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DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY FOCUSED ON SOCIAL  
NETWORKS AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN *AGENCIA  
ADUANAL LILLIANA IRÍAS CARVAJAL*, SAN JOSÉ 2022

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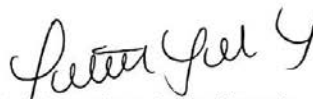
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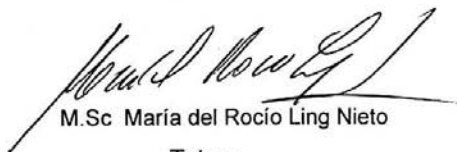
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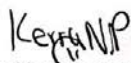
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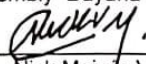
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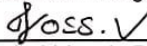
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Carolina De Los Angeles Picado Avendaño

**Dedication**

First of all, I dedicate this study to God who has been my source of strength, wisdom, inspiration, and understanding which made me able to complete this goal. Besides, I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Rodney and Yajaira, who always gave me support, love, care, resources, and encouragement to achieve my degree. I want to thank my teammates for their commitment and perseverance to complete this research. I am also grateful to my friend Alejandra who was always supporting, listening, and motivating me, and I appreciate my lovely dog Perla, my loyal companion during this process.

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First of all, I want to thank God for allowing me to get this far, for giving me perseverance, the ability to face any adversity and above all for allowing me to fulfill one of my biggest dreams and desires. To my parents Alexander and Fanny who have shown me their sincere love throughout my life, praying and giving me the necessary resources to get to the University, I thank them with all my heart for never abandoning me and for always being present. Also, to my fellow researchers for being amazing people and really striving to achieve a common goal, thank you for your dedication in this project. Last but not least, to my beloved sister Hazel and best friend Sharon and my dog Bella, they were always company and motivation in my study hours.

**Yoselin Valverde Rodriguez.**

I dedicate this study first of all to God for being my support and my guide to achieve this important goal. To my family, my parents Soledad and Adolfo for being unconditional and for always inculcating in me the importance of studying and following my dreams. To my brothers Isaac and Julian and my grandma Hilda for all their love. To my teammates, thank you for your commitment and dedication to this project. And finally, to my friends of ECU, Joss and Karlita for their kind encouragement and prayers that pushed me to keep going. And I could not miss my lovely dogs Toby and Candy for their loyalty and company.

**Carolina De Los Ángeles Picado Avendaño.**

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**Nick Moises Vega Mora.**

First of all, I dedicate this study to God who has been my lead, refuge, strength and to give me the opportunity to have this achievement. Besides, I dedicate this work to my dear mother Eugenia and grandfather José who strongly supported and encouraged me with love and patience to reach my goal. I can't thank you enough for helping me finish this. My special thanks to my siblings Tayri and Jeremy who always give me the perseverance and motivation to obtain this goal. I would like to thank César for always listening, motivating, and accompanying me. Finally, I was so pleased and grateful to work with this team and I really appreciate your effort during this research.

**María Fernanda Rodríguez Villalobos**

## **Preface**

The elaboration of this research came from the interest of investigating the competitive advantages of the correct use of a Digital Marketing strategy focused on Social Networks of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Thus, the investigation had as a challenge to conduct a exhaustive analysis both internally and externally in the company *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* using instruments such as an interview, observations, surveys, and methods such as SWOT, CAME, Benchmarking, 7Ps in order to identify the current situation of the agency in the use of its social networks with the goal of determining its strengths and opportunities for improvement in the field of digital marketing strategy in comparison with other competitors.

On the other hand, with the results of the research, a digital marketing strategy was proposed with the aim of creating a handbook as input for “*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*”; therefore, it was a contribution not only for this Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) but for the rest of these kind of companies in the country to find professional support and be able to adapt the handbook to their needs in terms of digital marketing focused on social networks. Last but not least, the study was designed to support the academic resource for “*Universidad de Costa Rica*” and specifically to the major of English with Business Management Training, as it was pursued to enrich the knowledge in the present and future generations that belong to this professional area.

## **Acknowledgment**

This research has been successfully completed thanks to people who committed to provide support and contributions during the process. First of all, we would like to thank the professor and director of the research, M.Sc. María del Rocío Ling Nieto, who has been a professor in English with Business and Management Training major, who also demonstrated her commitment and support from the process of the research proposal, and provided us with the necessary tools to organize, plan, and develop the research. At the same time, she was a motivational support and was responsible for ensuring the development and personal growth of the members. Lic. Kerry Navarrete Padilla and M.Sc. Ana Gabriela Navarro Alpízar, who demonstrated vast knowledge on the subject and who were a fundamental support in theoretical and research development. Their contributions allowed the research to be developed efficiently and obtain a successful result.

We would like to thank Professor M.Sc. Lilliana Irías Carvajal, who made her company available as an object of study; her company proved to have the necessary criteria to adapt to the research. Thanks to the members of Agencias Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal, such as Juan Bautista Castro Alvarez and Aurelio Solano, and to the company's client who participated in the collection of information, in addition to the customs agencies that participated in the specific instruments.

We acknowledge the support of the previous coordinator of English with Business and Management Training major, M.Sc. Maureen Manley Baeza, who also participated in the creation of the program and in the final degree work process, providing preparation spaces for it. Also to the current coordinator of the same career, who at the same time was part of the qualifying jury M.L. Rosberly López Montero and M.Sc. Jonathan Salas Alvarado member of the qualifying jury who gave their support in the participation of the defense of the final degree work.



### **Bibliographic card**

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### **Executive summary**

An investigation of digital marketing in social media as a competitive strategy was developed in the enterprise, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, a customs agency with main headquarters located in Barrio Luján, in the province of San José, Costa Rica. The customs agency was selected due to the current lack of use of social networks as a digital marketing strategy, therefore it was established the objectives of analyzing the use of social media by the company and its strengths and weaknesses in order to develop a digital marketing strategy on social networks proposal to boost the competitive advantage of the agency.

The mixed method type of research was selected, and the following instruments were applied: An interview with the CEO, a checklist directed to the CEO, a survey to the

regular customers, a survey applied to customs agencies, and an observation of competitors' social networks. Moreover, SWOT, CAME, Marketing mix of 7P's, and Benchmarking techniques were carried out to analyze the internal and external situation of the customs agency to propose a digital marketing strategy adapted to the necessities and areas of improvement of the agency by also taking into account the competitors.

The increase in technology for the development of communication provides a great opportunity for improvement to the Lilliana Irías Carvajal's Customs Agency to use social networks in order to advertise their services. The strategy is based on the results of the instruments applied to *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, its clients, and competitors, where it was possible to recognize the need to improve the digital presence on the social networks, such as, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp in order to achieve better engagement with the clients.

The strategy provides a guide to improve the presence of the customs agency on social networks through the generation of business accounts on social networks, interface improvement, periodic publications, and increased interaction. The investigation identified the points of improvement applicable to the company in order to transform and adapt the social networks to the current market competition rate with the implementation of updated strategies to generate competitive advantage.

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## 1. Introduction

The company "*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*" is a Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) dedicated to managing services in the customs area for imports and exports with the main headquarters in Barrio Luján, in the province of San José, Costa Rica. It has offices in Caldera, Santamaría, and Limón. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected this enterprise reducing the opportunity to increase sales in their customs services in 2020 and 2021. L. Irías (personal communication, September 29th, 2021). More than ever the necessity to implement new marketing strategies seems to be an alternative to open up to new options to become more competitive.

The owner of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, L. Irías (personal communication, September 29th, 2021), shed light on the necessity to improve Digital Marketing in this agency. Currently, the company only manages Twitter and Facebook social media accounts. Martínez et al. (2021) highlight the perceptions on digital marketing among Costa Rican exporting SMEs and state the following: "Business dynamics have changed in the last decade mostly driven by the technological revolution, and this is especially evident in the strategic approach adopted by organizations to interact with their customers" (p. 84). Hence, it is crucial for SMEs to be able to adapt to the new technological era, for instance, implementing digital marketing through the use of social networks may provide a competitive advantage since they enhance relationships with their existing customers as well as showing products, or services in a more attractive way to the audience.

Martínez et al. (2021) also state that SMEs reflect the benefits provided by digital marketing as they use digital tools such as Websites, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, among others; as a result, this can be seen in highly successful businesses in Costa Rica where it is considered that 40% of them obtain benefits in relation to suppliers, and 70% of these businesses get benefits in regard to customers, both cases through digital marketing

actions that favor them. By the same token, a Digital Marketing Strategy on Social Media is key for today's firms because it is a popular means by which individuals engage with the business. Stojiljković (2019) explains that Social Media Marketing is one of the most popular marketing methods worldwide. Therefore, hundreds of studies rate Digital Marketing in Social Networks as one of the most important ways to approach the user as it has a great impact on developing loyal customer relationships.

According to Kumar, Syed, & Pandey (2021), “COVID-19 pandemic introduced a push in technology, and in coming years, SMEs will be bent more towards digital marketing due to it offers several tangible and intangible benefits to SMEs, and SMEs should train themselves well to adopt the technology” (p.143). Based on this, it is crucial for SMEs to invest more in the use of Digital Marketing in Social Networks due to the changes in market behavior caused by the COVID-19 in which companies have had to migrate and opt for the use of new communication technologies to implement this type of digital marketing.

Furthermore, this research seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Digital Marketing Strategy in Social Networks that is implemented in the company “*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*”, for this purpose an internal analysis will be performed in order to find out the needs for improvement in the strategy used in this area. Moreover, these aspects mentioned above will be carried out through the methodology, compilation, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information that will be collected since the type of marketing study in this research is essential to promote the content of the business in the best way for those market settings.

Additionally, throughout this research process, the main needs of the enterprise in terms of Digital Marketing in Social Networks are raised, in order to design a proposal focused on this field. Likewise, it has the aim of generating a competitive advantage

regarding the demands of the current market, which has been affected by COVID-19, as the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises have been adapted to the "new reality" post-pandemic, this enables Digital Marketing Strategies to have a great impact on social networks.

### **1.1 Background Literature**

The present research background was developed from local studies to global studies. Regarding the local field, the authors Serrano & Tencio (2020), Solano (2021), He (2021), and Angulo (2021) have common perspectives related to the methodologies that can be implemented to develop a feasible and successful Digital Marketing Strategy on Social Media. First, it is convenient to use the mixed-method research study which includes both types of assessment, qualitative and quantitative, and the instrument for data collection is based on surveys and questionnaires. In addition, organizations should develop an analysis of the internal and external situation of the business and market segmentation. It is necessary to include several investigation variables, for instance, price, product, promotion, distribution, budget, market strategy, the internal situation, external situation, financial situation, social networks, trends, competitors, service, positioning, purchase frequency, among others.

Furthermore, the authors agree that it is essential to use the following techniques: SWOT, CAME, Marketing mix, and Benchmarking.

SWOT is defined by Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong. (2005) as “A distillation of the findings of the internal and external audits which draws attention to the critical organizational strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats facing the company” (p.58).

Besides, Sánchez, González & Serrano (2020) stated “(...) the CAME analysis responds to the Correct, Adapt, Maintain and Explore initiations. It consists of a methodology that complements the SWOT analysis and suggests guidelines for action



based on the results obtained” (p.127), and Benchmarking which is defined by Kotler et al.(2005) as "Benchmarking—The process of comparing the company’s products and processes to those of competitors or leading firms in other industries to find ways to improve quality and performance" (p.906). These techniques will support the process of recognizing and establishing a guide to design a marketing strategy on social media.

The authors related to the global field, Lisans (2019) and Villagómez & Acosta (2020) agree on the use of instruments for data collection and data analysis, for example, surveys and questionnaires to gather information from different research populations, such as enterprises, entrepreneurs, and clients. The survey method used contains questions to analyze demographic segmentation related to gender, age, interaction with the company, customer experience, and education level. The questionnaire was focused on the sale of products through social media channels, or using social media as a marketing tool. The analysis of the data collected combining a variety of instruments allows obtaining an overview of the real situation of a firm.

Solano (2021), He (2019), Angulo (2021), and Serrano and Tencio (2020) explain that Digital Marketing in Social Networks aims to increase the visibility of the business through interactive and digital content, and it is crucial to create communities in social networks related to the company to turn users into potential customers for the business. In addition Vidovic. (2020) states that “Digital marketing implies the promotion of products or services using digital communication channels to make the message reach the primary or target audience” (p.62). Besides, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, as cited in Li et al., 2021), state that “In a marketing context, social media are considered platforms on which people build networks and share information and/or sentiments” (p.52). Therefore, the firms take advantage of social media since individuals share information that can be used to have a better understanding of the target market and gain new clients.

Solano (2021), He (2019), Angulo (2021), and Serrano and Tencio (2020) also affirm that companies depend on sales, but mainly on people who can buy their products or services; they also state that competitiveness of a firm, at the level of social media, must be oriented to clients, competitors, and the company's features and needs. In addition, the enterprise's understanding of the direct variables to its business implies more accurate decisions about customers' requirements and characteristics, suitable social networks for the target, and marketing goals.

When developing social media presence, enterprises must recognize the internal and external situations to improve decision-making regarding digital content. Li et al. (2021), stated that Social Media Marketing Strategy (SMMS) is "From a strategic marketing perspective, social media interaction entails a process that allows not only firms, but also customers to exchange resources" (p.53). Therefore, the use of social networks to exchange information may enable companies to reinforce the knowledge, preferences, and interactions of their clients to formulate a successful marketing strategy.

Similarly, to the points stated by Solano (2021), He (2019), Angulo (2021), other authors such as Serrano and Tencio (2020) affirm that it is key to allocate trained personnel to be in charge of the management of social media marketing. They must be involved in a constant acquisition of knowledge because technology advances at a very accelerated pace. Related to the international field, Lisans (2019), Csinger & Korcsmáros (2020), and Villagomez & Acosta (2020) have common conclusions regarding social media marketing implementation which can be very useful in small enterprises, but it requires good management of marketing tools and strategies to carry out better outcomes. Also, it is relevant to recognize the strengths and weaknesses to design the strategic plan that places the firm with a successful positioning in comparison with its competitors.

Besides, Kotler et al.(2005) define Marketing mix as “Marketing mix—”The set of controllable tactical marketing tools – product, price, place and promotion– that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market” (p.915). The classification of 7P’s marketing mix was an essential factor to develop a plan to guide small or medium enterprises towards the use of Digital Marketing in Social Networks.

To sum up, it is necessary to take into account the needs, objectives, and budget of a company in order to create a feasible digital marketing strategy. Furthermore, the studies highlight the relevance of customer-company relationships through social networks.

## **1.2 Justification**

The development of a Digital Marketing in Social Network proposal as a strategy may contribute to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Costa Rica by reinforcing brand awareness, achieving growth, and having better market positioning due to technology has become an essential tool that facilitates the operation in the marketing field.

Enterprises are forced to innovate and implement new strategies in order to grow in a globalized world. Digital Marketing in Social Networks is a strategy that firms must adapt to avoid being disruptive and be affected by the accelerated innovation in the world. According to Martin (2017) “in the nitro-fueled, hyper-paced modern world, digital marketers have to be able to upshift quickly, change lanes without hesitation, and recognize the traffic patterns ahead to avoid delays and setbacks.”(p.17) The marketing administrative processes are becoming more and more digitized, and strategies began to be carried out in different digital means because the Internet became a communication space that allows better interaction among clients and firms since they spend much time on different virtual platforms. Some of these are social networks where companies such as SMEs can take advantage of many opportunities by applying a digital marketing strategy.

Furthermore, social media has an important and positive response in customer relationship performance, and this study can contribute to enterprises that want to adopt social media as a marketing tool for the improvement of their business. According to Bansal & Chaudhary. (2016)

Social Media played a vital role in engaging customers online. Some forms of social media consisted of tools –blogs, wikis, and podcasts. Some were user-generated content-comments, reviews, social tags and bookmarks, rankings, ratings, photos and videos. Different companies made use of these tools at different times for customer engagement. (p.19)

It is necessary to keep the customer informed through social networks about products and services. The constant presence in social media can be created through posts that must include attractive images, messages, interactive activities, and a human image, for example, by showing faces, since these and more aspects will enhance customer relationships, customer engagement, brand awareness, and confidence among clients. Moreover, due to the new technology trends, it is important to have a digital marketing strategy that brings an innovative way to face the possible external risks for the firm, for instance, the impact that Covid-19 has had on different industries.

Currently, companies must be often active and in contact with their consumers with the purpose of building trust relationships between them. The use of social networks in the business world has become a fundamental communication tool for clients since they are looking to speak with another person, not an enterprise. Viet-Błaszczyk (2020) states that “Social media influences the perception of the brand by customers, but also the purchase of specific products.” (p.58). The absence of a brand presence on social media could generate a lack of knowledge and trust in the firm. The effectiveness of a service or product depends a

lot on listening to what the client shares as feedback on social networks. Also

Viet-Błaszczyk, (2020) mentions that the digital customer;

“... not only relies on the opinions of other Internet users when making purchasing decisions, but also expresses their opinions and recommends their favorite brands. They acquire and analyze information, which they later share with other users co-creating content on the Internet.” ( p. 46-47).

Therefore, companies must value their presence in social networks since it may allow them to spread their brand among the target market due to the fact that users of social networks might have an impact in a firm's promotion and sales through the opinions and feedback shared on the digital platforms.

According to Sobrevilla, Barrios & Moreno (2017), SMEs can obtain benefits from the use of social networks because they increase sales and clients. In Costa Rica, many SMEs have faced many barriers to compete in the market against large companies or competitors. The idea of contacting or creating relationships with customers on the Internet is optimal to achieve brand awareness and growth for SMEs. Therefore, Martin et al (2021) mention the possibility of researching the implementation of digital marketing actions and tools in favor of competitiveness in global business management.

From the necessity of raising awareness in the enterprises about the implementation of digital marketing strategies; this study is developed to be a support model for SMEs to gain a competitive advantage in the market. Martínez et al (2021) affirm that some exporting SMEs in Costa Rica vaguely know about the dynamics of digital tools, even when they are aware about the importance and benefit of the relationship with the client.

Lack of awareness of the benefits of Digital Marketing in Social Media can affect the firms by not meeting the needs of the consumer, and by not following what is in trend.

*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* can take advantage of Digital Marketing in Social

Media by knowing and collecting data through social platforms to understand the opinion of its clients in order to enhance its service, customer relationship, and business recognition.

It is important to mention that this study makes a positive contribution to the country's economy because, according to Ministerio Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio (MEIC), Arce (2019) mentions that regarding studies from the Banco Central de Costa Rica; the SMEs represent 97.5% of country 's business structure. Therefore, small and medium-sized companies must focus on the development of social networks to increase channels of negotiation, interaction, and communication with customers since with one click they can access the information available from a number of different Internet communities. An empowered presence in social networks allows people to have a closer relationship with the business through the evaluation of the service and the interaction with the seller.

Social media is a very effective and simple way to reach and inform customers about operations, image, experience, products, and services. Information sources empower people to make more accurate purchase decisions since clients have a clearer idea of the company. Also, social networks open up a world of possibilities, one of them is the possibility of contacting the seller in real-time for inquiries.

Furthermore, social media provides great opportunities for businesses, such as brand recognition and customer attraction. Organizations require good planning for the management of social networks to be able to reach the market niche. According to Martínez et al (2021), in their study, it is demonstrated that some enterprises in Costa Rica have weaknesses in terms of digital marketing strategies, and more and more companies are joining social networks, which increase users on these platforms, many of which may be interested in the firm.

It is essential for the SME *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, to develop a digital marketing study because it has national and multinational customers, nevertheless,

the enterprise lacks a rigorous strategy in social media management due to the fact they have little activity and interaction with regular and potential customers through social networks. *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* recognizes the importance of digital marketing to achieve an increment in customers, brand recognition, and improve relationships with clients.

The customs agency aims to increase sales through the application of a digital marketing strategy as it has the capacity to expand its market at the national and international levels. Also, it is worth mentioning that due to the contact with multinational and national companies, there is the possibility of creating content in English and Spanish for social networks.

Despite the need to raise awareness of the implementation of digital marketing strategies in SMEs in Costa Rica, another important reason taken into consideration to develop this research is the relation with academic background of English with Business Management Training major. This study will make contributions in the control and improvement of the functionality of digital marketing in the internal and external environment of the enterprise, and in the profitability of technological tools, such as social networks for marketing development, providing material for discussion, and knowledge acquisition.

To summarize, small and medium companies in Costa Rica need to implement a Digital Marketing Strategy in Social Networks in order to raise brand awareness, build customer engagement, adapt to the changing trend, and reach the target market. Moreover, this study at *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* would bring outcomes serving as a contribution to other companies in the country.

### 1.3 Research problem

The enterprise "*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*" is dedicated to offering services in the customs area and uses different social networks where the company posts important information that customers may be interested in. Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that good handling of social media at the marketing level can encourage communication and engagement which leads to good business relationships with current customers as well as reaching new potential clients. Therefore, digital marketing contributes to increasing the competitive position for Small and Medium Enterprises since it enhances sales in a more efficient and dynamic way which allows them to take advantage of the new technologies.

Additionally, Digital Marketing Strategies are essential components for SMEs to boost their business by offering their products or services through social networks. Nevertheless, during an interview with the owner of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* (oral communication, September 29th, 2021) it is brought to light that there are opportunities to improve digital marketing on this customs agency; as the company is not taking full advantage of its social media accounts. Consequently, the owner has not leveraged the advantage of using additional social networks tools that would be useful for the business, and the agency has not had the opportunity to have the personnel in charge of managing them properly.

As a result, it may affect the competitive advantage with other companies either nationally or internationally while preventing the growth and expansion of its services in the desired target market; therefore, designing Digital Marketing Strategies will bring better opportunities for positioning, gaining brand awareness, increase in the adoption of this kind of service, among others.

This research project presents the following research question:



General question:

- What is the digital marketing strategy focused on social networks used by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, San José, 2022 in order to tackle the necessities of the target market?

Specific questions:

- What is the impact of the digital marketing strategy used by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* to fulfill the necessities of their current clients, San José, 2022?
- What are some strengths and weaknesses of the digital marketing strategy used by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*?
- What is a digital marketing proposal focused on social networks that may prove effective for reaching the target market of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, 2022?

#### 1.4 Objectives

##### **General Objective:**

To analyze the digital marketing strategy to identify the strengths and weaknesses for designing a proposal focused on social networks to reach the necessities of the target market in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, San José, 2022

##### **Specifics Objectives:**

- 1- To identify the digital marketing strategy used by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, San José, 2022
- 2- To determine the strengths and weaknesses of the digital marketing strategy in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, San José, 2022.

3- To propose a digital marketing strategy focused on social networks in order to reach the target market of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, San José, 2022.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The investigation intends to identify the target market of the customs agency *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, through instruments such as an interview, observations, and surveys. It will be possible to recognize the social media platforms that best suit the marketing needs of this agency. Also, the information gathered from the customers and the owner will be analyzed and used in order to improve its virtual presence in social networks.

Furthermore, the researchers pretend to provide a digital marketing proposal in order to allow the customs agency to have a guide to update the enterprise's social media page and marketing strategy aligned to the interests of the target market. Moreover, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* will have an overview of strengths and opportunities for improvement to reinforce the digital marketing strategy in its various public online sites.

On the other hand, regarding limitations, researchers had obstacles in the process of gathering information from customers since there is no control over the client's responses due to the nature of this company which may negatively affect the results. *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has clients who are business people who are busy and may not be willing to answer instruments such as the survey. As a result, the application of instruments three and four is a limitation of this research since, despite insistence, the agency's clients did not respond in the number of people that were expected.

Moreover, the pandemic situation may lead to new restrictions that might affect the observation instrument in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* in a physical way. In addition, the pandemic might change the economic situation, as a result, the type of clients

can vary since the purchase behavior of customers change due to a pandemic as He (2021) states, the COVID-19 pandemic produces factors that changes the customers purchase behavior such as economic and political changes, restrictions, and population's fear.

Additionally, the change of government may lead to alterations in the Costa Rican economy that may cause a variation in the type of clients of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Digital marketing strategies in social media have become part of the marketing strategies of enterprises since it brings benefits, such as an efficient promotion at a cheaper rate, but also, it enhances customer engagement due to the positive interactions that can be shared between companies and customers online. Therefore, firms have to adapt to the changing and competitive environment in which social media has become a relevant investment for companies in order to promote their competitive advantage.

According to Joshi & Suman (2017):

Social media has for recent years been constantly debated by various businesses as to whether or not it is a worthwhile vehicle to invest significant resources in or not. While some feel that traditional marketing communication channels are adequate means of reaching and communicating with consumers of products, the growth of Facebook cannot be ignored by any business that intends on remaining in business. (p.97)

Also, the technological advance that surrounds users today requires that companies adopt changes using strategies that help organizations to turn changes into opportunities. Marketing in social networks has great importance on the promotion of goods and services, through content that attracts consumers, for example, videos, images, and forums. It is a tool that works as a direct key to meet the objectives of reaching users, attracting clients, and making sales. The online interaction between customers and sellers increases the formation of loyalty and trust to maintain long-term relationships with consumers.

Social networks offer a wide set of possibilities to face the marketing challenges in the company. As Vidovic (2020) states,

If you are looking for the most effective and fastest communication channel for promoting products and services, social networks are one of the solutions. They provide the opportunity to achieve far more significant results than those achieved in other marketing techniques and tools, with individual approach and targeted marketing strategy. (p.62)

Therefore, it is necessary to implement a marketing strategy that helps the company to get the most out of social networks because these are platforms that can help businesses to manage and contact end customers in a cheaper way. Social Networks act as an informative tool about the characteristics, products, services, prices, and means of contact between enterprises and clients.

Social media has become more than entertainment for users because its use has been expanded to the marketing field; therefore, enterprises can take advantage of the benefits and competitive advantage that social media brings as a marketing strategy.

According to Becić, Stojanović & Nikolić. (2018)

Using social networks as a medium for promotion is absolutely necessary in order to rise above the competition, and is considered as one of the least expensive ways to make yourself visible in the sea of different information. This way, more people are reached, and it is possible to present a new product, for example, and even gain feedback, all using social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and others, and for the lowest expenses possible. (p.80)

Furthermore, Social media have become a tool capable of allowing users to interact and create content. This helps companies to promote their image and engage with their customers easier. Dealing with clients on social networks is cheaper and more effective compared to using traditional methods.

The following concepts are relevant to the investigation:

**Marketing**

Kotler et al.(2005) state that “Marketing concept—The marketing management philosophy which holds that achieving organizational goals depends on determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors do” (p.16). Marketing is focused on meeting the needs of customers. Nowadays, companies consider the opinions and needs of their clients to create products or services. This generates greater profitability for the company and satisfaction for the consumers. In addition, through marketing the products or services will be designed for the specific customer area of the company which allows a greater reach of the target market.

**Marketing Strategy**

By knowing and analyzing the needs of an organization, a marketing strategy can be tailored to the goals and objectives to be achieved in its marketing activities. For instance, Varadarajan (2016) states the following:

Marketing strategy refers to an organization's integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives. (p.128)

Therefore, organizations may look for knowing, improving, and correcting processes in the current strategy, or creating a new one if it is lacking.

**Target Market**

Kotler et al.(2005) state that “Target Market —A are a set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve” (p.418). Through the target market, companies can focus their services and products on certain sectors of the population that have the characteristics of the potential customers for the organization. As a

result, the target market becomes essential for the marketing plan since it allows the company to better identify the users through the study of specific features in order to generate a customer profile.

### **Customer**

Burnett (2008) states “In the case of business organizations, and marketing organization:: In particular, the people with the needs are called consumers or customers” (p.8). Regarding the previous definition, companies should have a clear perspective about the customer; therefore, it is necessary to create an abstract customer profile in order to guide the sale of products and services. In addition, the profile allows the enterprise to have an idea about the motivations of the customer and the challenges. When using social networks to promote a business, firms must create the profiles of customers to whom the company seeks to attract.

### **Service marketing**

Services represent intangible goods, hence marketers must devise action plans based on benefits and ideals to which the service responds. Therefore, sellers of service must rely on providing customers with a good experience that allows them to generate loyalty, and satisfied customers.

Krishna et al. (2009) explain that,

Although both services marketing and goods marketing start with the critical need-identification and product design functions, goods generally are produced before it is sold and services generally are sold before it is produced. Moreover, services marketing has more limited influence on customers before the purchase than goods marketing (...) Normally the customers must experience the intangible service to really know it. Intangibility makes it more difficult for customers to

imagine and desire than goods. Customer's perception of risk tends to be high for services because services cannot be touched, smelled, tasted, or tried before purchase. (p.71)

It is essential to make the distinction of products, or services that an organization offers while developing marketing since the approach may influence the outcomes, for instance, customers who are looking for those aspects will need service marketing that enables them to have a positive perspective and reliability to be motivated to acquire the service that is intangible; consequently, it may enable the firm to face the promotion challenges, but at the same time, it may bring benefits to customers while letting them know what is best for them.

### **Marketing mix of 7P's**

Krishna et al. (2009) stated that

The traditional concept of the marketing mix consisting of product, price, promotion and place was developed largely on the basis of empirical work undertaken in relation to the manufacturing industry. (...) A more radical adjustment has been suggested by Booms and Bitner and popularized by Cowell and Magrath to the effect that the services marketing mix should be broadened to include three further 'Ps' - people, process and physical evidence. (pp.75-76)

When a company is willing to use the marketing mix, it is essential to take into account the needs and the nature of the organization, for example, if the organization offers products or services; as a result, it is necessary to identify what "Ps" should be included as stated above. Furthermore, the marketing mix of 7P's was applied and adapted to services for the development of this research to make it suitable to the customs agency service nature which is intangible. It is essential to highlight that 7P's marketing mix will contribute to this



research process since a product-based marketing can be adapted to services, as a result, with adaptation, it will be effective for this kind of service company.

According to Kotler et al.(2005),

However., successful service organizations recognise that the specific nature of services requires tailored marketing approaches and that traditional product-based marketing is unlikely to be effective if principles are transferred without adaptation. This does not mean that new marketing principles and theory should be developed for services, rather that the existing principles should be adapted to the service environment. (p.633)

Therefore, this marketing mix was selected maintaining a tailored version of each P for services offered by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*. Krishna et al. (2009) stated that the 7P's marketing mix elements are the following:

Product: The service provided is identified as the product.

Pricing: To establish a price of a product or service, it is necessary to consider two factors, for example, the quality and the time of production of the product.

Promotion: It is crucial to develop a promotional strategy for a product in order to gain customers, a well-known image, recognition among competitors, and customer engagement.

Place: Place implies the channel used to provide the service to the customer.

People: Each individual represents a relevant factor for a service provider because people are the target market that a company intends to satisfy through a product or service.

Physical evidence: Companies that offer services must provide physical evidence since services are intangible.

Process: The process corresponds to several steps that an enterprise has to follow in order to deliver a product or service to the client.

To sum up, the 7P's marketing mix enables service organizations to analyze the company from various areas, from the service itself to the experience to deliver it, or to the customer's perspectives and needs. In addition, the understanding of the 7P's marketing mix is relevant for companies because the performance of a service firm should not be always focused on the transactions, in contrast, it should also include the customer needs, relationships, positive experience, promotion, among others.

### **Advertising for services**

Advertising for services is defined by Krishna et al. (2009) as "Advertising is any kind-of paid, non-personal method of promotion by an identified organization or individual. As discussed earlier, services are different from goods in some basic ways. The service characteristics like intangibility, perishability, etc. pose unique marketing challenges" (p.81).

Therefore, the organization has to pay attention not only to the number of advertisements that are posted on their social media, but also to the way in which they are created to transmit the right message due to services cannot be promoted in the same way as products, hence it is necessary to analyze what ways are more accurate to face the marketing challenges that services have.

### **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

According to Davis (1989) and Venkatesh et al. (2003) (as cited in Ritz, Wolf, and McQuitty, 2019), explain the model of TAM as the following: "(...) proposes that an individual's perceptions of a technology's ease of use and its usefulness are the determinants of intentions to adopt the technology and actual adoption behavior" (p. 183). In this case, the authors state that technology can be accepted as long as it is easy to use for the user. In this way, the user's intention comes into consideration because if the user is motivated to accept

new technology in their functions, it will be easier to adapt to the new reality that is demanded today.

### **Digital marketing**

Sarker & Pahari (2021) stated that

Digital marketing is a system of reaching prospective shoppers or consumers with products or services by using digital devices and channels. The key intent of digital marketing is to reach consumers by using various online platforms at a cheaper rate than traditional marketing approaches. (p.186)

Therefore, brands may include digital marketing as an option to expand their visibility among customers due to current technology enabling companies to achieve their marketing goals at a cheaper rate through digital platforms that are commonly used by the target market and regular clients.

