



MUEO - Màster Universitari en Enginyeria d'Organització

REPORT

Study of the online funnel conversion of strategic
consulting companies in Spain

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1 Introduction

1.1 Abstract

The funnel conversion is the journey of an internet user from web surfer to loyal client, through intermediate stages. It consists of:

1. Acquisition → Convert visits into leads
2. Activation → Convert leads into prospects
3. Monetization → Convert prospects into Loyal clients

The objective of the research is to study funnel conversion applied by consulting companies online, define alternative strategies and test them to understand how we could possibly improve the results.

The results will be on both the funnel conversion techniques and tools that the companies examined could use.

We will analyse each step of the funnel separately because, despite overlapping aspects, we cannot act on the three steps simultaneously. “You don't turn cold prospects into leads, customers and multi-buyers all at once. A solid conversion funnel anticipates each step necessary to lead the prospect to the conversion.” (Lindner, 2015)

The actions performed to convert a prospect into a client are not the same, rather a good action in the wrong stage could reduce the effectiveness of our work.

The existent research had only focused on products or services directly purchasable online. The aim of this research is to focus on a niche which is not directly sold online: Consulting services.

Usually in the consulting activities the negotiation takes place in face-to-face meetings due to the complexity of the projects and the high value of the transactions, but the process of evaluating, or how a client decides, to go for a

specific firm is not studied in depth in the literature, we will focus more on this topic. How consulting companies are attracting clients online, driving prospects to become clients and shape their online reputation between stakeholders, and how they could improve their process by using other techniques from different businesses.

We will refer to the prospects/clients as stakeholders. In this group, we will consider: Clients, Partners, Students and employees. Since the influence on this group will generate the reputation of the company, and the online activity of the company is addressed to all of them.

Possible tools of the company to achieve the results:

1. Web page
2. Newsletters
3. Online publications (i.e. McKinsey quarterly)
4. Social network (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter)
5. Events
6. Charities
7. Word-of-mouth
8. Others

The unit of analysis is a selection consulting companies operating on the Spanish market and unit of observation are companies' activities online and the stakeholders. The sample will try to illustrate the entire market with a comparison between small and big companies.

The analysis will be performed with the direct observation of the methods and channels used and the comparison with the theory showed in the literature review. We will generate hypotheses on how to improve the existing activation stage of online funnel conversion of the companies studied. Finally, we will

perform focus groups and interviews to potential or actual stakeholders of those companies, to test the validity of our hypothesis.

1.2 Details of the research

1.2.1 Aim of the study

The analysis of the funnel conversion for consulting companies operating in the Spanish market, the focus will be on the different techniques and tools the companies are currently using to have the most effective strategies on the market. In the final section, we will suggest some improvement to the actual strategy, based on the theory and cross-analysis of different companies.

1.2.2 GAP

The current research focuses just on products or services directly purchasable online with an emphasis on the B2C market. There is no current literature on the B2B market for services not directly purchasable online. This study will focus on a category of business service with a transaction completed offline in face-to-face meeting, due to usual great cost and negotiation. In this specific category, we will understand the role of online activation for the conversion of a user in a client. Despite everything, these companies cannot underestimate their online conversion.

1.2.3 Research Question

What is the funnel conversion strategy for consulting companies in Spain and how it could be improved?

1.2.4 Scope

The scope of this project is:

- Review of the scientific literature
- Observation of the different online tools and strategies used by companies in analysis
- Development of Hypothesis based on observation and theory
- Focus group with potential or actual clients of these companies to test the most subjective items

1.3 Requirements

1.3.1 Sample to study (Unit of Analysis)

Consulting companies operating in the Spanish market with a selection process based on:

1. Business
2. Size
3. Number of employees
4. Type of companies served

N.B. The companies with an office in Barcelona will be preferred for allowing direct observation of activities in the city.

1.3.2 Sample to Study (Unit of Observation)

The research has a double unit of observation of the stakeholders and the activities of the companies.

Potential stakeholders of the companies in analysis. The group will contain:

- Clients
- Potentials clients
- Students
- Employees

The online activities of the companies in all their declinations.

1.4 Objective

Analysis of the conversion funnel for consulting companies operating in the Spanish market.

1.5 Structure of the work

In the initial phase, to carry on this project will be necessary to review the existing literature regarding funnel conversion and become familiar with the typologies of these funnels and how they are developed in the online businesses.

1. Read articles/books related to o-funnel conversion

2. Video on funnel conversion
3. Summary of the knowledge acquired with the structure from RS

In this phase we will Study the tools used by the company:

- offline: advertising, publication, branding (e.g. billboards especially on representative buildings)
- online: webpage, LinkedIn, twitter, Facebook.
- networking: roundtables, word-of-mouth, corporate presentations, charity events etc. A detailed analysis could be developed on recruiting events in the universities, since it will be a double leverage on potential clients or employees

We will focus on the online tools and classify them in pull and push. Trying to understand which category is more effective.

From this information, we will make a detailed study of the online funnel conversion of different successful consultancy businesses in the Spanish market and observe which funnel from the previous study (phase 1) is used.

1. Review of the previous phase
2. Search for the companies to analyse (select some criteria for filtering)
3. Analyse companies' activities in the 3 stages of OFC
4. Write a comparison with a special emphasis on the difference between companies with different sizes and market served
5. Create graphs and tables to make this comparison easier to understand

Once defined the existing funnels, we will propose alternatives in tools or techniques according to the findings. These tools and techniques will be tested with control groups in case study and in case of uncertain results they are going to be counterproved with an interview with an expert.

Once the data has been collected, it will be analysed and compared with the literature to generate meaningful conclusions.

Subsequently, we will define the limitations of the current research and what can be the possible investigations to be performed in the future.

The last part of the study will sum up the information collected and the conclusions of the analysis.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review starts with the consulting services in the B2B markets, then it analyses the specific Spanish market to clearly present the environment of the research. The central part expounds the specificity of the Spanish market for these services, and finally it analyses the offline and online Funnel conversion.

2.2 Definition of B2B service Market

B2B stands for Business to Business, it defines all those companies serving directly other businesses and not a final consumer; its dual is B2C (Business to Consumer). These labels are not creating separate categories of businesses, many companies are working in both 2 industries.

Webster (1978) showed that B2B relationships have a stronger interdependence between buyers and sellers. Gruen (1995) reinforced this idea, he affirms that B2B marketing is driven by relationships, relationships with unique structural and process characteristics. For example, business relationships are considered different from those in B2C due to their continuity, complexity, symmetry, and informality. Hence, B2B and B2C markets must be handled in a different way.

Additionally, Cooke (1986) affirms that it is not possible to use the same strategy for marketing in B2B and B2C markets, due to the complexity of the different markets the techniques should be different. However, not all the researcher agrees with this vision, Fern and Brown (1984) argue that the distinction between the categories is not enough, and they propose an approach based on removing the dichotomy between the markets and examining marketing phenomena for similarities, defining new analysis' dimensions as buying centre size, buyer's knowledge or frequency of purchase, which provide the opportunity for developing a more general theory of marketing.

Considering that, this market is based on the relationship, we should know our customer and adapt to their needs, being those elements the biggest sources of competitive advantage in B2B businesses. (Vargo and Lusch, 2004)

Customer knowledge refers to knowing customer needs, wants, and preferences. This is essential for adopting customization as a business strategy (Tollin, 2002). Precisely, in B2B markets, a deep knowledge of the customer is considered mandatory to create a customized offer (Stump, Athaide and Joshi, 2002). Intimate knowledge of client firms can provide suppliers with opportunities to develop market offerings that better match customers' requirements. (Madhavaram and Hunt, 2017)

Additionally, Madhavaram and Hunt (2017) stated that customizing B2B professional services involves braiding together many tasks that (1) are knowledge intensive, (2) require the coordinated efforts of individuals with specialized knowledge and skills, (3) are systemic (elements of the offerings depend on each other for development and performance), and (4) have emergent properties during development (unpredictable and unexpected events and interactions often occur).

2.3 Definition of the multi-level perspective in selling

The multi-level perspective (MLP) is a middle-range theory that conceptualizes overall dynamic patterns in socio-technical transitions.(Geels, 2011). The MLP distinguishes three levels of analysis: niche-innovations, socio-technical regimes and socio-technical landscape.(Schot and Geels, 2008) The Niche-Innovation is the smaller level of interaction, the sociotechnical regime extends the relationships with other players, and finally the sociotechnical landscape takes in consideration the environment.

On this research the interest is on selling and social relationships through digital tools.

The multi-level perspective of selling is a deep analysis of the purchasing process considering different levels of relationships between the entities involved. A company can evaluate its own relationships through 3 parameters (Borg and Young, 2014)

- Relationship competence, i.e. how the workers of the company can manage the relationships

- Relationship portfolio, i.e. the number of relationships the company has (how big is the network)
- Relationship value, i.e. the value of the different relationships of the company

(Borg and Young, 2014) defined the principal level of purchasing analysis as Monadic, Dyadic and Network.

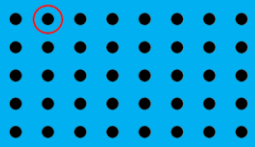
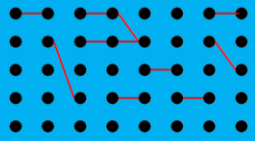
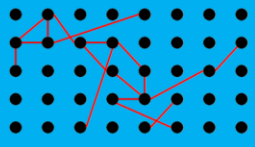
Level of analysis	Visualization	Characterization
Monadic		At this level of the analysis just one actor is evaluated. The focus is on the skills and activities performed to position in the market and to sale Here the focus in on relationship competence
Dyadic		At this level of the analysis the focus is on the relationship between to interdependent actors. Here the focus in on relationship values and portfolio
Network		At this level, where our analysis will be done, the individual are considered embedded in a large number of relationships. Where the actors are connected between them and are mutually dependent. Therefore the selling process is influenced by the different actors that are involved not only in the sales, but in the entire network.

Figure 1 Level of analysis in purchasing, Borg and Young (2014))

As companies in the B2B sectors are always involved in a network of relationships, it is possible to acquire information on the companies and their relations from other actors that are not involved directly in the transactions. Therefore, we can acquire information not just from the client and seller, as in the dyadic model, but from other participants as other companies, students and people related to the businesses. (Borg and Young, 2014)

This result is also validated by Anderson and Weitz (1992). They affirmed that vendors provide signals of their future actions through their behaviours in other channel relationships. By showing their concern to the other channel members, retailers and vendors, they would develop a fairness reputation within the industry.

2.4 Definition of consulting

On the one hand, Fischer (1993) defines consulting as a planned intervention in a firm whose aim is to identify existing problems and to introduce the most suitable ways of resolving them. On the other hand, Clark and Salaman (1998) define management consulting as a twofold area that deals with problems and processes.

The second one is the most common definition for B2B consulting. It can be related to any kind of problems in a company. Nowadays, there are countless consulting societies for any aspect of a company life, from marketing to change management.

Between the different reasons companies search for this service, the first one is the search for suitable information to ensure that the best possible decisions are taken in each case. Another one is to resolve a or general problem that the firm may be faced with. Also, the firm may seek an independent opinion concerning a previously undertaken course of action (Ribeiro Soriano, 2001)

All the services provided by a consulting company are based on the inherent interaction between the clients and the consultants. Therefore, the experience of the client, and the way the work is managed by the consultant, will be important factors in the initial decision to make use of, and subsequently evaluate the quality of, the service. The interaction of the client with the company is constant during the service provided and the relationship is not global with the company, but individual with each consultant with their peculiar characters and abilities. Thus, the client evaluate the service during the whole process and not just on the results, that can vary depending on external factors, as economic environment, or supplies' shortage, and studies find out that the relationship between the client and the consultant is as much important as the results in the evaluation (McGivern, 1983; Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992)

In addition, since the evaluation is not possible until the realization of the service, during the pre-purchase stage, the client will tend to place the quality of the consulting service above professional criteria, as reputation of consultant in specific functional area, general reputation, Clients experience with consulting

firm or written consulting proposal. (Dawes, Dowling and Patterson, 1992). Indeed, according to Monnoyer (1993), a consultant's having a good reputation usually increases its profits and margins.

According to Soriano (2001), the value brought by the consulting firm lies in its ability to increase the knowledge about the activities subjected to the consulting process and the support from consultants improves the performance of firms in both the short and the longer term.

2.5 Buying business behaviour in B2B market

Traditionally, organizational buying research has viewed buyers in this process as purely rational, objective, and non-emotional (Patti, Hartley and Kennedy, 1991; Baack *et al.*, 2016a). Indeed, individuals involved in purchasing decisions as being influenced by group objectives, and that this process keeps individual behaviours pragmatic and more predictable (Gilliland and Johnston, 1997)

Successively a new theory raised, accepting that organizational buyers are not always objective decision makers, a growing number of researchers have found that individuals in organizational buying centres are sensitive to subjective marketing information (Brown *et al.*, 2011, 2012; Swani, Brown and Milne, 2014)

Thus, there appears to be growing evidence, and even acceptance, that managers involved in the organizational buying process are susceptible to subjective information, such as branding (Leek and Christodoulides, 2011, 2012) Further, many of the psychological differentiators, as trust, prestige (the need for status), career security, friendship and social needs used in consumer advertising seem applicable for business advertising as well (Gilliland and Johnston, 1997; Lynch and de Chernatony, 2004).

