LEMME-X: an agile approach applied in the creation of personas, sales funnel and customer journey in the company MAKING

LEMME-X: uma abordagem ágil aplicada na criação de personas, funil de vendas e jornada de compra na empresa MAKING



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This article deals with the application of an agile approach in the creation of personas, sales funnel and customer journey focusing on the digital marketing strategies used at LEMME group consulting in partnership with Sebrae/SC. The selected case is the Making company. The methodological procedure - called LEMME-X - consists of four consulting stages: Diagnosis, Benchmarking, Digital Marketing Plan and Next Steps. The method used allowed for optimization in the analysis time, greater depth in the relevant items analysis for solution proposal and more security for decision making.

KEYWORDS

Agile approach. Personas. Sales funnel. Digital marketing.

RESUMO

O presente artigo trata da aplicação de uma abordagem ágil na criação de personas, funil de vendas e jornada de compra com foco nas estratégias de marketing digital utilizadas em consultorias do grupo LEMME em parceria com o Sebrae/SC. O caso selecionado é o da empresa Making. O procedimento metodológico - chamado de LEMME-X - consiste em quatro estágios de consultoria: Diagnóstico, Benchmarking, Plano de Marketing Digital e Próximos Passos. O método empregado permitiu otimização no tempo de análise, maior profundidade nos itens relevantes para proposta de solução e mais segurança para tomada de decisões.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Abordagem ágil. Personas. Funil de vendas. Marketing digital.



The advance of technology and the increasing evolution of digital communication strategies have made companies revolutionize the way they interact with their target audience. The exploration of virtual space has been valued as an effective form of contact with its audience. Internet presence became a matter of survival and communication professionals began to use it as one of the main means of advertising promotions, product launches and general company activities (EHRENBERG and DE SOUZA, 2012).

Today, following Inbound Marketing it is possible to track consumer trends of the target audience in digital channels, and rethink design content to be more attractive and ensure the interest of potential customers (PATRUTIU-BALTES, 2016). From this perspective, new methods of evaluation of digital marketing strategies are necessary to create communication directed to the audience, increasing the purchasing chances (EHRENBERG and DE SOUZA, 2012).

The company Making, focused in the solutions for health companies market, hired for an evaluation of LEMME group consulting. The objectives were to design inbound marketing actions and strategies for presence in digital channels, to create value with its audience, transforming them into customers. To do so, a method was used to enable the interaction between the consultants and the company owners, providing appropriate solutions validated by all participants.

2 Theoretical References

2.1 An Agile Approach

Preparing and conducting a consulting involves organizational aspects that facilitate analysis besides quick decision making. It involves communication between the consultants, the company owners and the end users of the product. The use of electronic communication tools, shared with all participants involved, is essential for an agile development of the consulting. In this complex and decentralized adaptive system, independent individuals interact to create innovation and accessible results (HIGHSMITH & COCKBURN, 2001; HIGHSMITH, 2009). Teixeira (2018) also states that structuring processes in a clear way can help the team to better understand the context and develop satisfactory solutions. Feeding project information in a logical flow can be the first step to reduce complexity, making activities and decision making more evident, logical and visual.

Agile development combines a creative work team with an intense focus on effectiveness and maneuverability (HIGHSMITH & COCKBURN, 2001). The focus on quick learning of end users' needs enables small advances and fast improvements, both in the product developed and in the process of analysis development and decision making. The team that works with agile development recognizes that there are uncertainties and error possibilities involved in the proposed solutions, and works on them by performing systematic testing of these solutions.

The interaction steps, focusing on problem recognition and solution generation, must be recorded in shared digital tools. This is an intensive consulting process, which presents a relevant product in the end. The interactions provide the initial impulse for decision making, allowing all participants to understand the progress and the developmental stage of the consulting focused on the creation of personas, sales funnel and customer journey.