### **Social Networks**

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) (as cited in Li et al. 2021), states that “In a marketing context, social media are considered platforms on which people build networks and share information and/or sentiments” (p.52). Social networks are virtual applications and tools that work by connecting users with each other who may be related by the same interests, or common relationship. The interactive content that can be shared through social networks has a high impact on the establishment of the brand in the online market which can help the enterprise to inform the user respecting the business to be more sure about the purchases and the seller.

### **Content in social networks**

According to Paswan (2018) “Content is the king in digital marketing- there are three types of contents that are used in digital marketing. 1. Informational content 2.

Engagement content 3. Promotional content” (p.9). It is important to identify the types of content in order to understand the purposes of each one, informative content allows the company to share relevant details and information about the business. In addition, through engagement content, it is possible to develop data that is interactive and entertaining for clients. Finally, promotional content will be of utmost relevance to offer the services to the target market and regular customers of the enterprise.

### **Social media Marketing**

Joshi & Suman, (2017) mention,

Social Media Marketing (SMM) alludes to the procedure of dispersing messages, picking up web movement or consideration through social networking sites with a specific end goal to advance an identity, reason or business. (...) The meeting of innovation and Social Media have changed the way individuals associate with each other and organizations can no longer overlook these advanced groups. (p.9)

Social media marketing is a method for promoting business and attracting customers at a cheaper rate than traditional marketing media. In addition, through social media marketing, it is easier to look for clients through segmentation tools. Nowadays, it is extremely important to take into account the perspectives and interests of regular and potential clients to orientate the marketing strategies of the company to obtain a full advantage.

### **Social media marketing strategy (SMMS)**

Li et al. (2021), stated that social media marketing strategy (SMMS) is “From a strategic marketing perspective, social media interaction entails a process that allows not only firms but also customers to exchange resources” (p.53).

Companies can take advantage of channels such as social networks to share the key information that can spread brand awareness. Through social media marketing strategies, the company could build interactions and information exchange with customers in order to contribute to the achievement of the firm's marketing goals.

**Emotional Marketing:**

Purchases, experiences, and customer bonding are achieved when a company's marketing is focused on creating positive emotions in its customers. According to Monacchi (2016),

They mention that Guardiola explains the emotional marketing as the discipline that a brand uses within a strategy, in order to achieve an affective bond with its customers, or future customers, so that they feel the brand as their own and need to be part of it. (para. 6)

Digital marketing is related to emotional theory because interactions with customers through social networks can develop bonds, while also offering experiences and sentiments of services and products.

Also, Monacchi (2016) mentions that Guardiola constitutes emotional marketing has 4 pillars;

- Affective brand-consumer bond: To establish a relationship between brand and customer.
- Experience / Sensations / Emotions: Through the experience offered by the company to its customers, they can feel comfortable, creating positive emotions.
- Lovemarks: Become the preferred option of customers for them to engage with the brand.
- Content marketing: Create accurate and interactive content for clients. Digital marketing is related to emotional marketing, as it can be used as a strategy to

improve the relationship with buyers and suppliers. Emotional marketing aims to establish bonds with customers in order to get engaged with the brand. Social networks have the potential to develop this type of strategy within them.

### **Market Segmentation**

Authors such as Stone and Desmond (2007) state that: “Segmentation involves an analysis of the nature and composition of a market to identify groups of potential buyers who have similar needs or characteristics or display similar behavior. These groups are known as market segments” (p.174). Therefore, in order to comprise the groups aforementioned, according to Stone and Desmond (2007), the state marketing segmentation can be grouped as follows:

- Geographical: e.g. region, urban/suburban/rural and population density.
- Demographic: e.g. age, sex, marital status, socio-economic status, social class, religion and education.
- Psychographic: e.g. lifestyles, personality, self-image, value perceptions and motives.
- Behavioral: e.g. use rate and volume, occasions when used, brand loyalty and benefits sought. ( p.175)

In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the division of these groups helps to organize marketing segmentation and to clarify the needs and wants of various sections of the population with commonalities that will be useful for better targeting the market in which the brand should focus on.

### **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**

According to OECD (2016) “SMEs are generally considered to be non-subsidiary firms which employ less than a given number of employees. This number of employees

varies across countries. The most frequent upper limit designation of an SME is 250” (p.21).The SMEs significantly help the economic progress of the country due to these covering most of Costa Rica's trade structure. These are composed of a small group of people who work to meet the company's objectives. The SMEs always bring opportunities for developing studies that contribute knowledge for the business management areas.

### **Business to Business B2B E-commerce**

According to Kumar & Raheja (2012), they state that:

Business-to-business (B2B) describes commerce transactions between businesses, such as between a manufacturer and a wholesaler, or between a wholesaler and a retailer. B2B Ecommerce can save or make the company money. B2B is also used in the context of communication and collaboration. (p.447)

B2B businesses are companies that establish a commercial relationship where usually the interaction and communication is more direct. Therefore, a system such as e-commerce can increase revenue.

### **Business to Customers (B2C)**

Kumar & Raheja (2012) explain a concept of Business to Consumer (B2C), which details “Business to Customer describes activities of business serving end consumers with products and/ or services. Individuals visit an organization’s website before they buy the product” (p. 448). Although, it was a clear description of what this basic concept means, authors Kumar & Raheja (2012) add the following:

B2C websites are companies that through their website attract potential customers and in some cases customers can purchase products and or even services through their website. The major differences between the two are that B2B conducts

business transactions between other businesses, while B2C conducts business directly with the customer cutting out the middleman. (p.447)

Therefore, when using digital marketing strategies focused on social networks, it is important for companies to be conscious about the relevance of doing Business to Consumer means since it helps to catch attention from potential consumers who can evolve into regular customers in the future, and it is thanks to the promotion as well as the advertising when it comes to using this business activity.

### **Benchmarking**

For comprehending the basis of benchmarking, Espinosa (2017) defines it as “a continuous process by which the products, services, or work processes of leading companies are taken as a reference, to compare them with those of your own company and then make improvements and implement them.” (para.1). To achieve a better market positioning, enterprises must match or surpass their adversaries. This requires identifying and analyzing the operations and plan of action of the other sellers in order to adapt them to the company that wishes to compete. Benchmarking is divided into 3 types; Internal, functional, and competitive Espinosa, (2017);

Competitive: It is based on improving processes, functions, services, etc. in order to meet or exceed market competencies, this type of benchmarking is difficult to achieve due to the confidentiality of companies in providing information about their processes, functions, or strategies. The idea is to know or investigate the strategies that are used by the competencies in the current market. Competitive benchmarking helps to analyze the processes that have been most effective for the competitors and somehow improve them and follow them in order to achieve the same, or better results than the competitors obtained. It also helps to know what mistakes not to make according to the experience of the competition.



Internal: Espinosa, (2017) It aims to improve the process, operation, strategies, etc. within the same company with the objective of achieving a more efficient environment.

Functional: Espinosa, (2017) mentions that “functional benchmarking identifies the best practices of a company that is excellent in the area to be improved”.(para. 8) It tends to improve the effectiveness of departments within the organization to enhance their productivity.

The digital marketing that is done in social networks leads to better positioning in the market; therefore, it is important to recognize the scheme that the competitors carry out, and apply them at an internal, functional, and competitive level.

## **SWOT**

Kotler et al. (2005) stated that “SWOT analysis distills this data to show the critical items from the internal and external audits. The number of items is small for forceful communications, and they show where a business should focus its attention” (p.58). Thus, they suggest that managers need to identify the main threats and opportunities that the company faces, as well as, strengths and opportunities; therefore, it is essential to clarify what each letter of SWOT analysis stands for, with the purpose of understanding in depth this technique which is very useful in the business environment. According to Lomas (2009), each letter can be understood as follows:

- Strengths: What internal strengths does our organization have?
- Weaknesses: What internal weaknesses are there within the organization?
- Opportunities: What external opportunities present themselves?
- Threats: What external threats are there to our organization? These four key headings can be used to present an overview of the issues facing an organization.

The goal will be capitalized upon the strengths, convert the weaknesses into

strengths (or mitigate them), seize the (key) opportunities, and counter or manage the threats. (pp. 82-83)

Therefore, the SWOT analysis can be used as a mechanism that helps a company to know its internal and external situation, and taking into consideration these aspects, it can be used to collaborate in developing a strategic plan for Digital Marketing in Social Networks in order to define the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a company. Likewise, Kotler et al. (2005) explain that not all threats have the same degree of attention since those have to be carefully evaluated in order to understand the damage that each one could imply; therefore, it is vital to prioritize those that can affect more, with the purpose of preparing alternatives to overcome them. On the other hand, opportunities can be identified when there is a trend in the market that is in line with and favors the business, as well as it is important to highlight SWOT strengths and weaknesses do not include all aspects of a company, but only those that focus on the aspects that are really critical for success.

The SWOT theory is an excellent and useful tool that supports the appropriate management of different business areas. As a result, thanks to the research and the foundation of this technique, many enterprises can count on the benefits and guidance that SWOT offers, thus facilitating the achievement of the objectives set in different areas.

### **CAME**

According to Sánchez et al. (2020) “(...) the CAME analysis responds to the Correct, Adapt, Maintain and Explore initiations. It consists of a methodology that complements the SWOT analysis and suggests guidelines for action based on the results obtained” (p.127).

CAME first involves a series of analyzes such as SWOT in order to know the current situation of the company and, based on this, propose several actions to carry out. It is a strategy for the business management that aims to establish the operations that must be done

after the SWOT analysis. According to Sánchez et al. (2020) CAME analysis is ideal for determining a plan of action effectively because it considers the initial results of the SWOT. It is an essential tool to incorporate measures that most benefit the organization in terms of the resolution and investigation of variables that can affect the company.

### **Competitive advantage**

Kotler et al. (2005) define competitive advantage as “Competitive advantage—An advantage over competitors gained by offering consumers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing more benefits that justify higher prices” (p.494). Therefore, an enterprise can add value to its brand, not only by prices or quality, but also by exploring new ways to offer different benefits to customers in different areas, for instance, prices or emotional connections through customer engagement created based on the incorporation of social media. On the other hand, to contribute to competitive advantage, a business can create strategies which are defined by Kotler et al. (2005) as “Competitive strategies—Strategies that strongly position the company against competitors and that give the company the strongest possible strategic advantage” (p. 494). Consequently, in the competitive business world, firms improve their position among other companies by implementing competitive strategies for enhancing different areas.

### **Market Positioning**

Kotler et al.(2005) states that "Market positioning—Arranging for a product to occupy a clear, distinctive and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of target consumers. Formulating competitive positioning for a product and a detailed marketing mix." (p.31)

Therefore, it is essential for a company to have an understanding of how to enhance the image of the brand, and how to be perceived by the target market as relevant in the

competitive world. Market positioning will not only improve the brand familiarity, it also helps to make a stronger and positive perception which contributes to customer loyalty.

### **Brand awareness**

Then, Chandon (2003) affirms the following:

Brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in memory. Brand awareness can be measured through brand recall or brand recognition. Brand recall reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand from memory when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue. Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand. (pp. 1-2)

Based on this, it is important to analyze that companies should know how they are getting people familiar with their brand, and the ideas they are trying to implement on potential consumers in order to generate attraction and keep the loyalty of buyers as well.

### **Customer engagement**

Bansal & Chaudhary (2016) explain that: “Customer Engagement refers to emotional attachment that a customer experiences during the repeated and ongoing interactions. Engagement occurs through satisfaction, loyalty, and excitement about your brand” (p.15).

For these reasons, organizations need to be focused on sales rates due to the emotional factor while doing business. It is important to intensify brand recognition, customer loyalty, and customer engagement because it allows firms to have genuine attention from buyers due to the fact that it creates excitement about the product or service.

### **3. Methodological framework**

#### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

Currently, technological devices, and social networks have become part of the lives of human beings around the world, and external risks such as the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced the necessity of enhancing competitiveness due to the negative effects that it brought to some businesses of the reviewed studies. Therefore, digitalization has expanded because innovation in the digital marketing field has become essential.

The paradigm was interpretivism which according to Rehman & Altharhi (2016) implies that: “It is not possible to know reality as it is because it is always mediated by our senses. Interpretive epistemology is subjective. External reality cannot be directly accessible to observers without being contaminated by their worldviews, concepts, backgrounds, etc” (p.55). This investigation seeks to analyze perspectives from regular customers and the owner of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*, as a result, it was obtained the customs agency’s image from the insights of the consumers, in terms of digital marketing in social media, through the information collected by instruments such as an interview, observations, and surveys. In addition, the collected data needs to be examined by taking into account the theoretical concepts and background.

#### **3.2 Type of research**

To develop this paper, it was selected the mixed method type of research, this method allows obtaining data in a qualitative way which is crucial to ensure a clear and detailed understanding the needs, opinions, wishes, experiences, etc. of customers of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*. On the other hand, the mixed method also enables the researchers to have an analysis based on information that can express the customer’s

behavior, characteristics, etc from the study population related to *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*.

According to Creswell (2014):

Mixed methods involve combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study. Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as those found on questionnaires or psychological instruments. (p.43)

This research method was an integrated data collection which also supported the progress of the following techniques: SWOT, CAME, Marketing mix of 7Ps, and benchmarking with the purpose of understanding the relevant aspects from *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* and its customer's needs in order to follow the more convenient actions during the advance of the Digital Marketing Strategy on Social Media.

In addition, because the research was developed through the mixed method, it is important to establish the time in which information was obtained and analyzed, as a result, the mixed study used the following execution time; a sequential mixed method which according to Creswell (2009) implies,

Sequential mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand on the findings of one method with another method. This may involve beginning with a qualitative interview for exploratory purposes and following up with a quantitative, survey method with a large sample so that the researcher can generalize results to a population. (p.31)

To summarize, the researchers applied an interview with the owner of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* in order to obtain qualitative information. Also, a survey and observation will be applied to the regular customers to obtain quantitative data.

### **3.3 Sources of information or subjects participating in the study**

The following study was developed in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* located in Gran Área Metropolitana; it is a private enterprise dedicated to the commercialization, and grant consultancy about foreign and domestic trade.

The research aims to propose a digital marketing strategy focused on social networks, as a competitive advantage, in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*. This investigation was centered on the 12 regular customers, during the first semester of 2022, a period in which the present investigation was developed. Furthermore, the study population were the owner and regular customers of the customs agency for the qualitative approach, and a set of 12 regular clients of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* for the quantitative approach. Moreover, the competitors were a population for the quantitative and qualitative approach.

### 3.4 Definition of variables and/or theoretical constructs

Angulo. (2021) states a model for organizing variables that include conceptual definition and operative definition, therefore, Angulo. (2021) model is used as a structure that guides the organization of the following concepts of this research.

**Table 1.**

*Variables*

| Objectives   | Variables                          | Conceptual definition  | Operative definition   |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1- To identify the digital marketing strategy used by <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> , San José, 2022                              | 1- Digital marketing strategy used | Kotler et al.(2005).“information—Information gathered from sources within the company to evaluate marketing performance and to detect marketing problems and opportunities.” (p.338)                                       | It corresponds to the digital marketing strategy used by the company <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> to manage the marketing performance in social networks.<br><br>It was analyzed by SWOT analysis and CAME.<br>An interview directed to the owner of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> is used to collect data. |
| 2- To determine the strengths and weaknesses of the digital marketing strategy in <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> , San José, 2022. | 2-Strengths and Weaknesses.        | Burnett (2008) “The impetus (...) external environment. In particular, most marketers are far removed from their customers; yet must know who their customers are, what they want, and what competitors are doing.” (p.54) | It implies the characteristics and wants of regular customers of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> and the situation of competitors.<br>It was analyzed by Benchmarking. Also, the researchers will conduct an observation taking   |



|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
|                        |   | into account a checklist of specific behaviors from customers to analyze.  |
| 2- Customer engagement | Bansal & Chaudhary. (2016) The term “customer engagement” is often used as a catchphrase to mean any number of things from customer satisfaction to repeat buy conduct. While these behaviors are alluring, they provide no certification that your customer today won’t turn to your rival’s customer tomorrow.” (p.15)  | The behavior of customers or act of being loyal to <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> because of their levels of satisfaction with the brand. The observation is used to collect data. |
| 2- Brand awareness     | A concept by Chandon (2003) Brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in memory. Brand awareness can be measured through brand recall or brand recognition. Brand recall reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand from memory when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue. Brand recognition reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand (pp. 1-2) | It refers to how much recognition <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> has in the target market. The observation is used to collect data.  |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>3- To propose a digital marketing strategy focused on social networks in order to reach the target market of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i>, San José, 2022.</p> | <p>3- Target Market</p>  | <p>According to Stone &amp; Desmond. (2007). “Segmentation involves an analysis of the nature and composition of a market to identify groups of potential buyers who have similar needs or characteristics, or display similar behavior. These groups are known as market segments.”(p.174)</p> | <p>It corresponds to the definition of the target market, of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i>, that the product or service could have.</p> <p>A survey to regular clients is used to collect data.</p> |
| <p>3- Social Media Marketing</p>  | <p>Joshi &amp; Suman (2017) states: “Social media Marketing (SMM) alludes to the procedure of dispersing messages, picking up web movement or consideration through social networking sites with a specific end goal to advance an identity, reason or business.” (p.90)</p> | <p>The research seeks to develop a digital marketing proposal based on Social Media Marketing for <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i>. It was analyzed by Benchmarking. Also, the survey is used to collect data.</p>  |  |
| <p>3-Product</p>  | <p>According to Krishna et al. (2009), the product is “The product here refers to the service offering.” (p.77)</p>  | <p>It refers to the service that the customs agency <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> provides to the customers. The survey is used to collect data. It will be analyzed by 7 P's marketing mix of services.</p>   |  |

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 3-Price     | <p>Krishna et al. (2009) stated that pricing is defined as “The vital factor noticed in pricing of services is the "quality". Quality of service determines the price of that service. Even "time" is also one of the determinants of price.” (p. 78)</p>  | <p>It refers to the monetary amount that the <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Arias Carvajal</i> charges to the clients for the service.</p> <p>It was analyzed by Benchmarking and 7 P’s marketing mix of services.</p> <p>Also, the survey is used to collect data.</p>                       |
| 3-Promotion | <p>Krishna et al. (2009) mentioned that promotion refers to, Once a suitable product has been designed, a promotion strategy must be used to build an image and reputation, to differentiate each from their competitors, to generate interest and knowledge, to attract new customers and to generate customer loyalty. (p. 79)</p> | <p>It refers to the strategy used in media channels by the <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> to spread information about the customs agency.</p> <p>It was analyzed by Benchmarking and 7 P’s marketing mix of services.</p> <p>Also, the survey is used to collect data.</p> |
| 3-Place     | <p>Krishna et al. (2009) stated that place refers, “This refers to the distribution channel of service. How does the service have to reach consumers?.” (p. 84)</p>  | <p>It corresponds to the channel used by <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> to provide the service.</p> <p>It was analyzed by 7 P's marketing mix of services.</p> <p>Also, the survey is used to collect data.</p>  |

|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 3-People            | According to Krishna et al. (2009), the people element is defined as “The 'People' component reflects the important role played by individuals in the provision of services. People are also an important element in the specification of the marketing mix.” (p. 86)   | It corresponds to the individuals who receive the service of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> . It was analyzed by 7 P's marketing mix of services. Also, the survey is used to collect data. |
| 3-Physical evidence | Krishna et al. (2009) stated that physical evidence is defined as, Physical evidence is one more marketing mix available to the service providers. The service firms must consciously make efforts to manage the physical evidence associated with their services. The need for physical evidence within the marketing mix arises directly from the typically intangible nature of the service. (p. 87) | It refers to the customer 's comments on social media of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> . It will be analyzed by 7 P's marketing mix of services.   |
| 3-Process           | Krishna et al. (2009) mentioned that process is defined as “This is the seventh component of marketing mix. In a service organization, the system by which the target audience receives delivery of the service constitutes the process.” (p.88)  | It corresponds to the method used by <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> to provide the service to the customers. It was analyzed by 7 P's marketing mix of services.                            |

Note: Kotler et al.(2005, p.338). Burnett (2008, p.54).Bansal & Chaudhary. (2016, p.15). Chandon (2003, p. 1-2. ). Stone & Desmond. (2007, p. 174). Joshi & Suman (2017, p. 90). Krishna et al. (2009, p. 77-78-79-84-86-87-88).

### 3.5 Description of the instruments for data collection

**Table 2.**

*Research instruments*

| Instrument #1: Interview for the first objective    |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Technique   | Instrument  | Data to be clarified   |
| Interview   | <p>It was a one-on-one virtual meeting interview through a digital platform like Zoom, over the phone, WhatsApp, or Google Meet, and it can be in a video call or audio format. Also, data will be answered by the owner of the <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i>.</p> | <p>Directed to: The owner of <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i>.<br/>           Type of interview: The interview was developed in a structured way.<br/>           Type of questions: It used open-ended questions, in order to get the information from the company's owner.<br/>           Number of questions: 5<br/>           Application method: It were applied by the researchers in which the owner of the company will respond to specific questions via a digital platform.<br/>           Purpose: It was to obtain information about the digital marketing strategy used by <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal</i> from the first objective that was to support the analysis of the internal situation of the customs agency. Also, the aim of this instrument is to obtain qualitative data from the owner.<br/>           Sample questions can be found in Annexes Section I.</p> |
| Instrument #2: Observation for the second objective |   |  |
| Technique   | Instrument  | Data to be clarified   |

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|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| Observation | <p>According to Creswell (2014): A qualitative observation is when the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi structured way (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), activities at the research site. (p. 239)</p> <p>Therefore, it was performed by means of a checklist with a prior number of items indicating the necessary information to be observed.</p> | <p>Directed to: CEO and collaborators.</p> <p>Type of observation: Semi-Structured observation was used to gather data in a systematized and qualitative way by means of a checklist.</p> <p>Number of items to be observed: 9</p> <p>Application method: The checklist was applied at the premises of the customs agency in order to observe the strengths and weaknesses of the use of digital marketing with regular customers.</p> <p>Purpose: It has the goal of observing specific items in order to collect the necessary information to support the analysis of the second objective with variables such as External Situation, Customer Engagement, and Brand Awareness.</p> <p>Sample of the checklist can be found in Annexes Section II.</p> |
|-------------|--|--|

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Instrument #3: Survey for the second objective

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| Technique | Instrument  | Data to be clarified  |
|-----------|---|---|
| Survey    | <p>An online Survey was created with Google Form which will have a variety of questions to be delivered via Facebook, email, or Whatsapp.</p> | <p>Directed to: Regular customers.</p> <p>Type of questions: It contained closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data from the respondents.</p> <p>Number of questions: 7</p> <p>Application method: The instrument was applied by sending the survey to the</p> |

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participants. In this way, they can complete it at his/her convenience.

Purpose: It has the goal of collecting the necessary data for the variables according to the second objective which are External Situation, Customer Engagement, and Brand Awareness.

Sample questions can be found in Annexes Section III.

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Instrument #4: Survey for the third objective

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| Technique | Instrument | Data to be clarified |
|-----------|------------|----------------------|
|-----------|------------|----------------------|

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## Survey

A Google Form was created with the survey questions to be delivered via Facebook, email, or Whatsapp.

Directed to: Regular customers.  
 Type of questions: Closed-ended questions was used because only quantitative data is required to be collected from the respondents.  
 Number of questions: 8  
 Application method: The questionnaire was applied by sending the survey to the participant in order to complete the instrument at his/her discretion.  
 Purpose: It has the aim of collecting the necessary data for variables of the third objective which include Marketing Segmentation, Social Media Marketing, and Marketing Mix 7ps. For this reason, it will focus on a quantitative method to achieve the purpose stated in the third objective.  
 Sample questions can be found in Annexes Section IV.

## Instrument #5: Survey for the third objective

| Technique | Instrument | Data to be clarified |
|-----------|------------|----------------------|
|-----------|------------|----------------------|



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|        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
| Survey | <p>A Google Form was created with the survey questions to be delivered via Facebook, email, or Whatsapp.</p> | <p>Directed to: Customs Agencies.</p> <p>Type of questions: Closed-ended questions were used because only quantitative data is required to be collected from the respondents.</p> <p>Number of questions: 5</p> <p>Application method: The questionnaire was applied by sending the survey to the participant in order to complete the instrument at his/her discretion.</p> <p>Purpose: It has the aim of collecting the necessary data for variables of the third objective which include Marketing Segmentation, Social Media Marketing, and Marketing Mix 7ps. For this reason, it is focused on learning the perspective of other customs agencies regarding Digital Marketing management in their business. Sample questions can be found in Annexes Section V.</p> |
|--------|--|---|

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Instrument #6: Observation for the second objective

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| Technique   | Instrument   | Data to be clarified  |
|-------------|--|---|
| Observation | <p>Comparative charts of social networks from 3 competitors and <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> was created by means of own elaboration in order to collect and observe the necessary data to carry out the comparison.</p> | <p>Directed to: Competitors' social networks such as <i>Agencia Aduanal AIRM, REXCARGO, Grupo logistico Aduanal.</i></p> <p>Type of observation: Semi-Structured observation will be used to gather information in a quantitative way in order to collect numerical data and qualitative to get the descriptive. This instrument was applied by means of comparative charts as reference for each company. Number of items to be observed: 4</p> <p>Application method: It was implemented by means of comparative charts. This</p> |

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method pretends to observe strengths and weaknesses regarding digital marketing on competitor's social networks.

Purpose: It is intended to observe specific items, with the goal to collect the necessary information to support the analysis of the second objective with variables such as strengths and weaknesses. Sample of the comparative charts can be found in Annexes Section VI.

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Note: Adapted from Wallace, M. (1998). Action research for language teachers. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The data collection instruments for this research consist of a single interview, an observation, and three surveys. Also, it was used the mixed method design called an exploratory sequential design that is defined by Creswell (2014) as "In the exploratory sequential approach the researcher first begins with a qualitative research phase and explores the views of participants. The data are then analyzed, and the information used to build into a second, quantitative phase" (p.44).

Therefore, the order to collect data started from the application of the interview, then the observation, and finally the three surveys to follow the mixed method design in which the baseline is the qualitative research that was supported by quantitative research to analyze the perspective from the owner of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*, customers, and other customs agencies.

In addition, it was used the type of exploratory sequential design called comparative that according to Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza (2008) & Creswell et al., (2008, as mentioned in Hernández et al., 2014) implies that exploration in the research should be based on the data collection for the qualitative approach in order to obtain the information needed. In the second stage, an analysis is carried out based on information obtained from

the quantitative focus with the purpose of reinforcing the first output. Then, the final results from both phases were contrasted and combined for the final result analysis in which the prime approach could be focused on either qualitative or quantitative.

In the first place, Creswell (2014) states the following definition for the qualitative instrument, “means that the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, on the Internet” (p.294). Additionally, the interview was conducted in a structured way, and its design is created by own elaboration due to the researchers having adopted specific variables to carry out the digital marketing strategies. It was a one-on-one virtual meeting interview through a digital platform like zoom, over the phone, WhatsApp, or google meet, and it can be in a video call, or audio format. Moreover, the information for this instrument was completed by the owner of the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* during the first semester of the year 2022. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information from internal records to support the analysis regarding the digital marketing strategy used by the customs agency.

Also, another instrument that helped to gather qualitative data was the observation which was carried out in a structured way, and the design of the checklist is created by own elaboration in order to review specific behavior from the customers and the owner. It was developed by visiting the enterprise’s building during the first semester of the year 2022. Also, a second observation with the same structure was applied in Competitors' social networks. The purpose of these observations was to understand external situations to identify weaknesses and strengths to reinforce customer engagement and brand awareness.

Then, it follows the quantitative instruments which are three surveys. Creswell (2014) states, “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p.201). For this reason, surveys made by own authorship were chosen as a method to obtain quantitative

data, and in this way, it measured the variables from ranges, percentages, and any numerical value that indicates certain behavior of the respondents by the use of closed-ended questions. The instruments were applied in the following way: surveys for clients were done together through Google form, and sent to regular customers via Facebook, email, or WhatsApp which allowed participants to complete the form at their discretion during the first semester of the year 2022. Then, the survey for customs agencies was done in a Google form and sent to the agencies via a digital platform where the responses were completed during the first semester of the year 2022. Moreover, the questions for the surveys can be found in Section of the Annexes.

### **3.6 Procedures**

The primary sources were data obtained from an interview, observations, and three surveys that allowed the use of techniques and analysis to understand the external environment, the internal situation in digital marketing, customer segmentation, and the marketing mix elements; in addition, the use of secondary sources such as theoretical and literature review that supported the analysis.

The following techniques were used to develop the analysis and as a support for creating the Digital Marketing Strategy on Social Media in the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*.

SWOT recognized strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to analyze and identify the internal situation, in terms of digital marketing strategy on social media of the company, by the organization of information following the SWOT technique. This SWOT analysis established a guide to set improvements in the internal area, in terms of marketing, of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* to get to know the needs and goals that enhanced its digital marketing area.

After having applied the SWOT, the CAME analysis continued the improvement of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*. This method consists of correcting the weaknesses, facing threats, maintaining, or improving the strengths, and finally taking advantage of the opportunities that were found in the SWOT study. The objective of these techniques is to create an analysis of the internal state to establish an optimal and accurate strategy that brought benefits to the company. Therefore, the CAME technique is an essential tool for data codification obtained from SWOT analysis regarding the company's internal situation, due to this information, it allowed designing the strategic plan. Furthermore, CAME analysis enables the enterprise to identify the most suitable strategy implementation in order to take advantage of social media marketing. In summary, this technique helps to adopt possible actions that fit with the needs of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*.

The 7Ps acted to identify the marketing mix of the company by the collection of information that allowed determining the place, people, prices, promotions, physical evidence, process, and product. Since services are intangible, it is relevant to understand the customer perspective and the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* internal management of digital marketing, personnel in the social media area, and its service to face the challenges in terms of marketing that can be found. The data obtained from customers set the guidelines for this research to understand the customer needs and the performance that the company *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has offered in terms of the perceptions of the regular clients. This technique enables the analysis of the behaviors and perspectives of the customers, as a result, it brings the framework to identify what could be the right integration and classification of the seven elements in a real context in order to establish the precise and targeted content and actions on social media that best meet the customer's expectations and needs.

The benchmarking techniques consisted in recognizing, analyzing, and evaluating the process performance of competitors in social networks to understand the external environment, specifically, the interaction strategies in digital media in order to achieve the same or better level than them in the market, and finally, create brand awareness in social networks. Benchmarking was analyzed in a competitive way by recognizing the functions, or actions that the major competitions implement in their digital marketing strategies. In this way, suggest and implement the operations that the current market uses, internally in the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* in order to improve the strategies, update actions and operations in the market strategies, and finally create better efficiency in the area in charge of operating digital marketing. To sum up, the analysis of competitors allowed this research to understand what aspects from competitors was essential.

On the other hand, the verification of data was carried out with the triangulation of data which is defined by Creswell (2014) as “Triangulation of data—Data will be collected through multiple sources to include interviews, observations and document analysis” (p.259). The following four resources were used: literature review, interview, observing, and survey information.

Moreover, the stages to collect the information followed this order: During the first stage, an interview was applied in a structured way, with open-ended questions format, and it was directed to the owner of the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*. In the second stage, structured observation was evaluated through a checklist, and carried out at the customs agency premises as well as focused on observing the regular customers. Then, the third stage consisted of three surveys in which two of them were applied to regular customers, and the last one was applied to customs agencies. The surveys directed to customers were done together in a single Google Form to make sure that clients responded to the two surveys, and it was delivered via WhatsApp, email, or Facebook. The survey

directed to customs agencies was done in a Google Form and delivered via Facebook, email, or Whatsapp. Finally, an observation was applied in Competitors' social networks by means of own elaboration in order to collect and observe the necessary data. Once the process of applying the instruments in the stages is completed, the information corresponding to the research objectives were classified according to each variable and purpose. Then, the collected data was analyzed to look for a proper suggestion of a digital marketing strategy on social networks that could be managed by the customs agency.

### 3.7 The Schedule of Planned Activities

Medicoa (2003) as cited in Universidad de Colima (2022) states a model for organizing the investigation activities that includes task definition and estimated time; therefore, Angulo (2021) model is used as a structure that guides the organization of the following activities to carry out this research.

