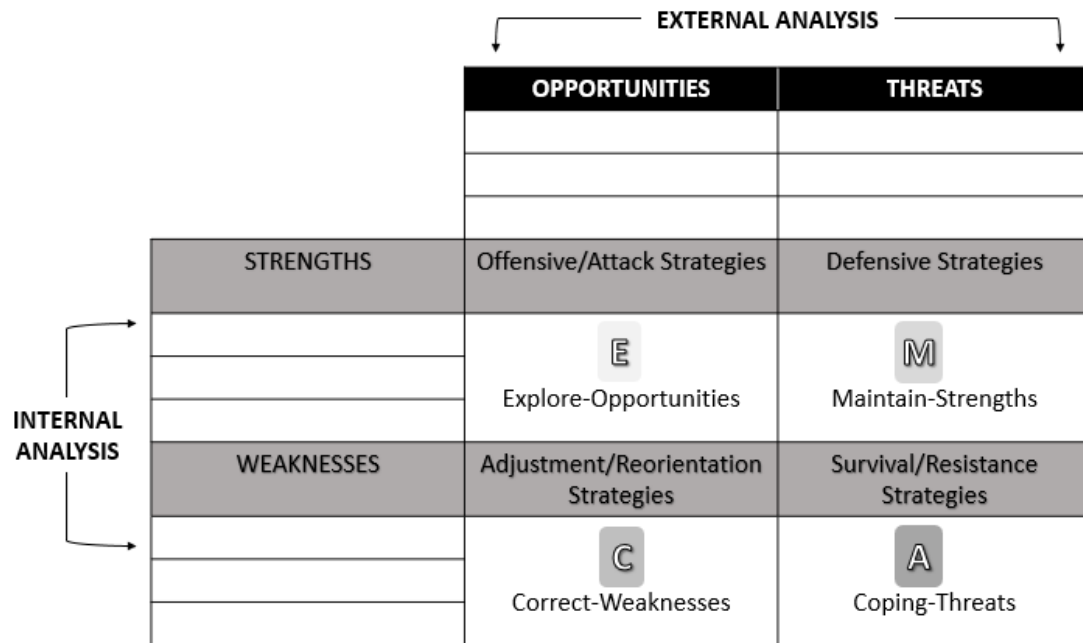
Figure 3. Michael Porter's Value Chain Analysis

Source: Porter, 2002; Porter, 2011

- SWOT Matrix Analysis and CAME Tool.

In order to analyze the relationship between the organization's environment, according to its external perspective, and its internal capacity, from a strategic point of view, it is recommended to consider the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), arranged as shown in Figure 4; which is complemented by the CAME analysis (Martínez and Milla, 2012), thus providing a much stronger analytical basis for the strategic formulation and the establishment of specific mechanisms that contribute to **correcting** weaknesses (adaptation or reorientation strategies), **facing** threats (survival or resistance strategies), **maintaining** strengths (defensive strategies) and **exploiting** the company's opportunities (offensive or attack strategies) (Pedrós and Gutiérrez, 2012). Each strategy should be formulated in the cross-cutting blocks provided for this purpose.





**Figure 4. SWOT Analysis - CAME**

Source: Own elaboration based on Martínez and Milla, 2012.

#### Digital Situation Analysis:

The digitalization of marketing activities implemented by today's organizations is a reality that must be understood from several perspectives. One of them is related to the analysis of the organic and paid positioning of the websites they use, whose success or failure depends on the quality of their design and development. Similarly, it is necessary to perceive the behavior and knowledge of customers and followers in the networks where content is published, which is considered relevant or not for them, depending on how strategic it is, and in turn understand how to reach them, while measuring and evaluating their characteristics, behaviors, needs and desires in the digital environment (Bhatia, 2017).

In this context, it is necessary to analyze the market where intermediaries, influencers and other actors that can be identified in search engines, blogs, review sites and social networks interact, which should be considered when evaluating the opportunities and threats of digital media and technology. In the same sense, it is necessary to review the behavior of competitors by making a comparison of their digital offers, websites, keywords and other elements that allow identifying new approaches and digital marketing activities that need to be improved or reevaluated, as appropriate. Finally, the Digital Situational Analysis also involves a realistic internal and introspective review of what the organization has been doing in terms of digital marketing activities and measuring their effectiveness. This includes reviewing the current results of key performance indicators (KPIs) (if any) and the organizational capabilities and processes used to manage the work of this area of the company, summarized as strengths and weaknesses (Chaffey Ellis-Chadwick, 2015). It is then suggested to consider at least the following elements for the analysis of the digital situation.

