

Digital marketing communication of student exchange programs at Tec De Monterrey, Mexico

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<p>The purpose of the thesis is to enhance digital marketing communication for student exchange programs at Tec de Monterrey University in Queretaro, Mexico. The topic was decided during the author's exchange on the campus and her internship in International Program Office, whose goal is to increase the number of exchange students in Queretaro.</p> <p>The theoretical framework defines the key concepts of digital marketing. In addition, relevant media channels are explained and analysed. The empirical part of the thesis consists of applied qualitative research, which is designed to answer specific questions aimed at solving practical problems. The main research question is: How to improve digital marketing communication for exchange study programs in Queretaro? The main research question is further divided into two investigative questions: What is the current situation of digital marketing strategy? and What could be done better?</p> <p>In order to find the answers to the research questions, the current digital media channels of International Program Office were analyzed and interviews were conducted with exchange students. The author's personal experience as an exchange student gained during 7 months in Tec de Monterey was also used as resource for development ideas. The research covers IPO's webpage and its social media channels Facebook and Instagram.</p> <p>The findings of the research helped suggest development ideas for the digital marketing of Tec de Monterrey University in Queretaro.</p>	
Keywords digital marketing, inbound marketing, content marketing, exchange programme	

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1 Introduction

This thesis is research oriented and it consists of a theoretical framework, qualitative research and a discussion on the findings.

In the fall semester 2019, the author of the thesis was doing her internship in IPO, International Programs Office at Tec de Monterrey University, Queretaro campus in Mexico. During August–December she was working full time and had many responsibilities. She was assisting the Director and Coordinators of the International Programs office in tasks such as database control, exchange agreements, support to International and Mexican students in their Study Abroad programs, organization and logistics of events, trips and activities.

Her main task was to take care of exchange students who came to Queretaro, helping them with numerous things, such as housing payment, trips, course selection, etc. She was responsible for providing information they required from the office and for acting as a tutor for them.

The thesis author's other duties during internship were helping coworkers with their tasks. The main responsibilities included taking care of social media channels, mostly creating and sharing Instagram stories, taking pictures and making videos.

The idea for the thesis topic was created during the internship. Tec de Monterrey University asked the author to help them enhance their digital marketing directed at students interested in studying in Queretaro. Digital marketing is a subject of interest to the author and the thesis work developed the author's professional competencies needed for future work.

1.1 Objectives and demarcation of the thesis

This thesis examines digital marketing communication of the student exchange programs at Tec de Monterrey University, Queretaro campus.

The aim of the thesis is to find answers on how to enhance digital marketing communication for IPO (International Programs Office), which is a private university's international office working in Mexico Querétaro. IPO seeks to get more exchange students by improving its digital marketing strategy.

The main research question is: How to improve the digital marketing communication of exchange study programs in Queretaro? The research question is further divided into investigative questions: What is the current situation of digital marketing strategy? and What could be done better?

In order to find the answers for the research questions the current digital media channels of International Program Office will be analyzed and current exchange students will be interviewed to get a better view on how IPO can improve its digital marketing communication. Author's personal experience as an exchange student gained during 7 months in Tec de Monterrey will also be drawn upon in finding development ideas. The research covers IPO's webpage and its social media channels Facebook and Instagram.

The report will help the international office to increase the interest of international students in applying for the exchange and to understand how its marketing content on digital media channels affects the application process. The report will focus on International Office Queretaro campus, but the ideas given may also be useful for other IPO offices at other campuses of Tec de Monterrey.

1.2 Case company - Tec De Monterrey University

The Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, commonly known as Tec de Monterrey, or "Tec," was founded in 1943. Seeking to educate professionals and equip them with the skills needed to succeed in the business world, Tec de Monterrey has developed into an institution recognized, nationally and internationally, for its academic excellence. (Education Dynamics s.a.)

A private non-profit nationwide university system, Tec de Monterrey is comprised of 29 campuses spread throughout 26 Mexican cities. The international study abroad program is only available at select campuses, including Queretaro. (Education Dynamics s.a.)

Queretaro is located in the center of Mexico. The location of Queretaro makes the city a perfect place to study, live and travel. Tec de Monterrey offers many different study programs, such as university courses, Spanish as a Second Language, Certificates and Research Projects. (Tecnológico de Monterrey 2020)

In addition to academic courses, a limited number of unpaid internships are available. The International Programs Office at the Tec assists students in locating internship placements.

In 2017 there were 2570 international students at Tec de Monterrey, 30% from America, 47% from Europe, 7% from Asia, and rest of the world 25%. Only in Queretaro campus there are usually around 400 exchange students a year. In Autumn 2019 there were over 200 exchange students, the biggest groups from France, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Austria, USA, Canada, Korea and Japan. (Tecnológico de Monterrey 2020)

2 Digital Marketing

Marketing strategies and tactics that worked earlier do not work anymore. The marketplace for nearly every product or service is extremely crowded; it has never been harder for companies to differentiate their offerings. (Shih 2011, 67.)

There are many definitions of digital marketing, but in general, digital marketing encompasses all marketing efforts that use an electronic device or the internet. Businesses leverage digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, and other websites to connect with current and prospective customers. (Ctel 2020)

Digital marketing is defined by the use of various digital tactics and channels to connect with customers where they spend much of their time: online. There is a great variety of tactics that can be called “digital marketing”, starting from websites to online branding assets such as digital advertising, email marketing, online brochures, and beyond. (Ctel 2020)

The main principle of digital marketing is that the customer is the starting and finishing point for all digital activities. The answer to all questions is “let the customer decide.” Many people are too quick to jump into managing digital channels. They set up blogs, websites, and social media profiles and start publishing nonspecific content about themselves, their companies, and their products. They fail to realize that digital channels are not broadcast channels in the traditional sense of the term. In fact, they are interaction channels that facilitate a two-way conversation. By taking the time to find out what customers are doing online, their digital activities would become more effective. (Dodson 2016)

As Dodson points out, click-through rates, response rates, and conversion rates can be analyzed within minutes of publishing an ad. More importantly, the content or design of the ad can be changed a limitless number of times in response to user actions. Each digital marketing channel is at its most effective when an iterative process is applied, and the more iterations of the campaign one applies, the more effective it becomes. (Dodson 2016)

As stated by Dodson (2016), integration is crucial to effective digital marketing. It works at three levels: integration across digital channels, integration of digital and traditional marketing, and integration of reporting sources.

Integration across digital channels is about using information gleaned through one channel to improve the effectiveness of another digital channel. It can be as simple as sharing information learned through search engine optimization with the email marketing team. According to Dodson (2016), sharing insights learned through one channel can drastically improve the effectiveness of another.

The integration of digital and traditional marketing involves using information gathered from digital marketing efforts and integrating it with traditional marketing strategy. For example, when writing the script for a radio ad one should use the same keywords that resonate with customers using search engines. Any opportunity to learn from customers can be shared across all channels to improve the effectiveness of all communications and marketing campaigns. (Dodson 2016)

Companies who engage with digital marketing obtain an abundance of data about their customers. However, it is important to gather data in such a way that allows the company to make good business decisions. An integrated view of customers is a good place to start and it can be achieved by using Google Analytics. This tool can provide one with detailed information on the source of the traffic coming to a website, the percentage of the site visitors who come via email versus paid search advertising, or information on which visitors convert more quickly. Making business decisions based on the true value of digital marketing is a crucial step in implementing and justifying the digital marketing strategy. (Dodson 2016)

2.1 Inbound Marketing

Inbound marketing is focused on attracting customers through relevant and helpful content and adding value at every stage in the customer's buying journey. With inbound marketing, potential customers find the company through channels like blogs, search engines, and social media. Unlike outbound marketing which pushes its messages at an audience, inbound marketing does not need to fight for potential customers' attention. By creating content designed to address the problems and needs of ideal customers, the company attracts qualified prospects and builds trust and credibility for the business. Inbound marketing is focused on being found by customers. Instead of the interruption-based messages of outbound marketing where the marketer has all the control, inbound marketing is about empowering potential customers. (Munroe 2020)

As Miller (2015, 10) points out, inbound marketing is a connected system of online customer attraction and conversion. A journey where a stranger becomes a lead, a lead

becomes a customer, and the customer advocates the brand represents a flawless execution of inbound marketing. This powerful conversion process is why more and more organizations are practicing inbound marketing. A well-designed system facilitates action and reaction. This conversion system acknowledges the multiple conversion points along the purchase path and facilitates a conversion at each point.

Inbound marketing system's four primary objectives are to attract visitors, to engage website visitors through meaningful, relevant content so that visitors become leads, to encourage a lead to take actions that can eventually be monetized and finally to re-engage previous customers, causing reactions (additional purchases/reviews/and so on) resulting in repeat customers while also fostering a loyal fan base. These loyal fans are called brand evangelists, fanatics, or advocates. (Miller 2015)

Inbound marketing offers an organization a number of benefits. When transitioning to inbound marketing, it is important to communicate these benefits to everyone affected by this change. Even if there is company-wide acceptance that introducing inbound marketing into the organization is the right thing to do, clear communication about the benefits helps people come to terms with the change. By clearly communicating inbound marketing's benefits to internal colleagues up-front, one may later need to refer back to these conversations and presentations when it comes time for marketing to delegate ownership and accountability of the various inbound tasks within marketing and other departments. (Miller 2015)

2.2 Content Marketing

According to the experts at the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is a strategic marketing and business process focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and ultimately drive profitable customer action. It is really just the art of business storytelling. Marketer's goal should be to tell a story to an audience that educates and inspires them to make a well-informed, confident decision. (Baker 2020)

Content marketing typically involves the creation of content that a customer in the brand's target group or demographic will find helpful, useful, or interesting. Even if the content does not contain a strong call to action, or push the brand's products or services, its existence may still build affinity for the brand in question. (WebFx 2020)

As more and more consumers tune out invasive marketing methods and ignore sales pitches, content marketing has emerged as a preferred way to slowly build relationships with potential customers, and it is these relationships that lead to sales. (WebFx 2020)

As Champion (2020) states, well-done content marketing helps create a relationship with audience, which leads to trust. Once the audience members get trust, they are more willing to do business and make a purchasing decision. Content has the very important job of pulling people from one stage of the inbound methodology to another. Good content should attract the right people to a website, engage those people into leads, and nurture and help close them into customers. Furthermore, content should also delight customers and turn them into promoters of a brand. (Champion 2020)

Although content marketing may be cheaper thanks to digital innovations, it certainly is not free, nor has digital made it any easier. Consistently delivering quality content to a target audience requires thought, work, originality, strategy, experimentation, and persistence. (Lieb 2012)

According to Corey Braccialini (2020), one of the biggest challenges marketers face when creating content is visibility. It can be difficult to get content in front of enough people to make the time and effort put in worth the investment. Creating great content is not enough. To create a successful content strategy does not mean simply promoting content across available channels. A successful content strategy should include a promotional plan that does not just share the content, but strategically shares content with the people who will benefit most from it.

Although content marketing and inbound marketing have a lot in common, there are some differences. Content marketing focuses on the creation and distribution of content across multiple channels, for example, writing a guide, sharing it on social media, and ensuring that it is read and shared by those who will find it applicable. Inbound marketing, meanwhile, focuses for example on making a website, and the content on it, attractive enough to compel some kind of action by the visitor—whether it is a purchase, the completion of a form, or just a follow on social media. (WebFx 2020)

While content marketing is focused on building relationships through content, inbound marketing is a bigger-picture activity that uses many activities and methods to eventually inspire a customer to take action. Most content marketing programs focus on blogging and content creation, while inbound marketing encompasses a large variety of methods, from social media to blogs to video. (WebFx 2020)

2.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is the use of social media websites and social networks to market a company's products and services. Social media marketing provides companies with a way to reach new customers, engage with existing customers, and promote their desired culture, mission, or tone. (Kenton 2018)

In social marketing, the objective is to encourage potential customers to become fans of the company's products and services, to engage with the audience by entering into a conversation with it, to encourage fans to share their enthusiasm with their friends and create a community of fans online. The end objective is to strengthen the brand and drive sales by increasing "share of online conversation." (Laudon & Traver 2018, 479.)