**Table 3.**

*Timetable*

| <b>Timetable</b> |                                      |                       |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Task</b>      | <b>Activity</b>                      | <b>Estimated time</b> |
| 1                | Selection of the company             | 1 Week                |
| 2                | Project topic and objectives.        | 1 Week                |
| 3                | Bibliographical review               | 2 Weeks               |
| 4                | Elaboration of bibliographical cards | 1 Week                |
| 5                | Proposal development for review      | 1 Week                |
| 6                | First advance review                 | 1 Week                |
| 7                | Editing the second advance           | 2 Weeks               |

|    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| 8  | Preliminary project review                            | 2 Weeks     |
| 9  | Selection and dissemination of surveys and interviews | 2 Weeks     |
| 10 | Data collection                                       | 3 Weeks     |
| 11 | Data analysis   | 3 Weeks     |
| 12 | Second advance review                                 | 2 Weeks     |
| 13 | Processing of data in qualitative approach            | 3 Weeks     |
| 14 | Processing of data in quantitative approach           | 2 Weeks     |
| 15 | Outline results                                       | 3 Weeks     |
| 16 | Background Literature                                 | 2 Weeks     |
| 17 | Justification   | 1 Week      |
| 18 | Research problem                                      | 1 Week      |
| 19 | General and Specific Objectives                       | 1 Week      |
| 20 | Scope and Limitations                                 | 1 Week      |
| 21 | Theoretical Framework                                 | 3 Weeks     |
| 22 | Methodological Framework                              | 3 Weeks     |
| 23 | Results and analysis                                  | 2 Weeks     |
| 24 | Application of Instruments                            | 4 Weeks     |
| 25 | Digital Marketing proposal                            | 2 Weeks     |
| 26 | Marketing strategies in social networks               | 2 Weeks     |
| 27 | Conclusions and Recommendations                       | 1 Week      |
| 28 | References  | Every month |
| 29 | Anexes  | 3 Weeks     |
| 30 | Correction  | 2 Weeks     |
| 31 | Final version editing                                 | 3 Weeks     |
| 32 | Final presentation                                    |             |

Note: Medicoa (2003) as cited in Universidad de Colima (2022).



#### 4. Results and analysis

The increase in technology for the development of communication provides a great chance for *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* to advertise their services through social networks. Social media helps customers find information regarding their needs from their phones or computer 24/7 effectively. Therefore, it is important to adapt the service to the new methods offered by technology, for instance, a social network page can be a great opportunity to share information that can be visited by customers at the time they want and need. Joshi & Suman (2017) state

The social media platform also helps businesses to connect with end customers in a timely manner and at low cost and has greater influence on the consumer purchase behavior. Now even the customers refer to social media before making a purchase decision and social media provides a public forum to the individual customers to gain information about the brands and in the meanwhile customer becomes aware of the unfamiliar brands and products (p.91).

So far the agency under study has not implemented digital advertising because customers have played the role of referrals; however, the agency currently needs a digital transformation that allows them to start working in equal conditions with its potential competitors. Some of them have already created profiles on social networks to share content, inform their actual and potential customers. A community manager could be an excellent option to be in charge of updating and managing the social networks of the company.

According to the survey applied to regular customers, the most preferred social networks are Facebook and WhatsApp which the company has already implemented. What seems to be the challenge is to use them in an interactive way to share, contact and mobilize traffic to the digital profile of the company. Moreover, in an updated web page, customers

can obtain a better overview of the service provided by the company, therefore, they can make informed purchases through general service information, reviews, and comments from other users. Also, if the information shared by the company is displayed in an attractive and concise way, it works to generate a good user experience with the social network. In addition, social networks are of utmost importance to be used as a communication channel to manage purchases and customer inquiries, as it will function as a means of direct contact between customer and the service provider.

The general information shared with customers should be constantly reformed with the services provided by the agency due to the impact on the customer decisions, so the general information shared with the clients needs to build confidence and assurance in the service the company advertises. According to Joshi & Suman (2017) “A social media brand perception gives a confidence and tempts the customer to feel good about the brands and impacts the customer to buy the product”.(p.92). Moreover, keeping an interactive profile can improve the attraction of customers, in fact, a social network can be on many occasions the first contact with customers before the purchase; therefore, it is grand to choose the most used and practical mass media for customers. The Facebook page of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* has around 1200 followers, however, most of them are students or close friends of the agency owner. In this case, the target objective should be focused on potential true customers improving the interface of the page and maintaining a constant rhythm of publishing advertising and information.

Implementing a social media marketing strategy requires assessing aspects such as platforms, content, interactions, target, and customer attraction. It is vital to guide the content that is advertised on the social networks of the company and select the appropriate channels to reach the target market to which the business is directed; this may allow the business to connect in an easy way with consumers. Enterprises must complement their

strategies with digital marketing because customer behavior has changed over the time due to the creation of online platforms that provide the clients with the necessary tools to be informed before making a purchase which have improved the user experience. The large amount of time that people invest on the internet makes them potential customers for companies that advertise their services through social networks channels. According to Becić, Stojanović and Nikolić.(2018)

The biggest mistake a company could make is to neglect the importance of social networks because they bare multiple possibilities, starting from promotion activities, placing new products, gathering feedback, gathering information on consumers and others. (p.82)

The customs agency has already considered hiring a professional to take control during a two month trial period to evaluate whether it is profitable or not to invest on social networks (personal communication, June 2, 2022). Indeed, a positive factor is to start experimenting, learning, and planning how this strategy works in a company to determine the impact on the market.

Kotler et al. (2005) explain that

Planning good strategies is only a start towards successful marketing. A brilliant marketing strategy counts for little if the company fails to implement it properly. Marketing implementation is the process that turns marketing strategies and plans into marketing actions to accomplish strategic marketing objectives. Implementation involves day-to-day, month-to-month activities that effectively put the marketing plan to work. (p.72)

During this trial period, it is fundamental to determine if the process of planning and implementing the digital marketing strategy is carried out correctly since it is about not only being profitable, but also avoiding any losses. In fact, setting clear objectives according to

the necessities of the company is key to success. It is relevant to point out that the social media profiles of the company were designed in 2010 which implies that updated security standards should be used to avoid any situation with hackers. According to Irías, L. (personal communication, June 02, 2022), the resources invested in Digital Marketing must be profitable for the agency and framed within high security standards not only for the users but also for the company. Today companies are exposed to receive threats from hackers and are victims of identity theft, as the author Tayouri (2015) states "Social media has security risks. It is also used by criminals for fraud, gathering business intelligence, stealing sensitive information, etc" (p.1). Moreover, making a capital investment requires prioritizing the correct application of the digital marketing strategy in the different social media to get the profits expected. Becić, Stojanović & Nikolić. (2018) affirm that "traditional marketing methods are less and less effective, companies need to integrate social media into their strategies in order to increase their profitability and develop a competitive advantage" (p.28).

Additionally, another change that is highlighted by the owner of the company is about the necessity to integrate informative videos and advertising campaigns. The expectation would be to increase brand recognition and establish a more interactive communication with customers, as stated by the author Joshi & Suman (2017):

Social media provides a public forum to the individual customers to gain information about the brands and in the meanwhile the customer becomes aware of the unfamiliar brands and products; gets latest updates about new brands and products and also gets influenced by the feedback of other customers on the same social media platform. (p.91)

Updating social media with the latest news seems to be an excellent option to attract clients' attention, besides it is a more striking and technological way to receive information with which the company can have a competitive advantage as well.

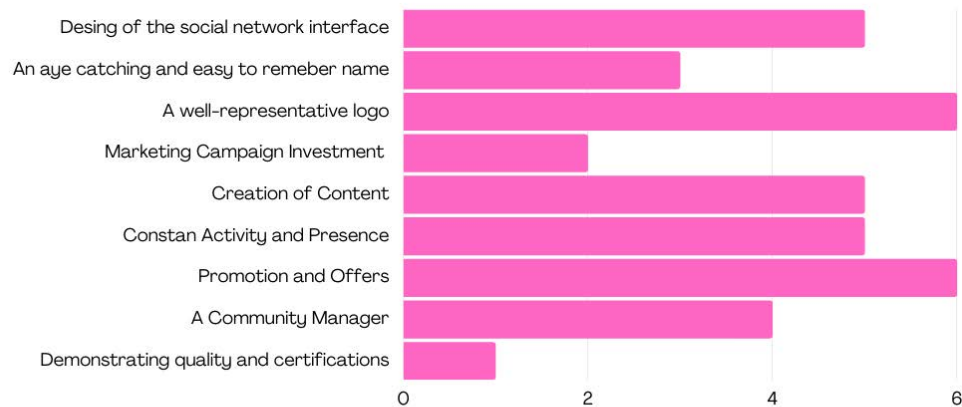
On the other hand, the customs agency not only focuses on Free Trade Zones and especially on medical devices, but also works with other types of customers and products such as national lottery security paper, lottery printing ink, lottery balls, motorcycle spare parts, drills and machines, textiles, clothing, shoes, as well as Chinese products. Irías, L. (personal communication, June 02, 2022). For that reason, the agency is open to trying other types of merchandise in order to see if it is profitable. To implement new services, digital marketing is a good opportunity to increase the brand awareness of existing services as well as those that the company would like to include to test their profitability. Smith (2012), Tuten and Solomon (2015), Truong and Simmons (2010) (as cited in Ritz et al, 2019) suggest: "Examples of digital marketing goals include increasing customer engagement (comments, reviews, recommendations), awareness (shares, clicks, likes, views), increasing sales, adding value (as a subject matter expert), loyalty and providing opportunities for customer co-creation (new product development)" (p.4). To consider whether a product is profitable, it is necessary to keep in mind the view of the target market; therefore, the agency can take into account the goals stated before in which digital marketing has an impact. On the other hand, in order to have a successful digital marketing proposal, it is essential to understand the target market, and this can be reached by having a customer profile. *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has determined the following customer profile as people who need consulting and logistics in export and import mainly in free trade zones, through maritime, land, and air channels. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022). Even though the agency has a clear profile of the clients, any specific segmentation of customers' needs in terms of digital marketing in social media

has been implemented which is a weakness that may affect the social media advertising. The company members are not aware of the needs or preferences of the customers in the social media field due to the fact that they do not usually have contact with customers via Facebook or Twitter which are the only two social networks the agency has. The agency has only promoted its services in the yellow pages directory.

The company is mostly known by word of mouth and the most used communication channels are phone calls or emails with customers. Moreover, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* needs to maintain a lot of confidentiality in its services function, for this reason, phone calls and emails have been the preferred channels to have contact with customers, therefore, if social media's public communication is used. Posts must be more restricted to protect their intellectual property from competitors. To ensure effective digital marketing is essential to take into account the customer needs and preferences based on realistic customer expectations. One way to achieve this is by making a marketing segmentation which is a benefit during marketing planning. As Stone and Desmond (2007) state, "Strategic marketing planning. Dividing markets up allows marketers to develop plans that give special consideration to the particular needs and requirements of customers in different segments." (p.189). The knowledge of clients' features is a must in order to create interest in the customs agency in the virtual environment, and at the same time, activate the traffic to expand the company's image through eye-catching elements that are in accordance with customers' needs and preferences.

### **Figure 1**

## Important Aspects in the Implementation of Digital Marketing Strategy According to Customs Agencies.



### Opinion of 6 customs agencies

Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instrument #5).

For example, attractive content, logo, network interface, promotions, and frequent presence are the most relevant elements in terms of digital marketing strategy among customs agencies which demonstrate the importance of activated social network accounts that follow the client's preferences. To achieve this attractiveness in an enterprise's social media, it is necessary to know the clients' expectations, for example, the most preferred promotions, content, platforms, and necessities, among others.

Another area of improvement of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* is social network activity. Facebook and Twitter accounts were created, but not active because nobody can be responsible for following up. Moreover, the company members stated that other social networks, such as Instagram, cannot be effective to attract customers since the customs service is not adaptable to the common visual publicity used on Instagram. They consider Instagram as a better space to promote products than customs services. They affirm that customs services are more effectively promoted on Twitter since it is easier to reach

international customers and they have been able to gain customers abroad due to the use of Twitter. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022).

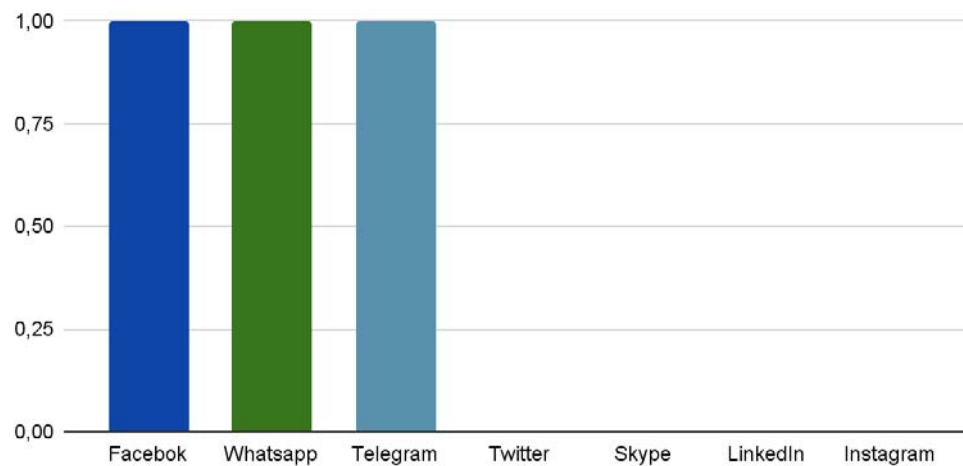
The customs agency mostly uses Facebook to promote the enterprise and establish communication with clients which seems to be positive, for most customers selected it as the most preferred social media to check the customs agency's information along with Telegram and Whats app. However, Facebook and Twitter accounts of the agency are not currently active, and the other digital channels that the agency has to communicate with clients are Whatsapp, only for general inquiries, the agency still does not have a Whatsapp business account. The agency members also consider that Whatsapp or Telegram are not sufficiently formal or secure to share information or documents that might be sensible. Besides, they affirm that the formal channel they use to communicate with customers is email. *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* needs to take into consideration the opportunities to interact with customers via Telegram and Whats apps due to its preference by the client and the accessibility it provides. The company has opportunities to create interactive content and publish it on social networks since it has the material and information to do so, for example, customs agencies receive continuous updates or reports from different institutions in charge of international trade such as the Ministerio de Hacienda. This information or news provided by the institutions in charge of international trade can be used to create informative and interesting content for customers either through images or videos and even tweets, which can be used to build better interaction with customers on social networks. This is an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage because the competitors are not creating content with this type of information either. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022).

## **Figure 2**



## Customer's preferred social networks

The customer stated they have better access to information with these social networks.



Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instrument #3).

In summary, the preferences of the clients of the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* reinforce the necessity to reactivate the Facebook account and modify the current use of Whats app to make it more interactive with customers. It is also imperative to pay more constant attention to customer inquiries that may arise from these platforms along with Telegram, and even Twitter which is considered for the company as an excellent channel to get in touch with international contacts; this scenario was confirmed by Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022) who highlighted Twitter as the platform that has generated better international customers response.

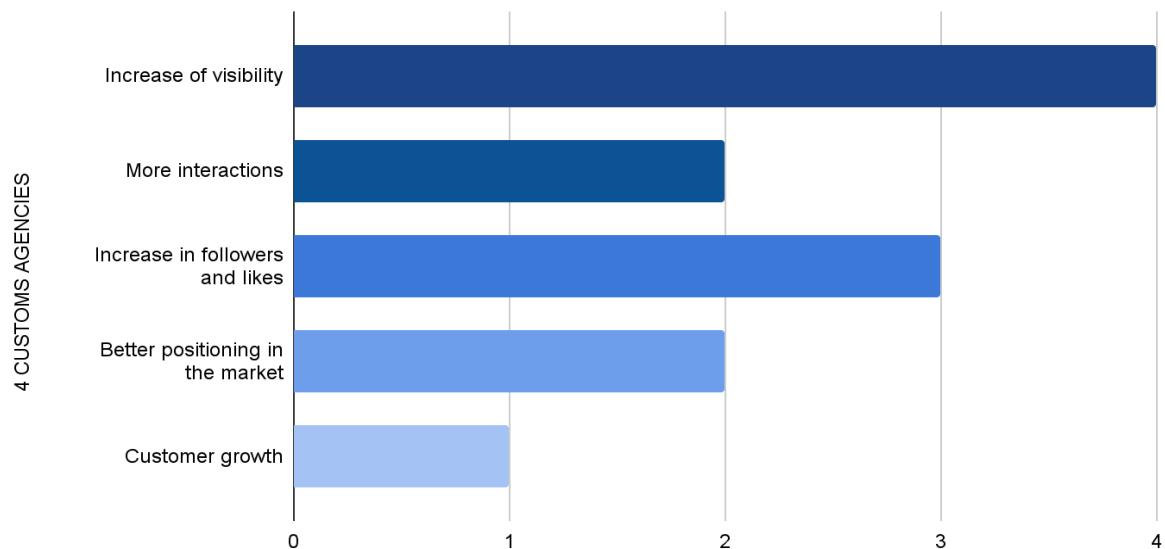
According to Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022), customers do not show enough interest in the company's services in the networks. Messages are rarely received with queries or many clients seek the agency for reasons of proximity or accessibility and clients search for it by recommendation by word of mouth. This lack of interest from clients may be reduced by expanding the agency's exposure to social media with more suitable content for the target population's needs and preferences in order to raise the interest of people. The company currently uses the traditional

word-of-mouth promotion channel that has been really effective for the agency, however, it will be a great area of growth to take advantage of the application of modern digital marketing in social media, as well, to reach a greater image exposure. The results shed light on a client's perception of digital marketing as a strategy in social media that enables companies to expand their image and scope of the company by making it better known as well as boosting the enterprise to gain more knowledge of its market in order to apply in different areas of their business.

Consecutively, three social networks, Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp may be the main platforms to improve this company's scope. The implementation of these platforms to a digital marketing strategy on social media in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* be beneficial to increase brand awareness, among other benefits, as it was stated by these customs agency's competitors that applied a digital marketing strategy on social networks which demonstrates that *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has an area of improvement in comparison to its competitors since the agency's social media is inactive and not well managed due to the lack of digital marketing plan which reduces the possibilities to gain more imagen position in the market. Figure 3 reveals the results of an observation of four different agencies which have implemented digital marketing and have obtained significant benefits.

**Figure 3**

Benefits and advantages achieved in the implementation of a digital marketing strategy in customs agencies:



Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instrument #5).

In terms of competitors' digital marketing awareness, the customs agency has an area of improvement since it comes out that the agency only has a general view of competitor's digital marketing strategies. The customs agency's competitors are more focused on using Facebook, as this is the social network most used by Costa Ricans, and to create better international contact, other agencies use Twitter. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022). However, the agency has not implemented a detailed evaluation of its digital marketing on social media in comparison to competitors, consecutively, this lack of detailed analysis of competitors may affect the company in a negative way due to the fact that the agency is not taking advantage of the benefits of digital marketing on social media, such as more visibility, fast and accessible communication with customers, easy access to customer's feedback, among others. Therefore, innovation through social media marketing should be considered for implementation in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* in order to improve competitive advantage and to be

updated with competitors' digital marketing workflow.

In the present study, the collaborators and the CEO pointed out the relevance of confidentiality concerning the agency services, for example, it is not convenient to post the tariff or more specific details about their work. As a result, they prefer to maintain limited data in social media, for example, contact information, basic procedures for customer service, and offered services. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022). It is relevant to highlight that, once a formal project to implement a digital marketing strategy plan is established, the customs agency should consider benchmarking, especially the Internal type. According to Espinosa (2017), internal marketing seeks to achieve better processes, operations, and strategies in the company. Therefore, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* must take advantage of the competitor's strategies attributes to enhance the development of their own digital marketing strategy and include suitable features in accordance with the customer needs and preferences to ensure a successful strategy. The customs agency has never used indicators or methods to measure customer satisfaction; the only way in which satisfaction is assessed is by the voluntary feedback from clients. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022).

Otherwise, the client interviewed has shown a preference for the company expressing that they would choose their services again. This type of opinion would greatly benefit the company if customers could share their experiences on the company's social networks, allowing other users to know the quality of the service. Viet-Błaszczuk, (2020) mentions that;

“Due to the activity of the digital customers in recommending and discussing individual goods, and taking into account their requirement for quick reactions from the producer and the need to have distinctive personalized products, social media

seem to be the optimal environment for companies to reach potential customers.”

(p.47).

Social networks are spaces that allow users to know the web pages of the companies, many times when users are looking for references of a company, they look for the opinions of users in the satisfaction section. Creating spaces where customers can show their satisfaction, strengthens the relationship between brand and customer. Vidovic (2020) states that according to digital marketing “..it is important to define its goal, i.e. to create and maintain a connection between the company and the user / buyer of its products and services.”(p.62)

For instance, all content can include brand name or logos, for the customers can identify the brand and present interest or intent to purchase. An easy-to remember logo and name prove essential to impact the clients.

On the other hand, the company emphasizes that it is important to maintain discretion in pricing and procedures. Many times customers want to get a benefit by making inquiries about processes without paying for professional counseling. Also, competitors can be aware of the company's movements and make better offers, as a result, if a digital marketing strategy is applied, it should be handled with great confidentiality regarding the content, for the good of the company. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022). Offers and promotions are one of the most highlighted aspects for customs agencies in terms of digital marketing development. However, this must be used strategically to protect the company's confidentiality. Offers and promotions are usually very attractive to users. Vidovic (2020) states; “Digital marketing implies the promotion of products or services using digital communication channels to make the message reach the primary or target audience.” (p.62)

In summary, the agency can have the commitment of implementing a digital

marketing strategy on social media if there is a formal project to manage and activate social networks marketing. Nevertheless, the company does not consider it as a priority to create a presence in digital media at the present time, however, they do consider it necessary and beneficial. This is something that should be handled with care because social networks could also affect the company, therefore, it is necessary to have a community manager who is in charge of the management of the company's social networks. Some customs agencies consider it important to have a community manager in charge of managing social networks, creating content, and developing and directing marketing campaigns. Also, when negative feedback or evaluation is received, the company must know how to handle it in order to maintain customer satisfaction. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022).

Regarding the current Facebook page, the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has a cover and profile photo on Facebook with contact information and an image of the earth. However, this image of the agency may be modified with a more eye-catching and easy to remember logo. According to Stone and Desmond (2007), “For example, a store logo can act as a discriminative stimulus for pleasant shopping experience and good service – this reinforcer being contingent on entering a shop and speaking to an assistant.” (p.71). Therefore, in order to gain active followers to the Facebook page, and other channels, the logo should be modified.

In terms of interactions with the page, the customs agency has a total of 1.271 followers. Nevertheless, posts have an average of 2 likes with a maximum of 5 likes in one of the posts. Due to the fact that there is a great difference between followers amount and reaction amount, it can be identified the necessity of creating new attractive content that may activate the traffic on this Facebook account. Moreover, the Facebook account has posted from 2010 until the last post in 2020, and the customs agency made posts frequently,

however, after the last post in November, 2020, the account has been completely inactive. In addition, the most common characteristic of the posts is that information is posted in PDF or images with a little description of them. However, this kind of post can be modified for more eye-catching and summarized information, for example by images containing the most relevant information on how to make a customs procedure in a general way, or short videos to share how the agency can be contacted, and the terms of use of the social networks and channel communication of the agency. This way of modifying the posts is also seen, by the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* collaborator and owner, as an effective way of activating the attention of the Facebook account. Solano, A., Castro J., & Irías, L. (personal communication, June 20, 2022).

Regarding the current Twitter page, the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* joined Twitter in 2010, the account has 1048 followers and they follow 343 accounts. The interface of the social network is not eye-catching as it does not have a logo to better identify the brand. The description of the page expresses the type of company and the services that the company focuses on. The social network does not have interactive content since only PDF documents are published and these are very full of information. The social network has the potential to publish important and truthful information through images or short videos since the PDFs contain news or updates related to the company's field and the information may be of interest to customers. Most of the publications do not use hashtags that allow the publications to have a greater reach to an audience of interest. The average interaction of the page is one "like" per publication. On Twitter, the company has been able to have more impact with international clients than national ones since most of the messages come from abroad from people who are interested in the company's services.

Figure 4

## CUSTOMER ANALYSIS



Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instruments #3 and #4).

In the survey directed to customers, the client pointed out that increased interaction with customers on social media is the most relevant aspect that companies should have in using their social networks.

According to Peters, K., Chen, Y., Kaplan, A. M., Ognibeni, B., & Pauwels, K. (2013) (as cited in Li et al. 2021) Social Media are: “dynamic, interconnected, egalitarian, and interactive organisms” (p. 52). For that reason, nowadays, companies need to be active on their social networks in order to build closer relationships with their customers through



interaction. In this way, Chen, Y., Wang, Q., & Xie, J. (2011) (as cited in Li et al. 2021), they claim that “social media have transformed the way firms and customers interact and influence each other. Social interaction involves “actions,” whether through communications or passive observations, that influence others’ choices and consumption behaviors” (pp. 52-53). Therefore, the good use of social media in business can give extra value to the company since its customers will have them as the first option when they need a service related to what the company is offering because of the close interaction that they can have.

Also, supporting this line of approach, the results show the interaction and use of social networks by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* with a rate of 4 on a scale of 1 to 5, considering 1 as the lowest rating and 5 as the highest rating. Thus, it can be concluded that this client has had a medium-high interaction with the agency.

Hütt, H. (2011) considers that interaction is the key to the social relations of human beings which is why organizations depend on good interaction with their clients to achieve success and obtain good business outcomes. The author also indicates that the interaction of the companies must be given with specific objectives and can be carried out in different ways, either natural and spontaneous or through some direct and strategic scheme. In this sense, Hütt analyzes that social networks have been miss-used because in many cases they are not considered as a marketing strategy for companies which minimizes their real positive influence on business, since there is a wide range of options that companies can implement for the diffusion of their products or services.

In the case of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, they can choose which type of advertising they prefer to share on their social networks, all depending on the niche or target audience they want to interact with, since according to this aspect, their content can have a more informative style or a little more promotional where they offer their services

with different marketing dynamics that help to persuade customers to obtain the services provided by them. It is also necessary that the company's social networks have enabled a space for comments, feedback, or rating the services obtained so that customers can interact with the company and among and between them about the quality of work offered by the agency, thus achieving a position in social networks and becoming known through these interactions.

A content strategy in Social Media is necessary for every company as it serves as a guide on what content and information is most attractive to its customers. In the case of the customer of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* indicate in the survey that general information about the services of the company and contact information are essential elements to see in the social networks of the company to have a good experience of purchasing or consultation services.

Li et al. (2021) states that content popularity and vitality are influenced by many factors such as “brand names, functional and emotional appeals, vividness and interactivity, inspirational knowledge and trending topics, content user fit” (p. 61). which helps the company to attract the customer's attention by highlighting important features of its product or service. Also, the author mentioned that the popularity of a company on social media is due to the right use of it and the proper information that fits with the demand content that the customer wants to see to have a better experience when they purchase a service or product.

*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* may opt to update their information and content on their social media often because in this way, customers can notice that the Social Network is active and they can verify that the information uploaded is absolutely true and is the right information of the agency. Also, it is important to post attractive information for their target customer to maintain the interaction between clients and agency.

The client indicated in the survey the preference to select the services of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* again. There are many reasons why a customer chooses the services of a company again, this may be due to the quality of the service, the reputation that the company may have in that field, the years of experience the company, etc. which generates the customer to be loyal to the brand.

In this case, social networks can also help to increase the customer engagement of companies, this can be demonstrated in the study of Bansal & Chaudhary (2016) who state that:

Using social computing tools, companies can create and promote public-facing communities, which in turn maximize sales from existing customers and dramatically improve the results of customer satisfaction initiatives. Incorporating social computing functionality on a company's online presence provides the ability for businesses to engage customers and stakeholders enabling companies to consistently exceed corporate growth initiatives (p. 16).

In this way, Lilliana Irías Carvajal's Customs Agency may take advantage of its social networks since it already has loyal customers, but the implementation of a strategy to improve its presence in social networks can increase customer engagement through the satisfaction that the customer may have not only for the service received but also for the experience and interaction that the Agency can give through its social networks making its customers identify more with its brand and work which makes them share their experience with more people who may be potential customers for the company.

The enterprise can take advantage of prices to attract more customers, as it was revealed in customer's opinion that the agency has competitive prices, as a result, it is essential to highlight this agency's advantage, for example by using Facebook, Whatsapp, or Twitter to let users know the agency's channels in which customers can ask for prices, such

as email or phone calls, In this way, the agency can ensure that there is customer orientation, and at the same time, it maintains the confidentiality and formality that the company prefers in regards prices.

On the other hand, it is essential to highlight the importance of service information and communication with customers, as it was revealed in customer's opinion and in figure 1, which reinforces the area of improvement in terms of interactivity, offers, and attractiveness since the customs agency does not have active management and promotion of its social networks.

When using a social network it is vital to choose one of the customer's preferences in which they spend most of their time. The results show that the frequency of clients checking social networks is at least once a week, this frequency can increase if clients receive more publications from the page. Therefore, the agency needs to improve the interaction with the clients through Facebook because it will be the digital place where potential and regular customers can be reached, and to create a social media image in the customer's mind the agency must take into account the amount of postings (videos, pictures, adds) with content to improve the attraction of users and to establish strong relationships with the users, for example, the number of postings at the beginning can be between 3 or 2 weekly in order to link the content of the account with the Facebook wall post of the followers, so the business content will be constantly visible to customers at least 2 to 3 times per week. This implies that the company will face more traffic on the social network, so the company must consider the possibility of an increase in customers which requires greater involvement of the company in the customer service. Burnett, J. (2008) states "(...)to establish a company image that clearly reflects the values and aspirations of the company to employees, customers, intermediaries, and the general public"(p.22). When customers see that the company has an active role on social media they can show more interest in the service provided by the

agency because constant updating of the Facebook account can boost a greater certainty in the purchase.

Moreover, on Facebook the interaction can grow if the postings are visually attractive, encouraging the user to make a click to reach the main page of the company's Facebook increasing the traffic on the page. In addition, the postings should be made at a time when the customer reviews the social networks, for example, according to the results the frequency of clients to check social networks is at least once a week, this frequency can increase if clients receive more regular publications from the page. The results show that the frequency of clients checking social networks is at least once a week; this frequency can increase if clients receive more regular publications from the page a good time to publish could be at 8 am, because customer mentions that the hours to commonly review the page are from 5am to 11am, during the morning, the posting appears on the Facebook wall of customers.

To reach the target audience it is necessary to take into account the segmentation, therefore, when advertising the service at the social network level customers characteristics should be contemplated, and the use of search filters when posting that allow the owner of the account to consider among those who receive the ads, for example choose the demographic areas to which the company is interested in selling, and in this case the customer company location is in San Jose, this factor is important to add the location in the filters of facebook when advertising. According to Kotler et al.(2005). "Within a given target industry and customer size, the company can segment by purchase approaches and criteria" (p.410). Also, with segmentation, it is possible to filter the field of companies that are expected to be reached by the ad, for this case to import companies.

The promotions and offers are an excellent way to catch clients' interest, besides, it is an essential element of 7P's marketing mix to apply in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*. According to Burnett (2008),

Communication (Promotion) The product's benefits must be communicated to the distributors and to the final customers. Therefore, the marketing organization must provide marketing information that is received favorably by distributors and final customers. Marketing organizations, through promotion, provide information by way of advertising, sales promotions, salespeople public relations, and packaging. (p. 20).

As a result, promotions must be included in the social media of the customs agency, for instance, by posting images with promotions in Whatsapp and Facebook status. It is revealed by the customer's opinion that referral discounts are the most preferred promotion. Therefore, it would be a beneficial option to implement this promotion in social networks, for instance, by offering a discount if the client shares *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* on social media pages with at least 3 people, in this way, the word of mouth recommendation, which is the current brand promotion used by the agency, can be expanded and innovated to the digital level.

Furthermore, The results of the client's opinion shed light that the computer is the most preferred device, however, it is important to highlight that cell phones or tablets are also accessible devices for customers. Therefore, it is essential to enhance the exposure of the customs agency's image through devices that are more accessible and preferred by users. The most commonly used platforms such as Whats app, Facebook, or Telegram, as it is observed in figure 2, are suitable for these devices and customer access since it is necessary to take into account the fact that most customers of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* are companies with executive collaborators working in office environments in which computers are commonly abundant.

Even though the customs agency offers some assistance through Whats app, the other social media platforms are not active at all which brings less contact with customers as the results reveal, in the customer's opinion instrument, in which it is highlighted that the virtual assistance via social networks to customers is null, as a result, there is an opportunity for improvement in expanding their assistance among more social networks, and enhancing the current one, to offer solutions to customers' doubts, but at the same time, to share general information about their services.

One opportunity for improvement in terms of assistance is creating more attractive and summarized content about all their services, and also giving more attention to their most demanded services. For instance, consolidation of international cargo service, as it is the most purchased service according to the customer's opinion, in order to ensure that the clients can feel more motivated and aware of the advantages that *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* has in contrast to its competitors.

Buyer's trust and interest in the customs agency should be boosted with the interaction that can be achieved only by communication which can be in real-time, such as, by live and personalized assistance through comments, chats, text messages, or calls in social media, or by giving access to information about the service through posts, videos, etc. According to Kotler et al.(2005),

Effective service deliverer–customer interaction is important for achieving a satisfactory service transaction. Service marketers cannot assume that they will satisfy the customer simply by providing good technical service. This is because the customer judges service quality not just on technical quality (...). Also, each interaction is a 'moment of truth' for the provider, where not just the service encounter, but also the organization, will be decisively judged by the customer. Thus, professionals cannot assume that they will satisfy the client simply by providing

good technical service. They have to master interactive marketing skills or functions as well. (p. 635).

