

# DIGITAL MARKETING AND THE COMPANIES IN THE CITY OF TEÓFILO OTONI/STATE OF MINAS GERAIS/BRAZIL

MARKETING DIGITAL E AS EMPRESAS DO MUNICÍPIO DE TEÓFILO OTONI/MG/BRASIL

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## ABSTRACT

*Repeatedly ignored and rarely used, digital marketing does not appear to be a need for the companies in the city of Teófilo Otoni, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. This lack of interest can be explained by the fact that the local business people are not concerned about this working tool as a development strategy, both in the way of thinking and acting. Regarding the methodology used, from the point of view of its nature, the research comes up as a basic one and, from the objectives' point of view it is seen as a descriptive research. On the object of study, this paper adopted field research for survey and data collection, and the mechanisms applied were those of direct observation and the use of questionnaires. Data analysis occurred through simple statistical analysis. The questionnaire was applied between the months of December 2014 and January 2015, with an answer rate of 57% of the target companies.*

**Key-words:** Marketing. Digital Marketing. E-Commerce. Internet. Business strategies.

## RESUMO

Seguidamente ignorado, raramente utilizado, o Marketing Digital não aparece para as empresas de Teófilo Otoni/MG como uma necessidade. Este desinteresse se explica pelo fato de os empresários locais não se preocuparem com essa ferramenta de trabalho, seja como estratégia de desenvolvimento, seja como modo de pensar e agir. Com relação à metodologia utilizada, do ponto de vista da sua natureza, a pesquisa se apresenta como básica e, do ponto de vista dos seus objetivos, é tida como descritiva. No tocante ao objeto de estudo, o trabalho adotado foi a pesquisa de campo para o levantamento e coleta de dados e os meios aplicados foi a observação direta e a utilização de questionários. A análise dos dados ocorreu através de tratamento estatístico simples. A coleta de dados aconteceu entre os meses de dezembro de 2014 e janeiro de 2015, com uma taxa de resposta de 57% das empresas alvo.

**Palavras-chave:** Marketing. Marketing Digital. E-commerce. Internet Estratégias Empresariais.

## INTRODUCTION

The world is more and more elastic; cultural aspects, information and technology go through rapid and radical transformations, and this changing picture causes severe and unpredictable market impacts. It is true that creating and developing products is now faster, services are differentiated, competition is fierce and market boundaries, which used to be closed, are now totally open; this is the competition globalization. The companies which are doing what they should are the big ones, those which are used to facing the business world. In view of this there is the need that this way of thinking and acting should also be a part of the micro, small and medium enterprises. Thus, it is up to the marketing professionals to study these market transformations in order to observe and detect opportunities and threats, enabling the organizations to create adequate strategies to their current and potential clients. Nowadays, according to Kotler and Keller (2006), it is more and more difficult to satisfy these clients, since sales have gone from a mere commercial transaction to a long and faithful relationship.

In this high competitiveness scenario, the enterprises need to change their strategic focus and try to use the technological tools available like, for instance, Extranet, Intranet and Internet. The World Wide Web becomes fundamental for connecting people, for data collection and information, besides serving as a facilitator for virtual customers and also as a primary tool of advertisement and publicity.

Thus, to Kendzerski (2009), the importance of digital marketing within the enterprises is huge, sometimes so important it becomes irreplaceable.

Saad (2003) states that, in order to have an efficient digital structure, one needs to present innovative and creative methodologies, regardless of observing the internal and external enterprise environments, which are constantly changing. Besides, the greatest challenge is catching up with market, economy and technology tendencies. Following an intense technological pace, an important product today may become obsolete tomorrow, especially in the virtual world, where information is more accessible and flows more quickly.

This paper tries to relate the importance of digital marketing to enterprises, especially those said to be hypercompetitive. It must be said that, in a market where information and service differen-

tiation become more and more responsible for the companies' survival, digital marketing may add value to the enterprise and significantly collaborate to its success.

In effect, the internet changed the world and some of these transmutation consequences were the market expansion, the increase in the number of clients and competitors, besides a decrease in geographical and economical boundaries. Thus, one might reflect about the survival possibility of enterprises which do not adapt to this transformative reality in the virtual world. Consequently, according to data from the City Hall of Teófilo Otoni, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, the city has a large and diverse number of companies not yet connected to the World Wide Web, and this leads people to ponder whether these organizations come to prospect any advantages and opportunities which come from digital marketing.

