



INTERNSHIP

EXACTUSENSU: MARKETING PLAN

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Exactusensu: Marketing Plan

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Professional project presented to IPAM, to fulfil the requirements needed to obtain the Master's Degree in Marketing, developed under the scientific supervision of Professor Miriam Salomão, PhD.

ABSTRACT

The object of study of this project was the company Exactusensu headquartered in Boavista, in the Porto area. Having been in the safety market for over 20 years, it has a wide range of services, from developing self-protection measures, consulting and training.

The objective of this professional project was to create a Marketing Plan to improve the company's internal communication, as well as to create differentiation to make the company stand out from the competition. To accomplish that, the first stage was the external macroenvironment understanding by using a PESTEL tool and the analysis of the external microenvironment and the company itself (done through a SWOT analysis).

As a result, it is believed that the investment in communication, design, and new technologies, not only for content, is the starting point for Exactusensu to differentiate itself from its competitors. In addition, some promotional actions were suggested for the manual "Segurança Contra Incêndio em Edifícios - Volume 2", and an implementation schedule was drawn up to publish these actions weekly to reach the target audience.

Keywords: Marketing plan, services marketing, business-to-business

RESUMO

O objeto de estudo deste projeto foi a empresa Exactusensu sediada na Boavista, na zona do Porto. Estando no mercado da segurança contra incêndios há mais de 20 anos, tem uma grande variedade de serviços desde a realização de projetos, elaboração de medidas de autoproteção, consultoria e formações .

O objetivo deste projeto profissional foi criar um Plano de Marketing para melhorar a comunicação interna da empresa, bem como criar diferenciação para destacar a empresa da concorrência. Para tanto, a primeira etapa foi o entendimento microambiente externo por meio da ferramenta PESTEL, bem como a análise do microambiente externo e da própria empresa (feita por meio de uma análise SWOT).

Como resultados, acredita-se que o investimento na área de comunicação, design e das novas tecnologias, foi o ponto de partida para que a Exactusensu se diferenciasse dos seus concorrentes. Além disso, foram sugeridas algumas ações promocionais ao manual “Segurança Contra Incêndios em Edifícios - Volume 2” e feito um cronograma de implementação, com o propósito de publicar semanalmente essas ações, de forma atingir o público-alvo.

Palavras-chave: Plano de marketing; marketing de serviços, business-to-business

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

APSEI- Associação Portuguesa de Segurança

B2C/ B2B- Business-to-Consumer/ Business-to-Business

PESTEL- Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal

SWOT- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

DGERT- Direção Geral do Emprego e das Relações de Trabalho

ANEPC (Autoridade Nacional de Emergência e Proteção Civil)

INTRODUCTION

For six months, this professional project was developed for an organisation inserted in the fire safety sector called Exactusensu - Consultores Associados, Lda. The work presented here was developed within the scope of the Master's Degree in Global Marketing by IPAM throughout the academic year 2020/2021.

According to the specifications of this report, the student assumed the position of marketing intern at the organisation. In this position, the student worked side-by-side with the design department, responsible for creating written content for social networks and internal content inherent to the organisation's workers.

The object of study is the company Exactusensu - Consultores Associados, Lda, headquartered in Boavista, Porto. Created in 1999, this Business-to-Business company offers fire safety services in buildings, more specifically in four major areas that will be detailed further ahead: Project Development, Self-Protection Measures, and Assistance to follow-up the client and Training. For over 20 years, the organisation is well placed in terms of reputation.

In order to monitor the evolution of the security sector, a report was prepared. According to the report developed by Associação Portuguesa de Segurança (APSEI, 2019), 372 companies were contacted, but only nine were accepted to be interviewed, thus being a small sector sample. Some of the results show an increase in sales since 2014 and an increase in employees (with an average of 5 new employees per company).

However, wage costs have reduced with an entry wage below the sector average, and, therefore, they get workers at more affordable prices (table 1).

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Added value (K€)	1 334	1 409	1 469	1 653
Value added per worker (K€)	27 575	28 780	29 507	30 834
Wage costs per worker (K€)	18 934	18 882	18 824	18 328
Wage costs (% sales)	172.0%	16.8%	16.3%	16.2%
Average period of receipts (days)	n.d.	187	182	178
Average inventory period (days)	n.d.	38	37	37
Average payment period (days)	n.d.	139	126	130
Cash cycle	n.d.	87	92	84
Percentage of bad debts (% sales)	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%	1.8%

Table 1- Main added values results (source: APSEI, 2019)

According to the data in the table (table 1), it can be seen that it is a competitive market. In order to differentiate itself from the competition and offer a greater variety of services, Exactusensu created a design and communication department.

This department can make the company stand out by elaborating several projects related to image and video, thus investing in external marketing and communicating with its audience.

The position that the organisation occupies in its market is derived from the recommendations made by its clients to other companies, being word-of-mouth the primary source of leads and clients.

To differentiate even more from its competitors and occupy a more advantageous position in the market, Exactusensu wanted to develop a marketing plan.

This project aims to present a Marketing Plan for the company Exactusensu-Consultores Associados, Lda.

The main objective of this plan is to improve the company's internal communication, as well as to create differentiation to make the company stand out from the competition.

As this document is a proposal for a marketing plan, the first part is dedicated to the literature review that supports all the theoretical parts of the marketing plan for a company that offers a service in a Business-to-Business market. Soon after, the research methods and analyses that support this project are presented. Finally, the marketing plan proposal is presented, where all the goals and objectives are described and the actions proposed to achieve them.

1.LITERATURE REVIEW

To assist in preparing the Marketing Plan for Exactusensu, this literature review presents critical concepts for the reader to understand what this marketing plan consists of.

This chapter will present the main themes of this Literature Review, such as the differentiation in perceived value in Business-to-Business versus Business-to-Consumer markets, an analysis of service thinking of service marketing as a competitive advantage, and finally, in the marketing plan and its constituents.

1.1.PERCEIVED VALUE IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

When someone enters the world of work faces two possibilities: the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) Market and Business-to-Business Market (B2B).

According to Asipi & Durakovic (2020), the B2B business model is more common for big corporations. These companies deal with other businesses rather than individual customers.

With this being said, Business-to-Consumer companies sell directly to the final consumer, and Business-to-Business companies' targets are governments, suppliers and distributors (Asipi & Benjamin Duraković, 2020).

As well as in B2C, also in B2B markets, it is vital to maintain a healthy and trusting relationship with the customer or business partner. Therefore, customer satisfaction is one of the main factors for the customer to do business again. To better understand the clients' satisfaction and needs, companies started to question the perceived value of their offering, which is the value of a product, service or the relation with a client or the stakeholders (Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

According to some authors, perceived value can be defined as “the consumer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given”, which means the benefits the customer gets versus the cost between buyer and seller (Zeithaml, 1988, p.14; Samudro et al., 2020).