Therefore, more communication with customers can make a positive difference in the buyers' perception of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* services, however, currently, this communication is mostly done through traditional channels which is a weakness that may reduce the visibility of the customs agency among its competitors in the virtual space since in this modern era, the process of buying or researching about services has expanded in a fast pace. This lack of presence in social media is a threat that may reduce *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* visibility and competitiveness in the customs business due to the survey applied to customs agencies shed light that there are other customs agencies that already applied digital marketing strategies on social media. As a result, the company is not taking full advantage of the brand awareness it can gain through social networks.

Besides, interaction and communication about the service are essential, therefore, the lack of active interaction between the customs agency and the clients in social media is another threat since buyers can feel a lack of trust, attractiveness, and even accessibility in comparison to competitors that offered easy interaction and information in digital channels, and eventually, can affect in a negative way the customer's awareness of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* services and advantages among competitors.

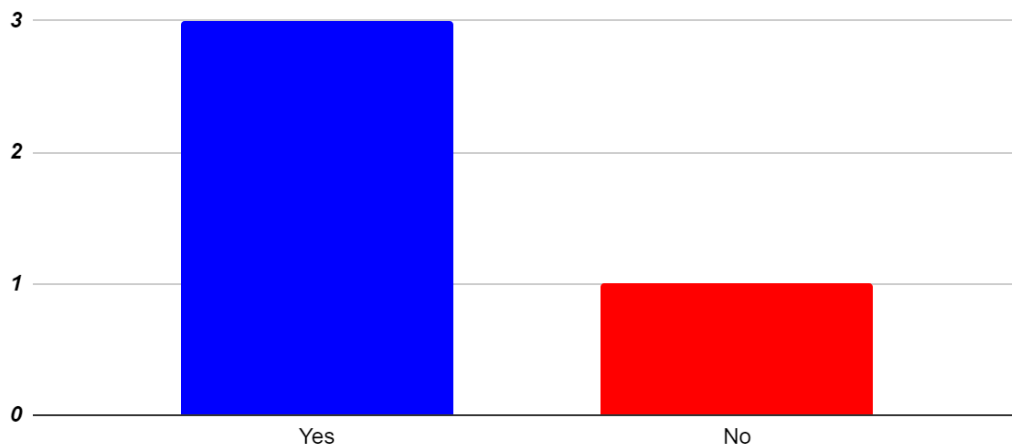
As explained above, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* does not consider it a priority to implement a digital marketing strategy, however, they do consider it necessary. One of the company's concerns is whether the implementation of a digital marketing strategy would benefit the company's development; mainly in the increase of customers. According to the customs agencies interviewed that have applied a digital marketing



strategy, most of them stated that applying a digital marketing strategy is recommendable and they have obtained benefits from this.

**Figure 5**

**Approval of implementing a social media marketing strategy by customs agencies that have implemented a digital marketing strategy:**



**3 of 4 customs agencies stated digital marketing strategies are efficiency.**

Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instrument #5).

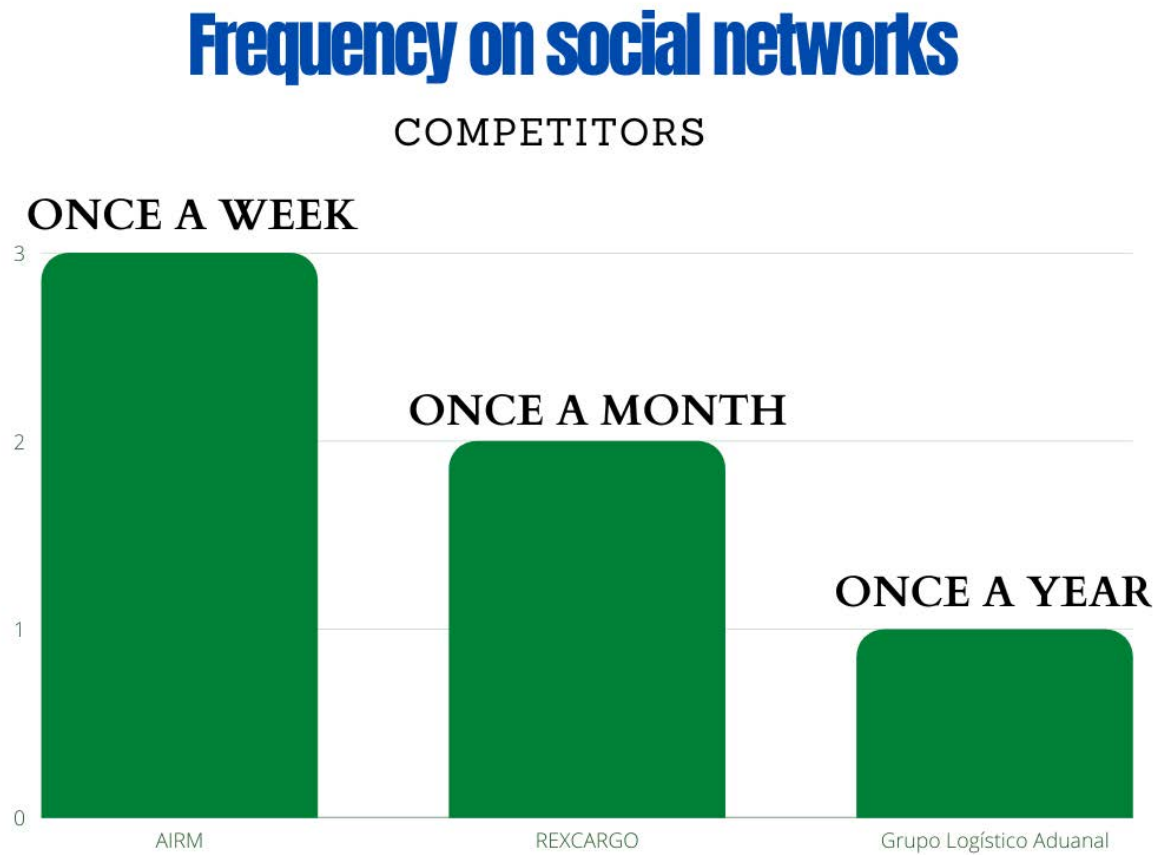
In order to achieve the objective of increasing the number of customers and a better market positioning, it must be taken into account in which digital platforms the company's customers are located. For this reason, the identification of the target customer is performed to better identify the customer profile and thus establish the digital marketing strategy to reach the population that is interested in the services offered by the company. Sarker & Pahari (2021) stated that “to get the advantage of digital marketing, marketers must formulate the right strategy based on products or services by mapping the target audience.” (p.190) In addition, the company also recognizes that many of its competitors are not implementing digital marketing strategies, as it was also discovered through social media browsing that few customs agencies have implemented a digital marketing strategy in the country. Therefore, if the company were to implement this, it could effectively create a competitive advantage over competitors.

On the other hand, one of the companies that participated in the process emphasizes that the use of digital marketing "favors the image and scope of the company as well as its vitality around the time in the field, it also promotes to meet the new needs of the market for the application of these in their company". The above further supports the party in favor of this type of strategy, so it is evidence that it also gives an excellent image to the community and at the same time discovers market trends. Thus, it can be reflected that the majority of companies by their choice in favor, imply that including this type of marketing shows efficiency in the processes, this can be related to what Ritz et al. (2019) also states:

Small business owners and managers invest time and effort to foster loyal customers through personalized experiences. Having a website or digital storefront enables owner/ managers to participate in two-way communications with current and prospective customers more frequently and efficiently than other forms of marketing media. (...) small business owners/managers can judge for themselves the effectiveness of digital marketing using measures such as the ratio of positive over negative online customer recommendations and reviews, their quality, and other forms of customer participation. (p.15)

It is important to note that in the previous statement a balance is made regarding the fact that small business owners can have their own point of view of the effectiveness of digital marketing using different tools that allow them to evaluate customer engagement. Therefore, as it can be analyzed in the results of the previous graph, it can be demonstrated that most of them have the same point in common that implementing this type of strategy is effective, therefore, it can be deduced that by using it, this collaborates to know even more not only what consumers think of the brand, but also how much they recommend it.

Figure 6



Note: (own elaboration, data taken from Instrument #6).

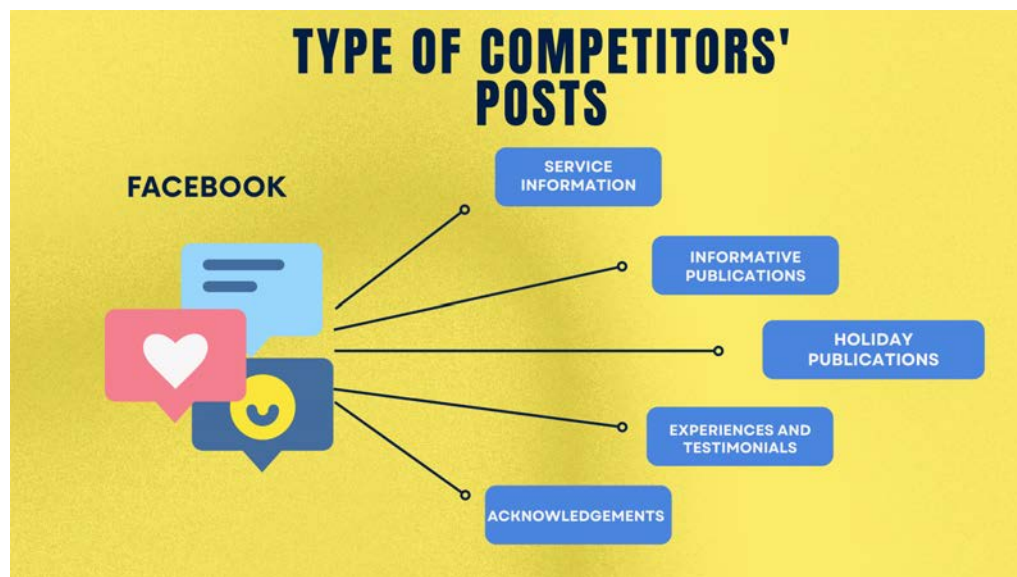
It is necessary to analyze the marketing strategies used by major competitors in their social networks. The best way to create an efficient digital marketing strategy is to compete against the majors. Investigating what kind of strategies the competition is doing, and improving the ones they are applying. Espinosa (2017) mentions that "It is not about copying what your competition is doing, but learning what the leaders are doing to implement it in your company by adding improvements." (para. 2) The competitor investigated were;

- AIRM
- REXCARGO

- Grupo Logístico Aduanal

As general aspects, it was observed that in the social networks of the competitors, they have representative logos, which are also used to mark their content and be able to recognize it. They also have descriptions of the services and contact and location information. Furthermore, all competitors investigated, create their own content.

**Figure 7**

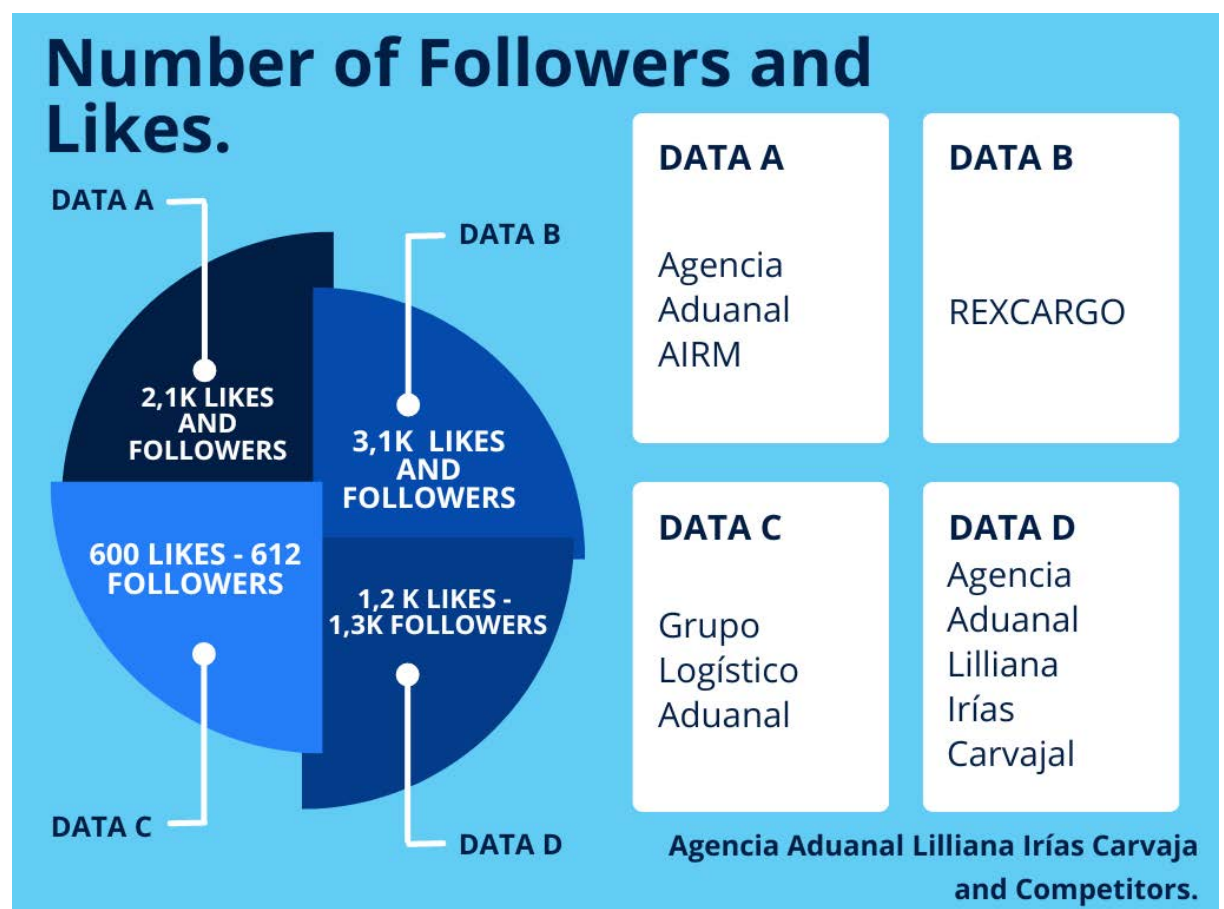


Note: (own elaboration, data taken from instrument #6).

Moreover, the social networks of the competitors show how effective it is to make publications and keep the Facebook page updated, most of them demonstrate to do it constantly while keeping their followers informed about relevant topics regarding the customs context mainly, as well as sharing with the public audience the experiences of the services offered and available to companies interested in customs processes; therefore, this is a great opportunity to bring new customers or catch the attention for those who wish to try the service, as well as to keep current customers interested in the brand, since by demonstrating activity in social networks, it promotes and gives a good impression of the business.

Additionally, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* used to do posts in a constant way in the past with important content related to customs. Based on the above mentioned, the business should return to the constancy in their posts because in this way, if there is more recent activity on the page, this helps not only the service to continue to be recognized in the market but also the current followers feel connected with the brand.

**Figure 8**



Note: (own elaboration, data taken from instrument #6).

Gaining a competitive advantage in social media can be achieved by implementing better social media strategies such as posting frequency, as most of the analyzed competitors do not maintain persistent posting frequencies. However, a strength is that the major competitions are dedicated to making their own content with a variety of types of posts, as a

result, interactions have been high in comparison to the usual reactions on customs agencies social networks, ranging from 1 to 68 interactions. Therefore, the competitors are implementing strategies that encourage user participation or interaction.

One of the weaknesses or aspects to improve of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* is that its publications are not attractive and do not express the company's sense. It was found that in the Facebook page there are publications not related to its services or directed to its users, that is to say, it has been used for personal criteria. The company has the necessary number of likes and followers to be able to compete in social networks, however, the lack of marketing strategies does not allow it to attract or obtain the attention of potential customers who might be interested in the company's services.

## **5. Digital marketing proposal focused on social networks for *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*.**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The following digital marketing strategy proposal on social networks has been designed and adapted by the research group based on the digital marketing strategy proposal developed by Quesada (n.d). It is focused on creating a guide that allows *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* to improve strategies on digital marketing. It is proposed to strengthen the current social network pages of the agency (Facebook and Twitter) should be reinforced and a new digital channel through Whatsapp Business can be created. The investigation process shed light that the three digital platforms are useful and adaptable to this business since the target market is entrepreneurs and corporations that access these platforms, and are interested in exporting and getting assistance in exporting and importing mainly in free trade zones, through maritime, land, and air channels. The results of the study also determined that potential customers are found on Facebook, Whatsapp, and Twitter.

In order to achieve the benefits that a digital marketing strategy may bring to *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, a study of the situation of one of the social media platforms of the customs agency, which is Facebook, was carried out. The development of the digital marketing strategy on a social media proposal was focused on Facebook, Whatsapp, and Twitter. Each section included the following elements: Objectives, strategies, and tactics. (tactics will have each step to achieve each objective). Furthermore, a Gantt Chart in order to ensure organized and specific guidelines for carrying out the digital marketing strategy on a social media proposal was designed.

The development of a digital marketing strategy proposal enables the customs agency to invest time, resources, and ideas to improve the digital presence among

competitors, however, it is essential to follow a structure to boost positive results since the way to work on the areas of improvement or strengths of the agency is different on each platform due to the variation of the management, interface, interaction, and content format of Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp Business. To ensure that all resources that may be invested will be successful by the application of the following proposal that seeks to ensure innovation and competitive advantage at the digital level.

**Figure 9**



Note: (own elaboration).

## 5.2. Situation of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* Facebook page

The following figures provide a view of the Facebook profile page of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*.



Figure 10



## Agencia Aduanal LIC



1,2 mil Me gusta

1,2 mil seguidores

Mensaje

Te gusta



Note: (own elaboration)

Figure 11

### Detalles

Contáctenos:  
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agencialic.com

Promocionar sitio web

Note: (own elaboration).

The study of the Facebook page revealed the reactions in a period of 28 days obtained from the tool of the same social media that provides statistics. It was reviewed on

November 7, 2022. The information obtained contributed to design a suitable digital marketing on social media proposal.

### 5.2.1. Demographic data of followers of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* Facebook page.

**Figure 12.** Data of age and gender of people who follow the customs agency's Facebook page.



Note: (Own elaboration).

Most of the followers and viewers of the Facebook profile are people from 24 to 44 years old; the most important rank from 25 to 34 which implies that most of the strategies used should focus on the preferences of this group.

**Figure 13.** Data of the place (city and countries) where the followers belong.

| Lugar  | Ciudades | Países |
|--|----------|--------|
| San José, Provincia de San José, Costa Rica  |          | 142    |
| Alajuela, Provincia de Alajuela, Costa Rica  |          | 76     |
| Cartago, Provincia de Cartago, Costa Rica    |          | 38     |
| Heredia, Provincia de Heredia, Costa Rica    |          | 37     |
| San Ramón, Provincia de Alajuela, Costa Rica |          | 33     |
| Limón, Provincia de Limón, Costa Rica        |          | 30     |
| Ciudad de México, México                     |          | 21     |
| Liberia, Provincia de Guanacaste, Costa Rica |          | 20     |
| Quesada, Provincia de Alajuela, Costa Rica   |          | 19     |
| Mercedes Norte, Heredia Province, Costa Rica |          | 17     |

Note: (own elaboration).

**Figure 14**

| Lugar          | Ciudades | Países |
|----------------|----------|--------|
| Costa Rica     |          | 1.130  |
| México         |          | 79     |
| Estados Unidos |          | 21     |
| Perú           |          | 16     |
| Nicaragua      |          | 12     |
| China          |          | 8      |
| Colombia       |          | 5      |
| El Salvador    |          | 4      |
| Canadá         |          | 3      |
| Panamá         |          | 3      |

Note: (own elaboration).

Most followers are from Costa Rica, however, the main followers are from Mexico and the United States. The variety of countries the followers belong to is an advantage on

the virtual page since it means the customs agency is reaching international users which is a positive sign since *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* offers services to the international and national community, therefore, this data confirms that the agency has been able to reach both, the international and national users.

### 5.2.2. Summary of activity on *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*'s Facebook page

Figure 15

#### Resumen de la página

##### Descubrimiento

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  Alcance de las publicaciones      | 9 |
|  Interacción con las publicaciones | 6 |
|  Nuevos Me gusta de la página     | 5 |
|  Nuevos seguidores de la página  | 6 |

##### Interacciones

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  Reacciones               | 0 |
|  Comentarios              | 0 |
|  Veces compartido         | 0 |
|  Visualizaciones de fotos | 0 |
|  Clics en enlaces         | 0 |

##### Otro

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  Ocultar todas las publicaciones  | 0 |
|  Personas que dejaron de seguirte | 0 |

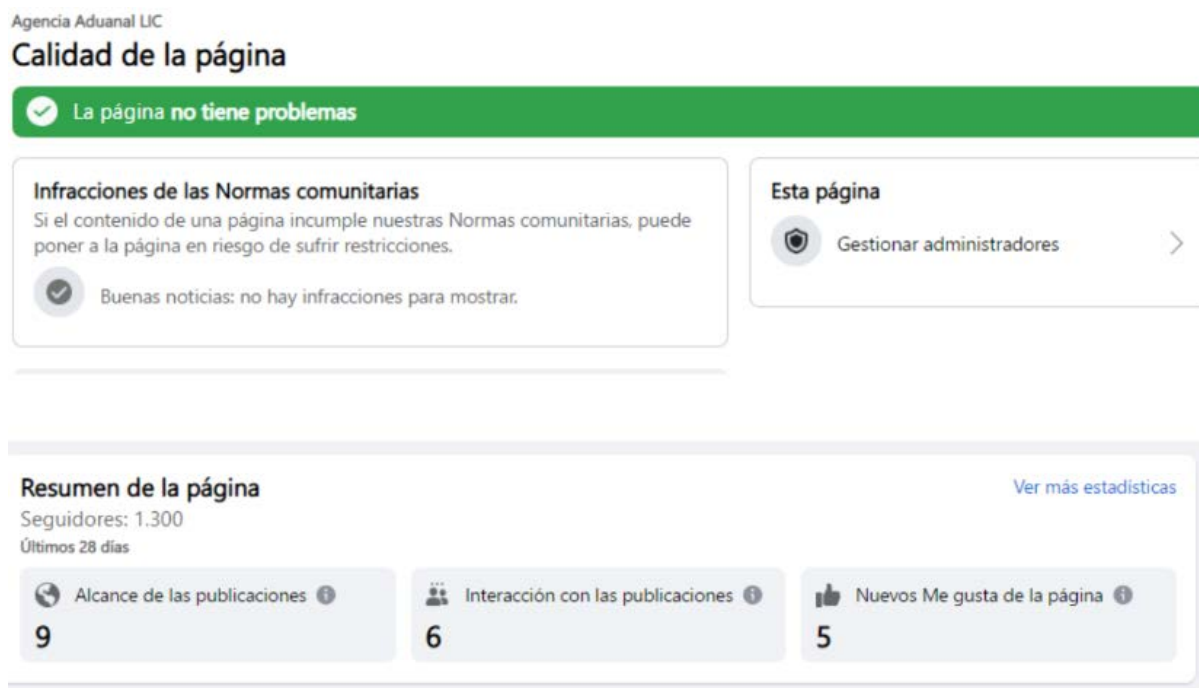
Note: (own elaboration)

In 28 days, the follower's growth was only 6 people which may represent a disadvantage since the agency is getting less visibility and the posts are also not reaching

more than 10 people with only 6 interactions on posts which demonstrate reduced activity, and it highlights the necessity of reactivating the Facebook page with new interactive and informative posts.

### 5.2.3. Quality of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* Facebook page

Figure 16



Note: (own elaboration)

A strength of the current Facebook page is that it has complied with Facebook community rules.

In summary, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* Facebook page required increasing the number of posts, interactions, and followers to cope with the competitors. The international and national market is a must for the agency, for it is fundamental to improve, increase and expand the international followers using platforms such as a Twitter Professional Business account which are well-known internationally..

### **5.3. Digital marketing strategy on social media proposal**

#### **5.3.1. Facebook strategy proposal:**

**Objective 1:** To increase the amount of clients in Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal

**Strategy:**

To improve the management of social networks profiles of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* by hiring a community manager to be responsible for Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp Business accounts.

**Tactics:**

**Step 1: To hire a community manager.**

To hire a community manager who is the person that will maintain interaction, attractiveness, communication, and traffic generation in the customs agency's digital profiles. The community manager plays an essential role in the success of a digital marketing campaign in social networks, therefore, the community manager must have the following qualities presented in the infographic.

Figure 17



Note: (own elaboration)

**Objective 2:** To attract potential clients to *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal's*

**Strategy:**

To provide an eye-catching image to users by the design of a more attractive profile on the social network Facebook.

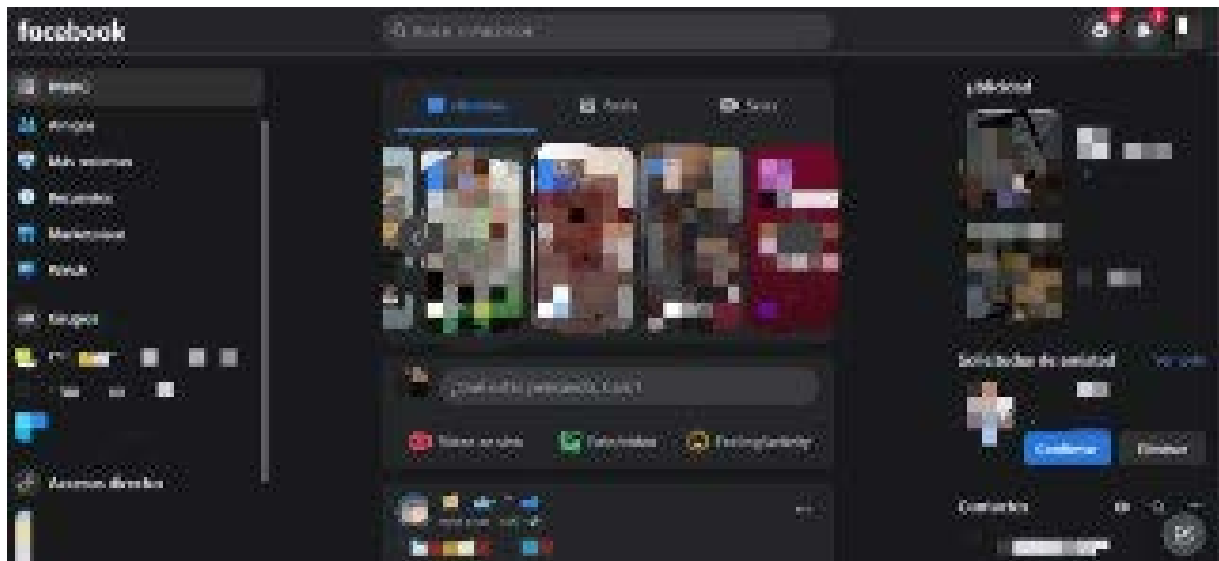
To improve the layout of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal's* Facebook page.

**Tactics:**

**Step 1: To create a Facebook Business Account**

-Get into the Facebook Website.

**Figure 18**



Note: (Own elaboration)



-Click on the menu option and select the option “Create page”.

**Figure 19**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-After clicking on the option “create page” the application will request general information about the business.

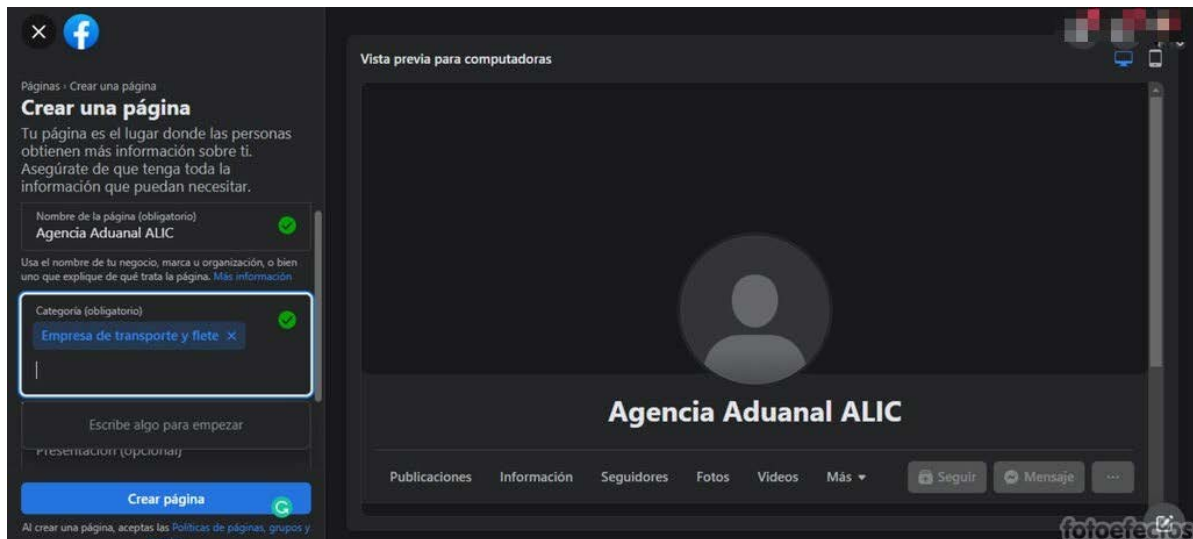
**Figure 20**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-After clicking on the option “create page” the application will request general information about the business.

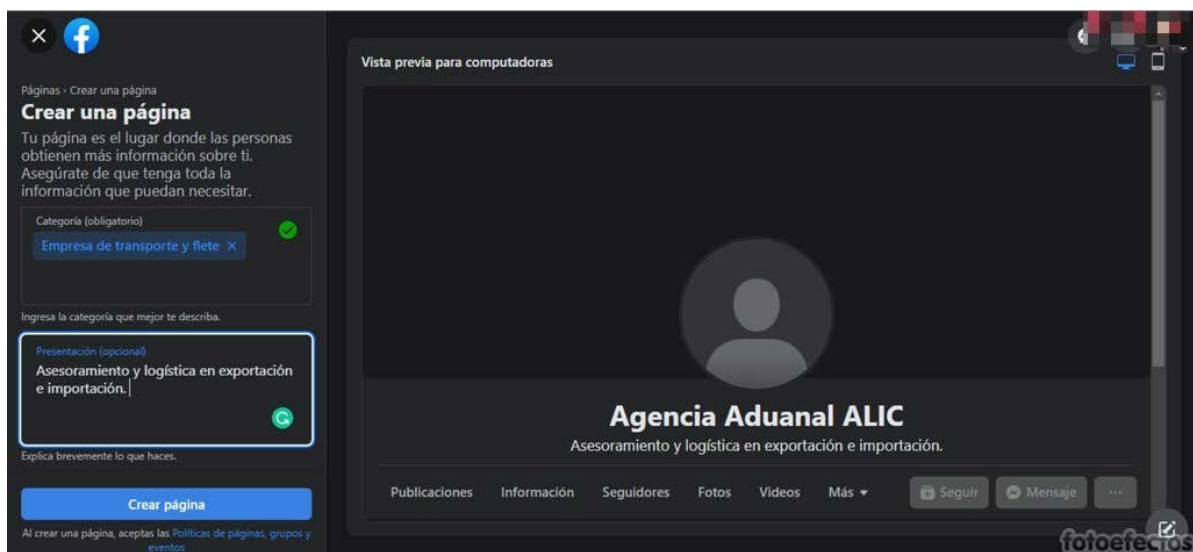
**Figure 21**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Fill out all the information related to the name, service, and category of the business to make it easy for customers to find your service.

**Figure 22**



Note: (Own elaboration)

Figure 23



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Then, the application will request your contact information as the address, phone number, and email address. It is important to know that all of this information will be accessible to Facebook page users and followers.

Figure 24



Note: (Own elaboration)

-During the setting of the Facebook page, you can select the schedule in which you provide the service in order to advise the users about your availability to answer messages.

**Figure 25**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-It is time to personalize the facebook page. First you will need to add a profile and cover picture that represents your business. For example, for the profile page you can add a Logo and for the cover picture you can add an image related to the service.

**Figure 26**



Note: (Own elaboration)

Figure 27



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Now, click on “Invite friends” to send an invite to all your contacts to like your Facebook page. It is important to invite all the people that could be interested in your service, or people that can help you to share your profile with potential clients.

Figure 28



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Activate the notifications of your Facebook page to receive alerts about the activity of the page as new followers, likes, comments, and messages.

**Figure 29**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Finally, the app will give you access to administrate the Facebook page in order to know more about the activity of the page.

**Figure 30**



Note: (Own elaboration)

## Step 2: Name

Identify a name that is easy to remember, for example, the full name of the company is *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* represented with an abbreviation.

