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**BRAND POSITIONING AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION**  
**NESTLÉ BUONA LA VITA CASE STUDY**

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## Abstract

In an increasingly competitive market, it is crucial for companies to position themselves in order to survive and be efficient in terms of profits and brand values.

Brand positioning is the marketing strategy for excellence, it is the key to success. Good positioning means being able to enter the minds of consumers so that the brand is perceived as unique and different from its competitors.

Over the last decade, the digital revolution has had a strong impact on business strategies. In addition, the changing lifestyle of consumers and their growing need to interact directly with companies has led to the need of synergies between offline and online positioning.

In this context, particular attention is paid to the food sector. Web positioning is fundamental for brands in the food sector, especially at a time when eating habits are constantly evolving. New food trends are affecting the buying behaviour of millions of consumers and this constitutes a great opportunity for both small and large companies.

Nestlé, the leading multinational food & beverage company, has adopted digital branding strategies to position itself in the nutrition, health and wellness field. This latter end is also achieved thanks to the website Nestlé Buona la Vita and its social page. Finally, a careful analysis of the web communication will be conducted to better understand what is the best strategy for achieving a good positioning consistent with the goal.





## **Index**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Brand Positioning</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 <i>The brand concept</i>	11
1.2 <i>Brand Identity and Image</i>	13
1.2.1 Brand Identity	13
1.2.2 Brand Image	16
1.3 <i>Brand Positioning</i>	17
1.3.1 Brand positioning definition	18
1.3.2 Positioning process	20
1.3.3 Types of brand positioning	21
1.3.4 Updating brand positioning	21
<i>Reason behind chapter 1</i>	22
<b>Chapter 2: Digital revolution and consumers changes</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1 <i>The digital revolution</i>	23
2.1.1 Traditional and digital marketing	25
2.2 <i>Changes in consumer behaviour</i>	32
2.2.1 The new consumer decision journey	33
2.2.2 Social opinion as the new driver to make decisions	36
2.2.3 The reaction of companies to the new consumers' experience	38
<i>Reasons behind chapter 2</i>	43
<b>Chapter 3: Brand positioning online</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1 <i>Off-line and on-line branding</i>	45
3.2 <i>The main elements in online positioning</i>	47
3.3 <i>Digital tools needed to build a digital branding strategy</i>	48
3.3.1 Official website	49
3.3.2 Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing	50
3.3.3 Social media	51
3.3.4 Digital advertising	61
<i>Reason behind chapter 3</i>	67
<b>Chapter 4: Digital influences on food marketing</b>	<b>68</b>

<i>4.1 New changes in food: Food trends</i>	68
4.1.1 Changes of food habits over the years	68
4.1.2 Simplicity and avoidance of ingredients as a new trend	71
4.1.3 Eating less and healthy indulgents	75
4.1.4 Causes and next step to meet the trends	77
<i>4.2 Food and digital marketing</i>	79
4.2.1 Key elements in order to exploit digital tools in food communication	85
4.2.2 Successful examples of companies which have exploit the web and its technologies to grow their businesses	87
<i>Reasons behind chapter 4</i>	90
<b>Chapter 5: The development of an online branding strategy: Nestlé Buona la Vita</b>	<b>91</b>
<i>5.1 The company</i>	91
5.1.1 Nestlé and food trends	91
5.1.2 Nestlé and its digitalization	95
5.1.3 Nestlé and the consumers experience	98
Listen to consumers and co-create with them	98
Being open to consumers	100
Personalize contents, products and services	101
Being always at the service of consumers and make them at the centre of the strategies	101
Using disrupting storytelling in order to engage consumers	101
The Consumer & Shopper Engagement Centre	102
<i>5.2 Nestlé positioning</i>	103
<i>5.3 Using web as a positioning tool: Nestlé Buona la vita website</i>	105
5.3.1 Buona la Vita structure	106
5.3.1 Buona la Vita target and their relationship	108
5.3.2 Buona la Vita brand analysis	110
5.3.3 Buona la Vita and social networks	115
5.3.4 Nestlé Buona la Vita competitors	116
5.3.5 Buona la Vita and its similars	117
<i>5.4 How Buona la Vita contributes to the positioning of Nestlé as a health and wellness brand</i>	119
5.4.1 Buona la Vita positioning	119
5.4.2 Buona la Vita and the perception of Nestlé in the field of Nutrition, Health and Wellness	121
<b>Chapter 6: Buona la Vita online communication tools</b>	<b>123</b>

<i>6.1 Buona la Vita Website Analysis</i>	<i>123</i>
<i>6.2 Buona la Vita Facebook Fanpage Analysis</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>6.3 The comparison with the Spanish website</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>6.4 Buona la Vita communication tools performances</i>	<i>127</i>
6.4.1 Understanding the right goal of the Facebook page	128
6.4.2 Discovering the level of interest on the website contents	133
6.4.3 The most engaging and interesting Facebook contents	135
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Websites</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>163</b>

## Introduction

In order to be competitive and being able to survive in a fast changing market, companies need to position themselves in order to be differentiated.

The last decade has been the one of changes in almost all the sectors of our economy. The cause of those transformations is mainly associated with the digital revolution. Digitalization has influenced all the stages and all the actions that a person takes every single minute of his day. The way people communicate, learn, cook, do sport, do shopping, everything is now being impacted by new digital devices.

Amongst all these sectors, one that has been profoundly influenced by new technologies is doubtless marketing and communication. New forms of marketing have been introduced and exploited by companies through the birth of numerous touchpoints and ways to communicate with consumers. Online forms of communication have become the main channels to reach and retain consumers and gain new prospects. This is the reason behind the importance for companies to use digital tools in order to reach their desired positioning in the market and remain competitive.

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how a well established food brand decides to use online positioning tools in order to position itself following food trends. To better understand the effectiveness of those online communication tools, they will be deeply analysed and will be done an examination of the social strategy implemented to see if it is right to obtain the desired brand positioning.

The thesis is structured in five chapters.

*Chapter 1* is centred on defining brand positioning and what are its main components.

*Chapter 2* is focused on the digital revolution and how it influences either the way in which consumers behave and companies' reactions to those behaviours.

In particular, it is explained the passage from traditional to digital marketing making a deep focus on digital marketing strategy and advantages. Additionally, there has been done an analysis of how digital impacts also consumers' behaviours and their relationship with companies. Consumers now are even more powerful and in order to face this situation brands need to develop consumer-centred digital strategies.

*Chapter 3* is focused on online brand positioning. With the spreading of digital technologies, companies need to implement an integration of offline positioning strategies with the online ones. In this chapter there will be a detailed description of what are the most important digital tools needed to build a digital branding strategy.

In *chapter 4*, is explained how the digital revolution affects the food marketing and communication. Food is a sector that has continuously evolved and in the last decade new food trends have become at the centre of consumers' alimentary choices. Thanks to digital devices and tools, consumers are more informed and therefore increasingly pay attention on what they eat. The food communication has been profoundly touched by the new technologies and now it is unimaginable to speak of food communication without considering digital tools. All of this is reflected in the capabilities of food companies to manage in the right way the digital assets and transform their strategies into great successes.

*Chapter 5* introduces the Nestlé case study. Nestlé is the world leading company in the food and beverage industry. Its mission is to become the company leader in the nutrition, health and wellness field. This field is perfectly in line with the spreading of the new food trends which concern healthy food and way of living. It is not by chance that Nestlé is a follower of the new food trends launching new products and modifying existing ones. Moreover, it has been able to adapt to the digitalization of the sector, being always up-to-date and being a master in the usage of new technologies to communicate with consumers. Nestlé focused on the consumers' experience trying to be successful in all its features.

In order to gain its objective of being positioned in the field of nutrition, health and wellness, it has introduced a series of websites whose aim is exactly to enhance its positioning in that field. In this elaboration the focus will be on the Italian website, namely Buona la Vita, and its digital asset or Facebook page. Buona la Vita can be seen as the perfect combination between digitalization and the consequently need to be near to consumers while gaining Nestlé mission.

Finally, *chapter 6* concerns a deep analysis of the main online communication tools of Buona la Vita, namely the website and the Facebook page. The attention will be in

particular to understand how the social page can help Buona la Vita website in reaching the final goal and if it does it in a correct and effective way.

Thanks to those analysis, the thesis wants to demonstrate how and thorough what digital tools and contents a brand can achieve the desired positioning.

# Chapter 1: Brand Positioning

## 1.1 The brand concept

It does not exist a unique definition of brand. Brand is a concept that it is continuously evolving and defined in several different ways.

The traditional definition of brand defines it as 'a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service'<sup>1</sup>.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition." In this case, the key to create a brand is to choose the right elements that differentiate it from others. Those elements are called brand elements.

In other words, a brand can be explained as a 'name with the power to influence'<sup>2</sup>. Today more than even, a brand is not a brand if it does not inspire and transmit trust, respect, passion and engagement. Create a community is therefore a core issue in brand management. In order to influence buyers a brand should rely on associations and relationships. The formers represent brand image (see section 1.2.2), while the latter refer to the emotional relationships that are created between brands and consumers.

Additionally, a brand can be seen as a symbol for quality and a provider of a great amount of information about what can be expected from a product or service to consumers.

In general, there are numerous stakeholders that are interested brands (employees, shareholders, suppliers, partners, investors, regulators, etc). Even if not every brand definition considers all those stakeholders, every brand theme takes the perspective of one of them. In particular, there are two main boundaries of the brand construct: the company's activity and its consumers' perceptions. There is a continuous process in which the firm provide values and expectations through the brand products or services, and those values are interpreted and redefines by consumers. Brands create assets in the minds and hearts of consumers, distributors, prescribers, opinion leaders.

It is not by chance that the consumer-based definition of brand defined it as the 'customers' willingness to buy one brand more than its competitors, even when another

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<sup>1</sup> K.L.Keller, Strategic Brand Management, Prentice Hall, 1998

<sup>2</sup> J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management, Kogan Page, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012

brand is cheaper<sup>3</sup>. This wonder of pay more is due to the beliefs and links that have been created through time between the consumers and the brand.

The brand has also been legally defined as 'a sign or a set of signs certifying the origin of a product or service and differentiating it from the competition<sup>4</sup>'. The significant point in this definition is that the brand has a day in which it was born. From that day it becomes defensible against infringements and counterfeiting.

Summarizing, a brand is for any company an extremely valuable intangible asset as it defines the essence of the company with the ability of spreading tons of information in just a second. It is not easy to understand exactly the effect of a brand on a company, but surely it provides benefits if managed in the right ways. If a consumer is loyal and accustomed to a brand, it will probably take slot of time before he will substitute the products of that brand.

In order to manage brands, brand management starts with creating products or services that materialise the brand. A product is anything we can offer to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a need or want<sup>5</sup>. But a brand is a conditional asset. This means that it needs to work conjunctively with other material assets like products or services. Therefore, there is no brand without products or service to carry them.

Strategic brand management involves the design and implementation of marketing programs and activities to build, measure, and manage brand equity<sup>6</sup>. There four steps to follow:

- 1) Identifying and developing brand plans
- 2) Designing and implementing brand marketing programs
- 3) Measuring and interpreting brand performance
- 4) Growing and sustaining brand equity

It is possible to state that brand management is about obtaining power, with the final aim of enhancing brand awareness, purchases and engagement.

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<sup>3</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p. 7

<sup>4</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p. 8

<sup>5</sup> K.L.Keller, Strategic Brand Management, Prentice Hall, 1998

<sup>6</sup> K.L Keller, cit., p.58



## 1.2 Brand Identity and Image

### 1.2.1 Brand Identity

As previously stated, a brand is not only the name of a product, 'it is the vision that drives the creation of products and services under that name'<sup>7</sup>. Brand identity can be defined as the brand's core values and key beliefs. To say it better, brand identity is 'what helps an organization feel that it truly exists and that it is a coherent and unique being, with a history and a place of its own, different from others'<sup>8</sup>. It is how a company would like to identify itself and it is the promise that it makes to consumers. In fact, an organization transmits its identity to the consumers through its branding and marketing strategies.

A brand is unique due to its identity<sup>9</sup>. Having an identity means having a distinctive goal which is different from others, and pursue it being yourself.

Moreover, brand identity should be futuristic. Namely, it should reveal the associations aspired for the brand and establish what can be changed and what should be remained stable. It should reflect the durable qualities of a brand. Brands are living systems that have to adapt to the market and to the surrounding environment. However, it is important to remain coherent with the core values and vision which characterized and identify the brand.

The brand identity expresses everything that makes the brand what it is and without which it would be something different. Brand identity is made of a lot of different elements which constitute its DNA and which should be coherent with each other:

- 1) The brand flagship products: the product is the first source of brand identity. The brand's values must therefore be integrated in the brand's most highly symbolic products.
- 2) Brand name
- 3) Brand characters: those can be seen as emblems. They serve to symbolize brand identity through a visual figure other than the brand name. Their many functions are: to help identify and recognize the brand; guarantee the brand; give the brand durability; help differentiate and personalize.

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<sup>7</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p.149

<sup>8</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p.150

<sup>9</sup> Management Study Guide, Brand Identity - Definition and Concept,  
<http://managementstudyguide.com/brand-identity.htm> visited on 28.07.17

- 4) Visual and symbols and logotypes
- 5) Geographical and historical roots
- 6) The brand's creator: brand identity cannot be dissociated from the creator's identity.
- 7) Advertising: content and form. It is advertising that writes the history of a brand. A brand acquires a personality, a history, a culture thanks to its communication. Brands have the gift of speech and they can only exist by communicating<sup>10</sup>.

But this is not enough to explain brand identity. J. N Kapferer (2012) identifies six facets of brand identity. This is called the 'brand identity prism'<sup>11</sup>(figure 1).

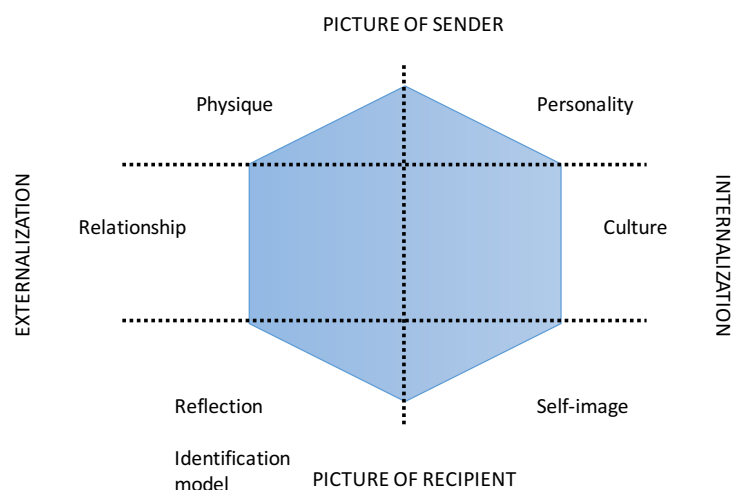


Figure 1: Brand identity prism

Source: J.N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, Kogan Page, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012

When a company communicates its brand, it wants to build a representation of itself (sender), but also a representation of the addressee (recipient) and their relationship built by communication. However, as previously stated, brands are also about products, services and satisfactions. The externalization aspect regards all the traits of a brand that a company wants to communicate with the external environment, while the internalization aspect regards all the intrinsic aspects of the brand identity.

<sup>10</sup> J.N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, Kogan Page 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012

<sup>11</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p. 158

Going more deeply on those six facets, it is possible to highlight:

1. The physical facet: it 'is both the brand's backbone and the brand tangible added value<sup>12</sup>'. It represents what a brand is concretely and specifically what does it do. The physical dimension includes also the brand's prototype: the flagship product that is the exemplar of the brand best qualities and characteristics.
2. Personality: brands have a character and how they communicate their products or services shows what kind of person they would be if they were human. A common method to diffuse the brand personality is to have a famous character representing the brand. Brand personality 'allow consumers either to identify with it or to project themselves into it<sup>13</sup>'.
3. Brands are also ideologies. Strong brands deliver culture; they are a vision of the world. This facet is the most important of the prism. The cultural facet of a brand 'is the ideological glue that ties everything together long term<sup>14</sup>'.
4. Brands are also relationships. This facet 'defines the mode of conduct that most identifies the brand<sup>15</sup>'.
5. Brands also reflect their consumers. A brand is an image of its buyer or user to which it is addressed to. But it is important to not confuse the brand reflection with its target. Reflecting the consumer stands for how a consumer should be seen as a user of that brand.
6. Brands also speak to a consumer self-image. 'Self-image is the target's own internal mirror<sup>16</sup>'. It is possible to build kind of inner relationships with ourselves thanks to the attitude towards a brand.

All those facets are linked with each other and form a well-structured entity. Brands can be intended as a form of communication since they only exist if they communicate. As every form of communication, it has a sender and a recipient. The physique and personality help define the sender, while the reflection and self-image help define the

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<sup>12</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p. 158

<sup>13</sup> K. L. Keller, Strategic Brand Management - Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, Pearson, 4th Edition 2013, p. 159

<sup>14</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 160

<sup>15</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 160

<sup>16</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 162

recipient. Relationship and culture server to fill the gap between the sender and the recipient.

Summarizing, brand identity is all that a company wants the brand to be perceived. It is a way of externally expressing a brand to the world.

Brand identity is the integration of what a company do in order to spread its mission, personality, promise to the consumers and competitive advantages.

It is important that the brand identity is sustainable. This means that what the company would like to express, has to be instantly correlated by consumers with its product/service.

### **1.2.2 Brand Image**

After describing what is brand identity, it is important to comprehend why we speak of identity rather than brand image.

Brand image 'is the consumers' perceptions about a brand, as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory<sup>17</sup>'. It is how the consumers and other stakeholders perceive the brand and how they currently view it. It is a 'synthesis made by the public of all the various brand messages<sup>18</sup>' provided by the brand identity (name, logo, product etc.). It can be defined as a unique aggregation of associations within the minds of target customers.

All the touchpoints at which consumers are exposed and form impressions in their minds constitute the brand image. An image is made on the basis of subjective perceptions of associations that the consumers have. For example, Volvo is a brand associated with safety and Toyota is associated with reliability. The idea that stands behind the brand image is that when consumers choose to buy a specific brand, they do not buy only its products or services, rather the images associated with them. Those images can be enhanced thanks to advertising, packaging, word of mouth publicity, other promotional tools, etc.

Thus, consumers develop various associations with the brand and on the basis of these associations, they form brand image. Brand associations can be either brand attributes or

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<sup>17</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p.76

<sup>18</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p. 151

benefits. Brand attributes are the characterizing features of a product or service. Brand benefits are the personal value and meaning that consumers attach to the product or service attributes<sup>19</sup>. Benefits are the reason for the purchase decision. There are three types of benefits:

- 1) Functional benefits: what you do better than others;
- 2) Emotional benefits: how you make me feel better than others;
- 3) Rational benefits: why I believe you more than others.

Summing up, 'Brand image is the customer's net extract from the brand'<sup>20</sup>.

As state before, brand identity is on the company side, it represents how a business wants to be perceived in the market. On the other hand, the brand image is nothing but the consumers' perception about the product. Differently from identity, this latter is not created but automatically formed in the mind of consumers. Therefore, identity precedes image. Before projecting an image to the public, companies need to know exactly what they want to show.

Of course, the ideal for a company should be that brand image and identity overlap. This would allow people to perceive the brand exactly as the company ideates it. However, it is quite rare that those two overlap since the involvement of consumers perceptions is extremely subjective.

### **1.3 Brand Positioning**

The strategic brand management process starts with a clear understanding of what is the brand identity and how it should be positioned with respect to competitors. Brand identity is the source of brand positioning.

The essence of positioning can be seen as assuming the desired position in the consumer's awareness by owning a specific set of associations in the context of competition. This approach points out a strong relation between brand positioning and image and brand identity. To precisely defined brand positioning a well-defined brand identity is needed. Brand identity set the boundaries of positioning by adjusting its expression, supporting

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<sup>19</sup> K. L. Keller, Strategic Brand Management - Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, Pearson, 4th Edition 2013

<sup>20</sup> Management Study Guide, Brand Image, <http://managementstudyguide.com/brand-image.htm> visited on 22.06.17

its individualism and abiding by coherence and consistence<sup>21</sup>. Brand identity consists of more detailed and useful information about a brand in the context of implementing the positioning strategy.

It is possible to state that the connection between brand identity and brand positioning stands in the degree of freedom between them that enables a brand to change over time while still remaining itself<sup>22</sup>.

In order to comprise brand identity and positioning, companies create the brand platform. This is the normative blueprint of the brand that the company wants to build in order to summarize brand identity and brand positioning<sup>23</sup>.

### **1.3.1 Brand positioning definition**

In order to define brand positioning, it is important to explain the company desired or ideal brand knowledge structures and set up the points-of-parity and points-of-difference to establish the right brand identity and brand image<sup>24</sup>. Distinctive and significant points-of-difference (PODs) indicates the reason why consumers should purchase the brand and they provide with a competitive advantage.

On the other hand, some brand characteristics and associations can be beneficial as those of competing brands, so they work as points-of-parity (POPs) in consumers' minds. Preferentially, these associations are designed to provide "no reason why not" for consumers to choose the brand<sup>25</sup>.

Points-of-difference and points-of-parity can be valuable means to guide positioning. In order to gain an optimal positioning, two key tasks are necessary: defining and communicating the competitive frame of reference; and choosing and establishing points-of-parity and points-of-difference<sup>26</sup>.

Brand positioning is fundamental in the marketing strategies. Traditionally, it is defined as the "act of designing the company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and

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<sup>21</sup> K. Janiszewska, The strategic importance of brand positioning in the place brand concept: elements, structure and application capabilities, Poznan University of Economics, 2012

<sup>22</sup> J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Kogan Page, 2012,

<sup>23</sup> J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Kogan Page, 2012,

<sup>24</sup> K. L. Keller, Strategic Brand Management - Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity, Pearson, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2013

<sup>25</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 68

<sup>26</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 87-88

valued place in the target customer's minds<sup>27</sup>". Positioning aims at finding the proper and right "position" in the minds of a market segment, in furtherance of making them think about the brand in the desired way of the company and so to maximize its benefits.

'Brand positioning specifies the angle used by the products of that brand to attack a market in order to grow their market share at the expense of competition<sup>28</sup>'. In other words, it specifies how to attack the market to grow the market share at the expense of competitors.

On the basis of fundamental attributes for the target, positioning helps a brand to be differentiated from its competitors and create a distinctive identity for the brand in the minds of the customers. Positioning is not only an important source of competitive advantage, but also acts as a support for obtaining it.

One of the key feature of brand positioning is that it should be functionally and emotionally defined in order to be significant to the target. Being important on the emotional level is not so easy but is crucial since it stimulates involvement and enthusiasm among a brand's target consumers. The majority of the decision taken from the consumers is due to emotional pushes, rather than rational ones. Consequently, companies should refer to the target emotions. On the whole, brands which create positive expectations bring stronger positive emotional linkages with their consumers. However, it is important for the brand to maintain the promises made.

Another key feature of brand positioning is brand credibility. It is based on the brand's consistency in keeping the promises it makes<sup>29</sup>. This consistency should refer to the brand's constant elements like its personality and values which do not vary even in cases of change.

Additionally, one of the key feature mostly related to brand positioning and which define it, is differentiation. Positioning aims at characterizing the brand from other different brands in the market. A brand can differentiate from competitors and from the product categories. Segmentation of the target is useful to obtain the brands distinction.

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<sup>27</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., page 79

<sup>28</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p.149

<sup>29</sup> K. Janiszewska, The strategic importance of brand positioning in the place brand concept: elements, structure and application capabilities, Poznan University of Economics,2012

### 1.3.2 Positioning process

The brand positioning strategy process, is made of seven steps<sup>30</sup>:

- 1) identifying a relevant set of competitive products/ brands;
- 2) identifying the fundamental brand attributes;
- 3) collecting data about the consumer's perception for products in the competitive frame;
- 4) analysing the current position of the brand in the competitive set in order to identify its uniqueness;
- 5) identifying the most preferred attributes by consumers;
- 6) trying to adapt the alternative possible positions with the consumers needs;
- 7) writing the positioning statement. The positioning statement is an internal document which synthetically captures brand vision to turn it into the basis of tactical and operational efforts<sup>31</sup>. Its aim is to encourage and motivate a company to strive for growth. There four main questions identifying the brand positioning statement:

1. A brand for whom? It refers to the target consumer. Identifying the consumer target is fundamental since consumers have different brand perceptions and preferences. In order to determine the target consumer, companies need to segment the market. Through market segmentation, it is possible to divide the market into different groups of consumers with similar needs and behaviours. In segmenting the market, companies encounter a trade-off between the advantage of finely segmented the marker and so satisfy all the consumers' needs, the drawbacks of a higher costs is by virtue of the reduction of standardization.
2. A brand against whom? It refers to the main competitors and to the market in which the brand operates. In other words, it is about what category is the brand competing in and the context in which the brand is relevant to customers.

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<sup>30</sup> Walker et al., 2003

<sup>31</sup> K. Janiszewska, The strategic importance of brand positioning in the place brand concept: elements, structure and application capabilities, Poznan University of Economics, 2012



3. A brand for what benefits? It refers to the benefits that the brand should provide to consumers. It is vital in this case to identify the point-of-difference and point-of-parity.
4. Reason to believe. This refers to the elements that support the claimed benefit.

In this way a company can have an idea on where to position itself in the market against the competition.

An example of the positioning statement can be one made by Amazon in 2001, when it almost sold books: For World Wide Web users who enjoy books (target consumer), Amazon.com is a retail bookseller (category in which it operates) that provides instant access to over 1.1 million books (benefits provided). Unlike traditional book retailers (point-of-difference), Amazon.com provides a combination of extraordinary convenience, low prices, and comprehensive selection (reason to believe).

### **1.3.3 Types of brand positioning**

Positioning implementation results in a specific brand image, compliant with brand identity and differentiating the brand from its competitors<sup>32</sup>.

There can be identified three basic types of brand positioning which form the basis of the positioning strategy: functional positioning, symbolic positioning and positioning through experience.

1. Functional positioning refers primarily to the differentiation of brand features through a rational nature. It stands under the idea that the brand can help to solve a consumers' problem.
2. Symbolic positioning refers fundamentally to the target's emotions. A similar type of positioning is focused on increasing the brand affinity and social acceptance of the target consumers. The brand gives emotional support to the consumers.
3. The third type of positioning is focused on the experience that the brand has furnished to the target.

### **1.3.4 Updating brand positioning**

Updating brand positioning is a key question in this context. Conventionally, positioning

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<sup>32</sup> K. Janiszewska, The strategic importance of brand positioning in the place brand concept: elements, structure and application capabilities, Poznan University of Economics, 2012

should rarely be dramatically changed, and only when the situations have a significant impact on the effectiveness of existing point-of-parity and point-of-difference.

Nevertheless, positioning has to evolve over time to better meet market opportunities and changes in the environment. Those changes can be determined by the actions of competitors or changes in the target group. In order to maintain the right brand image, positioning should be proactively monitored and requires continuous reviews and updates.

Summarizing, brand positioning points out that all consumer choices are made on the basis of comparisons. Positioning starts with the consumers, by putting companies in their place. That is to say, a company has to position the product or brand in the mind of the potential client<sup>33</sup>.

To be successful, it is important to be in contact with the reality. But the reality that surely matters is the one in the mind of prospects. The fundamental approach of positioning is not to create something new and different, rather to manipulate what is yet in the mind of consumers<sup>34</sup>.

In a society where consumers are constantly under numerous of communications and in which competition is increasing, the only hope is to be selective and concentrate on narrow objective segmenting the market.

In defiance of the volume of communication at which it is exposed, the mind filter and refuse a lot of information that is received. In brief, the mind accepts only what can be linked to previous knowledge and experiences.

### **Reason behind chapter 1**

The analysis of brand positioning is fundamental to understand the case study under examinations. Brand positioning has been the strategy that pulled Nestlé to create the website Buona la Vita and its Facebook page.

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<sup>33</sup> A.Ries, J. Trout, Il Posizionamento. La battaglia per le vostre menti, Anteprima, 2016

<sup>34</sup> A.Ries, J. Trout, Il Posizionamento. La battaglia per le vostre menti, Anteprima, 2016

## Chapter 2: Digital revolution and consumers changes

### 2.1 The digital revolution

Between 1950s and 1970s, emerged a revolution that would have changed the world forever: the digital revolution. It is arguable to say that it starts with the introduction of the first personal computer and consequently explodes with the born of the internet.

Internet brought connectivity and connectivity brought power to be less concentrated in the hands of a few but rather in the inclusivity of people. But not only, connectivity has also destroyed some of the most successful and popular industries. Think about the bookstores that has been overthought by Amazon; or iTunes that have been demolished by Spotify. Thousands of other examples can be mentioned to demonstrate how internet has changed the world.

This fast digital transformation has been driven mainly by connected consumers, the diffusion of mobile phones and elevated mobile broadband adoption.

From the Italian perspective, the use of the web is growing even more. In 2016, the number of person which were connected to the internet registered a growth of 4% respect to 2015<sup>35</sup>.

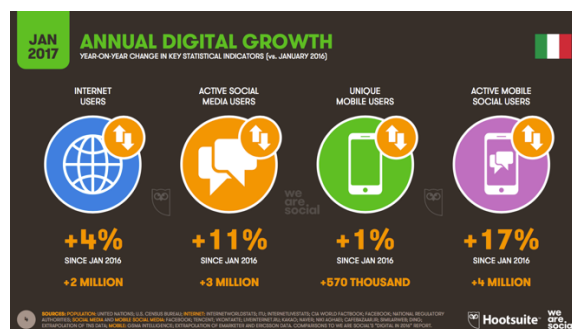


Figure 2: Actual Digital Growth in Italy

Source: We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

Audiweb<sup>36</sup> shows that mobile is one of the main responsible of the diffusion of the internet. The mobile audience presents around 25 millions of users and have overtook

<sup>35</sup> We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

<sup>36</sup> C. Varpi, Audiweb: il mobile traina la crescita dell'utenza internet, <http://www.engage.it/ricerche/audiweb-mobile-iab-forum2016/90852#I07XoUg2y4ePsBAL.97>, visited on 23.06.17

desktop with around 22 million users. The 'mobile only' navigation have been doubled in one year reaching 4.3 millions of unique users per month. The use of internet from mobile have seen a growth of 35 percent in two years. Infact, from the data<sup>37</sup> it is possible to infer that 77 percent of the total time online is due to mobile surfing, and the 88 percent of this time is spent using mobile apps.