This idea can be explained from different perspectives such as money, quality, benefit and social psychology (Kuo et al., 2009).

In the monetary perspective, Bishop (1984) states that value is created when the client pays less for the product or service using discounts or coupons or, in other words, “the concept of consumer surplus in economics”. With this being said, the perceived value is the difference between the price that consumers are willing to pay versus the amount paid (Kuo et al., 2009, p.888).

The value in quality perspective is the difference between what the client paid versus the quality of the product, which means that if the client pays less for better quality, then the positive perceived value is more significant. The benefit perspective is the customers' evaluation of the product's utility (Bishop, 1984; Zeithaml, 1988).

Finally, yet importantly, the social psychology value is caused by purchasing an item to the buyer's community, for example, social-economic status and social culture (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991; Kuo et al., 2009).

The concept of value has changed over time. Slater (1997, p. 166) stated "The creation of customer value must be the reason for the firm's existence and certainly for its success", which shows the importance of customer value as a competitive advantage for all the businesses (Slater, 1997, p. 166; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

Some authors see perceived value as a unidimensional construct that can be measured by evaluating the received value in making purchases. However, others stated that the concept is a "narrow approach", making it a multi-dimensional construct (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007, p. 428).

One of the principal authors that defend uni-dimensional construct is Zeithaml (1988), saying that value is an evaluation of the product's utility based on the client's perceptions. However, many authors identified perceived value as a set of notions such as perceived price, quality, benefits, and sacrifice linked. Hence it is a complex concept (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

After analysing the perceived value and its different perspectives, the concept will be presented in the two distinct types of market: Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B) (Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

In Business-to-Consumer markets, the perceived value can be characterised in three types: purchase value, shopping value and consumption value (Kuo et al., 2009).

According to Zeithaml (1988), the purchasing value compares the perceived benefits and sacrifices when purchasing a product. The shopping value concept is usually associated with the retail distribution and is associated with the consumers' experience inside the store, which is a way to rate value (Zeithaml, 1988; Kuo et al., 2009).

Holbrook (1999) describes the last type, consumption value, as an experience of interaction between subject and object. This author proposed a typology regarding three dimensions: an ontological dimension (with intrinsic or extrinsic orientation), a praxeological dimension (with active or passive orientation) and a social dimension (with individual or interpersonal orientation).

In the opposite market, Business-to-Business value has different perspectives on the role of industrial and business marketing (Lindgreen et al., 2012; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

According to Lindgreen et al. (2012), the first perspective is a vision of the market as fully functional and with perfect competition. Here, companies target relevant markets, and the number of buyers and sellers represent the "room for action" with a unique offering that creates "lock-in effects". In this case, with higher termination costs, companies are always looking for solutions for existing problems. In this perspective, it is essential to understand the market and play with it because "the market pushes for the use of existing competition and exploiting opportunities". With this being said, this market structure supports a transactional approach to business and industrial marketing (Lindgreen et al., 2012, p. 208).

The second approach, called relational, regards markets as organised networks so business and industrial marketing can collaborate in different activities. From this point of view, it is crucial to maintain a healthy relationship with the customer because the company focuses on specific customers, not on different market segments, “emphasising the contents and functions of a specific relationship in the larger network”. (Lindgreen et al., 2012, p. 209).

Table 2 illustrates the main differences between both perspectives (transactional and relational) (Lindgreen et al., 2012, p. 209).

Perspective	Transactional	Relational
Competition	Many alternatives	One or a few alternatives
Tactical focus	Every detail is a new business; no one benefits from past performances; market exchanges are independent and discrete	A deal is part of the relationship, and the relationship is part of the network; dependent, ongoing market exchanges
Relationship attitude	Exploit the potential of competition; anonymous and efficient market	Exploit the potential of cooperation; numerous market networks
Temporal horizon	Short-term, arm’s-length, avoid coming too close	Long-term, tough demands, joint development
Organisational structure	Hierarchical, functional organisation	Cross-functional, process-based organisation
Renewal	Effective renewal through partner changes, choose the most efficient supplier at any time	Effective renewal through collaboration and teamwork; combine resources and knowledge
Innovation imperative	Buying standardised products	Buying capabilities; customised products
Services	Services augment the core product	Services are the basis for differentiation
Orientation	Price orientation, to achieve favourable prices in well-specified products; marketing through the 4Ps	Cost and value orientation, to achieve low total costs of supply; develop new value; marketing through relationships, networks, interactions

Table 2- Transactional versus relational marketing and purchasing behaviour (source: Lindgreen et al., 2012, p. 209) - own elaboration

In Business-to-Business markets, two criteria are used to clarify the developed approaches: the time perspective and the identified beneficiary of value creation (Lindgreen et al., 2012; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

The first criterion consists in splitting the transactional (competition) approach from the relational (collaboration) approach, which means that, in this perspective, both methods do not differ in the object's value but in the temporal (time) perspective.

Many authors compare the perceived value with value for money; others have extended this description to other benefits such as performance and service quality and sacrifices such as commodity costs and change costs (Lindgreen et al., 2012; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015; Anderson et al., 1993; Kumar & Grisaffe, 2004).

The second criterion helps rank the benefits of value creation by stakeholders in the Business-to-Business market. Three perspectives can be distinguished if an investigator adopts a buyer, seller, or buyer-seller approach (Ulaga & Chacour 2001; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

In the buyer approach, the value of the company is defined from the customers perspective. However, as in a normal relationship, value is not only created by the buyer but also by the selling company (Möller & Törrönen, 2003; Purchase et al., 2009; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

Regarding the seller's point of view, Walter et al. (2001) define perceived value by identifying the costs (distribution, production and putting the product on the market) and functions that directly or indirectly affect market performance.

Lastly, in both buyer-seller perspectives, some studies introduced the idea of “value co-creation” that could be extended to a network arrangement (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006; Frow & Payne, 2011; Jaakkola & Hakanen, 2013; Mencarelli & Rivière, 2015).

1.2. DIFFERENTIATION IN SERVICES: DESIGN THINKING

Services have always been part of people’s lives. Services such as food, entertainment and education may be the sectors with the most public.

Its definition goes back a few centuries ago when people wanted to create and own wealth in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The goods were objects of value with ownership that could be established and exchanged. This ownership implied that the goods were tangible and acquired through purchase or given from the previous owner (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

According to Lovelock & Wirtz (2011), services are “economic activities offered by one party to another (...) in exchange for money, time and effort (...)” to fulfil people’s needs without taking ownership (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011, p. 15; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

According to Slack (2002), there are three types of services: mass service, professional service and “customised” service. In the first type of service, mass services, there are many customers, which does not allow any customisation and, usually, this type of service is associated with customer service.