- The implementation of ALIC as the new name presentation of the agency to make it easy to remember by users.
- Implementing the name ALIC on all posts to make the posts and digital profile easier and faster to read by avoiding long names on the page.

## Step 3: Logo change

During the research, it was determined that the logo of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* may be improved. The Facebook page has a complex image without anything representative of the agency which may eventually have an insignificant impact on customers and competitors. Therefore, a prototype logo has been proposed according to international standards, easy to remember, and may catch the attention of the clients. The following key points were implemented in the proposed logo.

- To use a logo that reflects the name abbreviation ALIC (*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*) by using the letter "A" which is the initial of the customs agency's name. It is a way to have a symbol that is simple, aesthetic, and easy to remember.
- To choose blue as the main color for the logo and the Facebook page since this color portrays trust, seriousness, safety, and professionalism. According to Badici, S. (2020).

Blue and white colors are soothing and stimulate the ability to communicate, which is exactly the purpose of social media. If you look at social media logos, at least the ones that are the most popular ones and have the greatest number of users, we notice these colors. It is said that blue also determines the quality and success of a

relationship. In the world of technology, blue is associated with knowledge and intellect. (p.42)

- To implement an element that represents the customs agency, for example, the semicircle within the logo that means the world referring to the international transportation symbolizing the export and import service provided by the agency.
- It is suggested that when making publications on social networks, there should be a pattern of always adding the new logo in posts, as a result, customers become directly familiar with the agency.

**Figure 31**



Note: (own elaboration)

#### **Step 4: Interface Change**

- To add a cover photo that is related to the activity of the company, for this specific case (merchandise or containers) as background.
- To add a profile picture that represents the company, in this case, the logo.



- To add the contact information, address, and a brief description of the agency.

Figure 32



Note (own elaboration)

Figure 33



Note (own elaboration)

**Objective 3:**

To increase digital participation in the Facebook social network page of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* with an increase of 40% in reactions on each post in the next 3 months.

(Percentage was calculated based on a comparison with the reactions of the last 20 posts of the company REXCARGO which is the enterprise with more digital participation among competitors of instrument #6)

**Strategy:**

To improve the interactions on the ALIC's Facebook page by generating interactive and informative new content.

**Tactics:****Step 1: Periodic publications**

The customs agency should upload at least 2 posts per week during the first month, and then 1 post per week. Publications can be shared from 8 am to 12 pm.

The publications should be based on the Actshop Method which is a self-developed method adapted from the advertising writing process called Copywriting. The Actshop Method consists of writing short sentences and questions that present a problem that the user identifies with, then showing a solution that the company can provide to that problem, and finally, including a message that convinces the customer to purchase the service or product by means of direct contact with the company through a single click. The Actshop method contains the following elements in the same order as shown in the following chart.

| Actshop's elements                    | Example  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| The client's problem.                 | ¿Sientes que no sabes por dónde empezar para adquirir la mercadería para tu emprendimiento?                          |
| The solution to the client's problem. | En ALIC contamos con un programa especial para emprendedores con servicio personalizado y a un precio accesible.     |
| Call to action to purchase.           | ¡No pierdas más tiempo buscando cómo empezar! Contacta ahora mismo a ALIC y empieza tu negocio como todo un experto. |
| Result                                | Figure 8   |

Figure 34

**AGENCIA ADUANAL ALIC**

**¿SIENTES QUE NO SABES POR DÓNDE EMPEZAR PARA ADQUIRIR LA MERCADERIA PARA TU EMPRENDIMIENTO?**

En ALIC contamos con un programa especial para emprendedores con servicio personalizado a un precio accesible.

**¡NO PIERDAS MÁS TIEMPO BUSCANDO CÓMO EMPEZAR!  
CONTACTA AHORA MISMO A ALIC Y EMPIEZA TU NEGOCIO COMO TODO UN EXPERTO.**

Aduana Central- Caldera-Limón- Santamaria

22563544

ALIC

@alic

Note: (own elaboration).

- To design and create content that is important and relevant to customers such as the information provided by the Ministry of Finance.

**Figura 35**



Note: (Own elaboration)

- To present informative videos in an attractive and concrete way to catch the attention of customers, and with just one click, customers can quickly identify the content they need.

Example:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAFPqMWnstM/IM3Hglh4gUrsXThC3FvPPA/watch?utm\\_content=DAFPqMWnstM&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=publishsharelink](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFPqMWnstM/IM3Hglh4gUrsXThC3FvPPA/watch?utm_content=DAFPqMWnstM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink)

Note: (own elaboration)

- The company can share content related to celebrations on important dates, the publications can be shared from 8 am -12 pm on the day of the celebration. This kind of posts has been also uploaded by competitors with effective social media presence.

**Figure 36**



Note: (own elaboration)

Figure 37



Note: (own elaboration)

### Step 2: Comments.

The publications should encourage the participation of the followers of the page. This will foster greater credibility to the digital account of the company and increase trust. In addition, comments are part of the evaluation provided by customers for example, by sharing the experience with the service and rating through stars. This aspect is important since most users review the recommendations and other customer experiences before making the purchase of a service. Furthermore, from the benchmarking developed with the customs agency of instrument #6, it was revealed that posts about customer experiences and testimonials are used in their

digital profiles which contribute to its effective digital marketing on social media, as a result, it will be also beneficial for *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's* digital profile. Therefore, the traditional word of mouth, which has already been successful for the agency, must be implemented, but at a digital level which can be implemented by the following two options:

1- Asking for feedback or experience from customers about the service by a post that contains:

- A QR code which will lead customers to a short Google form survey with the following questions:

*1. Nos gustaría compartir tu experiencia en nuestra página de Facebook, por favor confirma si estás de acuerdo.*

Translation: We would like to share your experience on our Facebook page, please confirm if you agree.

*2. ¿Cómo ha sido tu experiencia al elegir nuestros servicios?*

Translation: Please share your experience with our service.

*3. Califica nuestro servicio del 1 al 5. (1 representa la calificación más baja y 5 la más alta)*

Translation: Rate our service from 1 to 5. (1 represents the lowest and 5 the highest).

- It is a must to specify the reward and date of the raffle. It is recommended to add a reward for participating in the feedback survey in order to encourage customers to share their experiences. A rewarding example is a discount on a service.

Figure 38



Note: (own elaboration)

After obtaining the feedback from customers, a new post should be created with the experience of customers that agreed with making their experience public on *ALIC*'s Facebook Page.

2- The second way to digitize the successful word-of-mouth promotion method used by the customs agency is by getting the personal experiences of customers who have chosen the services of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* in order to share it in a post with their name and photo if the customer agrees.

In order to get the feedback, the experiences should be obtained by direct communication with the customer, for example, a call, text, or face-to-face conversation in which the agency's collaborator will ask permission for publication of the feedback, the experience, and a photo of the customer (the picture is optional) to proceed to adapt the word-of-mouth experience into a virtual post.



Figure 39



Note: (own elaboration)

- The customs agency may also create and post interactive content with creative and curious posts that may motivate the participation of customers.

Figure 40



Note: (own elaboration)

### Step 3: Promotions

The study revealed that customers are willing to get discounts for referring customers. This type of promotion is adaptable to the company because the traditional method used by the agency, word-of-mouth, has been beneficial to the agency. Therefore, referral discounts are a strategy that will also allow adapting the traditional method (word of mouth) of promotion to a digital level bringing innovation through new methods of digital marketing in social networks. Allowing the company to be at a balanced level with respect to its competitors and at the same time generating greater adaptability to the preferences of customers at the level of social networks.

It is a must to maintain confidentiality through promotions related to monetary rewards without providing information such as prices to avoid competitors taking advantage of this information.

**Figure 41**

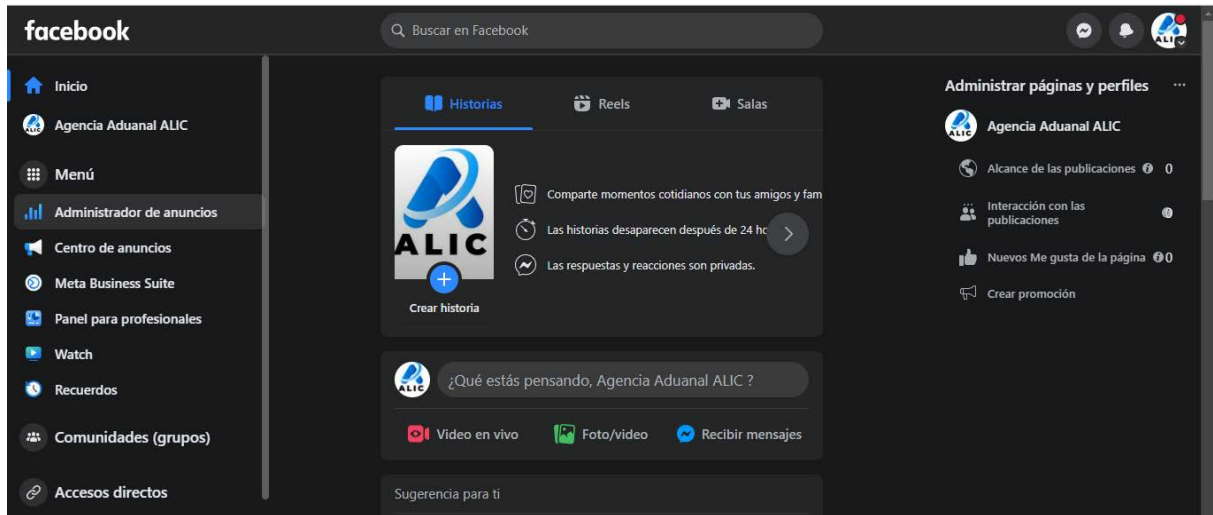


Note (own elaboration)

## Step 4: Advertising

- **How to make advertisements on Facebook Business accounts.**
  - In the left bar of the home page, select the option of advertisement manager.

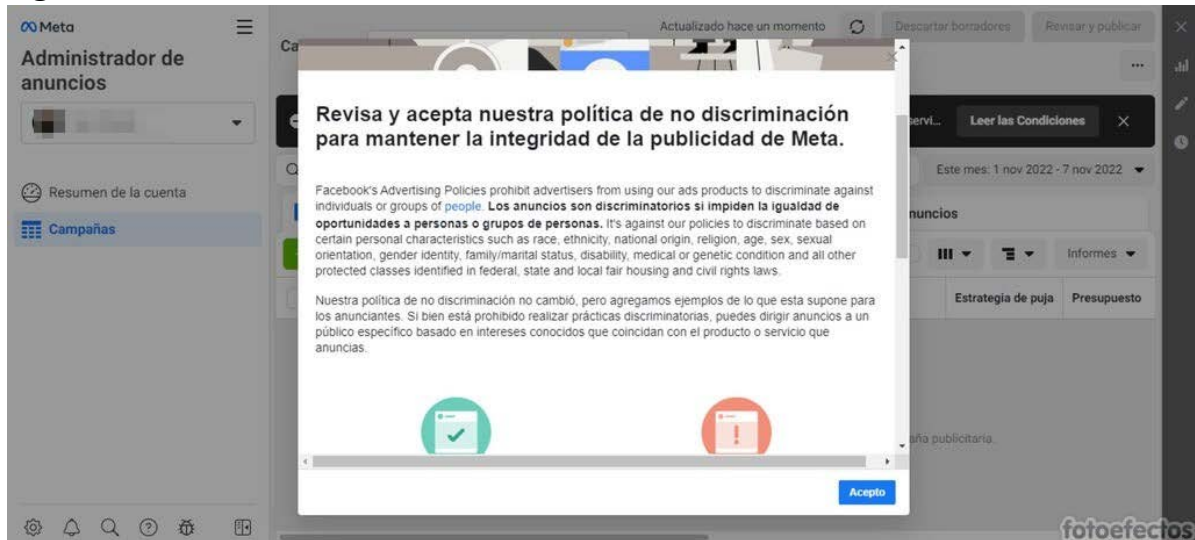
Figure 42



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Accept META's non-discrimination policy.

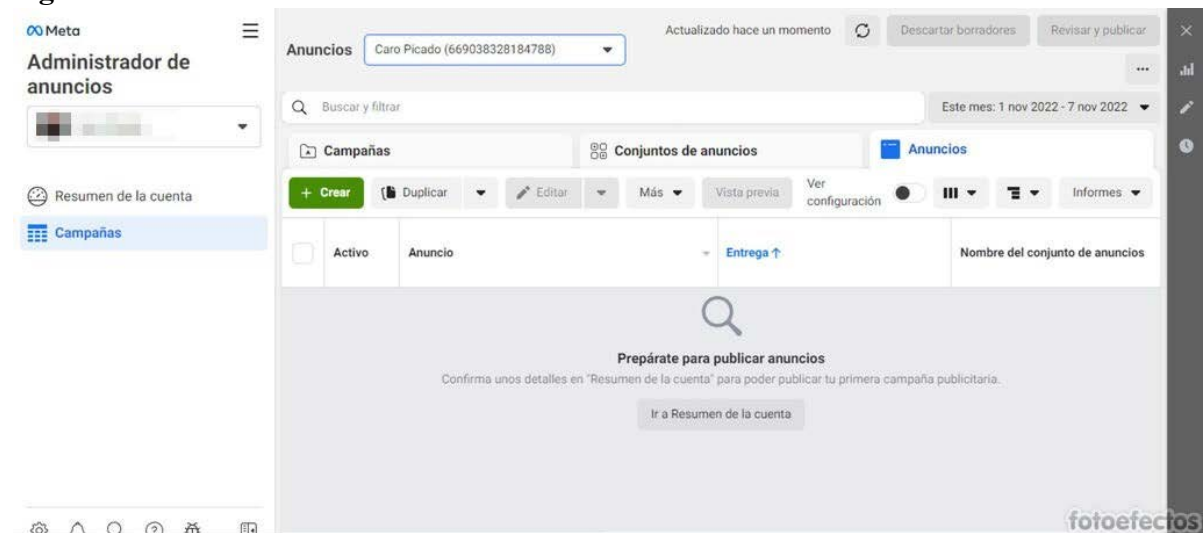
Figure 43



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Select the advertisement option and click on the green button to create.

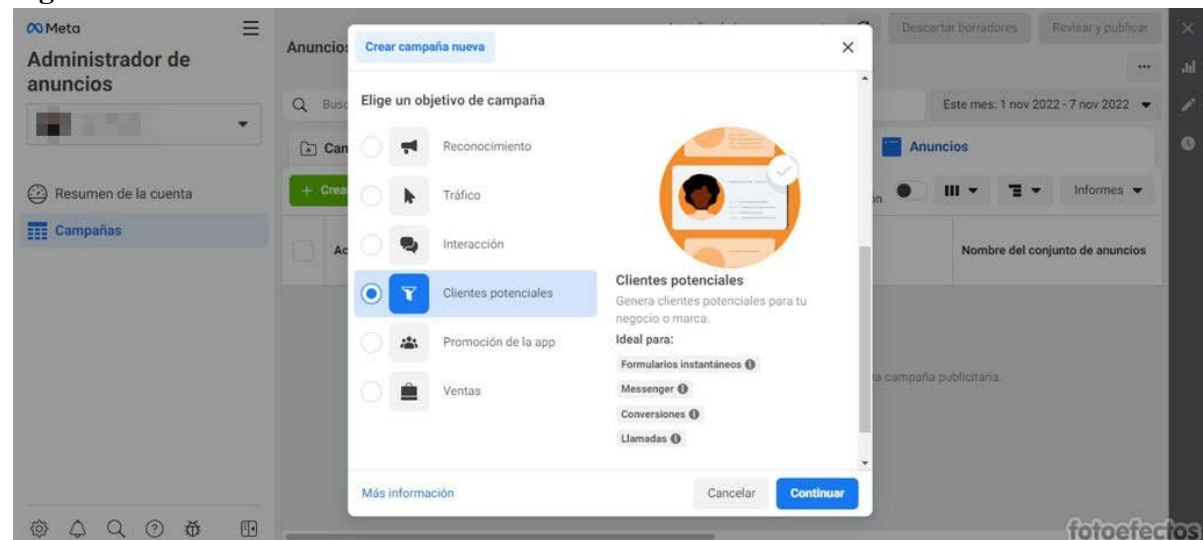
Figure 44



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Choose the campaign objective for this advertisement to be met.

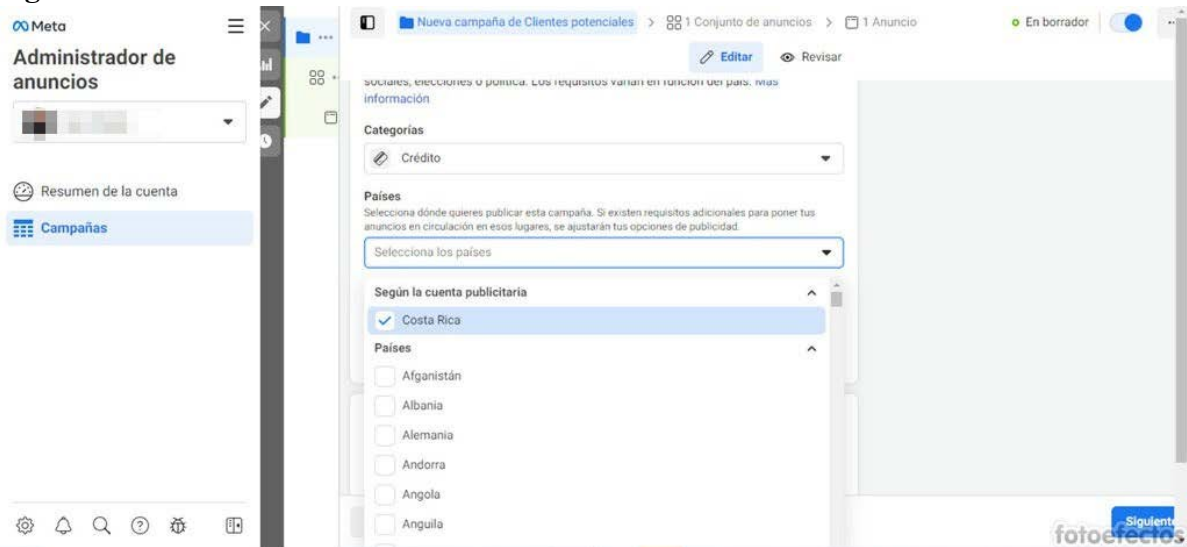
Figure 45



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Select the category of the advertisement and the country where it will be published.

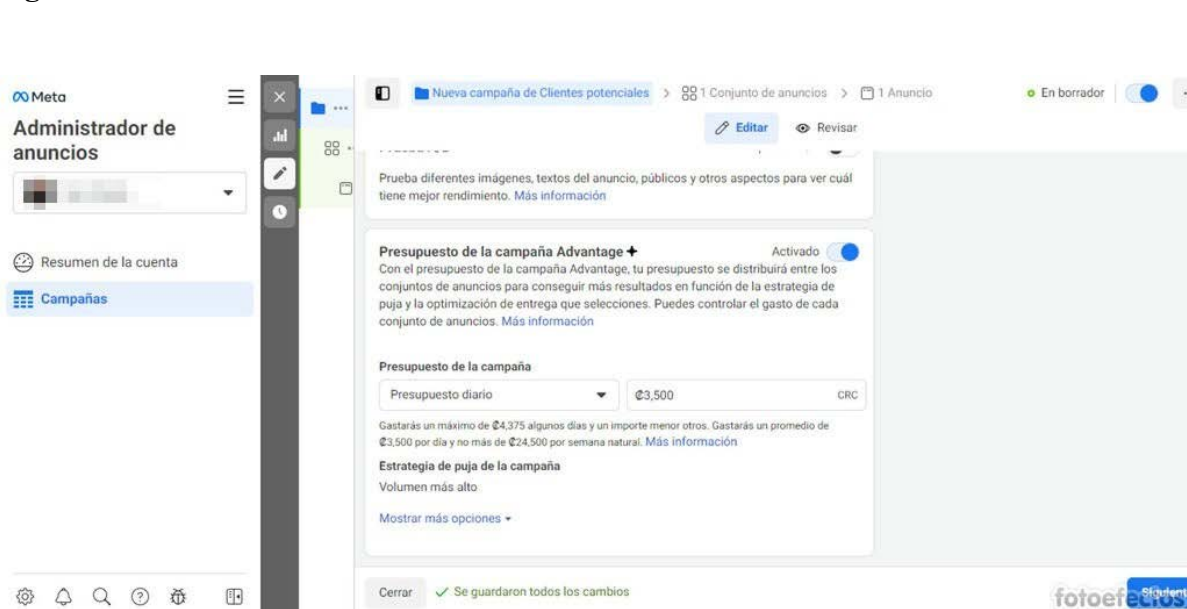
Figure 46



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Choose the daily budget for the advertisement to be published.

Figure 47



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Add payment information and click in save.

**Figure 48**

Meta  
Administrador de anuncios

Resumen de la cuenta  
Campañas

**Agregar información de pago** X

**Ubicación y divisa**

País o región: Costa Rica

Divisa: Colón costarricense

Zona horaria (GMT -06:00) Hora de Costa Rica

La ubicación y la divisa no se pueden cambiar una vez establecidas.

Siguiente

Se guardará todos los cambios

fotoefectos

Note: (Own elaboration)

**Figure 49**

Meta  
Administrador de anuncios

Resumen de la cuenta  
Campañas

**Agregar información de pago** X

**Información comercial y fiscal** Editar  
(Opcional) Agrega la dirección o identificación fiscal

**Agregar método de pago**

Tarjeta de débito o crédito VISA Mastercard American Express

Tengo un crédito publicitario para reclamar.

Aunque tengas un crédito publicitario, es necesario que agregues un método de pago para poder publicar anuncios. Podrás reclamar el crédito después de ingresar tu información de pago.

Tus métodos de pago se guardan y almacenan de forma segura.  
Se aplican condiciones

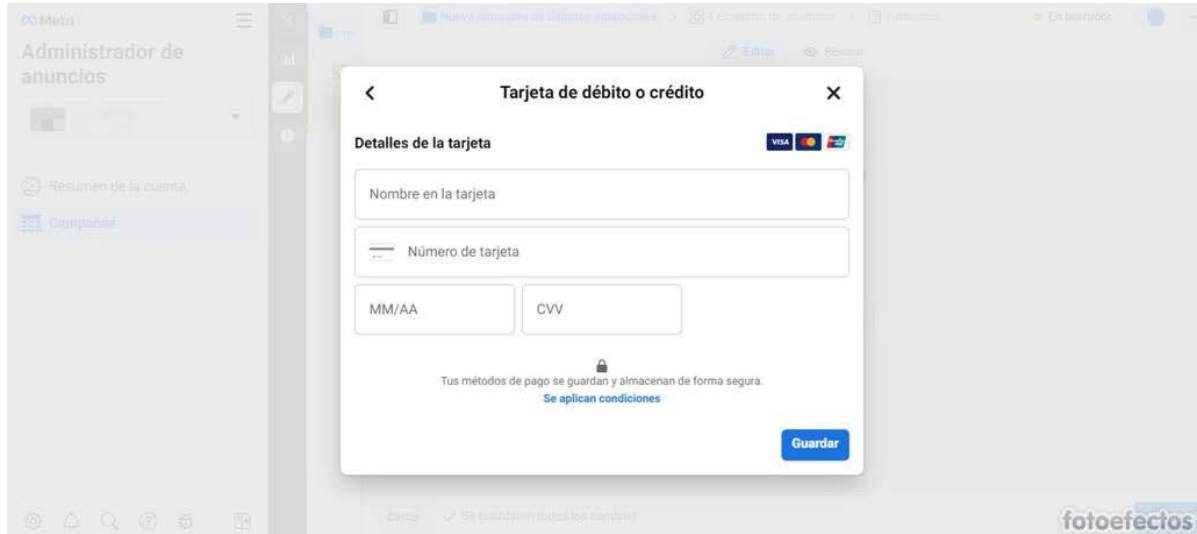
Siguiente

Se guardará todos los cambios

fotoefectos

Note: (Own elaboration)

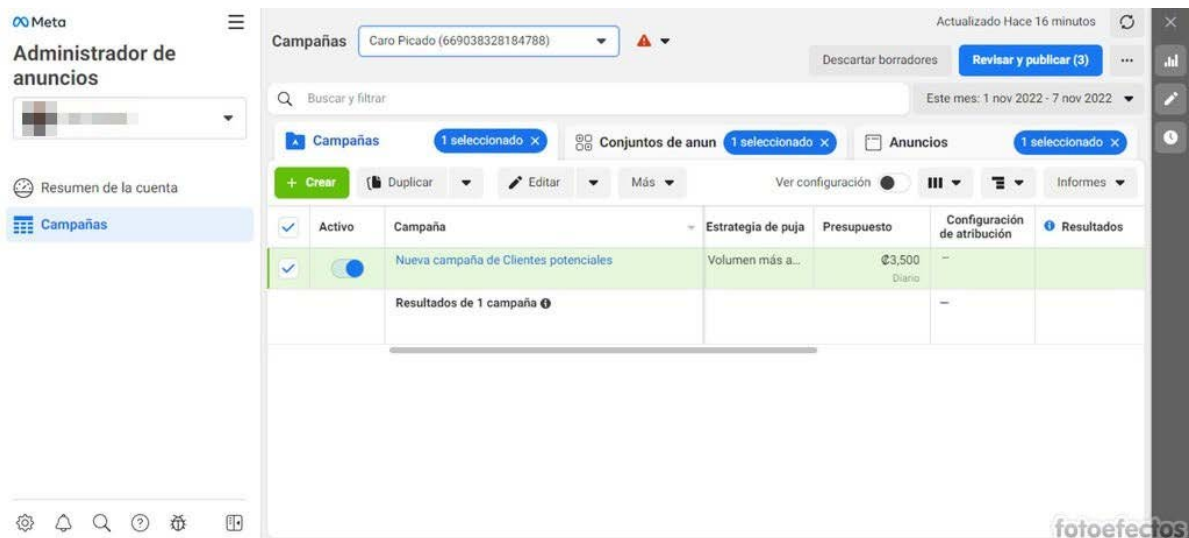
Figure 50



Note: (Own elaboration)

- Finally, the advertising campaign is ready for the advertisement to be published.

Figure 51



Note: (Own elaboration)

- To highlight the page, it needs advertising that allows more people to receive information from their cell phones about the service provided by the Customs Agency, as a result, companies that are interested in the service will be able to access it by a click which redirects to the home page where they can with a like to be followers of the

page and receive continuous content of interest to customers such as promotions and general information.

**Figure 52**

The image shows a Facebook advertisement for ALIC. At the top, the Facebook logo and navigation icons are visible. Below the navigation bar, the ALIC logo and name are displayed. The main content of the ad is a large image of a semi-truck. To the right of the truck, there is a blue vertical banner with the text 'ALIC ES TU ALIADO EN ASESORAMIENTO Y LOGÍSTICA'. Below this banner, there is a yellow box with the heading 'NUESTROS SERVICIOS' and a list of services: 'ASISTENCIA Y TRÁMITES DE IMPORTACIÓN Y EXPORTACIÓN', 'RÉGIMEN DE ZONA FRANCA', 'CONSOLIDACIÓN DE LA CARGA INTERNACIONAL', and 'SERVICIOS DE ASESORAMIENTO ADUANERO'. Below the list, there is a yellow box with the phone number '+506 22563544' and social media icons for Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. At the bottom of the ad, there are two buttons: 'Solicita mas info aqui' and 'Más información'. Below the buttons, there are engagement metrics: '15' reactions, '7 comentarios', and '1 vez compartido'. At the very bottom, there are three icons: a thumbs up for 'Me gusta', a speech bubble for 'Comentar', and a share icon for 'Compartir'.

Note: (own elaboration)

- Publications with information about the service provided by the company, however, it is a must to maintain the confidentiality of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal's*



processes, for instance, by providing only a general view of the services of the agency or new changes on the customs area that are well known for the customs community due to it might be valuable information for people who are new in this area.

- The use of keywords in the posts should provide enough information about the company's management. It is important to use striking words to present the service of the agency by using phrases that show the relevance of the service to provide a solution to the needs of the client. Besides, it is necessary to explain more about the services on posts and maintain updating data in an engaging and eye-catching way.

Figure 53



The advertisement features a large semi-truck on a road. A blue banner is overlaid on the right side of the image. At the top left of the banner is the ALIC logo, which consists of a blue tag with a white circle containing a stylized 'A' and the letters 'ALIC' below it. The main text on the banner reads 'ALIC ES TU ALIADO' in large white letters. Below this, it says 'EN ASESORAMIENTO Y LOGÍSTICA'. A yellow arrow-shaped box contains the heading 'NUESTROS SERVICIOS' in bold black letters. Underneath, there is a list of services: 'ASISTENCIA Y TRÁMITES DE IMPORTACIÓN Y EXPORTACIÓN.', 'RÉGIMEN DE ZONA FRANCA.', 'CONSOLIDACIÓN DE LA CARGA INTERNACIONAL.', and 'SERVICIOS DE ASESORAMIENTO ADUANERO.'. At the bottom of the banner, a yellow arrow-shaped box contains the phone number '+506 22563544'. Below the phone number are three social media icons: Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter.

Note: (own elaboration)

### 5.3.2. WhatsApp strategy proposal:

#### Objective 1:

To create a business profile on WhatsApp.

#### Strategy:

To establish a WhatsApp business account as a means of contacting customers.

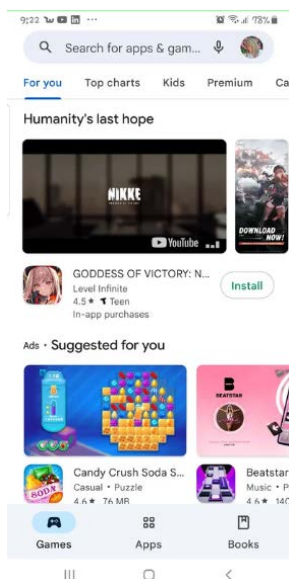
#### Tactics:

##### Step 1: Creation of WhatsApp business account.

##### Steps to create a WhatsApp Business account.

-First, you must go to the Play Store app.

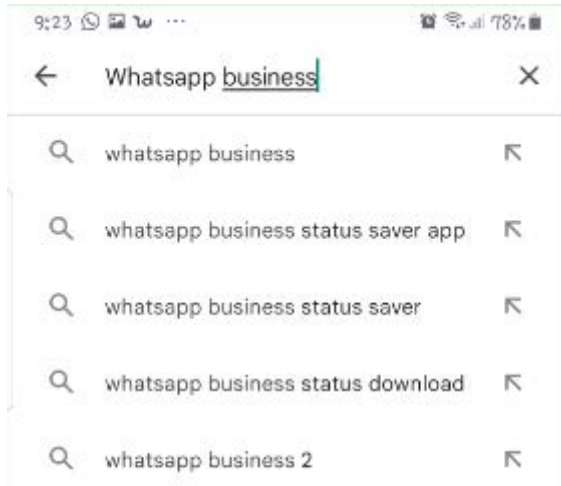
#### Figure 54



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Add in the search box "WhatsApp Business" to find the app.

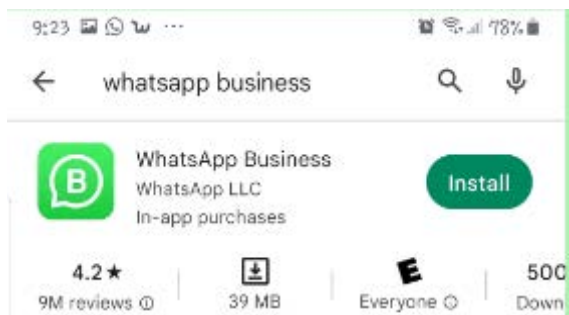
**Figure 55**



Note: (Own elaboration)

-Click on the install button to download the "WhatsApp Business App" .

**Figure 56**



Note: (own elaboration)

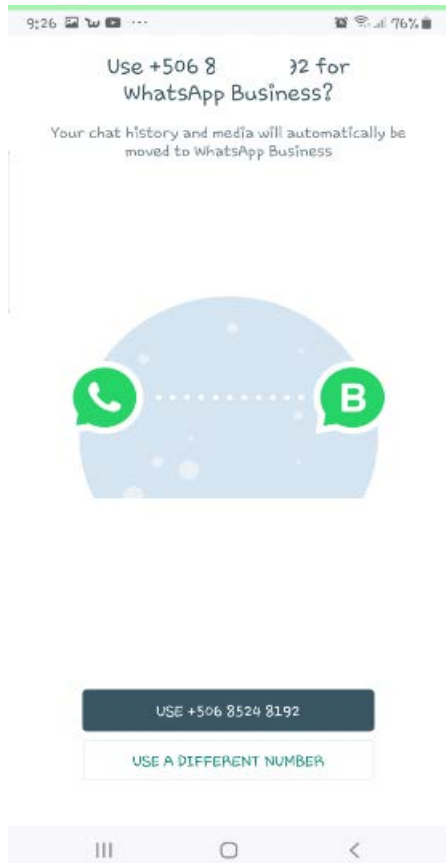
-Open the app, and select "agree and continue" to start the creation of the WhatsApp Business account.

