

Customer loyalty and retention. A marketing strategy based on the creation of promotional content and its effect on the consumer through the relationship with influencers

Fidelización y retención de clientes. Una estrategia de marketing basada en la creación de contenidos promocionales y su efecto en el consumidor por medio de la relación con influencers

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Abstract

Objective.-This study analyzes the fundamental role that influencers play and their relationship between a brand and its target audience.

Methodology.- Marketing has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of influencers as key tools in brand promotion strategies. It examines how influencers build authentic relationships with their followers and how this authenticity influences the credibility and influence of the brand's message.

Contributions.- In addition, effective collaboration strategies between brands and influencers are explored; Likewise, future trends in influencer marketing are discussed and the continued



Resumen

Objetivo: Este estudio analiza el papel fundamental que desempeñan los influencers y su relación entre una marca y su público objetivo.

Metodología.- El marketing ha experimentado una transformación significativa con la ascensión de los influencers como herramientas clave en las estrategias de promoción de las marcas. Se examina cómo los influencers construyen relaciones auténticas con sus seguidores y cómo esta autenticidad influye en la credibilidad y la influencia del mensaje de la marca.

Contribución.- Además, se exploran estrategias efectivas de colaboración entre marcas e influencers; asimismo, se discuten las tendencias futuras en el marketing de influencers y se subraya la importancia continua de esta herramienta en el panorama del marketing digital.



Marketing de Influencers, Fidelizacion de Marca, Relación Emocional

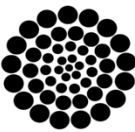
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Introduction

In the current marketing landscape, the presence of influencers has acquired a central role as a strategic tool for brands. However, despite their growing popularity, there is a pressing need to further understand the impact and nature of the emotional relationship that exists between influencers, brands and their target audiences.

The central problem lies in the lack of a comprehensive understanding of how influencers exert their influence on consumer purchasing decisions and how this influence translates into building meaningful relationships. The impact of influencers and their emotional relationship with their target audience raises questions about the effectiveness of this evolution and the tangible benefits it brings to brands in terms of building loyalty and positive perception.

Additionally, there is a significant challenge in measuring the performance of influencer marketing campaigns, as the lack of clear standards and specific metrics can make it difficult to accurately assess return on investment. Furthermore, the ethical dimension of influencer marketing, including transparency in relationships and authenticity of content, raises questions about the integrity of these practices and their long-term impact on public trust.

In this context, it is essential to address these issues comprehensively to provide brands and digital marketers with a robust, evidence-based framework to optimize their influencer collaboration strategies. This study aims to analyze in detail the role of the influencer as a key tool in digital marketing, focusing on the connection with their audience, their transformation into brand ambassadors and the need to establish ethical standards and clear performance metrics in this area.

The influence of influencers on consumer purchasing decisions is undeniable. However, the nature and mechanisms behind this influence have not yet been fully explored. This study seeks to fill this gap to provide brands with solid insights on how to leverage this influence effectively.

The transition from influencers to brand ambassadors raises questions about the authenticity of this evolution and the tangible benefits it brings to brands. Understanding this process will allow companies to make the most of long-term relationships with influencers.

The research seeks to offer practical and applicable knowledge to digital marketing professionals, helping them make informed decisions and improve the effectiveness of their collaboration strategies with influencers.

Research Question

How does the role of the influencer in marketing influence customer loyalty and retention through building authentic connections with their target audience?

General objective

Analyze the role of the influencer in marketing, evaluating the existing connection with its target audience and a brand, identifying the most effective collaboration strategies, and proposing a comprehensive framework to measure the performance of these campaigns, considering ethical aspects and the evolution of the influencers in the dynamics of current marketing.

Theoretical framework

Influencer marketing has experienced rapid growth in recent years, becoming a key strategy for brands in the digital sphere. To understand this phenomenon and address the proposed research topic, it is essential to explore several dimensions within the theoretical framework.

1. Persuasive Communication:

Persuasive communication according to Guillén and Guil (2000: 71) is a set of stimuli that raise a question that suggests the answer; in which one of the most valued effects of the communication process is, without a doubt, persuasion. This represents that the influence of influencers on purchasing decisions can be analyzed through the theory of persuasive communication. This approach examines how persuasive messages, in this case, those generated by influencers, impact the attitudes and behaviors of the target audience.

2. Theory of Relationship with the Consumer:

Consumer theory from an economic approach seeks to understand how people make purchasing decisions taking as reference their tastes, preferences, income and the prices of goods and services; In this way, companies consider these elements to develop marketing strategy (Schiffman and Lazar, 2010). Therefore, to understand the connection between the influencer and his audience, consumer relationship theory provides a conceptual framework. Examines how long-term relationships are built and maintained between brands (through influencers) and consumers.