Professional services, unlike mass services, are performed according to the client's needs, which results in more customised service. Finally, the customised mass services serve many customers but have technology as the primary tool, giving customers a feeling of customisation (Slack, 2002; Marangoni, 2015).

To understand what a service is, it is essential to know all the characteristics that do a service.

The first one is intangibility, which means people cannot touch or grab. In this case, the buyer will look for quality signs in the place, people, equipment, communication, materials, and price. Next is inseparability, where services are produced and consumed simultaneously, with no opportunity to put in the inventory. The third one is variability because there is always heterogeneity in their production. After all, services are difficult to be standardised, and it depends on who provides them and when and where they are provided. Moreover, the last one is perishability, where services cannot be stored (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Marangoni, 2015).

In the services market, it is vital to be different from the competition. Companies need to create innovative ways to stand out from their competitors. Therefore, it is essential to promote and elaborate on specific marketing strategies to reach differentiation (Porter, 1989; Marangoni, 2015).

According to Kotler (2000), differentiation means "the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company's offering from competitors' offerings"(Kotler, 2000, pp. 175-178).

Service design thinking is one way that can help companies innovate and being successful. According to Stickdorn (2018), service design thinking is a tool that helps organisations seeing their services from a customer perspective. With this tool, companies can see what their customers see and balance their needs, a competitive advantage for the competition.

According to Stickdorn (2018), this technique was born in the 1990s and 2000s thru design methodology and was developed by designers. Recently, the customer experience has become more crucial for companies to succeed in their field. With this in mind, design thinking has become “a key innovation and management methodology (Stickdorn et al., 2018, p.23).

In order to attract values that meet consumer needs as well as return value to the company, design thinking practitioners believe that there are five stages of this process: empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test (Figure 1) (Liedtka, 2014; Rau et al., 2017; Wolniak, 2017).

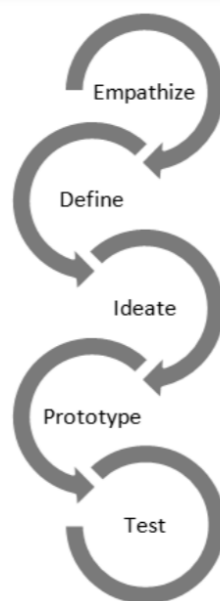


Figure 1- The five steps of Design Thinking (source: Wolniak, 2017)

In the first stage, the characteristics of the audience are determined through observations, surveys and interviews. In the define stage, the customer's needs are specified through the information collected in the previous stage. In the ideate process, brainstorming with the main ideas is done. As the name implies, the prototype creates a project to test whether it follows the consumer's requirements. Moreover, finally, in the last phase, the final test is carried out, being presented to the customer, and it is expected that all customer's needs have been met (Wolniak, 2017).

In addition to having design thinking as a competitive advantage, the company can surpass all competitors with excellent customer service with better-trained personnel with characteristics such as competence, credibility and courtesy, and an excellent delivery system, which is very attractive to the consumer (Kotler, 2000). Also, channel and image can be characterised as the image of the brand, being how the company operates in its distribution channels and how it positions itself in its market (identity), as well as the image that the customer has of the brand or the products (Kotler, 2000).

To create value for the customer, the company must differentiate itself. Due to the characteristics of the services and to have a competitive advantage, companies must execute specific marketing strategies (Marangoni, 2015; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

In a competitive environment in the services sector, the customer may be at an impasse in choosing a company and opting for the one that offers the same service at a lower price. Therefore, it is essential to have a market positioning strategy to differentiate itself from the competitors. This strategy achieves lasting relationships with its customers (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

For this strategy to be successful, it is essential that the managers know their audience, preferences, and what the competition offers. In addition, in the services market, it is also necessary to include services processes, distribution systems, services schedules, location, environment, and personnel in this positioning strategy (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

1.3.MARKETING PLAN

For a company to succeed in its market, it is essential to follow a plan in which the strategies to be implemented over time are indicated according to its objectives. This plan should be simple, specific, realistic and complete (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

It is essential to understand that marketing plans differ from company to company. Some companies take this plan severe to help them manage the business, but others only take the plan as a “rough guide to action” (Kotler, 2000, p.52).

These situations can be harmful to the company, as it does not understand the need to prepare a marketing plan and cannot differentiate itself from its competitors. Some marketing executives point to weaknesses in carrying out marketing plans: lack of realism, weak or insufficient competitive analysis, and only a short-term focus (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Kotler, 2000).

For the preparation of the marketing plan is necessary to know who plans it, when it should be planned, how it should be planned, what the content of the plan is and to whom it should be disseminated (Lindon et al., 2004; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Marketing technicians or specialists in the field prepare this plan. There are different marketing plans for different activities in the company. Usually, the marketing director writes the company's global marketing plan, product managers the product plan and the advertising director writes the advertising plan (Lindon et al., 2004; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

In terms of the planning period, it is not always possible to predict a fixed date of preparation for some plans. However, it can be done in the medium-long term, short-medium term or short term (Lindon et al., 2004).

When planning begins, there are several difficulties, such as the interdependence of different plans and some complexity of different plans. That is, there must be consistency in the plans and be evaluated one by one, individually (Lindon et al., 2004).

Therefore, the plan should contain objectives to be accomplished, an operations calendar, the necessary budget to execute the plan and a definition of measurement of the objectives. This step will be explained in more detail later on (Lindon et al., 2004; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Finally, the plan should be presented to those responsible for its execution and those interested in and who have a role to implement it (Lindon et al., 2004).

According to Kotler & Keller (2012), a plan should work on strategic and tactical levels. The strategic level is established the target markets and the value to be offered based on an analysis of the market opportunities and the strategy to be implemented. All the marketing tactics are specified on the tactical level, including product characteristics, promotion, merchandising price, sales channels, and services (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

In the marketing plan, several points are elaborated in order to fulfil the outlined objectives. Some of them could be the current marketing situation, an analysis of the opportunities and threats of the business, objectives to complete, a marketing strategy, action programs, profit-and-loss statement, and controls (Kotler, 2000; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Westwood, J., 2006).

To start planning, the company should examine the macroenvironment, including political-legal, economic, social-cultural and technological analysis (PEST), the microenvironment, the competitors, distributors, suppliers and internal analysis. To better understand the company and the internal environment is necessary to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by making a SWOT analysis (Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Westwood, J., 2006).