2.6 Consumer's type

In retailing and general purchase the following areas generate more insights on the customers preferences: (1) goals, schema, and information processing, (2) memory, (3) involvement, (4) attitudes, (5) affect, (6) atmospherics, and (7) consumer attributions and choices.(Craik and Lockhart, 1972; O., 2009)

Specially, according to Puccinelli *et al.*(2009), goals affect the need of recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Hence, we need to analyse both internal and external factors to evaluate the consumer preferences.

The customers are influenced by their long- or short-time orientation in the relationship with the supplier of the services (Anderson and Narus, 1990). According to Ganesan (1994), the first benefit of the analysis of customer orientation in relation to time is that it enables the vendor to select and use marketing tools with time characteristics that correspond to the time horizons of the customer. If consultants know the customers and the tools to use, it will let them focus on the correct target and invest more efficiently their resources.

Therefore, customers are being studied for the different long or short-term orientations and divided into two categories:

2.6.1 Transactional buyer

Transactional mechanisms are those that govern interparty exchanges, avoiding uncertainties through legal stipulations and economic incentive systems.(Liu, Luo and Liu, 2009).

According to Clarks (2008), the transactional buyer is short term oriented on a single transaction and a single purchase. They are concerned primarily about price and terms. They enjoy negotiating and trying to extract as many concessions out of the salesperson as possible. This kind of buyer is more sensible to offers, and less sensible to support and post purchase campaigns.

Furthermore, short-term oriented customers are likely to switch their patronage from one vendor to another (Ganesan, 1994), making more complex the retention of the customer.

2.6.2 Relational buyer

Relational mechanisms emphasize inherent and moral control, governing exchanges through consistent goals and cooperative atmospheres. relational mechanisms are more effective in enhancing relationship performance. (Liu, Luo and Liu, 2009)

The relational buyer is long term oriented, giving priority to the quality of the service, more than the implementation cost. They are looking for a Business Partner or Trusted Advisory who is an expert that they can trust. Once they find someone they trust, they are loyal and tend to be the best repeat customers (Clarks, 2008). According to Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande (1992), trust is the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.

For this typology of customer, Bendoly, Rosenzweig and Stratman, (2009) recommended an emphasis on Strategic performance in customer intimacy that involves satisfying the customer, which is facilitated using operational excellence information, to ensure that customer expectations in terms of order fulfilment are met. This suggests the usage of a database for storing the data and the creation of a more tailored offer for the customer, because it will create a higher ROI.

The consumer of consulting services is more often in the second category due to the sensible information managed during the relationships between the companies and the importance of the results.

2.7 Buying process for services

Many researches differentiate the process for buying a product and a service, Van der Valk and Rozemeijer (2009) affirms that “*Services are mostly consumed and produced simultaneously in interaction between customer and service provider, which implies a dual role for the buying company (both consumer and co-producer).*”

Furthermore, services could not be evaluated easily before the purchase, due to the variability of the results according to the specific case presented to the consulting company, complicating the selection of the supplier; and at the same time is not easy to quantify the cost, price and time in advance (Wynstra, Axelsson and van der Valk, 2006).

Wynstra and the other authors consider not just the first purchase of a service as a different process, but also, they differentiate the buying process in post purchasing and evaluation. In fact, the evaluation of the purchase could be done just after the first purchase.

In some cases, the evaluation is not even possible. If we take the example of a strategic consulting company's service like the brand repositioning or entering a new market, the result is uncertain and it is difficult to understand if the outcomes are originated by the service provided by the company or they are merely a consequence of external factors. In fact, we could have a lack of skills in the implementation or a change in the market that does not allow a valid strategy to be effective.

Additionally, Stock and Zinszer (1987) on their research state that organizational buyers consider the purchase of business services as being essentially different from the purchase of goods. Indeed, Wynstra et al. (2006) claim that the characteristics of consulting services (intangibility, heterogeneity, simultaneity and perishability) affect the purchasing process in the sense that certain aspects become more important and/or difficult than, or just different in comparison with, the purchase process for goods.

As stated above, the principal difference between purchase of generic service and consulting services comes from the dual role of the buyer, both consumer and actor of the service, since the definition and scope of the problem from the buyer are key for the buying process. a survey pointed out the most difficult phases in consulting purchases: specifying the service, defining the specific content of a service level agreement and evaluating performance.(van der Valk and Rozemeijer, 2009)

Fitzsimmons, Noh and Thies (1998) pointed out that the purchase process for services is more complex, because it implies different risks for the buyer about evaluating the vendor, specification and evaluation of the service.

Van der Valk and Rozemeijer (2009) affirms that the top management underestimates the process of buying services, thus the role of buyer is assigned to a worker with low experience. Due to the duality of the service, a novice buyer could be induced in a bad deal from an experienced seller, that can sell

unnecessary or collateral benefits or negotiate on delayed deadlines. Furthermore, the low experience could lead to a wrong definition of the problem and a useless purchase of a non-required service. (Kasper, Helsdingen and Gabbott, 2006)

In order to overcome these issues, in the last decades, a purchasing specialist figure was created by many companies in order to manage complex services' purchases or expensive ones. (Wynstra, Axelsson and van der Valk, 2006)

During a normal purchase, the client can approach the service provider with a specific problem to be solved or a broader situation to be analysed. In some specific cases, the consulting company can propose a project to a serial buyer, knowing the situation of the client and the reality of the industry. Obviously, this is generated by a long-term relationship between the parts.

For consulting companies, most of the networking is made in fairs and by word of mouth, since many of the agreements are based on reputation. (Glückler and Armbrüster, 2003)

For other products, companies organize trials of the products or tasting, as food tasting the supermarket for a new product. For electronic products it is common to have per brand stand in the big retailers.

The purchase of products and services have been classified by different studies. In this research the focus is on the behaviour during this process using the funnel conversion framework, as introduced in the next paragraph.

2.8 Definition of Funnel conversion

The funnel conversion is a framework for defining the consumer journey to buy a product or a service. (Ramos and Cota, 2009). Additionally, according to Court *et al.* (2009), the path for the consumers start with a number of potential brands in mind (the wide end of the funnel), marketing is then directed at them as they methodically reduce that number and move through the funnel, and at the end they emerge with the one brand they chose to purchase.

The study of funnel conversion started in the 60s with Haines, Howard and Sheth (1970). They defined the purchase process as a mostly repetitive behaviour, depending on the product. Confronted by repetitive brand-choice decisions, the consumer simplifies his task by storing relevant information and establishing a routing in his decision process. According to their theory the motives are specific to a product class and reflect the underlying needs of the buyers.

Subsequently, research on this process created a more detailed analysis of this behaviour illustrating many of these issues and proposes that online marketing should be perceived as five components namely: (1) promotions; (2) one-to-one contact; (3) closing; (4) transaction; and (5) fulfilment. (Welz, 1995)

Another model that proposes a similar approach to the purchase, but specific for the company. This model contains the following steps: (1) identification of need; (2) establishment of specifications; (3) identification of alternatives; (4) evaluation of alternatives; and (5) selection of suppliers. (Webster, Wind and Wind, 1972)

Principally, the funnel conversion is studied from the point of view of the seller point of view. According to ..., it consists of 5 steps:

1. **Prospect:** The attraction of the prospect client to the product with the advertising or other campaign which acknowledge of the existence of the company and their products and the desire associated with them
2. **Rapport:** First contact between the customer and the seller, in which they make the first impression.
3. **Qualify:** In this step, the customer's needs will be analysed and investigated to find the perfect solution to their problems and needs.
4. **Present:** The product/service is suggested to the customer with all the features, explaining how they could profit from that.
5. **Close:** We close the deal and evaluate the satisfaction after the purchasing. In this phase, all the post-purchase services are considered.

This model is focusing just on a single purchase, and it does not take in consideration the long-term relationship between customer and vendor. Edvardsson *et al.* (2000) suggest that the first purchase is crucial for generating profit, but the most profit came from loyal customers for services.

Thus, the model from the point of view of the customer takes in consideration this aspect. It consists in five steps:

1. **Awareness:** The buyer analyses his needs and looks for a solution. For consulting services could be through the recognition of a problem in the company and the comparison with the competitors.
2. **Research:** Once the need is recognized, the buyer starts his quest for finding the product/service that will satisfy it.
3. **Comparison:** On the market various solutions are offered, many similar products/services promising to meet the expectations of the client, that will assess which is the best solution.
4. **Purchase:** The action that eventually converts the user into buyers.
5. **Retention:** In this stage the buyer becomes a user of the product and evaluates the sale and the satisfaction of the product/service compared to what was promised previously.

Eventually, these 2 points of view of the funnel conversion converged into a single point, according to Rawal (2013), the most accepted model is the AIDA Model, in which the point of view of the customer and the seller converge into a unique funnel.

The evolution of the AIDA model proceeded during the year from 1898 to 1956. The most well-known is AIDA originated by Lewis in the late 1800s. It consists of 4 steps: Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. Those steps define the different faces a customer is going through during every purchase that is performing and what are the different triggers in each step. Once again, we can analyse the different phases from the point of view of both, the customer and the seller. As stated in the next table.

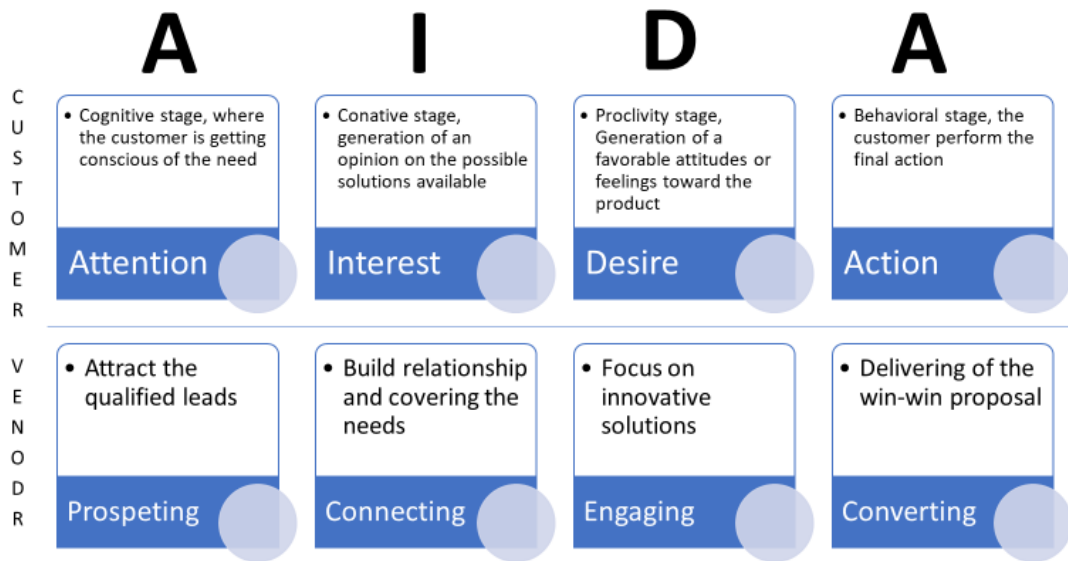


Figure 2 - AIDA Model

The AIDA model has gained even more importance with the rise of blogs, where different visual elements can be added to enhance the efficiency of the piece. Indeed, the rise of Social Network has increased the importance of this model, because it allows to carry out all the stages of the AIDA model in a single platform (Green, 2015).

The model is based on the hierarchy of effects, the classical definition according to Lavidge and Steiner (1961) has 6 steps, beginning with "aware," indicating three major functions of advertising: (1) The first two, awareness and knowledge, relate to information or ideas. (2) The second two steps, liking and preference, have to do with favourable attitudes or feelings toward the product. (3) The final two steps, conviction and purchase, are to produce action-the acquisition of the product. These three advertising functions are directly related to a classic psychological model which divides behaviour into three components or dimensions: 1. The cognitive component (intellectual, mental, or "rational" states). 2. The affective component ("emotional" or "feeling" states). 3. The cognitive or motivational component ("striving" states, relating to the tendency to treat objects as positive or negative goals).(Ostrom, 1969)

This way we are defining a schematic process for the buyer's behaviour and a basic approach for the seller counterpart. The AIDA model steps are based on the actions of the customer from the intention to buy to the completion itself. This is not the only model studying this behaviour, lately the funnel conversion is getting more on the spotlight, because it is focusing on the engagement. It simplifies the steps from 4 to 3, and makes the model closer to the internet era, as it will be explained in the next paragraph.