**Figure 57**



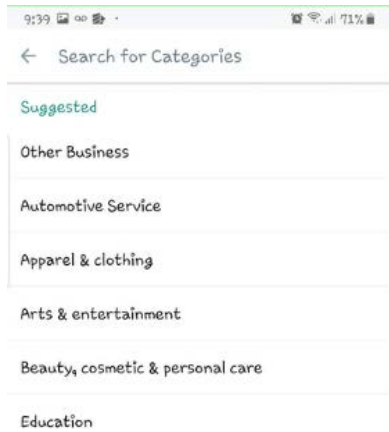
Note: (own elaboration)

-Add the cellphone number that you will use to receive and send messages to your customers.

**Figure 58**

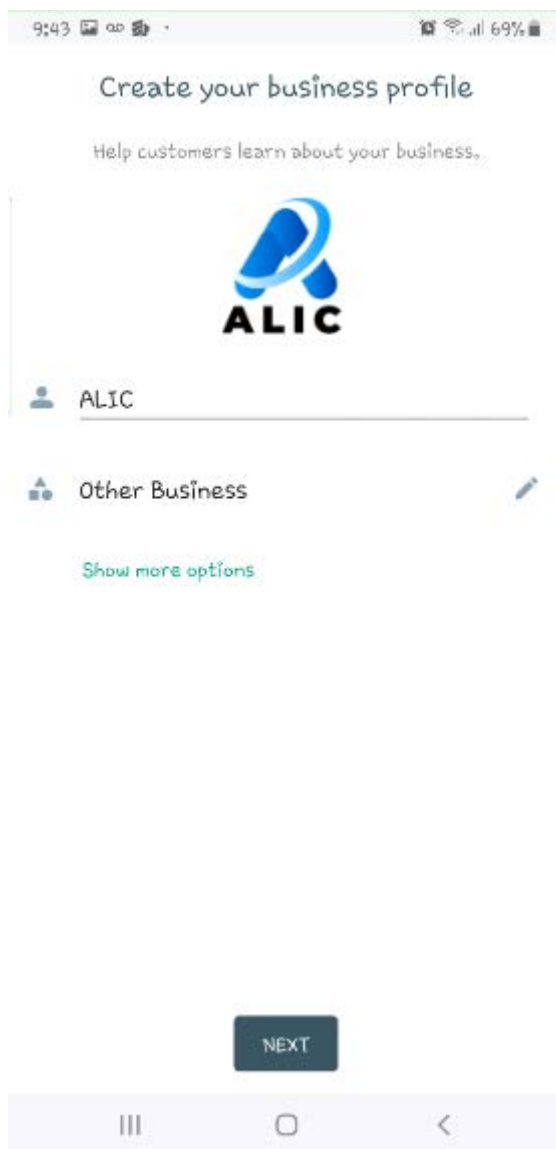
Note: (own elaboration)

-Choose the category that represents your business activity.

**Figure 59**

Note (own elaboration)

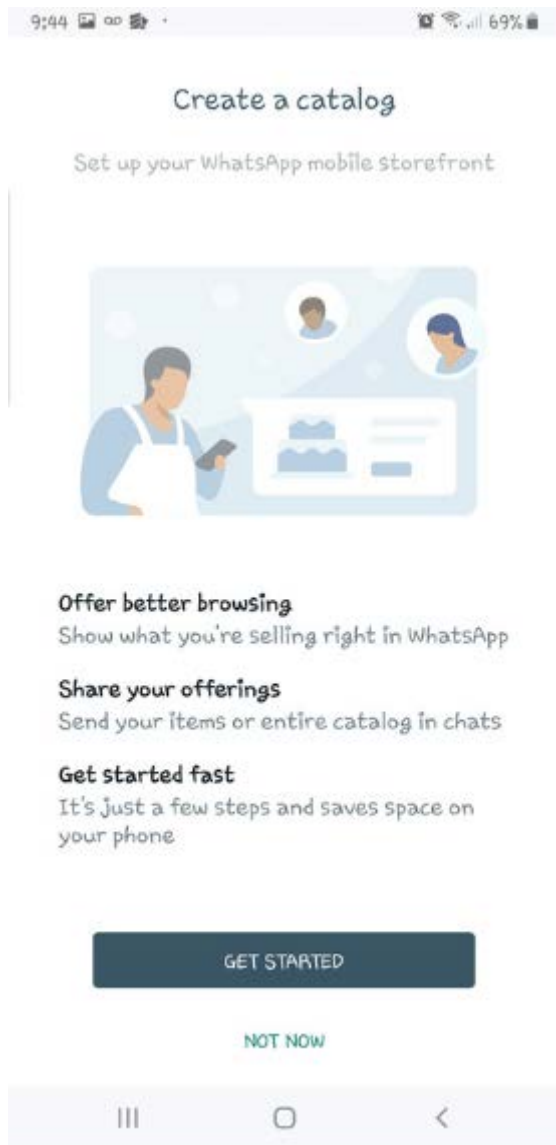
-Add a picture and a name to your WhatsApp business account.

**Figure 60**

Note: (own elaboration)

-Create a catalog with your business services to inform your clients about your services.

Figure 61

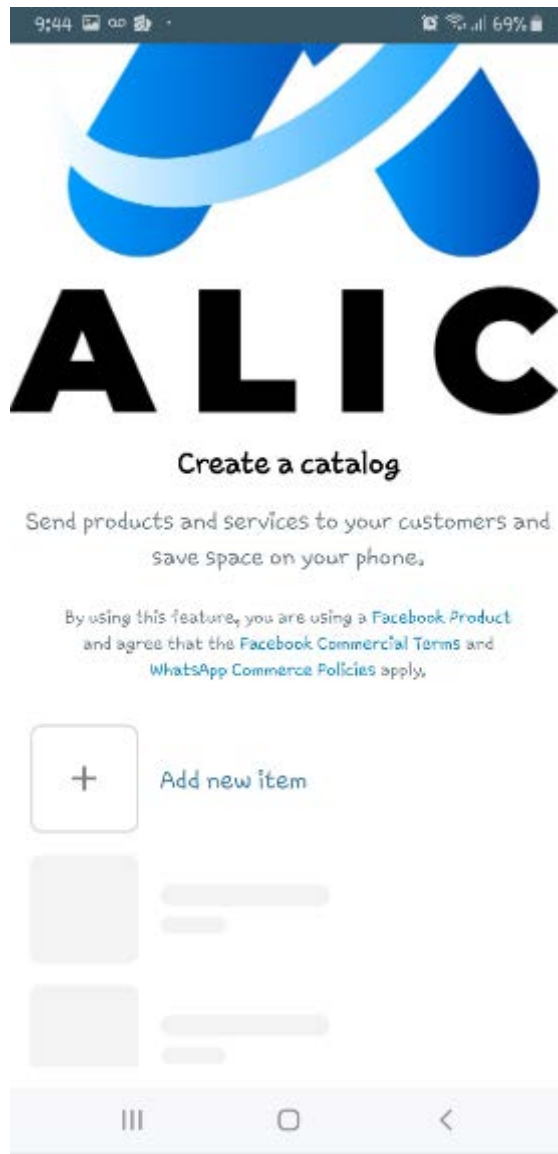


Note: (own elaboration)

-Click on "Add new item" to start the creation of the catalog.



Figure 62



Note: (own elaboration).

-Here you can add a picture, price, and description of every service that your business provides.

Figure 63



9:51 67%

← Add Item SAVE

Item name  
Asesoramiento aduanero

Price CRC (Recommended)

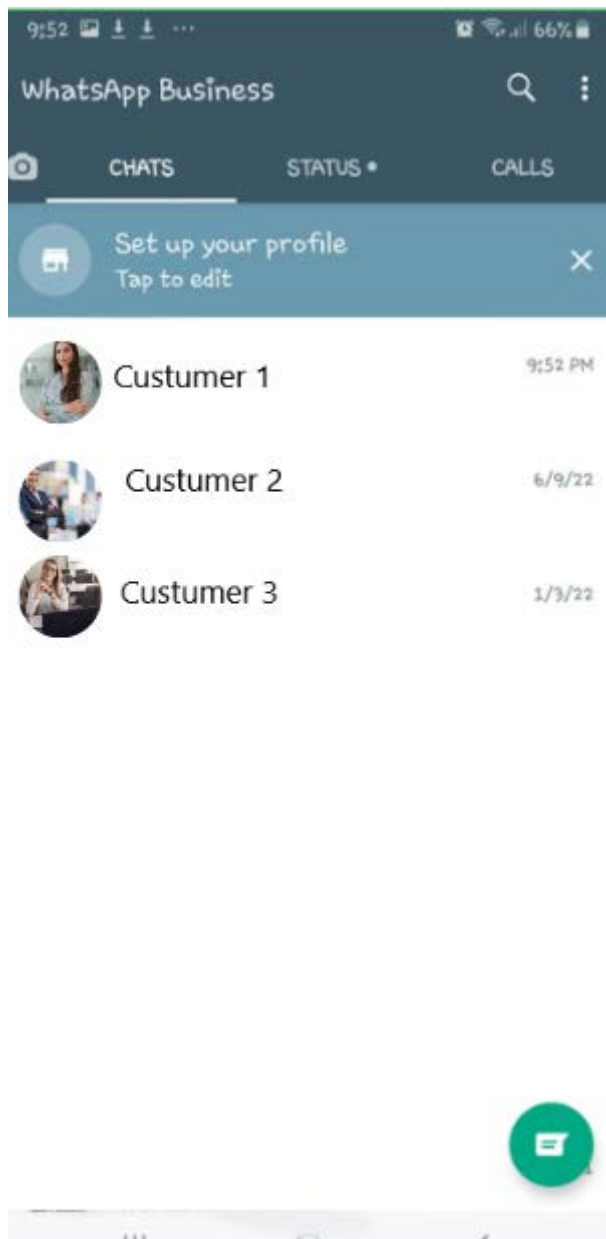
Description (Optional)  
Brindamos asesori

More fields

Note: (own elaboration)

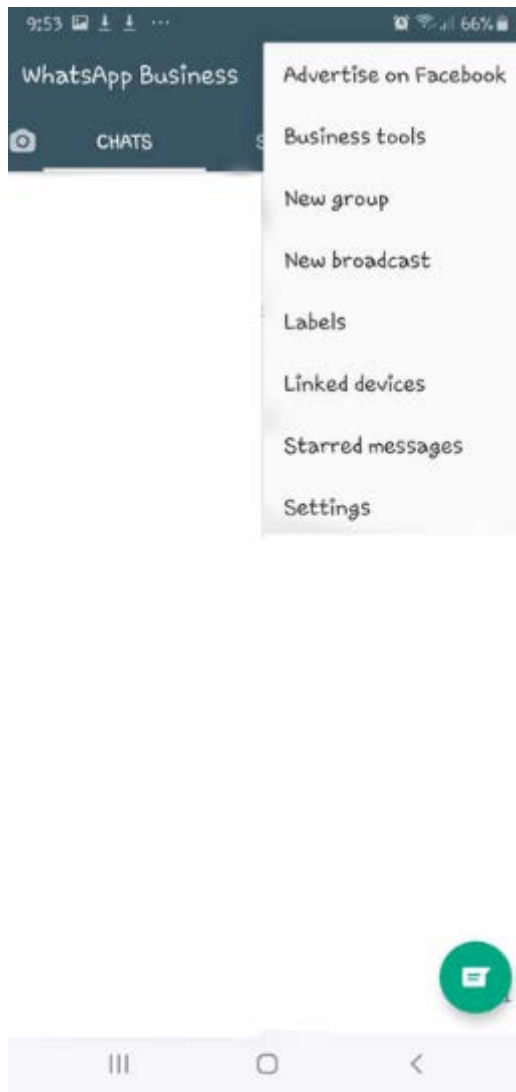
-The WhatsApp Business account is ready. You can chat with your customer.

Figure 64



Note: (own elaboration)

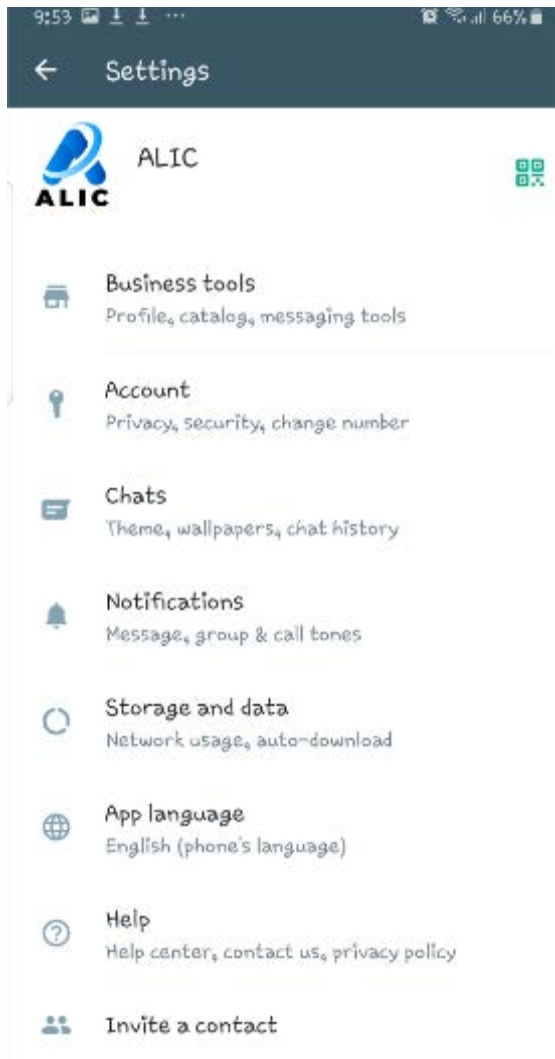
-Click on the three points in the top right corner to go to the settings option.

**Figure 65**

Note: (own elaboration).

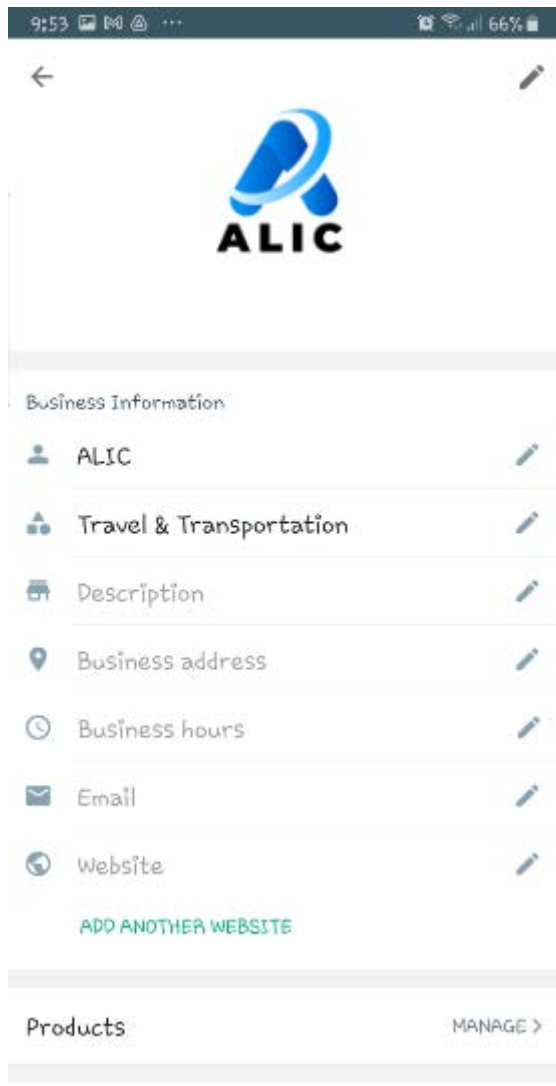
-Then click on the "account" option.

Figure 66



Note: (own elaboration).

-Here you can edit your name, category, description, address, schedule, email, and business web page.

**Figure 67**

Note: (own elaboration)

### **Step 2: Inquiry Chatbot.**

- Hire a chatbot to handle customer queries which will inform the customer about response times and service hours.

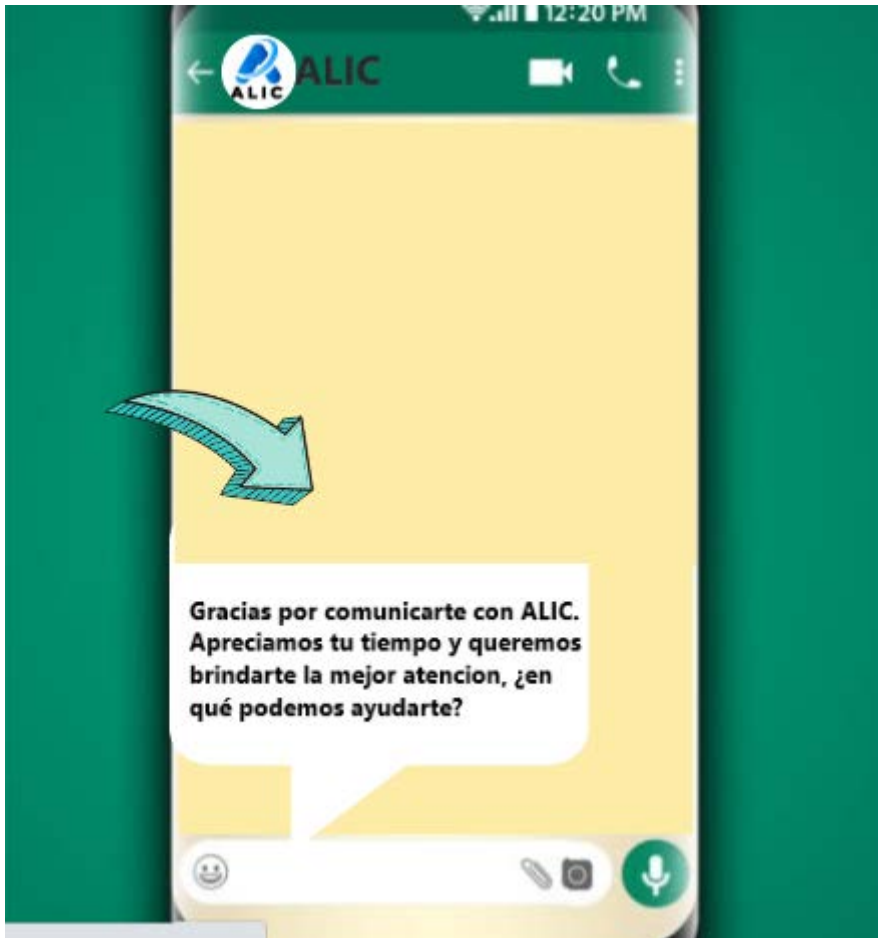
**Figure 68**



Note: (own elaboration).

- Adding response templates to the chatbot.

Figure 69



Note: (own elaboration).

- Aside from the chatbot, the community manager will need to assist with inquiries that may not be completely resolved by the chatbot, therefore, it is important the creation of templates with answers to frequently asked questions, to ensure that a certain level of confidentiality is established as mandatory when providing answers from the community manager. In addition, having previously developed answers will provide more agility to the person in charge of answering questions on WhatsApp, thus providing an efficient service that at the same time meets the expectations and regulations of the customs agency in terms of confidentiality.

### **Step 3: Statuses**



Upload publications to the “statuses” section in the WhatsApp Business app in order to keep customers informed about the company's function and information and at the same time keep reinforced the relationship with customers through the reply options that WhatsApp statuses have. Also, statuses should be frequent, e.g. periodic posts at least 2 or 3 per week.

-Post a status by tapping the camera icon and adding a photo or image.

**Figure 70**



Note: (taken from GCFGlobal, n.d).

### **5.3.3. Twitter strategy proposal:**

#### **Objective 1:**

To create a new Twitter Professional Business profile to boost international and national presence.

#### **Strategy:**

To have more visibility on the Twitter platform to reach both national and international customers through a Twitter Professional Business profile.

#### **Tactics:**

#### **Step 1: Create a Twitter Professional Business profile.**

To use the tools offered by Twitter for business-focused company profiles where you can segment the desired audience, for instance, by establishing time periods in which the tweets will be promoted, the range of age of the target market, localization of target market, budget, and amount of people to reach, etc.

It is essential to add the following information to the Twitter Professional Business account:

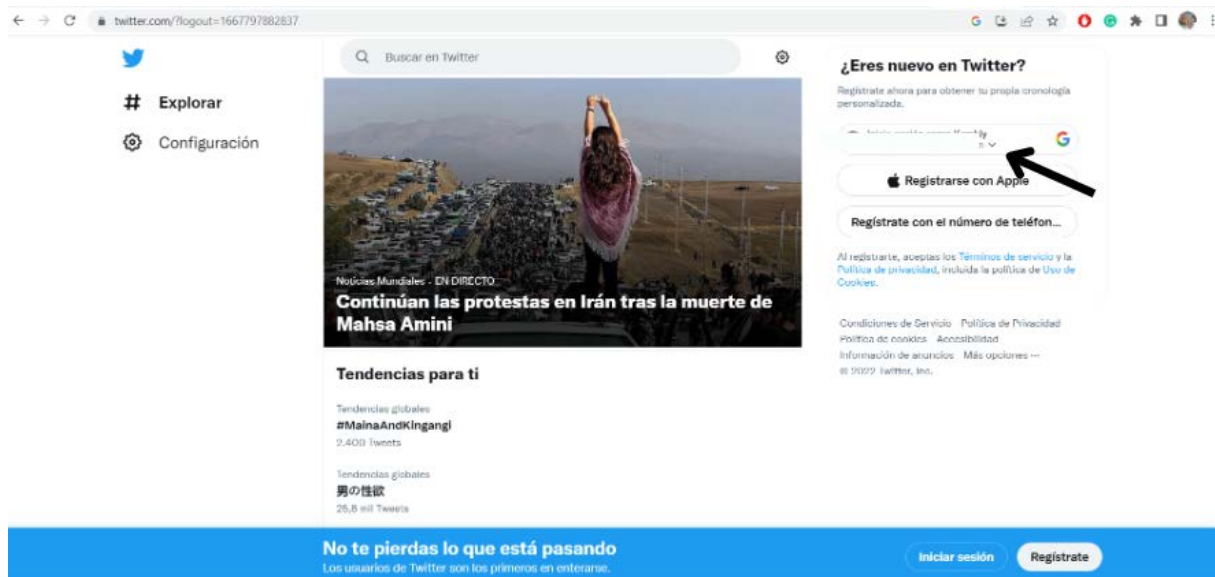
- A representative easy to remember name such as *Agencia Aduanal ALIC* and username @ALIC.
- A description with relevant keywords in Spanish and English.
- Contact channels, such as, phone number, email, physical address, Facebook, and Whatsapp accounts.

- The logo of the customs agency in order to relate the enterprise with this label image on the min of customers and potential customers.
- Maintain the range of blue colors and elements that represent the customs services as the main attributes of the label image.

### Steps to create a Twitter Business account.

-Go to Twitter.com and click on the symbol indicated with the arrow to choose a Google account to create your Twitter account. You can also register with Apple or your phone number.

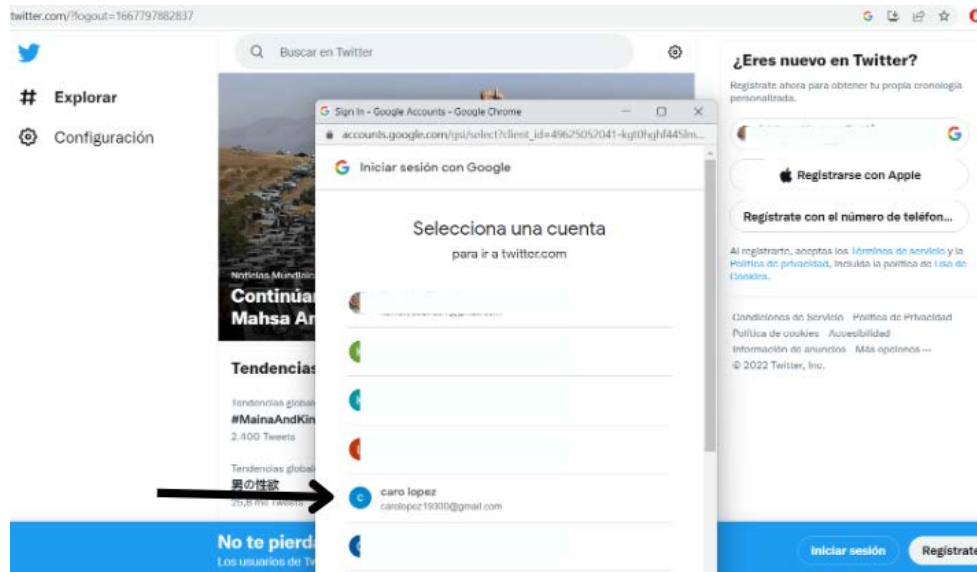
Figure 71



Note: (own elaboration).

-Then, if you have a Gmail account, you can select one of your accounts or create a new one. In this case, the email indicated by the arrow was clicked in order to select it, and then proceed to confirm your email by clicking at the bottom “To confirm”.

Figure 72



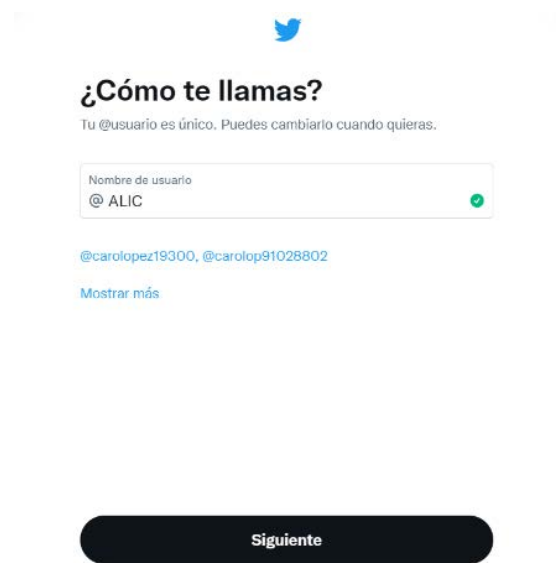
Note: (Own elaboration)

-The next step is to fill in the blanks with the requested information. If it is necessary, this information can be changed later.

Figure 73

Note: (own elaboration).

Figure 74



¿Cómo te llamas?

Tu @usuario es único. Puedes cambiarlo cuando quieras.

Nombre de usuario  
@ ALIC

@carolopez19300, @carolop91028802

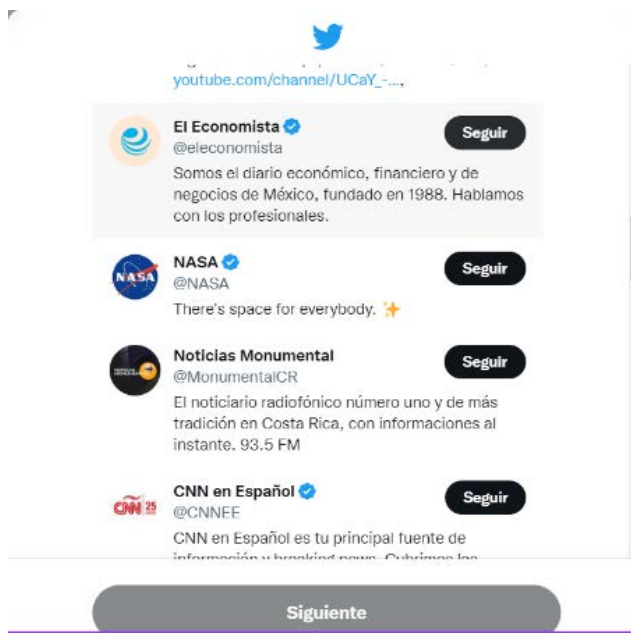
[Mostrar más](#)

Siguiente

Note: (own elaboration).

-Choose some accounts to follow. It is recommended that the accounts you start following are related to your business field in order to be more visible to people related to your customer profile.

Figure 75



Note: (own elaboration).

-Then, your Twitter account is created, however, it is necessary to change it into a professional account. Therefore, click on the “profile” option indicated with the arrow.

Figure 76



Note: (own elaboration)

-Click on "Edit profile".

**Figure 77**



Note: (own elaboration).

-Click on "Switch to professional".

Figure 78

× Editar perfil Guardar

Nombre  
Agencia Aduanal ALIC

Biografía  
ALIC (Agencia aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal) Régimen de Importación & Exportación, Zona Franca, 4 Aduanas de Operación.

Ubicación  
Costa Rica

Sitio web  
Encuétranos en Facebook y WhatsApp como Agencia Aduanal ALIC y

Fecha de nacimiento · [Editar](#)  
7 de febrero de 1990

Cambiar a profesional >

Note: (own elaboration).

-Type a short description of the business.



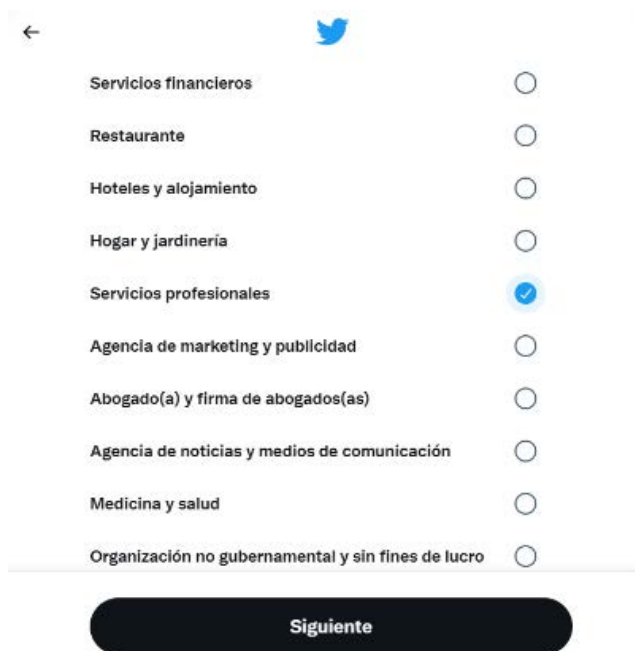
Figure 79



The screenshot shows a mobile interface for setting up a Twitter profile. At the top left is a back arrow, and at the top center is the Twitter bird logo. Below the logo is the heading "Cuéntanos sobre ti" (Tell us about you). Underneath is a sub-heading: "Agrega una descripción empresarial o una biografía personal para cambiar a una cuenta profesional." (Add a business description or a personal biography to switch to a professional account). A text input field is shown with a light blue border, containing the text "Régimen de Importación & Exportación, Zona Franca, 4 Aduanas de Operación." The field has a character count "122 / 160" in the top right corner. Below the input field is a large, dark blue rounded button with the text "Siguiete" (Next).

Note: (own elaboration).

-Select the type of business.

**Figure 80**

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter account creation screen. At the top left is a back arrow, and at the top right is the Twitter logo. Below these is a list of account types, each with a radio button to its right. The 'Servicios profesionales' option is selected, indicated by a blue checkmark inside its radio button. Below the list is a black button with the word 'Siguiente' in white text.

| Account Type                                       | Selected                         |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Servicios financieros                              | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Restaurante  | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Hoteles y alojamiento                              | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Hogar y jardinería                                 | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Servicios profesionales                            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| Agencia de marketing y publicidad                  | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Abogado(a) y firma de abogados(as)                 | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Agencia de noticias y medios de comunicación       | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Medicina y salud                                   | <input type="radio"/>            |
| Organización no gubernamental y sin fines de lucro | <input type="radio"/>            |

**Siguiente**

Note: (own elaboration).

-Select account type. For *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*, it is recommended to choose Enterprise account.