2.2 Inbound Marketing

The interviews conducted at the diagnostic stage showed that the company had no presence on social networks at the time of the consulting (December 2017) and wished to increase its digital presence in a structured manner and with well-defined strategies focused on conversion. In this sense, Inbound Marketing is a marketing strategy aimed at attracting the audience and converting them into customers and admirers of the brand, company, product or content. It is an advertising strategy in which a company promotes itself through virtual communication channels and spreads online content.

The main focus of this strategy is to produce content that is relevant enough to attract the customer to the company (PALFFY, 2015). One of the first inbound marketing scholars, Seth Godin (2001), says that "content is the last form of marketing that still exists". With new technologies, information is constantly present in people's lives. The content acts as a fundamental piece to form opinion, generate discussion, trends and conversions (OPREANA and VINEREAN, 2015).

Therefore, more than creating intrusive content, companies have invested in informing their audience to help them make better decisions. In this case, the Inbound Marketing strategy works well when it enhances the content, especially for companies that delimit a well-defined target audience, where the personalization of these communication strategies takes place according to this audience (CINTELL, 2015). For this reason, the persona definition strategy was chosen.

However, it is important to understand that not all people who show interest in the content produced are at the same stage of purchase or have high conversion potential. Nowadays, potential customers seek information in real time and want to be taught and attracted by the brand they are interested in through content that has value and utility, generating need for the product or service, thus leading them to the purchase decision.

For this reason, it is necessary to captivate them at the first contact, so that they can see what the company has to offer with its products and services, as well as the content it produces (ROQUE, 2017). This process is called customer journey, and it is essential to understand what are the potential customer's needs and motivation at each stage of this journey in order to move forward. At the same time, the use of the sales funnel allows identifying the best opportunities and focusing efforts on these conversions. In this sense, Patrutiu-Baltes (2016) states that:

> Essentially, inbound marketing is adapting the content to the "buyer persona" who came naturally and voluntarily to the company. That's why, in this context, the definition of the "buyer persona" plays a central role, since if it's not identified correctly, the entire marketing strategy will become a fiasco (PATRUTIU-BALTES, 2016, p. 62).

In addition, we can also say that successful inbound marketing campaigns have three key components in common: 1) Content: the key component that attracts the target audience and should be structured to meet customers' or potential customers' need; 2) Search Engine Optimization (SEO): these make it easier for customers or potential customers to find the desired content in the organic classification of search engines, where most purchasing processes begin; and 3) Social networks: presence and performance on social networks increase the content reach and impact (ROQUE, 2017; OPREANA and VINEREAN, 2015).

2.2.1. Personas

The determination of the audience ideal representatives of that a company wants to meet helps to define criteria and strategies of empathy and engagement that impact the company good image of for these potential consumers, as highlighted by some authors such as Garrett (2011); LeRouge et al. (2013); Lee (2015); Ferreira, Conte and Diniz (2015); Cintell (2016); and Roque (2017).

The concept of persona determines that a small number of audience ideal representatives tends to represent the majority of them (GARRETT, 2011). LeRouge et al. (2013) complement this by stating that techniques and tools as personas are structured forms of typification, which essentially consists of modeling end users in a conceptual way. According to them, the persona goes beyond demographic data. It is a tool that seeks to "capture" a mental model of the user composed of expectations, previous experiences and behaviors.

Thus, by humanizing the process, the development of personas facilitates the visualization and perception of opportunities, potentials, weaknesses and needs often ignored in the design, development, testing and approval of products for consumers, which may result in low adoption and use (GARRETT, 2011; LEROUGE et al., 2013; TEIXEIRA, BENEDET and HOPPE, 2015).

After having said that, the following section reports the stages of persona creation, analysis of the company's action channels, sales funnel definitionand the customer journey of these personas and, finally, the keyword definition to guide the communication with these personas.

2.2.2 Sales Funnel and Customer Journey

Roque (2017) states that the Sales Funnel strategy aims to attract consumers who are really interested in buying the company's service or product. From the attraction stage to the sales stage there is a structure in the form of a funnel, which ranges from the extensive audience to the audience who is really interested in the service/product offered (PALFFY, 2015).