The five elements of the social marketing process are: fan acquisition, engagement, amplification, community, and building brand strength and ultimately sales (Laudon & Traver 2018, 479).

Fan procurement involves using different kinds of means to attract people to an organization's social media page. This could be news feeds, display ads or page pop-ups which help a brand get "out there" in streams of social messages. Displaying ads on social sites have a social dimension, inspiring visitors to interact and take part in social activities, such as participate in a contest, gain a coupon or obtain free services for attracting friends. (Laudon & Traver 2018, 479.)

Engagement is the next step to be considered and it involves using a variety of tools to motivate users to interact with content on the organization's Facebook or webpages. This may be understood as conversation around one's brand and the idea is to get the followers to talk about the content, product or service. This can be achieved by creating eye-catching photos and videos, attractive content and blogposts, or interactive posts with opportunities for potential customers to express their opinions. (Laudon & Traver 2018, 479.)

Once the visitors have been engaged, one can begin benefiting the social network features to spread their messages by encouraging users to tell their friends by liking, commenting and sharing, or by sending a message to their followers on any social network.

Further, while enough engaged fans/followers have been obtained, the foundation for a community will be established. Engaged group of fans who are interacting with each other over significant period of time are a great opportunity for marketers. Marketers usually have various types of tactics to nurture this community, such as providing information on new product or services, price breaks for loyalty and gifts for bringing in new members. Finally, the ultimate goal is to strengthen the brand and to drive sales revenue.

(Laudon &Traver 2018, 479.)

One of the defining phenomena of the present times reshaping the world as we know it, is the worldwide accessibility to the internet. The lovechild of the World Wide Web is social media, which comes in many forms, including blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, social gaming, microblogs, chat apps, and last but not least social networks. In 2019, the global social penetration rate reached 45 percent, with East Asia and North America both having the highest penetration rate at 70 percent, followed by Northern Europe at 67 percent. (Clement 2019)

The power of social networking is such that the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 3.02 billion monthly active social media users by 2021, around a third of Earth's entire population. In 2023, an estimated 800 million of these users are expected to be from China alone and approximately a 450 million from India. (Clement 2019)

With over 3 billion global users, it is easy to understand why so many businesses invest in social media marketing. There are a number of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Snapchat to work with and several ways one can create and share social media content on each of them (such as photos, live and pre-recorded videos, and stories). All of these platforms and ways to share content provide with a plethora of opportunities to connect with an audience.

The most popular social networks worldwide in 2019 ranked by number of active users are presented in figure 1. The most used networks are Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp and Messenger.

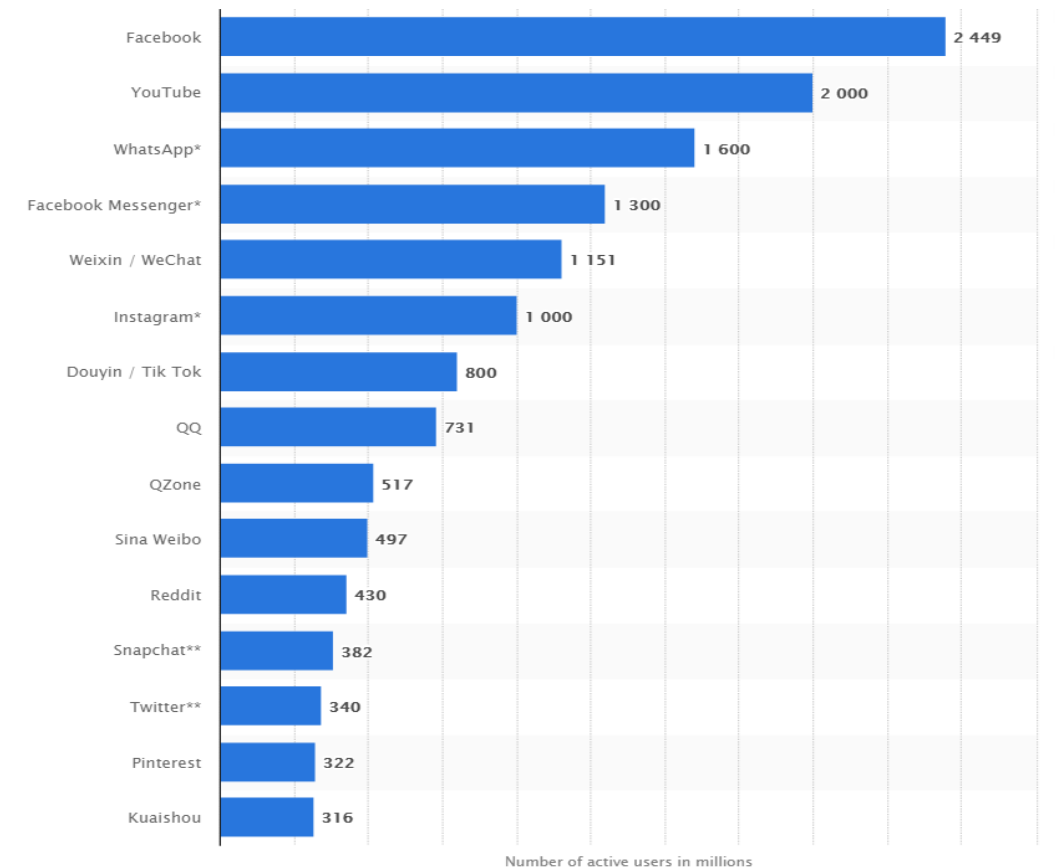


Figure 1. Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2020, ranked by number of active users (in millions) (Statista 2020)

Leading social networks usually boast a high number of user accounts or strong user engagement metrics. For example, Facebook is the first social network having surpassed the 1 billion monthly active user mark and as of the second quarter of 2019, has 2.41 billion MAU worldwide. The platform is also ranked first among the most popular social networks worldwide. Other leading social apps and networks include photo and video sharing platform Instagram, which has over 1 billion monthly active users and most recently reported 500 million daily active users for its Stories feature. Messaging apps including WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and WeChat are also popular social channels for online users. (Statista 2020)

Despite the ubiquity of social networks market potential is still increasing, as not only user figures but also user engagement continues to grow. On average, global internet users spend some 136 minutes per day surfing social networks. This prompts worldwide brands and their marketers to use that time and screen space to promote various products and services via social media marketing or social advertising. (Statista 2020)

In recent years, social networking has demonstrated a clear shift towards mobile platforms. Smartphone and tablet apps as well as mobile web access have facilitated the constant presence of mobile-first or mobile-only platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat. Snapchat is extremely popular among Millennials, one of the most appealing advertising demographics. It is also a sticky platform, with users accessing the app many times a day. (Statista 2020)

Possessing comprehensive knowledge and skills to use different platforms can give a company a competitive advantage against its competitors, as marketers are often challenged by the diversity of digital communication channels.

In social media marketing, the purpose is to inspire the potential consumers to engage and communicate with businesses and also become admirers of a business's product or services. Businesses' further aim is to motivate devoted consumers to share their excitement with their friends and as a result create a community of online admirers. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the brand and increase sales by growing the share of online interactions. It is also believed that social media marketing is more cost effective than traditional marketing. (Laudon & Traver 2018, 477.)

Every customer interaction on social media is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate customer service level and improve relationship with the customers. For instance, if a consumer complains about a particular service on Facebook, the organization can instantly address the issue, make an apology publicly, and fix the problem. Similarly, the customer might compliment the product or service, which then leads to a positive outcome and the organization can thank the customer and recommend additional products or services. It is the personal experience and the attention given to their feedback that lets the consumers know that they are important and valued.

3 Digital Media Landscape

When digital marketing and advertising began in the 1990s, the promise of digital channels was to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time - a game-changing upgrade over traditional media channels. Digital media has been sold a nirvana of data collection, analysis, and measurement that would yield the most efficient, optimized programs one could hope for. (Hemann & Burbary 2013)

Today's digital media landscape is more complex than ever before. The continuous and rapid introduction of new platforms, tools, data sources, and media consumption devices (such as mobile devices and tablets) have created an environment that can make any marketer's feel uncertain. The challenge now lies in identifying which unique composition of all those choices is required to produce the outcomes needed to achieve digital goals and objectives. (Hemann & Burbary 2013)

The primary challenge for any business, no matter how large or small, is quite simple—how to get its product or service into the hands of the customer. How the company can achieve this is informed by market research, gut instinct, polls, surveys, and research about existing habits and activities. However, when conducting market research, especially surveys, one need to take into account the fact that people often lie. The Internet enables companies to learn from market reality by looking at what people actually do online. Social listening tools can be used to research customers' activities and preferences based on their online habits and to complement market research. By accessing this market reality, a product or service can be better targeted and the chances of a successful go-to-market strategy are greater. (Dudson 2016, 10.)

3.1 Digital media types

In the fast-expanding field of digital media, content is king. Companies are working hard to produce new content that will reach a wide audience and capture new customers. However, not all content is created equal, and every type of media works differently in a marketing strategy. The figure 2 outlines each element's role of different digital media types and how they work together to form a cohesive marketing mix.

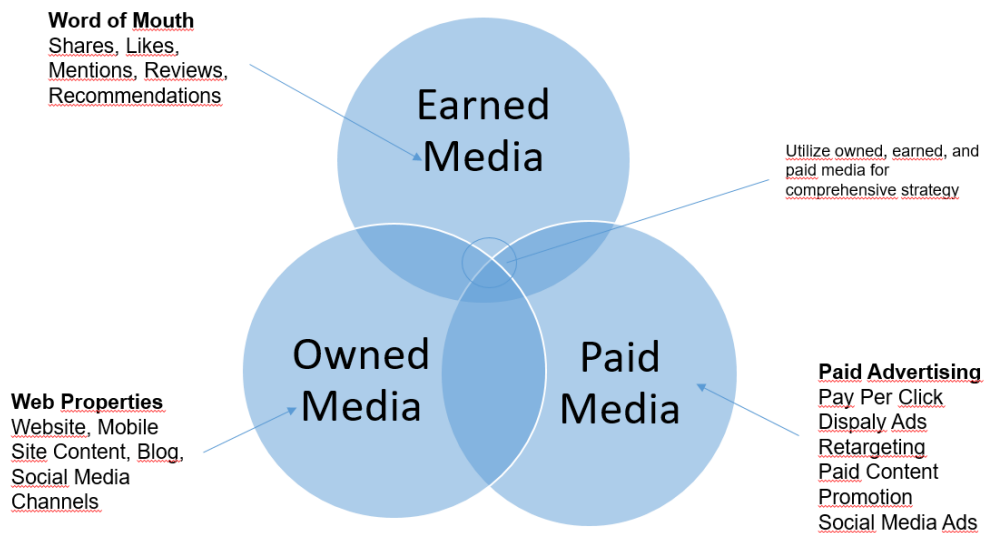


Figure 2. Digital media types (adapted from Oneupweb 2016)

As it is presented in the Figure 2, one type of media is paid media, either in the form of paid search (Google AdWords) or display advertising (Display banner ads, or more recently Video ads). Paid media is literally digital media channels that a brand pays to get their message, offer, or branded content in front of an audience they believe it will resonate with. (Hemann & Burbary 2018, 2.)