3. Theory of Authenticity:

Authenticity consists, according to Consuegra and Quiñonez-Cintron (2012), in a coincidence with oneself, to which each one aspires. The foundation of authenticity is identity; a person who is identified with himself, where his way of acting coincides with his way of being, is authentic; In this sense, authenticity is a crucial element in the emotional connection between influencers, brands and their audience. Theories about authenticity explore how this quality affects public perception and the building of lasting relationships.

4. Evolution of Influencer Marketing:

Influencer marketing is a constantly evolving sector; Today it has become a job that requires professionalization and a consolidated strategy that generates engagement and trust with the general public (Sanmiguel, 2020). From this perspective, the analysis of the evolution of influencer marketing is based on theories of digital marketing and communication to understand how influencers have gone from being mere content creators to becoming brand ambassadors, focusing on the creation of long-term relationships.

5. Performance Metrics and Analysis:

Digital marketing is the creation and distribution of useful and relevant content in the digital environment to attract and retain the audience (Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, 2020).

Regarding performance measurement, theories of metrics analysis and return on investment in digital marketing provide tools to develop a quantitative and qualitative evaluation framework, allowing a deep understanding of the impact of influencer campaigns.

6. Ethics in Influencer Marketing:

Marketing ethics consists of incorporating moral values and principles in the dissemination, communication and awareness processes to create honest, safe and responsible relationships with the consumer (López, 2021). To address the ethical dimension, ethical and corporate social responsibility theories are used, analyzing transparency in the relationships between influencers and their audience, as well as the responsibility of brands in promoting ethical practices in influencer marketing.

This generalized conceptual vision provides the necessary conceptual basis to address the research topic, integrating communication, marketing, consumer relations and business ethics perspectives to comprehensively understand the role of the influencer in digital marketing.

Contextual framework

For the purposes of the research, a contemporary fashion brand that seeks to increase its online presence and attract a younger and more diverse audience will be taken as the basis of analysis; However, it is important to highlight that the purpose is not to disseminate the brand or the influencer, only to know their influence in relation to the brand; For this reason, the name of the brand or the name of the influencer will not be revealed.

In this scenario, the brand decides to implement an influencer marketing strategy as an integral part of its digital strategy, so a contextual overview will be provided to explore the key elements of the research topic.

Article

Fashion Brand X: Influencer Marketing Strategy

1. Identification of Influencers:

- The brand carries out an exhaustive analysis to identify influencers whose style and values match the aesthetics and image of the brand.
- An influencer is selected who has a committed audience that is representative of the target audience.

2. Authentic Content Strategy:

- The influencer collaborates closely with the brand to create authentic content that not only highlights the products, but also reflects the brand identity and the influencer's unique personality.

3. Transformation into Brand Ambassadors:

- Over time, some influencers show a deeper connection with the brand, expressing authenticity and genuine commitment.
- The brand decides to explore the possibility of turning the influencer into a brand ambassador, thus strengthening the long-term association.

4. Performance and Return on Investment Metrics:

- The brand uses specific metrics to measure the impact of the influencer's campaigns, including increased social media engagement, website traffic and, ultimately, sales.

Methodology

Qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the participants, exploring their experiences, perceptions and meanings. A qualitative case study research design will be used, allowing a detailed and contextualized analysis of the relationship between the influencer, the brand and its target audience. The case study will focus on a contemporary fashion brand and its experiences with influencers as brand ambassadors.

The sample will be selected intentionally, including an influencer representing brands and some audience members who follow said influencer on social networks.

A varied sample will be sought in terms of age, gender, geographic location and socioeconomic level.

Data collection

Participant observation of an influencer, brand representative, as well as the audience will be carried out to obtain a broad and diverse perspective.

Topics such as relationship building, evolution towards brand ambassadors and audience perception will be addressed.

Content analysis

Content generated by influencers will be analyzed, focusing on authenticity, alignment with brand values and audience response.

Posts on social networks, videos, and other formats will be examined to understand how the brand communicates through influencers.

Participant observation:

An observation will be made about online collaborations and activities where influencers represent the brand.

Observations will be collected on the direct interaction between the influencer, the brand and the audience.

Analysis of data

Data analysis will be inductive, emerging patterns and relevant themes will be identified. A triangulation approach will be used, comparing and contrasting participant observation data.

Interpretation and Presentation of Results

The findings are interpreted in the context of exhaustively and in detail exploring the role of the influencer in digital marketing as a brand ambassador and their connection with the target audience, capturing the experiences and perceptions of the participants in a meaningful way.

Performance Measurement:

1. Participation in Social Networks:

- Metrics: Track likes, comments and shares on social platforms.
- Benefits: Indicates the interaction and reach of the content.