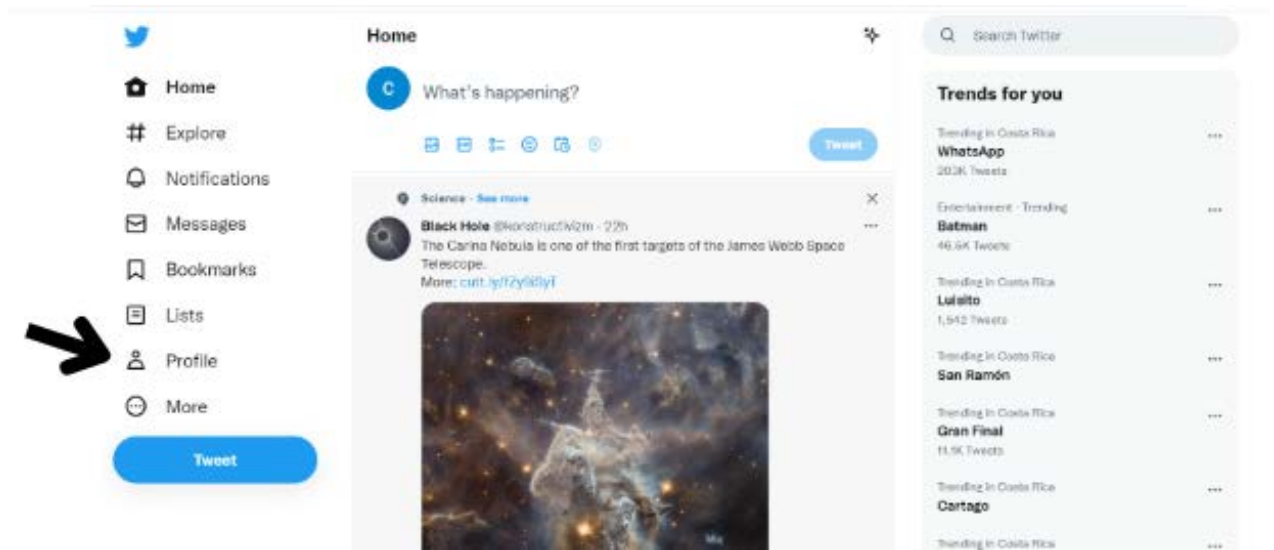
Figure 81



Note: (own elaboration).

-Now the Professional Business account was created, however, it is necessary to redesign the profile. Click on "Profile".

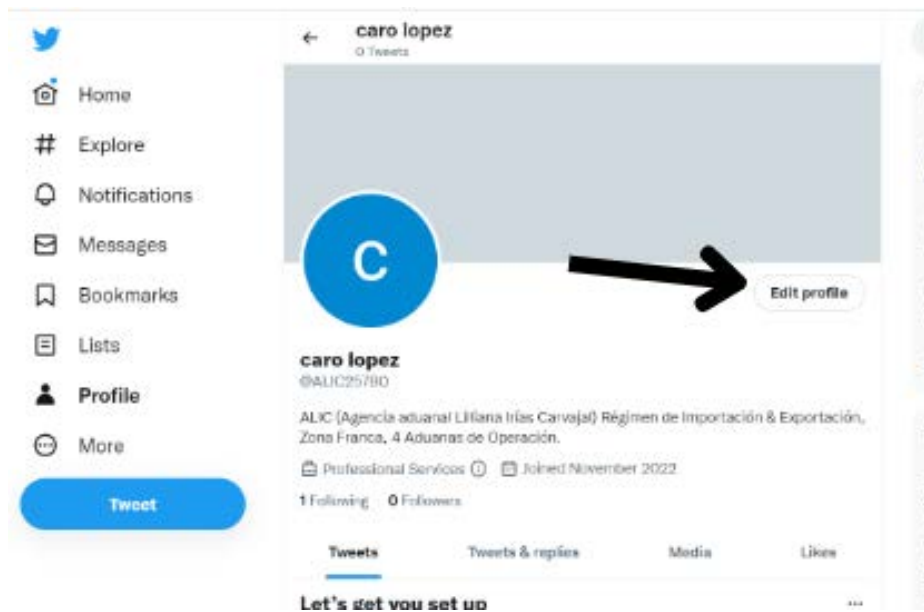
Figure 82



Note: (own elaboration).

-Click on "Edit profile".

Figure 83



Note: (own elaboration).

-Upload a cover photo that represents the company with contact information. Besides, add the logo as a profile photo in order to make your label easily identifiable. Then, add fill in the blanks with the requested information.

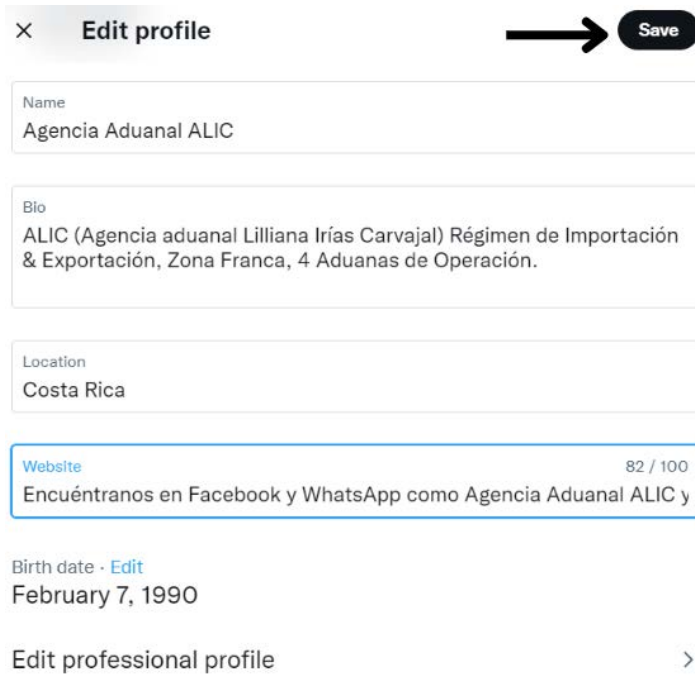
**Figure 84**

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for editing a profile. At the top, there is a close button (X) and the title 'Edit profile', followed by a 'Save' button. The main content area features a blue cover photo with the text 'Expertos en Logística Internacional y Carga' and the ALIC logo. Below the cover photo is a circular profile picture of the ALIC logo. Underneath, there are three input fields: 'Name' containing 'Agencia Aduanal ALIC', 'Bio' containing 'ALIC (Agencia aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal) Régimen de Importación & Exportación, Zona Franca, 4 Aduanas de Operación.', and 'Location' containing 'Costa Rica'. A vertical scrollbar is visible on the right side of the form.

Note: (own elaboration).

-It is recommended to add a description with the most important words to recognize the customs agency and to inform people what the agency is about. Besides, add keywords in English in order to make it visible to international customers. After all information, and photos are added, click on save.

**Figure 85**



× Edit profile → Save

Name  
Agencia Aduanal ALIC

Bio  
ALIC (Agencia aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal) Régimen de Importación & Exportación, Zona Franca, 4 Aduanas de Operación.

Location  
Costa Rica

Website 82 / 100  
Encuétranos en Facebook y WhatsApp como Agencia Aduanal ALIC y

Birth date · [Edit](#)  
February 7, 1990

[Edit professional profile](#) >

Note: (own elaboration).

-After clicking on the save option, your Professional Business Twitter account is created, and your profile will appear as it is shown in the following image.

**Figure 86**



Note: (own elaboration).

## Objective 2:

To increase digital participation in the Twitter social network as a means of international and national contact by creating content (Tweets).

## Strategy:

To improve interaction with customers through a Twitter Professional Business profile that contains posts and hashtags in both languages, English and Spanish in order to have an international and national virtual presence.

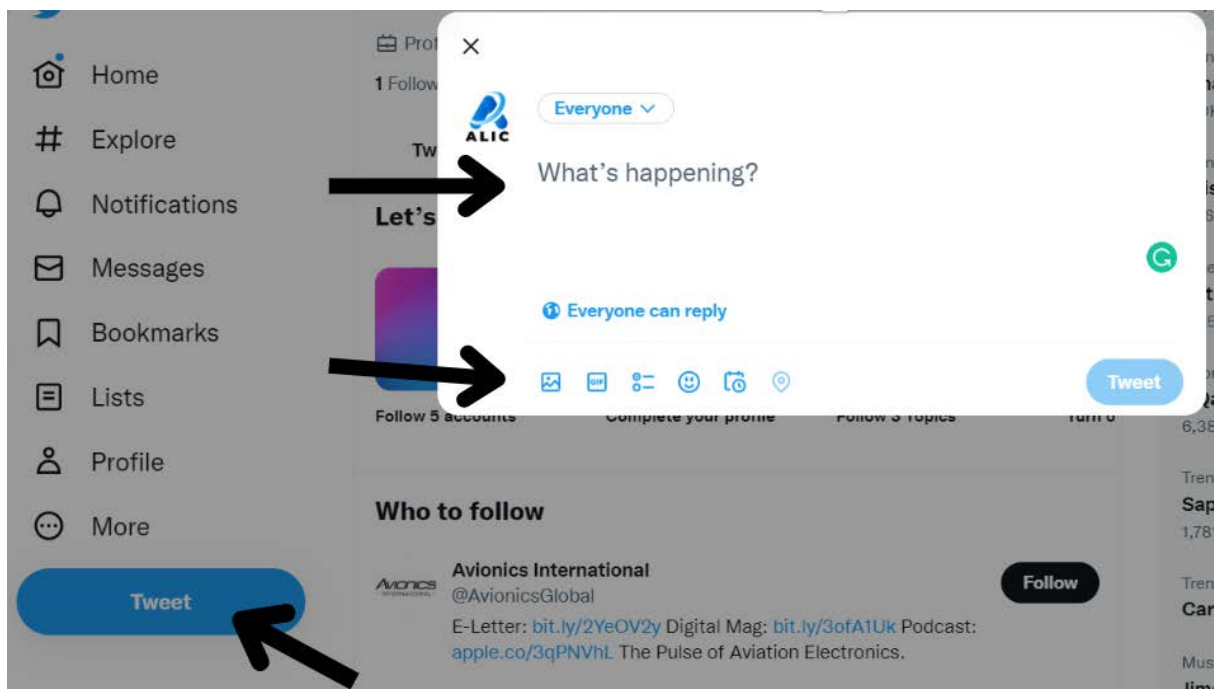
## Tactics:

### Step 1: To create content on Twitter (Tweet).

#### Steps to create a Tweet:

-Now that the Professional Business account is created, you can proceed to post Tweets by clicking on Tweet bottom, consecutively, add the text, image, GIF, location, emoji, survey, or schedule to create your tweet, and finally click on Tweet option on the right down corner of the pop-up.

**Figure 87**

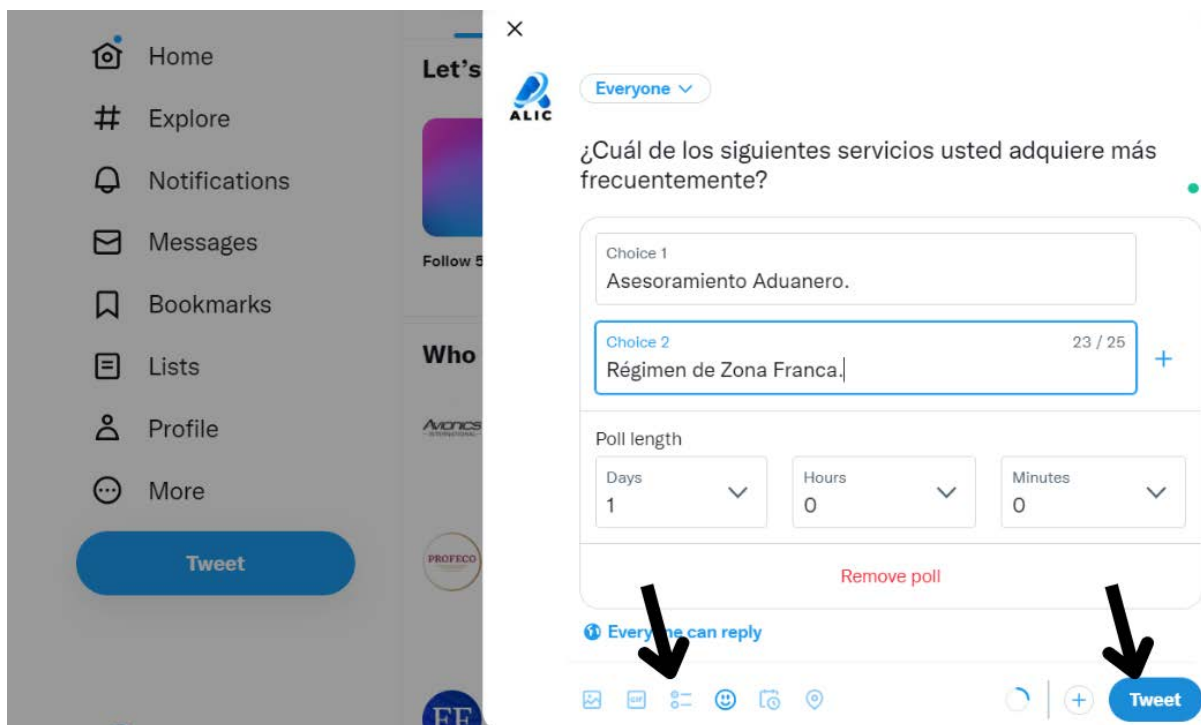


Note: (own elaboration).

-One Tweet example can be a poll. To create a poll you must click on the poll icon indicated by the arrow, fill in the blanks, and then click on Tweet.



Figure 88



Note: (own elaboration).

-Finally, the Tweet will appear on your profile. Moreover, you can promote the Tweet by clicking on the option "Promote" under the Tweet.

Figure 89



Note: (own elaboration).

## Step 2: Create attractive Tweets

- Tweets about the services: It must be in English and Spanish since English is essential to attract new international customers. It is also essential to always include hashtags in both languages (hashtags are further explained in the next objective). It is essential to present the services of the customs agency as was proposed in figure 53, however, there must be also images that present those services in English.

Figure 90



**ALIC SERVICES**

- IMPORT AND EXPORT ASSISTANCE.
- FREE ZONE REGIME.
- INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT CONSOLIDATION.
- CUSTOMS ADVISORY SERVICES

**Contact us!**

+506 22563544

ALIC

@ALIC

gerencia@agencialic.com

The graphic features a white airplane flying over a city at night, with the ALIC logo in the top right corner. The text is arranged in a clean, professional layout on the left side of the image.

Note: (own elaboration).

- The customs agency can also add text with images on the Tweet. According to Twitter (2022), Twitter has limitations on Tweet characteristics, such as text on the tweet can be up to 280 characters, and it can include up to 4 photos, one GIF, or one video. One example of a Tweet, is the following text that was created by using the Actshop method with an eye-catching image. Text:

Do you need to expand your business to Costa Rica?

Start exporting your goods with the help of *ALIC*.

Contact *ALIC*, and do not waste time! Start exporting to Costa Rica! *ALIC* helps you with export assistance at an excellent price!

Some hashtags alternatives to add under the text on the tweet:

#agenciaALIC #exportCostaRica #customsCostaRica #customsagency #CostaRicatrade  
#internationalfreight

**Figure 91**



**ALIC**

**EXPORT ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA.**

ALIC IS A COSTA RICAN CUSTOMS AGENCY THAT OFFERS CUSTOMS ASSISTANCE WITH QUALITY-PRICE EXCELLENCE.

**Contact us!**

+506 22563544

Agencia Aduanal ALIC

@ALIC

gerencia@agencialic.com

Note: (Own elaboration).

**Figure 92.** How the Tweet would look like.

 **ALIC** @ALIC 7s ...

Do you need to expand your business to Costa Rica?  
Start exporting your goods with the help of ALIC.  
Contact ALIC, and do not waste time! Start exporting to Costa Rica! ALIC helps you with export assistance at an excellent price!  
[#exportCostaRica](#) [#customsCostaRica](#) [#customsagency](#)



**EXPORT ASSISTANCE TO COSTA RICA.**

ALIC IS A COSTA RICAN CUSTOMS AGENCY THAT OFFERS CUSTOMS ASSISTANCE WITH QUALITY-PRICE EXCELLENCE.

**Contact us!**

+506 22563544   
 Agencia Aduanal ALIC   
 @ALIC   
 gerencia@agencialic.com 

**Promote**

Note: (own elaboration).

- Another suggestion applicable to Twitter, but also to Facebook and WhatsApp, is to make content with Quotes related to the customs and trade field in order to add an extra variety to the content, however, it must be related to the customs agency's service field, and this kind of content should not be the majority of tweets since it is essential to inform customers about other relevant information such as customs agency services, laws related to trade and customs, achievements of the customs agency, etc.

**Figure 93**



Note: (Own elaboration, quote taken from Quotefancy, 2022).

Figure 94



Note: (own elaboration, quote taken from Fedex, 2013).

- *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* can also include images on Tweets during special holidays.

Figure 95



Note: (Own elaboration)

### Objective 3:

To promote on Twitter in order to reach customers and offer more visibility to the customs agency in the international and national fields.

### Strategy:

To implement the use of promotion options available on Twitter, and add hashtags that contribute to the visibility of the agency's Twitter professional business profile.

### Tactics:

#### Step 1: Using hashtags as a strategy for greater reach on Twitter.

A post with the # symbol plus the keyword that encompasses the topic of the publication facilitates the search of who is interested in that topic. Besides, it should be taken into account that publications are taken advantage of because most of the time people

may react with several questions and comments about the service provided or simply an opinion of the business, as a result, it is necessary to respond quickly and establish solid communication with the followers.

According to Dorney (2022) “On Twitter, adding a “#” to the beginning of an unbroken word or phrase creates a hashtag. When you use a hashtag in a Tweet, it becomes linked to all of the other Tweets that include it” (para. 3). Based on this, *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* should follow these instructions on how to add hashtags on their posts; therefore, it would be a good practice to start creating their own elaborations regarding this function.

To create a hashtag, it must have the # symbol before the phrase chosen as the most relevant one that represents the post. Also, it is important that the phrase or word does not contain spaces or be too long. Also, hashtags should be both in Spanish and English to be present in national and international user searches on Twitter. Finally, some alternatives of hashtags to twitter posts of the agency are as follows:

#agenciaALIC #ALICresoluciones #comunicadosALIC #circularesALIC

#noticiasaduanas

#aduanasCR. #internationaltrade #aduana #cargainternacional #wto

#worldtradeorganization #customsagency #ALICcustomsagency #CostaRiacustoms

#CostaRicaaduana #internationalfreight #customsclearance.

## **Step 2: Create a promotion for the content.**

### **Steps to create a promotion.**

-Click on the option "Promote" under a Tweet.

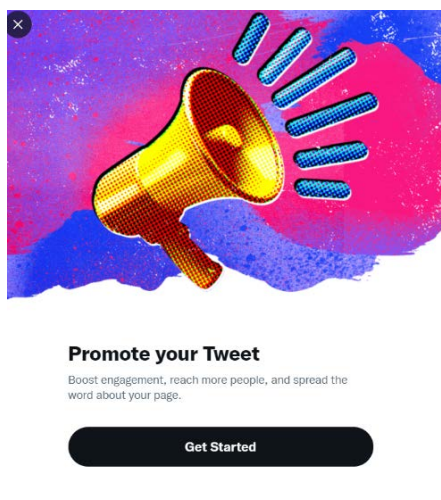
## **Figure 96**



Note: (own elaboration).

-Then, this pop-up will appear, and you should select "Get started" option.

**Figure 97**



Note: (own elaboration).

-Select your goal, and click next.

**Figure 98**



←

What's your goal?

- Increase engagement
- Grow your followers
- More link clicks

**⚠ Add a link to your Tweet**  
Make sure your Tweet includes a link.

Help me choose the right goal. [Learn more](#)

Next

Note: (own elaboration).

-Specify the characteristics of the people you need to reach.

**Figure 99**

Who do you want to reach?

**Location**  
Costa Rica >

**Age range**  
18 ————— 55+

**Gender**  
Any Gender >

Next

Note: (own elaboration).

-Choose the budget you would like to spend, and the duration of the promotion.

**Figure 100**

The screenshot displays a configuration screen for a promotion. At the top, it asks "How much do you want to spend?" and shows a selected budget of "\$20 over 2 days" in blue text. Below this, it states "Estimated reach of 83 - 450 people per day". There are two sliders: "Daily budget" with a range from \$10 to \$5,000 and a blue dot at \$20; and "Duration" with a range from 1 day to 30 days and a blue dot at 2 days. A disclaimer at the bottom reads "Estimated reach is approximate. Actual reach for this promotion can't be guaranteed." A large black button labeled "Next" is at the bottom.

**How much do you want to spend?**

**\$20 over 2 days**

Estimated reach of 83 - 450 people per day

**Daily budget**

\$10  \$5,000

**Duration**

1 day  30 days

Estimated reach is approximate. Actual reach for this promotion can't be guaranteed.

**Next**

Note: (own elaboration).

-Review the information you chose, and proceed to add a payment method by clicking on the section indicated by the arrow. Finally, click on "Create promotion".

**Figure 101**

## Does everything look OK?

**Promotion goal**

Engagements

**Audience**

Location: Costa Rica

Age range: 18+

Gender: Any Gender

**Your budget**

\$10 per day for 2 days

**Payment method**

[Sign up and add payment details](#)

>

**Total**

\$20.00

**Create promotion**

By clicking Create Promotion, you're indicating that you have read and agree to the [Twitter Terms and Advertising Guidelines](#).

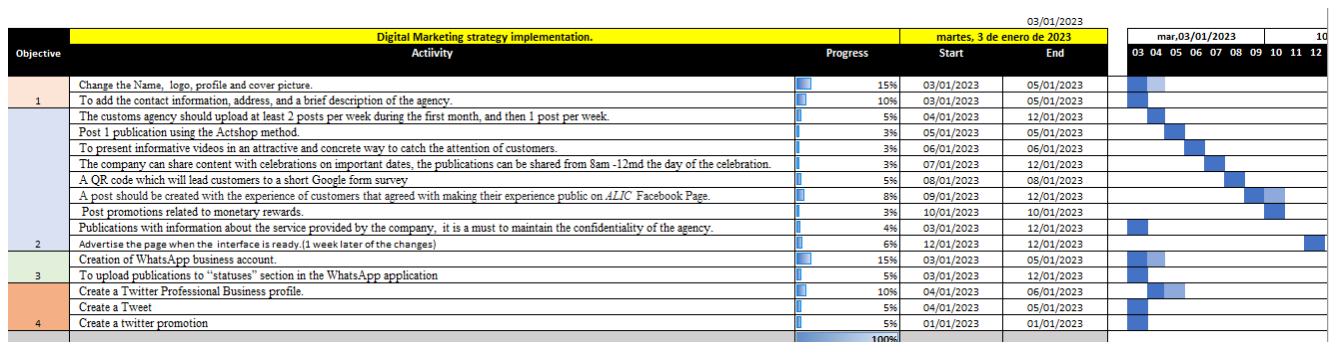
Note: (own elaboration).

## 6. Gantt Chart

The Gantt Chart allows the community manager or other members of the team to manage the tasks with deadlines for each task, besides the person who makes an advance on the task can change the percentages in the “Progress sections which will lead the color segments to mark the progress. The Gantt Chart acts like a guide for making sure that resources will be invested with a purpose and in a factual schedule. It is recommended to use this monitoring method to check and delegate tasks, as well as to identify if the goal is being achieved on time, or not achieved at all.

**Figure 102. The complete version of the recommended Gantt Chart for ALIC.**

**Figure 102**



Note: (own elaboration)

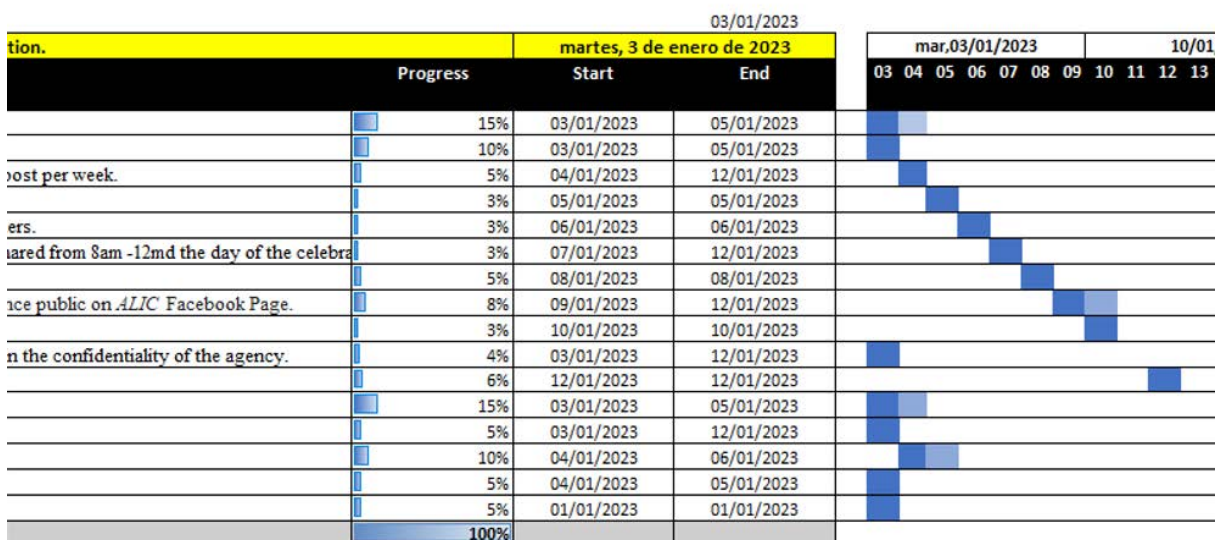
### Zoom version of recommended Gantt Chart for ALIC:

**Figure 103**

| Digital Marketing strategy implementation. |  |          |
|--|--|----------|
| Objective                                  | Activity   | Progress |
| 1  | Change the Name, logo, profile and cover picture.  | 15%      |
|  | To add the contact information, address, and a brief description of the agency.  | 10%      |
| 2  | The customs agency should upload at least 2 posts per week during the first month, and then 1 post per week.                             | 5%       |
|  | Post 1 publication using the Actshop method.   | 3%       |
|  | To present informative videos in an attractive and concrete way to catch the attention of customers.                                     | 3%       |
|  | The company can share content with celebrations on important dates, the publications can be shared from 8am -12md the day of the celebra | 3%       |
|  | A QR code which will lead customers to a short Google form survey  | 5%       |
|  | A post should be created with the experience of customers that agreed with making their experience public on ALIC Facebook Page.         | 8%       |
|  | Post promotions related to monetary rewards.   | 3%       |
|  | Publications with information about the service provided by the company, it is a must to maintain the confidentiality of the agency.     | 4%       |
|  | Advertise the page when the interface is ready.(1 week later of the changes)   | 6%       |
|  | Creation of WhatsApp business account.   | 15%      |
| 3  | To upload publications to "statuses" section in the WhatsApp application   | 5%       |
|  | Create a Twitter Professional Business profile.  | 10%      |
| 4  | Create a Tweet   | 5%       |
|  | Create a twitter promotion   | 5%       |
|  |  | 100%     |

Note: (own elaboration)

Figure 104



Note: (own elaboration).

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

### 7.1. Conclusions

*Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* lacks an updated and interactive digital profile through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp that may encourage clients to acquire the services of the agency. The enterprise has not invested in digital marketing so far. One of the main recommendations to improve digital marketing resources is to hire a community manager. Some of the tasks of this job position would be creating attractive posts, answering and reacting to comments or inquiries by chats, and updating all virtual pages. Furthermore, the current digital profile of the company does not include summarized information about the services of the agency; this aspect may also be managed by an expert in this field. Moreover, the Facebook page does not display a company's short presentation which is essential since it allows clients to have an overall view of the agency. The deficient implementation of social networks as a marketing tool is a factor that may influence the competition with other companies in a negative way since those are present in the virtual networks and provide the same service. In this research, it was observed that there are customs agencies that have interactive posts to attract potential customers and keep regular customers informed about their services. As it may be concluded, the company under study is not taking full advantage of social networks which is; unquestionably, a competitive disadvantage. During the study, it was determined that there are customs agencies that do not give priority to investments in digital marketing strategies in social networks, however, it was found that the customs agencies that have implemented digital marketing strategies, stated that these strategies were efficient in their companies. They mention Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp as the most effective.

Although *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* has limitations in the use of its digital platforms, there is an opportunity for improvement in this area. Strategies focused on the correct use of social networks to reach both national and international clients have been analyzed and suggested in this study. Digital marketing strategies in customs agencies seem to be developed in a confidential way, i.e., not to share information that may affect the company's sensitive information. Even the customs agencies that participated in the instruments stressed confidentiality in their responses. That is why it is necessary for the company to establish limits on the information or content that can be shared on social networks. An example of sensitive information is the prices of services.

In conclusion, the research has determined that digital marketing not only goes hand in hand with current business trends, but it is also a necessity in any company willing to transform and adapt to the most updated digital marketing strategies.

## 7.2. Recommendations

The Facebook account should contain a profile presentation including the services, and information regarding operations performed by the company. Thus, the customer can have an overview of the service obtained from the *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*. The company's presentation should be located in the Facebook section called information hence this section would be the first part the user may read, and at the same time, it would make the page more aesthetic with the organized information.

The publications should generate interest in the users to encourage reading about them and sharing as well, and find an attractive solution through the services of *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*. Therefore, it is recommended that the content shared by using posts should contain the Actshop method based on 3 fundamental pillars:

- Customer problem: It will allow the user to feel identified with a problem presented in the post which is related to a personal issue of the user that needs a solution.
- The solution to the problem: The customer is interested in the service since it is visible the advantage or help that will be received through the service.
- Call to action to purchase: It must be a motivating phrase that encourages the customer to connect directly with the company just through a click to acquire the service.

The number associated with the Whatsapp account must have a company account called Whatsapp Business. It is an option provided by this social network that will allow the customs agency Lilliana Irias Carvajal not only to connect with customers, but also to provide detailed information about the service by using automatic messages every time a customer contacts the agency, and it can be through a greeting, a question about the customer needs, and the approximate time in which the client will get a response. Whatsapp business may make the company closer to the client and generate trust in the acquisition of



the service. Moreover, through Whatsapp, the company can share statuses with experiences of other customers, promotions, and relevant information about its operations, among others.

The social media accounts must be constantly updated to make the clients aware of the company's presence on Facebook and Twitter, and to spread the latest news and operations of the customs agency. Due to this need, the company should start making periodic publications at least 2 or 3 per week with messages related to the service, company experience, customer experience, promotions, and new services which may generate traffic within the social network making the page an accessible way to have direct contact with *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* for obtaining the service.

*Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* must have accounts for businesses in social networks since platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have this modality to facilitate the work of companies in social networks through tools where it is possible to measure the online traffic, the people that the publications reach, the organic positioning in the search results page and profile appearance of the company in social networks, audience segmentation, and more in which the agency can take advantage of to offer its services in an intentional way.

Having a community manager responsible for the social networks of the agency to implement strategies may prove valuable to increase the clients' interest and to have them involved in the publications. To increase the interest may contribute to keeping up with the competitors' options and potential customers. The community manager should have vast experience in developing marketing campaigns in social networks and should create and design content to maintain activity in social networks as well as selecting someone who transmits trust and does not reveal confidential information of the company.

Another relevant tool to follow up clients' interest may be the implementation of bots or the free automatic messages, for instance, automatic free messages included on Whats App Business, in order to improve the messaging area on Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp. This strategy may provide agility in tasks and customer inquiries, as long as it is programmed to share the necessary information, such as the services the company offers, quotes, contact information, etc. Nowadays, companies are using these tools to assist customers' needs in a more efficient way.

Additionally, the customs agency should participate in seminars, conventions and talks that would enrich knowledge regarding digital marketing trends, or either delegate to a person such as the community manager or a company collaborator. Constant training may contribute to adapt to the worldwide changes and the necessities of the national and international market by offering innovative alternatives.

The social networks of the company must frequently update, for example, the page content, the description of the company's services, the clients' opinion to boost competitive advantages and identify opportunities for improvement. Twitter seems to be the best alternative because this social network can provide the company with the scope about current events and contributes to building engagement with current customers as well as to increase brand recognition.

Finally, in case the agency cannot immediately find the collaboration of a community manager to manage its social networks, an additional resource was elaborated that serves as a guide with different ideas in order to enable *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal* to redesign its social networks and create attractive content for its clients by its own means. This guide is a handbook that can be found in Annexes Section VII .

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## 9. Annexes

### 9.1. Section I: Instrument #1 Interview with the owner.

This instrument aims to obtain the necessary information during the research process on the Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*, thus part of it aims to collect the required data, in order to provide information for the first objective to support the analysis of the Internal Situation of the Customs Agency. This project is part of the Licenciatura Degree in English with Business Management Training. The results obtained are confidential and will only be used for qualitative research purposes.

Date: 06/02/2022

Applied by: Kembly Dayana Obando Alán, Nick Vega, and Fernanda Rodriguez Villalobos.

Questions and answers of the interview regarding the Digital Marketing Strategy used:

1. What are the social networks most used by the company, and how are they used to promote the agency?

Translation: ¿Cuáles son las redes sociales más utilizadas por la compañía, y cómo son utilizadas para promocionar la empresa?

2. Do you apply any digital marketing strategy on social networks? If your answer is yes, how do you apply it? If the answer is no, what goals would you like to achieve with a digital marketing strategy on social networks, and why?

Translation: ¿Aplica usted alguna estrategia de marketing digital en redes sociales?

Si la respuesta es sí, ¿Cómo la aplica? Si la respuesta es no, ¿Cuáles objetivos le gustaría alcanzar con la estrategia de marketing digital en redes sociales, y por qué?

3. What do you think about boosting digital marketing in the company? Do you consider that investing in digital marketing on social media is necessary? Please,

justify your answer.