The second type is owned media, which is a generic term for any media asset or property that a company owns, controls, and utilizes to reach a prospective audience. Some of the most common forms of owned media are brand websites; email marketing to subscribers; company blogs; or even branded apps for smartphones, tablets, or IoT devices such as Amazon’s Alexa or Google Home. For both paid and owned media, clickstream data has ruled as the dominant data to collect and analyze. Tracking what happens after a user clicks on a link can be useful, but it cannot answer all the questions. New and other ways exist to fill in the gaps for a more complete picture by using a variety of digital data sources. (Hemann & Burbary 2018, 2.)

Due primarily to the emergence and growth of social platforms, earned media has risen in importance and in the effect, it has on other media types. By definition, earned media is something generated by word of mouth, buzz, or a communication “going viral.” (Hemann & Burbary 2018, 2.)

As Hemann and Burbary point out, owned and earned media are now a rich source of data that was not available to the marketers in the past. For example with Facebook encompassing 2 billion users, Instagram more than 800 million, and Twitter more than 325 provide data that involve user behaviors, intentions, and affinities, which when properly

captured and analyzed, can yield a better understanding of consumer intent. The new era of engagement has resulted in a data explosion that takes us well beyond focusing on clicks, advertising impressions, or website page views. (Hemann & Burbary 2018)

The data and tools available today can give the insight one needs to improve marketing and advertising performance; improve customer experiences across all touchpoints; and identify the specific details needed to personalize content, experiences, and messaging on an individual consumer basis. Simply put, marketers have never been better suited to generate their desired outcomes and predict future consumer behavior thanks to the robust ecosystem of data and analytics tools available to them. (Hemann & Burbary 2018)

Paid media is a more mature media type than some of the other digital media types, with some notable exceptions, as the paid media universe has also exploded over the past several years with many of the major platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and even Snapchat all experimenting with new types of advertising units. Not all of those come with the transparency around performance and data you might want or are used to getting. Paid media has well-established and robust methods of targeting, audience segmentation, and measurement. Additionally, paid media programs contain real-time measurement capabilities, which allow companies the opportunity to assess and change course on the fly if necessary. (Hemann & Burbary 2018, 4.)

The emergence of earned media is not all that is new to the digital data and analytics landscape. Due to continued enhancements such as audience analytics, cross-user tracking, and advanced segmentation in web analytics platforms like Google Analytics and Adobe Analytics, owned media assets offer more options than ever to gather competitive intelligence, user experience feedback, content analytics, and real-time site analytics; test for site optimization; and provide richer-than-ever-before clickstream activity analysis. (Hemann & Burbary 2018)

3.2 Webpage

A website is a great marketing tool. It represents a business on the Internet and it is one of the most important digital marketing channels a company can use to get more traffic or make more sales.

James Cummings (2020) points out that there are a number of reasons why brands spend a lot of time, money and effort on great website design. Many of them just want to have an attractive appearance, but only a few take into account the impact it will have on Search

Engine Optimisation (SEO). SEO involves achieving the highest position or ranking practical in the natural or organic listings on the search engine results pages after a specific combination of keywords (or keyphrase) has been typed in. If SEO is not considered in site design and within content management systems, search robots may be unable to crawl content and the relevance of different pages will be unclear. (Chaffey & Smith 2013)

Digital Marketing is mainly concerned with promoting a brand and what it offers. Google updated its Panda algorithm some years ago. This made website owners avoid duplicating content for different versions of their websites. Google's Mobile-First index also made others improve the mobile versions of their own websites. This is because duplicating the content on both versions affects SEO. (Chaffey & Smith 2013)

Effective web site designs are informed by two key approaches used by professional designers. These are usability and accessibility. Accessibility should be built into all web sites since it is a legal requirement under disability and discrimination law. An accessible design supports visually impaired site users and other disabled users with limited limb movements. It also helps users accessing the site with a range of different web browsers, using different devices such as mobiles or tablets, and it also indirectly assists search engine optimization. (Chaffey & Smith 2013)

User-centred design and usability – with a user-friendly site, visitors can find the information they are seeking, have a satisfactory experience and complete actions efficiently. User-centred web site design is an essential approach to ensure that the web site meets visitors' needs. Research to identify appropriate personas, customer journeys and relevant content is a key activity. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 293.)

Jakob Nielsen (2003) explains the imperative for usability best in his article 'Usability 101'. "On the web, usability is a necessary condition for survival. If a web site is difficult to use, people leave. If the homepage fails to clearly state what a company offers and what users can do on the site, people leave. If users get lost on a web site, they leave. If a web site's information is hard to read or doesn't answer users' key questions, they leave." (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 289.)

Information architecture and findability – analysis and design to create a sound system of structure and labelling of content in headings and navigation are essential to help findability through standard navigation and on-site search.

Marketers have a dream opportunity – to personalize their services, and web sites in particular. Web technology, combined with database technology, increase the marketer's memory so that any number of customers can be recognized, their preferences remembered and served immediately. Cookies are the key to web personalization. When a new visitor arrives on a site, a cookie or small text file is placed on their computer which contains an identifier unique to them (it does not contain personal data as is commonly thought – this is securely stored in a database). When they return, they are recognized by the cookie and a personal message is automatically displayed within the page template according to their profile. Although some users delete their cookies if they are openly used with the option to 'remember me', they can provide a seamless, personalized experience, of which Amazon is arguably still the best example. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 307.)

As Chaffey and Smith (2013) point out, web sites do more than just communicate and they must be integrated with all other communications tools, both online and offline. The web site's brand messages must be consistent with those in offline advertisements and mail-shots. Equally, new offers and major announcements such as awards won should be communicated consistently both online and offline. As the organization and the web site grows, this job gets more difficult, but space should be reserved within the page template for these key messages, which help show credibility and reinforce perceptions received through other channels.

At a basic level of integrated communications, all offline communications should carry the web site address or URL and describe the online value proposition. Equally, for customers who prefer other forms of contact, the web site should cater for inbound communications by carrying prominent and efficient telephone numbers, 'Contact us' forms, and where relevant to support sales questions, callback and Livechat systems. It is worth remembering that different customers prefer different communication tools, channels or modes. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 295.)

There are many design constraints or challenges under which web designers operate. Unfortunately, the list of constraints is long and sometimes neglected, to disastrous effects. The first challenge, according to Chaffey and Smith (2013), are modems and download times. Although broadband access is growing rapidly, good designers optimize graphics for fast downloading and then test, using a slow modem across phone lines. The top sites download in less than a second. The majority of initial visitors to a site will not hang around to wait for it to download if it takes longer than 4 seconds.

The second challenge mentioned by Chaffey and Smith (2013) is screen resolution. Today a tiny proportion of desktop users have lower screen resolutions of 640 x 480 or 800 x 600 pixels; the majority have 1024 x 768 pixels or greater. But if designers use resolutions much greater than the average user, the screens may be difficult to read for the majority and, as we will see in the final section of this chapter, mobile design is becoming more important. Fluid designs (also known as adaptive design) may be best for retail sites where the design maximizes the space on the screen – fitting more above the fold on higher screen resolutions. However, designers of brand sites often prefer fixed designs where they have more control over the visuals. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 313.)

Number of colours might also be a constraint. Some users have monitors capable of displaying 16 million colours, while others may only have the PC set up to display 256 colours. Another issue might be browsers. Different types of web browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari and different versions of browsers such as version 6.0 or 7.0 may display graphics or text slightly differently. An e-commerce site tested under one browser may fail completely under another.

Font sizes might also be a challenge. Choosing large fonts on some sites causes unsightly overlap between the different design elements. The facility for the user to change font size is required for accessibility, so it is important to test tolerance of a design for text resizing. Also platform might be a constrain. Sites are increasingly viewed via mobile phones or handheld devices like the PlayStation Plus. Different stylesheets can be provided for different platforms or view modes, such as printing or without images. But effectively, web pages have to be repurposed for mobile use. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 314.)

As Chaffey and Smith (2013, 316) point out, first impressions are important, whether it is meeting in the real world or via a web site. The visual design of a site is important to establishing trust and sets the tone for the future experience. The biggest error with visual design is getting the balance wrong. Designers need to create a balanced visual design that is visually appealing, but also works for accessibility, usability, persuasion and branding.

The combination of colours used is important since they create a feeling about the site and brand. Different colour temperatures evoke different feelings – between warm reds and oranges and cold blues and greens which can be helpful to give a more professional look. Another issue to consider is white space (or background tints). White space can increase the visual appeal of a page and increase usability. However, it is again a

balance, since the site visitor will need to scroll down more for content. (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 315.)

To create effective sites for marketing requires a content strategy, since there is the challenge of delivering many different types of content in different forms to different places and on different access platforms. Chaffey and Smith define content strategy as: “The management of text, rich media, audio and video content aimed at engaging customers and prospects to meet business goals published through print and digital media including web and mobile platforms which is repurposed and syndicated to different forms of web presence such as publisher sites, blogs, social media and comparison sites.” (Chaffey & Smith 2013, 325.)

Web site structure is the big picture of how content is grouped and how different pages relate to others. Without a planned structure, a site can end up being a ‘spaghetti site’. This may leave visitors dazed, disoriented, confused and frustrated. If they cannot achieve flow control, they may not return. A planned site structure with clear hierarchies will allow the user to build up a ‘mental map’ of the site. So navigation and structure can in themselves satisfy or dissatisfy customers. Well-thought-through navigation options are needed to promote flow experiences. Interaction helps to engage web site visitors by giving them some two-way communications plus greater involvement and control over their web experience. (Chaffey & Smith 2013)

To sum up, site aesthetics are an important consideration in design since the combination of graphics, colour, style, layout and typography define a site’s personality and style, which are important in branding. Designers have to work under the constraints of, and test for, many technology variations including download speed, screen resolution, browsers and plug-ins. Page layout is important to providing a clear consistent message throughout the site. This is achieved through standard locations for menus, logos, names, signposts and content on page templates. Each site should have a clear online value proposition (OVP) that differentiates the site from those of competitors and defines services not available in the real world which positively impact on the customers’ lives. The OVP should be communicated offline, online and on the site itself and should be delivered. (Chaffey & Smith 2013)

Most communicators have had at least some exposure to web analytics tools, such as Google Analytics and Adobe Analytics. However, website data tends to be a confusing data source for many marketing and communications professionals. The good news for marketers is that unlike the social platforms, website analytics have more standardization

across tools and vendors, which means that regardless of which tool one decides to use to gather website data, the outputs will look very similar. Page views, visits, unique visitors, or average time on site, are simple examples of standard metrics across web analytics tools.

3.3 Chatbot

A Chatbot is a virtual assistant capable of chatting with users, to answer their questions, or help them with fulfilling a specific task. It simulates the conversation of a human being through text or voice interactions. It is basically a software with an artificial intelligence that allows it to work independently from a human operator. It has the ability to answer questions like a real person. The responses provided are based on a combination of predefined scripts and machine learning applications.

A chatbot is very similar to a mobile application except that the user interaction interface is completely different. The graphical user interface is replaced by the conversational user interface. For the user, this means conversing within an instant messaging interface on a website, a social network, or a mobile application. The most performant chatbots can see their intelligence grow over the data they collect, which allow them to deliver a variety of services, in a very personalized way. The chatbots phenomenon improves the relationship between companies and their customers and evolve it towards a personalized relationship. They are starting to become the preferred way to communicate for many of the customers.

Customers are more likely to return to a website that offers live chat. In fact, obtaining answers to their questions in real time is priceless. Moreover, chatbots today can communicate like real humans and can therefore build a trusting relationship with the customers.

According to Lindsay McKenzie (2019), more and more colleges are deploying virtual assistants or chatbots to communicate with students on all aspects of college life, creating a virtual "one-stop-shop" for student queries.