This way, one may ask: how do the enterprises in Teófilo Otoni use the digital marketing tools?

In search for this answer, besides a bibliographical study about the topic, an empirical research with some enterprises in Teófilo Otoni was conducted with the scope of knowing the managers' perception about the use of digital marketing as a development strategy. In this context, the following hypotheses come up: H1 – digital marketing is essential in entrepreneurial strategies; H2 – digital marketing is a useless tool to the enterprise's growth.

## THEORECITAL FRAME

### MARKETING EVOLUTION AND CONCEPT

The American Marketing Association (AMA), the oldest professionals and researchers' association connected to this activity, defines marketing as “the set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders” (AMA, 2004).

For Kotler and Keller (2006, p. 4), “the marketing objective is to know and understand the client so well that the product or service is adequate to them or is sold by itself”, that is, make selling so easy that all you would need would be to leave the products and/or services to be sold, which would enable the salespeople to do the least they could in order to obtain the highest results. With the same

thought, Kotler and Armstrong (2007) highlight that the marketing actions are necessary to any organization that intends to conquer their clients in a correct and precise way, without wasting time nor resources, for, if an enterprise does not know their target audience well, they will possibly not have adequate strategies to serve them and their resources and efforts will be in vain. Also, according to Urdan and Urdan (2011), it is the process in which the professionals adopt measures to understand and meet the clients' needs and desires, trying to please them better than their competitors and creating a long-term relationship between the parts.

Meanwhile, as Levit (1960) used to say, it is the marketing's responsibility to implement a commercial process integrating the effort to discover, create, awake and satisfy the consumers' needs.

Notwithstanding, marketing has existed since the exchanging of goods (barter) and especially in the beginning of commercialization for the private enrichment. However, in essence, we can divide marketing in three areas, highlighted by Cobra (2009) as The Production Era, The Selling Era and The Marketing Era:

– The Production Era existed up to mid-1925, when the dominant countries in the world economy held the largest enterprises at that time; their concerns were totally dedicated to the products, since all of them, when produced, were consumed immediately.

– The Selling Era went on between 1925 and 1950, when production was no longer elitist, and techniques were dominated by several enterprises in the world. Issues related to the importance of selling goods started to spread out since the buyers had more choices and the enterprises noticed that their products were not as essential as before.

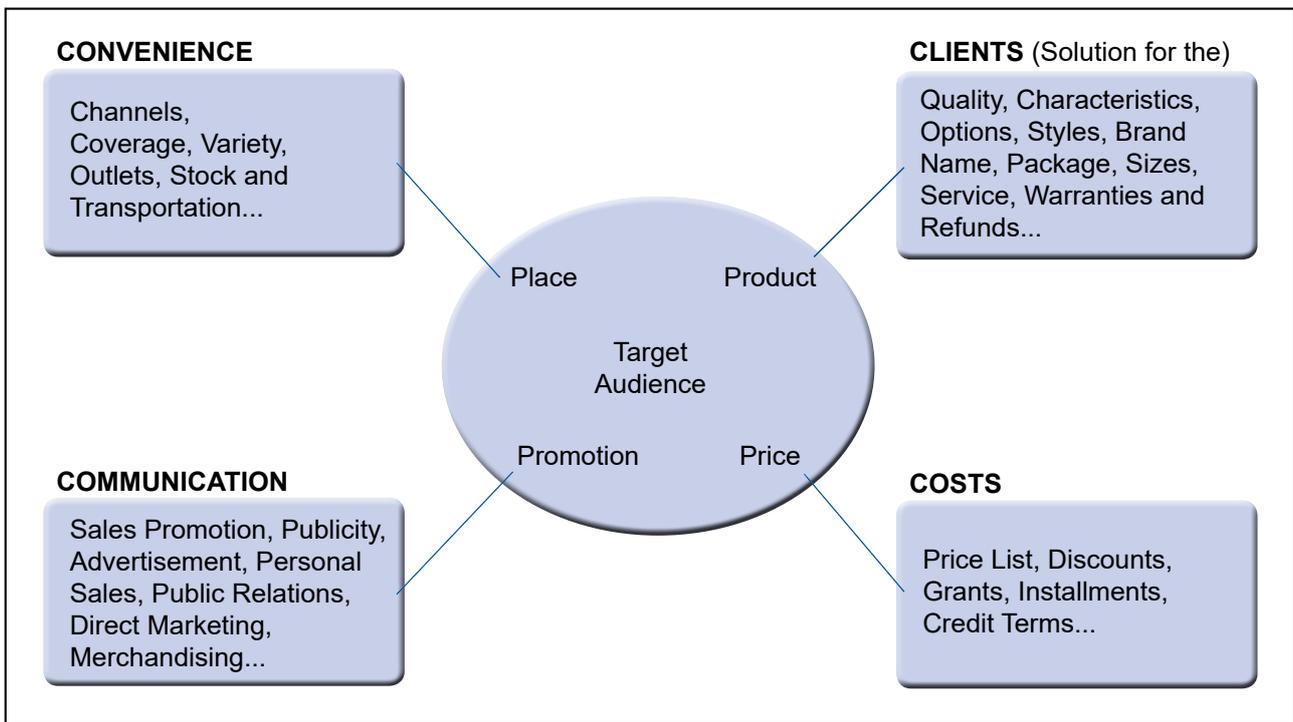
– The Marketing Era took place right after the 1929 crash and it originated from the high increase of production and from the markets which were not severely regulated by governments. This event forced the United States and other countries to struggle with the people's loss of power of consumption, making buying more difficult. Marketing was the tool used by enterprises which tried to meet the market main desires, and this triggered strategical changes committed to a better knowledge of products and clients.