The research 'Digital in 2017', developed by a collaboration between We Are Social and Hootsuite, shows that people which surf using the pc has decreased by 14 percent while all the connections from other devices are growing (see figure 3).

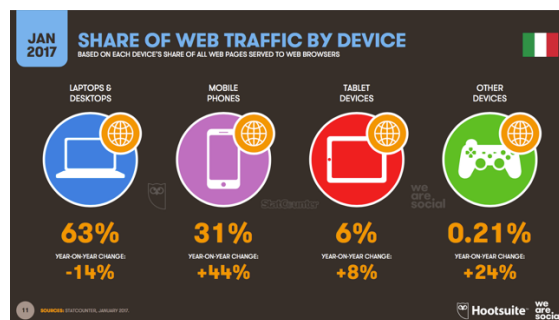


Figure 3: Share of Web traffic by device in Italy

Source: We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

Moreover, it is important to notice that the usage of mobile is spreading around all the population segments (see figure 4).

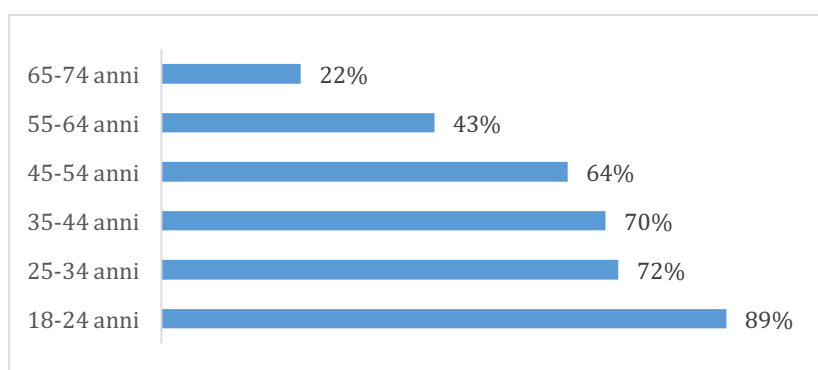


Figure 4: The usage of mobile phones in Italy per age

Source: Audiweb data 2016

But, as previously shown, Italians do not renounce to surf on the internet using desktop.

<sup>37</sup> Data Audiweb 2016

There are around 20 millions of users which are cross-device, namely they use both mobile and pc.

As regards to the time spent online, Millennials are those which result 'always on', with around 60 hours spend online per month, preferring video content and e-commerce. The generation X<sup>38</sup>, is the cross-device one while the Boomers<sup>39</sup> are now in the exploring phase but yet register a growth.

Taking a global view, 'Digital in 2017'<sup>40</sup> shows that more than the half of the population have a smartphone, almost two third own a mobile phone, and more than the half of the internet traffics are generated by mobile.

Looking at all those data, it is possible to infer that Internet and its related devices are becoming part of our daily life, changing it. In this respect, many sectors exploit those changes and new sectors are established. The field of marketing and communication have been profoundly transformed and new forms and tools were established.

### **2.1.1 Traditional and digital marketing**

The digital revolution has brought radical changes in the field of marketing and communication. It has changed the way in which companies communicate with consumers and how consumers relate to each other.

At the end of last decade, there was the belief that digital media would have completely substitute the traditional ones.

Digital media, which are all the media that were born with the appearance of new technologies, are essentially of three types.

- Paid media: are the means for which the company paid to gain visibility.
- Earned Media: those are the obtained thanks to citation of a company website or other tools on reviews, citations, conversations among user and so on. They are not under direct control of the company. This category of media includes also user generated content. User Generated Contents (UGC), are contents directly created by users rather than companies.

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<sup>38</sup>People with age between 35 and 54 years old

<sup>39</sup> People with age between 55 and 74 years old

<sup>40</sup> We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

The Facebook shares or the reviews on a product are prime example of earned media.

- Owned Media: are those tools directly managed by the company. On those media, the company has a direct control.

Media type	Definition	Examples	The role	Benefits	Challenges
Owned media	Channel a brand controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Mobile site</li> <li>• Blog</li> <li>• Twitter account</li> </ul>	Build for longer-term relationships with existing potential customers and earn media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control</li> <li>• Cost efficiency</li> <li>• Longevity</li> <li>• Versatility</li> <li>• Niche audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No guarantees</li> <li>• Company communication not trusted</li> <li>• Takes time to scale</li> </ul>
Paid media	Brand pays to leverage a channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display ads</li> <li>• Paid search</li> <li>• Sponsorships</li> </ul>	Shift from foundation to a catalyst that feeds owned and creates earned media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In demand</li> <li>• Immediacy</li> <li>• Scale</li> <li>• Control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter</li> <li>• Declining response rates</li> <li>• Poor credibility</li> </ul>
Earned media	When customers become the channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WOM</li> <li>• Buzz</li> <li>• "Viral"</li> </ul>	Listen and respond — earned media is often the result of well-executed and well-coordinated owned and paid media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most credible</li> <li>• Key role in most sales</li> <li>• Transparent and lives on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No control</li> <li>• Can be negative</li> <li>• Scale</li> <li>• Hard to measure</li> </ul>

54869 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 5: Digital Media Types

Source: Forrester research 2009, <http://www.riccardoperini.com/classificazione-social-media.php>

As shown in figure 5, owned media include: the website, blog, social media; paid media include online advertising and paid search and sponsorship; earned media regards word of mouth. All those management tools will be explained more in detail in section 2.3.

Independently from the type of companies, whether big or small, all these media have to converge accordingly have a complete digital strategy. When a company starts to enter in the world of digital marketing, it is almost obvious that it will possess its own media such as a website or a blog. Today more than ever in order to gain visibility and to enhance the awareness of owned media, paid media are necessary. Earned media are those which are more difficult to gain but the most important to reach the consumers. People are increasingly becoming diffident in contents made by the brands themselves and have even more trust towards the opinions and experiences of their peers. Thus, achieve earned media is of fundamental importance.

However, the conviction that those type of media would have destroyed traditional ones, has by now been abandoned since digital and traditional media are even more cohabiting. Internet have not superseded traditional media even if it is true that it influences the frequency of usage of those media, notably in regard to the television enjoyment.

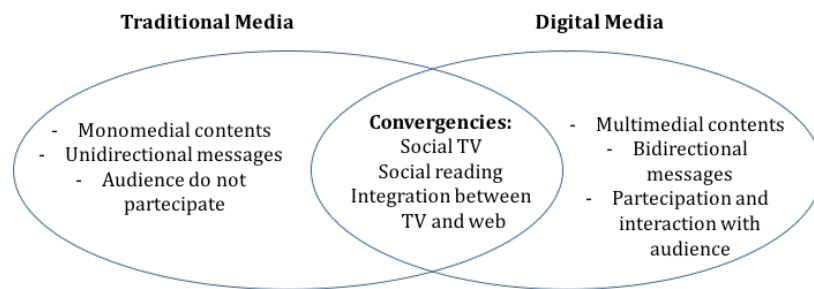


Figure 6: Traditional and Digital Media

Source: personal elaboration

For decades, companies have boosted their products mainly through traditional media formats like television, radio, newspapers and magazines. But the rapid diffusion of personal computers and mobile devices connected with internet tools, have forced companies to become more active online and engage with their consumers using digital media.

The traditional marketing approach is linear and the company is always in a superior position respect to consumers. The relationship is unidirectional and top down. Consumers receive the messages on products without any kind of possibilities of being informed about what are their real benefits. Companies interact with consumers only at the moment of purchase. In digital marketing, companies establish a real relationship with its consumers, inviting them to reflect and than act. Digital advertising leverage on emotions and needs of people, influencing the perception of reality.

Over the past years, there have been a shift from product-driven marketing (marketing 1.0) to consumer-centric marketing (marketing 2.0), and from this latter to human-centric marketing and ultimately to Marketing 4.0 that amplifies the human-centric marketing to cover every aspect of the consumer's journey.

Philip Kotler, the modern father of marketing and the inventor of the traditional marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion), argues that 'the marketing mix has evolved to accommodate more consumer participation. Marketing mix (the four P's) should be redefined as the four C's (co-creation, currency, communal activation, and conversation<sup>41</sup>'.

To develop new products companies should not only consider what are their wonder but have to co-create them with their consumers. Are growing more and more the examples

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<sup>41</sup> P. Kotler, Marketing 4.0 – moving from traditional to digital, Wiley, 2016, p.49 e ss.

of food companies that launch new products suggested by consumers (see chapter 2 and 4). The long-term goal of companies that co-create products or services with their consumers is to increase the level of participation and engagement in relational perspective<sup>42</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the concept of price changes: from a static price to a dynamic one. With the use of the internet prices are not the same everywhere: online retailers can offer a unique pricing for each consumer. As consumer's demand become more and more immediate, the channels inevitably are now varying. We are assisting the born and diffusion of peer-to-peer channels (es. Ebay, Airbnb). Finally, promotion has been transformed profoundly. Today, companies are sending messages to consumers and consumers are answering to these messages thanks to all the digital tools that they have used, mainly social media. As a consequence, in the latter years the majority of brands are moving the investments on digital rather than traditional tools. This because digital guarantees to companies a high traceability of results and integration within the different multichannel tools.

To better understand how digital influences marketing, it is important to define digital marketing and its main tools. Digital marketing 'is nothing but marketing a product or business using the digital medium and leveraging it to get favourable results'<sup>43</sup>.

Digital marketing has changed the way of doing marketing and is now an integral part of any business plan.

In the digital era, the market is virtual, dematerialized, and the offer is constituted by information on products. By all means, the client is even more aware of his power and that his voice has an impact on the web. This type of new consumers is always searching for more personalized experiences therefore companies need to involve and engage consumers (section 2.2.4).

Moreover, the competition has changed. Since with internet there have not been any kind of barriers, the number of competitors are growing and so there is an excitement towards innovation in order to be differentiated.

Among the numerous functionalities that it can have, digital marketing allows companies to make targeted and customized campaigns through various tools; enables them to

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<sup>42</sup> A.Olietti, Il fenomeno della co-creazione: aziende alla ricerca di idee innovative tra i consumatori, 2012, <http://www.brandforum.it/papers/1082/il-fenomeno-della-co-creazione-aziende-alla-ricerca-di-idee-innovative-tra-i-consumatori>, visited on 23.06.17

<sup>43</sup> Y.Hassim, Digital Marketing: Digital Positioning, 2014, p. 28



engage directly with consumers; provide a great amount of interesting data on the consumers and prospects; increase the visibility on social media and search engines; enhance brand awareness.

It is possible to summarize the main advantages of digital marketing as follow:

1. **Ubiquitous Connectivity:** people now are connected through different platforms like tv, mobile, personal computer. Through the presence in those different touchpoints, companies can more easily reach their consumers.
2. **Instantaneity:** Internet offer connectivity and connectivity have no time constraints. Using digital tools, a company can interact and reach its consumers 24 hour / 24 hours.  
Internet allows people to be instantaneous. Messages and contents can be sent in few seconds.
3. **Engagement:** the explosion of all the interactive media has facilitates active engagement. The engagement is a fundamental element of digital marketing. It allows brands to start a new type of relationship with the consumer, a long-term personal relationship. Engagement is important also because it can create an emotional connection between consumers and brands.
4. **User-generated content:** consumers nowadays aimed at being in the centre of the decisions made by the companies. UGC is a new powerful way to attract consumers and to establish with them a solid relationship.
5. **Personalization:** digital marketing tools allow firms to personalize content for each consumer, open a new way of targeting consumers.
6. **Social graphs:** thanks chiefly to social network, firms can influence not only on the profile of a specific person, but also on the network of people it is surrounded.
7. **Globalization:** Internet is globalized medium. It can be accessed without any national or geographic boundaries.
8. **Cost saving:** the cost of using digital marketing tools is in general cheaper in respect to traditional marketing tools like the tv, radio etc. so, it is possible to make small amount of investments in digital marketing and obtain a high ROI. This feature helps small organizations to market their business targeting the global customer base. Thanks to the internet, small, young and local companies can compete against the big ones.

Although, there can be drawbacks in digital marketing. The principals are:

1. Coherence: the first risk which could occur when using digital marketing is the lack of coherence with the identity of the company's business. If the corporate image is incoherent and linear on different communication channels, it could be misleading for consumers and not profitable for the company.
2. Security and Privacy: When it comes to online, it is important to be aware of fraudulent activities and online spam.  
Spamming is one of the prime challenges for online marketing and confidential data can be easily hacked.

### *Digital marketing strategy*

In order to implement a digital marketing strategy, it is important for a company to answer to two important questions<sup>44</sup>:

1. if its audience is online or is going to be online: it is fundamental to know if consumers use digital tools to make researches or purchase products or services online. However, businesses need to know that it is the next generation that will be the new consumers, and the demand for digital interactions from companies are becoming more frequent.
2. if its products, services or brands are suited to digital marketing: the answer to this question is usually positive since once a company has an online audience, it should be obvious that its activities will be promoted online.

Setting a digital marketing strategy will help a company to make conscious decisions and ensure that its efforts are directly focused on the tools of digital marketing that are most relevant to the company business. Thus, a clear defined strategy will benefit a company ensuring that its marketing activities are always in line with the business goals and, most of all, that the target that it reaches is the desired one.

However, there is not a 'one size fit all' strategy to ensure digital marketing successes. Every business has its own characteristics and needs to follow its unique digital strategy. Despite this, it is possible to delineate some key components fundamental to the

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<sup>44</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

implementation of a company digital marketing strategy<sup>45</sup>.

1. Know the objectives that have to be achieved: it is of fundamental importance for a company to have a clear idea of what it wants to achieve with its activity in digital marketing.

In general, the objectives should be SMART. It is an acronym that stands for:

- S - Specific, the objectives do not have to be too broad;
- M - Measurable, objective should be measured to understand if the strategy is successful or not;
- A - Attainable, and so realistic;
- R - Relevant that means to not distract from the core goal;
- T - Time-bound, and so to put a deadline in order to reach the specific objective.

Setting clearly the desired goals is a key issue in a digital marketing strategy.

2. Know the competition: it is important to know which are the main competitors in the digital field trying to understand their strategic skills, their successes and failures. Most of all it is fundamental to figure out what can make the company different from them.
3. Know the target: knowing the consumers that the company wants to address all its activities is necessary. A company needs to know who they are, what they want and aspect from it, and what their relationship with digital technologies.
4. Know the performances: on the whole, all the digital marketing strategy can be measured choosing the right KPIs or key performance indicators. 'Are certain digital channels delivering more traffic than others? Why is that? Measure, tweak, refine, re-measure. Digital marketing is an ongoing and iterative process<sup>46</sup>'. KPIs not only give to a company an immediate sense of the marketing performances, they also highlight the potential problems.

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<sup>45</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014, p. 26

<sup>46</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014, p. 27 e ss.

Some generic KPIs can be: conversion rate, page views, unique visitors, bounce rate and so on. Those elements will be better explained in chapter 3.

However, in digital marketing exists a concept that regard mysterious creatures who exist in a hyper-connected, multifaceted cyber-world of their own<sup>47</sup>. They can be considered an enigma: they speak a different language, communicate in ways that are difficult to understand, and they are changing the world of marketing. These are 'digital consumers', who slip effortlessly through the marketer's grasp<sup>48</sup>.

## **2.2 Changes in consumer behaviour**

With the new means of communication based on the internet, also the behaviour of consumers have changed.

Consumers are becoming more cautious in making choices and are less loyal to brands.

One of the most important and impactful change due to new digital tools has been the fact that now consumers are contents producers. On the basis of their experiences, consumers produce contents online and share them with friends through social media. Those can have a big impact on the reputation of a company products since these new category of contents 'creator' are more trustworthy than the companies themselves.

At this point, the aim of companies is to try to provide good experiences in such a way that consumers will be satisfied.

Consumers, empowered by social media and digital devices, are now dictating when, where and how they engage with brands<sup>49</sup>. They are no more only spectators but have become in like manner critics and creators, demanding even to modify products and services in order to receive a personalised experience.

A plenty of tools have given consumers a voice and at length they expect it to be heard.

Not by chance, the socio-economic context in which we are living can be defined as the 'Consumers era'<sup>50</sup>. Consumers do not content themselves with simply the purchase of a

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<sup>47</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014, p. 27

<sup>48</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014, p. 27

<sup>49</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

<sup>50</sup> KPMG and Nunwood, L'era della customer experience, Harvard Business Review Italia, 2017

products, rather they are demanding an experience of profound interaction with brands. Particularly mobile and social media, have accelerated the process of transfer the decisional power from companies to consumers. Those latter became the real protagonists of the new shopping experience.

Customer experience can be defined as the sum of the experiences, emotions and memories that a customer has matured in his interaction with the brand at all stages of its life cycle. Today, more than ever, customers expect personalized experiences (offerings, content, custom-made products, etc.), transparent communication (prices, conditions, service changes, etc.), efficient distribution (quick deliveries, real-time, etc.) and instant satisfaction.

This is a radically different scenario respect to the time when customers, adapted their needs to companies. Companies have to anticipate customers' dreams and need to get in touch with them.

### 2.2.1 The new consumer decision journey

One of the marketing goal is “to reach consumers at the moment that most influence their decisions<sup>51</sup>”. Those moments, in which consumers are open to influence, are known as touch points.

For years, in order to understand touch points, marketers have been using the metaphor of the funnel.

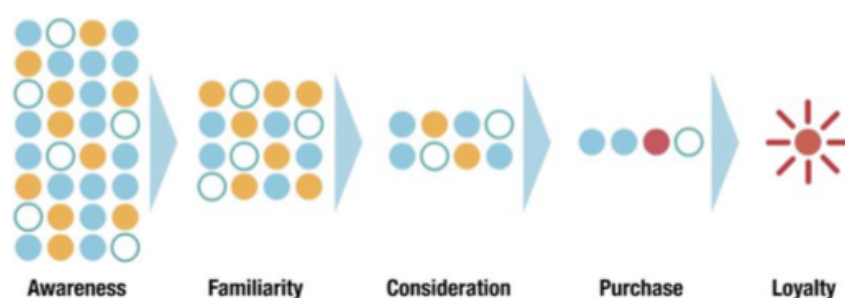


Figure 7: The traditional funnel

Source: McKinsey Quarterly, The Consumer Decision Journey, 2009

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<sup>51</sup> The Consumer decision Journey, McKinsey Quarterly, 2009

As shown in figure 7, in the awareness phase, consumers have in mind lot of different brands that have continuously studded them with messages. The funnel starts to narrow when consumers choose their favourite brands that become first familiar, then enter in the consideration set, that is the number of brand that a person would like to buy, and finally consumers purchase the product of the brand that they have chosen. Subsequently, if the products meet their expectations, consumers will become loyal to a brand and will repeat the purchase.

This type of approach is perfect to describe the relationship between consumers and companies through traditional media. An example can be made for the tv advertising: consumers see the advertisings of many different products by different brand. Then start to familiarize with some of them, that are the ones which will enter in the consideration set. Once at the store, consumers will purchase the ones that have mostly influence them. If the products perform as expected, it will return to be purchased another time. As we can see, in this example there is an unidirectional relationship in which the company communicate with consumers and those latters limit themselves at the purchase of the products without any interaction with the company.

But today the situation is different. With all the digital tools available, companies are no more able to capture all the touch points necessary to influence consumers.

Thanks to the digital media, social media in particular, the flow of communication has become bidirectional rather than unidirectional. Through social media, consumers can directly and immediately interact with brands and those latters have not to be unprepared.

The new consumer journey is circular and not linear as was before (figure 8).

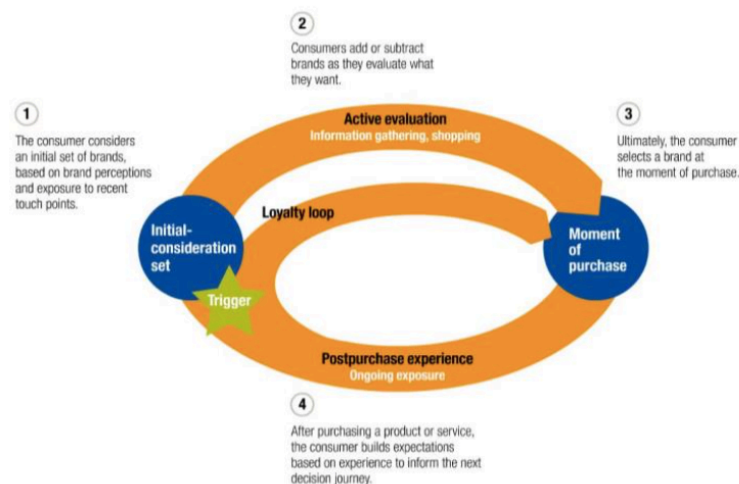


Figure 8: The consumer Decision Journey

Source: The Consumer Decision Journey, McKinsey Quarterly, 2009

In the brand consideration phase, the consumers consider an initial sets of brand on the basis of brand perceptions and the exposure to touch points that can be company generated but also user generated. Obviously brand awareness matters. It has been demonstrated that brands in the initial consideration set can be up to three times more likely to be purchased eventually than the brands that are not in it<sup>52</sup>. In this phase internet tools are fundamental for consumers to gain information and for companies to reach them.

In the active evaluation phase, the number of brand taken in consideration by consumers can expand rather than only narrow, as it was in the funnel method. This is because, thanks to digital tools, consumers now seek information on websites, forums and social media before making the decision of purchase. In response to this, companies try to add touch points and invest in consumer driven marketing like internet reviews, Word of mouth recommendations, in-store interaction and post-experience reviews.

The third phase is characterized by the moment in which consumers choose the brand and purchase it.

The latter phase, or active post purchase experience, is the more interesting an important one. The post-purchase experience shapes consumers' opinion for every subsequent decision in the category. Today consumers can interact directly with the brand and give opinion on the products through different type of tools: from reviews to comments on

<sup>52</sup> The Consumer Decision Journey, McKinsey Quarterly, 2009

social media. Those latter become another touch point for other consumers, that is why the new consumer decision journey is an on going cycle. Today the opinion of pairs is more important and influence our opinion more than all the types of advertising made by companies.

Consumers trust is no more a vertical concept, it is horizontal. Consumers today believe more in the f-factor<sup>53</sup>: friends, family, Facebook fans, twitter followers, review forums. In our daily world, communal rating systems such as Tripadvisor or Yiepl have become almost of daily use by consumers.

### **2.2.2 Social opinion as the new driver to make decisions**

In order to become loyal and confident, consumers today expect a complete opening by brands. They have to show their authentic characters and, most of all, have to be honest about their true values. Consumers want to be considered as peers and friend of brands. These are the only ways for consumers to trust a brand.

The traditional purchasing process have been almost destroyed by the tendency through which consumers buy products only after having the approval and recommendation of some peers.

Even if the decision-making process can seem more complex, the new digital tools can be used to perfect consumers' choices. 'Indeed the ability of consumers to distribute information using a variety of networks, digital media devices and platforms not only lets them connect with their peers, it also helps enrich the information shared<sup>54</sup>'.

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<sup>53</sup> P. Kotler, cit., page 12

<sup>54</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014



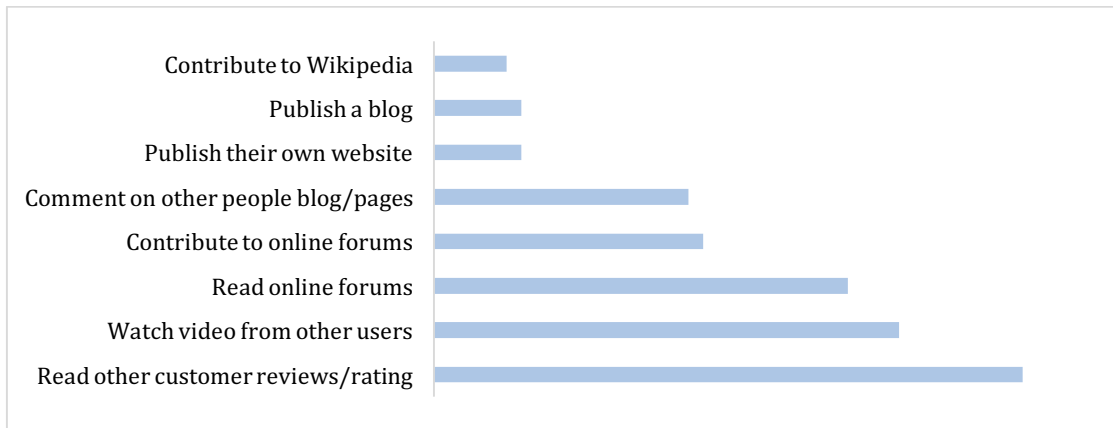


Figure 9: Attitudes towards digital contents

Source: Rielaboration of data from Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

As shown in figure 9, the majority of consumers read reviews and check ratings, contribute to online forums or comment on other people’s blogs. Moreover, there is also a smaller proportion that are genuine content creators which publish a blog or manage their own website.

Thus, consumers today are no more passive, rather are active media of communication. In their purchasing process, they follow social opinions and the purchase is based on social decisions rather than influenced completely by companies’ communication. The dependency on the opinion of others has become the normality and social media have played a fundamental role in this process.

There is a general evidence that consumers prefer to trust independent sources to find information rather than communications made by businesses.

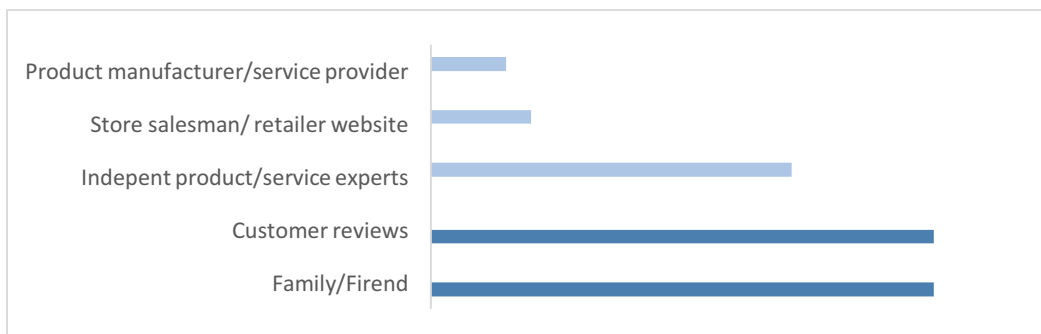


Figure 10: Most trusted source of information on products and services

Source: Rielaboration of data from Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

As shown in figure 10, consumer trust mostly other peers and family/friend opinions rather than the one made by people who directly for business or the business themselves. So, principally consumers make their experience a social one, sharable with others.

Thank to this sharing of consumers' opinions, they are interacting more in the development of products and services. The participation of like-minded people to promote their voices and opinions, allows to demonstrate the power of crowd. This is the source of co-creation, a tendency that is spreading across all the markets. Some companies are using crowd-based tools to develop their products and services.

Today consumers can no more only take under consideration what is on offer, they can have their own idea and try to search it on the web but even more to create it. Consumers can ask for services or products they would like to have or need. Hence, the consumers' involvement in imaging and conceptualising the product or service they need is higher in respect to the past.

Consumers have now all the instruments to research what they want and even satisfy most of their needs by also creating the products and services they want.

### **2.2.3 The reaction of companies to the new consumers' experience**

There is no doubt that customer experience represents the new competitive arena and the first truly distinctive asset for companies, exceeding the structural characteristics of a product, such as quality and price. Providing a high-level customer experience allows companies to establish an emotional connection with their customers, directing relationships and behaviours in a business growth perspective.

According to a research made by KPMG and Nunwood<sup>55</sup>, there are 'Six Pillars' of customer experience.

1. Personalization: consists in personalizing the experience of each single clients in order to create a unique emotional relationship;
2. Expectations: manage and exceed the expectations of clients;
3. Time and commitments: minimize the time and the commitments required by clients, through clear and simple processes;

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<sup>55</sup> KPMG and Nunwood, L'era della customer experience, Harvard Business Review Italia, 2017

4. Integrity: being credible and inspiring trust;
5. Resolution: transforming a simple experience in a brilliant one;
6. Empathy: try to understand the expectations of clients in order to establish a profound relationship.

The research made by KPMG<sup>56</sup> classify Amazon as the leader in the Customer Experience, constantly overcoming customer expectations through continuous innovations aimed at facilitating the entire purchasing experience.

Amazon is the reference point in the Italian context, thanks to the ability to make efficiency and delivery times the brand's business card, combined with an unmatched customer service based on personalization.

In general, brands that excellence in the customer experience have as major objective the client's satisfaction.

The roads leading to this goal are different, but they all pass from some obligatory stages:

- Create omni-channel experiences. In these latter years, the idea of multichannel marketing has been abandoned in favour of omni-channel marketing. Multichannel marketing consists of using the same marketing strategy and messages via multiple channels. On the contrary, omni-channel marketing is based on the idea that consumers want to engage and communicate with companies across multiple channels in a way that suits them.

In today's increasingly digital-first world, customers expect a consistent experience between online and offline channels. Omnicanality is therefore a key element to ensure a customer experience that meets customer expectations.

- Mature a global vision, striving to achieve excellent service levels that surpass geographic boundaries;
- Know the customers in order to offer a tailor-made experience. Customer knowledge enables companies to excel in customer experience, allowing them to reach high levels of customization and proper customer expectations management.

An example is the campaign made by Ferrero "Like you there is no one". Ferrero

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<sup>56</sup> KPMG and Nunwood, L'era della customer experience, Harvard Business Review Italia, 2017

made 7 million of different, customized Nutella tins.



Figure 11: Nutella 'Like you there is no one'

Source: Google images

Customization is not enough just to understand the needs of the customer, it is also necessary to educate the customer to know the company and discover its offer. Thus, companies need to implement contents that are aimed at informing and educating consumers rather than simply selling to them.

- Investing in a way that employees become the first promoters of the brand's customer experience by building a human contact with customers.

### *Innovators and followers*

*"It will not be the biggest fish to eat the smallest, but it will be the fastest one to eat that slow"* says Leo Wencel, president and CEO of Nestlé Italia.

Many large businesses have been slow to respond and have retained silos that separate their different touch points with consumers. Moreover, most of those that have responded to changes are 'fast followers' with few consumer businesses really innovating.

