

Karina Monserrath Siguenza-Peñafiel; Juan Carlos Erazo-Álvarez; Cecilia Ivonne Narváez-Zurita

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Estrategias de marketing viral y el posicionamiento de marca en el sector farmacéutico

Viral marketing strategies and brand positioning in the pharmaceutical sector

Karina Monserrath Siguenza-Peñafiel
karina.siguenza@psq.ucacue.edu.ec
Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Cuenca
Ecuador
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4102-5226>

Juan Carlos Erazo-Álvarez
icerazo@ucacue.edu.ec
Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Cuenca
Ecuador
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6480-2270>

Cecilia Ivonne Narváez-Zurita
inarvaez@ucacue.edu.ec
Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Cuenca
Ecuador
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7437-9880>

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ABSTRACT

The brand is the most favorable perception to influence the moment of acquisition in the minds of customers, where a link is created between the consumer and the organization. Therefore, the Swiss pharmacy chain located in the Cañar province, in Azogues city-Ecuador, is a company dedicated to the sale of pharmaceutical products. This research aims to develop viral marketing and brand positioning strategies in the pharmaceutical sector. The applied methodology is descriptive, transversal with a mixed-methods approach using the inductive-deductive method. The lack of strategies was found according to the new technology era regarding a digital consumer and always up to date

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in technology with an increasingly virtual buying trend. It is concluded that the contribution of viral marketing strategies is essential to improve positioning.

Descriptors: Marketing; advertising; administration; management operations. (Words taken from the UNESCO Thesaurus).

INTRODUCTION

Today, in Ecuador with an increasingly competitive market where the consumer not only looks for a cheap price but rather for an added value, it is determined that the brand is the most favorable perception to influence the moment of acquisition in the minds of customers in which a link is created between them and the organization. So the positioning of a brand allows the consumer to identify and take hold of it.

In the same way, from the nineties to the present, it is observed that the brand has become one of the most important components for small and large companies, since the consumer is intimately connected with the product or service that organizations offer. A very particular case are the "golden rings" of McDonalds, which are recognized anywhere in the world. In this way, it is important to have a strong brand like that because, despite the existence of several restaurants around the world, it will be well-known due to its fast and timely service.

In this respect, the brand is constituted as one of the most transcendental intangible elements, since they contribute to the process of the company differentiation in relation to the competition. Therefore, this must be managed properly, due to it has the ability to (I) promote reputation and prestige, (II) build customer loyalty, (III) generate affinity and emotional interest among a set of people with similarities, (IV) difficulty to be imitated (Aguerreberre, 2014). Nowadays, it is possible to attract potential customers through technology because it helps to increase sales and optimize expenses through an innovative and effective communication channel without reducing the quality of service to customers.

Within this context, a Swiss pharmacy chain located in the province of Cañar, in the city of Azogues-Ecuador with 38 branches (inside La troncal, Suscal, El tambo, Cañar,

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Biblián and Azogues) is a company that is dedicated to the sale of pharmaceutical products characterized by service to its consumers and benefits to its collaborators.

The problem lies in the absence of viral marketing and brand positioning strategies, since the company only takes into account its initiative and management empowerment forgetting about the consumer's interests who looks for economic prices and also the added value. For this reason, the entity must consider the following:

The creation of a brand is an integrative process, which seeks to build powerful brands; that is, brands that are widely known, associated with positive elements, desired and bought by a broad consumer base. This includes the definition of the identity or image that people want to have in a market, its graphic design and the staging of the brand in front of certain audiences, so that it becomes relevant... (Hoyos - Ballesteros, 2016, p.1)

Based on the aforementioned, the objective of this study is to develop viral marketing and brand positioning strategies that allow the consumer to identify and take possession of it. The term brand value "was born in the mid-eighties, a time when the worlds of finance and marketing became aware of the enormous economic value of brands, (...) a slogan that groups different concepts" (Batey, 2013, p 20).

METHOD

This research was non-experimental because there was no manipulation of the studied variables by which they were analyzed in their natural environment. It was based on a mixed- method approach "in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were combined in the same stage or phase of research" (Pereira-Pérez, 2011, p.19).