Thus, a new management way is adopted, like Bross (1965, p. 133) used to say that “the objective of studies on consumers' preferences is that of suiting the product to the public, not like in publicity, which suits public to product”. Four decades later, Kotler and Keller (2006, p. 14) ratify Bross words and testify that “what one needs no more is finding the right clients for their products but the right products for their clients”. In the 21st century the marketing main concerns turn to communication with people, creating experiences and interactions in order to make communication easy.

## MARKETING MIX

The marketing mix (or 4 Ps) is about the tools that every organization must take into account to motivate their clients to buy their products or services. This influence must be specifically guided to their target audience, confirming the strategy proposed by the enterprise. The so-called 4Ps (production, price, promotion and place – Figure 1) are applied in one single direction in order to manage the actions that try to reach the entrepreneurial objectives (STEFFEN, 2009, p. 21).

MARKETING MIX



Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2006).

Kotler and Armstrong (2007, p. 42) state that “product means the combination of goods and services the enterprise offers to their target audience”. These products must meet the clients’ expectations and it is essential they have good quality, good design, attractive packaging and an admirable brand name, for, according to Frantz et al. (2010, p. 5) “these will be the factors which will differentiate one from another, guaranteeing clients’ fidelity and retention to the enterprise”.

Price is the value paid by the client to obtain the product or service from the organization. It can be divided into two components: the monetary value (which represents the product manufacturing, stocking, distribution and depreciation) and the non-monetary value (electricity and time costs and psychological costs for acquiring the products). These can actually be the differential aspects when deciding to buy. It must be mentioned that price is essential in enterprise strategy, for, according to Urdan and Urdan (2006), it is according to the intended market that one must stipulate the adequate price.

As to promotion, it is vital for the client to know the enterprise and the product it offers. However, the main role of promotion is to show that a product is better than that of their competitors; for Kotler and Keller (2006), it is making sure that buying this prod-

uct will be the best choice among all others in the market.

Place, or distribution channel, is of great relevance on the grounds of consumer or client’s accessibility when buying the products. For Frantz et al. (2010), a place that is not planned may result in delivery delays, unavailability and overpricing; every logistical aspect is affected.

Above all, it is important to show how the client notices these factors when comparing the purchase, especially when it is time to decide about it. The Marketing 4Cs (Client, Convenience, Communication and Cost) show the clients’ side.

According to Menshein (2006):

-The Client is the person who looks for an enterprise product or service to meet their needs or desires. They are the main focus of any organization, for without them there are no sales nor financial return; that is why the enterprise must analyze their clients well and set good strategies to reach them successfully.

-Convenience is the ease to find the enterprise’s products in the market. That is why it is essential for the organization to study its location well in order to make it easily accessed along with an efficient distribution.

-Communication is very important for the clients, since this is the way they will know the price, the

quality, the differentials and advantages to acquire such products. It is no use if the enterprise is only concerned about producing and not advertising their product in the market.

-In Cost, the client creates a value perception in every product. The enterprise must, through a lot of research, create the adequate price according to their target audience perception. Upon analyzing similar products and clients' behavior, the organization determines the adequate value.