'Innovators are those businesses that have started to regain ownership of the consumer journey by using consumer data and insight to inform the business strategy and by changing their operating model accordingly<sup>57</sup>'. They are the ones who:

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<sup>57</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

- Listen to the consumers: set up social command centres or social listening posts to trace consumers conversation about their brands and engage directly with them.
- Inspire consumers: developing tools to foster customer advocacy and social media platforms to inspire and encourage consumers to promote the company brands.
- Co-create: using crowd-sourced tools and engage with active followers in order to converse with them. User generated contents can either increase the conversation rates and encourage consumer's loyalty.

An example can be made in the case of Coca Cola HBC Italia, which launched Coca Cola Lemon for the first time in Italy after the experience of Expo 2015, where the Italian citizens' love for citrus fruits was recorded. "You can safely say that this is a product created by consumers<sup>58</sup>".

#### *Dealing with the power of consumers*

Deloitte research<sup>59</sup> underlines some of the risks that can occur if a company ignores the growing power of consumers. There are some elements that have to be taken into consideration when dealing with the power of consumers.

First of all, consumer activism. Consumer activism has exponentially grown over the last years and should be under control for all consumer-facing businesses. Issues like data security, reputational risks, the protection of consumers' rights and customer satisfaction, are all risks connected to this new tendency. In response to this, companies need to alleviate risks by implementing platforms and tools able to monitor what content is shared and by whom.

Second, consumer communities. Social communities are becoming incredibly powerful. Choose not to be present on social media could bring consumers to vent their concerns or views on a competitor's social platform. Offering great customer services will be reflected on companies' social media activities. This should be seen as an opportunity to build powerful relationships with their customers.

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<sup>58</sup> S. Sagone, Linkontro. Coca - Cola, Ferrero, Nestlè, Unilever, Facebook: agili, veloci, flessibili, e digital oriented per comunicazioni one to one coi consumatori. Così cambia il marketing del largo consume, Nielsen, May 2017, <http://www.adcgroup.it/adv-express/big-data/nielsen/linkontro-coca-cola-ferrero-nestle-unilever-facebook-agili-veloci-flessibili-e-digital-oriented-per-comunicazioni-one-to-one-coi-consumatori-.html>

<sup>59</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

Thus, responding to the consumers scepticism through the ability of big brands to maintain their promises, companies have to engage consumers directly through social media platforms. As it will be explained better in section 2.3.3, social media are the biggest opportunities that companies across industries have to connect directly to consumers. However, this tendency has a double face: on the one hand the engagement through those tools is fundamental to reach consumers; but on the other hand, some of these practices can impact negatively on consumers' trust. Companies tend to 'sanitize' the content that appears on social media about their brands and many businesses have taken some of the negative consumers' conversations offline while encouraging people with positive experiences to share them more widely. This can be detrimental to businesses as they run the risk of being removed from the conversations about their brands altogether.

Social engagement can help businesses become more transparent and this is strictly linked with consumers trust. 'Businesses that keep their promises and act more transparently tend to be rewarded as consumers are more likely to talk about their experience when they are satisfied than when dissatisfied<sup>60</sup>'. Deloitte research<sup>61</sup> shows that the majority of consumers will tell their peers about a positive experience, while only one third will talk about unsatisfactory experiences. Businesses should give the right importance and recognize their main advocates, personalising responses for them and recognize that they can be fundamental to increase brands good reputation on social media.

Third, enterprise-wide transparency. 'Building consumer's trust is dependent on brand messages being consistent with the consumer's experience of the product or service<sup>62</sup>'. – All the entire supply and value chains should be focused on delivering the brand's promise.

Finally, loyalty. As previously shown, digital has changed the traditional purchase funnel, and what used to be a linear route from awareness to loyalty is now circular. For companies it is fundamental to remain relevant across all the touchpoints of the customer journey.

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<sup>60</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

<sup>61</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

<sup>62</sup> The Deloitte Consumer Review, The growing power of consumers, 2014

## **Reasons behind chapter 2**

The last decade has been characterized to be the one of the digital revolution. Of course, this has had a big impact on the consumers' behaviours and the way in which companies communicate with them. Digital media enter in the life of people, even if, as we will see for the food sector, traditional ones are still important.

In order to better understand the final case of Nestlé Buona la Vita, it has been relevant to underline how to elaborate a digital marketing strategy, with a particular focus on its objectives and advantages. Moreover, since Nestlé is a company always putting the consumers at the forefront, and since Buona la Vita is a consumer relationship website, it has been analysed the consumers' behaviour changes. Consumers are no more only spectators, rather they are critics and creators. With the diffusion of digital technology, for companies it is complicated to retain consumers and make them loyal. Businesses have to provide a unique consumers experience able to conquer consumers and their peers. As we will see in the case study, Nestlé has been an innovator in those fields, being up-to-date with digital and consumers' changes.

## Chapter 3: Brand positioning online

As seen in the previous chapter, the last ten years have been characterized by the fast development of new digital technologies, changings in the consumers' lifestyles and the increasing power of consumers that now interact with companies on an ordinarily basis. Digital marketing is the perfect tool for small, medium and large companies to gain an online identity and get in touch with lot of consumers and prospects.

Additionally, Internet has also changed the ways in which companies manage their brands.

As a consequence, brands need to adapt to this changing environment becoming even more digital.

Marketing positioning is a concept that lays out a strategy to market a company brand to its potential consumers<sup>63</sup>. It provides the vision of the brand to the target audience,. Its main goal is a unique and clear space in the target minds.

In these circumstances, it is fundamental for brands to synergize their positioning strategies with online positioning strategies.

Consumers are no longer mere spectators, rather are active and directly communicate with companies (section 2.2). Hence, the traditional positioning strategies may not succeed as segments are becoming smaller and less homogenous<sup>64</sup>. In order to build a strong brand, consumers have to be reached through multiple channels. "Digital channels and assets are used to communicate a brand's positioning as part of multichannel brand communication or engagement programmes<sup>65</sup>".

Digital branding is about the sum of all the digital experiences that a consumer has with a brand. All those experiences are influenced by the brand identity elements.

Brand can be seen as the personality of a company. Today, digital media give the opportunity to companies to show their true personality.

Another way to see digital branding is to consider it as the brand positioning that is made with particular reference to the digital market. For a digital branding strategy all the skills related to the traditional marketing approach are needed, plus those of digital marketing.

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<sup>63</sup> Y.Hassim, Digital Marketing: Digital Positioning, 2014

<sup>64</sup> Solomon, 2003

<sup>65</sup> What is digital branding?, Smart insights, 2017, <http://www.smartinsights.com/online-brand-strategy/brand-development/digital-branding-definition/>, visited on 28.05.17



Branding and strategic marketing must therefore follow an appropriate digital marketing strategy.

Summing up, it is possible to state that a brand is the driver in a company business. And digital is a tool-set for activating that brand<sup>66</sup>. The stronger a company brand is, the better position it gains. But in order to do that, three essentials have to be followed:

1. Promises and truths: it is important that the brand knows its essential and intrinsic characteristics, what it wants to communicate, what are its objectives, and its target. Practically, it is not important to focus only on the external positioning and external brand expressions.
2. Focus on connections: brands have to think of the total online consumer experience, and so they have to leverage a wide range of digital tools relevant to them. Those are the brand touchpoints and include websites, apps, social media channels, broadcast, retail and real estate. It is important that the positioning remains coherent independently from the channel.
3. Achieve ROI through those promises: the promises above can be seen as brand differentiation concepts in order to gain the desired ROI.

### **3.1 Off-line and on-line branding**

As in the traditional branding also in the digital one, the brand's positioning is the key element.

Online communication allows company to highlight certain aspects of a brand that could not be done with off-line advertising. Through digitalization, the functional attributes of a brand could be converted in information-based functionalities. This offers interesting opportunities for e-positioning of brands. It extends the conventional positioning to offer whole customer experience which spans the entire decision-making stages of consumer's selection process from prepurchase to postpurchase<sup>67</sup>.

Moreover, the positioning could use e-positioning to be in line with the changing environment. The digital world is dynamic and continuously evolving. Meeting the

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<sup>66</sup> D. Bosomworth, Brand strategy – Core to digital strategy, but often MIA, Smartinsights, 2017, <http://www.smartinsights.com/online-brand-strategy/brand-development/brand-positioning-strategy/>, visited 23.07.17

<sup>67</sup> Bloch, 1995

changing demands, it surely easier in the online than in the off-line world.

Additionally, with each touchpoint consumers interact with, it constitutes an experience. And the sum of all those experiences designs the brand perception. So, it is important that all the touchpoints are coherent.

Every marketing activity that help to build a company digital branding needs to be clearly connected with the company business objectives and values and so with the brand identity. If the digital branding is not properly aligned to the business strategy and values, it will not produce any profitable results. Some companies create fabulous social campaigns that engage lots of people but they do not increase sales since they were not in line with the business objectives. An interesting example that can be mentioned in this case is the one of Pepsi and its 'Pepsi Refresh Project'. Pepsi's principal objective is to sell its products. During the Super Bowl adv. did not want to put the product in the hands of a super star, it has always been done in this way. It wanted to do something different. Pepsi would give the money that it would have spent in the commercial for the super bowl, to good causes. Consumers could vote on social media the causes that they would like to give the money to. Millions of people voted but the there was not any increase of sales. The cause of this result is not that this was not a good idea, rather it was not in line with what Pepsi really is. It is not a charitable foundation or social enterprise.



Figure 12: Pepsi Refresh Project

Source: Google Images

Thus, each digital campaign, has to be coherent with the ultimate objectives of the company. A brand needs to live its values and then has the opportunity to communicate this via digital branding<sup>68</sup>. With digital branding it is not possible to hide under false promises anymore. In this context there is a trade-off for brands: on one side digital

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<sup>68</sup> D. Rowles, Digital Branding, Kogan Page, 2014, p. 39

permits to create powerful brands based on real promises faster than before; on the other side a lack of authenticity will be more exposed.

The integration of off-line and online positioning strategies could enhance also the point-of-difference and point-of-parity (see chapter 1) of a brand in a given competitive context. In off-line positioning, which involves for example television or print advertisements, the positioning could be highlighted while the web could be used as a tool to effectively position a brand. Websites could be designed to distribute products and brand information that would enhance the differentiation of the brand in the marketplace<sup>69</sup>.

Summarizing, amongst the online branding goals, the ones noteworthy are: enhancing the awareness of online and offline services and encourage users to use them; increasing an effective communication between the company and its consumers; encourage the company website's visits; increasing brand awareness and reputation.

### **3.2 The main elements in online positioning**

As for off-line positioning, in building an online positioning, there are three main elements that are fundamental for the process of positioning:

1. Customer: as seen for brand positioning, it all starts with the customer. It is important in this case to understand the digital channel and behaviour of consumers. It can be fundamental to know what are the most frequent digital channels with which consumers engage with; what are the devices mostly used; how often and when they interact and use those channels.

It is important for companies to try to deliver similar experiences to consumers in the offline and online channels.

2. Identity. Identity is the source of brand positioning and is at the base of all the branding strategies. It is fundamental to maintain the same brand identity offline and online in order to remain coherent and not to confuse consumers. Of course, in online branding there are some identity elements that are more important than others. One of these is the brand name. In the online world, naming is of fundamental importance since this impacts on search. In this sense, it is important to keep the name simple and easy to remember.

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<sup>69</sup> S. R. Kumar, *The E-Mode of Brand Positioning: The Need for an Online Positioning Interface*, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India, 2005

Moreover, in digital marketing it is important to be recognizable thanks to logos and visual elements. An example that can be mentioned is Facebook. Its distinctive “Blue F” and like “thumbs up” icon work well alongside or in isolation to the Facebook logo making it perfect for a multiplatform approach.

3. Competitors: the analysis of competitors is a key part of the positioning process. In this context, digital channels and their transparency are fundamental to conduct a deeper examination than ever before. Thanks to new tools, the competitors’ analysis is more open and accessible. Nowadays it is possible to understand what competitors offer, how they communicate and what their online target is. This investigation can give important insights to the company in questions like:

- The social networks it should focus on;
- The competitiveness for key search terms amongst competitors;
- The content strategy to be used in order to deliver more relevance.

Generally speaking, companies have to be aware that they are being watched, monitored and ultimately driving a competitor response based on the transparency of the digital world<sup>70</sup>.

All of these are fundamental elements to implement a good brand positioning.

### **3.3 Digital tools needed to build a digital branding strategy**

Digital marketing includes a multitude of tools that can be exploited to establish a good online positioning.

In general, in order to communicate the right brand values, a company needs to provide good contents. Content marketing is a fundamental concept approaching to digital branding. It is about providing useful and engaging content that is suited to the user’s journey<sup>71</sup>.

Among the principal tools aimed at gaining a good brand positioning, the ones that are worth noticing are: the website, SEO and SEM or search marketing, social media and digital advertising.

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<sup>70</sup> A.McCrea, Online branding: a digital-centric approach to developing brands, Smart Insights, <http://www.smartinsights.com/online-brand-strategy/brand-positioning/digital-brand-development/> visited on 24.08.17

<sup>71</sup> D. Rowles, cit., p. 24

### 3.3.1 Official website

One of the most common tool that a company uses in order to be in the right digitalized position is an official website. The website is an important digital touchpoint in the consumer experience. It is owned by the company and so it has a complete control over it.

The website is generally the 'place of business'<sup>72</sup> for a company. Almost all the campaigns that a company make and all the tools used, are linked back to the website. Digital marketing techniques are often designed to drive targeted traffic to the company website. It is not by chance that it can be considered as the most valuable digital tool.

The website is a 'conversion engine'<sup>73</sup> for the traffic reached, thanks to all the other digital marketing tools. Through the website, it is fundamental for a company to give information about products, services and the brand itself, but the conversion goal has to be always at the forefront. A conversion goal can be anything from an actual online purchase to an online query (lead generation), to subscribing for a company online newsletter (opt-in for future marketing) or whatever else a company decides that it is important for its business and appropriate for its customers<sup>74</sup>.

In order to be effective, the website should converge two main issues: the company goals and the needs of consumers. Moreover, it should have some fundamental characteristics. First of all, a good website should be coherent with the brand/corporate image, it should speak about the company's products, and it should have good quality contents able to entertain people.

Websites have high potentialities since they can be used as online stores, information repositories, portals or gateways for many different services.

It is possible to identify two different examples of websites<sup>75</sup>:

1. *Intermediaries websites*: they can be considered as portals or gateways to a variety of content. Among them there are:
  - Mainstream news media sites or portals, such as traditional websites like Times, Guardian, and Google news;

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<sup>72</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

<sup>73</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

<sup>74</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

<sup>75</sup> Digital Marketing and Social media, chapter 18, 2012

- Social networks, like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn;
  - Price comparison sites, for example mysupermarket.com;
  - Super affiliates. Affiliates are those which make profits by referring to a merchant and paying commissions based on a proportion of the sale or a fixed amount;
  - Niche affiliates or bloggers. These can be individuals but they can be relevant. They can also be important collectively.
2. *Destination sites*. In this case the company aims to generate and enhance visits and they may be transactional sites: for example, retailers, financial services, manufacturer's brands.

Finally, taking into consideration the consumer's experience, a website should have an adequate design favouring usability and providing a sensorial experience. Moreover, since the usage of mobile is diffusing at a strong pace, a website should also be mobile-friendly.

Despite these graphic and experiential characteristics, the most important feature that a site should have is the visibility. A website should be visible.

Today, if a company would be easy to be found, the two fundamental tools related to search engines: SEO and SEM.

### **3.3.2 Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing**

SEO and SEM are known as search engine marketing tools and allow companies to be present when consumers look for information about their products, competitors' products or substitute products. Since the research is the activity mostly done online, it is fundamental for companies to use those digital tools in order to gain an online positioning. What consumers search for has an enormous impact on the company's digital branding. In order to deliver the best user experience, it is compelling to understand what the target audience search for at the different stages of the consumer journey. The user experience is maximised if a company can be found on digital tools, otherwise the digital branding will be damaged. Even if a company has the best website in the world, it is useless if it cannot be founded by users. For these reasons, tools like SEO and SEM are fundamental for online brand positioning.

SEO (Search engine optimization) is used to improve how a website content is listed in

response to search queries, and it does not expect monetary efforts to be implemented. The rankings generated by search engines are crucial since it is a common habit for users to click on the first few websites that they see on the search engine research page (SERP). Thus, being one amongst the first in the SERP is obviously important. However, implementing SEO strategies is not so easy. Search engines analyse the website's contents taking in consideration some factors like: the freshness, which is the continuous updating of the contents; the backlinks, or the number of other websites linked to the company's one; the links with social media and the conversation about the website in other platforms and websites. Then, the search engine algorithm will decide which sites will appear on the top of the search list. Search engines companies change the algorithm formula on a regular basis, so SEO experts have to be always ready to adapt the website contents in order to be efficient. Organic results are those which are listing ranked in order of relevance based on the search engine's ranking algorithm.

SEO is a key tool used for SEM (Search engine marketing). It 'refers to a form of online marketing that promotes websites by increasing the visibility of the site's URL in search engine results, both organic and sponsored<sup>76</sup>'. This tool, includes SEO, that is the non-paid part, but also SEA (search engine advertising), for which monetary efforts are required. SEA (used sometimes as a synonymous of SEM) is based principally on the payment for keywords. Keywords, also called search queries, are the words and phrases that searchers enter into search engines. Using SEA, companies bid on keywords in order to be present exactly when people search for the topic of interest but also to be present where the advertisings of the competitors are.

With SEA, companies have also the cost of pay-per-click. This means that every time that a user clicks on the company's websites, it has to pay to the search engines a cost-per-click.

Thus, it is obvious that it is preferable to earn organic results rather than paid ones.

### **3.3.3 Social media**

In the online world, social media have redefined the way people interact with one another, enabling them to build relationships without geographic and demographic barriers<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> T.L. Tuten and M.R. Solomon, *Social Media Marketing*, Sage, 2nd edition, 2015, p.179

<sup>77</sup> P. Kotler, *cit.*, p.10

Social Media are fundamental for companies which want to increase their brand exposure and positioning. Once thought of as an "extra" in traditional marketing departments, social media is now a must-have, and one of the best ways to get results.

### *Social media and Social network*

Often the concepts of social media and social networks are used as synonymous but they are not.

Social media is a way to transmit and share information within an extended audience. It is a communication channel rather than a place to visit. It is a system to diffuse information.

Social network is a concept that describes the relationships among people and their community. The conversations are at the centre of social networking. In other words, it is possible to say that social media are the techniques and online practices that users used to share every type of contents, while social network is the technology oriented to the sharing of contents<sup>78</sup>.

Social media can be classified in six different typologies<sup>79</sup> :

1. collaborative projects;
2. blogs;
3. social networking sites;
4. virtual game worlds;
5. virtual social worlds.

In this context, the focus will be on social networking sites, in particular: Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

### *Facebook*

With more than one billion of users, it is considered the social network for excellence. In implementing a social media strategy, it is quite obvious that this social network will be considered as one of the main tools<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> G. de Paulis, Food Marketing: web e social, Franco Angeli, 2016

<sup>79</sup> Kaplan and Haelein, 2010

<sup>80</sup> G. de Paulis, Food Marketing: web e social, Franco Angeli, 2016



Facebook can be used by people or by companies. People have their own profile while companies have their own page. The page serves as a hub of information that a company wants to provide to users. If someone puts a 'like' on the Facebook page it will become automatically his fan. Moreover, Facebook pages are public and so can be indexed by search engine and can help a company website positioning on the SERP.

On Facebook, companies published contents in the form of what are known as 'posts'. Each post provide content that is considered fundamental to engage people. The posts can be of several types and each one is used to gain a different objective. There are posts that aim at engaging consumers, other aimed at driving traffic to the web and so on.

The linkages between the post types and the relative objectives are described in table 1.

Type of post	Objective
Facebook photos Facebook videos Facebook carousels Facebook canvas	Brand awareness
Facebook links Facebook carousels Facebook collections	Conversions: companies optimize their social insertions to make people perform specific actions on their website, such as subscribe to a newsletter or purchase a product.
Facebook post photo Facebook post video Facebook text post Facebook canvas post Like on the Facebook page Answer to events	Interactions
Facebook links Facebook carousels Facebook collections Facebook canvas	Traffic: allows people to visit the important sections of a company website.

Table 1: Types of Facebook posts related to their objectives

Source: Facebook ads guide, <https://www.facebook.com/business/ads-guide/?tab0=Sezione%20Notizie%20mobile>

To have a better idea of what are those posts, in figure 13, are shown the most common Facebook posts: post links, Facebook video, Facebook carousels and Facebook photos.

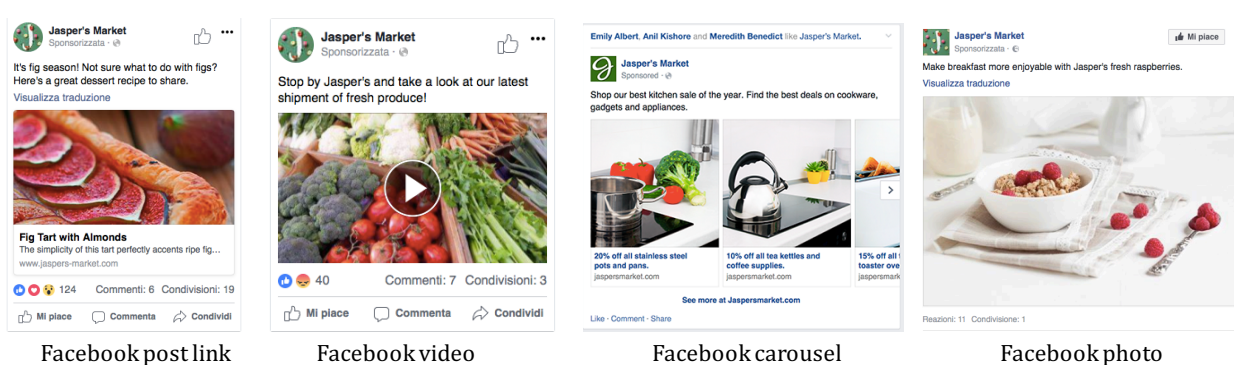


Figure 13: Types of Facebook posts

Source: Facebook ad Guide

To each post published people can interact putting a like, a reaction, sharing the content, and comments. Together they are known as interactions.

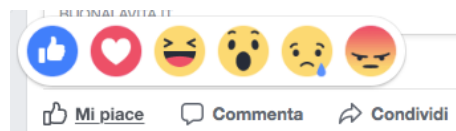


Figure 14: Facebook Interactions

Source: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Obviously, among those interactions, there are some that have a higher importance in respect to others.

It is possible to argue that the 'like' is the lazy interaction and does not have a great importance<sup>81</sup>. It is quick and easy and so people put it even without thinking. Putting a like requires the minimum commitment for a user. Likes, comments and shares, goes in

<sup>81</sup> S. Rayson, Facebook Interactions: Why Shares, Likes and Comments All Count, <http://buzzsumo.com/blog/facebook-interactions-why-shares-likes-and-comments-all-count/>, 2015, visited on 17.09.17

order of importance<sup>82</sup>. Infact, in commenting or sharing, users need more time and thoughts about their actions. Commenting require a medium level of commitment since a user limits his actions to give an opinion about something that have been posted by another user or a company. Sharing means posting a content made by another user or a company on a user private profile. So sharing requires a high level of commitment since, when a user shares contents, it is assumable that he truly believes in them and so he wants to share with his community.

### *YouTube*

YouTube is the social network that allows to upload and share instantly videos on the web. Through YouTube, a company can tell its story, describes its philosophy, illustrates its products and services exploiting all the video potentialities, above all the emotional ones.

### *Instagram*

Instagram is a social network that allows users to take, modify and share photos with some captions that comprehend hashtags. With Instagram, companies can recourse to photos to be evocative and emotional.

All those social networks are linked and a content published on one of these can be shared also on another one.

Social networks involve also messaging platforms. Those are instantaneous chats that permit to people that use the social network, to interact privately with their 'friends'.

The importance of these messaging platforms is growing fast. In Italy, among the first five social platforms, two are messaging ones. 51 per cent of the online population use messaging apps from their mobile devices.

As shown in figure 15, in Italy Youtube is the social mostly used followed by Facebok and Whats app. Facebook represents the most interesting platform since, from the research<sup>83</sup>, it emerges that 74 per cent of the Italian population uses Facebook every day.

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<sup>82</sup> C. Heine, Brands Favor Social Shares Over Likes (2013), Adweek, <http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/brands-favor-social-shares-over-likes-148256/>, visited on 17.09.17

<sup>83</sup> We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

There are social we use all day or several times a day: these are citizenship social<sup>84</sup> and they are mainly represented by Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Whatsapp. On the other hand, there are functional social in the sense that they meet a specific need. According to Blogmeter analysis, the main ones are Google Plus, Twitter and LinkedIn. So, companies that use social as a work tool have to decide if becoming "street companions" of users or, instead, becoming a specific needs solver if they want to talk effectively to their consumers.

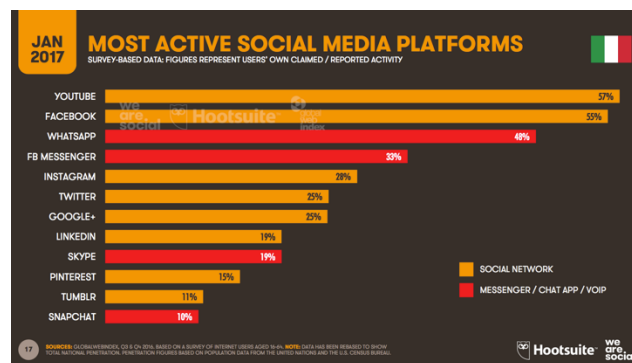


Figure 15: Most active social media Platform in Italy  
 Source: We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

Also on a global level, social media registered a positive growth. On the almost 4 billion of people active on the internet, around 3 billion use social media and use them from mobiles. Those latter use social media more than once a month. Facebook is the mostly used social platform around the globe as shown in figure 16:

<sup>84</sup> Italiani e social media, blogmeter, march 2017

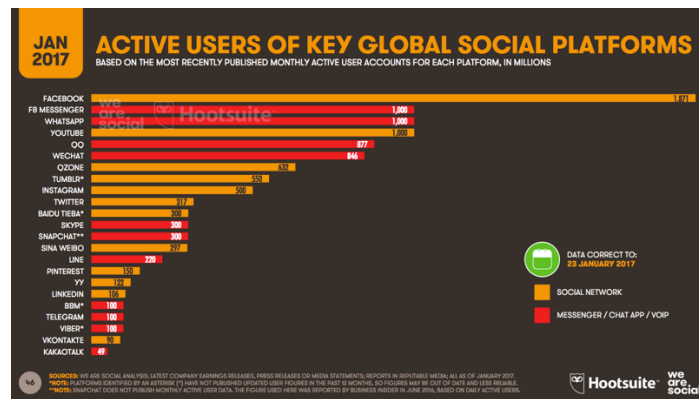


Figure 16: Active users on social Platform at a global level

Source: We Are Social and Hootsuite, Digital in 2017

### How Social media improve brand positioning

Social media are one of the most impactful tools on branding. Social media changed the way in which consumers interact and engage with brands and led to an important shift in branding: from one-to-one form of communication between brands and consumers, to a two-way communication flow. Differently from the traditional broadcasting tools, which were limited to give information to consumers, social media engage with them. But in order to provide a good level of engagement, it is important that a brand gives consumers incentives to engage: from entertaining to education. The perception is created by consumers but a brand can engage users through brand experiences.

In social media, it is about storytelling, rather than selling. A brand story should speak to its positioning consistently and effectively. Each and every communication made on social media has an impact on the brand perception. Thus, everything a company decides to post, share, write, tweet, reply on social media should be purposeful and in alignment with its brand positioning.

However, before implementing a social media strategy, companies need to be aware of the main social networks used by their target. Despite this, there are tools that help companies to understand how people search for information, what are their needs and what are their interests. This could provide important insights. The main tools are:

- Google Trends: it allows companies to see what users search on Google and the major trend over time. It also enables to compare those trends;
- Social Listening tools: those tools help companies to analyse social media performances and online reputation of the different brands in portfolio. By

investigating deeper into social conversations, companies can find new markets or refine their product offering according to market needs.

In general, companies need to listen rather than to tell. They have to listen to all those social media movements that are driving the consumers' willingness to buy.

- Social Analysis tools: they look at one social platform and give some analysis or functionality for that particular platform<sup>85</sup>. Those are often built in the social media themselves. Social media analytics are the most used instruments in helping food manufactures in this process; they assist companies to get valuable customer data and use them as competitive advantage for a variety of functions. An example is Facebook Insights.
- Analytics: those tools can help companies to understand the impact of social media on the broader digital objectives. Google Analytics is one of the most important web analytics platform. For each link, Google analytics provides a series of important indicators useful to make a complete analysis.

In this elaborate, indicators such as the pageviews, sessions, the bounce rate and average time on page will be considered.

Pageviews can be defined as the total number of page viewed.

A session is a group of users' interactions with your website that take place within a given time frame. For example a single session can contain multiple page views, events, social interactions, and ecommerce transactions<sup>86</sup>.

Bounce rate is the single-page sessions divided by all sessions, or the percentage of all sessions on your site in which users viewed only a single page<sup>87</sup>.

The issues about bounce rate is if having a high bounce rate is positive or negative. A high bounce rate can be intended as above 40% and there is not a perfect number for it. It always depends on the objectives of the website. If the website has multiple pages and the home page is a gateway to the rest of the website pages, a high bounce rate is certainly a bad thing. On the other hand, if a website is made only of one page, a high website is completely normal.

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<sup>85</sup> D. Rowles, cit., page 51

<sup>86</sup> How a web session is defined in Analytics,  
<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/2731565?hl=en>

<sup>87</sup> Bounce rate, <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1009409?hl=en>

The average time on page is the average amount of time spend by users on a particular page and it is obtained as follow:

Avg. time on page= Time on Page / (Pageviews – Exits)

Of course, having a very low time on page it is not a good sign. If a page is seen for 10 seconds, it is obvious that people do not pay attention to what is written inside. So a higher time on page is of course a positive thing.

In general, it is possible to state that having a high bounce rate and time on site is positive because it means that people are seeing only a page of the website but for a long time and so they are interested on it.