After doing the analysis, it is essential to set objectives. The company sets goals and a time to achieve the intended results. These goals also concerned stakeholders, the company's reputation, and technology (Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Westwood, J., 2006).

After setting the goals, it is essential to elaborate marketing strategies. In this stage, the company chooses the most effective action to conquer the objectives and set a time to accomplish the tasks in the plan (Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Westwood, J. 2006).

Elements of the marketing mix- product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical environment are related to this strategy. For each objective outlined by the company, it is necessary to develop individual strategies for each element. With the financial objectives in mind, the profit-and-loss statement will help the product manager create a budget to support all the expenses stated in the marketing plan to achieve the goals above indicated. At last, the controls monitor the plan to see if the company is making progress or revising aspects in the plan (Kotler, 2000; Kotler, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Westwood, 2006).

For any plan to work and to be successful, the company's divisions should work together. This will be easier to do the reviews, and everyone is aware of the plan.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methodology is a structural step towards the realisation of the plan. This project bases its principles on a case study, analysing a specific organisation and its characteristics.

According to Baxter & Jack (2008), two views can explain the methodology of a case study: one proposed by Robert Stake (1995) and the other by Robert Yin (2003).

Yin (2003) considers it essential that the focus of this methodology answers “How” and “Why” questions, thus considering the context of the situation. Another critical point is the non-manipulation of the behaviour of the people involved in the study, thus obtaining the expected results (Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Stake (1995) identifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental or collective. In the first type, intrinsic, the author suggests using this approach when investigators have a genuine interest in the case and want to understand better. The second type of case study, instrumental, is used to understand a particular situation as it provides a different view on a problem or helps refine a theory. Moreover, the collective case study is similar to different cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake 1995).

For Yin (2003), case studies can be categorised as explanatory, exploratory or descriptive. The first type, explanatory, is used to answer questions too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. The exploratory case study is used to explore situations without an outcome. Moreover last, the descriptive type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon in the context in which it occurred. In addition, the author also differentiates between single case studies and multiple case studies (Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

In this project, the type of case study adopted is descriptive (Yin), where all possibilities and the actual context of all phenomena are described. Also, it is the instrumental type (Stake) as it is only used to understand a particular situation. In this case, the marketing plan for the company where the researcher was an intern (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack 2008).

2.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

To prepare for this professional project, it is essential to know the scientific methods that will be used in the research approach. Scientific research serves to discover and interpret facts present in reality. This approach can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed (Flanagan, 2003).

Qualitative investigation is used to designate all forms of research based on data such as ethnography, naturalistic investigation and a more interpretative and constructivist perspective (Rodríguez et al., 1999; Meirinhos & Osório, 2010).

This perspective suggests that the researcher might be part of the company in fieldwork to analyse it through direct observation, making value judgments (Meirinhos & Osório, 2010).

For the elaboration of this marketing plan and as mentioned above, the qualitative methodology was vital. The participant observation and document analysis were chosen to assist in elaborating this professional project, which will be further detailed.

In addition, the researcher carried out individual meetings with representatives of each department, thus having a broad view of the company and the expectations and objectives of each sector of the organisation.

Through participant observation and document analysis, the plan is proposed to allow for the resolution of failures. Resulting from the research, the definition of objectives determined that the qualitative perspective would be the approach to be followed.

2.2. DATA COLLECTION: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

As an intern at the company for which this project is intended, the researcher had access to some of the company's material, strategy and tactics. In addition, the researcher participated in several meetings where there was interaction with workers. That said, the technique called participant observation is applied.

According to Bernard (2017), this approach is both humanistic and scientific, and it helps to get an "experimental knowledge" of the topic. This method involves people getting comfortable with the researcher's presence to get a scope of information.

Since the object of study is the Exactusensu Company, it was essential for the researcher always to be close to the object under study to perform the analyses. This type of research can be characterised as an interaction between researchers and members of the investigated situations (Gil, 2002).

During the researcher's internship period, the organisation held several weekly meetings called "Technical Mondays". At these meetings, the employees gave their follow-up of the previous week and discussed what they could do best for the current week. In addition, in these meetings, the researcher's opinion was considered to create an environment more conducive to success.

To better deepen the knowledge, the researcher used the documentary analysis method. Documentary analysis is a procedure for reviewing and evaluating various documents such as manuals, articles, books, newspapers and others (Bowen, 2009).

This method was revealed to be one of the most crucial points in the elaboration of this plan. This analysis allowed the researcher to access some relevant documents, such as internal reports and sector reports.

It was also relevant to know whether the documents have changed over time, whether the practices governed by them are still active and whether employees are aware of these documents. These points are essential for the company to evolve, always respecting its employees and their standards of conduct.

In the case of the organisation in question, documents written by the company's quality department were analysed. Financial data was disclosed to the researcher, but it cannot be part of this professional project because it is confidential.

3. MARKET AND PROJECT ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher analyses the company's market and the internal and external environment. This analysis is fundamental for decision-making and for the objectives to be achieved.

3.1. ORGANISATION'S OVERVIEW

Engineer José Aidos Rocha in the Porto region founded Exactusensu in 1999. Throughout his career, José Aidos Rocha has been committed to building a successful company in fire safety. With 20 internal employees divided by different sectors, Exactusensu distinguishes itself from its competition for service differentiation by creating a design and communication department.

This organisation offers its customers four types of services: Projects, Self-protection measures, Assistance and Training.

In the Projects area, Fire Safety Projects, Projects for the Implementation of Armed Fire Networks, and Projects for executing automatic fire extinguishing water networks (Sprinklers) are prepared. Self-Protection Measures contain the Internal Security Plans, Emergency Plans, and the Simulation Exercises more practical. At the Assistance to follow-up point, the Organization and Security Management of the building accompany the client. Moreover, Training in Building Fire Safety, Self-protection, Quality and Environment, and Safety and Health at Work is carried out.

The organisation created a design and communication department (Exactuflow) to excel at the difference, which supports the other services inherent to the company. This department creates audiovisual and written content for clients and internally, such as the company website. In addition, this department was the starting point for Engineer José Aidos Rocha to write and edit a manual on fire safety in buildings.

Another way Exactusensu differentiates itself from its competition is by creating three departments inherent to its services to its audience: Exactuform, Exactubooks and Exactuflow (Figure 2).



Figure 2- Exactusensu's Logos

With Exactuform, the company managed to achieve one more goal, by being a training entity certified by Direção-Geral do Emprego e das Relações do Trabalho (DGERT). Since January 2013, Exactuform has provided training in the Education and Training Areas of Computers in the User's Perspective, Protection of People and Goods, Safety and Hygiene at Work.