- SEO Audit.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) corresponds to the organic positioning that is intended to have in search engines by websites or, in specific cases, publications of social networks or specialized blogs, based on the understanding of how the algorithm of the search engine allows the matching of terms. What is sought with SEO is to achieve organic conversion by meeting the business metrics associated with the achievement of certain objectives and not just obtaining traffic, so the failure to meet these





objectives will generate the implementation of actions to improve this situation (Page, Brin, Motwani and Winograd, 1999).

To understand the SEO strategies and actions that are carried out to improve the position of a website in the search results or SERP (Search Engine Results Pages), it is necessary to know the options offered by the search engine and thus intervene and potentiate the website. The SERP are related to the pages that result from a query made on Google, Bing, YouTube or other search sites, whose main feature is that the higher the place where the web is and at the same time manages to appear on the first page, the more traffic queries will have. This is not a simple task, since it is necessary to interpret and manage the factors that are taken into account for these engines to quickly find the website of a company, either by its nature (organic or paid) or for its content (Ledford, 2009).

Currently, search engines have adapted to the new technological conditions to provide a wide variety of SERPs that become essential for each type of company according to its business objectives. However, it is necessary to consider that the actions developed with regard to the paid SERP are very different from those of SEO, because the organic results are obtained on their own merit due to the quality of the page, the correct use of keywords, the publication of relevant and well thought-out content, as well as the efforts made to increase the chances of appearance, which, being genuine, will have a greater probability of lasting in time and not being conditioned to payments per click to search engines, therefore this knowledge is a fundamental basis that must be applied when using the different SEO tools included in websites or applications such as Google Trends, Google my Business, PageSpeed Insights, Semrush, among others (Estrada and Von Wobeser, 2017; Ramos, 2012).

The correct management of the SEO audit will provide the company with potential visibility on the network, something basic in today's digital world, obtaining free traffic on search engines that will position the business and improve its sustainability (Marín, De Lavega and Mierterán, 2016).

#### - SEM Audit

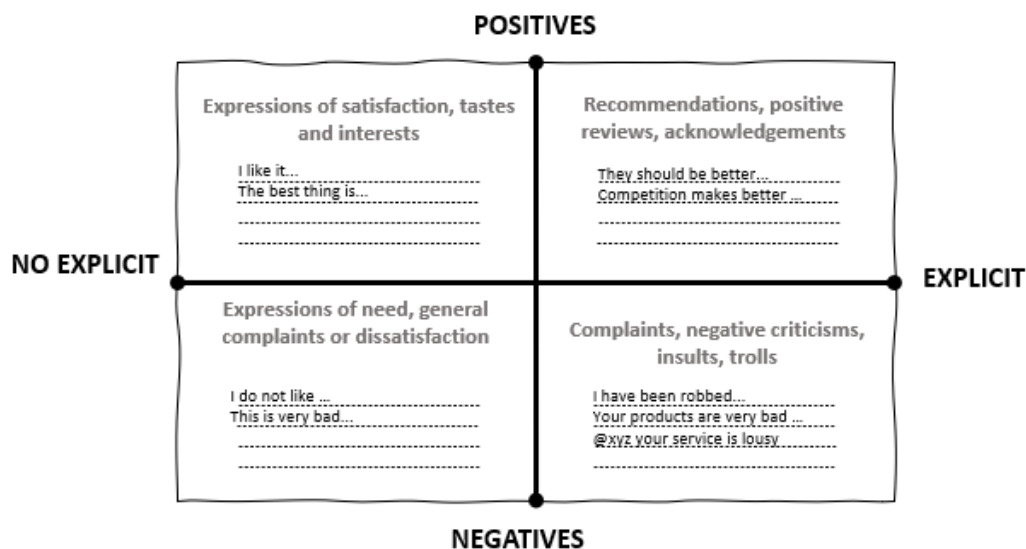
Search engine marketing or SEM (Search Engine Marketing), corresponds to the efforts made by a company to achieve presence and positioning in search engines such as Google, Bing or others, through the use of special paid tools in specific campaigns. In this way, it is expected that the advertisements and promoted pages are above others, making them visible in the first positions of the searches performed by users (SERP) (Arias, 2013; Maciá and Gosende 2012).