2.9 Classic Funnel conversion

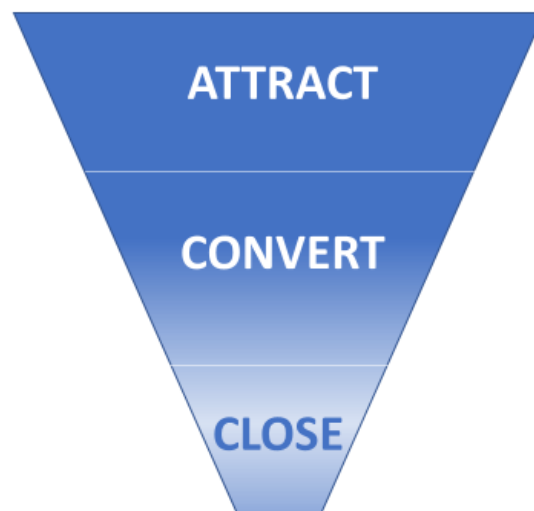


Figure 3 - Funnel conversion

The classic funnel conversion analysis is divided in 3 stages: attraction, conversion and closing. The process of stepping from one stage to another of the funnel is called conversion.

A user is then said to convert from a regular user into a potential business lead or customer when the user steps from one phase to another in the conversion funnel. However, not all conversions have the same meaning or value to all advertisers (Bagherjeiran, Hatch and Ratnaparkhi, 2010). Some advertisers want the user to purchase some product whereas others want the user to request information about a product by signing up for a newsletter.

In the current market both for B2B and B2C, with the new complexity added and the overwhelming availability of information, Court *et al.* (2009) states that the consumer is often delaying their decision until they reach the store becoming the merchandising and packaging factors very important.

Another new trend generated by the complexity in the B2C market is the gradual abandoning of the push market, since according to Court *et al.* (2009), the customer is more an expert compare to a decade ago, or can become one easily, we have to prove all the information, support and experience what the customer want to influence their purchasing decisions, or we are going to lose customers and money.

2.10 Definition of Online funnel conversion

The online funnel conversion is the application of the funnel conversion to the e-business world. Lindner (2015) defines the online funnel conversion as a “*multi-step that seamlessly and subtly leads a prospect toward a desired action*” (pp.2). From this definition, we extrapolate the possibility of applying the conversion to many kinds of structured processes, not just the purchase. This observation underlines how crucial is the online presence for a company, and the attention needed for the funnel conversion. (Phau and Meng Poon, 2000)

A conversion is the business term for an action that has some benefit to the advertiser and happens after the click. For a conversion to occur a specific set of events must be put in place.(Bagherjeiran, Hatch and Ratnaparkhi, 2010)

For instance, a possible application of the funnel conversion is the analysis of an e-commerce app downloaded by a user as well as the search of a product to the effective purchase (Bonnie, 2017). In this case we can analyse all the steps of the conversion, if the user has the app on their phone, what type of product is looking for, is interested in, etc.

Products and services that are relatively expensive and infrequently purchased are more amenable to be purchased via the Internet (Phau and Meng Poon, 2000), but even for products that are purchased outside the online channel it is necessary to create a funnel conversion, as Food companies like Buitoni or

Mondelez with their programs of online recipes to catch the client that will buy later the product in the physical store.

The two main objectives of any marketer are twofold: (1) drive qualified traffic to the web; (2) get a higher number of visitors to convert into users.

At this point, the problem is the set of actions to be performed for a heterogeneous group of possible customers. We assume that these actions will work for most of our public, because they share the same objectives and the culture. As pointed out by Johnston and Johal (1999), “*the Internet shoppers may well exhibit several demographic and psychographic similarities*” (pp. 111). This trait is captured in the concept of the Internet as a virtual cultural region. From this assumption we assume that our possible clients will be in a virtual cultural region.

Again, the difference of online marketing is the switch from one-way communication to two-way communication, where the customer can get in touch with us through the social network or can get in touch with other customers exchanging opinions about companies and products/services. Hence, the marketers need a more systematic way to satisfy customer demands and manage word-of-mouth.(Court *et al.*, 2009) because it generates their reputation on the internet.

As can be seen in figure 4, the AIDA model can be linked with the online funnel conversion. (DeMers, 2013)




C o n v e r s i o n	Steps	1. Acquisition Convert visits into leads 	2. Activation Convert leads into prospects 	3. Monetization Convert prospects into loyal clients 	
	Motivation elements	Lead Magnet	Tripwire + Core Offer		Profit Maximizer
	Actions	Show how the feature of our product/service can solve customer's problems and wake their attention	Create the relationship with the prospects (Trust) to create a customer. Once the first transaction is realized, it is easier to engage in other		Offer core product to interested customers. Maintain communication Simplify the process Keep customers up to new products
A I D A	Steps	Attention	Interest/Desire	Action	Loyalty
	Questions to ask	Who is the client?	What does s/he want?Why?	How to make it act?	How to maintain the relationship?
	Topics to present	Relationship Solution	Problem Story Benefits Testimonials	Call to action	Build the relationship

Figure 4 - Conversion funnel and AIDA

From the graph we notice how the funnel conversion brings a step more compared to the AIDA model, Loyalty. In this last step, the post purchase is analysed and how it creates a loyal customer.

This model is needed to face the different stages of the online funnel conversion differently. In fact, not all the actions could be performed on every step at once.

Again, the difference of online marketing is the switch from one-way communication to two-way communication, where the customer can get in touch with us through the social network or can get in touch with other customers exchanging opinions about companies and products/services. Hence, the marketers need a more systematic way to satisfy customer demands and manage word-of-mouth, (Court *et al.*, 2009) because it generates their reputation on the internet.

The next paragraphs are analysing separately the different stages of the funnel conversion. We need to keep in mind that the strategy for the funnel conversion, usually changes at each step, a general message cutting across all stages may have to be replaced by one addressing weaknesses at a specific point, such as initial consideration or active evaluation. (Court *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, we should create a specific strategy for all the different conversions.

2.11 Acquisition

In this phase, the company is trying to get the customers' attention on their product/service or their brand. They want to get them to know that the company exists and offers solutions to their problems. A consumer can recognize a need due to intrinsic (e.g., hunger) or extrinsic (e.g., marketing communication) factors (Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009), then it is possible to drive the customer to a specific desire.

Nowadays, customers are facing a global market for almost all the product/service with fragmented media (Social networks, newsletters, ads...) and redundancy of offer. (Court *et al.*, 2009) find out that faced with a plethora of

choices and communications, consumers tend to fall back on the limited set of brands that have made it through the wilderness of messages. Once again, the recognition of the market as a big player is a key for certain businesses and makes more complex the growth of new competitors.

Specifically, for the online acquisition, the most important platforms are social networks and websites, because customers have the most interactive options and they can share their opinions publicly.

In this phase, all the actions taken by a company are called “Lead generations”, they can include inbound marketing, outbound efforts, referrals — every possible way someone can become aware of your brand, product, and offerings. (Iliev, 2015) The usage of those techniques creates the public for our website, later in the essay we will analyse the different techniques. The next step is understating how to measure them.

The online acquisition takes in consideration specific measurement of the users' interaction with a web page:

- **Conversion rate between every two steps**, or how many people go from each step to the next one. The more, the better. The conversion rate between the first and the last step is also important, because it indicates how many people have completed the whole process and achieved the final goal, which is usually buying. Usually this last measure is low, as a 2% for plane tickets.
- **Average time between steps** indicates how much time it takes people to complete the simple task of going to the next step. The less time, the better. This depends both on your web site navigation and loading times, as well as on their way of making purchasing decisions.
- **Sample size.** A conversion funnel with 17 people in the first step cannot be trusted. You need a bigger sample size to trust the data. (Iliev, 2015) This measurement is valid for all the statistics, the more the better.

- Number of clicks per conversion** indicates the number of clicks that the user needs to perform to complete the conversion. The less, the better. A too long process will discourage our customers.

In performance advertising, advertisers are ultimately interested in finding users who would like to buy their products. An ad ranking method that optimizes for the conversion funnel must simultaneously optimize both for clicks as well as for the conversions for all advertisers. (Bagherjeiran et al., 2010). In the same research they find out that in this application many times there is a misunderstanding of the data due to the confusion between clicks and conversion, with the same emphasis given to the two actions.

The conversion event is associated only with the page visited. It is up to the advertiser to decide what appears on the page. The page could be the receipt page after purchasing a product, but it could also be a visit to a product description page. In these cases, the conversion is attributed to the latest click and all previous clicks are designated as supporting clicks. The key distinction between clicks and conversions is that clicks are defined and instrumented by the ad network, but conversions are defined and instrumented by advertisers. (Bagherjeiran et al., 2010)

Lately, the measurement of this data has become simple, we can use technology like Google Analytics to have a comprehensive analysis of these factors for our website.

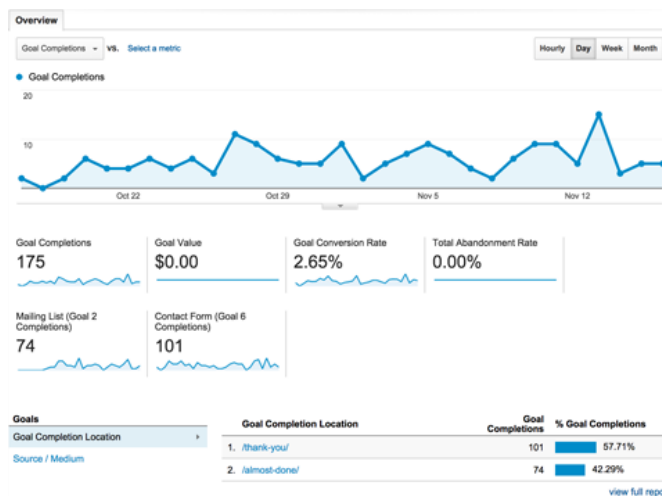


Figure 5 - Example of Google Analytics results for a website

Online advertising

As highlighted from the previous chapter, a fundamental role is allocated to online advertising.

Goldfarb (2014) differentiates the online advertising in 3 categories:

- **Search advertising** is the advertising that appears along with the algorithmic (or “organic”) results on search engines such as Google or Bing. The research for a product or service is purely intentional and the customers will get to the most appropriate ads, at the same time the advertiser accesses an already targeted public.
- **Classified advertising** is advertising that appears on websites that do not provide any other media content or algorithmic search. It is generic and usually based on the content of the website
- **Display advertising** is the main revenue generator for online media that are not search engines. These ads are shown on the website to targeted people, as the short video before a selected YouTube video. As per the first category, we can choose a specific category of video where to place our campaign. These ads are typically priced per impression (Number of views) or interaction (Number of click). Display advertising is priced with a variety of mechanisms, depending on the website. In some cases, more complex algorithms are taking in place, as duration of the impression (How many second of the video were seen by the user)

Another way to target the use is behavioural targeting, since the cost of targeting is lower, and we can access the click history of many users is easier to match better our target customer.

2.12 Activation

The second stage of the online funnel conversion is the activation. In this part, the customer converts its interest in desire and subsequently into action. Here we transform the user into a client, and we need a strong call to action to trigger them.

This phase is when shoppers take your desired action. This desired action could be signing up for your newsletter, or guiding shoppers to convert into customers. (Ferenzi, 2014), not only to purchase an item. Therefore, we must study different funnel conversions based on the objective of our funnel.

Once we have the attention of the customer, we can provide them more information and details about our product. We can use products, videos or photos with a great story behind to transpose the product to the customer level of understatement.

They should be able to make an informed decision, and, as providers, we must make them comfortable, for example using a comparison page for the product. Furthermore, we can offer competitive shipping and returns policy, great promotional offerings.

This phase is not just about the product we also must sell the company and our support to the customer, they should feel safe to purchase the product from us and perceive the transparency in the service. On the internet the number of providers is high, we should make them trust us, and understand why they should buy from us.

Summing up, we must remove all the friction from our process, make it easy and simple. In a product purchase funnel, it cannot be underestimated the check flow chart, an excessive complex process will confuse the buyer and make them abandon the purchase, at the same time we should address the correct information, as the credit institution we are partnering with and the security level of the transaction on our website. (Bosack, 2015)

As per the previous step, the market is not accepting anymore a pure push style marketing, because the customer is receiving too much information, we should guide them to the conscious choice by influencing the customer-driven touch points, such as word-of-mouth and Internet information sites. (Court et al., 2009)

2.13 Monetization

In the monetization phase, the user has already done the conversion to the client, therefore attention is already caught and has used our product/service at least one time, we must focus on maintaining the relationship and make it stronger. A satisfied client will re-purchase from our company, to generate as much revenue (gross sales) as possible (Lindner, 2015), plus a returning customer is cheaper to maintain and spend more in average (Clark, 2013)

After someone has taken a desired action and converted on your website, you will want to be sure to pull these highly targeted customers back in the funnel and encourage them to become repeat buyers. Retention is a crucial aspect of growing an online store because you are generating revenue from customers you a) do not need to pay to acquire, and b) have already demonstrated huge interest in your brand.