Colleges initially were deploying this technology only in specific areas, such as financial aid, IT services or the library. Now institutions are looking to deploy chatbots with much broader capability. For the companies that make this computer software that conducts text or voice-based conversations, this changing usage on campus marks a significant shift. (McKenzie 2019)

This expansion happened naturally, said Mark McNasby, CEO and co-founder of chatbot company Ivy.ai. He noted that around 35 percent to 40 percent of the questions students ask a departmental chatbot are actually the domain of another department. A student talking to an admissions bot might, for example, want to know about the career outcomes of a particular program. According to McNasby, rather than directing that student to a separate career services bot, institutions want integrated services where students "can ask any question, no matter the entry point". (McKenzie 2019)

Many companies offering higher ed chatbots say their services are not replacing administrative staff, but instead supporting them to make better use of their time. "One of the key drivers for institutions to use chatbots is a desire to increase efficiency and cut costs," said Patricia Velazquez Alamo, director of education and research industry marketing at Oracle Higher Education. (McKenzie 2019)

As Cooper (2019) claims, bots are programmed to understand questions, provide answers, and execute tasks. From a student's perspective, they are a friendly and accessible time-saver. Rather than opening an app (let alone downloading one), making a phone call, running a search, or loading a webpage, a student can just type a message, like they would to a friend.

Leeds Beckett University is one example university that introduced chatbot technology to assist prospective students find the right course for them through clearing. Using Facebook Messenger's chatbot technology, the LBU bot, which is supported on desktop and mobile, uses menus and keywords to help students. As Dougal Scaife, head of digital at LBU, points out: "We know that our prospective students already use lots of messaging software for communicating with their friends, such as Snapchat, WhatsApp and texting, so developing a chatbot was a natural evolution in order to engage with our prospective students in a medium that's ubiquitous, familiar, and comfortable for them." (Edtechnology s.a)

Another example is Lancaster University that has also launched a chatbot mate for students. For instance their widely used app, iLancaster, Ask LU's voice interface can respond to questions about timetables, tutors and grades, but also suggest useful tips like where to find a free computer or washing machine. Based on Amazon Web Services, Lancaster's Information Systems Services team have created a chatbot that can have more multifaceted interactions with students and even signpost them towards wellbeing and welfare support. (Edtechnology s.a.)

3.4 Instagram

As Hemman & Burbary (2018) point out, the popular photo sharing application has exploded within a few years driven largely by being acquired by Facebook. Instagram now has more than 800 million monthly active users and 500 million daily active users. More than 30% of Internet users in the United States are now on Instagram, and the platform has more than one million advertisers. As more of the Internet moves from text-based to image-based communication, it is safe to assume that Instagram will only to continue to grow.

Because of this visual nature, Instagram holds massive opportunities for ecommerce businesses looking to display their products. Whether through regular photos, videos, or Instagram Stories, millions of businesses have learned that building a visual presence on Instagram can hugely compliment their ecommerce marketing. There is also the fact that Instagram users are more engaged than the average social media user. The platform is producing higher engagement rates for businesses compared to both Twitter and Facebook. In addition, since Instagram is constantly updating the algorithm to improve user-experience and prioritize certain types of content, it can be difficult to know how to optimize your posts to get the most engagement and reach possible. (Later 2020)

Instagram is all about the visual appeal to the viewer. The platform is easy to use and posting beautiful photos may seem like no big deal. To really manage Instagram well, one needs to build a cohesive visual and content strategy that takes into account a variety of factors.

There are four main ways images can help or engage the followers. They can educate followers, entertain followers, assist followers in solving a problem and motivate or inspire them. (King 2020a)

As Crystal King (2020a) from Hubspot points out, to attract attention, images should align with at least one of the categories below:

- Timely: Posting about an upcoming holiday or event that connects to your following.
- Trending: Posting the type of content that is currently hot and trending on Instagram
- Original: Posting unique, beautiful, and interesting content that cannot be found elsewhere.
- Snackable: Posting content that is easily digestible while followers scroll their feeds.
- Actionable: Include a call-to-action in a post, directing followers to like, share, or comment on image.

But above all, it is very important that images tell a story. The best way to establish a loyal and enthusiastic following is to use Instagram images to tell a story that captivates and engages followers and allows them to be part of the adventure. (King 2020a)

As Crystal King talks in her on-line course, there are a few ideas which could be used:

- Behind the-scenes posts: for example posting events, video shoots, and more.
- Repost from students: for example sharing the fun things that students love about studying at their university.
- User generated content: UGC is curated content from fans and followers that capture brand's style.
- Educational posts: are quick tips on how to do or make something with easy-to-follow instructions.
- Influencer posts: piggyback on the fame of a celebrity or well-known public figure to draw attention to a brand.
- Motivational posts: simple visuals with some kind of uplifting text or quote overlaid on top.

As part of a content strategy, there should be videos based on goals to be achieved. The goals can be evoking an emotion or encouraging a specific call-to-action. There are many options for videos that can help reach those goals. Here are some common types of Instagram videos:

1. Course, service showcase
2. Branding and awareness
3. Education on specific topics
4. How-to tutorials
5. Sneak peeks and behind the scenes
6. Interviews
7. Video biogs (King 2020a)

Crystal King (2020a) points out the main things that should be taken into consideration when one starts to record a video. First one needs to be thoughtful of the size and format. It is recommended not to use a traditional horizontal video that mobile phone creates. Instead, a video should be edited in an editor to 600x600 px. For stories, an image should be 1080 x1920 px. This is an aspect ratio of 9:16. Newer models of the mobile phones have a good camera nowadays, but it is always better to use a professional camera for better quality videos.

There are many factors to consider when shooting Instagram videos. According to King (2020a), the first two seconds of a video are the most important. It means that a video needs to engage an audience immediately with a compelling visual so that they do not scroll past in their feed. And just because Instagram offers 60 seconds to be used that

does not mean the video should be that long. The videos should be as short as possible to keep the attention of the audience.

Videos are automatically auto-played without sound, so professionals should not rely on that to grab attention, but instead to enhance the experience if followers decide to turn up the volume. A good idea could be using words and captions when one wants to grab attention without sound. Getting the sound right is, however, important, as a majority of users listen to sound in videos. Background noise should be eliminated if possible. Lighting is also crucial. (King 2020a)

Crystal King (2020a) from Hubspot gives a good piece of advice: "If you're putting your videos on Instagram, it is really in your best interest not to just recycle your exact video that you put on another platform like Facebook. Instagram is a visual medium. People are not there to watch videos specifically. They are there to scroll. They are there to scroll through visually appealing images, so you need to be thumb-stopping. You need to be visually appealing. You need to think about the beginning of your video that is going to get people to actually watch it. The video also needs to be shorter, not just because of the limitation that Instagram has actually put on the length of video uploads, but also in general. People are not there to sit and watch a long video. They are there to keep scrolling and keep moving, so you need to keep it visually interesting, short, and snappy. Call-to-action can also be a little trickier on Instagram. People are used to doing stuff with a Facebook post. With Instagram, they are used to just scrolling on by, so if you do have a call-to-action with your video, make it really, really clear to the degree that you might not have to on Facebook where there is all sorts of context providing what to do next."

King (2020a) also suggests to think about thumbnails when creating the video. The thumbnail is what people see first in their feed, and a marketer wants to entice them to click and view it. One nice thing is that Instagram allows using video in multiple-image posts, which means it is possible to tell a story that is ten minutes long if one is posting sequential videos. To increase interests in a post one can record an animated, stop motion, or time-lapse video.

King (2020a) also points out that, the power of using other people's content is a good thing to consider. Sharing other people's content can help dramatically increase reach and brand awareness. There are two main ways in which one can tap into the power of the people: user-generated content (or UGC) and regramming.

UGC is simply content that fans, customers, and followers are creating about the brand. This type of content is highly valuable because buyers trust friends, colleagues, and family more than they trust brands. People want recommendations from real people, not a company hiding behind a logo on Instagram. In fact, 92 percent of consumers say they trust UGC more than other forms of advertising. (King 2020a)

What is very important that increased engagement means that the Instagram algorithm will boost content more often in users' feeds, so the more engagement that content has, the more a brand will be seen. Hubspot academy teachers suggest a few tactics that help involve audience and get them to create content that features company or products.

- Creating a custom hashtag-like or developing a photo or video contest: For example asking followers to snap a picture and share it out with their audience on the hashtag.
- Asking a question or creating a challenge: This can be a fun way to engage audience. One of the example could be asking a question or issuing a challenge for the followers and having them share the answer via their own Instagram channel using a specific hashtag.
- Sharing customers' photos or creating a branded hashtag for them to use when they want to share something about services or products. For example, AirBnB's feed is created entirely using user-generated content of places where guests have stayed. (Hubspot 2020)

Instagram stories allow users to post at a higher frequency without over posting and clogging up the main feed. Stories are great for behind-the-scenes content and usually feature less polished images and videos. Instagram stories are ephemeral, meaning that they only last for 24 hours before they disappear. For personal accounts, once stories are gone, they are gone. But for brands, they are archived, and can be stored in collections called "highlights" that appear at the top of feed. (King 2020a)

Story Highlights can be used to tease company and products, organize stories into themes, explain products through pictures and videos, and promote products using swipe-up links-if a brand has 10,000 followers. (King 2020a)

Including links on Instagram is not something that anyone can do except in their profile or Instagram stories. The challenge with stories, however, is that one needs to have a business account with 10,000 followers to include a link in a story. Additionally, Instagram stories are discoverable by other users on Instagram that do not see posts in a feed. The

latest story also appears when someone clicks on brand profile, which gives a valuable opportunity to share messaging to prospects who are interested in learning more about the brand. (King 2020a)

As Krystal King (2020a) claims: "Instagram stories are so awesome because most likely your followers are consuming that content, and they are your warm lead. So, they are getting more intimate with your business and your brand and your personality, and you're taking them with you throughout your day by telling a story that captures their interests. And you can get that interaction from them by using stickers, the question sticker, the poll, and the slider, and you can also use the geolocation sticker and the hashtag sticker, which both help you get more eyeballs on your content if you use them strategically."

One thing to remember is that the best Instagram stories are authentic. While profile feed should feature polished photos, stories can be a little more raw. One example could be using stories to highlight fun moments, provide a behind-the-scenes look at the brand, or highlight company culture.

Instagram has gone through many changes since 2010. Nevertheless, one thing has remained consistent for many years: the importance of Instagram hashtags. One of the best ways to be discovered by the audience is using relevant and targeted hashtags in the posts and Instagram stories. Hashtags can produce more followers, more engagement and more customers for the business. (Later s.a.)

If a brand has a public Instagram account and adds a hashtag to a post, that post will be visible on the corresponding hashtag page, it is basically a directory of all the photos and videos that were tagged with that hashtag. "Not only do hashtags help social media users organize and categorize content, but they're also one of the driving forces behind some of today's best marketing campaigns," says Maddy Osman on Sprout Social. Hashtagging is so effective because it helps categorize similar content and make it even more discoverable, which is likely why hashtagged posts get so much more engagement than those without. (Margot, Wordstream s.a.)

Since hashtags are used with an intent to discover content, the right hashtags can put a brand in front of a target audience, even if they have not connected with a brand before.

3.5 Facebook

When it comes to Facebook marketing, posting content is the core function of the job. Users discover content and may choose to like a Page to continue the relationship. Over time, their trust in brand increases, hopefully enough to make a purchase.

In early 2018, Facebook updated its News Feed algorithm to prioritize content from friends and family over that from Pages, causing the reach of the latter to drop for many businesses. Professionals from Hubspot academy point out that images get the most reach these days, not video. And while pages who post less than once a day get the most engagement on individual posts, they get less overall engagement. HubSpot has found that posting five times a day leads to healthier engagement numbers. But that will change as Facebook continues to tweak its algorithm, that will change, so the best idea is to regularly post a healthy mix of content. An image is always a great choice, especially since Facebook posts with images get two times more engagement than those without visuals and account for 87% of total interactions. (Hubspot 2020)

Blog posts are also a great content type to share. As opposed to summarizing the blog post in your copy, come up with a relatable or witty statement (as long as it is in line with brand voice) that would intrigue someone to learn more.