For the configuration of campaigns, the use of "keywords" is decisive for their success, therefore it will be necessary to conduct a prior research to determine whether the so-called "keywords" are relevant, specific and directly related to the product or service being promoted (Cantor, 2017). In this way, users will click on the promoted ads, resulting in a positive ranking of the ad, which is subject to two conditions: the first is the bid, which corresponds to the maximum value that the advertiser is willing to pay per click (CPC) and the second is the level of quality based on the relevance of the keywords, the composition and design of the landing page and the percentage of clicks obtained by the publications (CTR). In addition, it is possible to appear with sponsored banners on various websites that allow it, depending on how well the strategy is formulated, and thus obtain effective conversions according to the objectives set (Del Valle, 2016; Ramos, 2015).

A fundamental characteristic that allows the investment in SEM campaigns, is the obtaining of quantifiable or measurable results with a high degree of accuracy, depending on the platform used for this purpose, thus managing to measure its scope, relationship with the budgetary compliance that has been agreed and conducting SEM audits, which is nothing more than the review and study of the configuration and maintenance of an advertising account in technical and functional terms, allowing to find possible adjustments to be implemented. As a result, it will be possible to obtain cost savings, budget redistribution and the identification of opportunities for improvement, seeking to achieve better performance according to the metrics to be defined in the construction of the strategic digital marketing plan. For this reason, it is necessary to know and use the analytical tools provided by the web that is used (Selman, 2017; Giraldo and Juliao, 2016).

### - Social Listening

Steimer (2017) defines social listening as the monitoring of digital conversations to determine what consumers are saying online about a brand, company, or industry. This monitoring can range from setting up alerts on specific search engines, manually tracking mentions made, or using and paying for specialized social listening tools that do this automatically. One of the greatest opportunities of social listening is the ability to add value to the consumer or user experience, showing them that the organization truly cares about them and understands them by taking immediate action to address their concerns (Rosenblatt, Treiber and Curran, 2018). It is useful for organizations to be able to choose the most appropriate and adaptable tool for their needs, taking into account at least the elements mentioned in Figure 5.



**Figure 5. Categorization of comments or mentions in social networks.**

Source: International University of La Rioja. Social Media Marketing Module (n.d.).

### Determination of the Unique Selling Proposition - USP:

The company will determine its unique selling proposition (USP) based on the external, internal, and digital situation analysis. The USP is the differential elements identified that will make its competitive advantage visible to customers, competitors, and individuals who maintain interaction with social networks, websites, and/or publications that it makes throughout its digital media campaigns (Somalo, 2017). Once all the aforementioned factors have been defined, the following will be based on the identified USP, which must be communicated and understood by the organization's collaborators, especially those in the marketing area, in order for a correct strategic, tactical, and operational formulation to be achieved.

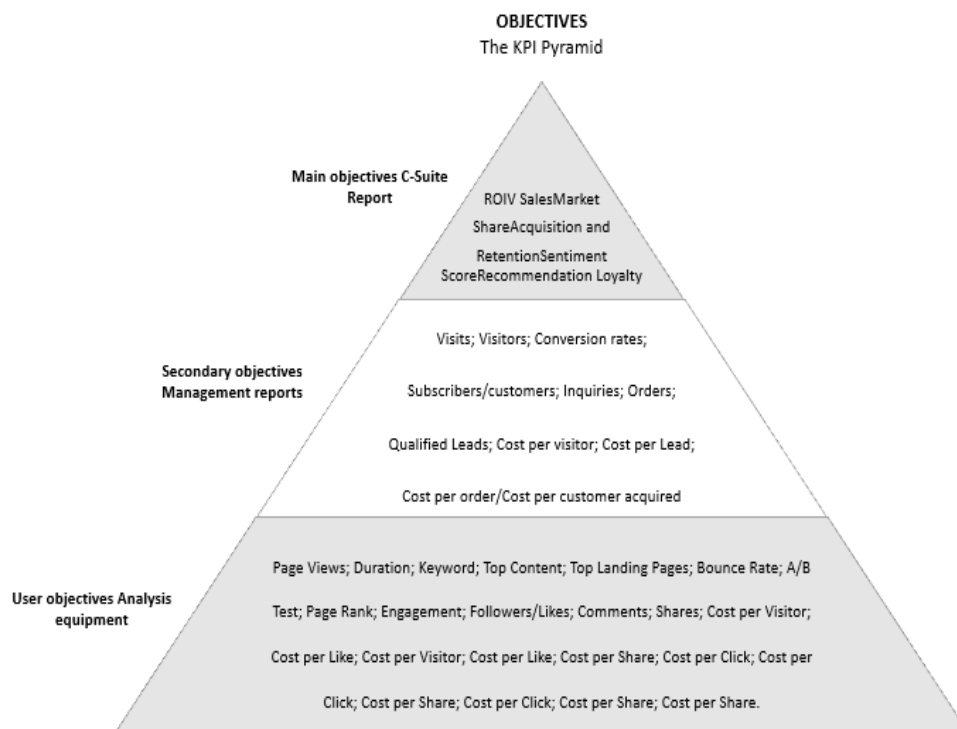
### Establishment of Objectives and KPI's:

The challenge facing management teams in organizations is to develop appropriate strategic digital marketing objectives and establish mechanisms to measure their achievement. This is due to the current need to satisfy consumer needs, while at the same time achieving commercial and sales goals, maintaining a presence on key digital platforms and keeping up with emerging competition in the markets.

It is therefore crucial to establish objectives correctly, as this enables the organisation to determine its future direction and aspirations. This is achieved by integrating the strategic and operational perspectives, which serve as the foundation for formulating strategies and subsequent activities that collectively guide the organisation towards the fulfilment of its overarching strategy. Once the objectives have been clearly defined in accordance with the SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound), action plans can be established to demonstrate how they will be fulfilled through concrete tactics (Kingsnorth, 2016; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2015).

Nevertheless, the establishment of objectives must be accompanied by the creation of relevant KPIs (key performance indicators) to measure their achievement. As defined, KPIs are metrics that contribute to the achievement of specific business objectives. Consequently, companies must formulate strategies and develop internal web analytics frameworks to create KPIs that align with their business needs and help them achieve higher returns on investment (Bhatia, 2017).

Smith (2016) emphasizes the significance of KPIs and key metrics through the KPI Pyramid (Figure 6), with the highest level representing the (ROI) Return on Investment, followed by sales, market share, customer acquisition/retention rates, and so on, which are classified as "Objectives and KPIs of the 'C' suite or board." Subsequently, the secondary metrics pertain to management reporting, including visitor statistics, conversion rates, cost per lead, and so forth. At the lowest level are the operational KPIs for the analytics team, which relate to page views, bounce rate, cost per like, and so forth.



**Figure 6. The KPI pyramid**

Source: Smith, 2016 based on Pulizzi, 2013.

### Strategy Formulation:

An understanding of the current situation, coupled with the correct establishment of objectives and KPIs, is considered the basis for the formulation of deliberate strategies. When these strategies are clearly defined, they help the company maintain focus and alignment in digital marketing activities targeted to visibly identified people and segments. In the meantime, digital channels will continue to evolve and expand, increasing the complexity of the technical processes involved in implementing the designed campaigns. Consequently, it is imperative that the organization be prepared to face this dynamic movement of the environment by creating emerging strategies when necessary.

(Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1999). Otherwise, opportunities or business will be lost, and in the worst case, the company could be left behind, watching its competitors grow and move away from it in an ever-widening technology gap.

It is crucial to recognize that this entire process is inherently dynamic and occurs within the context of real-time environments, where the relevance of a given sales cycle may fluctuate over time. Consequently, what is deemed pertinent today may not even capture the attention of the audience in the near future. Consequently, a strategic approach necessitates a perspective that encompasses the broader implications of marketing initiatives on business objectives. This entails marketers transcending the confines of campaign-centric, single-interaction approaches, which are often divorced from the nuances of evolving consumer behavior. Instead, it entails embracing a more nuanced continuum that positions companies as the go-to experts, adapting to the ever-shifting needs and expectations of consumers (Albee, 2018).

The strategy, then, is related to the question of how one might achieve the desired outcome. (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2015) is based on the previously stated objectives. Maciá (2018) presents a classification of digital strategy types, which are presented in Table 2 with illustrative examples.