To stay in contact with our customers, an option is inviting them to sign up for the company's social networks or newsletters to acknowledge them about our new products. Send them a coupon or promotion via email. Include marketing or loyalty materials in their shipment to encourage them to come back and make sure they understand how much you value their business. Expand the product line or services to offer something new to bring their business back. (Bosack, 2015)

There are many possible options, we should know well our customers to use the correct campaign with each one of them. We can use data analysis on the customer's data to improve our marketing performance. In fact Chen, Narasimhan and John Zhang (2001) examined the ability to target loyal customers (as distinct from switchers) and showed that imperfect targeting can soften competition, in contrast to no targeting or perfect targeting.

Finally, the post purchase experience shapes their opinion for every subsequent decision in the category, so the journey is an ongoing cycle. All marketers should make expanding the base of active loyalists a priority, and to do so they must focus their spending on the new touch points. That will require entirely new

marketing efforts, not just investments in Internet sites and efforts to drive word-of-mouth or a renewed commitment to customer satisfaction. (Court et al., 2009)

Common causes of poor online funnel conversion

In this paragraph common reason that make users quit the sales funnel or a website navigation and possible solutions to the problems

- Extra costs too high (Shipping, taxes, fees...) → The best option is to include all these prices in the price we are showing to our customer and make it clear in the product description.
- The site wanted to create an account → We should create two different patterns, one with a registration and one without (Especially if our customers are not frequent buyers), offering a little discount on the first purchase with the creation of an account. The incentive will create a win-win situation.
- Too long/complicated check out process → We should create a process as simple as possible, and invest in customer support, like a virtual chat
- It is not possible to see/calculate total order cost up-front → Make clear the shipping price from the beginning and all the related costs depending on the country. In the cart, we should clearly show the subtotal before shipment and the final price. It could be better to show this price directly in each page
- Website had errors/crashed → Run a complete test of the website before going online and upgrade to the latest version of the software
- Not trustable management of the credit card information → Make agreements with the most secure affiliation for a payment and show them all over the website
- Too slow delivery → Offer various shipment methods tailored for each customer. Someone will pay more for a quick and fast shipment
- Unsatisfactory returns policy → This depends specifically on the product, but a good return policy is synonymous with excellent quality. We should offer this option if we can, like the Amazon model, that is famous for a flexible return policy. (Barron, 2015)

- Attraction of poor qualified traffic → Improve the SEO and the targeting
- Poor Call-to-action → Mix of different actions to deliver and make the customer perform the action. This part will be

In general, we could sum up all those improvements in “making the process smooth”, always keeping in mind that starting from 2014 the number of mobile users exceeded the desktop users (Chaffey, 2018), therefore our process should work properly on all the devices.

All of these are just punctual problems and solutions in the short/medium term. The application of a systematic set of action is not enough, we need a strategy to coordinate the entire funnel conversion, as in the example below.

2.14 Examples of Funnel conversion

Each step of the Funnel conversion depends on our objectives. The same action could be in 2 different points if we want a customer to buy a product or to subscribe to a newsletter, in some cases the objective of a funnel can be just a step of another.

2.14.1 Newsletter subscription

The final objective of this funnel conversion is to convert a user to a subscriber to our newsletter.

Acquisition

In this phase we want to get the attention of the user that landed to our page.

There are different tools, the most common are:

- Pop-up message, it is an on-screen message which is trying to catch the attention of the user, usually offering information about the company/product, solution to a problem or assuring to receive the most updated information about the company/product. Below an example for www.socialmediaexaminer.com, here the call to action is strong, especially with the positive action, that focuses on the improvement. They expect their public to be interested in this kind of content

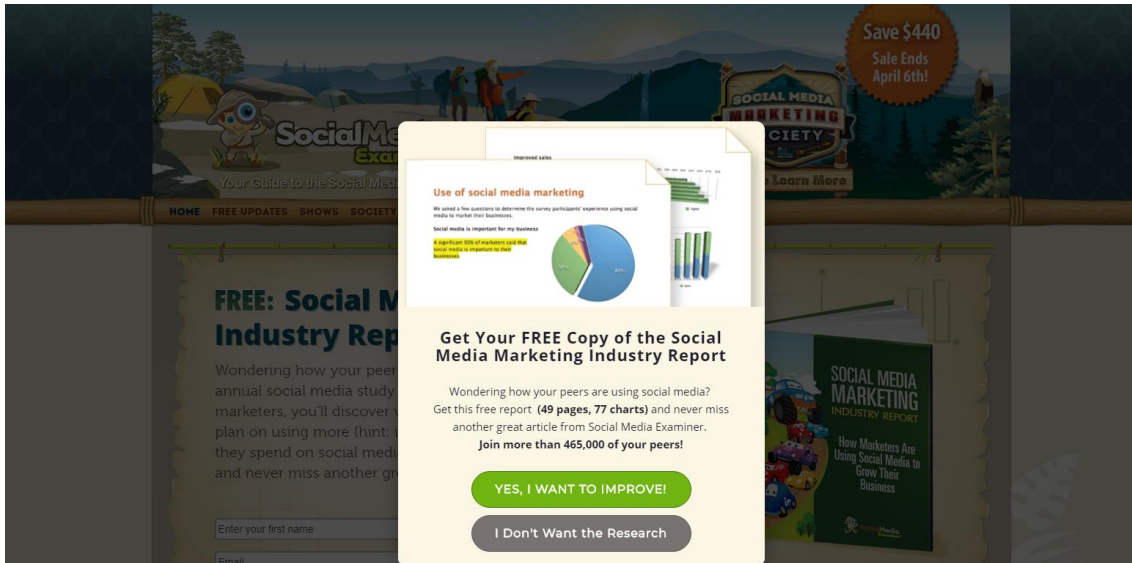


Figure 6 - Pop-up on Social Examiner

- Newsletter page, it was most common some years ago, when Spam emails were a lower concern for the internet users. It is less effective because the user should actively search for the page. In this case there is a specific tab on the website the user should reach to get subscribed
- Manual newsletter inscription, it is more common for specific website where the user is content oriented, and he knows it is navigating on a high reputation website, as the example of the McKinsey & Company newsletter

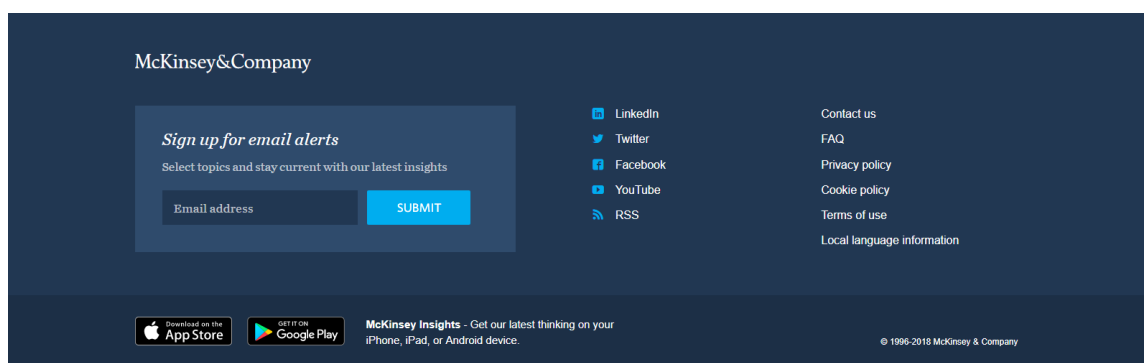


Figure 7 - Manual newsletter subscription on McKinsey&C Website

Activation

During this phase, the user inserts their information to enrol in the newsletter. If we catch the attention/desire in the previous phase, now the most important part is to make the process easy and smooth, asking for a little information (Just the email if possible).

Using again the example from Social Media Examiner, the process is simple, from the previous screen, we click on “Yes, I want to improve”, and the following step is just inserting Name and Email.

The number of information required is low, and the process is simple, offering for free a report on the social media marketing industry.



Figure 8 - Data collection on Social Examiner

Monetization

Once the user is transformed into a “Client”, according to the aim of our Funnel conversion, we can sell a product or make them register, acquiring more information on this client. To maintain this relationship, the client should be updated with new and relevant information according to the tastes and profile.

Using again the same example of Social Media Examiner, their content is interesting, and they are giving it for free, creating a relationship with you. Now they need to monetize, their strategy is to sell you a course that completes the information you received with a subscription of about 400\$ per year.



Figure 9 - Monetization on Social Examiner website

2.14.2 Mixed Online/Offline strategy

This case is from "Riso Gallo", an Italian rice brand, that made a mixed strategy for newsletter and social network subscription for their brand

1. Acquisition

In this case the acquisition is made offline, on the packaging of the product. One side is offering for free a recipe and another is promising thousands more on their website, plus additional offers and discounts.



Figure 10 - Example of acquisition in Gallo's products

2. Activation

The landing page of the conversion is the homepage of Riso Gallo with all the tabs that were offered on the packaging and more, as new products and the online store.



Figure 11 - Example of activation in Gallo's products (Part 1)

At the bottom of each page, there is an invitation to subscribe to their newsletter and visit their social networks. As before the only information required are name and email



Figure 12 - Example of activation in Gallo's products (Part 2)

3. Monetization

The advantages for the company are:

- The subscriber to the newsletter will receive offers on product, both in-store and online
- Once landed on the homepage can directly reach the store, and purchase without intermediary
- Create a loyalty to the brand for the recipes and the complementary services offered

2.15 Difference between standard OFC and OF for Consulting

From the first part of the literature review, the B2B comes out as a more relationships-based business, in which the knowledge of the client is one of the most important characteristics. Commonly, the clients are loyal to their suppliers for the high level of confidentiality. When clients choose a supplier, they are more likely to stress factors such as their, or others', previous experiences with a consultant or consulting firm rather than other factors such as fees or the quality of the written proposal. Buyers are so concerned with reducing risks that they may sometimes ignore the perceived gains involved in choosing an alternative brand. (Mitchell, 1994)

Although all the big companies are purchasing this kind of services, Patel interviewed 30 main board directors of leading companies and observed that 70 percent of them worry about how their companies buy professional services (e.g. consulting, legal, banking and marketing services). Considering this worrying, consulting companies have still room to apply their marketing, to consolidate their position in the mind of the clients.

Hence, for consulting companies the funnel conversion is important for building up the reputation with their clients and maintaining them, making them perceive the innovation of the company and their credibility. Ganesan (1994) argues that the trust is necessary for parties to have a long-term orientation in their relationships for the dependence between the companies.

3 Methodology

The objective of the study is to evaluate the different acquisition strategies made by consulting companies in the Spanish market and compare, with the help of interviews, with 2 specific funnels used in other businesses, to evaluate the effectiveness of those funnels and the tools used at each step.

We will start with the direct observation of the websites to evaluate what strategies are already in place, and what tools are used.

From this analysis will be created a map of the tools and funnels used by the companies in analysis.

In the following part, 2 focus groups will be held with possible customers of those companies, and an interview with an expert in order to clarify specific points from the group interviews. Both interviews will try to understand the customer perception of what is already in place and what could be applied.

Finally, the information from the literature review, and the interviews will be compared to find out the most effective funnel.

3.1 Focus group

The interview will have 4 phases:

1. Introduction and explanation
2. Focus on Tripwire plus Discussion
3. Focus on Webinar plus Discussion
4. Tools evaluation

During the focus group, the interviewees will be presented with the topic of analysis, in the following order:

1. General overview of the research topic
2. Type of company in the analysis
3. Online funnel conversion, in general and for the specific type of companies
4. Variable of the analysis
5. The 2 additional funnels for the study

- a. Tripwire
- b. Webinar

They will be provided with a printed short explanation, and a table where to evaluate the stages and tools in the funnel from 1 to 7. For some specific tools, as landing pages or newsletter examples will be shown.

After each phase explanation they will have to evaluate on the sheet, later the sheet will be collected, and the results analysed and discussed between the participant and the interviewer.

3.2 Interview with the experts

Those interviews will be less structured, after an introduction to the topic like the focus group. there will be a more open discussion of the results coming from the analysis and the previous interview. Especially in case of contrasting results, to add an external opinion.

3.3 Type of company analysed

After an analysis of the market and the literature review of the B2B and, specifically to the consulting business. The research focused on the business consulting business, in which the techniques on the internet are usually less complex, limited to building a reputation online through content. The reading of "Dot com secrets" by Russell Brunson showed examples of different funnels that are not used by these companies but could easily work if correctly applied.

The initial sample of companies was selected from the firms operating in Barcelona, for a hypothetical interview that in the end is not going to be performed. The first exclusions were the companies providing different kinds of services where the reputation of one of the other branches could influence the overall decision of the customer. The only exception was made for Daemon Quest, part of Deloitte, that is operating in the digital strategy, because we expected more innovative tools and interesting data.

- **Boston consulting group**

It is a strategy consulting firm with 90 offices in 50 countries. One of the big 3 of strategy consulting with McKinsey and Bain. It has a high reputation in the market and, it is recognized for the highly educated level of the employees and their problem-solving skills. Since the foundation, they developed different frameworks for business analysis as the Growth-share matrix.

The company is interesting for the big impact of their project and important client, but Spain is not a focus market with a specific online strategy on their website. Therefore, the company is not directly part of the analysis.
- **Deloitte Digital**

One of the “big 4” accounting firms, less known for SC. This is the new division specialized in digital strategy for both B2B and B2C markets. This department has a focus on Spanish market with localized websites and different offices in Spain.