With Exactubooks, two manuals on fire safety in buildings were prepared to spread the fire safety culture in buildings and create critical mass in this field (Figure 3).



Figure 3- Building Fire Safety Manuals (Source: Exactubooks website)

Lastly, Exactuflow is managed by the design and communication department and, therefore, is the creative part of the company.

In the market for over 20 years, the organisation's primary mission is to prepare projects and studies in fire-safe, providing consultancy and Assistance and pursuing high quality and rigour criteria.

Exactusensu aims to be a leading knowledge company in fire safety and emergency organisation, always striving to achieve customer and employee satisfaction.

Exactusensu is characterised by its extreme connection to the values it considers essential:

- 1- Quality by ensuring high-performance levels in the provision of services based on customer needs.
- 2- Rigour in work produced.
- 3- Creativity and competence by looking for the best solutions for each customer.
- 4- Innovation when promoting continuous improvement and the implementation of new solutions.
- 5- Valorisation of Human Resources by creating conditions for individual and collective success.

These values are part of the company's day-to-day activities, thus applying them to the way of living and working of Exactusensu's employees. In addition to the values attributed, all employees collaborate, creating an environment of sharing and community.

3.2. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: MICRO AND MACRO ENVIRONMENT

To evaluate and develop a good marketing strategy, it is necessary to carry out external macro environment (PESTEL), external micro environment (competitors and consumers) and internal analyses (the company).

To complement the environmental analysis, the researcher carried out a SWOT analysis and analysed the company and its consumers and competitors.

3.2.1. External Macro-environment: PESTEL Analysis

In order to understand the impact that the external environment can have on the company, the researcher carried out a PESTEL analysis together with the Director and the design and communication department of Exactusensu, this being the department in which the intern worked during the project

Therefore, this analysis identifies political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal factors (Lambin, 2000).

In the political and legal environment, the company is always safeguarded by the decree of law nº123/2019 of October 18th, which establishes the legal regime of fire safety in buildings. Some of the articles to be considered in this decree of law are articles 5, 15, and 34. In these articles, it is established that the competent authority is the ANEPC (Autoridade Nacional de Emergência e Proteção Civil).

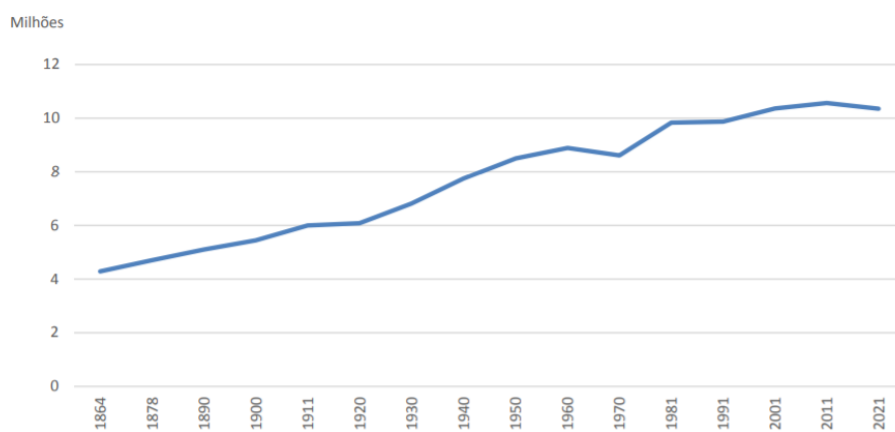
The architect who draws up self-measures for buildings classified in the 2nd, 3rd and fourth risk categories must belong to the Order of Architects “with a certificate of specialisation declared for the purpose” (Diário da República, 2019).

In the economic analysis, there was economic growth that influenced construction. In the report made by APSEI in 2019 (table 3), there was a steady increase in sales since 2014, continuing in 2019. Despite the increase in sales, operating profitability has been improving, indicating lower competitiveness in the sector, and prices may increase. This situation is not favourable for the company because it negatively influences the projects department. However, due to the COVID-19, it was pointed out that in 2020 there was a sharp drop in the world economic activity, specifically in the reduction of industrial activities, commerce and services. Despite the pandemic, many companies recovered or reinvented themselves to regain their place in the market they operate (Programa de Estabilização Económica e Social, 2020).

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sales (K€)	5334	5497	5747	6079
EBITDA (K€)	418	485	532	671
Operational result (K€)	247	324	377	517
Net income (K€)	73	162	242	331
Number of workers	48.4	49.0	49.8	53.6
Return of equity	n.d.	7.6%	11.0%	14.1%
Solvency indicator (liabilities/assets)	69.6%	68.6%	67.3%	66.2%
Debt ratio (debt to equity)	1.23	1.15	01.06	0.98
Degree of general liquidity	1.36	1.45	1.57	1.60

Table 3- Main sales results (source: APSEI, 2019)

According to Instituto Nacional de Estatística (2021), through the XVI General Population Census and VI General Housing Census, there is a sharp decline in the population residing in Portugal. These data (figure 4) are for the last ten years, and there is a reduction of the Portuguese population by 214,286 people, representing a population decrease of 2.0%. This decrease resulted from the negative natural balance of -250 066 people, so it is possible to observe that the resident population in 2021 has a value close to that recorded in 2001 when lived in Portugal 10 356 117 people (Censos, 2021). In terms of social analysis, there was a decline in the number of births.



Fonte: INE, Recenseamentos da População e da Habitação

Figure 4- Resident Population in Portugal, 1864-2021 (source: INE, Recenseamento da População e da Habitação)

Technological advancement has become one of the essential points at the height of the pandemic. Due to COVID-19, all workers were forced to work from home, and Exactusensu was no different. This technological advance improved technology, making it possible to create different tools that help the company daily, such as the PODIO app, which will be explained later.

In environmental terms, the increase in fires and the change from the incendiary element (instead of oil and Gasoil, the company uses gas) to the interventions are pointed as advantages. The company needs to sensitise its customers with the new training implemented for the company. Also, changing the incendiary element is better for the environment and helps the awareness given in training to have a more controlled environment.

3.2.2.External Micro-environment: Competitors

In this section, an analysis of Exactusensu's competitors will be made. These competitors are direct, which means that they offer the same services. After an exhaustive analysis of the competitors, the researcher arrived at four to analyse in more depth.