**Table 2. Types of digital marketing strategies and examples.**

Types of strategies	Description	Examples
Traffic attraction	Users visit the website or follow the publications that are made naturally and out of their own interest, not because of any conditioning (Inbound Marketing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEM and SEO campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.</li> <li>- Carrying out SEM and SEO campaigns through Google Ads.</li> <li>- Using Display advertising capturing the attention of users (Banners).</li> </ul>
Conversion of visitors into customers	The website contains user-friendly elements or elements that motivate the user to click on certain advertisements or promotional banners (Conversions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation or redesign of a web page to make it user-friendly.</li> <li>- Creation of an e-commerce.</li> <li>- Personalized discounts or phrases alluding to the use of purchasing opportunities.</li> </ul>
Customer loyalty	Visitors or users can register their data in a form or Landing Page, or through a purchase you will obtain their information seeking to maintain contact with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead acquisition through a Landing Page.</li> <li>- Use of e-mail Marketing.</li> <li>- Development of Mobile Marketing.</li> <li>- Subscription to certain bulletins or Newsletters.</li> </ul>
Creation of evangelists / prescribers	Loyal users with a sense of belonging to the brand or company can become its evangelists through posts, recommendations, comments or mentions in social networks using mechanisms that encourage this process at very low costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote frequent customer interaction on social networks.</li> <li>- Achieve customer or user satisfaction through contests, product trials or giveaways to acquire positive impressions and comments.</li> <li>- Creation of testimonial content.</li> <li>- Selection of influencers for the brand.</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration based on Maciá, 2018.

#### **Establishment of Tactics and Plans:**

The strategic use of digital channels allows for the transcendence of traditional restrictions, such as geography, interaction between individuals, time zones, and others. This enables the connection with a wide audience. Digital technology enables organizations to refine advertising messages with greater precision, targeting niche segments and specific markets. This is achieved through a set of tools,



techniques, and tactics that are unprecedented and empower those in charge of marketing areas to reach consumers and interact with them. A representative example of these is engagement, which corresponds to the focus and attention that a certain individual pays to a situation, publication, or object by expressing their liking or disliking through some symbolic representations such as "Like," "Share," and "Comment." These are recorded and will later be classified and analyzed, a process that was previously very difficult to accomplish (Ballesteros, 2019; Ryan, 2014).

These tactics represent the numerous steps that the organization and, in particular, the work team will take to implement the formulated strategies. They constitute the operational or practical part of the objectives established in the Digital Marketing Strategic Plan, which will be transformed into concrete activities that must be executed by those responsible for marketing. In the event that a tactic proves ineffective, it will not represent a significant setback, as another can be implemented to support the overarching strategy. Should any of these tactics prove to be unsuccessful, it will be necessary to modify them when it is determined that they are no longer contributing to the strategic fulfillment (Godin, 2018).

Nevertheless, the definition and implementation of tactics to support the execution of strategies will necessitate the consideration of certain organizational elements, including:

- The design of an organizational structure and the possession of a workforce that works around the fulfillment of the established objectives necessitates the reformulation of some of the planned activities and the review of hiring or training processes that guarantee such alignment.
- It is recommended that employees be trained in accordance with a program that encompasses the fulfillment of the objectives set forth.
- It is also necessary to determine the remuneration structures, bonuses, and incentives that are designed to achieve the organizational objectives.
- In the event that new activities or functions are introduced to existing programs, it is imperative that these are also designed in alignment with the aforementioned objectives.

Although this process may appear straightforward, it necessitates a daily, unified strategy that will ultimately lead to an organization that consistently surpasses customer expectations, maintaining customer satisfaction while fostering a self-directed and motivated workforce (Randazzo, 2014).

#### **Elaboration of Timeline and Calendar:**

In the majority of cases, marketing plans are designed to be executed over the course of a year. As a result, it is prudent to begin the elaboration process several months in advance, allowing sufficient time to conduct the necessary research and analysis. This process also enables the determination of the management and coordination capacity of the company, which is essential for ensuring consistency between the planned objectives and the responsibilities of those responsible for implementing and executing the actions. Furthermore, this approach allows for the development of performance evaluation mechanisms for employees, processes, and the commitment to implementing strategies (Meiselwitz, 2018).

The result of such planning must be recorded in a schedule that has been duly established, communicated, and understood by the members of the organization or work team. This schedule must include at least the following elements: activities, dates, and responsible persons. It is through this schedule that the review and assessment of compliance with the deadlines can be carried out correctly (Meiselwitz, 2018).