The study had a descriptive-explanatory scope due to the fact that several theories were investigated based on the research variables; the applied methodology was also transversal. Besides, the deductive-inductive method was used. Finally, the techniques used were the observation and the survey to collect necessary and indispensable information on the variables whose instrument was the questionnaire (Erazo-Álvarez & Narváez-Zurita, 2020).

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RESULTS

The structure of the proposed viral marketing strategies is presented below:

Situational analysis of the company

Based on the instruments that were applied to the most frequent clients of the Swiss pharmacy chain; it is established that 32% of the respondents were male and 49% were female. On the other hand, 21% of the respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 27 years, 27% ranged from 38 to 47 years. In addition, 60% of the people surveyed were married in a marital status, these being the characteristics of their potential market.

Dimension: Picture

In this dimension, it was observed that 39.6% of the people who were surveyed had a preference for the logo of the Swiss pharmacy chain, 60.4% had a preference for other brands.

Dimension: Positioning

In this dimension, it was observed that 58.3% of those surveyed had a preference for the Swiss pharmacy chain, 41.7% favored other pharmacies.

Dimension: Product

According to this dimension, customer behavior considered that 94.4% of the people who were surveyed needed a pharmacy to have a variety of both pharmaceutical and popular products, where everything could be found in one place. In addition 80, 6% of those surveyed considered that it was very important to have affordable and accessible prices.

Dimension: Promotions

According to this variable, the people surveyed considered that promotions and raffles at the time of making a purchase affected the customer in a 64.8%, in the same way, 94.4% of those surveyed agreed with the fact of intensifying promotions and raffles through networks. In addition, 72.2% thought that the sale should be implemented through a web proforma. Within this context, 57.7% also agreed to receive personal

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notifications of promotions through a direct message to customers and 41.7% agreed to receive beauty and health advice on all digital platforms.

Dimension: Preferences

91.7% of the people surveyed considered that customer service is the most important thing in order to have a pleasant shopping experience and an incentive to buy back.

Goals

Increase sales through digital media by 10% between July and December 2020. Use social networks to offer the products and share health advice where the positioning of the Swiss pharmacy chain could be highlighted in the city of Azogues.

Product strategies

Swiss pharmacy has more than 40 years in the market, its distinctive has the shape of a rooster, the same one that over the years has been improved until using an apron which represents the medical profession.

Sales strategies

The company has 33 branches in the province of Cañar. 10 of them are in the city of Azogues. Its sales are direct, that is, the customer has to go to any point of sale to purchase the products. However, the use of a digital media is an option for customers' interaction through the Facebook platform. On the other hand, the fan page is used so that the client can know the products, prices and promotions that each Swiss pharmacy has, because they have 6 products that are in promotion every week. Following this line, a web page is also available where customers can buy any online product offered by the Swiss pharmacy chain.

Communication strategies

The main objective of this strategy is to use digital media such as social networks, and other applications provided by the internet to keep customers of the Swiss pharmacy

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chain informed. Likewise, it is intended to promote communication through online messages to solve any doubt, concern or requirement that the user may have.

Customer service strategies

The focus of this strategy is to promote good courtesy practices towards customers in the Swiss pharmacy chain. On the other hand, the channel manager must control and supervise compliance with the parameters established in a guide to facilitate its monitoring.

Results measurement

The measurement of results is based on the increase in sales within the specified period of time. To achieve this, monthly follow-up and monitoring will be considered to develop campaigns either ATL Above The Line or BTL Below The Line for the success of the marketing campaign.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that, at present, there is no greater restriction in terms of the relationship between company – client because of the use of the internet and information technologies. These innovative services are necessary for the communication since they allow creating content that is important for the clients and serves as a reference to resolve any concern or doubt. Due to the users are considered to be changeable and curious, the pharmacy must provide the necessary information for calling their attention and accomplish their preferences.

Swiss pharmacy chain has a noticeable trajectory throughout its history; however, it is not extensive enough, that is why it is recommended that the viral marketing strategies that have been proposed in this study, may be applied in order to have a significant presence in the business area as well as become a benchmark for its competitors. In addition, the respective monitoring must be constantly carried out and monthly controlled by virtue of complying with the parameter established in the company's guide, which is

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focused on the sales improvements. As a result, this study permits the company to have strong marketing strategies and implement a culture directed towards communication and viral marketing in the organization.

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