Ativa is located in Lisbon and offers consultancy services, fire safety projects in buildings and self-protection measures. The team comprises technicians with a background in engineering and architecture and is led by Eng^o Marco Miguel. As one of the largest companies in Lisbon, it has worked with brands such as ANA- Aeroportos de Portugal, Metro de Lisboa, SONAE, among others. Like Exactusensu, Ativa has another branch called Ativa Solutions, which is responsible for the representation and distribution of equipment in the areas of rescue, maintenance and construction, such as LED lights. In addition to all the services provided, the company publishes articles in technical magazines and collaborates in training, events, conferences and seminars with APSEI.

Formed in 2004, Action Modulers began by providing security and safety consulting services is now on par with Exactusensu. Located in Mafra, the company performs project preparation services, audits and assesses security conditions and implements self-protection measures. Despite being a company that has been in the market for over ten years, few works are shared on the website, so the researcher did not mention the brands that worked with this company.

Alves Rasteiro was founded in 2015 and started by positioning itself in the market as an Engineering Office specialised in fire safety in buildings. Due to its growth, CEO Daniela Alves made it diversify its services. The services of this company are divided into three categories: self-protection measures, speciality projects and training. With the addition of training to its list of services, Alves Rasteiro becomes a direct competitor with Exactuform (part of Exactusensu). With a vast portfolio, this company stands out for its work with different buildings, whether residential or industrial and warehouses.

Doufer was founded in 2018 by Dourado and Ferreira, and even with little time in activity, it is already considered Exactusensu's most direct competitor, located in Porto. Despite being in the market for only three years, Doufer practices the same services as all the competitors described above: elaboration of security projects audits, consulting and inspections, elaboration of self-protection measures and training. With this last service, it is comparable to Alves Rasteiro and Exactuform. Some of the projects prepared by the company were with brands such as SportsDirect, Pingo Doce and BMCar.

3.2.3.External Micro-environment: Customers Analysis

As a company that offers services to its public, Exactusensu's type of customers can belong to two broad categories:

- 1- Small and family businesses
- 2- Large surface companies

Despite being a relatively small company, Exactusensu has a vast portfolio of clients who benefit from the different services offered by the company.

There are also different types of customers through the different aspects inherent to the company, such as Exactubooks, Exactuform and Exactuflow.

With the development of its editorial project, through the manuals "Segurança Contra Incêndios em Edifícios- volume 1 e 2", Exactubooks' primary customers are security technicians, as well as engineering and architecture students.

Concerning training, Exactuform's primary customers are companies and individuals. In this aspect, training in fire safety, self-protection, occupational safety and quality and environment is administered.

Last but not least, Exactuflow is a design, communication and multimedia strand, the types of customers in this aspect can be both individuals and corporate.

3.2.4.SWOT Analysis

To summarise the company's competitiveness, the researcher prepared a SWOT analysis with the company's Director and the quality department to corroborate the analysis performed. This analysis is a tool used in the marketing field to carry out a strategic diagnosis of a company to define future strategies. The letters SWOT refers to the internal factors (Strengths, Weaknesses) and external factors (Opportunities and Threats).

Strengths: As a company established in the market for over 20 years, it is one of the experts in fire safety. Another of its strengths is providing complementary services, such as training and consultancy to facilitate the client and investment in design and audiovisual. Also, Exactusensu stands out for its strong presence in the editorial domain by elaborating two manuals about fire safety in buildings. Another important aspect is the investment in audiovisual and new technologies that led to a "Knowledge Base" for individuals and companies called Axio.

Weaknesses: Despite all of the strengths, one of its significant weaknesses is the poor reliance on publicising the company on social networks, which was filled with the elaboration of this plan and the weekly publications prepared by the researcher.

Opportunity: As most of Exactusensu's competitors are located in the centre of the country, the company sees investment in the north as an opportunity. It is one of the only ones in this area of activity.

Threats: The company faces daily threats that can be harmful, as self-protection measures are finite. As it is the first point of contact with the customer, where the typical uses of each building are reviewed, self-protection measures are elaborated according to the type of building. Once elaborated, they can only be updated if the type of building changes. Therefore the self-protection measures are finite. Another threat is the client can perform some services such as self-protection measures, which can be a risk for the company since it is the biggest source of income.

4. PROJECT PROPOSAL

In order to be able to prepare the marketing plan for Exactusensu, during the internship period (six months), the researcher collected information through participant observation and documental analysis of reports inherent to the company. With the purpose of meet the Director's expectations for the researcher, goals were pointed out to be achieved. These goals were proposed right at the beginning of the internship to be part of the marketing plan prepared by the researcher. After establishing the objectives of this plan, a budget was established that cannot be indicated in this project because it is confidential information.

As a company established in the market for over twenty years, Exactusensu intended to improve the company's internal communication, as well as to create differentiation to make the company stand out from the competiton.. Through the design thinking approach and with the help of the marketing department, the Exactuflow branch created a platform called AXIO. This platform is user-centric and is used for internal communication and, for this reason, the researcher does not have access to it.

4.1. SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE MARKETING PLAN

Through the systematic collection of information throughout the internship period, the researcher and the company's Director and the communication and design department defined specific goals to implement in the marketing plan.

In order to meet the expectations of the company's Director, goals were set to be achieved during one year (table 4).

Actions	Identification	Objective to accomplish
PODIO (Internal Communication program)	A)	Improve internal communication
Manual Campaign	B)	Stand out from the competition
Exactuflow (AXIO app)	C)	Stand out from the competition
Technical Sheets	D)	Improve internal communication
Newsletter	E)	Improve internal communication

Table 4- Specific goals of the Marketing Plan (source: own elaboration)

By achieving these goals, Exactusensu intends to assume a new position in its internal communication and reinforce its position on social media. To measure the expected results, it was necessary to define evaluation metrics for each defined strategy.

4.2. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT'S STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Taking into account the achievement of the proposed goals, actions and strategies were defined. It is essential to specify what is intended to be achieved with these actions.

A) PODIO

PODIO (figure 5) is an internal communication platform and it is a work tool that all workers have access to. This platform is an asset to the entire internal communication process, as all workers have access to projects from all aspects of the company, is all connected. It was designed to increase sharing and create a good team environment.