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the simultaneous development of the content publication calendar, which will establish the frequency of appearance of videos, posts, images, text, and other content on a daily, weekly, monthly, or bimonthly basis (Toledano and San Emeterio, 2015). The optimal configuration of the elements mentioned here can be achieved through the interaction generated between the organization and its users or followers. To this end, it is essential to maintain a constant communication with them, with the objective of investigating their preferences. This is because some of the main reasons why people stop following brands on social networks are due to the excess or lack of publications, the focus on selling, or the inclusion of information that is not

wanted. In this way, a balance will be achieved between what the organization wants to publish and what customers really want (Ramos, 2017).

#### **Budget Preparation:**

One of the most significant challenges that organizations encounter in relation to the allocation of advertising budgets is to ascertain the efficacy of the programmed advertisements. For this purpose, it is possible to estimate certain items by calculating simple averages of historical data, such as average click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and effective leads, among others. In the absence of such data, a probabilistic model can be constructed based on the available information at the time (Tkachenko, 2014).

The digital marketing budget must achieve an optimal balance between the campaigns to be developed with respect to traffic generation and the other activities that are expected to be executed online and offline. It is not the amount of funds that is of primary importance; rather, it is the manner in which they are to be invested with a view to achieving the desired results in accordance with the planned and budgeted objectives. To elaborate, it will be necessary to involve the channels, tools, and media that will be used to achieve a favorable organic and paid positioning in search engines, the effective publication of advertisements on social networks and display, the website in accordance with the necessary technological requirements, the creation and uploading of quality content, and the qualified workforce, both within and outside the company, that will facilitate the successful development of all planned actions. The initial step in determining the necessary items is to ascertain the clarity of the objectives, strategies, and tactics established. These elements are incorporated into the schedule and calendar prepared and are inextricably linked to the budget (Chaffey and Smith, 2017).

#### **Establishment of Control Mechanisms:**

The success or failure of operationalizing the strategies will be determined by the strategic and operational control exercised over the work done (Nova and Duque, 2015). It is recommended that management information, including web analytics, be employed to monitor budget execution and the implementation of activities established in the schedule. The success of the strategic and tactical objectives will be evaluated and analyzed in conjunction with the results of the established metrics and KPIs. If the results are deemed unsatisfactory, it will be necessary to propose modifications to the plans in order to improve the results. Consequently, web analytics tools will provide essential elements to monitor marketing performance, including the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of internet data. This allows for the understanding and optimization of the use of the web for the benefit of the organization (Järvinen and Karjaluo, 2015).

In turn, a reliable mechanism to ensure that the planned outcome is achieved in the most optimal manner is the calculation of ROI. This analysis employs data from the actual or projected income statement for the months during which the campaigns last. It is important to note that the accumulated values in the general accounts already include the costs and expenses of personnel, marketing, transportation, services, and so forth. The formula employed incorporates the anticipated benefits and the investments made during the campaign period. In this manner, the return on investments and efforts made throughout the company are calculated (Formula 1), and the same process can be applied to resources utilized exclusively in digital campaigns (Formula 2).

Formula 1:

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Revenues} - \text{Total Costs}}{\text{Total Costs}} \times 100$$

Formula 2:

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Revenue} - \text{Digital Campaign Costs}}{\text{Digital Campaign Costs}} \times 100$$





## CONCLUSIONS

The design and execution of a strategic digital marketing plan must be informed by a comprehensive diagnosis and analysis of the various variables that affect the company. This approach will provide a solid foundation for the construction of strategies, tactics, and specific activities that will achieve the objectives proposed by the organization.

This dynamic will necessitate a robust commitment from the organizational units responsible for the future planning and operationalization of its fulfillment, particularly in the marketing domain. These actions will contribute to an increase in sales and the establishment of positive relationships with customers and consumers. Consequently, it is of paramount importance that these areas monitor and evaluate each stage of the proposed Digital Marketing Strategic Plan, with the objective of avoiding the loss of the efforts invested in its construction and execution due to the failure to implement the necessary corrective actions at the appropriate times.


The plan is based on a comprehensive analysis of market segments and niches, as well as users or customers. These individuals must be engaged more actively through the use of digital media and channels that have been reviewed and proposed. However, it is equally important to identify and retain new customers in different segments. This can be achieved through the use of powerful tools that are currently available. These tools are described in detail throughout this document.

Finally, as professionals in business administration and university teachers, the authors consider that this document allows for the practical and experiential identification of how digital tools can make a difference in the success of organizations. At the same time, it is evident that companies are facing an abrupt change in their marketing methods. Therefore, it will be necessary to continue deepening research that promotes learning in the use of new tools that have been created for the evolution of the mechanisms of promotion and marketing of products and services.

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