Inbound Marketing as A Commercialization Strategy of Technology Services for The Restaurant Sector

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Abstract. Nowadays we live surrounded by technology and we have witnessed its evolution, having to adapt to the mandatory changes to understand and advance with great leaps with it. With the appearance of the Internet, organizations have had to migrate to a digital infrastructure, thus changing their perspective on the appropriate marketing for their company, which places them in a situation of technological and strategic challenges to stay ahead and thus cause the impact and expected result. Identifying the needs of the client and taking him by the hand towards the acquisition of a particular product or service has become an essential concept to be able to define the appropriate strategies for marketing, especially in the case of services and even more so when these services are of a technological nature and depend on digital media to be marketed. Inbound marketing is based on non-invasive tactics through which it is intended to achieve first of all the attraction of the client through valuable content, secondly, the adequate interaction with him in his journey during the acquisition of the service of a company more personal and empathetic way and, finally, the feeling of delight and satisfaction with which the process closes and completes the cycle achieving customer loyalty. In the fall of 2021, a study was carried out based on the responses of 35 large restaurant companies in Mexico that operate in the state of Puebla on how a technology and information consultancy can make their technological services known to the restaurant sector. This study analyzes the acceptance of inbound strategies in the commercialization of consulting services to this specific sector.

1. Introduction:

Marketing plays a very important role in the marketing strategy of any company. Through it, an exchange of benefits between client and company is achieved, their needs are satisfied and profits are obtained at the same time (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). A decade ago it worked very well to buy an email list, have your own internal sales force or hire an external telemarketing company. However, today companies must seek new and creative ways to reach their market, technological advances and even methodologies other than traditional ones (Halligan & Shah, 2010).

This study is based on a methodology called Inbound, a business philosophy whose objective is to conduct business in a more humane and meaningful way through communication with potential customers who purchase and market products and services online (Munroe, 2020). The innovation of the Inbound methodology lies in the non-invasive marketing techniques focused on the client, in such a way that they come alone and with greater interest in the product or service that is offered (Halligan & Shah, 2010).

The research is based on this methodology with the aim of facilitating the processes of marketing technology services to the restaurant sector using digital media.

2. Theme Development:

According to Selman (2017), digital marketing could be described as a set of marketing strategies that occur in the online world and that seek to get the user to perform some desired action. However, including a digital marketing plan is hardly seen as part of organizational strategies.

The term of Inbound Marketing is due to Brian Halligan, who is CEO and co-founder of Hubspot, a marketing and sales software company based in Massachusetts, USA and used it for the first time in 2005 as a reference to attract customers. The term is focused on marketing in digital media through content of interest and interaction with the client.

The inbound marketing methodology arises from the fact that marketing tactics used successfully in the past no longer produce the desired results (Halligan & Shah, 2010). With this observation, a wheel model emerges that defines the stages of this methodology.
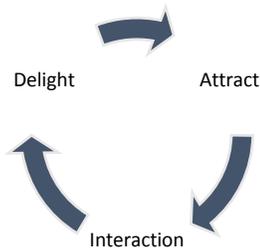
Figure 1. Wheel model of the stages of the Inbound Methodology
Source: Own elaboration based on (Halligan and Shah, 2010)

The Digital Transformation in Mexico is closely related to the role of the customer and their needs. This is due to the fact that there is a culture of service focused on getting to know the client better and offering them the best solutions according to what they want. However, a true transformation is not defined by the technology itself, but by the transition of customer-focused processes. In other words, if the process is digitized but is not focused on improvement, it does not mean that it has been transformed (Thompson, 2017).

According to the model of the Inbound methodology and performing a statistical analysis based on the Pearson correlation with the help of the SPSS system, the result was obtained that there is mainly a considerable correlation between the ability to attract and attract customers. This close relationship between both variables determines the importance of inbound strategies since triggering the interest of prospective customers is decisive for the start of marketing services and converting potential customers into captive customers.

**Figure 2.** Correlation of customer acquisition variable (DV) with the attraction variable.
Source: Own elaboration based on the statistical program SPSS (2021).

The survey applied in the census aimed at the restaurant sector shows that around 71% of the companies do not have exclusive software and use commercial software. This means an opportunity for IT consultants in terms of creating custom software, taking into account that the average time in which they request IT services, according to the results of the study, is 18 months.

Among the digital services of greatest interest to the restaurant sector are those detailed in Figure 3 below.
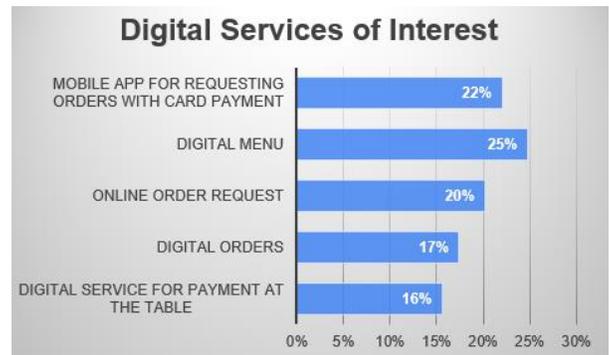
Figure 3. Digital services of greatest interest.
Source: Own elaboration (2021).

However, when acquiring this type of service, restaurant companies have mainly faced problems such as lack of support (24%), changes in costs (21%) and delivery times (20%). To deal with these points, the restaurant sector takes into account key points when hiring IT services. According to the results of the survey, the most important factor with 43% is the recognized brand, in second place, the recommendation on social networks with 22% and in third place the recommendation of third parties with 18%.

As a whole, the companies surveyed consider personalized advice to be of great importance in the process of buying new software and 69% give a high value to post-sale service when closing the process of marketing and interaction with the client. This action largely determines the level of customer satisfaction and delight in the last stage of the inbound methodology through which loyalty can be achieved by following the service marketing process in a personalized way.

3. Conclusion:
The restaurant sector is looking for technological solutions that allow it to interact effectively, but above all simply, with its customers. This is why it focuses on technological services that facilitate this relationship and that are within the reach of a high percentage of its market.

For an IT consultancy it should be a priority to satisfy the needs of digital services that the sector requires, and for this it is necessary that it has a good brand positioning, information of interest on technological issues,

and stand out for the personalized treatment, post-sale advice and be open to feedback.

Inbound techniques open up the possibilities of showing the sector dedicated to restaurants that IT consultants are aware of the needs of the sector, however, it is necessary that they be present on the network in a striking way that allows them to have a good position in the web search engines, but above all, they must have information and content of interest, as well as personalized services that accompany the client throughout the commercial process.

Having a presence on the network and following up on the concerns of the interested parties, coupled with the satisfactory closure of the IT services commercialization process, will open the doors of digital services to strengthen the relationship with the restaurant sector, allowing it to accept and apply greater ease and consistency the technological alternatives that an IT consultant can offer you.

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