To create content that will attract the visitors (Digital Marketing) and funnel this audience in a niche of people who really want to receive what the company has to offer (Sales Funnel), it is necessary to understand the journey of purchase. This allows defining the

contents to be used to nurture potential consumers and have better results such as increased sales and customer retention and reduced acquisition costs (ROQUE, 2017).

The customer journey is the path that the potential consumer travels before buying, even without knowing that he or she is following it. By analyzing this path, it is possible to know the most important information and when that information really matters (ROQUE, 2017).

Thus, the customer journey usually has four steps: 1) Learning and discovering - The objective is to stimulate the interest of the potential customer in some subject and make him/her realize that he/she has a problem or a good business opportunity; 2) Recognizing the problem - In this stage the potential customer recognizes that he/she has a problem or a business opportunity and begins to research and becomes familiar with the possible solutions; 3) Considering the solution - In this stage the potential customer evaluates the possible solution alternatives to solve his/her problem. Here it is important to create a sense of urgency to identify a suitable problem solution; 4) Purchase decision - In this last step, the potential customer compares the available options and searches which one is best for his/her business. It is important at this stage to highlight the competitive differentials of each of the solutions (KELLY, JOHNSTON and DANHEISER, 2017; ROQUE, 2017).

3 Methodological Procedures

The research applied (LAKATOS & MARCONI, 2007) in this case study (GIL, 2015) presents the service model used – called LEMME-X. The model proposes an agile approach in the process of defining personas, sales funnel analysis and customer journey, for the definition of strategic plans aimed at company inbound marketing. The practical approach was performed in four stages:

1) Diagnosis - in this stage an initial immersion is made on the history, market, audience served, products offered, company services and verification of sales funnel used until the consulting moment. In this immersion, the main needs, restrictions, opportunities, threats and good practices are identified, focusing on potential users and consumers, as well as the main demands, desires, expectations and interests of the same with the service offered are taken into account. The identification of served audience's profile is done through semi-structured interviews in order to base the persona creation of and define the importance

weight of each one;

- 2) Benchmarking where an examination of the company's channels and digital marketing strategies is made. This step analyzes the user interaction strategies with employed by companies in the same field and identifies how each persona could digitally interact with the company;
- 3) Digital Marketing Plan in this stage, strategies are defined for each channel examined in the previous stage. Thus, a matrix is applied to calculate the number of posts for each persona, taking into account the sales funnel. The keywords that best suit the persona are also analyzed and defined; the customer journey; and the language markup for the posts;
- 4) Next Steps where suggestions for improving the company's performance in the channels identified in step 2 are indicated, with the objective of engaging people, taking into account the results obtained in step 3.

The purpose of this approach is to help develop a more rigorous science in the diagnosis of effective strategies in order to reach more specific audience/personas, organizing a methodology based on the analysis of strategies and decision making.

4 Results

The consulting described in this study was contracted through a collective project with Sebrae/SC¹, that coordenated the Sebraetec² program, which aimed to offer specialized and customized services for the implementation of new digital solutions or improvements in small businesses.

The project lasted two years and occurred between 2017 and 2018. Thirty companies from the technological area of Grande Florianópolis region³ participated in the project. The purpose of the project was to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of small businesses in the value chain of the digital economy in the region. To reach this objective, the work plan provided a series of actions and solutions such as lectures, event participation, international missions, courses, workshops and consulting for specific areas. Among the consulting services offered, MAKING chose to contract a 16-hour scope in the inbound marketing area. In this case, the

- 1 Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas de Santa Catarina.
- 2 Programa desenvolvido pelo Sebrae que oferece orientações especializadas e customizadas para implementar soluções em sete áreas de inovação (Design, Produtividade, Propriedade intelectual, Qualidade, Inovação, Sustentabilidade, Tecnologia da Informação e Comunicação).
- 3 Região metropolitana localizada no sul do Brasil, e composto por 22 municípios, cujas principais atividades econômicas são a indústria tecnológica, turismo, construção civil, comércio, serviços e agricultura.

service took place between November 30th, 2017 and December 1st, 2017.