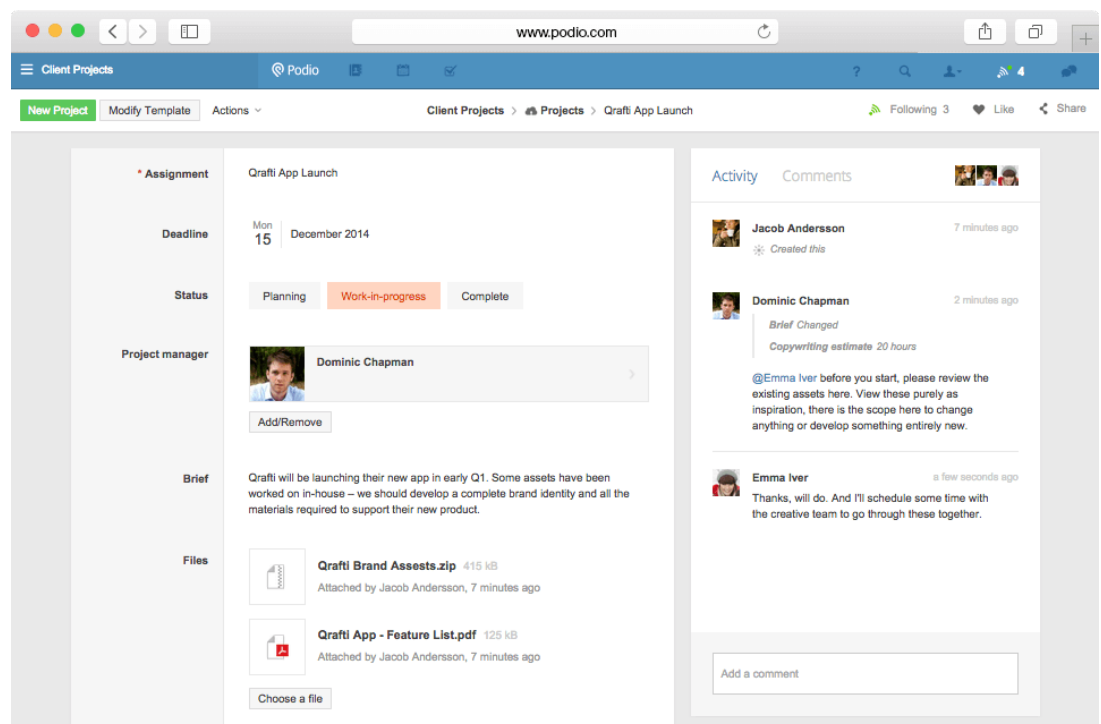


Figure 5- PODIO homepage (source: PODIO)

B) Campaign for the manual

One of the objectives suggested by Eng^o José Aidos Rocha was to elaborate a campaign to publicize the volume 2 of the manual “Segurança Contra Incêndio em Edifícios- Regulamentação Ilustrada e Anotada”(figure 6). This campaign consisted of publishing two weekly themes to attract Exactusensu’s regular customers and students and technicians from the engineering and safety field. The researcher, together with the design team, prepared these publications. In each image, people could find a question answered in the new manual, thus arousing the reader’s curiosity.

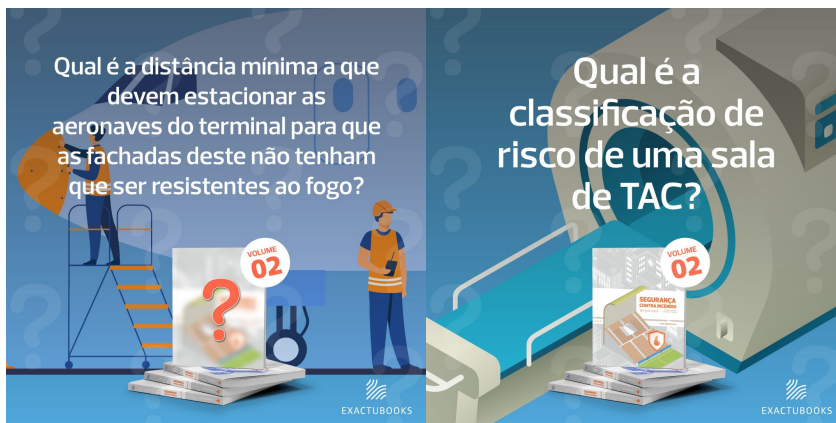


Figure 6- Posts for the Campaign

C) Exactuflow (AXIO App)

Through the Exactuflow component, Exactusensu distinguished itself from its competitors by establishing a communication and design department. Although this department was developed before the researcher's internship, it was crucial in the marketing plan. In this department, the researcher and the other elements developed the campaigns for social media and participated in creating the AXIO app. This app was created to create a platform for companies to communicate internally. This app is private, so the researcher does not have access and cannot be shown in the marketing plan.

D) Elaboration of Technical Sheets (figure 7)

The researcher prepared these technical sheets in order to assist the department of self-protection measures. These papers were prepared for intern use only to assist all workers, creating a link between departments. These sheets present topics such as the general conditions of self-protection, legal framework, description and stages of the service and the means necessary to carry out the work. These sheets were made to obtain all the information necessary to carry out the service in a detailed and precise manner. In addition, the company aimed to place other workers from other departments to help the self-protection measures, as this is the most requested service by Exactusensu's customers.

Medidas de Autoproteção

As Medidas de Autoproteção (MAP) são um conjunto de documentos que ajudam a garantir a manutenção das condições de segurança contra incêndio de um determinado edifício ou recinto durante a exploração do mesmo.

As MAP são compostas pelos cinco pilares da segurança: Medidas de Prevenção, Medidas de Intervenção, Registos de Segurança (parte processual), Formação e Simulacros (implementação).

Para cada edifício ou recinto é nomeado um Responsável de Segurança (entidade gestora máxima do edifício) responsável pela manutenção das Condições de Segurança. O Responsável de Segurança pode nomear um ou vários Delegados de Segurança que o apoiem em todo o processo de execução (parte processual) e implementação das Medidas de Autoproteção.

Enquadramento legal:

- Decreto-Lei n.º 220/2008, de 12 de novembro- Regime Jurídico da Segurança contra Incêndio em Edifícios, na redação que lhe foi conferida pela Lei n.º 123/2019, de 12 de novembro;
- Portaria n.º 1532/2008, de 29 de dezembro- Regulamento técnico de Segurança Contra Incêndios em Edifícios.
- Despacho n.º 2074/2009, de 15 de janeiro- Define os Critérios Técnicos para Determinação da Densidade de Carga de Incêndio Modificada, na redação que lhe foi conferida pelo Despacho n.º 8954/2020, de 18 de setembro.

Condições Gerais de Autoproteção:

Todos os edifícios e recintos devidamente licenciados são obrigados a elaborar e a implementar as Medidas de Autoproteção, exceto as habitações de 1.ª e 2.ª Categoria de Risco. As Instalações/Edifícios com várias Utilizações-tipo, sobre a mesma gestão, deverão ter apenas um documento sendo assumida a tipologia de Medidas de Autoproteção mais gravosas.