2. Traffic to the Website:

- Metric: Analysis of the increase in web traffic during and after the campaigns.
- Benefits: Evaluate the effectiveness of the collaboration in generating interest and conversions.

3. Conversions and Sales:

- Metric: Tracking direct conversions attributable to the collaboration.
- Benefits: Measures the direct impact on business performance.

4. Surveys and Audience Feedback:

- Metrics: Compilation of opinions and perceptions through surveys and direct comments.
- Benefits: Provides qualitative insights into brand perception and influencer influence.

5. Audience Retention Rate:

- Metric: Evaluation of follower retention during and after collaboration.
- Benefits: Indicates long-term effectiveness in retaining interest and loyalty.

Interpretation involves analyzing and making sense of emerging patterns and themes through the prism of participants' experiences and perceptions.

Results

The emotional connection between the influencer and their audience was found to be a key component in influencer marketing success. Participants highlighted the importance of authenticity and the influencer's ability to generate trust and loyalty. This means that the influencer is an emotional connector.

The results revealed that authenticity in collaborations between the influencer and the brand is essential to maintain credibility with the audience. The perception of alignment between the influencer's values and those of the brand was a critical factor in the success of the collaboration. This results in authenticity and credibility in brand relationships.

The influencer demonstrates a natural evolution towards brand ambassador roles. This transformation was attributed to consistency in brand representation, building long-term relationships, and mutual identification of goals and values.

Effective collaboration strategies between brands and influencers were identified, such as the co-creation of content, the integration of brand values in the influencer's narrative and the authentic promotion of products or services. This results in an effective collaboration strategy.

The analysis revealed tangible indicators of impact, such as increased social media engagement, website traffic, and sales conversions. Participants reflect brand perception and customer loyalty, resulting in a return on investment for the brand.

Conclusions

Influencers play a crucial role in building an authentic and meaningful connection between a brand and its target audience. This connection goes beyond simple product promotion, becoming an emotional and relational phenomenon that can strengthen brand identity and foster consumer loyalty. Here are the key aspects of this role:

Influencers act as trusted mediators between the brand and its audience by embodying authenticity. Their ability to share genuine experiences and credibly recommend products creates an emotional bridge beyond traditional advertising.

Influencers stand out for their ability to establish an emotional connection with their audience. They share moments from their daily lives, personal experiences and values, which makes the brand more relatable and approachable for the target audience.

As influencers evolve into brand ambassadors, their consistent representation of the brand's values and messages reinforces the brand's identity. This consistency contributes to the formation of a strong and recognizable narrative.

The active participation of influencers in content creation provides a platform to organically integrate the brand's products or services into relevant and attractive contexts. This collaboration allows for a more authentic and compelling narrative.

The transition from influencers to brand ambassadors represents a long-term commitment. This evolution implies a deeper and more lasting relationship, where influencers become active advocates of the brand, continuously and authentically sharing their support and loyalty.

The evolution towards brand ambassadors goes hand in hand with building long-term relationships. These strong relationships not only benefit the brand in terms of continued promotion, but also reinforce the emotional connection with the audience.

The fundamental role of influencers translates into a measurable impact on the audience. Increased social media engagement, website traffic, and sales conversions are tangible indicators of the effectiveness of this connection.

These found pillars conclude that influencers play a vital role in building and strengthening the connection between a brand and its target audience. Their evolution into brand ambassadors reinforces this connection, taking the relationship beyond a simple promotional collaboration and contributing to the construction of a solid and authentic brand identity.

Effective Collaboration Strategies between Brands and Influencers:

1. Content Co-creation:

- Strategy: Involve influencers in the co-creation of content, allowing them to contribute their unique style and perspective to the brand narrative.
- Benefits: Increases authenticity, engagement and relevance of content.

2. Integration of Brand Values:

- Strategy: Select influencers whose personal values are aligned with those of the brand to guarantee a coherent and authentic representation.
- Benefits: Strengthens the emotional connection and reinforces the brand identity.

3. Exclusive Events and Collaborations:

- Strategy: Organize exclusive events or limited collaborations with influencers, generating anticipation and exclusivity.
- Benefits: Create memorable experiences and encourage audience participation.

4. Custom Affiliate Programs:

- Strategy: Establish custom affiliate programs that reward influencers for traffic and conversions generated.
- Benefits: Encourages performance and ensures mutually beneficial collaboration.

5. Inclusion in Product Decisions:

- Strategy: Involve influencers in the decision-making process of new products, from development to launch.
- Benefits: Generates a sense of ownership and increases authenticity in the promotion.

Additional proposals

1. Transparency and Disclosure:

- Challenge: Ensure clear disclosure of sponsored collaborations to maintain transparency.
- Strategy: Establish clear guidelines and encourage influencers to be transparent about partnerships.