To tell a story on Facebook, video is a great option. To increase engagement, it is better to upload pre-produced video to Facebook rather than sharing a link from YouTube or Vimeo. Hubspot recommends uploading videos as an MP4 or MOV file, using the text of title, description, and tags to entice an audience to watch the video.

Some videos have small white words at the bottom of a video, narrating in real time. This sort of closed captioning is created with an SRT (or SubRip Subtitle) file, which one can upload to the Captions tab. Considering Facebook auto-plays videos without sound, SRT files are a smart choice to make sure a video is understood by those scrolling through their News Feed on a mobile device, as well as those who are hard of hearing. Because Facebook auto-plays videos, the first 5–10 seconds are prime real estate. When brainstorming videos for Facebook, one shall make the beginning as visually compelling as possible to encourage the user to view the full video. Now with videos automatically playing sound as well, it is crucial to pay close attention to the music or voice. (King 2020b)

Aside from pre-produced video, Facebook Live is another option to explore multimedia content. Facebook Live is a feature that allows live-streaming capabilities to users via their smartphone. It is available to any Facebook user, but is particularly appealing to brands who want to capture the culture of their company and form authentic relationships with their followers. (King 2020b)

Just like Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories lets users curate a slideshow of photos and videos that is visible to their friends for 24 hours before it disappears. This feature shares Stories through Messenger, Facebook's standalone messaging app used by more than one billion people worldwide. Messenger's in-app camera lets users add text, drawings, stickers, emojis, filters, and lenses to photos and videos before adding them to their "story" or sending them to individual friends or groups.

Next, Facebook Instant Articles are a feature that allows publishers to post text- and photo-based content in a format that loads on mobile without leaving the Facebook app. Facebook Instant Articles significantly decrease the time it takes to load content on mobile, while offering a seamless user experience. While Instant Articles are definitely not for every business, they have helped some larger publishers monetize from native advertising. (Hubspot 2020)

Last but certainly not least, there is virtual reality for Facebook. At least for the moment, Facebook's main virtual reality offering is 360-degree video. Facebook 360 allows publishers to tell immersive stories that share places and experiences with their fans. The 360-degree video experience works best on mobile, as viewers are able to tilt and turn their phone to reveal video content all around them. On a desktop, users can click and drag. The format is also compatible with VR headsets like Oculus Rift or Samsung Gear VR.

One last thing about all these forms of content. By "pinning" a post, one can determine which piece of content sticks to the top of a Page. Any other posts will appear below, even if they were published more recently than the pinned post.

4 Research

Apart from theory part, this thesis consists of qualitative research with an applied approach, which is designed to answer specific questions aimed at solving practical problems. The main research question is how to improve digital marketing communication for exchange study programs in Queretaro. The research question is further divided into investigative questions such as: What is the current situation of digital marketing strategy? and What could be done better?

4.1 Research methods

In order to answer the research questions, two research methods were chosen in an empirical part of the thesis.

The first method was analysis of digital media channels of Tec de Monterrey and International Student Office in Queretaro, Mexico. This method was helpful to explore the current situation of digital marketing communication in order to look for development ideas.

The second method of the research was an interview of exchange students currently studying in Queretaro. The interview is usually the most effective for qualitative research and it helps explain, better understand and collect in-depth information on research subjects' opinions.

4.2 Digital Media Analysis of Tec de Monterrey

Tec de Monterrey and International Program Office in Queretaro have many digital media channels which will be analyzed in the below subchapters.

4.2.1 Webpage

Tec de Monterrey has a great official webpage <https://tec.mx/en> with many nice visuals and a lot of information. However, even though the webpage makes an impression of a well-structured and informative the fact is there is too much information in one place. The site is also giving information for the locals who either study already or want to begin their studies. There is no information on exchange programs.

The main page can be viewed either in Spanish or in English language, however if one is searching more information on study programs the page will be switched to Spanish language only.

Since this thesis focuses on exchange programs the webpage for the international students - **Study in Queretaro** will be analyzed.

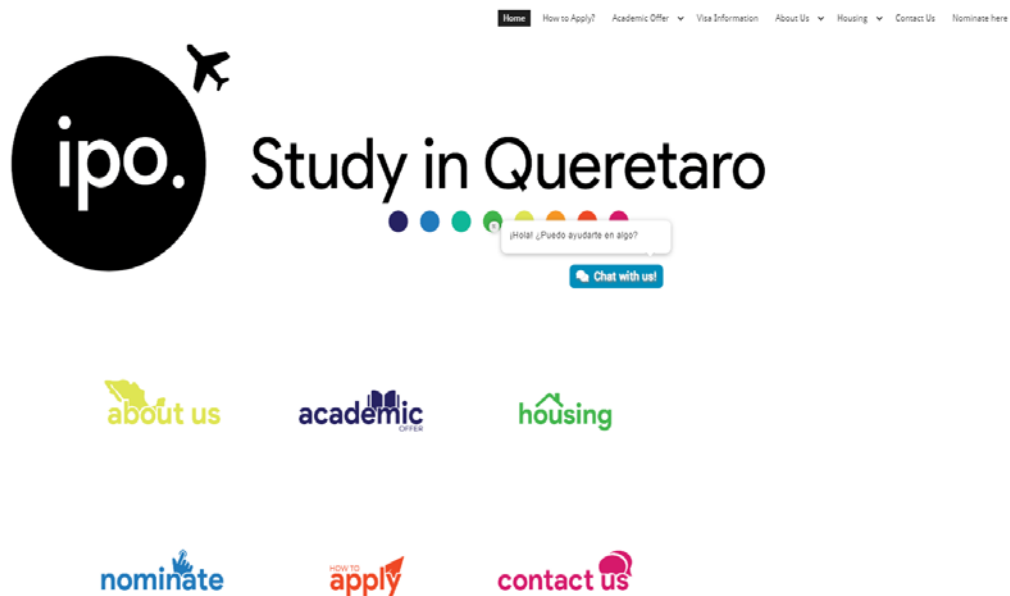


Image 1. Study in Queretaro. The main webpage for exchange students

IPO - Study in Queretaro is the main webpage directed to exchange students. Its URL is <https://sites.google.com/view/studyqro/>. This webpage is not linked with the university main webpage <https://tec.mx/en>.

The homepage is very clear and it does not have any visuals or special effects. All text is on a white background and other colours used are from the same palette as 8 dots on every page. The first impression of the page is good as it has a balanced visual design that is visually appealing, but also works for accessibility, usability, persuasion and branding. The site has user-centred design and usability. The homepage clearly states what users can do on the site.

The main page has links to Youtube, Facebook and Instagram account, which is very good as potential students can see pictures and videos that are not posted on the webpage.

EXCHANGE STUDENT

Follow the next steps, if your university has a partnership agreement with Tec de Monterrey.

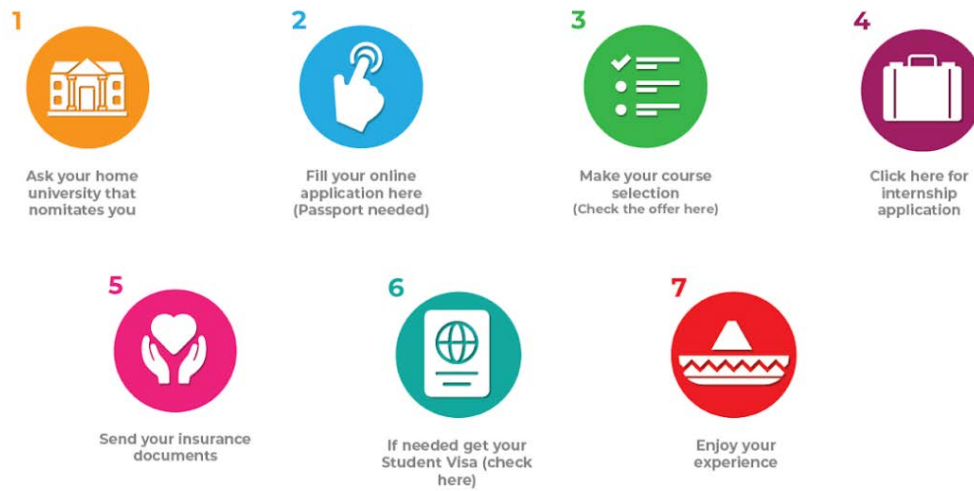


Image 2. Application process on Study in Queretaro webpage.

The most important part for the potential exchange student is information on how to apply. As the image 2. shows, the whole process is well presented on the webpage in 7 points. The page is clear and easy to navigate at this stage. However when one starts to follow the steps given, it will be noticed that point 1. and 2. brings us to the same page where we are asked for nomination - "Dear partner, here is the official link to nominate prospective students. Please bear in mind that you can only nominate them if there is a valid agreement between our universities." This however stops a potential student's "journey on the webpage" because as a student one cannot nominate himself.

Under point 3. there is a promise of finding a course selection which is one of the most aspect of the student exchange. However, when one tries to see the offer the page shows "404. That is an error. The requested URL is not found on this server." Point 5. about sending insurance documents is simply a link straight to email address A01679670@itesm.mx. Since the email address is just a number, the interested person will not know who will receive his documents. As it can be noticed, the application page is not attracting potential exchange students who would be interested in coming to Queretaro campus. Luckily, in point 6. about the information on a visa, most of the students can find out that they do not need a visa if they stay in Mexico for less than 180 days. If they stay for more than six months, they need a student visa. Now they can go straight to point 7. - enjoy their experience!

If one wants to find course selection, the best path is to click on the Academic Offer in the main page, then choose for example Spring 2020 and then Course Selection.

Direct link to this page is very confusing. It shows spring 2019 although the courses are for the spring semester 2020. It is long and cannot be found even by Google.
<https://sites.google.com/view/springqro2019/course-selection?authuser=0>.

There are many free tools that help analyze the webpage. The author of the thesis used website.grader, gtmetrix and woorank. Development ideas on how to improve the webpage are presented in the final chapter of the thesis.

IPO Study in Queretaro webpage offers a live chat.

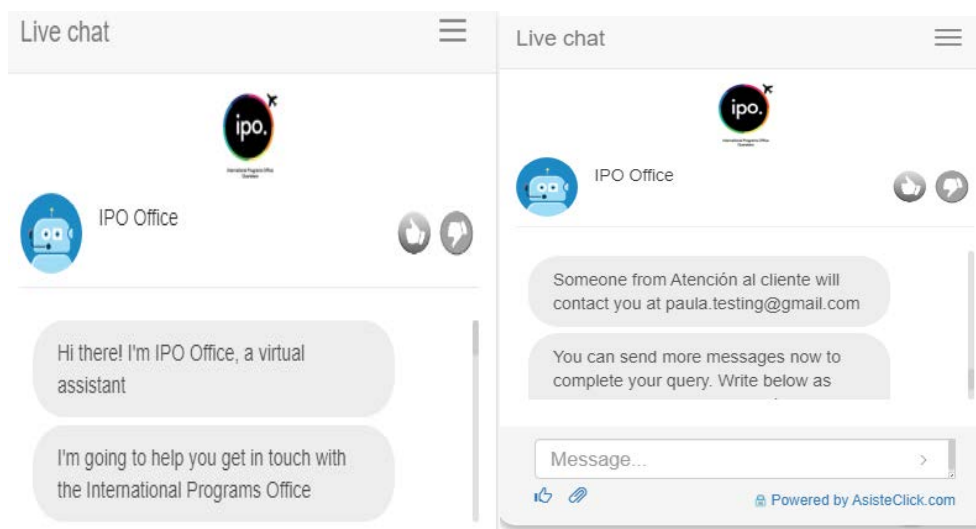


Image 3. Screenshot of live chat on the “Study in Queretaro” page.