Some of the challenges inherent to the context of this consulting may be highlighted here. Specifically for this collective project, three consultants from the LEMME group were recruited to serve, in 90 days, a total of 26 companies in individual consultancies of 16 hours each. Eight of these companies requested the consulting for the digital marketing area. In order to gain depth, agility and consistency in the consulting within the time limits, the consultants decided to combine the service model actions, methods and standardized tools.

In step 1, for the diagnosis of the user profile of the company site, a semi-structured interview was used in a dynamic spreadsheets (Google Spreadsheets), where characteristics of the target audience and potential customers were defined. The semi-structured script interview was created by one of LEMME's consultants in a previous consulting. However, the roadmap is based on the empathy map and on the value map of Osterwalder and Pigneur (2013) and Osterwalder, Bernarda and Pigneur (2015). Table 1 shows the roadmap of creation administered.

Table 1: Semi-structured interview script

Question	Guidelines		
Customer/Persona	ustomer/Persona Name, Age group, Profession, Segment, Area		
Representativeness Percentage (%) that represents from the customer base or po that represents the customer base			
Reason for interest Why does the client have interest in this cause/goal?			
Channels	In decreasing order of importance		
Type of language/ form of the message			
Revenue models	enue models Ex. Monthly payments (Which cycle) / Ex. Project/ Ex. Onboard		
Type of approach	Promotions / Relationship / Result		
What frustrates?	ustrates? What makes stop believing the product/service?		
Main pains	Which pains can we <u>treat</u> and which should not be intensified		

Source: Lemme, 2017.

The spreadsheet was filled out in a single day, with three representatives of the company (the president, a manager and a sales professional) and generated the following responses, referring to the characteristics of the personas served and potential customers:

- A) Customer/Persona IT; Representativeness up to 75% of the base; Reason for interest - this field was not filled at the time of the interview; **Channels -** whatsapp, e-mail, contact form (site) and telephone; Type of language/form of the message - Personal, Direct (redirected according to posture), Informal, Technical; Revenue models - Implementation > License > Maintenance; Type of approach -Relationship; What frustrates? - Lack of Innovation; Main pains - Lack of Agility, Lower volume of calls for support.
- B) Customer/Persona Auditor; Representativeness up to 30% of the base; **Reason for interest** - Process Improvement (time optimization). Main Customer Journey; Channels - whatsapp, e-mail, contact form (site) and telephone; Type of language/form of message - Personal, Indirect, Formal, Generalist at the beginning and more technical at the end; **Revenue models -** Implementation > License > Maintenance; Type of approach - Relationship and Promotion; What Frustrates? -Talking about Process (show numbers/statistics about releases, costs, time). Incisive Approach (maximum frequency once a month news with few contents about sale/offer). Consultative Sale; Main pains - Has the biggest pain. Process (Releases).
- C) Customer/Persona Director; Representativeness less than 15% of the base; Reason for interest - Cost; Channels - whatsapp, e-mail, contact form (site) and telephone; Type of language/ message form - Institutional, Indirect, Formal, Generalist (potential cost reduction and access to information); Revenue models - Implementation > License > Maintenance; Type of approach - Result; What Frustrates? - Acquisition Cost, Implementation Time (avoid on 1st contacts); Main pains - Cost, traceability, Bl.

Then, a matrix of representativeness and purchasing power - shared and also filled with the company's representatives - was used to define the profile weight in relation to the business. The weights varied from 1 (one) as "little" to 5 (five) as "much", distributed in two variables: "Purchasing power, decision or influence" and "Representativeness". The attribution of the scores for each variable was determined by the managers and with the guidance of the consultants. The profile weight was defined by the average of the scores attributed in both variables, as shown in table 2. The methodology for composing the representativeness matrix is not the object of this study, but it can be consulted in the work of Wernke, et al (2019).