The expertise is in all the digital fields such as marketing and big data, thanks to the support of the rest of the company.
- **Consulcat**

SC focused on Small and medium-sized enterprises in the Catalan market. They offer a variety of business services, and all the offers in the website are just in Catalan.

As a smaller business, we see on their website an attempt to create a more direct connection with the client. From the beginning they are asking to be contacted with a phone number and a form, where everybody will attend in Catalan.

This company results interesting for the analysis
- **Konozca**

Technology strategic consulting firm with focus on Salesforce, cloud implementation in the Spanish market, especially Madrid and Barcelona.

Their website is based on an always scroll design with different subpages.

They have a section for testimonies, but it is only a couple of quotes from previous clients, without a detailed description of the case.

No funnel is used, and there is only a contact paragraph with a form

- Tandem

Small company focused on innovation, experience design, venture capital and business. Office in Barcelona and Madrid.

Their website has a captive look, with an interesting blog focus on product innovation and specific case studies.

No OFC is used, except for a newsletter subscription page, that could be more visible.

- McKinsey

It is the firm with the highest revenue in the SC business, and the highest reputation on the market. They are principally recognized for the extensive problem solving and presentation skills. Even if they have no specific plan on the Spanish market, the high reputation of the company plus the use of different online tools, as webinar and different newsletter made the company interesting for the research.

- Delta partner

Offices in 7 cities in the world and Barcelona is the only one in Europe.

They are specialized in Corporate strategy, Finance and Advisory, especially in telecoms, media and tech (TMT) industry. Each expertise has a different section in the website with testimony and cases.

At the end of the section there are classical activation pages with contact, enquiry and blog link.

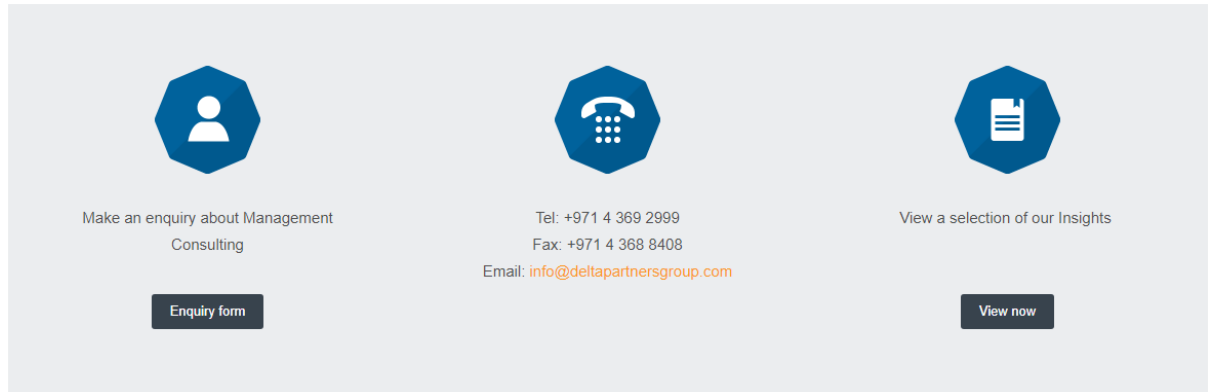


Figure 13 - Delta partner contact page

The look of the website is modern, responsive and appealing, but there is no implementation of innovative OFC.

- **Koncepts**

SC in Barcelona, different areas, few consultants with high experience on the local market.

Their webpage looks more personal than the other, with an entire section for testimonies. The structure resembles a conversation with one of their consultants. On each one of the services offered there are different testimonies from clients.

They have a simple implementation of tripwire with a free pre-screening of the issue.



Figure 14 - Basic Tripwire from Koncepts

- **BMG Consulting**

The office in Barcelona is just for business and strategy. Just 2 partners for this office.

The structure of the website is barebone, and old. There are no interactive sections, except for an enquiry form on the left of each page.

When presented to the interviewers the perception was not positive: “If this is how they present themselves in 2019, I don’t think they can help me”
Marc, one of the interviewed.

Name	Description	Interest 1/10	Spanish Headquarter	Website Language	Office in BCN	Website	Comment
BCG	One of the big 3 of SCC, high reputation in the market	9	Madrid	Spanish	Y	https://www.bcg.com/en-es/default.aspx	
Deloitte Digital	One of the big 4 accounting firms, less know for Strategy.	8	Barcelona	Spanish English	Y	http://www.daemonquest.com/en/	
Consultcat	SC focused on Small and medium-sized enterprises just in Catalunya.	9	Barcelona	Catalan	Y	http://www.consultcat.cat/	The website is in Catalan, addressing a specific niche.
Konozca	Technology SC with focus on Salesforce support (Just Spain)	8,5	Madrid Barcelona	Spanish	Y	http://www.konozca.com/	
Tandem	Focused on innovation, experience design, venture capital and business.	8	Barcelona Madrid	Spanish	Y	http://www.tandem-company.com/?lang=en	
Laver	SC company focused on Spanish market	9	Barcelona Vic Madrid	Spanish	Y	http://bcnconsultors.com/	-
Koncepts	SC in Barcelona, different areas few consultants with high experience on the local market	8	Barcelona	Spanish	Y	http://www.koncepts.es/	
BMG Consulting	The office in Barcelona is just for business and strategy. Just 3 partners for this office	7	Barcelona	Spanish	Y	http://www.bmgcn.com/	
McKinsey	One of the big 3 of SC, big but without an office in Barcelona	8	Madrid	English	N	http://www.mckinsey.com/	Probably the best initiatives with application for the blog and interesting newsletter
Delta partner	Offices in 7 cities in the world and Barcelona is the only one in Europe.	8	Dubai	English	N	http://www.deltapartnersgroup.com/	
Blue Cap	SC specialized in Finance	8	Barcelona + Madrid	Spanish English	Y	http://www.bluecap.es/	They are using testimonials from previous clients to show the approach of the firm in the project development.

SCC stands for Strategic consulting company

Figure 15 - Initial companies

After the analysis of all these companies, we realize that the strategy is more traditional and there is no innovative OFC applied. Some basic tripwire using a free evaluation of our company is the only trace of it, or a webinar, but without a direct offer in the end. They are more used as a branding strategy, than sale.

The strategy is usually based on newsletter, corporate presentations and blogs. There is no relevant innovative strategy.

In the view of these findings, the application of a tripwire or Webinar strategy can create a competitive advantage, if the client's reaction is positive.

During our interview we will try to understand if it is worth implementing them.

3.4 Definition of the variables for the analysis

The analysis will be performed with interviews to clients of consulting companies, and/or former consultants. According to the multi-level perspective theory, all the actors in the seller's network will bring complementary information to the research. Below a presentation of the variables that will be analysed:

- **Usability** → It is defined per the ISO 9241-11 (Guidance on usability) (AENOR, 2018)– “the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use”. A Website with a cluttered or confusing layout can induce frustration. When the first few pages of a Website elicit greater pleasure, consumer approach behaviour and exploration improve (Menon and Dubé, 2000). However, a site that elicits stimulation, such as through lots of colour and information overload, has a negative impact on further exploration.

Different websites will be presented to evaluate the differences in the structure, and how they are influencing the conversion of the interviewers. How easy, effective, efficient and satisfactory is to find and search information by the user to achieve a specific goal

Examples:

Newsletter → Dimension of the buttons to click or the layout of the text.

Website organization → How easy is to find a specific page

- **Involvement** → It refers to the degree to which consumers are inherently interested in information about a product and motivated to learn more about it. (Zaichkowsky, 1985) Involvement can interact with demographic variables to influence the need recognition stage of the consumer decision process. (Donthu and Cherian, 1994). In the case of consulting companies are the topic presented in their website, and how the customer feels related to them, and their business, as well as the activated interaction.

Examples:

Blog → Relatedness to the most discussed topic or content

Blog → How much the content is shared on Social Media

- **Creativity** → It is the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations. Research finds evidence that creative messaging influences business managers' response towards advertising. (Baack *et al.*, 2016b) Furthermore, creative ads generated stronger attitudinal shifts for key attributes of the advertising country. Creativity also had a significant impact on the behavioural intentions of our respondents. to explore advertising creativity in the B2B sector, creativity must be identified as a relevant construct that likely influences business managers during their decision-making process. In its ability to influence message persuasion, creativity has multiple roles. It can act as a mechanism to encourage deeper message processing and it can generate an emotional response.

Examples:

Testimonials → New ways to share the message, as new platforms or formats

Direct email → Innovative email subject

Website/Blog → New copy of the content

- **Trust** → Trust is a state involving confident positive expectations about another's motives with respect to oneself in situations entailing risk. (Rempel, Ross and Holmes, 2001) Based on the B2B and Consulting paragraph, is one of the most important variables for this kind of business. The interview will evaluate the trustworthiness generated by the online tools of the companies in analysis. It is an emotional state involving positive expectations about the company's purposes in situations entailing risk (Economical transaction, sharing personal data...).

Examples:

Social Media → Number of positive interactions with the content

Website → Content quality

3.5 Type of sample

The type of sample will be people working in different industries in order to assure various points of view, in fact the services of the companies we are taking in consideration could be purchased from any kind of company both public and private.

General information of the used sample

The profile of the interview is as following:

Focus group → Professional workers with short work experience (2-5 years)

The first group is composed of young professionals with a fresh view of the internet and the digital marketing strategy. Since the analysis will be performed online, this group was selected to ensure acquaintance with the different technologies and tools presented

All of them are millennials, born between 1985 and 1994.

There will be 2 separate focus groups for logistical purposes.

Second group → Experts, professional worker with long experience (20+ years)
(Control group)

The experts will help in evaluation deeply the tools and to intercept flaws in the evaluation process. Furthermore, we expect valuable insights from current decision makers in the companies.

The difference in the 2 groups, especially for the age, expects the first group to be part of millennials and the second to Generation Z.

3.6 The procedure

Each interview or focus group will be recorded and transcribed for further analysis. After the initial introduction and explanation, test and explanation sheet will be provided

3.7 The in-depth interview

Initially the scope, objectives and aim of the research will be presented with emphasis on the role of the interviewed on the data acquisition. In the second part the interviewed will, be assured of the secrecy of the data collected and how their name will not be shown during the elaboration of the document. The background of the subject could be used to give value to their opinion, especially when one affirmation could influence the research and their expertise needs to be assured.

3.8 Online Funnel conversion of the analysis

For this study, the Tripwire and the Webinar funnel models are taken in consideration and we will be analysed

Those 2 OFCs are typical from social media marketing, but their structure could work for consulting companies too.

3.8.1 Tripwire

The tripwire offer is an offer made by a service/product provider in which we are giving to the customer a high value for low or no profit. The main objective of this funnel is to create a customer and to break even. In this funnel the initial offer will be free or almost free, in the example of Brunson (2015) with his book on the

3.8.2 Webinar

This funnel is based on a webinar or another live performance/class about a specific topic. The point of the funnel is not, usually, to sell the webinar, but to make the customer aware of our expertise. We are selling ourselves and our companies in this webinar. They are usually between 60 and 90 minutes long.

On this kind of product, we are making the customer aware of our webinar online with advertisements on specific platforms where we can find our optimal client.

At some point during the performance we will sell the real product, like a consultancy on how to use the knowledge we explained earlier.

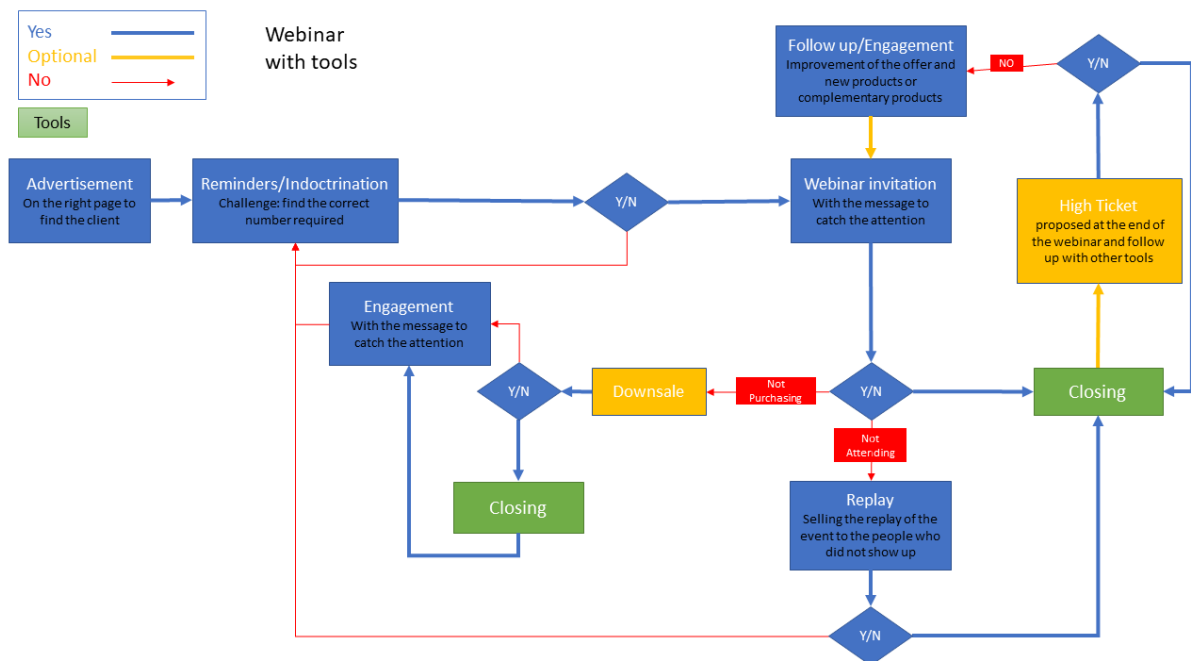


Figure 17 - Webinar map

Core offer/High ticket

In this funnel the most expensive product will be sold to the customers willing to buy it. This client is going to invest much money on the product, it means, usually, we cannot approach directly with this offer, we must gain the trust through the previous funnels.