### Marketing Typologies in Organizations

Kotler and Keller (2006) state that in this new scenario the organizations must adopt more and more flexible strategies, and their concerns must cover every market agent, from employees to clients, suppliers and competitors, that is, society as a whole. Known as Holistic Marketing, it is responsible for Integrating Relationship Marketing, Integrated Marketing, Internal Marketing and the Socially Responsible Marketing.

Relationship Marketing means creating strong and long-term partnerships, upon which the entrepreneurial success depends. Thus, it is advisable to seek for every client, supplier, distributor and organization which influences directly or indirectly in this process.

Integrated Marketing involves adopting adequate planning to the public through the so-called 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion), which the organization will use to create and communicate the value to their clients.

Internal Marketing (or Endomarketing) will try to hire, develop and value the employees within an enterprise. It is relevant because people form any enterprise's competitive differential.

The Socially Responsible Marketing covers all society, showing interest in world, social, cultural and economic matters, among others.

In fact, there are several types of marketing but, at this point, the focus is on Digital Marketing, which facilitates mass products' transactions and personalization through electronic channels; the versatility of their functions will be discussed.

## DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

In order to understand digital marketing, it is meaningful to present certain aspects related to this theme. To name a few: the origin of the Internet, e-commerce and e-business, their advantages and market growth.

### Internet and E-Commerce

The globalization pushed by developed countries resulted in the facilitation of market openings, both for the enterprises and for the clients, to act in any part of the world. However, not only opportunities came along, but also threats to all these companies. Yet, this consumers' market expansion was only possible, according to Cobra (2009), because of the people's way of thinking and the improvement of technologies.

Nevertheless, it is pertinent to line out a brief history regarding the Internet, something directly responsible for all these changes. The Internet came to be during the Cold War in a silent way, when nations at war looked for information from enemy countries and used it as communication among the military bases. Later on, in 1969, the Internet was born and it was called ARPAnet, for it was a project from the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), becoming public only for scientists in the USA universities. After two decades of researches and improvements did it become a commercial product, through which people communicated world widely via a computer web (TAIT, 2007).

Saad (2003, p. 22), then, underlines that the Internet is "a world wide web of computers interconnected which enables messages exchanging, data and files between several users, with an instantaneity never before seen". However, his definition becomes more and more complex and inaccurate due to its multiple uses, both domestic and industrial: "online banks, internet shopping, shopping mall inquiries. Anyway, a variety of daily situations became part of the large virtual web" (PIMENTEL, 2011, p. 1).

In Brazil, the Internet gained visibility and popularity around 1991, when the Department of Science and Technology tried to make the Brazilian academic system search it more deeply to see its advantages. In 1994, the Brazilian Telecommunication Enterprise (EMBRATEL) launches the Internet as an experiment trying to get to know it better, and later approving of its use to enterprises only in 1995; several years later, we can observe the changes the Internet has brought for people and for the world commerce (MENDES; MENDES, 2008).

Besides encompassing military and academic fields, the Internet came to widen the entrepreneurial growth chances for electronic commerce, or e-commerce. In this sense, Mendes and Mendes (2008, p. 10) show that e-commerce means electronic commerce, that is,

a set of commercial activities that take place online. There is a difference between e-commerce and e-business, expressions that many people get confused with. E-business does not involve commercial transaction, it is an electronic business, a deal done through the Internet but which does not necessarily involve a commercial transaction. It is wrong for those who are in the market to use these two expressions to talk about the same thing.

## E-commerce and E-business in Brazil

The Brazilian electronic market stands out in world statistics and the tendency is that these numbers grow even more. According to data published in June 2012, Brazil was among the five countries which had more Internet users in the world. That was around 88,494,756 users of this service in the country, approximately 45.6% of the total population then. The electronic commerce revenue growth has grown exponentially since the beginning of the 21st century: in 2001, the revenue was R\$ 0.54 billion, reaching R\$ 22.5 billion in 2012. The most sold products, in an ascending order, are appliances, computer products, electronics, health/beauty and fashion/accessories. Actually, the number of consumers went from 1.1 million in 2001 to 43 million in 2012, and these data show that the biggest consumers have an income between R\$ 1,000 and R\$ 3,000 a month, with the age ranging between 35 and 49 (E-COMMERCE, 2012).