Table 2 - calculation of profile weight

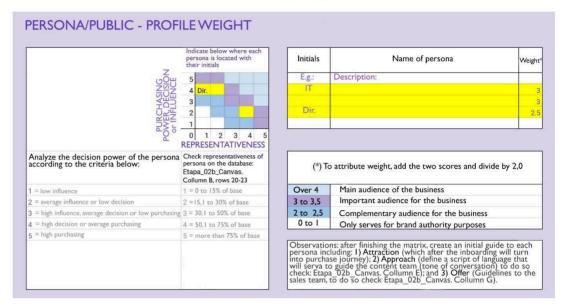
Profile	Purchasing power, decision or influence	Representativeness	Weight
IT	2	4	3
Auditor	4	2	3
Director	4	1	2,5

Source: Lemme, 2017.

With the results of the assigned weights, the persona Director represented the profile of "Complementary Audience to the Business" and constituted from zero to 15% of the users and buyers base, with high influence or decision power. The persona Auditor and IT represented the profiles of "Important Audience for the business". They constitute from 15.1% to 30% and from 50.1% to 75%, respectively, of the user and buyer base, with influence, decision power or purchase, high in the first case and medium in the second, according to the methodology presented in figure 1.

It is important to note that to gain agility, two personas of the three target audiences structured in the interview phase were created due to weight similarity of and the short period of time for the execution of the following stages. If the third persona was maintained, the percentage of representativeness of the audience could be harmed, so that analogous profiles were "merged" - preserving the characteristics of the one with the highest weight when any conflict can be observed.

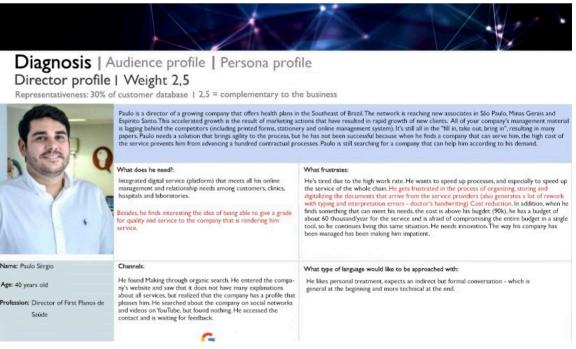
Figure 1: Filled matrix of representativeness, Purchasing power, Weight of profile and importance for the business.



Source: Lemme, 2017.

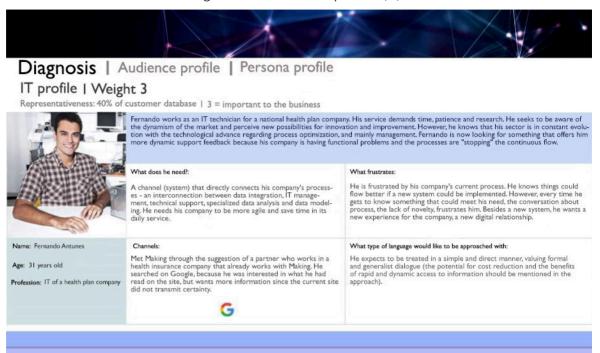
With the data obtained in the structured interview and the data from the matrix to define the relevance of each profile for the business, the following personas were created, representing the different profiles (figures 2 and 3):

Figure 2: Profile of the Director persona (Dir.)



Source: Lemme, 2017.

Figure 3: Profile of the IT persona (IT).



Source: Lemme, 2017.

With the personas defined, in step 2, the channels of the company, as well as other companies in the same field, were benchmarked on the potential communication channels, by comparing the number of followers and subscribers to these channels. The result of this step appears in table 3. The data was collected in November 2017.

Table 3 - benchmarking of channels.

Canal	Making	Company OB*	Company T*
Facebook	Did not have	Did not have	347.225 followers
LinkedIn	Did not have	11.136 followers	303.147 followers
Tweeter	Did not have	1 follower	20.7k followers
Instagram	Did not have	Did not have	9.984 followers
Google+	Did not have	Did not have	1.549 followers
YouTube	Not verified until presentation	39 subscribers	8.463 subscribers

Source: Lemme, 2017 (*the names of the companies were altered to ensure anonymity).