In order to build a brand on social media, there have to be followed four main rules<sup>88</sup>:

1. Choose social networks that are coherent and sustain the brand image.

As previously seen (section 2.1), social media are diffusing rapidly. People access to social profiles more than once a day, making them the best tools to build a company brand. There are numerous social media, but for a company it is important to choose the right one which is able to sustain its brand image.

- Facebook. It is the most used social network around the globe and it is best platform for promoting brand awareness. Thanks to the fact that its users are very heterogeneous, Facebook is a great platform for promoting virtually any brand.
- Instagram. It is the best choice for brands that rely heavily on images, such as food companies, fashion and retailers. It is particularly effective to reach the youngest generation.

2. Provide valuable and shareable contents

As stated before, content is the most important element. Companies should provide contents that invite people to share them. They have to put themselves in the mind of consumers and try to understand if the contents published could be read by the target or not.

However, it is important to remember that each content that has been published, should support the brand image. Additionally, a company has to figure out which content is most

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<sup>88</sup> A. Angius, The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media, Entrepreneur, 2015, <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/244677>

likely to gain visibility on social networks. This is possible thanks to the data provided by analytics. Generally, visual contents have a high probability to reach more people and engage them.

In deciding the type of posts to use in order to build a brand, companies could also look at the competitors' behaviours. For example, a company can look at the performances of competitors' posts and decide to make one using similar contents.

### 3. Exploit influencers

If the company brand is relatively unknown or needs more visibility, a fast approach can be to gain the audience of existing influencers present in the company industry.

### 4. The usage of social campaigns to promote content

Nowadays, almost all the campaigns made on social media are paid by companies. It is because the consumers are submerged by thousands of messages each day and in order to gain the right target it is of fundamental importance to concentrate all the efforts through sponsored posts.

All those rules can be important to build an effective brand positioning on social media. Finally, as seen in previous sections, mobiles is becoming the most diffused tools to access to social media. It is important for companies to consider this in order to adapt their contents to the mobile social apps.

Summarizing, it is possible to state that the opportunities provided by online to brands are massive. However, it has to be noted that brand damage is now easier than ever since customers are able to conduct direct conversations with companies through social media. Therefore, a reliable and smart content plan is needed. It is not possible anymore to manage social media with few resources also in terms of people.

### *The relationship between the websites and social media*

Social media have been always seen as means to support websites. Infact, in order to be effective and have a good position on search engines, an official website should be connected with social media profiles.



Today social media, being vast communication channels, act mainly as a great source to create tempting web designs<sup>89</sup>. They are playing a big role in making websites more attractive for consumers in order to make the two digital strategies (the ones of the website and the ones of social media) coherent with each other.

However, social media are even more growing in importance since the majority of people spend their time scrolling on social media home pages.

In general, the website is seen as a shop window that limits the possibility of approach with the company users. The traditional companies' official website, permits to the potential consumers to browse the products, discover their main characteristics and sometimes, permits to buy products directly online without going physically to the shop. Nevertheless, this approach limits the interactions between the brand and the users. A similar type of relationship, is unidirectional and it is pushed from the company to the consumers without asking to share their wishes or proposals. It is based on a more traditional way of doing marketing rather than an involving approach. The users' feedback in this way, can be obtained in quantitative terms, monitoring sales or through market researches that can determine the consumers level of satisfaction related to the products or services they buy. Social networks give the possibility to enhance the relationships with the company potential consumers without being limited to traditional channels of communication. Thanks to them, a company can create a participatory communicational flux, where the subjects or contents of a company activities have been created and shared with the users of social media. Consumers changed their needs and they are becoming more and more demanding. Companies have to try to create an even more engaging and profound relationship with their consumers.

### **3.3.4 Digital advertising**

'Digital advertising is simply an extension of the traditional media broadcast model<sup>90</sup>.

There are several tools of digital advertising:

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<sup>89</sup> D.Meyer, How social media is putting a positive impact on web design, May 2017,

<https://www.dialogfeed.com/how-social-media-is-putting-a-positive-impact-on-web-design/>, visited on 18.08.17

<sup>90</sup> M.S. Eastin, T. Daughtery, N.M. Burns, Handbook of Research on Digital Media and Advertising, Information Science Reference, 2008

- Display advertising: it is a form of interruption marketing since it is the company that pay to be seen from consumers while they are surfing on the internet. It includes banner, pop-up, pop-under etc.



Figure 17: An example of display advertising

Source: <http://www.corriere.it>

- Video advertising: in order to be effective, a video advertising has to have some important features: first of all, it has to tell a story; second, the first five seconds have to be the most salient in order to attract people attention; third, the video should be an emotional roller-coaster, namely it has to play with emotions; fourth, it should be shared by people and most of all by influencer than will enhance the share of voice; fifth, the video should surprise the spectators. In order to see the performances of video, it is important to take into consideration that the 48 hours after the publication of the video are the most significant, and normally are the ones in which it is possible to reach the majority of the views.
- Email marketing: there are two different tools used in email marketing. Those are:
  - a) Newsletters: they have informative contents and usually are sent by the company itself. Their objective is to inform consumers about something.
  - b) Direct Email Marketing (DEM): they provide advertising contents and usually are not send by the company but by other service providers. In this case the objective is to sell rather than inform.

The main difference between these two tools is that while in the case of newsletter the database is owned by the company, in the case of a DEM the company buys a database of users by a service provider.

Email marketing can be an incredibly effective tool for implementing digital branding. It is a simple mean that requires the right targeting and testing, and allows to personalize contents.

Moreover, in order to enhance the potentialities of email marketing, it can be integrated with customer relationship management (CRM) systems. More opportunities can be explored through marketing automation systems.

CRM systems are where a company stores its customers data<sup>91</sup>. Through those systems a company could store the engagement history with consumers, their responses and so on. The aim of CRM regarding digital branding is to personalize any messages so that each touchpoint meets the consumer's demands and needs.

- Social advertising: it is the advertising inside social network. It is really closed to display advertising but the difference stays in the fact that in the case of social media, each of it has its own rules and functions and so the company chooses where to position the ad in respect to the profiles that wants to reach. Social advertising has in general two aims: external aim and internal aim. External aim is to lend people to the desired website and so click on the ads. The internal aim refers to achieve good performances inside the social network, for example increasing like on Facebook page.
- Native advertising: 'it is often described as the use of unique and specific ad formats which are strongly integrated in the publisher's editorial environment. Native advertising is then an extension of the editorial content and completes the visit experience<sup>92</sup>'.

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<sup>91</sup> D. Rowles, cit., p.151

<sup>92</sup> The Digital Marketing Glossary, <http://www.digitalmarketing-glossary.com/What-is-Native-advertising-definition>

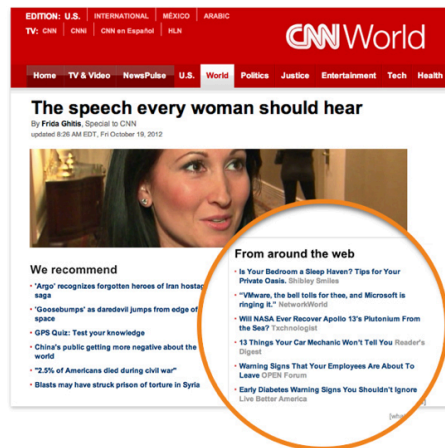


Figure 18: An example of Native advertising

Source: <https://clickrain.com/blog/why-you-should-care-about-native-advertising>

Since digital advertising is included in the group of paid media, there is a system of pricing under that kinds of tools. To say it in better words, companies pay to obtain visibility on the basis of three main price models:

- Cost per Click (CPC): it is the most used pricing model. When the people click on the advertising, the company has to pay.
- Cost per Mille (CPM): usually it is the cheapest way of pricing and in this case a company pays each time it reaches a thousand of impressions<sup>93</sup>.
- Cost per Action (CPA): in this case the company pays only if the users respond to the call to action on its advertising. In other words, if the company made an online advertising with the call to action 'subscribe to the newsletter', it pays only if the consumers effectively subscribe to the newsletter.

After having described all the main important digital marketing tools, it is possible to find a relationship between them which at the end will constitute the digital marketing strategy to gain the desired positioning.

Without any doubts, in developing a digital strategy aimed at online positioning, a company needs to involve more than one channel. Even if the budget is limited, SEO and social strategies will be surely used.

But a complete digital marketing strategy involves at least all the tools explained above.

In general, the website it is an important window in approaching the digital world and it

<sup>93</sup> An impression is counted each time your ad is shown on a search result page or other site,

<https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/6320?hl=en>

is fundamental to understand its goal that will be reflected to all the strategy.

Of course, as previously stated, in order to increase the website visibility, SEO strategies are fundamental. Building those strategies is not so easy, the path to reach the objectives is long but finally it rewards. The best position the company website can reach, the worst will be the positioning of the competitors' websites since the spaces in the first page of SERP are limited.

SEO strategies always go with paid search strategies. They can be considered as complementary tools that help a company to gain the maximum visibility for their website but also blogs and social media pages.

Social media, are another integral part of the digital positioning strategy. They have numerous benefits:

1. Users volumes: as stated before, almost every customer is using social media.
2. the possibility to use targeted advertising. Through social media, companies are able to direct their social posts segmented them by consumer age, location and even interests.
3. Insights provided thanks to the analytics. The analytics linked with the social tools are able to provide important insights for companies. For example Facebook insights can provide data about the kind of people which are seeing the Facebook page.
4. They give the possibility to companies to experiment with posts at specific times with a high degree of flexibility and results in real time<sup>94</sup>.
5. They opened up the art form of viral marketing. Viral marketing gives the opportunity to enhance brand awareness that would be excessively expensive if achieved on other channels.

In order to spread a brand and diffuse its campaigns, display advertising is also of fundamental importance. The drawback is that it commonly does not reach a high percentage of clicks and so it is considered ineffective. So, in using this channel is always fundamental to have clear objectives.

At this point, it is important to understand how these channels interact with each other to position the brand. It is fundamental to figure out how the marketing results of a

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<sup>94</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

business activity can be assigned to each different channel.

D. Ryan (2014) identifies different models for attributing value to each channel even if there is no one that can be considered as the correct one<sup>95</sup>.

The various models to consider can be briefly explained below with their relative advantage:

1. Single source – last interaction: in this model, the last interaction that a user has with a digital tool before purchasing is the most valuable one.
2. Single source – first interaction: in this model, the first interaction with the tools is the most important and is the one that pulls other interactions with the different touchpoint of the company. In this case, an example can be also offline communication tools such as TV advertising.
3. Equal weight/ linear: this model states that all the interactions have the same weight and no one is the one that will influence the consumers decisions.
4. First and last priority or u-curve: in this model the first and last channels with which users interact with, are the most important ones and drive the users to the conversion funnel.
5. Time phased: this model assumes that the touchpoints closer to the point of purchase are the key ones<sup>96</sup>.

Other important factors that have to be considered are the company conversion levels. They will differ by channel and the brand impact on each channel. For example, it could be interesting to compare the behaviour of a visitor that lands on the company website from paid search or organic search. Understanding these kinds of behaviours, which of course differ from channel to channel, is fundamental since it affects each channel's effectiveness.

In general, it is more difficult to value a brand without research. Thanks to digital marketing, a significant amount of data has become available to companies, but brand value is one metric that is not entirely scientific. Companies can look at their performances versus the competitors on search terms but without having never the true

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<sup>95</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

<sup>96</sup> D. Ryan, Understanding Digital Marketing, Kogan Page ,Third edition, 2014

picture. The important thing to consider is that the opportunities provided by the different channels are not always the same in creating the brand value.

Brands must decide the right mix of tactics to use, based also on the product's brand positioning in order to meet customer expectations, differentiate the products from their competitors and aid conversion.

Thanks to digital branding, companies can be conscious of what have been said about them, their products or services; and they can also monitor conversations between consumers. It is not by chance that one of the principal benefit of digital branding is the fact that allows companies to establish relationships with their consumers. Particularly in those latter years, building relationships is fundamental to establish brand loyalty.

### **Reason behind chapter 3**

Explaining and analysing online brand positioning is of extreme importance to understand the born of Nestlé Buona la Vita, which is at the centre of this elaborate. The reasons behind an online positioning can seem obvious since we are in the digital era, but it is crucial to implement an effective positioning coherent with the companies' main objectives. In the course of the chapter the principal tools used to build a digital branding strategy have been described, and those are the same that Nestlé used in the case of Nestlé Buona la Vita to position itself in the field of nutrition, health and wellness.

## Chapter 4: Digital influences on food marketing

### 4.1 New changes in food: Food trends

New alimentary habits have been profoundly influenced by the new consumers' needs. Thanks to new technologies, consumers are even more demanding, informed and conscious about their food purchasing. They pay a deep attention to food quality, its origins, its environmental sustainability and the security for the health.

Price, product quality, and income levels are still important factors for the consumer's choices but in recent years what consumers regard as "quality" has changed considerably. Today the concept of quality is more closely associated with four quality attributes for food products: sensory attributes, health attributes, process attributes, and convenience attributes<sup>97</sup>.

In response to this, new food and consumer's trends related to food consumption have been diffused.

#### 4.1.1 Changes of food habits over the years

Eating habits have never been stable, every year is characterized by something new in term of food consumptions and habits. This is due to number of reasons like: culture, scientific discoveries and historical events.

In the last two centuries, eating habits have been profoundly changed. As regard Europe in the 21th century, it is possible to split it into two periods: the first half of the century was the one of the two world wars, of the shortage of food; while the second half, was represented by the years of the economic recovery, the growth of food demands and the modernization of agriculture. In those latter years, the explosion of food productivity was so strong that growth in production exceeded growth in demand. The rapidly increasing population asked for more and better food at declining real prices. In the time span of few decades, the rigorous application of scientific advances to traditional agriculture, mechanization, genetic improvements and the development of fertilizers and pesticides enabled an exponential growth of food production.

Early at the start of the new millennium, something gradually changed and people start to ask more and more for natural, healthy products rather than industrial, rich in fat and OGM products.

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<sup>97</sup> Grunert, 2003



However, for the majority of people, it is still not clear what are the right dietary and nutritional advices that have to be followed in order to conduct a healthy and long-lasting life. One of the most important cause is the fluctuating scientific knowledge. Each day is a new lesson for scientists and so there are a plenty of discoveries and reinterpretations of data every year.

As generational changes are going by, as do the food habits. It can be interesting to see briefly how food habits change over the past ten years, identifying what are the salient moments for food and beverage industry comparing some trends of 2005 with the ones of 2015<sup>98</sup>.

Back in 2005, it was all about calories. It was not important what proportions of food people ate, the fundamental thing was to have a good balance between calories eaten and calories spent doing activities. It not seemed to be important the proportion of macronutrients, rather it was fundamental the difference between calories ingested and the calories consumed. Shifting to 2015, the situation was not so similar. In our times, it is not only important to see how many calories we eat per day, rather it is important to conduct and healthy lifestyle ad have healthy habits to keep calories low.

It is a common knowledge that a good diet is high in vegetables, fruit, whole grains, seafood, legumes, and nuts; moderate in low and non-fat dairy products and alcohol; lower in red and processed meat; and low in sugar-sweetened foods and beverages and refined grains.

As the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee states: “But every person in the world eats a complement of foods over the course of the day, the week, the month, the year and a lifetime, and it’s that pattern of foods that dictates how healthy or not healthy you’re going to be<sup>99</sup>”.

Another big issue concerned fat. While before fats were considered as almost prohibited, now we are all about ‘healthy fat’ as the avocados, eggs and nuts. The reason for this, can be seen as a misunderstanding in the previous years. In order to reduce fat, food

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<sup>98</sup> A. Almendrala, How ‘Healthy Diets’ Have Changed Over The Decade, May 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet\\_n\\_7209806.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet_n_7209806.html), visited on 07.07.17

<sup>99</sup> A. Almendrala, How ‘Healthy Diets’ Have Changed Over The Decade, May 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet\\_n\\_7209806.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet_n_7209806.html), visited on 07.07.17

manufacturers were replacing fats with added sugars and refined carbohydrates, which turned out to be just as bad (or even worse) for health. So, it is possible to conclude that there are some fats that are healthier than others, and it is more dangerous to cut them than eat them.

Above fat, another matter of contention regards sugar. In 2005, the correlation between added sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages and weight was only at the beginning. Today, it is well known that consuming added sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages increase the chance to become affected to some diseases like obesity and type 2 diabetes. All the beverages that before were consumed ordinarily, have now to be treated as a pleasure. In order to meet this trend, big beverage companies have launched products with low contents of sugar. For example, Coca-Cola launched Coca-Cola zero, Light and Life, the new one with stevia rather than sugar.



Figure 19. Coca Cola life, light and zero

Source: Google images

Moreover, in 2005, the belief was that individuals were the only responsible of their diet. Obviously, also today being healthy depends a lot on the wonder of the individual. Nevertheless, there are some evidences that also the environment (like schools and offices) plays a big role. In our days, “It’s not just about individual behaviour change; it’s about systems change<sup>100</sup>.”

Another matter of content is climate change. Back in 2005, the effect of food on climate changes was not considered so impactful and was almost unknown. Today, it is a common knowledge that our diet deeply affects the environment. People start to choose what to eat in consequence of its impact on hearth simply because the diets that are the healthiest for the planet are also the healthiest for human beings. As a result of this, it is born the big

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<sup>100</sup> A. Almendrala, How ‘Healthy Diets’ Have Changed Over The Decade, May 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet\\_n\\_7209806.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/2005-2015-healthy-diet_n_7209806.html), visited on 07.07.17

issue of the red meat. The methane gas emitted in order to produce red meat, contribute to global warming.

This is one of the reason, but not the only, of the birth of some eating movements like: vegetarian, vegan and more recently flexitarian.

Flexitarians do not entirely avoid animal proteins, but reduce a lot and in conscious way the amount and the consumption of meat.

The majority of the population in Italy are still omnivorous but the number of flexitarian is growing even more. The reasons why people choose this type of diets are multiple but the most common are personal-wellness and health reasons<sup>101</sup>.

Vegetarians do not eat animal meat and conducting this type of diet, they are pulled mainly by ethical and personal wellness reasons.

Vegans do not eat any type of products that derive from animals. They avoid also eggs, cheeses and dairy products. As vegetarians and flexitarians, in the diet choice are moved mainly by ethical reasons.

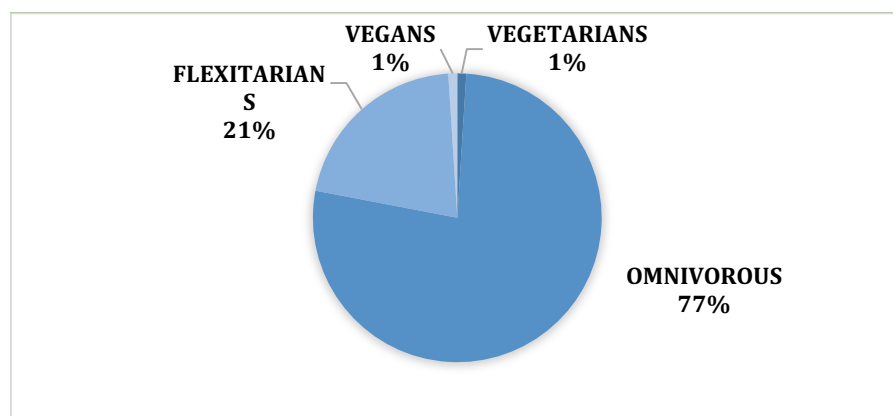


Figure 20: Italians diet habits in 2015

Source: Ipsos 2015 research on Vegetarians, Vegans and Flexitarians

#### 4.1.2 Simplicity and avoidance of ingredients as a new trend

Nowadays, there is a general focus on back-to-basics, simple ingredients and fewer processed foods. The majority of consumers are avoiding artificial ingredients, hormones or antibiotics and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Nielsen shows that in Europe the most avoided ingredients are antibiotics or hormones used in animal food production,

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<sup>101</sup> Ipsos 2015 on Vegetarians, Vegans and Flexitarians

and artificial preservatives as shown in figure 21.

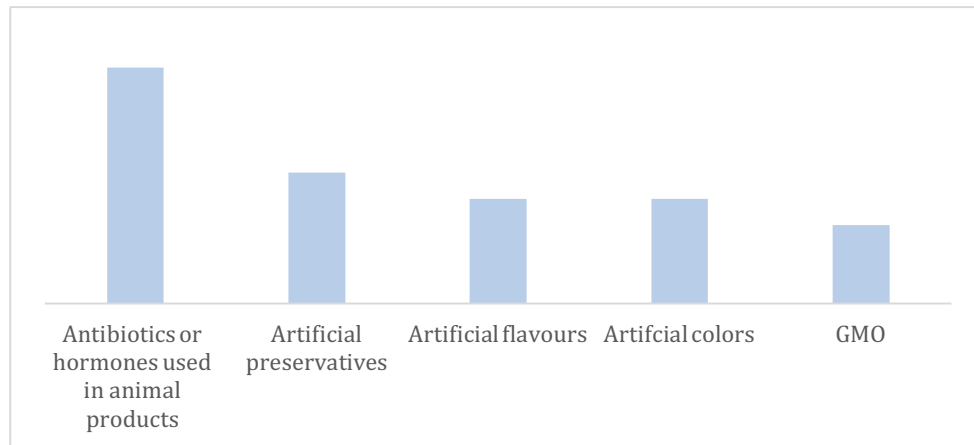


Figure 21: Top Five avoided ingredients in Europe

Source: The Nielsen Global Health and Ingredients Sentiment Survey

The refusal of artificial ingredients and the research of traditional and simple products, have brought to the explosion of new types of ingredients and products.

Organic products are among them. The term "organic agriculture" refers to a method of cultivation and breeding which only permits the use of naturally occurring substances present in nature, excluding the use of chemical synthesis substances (fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides)<sup>102</sup>.

In the last years, the organic market is growing swiftly. In 2015 in Italy, the yearly turnover of organic products on the total turnover of food industry was 2,5%<sup>103</sup>.

Also refined foods have been objects of new debates. With this term, are meant foods that are subjected to numerous and repeated processing processes to improve and enhance taste, and that are adapted to consumption in terms of ease of use and often save time in preparing a meal<sup>104</sup>. Being able to avoid those types of foods means privileging fresh products without any special technology or processing which also reduce the quality.

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<sup>102</sup> Associazione Italiana per l'agricoltura biologica, [http://www.aiab.it/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=112&Itemid=136](http://www.aiab.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=112&Itemid=136), visited on 03.07.17

<sup>103</sup> Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

<sup>104</sup> A. Nanni, Attenzione ai prodotti raffinati ed ecco cosa dovete sapere sulle farine, La stampa, April 2017, <http://www.lastampa.it/2017/04/11/scienza/benessere/attenzione-ai-prodotti-raffinati-ed-ecco-cosa-dovete-sapere-sulle-farine-Mlckt9NKc8eWvHrgJ0QL2J/pagina.html>, visited on 09.06.17

There are mainly five refined foods that we are used to eat every day and are known as 'white poisons'. Those are: salt, white flour, rice, milk and sugar. But recently, those products have been substituted by their raw versions.

Whole grains are defined as such when used in their entirety for almost the 50%<sup>105</sup>. They present higher levels of nutritional properties and avoid the machining wastes, since there is an almost total absence of machines usages. Different types of wholegrain cereals and wholegrain flours, together with legumes and new types of pseudo grains like quinoa, are becoming more and more diffused and common in our diets and habits.

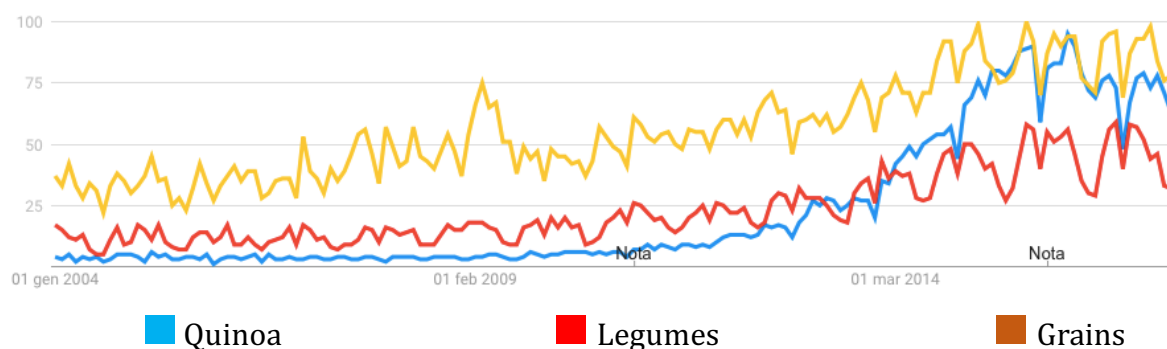


Figure 22: Google search for Quinoa, legumes and grains in Italy 2004-2017

Source: Google trends, 23 July 2017

Similarly, canned sugar, wholemeal salt, whole grain rice and vegetable milk are becoming even more of common usage.

Food preferences have been affected also by food intolerances and allergies. The Nielsen research<sup>106</sup> shows that products with grain-free, gluten-free, nut-free and lactose-free claim on their packages grow their sale volumes.

Healthy foods are defined by many consumers by what they do not contain, rather than the benefits they provide. It is noticeable that in many cases, people buy products 'free

<sup>105</sup> C. Ranza, Cereali e salute: i vantaggi degli integrali, p. 11-15 di Alimentazione Prevenzione & Benessere, Nutrition foundation of Italy, April 2015.

<sup>106</sup> The Nielsen Global Health and Ingredients Sentiment Survey

from' even if they are not intolerant or allergic.

The two principal cases are lactose-free and gluten-free products.

In Italy in the last years, lactose-free products boomed and have seen a growing market share. These products are consumed also by no-intolerant or no-allergic people, which are the minority of the entire population. It is interesting to notice that the main cause of purchase among not allergic or intolerant is curiosity<sup>107</sup>.

The expansion of this growing market has brought to the enlargement of offerings by big and small brands that have launched a proliferation of products free from lactose. Those products are mainly made with vegetal milks, like rice and soya.



Figure 23 : Lactos-free big brands

Source: Google images

Similar to this case, is the one of coeliac disease. Gluten-free products are not seen only as products for diseased but also for the ones who are not. About 600,000 families buy these foods without however having intolerance. This is because of the erroneous conception of gluten free products as lighter and dietetic, and the reason is mainly due to the spread of false and scientifically unfounded information<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>107</sup> Ricerca Nielsen fine 2011

<sup>108</sup> Le verità sul glutine e i prodotti gluten free, July 2014,

<http://www.lastampa.it/2014/07/22/scienza/benessere/alimentazione/le-verit-sul-glutine-e-i-prodotti-gluten-free-PD0HSihyVw7PiUm887WPMK/pagina.html>, visited on 02.08.17

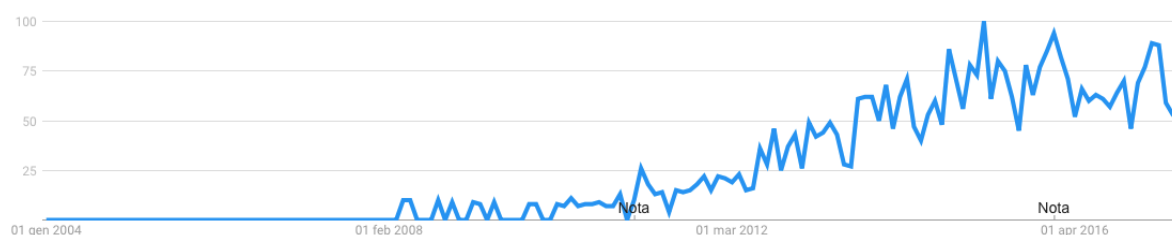


Figure 24: Google search for gluten free products in Italy 2004-2017

Source: Google trends, 23 July 2017

In this context, the so-called "superfoods" have grown in importance. The Oxford Dictionary, describe them as such: "Nutrient-rich food considered to be especially beneficial for health and well-being". For this reason we can consider "super" any ingredient whose nutrient density, such as vitamins, minerals, fibres and especially antioxidants, is greater than another<sup>109</sup>. So here is the boom of goji berries, azure beans, but also ginger and turmeric.

#### 4.1.3 Eating less and healthy indulgents

Forget about the old saying that eating little of everything is the best recipe to be healthy. Italians tend to be more and more insistent in reducing the amount of food consumed, but also to select more carefully the fares they bring to the table.

The shopping is still depended on traditional drivers. Freshness, price and taste are the leading reasons of influence on the shopping<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>109</sup> Guida ai superfood: quali sono, come si usano, a cosa servono, Fine Dining Lovers, April 2015

<sup>110</sup> Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

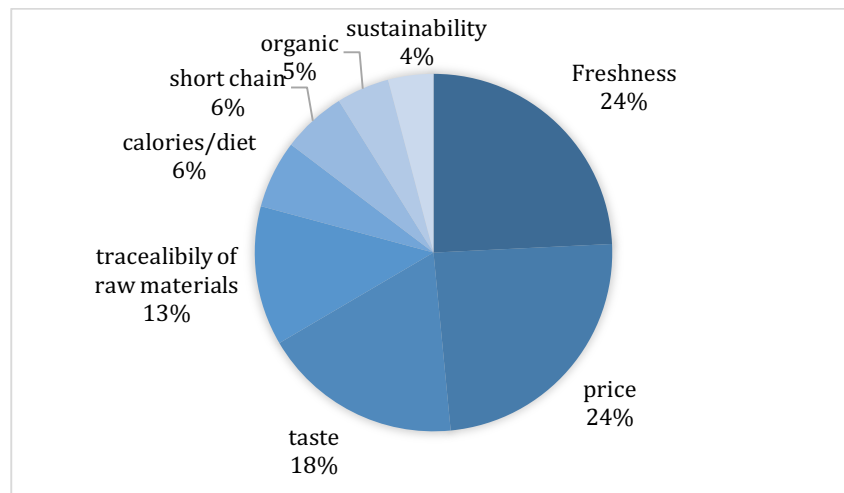


Figure 25: Influential drivers on the shopping in Italy

Source: Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

From the analysis made by Ipsos in 2016, in the near future people will demand more fresh products rather than processed ones. A particular attention will be placed on local/regional, organic and sustainable products. Other production modes that will become even more diffused than now, are gourmet foods, vegan/vegetarian, free from lactose and gluten<sup>111</sup>.