These data highlight how promising this area is for the market. The advantages, according to Diniz et al. (2011), include availability and service convenience, that is, the client can proceed with the purchase from anywhere; it works around the clock; a wide variety of information about the products and other consumers' opinions; low operational and communication costs; rapid product dissemination; entrepreneurial image value added; integration with clients and suppliers; generation of a database; and promptness in advertising products and/or services.

However, these services, according to Diniz et al. (2011), also present some disadvantages: the clients still show some suspicion about services and products; the absence of a salesperson abolishes the possibility of bargaining; delivery is not immediate; shipping, oftentimes, is an added value; and, lastly, exchanging a product which was bought from a distance can be an awkward situation.

## E-Commerce Types of Transactions

Kotler and Armstrong (2007, p. 6) define market as a “[...] set of real and potential buyers of a product. These buyers share a desire or a specific need which can be met through exchanges and relationships”. The focus on this market is ruled by direct agents like clients, suppliers, enterprises, competitors and partners, besides factors like government, culture, technology, among others.

The market can be divided into different types of transactions (following the same e-commerce relation) with diversified purposes; exchanges which involve from consumers up to the government. It is highlighted that an enterprise can do more than one type of transaction within its market. According to Turban (2005), the most common ones are: business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumers (B2C), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), government-to-citizens (G2C), consumers-to-business (C2B), government-to-business (G2B) and the Intra-Business Commerce (Interorganizational), used so that the organizations internally improve their techniques.

However, the most used one is the business-to-employees (B2E), in which the enterprises sell their products and services to their own employees. With the Collaborative Commerce (c-commerce), the organizations exchange information with their partners seeking to a better integration with all the value chain. And, with the Mobile Commerce (m-commerce), it tries to conduct trades from a mobile space, for example, shopping from a cell phone or another electronic gadget which is not fixed, that is, wireless.

Nowadays, it is understood that commercial trades can happen anywhere and at any time, for the virtual tools facilitate the purchasing effectiveness and work uninterruptedly, allowing sales to be swift. Besides, the enterprises can also collect valuable information from the clients.

## THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is a tool upon which enterprises use the media along with marketing in order to reach their strategic objectives. Through this tool, highlights Lemes and Ghisleni (2013), the enterprise tries to reach its clients and create a solid organization image in the market. Torres (2010, p. 7), on the other hand, describes it as

a set of marketing and publicity strategies, applied to the Internet and to the new

consumer's behavior when they are browsing online. It is not about this or that action, but a coherent and efficient set of actions which create a permanent contact between enterprise and clients.

Therefore, one notices that the relationship between enterprises and clients went through meaningful changes after the digital marketing came to be. Thus, the enterprises ceased to use only the traditional advertisement in order to communicate directly with each client, so as to create a communication channel for both, making it possible for the clients not only to show what they want, but also suggest improvements in products and services of their interest. Within this context, as appointed by Lemes and Ghisleni (2013), the enterprise has the capacity to discover the clients' needs and desires in order to meet them.

According to Torres (2010), this digital tool is becoming more and more important, not only because of the technological changes, but also because of the variation in the consumers' way of thinking, since they have more information at their reach. Comparing prices and going through other people's reviews about a certain product in the digital world has become something common. We have, then, another service which is at high: the so-called blogs, forums and social networks, where the consumers themselves share their level of satisfaction. All these facts have great effects, since poor and unfavorable reviews about a specific product or service can bring about serious consequences and even hurt the organization image.

## MIDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS APPLIED TO MARKETING

Lima (2009) explains that, due to the technological convergences which have taken place in the past few years, communications have gone through transformations which affected people's relationships and shared information directly; notwithstanding, the social networks are the area which grows more rapidly on the Internet. We should mention that this new way of thinking and acting directly affects the organizations, which, because of people's uncertainty when receiving these facts, rejected such tools. Nowadays, for Nanni and Cañete (2009), the use of these tools has become a way of work and communication facilitator, since the clients no longer want partial communication, but a wide dialogue which can help them clear their doubts.

According to Recuero (2009), a social network can be defined as the interaction between several individuals or legal persons, with the objective of creating bonds between themselves, with mutual interests and which can be done digitally. On the Internet, people (as the social network actors) interact through a web in search of a common relationship. The web made the process of social relationship easier. Besides, there is also the speed of access, the swiftness around information and the number of people in this virtual world which turned the Internet into a social movement that affects the market, the economies, the politics and even cultures around the world.

