


Chapter 5

Online Persuasive Communication: 8000Kicks Brand Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The information flows available in the online world generate changes in consumer behavior. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how brands have adapted, creating a communication strategy that would make them reach their audience more assertively. This research proposes an analysis of the communication of the brand 8000Kicks, a pioneer in the production of waterproof footwear made from hemp, a variant of the cannabis plant, with the aim of determining whether the brand persuades the public towards the materials that are used in its products. Following the qualitative method, a content analysis was made of the brand's social networks, Instagram and Facebook, and by using this analyzed data it was possible to conclude that the 8000Kicks brand uses online persuasion strategies in their publications, which culminates in the affirmation that 8000Kicks use persuasive communication.

INTRODUCTION

Given the current communication landscape, in which much of the communication is done digitally and in the online world, it was necessary to adapt and adjust the communication strategies used until now to more effective techniques and capable of reducing the impact of these changes for the recipients of the messages.

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Online Persuasive Communication

It is in this context that online persuasion emerges as a strategy, a method generally associated with manipulation, but which differs in the way it is treated and implemented. Persuasion should be seen as the ability to “influence and be influenced by human, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, intentions and behaviors” by shortening the distance between two distinct points of view (Nahai, 2017, p.60).

The factors that motivated this research are divided between understanding the power and ways of influencing and observing the behavior of the human being in the face of this influence. In a where the consumer, who is a user, seems to be in control, the reality is that he exists in a universe controlled not by himself, but by those who hold the power to influence. 85% of financial success is represented by the ability to persuade and influence. This means that this ability is “six times more important than intellect, talent or skill” (Allen, 2018, p.9).

Consumers often overlook how their surroundings profoundly influence them across diverse aspects, lacking awareness of this impact. Therefore, it is pertinent to reflect on this influence in the field of decisions that are based on emotions that have not been rationalized, but that interfere in the purchase process. As several studies indicate, decision-making “can be significantly influenced and biased by our emotional processes” (Nahai, 2017, p.6).

Due to this influence and persuasion, most individuals’ purchasing decisions are made unconsciously and the emergence of technology and network communication in people’s lives has maximized these effects. Nowadays, the influence can happen through the voluntary demand of the consumer to have more information before making a final decision, but that decision may, for example, be motivated by the sharing of knowledge on the network, in addition to the personalized content offered by brands and that attract consumers.

Given all this, this research becomes relevant since, in addition to allowing us to know the persuasive techniques that can be implemented in the communication of an organization and beyond, it also helps to understand how the consumers’ brain reacts to such strategies and the influence they have on the decision-making process.

Taking this information into account, the main objective of this chapter is to analyze the 8000Kicks brand, understanding whether or not the brand is using a persuasive communication strategy in the content it shares on the social networks in which it is present, which in this case are Instagram and Facebook. To make this possible, the online persuasion techniques identified and referred to by authors in the area of study in question such as Nathalie Nahai and Robert Cialdini will be taken into account.

Regarding the specific objectives that are intended to be achieved with this research, it is expected above all to understand whether online persuasion strategies are being applied in 8000Kicks publications, but also to identify how often each type of content analyzed is shared, that is, what is the format of the publications disseminated, what characteristics constitute the text of these publications and finally, to understand whether these same publications have greater feedback from consumers.

To achieve all these objectives, it is essential to use a qualitative method to carry out a content analysis of the social networks, Instagram, and Facebook of the brand under study, through analysis grids of our elaboration, segmented according to the different categories to be analyzed and that make up a communication type.

Thus, the structure of this chapter is divided into three sub-chapters, the first being dedicated to the theoretical framework where the main themes that make up the research are addressed. These themes vary namely between online communication and the strategies that can be applied to influence consumers, and there is also a theme regarding consumer profile and behavior, where the decision-making process is integrated.

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