On this specific step, we make the most of the money.

The bait for this funnel should be used on the closing of a previous one, like the thank you email for a webinar. In this case the conversion rate will be low, but we are taking most of the profit per customer, ideally with a break even in the previous stages.

To drive the client to our offer, we should make them aware of the problem, using a case study or testimonial. A business testimonial has the advantage of showing the results of our method.

3.9 List of online instruments and metrics

After a study of different websites and OFC from the book dotcom secret. We are going to analyse the following instruments and tools:

- **SEO**, (Search engine optimization) are a series of activities and techniques to optimize the ranking in the search result of a search engine. This instrument is not part of this study
- **Social Network**, in the B2B, the social network became one of the predominant tools for the online market, not just on the specific sites, as LinkedIn, but even on the mainstream as Facebook and Instagram, where it is easier to reach a broader public. These platforms have specific tools that are easier to target, but due to the quick use and the huge availability of content, our message could be lost.
- **Post**, it is a microblogging activity with some digital content related that varies depending on the platform, an image plus text on Instagram (without links) or 280 characters on Twitter. This information will be shown to our followers or to people searching for key characters of our message, like hashtags.
- **Targeted post**, Same as above, but this post will show up on the timelines of people with a specific profile we are looking for. In all the big social media, we can pay for this service directly to the platform and select demographic characteristics of our public, with external services we can even target the followers of other companies.
- **Messages**, this is a direct message on the communication platform of the social network. We can usually target those messages to the public we prefer. LinkedIn has one of the most advanced systems for targeting.

- **Mail**, the mail is the most customizable tool we have, thanks to html we can create the specific message we want with all kinds of digital media, without any restriction from the content point of view. We can send in the form of newsletters or direct mail after an inscription depending on the moment on the funnel.
- **Advertising**, the advertising is a static or dynamic banner on a website where we expect our potential customers are going to surf, for example we could select an economic news website for financial service. The pay per view and pay per click are the most common payment method. The downside of this method is the reduced target because anyone could be interested in those websites, like students of the subject we are working on.
- **Sponsorship**, another way could be the sponsorship of content creator or competition, as an online hackathon or a youtuber. In both cases for a B2B communication we should focus on the selection of the entity to sponsor.
- **Webinar**, the webinar is an online presentation on a specific topic, it is usually in direct or can be sent as a replay. Many companies based on knowledge use this tool to show off their expertise on a subject. We can even have a specific funnel conversion for this tool.
- **Websites**, the website is the showroom for our company and where we can drive the client as we prefer in the funnel journey. The website can act as a complementary tool to one of the previous as in a landing page, the client will reach from a newsletter or standalone as a blog or the presentation of a case study.
- **Giveaways, Physical (books, gadgets), digital (books, information)**

In the table below the tools that are associated with a specific step of the tripwire or webinar funnel. One of the aims of this study is understanding the most effective at each step and their relationship with our variables.

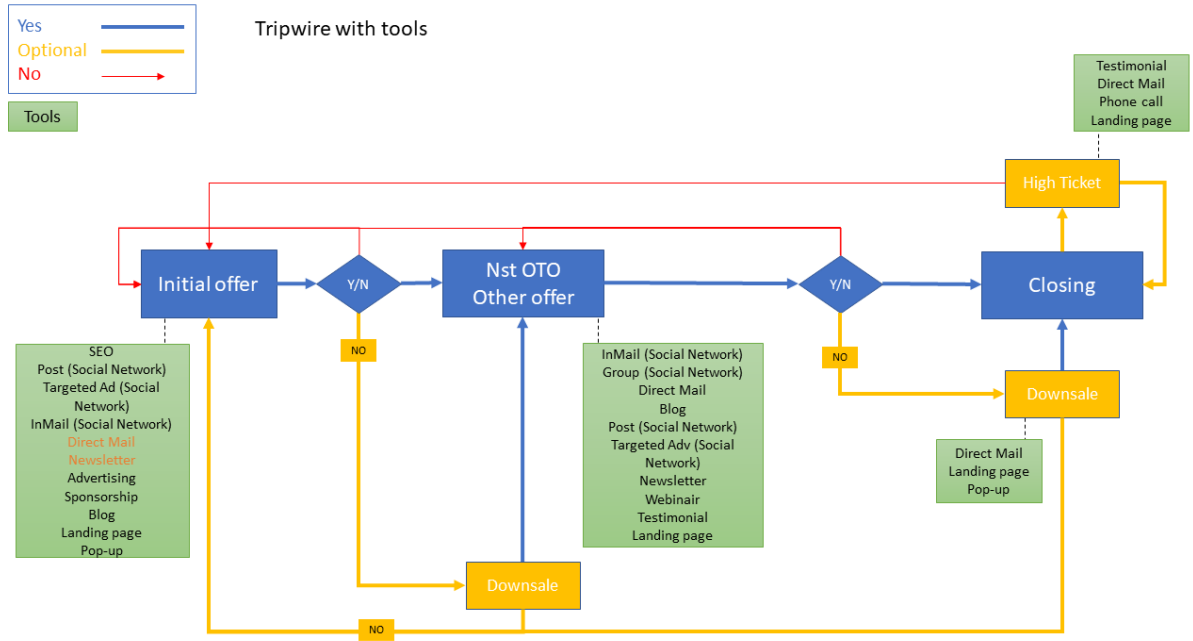


Figure 18 - Tripwire with tools

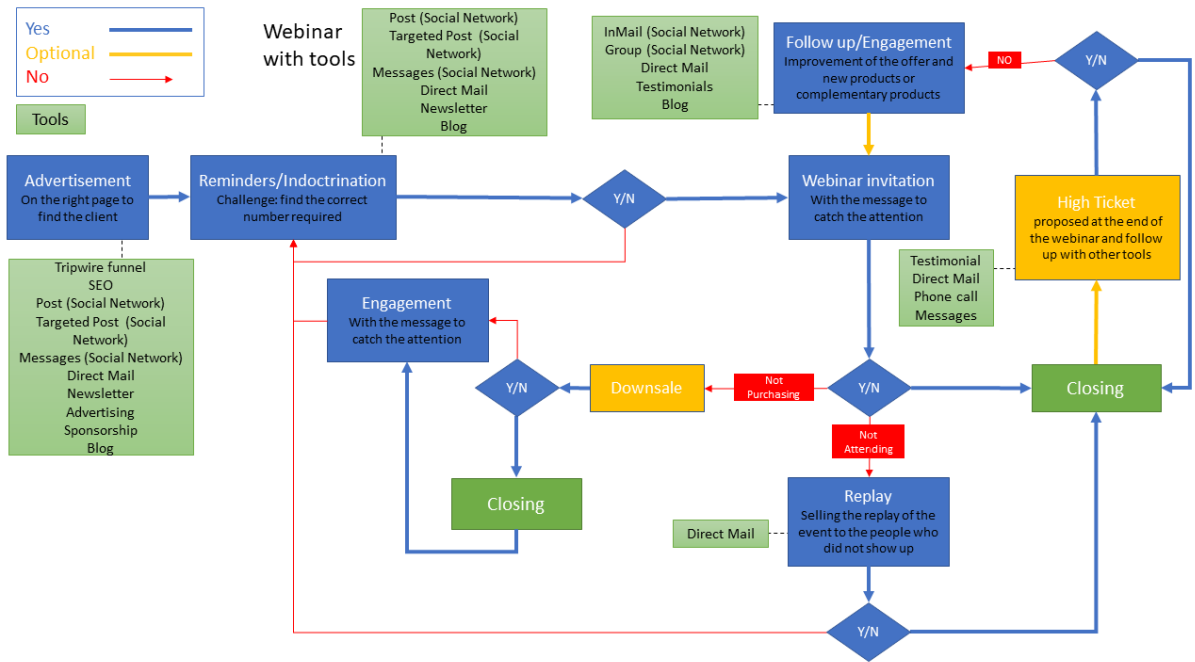


Figure 19 - Webinar with tools

4 Results

In this section, we are going to show the results of the 2 focus groups, on the funnels, tools and variables.

In the first part, we will show the most effective tools in each specific step of the funnel according to the interviewees. In the second, the variables priorities, and lastly an analysis of the outcomes from the comments received by the interviewees.

Each element has been evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 less interesting/valuable and 7 most interesting/valuable. We will further analyse the segmentation in pull and push of the different tools, trying to detect correlations.

We also divided the tools into push and pull, according to their intrinsic characteristics. (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996) Push are those factors leveraging the needs of the customers to contract this kind of service or the generation of the need, while pull are the ones working on the selection of the specific company or service. Some tools are working on both aspects, in this case we considered in the most relevant according to our judgement.

Pull	Push
Advertising (Banners)	Direct Campaign Mail
Blog	InMail (Social Network)
Group (Social Network)	Landing page
Post (Blog)	Newsletter (email marketing)
Sponsorship	Phone call / TELCO
Testimonial	Pop-up
Video Testimonial	SEO
Webinar	Targeted Ad
Testimonial	
Video Testimonial	
Webinar	

Figure 20 - Pull and Push classification table

4.1 Tripwire

Now we will analyse the different tools utilized in the different phases of the tripwire.

All the phases of the tripwire have been discussed during the focus group.

4.1.1 Initial offer

The initial offer is the first phase of the funnel, where the company does a small offer of a service for free or a low amount in order to get in contact with the client.

Initial offer								
Instrument	FC1		FC2		Total		New chart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
SEO	6.83	1	6.75	1	6.79	1	1	SEO
Post (Social Network)	6.00	2	5.00	8	5.50	5	2	Targeted Ad
Targeted Ad	5.83	4	5.75	2	5.79	2	3	Landing page
InMail (Social Network)	4.50	12	4.50	11	4.50	12	4	Blog
Group (Social Network)	4.67	11	4.00	12	4.33	13	5	Post (Social Network)
Direct Campaign Mail	4.83	10	5.25	4	5.04	9	6	Video Testimonial
Newsletter (email marketing)	4.50	12	5.25	4	4.88	10	7	Advertising (Banners)
Advertising (Banners)	5.33	7	5.00	8	5.17	7	8	Webinar
Sponsorship	5.17	8	4.00	12	4.58	11	9	Direct Campaign Mail
Blog	5.67	5	5.50	3	5.58	4	10	Newsletter (email marketing)
Webinar	5.00	9	5.25	4	5.13	8	11	Sponsorship
Video Testimonial	5.67	5	5.00	8	5.33	6	12	InMail (Social Network)
Landing page	6.00	2	5.25	4	5.63	3	13	Group (Social Network)
Pop-up	4.50	12	1.75	14	3.13	14	14	Pop-up

Figure 21 - Tripwire: Initial offer results

According to the subjects the most important tool is SEO. This is justified by how they see their journey for this kind of service, and the number of options they should evaluate.

They imagined looking for the problem online, and took in consideration the first results, and maybe added their current location to the key words.

On the second spot, the targeted Ad. Again, this follows the same path as SEO. After you have been searching for a specific topic, the Ad you are seeing around, and their quality will influence the most your decision to move forward with the initial offer. Subsequently the landing page because it is where your journey will start translating into action. Whether the usability and the involvement of the page are enough to trigger your action.

On the lower side of the chart (Average score below 5 out of 7), we find the Direct Campaign Mail, Newsletter (email marketing), Sponsorship, InMail (Social Network), Group (Social Network) and Pop-up. Those tools are perceived as nonself triggered. They are sent by the company, but they are not coming from the instantaneous research for the specific kind of service. It is true that we are including Direct Campaign Mail and Newsletter (email marketing), for which we need to be into a mailing list that we requested to be included in, but they are still seen as less custom tailored.

Special mention for the pop-up, that it is always at the last position in the chart, due to the negative reputation within internet users. Those kinds of services were considered spam, by all the users, except one, who recognized the value of attention catcher by this tool.