2. Integrity of Product Representation:

- Challenge: Ensure that the influencer's representation of the product is authentic and honest.
- Strategy: Select influencers who are already aligned with the brand and establish clear expectations about the representation of the product.

3. Safety and Wellbeing of the Influencer:

- Challenge: Ensure that collaborations do not compromise the safety or well-being of the influencer.
- Strategy: Establish policies that prioritize safety and well-being, and communicate openly with influencers about boundaries and expectations.

4. Equity in Collaborations:

- Challenge: Avoid unfair preference or discrimination in the selection of influencers for collaborations.
- Strategy: Implement a fair and equitable selection process based on authenticity and alignment with brand values.

These strategies and ethical considerations seek to maximize the effectiveness of collaboration between brands and influencers, ensuring an authentic connection with the audience and proactively addressing ethical challenges.

Declarations

Conflict of interest

In relation to this article, the authors wish to emphasize that there is no conflict of interest that could influence the objectivity or impartiality of the results presented. We confirm that we do not have financial interests that compete with the topics discussed in this work, nor do we maintain relationships that could bias the interpretation of the data or the presentation of the conclusions.

Importantly, our priority is to maintain academic and ethical integrity in all our research. Therefore, any potential conflict of interest would be disclosed in a transparent and open manner. In this sense, we reiterate that there is no external influence that has impacted the writing or analysis of the content presented in this article.

We are committed to maintaining high standards of honesty and transparency in our investigative work, guaranteeing the reliability and credibility of the results presented. The absence of conflicts of interest reinforces our conviction in the veracity and relevance of the findings presented here, and reaffirms our commitment to scientific and academic integrity.

Author contribution

The contributions reflect the unique perspectives of each of us considering the specific experience and knowledge in digital marketing, research methodology and market positioning which enrich the analysis of the role of influencers in brand promotion strategies.

1. Market Positioning Expert (author: *Susana Ruiz Valdes*):

- Contribution: The author contributes her knowledge on how influencers can contribute to the positioning of a brand in the market. It highlights how strategic association with certain influencers can influence the perception of the brand in relation to the competition, allowing the brand to differentiate itself and stand out in a saturated market. The importance of carefully selecting influencers whose image and values align with those of the brand is emphasized to ensure an authentic and effective partnership that resonates with the target audience.

2. Expert in Research Methodology (co-author: *Juan Alberto Ruiz Tapia*):

- Contribution: The co-author analyzes the relationship between influencers, brands and their target audience from a scientific approach. The importance of designing and executing studies that allow evaluating the effectiveness of collaborations between influencers and brands is highlighted, as well as understanding in depth the impact of authenticity on consumers' perception of the brand. The need to use rigorous research methods is highlighted to obtain relevant insights that guide influencer marketing strategies effectively.

3. Digital Marketing Expert (co-author: *Ivette del Rosario Cruz Solis*):

- Contribution: The co-author highlights the significant transformation that the field of marketing has experienced with the rise of influencers as key tools in brand promotion strategies. It points out how influencers have revolutionized the way brands interact with their target audience in the digital environment, allowing for more direct and authentic communication. In addition, it highlights the ability of influencers to amplify the reach of brands through their social media platforms, generating greater engagement and loyalty from followers.

Availability of data and materials

The availability of the data in its entirety is contemplated for those interested who wish to delve deeper into the complete study and contact us as authors. We will be happy to provide access to detailed data, provided that applicable privacy and confidentiality policies are respected, and established ethical and legal procedures are followed. To request access to full data, we invite you to get in touch and we will assess the request on an individual basis and take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements. We are committed to fostering transparency and replicability in our research, and to collaborating with other researchers interested in using our data for related future studies and analyses.

Funding

It is important to note that this research was conducted without the support of any external funding. All costs associated with data collection, analysis, and presentation were borne by the authors themselves. This absence of external financing guarantees the independence and objectivity of the study, by avoiding any potential influence that could arise from financial interests or commitments with external entities.

This study was conducted with internal resources, ensuring that the results and conclusions presented are based solely on the evidence collected and unbiased analysis of the data. Since we have not received external funding, there are no conflicts of interest associated with financial interests or commitments to third parties that could influence the results or interpretations of this study. This declaration of financial independence underscores our commitment to objectivity and quality.

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Article

Furthermore, we recognize the collaboration of all participants who dedicated their time and shared their experiences, which was essential to enrich the findings of this work.

This study represents a collective effort and we would like to express our gratitude to all those who have contributed, directly or indirectly, to its completion.

Abbreviations

It is important to note that no abbreviations were used in this work. It was chosen to use full terms instead of abbreviations to ensure clarity and understanding of the text, as well as to maintain a more formal and readable presentation. This decision helps ensure coherence and consistency in the presentation of information, making it easier for readers to read and interpret the content.

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