Despite all of this, retail sales data (provided by Nielsen<sup>112</sup>) demonstrate that even if consumers are reducing the consumption of foods that are high in fat, sugar and sodium, a place for indulgences still remains in consumers' diets. So, there is a room for both healthy food and special treatments in the diets of consumers. They still want to mollycoddle themselves but in a different way compared to the past. They are indulging smarter. Innovations and improvements in the choice of ingredients and preparation methods that enhance the nutritional properties of the products, will be better positioned to succeed. Today consumers prefer foods with high calories but with much more health benefits.

Indulgent categories of products with wellness claims are growing in sales volumes.

“Consumers are seeking out guilt-free, great-tasting products that provide healthy

<sup>111</sup> Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

<sup>112</sup> Nielsen Global Health and Wellness Report, January 2015



indulgence<sup>113</sup> .

#### **4.1.4 Causes and next step to meet the trends**

In general, simplicity is the new key for consumers. Products with a short list of ingredients are becoming the strongest ones. It is fundamental to provide easy-to-understand packaging labels, which are a key source of information for consumers. But not only, manufacturers have to help consumers to understand the benefits of particular ingredients and foods using also out-of-store communications and in-store signage/displays.

According to Nielsen<sup>114</sup> research, globally, 68% of consumers are willing to pay more for products that do not contain unhealthy ingredients. All of this is reflected in the consumers' buying behaviour: organic products, products with claims that they are hormone- or antibiotic-free, GMO-free or natural grown, are growing their volume sales always more. Willingness to pay a premium for health attributes declines with age. Millennials (21-34) are the ones that have the highest willingness to pay for healthier products. They are followed by Baby Boomers (50-64), Generation X (35-49), Generation Z (under 20) and ultimately Silent Generation (aged 65+) for which the percentages are lowest.

According to the 'Global Health and Ingredient survey' made by Nielsen in 2016, the increasing trends towards health and wellness are due to four major environmental tendencies:

1. Population aging and long-lasting living
2. The rise of chronic-disease and allergies: chronic diseases and cancer are the major causes of death and disability in the world and are increasingly spreading. Medical experts agree on the fact that these illnesses can be prevented also thanks to a healthy living and lifestyle.
3. The attention on self-care treatment and prevention. Food can be seen as 'medicine' to prevent bad health conditions. Consequently, people are changing their dietary habits to meet the increasing rates of diseases.
4. Growth of well-educated and connected consumers. The digital revolution gives consumers access to a great number of health information and products they can

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<sup>113</sup> J.Walter Thompson, Food + Drink: Trends and Futures report, The Innovation Group, 31 May 2017

<sup>114</sup> Nielsen Global Health and Wellness Report, January 2015

use to have greater control over their health. Additionally, consumers are demanding more transparency from food manufacturers and retailers.

In order to meet the growing attention through health and wellness tendency, manufacturers should follow some strategies like<sup>115</sup>:

- Simplicity: the best action to be taken is to try to modify the product portfolios removing or replacing disliked ingredients. This has to be highlighted in their marketing campaigns.
- Innovation, investments, acquisitions. Clever manufacturers have to explore the environment around them and try to identify and invest in newborn companies following all of these trends and so with high growth potential. As much regards innovation in the food sector, Italians see it as: higher attention on local products, sustainability of the food chain, exhaustive labels, new flavours, products for allergies and intolerances, new formats, new raw materials, new preparing processes, new packing and new ways of relationship with the consumers. In the last three years, the most innovative food categories that have been able to innovate are deep-frozen<sup>116</sup>.

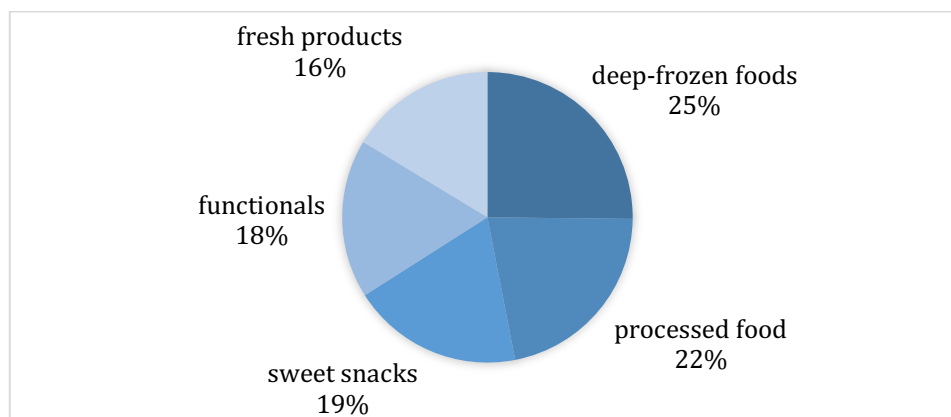


Figure 26: Food categories which mostly innovate in the last 3 years

Source: Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

- Make it convenient, effective cost and tasty. It is important to combine costs, healthy trends but remaining tasty.

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<sup>115</sup> Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

<sup>116</sup> Il futuro vien mangiando, Ipsos, 2016

- Still consider indulgent consumers. As stated before, now indulgent consumers are smart. Manufacturers have to think about some ways to let consumers indulge without feeling wrong.

Driven by the willingness to eat healthier, consumers should be helped by manufacturers, retailers and the medical community. Manufacturers have to provide products containing good and salutary ingredients, while retailers have to stock shelves with the right healthful assortment. Finally, doctors play a fundamental role. They must provide the right guidance on what and how much to eat in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

## **4.2 Food and digital marketing**

Digital technology is by now the main actor in all the industries, from fashion to mechanical production.

In order to demonstrate my thesis, it is compelling to focus on food and beverage industry and how the digitalization affects it.

This sector, it is one in which the potentialities of the digital transformation have been particularly wide and interesting but it is also difficult to be fully understood. On one side, there is food: a key for the survival of the earth and the health of people, and that is at the centre of numerous important issues: growth of population, food scarcity and environmental problems. On the other side, there are new technologies that can solve lots of these problems but have to be integrated in the traditional habits.

Food is something extremely complex that involves and determines people lifestyle. In our society, the research for good food is increasing. What we eat, how the fares are produced, who produces them, from where they come from are questions that are even more frequent in the majority of the discussions. Consumers are even more desirous to know better who are the producers of the food that they eat. They want to know more about the company, how it is organized, what are its ethical principles, how it respects the environment and how healthy it is the food it produces. This has been made possible thanks to the numerous technologies available in these last decades.

Doing business through the new digital devices and technologies is now a mandatory step that all food companies have to make since ordinary behaviours and actions like eating, cooking and having dinner with friends have entered in the web world. New online tools like social media, blogs and websites, generate a new parallel universe that includes

information, images and experiences linked to the food world. It is exactly in this universe that a strong relationship between food and web is growing.

In these latter years we are assisting to the explosion of online and tv programs dedicated to cooking; blogs that talk and review alimentary products; culinary tutorial on YouTube or food blog; apps that allow people to order already cooked meals directly at home; the growing trend of foodstagramming, namely the mania of photographing food and sharing the images on social media. Those are only some of the major trends that demonstrate that food and web are becoming more and more connected. By now, everything concerning food, from searching a restaurant when travelling, to having information about a product when a person is doing shopping, is done online.

Today, more than ever, it is important for companies to reach and search consumers and prospects where they are, namely online.

This new millennium can sign the born of a new sector: the internet of food. This concept represents a multitude of different aspects: from agro-tech to smart kitchen and traceability of ingredients. In a connected world, the entire food chain is bound to change, from the production process to the product on the table of consumers.

#### **4.2.1 Digital communication for food**

Food market is amongst the most dynamic as well as it is representing one of the economic pillars of the Italian economy. Moreover, it is important to remember that food is a trending topic either for digital media and web, and for traditional media. On the web it is one of the most discussed topics together with sport and news. On traditional media, food has increased its presence on TV with a multitude of programs.

Despite this, more than the half of the channels used to gain information about food and recipes are digital. After tv programs, which still have a great importance, the main touchpoints more used among people concerning food are blogs and social media.

##### *The main media tools*

Thanks to the FoodFWD research, conducted by MEC & GroupM, it has been possible to infer what are the types of traditional and digital media mostly used in food communication:

- 86% Paid Media: the tv programs and paid search;

- 70% Owned Media: websites, app and recipes on products packaging.
- 51% Earned Media: Word-of-mouth in all its components online and offline. Online it derives from blogs, specialized websites, and social networks.

Among the numerous evidences<sup>117</sup>, traditional media still have a great importance when talking about food. Food industry has always preferred tv advertising, and so the investment in web advertising is lower respect to other sectors. The complementarity between traditional advertising and demonstrative product placement, namely the one that see the usage of a product in a tv program, is of great success. The former enhances brand awareness, while the latter aims at exploit the consideration phase with the ultimate goal of advocacy.

However, in choosing the right tools to use, it is always important to understand the context in which the brand operates.

Today digital media are diffusing even more and companies need to integrate them with the traditional ones.

### *Social Networks and Food*

A satisfied client is always the best purchasing channel for every company. Its word-of-mouth is the most powerful tool that is on the web. The best way to obtain a good WOM and consequently a good reputation is the use of social network. Facebook, Youtube and Instagram are the most common and known.

In the last years, the usage of social media by food companies has had an exponential growth. Food is one of the most discussed and appreciated topic on social media. It has social value: it represents an important social moment, able to put in contact people and nurture curiosity for different cultures, and it has also a viral effect.

Food companies are becoming even more aware of the potentialities of social media and they are trying to involve consumers towards a direct and engaging contact.

The most appropriate social networks for food topics are Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest and Youtube, since their main methods of communication are photos and videos. Food is a perfect subject for them: its aesthetic value can be exploited online to transmit sensorial stimulations and can be easily part of visual marketing strategies.

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<sup>117</sup> FoodFWD, MEC & GroupM, 2015

Products provided by FMCG manufacturers are staples of everyday life for people across the world. In general terms, food will always be a hot topic of discussion on social and other online channels. This is an enormous advantage for food manufacturers, they can find gold pills of insights that can help improve the bottom line.

Not by chance, #food is at the 25<sup>o</sup> place in the ranking of the most used hashtag in the world<sup>118</sup>. TalkWalker.com shows that, in only one week, #food generates on average 131,5 million results, registered on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts and on their connections; 28,9 million of them is linked to food brands. In both cases, the majority of these results is concentrated on Instagram and the sentiments generated are always positive or neutral.

Social Marketing Report from Social Bakers<sup>119</sup>, shows that FMCG foods are first in the ranking of top five industries on Facebook with 53.773.124 millions of fans, followed by fashion industry, e-commerce, beauty and automotive.

Among the five top brands most popular on Facebook<sup>120</sup>, five out of five are food&beverage brands. Nutella page is ranked first for fans' number (4.393.992 fans) and also among the fastest- growing Facebook pages are all about food. The first is Coca Cola, followed by Kinder, Nutella and Galbani – le ricette di casa mia.

With 700K of active users, Instagram is the social network with the fastest expansion in the last two years. One of the main topics is surely food. By now, mostly the young generation, post pictures online before tasting it. They take the photo, adjust the brightness, contrast and saturation, and upload it to their social media accounts. People share their food online more than ever before, no matter the poster or the politics, food shines bright as something that all can aspire to. Once these Instagram-friendly foods go viral, they can completely change the way we eat<sup>121</sup>. Also, the simplest dish has to be presented in a certain way today. Increasingly, people are influenced not just by the types of food they eat, but how to cook and eat that food.

The old saying that we eat first with our eyes fits like a glove in this situation.

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<sup>118</sup> #food & Instagram: conoscere i consumatori attraverso i social network, Tedwalker.com, 2017

<sup>119</sup> Social Marketing Report, Social Bakers, 2017

<sup>120</sup> Popularity measured in relation to the number of fans on the page

<sup>121</sup> R. Tandoh, Click plate: how Instagram is changing the way we eat,

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/nov/02/click-plate-how-instagram-changing-way-we-eat-food> , 2016, visited on 27.04.17

Posting food on social media can reframe the ways that people interact with food on a fundamental level.

Those evidences and data confirm once again that social media represent a great opportunity for food companies. The continuous changes of diets and eating habits are hard to be followed and social media and their tools are important assistants to meet those trends.

### *Foodblogs*

The viral effects of social food can be explained also with another important phenomenon: food bloggers and their food blogs.

The first foodblog was born in the USA at the end of the last decade. It was a sort of wall where people could exchange opinions on places where to eat, drink and buy good food. In Italy, this phenomenon is more recent but it is spreading rapidly.



Figure 27. Google's researches interest for "food blogger" – expressed in % - over time in Italy

Source: Google Trends, 2017

A blog is a website at all the effects, but differently from it, a blog is more dynamic and continuously updated which can allow to interact from and with outsiders through comments and warnings.

From a dozen years, being a food blogger has become a new and real profession at all the effects. Bloggers have a special characteristic: they are at the same time consumers, influencers and medium. Their point of view is fundamental to anticipate the changes in food trends and influence their community but not only, since their influence is growing even more.

Today food bloggers live on the web, on Youtube, on social media, through blogs where they post their recipes with photos and videos. The majority of the food bloggers are

women and they have become real celebrities. They are on tv shows and some of them also have their own programs, write books and take part in culinary events. They are effectively entrepreneurs. These successes are due to their work and their publications that are followed by more than 11 billions of people. Obviously, this has pulled food companies to make partnerships with them to increase their brand awareness, and this classify them also as influencers. Consumers can be influenced by bloggers since they are people like them, they love cooking and simply make of it a real job. Bloggers have entered in the houses of people and without any doubts, people trust more them than a company direct advertising. By now, if someone wants to look for a recipe, in the majority of cases she will search on food blogs.

In the latter years, there have been a proliferation of food blogs. Those blogs can be multi or mono authors. Each of them is, like said before for websites, of course linked with one or more social profiles. The most popular are Facebook and Instagram. Those pages demonstrate the great success of food blogs. Analysing the Italian situation, it is possible to identify the most followed food blog looking at the numbers of fans and interaction they have on Facebook.

Among the multiauthor blogs, it can be interesting to analyse how the number of fans change, comparing the situation in 2015<sup>122</sup> and in 2017 in order to understand their increasing popularity.

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<sup>122</sup> La classifica dei migliori food blog in Italia, Infografica, 2015, <http://www.upgrademe.it/blog/upgrade-me/243-la-classifica-dei-migliori-food-blogger-in-italia>, visited on 16.07.17



Blog name	Facebook fans in 2015	Facebook fans in 2017
Cucchiaio d'argento	425.241	2.782.090
Giallo zafferano	345.165	2.074.014
Butta la Pasta	244.065	462.669
Agrodolce	230.000	664.202
Buonissimo	167.858	273.824
Cucina Naturale	104.390	152.936
Dissapore	25.031	130.139

Table 2: the most important food blogs in Italy

Sources: La classifica dei migliori food blog in Italia, Infografica, 2015, Facebook pages 2017

As it is possible to see in table 2, the Facebook fans of those blogs have risen more than double in two years. Cucchiaio d'argento and Giallo zafferano represent the most impressive cases with a triplication of the number of fans.

#### 4.2.1 Key elements in order to exploit digital tools in food communication

As previously stated, the majority of the touchpoints connected with food choices are digital.

There are five key elements used to exploit digital tools in food communications. Those are: Video, storytelling, and testimonials.

##### **Video-communication**

Video strategy is fundamental to develop an efficient brand communication about food. From tv spot to videorecipes on blogs, social and websites.

Figure 28 shows the main food touchpoints. From that image it is possible to observe that four out of five touchpoints involve videos.

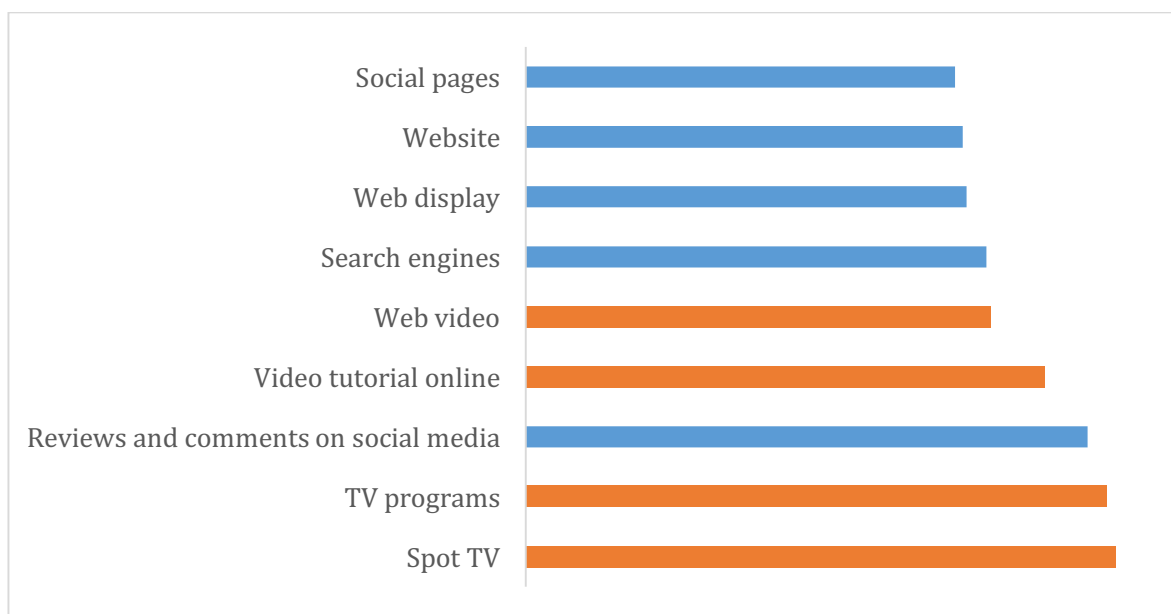


Figure 28: The most memorable food touchpoints

Source: FoodFWD research, conducted by MEC & GroupM

However, it is important to integrate the traditional forms of communication with the digital ones. The latter can rise more than double the online researches volume, enhancing brand awareness and word of mouth thanks to stories which create immersive experiences for consumers.

An example is a video made by Illy in the occurrence of Expo 2015. 'A Small Section of the World' directed by Lessley Chilcott, produced by Illy caffè, and with a soundtrack made by Alanis Morissette, talks about a multigenerational female story of passion and tenacity without never explicitly declaring it. It leaves the images and the commitment of Illy in its sustainable work, talk. An emotional travel aimed at discovering how a cup of coffee has changed the life of many women and has allow them to make emerge their potential. This video had more than 1 million of views on YouTube and was multi awarded.

### Storytelling 3.0

To retain consumers attention in a context full of messages, companies can use storytelling. In order to be distinguished in an almost saturated market full of 'stories', companies need to concentrate on their story rendering it unique. In order to gain a competitive advantage, themes like origins and tradition associated with innovation are

winners.

An example of storytelling based on recipes and ingredients is the 'taste of travel', a branded content operation realized by Nastro Azzurro, National Geographic Channel and Nat Geo People. The most exported Italian beer, has talked about itself as an authentic Italian product starting from its ingredients. More than 700 million of views on Youtube and a buzz growth of the brand respect to the previous year.

### **Testimonials**

Stories are more efficient if narrated by a testimonial. The food sector has been one of the predecessors in understanding the importance of testimonials: they have to have high levels of credibility and a functional character to the specific category.

## **4.2.2 Successful examples of companies which have exploit the web and its technologies to grow their businesses**

### **Mulino Bianco- Nel mulino che vorrei**

#### *The features*

'Nel mulino che Vorrei' is a relational loyalty digital platform by Mulino Bianco. It was born in 2009 and completely restyled in 2015 in consequence of a strategic loyalty programs. Today the platform brings together all the brand lovers, or 'Mulino Lovers', which use it to share information and ideas to be part of the promotional initiatives.

#### *The challenge*

Create a sharing space in optics of crowdsourcing. An active listening tool which could permit users to express their ideas, to share them with others and receive a feedback from the company. A platform in which, for each action taken, the user accumulates points that can be spent on the platform itself to obtain advantages signed by Mulino Bianco.

#### *The solution*

From 2015, users can access to the portal [www.nelmulinochevorrei.it](http://www.nelmulinochevorrei.it) and become part of the community of Mulino brand lovers. The platform allows to see all the brand news and enter in contact with other users. The users have to register, answer to the questionnaire, and tell their own idea to the brand.

For each action made in the portal, the users earn 'grain of wheat' with which they could

win Mulino Bianco coupons and the provisions of Mulino Bianco products.

The wall of ideas is the earth of the community. In this space a user can liberally propose his own idea and make it voted. Every three months, the most voted ideas become 'good ideas' and among them, Mulino Bianco realizes the most originals.

Users accumulate grains of wheat also for the judgment of the community: each time that an idea is voted or becomes a 'good idea', the user in question receives new grains of wheat. Moreover, if the idea is rewarded, the user is rewarded too.

Every brand lover can independently choose how to spend its grains on the platform and at the end, users that accumulate more than 25 grains of wheat, can participate to the final extraction to win a vacation with a visit to a Barilla factory.



Figure 29: Il Mulino che Vorrei platform

Source: <https://www.nelmulinochevorrei.it/>

### *The results*

'Nel Mulino che Vorrei' is a platform of crowdsourcing that hosts a program of digital loyalty, which awards users thanks to a digital virtual currency. Of the 55% of new users to the platform, 62% answer to the questionnaire and 25% of users propose new ideas.

In this way, consumers feel near the company choices and part of its community, while the company is able to better understand consumers' needs.

### **'The last square' – Milka**

### *The features of the strategy*

In 2013 Milka undertook an innovative and brilliant strategy to involve its consumers and stimulate the most tender part of chocolate lovers. Not by chance, the message used in this strategy was 'dare to be tender', similar to a provocation for consumer to accept the challenge.

The marketing idea was to help consumers to show the sweetest part of their character. The video of the campaign, published on the website <http://www.osaesseretenero.it>, became the active and effective promoter of the strategy.

The spot was focused on the sharing of the last square of the Milka chocolate bar: the last one is always the best, the most waited, and Milka wanted that this little piece had to be donated to a special person.

The strategy consisted in produce 13 millions of chocolate bars with a missing square. Inside the wrap there was a code thanks to which consumers could access to the online website and decide to whom they wanted to address the missing square. This latter could be delivered on the consumer address or could also be sent to a special person decided by the consumer himself, with a special personalized packaging.

### *The objectives*

The main objectives were:

- To increase the emotional link between the company and the consumer;
- To involve the loyal consumers;
- to give voice to consumers;
- to create an emotional attachment with the brand;
- to diffuse the vision and mission of the company;
- to create a viral effect.

### *The results*

The video of the spot had overcome 29 millions of views on Youtube and more than 500 millions of squares have been sent to 'special persons'. It was a great success that surely created and enhanced lots of brand awareness.

This is a perfect example of how a company can integrate online and offline strategies to successfully reach its desired results.

#### **Reasons behind chapter 4**

Since this thesis is about a case study regarding a food company, it has been necessary to contextualize the sector under discussion. The digitalization has had a big impact on food in general. Consumers have become more alimentary conscious and informed about what they eat. Moreover, new food habits and trends have diffused and focused on natural and healthy food. This is important to understand why a company as Nestlé has decided to gain a position in the nutrition, health and wellness field. Additionally, the most used digital tools in food communication have been analysed in order to understand if Nestlé Buona la Vita is in line with them.

## Chapter 5: The development of an online branding strategy:

### Nestlé Buona la Vita

#### **5.1 The company**

Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage company. It manages more than 2000 brands ranging from global icons to local favorites, and it is present in 191 countries around the world.

Nestlé's purpose is enhancing quality of life and contributing to a healthier future<sup>123</sup>. It wants to help to shape a better and healthier world while, at the same time, inspires people to live healthier lives. This is how Nestlé contributes to society while ensuring the long-term success of the company.

Following these perspectives, Nestlé wants to be positioned as the leading company in the nutrition, health and wellness field.

In the belief that attention to the relationship between nutrition and health and the desire for wellbeing will increasingly determine consumers' choices, Nestlé aims to contribute to improving the quality of life through increasingly tasty foods, but also from high nutritional value and with the least possible environmental impact products. The company's great and constant commitment is embodied in the many initiatives taken and the significant improvements introduced for the benefit of consumers; in research and development activities for the creation of new products and the improvement of existing ones; innovations linked to labels and messages transmitted through products and the Internet. Good Food, Food Life is the motto that summarizes Nestlé vision.

##### **5.1.1 Nestlé and food trends**

As it has been shown in chapter 4, in the last years dietary habits have been profoundly changed. The thought towards healthier products is becoming more and more intense and consumers are increasingly paying attention to what they are eating and what is inside their food. Thanks to new means of digital communication, consumers are well informed and want to be at the centre of companies' communication strategies.

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<sup>123</sup> <http://www.nestle.co.uk/aboutus>

Nestlé's brands and products portfolio offer a wide range of references at all levels of the food pyramid, and consumers can choose and build their own balanced supply without waiving to taste and pleasure.

In order to follow food trends, Nestlé has exploited its brand reputation to enter in new categories of products that better meet the demands of the new market.

Nestlé has innovated and modified their production processes investing a lot in R&D activities.

Over the past two years, Nestlé has eliminated 8,600 tonnes of sugar, 260 tonnes of sodium and 440 tonnes of saturated fat from its products<sup>124</sup>. The company announces every year further commitments on nutrition and health. Infact, Nestlé is still committed to reducing the amount of sodium present in its food and beverages to provide healthier products, while maintaining the taste so much appreciated by consumers. In order to succeed, it proceeds to a gradual reduction, putting in practice all of its gastronomic experience and replacing salt with other healthier minerals.

Also reducing sugar is essential to keep Nestlé promise to offer healthier foods and beverages, while maintaining the taste so much appreciated by consumers. By finding the same flavour and consistency they were used to, but with less sugar, consumers will remain loyal to Nestlé products. One of the examples for which Nestlé is reducing the amount of sugar is Nesquik. Between 2017 and 2018, first in Europe and then in the United States, Nestlé will produce a new version of Nesquik that will contain 3.4 grams of sugar per serving instead of 20 as now<sup>125</sup>.

As far as fats are concerned, they are an important component of a healthy and balanced diet, but excess saturated fat or trans fatty acids can expose the risk of non-transmissible diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Nestlé goal is to reduce saturated fats in its foods and completely eliminate trans-fatty acids from partially hydrogenated oils.

Moreover, as shown in chapter 4, whole grains and vegetables are fundamental to the nutritional balance of the diet since they are precious sources of fibres, vitamins and mineral salts. Nestlé aims at promoting the consumption of both of these groups of foods through its product ranges. It is not by chance that in 2011 Nestlé launched the new whole grains puff pastry (figure 30).

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<sup>124</sup> <http://www.nestle.it>

<sup>125</sup> Il Post, Nestlé cambierà il Nesquik, January 2017, <http://www.ilpost.it/2017/01/30/nestle-cambiera-nesquik-meno-zuccheri/> visited on 29.07.17





Figure 30: La sfoglia con farina integrale Buitoni

Source: Buitoni.it

But this is only one among the numerous examples of Nestlé products in which whole grains ingredients have been used. Among them there are also: Fitness cereals with oats and whole wheat and Buitoni pizza base at five cereals.

As much regards vegetables, Nestlé has followed new dietary trend and entered in the market of products for vegetarians and flexitarians (see chapter 4.1.1). In line with those trends, in the spring of 2017, Nestlé launched the Garden Gourmet line.



Figure 31: Garden Gourmet Logo and product

Source: Gardengourmet.it

In 2016, to meet the growing demand for organic products, Antica Gelateria del Corso creates Biofruit, the new organic ice cream that has in itself all the flavour of Italian fruit. Naturalness and simplicity are the values that characterize the BIOFRUTTA ice cream from Antica Gelateria del Corso: organic, prepared with only Italian fruit from organic farming, cane sugar and gluten-free.



Figure 32: Biofrutta icecreams by Antica Gelateria del Corso

Source: Google images

In chapter 4, there are also reference to the fact that in Italy, food intolerances are spreading around the population and also people who are not allergic or intolerant, are starting to buy free-from products mainly for curiosity and digestive reasons. Nestlé is going towards those trends with a large range of products free-from lactose and gluten.

In 2014, had been introduced Nestlé Gluten Free Corn Flakes, the first Nestlé cereals for anyone who is gluten-sensitive or who just want to start the day in a new way.

In May 2016, Buitoni, which is always attentive to the needs of its consumers, had broadened its range of products with two novelties suitable for those who must follow a diet that is attentive to intolerance: the gluten free iconic round puff pastry, and the frozen, gluten and lactose free pizza.

The Gluten Free round puff pastry is the first and only fresh gluten free puff pastry on the market. A great base for the most creative recipes that is naturally lactose-free and with a taste that maintains all the crunchy and crisp characteristics of traditional pasta. Thanks to its characteristics it had been not only appreciated by those who must follow a diet free from gluten but also by the entire family.

For those who love the rite of the pizza, but often have to give up because of the intolerance of gluten, Buitoni had introduced the ideal alternative. Good as the traditional one, it is the ideal solution to enjoy at home, alone, with family or friends, an appetizing pizza.

These two have been the first two gluten free products. After that some variants like the gluten and lactose free pizza with ham, or the gluten free short crust and pizza base have been introduced.

All those products are perfect supporters in balance between taste and health.



Figure 33: some of Buitoni gluten free range products

Source: Google Images

In order to meet the demand of lactose free products, in 2016 had been launched also free from lactose ice creams by La Cremeria, keeping its unmistakable features unchanged: softness and creaminess.



Figure 34: some products of the range La cremeria without lactose.

Source: google images

### 5.1.2 Nestlé and its digitalization

As seen chapters 2 and 3, the entire world and particularly the food sector, is involved in the digital transformation. Digital tools have revolutionized the way companies communicate and the ways consumers are attracted and retained by them. Digitalization is about transparency, immediacy, customer focus and data management and involves great changes in firms that adopt different models of governance in response to the risks and opportunities they face.

Nestlé demonstrates to be a world leader in terms of its approach to the digital age. Despite it was born more than 150 years ago, Nestlé has always been kept up to date with the contemporary changes, becoming a pacesetter in the tech and marketing fields.

The company success in modern markets, it is mainly due to its digital strategy, its approaches to social media, and the presence of entire teams devoted to digital transformation.