The chat-bot on the webpage asks “what’s your name” and “what’s your question” and whatever question is asked, the same reply appears, explaining that someone from Atención al cliente will contact a person at the email address given and one can ask as many questions as s/he wishes. This kind of bot seems to be a bit pointless, because the student could send an email directly to the international office and most probably get a quicker reply.

There is also another webpage for exchange students Study in Mexico, Tecnológico de Monterrey.

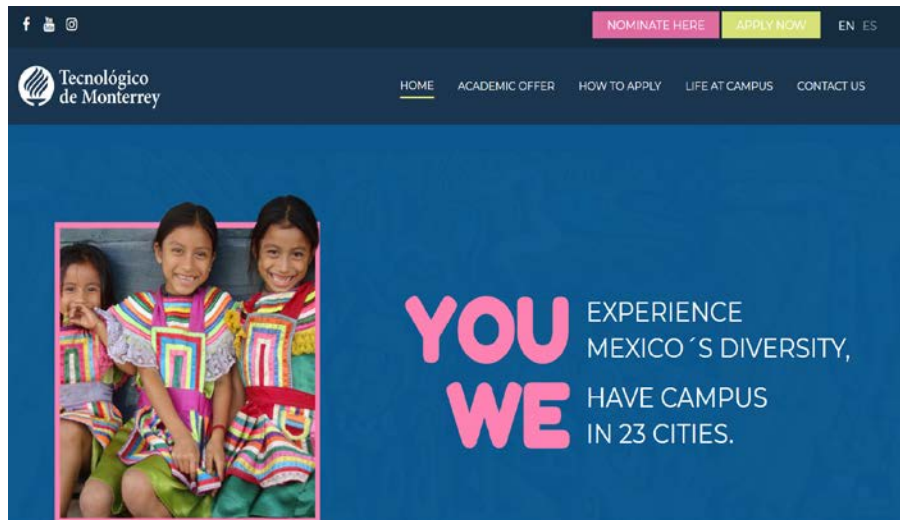


Image 4. Homepage of Study in Mexico, Tecnológico de Monterrey

This webpage is generally for all exchange students in all campuses of Tec de Monterrey. This webpage is visually nicer than Study in Queretaro webpage.

Admission Process is explained in 7 points:

1. Check the requirements:

- Ask the international affairs office at your university for help

2. Online:

- Fill in the admissions form

3. Provide:

Provide the necessary documentation *Additional documents may be required

4. Student with and no agreement:

- Student with agreement: You need to be nominated by your University
- Student with no agreement: You need to pay the admissions fee

5. Admissions:

- After your admissions result, you will receive a letter of acceptance

6. Migratory process

- Please review the link <https://www.gob.mx/inm> and apply for your visa if necessary

7. Course registration:

- After your admission, the campus will contact you to do your schedule.

The page Study in Mexico has many points that could be developed. As first, there is no direct link to the application form. Later there is no information what documents or whom the documents should be sent to and there is no link to the course registration.

While clicking Nominate Here or Apply Now, the potential student will be directed to the page below with a long URL:

<https://prd28pi01.itesm.mx/Recepcion/StudyInMexico/AlumnosExtranjeros/Login?In=en>.

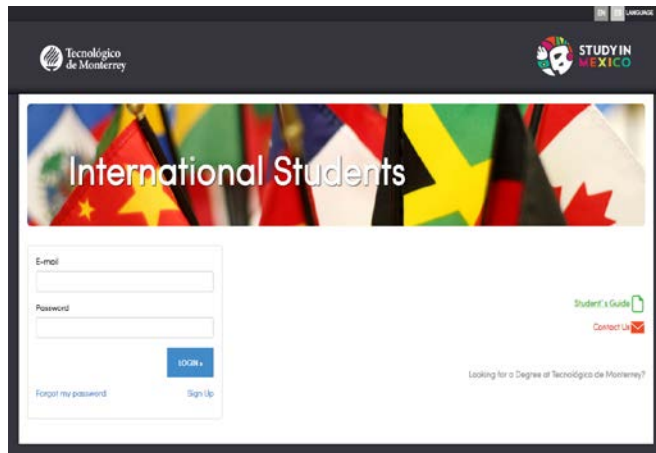


Image 5. Screenshot of a page where students can apply and partner universities can nominate their students

This page is the most important webpage for the exchange students, but there are usually many problems to sign-up and then login. During author's exchange there were many times she could not login even when signing up according to the instructions. Every login followed sending many emails to studyinmexico@servicios.itesm.mx

Although the page in general seems to be informative, there are many pages that have links to other sites. Furthermore, there is evidence that important information is often missing, for example a course selection or what documentation is required. However, the Study in Mexico, Tec de Monterrey as a webpage is visually very nice and attractive. It has many pieces of information about the university in general, types of programs available, admission requirements, etc. Overall, it provides much more information for the exchange students than Study in Queretaro page.

As the previous chapters 2.1 and 2.2 explained, creating a content that is relevant and engaging is very important. Inbound marketing earns the attention of customers and makes the company easy to be found. The webpages presented in the thesis, especially the Study in Queretaro does meet requirements of inbound or content marketing. The page cannot be found in the Google search, some links do not work at all and the chatbot does not answer the questions right away, but make a user wait for many weeks to get a reply by email.

By creating content designed to address the problems and needs of the user, inbound marketing attracts qualified prospects and builds trust and credibility for a business. As the analyse of the webpages shows, it can be very difficult to build a trust for potential students who cannot find needed information or have to wait for a reply for a long time.

The webpages Study in Mexico and Study in Queretaro are examples of owned media, which are fully controlled by the university and International Program Office. Some pages of both websites are linked together sending students back and forward to different places on both websites. This is the tactic against inbound marketing. As the chapter 2.1 explains, inbound marketing is methodology that attracts customers by creating valuable content and experiences tailored to them. Inbound marketing is all about letting customers, in this case potential students, find our services easily and engage them in making decision.

One may ask a question, what good is about a webpage if no one is seeing or interacting with it. That is where earned media comes in. As the chapter 3.1 points out, earned media is essentially online word of mouth, usually seen in the form of 'viral' tendencies, mentions, shares, reposts, reviews, recommendations, or content picked up by 3rd party sites. One of the most effective driving forces of earned media is usually a combination of strong organic rankings on the Search Engines, and content distributed by the brand. First page rankings and good content are typically the biggest drivers.

After attracting the visitor on the website, the university should be ready to convert him/her into prospect gathering his/her contact information. Emails are the most valuable information for an inbound marketer. The inbound marketer's goal should be to attract the right visitor, so they could exchange for example a tutorial video, an online guide about live in Mexico or study programs in Queretaro or something valuable for the student so he/she would be glad to give his/her e-mail in return. This is missing from both websites analysed in this chapter. Once the potential student will not find useful information, he will most probably leave the webpage without giving his contact information and will not have a possibility to receive marketing material in the future.

Significantly, inbound efforts build upon themselves over time. For example, a good piece of content offers many immediate and long-term benefits. It brings attention to a site and let the visitor stay on the site. As the content gains more exposure, it can then become an ongoing source of inbound traffic via search engine optimization (SEO), social shares and word of mouth.

4.2.2 Facebook

Tec De Monterrey has its own Facebook page like it has its main webpage with over 800.000 followers. Its Facebook page is very good and informative, however all posts there are only for Spanish speakers. The page is updated once or twice a week.

Moreover, Tec de Monterrey, Queretaro campus has its own Facebook page, just as all other campuses have their own. This page has about 44.000 followers. Posts are uploaded many times a week and they are showing life on campus, what students study and what kind of projects they do. Even though the page is only in Spanish, it gives good picture about studies in Queretaro.

In addition, IPO, International office has its own Facebook page - Study in Mexico - Tec de Monterrey Queretaro. It has over 1700 followers.



Image 6. Facebook page, Tec de Monterrey Queretaro

There is a link to the webpage <https://sites.google.com/view/studyqro/> which obviously is a good thing as it is the only place where potential applicants can get a direct link to the page.

Similarly, to other social media channels, many pieces of information and pictures are related to the trips IPO offers to international students. Here are some examples of the posts “Don't be left out ! Last couple of days to get your discount ticket for the incredible trip to La Huasteca!”, Study in Mexico - Tec de Monterrey Queretaro added pictures to albums: Teotihuacan Spring 2020, Querétaro City Tour Spring 2020, Host Family fall19, Teotihuacan Fall19, San Miguel by AMI Fall19, Welcome Lunch Fall19, etc.

There are also good post advertising academic programs in Queretaro campus and directing students to the webpage Study in Queretaro which was analyzed above.

Here are some examples:

“Queretaro is the best place in Mexico to specialize your studies in aeronautics. Check our academic programs and courses here: <http://bit.ly/StudyinQRO>”

“No bad days in Mexico, and a new discovery everyday. Ready for your Mexican experience? Check our programs here: <http://bit.ly/StudyinQRO>”

“Explore Queretaro and its surroundings, while studying in the best private university in Mexico. Check our academic offer here: <http://bit.ly/StudyinQRO>”
(Facebook 2020)

These kind of posts are good as their goal is marketing different study programs while giving links to the place where students can receive more information. This is a good kind of linking which help also Facebook algorithms to notice the importance of the post. The more times people click on the link the faster and more often it will be showed to other visitors on the site.

Although Facebook site is an example of owned media, it is not fully controlled by the owner, in this case International Program Office. It is also an earned media, since followers of the site can leave their comments, testimonials and reviews. It is important to remember what was explained in chapter 3.1 that owned media and earned media work in tandem. The first priority should be to create outstanding owned media that will later, “earn” the chance to be promoted and shared elsewhere. Visitors have power to either make the brand stronger or by their negative opinions and word-of-mouth make the brand unwanted.

In Study in Queretaro Facebook site there are only good reviews of the students who liked the study experience on the campus. However, the profile itself does not engage students. There are no comments under the posts nor does any conversation take place on this profile. Students do not share the content with other students and the activity there is rather peaceful.

An example of paid media in Facebook would be a good ad designed especially for exchange students before the application time is due. At the moment of the analyze made for the thesis, Study in Mexico has not used any paid media methods.

4.2.3 Instagram

Tec de Monterrey has 3 Instagram accounts: Tec Campus Queretaro, Study in Queretaro and Tecnologico de Monterrey.

The main account Tecnologico de Monterrey -Tecdemonterrey has over 80 thousand followers and the pictures there present many posts of people and places on the campus. This account is meant for local students as all posts are in Spanish only. Instagram account of Queretaro campus has over 6000 followers. Pictures from the life on campus are posted about once a week or less frequent. The posts are in Spanish. Both the accounts seem to be for the local students only.

Since this thesis is about and for Queretaro campus, the only one account, which is for the exchange students, presented as Image 7, will be analyzed here. The only Instagram account meant for the exchange students in Queretaro is “Study in Queretaro”.



Image 7. Study in Queretaro, Instagram account

As it is presented in the picture above, “You can't buy happiness but you can go to Queretaro, and that's pretty much the same thing”. In the bio, there is also a link to Study in Queretaro webpage where potential exchange students can read more about the application process. This a very good way of inbound marketing and a captivating content.

Over 1200 people follow the account (situation on 11.3.2020). The biggest majority of the followers are actually the current and former exchange students who want to see the pictures from their trips taken by international office. Pictures are posted quite seldom, only a few times a month.



Image 8. Pictures from the account

The office has its own Instagram account, but there is a lot to improve in the posts. As the Image 8 shows, there are mostly pictures showing the trips, and the exchange study is not only about the trips. There should be some comments from past exchange students about how the semester has gone and what are the nicest things they have been doing while on their exchange, some Mexican traditions could be seen in the page and also the classes what TEC has to offer. Tec has plenty of art and cultural classes, as well as a bunch of dance classes, musical classes and theater. It has also such a good variety of sports; one can do almost whatever he wants in the campus. None of the real class experience is shown in the pictures. There are no videos at all. Inbound marketing is clearly not used in this profile.