PUSH and PULL analysis

The first 3 positions are occupied by push tools, has said previously, they are leveraging the intrinsic desire for the service. The first one is the SEO, that could be used to learn more about the service and redirect to our initial offer. Especially in the case of a tripwire, we would usually start with a small offer to move through the AIDA steps. The 2 following are Targeted ads and landing pages. It is interesting to know how targeted ads are often generated by your web search, so we could consider them because of SEO.

We detect a second group of pull tools from position 4 to 8, except the banner, they are all tools providing a big amount of information, and consequently needing a medium/high time commitment.

4.1.2 Nst offer

The Nst offer is one of the upselling we are doing starting from the initial offer, excluding the final ticket, that follows different rules, due to the much higher value.

Nst offer								
Instrument	FC1		FC2		Total		Newchart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
Post (Social Network)	5.50	5	5.00	6	5.25	6	1	Video Testimonial
Targeted Ad	5.00	8	5.25	5	5.13	7	2	Landing page
InMail (Social Network)	5.17	7	4.25	8	4.71	8	3	Direct Campaign Mail
Group (Social Network)	5.50	5	3.75	11	4.63	9	4	Webinair
Direct Campaign Mail	6.00	1	6.00	3	6.00	3	5	Post (Blog)
Newsletter (email marketing)	4.33	11	4.00	9	4.17	11	6	Post (Social Network)
Advertising (Banners)	4.33	11	3.75	11	4.04	12	7	Targeted Ad
Sponsorship	4.83	10	4.00	9	4.42	10	8	InMail (Social Network)
Post (Blog)	5.83	3	5.00	6	5.42	5	9	Group (Social Network)
Webinair	5.00	8	6.00	3	5.50	4	10	Sponsorship
Video Testimonial	5.83	3	6.50	1	6.17	1	11	Newsletter (email marketing)
Landing page	6.00	1	6.25	2	6.13	2	12	Advertising (Banners)

Figure 22 - Tripwire: Nst offer results

The results on the Nst offer are more variable. We can define 3 groups, based on close results:

1. Video Testimonial, Landing page and Direct Campaign Mail.
In this first group we have more content related tools, where the focal point is the content about the offer. In fact, the interviewees commented that at this stage, they are interested in knowing more about the company, and build up a reputation in their mind.
2. Webinar, Post (Blog) and Post (Social Network). This second group is also related to content, but requiring more time investment by the client, because not directly addressed to the customer.
3. Targeted Ad. InMail (Social Network), Group (Social Network), Sponsorship, Newsletter (email marketing) and Advertising (Banners).
The third includes what is considered less valuable by the potential client.

In this phase, clients are preferring tools with a medium level of effort required, but still generating content about the company, because they are starting to invest and needs to acquire more confidence in the company. In a second instance,

they move to tools with even more content and a higher level of effort required, and lastly, they prefer tools with low effort and low content.

PUSH and PULL analysis

On this stage we have an alternance of pull and push in the chart, we cannot find a specific pattern. The Nst offer has a different group of offers inside it, and there are both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations behind the choice.

From the discussion with our expert, she was not too surprised of the results, due to the variability of these offers, and the different stages they are presented at, there could be a mixed reception of the tools.

4.1.3 Downsale

The Downsale is a phase following a rejected offer, where the customer receives a smaller deal.

Downsale								
Instrument	FC1		FC2		Total		Newchart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
Landing page	6.33	1	5.75	2	6.04	1	1	Landing page
Pop-up	4.17	3	3.50	3	3.83	3	2	Direct Campaign Mail
Direct Campaign Mail	4.33	2	6.00	1	5.17	2	3	Pop-up

Figure 23 - Tripwire: Downsale results

In this phase, the number of tools is limited. The Landing page is considered as the most important instrument. The Direct Campaign Mail is not distant from the number one, and both are closely related with the customer. Pop up has a lower value because it is considered more spam than other tools.

PUSH and PULL analysis

All the tools in this step are pushed, in fact we want to generate interest in clients that were going out of our funnel. We want to work back the AIDA steps for the attention, in order to move back to the funnel

4.1.4 High Ticket

The High ticket is the final objective of the funnel, to offer the most expensive services to a limited number of users for a big return.

High Ticket								
Instrument	FC1		FC2		Total		Newchart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
Testimonial	5.83	2	6.25	2	6.04	2	1	Phone call / TELCO
Phone call / TELCO	6.83	1	6.75	1	6.79	1	2	Testimonial
Landing page	5.17	3	4.25	4	4.71	3	3	Landing page
Direct Campaign Mail	4.33	4	4.50	3	4.42	4	4	Direct Campaign Mail

Figure 24 - Tripwire: High Ticket results

In this case, personal is again the key word for the participants in the focus groups.

The phone call is considered the most important instrument, for being the most personal interaction. The client is feeling reassured about the professionalism of the company and the importance they are giving to them and their project.

The testimonial is in the second position because certify the results obtained by the company, in fact the highest variable for this specific item was the trust. The participant thought that a successful story they can relate with is one of the most important factors to consider.

We find landing pages and direct campaign email with lower results, because less personal, especially the email. This does not mean that we must underestimate the value of a good landing page at any moment of the journey.

PUSH and PULL analysis

The high ticket shares the prevalence of push tools, in fact the company is trying to push for a more valuable service, and it must create the need into the customer. We expect at this point of the funnel a customer is aware of the company potential and that has already chosen them. We need to generate the basic need for the service.

Conclusions tripwire

As a general view from the participant, the feedback about tripwire is positive for this kind of business. They would be much more interested in purchasing from companies offering some small services as a free evaluation of their issues, if the tools used for marketing are refined enough. We highly suggest this methodology.

4.2 Webinar

The webinar funnel is based on the company performing a webinar to promote the knowledge about a specific topic, in order to sell the high tickets.

4.2.1 Initial offer

Instrument	Initial offer							
	FC1		FC2		Total		New chart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
SEO	6.67	1	5.75	3	6.21	1	1	SEO
Post (Social Network)	6.00	3	5.00	5	5.50	6	2	Newsletter (email marketing)
Targeted Ad	6.50	2	4.75	6	5.63	4	3	Direct Campaign Mail
InMail (Social Network)	5.83	5	5.25	4	5.54	5	4	Targeted Ad
Group (Social Network)	5.17	9	4.75	6	4.96	8	5	InMail (Social Network)
Direct Campaign Mail	5.33	8	6.50	1	5.92	3	6	Post (Social Network)
Newsletter (email marketing)	6.00	3	6.00	2	6.00	2	7	Advertising (Banners)
Advertising (Banners)	5.67	6	4.50	9	5.08	7	8	Group (Social Network)
Sponsorship	4.17	11	3.00	11	3.58	11	9	Post (Blog)
Post (Blog)	5.00	10	4.75	6	4.88	9	10	Video Testimonial
Video Testimonial	5.50	7	4.00	10	4.75	10	11	Sponsorship

Figure 25 - Webinar: Initial offer results

In the case of the webinar, we have a different ranking for the tool, except for the SEO, considered the main source of value for the customer in the first step of the purchase journey.

We can notice some differences with the tripwire, in fact the newsletter, direct email, targeted Ad, InMail and post (Social network) get the lead in the ranking. This was justified by the interviewees because they are looking for more information on the topic of the Webinar, but they are willing to learn it during the webinar itself. This means that they are looking for more short time investment tools, than a post on a blog or a video testimonial.

We can also recognize an interest in a more direct contact from the service provider with direct messages via mail or social networks.

PUSH and PULL analysis

In the webinar we can identify groups, push for the first 5 positions and pull for the rest. All the subjects are prioritizing the push for the initial offer. In this funnel, where we expect the client to invest time for the fruition of the content, it is more important to generate the intrinsic desire in the initial phase.

4.2.2 Downsale

Downsale								
Instrument	FC1		FC2		Total		Newchart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
Post (Social Network)	6.00	1	4	4	5.00	4	1	Direct Campaign Mail
Targeted Ad	5.67	4	4.75	3	5.21	3	2	Newsletter (email marketing)
InMail (Social Network)	5.50	5	3.5	5	4.50	5	3	Targeted Ad
Direct Campaign Mail	5.83	3	7	1	6.42	1	4	Post (Social Network)
Newsletter (email marketing)	6.00	1	5.5	2	5.75	2	5	InMail (Social Network)
Post (Blog)	4.33	6	3	6	3.67	6	6	Post (Blog)

Figure 26 - Webinar: Downsale results

On the Down Sale, as in the initial offer, direct campaign mail and newsletter are in the first positions. According to the interviewees, the more personal tools are more important, because they feel pressured by the company. If they did not accept the first offer, they do not want to be pushed too hard into an alternative, because there could be many reasons for not accepting in the first place, like a lack of budget.

On the last 2 positions InMail and post (blog). The first one because they perceived the message on the social network, even a professional one like LinkedIn, as more intrusive than an email. The second, because as said before there are many reasons for not accepting the first offer. The post on the blog can improve their opinion of the company, but probably not move that much in this part of the funnel.

PUSH and PULL analysis

The Downsale as per the previous situation as a prevalence of push techniques, except the InMail in social networks, that has a lower consideration by the participants.

4.2.3 Nst Offer

Instrument	Nst offer							
	FC1		FC2		Total		Newchart	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Rank	Tool
InMail (Social Network)	5.17	3	4.5	3	4.83	3	1	Direct Campaign Mail
Group (Social Network)	4.50	4	3	5	3.75	5	2	Newsletter (email marketing)
Direct Campaign Mail	5.67	1	6.75	1	6.21	1	3	InMail (Social Network)
Newsletter (email marketing)	5.33	2	6	2	5.67	2	4	Post (Blog)
Post (Blog)	4.33	5	4.5	3	4.42	4	5	Group (Social Network)

Figure 27 - Webinar: Nst Offer results

Finally, the Nst offer for the Webinar, the most important tool for our interviewees is the direct email campaign, because if they followed the entire Webinar they are interested in the topic. The possibility of having various offers during time, until you find the interesting one.

In general, there is a preference for the tools that are contacting the customer directly, while there is a lower interest for Posts and groups, where the information is being shared with everyone. In the case of Webinar, since they already have seen the webinar they have a more in depth idea about the topic, they feel like they can discern more about it, and they already know if they want to learn more, and what in particular they want to learn.

PUSH and PULL analysis

Another situation with 2 groups of push and pull priority. The push tools score higher. Compared to the tripwire where it was a mix of push and pull. We justify this because with the Nst offer, the offer we are doing is always the webinar, where the participants are going to receive information, and they do not want to invest too much time before. In general, the expectation on the webinar is to be detailed, but not a university class. Something that a person of the industry should understand without specific training for it.

Conclusions Webinar

During the focus group, the opinions on the webinar were mixed. We think it is due to the different personalities of the people involved, but for the people that were interested the level of expected satisfaction seemed higher than the tripwire,

because they imagined getting a big level of information on the company and their services. This way they could speed up the evaluation process.

4.3 Variables analysis

		Scoring - 1 to 7														
	Usability	FC1	FC2	Average	Involvement	FC1	FC2	Average	Creativity	FC1	FC2	Average	Trust	FC1	FC2	Average
SEO	The easiness of finding the specific content through the use of keywords will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	7.00	7.00	7.00	The easiness of finding the content on the website will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	5.25	5.96	The diversity of synonyms encountered in the content will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.00	4.00	4.50	The good quality of the website/blog content will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.83	6.25	6.54
Post (Blog)	The easiness in reading the content on all the devices will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.83	6.75	6.79	The easiness of finding the content interrelated in our blog will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	7.00	7.00	7.00	The type of multimedia content used in the blog will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.17	6.00	6.08	The number of shares and comments on the blog post will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.50	6.50	6.50
Post (Social Network)	The easiness of finding the specific content through the use of hashtags will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.50	6.75	6.13	The number of likes received by the social network post will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.83	6.50	6.17	The catchiness of the multimedia content in the social network post will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	5.00	5.83	The number of shares and comments on the social network post will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25
Targeted Ad	The accuracy in receiving content related to my tastes and interests in Social Network will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	6.50	6.58	An attractive call to action in the social network ad will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	5.50	6.08	The way of showing the offer of the service in the social network ad will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25	The number of interactions received by the social network post will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.67	6.25	5.96
Direct Campaign Mail	The accuracy in receiving content related to my tastes and interests in Direct Campaign Mail will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.17	7.00	6.58	The copywriting of the in Direct Campaign Mail title (to make the user open and interact with the email) will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	7.00	6.75	6.88	The catchiness of the copy in Direct Campaign Mail will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.75	6.38	The professionalism and the coherence of the person/company sending the email will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25
Group (Social Network)	The easiness to find the group related to my interests on the social networks will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.83	6.50	6.17	The moderator actions in energizing the discussions between the members will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.50	6.75	6.13	Finding updated and interesting topics in the social network group will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.33	5.50	5.92	The quality of the contents and comments made by the experts will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.67	6.25	5.96
Newsletter (email marketing)	The clarity and the structure of the content in the newsletter will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	7.00	6.83	The clarity of the Call to action (to make the user interact and navigate in the website) will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	7.00	6.75	6.88	The updatedness of the newsletter content will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.33	6.75	6.54	The management of your personal data explained in the footnote of the mail will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.17	7.00	6.08
Advertising (Banners)	The link between the ad content and the website will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25	The catchiness of the banner advertisement will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.33	5.75	6.04	The capacity to create a relationship with the client through banners will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.33	5.50	5.42	The good quality of the banner content (Copy and Images) will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.33	6.75	6.54
Webinar	The easiness in accessing the content and the streaming quality will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	7.00	6.83	The capacity of catching the attention of the client by the webinar's content will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.50	6.75	6.63	The usage of different techniques and strategies of communication to establish a trust relationship with the potential customer through webinar will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25	The reputation of the expert presenting the webinar will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.83	6.75	6.79
Video Testimonial	The updatedness of the streaming tool and compatibility with different devices will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25	The emotional bound created with the customer by the video testimonial will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.00	6.50	6.25	A good way to tell the story of a previous customer through videos will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.67	6.00	5.83	The realistic and coherent data shown in the video will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.67	6.25	6.46
Phone call / TELCO	The easiness in accessing the call platform will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	4.33	5.75	5.04	Further interaction with upselling and cross-selling techniques will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.83	7.00	6.42	The phone call selling techniques (Active listening, Assertiveness, Mirroring...) will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.67	4.75	5.21	The management of the economical transactions during the call will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.00	6.75	5.88
Landing page	The website structure will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	7.00	6.50	6.75	The easiness to navigate through website will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.83	6.75	6.79	The different multimedia content used in the landing page will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.17	6.25	6.21	The presence of dubious content in the landing page will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	2.50	6.75	4.63
Pop-up	The allowance to continue navigating in the webpage will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.67	5.25	5.46	The catchiness of the message in the pop-up will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	6.17	4.25	5.21	The visual impact of the pop-up will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.83	5.50	5.67	The easiness to see the privacy policy link in the pop-up will influence positively in continuing with the next step of the funnel	5.17	6.00	5.58