*"Our market share of sales (not in absolute values) that comes from digital channels is higher than the offline. As far as communication is concerned, television is still important, but digital is growing especially as a consumer dialogue<sup>126</sup>"* said Leo Wencel, CEO of Nestlé Italia.

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<sup>126</sup> S. Sagone, Linkontro. Coca - Cola, Ferrero, Nestlé, Unilever, Facebook: agili, veloci, flessibili, e digital oriented per comunicazioni one to one coi consumatori. Così cambia il marketing del largo consumo,

One of the most fundamental moment that allows Nestlé to completely focus on the shift through digital transformation, was when the company's Digital Acceleration Team (D.A.T.) was created. It was first established in the headquarter of Vevey (Switzerland) in 2012 and now it is present in 22 countries. In Italy it was opened in 2013.



Figure 35: D.A.T. spaces in Italy (Assago, MI)

Source: Google images.

Digital Acceleration Team combines digital leadership training programmes and a place for digital marketing projects at Nestlé. Its objectives are twofold: on one side, D.A.T.'s job is to train employees on the digital part of the business. This includes everything from social media to SEO. On the other side, D.A.T. is used to experiment with interesting digital trendsetters to find unique and new advertising approaches<sup>127</sup>. This latter goal allows Nestlé to keep up with cutting edge approaches in digital marketing and communication. As it is shown in figure 35, D.A.T. is full of screens that show current, real-time data trends, providing a deep view into what is happening across Nestlé's digital world at any given moment. Metrics like trending posts, conversations and sentiment level are visible on those screens. Those data let the team understand exactly when and how to engage with their social and digital followers.

So, DAT's job is to make sure that almost all of the Nestle employees across the company's

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Nielsen, May 2017, <http://www.adcgroup.it/adv-express/big-data/nielsen/linkontro-coca-cola-ferrero-nestle-unilever-facebook-agili-veloci-flessibili-e-digital-oriented-per-comunicazioni-one-to-one-coi-consumatori-.html>

<sup>127</sup> Centric Digital, How Nestlé's Digital Transformation Made the Brand a Major Player in Today's Marketplace, February 2016, <https://centricdigital.com/blog/digital-transformation/how-nestles-digital-transformation-made-the-brand/>

multiple brands embrace its successful digital strategies.

Another example of Nestlé path through digitalization is the full-time digital lab, stationed in Salesforce's New York offices by Nestlé Waters in 2016: the "Consumer Engagement Centre". This lab aimed at, through digital tools, improving personalized communications with the company consumers and building an engaged community around its brands.

*"Marketing today is about providing personalized consumer experiences - so what we're trying to do is not just do brand campaigns, but have two-way conversations, nurture communities and really be a companion to our consumers."* (A. Sciuto, CMO of Nestlé Waters North America)<sup>128</sup>.

After being looking at all those activities, it is possible to state that Nestlé is at all the effects, experiencing a complete digital transformation. But one of the first step Nestlé focuses on when started going digital, was how to implement brands websites and social media channels.

In 2015, Nestlé has over 210 million fans on its brands on Facebook<sup>129</sup>. Among the Nestlé Italian brands, all (42) have an official website while 32 have one or more social pages. An exception is Buitoni which is the most digitalized brand with an official website, a blog and three social profiles. (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).

In general, it is also true that for a brand it is not a real choice to be present on social media.

*"Every brand technically has a social media presence by virtue of the fact that consumers and stakeholders talk about brands. Social media is a reflection of brand love, or in some*

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<sup>128</sup> T. Dua, Nestle Waters launches a digital command centre to collect data and market faster, Digiday UK, 2016, <https://digiday.com/marketing/inside-nestle-waters-new-digital-command-center/>, visited on 29.07.17

<sup>129</sup> Centric Digital, How Nestlé's Digital Transformation Made the Brand a Major Player in Today's Marketplace, 2016, <https://centricdigital.com/blog/digital-transformation/how-nestles-digital-transformation-made-the-brand/> visited on 29.07.17

*cases issues that people have with brands*". (P. Blackshaw, Global Digital Media Head at Nestlé<sup>130</sup>).

Obviously, people that want to engage with a company brands on social media have an implicit interest on them. Even if they purchase or talk about the brand, they are in both cases, potential consumers. And since they trust each other more than they trust formal advertising made by companies, it is fundamental to engage with them in a better way as possible to try to make them the company's advertisers.

However, even if digital communication is growing sharply, traditional form of communications like tv, still remains important. The big difference is due to the dialogue with consumers. Among the vast Nestlé portfolio, there are brands which are more digital oriented, like Purina and personal health care areas, while others, like Perugina and Buitoni, which use both traditional and digital strategies.

### **5.1.3 Nestlé and the consumers experience**

Consumers are now even more powerful and demanding. Summarizing what has been said in chapter 2, in order to face those changes and challenges, companies need to:

1. Listen to consumers and co-create with them;
2. Being open to consumers;
3. Personalize contents, products and services;
4. Being always at the service of consumers and make them at the center of their strategies;
5. Using disrupting storytelling in order to engage consumers.

Looking at Nestlé, it is possible to cover all these points.

#### **Listen to consumers and co-create with them**

In order to 'talk' and so listen to consumers, Nestlé uses numbers of different online and offline tools. Referring in particular to Nestlé Italia, call centers and community management are the main channels in order to have a direct relationship with consumers.

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<sup>130</sup> M. Fitzgerald interviewing P. Blackshaw, How Digital Acceleration Teams Are Influencing Nestlé's 2,000 Brands, MITSloan Management review, <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/testing-123/>, 2013, visited on 29.07.17

Call centre is the offline tool and aims at giving information, receiving any kind of advisory or communications and even suggestions.

Community management is the online tool and, for Nestlé Italia, community managers are in charge of administering the social pages of the Nestlé brands and being in relationship with consumers who want to communicate with those specific brands. Of the 32 social assets for Nestlé Italia brands, 29 are managed by the Internal Community Management. Around 20.000 comments per year have been managed (17000 in 2016 and 17000 in the first semester of 2017) with FAQ and personalised answers.

Moreover, as stated in previous chapters, brands should be humanised in order to let consumers recognize them as their peers. In answering to consumers, community managers sign with their personal name as the brand is a real person.

Those are the cases of Buitoni and Buona la Vita, as shown in figure 36.



Figure 36: The humanizations of brands

Source: Facebook Buona la Vita and Buitoni pages

Community managers are also those who often receive proposals by consumers of creating new products that meet their needs.

Social media are perfect means to make requests to companies. An example is shown in figure 37.



Figure 37: a proposal made by consumers on social network

Source: Buona la Vita Facebook page



Apart from requests, some of the proposals have been taken seriously in consideration and sometimes implemented. A recent example is the one of the opening of Formaggino MIO.

After some complaints about the opening of the product, in May 2017, the new opening has been launched ,as requested by consumers.

This has been an action that completely puts at the centre the need and wonders of consumers.



Figure 38: From comments by consumers to the final output

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/FormagginoMio/videos/1815854702065631/>

### **Being open to consumers**

In order to innovate and being even more near to consumers, companies have to be opened and elaborate projects with them. Nestlé does it on a ordinary basis thanks to some initiatives as Henri Nestlé<sup>131</sup>. Through HENRi, Nestlé combines the creative spirit and ingenuity of external innovators with the scale and expertise of the world's leading Nutrition, Health and Wellness company. Together, they will tackle projects that will make a genuine difference, not just to Nestlé and its partners, but to hundreds of millions of people across the world.

An example is Nesquik Studios. It is a digital and physical platform for parents to help their children use their creativity and imagination to realize their ideas and dreams<sup>132</sup>. The project is directly addressed to growing concerns about children's' lack of physical activity, the high sugar levels in kids' diets, and the rise of childhood obesity. Nestlé aim

<sup>131</sup> <https://henri.nestle.com>

<sup>132</sup> <https://henri.nestle.com/live-projects/nesquikr-studios>



is to work with an external partner to find new ways to encourage parents and children to create or re-invent games using mobile technology to help kids get active.

### **Personalize contents, products and services**

Personalization is another important element in order to attract and retain consumers. An example that can be mentioned is the Nescafé Dolce Gusto project for customizing the "Melody" machine through a Facebook application. This was a contest where people can customize the coffee machine and vote for their favourite personalized machines. The most voted by web users and a jury, had been realized and took part at the limited edition of spring 2013. This is an example of how a company can leverage one of the most popular social networking site in the world, particularly in Italy, to give users a realistic chance of having their idea realized, as well as involving them personally in a business project and thus linking them more to the brand in question and its values.

### **Being always at the service of consumers and make them at the centre of the strategies**

Consumers need to feel at the centre of the decision of companies and pretend to receive always the best services. That is why Nestlé is committed towards making available a number of personalized services using for example mobile apps, as in the case of Purina Pro Plan. A chatbot is always available to help consumers in everything they need: from question to the procurement of the products.

### **Using disrupting storytelling in order to engage consumers**

As seen in chapter 4, storytelling is the new frontier of communication mostly appreciated by consumers. In the ultimate years, also Nestlé has used this type of communication especially for some brands like KitKat and Infant nutrition.



Figure 39: An image of the KitKat advertising

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZxnJ9VXlhg>

### **The Consumer & Shopper Engagement Centre<sup>133</sup>**

In order to meet and understand the needs of consumers, in 2015 was established in Italy the first Consumer & Shopper Engagement centre of Nestlé Group.

This is a sort of "incubator" of digital skills and category management, where Nestlé Group and GDO work to develop innovative solutions together to better satisfy consumer needs. The idea at the base is to collaborate to respond quickly and precisely to consumer needs, and grow with trade.

The Consumer & Shopper Engagement Centre have been projected as a journey. This journey starts from listening to the expressed needs, expectations and desires of people, especially declared through digital means, regarding purchasing products and experiences. Then, it continues through data processing and the development of trade marketing strategies to increase the value of the categories, and improve sales performance.

Particularly, the area opens with the Digital Acceleration Team (see 5.1.2), a highly technological space that represents the Nestlé's commitment to accelerating the digitization process, and becoming a reference point for internal and external customers with regard to the knowledge of the consumer and the shopper. DAT is the heart of internal digital training and is based on three core pillars: Listening, Engaging, Inspiring & Transforming. Conversations on social media, are valuable indicators to understand current trends, understand user needs, and transfer digital innovation to improve the consumer and shopper experience.

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<sup>133</sup> [http://www.nestle.it/media/pressreleases/consumer\\_shopper\\_engagement\\_centre](http://www.nestle.it/media/pressreleases/consumer_shopper_engagement_centre)

The journey continues with the Shopper Insight Center, in which these data obtained from DAT are processed and materialized in a supermarket of 600mq. That is an ideal, futuristic, accessibility-friendly, on-line and off-the-shelf retailer, increasingly demanded by consumers. It contains over 3,000 references for the different product categories in which the Nestlé Group operates (aperitifs, water, beverages, coffee machines, culinary products, chocolate, cereals, hot drinks, fresh produce, baby food, petcare, Frozen, ice cream), which can be utilized through shelving positioning strategies, inspired by category management, but also through virtual shopping experiences.

In the Shopper Insight Center, some innovative marketing techniques have been tested like for example the IBeacon technology. That is an app which allows the consumer to be guided in products research, download coupons for discounts, build a "virtual shopping cart", view recipes to enhance the purchased products, and share the shopping experience on the major social networks.

Hence, the Consumer & Shopper Engagement Center demonstrates the Nestlé Group's commitment to developing joint strategies for GDO to innovate the market and meet the needs of the consumer.

## **5.2 Nestlé positioning**

Before looking at the online tools used by Nestlé to position, it is important to figure out its positioning.

As seen in chapter 1, brand positioning is a strategy aimed at positioning the brand in the mind of consumers in a unique way in respect to competitors.

Being the world's largest food manufacturer, Nestlé has two main competitors: Unilever and Danone, which both are two food and beverage giants similar to Nestlé.

However, the closest adversary can be considered Unilever. It is the company which is mostly similar to Nestlé, with around 230,000 employees and operating in about 160 countries.

The company is edging Nestlé in terms of the quality of its products which has made it the second player in the Western European ready meals market having a market share of 8,6%, 0.3 points behind leading Nestlé<sup>134</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> Nestlé S.A. Competitive Position and Analysis, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/course-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv\\_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestlé-S.A.-Competitive-](https://s3.amazonaws.com/course-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestlé-S.A.-Competitive-)

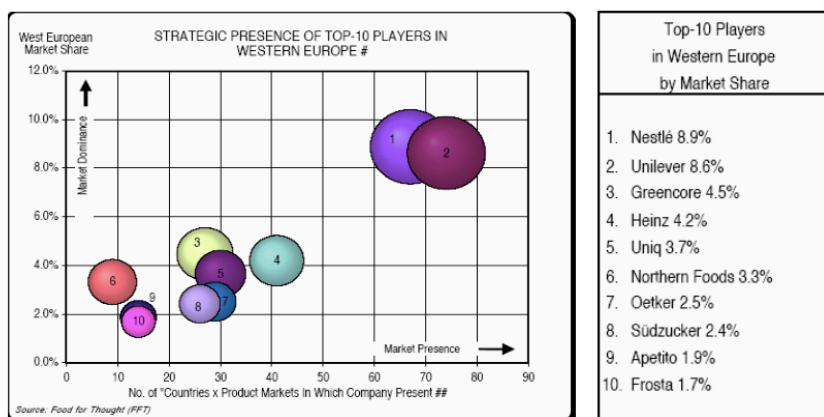


Figure 40: Nestlé Market share in Western Europe

Source: Nestlé S.A. Competitive Position and Analysis,

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-](https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl_)

[review/a3f86i8hEeWv\\_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl\\_](https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl_)

[S.A.-Competitive-position-and-Analysis.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl_)

Figure 40 shows the two giants in the ready meals market in Western Europe.

As far as the dairy market is concerned, Nestlé is still the leader, followed by Unilever and Danone. Nestlé, manages to remain on top thanks to its adaptation to local tastes for its products.

The Swiss company, focuses on capturing more customers, concentrates on establishing a positive orientation towards adding nutritional values to its products.

Moreover, Nestlé paying vast attention to brands and communication, has introduced and enhanced the nutrition and health dimensions in its brand communication.

Progressively, Nestlé improves the quality of its products with the development of nutrition which gives it a competitive advantage.

Figure 41, exhibits a comparison among the strategies of Nestlé and Unilever.

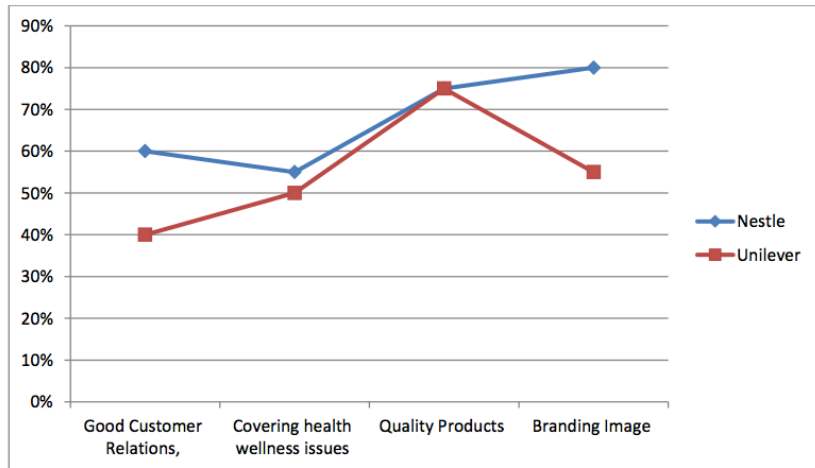


Figure 41: Nestlé and Unilever strategies

Source: Nestlé S.A. Competitive Position and Analysis,

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer>

[review/a3f86i8hEeWv\\_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl\\_-](https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl_-)

[S.A.-Competitive-position-and-Analysis.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/coursera-uploads/peer-review/a3f86i8hEeWv_w7cMMH1Uw/6b87a71fd27bc955f9b707ae6adfb79f/Nestl_-S.A.-Competitive-position-and-Analysis.pdf)

As shown in figure 41, Nestlé has the highest percentages in all the objectives in the x-axis. In particular, it boasts of good customer relations, covering health and wellness issues and branding image. The only aspect for which the two giants are almost equal is the quality of products.

### 5.3 Using web as a positioning tool: Nestlé Buona la vita website

In a market even more focused on nutrition, and with the goal to be positioned as the company leader in the Nutrition Health and Wellness (NHW) field and being even more near to consumers, on April 2011 Nestlé Italy launched the website: [www.buonalavita.it](http://www.buonalavita.it). In August 2013, the website [buonalavita.it](http://www.buonalavita.it) has simplified its navigation structure and has undergone a complete restyling of design and contents in order to better meet the needs of consumers.

The new portal Buona la Vita, comes alongside the institutional site, since, unlike the latter, it is defined as a consumer relationship website.

Buona la Vita offered the opportunity to consolidate Nestlé's positioning and awareness as a leading NHW company through building credentials of nutrition and brand quality, and providing relevant and engaging topics for a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Its main objectives can be summarized as follows: first of all, as previously stated, Buona la Vita goal is to enhance the positioning of Nestlé as a NHW leading company; secondly, it aims at strengthening the link between Nestlé's positioning and its brands by communicating the variety of products for every moment of life and consumer's occasion; third, it aims at building and maintaining a strong relationship with consumers by creating an emotional involvement contents focusing on NHW themes.

### 5.3.1 Buona la Vita structure

By partnering with the institutional site [www.nestlé.it](http://www.nestlé.it), Buona la Vita<sup>135</sup> is designed as a space that allows the company to increasingly approach with its consumers providing services and personalized content based on consumers' needs, as well as to spread knowledge from Nestlé's nutrition expertise.

Looking at the structure of the website, Buona la Vita is divided into five main sections. The section 'Vivere Sano' that is the one focused on the NHW field; a section dedicated to Nestlé products and one dedicated to recipes made using them; and other two sections devoted to promotions and coupons. Moreover, albeit less emphasized, there are the section for e-commerce and one dedicated to the reserved area.

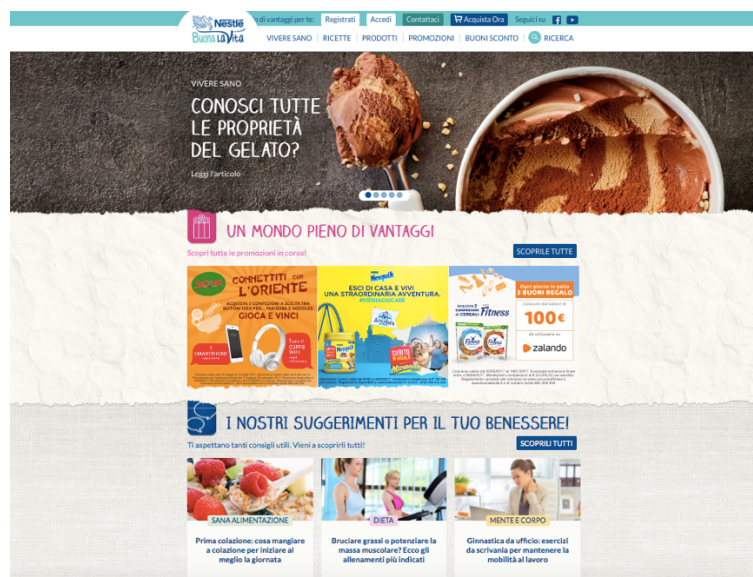


Figure 42: Buona la Vita website

Source: [www.buonalavita.it](http://www.buonalavita.it)

<sup>135</sup> [www.buonalavita.it](http://www.buonalavita.it)

Buona la Vita is a multifunctional website. Going deep into the different sections, it is analysable the relation between them and the websites' objectives. Vivere sano is the section dedicated to the purpose of Nestlé, that is Nutrition Health and Wellness. It is divided for themes: one part is dedicated to Nutrition, which is focused on health alimentary habits for pregnancy, children, and sport-loving; another one is focused on Health, in which there are articles dedicated to diets but also to allergies and intolerances; and finally a section dedicated to Wellness, in which there are articles dedicated mainly to the relation between minds and body.

In all those sections, the articles are written by experts following the new nutritional trends as the ones shown in chapter 4.



Figure 43: Some of the Buona la Vita articles focused on alimentary trends

Source: [www.buonalavita.it](http://www.buonalavita.it)

As stated before, Buona la Vita aims at enhancing the positioning of Nestlé products. In fact, is a multi-brand site which includes all the products by Nestlé Italy with their detailed descriptions and nutritional information, their history, news, promotions and recipes.

Recipes are another important section of the website. Those recipes are unique in the sense that are done using Nestlé's products and are necessary to communicate how Nestlé's products are perfect for every moment of life and occasion.

It is interesting to see that, as stated in section 5.1.2, there are some brands that have social profiles but not official websites. In those latter cases, Buona la Vita represents, at all the effects, the official website for those products which do not have one.

Finally, in order to involve more consumers to buy Nestlé's products, there are coupons and promotions.



### 5.3.1 Buona la Vita target and their relationship

The general target of Buona la Vita are all those people who care about their own and family's wellbeing and health, and, at the same time, who are also looking for tasty solutions. In doing so, they are searching for trusting companies to help them improving their quality of life.

Going more deeply, the specific target are middle-aged women who are particularly attentive to a healthy and balanced lifestyle without sacrificing the pleasure of taste for themselves and their own family.

Buona la Vita reflects the consumers that follow a balanced, tasty and healthy lifestyle thinking that is the best way to enjoy their life. So, the consumers' benefits provided by Buona la Vita are either functional and emotional. A NHW flagship site comprehensively supports the consumer in having a healthy, balanced diet and lifestyle.

In order to explain the relationship between Buona la Vita and its target, Ipsos, through a quantitative research made in 2016, had interviewed 900 people (female and male between 18 and 65 years old) which represent the website's target.

In order to analyse the level of involvement between the target and Buona la Vita, it has been relevant to start from the evaluation of Buona la Vita consumer funnel.

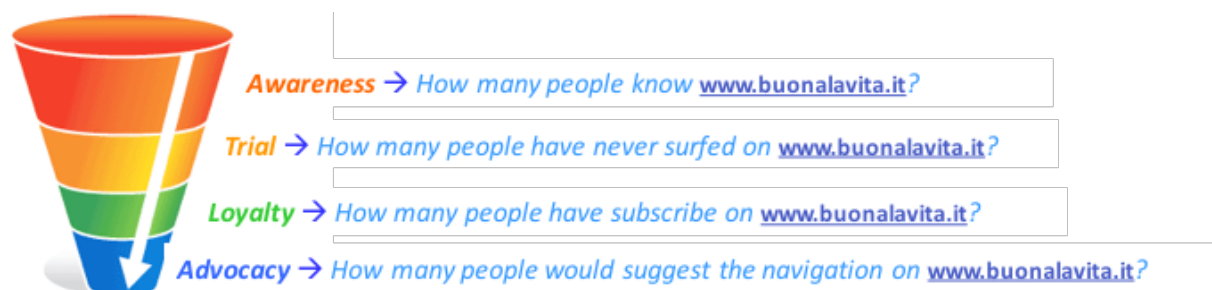


Figure 44: Buona la Vita consumer funnel

Source: Ipsos research on Buona la Vita funnel, 2016

From 2014 to 2016, Buona la Vita awareness has slightly increased as well as the number of people who have surfed on the site. The number of consumers who register to the website have remained the same while the advocates have increased<sup>136</sup>. Those latter are the ones which are most difficult to retain but are the most important since they recommend the website to others that can become new consumers.

<sup>136</sup> Rielaboration of Ipsos reasearch



At this point it is important to figure out what is the cognition of wellness for the website target. To do that, consumers have been segmented<sup>137</sup> in relation to how they perceive wellness. Four types of consumers have been identified: balanced, rigids, indifferents and exhibitionists. Among the interviewees, the majority were balanced, followed by rigids, indifferents and exhibitionists.

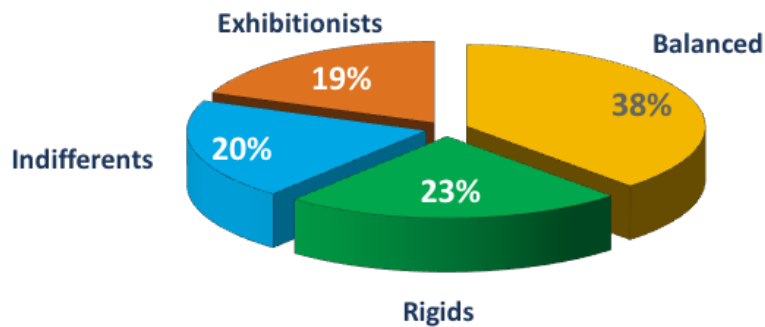


Figure 45: Buona la Vita target segments

Source: Ipsos research on Buona la Vita, 2016

Balanced are those who look at wellness in every aspects and who inquired about it through digital assets. Their behaviour through nutrition is a choice not only related to living healthy, rather it is also an ethic choice.

For rigids, the diet is determined by personal or familiar health problems, or by ethic duties. They are, in a certain way, obliged to follow a particular type of dietary habits.

Indifferents are those who do not follow any type of guidelines as much regards wellness. They follow their fleeting needs and often are those who do not have much time and wonder to care about what they eat.

Exhibitionists are focused on their image and are in a continuous research of other people approval. They care about their physical appearance and like to exhibit it. They follow an ordinarily alimentary ethic.

Looking at the correspondence between the funnel and the various segments, it is noticeable that balanced are the ones with the best funnel and so with the highest advocacy, while indifferents are those with the worst funnel. From those evidences, it is

<sup>137</sup> Buona la Vita target: female and male between 18 and 65 years old

possible to state that balanced are the core target of Buona la Vita<sup>138</sup>.

Considering the purchasing behaviour of these consumer segments, balanced are, for the majority, the ones who buy branded products only if they are on promotion, if there are coupons available and who buy private labels products. On the other hand, they are also the ones that, for some products, are loyal to a brand and are willing to buy its products even if they are more expensive.

As much regards the source of information that influences the interviewed purchasing process, in general, digital tools do not have a decisive impact. The least tools that impact the consumers' decisions is display advertising like pop-ups or banners. Despite this, the reviews made by other consumers on forums revealed that they are the ones which have the biggest influence on the purchasing decision.

### 5.3.2 Buona la Vita brand analysis

Nestlé Buona la Vita can be considered as a brand aimed at enhancing the positioning of Nestlé in the NHW field. In order to deeply understand its identity, it is important to analyse it from the brand perspective.

Buona la Vita does not identify a product or a range of products, rather, it identifies a way of living following Nestlé's philosophy. So, its brand analysis depends, for some points, by the one of Nestlé.

Some brands can be compared to a pyramid<sup>139</sup> as shown in figure 46.

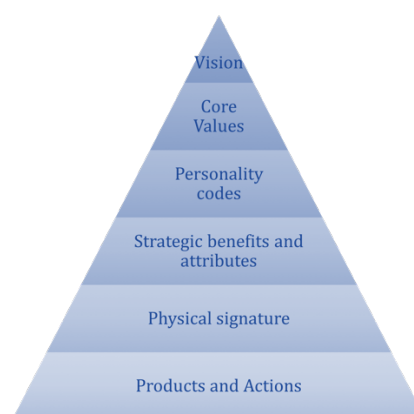


Figure 46: Brand system

Source: page 33, J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management

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<sup>138</sup> Rielaboration of Ipsos research

<sup>139</sup> page 33, J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012

Looking at the pyramid from a top-down point of view, that is the one of brand management, the first level is represented by the vision. As far as Buona la Vita is concerned, its vision is to be recognized as the most famous, diffused and influential website for the NHW field. Going to the next level, it shows the general brand style of communication. Buona la Vita communicates trying to excite consumers' curiosity through the advices it provides.

Brand personality codes reflect the brand's unique characters. The last two steps of the pyramid are the most material parts of the brand. In the case of Buona la Vita, there are not physical signature or products, there is a service provided by Nestlé that is positioning to enhance its purpose.

#### *Brand identity and image*

As shown in chapter 1, the identity of a brand expresses its essence, all the characteristics that make the brand what it is and without which it would be something different. Identity draws upon the brand's root and heritage. All those facets must be closely linked and it is fundamental that brand's intangible facets reflect the tangible ones. Buona la Vita can be seen as the intangible part of the brand identity of Nestlé.

In order to understand what is brand identity made of, it is possible to construct the brand identity prism<sup>140</sup> ( see also chapter 1). In general, the identity prism of Buona la Vita is strictly related to the one of Nestlé, in particular for the physical part.

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<sup>140</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., page 158-161

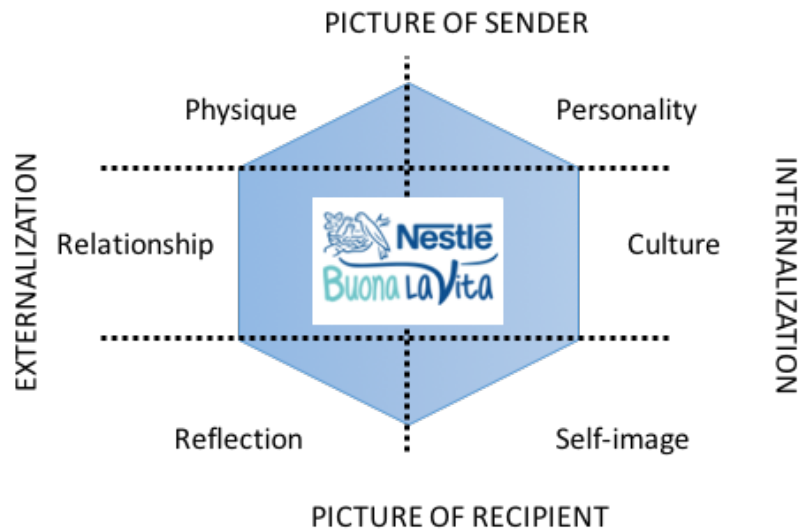


Figure 47: Nestlé Buona la Vita brand identity prism

Source: J.N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*, p. 158-161

As it is possible to see from figure 47, the six facets of the prism represent:

1. The physical dimension. Being by definition an intangible brand, Buona la Vita has not this characteristic. However, Nestlé does. Nestlé can be identified by a huge number of tangible assets, and so it is possible to state that in the case of Buona la Vita the physique facets has been inherited by Nestlé.
2. Personality. Each brand has its own personal character. The way in which it communicates its services or products shows how could be its character if it was a human. Buona la Vita would be a family mother that is attentive to herself and her family nutritional habits, without sacrificing the pleasure of indulging moments.
3. A brand is also a culture. Some brand are ideologies, above personalities. They must foster an ideal<sup>141</sup>. Buona la Vita perfectly reflects the new culture of food. As shown in chapter 4, the alimentary habits are changing, and what Buona la Vita wants to do is to inform consumers about these changes and convince them that good food is the key element for a healthy living.
4. A brand is a relationship. Buona la Vita establishes its relationships with consumers being as an advisor for their diet and way of living.