Utilização-tipo	Categoria de risco	Medidas de Autoproteção						
		Registos de Segurança	Procedimentos de prevenção	Plano de Prevenção	Procedimentos em caso de Emergência	Plano de Emergência Interno	Ações de sensibilização e formação em SGE	Simulacros
I	1ª apenas para os espaços comuns	x	x		x		x	
	3ª apenas para os espaços comuns	x		x		x	x	x
II	1ª	x	x					
	2ª	x	x		x		x	
III, VI, VIII, IX, X, XI e XII	3ª e 4ª	x		x		x	x	x
	1ª	x	x					
IV, V e VII	2ª	x		x	x		x	x
	3ª e 4ª	x		x		x	x	x
V, V e VII	1ª sem locais de risco D ou E	x	x					
	1ª com locais de risco D ou E e 2ª	x		x	x		x	
	1ª com locais de risco D ou E	x						
	2ª com locais de risco D ou E, 3ª e 4ª	x		x		x	x	x

Utilizações-Tipo
 UT I- Habitacionais
 UT II- Estacionamentos
 UT III- Administrativos
 UT IV- Escolares
 UT V- Hospitalares
 UT VI- Espetáculos e Reuniões Públicas

UT VII- Hotéis e Restauração
 UT VIII- Edifícios Comerciais e Gares de Transporte
 UT IX- Desportivos e Lazer
 UT X- Museus e Galerias de Arte
 UT XI- Biblioteca e Arquivos
 UT XII- Industriais

Figure 7- Technical Sheets (source: own elaboration)

E) Newsletter

The idea of preparing an internal newsletter came from the researcher and was well accepted by the company's Director. Through the newsletter, all employees had access to other news about the company, such as the customer they were working with at that time. Another point to mention in this newsletter was a message from the Director to his workers with motivational words that shows team spirit. Unfortunately, and because the internship period was short, the idea of the newsletter did not materialise.

The next tables show the results obtained during the researcher's internship period. Table 5 shows all the actions to be developed and the department responsible for them, as well as their target audience. In table 6 the calendar of actions is described and in table 7 the metrics to be calculated are indicated, as well as the outcome of the actions.

Actions	Target Audience	Responsible
A)	All collaborators	Communication and design department
B)	Current customers; Technicians and Students of engineer and security field	Communication and design department
C)	Companies outside Exactusensu; Current customers	Communication and design department
D)	All collaborators	Communication and design department
E)	All collaborators	Communication and design department

Table 5- The framework of the project's strategic options (source: own elaboration)

Action	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021
A)	X	X	X	X	X	X
B)			X	X		
C)	X	X	X	X	X	X
D)				X	X	X
E)			X			

Table 6- Scheduling of actions(source: own elaboration)

Actions	Metrics	Outcome
A)	- number of daily visits to the platform	Use of the platform as a work tool in order to assist the worker in its management
B)	- Scope of publications - Engagement with the audience	Use of social networks as a gateway to the company; greater visibility for its customers
C)	- Leads - Conversion rate	Make an internal platform is known to all customers and new customers
D)	- Material use	Assist the worker in their work, making more practical, getting information as quickly as possible
E)	n.d.	n.d

Table 7- Evaluation and control mechanisms (source: own elaboration)

CONCLUSIONS

This professional project was divided into four areas: the contextualisation of the project, a theoretical base related to the business-to-business market, its form of differentiation, the analysis and the marketing plan's construction. Therefore, in this part of the project, the researcher will present some conclusions.

The researcher was able to diagnose the organisation, identifying the aspects to be worked on, and defined goals that make up the plan in an integral way.

From the analysis of the environment, it was possible to find opportunities and threats that could affect its performance. One of Exactusensu's most significant opportunities is its design department, the only fire safety company to have this department, thus differentiating itself from its competitors.

To achieve results and the goals described in the plan, the researcher developed actions and strategies together with the design department and the Director of the organisation during the internship period (six months).

As five actions present in this plan, they refer to the objectives outlined at the beginning of the plan: to improve company's internal communication as well as create differentiation in order to stand out from its competition. During the internship period, the researcher could see the actions to be carried out as well as the results obtained. Only the action of creating an internal newsletter was not fully implemented, thus failing to respond to the objective outlined in the marketing plan.

Despite the direct competition with Ativa, Action Modulers, Alves & Rasteiro, and Doufer, Exactusensu distinguishes itself by the different strands created: Exactuform, Exactubooks and Exactuflow.

The political-legal environment is favourable as the company is part of an area protected by its laws and is always safeguarded if something happens that jeopardises the company. The economic and social environments are promising for the company's growth. Even with the pandemic and population shrinkage, the trend is for economic growth. In terms of technology, Exactusensu is well on its way. With the use of new technologies, the company can do its work better, showing more profitability.

An internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses was carried out. It could be seen that the company is well-positioned in the market by providing complementary services such as training and advisory. Another way the company stands out is for its editorial domain by elaborating two manuals on fire safety in buildings.

In general, the company's strengths are justified by the differentiation in the services offered to its customers and the editorial offer with support manuals for all workers in the area and students, technicians, and engineers.

It is now possible to reflect on the relevant aspects during the investigator's internship since a marketing department was never established, which did not allow the investigator to do more for the company. Nevertheless, the design department has always been available to assist the investigator in any work proposed by Eng^o José Aidos Rocha.

The ultimate goal was to develop a marketing plan to understand its full potential and what it could do to differentiate itself from its competitors and improve internal communication.

On top of that, the plan also showed that the company should invest in a marketing department to be more in the market and get the best possible results in its work area.

This work fulfilled the general objective previously established, as it was possible to create more engagement with the target audience through the publication of posts about the manual.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Before moving on to future investigations, it is essential to leave recommendations for organisations similar to this project's case study. In a company that deals mainly with essential customers and companies, it is vital to understand the profile of each target audience and their degree of involvement with it. It is also important to emphasise the message strategy towards workers and the general public.

Moreover, investment in technology is reinforced to improve the work environment and communicate with the public.

From the observation in a professional context, it was possible to indicate several research questions, which could be invested in the future to add value to the organisation.

After indicating the question to be studied, the next step is to implement a marketing plan. It should be noted that there is no marketing department within the organisation and, therefore, the project presented here was not implemented by the company. Although the proposed ideas were implemented, it was not established that this project would become the company's marketing plan in the case study.

Based on the observations, there is a need to invest in the communication and design department or create a marketing department. As a company that has different aspects, different types of audiences, the marketing aspect would be an asset for the organisation to differentiate itself even more from its competition and have better communication with different audiences.

Another issue to be studied in the future may be the elaboration of an internal communication plan. As the object of study is a growing company with more than twenty workers, it would be relevant to have an internal communication plan to unite all workers in the organisation, regardless of physical, structural or social barriers.

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