Figure 28 - Variable summary

At the end of the focus group all the tools were analysed according to the 4 variables of the research. The aim is to define the most influential factors per instrument. This way the company can understand where to focus in the application of the tools.

We will also do a final analysis of the variables itself, to define which have been considered more important on average, and the reason for this choice.

	Scoring - 1 to 7			
	Usability	Involveme	Creativit	Trust
SEO	7	5.96	4.5	6.54
Post (Blog)	6.79	7	6.08	6.5
Post (Social)	6.13	6.17	5.83	6.25
Targeted Ad	6.58	6.08	6.25	5.96
Direct Campaign	6.58	6.88	6.38	6.25
Group (Social)	6.17	6.13	5.92	5.96
Newsletter	6.83	6.88	6.54	6.08
Advertising	6.25	6.04	5.42	6.54
Webinar	6.83	6.63	6.25	6.79
Video Testimonial	6.25	6.25	5.83	6.46
Phone call / TELCO	5.04	6.42	5.21	5.88
Landing page	6.75	6.79	6.21	4.63
Pop-up	5.46	5.21	5.67	5.58

Colour	<5
Legend	5-6
	6-6.99
	7

Figure 29 - Variable results table

4.4 Tool analysis

- SEO

The most important value is for usability with a 7 by all interviewed, in fact they found fundamental easiness in finding the word related to their search. The value for creativity is the lowest of the entire dataset, interviewee found it not relevant for the analysis because they wanted to go straightforward to the researched topic

- Post (Blog)

In the post, we are sharing an important topic to catch our attention. The involvement is considered the most important variable for the level of commitment required for reading the entire article.

- Post (Social Network)

The post on the social network received a lower value in creativity because the interviewee felt this platform as “less serious” and they preferred a less creative content to compensate.

- Targeted ad

The only low value is on the trust. People are considering the targeted ad less trustful, because you are paying for targeting me, and there is a lower trust in data used for targeting, especially from platform like Facebook, after Cambridge Analytica scandal

- Direct campaign email

There is a high value for all the variables for this tool. The consideration is high, because they expect tailored content, for something they already enrolled for, and much more than a simple newsletter. The highest value is for involvement since they consider this to be needed in order to continue the conversation with the company

- **Group (Social Network)**

This tool did not have one of the highest ranking, and some of the variables are low. Especially trust and creativity. The first one is not high, because those groups are full of different people, and the participants feel they cannot trust them. Creativity is low because people did not see it useful for this peer to peer communication
- **Newsletter (Marketing email)**

The newsletter has general high numbers, especially for usability, due to the improvement in the last years of these tools. People are expecting a high navigability and a nice interface
- **Advertisement (Banner)**

Surprisingly, the banner ad has a low level of creativity. The interviewees still have a traditional view of the strategic consulting company and they are expecting low creativity from those ads.
- **Webinar**

The webinar has really good results in all the categories. The participants are considering it a powerful tool, but it needs the highest level of attention, for the high level of commitment required from the participant, coming for at least 1 hour.

The highest value is to usability, for the same reason as before. They consider the usual busy schedule of a worker, and how much the simplification of the access to the webinar could reduce drop from the funnel.
- **Video Testimonial**

All the levels are high, except the creativity. Regarding the message from a previous user of the service, they prefer a simple message without a creative touch. They consider the level of information as limited, and

even possibly biased in some situations, for this reason trust is considered important.

- Phone call

In this tool, we get the lowest level of usability, because the subjects are not considering it relevant for a direct way of communication. Creativity and trust have a low level as well. The most important variable results being involvement, in fact the subjects need their attention to be caught in order to continue with a phone call.

- Landing page

On the landing page, we get the lowest level of trust. In this case, since they are already going to the page, they expect the trust to come from the previous step, and here to focus more on creativity, involvement and usability.

- Pop up

It is the most controversial tool because people have low confidence in it, independently from the content. The average score for all the variables is low. Trust is still higher than the landing page.

Finally, we analyse the variable with the most impact on the funnel conversion

Usability	Involvement	Creativity	Trust
6,4	6,3	5,9	6,1

Figure 30 - Variable aggregation results

- Usability

This is considered the most important variable. It is expected due to the online environment, in fact all the subjects said that in the overcrowded environment as internet sales, even the slight simplification in the

process of one of the competitors against another one could make the difference.

- Involvement

The second most important variable for a similar reason as the usability. The overwhelming offer on the internet requires the tools not only to be well polished, but interactive and eye catching.

- Creativity

Creativity is the lowest scoring variable, due to the high value of the service sold, the customer is expecting a high level of professionalism, and expects a more traditional communication style, while at the same time it requires the usage of the latest technologies.

- Trust

At the third position we find the trust. People are expecting a high level for all the variables with few exceptions.

5 Limitations and further research

The analysis has been performed on a series of focus groups and an interview with an expert. There is no differentiation based on different industries where this service could be needed, and it could be extended to a bigger sample and on different countries.

It could have been interesting to create a second series of focus groups with expert people (15+ years in a company) and average the one we had, in order to reduce eventual biases.

Taking in consideration, the literature and the findings of this investigation. There is still room for further investigations on the following topics:

- Analysis of how the size of the company you are coming from affects this decision. All the participants from the focus group worked for big corporations. It could be interesting to compare your current company on your decision-making process
- Analysis of how the budget you have affects this decision. Another variable we could analyse is the budget for the project.
- Comparison of different generations in the perception of the tools. It could be interesting to compare baby boomer, gen X and Millennials. It would be an addition to add the Gen Z, to study the difference with this generation that it is the first born with the internet

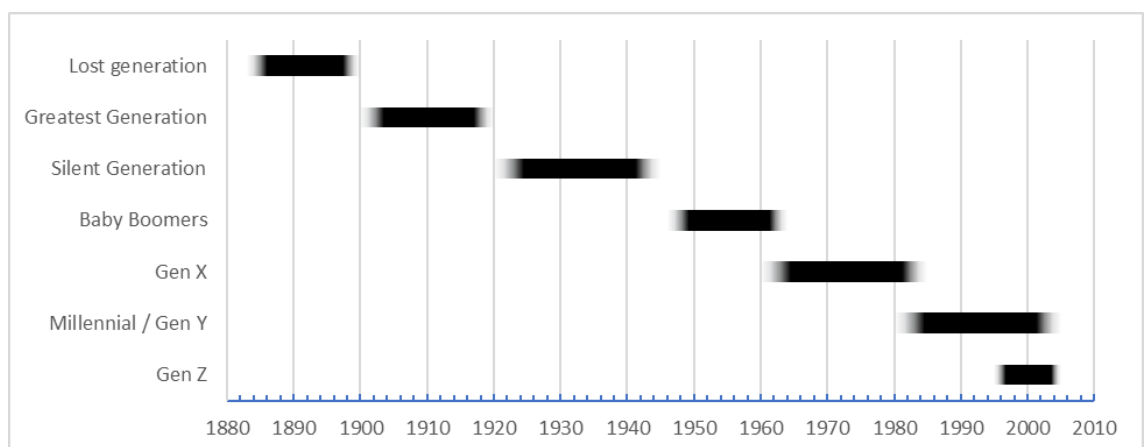


Figure 31 - Generations table



- Comparison with more traditional funnel to understand if they are still effective and necessary

6 Conclusions

6.1 Research summary

In this research we started from the broader analysis of the Funnel conversions, then moved into the application for consulting companies in the Spanish market.

We identified a gap in the online funnel, with limited actions taken and linear techniques, without newer approaches, except for a few cases. For this reason, we tested two alternative funnels, not usually used by these companies: Tripwire and Webinar.

Furthermore, we analysed the different online tools available, and selected the most used in the literature or from other companies in other industries. We limited the analysis to:

- SEO
- Social Network
- Post
- Targeted post
- Messages
- Mail
- Advertising
- Sponsorship
- Webinar
- Websites

The tools have been divided into 2 groups: push and pull, to verify if one of the two types are more relevant in different steps of the funnel.

In order to evaluate them more in details, we selected 4 variables to analyse per each of the tools:

- Usability
- Trust
- Involvement
- Creativity

With all the data gathered, we moved to a series of focus groups with potential clients of these consulting companies to understand how they react to these new funnels compared to the standard research on the internet, and how they do evaluate the different tools at each step.

6.2 Effectiveness of the funnels

6.2.1 Traditional funnel

We presented some of the websites of the companies not using special funnels, just a standard description of the firm and the services offered. The participants found some friction in finding out the information about the company, and the contact page was too generic. They considered that sometimes it could be difficult to formulate the problem in the first approach and even understand if it is the right company. Therefore, they preferred the 2 funnels presented after. In fact, they considered it useful to have a better understanding of the services through a more structured process.

6.2.2 Tripwire

As a general view from the participant, the feedback about tripwire is positive for this kind of business. They would be much more interested in purchasing from companies offering some small services as a free evaluation of their issues, if the tools used for marketing are refined enough. We highly suggest this methodology.

In all the steps, we found a preference for push tools, especially at the beginning, when they are still deciding if doing the first purchase, because they are leveraging on the intrinsic desire for the service. Another interesting finding is that content oriented tools are becoming more important the further we move into the funnel, because the client is willing to invest more time knowing about the company or the topic.

6.2.3 Webinar

During the focus group, the opinions on the webinar were mixed. We think it is due to the different personalities of the people involved, but for the people that were interested the level of expected satisfaction seemed higher than the tripwire, because they imagined getting a big level of

information on the company and their services. This way they could speed up the evaluation process. For this funnel, we had also a preference for push tools, but not as strong as the tripwire.

An interesting conclusion is on the pop up. The bad reputation of this tool is making it score the lowest punctuation in almost all the questions. Participant to the focus groups, considered them invasive and as spam.

Finally, we analyse the variable with the most impact on the funnel conversion.

The most important variable is the usability with a small distance from involvement. Both variables are expected by online users to do the high quality of the usual services offered online, and the overcrowded market. They are considering even the smallest slowdown in the user experience to reflect a similar bad experience with the company.

Trust is in the third position. Customers are considering it as fundamental for creating a long-term relationship as we expect for this kind of services.

Creativity has the lowest scoring variable, the customer is expecting a high level of professionalism and they are connecting this variable to a more frivolous environment, closer to the entertainment business than consulting.

In conclusion we found effective the usage of more structured funnel techniques for these kinds of businesses, and fundamentally the classification of the tools used, and an analysis of them in each step. We suggest these kinds of companies follow our guidelines on the most important tools and what are the most relevant variables for them. This way we expect to prioritize the limited resources available and increase the number of clients obtained by the company.

7 Environmental study

We expect a usage of this funnels as an alternative to face to face meeting, and other presential form of conversion. As a more digital approach get stronger, we expect a reduction in:

- Traveling by the employees and clients for meetings by any means: Airplane, cars and trains
- Investments in trade fairs with consequently reduction in people movement, production of gadgetry and other environmental dangerous conducts

This research impact on the environment was limited as much as possible, trying to reduce the amount of printed material, using mixed digital and printed materials for the interviews.

On the environmental impact we should consider direct form the research:

- PC utilization of electricity for 300 hours during the production of this document. The PC consumption is 20W in average, so we calculated 6kWh
- Paper printed for the interview, but re-utilized for the followings for a total of 50 pages

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