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<sup>141</sup> J.N. Kapferer, cit., p.160

5. A brand is a reflection of its consumers. But reflecting the consumer is not describing the target, rather, the customer should be reflected as he wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand. In the case of Buona la Vita, consumers would like to be seen as attentive to their health and the one of their family.
6. Finally, the brand speaks also to consumers self-image. Using and being addicted to certain brands, consumers develop a certain type of inner relationship with themselves. In consulting Buona la Vita, a consumer can feel as it is paying attention to its health and dietary habits but with some indulgent moments that make him happy.

It is important to distinguish between the brand identity and the brand image. As stated before, brand identity represents how the company defines how the brand is. Brand image is how the consumer perceive the brand. This latter is obviously influenced not only by brand image, but also by other numerous factors that include the competitor's actions too.

### *Brand Reputation*

Brand reputation is the sum of all opinions among all stakeholders about the company. Brands are made by people and so everyone is concerned by the final output.

In general, global reputation is based on six factors: emotional appeal, products and services, vision and leadership, workplace quality, financial performance and social responsibility<sup>142</sup>.

Even if Buona la Vita and Nestlé are two different brands, their reputation is strictly correlated. Buona la Vita can be seen as the part of Nestlé closer to its purpose: Nutrition Health and Wellness. If Buona la Vita has a good reputation, it means that Nestlé is seen as coherent with its mission (NHW). But it is also true the contrary: if Nestlé has a good reputation as a company in the food sector, also Buona la Vita will have a good one since the products and contents shown on the websites are by Nestlé brand.

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<sup>142</sup>J.N. Kapferer, cit., page 27

## *Brand architecture*

A brand has only one need: to grow, while maintaining its reputation and profits<sup>143</sup>. In order to grow, companies can extend or narrow their product line or range, or entry into new product categories. All the consequential strategic questions that come up, like the brand name, levels, the relationship between corporate brand and new brand, concern brand architecture. 'Brand architecture is the logical, strategic and relational structure for your brands or put another way, it is the entity's "family tree" of brands, sub-brands and named products<sup>144</sup>'. Fundamentally, brand architecture is a strategy.

Basically, there two type of brand architecture: house of brand and branded house. The former, is a situation of extreme freedom of management for the brands, subsidiaries, activities and divisions. While branded house 'expresses the desire to give coherence to the whole under the auspices of a brand with central values that find embodiment at the market and product level<sup>145</sup>'. Obviously, big companies often do not choose only one strategy but a mixture of those, rendering the architecture really complex.

The case of Nestlé is particular, since it adopts both strategies for the different product segments. In general, on global products, like for example Maggi and Perrier, the Nestlé brand appears and so it uses the branded house strategy; while for regional or local products, like Buitoni and Baci Perugina, the brand does not appear and so it is using the house of brand strategy.

In the case of Buona la Vita, as we can see from the logo (figure 46), Nestlé completely endorses it. This means that Nestlé gives its approval on Buona la Vita brand being also in its logo but leaving a minimum of originality that distinguishes corporate brand from the endorsed one. The peculiarity of Buona la Vita is also that it can be seen as an umbrella brand, or a common umbrella to identify a highly diversified range of products. This because Buona la Vita is a website that collects almost all Nestlé's brands and for some of them it is the only digital touchpoint.

As much regards the brand name, the choice of the name 'Buona la Vita' preceded by the Nestlé logo, has a true symbolic meaning. It is like to say that this is a brand that explains

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<sup>143</sup> page 309, J.N. Kapferer, *The New Strategic Brand Management*

<sup>144</sup> D. Daye, *Brand Architecture Strategy Guide*, 2014,  
<https://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2014/01/brand-architecture-strategy-guide.html#.WYgbzXdaZ0s>, visited on 07.08.17

<sup>145</sup> J.N. Kapferer, *cit.*, p. 314

how to live a life in a good and healthy way with Nestlé products and advices. Moreover, it is a name easy to remember, not too long and consistent with the intent of the business.

### 5.3.3 Buona la Vita and social networks

#### Facebook

In 2012, in consequence of the growing diffusion of social media as new means of communication, and in order to enhance Buona la Vita purpose, it has been opened Buona la Vita Facebook Fanpage. Today, it counts about 342 thousand of fans that are continuously growing.

As we can see from figure 48, Buona la Vita target<sup>146</sup> has discovered the Facebook page mainly thanks to the posts published and to Buona la Vita website.

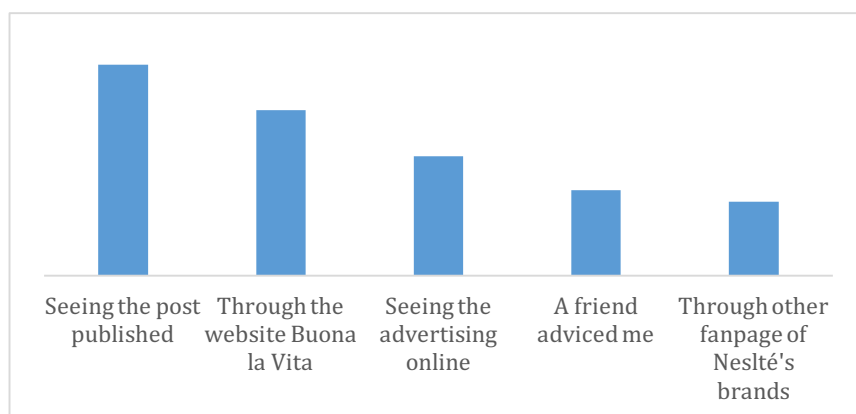


Figure 48: How the target came to know Buona la Vita Facebook fanpage

Source: Ipsos research on Buona la Vita, 2016

Through the Facebook page, Buona la Vita aims to engage consumers and spreads information about products and nutritional advices in order to gain the desired positioning (see chapter 6).

#### Youtube

Nestlé Buona la Vita has also a Youtube channel. This channel is mainly used to publish videorecipes. The views on the video published are on average around 150 and they, of course, are higher for the contents sponsored on social media or used in newsletters.

<sup>146</sup> Ipsos research, interviewed 900 people, female and male between 18 and 65 years old, 2016

*Instagram*

Instagram was implemented, but actually the profile is not active.

### 5.3.4 Nestlé Buona la Vita competitors

As Nestlé, other companies moved to the implementation of consumer-service websites in order to better position themselves as healthy and in line with trends.

In the FMCG sector, it is possible to identify three main competitors of Buona la Vita: Desideri Magazine by P&G, Detto fra noi by Unilever, Donna D by Henkel.



Figure 49: Buona la Vita and its competitors logos

Source: Facebook

Detto fra noi<sup>147</sup> by Unilever is maybe the most direct competitor of Buona la Vita, since Unilever is also a food company, and so provides recipes and nutritional advices.

Analysing the funnel for all of the four websites under examination, it is possible to notice that the one with the highest awareness is Desideri Magazine by P&G. In general, it has the best funnel with the highest awareness, trial, loyalty and advocacy. Considering the clusters in which Buona la Vita target has been divided (see section 5.3.1), it is noteworthy that balanced and rigids declared the highest values of awareness, trial, loyalty and advocacy for all of these websites.

As Buona la Vita, all of them have a Facebook fanpage.

Detto fra Noi Facebook page was created by Unilever and it is dedicated to the conversations and sharing of ideas, advices that can help people to live better. Through the numerous range of products managed by Unilever, in the page there will be addressed topics like home care, cooking advices and many others. Today it counts around 400 thousand of Fan.

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<sup>147</sup> <http://www.dettofranoi.it/home>



The Facebook page Desideri Magazine<sup>148</sup>, has been created by P&G in 2010 with the aim of implementing a forum to let consumers share experiences. It has a fanbase of more than 400 thousand fans.

Henkel opened its Facebook page DonnaD Amica fidata<sup>149</sup> in 2000. It is a particular kind of page because, differently from the other pages and websites, it is targeted only for women. It is a place to let consumers share thoughts, experiences and photos and today it counts around 306 thousand of Facebook fans. It is also interesting to notice that DonnaD is not only a web portal, it is also a magazine distributed for free in 600.000 copies, and comprehends a network of miniwebsites specialized in the arguments more researched by women like easy cleanings.

### **5.3.5 Buona la Vita and its similars**

Flagship NHW websites as Buona la Vita, are present also in different countries. Nestlé, being a multinational company, maintains its vision and purpose all across the markets in which it operates. The wonder to be positioned as the leader in the NHW field, has been to be adapted to all the different markets and so there are a plenty of websites with all the same goal. This goal has to be obtained throughout different strategies according to the different cultural environments.

Just to mention some of NHW flagship websites, there are the European like the Spanish a 'Gusto con la Vida<sup>150</sup>', the French 'Croquons la Vie<sup>151</sup>'; and the international like the Australian 'Choose Wellness<sup>152</sup>' and the Indonesian 'Sahabat<sup>153</sup>' (figure 50).

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<sup>148</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/desiderimagazine/>

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DonnaD.it/> visited on 23.05.17

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.agustoconlavid.es>, visited on 23.05.17

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.croquonslavie.fr>, visited on 23.05.17

<sup>152</sup> <https://www.nestlechoosewellness.com.au>, visited on 23.05.17

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.sahabatnestle.co.id>, visited on 23.05.17



Figure 50: Some of Nestlé NHW flagship websites

Source: Websites pages

Since Buona la Vita is part of the European websites, it can be interesting to briefly compare them with the other European ones, in particular the Spanish one.

As it is possible to see from figure 51, the Spanish website has a similar structure to that of Buona la Vita. It has the sections on Nutrition, Health and Wellness exactly as Buona la Vita has. But also recipes, contests and the brands.



Figure 51: The Spanish NHW flagship websites, A gusto con la Vida

Source: <https://www.agustoconlavida.es>

A Gusto con la Vida, as we see it today, was created in 2014 as a restyle of the previous one, in order to have a better alignment with Nestlé purpose.

Moreover, similarly to Buona la Vita, both the two websites have their Facebook Fanpage. 'Croquons la Vie' Facebook fanpage<sup>154</sup> launched in 2009, today has around 270 thousand of fans. 'Gusto con la Vida'<sup>155</sup>, launched in 2012, today has about 600 thousand of fans.

<sup>154</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/croquonslavieavecneville/>, visited on 23.06.17

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Nestle.AGustoConLaVida/>, visited on 23.06.17

## 5.4 How Buona la Vita contributes to the positioning of Nestlé as a health and wellness brand

### 5.4.1 Buona la Vita positioning

In chapter 1, brand positioning has been defined as a process leading to emphasize the difference between the company's brand and its competitors. Its aim is to identify the space that the company brand occupies in the mind of consumers.

Regarding the positioning of Buona la Vita website and Facebook page, four main variables have been considered: two regarding the communicational objectives and the other two regarding the contents. The communicational objectives of Buona la Vita are: to engage consumers or to inform consumers. As much regards the contents, they are mainly focused on nutritional advices or products.

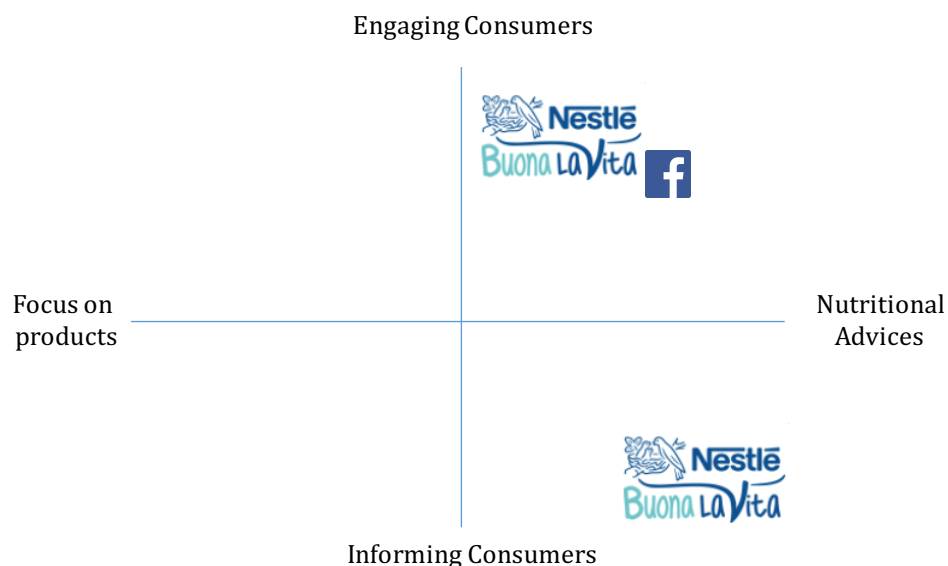


Figure 52: Positioning of Buona la Vita

Source: personal elaboration

As it is shown in figure 52, it is possible to position Buona la Vita as a website that provides informational contents focusing on nutritional advices. Looking at the Facebook page, it obviously has a positioning similar to the one of Buona la Vita website, since their ultimate goal is the same, but it can be seen as more engaging and with contents a little bit more focused also on products. Obviously this is due also to the different nature of social media

in respect to a website. The formers allow people to interact while the latter does not provide this type of service as it is explained in section 2.1.2.

In order to position Nestlé Buona la Vita in respect to its main competitor, or 'Detto fra Noi' by Unilever, the contents published on the Facebook page have been analysed. In other words, it has been seen for both the Facebook pages, how many contents regarding health or recipes have been published and their interactions. Doing this it is possible to compare the positioning of Buona la Vita and Detto fra Noi as two Facebook pages aimed at promoting health and quality of food.

Before analysing the positioning in detail, it is important to point out that Unilever it is not only a food and beverage company, it covers also products such as for home care and personal care.

However, from January 2017 to July 2017, Buona la Vita has published 40 posts on the Facebook page, and 40 posts of which 40% are about articles and recipes. Detto fra Noi has published 116 posts, 29% of which were about articles and recipes.

As much regards the number of interactions on those posts, Buona la Vita has around 8.000 interactions while Detto fra Noi has 1.000 interactions.

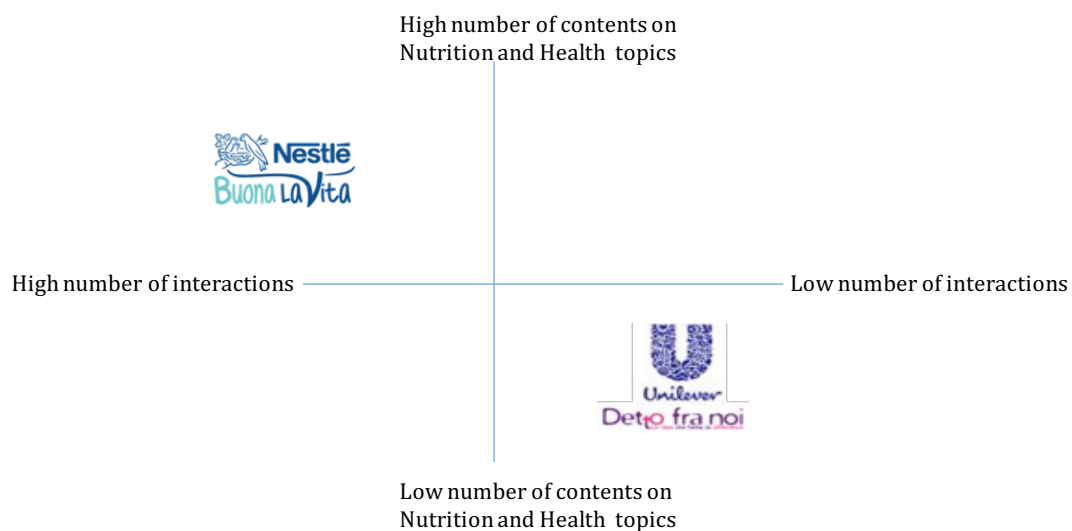


Figure 53: Positioning of Nestlé Buona la Vita and Detto fra Noi by Unilever

Source: Personal elaboration

Figure 53 shows the positioning map of those two Facebook pages considering two main variables: the number of contents about health and nutrition, and the number of interactions on those contents.

As shown in the figure, Buona la Vita concentrates mostly on food and health issues and gains much more interactions in respect to Detto fra Noi, even if this latter published more posts. This is about to say that Nestlé Buona la Vita has a solid positioning in the field of nutrition, health and wellness.

This is a sort of reflection of the offline positioning of Nestlé and Unilever explained in section 5.3.

#### **5.4.2 Buona la Vita and the perception of Nestlé in the field of Nutrition, Health and Wellness**

For wellness, Nestlé means a concept inspired at a healthy lifestyle made by balanced nutritional choices.

Among the people interviewed by Ipsos in 2016, Nestlé well represents the concept of health and wellness. Balanced and rigids (see section 5.3.1) are the clusters for which the relationship between the company and the concepts of health and wellness is closer.

As shown in figure 54, the majority of the touchpoints that drive the association between Nestlé and the health and wellness field are mainly offline touchpoints.

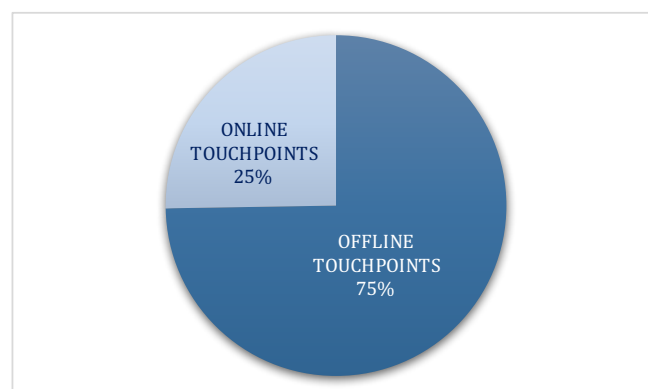


Figure 54: Touchpoints and association of Nestlé with NHW

Source: Rielaboration of Ipsos research on Buona la Vita, 2016

The offline touchpoints include Nestlé brand awareness, Nestlé products purchase, labels

on the packaging of products, magazines and recommendation by friends and family. As far as the online touchpoints are concerned (figure 55), the most important is the official Nestlé website, followed by other Nestlé websites, different websites which are not owned by Nestlé and finally the Nestlé official Facebook page.

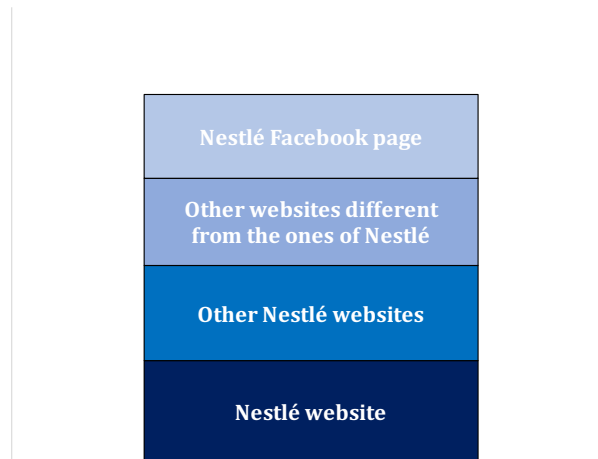


Figure 55: The online touchpoints and association of Nestlé with NHW

Source: Rielaboration of Ipsos research on Buona la Vita, 2016

From those data, it is possible to infer that offline touchpoints are still the most important ones in the positioning of Nestlé as a Health and Wellness brand. This is in line with the sector, since as seen in section 4.3, traditional media still have a leading role in the communication of food.

As much regards the online tools, the tools owned by Nestlé are the most important.

Moreover, the analysis conducted by Ipsos<sup>156</sup> asked also about the role of the website in relation to the perception of Nestlé corporate image.

In general it emerges that the items which describe Nestlé corporate image can be grouped in four main areas: affinity, products, lifestyle and social responsibility.

The corporate image appears well focused on the goodness and quality of Nestlé products, thanks mainly to the efforts in which the company is continuously committed to improve the products and make them healthier, communicating it also on the packaging.

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<sup>156</sup> Ipsos research, 2016

## Chapter 6: Buona la Vita online communication tools

After having analysed Buona la Vita from a general perspective as a mean that contributes to the positioning of Nestlé as a Nutrition, Health and Wellness brand, it is important to examine its online communication tools in order to understand their effectiveness. In particular, there will be analysed the website and Facebook page performances in order to figure out if the online strategies implemented are coherent and are correct for Buona la Vita's purpose.

### 6.1 Buona la Vita Website Analysis

As stated in chapter 5, Buona la Vita is divided into five sections (Vivere sano, recipes, products, coupons and promotions) and among these sections, the ones that are most visited are those of coupons, followed by products, recipes, contests and finally articles<sup>157</sup>. Buona la Vita target declared<sup>158</sup> that their accesses to the website and consequently subscriptions, are mainly pulled by the availability of promotions, contests and coupons, followed by the views of nestle.it website and by the Facebook fanpage. All those touchpoints are generated by Nestlé itself and are represented in figure 56.

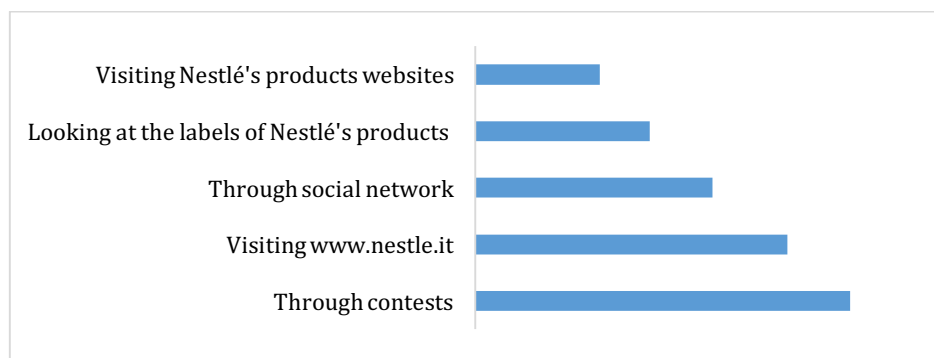


Figure 56: Nestlé touchpoints that drive access to the website

Source: Elaboration of Ipsos data on Buona la Vita, 2016

As also seen in the positioning of the website (chapter 5), Buona la Vita can be considered a website rich in contents and which provides lots of information. Infact, on Buona la Vita it is possible to find more than 300 articles regarding Nutrition Health and Wellness, more

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<sup>157</sup> Google Analytics data

<sup>158</sup> Ipsos research made in 2016 on the target of Buona la Vita

than 200 recipes about Nestlé products and following the new trends, and all the information possible for all the products by Nestlé Italia.

### Media analysis

As stated in chapter 3, there are plenty of tools that are finalized to position a brand online. Search engine optimization and search engine marketing (SEO and SEM) are of course used also in the case of Buona la Vita. But other important elements that increase the website's traffic are: paid media, such as display advertising and email marketing, and earned media.

In general, paid media are important to enhance the views of recipes and sometimes coupons and contests. Social networks, which are included also in the group of paid media, are fundamental for all the sections but for the articles in particular.

Earned media are the main source of coupons and contests. There are a huge number of websites whose primary activity is to evidence when a company makes coupons available or starts a contest. In fact, as declared by the website's target, they have accessed to Buona la Vita also pulled by online contests' websites or seeing advertising online. So, both earned and paid media are recognized by people as fundamental drivers to the website.

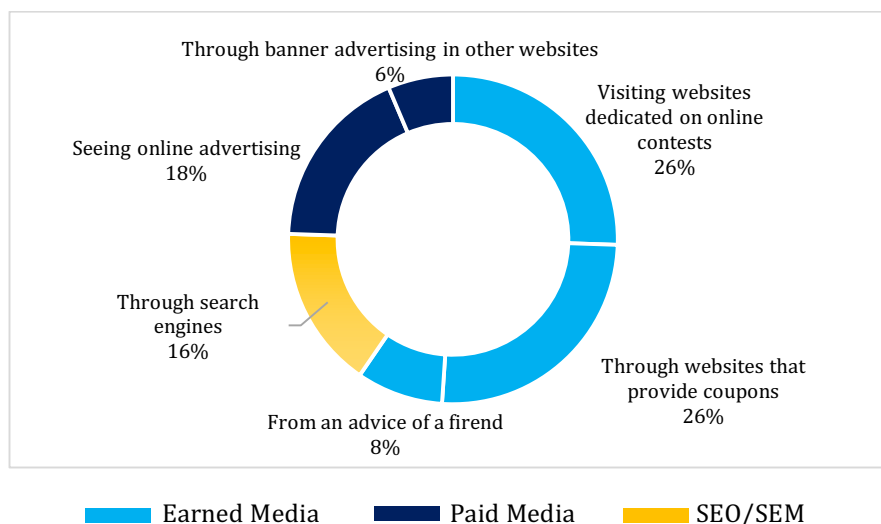


Figure 57: Buona la Vita drivers in the target's opinion

Source: Rielaboration of Ipsos research 2016

As shown in figure 57, 60% of the target said that is brought to Buona la Vita thanks to



earned media. For users, paid advertising drives only 24%.

As much regards the level of satisfaction of consumers, through the Ipsos research<sup>159</sup>, it is possible to show that it depends primarily from the availability of digital coupons of Nestlé products. Above that, also the recipes and Vivere Sano are sections that matter<sup>160</sup>. People like to consult new recipes and advices on alimentary habits, hence those section are fundamental to increase the level of website satisfaction.

## **6.2 Buona la Vita Facebook Fanpage Analysis**

The Facebook fanpage has been created to engage consumers and enhance the aim of Buona la Vita to position Nestlé as a NHW brand.

In order to boost all the sections of the website, there are different types of post dedicated to each of them. There are posts dedicated to recipes and video recipes, to 'Vivere Sano' articles and posts dedicated to products. As far as coupons and promotions are concerned, few posts have been implemented since they are boost mainly from other type of sources (see section 5.1).

Besides the engagement and positioning, the final aim of Buona la Vita's Facebook page is to increase the websites views driving people on the website. It is not by chance that most of the posts published are Facebook links, video and carousels, which principal objective is exactly to increase traffic to the website (table 1).

From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January until 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2017, 40 posts have been published. 37 were sponsored and 3 were organic. Among those sponsored, 49% were posts about Nestlé products and 51% were posts regarding Buona la Vita specific contents. Among those latters, the majority were about the articles (see figure 58), which reflect the ultimate goal of Buona la Vita, or rather, they have the important function to give some advice to people concerning nutrition, health and wellness to enhance Nestlé positioning.

Also recipes are important since they have a twofold goal: on one side, they enhance products brand awareness and the likelihood of product purchase; on the other side, they increase the perception of Nestlé as a healthy brand.

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<sup>159</sup> Ipsos research, 2016

<sup>160</sup> Ipsos research, 2016

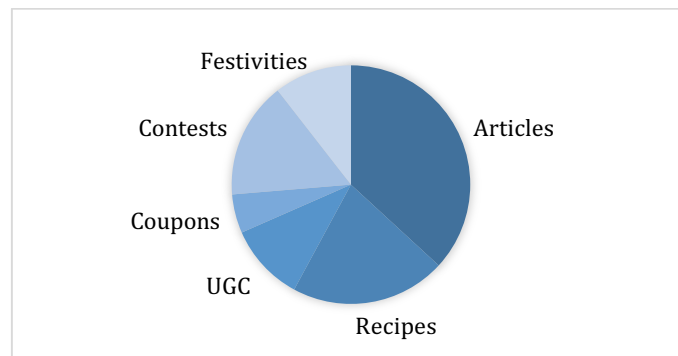


Figure 58: Buona la Vita type of post contents from January to July 2017

Source: Buona la Vita Facebook page

Analysing the type of posts about Buona la Vita specific contents, they are all Facebook links, video or carousels with the final aim to drive traffic to the website.

Concerning the type of posts about Nestlé brands, they are for the majority Facebook links or carousels but there is a little portion, about 17%, of Facebook photos, which have the ultimate goal of increasing brand awareness.

### 6.3 The comparison with the Spanish website

As seen in chapter 5 (section 5.3.5), the Spanish Website A gusto con la Vida is similar to Buona la Vita for the structure and *raison d'être*. Its contents are based on information about nutrition, health and wellness such as Buona la Vita.

Going more deeply into the analysis of this similar website, it is possible to notice the similarities and the differences.

As for Buona la Vita, the section which is most visited is the one of coupons, and it is followed by products, promotions and finally articles about nutrition and sport activities. If we focus on competition, it has mainly one big competitor by Danone: Alimenta Sonrisas<sup>161</sup> which has similar sections as Health, Recipes and coupons.

What makes Buona la Vita and A Gusto con la Vida really different, it is their strategy.

As seen at the beginning of this chapter, in order to increase traffic to the website, Buona la Vita uses principally the Facebook page and paid media such as display advertising and email marketing. In the case of A Gusto con la Vida, the traffic on the website is not deriving from the Facebook page, rather this latter serves only to engage the community and fans of the page. For A gusto con la Vida, the traffic is pulled principally by CRM

<sup>161</sup> <https://www.alimentasonrisas.es/es/sorteos>

activities like email marketing, followed by SEO or organic search activities, earned media, social media, display advertising and finally SEM or paid search.

#### **6.4 Buona la Vita communication tools performances**

After having analysed the two different digital tools of Buona la Vita in detail, it is interesting to see their performances in order to understand if the strategy implemented is in line with the final goal: the online positioning of Nestlé in the field of NHW. Being online positioned means to be remembered by people in a unique and impressive way, so that when people see the logo of Nestlé will automatically think about health and wellness. The KPIs (key performance indicators) that can be considered in this case are:

For the website:

- The number of page views: higher is the number of views on the contents to the website, higher will be the awareness of Buona la Vita.
- Average time on site: higher is the average time on site of the contents on the website, higher will be the level of interest of people in those contents.

Both the awareness and the interest in Buona la Vita could help Nestlé to be positioned in the mind of consumers as a healthy brand.