However, International Program Office is very active with Instagram stories. The stories are posted many times a day and are followed by many exchange students. The example of the stories are presented in image 9.



Image 9. Examples of the Instagram story

Instagram stories inform about events on campus, people's birthday, highlights from the trips, etc. It is a nice way to inform other students about their fellow-students' special day or remind about interesting activities on campus.

Instagram is an example of an owned media as the content on a brand's channel is created by the brand itself. The content of this media is very important for the students, because they are the audience who spends a lot of time on Instagram. Instagram is a great place for inbound marketing. The marketing efforts can easily be noticed by the target group if the content is relevant, fun and engage the viewers. Every post should be visually pleasing. In order to keep the audience captivated on Instagram, there should be a good amount of mixed content. As the analyse showed, at the moment there are only pictures on Study in Queretaro account, mostly from the students trips. As with most social media platforms, it is crucial to know how often to share content with followers. It is not good to be overly aggressive, but it is important to be present regularly. Posting one photo or a mixture of content every day, or every other day, is a good goal to aim for.

Comparing to International Program Office's Facebook account, Instagram has a much bigger engagement. Students comment pictures actively and like the content posted. A great example of using inbound marketing was the last post posted during Coronavirus time, which engaged students in photo contest. The post invited students to participate in the Mexico photography contest Spring 2020 organized by the IPO. It is hard to say how many students participated in the content especially taking into consideration that fact that the information was posted on 15th April and the final date of sending the pictures was stated as 10th April 2020. Anyhow, this is the first time this kind of activity was organized on Instagram and it would be good to engage students in similar activities more often.

4.3 Interview results

In order to get a better view on current digital marketing of exchange programs studies, the author of the thesis interviewed five exchange students who are now studying in Tec de Monterrey in Queretaro. Due to the coronavirus situation in the world, interviews were conducted on the phone and through video chat during first week of March 2020. The students were asked the same questions, which are presented in the appendix of the thesis, but the interview was done in the form of an open discussion. This way the students had possibility to give more in-depth information and freely talk about what digital

media channels they have used before applying for the exchange and if the information they found was sufficient.

All the interviewed exchange students were girls at the age of 20-24. The interviewees were: Amel from France, Emilia from Finland, Sooyoung from Korea, Annie from Canada and Valerie from USA.

While asked if they found the information about studies in Tec de Monterrey easily before applying for the exchange, the answers varied. Two of the students found the information easily because the most important aspects of the application and the program offers were provided by their own universities. However, those who were looking for the details themselves had problems with finding the relevant information and the most important details on the application process. According to Annie, the main problem was that information was “thrown in too many websites and it was very confusing”. This made the application process difficult.

Another question asked was “Which digital channels have you checked before/while applying as an exchange student in Tec de Monterrey, Queretaro campus”? Most of the interviewees checked the main University webpage, two were checking Facebook account, Instagram and only one found YouTube channel. What was interesting to notice only one respondent had a view of Study in Mexico webpage, all others did not know about this webpage at all before applying for their exchange. This shows that the webpage, which is designed for the exchange students, is actually not found easily, therefore not used by the exchange students. This may be a problem if a potential student will not apply because he will not find the right information and therefore will lose his interest in applying.

As the analysis of the webpage showed in the chapters above, the main webpage of Tec de Monterrey does not have any information about the exchange programs nor it provides any information on the application process. All of the interviewed girls told that the main webpage looks visually good and there is a lot of information in English, but there is totally nothing about the exchange programs so they recommended a sub-site for upcoming international students. There is also no information on the budget or any cost, which would occur during exchange in Queretaro. They also wanted to learn more information about the academic offer and additional things like free activities on the campus.

All of the students had problems with signing in the application website and they had to wait long for the answers while having sent an email with some clarification. One of the

students tried a chatbot from the webpage and it took 3 weeks to receive an answer for the questions sent through the chat.

During the interview, it was interesting to find out that almost all (4) students were reading reviews from former students who had been on the exchange in Queretaro. The students found many interesting blogs also in different languages, which were a good source of information for the interested potential exchange students. Those blogs were not linked with any digital media channels of the International Program Office.

Likewise only one student had visited Study in Queretaro Instagram profile before applying for the exchange. All other students had only seen the Tec de Monterrey's main Instagram account. Unfortunately, that account did not have any information relevant to exchange students.

The main research question was about development ideas on how IPO could improve its visibility of its exchange programs in the digital channels and increase a number of exchange student coming to Queretaro. According to Amel, "Tec de Monterrey's main Instagram account should mention @studyinqueretaro in their bio so that everyone could find it easily and it would prove that it is the official account of Tec."

Sooyoung answered to the same question: "I think marketing is about everything. I enjoyed watching the Youtube videos and seeing what my exchange semester will be like. In my opinion the Youtube channel could be more visible on Tec's websites. I kind of found it accidentally while just searching videos from Mexico and Queretaro, but I know that not many exchange students know about it."

Annie suggested posting blog posts from former exchange students who would write about their experience of the exchange in Queretaro. Emilia would like to see more videos from former students who would talk about their exchange. Valerie suggested linking "Study in Queretaro" webpage to the main Tec de Monterrey webpage and provide more information on exchange programs on all social media channels. She recommended also improving chatbot services, which many students are used to, in USA for example.

The next chapter presents the development ideas from the author of the thesis who similarly to the interviewees did not find relevant information on the main webpage before her exchange and had problems with application process.

4.4 Development ideas

Based on the analysis of the current digital media channels of Tec de Monterrey University in Queretaro and International Program Office as well as interviews with exchange students studying in Queretaro, there are many ways how IPO could enhance its digital marketing communication.

First of all, International Program Office should employ digital inbound tactics by creating online content that attracts potential students onto their webpage and social media channels. The content should be relevant and helpful. By providing audience members with useful content to educate them on the study exchange programs, application process and what they can experience during their exchange in Queretaro, IPO can increase conversation, engage and attract new students.

When done correctly, good content can help create a relationship with the audience, which leads to trust and supports decision-making. In other words, content marketing is the art of communication with the prospects who will enjoy and learn from it.

One of the simplest yet most powerful inbound digital marketing assets is a blog, which could be written by students who would share their experiences as exchange students in Queretaro. As the interviewed students pointed out, the blogs of former exchange students were the most important sources of information in their decision-making process before applying for the exchange. The blog posts could be published on the Study in Queretaro webpage and social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram.

There are also a few things that could be improved on the Study in Queretaro webpage. The most important issue is the website visibility. The URL of the webpage is <https://sites.google.com/view/studyqro>. The webpage cannot be found in google. The title and meta description tags in the HTML of the page should give a brief overview of the page's content. This information can be interpreted by browsing software to summarize a page and improve the end-user experience. It can also be used by search engines to help gauge the 'weight' of a page and therefore determine its position in search engine results. Search engines can use the description when displaying search results to visitors.

International office should make sure its website is easy for users to discover and easy for search bots to understand—with better page titles, headings, and meta descriptions. It could also be valuable to publish a site map and submit it to Google so it can more easily crawl the website. Website grader tool suggests IPO to remove or defer JavaScript and

CSS that interferes with loading above-the-fold content. It could be also good to optimize images to reduce their size by 89.9KiB (50% reduction). Also the links of the webpage should work properly without any “error pages”.

Moreover, the chatbot on the webpage could be developed so it could give useful answers at any time of the day. Now the chatbot only asks those questions that will be sent to International Program Office by email in any case, and the person will have to wait for weeks for the reply. There are many companies that offer chatbots designed especially for higher education institutions. They answer the most frequently asked questions right away and help to qualify the request and redirect the student to the right channel. The picture below presents one example chatbot offered by VirtualSpirits which could be used by IPO on the Study in Queretaro webpage.

The chatbot could start with the welcome message and a general question as to what kind of information the student is interested in. As Image 10 suggests, this could be categorized as information about the university, courses, enrollment, etc.

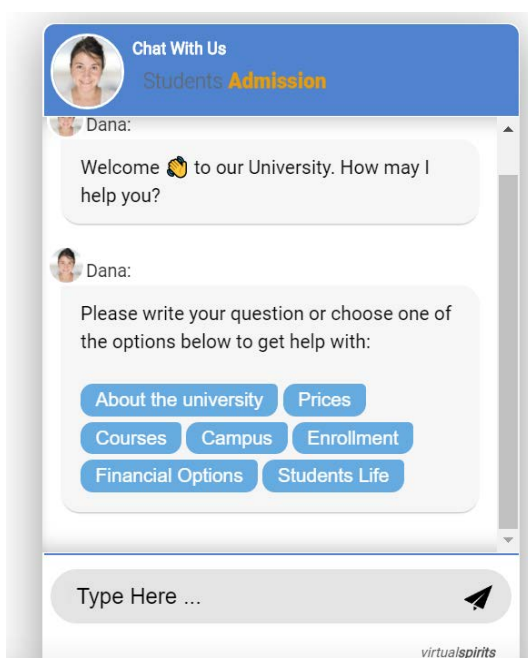


Image 10. An example of the chatbot which could be done for IPO (Virtualspirits)

Image 11 presents the further steps the chatbot could help the student with. This service should work smoothly and allow a potential student ask all questions in one place. The chatbot works 24/7 so a user does not need to wait until working hours in Mexico to receive a reply. Taking into consideration the fact that exchange students come to Queretaro from all over the world and now have to wait many weeks to receive an answer by email, the chatbot would be a great idea to improve the customer service.

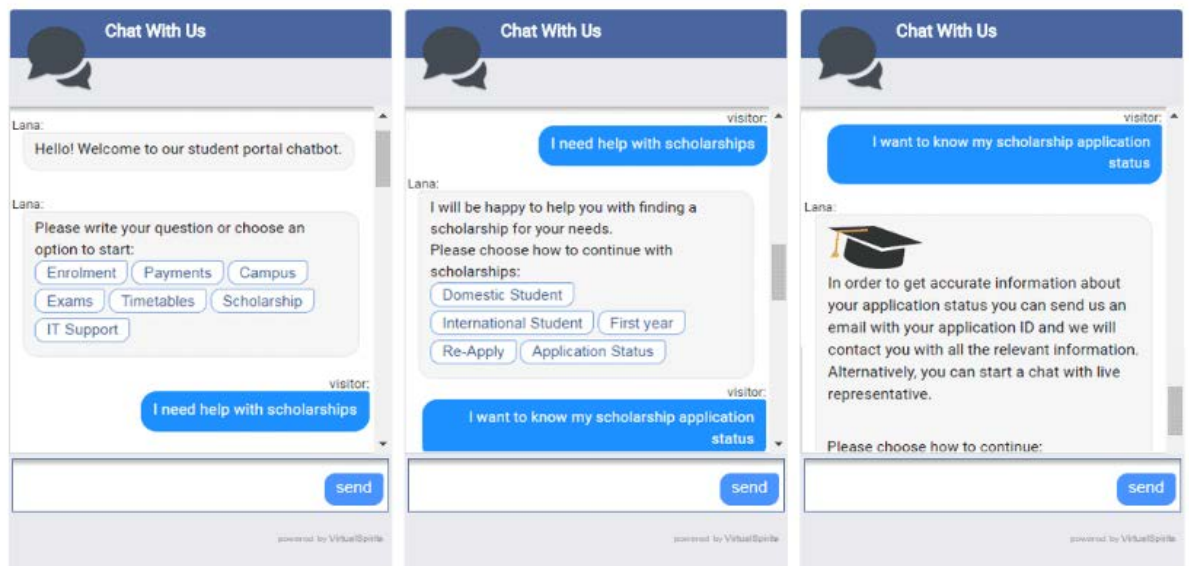


Image 11. An example of the chatbot which could be done for IPO (Virtualsprints)

As Virtual Sprints claim, the chatbot helps to recruit new students, secures a higher number of registrations and helps with admission. With the chatbot, the international office could easily engage potential students online, help with dilemmas, information about the campus, facilities, scholarships and enrollment. It is easy to integrate the chatbot with CRM and send student leads directly into recruitment process.