Through social media, the enterprises need to get closer to their clients, watching their needs and extracting the value of each one. A research done by Deloitte consultancy (2010) indicates that 70% of national enterprises use social media to reach their clients. Despite this percentage, many enterprises still do not enjoy the benefits of social media because they do not want or because they are not able to implement them correctly. The research goes on to reveal that the organizations use social media especially to advertise their products (around 83%), when the ideal would be to monitor their actions and create an enterprise-client relationship. It is also possible to notice that the investments are still very low, but this scenario is growing considerably.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

For Gil (1999, p. 42), the research is a "formal and systematic process of the scientific method development with the objective of finding answers to problems through the application of scientific procedures". With the same understanding, Markoni and Lakatos (2009, p. 157) underline that "the research forms the path to know reality or to find partial truths" and requires an orderly set of ideas in order to verify the facts observed. And similarly thinking like Gil (1999), Cervo et al. (2007, p. 55) reinforce the notion that the research "is an activity turned to the investigation of theoretical or practical problems by applying scientific processes".

In this sense, from its nature point of view, Silva (2001, p. 20) states that "the research can be basic, for it aims at generating new knowledge without any previous practice application". From the objectives' point of view, Gil (2010) says the research is descriptive, for it aims at describing the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon, and

one of its most meaningful characteristics is the use of standard techniques in the data collection, such as questionnaires and systematic observation. As to the technical procedures, Gil (2010) says the research is bibliographical, for it was developed from a pre-set material, mainly composed of books and scientific articles. Among its advantages is the fact that the documents constitute a diversified and stable data source. For Diehl and Tatim (2004), another advantage of bibliographical research is linked to the cost, since it is meaningfully low when compared to that of other researches. Furthermore, Diehl and Tatim (2004, p. 58) point out that “another advantage is not demanding contact with the research individuals”.

As to the object of study, the kind of work adopted was that of field research for data survey and collection together with the group researched, and the ways applied were direct observation and the utilization of questionnaires. According to Cervo et al. (2007), the questionnaire is one of the most frequently used tools to collect information, since it allows an accurate evaluation of the desired data and offers more security to the interviewees because of anonymity.

## FIELD RESEARCH CHARACTERIZATION

The field research was done in two steps. The first one was dedicated to questionnaire elaboration and the selection of the actors to be researched. The second one was dedicated to scheduling and survey application. However, at this point we scheduled the application for two enterprises and the exceeding questionnaires were freely applied to managers who had time to take part in the research. The application took place through the months of December 2014 and January 2015.

We should mention that our desire was to collect information from the highest possible number of enterprises in the commercial pole in the city of Teófilo Otoni, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, no matter the area of work, with special attention to keeping anonymity. However, the questionnaires were applied only in seven enterprises due to unavailability or lack of interest from the managers in the remaining organizations. We also tried to apply the survey in the largest Brazilian retail stores located in the city but they showed no interest, which was pitiful. With the results we hoped to make a comparative study with the regional enterprises.

## DISCUSSION RESULTS

The field research reached a universe of only seven enterprises from the most diverse activity sectors: publicity agency; pharmacy; information technology; jewelry and girls' accessories; education; stationery and medical exams office. As to the number of employees, the enterprises vary from micro to large ones. We also analyzed the enterprises' life span in the city, with most of them, 57%, around for over 10 years; 14%, 1 year; 29% between 1 and 5 years, and none between 5 and 10 years.

As to the entrepreneurial strategy, we initially questioned if the organization had any Digital Marketing policy, whether formal or not. The results show that out of seven, five of them, or 57%, presented some concern about the topic, both formal (29%) and informal (28%). The remaining two, a total of 43%, did not use digital marketing as a development strategy.

However, the enterprises which do not adopt any mechanism of digital marketing were also questioned about the tool's possible advantages and disadvantages. The answers, according to them, are that the possible advantages involve mass communication, low cost and improvement in the way they serve, which would come from the convenience of shopping. As disadvantages, the consumers' concern, as they still see the digital world as fraudulent.

The remaining enterprises which use this tool, including the formal use, worry about clients' information and care for their privacy. The others, besides resisting as to the use of digital marketing, do not have any intention to do so in the nearby future.

As we examined the five enterprises involved with digital strategy, we noticed that only three of them highlight the relevance of this tool to their employees. Besides, most of them demonstrate the connection in communication between their suppliers and clients, and only one do not take time to record any clients' data.