For the Facebook page:

- Interactions on the posts with particular attention to shares: the higher will be the interactions to the posts, the higher will be the emotional involvement of consumers.

This could also enhance the online positioning of Nestlé.

It is important to underline that, as stated in section 3.3.1, the website is considered the 'static' part of a digital strategy. In particular, in this case, the website is the tool that has to provide information to consumers. But as seen in section 2.2, nowadays people want to be engaged and have conversations with companies. It is not by chance that one of the most important tools for the online positioning is social media. In the case of Buona la Vita, the Facebook page is the social for excellence, which drives people on the website. Of course Facebook it is not only the online driver, but it is surely the most important tool to enhance Nestlé positioning as a healthy brand for the reasons explained in section 3.3.4.

Consider the period from the 1st of January until the 31st of July. In this span of time, the sponsored posts on the Facebook page of Buona la Vita, have reached around 9.000.000 people. Of those 9.000.000, around 18.000 interact with the posts seen. Moreover, looking at the performance of the website with source Facebook<sup>162</sup>, it is possible to see that on the website have surfed around 11.000 users. As much regards the page views to the sections of Buona la Vita website, they have been around 840.000.

From those evidences it can be stated that those 9 million of people that have been reached towards Facebook could be possible users of the website since the posts published contain links to it. So, the question is how to exploit the advantage of Facebook to reach so many people, to engage and drive them to the website enhancing the positioning of Nestlé as a healthy brand.

Taking this in consideration, is now of fundamental importance to understand how Facebook is able to help Buona la Vita to position Nestlé in the NHW field and if it does it in the right way.

The analysis will be structured as follow:

1. Understanding if the goal of the Facebook page of driving people to the website is right;
2. Investigating on the level of interest for articles sponsored on the Facebook page;
3. Figure out what are the contents that mostly engage people and their communities.

#### **6.4.1 Understanding the right goal of the Facebook page**

At this point it is compelling to figure out if people prefer to be driven to the website from social networks, and so responding to the call to action present in the posts, or prefer to be engaged directly on social pages without going on the website. In the former case, the objective of drive traffic on the websites is near to fail, while in the latter case it would be achieved.

In order to understand it, the posts of the Facebook link type, video link and carousels will be analysed, since their ultimate goal is exactly to drive traffic to the website. Then there will be a study of the interactions (see section 2.1.2) to those posts and the related performances on the website, looking at the views deriving from Facebook using Google

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<sup>162</sup> Google Analytics data

Analytics. In particular, the final goal of this section is to demonstrate what and how big is the difference between people who only interact with the posts and do not respond to the call to action, and the ones which presumably respond to the call to action and interact, but also try to see the content on the website.

The difference between the interactions and the views on the websites has been identified with the name 'discrepancy'. In order to compare the different discrepancies among the posts, there will be calculated an index called 'discrepancy index or index of discrepancy' (figure 59).

$$\text{Discrepancy Index} = \frac{\text{Total n}^\circ \text{ of interactions on a post}}{\text{Total n}^\circ \text{ of views on the website (deriving from Facebook) for the content in the post}}$$

Figure 59: the index of discrepancy

Source: personal elaboration

The More the index is higher than 1, the more the discrepancy between the interactions and the views of the contents on the website are distant. This means that the number of interactions are higher compared to the number of views, and thus people only interact with posts without going to the website. On the contrary, the more the index is lower than 1, the more people are interested in responding to the call to action and visit the contents online.

To better arrive to the goal, and so understand for which contents the index is higher or lower, the posts have been divided for the contents of Buona la Vita and for post type.

Particularly, among all the 40 posts published from January to July 2017, all the 19 posts of Buona la Vita contents are link, videos or carousels, and among the 18 posts of brands, 15 are of those types.

The analysis will have a particular attention to the contents that respond principally to the goals of Buona la Vita, that are: Vivere Sano articles, recipes and products. Posts about contests and coupons will be not considered, since those contents are boosted principally from other type of media as shown in the section 5.3, and they are not the most crucial contents related to the ultimate goals of Buona la Vita.

On the whole, 24 posts of similar types and with the same goal, but with different kind of contents, will be analysed.

For all the contents will be reported: the number of total interactions, the views on the website page deriving from Facebook and the discrepancy index.

### *Articles of Vivere Sano*

The table 3, represents all the posts analysed for the articles section of the section Vivere Sano.

Post type	Contents	Discrepancy index
Page post link	History and nutritional properties of ice-cream	3,27
	Winter sports	2,41
	Gluten free products	2,18
	Mediterranean diet	1,60
	The right portions of food	1,39
	Winter soups	1,28
	<b>Remedies for influenza</b>	<b>0,08</b>

Table 3: The analysis of the Vivere Sano Articles

Sources: Facebook Insights and Google Analytics

Table 3 demonstrates that over the 7 articles analysed, 6 have a discrepancy index higher than 1 and only one have the index lower than 1. People prefer interact on the Facebook posts but there is a high portion of those people that also click on the call to action. Infact, it is possible to see that the index never goes over 4. Compared to the average index of discrepancy for all the contents under consideration (which is 64,2), the index is very low. As regard as the one with index lower than 1, people definitely prefer to read this article rather than interact with the post.

In the case of articles, it can be demonstrated that the Facebook page has the right objective to drive people to the website.

### *Recipes*

As for the Vivere Sano articles, the table XX, represents all the posts made for the recipes and videorecipes.

Post type	Contents	Discrepancy index
Video link	Videorecipe with Nesquik and Perugina products	86,44
	Videorecipe using Buitoni products	6,54
	Cremé Caramel Videorecipe with Il Latte condensato product	5,63
	Videorecipe with Buitoni products (Calzone with vegetables)	4,92
	Videorecipes of chocolate icecream using Il latte condensato product	1,16
Page post link	Tacos recipe	<b>718</b>
	'Easy Tortilla' recipe	<b>0,05</b>
Carousel	Carousel with summer recipes	1,71
	Carousel with gluten free recipes	1,14

Table 4: The analysis of the videorecipes and recipes  
Sources: Facebook Insights and Google Analytics

The table 4 shows important evidences. Recipes and videorecipes are the type of contents for which it is expected to have a higher number of views rather than number of interactions, since recipes are published in order to be made. But the reality is not exactly like this. As the table shows, videorecipes are in general the one with the highest index of discrepancy (always more than 4), while the page post link type recipes have discordant performances. One has the highest discrepancy index while the other has the lowest. The reason for this can depend on a lot of different causes, that will be explained later in the conclusions.

Carousels have both a similar index near to 1. This mean that almost the people which react to the post have also see the content on the website.

Only one among the recipes have a discrepancy index lower than 1.

Establishing if the objective of the Facebook page is in this case reached or not, it is not easy. It is possible to say that recipes and videorecipes are contents that can be exploited either to drive traffic to the website or to engage people directly on social media.

### *Brands*

As for the Vivere Sano articles and recipes, the table 5 represents all the posts made for the Nestlé brands.

Post type	Contents	Discrepancy index
Page post link	Cacao Perugina	545
	Il latte condensato (tiramisu day)	67,39
	Tablò	39,97
	Fruit Joy Surprise	19,76
	Baci Perugina S. valentine's day	18,69
	La Cremeria Senza lattosio	5,37
	Easter Baci Perugina	5
	Coppa del Nonno chicchi al caffè	1,79

Table 5: The analysis of the posts of brands  
Sources: Facebook Insights and Google Analytics

Posts of brands are in general the ones with the highest discrepancy indexes. All the indexes are above 20 and only three are lower than 10. No one among the contents have an index lower than 1.

Hence, in the case of posts about brands people tend to prefer to be engaged only on the Facebook page. Seemed that they prefer being engaged by the brands rather than find out information about products.



Posts about brands and products are those which in general generate the lower traffic to the website, this is demonstrated also by the percentage of the number of views deriving from Facebook on the total number of views, which is for all the posts under 25%<sup>163</sup>.

Looking at all the 24 posts that have been considered in the analysis, it is noticeable that the majority have discrepancy indexes higher than one and this signifies that in general people prefer to interact with posts rather than respond to the link in the call to action and see the content on the website. It is arguable that those evidences demonstrate that there is a lack between the people reached towards Facebook and the people which effectively respond to the call to actions and see the website. It is possible to state that the biggest barrier is the 'click'. Click in this case is intended as the interactions and the actions. Nowadays people are used to scroll the home pages of social media without really paying attention on the contents and so receiving a 'click' is really difficult for companies. They have to be so engaging that people became prone to interact.

Summing up, the actual Facebook goal is correct for articles and sometimes for recipes, but not for posts about brands.

#### **6.4.2 Discovering the level of interest on the website contents**

Of course, it is not easy to effectively understand if the contents seen by people have been interesting for them or not. A non-perfectly precise way it is to look at the bounce rate and the average time on page. The assumption on the basis of this analysis is that presumably, if a user spends some time on a contents, it is interested on it.

As seen in the previous section, articles are the contents for which the Facebook objective of driving people to the website is reached. It is now fundamental to try to understand if people then effectively go or do not go on the website to read those articles, always based on the assumptions made before.

Table 6, shows for each article the bounce rate and the average time on site.

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<sup>163</sup> Google Analytics data

Contents	Bounce rate	Average time on page
Article on Winter sports	54,17%	7 min. and 30 sec.
Article on The right portions of food	15,71%	5 min. and 04 sec.
Article on Mediterranean diet	38,89%	3 min. and 39 sec.
Article on Winter soups	27,13%	2 min. and 52 sec.
Article on Gluten free products	33,33%	2 min. and 25 sec.
Article on Remedies for influenza	53,39%	2 min. and 08 sec.
Article on the History and nutritional properties of ice-cream	20,41%	1 min. and 07 sec.

Table 6: time on site and bounce rate of articles

Source: Google Analytics

As stated before (section 3.3), there is not a golden number for metrics such as time on site and bounce rate. They can be taken in consideration together in order to have a complete view of the performances. But even if taken together, there are still some interrogative points.

Looking at data on the table 6, almost all the contents have an average time on page over 2 minutes. However, the average time to read an article is among 3/5 minutes and only three articles have these results.

Bounce rate is a very particular metrics. In the case of Buona la Vita, it can be considered positive even if it is high or low. This because if the bounce rate is high this means that people do not leave the articles page, while if it is low it means that they look also on other pages of the website. So, in both cases it can be seen as positive.

However, in order to better understand the effective level of interest, these two metrics have to be analysed together.

Normally, high bounce rate (>40%) and high time on site means that people have found what they were looking for and that is positive. Two out of seven among the articles analysed have a high bounce rate and a quite high time on site. Those regard winter sports and the Mediterranean diet.

Summarizing, on the basis of the assumptions made before, it is not possible to state that articles are not interesting for people who click on the call to action and go to the website. However, as previously stated, there is not the full certainty but the situation seems positive.

#### **6.4.3 The most engaging and interesting Facebook contents**

Moreover, in order to better analyse the posts on Facebook and understand what are the contents for which people pay attention to and are also willing to diffuse them, the percentage of shares on the total interactions will be seen.

People can interact with Facebook posts commenting, sharing or simply putting a like or a reaction. As seen in chapter 2, between all the interactions, the most important and significant are comments and shares. They are the 'active' interactions since commenting people are publicly giving their opinion on something, while sharing a content means publishing it on the personal page and so it means to believe or like it so much to enhance its diffusion.

In order to understand what are the contents for which people are pulled to comment or even share, the percentage of comments and shares on the total interactions for all the posts will be analysed.

Moreover, in order to see if the contents shares have success amongst the users' community, the percentage of interactions of the shares will be discussed.

Contents	% of shares on the total interactions	% of comments on the total interactions
Videorecipes of chocolate icecream using Il latte condensato product	42%	2%
Cremé Caramel Videorecipe with Il Latte condensato product	40%	1%
Videorecipe with Nesquik and Perugina products	35%	1%
Carousel with summer recipes	35%	1%
Article on Winter soups	34%	1%
Article on Mediterranean diet	32%	1%
'Easy tortilla' recipes	29%	0%
Videorecipe with Buitoni products (rose di pizza)	27%	2%
Videorecipe using Buitoni products	25%	2%
Article on Remedies for influenza	21%	2%
Article on The right portions of food	21%	4%
Easter Baci Perugina	13%	3%
La Cremeria Senza lattosio	13%	4%
Article on Gluten free products	11%	0%
Fruit Joy Surprise	11%	3%
Coppa del Nonno chicchi al caffè	11%	6%
Baci Perugina S. valentine's day	9%	4%
Il latte condensato (tiramisù day)	8%	4%
Tacos recipe	7%	0%
History and nutritional properties of ice-cream	7%	0%
Carousel with gluten free recipes	6%	0%
Article on Winter sports	2%	8%
Tablò	2%	2%
Cacao Perugina	2%	1%

Table 7: Number of comments and shares on the total interactions

Source: Rielaboration of Facebook Insights data

From the table 7, it is possible to infer that in general videorecipes have a high number of shares. This means not only that people interact with those contents, but they want also to diffuse them and to let their community see them. Articles, which ultimate goal is to spread information, have also a good number of shares, while posts about brands have in general a lower percentage.

As regard as comments, they are less important and are less compared to shares. Thus, when Facebook users interact with a post or see it, they prefer to share it rather than comment it. That is positive since shares are the most influential interactions.

It can be interesting also to see if the shares have success and so if the community of people who share interact with them or not. In order to do that, the number of interactions to the posts shared for the ten most shared posts of table 7 have been analysed (shares > than 20% of the total interaction).

Contents	% of interactions on shares on total interactions
Article on The right portions of food	31%
Videorecipe with Buitoni products (rose di pizza)	15%
Cremé Caramel Videorecipe with Il Latte condensato product	14%
Videorecipe using Buitoni produtcs	13%
Article on Remedies for influenza	13%
Carousel with summer recipes	12%
Videorecipes of chocolate icecream using Il latte condensato product	11%
'Easy tortilla' recipes	11%
Article on Mediterranean diet	8%
Article on Winter soups	7%
Videorecipe with Nesquik and Perugina products	6%

Table 8: Number of interactions on shares

Source: Facebook Insights

Table 8 shows that there is not a strict relationship between the number of shares of a post and the number of interactions on those shares. Presumably, the contents with the highest number of shares should have had the highest number of interactions on those shares but this is not true in this case.

As it is demonstrable, contents like the article on the portions of food, which have a percentage of shares of 21%, have the highest number of interactions on those shares. On the contrary, the videorecipe of the chocolate ice-cream using a product of Il Latte Condensato, which has the highest percentage of shares (42% of the total interactions), has a very low number of interactions on the shares (only 11% of the total interactions). This means that not always shares can help contents to diffuse in a consistent way. It depends also from the interests of the community of the people who shares, but also from the fact that in general people tend to prefer interacting directly with contents published from who generate it.

Summarizing, the Facebook page is a tool of fundamental importance to enhance the positioning of Nestlé as a healthy brand. However, its potentialities are not fully exploited. Thus, on the basis of the theory explained in chapter 1, 2, 3 and 4, it would be possible to elaborate a digital marketing strategy aimed at reaching the goal desired by Nestlé.

## Conclusions

The ultimate goal of my thesis is to demonstrate how a brand can use online tools to obtain a certain positioning in a specific market. More deeply, taking into account a specific case, an analysis of the online communication means has been done, in particular on social media, in order to measure their effectiveness always focusing on the ultimate goal of positioning.

### **Theory in practice**

As stated in chapter 1, brand positioning can be seen as the “act of designing the company’s offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer’s minds<sup>164</sup>”. Nowadays, companies need to integrate online and offline strategies in order to create a coherent brand structure. Nestlé does this correctly, making its offline and online positioning converge. The Swiss leader company in the food and beverage sector, pursues the aim of position itself in the field of nutrition, health and wellness. To do this, it leverages both offline and online tools. The main online tool, which is at the centre of this elaboration, is the website Nestlé Buona la Vita. It can be seen as an informative source on mainly nutritional and healthy advices. After one year from the launch of the website, with the aim of enhancing Nestlé Buona la Vita awareness, also the Facebook page, has been introduced. Therefore, it has fundamentally the same goal: positioning Nestlé as a healthy brand.

The need of an online positioning is due mainly to the digital revolution. It has completely transformed the communication sector changing entirely the ways in which consumers and companies relate to each other. Having a digital marketing strategy is now of fundamental importance for companies who want to survive in this even more digitalized world. As shown in section 5.4, Nestlé Buona la Vita adopts a right digital marketing strategy covering all the most important points. It has a clear and well defined objective: the positioning of Nestlé in the field of nutrition, health and wellness. It is a SMART objective since it is specific, measurable, thanks to some researches on consumers (like the one made by Ipsos shown in chapter 5), attainable since it is realistic, relevant and time-bound. But this is not enough to develop a well-structured strategy. It is also

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<sup>164</sup> K. L. Keller, cit., p. 79

necessary to know the competitors, the target and decide the right KPIs to measure the digital performances. Nestlé has been able to perfectly implement that as shown in chapter 5.

Moreover, the digitalization changed the way in which consumers and companies communicate. It is more and more vital to involve consumers in experiences which could make them loyal to a brand. In chapter 2, the six pillars of the consumers' experience have been underlined. In this context, Buona la Vita can improve its performances in developing a suitable consumers experience enhancing personalization, exciting expectations and establishing profound relationship with clients.

The digital transformation has involved brand positioning. Online branding can allow companies to communicate certain aspects of their brand that cannot be shown with the traditional means of communication. To position a brand through online communication, the most important digital tools are: website, social media, online advertising and search marketing strategies. Nestlé decided to use Buona la Vita website as its main tool to online positioning. As seen in section 3.3.1, all the digital channels involved in the digital strategy are always linked with a website. It is the case also for Buona la Vita. Online strategies and search marketing strategies are all focused on the websites itself as shown in section 6.1. A particular issue regards social media strategy. In chapter 3, have be underlined four main rules to build a brand on social media. Following those rules, it is possible to state that first of all, Buona la Vita have correctly chosen the coherent social network to sustain its brand image. Particularly it uses Facebook, which is the social with the largest user base and so it is able to reach lot of prospects and consumers. However, it should consider to exploit more Youtube and implement the Instragram profile which is currently closed. The reasons behind this will be better explained below.

As far as the contents published by Buona la Vita are concerned, it is possible to confirm that they support the brand image since they are all about health or related to Nestlé products. However, actually there is not a clear idea of what are the contents that gain more visibility on the website or what are the contents that creates more engagement. In chapter 6 has been shown that the contents which gain more visibility on the website are the articles, and the contents which create more engagement are videorecipes. Despite



this, in general there is the need to better redefine the Facebook posts goals in order to exploit at best the potentialities of a social channel as Facebook actually is.

As regards the exploitation of influencers, Buona la Vita has never done it. However, it could be an interesting way of gaining much more visibility in the food sector, and consequently of easily reaching the desired online positioning. As seen in chapter 4, food bloggers are considered as stars with millions of people following them on social platforms. This could be an interesting opportunity also in the case of Buona la Vita.

The last element needed to build a brand on social media is to use social campaigns to promote contents. This is an activity ordinarily made by Nestlé Buona la Vita.

Additionally, as shown in chapter 4, in the digital communication for food, traditional media have still an important role. Also for the positioning of Nestlé as a healthy brand, offline touchpoints are still relevant. However, digital tools are growing in importance also in the food sector where the digital was seen as a distant concept.

The main digital tools adopted in the food industry are: social media and food blogs. As much regards as social media, the mostly used are Youtube, Facebook and Instagram. As stated before, Buona la vita used only the Facebook page. Youtube is used to publish videorecipes that most of the times will be posted on the Facebook page, but does not have any other significant goal. Instagram profile is closed and so actually Buona la Vita does not have an Instagram profile. On the other hand, regarding food blogs Buona la Vita does not have anyone. This is maybe due to the fact that before having also a food blog, it is important to exploit at the best the potentialities of the website itself.

In section 4.3.3, have been reported the key elements necessary to exploit digital tools in food. Those are videos, storytelling 3.0 and testimonials. Buona la vita does not used any of these. They could be fundamental to enhance the awareness and engagement of the Facebook page posts but also of the Youtube channel.

Summarizing, it is possible to see that to gain the right online positioning, the main points of improvement of Buona la Vita regards the social media strategy, in particular the one of Facebook. It is not by chance that in chapter 6 have been analysed the effectiveness of this communication tool and have been demonstrated that its final goal to drive people to the website is right only in some particular cases.

Taking back to the ultimate goal of this elaborate, it is possible to state that Nestlé uses online tools to position itself in the field of NHW. However, the most significant and important tool, or the Facebook page, has not been used in a completely effective way. To say it better, Nestlé Buona la Vita does not exploit all the potentialities of that tool, which is the most important as shown in chapter 3.3.4. The final goal of achieving the right positioning, and so being perceived in the mind of consumers as a healthy brand, can arrive only engaging more consumers and provide to them emotional contents exploiting social media.

Strengths	Improving Areas
Digital marketing strategy	Consumers experience (personalization and exceeding expectations)
The usage of the right digital positioning tools	Social Media strategy to gain the desired online positioning (choice of social media to use, contents published, exploit influencers)
	The usage of key elements in order to exploit digital tools the food sector (video-communication, storytelling 3.0, testimonials)

Table 9: Buona la Vita strength and areas of improvement

Source: Personal Elaboration

In the section below, I will explain on the basis of the evidences and the improving areas shown in table 9, how the communication strategy of Buona la Vita should be implemented to reach the desired goal.

### **Personal vision of the online communication strategy of Buona la Vita**

On the basis of the evidences founded above, it is possible to delineate a strategy for the online communication tools in order to gain the right brand positioning. In my opinion, in order to be position as unique and different from the competitors, a brand should be impressive, engaging expressing all the features of its identity.

The three main areas of improvements that I have highlight in the table 9, regard customer experience, social media strategy and the communication tools important in the food sectors able to exploit rightly the digital tools. All these three areas are strictly linked among each other: consumer experience can be provided by digital tools such as social media and those latters can be fully exploited thanks to the usage of other communication tools important in the food sector.

As it has been seen, Nestlé Buona la Vita uses all the main online digital tools necessary to implement an online positioning: a website, search marketing, social media and online advertising. This thesis focused mainly on social media, since in my opinion are the most important online communication tools.

The following sections will be focused on all the digital marketing tool underlining the way in which I will used them in the case of Buona la Vita.

### ***Website***

Buona la Vita website is the principal tool to enhance the positioning of Nestlé as a brand in the field of Nutrition, Health and Wellness.

As shown in chapter 5, it has mainly five sections: articles, recipes, products, contests and coupons. Contests and coupons are the main driver of people to the website.

In my opinion this situation can be exploited in an optics positioning, linking the sections of coupons and promotions/contests with the ones of articles and recipes, which are the sections that are most important to reach the final goal of positioning Nestlé in the NHW field. An idea could be to use a sort of banner advertising. When people download coupons, at the end it could be opened a banner showing an article or a recipe that uses the products in the coupon.

Summarizing, I can say that in my opinion is right to use the website as the principal tool to position Nestlé in the field of NHW since it provides the information required to gain this positioning.

### ***Search marketing and online advertising***

All the digital tools such as SEO, SEM and digital advertising have to remain with their actual functions (see section 6.1), or driving people to the website and enhance the awareness of Nestlé Buona la Vita.

## ***Social Media***

### ***Facebook***

As much regards the social media, Buona la Vita exploit only one among the most used and important in the food sector, and does not do it in a completely correct way. The social of which I am referring to is of course Facebook.

Actually, the function of Facebook is only to drive people to the website. The final goal of both those digital tools is to position Nestlé in the field of nutrition, health and wellness but the Facebook page in this case it 'at complete service' of the website.

As it has been demonstrated in chapter 6, in general people prefer to interact on the social page rather than click on the call to action presents in the posts and visit the website. For this reason, I think that the Facebook page should be an important engaging touchpoint to enhance the awareness of Nestlé Buona la Vita but also to engage users. It cannot be seen only as the main function of driving people on the website. In this sense, the situation could be similar to the one of the Spanish website explained in section 6.3. This is about to say that also in other countries the situation can be similar for Nestlé Buona la Vita similar websites.

In my opinion posts published on the Facebook page of Buona la Vita should be divided into two types on the basis of their goals: page post link and carousels with the aim of driving people to the site, and page post photo and videos to engage people and enhance brand awareness. Both with the aim of positioning Nestlé in the field of NHW.

Based on the evidences seen in chapter 6, in the first category there should be contents such as articles and some recipes, while in the other category there should be videorecipes and posts about brand.

#### Objective 1: Driving people on the website

Articles sponsored on Facebook must have a call to action that drive people to site. The article about winter sport can be considered as a successful example. It drives many people on the website and it is assumable that has been read entirely (see section 6.4.2). As it is shown in figure 59, the article has a very simple copy with a call to action and an image with the title well underlined.



Figure 60: Article about winter sports aiming at driving traffic on the website

Source: Nestlé Buona la Vita Facebook page

This should be the format for all the articles which have the ultimate goal of driving people to website. Summarizing the main features:

- Clear and simple call to action;
- Articles in line with the brand image, or wellness content;
- Actual and seasonal content;
- Simple image but evocative.

A possible idea, could be also to use a carousel. As shown in section 6.4.1, this latter format is effective for the fact that the people who click on the call to action present on a carousel, are almost all the same that goes on the website and effectively see the contents. It would be interesting to make a carousel with more than one articles about the same themes.

Also recipes are important contents to drive people to the website. By default, in order to make a recipe, it is necessary to read all the passages. However, as shown in section 6.4.1, it is not obvious that all the recipes published on Facebook are also seen on the website. That is why recipes can be both aimed at driving people on the website or not. An example

of a recipes that has success in making users respond to the call to action is shown in figure 61.



Figure 61: Easy Tortilla recipes aimed at driving people on the website.

Source: Nestlé Buona la Vita Facebook page

The posts about Tortilla Facile generates a lot of number of views on the website.

It is possible also in this case to identify some important features that in my opinion should be implemented for recipes to drive traffic on the website.

The post has to represent:

- A recipe easy to do and fast;
- A recipe that evoke to healthy indulgent;
- A recipe which is appealing and with the aspect of an home made dish;
- A simple and clear copy which could report the features explained before.

Objective 2: Engaging and create awareness

As regards as the other objectives that can be given to the Facebook page, or engaging people and increasing the awareness of Buona la Vita and so the positioning of Nestlé, it is possible to use two formats: videos and page post photos. The contents should be mainly about brands and videorecipes.

I think that in order to reach this goal videos are the formats that have to be used mostly. Today, video-communication is one of the key elements necessary to exploit digital tools in food communication (see section 3.3.3). That is why I think that this form of

communication is fundamental to reach and create engagement among people on Facebook.

Taking into consideration contents about brands, there can be a lot of ideas involving brand and videos. Moreover, on the Facebook page it could be interesting to combine video-communication with storytelling, which is another key element necessary to exploit digital tools in food communication.

Nestlé should use storytelling in order to make a story of each of its products unique and consequently its positioning.

There should be implemented some weekly rubrics about brands telling a story. Stories about how those products can be helpful in the daily life of consumers, how they can be used, and how they contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Those are ideas aimed at engaging more people and creating a relationship with them making the positioning of Nestlé as a healthy brand at the centre. Brands have to tell stories and to engage people.

In some cases, also page post photo can be interesting formats to be used with contents about brands, in particular if the creativity is engaging or the product is new. Take for example the post about the 'Tiramisù day' (figure 62).



Figure 62: An engaging post about a Nestlé brands

Source: Nestlé Buona la Vita Facebook page

This post has been one among the posts that create the highest number of interactions respect to the traffic on the website (high index of discrepancy, section 6.4.1.).

Looking at the post, it is possible to underline that both the creativity and the copy involve questions and so evoke to engage. Those are characteristics that have to be taken into consideration when implementing a similar post.

Also videorecipes are amongst the most engaging contents and, moreover, are contents which have the highest number of shares and interactions on the shares (section 6.4.3).

The ultimate goal of those contents should be to diffuse Buona la Vita brand awareness and for this reason it is important that in the copy the link is present.

In my opinion an interesting step could be to mix videorecipes with products. The idea is to make videos where stories about products and videorecipes are mixed. This help to reach two goals together: enhancing products awareness and diffuse recipes with those products. Those can be connected with the weekly rubrics about stories of brands. The idea is to try to create a series of videos that could cause much curiosity among consumers, that they become addicted and feel motivated to share those contents.

To sum up, this is how in my opinion the Facebook strategy should be implemented to enhance the customer experience and as a consequence, also brand positioning.

### *Youtube and Instagram*

Youtube is the most used social media in Italy and Instagram is the one that it is mostly diffusing. I think that both those two tools, should have been used to gain the desired positioning of Nestlé.

Youtube should be used either to publish video about brands and its stories as stated before, but it could be used to make partnerships with testimonials and influencers, which are other key elements necessary to exploit digital tools in food communication. In this sense, Buona la Vita should publish video in which some famous bloggers or important people in the food sector, such as chefs, cook are using Nestlé products. This could give to people a sense of trust and could also enhance brand awareness.

As regard as Instagram, it is the social about photos. In this case it is important to publish evocative and tasty photos of recipes that bring curiosity. In this case the link to the website it is fundamental since photos about recipes are not so engaging.

Table 10 sums up what have been said until now, or the function of the possible digital communication tools.



Online tools	Function
Buona la Vita website	Inform and improve sales through contests and coupons
Facebook	Engagement and driving people to the website
Instagram	Drive people to website and enhance Buona la Vita awareness
Youtube	Make partnership with influencers and published video about storytelling of brands
Search marketing and online advertising	Drive people to the website and enhance Buona la Vita awareness

Table 10: online tools and their functions

Source: Personal elaboration

All of those tools are needed to create consumer's experiences necessary to arrive to the final goal of positioning Nestlé as a healthy brand.

To conclude, Nestlé Buona la Vita it is the right tool for Nestlé to be positioned in the field of NHW since it is coherent with the brand image and with the offline positioning. However, in order to better exploit and reach a more solid and concrete positioning in this field, it could be important for Nestlé to use each social media in an optic of an omnichannel communication necessary to convey an excellent consumers' experience.

Improving the potential of the digital assets could be an opportunity to enhance the online positioning creating a strong common points to its users, consumers, shoppers.

With my point of view, I hope to give to Nestlé some interesting insights to enhance its online positioning.

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