With this step presented by the consultants to the representatives of the company, step 3 corresponded to the definition of the Digital Marketing Plan with the communication strategies. In this stage we also analyzed the channels that would have priority of communication with the personas; the calculation of the number of posts for each persona taking into account the sales funnel; the definition of keywords; the customer journey; and language adaptation for the posts.

It is necessary to take into consideration some points of attention, such as improvement opportunities, weaknesses and potential changes for inbound marketing strategies and customer journey, identifying how each profile prioritizes the channels of digital interaction with the company. The analysis of the channels was done by means of a dynamic table, filled in by the consultants and the company's representatives, taking into consideration the personas chosen and how the company would relate to them, according to table 4.

Table 4 - qualitative analysis for the priority of communication with personas.

Channel	Persona C - Director Paulo Sérgio	Persona A - IT Fernando Antunes	
Facebook	Secondary	Secondary	
LinkedIn	Main Main		
Tweeter	Does not use	Does not use	
Instagram	Does not use	Secondary	
Google+	Main (used organic search on Google)	Main (used organic search on Google)	
YouTube	Secondary (testimony and cases can improve the reputation of Making)	Main (has interest in tutorials and support from the company)	

Source: Lemme, 2017.

This analysis is necessary to define the needs and establish where the people navigate and prioritize the relationship with the company, as well as to establish where to focus communication efforts in the Digital Marketing Plan.

With the definition of the priority of the channels, the calculation of the amount of posts that matches each stage of the sales funnel was made. For this calculation, values were assigned considering the enlargement of the funnel, where the top stage of the funnel - "Learning

and Discovering" - would need more content and received the value 3. The middle stage of the funnel - "Recognizing the Problem" received the value 2. The bottom variable of the funnel - "Considering the Solution" - received the value 1. The stage "Purchase Decision" does not appear in this calculation because it is understood that the posts should be allocated in the previous stages. These values were multiplied by the weight of each persona, generating the amount of posts for each one of them, as shown in table 5.

Table 5 - Definition of the amount of posts considering the enlargement of the funnel.

Funnel stage	Persona C - Director Paulo Sérgio (weight 2,5)	Persona A - IT Fernando Antunes (weight 3)	Total posts
Learning and Discovering	3 x 2,5 ≅ 8	3 x 3 = 9	17
Recognizing the Problem	2 x 2,5 = 5	2 x 3 = 6	11
Considering the Solution	1 x 2,5 ≅ 2	1 x 3 = 3	5

Source: Lemme, 2017

Next, the association with the keywords that could compose the posts, especially in search engines, was defined.

Table 6 - Keywords and position in the sales funnel.

	Keyword	Search vol.	Competition	Top/middle/bottom
Word 1	Health plan management	10-100	High (ad) R\$3,07 low (SEO)	Тор
Word 2	health software	10-100	High (ad) R\$5,47 low (SEO)	Middle
Word 3	medical audition	100-1 mil	Average R\$8,32 High (SEO)	Middle
Word 4	-	100-1 mil	High R\$4,75 High (SEO)	Bottom
Word 5	Health plan systems	100-1 mil	Average R\$3,90 Average-High (SEO)	Тор
Other	health audition, health services audition, medical bills audition		ei .	-

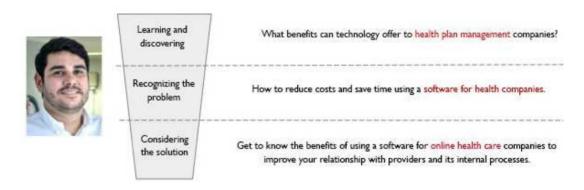
Source: Lemme, 2017.