About digital marketing, from the enterprises analyzed, only one does not apply any formal planning, as cited by an enterprise we interviewed: “There is no formal planning, we only use random tools like social networks sporadically”, most of them plan through market analyses or through support agencies.

Only one enterprise has someone in charge of this function. The behavior in the remaining ones is exemplified in the report from the enterprise number four: “We don't have a specific professional for that”, which

can show the lack of sensibility about the importance of such a tool. However, they all say they worry about giving feedback to their clients about their needs.

The digital marketing tools more widely used among the enterprises researched were: marketing in the media and social networks; online advertisement; online research; marketing e-mail; viral marketing.

As to the tools applied, the ones that stand out among the five enterprises are media marketing and social networks. As an example, we can use the statement of enterprise number 3: “We use Facebook and Twitter. We use them to talk about our offers, health tips and events promoted by the enterprise”. Viral marketing is less used. The phenomenon occurs due to the fact that the social networks are the media with highest evidence and lowest cost.

As to the use of digital marketing, among the five enterprises that have already adopted this developing tool, whether formally or informally, the best results were noticed. In enterprise number 1, client personalization stands out; in enterprise number 2, globalization, integration and proximity; in enterprise number 3, interactivity, globalization, integration, proximity and democratization; in enterprise number 4, personalization, globalization, proximity and information democratization. Enterprise number 5 refrained from giving an opinion.

The facts about this information are present. After all, they are the ones that will enable the creation and measurement of entrepreneurial strategies, as in the case of mass products’ commercial strategies transformations for personalized products, highlighting each client’s desire. All in all, customer support, communication and service advertisement swiftness can both show or hide the utility of such tools as to the final results.

As we observed the researched enterprises’ classification according to the types of transactions in e-commerce, they all adopt the business-to-consumers (B2C) transaction, which means the enterprises offer their products directly to their clients. The present numbers indicate that the use of digital marketing can bring great benefits, especially the high number of users and the high income which permeates the electronic world.

Besides, the enterprises cited the following as main advantages: “Low cost, mass media, communication swiftness, interaction and promptness” (enterprise number 1); “Now I think this type of media is essential” (enterprise number 5); the “speed with which the information goes and the number of people

reached” (enterprise number 3); “the advantage is that you communicate with several people in a network that is more and more used” (enterprise number 2), and the “wide reaching of people” (enterprise number 4).

About the main disadvantages, we can highlight: enterprise image exposition, which demands the processes to be more agile and efficient; information overload and negative image, the latter one in the case of a badly adapted strategy.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the beginning of this study we presented the marketing evolution and characteristics, treating it as a fundamental strategy in the process of clients’ positioning and retention, besides establishing a reciprocity relationship between parts. As we noticed a global competition due to the market openings and the technological advancements, we emphasized digital marketing as a tool that can aid the contemporary organizations management.

Effectively, the main objective of this study was to analyze the importance of digital marketing use for successful entrepreneurial strategies, as well as to check “if” and “how” the local business people use digital marketing.

Through the field research it was possible to see that the managers in Teófilo Otoni still do not recognize the importance of this tool for their strategy. The researched enterprises direct their efforts for the regional markets but forget that these same markets are more and more open, even to business internationalization. Even the business people who demonstrate some concerns about the competition invest little in the area and avoid employing specialized professionals. This shows that the H1 hypothesis was rejected and the H2 hypothesis was validated, since the local business people barely use the tools and show little interest in suiting digital marketing according to their strategies.

This work was equally important to show and alert the current and potential business people about the strategy shortages which cover digital marketing, a tool that contributes to differentiate the enterprises from their competitors. Truly, maybe they lack interactions with agencies that offer such services, for they can awake interests in the local enterprises.

The biggest limitation on this research was the number of enterprises analyzed, besides the fact it was not possible to work with the examples from the

large retail stores present in the city. We should thank the business people who contributed to this research, for they demonstrate commitment not only for their evolution, but also for the regional development.

On the possibility of future investigations, several proposals come up. One stands out: research the highest possible number of enterprises which already use marketing as a development strategy so as to know the real advantages of using it. To this proposal, we

should add the development of a model to help these same organizations strengthen their goals.

We conclude that this study proved itself to be pertinent because, in a market that is fiercer and fiercer, we noticed that the globalization promptness and possibility are fundamental aspects to any enterprise. Thus, the great challenge is aligning this modern enterprise view with the entrepreneurs' culture in Teófilo Otoni.

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