Tec de Monterrey's International Program Office could also benchmark some ideas from other universities, for example Haaga-Helia, a thesis author's home university. Benchmarking is learning from others and implementing others' best practises.

Haaga-Helia has only one main Instagram account where all campuses publish their posts. Haaga-Helia has over 6000 followers and over 1300 posts. In the bio there are links to all university's social media accounts which let students find the information easily.



Image 12. Some good examples of Haaga-Helia’s instagram posts

Image 12 presents very good examples of the posts made by international students. They are the best brand ambassadors, because students trust more other students than any other marketing team. They tell what they study and what they like about their studies. Most of the posts are in both Finnish and English language, which makes it easier for the international students to follow. This could be one of the ideas IPO could use in their social media channels. Exchange students in Queretaro could take over the Instagram account for a few days where they could post pictures, videos and Instagram stories.

The critical step for inbound marketers who want to bring more leads on Instagram, are hashtags. International Program Office should post more hashtags under their posts. The hashtags should be relevant to the account so that potential exchange students could find the profile easily. The most important hashtag should clearly be #StudyinQueretaro after each picture or any other post. Chapter 3.4 of the thesis gives many examples on how to improve digital marketing communication on Instagram.

International Program Office could post more behind-the-scenes posts: for example posting events, video shoots, and more. They could also repost from students: for example sharing the fun things that students love about studying at their university. It is good to remember that photos that evoke emotion see higher levels of engagement.

Since at the moment of writing the thesis, there are no videos on the Instagram account, IPO could post many videos together with the pictures. The pictures and videos should show more about the study experience at the university, instead of only having fun as it is now showed. The first two seconds of a video are the most important. It means that a video needs to quickly engage an audience immediately with a compelling visual so that they do not scroll past in their feed. A good idea could be using words and captions when one wants to grab attention without sound. Getting the sound right is, however, important, as a majority of users listen to sound in videos. Background noise should be eliminated if it is possible.

Youtube is a good channel to promote the campus via videos. When searching for exchange places, students usually google the universities and they would like to see some videos of it, so they could see exactly what kind of place it is and what it can offer.

Study in Queretaro YouTube channel has 443 subscribers (18.4.2020) (<https://www.youtube.com/user/IPQRO/>). The main marketing video is 7 years old and there are many videos that are made several years ago. There are however a few videos uploaded within a year, which are good. For example the one where students talk about iSummerMx programme 2019 was well done, although it is over 7 minutes long, which is too long. Those kind of videos, but much shorter, should be more and they could be shared also in other channels than YouTube. International programs office could focus on making a few good videos, which could be used as a marketing tool elsewhere.

Another very good example that could be learnt from Haaga-Helia is YouTube account. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences has 845 subscribers (18.4.2020). The length of videos are 2 minutes or less and they all are of very good quality. What is very good to benchmark, is the fact that all videos are categorized so it is easy to know what they are about. There are many videos uploaded within a year and the videos about alumni and student experiences are for the reason straight at the top. Those videos have the biggest number of views, which tells that they are watched more often than other videos. Other category is Haaga-Helia's services and Haaga-Helia life with videos from different happenings, university staff stories and case studies.

Categorising videos on Tec Youtube channels would be of great benefit for exchange students. For example, one of the category on Tec de Monterrey's Queretaro campus Youtube channels could be exchange students videos. The videos from YouTube could be then posted on webpage and Facebook site. To tell a story on Facebook, video is a

great option. Also Live videos on Instagram or Facebook would be an interesting choice of digital marketing.

The author of the thesis was asked by Tec de Monterrey's International Program Office to make a promotional video for exchange students. The video **Tec De Monterrey Querétaro - exchange fall2019** can be seen in YouTube under the link <https://youtu.be/E0IVG56bzwA>

The video shows different places on the campus, such as International Student Office, study facilities, library, swimming pool, gym and cafeterias, to mention a few. The most important part of the video is an interview with five exchange students who tell more why it is good to study in Queretaro.

Facebook is a great place to interact with the students. Post there could provide news and information student would appreciate. Similarly, to Instagram, the posts should educate potential exchange students on how they can apply for the exchange and what they can expect while on the exchange in Queretaro. The variety of posts should be big; there could be blogs, articles, videos, but also funny and entertaining content such as funny stories or quotes. The good way to engage followers would be a competition. For example, the current students could send their best stories from the exchange, which could be shared on Facebook. This way the Facebook site would have an interesting and relevant connect for new students who consider coming to Queretaro for the exchange.

Another example could be posting a post in a form of question where students could express their feelings, opinions or share experience. Also giving a possibility of asking a question by the students would be a good way to engage students in a discussion. International Program Office should bear in mind that content on their digital media channels should be valuable, relevant, and consistent to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and ultimately drive an action. It is really just the art of a storytelling. The goal should be to tell a story to an audience that educates and inspires them to make a well-informed, confident decision to apply for the exchange in Tec de Monterrey in Queretaro.

Now Tec de Monterrey has too many webpages, which are not linked together. The same issue is with Facebook profiles and Instagram accounts. There are too many profiles of one university that causes confusion and the potential exchange students cannot find relevant information and therefore might not apply for the exchange.

All of the above-mentioned ideas focused on owned and earned media, but another way of increasing a brand awareness would be paid media. Paying to promote the content is a great way to increase views and generate exposure. This could include Pay Per Click (PPC), social media paid advertising, display ads, sponsorship and paying influencers to share information about the brand. Paid media is a highly effective way of driving earned media because the more people who know about the university and its exchange programs, the more likely they are to mention them to others. It can also help to direct traffic to owned media properties such as IPO's website or other social media channels. Supplementing IPO's organic social media efforts with paid ads could really boost following and engagement rates. Although owned, earned and paid media are used in different ways, they are all interconnected and work together to contribute to a complete marketing strategy. The ultimate goal of all three channels is the same, to generate awareness and engage users.

To sum up the thesis, Tec de Monterrey University and International Program Office in Queretaro should remember that a good customer service is the best way to promote the brand. Word-of-mouth marketing has a big impact and a good way of inbound marketing. If the students studying at university are satisfied with the study programs, extra curriculum activities and what is most important with the customer service the International Office provides, they will become the ambassadors of the university. The good reviews from other students will bring more students to Queretaro, Mexico.

5 Discussion

The main goal of the thesis was to find ways of enhancing digital marketing for exchange programs at Tec de Monterrey in Queretaro. The author of the thesis believes that the goal has been met. The theory part of the thesis presented important aspects of digital marketing which should be taken into account when planning marketing strategy.

For example, the author explained why it is important to use inbound marketing. With inbound marketing, potential customers find the company through channels such as blogs, search engines, and social media. Unlike outbound marketing which pushes itself at an audience, inbound marketing does not need to fight for potential customers' attention. By creating content designed to address the problems and needs of ideal customers, the company attracts qualified prospects and builds trust and credibility for the business. Inbound marketing is marketing focused on being found by customers.

The theory part of content marketing explained what is defined as good content. Content marketing typically involves the creation of content that a customer in the brand's target group or demographic will find helpful, useful, or interesting. Even if the content does not contain a strong call to action, or push the brand's products or services, its existence may still build affinity for the brand in question. During the research part, the author of the thesis examined the content available on the webpage and IPO's social media channels. Development ideas were given on what kind of content should be posted in those media.

Chapter 3, on digital media landscape, gave a deeper understanding of what is meant by owned, earned and paid media and how they differ. The research showed that International Program Office does not use paid media and the author of the thesis recommended using this kind of media in the future. Chapter 3 focused on giving tips on how to design a good webpage and what are good marketing tactics on Facebook and Instagram. The goal of this chapter was to guide a marketing person on what could be done on those social media to make the profiles interesting and engaging.

The author of the thesis did the best of her capabilities and knowledge to evaluate the current situation of IPO's digital marketing strategies and to show what could be done even better. The results of the research are trustworthy. The author of the thesis has been 7 months as an exchange student in Queretaro, first as an intern and then as an exchange student, and she got a good understanding of the campus's marketing strategies.

The author's professional skills during the process of writing the thesis have developed. Time management was one of the greatest challenge, but it was overcome. Thesis writing was a long process and continuous improvement of the text took many hours a day. Moreover, writing a thesis in English, which is not author's native language, was also very challenging and exhausting at times. The author did not realize in the first place what a big difference it is to write a thesis in a foreign language. The same work using the Finnish language would have been much easier. However, now the author's English-language skills have developed and the author will be more confident to use the language in the future.

In addition, the covid-19 situation caused many changes to the schedule and the way the research was conducted. At first the author planned to make face-to-face interviews while in Queretaro, but since the situation with coronavirus changed dramatically in a short period of time, the author had to leave Mexico a few months earlier and conduct the study from Finland.

The ethical aspects of the research have been taken into account; the thesis author asked permission to publish the names of the interviewees. Students were also interviewed for the purpose of making a promotional video and they agreed on using their names in the video. The video was created by the thesis author and can be seen in IP YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/E0IVG56bzwA>

There were two thesis supervisors, one at home university and the other one at Tec de Monterrey. The biggest challenge was to get different opinions from both of them, especially while there were not the same. The author of the thesis had to correct many things depending on who gave the comments first. This was very stressful and time consuming.

However, Haaga-Helia's supervisor had the main role in thesis process and the final corrections were done based on her comments and frequent feedback. Her role is very appreciated. The thesis writing process was long and challenging, but the author has been very committed and wanted to achieve the best possible outcome. The final version of the thesis has undergone many changes compared with the first version. The author has learnt to handle criticism and has motivated herself to continue writing despite critical feedback. This skill is very useful in working life.

In conclusion, the subject of the thesis was interesting, but also very challenging. Since International Program Office has been already doing good job with marketing, there were

not too many things to find that could be developed. This is why it is very difficult to find any suggestions for development or further work.

Overall, the author believes that International Student Office in Queretaro finds her work interesting and makes use of the thesis results in its future operations. Author's digital marketing skills and deeper understanding of the subject will be an asset in her future work.

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Appendix

Script for the interview.

Dear fellow student,

I'm in a process of writing bachelor thesis about enhancing digital marketing of student exchange programs at Tec de Monterrey in Queretaro, and I kindly ask you to answer a few questions. The objective of my thesis is to research what digital media channels you had used before you applied for the exchange and if you found information on the application process on the webpage easily. If you had any problems with your application process due to insufficient information on the webpage, please tell me in your own words about development ideas and what Tec could do differently on their webpage and any social media you have used.

Thank you for your help!

1) What's your gender?

Female

Male

2) What country do you come from?

3) Did you find information about studies in Tec de Monterrey easily before applying for the exchange? If you answered NO, please write what kind of problems you had and what information you didn't find.

4) Do you find the application process for the exchange in Tec de Monterrey easy? If you answered NO, please write what problems you had.

5) Which digital channels have you checked before/while applying as an exchange student in Tec de Monterrey, Queretaro campus?

University webpage

Facebook

Instagram

other, what?

6) Which social media channels have you checked before applying?

webpage

Facebook

Instagram

Youtube

7) Which Instagram account did you check?

Tec de Monterrey's main Instagram

Study in Queretaro

8) Which webpage did you read before applying to the Tec de Monterrey, Queretaro campus?

9) What was good in the webpage you read before applying for the exchange and what should be improved to make the application process easier? What kind of information should be still added?

10) Give a few development ideas of the application process to Tec de Monterrey and how IPO could improve visibility of its exchange programs in the digital world. What Tec in Queretaro could still do better to get more international students in the future?