Part of the inbound marketing strategy is search engine optimization (SEO). Making a survey about content, we listed some keywords to be placed in posts and publications that Google could find and associate with the company. These keywords were listed during the process of search and validation of personas and, later, creation of content focused on personas. At a certain point the keyword search result was also validated with the customer. With the keywords that would compose the top, middle and bottom posts defined in table 6, the suggested strategies for each persona appear in figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4 - Persona A Customer Journey - Paulo Sérgio

Digital Marketing Plan | Purchase Journey

Persona A - Paulo Sérgio, director of First Planos de Saúde

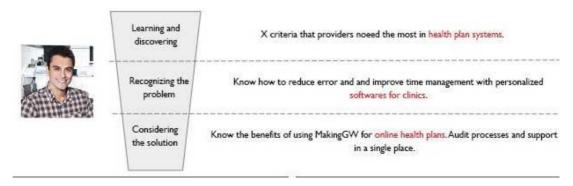


Source: Lemme, 2017

Figure 5 - Persona B Customer Journey - Fernando

Digital Marketing Plan | Purchase Journey

Persona B - Fernando, IT of a health plan company



Source: Lemme, 2017

With the keywords and posting strategies for each persona defined, the language adaptation was suggested using consultant experience onpersona behavior as a source of information, under the supervision of the managers of the company, as presented below:

A. For Persona A - Paulo Sérgio, Director:

Example of the first paragraph for the post: "What benefits can technology offer the company in the management of health plans?"

Attending different health professionals is a mission of high level of difficulty. Each one has specific needs and they end up losing a lot of time due to the lack of agility in the processes. Finding a good management system for Health Plan providers is difficult and, when you find it, the price or even the service does not completely satisfy them. Wouldn't it be interesting that you could find, customize and streamline each process according to the specificity of each customer? Making was created to give you visibility as a good salesperson of Health Plans that want to optimize your management with a customizable system.

Signature of a representative of the company with proximity to management in the health area

B. For Persona B - Fernando, TI:

Example of first paragraph for the post: "Learn how to reach new customers using software for customized clinics."

Finding a good customizable system for your provider is not an easy task, right? Large clinics, hospitals and even medical auditors and other healthcare professionals have different audit requirements - and you need to reach them. With Making's services you can connect your providers to clinics, hospitals, offices, doctors and health professionals, thus customizing a management system. Get to know these and other possibilities that Making offers you.

Signature of a representative of the company with proximity in the IT area

Finally, with the completion of the funneling of customer journey and language adaptation for the posts, stage 4 consisted of suggesting actions that the company could undertake to have a greater presence on social networks and make the brand easily recognized. These suggestions include: 1) Launch the profiles and fanpages of Making on social networks, such as Linkedin and YouTube; 2) Create content, especially small videos about Making's service - operation, statements from directors, users and

other customers, etc.; 3) Form a network of influencers-collaborators try to expose on digital channels; and 4) Invest in online ads, such as Google, Youtube, etc.

After the final stage, the company has the possibility to evaluate the different solutions and implement those that best meet their desires for growth and performance.

5 Considerations on the LEMME-X methodology

The consultants realized that the method used allowed for optimization in analysis and benchmarking time (considering the workload assigned to the development of the work), greater relevance in the proposal of inbound marketing solutions and more security for decision-making on the digital marketing plan. With the creation of personas, analysis of interaction channels and definition of inbound marketing strategies, it became possible to take decisions and make suggestions in a more substantiated manner seeking direct dialogue with company pains and expectations and with its potential customers.

It was possible, through the personas and other stages of the method employed, to make the necessary adaptations in the interaction and conversion strategies according to the user and audience, for product improvements, as noted by Patrutiu-Baltes (2016). It is also noted that the use and validation of the personas allowed a clearer ordering of items and requirements of the customer journey, in order to better serve the user, allowing for proposals of better interaction with the latter, as noted by Roque (2017).

Currently, several companies are already investing in the construction of personas or in the customization of sales and service, especially in digital environments. However, it is not common to find companies in the market with agile strategies like these applied in a systematic way, as it was presented. With this, the expected outcome is to bring elucidation and depth to the discussion of a subject that is sometimes approached with skepticism or applied in a superficial way since it is assumed that it is because of the restricted knowledge and the status quo that one has about the possibilities of measurement, improvement and application of the tool.



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