Translation: ¿Qué piensa usted sobre impulsar el marketing digital en la compañía?

¿Considera usted necesario invertir en marketing digital en las redes sociales? Por favor justifique su respuesta.

4. In the case that the company does not have a digital marketing plan, do you prefer to hire experts in this field, or do you prefer to learn about this topic by yourself, and develop the company's Digital Marketing on your own? Please, justify your answer.

Translation: En el caso en que la compañía no cuente con un plan de marketing digital, ¿usted prefiere contratar expertos en esta área o prefiere aprender sobre este tema por usted misma y desarrollar el Marketing Digital de la empresa por su propia cuenta? Por favor, justifique su respuesta.

5. What would you like to change about the way the company's social networks are managed?

Translation: ¿Qué le gustaría cambiar en cuanto al manejo de las redes sociales de la empresa?

Note: (own elaboration)

## 9.2. Section II: Instrument #2 Checklist directed to the CEO.

This instrument aims to observe and gather data during the research process on the “Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*”. This project is part of the Licenciatura Degree in English with Business Management Training. The information is kept confidential and will only be used for observational research purpose

Date of application: 06/20/2022

Applied by: Kembly Dayana Obando Alán and Nick Vega.

Checklist directed to CEO.

| 1. External Situation   | YES      | NO       | N/A | Observations / Write any comment that may illustrate your answer  |
|---|----------|----------|-----|---|
| <p>1-Does the company know their customers` profile? (Profile: characteristics and preferences of customers.)</p> <p>Translation:</p> <p>1-¿Conoce cuál es el perfil del cliente de la compañía?</p>  | <b>X</b> |          |     | <p>-A person who looks for logistics and export consulting.</p>   |
| <p>2-Does the company know the needs or preferences of its customers in the use of social media?</p> <p>Translation:</p> <p>2-¿La compañía conoce las preferencias y necesidades de sus clientes con respecto al uso de las redes sociales?</p>                           |          | <b>X</b> |     | <p>- The agency does not have an active Facebook or Twitter account. Twitter has been used to contact international customers.</p> <p>-The agency does not have Whatsapp or Telegram.</p> <p>-The main channels for customer communication are email and phone calls.</p> <p>-Word of mouth is the primary way in which the agency has been promoted.</p> |
| <p>3-Are you aware of your competitors' approach to digital marketing in social media?</p> <p>Translation:</p> <p>3-¿Conoce el marketing digital en redes sociales usado por sus competidores?</p>  | <b>X</b> |          |     | <p>-Participants affirm that competitors manage marketing in the same way as <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i>.</p> <p>-Competitors use Twitter and Facebook. Competitors also use Twitter for international contact.</p>  |
| <p>4-Do you consider that evaluating your digital marketing on social media in comparison to your competitors is necessary? Please explain.</p> <p>Translation:</p> <p>4-¿Considera necesario evaluar su estrategia de marketing en redes sociales en comparación con</p> | <b>X</b> |          |     | <p>-Participants consider that an evaluation would be necessary only if a formal project to reactivate social media marketing.</p> <p>-The agency will not be</p>   |

|   |          |          |  |  |
|---|----------|----------|--|--|
| la de sus competidores?   |          |          |  | willing to post tariffs of the services offered on public posts on social media since it is confidential information that competitors can take advantage of.                                       |
| <b>2. Customer Engagement</b>   |          |          |  |  |
| 5-Do customers show interest in the services provided by the customs agency through social networks?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>5-¿Muestran los clientes interés por los servicios que provee la <i>Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal</i> gracias a la redes sociales?  | <b>X</b> |          |  | -The most visited social media was Facebook in which customers looked for tariffs, job opportunities, and consulting.<br><br>-The agency does not frequently check its profile on social networks. |
| 6-Does the company use any method or indicator in which its customers evaluate their level of satisfaction with the service they obtained?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>6- ¿Utiliza la compañía algún método o indicador para evaluar el nivel de satisfacción de los clientes de acuerdo al servicio que ellos obtienen? |          | <b>X</b> |  | -The agency has never applied an evaluation of customer satisfaction with the service.<br><br>-The agency has measured customer satisfaction only by the voluntary feedback provided by clients.   |
| 7-Is there a continuous interaction between the company and its customers through the available digital media?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>7-¿Existe una continua interacción entre la compañía y sus clientes a través de los medios digitales disponibles?   |          | <b>X</b> |  | -There is no interaction since the has never existed a project to have digital marketing on social media, as a result, social media is not active.   |
| <b>3. Brand awareness</b>   |          |          |  |  |
| 8-Is the company committed to creating digital content for brand awareness?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>8-¿Está la empresa comprometida con la   |          | <b>X</b> |  | -Currently, it is not a priority.  |

|  |  |          |  |   |
|--|--|----------|--|---|
| creación de contenidos digitales para dar a conocer la marca?  |  |          |  |   |
| 9-Does the company know which platforms generate the most online presence?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>9-¿Considera que la compañía es consciente de las redes sociales que debe tener como prioridad para tener más presencia y actividad digital?                       |  | <b>X</b> |  | -Currently, it is not a priority since there is no digital marketing on social media projects established.<br><br>-There is no one in charge of managing the social networks. |
| 10-Does the company represent the value of the services and what makes it unique through digital advertising?<br><br>Translation:<br><br>10-¿Considera que la compañía expresa por completo el valor y singularidad de sus servicios por medio de la publicidad digital? |  | <b>X</b> |  | -Agency's social networks are not active.   |

Note: (own elaboration).

### 9.3 Section III: Instrument #3 Survey to the regular customers.

This instrument aims to compile and gather the necessary data during the research process on the “Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*”. This project is part of the *Licenciatura* Degree in English with Business Management Training. The information provided is confidential and will only be used for quantitative research purposes. Please answer at your earliest convenience the following questions:

External situation:

1) Select the social media platform/s that you prefer the customs agency to use when advertising its services. You may choose more than one. Briefly justify your answer for those selected.



|           |  | Justify |
|-----------|--|---------|
| Telegram  |  |         |
| Twitter   |  |         |
| Linkedin  |  |         |
| Facebook  |  |         |
| Skype     |  |         |
| Instagram |  |         |
| Whatsapp  |  |         |

2) Which of the following do you consider to be attractive for a company to have in terms of its use of social networks? (You may select more than one)

- a) It allows the opportunity to rate the services provided through social networks
- b) Higher interaction with customers on social networks
- c) A better advertising strategy on social networks
- d) A more visually attractive content
- e) Other

Customer engagement:

3) How would you rate the interactions on the social networks of this company?

1 2 3 4 5

The number 1 represents the lowest  
level of satisfaction.

The number 5 represents the highest  
level of satisfaction

4) Which of the following elements are essential for a good experience of buying or consulting services on social networks? (Select the letter that best represents your opinion, and you may select more than one)

- a) Information on payment methods.
- b) General information of the company services and its contact.
- c) Check reviews given by other users.
- d) Fast response to queries

5) Would you choose the services of this customs agency again? Please justify your answer.

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

Brand awareness:

6) How often do you see attractive content about the services provided by the company?

- a) Very often (Once a day)
- b) Often (Once a week)
- c) Rarely (Once a month)
- d) Never

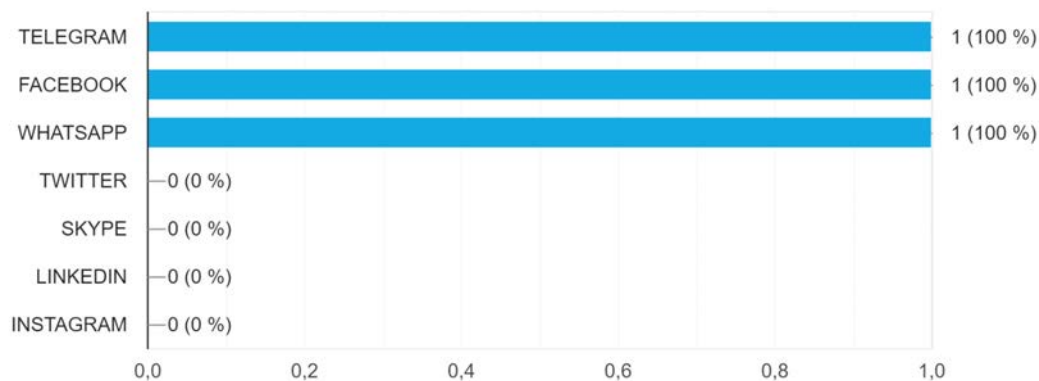
7) Would you like to leave us a comment about what you would improve in the social networks managed by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*? (Optional)

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: (own elaboration)

1-Seleccione la/s plataforma/s de redes sociales que usted preferiría que la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal utilice para anunciar sus servicios. Puede elegir más de una.

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

Basado en la pregunta anterior, comente el motivo de la selección de las redes sociales que a usted más prefiere:

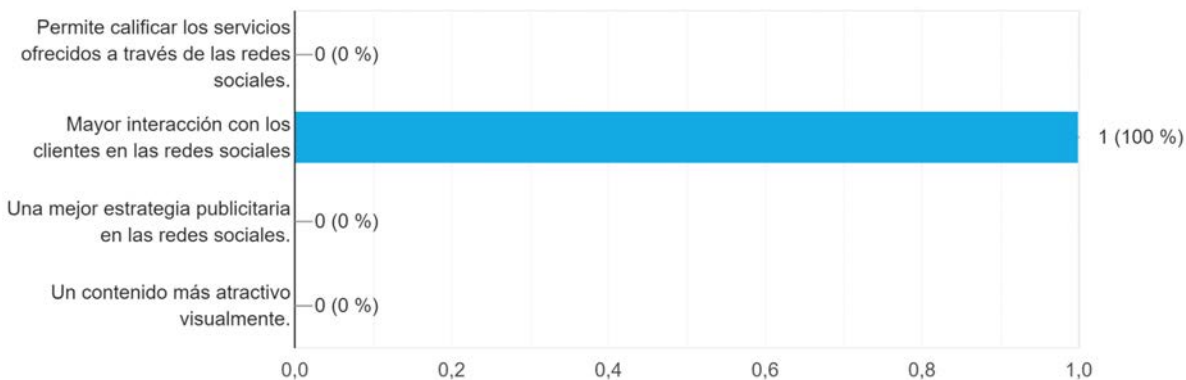
1 respuesta

Mayor acceso

Note: (own elaboration).

2- ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones considera usted que son llamativas que una empresa tenga en cuanto al uso de las redes sociales? (Puede seleccionar más de una).

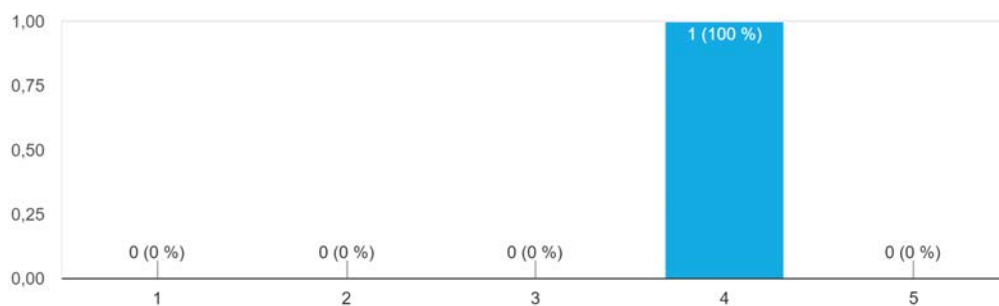
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration)

3-¿Cómo calificaría usted la interacción y utilización de las redes sociales por parte de la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal?

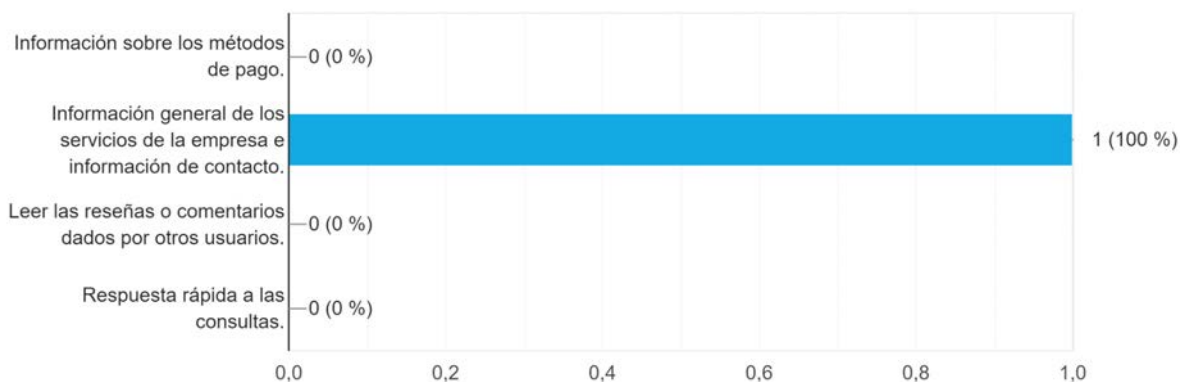
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration)

4-Para usted, ¿Cuáles de los siguientes elementos son esenciales para tener una buena experiencia de compra o consulta de servicios en las redes sociales? (Puede seleccionar varios).

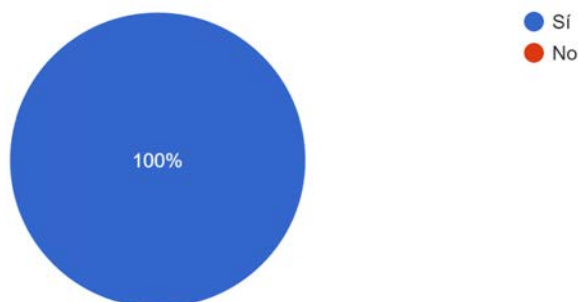
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration)

5-¿Volvería a elegir los servicios de la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal?

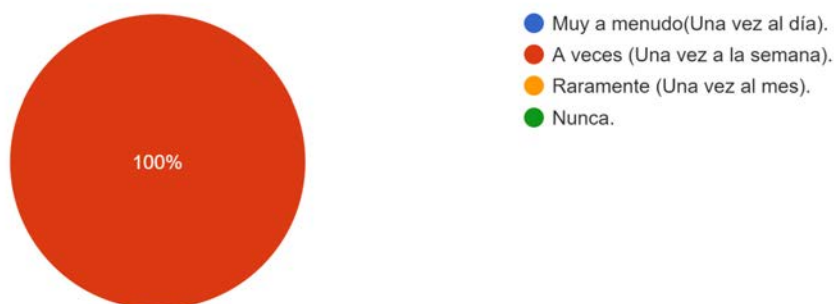
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration)

6-¿Con qué frecuencia ve las publicaciones en las redes sociales sobre los servicios que brinda la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal?

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

#### 9.4. Section IV: Instrument #4 Survey to the regular customers.

This survey is intended to collect the necessary data during the research process regarding the Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*; therefore, the variables that are part of the third objective that includes Marketing Segmentation, Social Media Marketing and Marketing Mix the “7ps” will be taken into account. This project is part of the Licenciatura Degree in English with Business Management Training program. The information provided

is confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes of the research. Please answer the following questions:

Market segmentation:

- 1) Select one of the options that represent the experience of your business.
  - a.  Less than 2 years.
  - b.  From 2 to 5 years.
  - c.  From 6 to 10 years.
  - d.  From 11 to 25 years.
  - e.  More than 25 years.
  
- 2) Select one of the following provinces where your company is located? In case your company does not belong to any of the following options, please indicate your location.  

|                                   |                                     |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> San José | <input type="checkbox"/> Guanacaste | <input type="checkbox"/> Puntarenas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alajuela | <input type="checkbox"/> Heredia    |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartago  | <input type="checkbox"/> Limón      |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abroad.  |                                     |                                     |

3) What type of industry do you or your company belong to?

---

Social media marketing

- 4) At what moment of the day do you prefer to use social networks?  
 Early morning (1:00 am-5:00 am)  
 Morning (5:00 am-11:00 am)  
 Afternoon (12:00 pm-5:00 pm)

Evening (5:00 pm-11:00 pm)

Midnight (11:00 pm-12:00 am)

Marketing Mix, 7ps

Product:

5) Which of the following services do you acquire most frequently in *Agencia Aduanal*

*Lilliana Irias Carvajal*?

Assistance and paperwork related to the Import Regime

Assistance and paperwork related to the Export Regime

Free Zone Regime

International cargo consolidation

Customs consultancy services

Price:

6) Do you consider the services provided by *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal* company offer a competitive price? Please explain.

Yes

No

Other

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Promotion:

7) What kind of promotions about services do you prefer to see on digital social media platforms? (Multiple choice)

Referral discounts

Discounts

Digital Vouchers and coupons

Loyalty programs promotions

Contests and Giveaways

Service bundles and gifts

Discount for special events

Place:

8) Select the type of device you mostly use to obtain services through digital platforms.

(Single Selection)

a) Smartphone

b) Computer

c) Tablet

d) Other

People:

9) Have you received assistance through the social networks of the company to solve queries? If so, do they meet the standards of quick response, being helpful, well-trained, and highly informed about the customs services offered?

Standards are met.

Standards are not met.

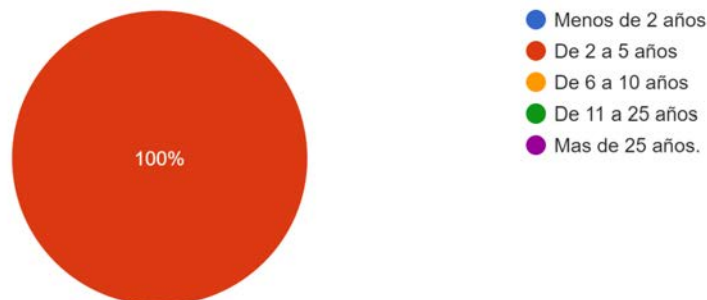
Standards are lightly met.

Other

Note: (own elaboration)

7- Seleccione la opción que represente el tiempo de experiencia que tiene su negocio:

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).



8- Seleccione dónde se localiza su compañía.

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

9- ¿A que tipo de industria pertenece su empresa o a la que usted le trabaja?

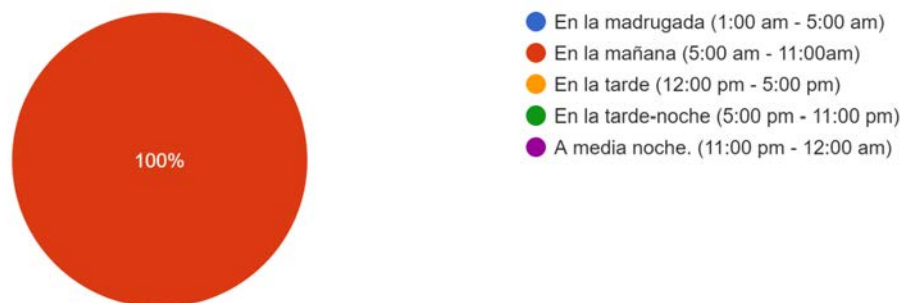
1 respuesta

Importacion

Note: (own elaboration).

10-¿En qué momento del día usted prefiere utilizar las redes sociales?

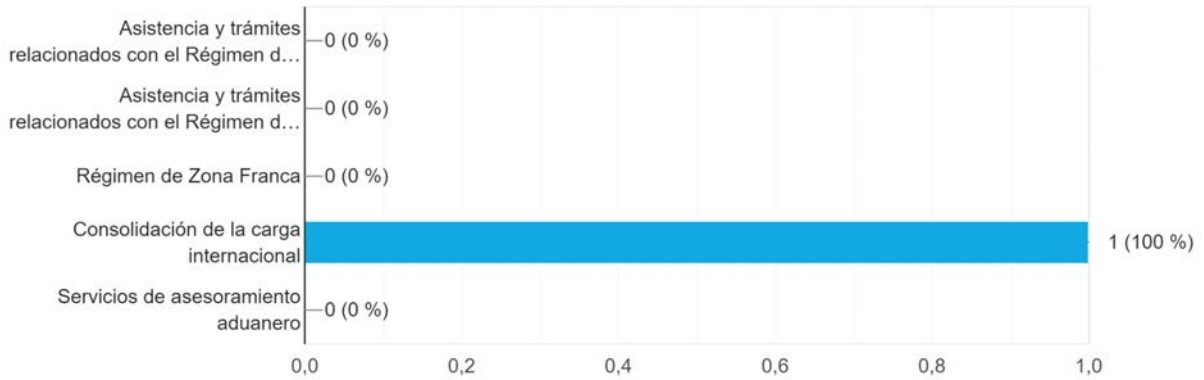
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

11-¿Cuáles de los siguientes servicios usted adquiere más frecuentemente en la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal?

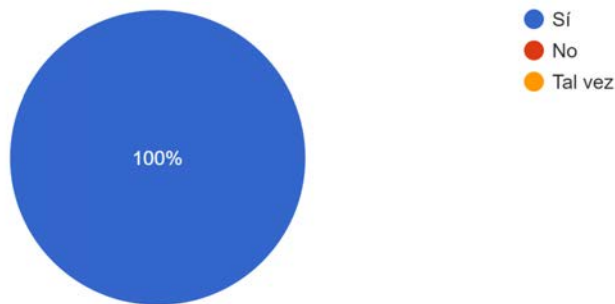
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

12-¿Cree que los servicios brindados por la empresa Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal, ofrecen un precio competitivo?

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

Justifique su respuesta de la pregunta anterior:

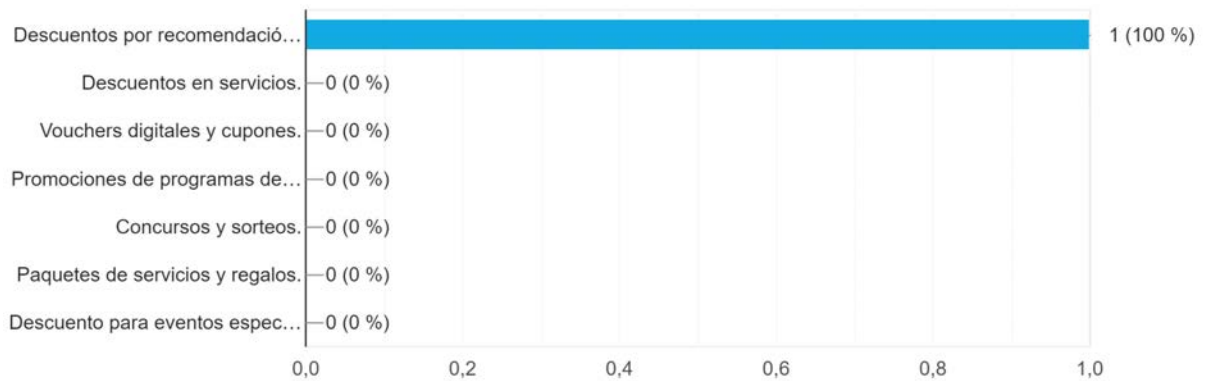
1 respuesta

Oferta/demanda

Note: (own elaboration).

13-¿Qué tipo de promociones sobre los servicios prefiere ver usted en las redes sociales?

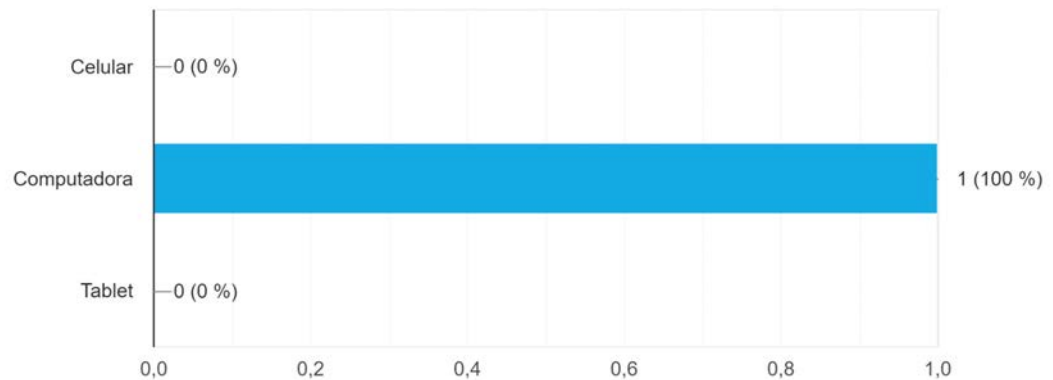
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

14- Seleccione qué tipo de dispositivo usted utiliza para obtener servicios por medio de las plataformas digitales.

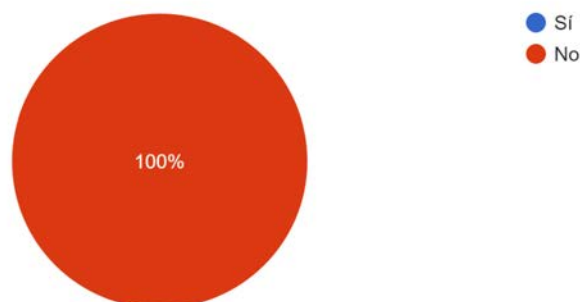
1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

15- ¿Ha recibido asistencia a través de las redes sociales de la empresa para resolver dudas?

1 respuesta



Note: (own elaboration).

Si su respuesta anterior es "Sí" ¿cumplen los estándares de respuesta rápida, buen servicio al cliente o información verídica sobre los servicios aduaneros que ofrecen la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal?

0 respuestas

Aún no hay respuestas para esta pregunta.

Note: (own elaboration).

¿Quieres dejarnos un comentario sobre cómo podría la Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal mejorar el uso o gestión de su redes sociales? (Opcional)

0 respuestas

Aún no hay respuestas para esta pregunta.

Note: (own elaboration).

### **9.5. Section V: Instrument #5 Survey applied to Customs Agencies**

This survey aims to collect the necessary data during the research process regarding the study of Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal*; therefore, the variables that are part of the third objective including Marketing Segmentation, Social Media Marketing and Marketing Mix the “7ps” will be taken into account. This project is part of the Licenciatura Degree in English with Training in Business Management program. The information provided is confidential and will only be used to collect statistical data for research purposes. Please answer the following questions.

Company name: (Optional, this information will be handled confidentially, it will not be added to the research project).

---

Select "Continue" to complete the survey.

\*

Continue to

1- Do you think implementing a Digital Marketing Strategy In Social Networks is necessary for customs agencies to increase the number of customers?

\*

Yes

No

2- Has your customs agency ever applied any digital marketing strategy on social networks?

\*

Yes

No

3- If the previous answer is "Yes", what benefits or advantages did you achieve? (You can check several options).

Greater visibility in social networks.

More interactions such as "Likes", "Share" or "Love".

More followers or likes to the page.

Better positioning in the market.

Increased number of customers.

N/A

Nombre de la empresa: (Opcional, esta información se maneja de manera confidencial, no será agregada en la investigación).

2 respuestas

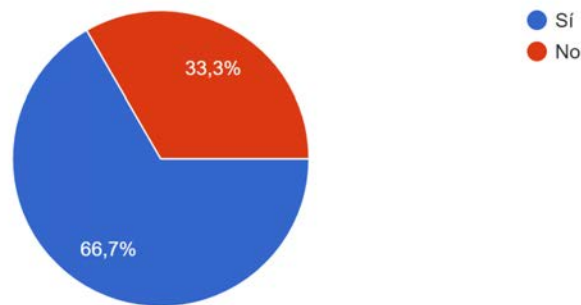
Compañía Perez Rojas Limitada

SOCIACO

Note: (own elaboration).

1- ¿Cree usted que la aplicación de una Estrategia de Marketing Digital En Redes Sociales es necesaria en las agencias aduanales para aumentar la cantidad de clientes?

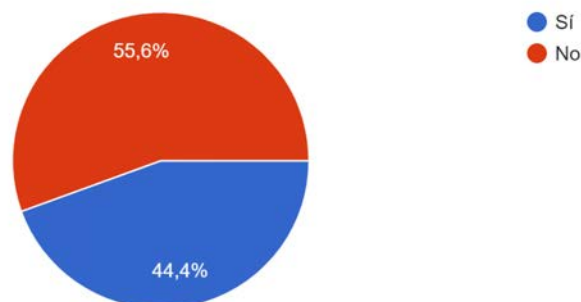
9 respuestas



Note: (own elaboration).

2- ¿Ha aplicado su agencia aduanal alguna estrategia de marketing digital en redes sociales?

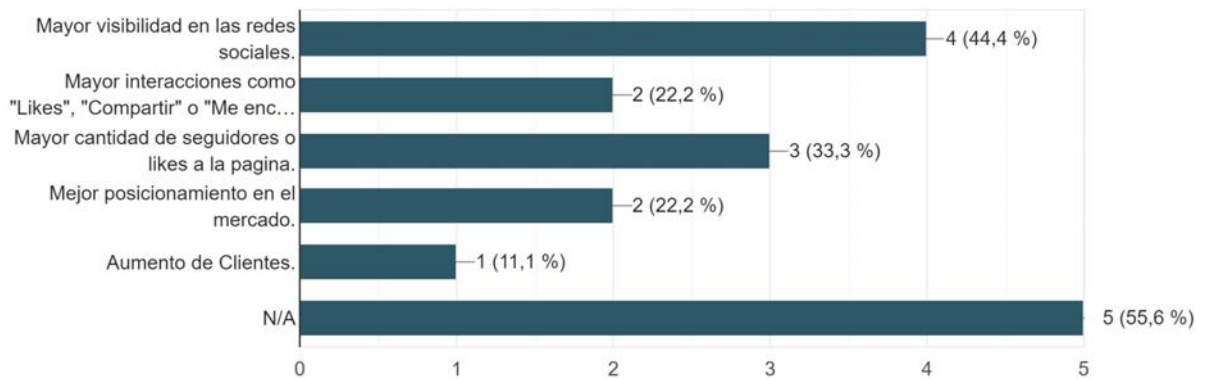
9 respuestas



Note: (own elaboration).

3- Si la respuesta anterior es "Sí" ¿Qué beneficios o ventajas lograron? (Puede marcar varias opciones).

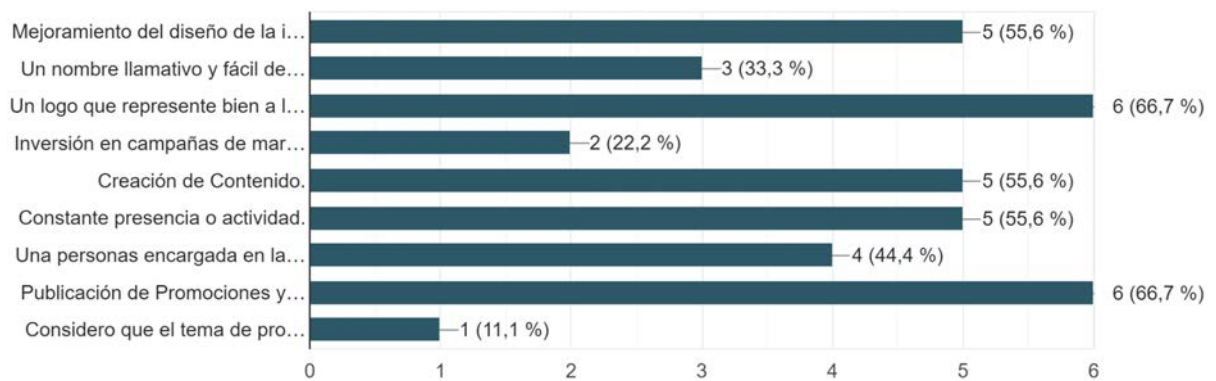
9 respuestas



Note: (own elaboration).

4- ¿Qué aspectos considera importante en la aplicación de una Estrategia de Marketing Digital En Redes Sociales para agencias Aduanales? (Puede marcar varias opciones).

9 respuestas



Note: (own elaboration).

5- ¿Deseas brindarnos un comentario acerca de la efectividad de aplicar una **Estrategia de Marketing Digital En Redes Sociales** en las agencias aduanales con el objetivo de lograr un mejor posicionamiento de mercado?

3 respuestas

No, muchas gracias

Propicia la imagen, y alcance de la empresa, así como su vialidad alrededor del tiempo en el ámbito. Así como también puede impulsar a la empresa a conocer las nuevas necesidades del mercado para la aplicación de estas en su empresa .

Es óptima y en tendencia

Note: (own elaboration).

### 9.6. Section VI: Instrument #6: Observation of competitors' social networks.

This instrument aims to compile and gather the necessary data during the research process on the “Digital Marketing Strategy focused on social networks as a competitive advantage in *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal*”. This project is part of the Licenciatura Degree in English with Business Management Training. The information will be used to identify and explore the company's benchmarking.

**Competitor’s Facebook page:** \_\_\_\_\_

| Question:   | Observation: |
|---|--------------|
| How often do competitors post on their social networks?                                   |              |
| What is the average number of interactions that competitors get on their social networks? |              |
| What kind of content do competitors share on social networks?                             |              |
| What is the number of likes on the competitor's page?                                     |              |
| How is the interface design of the competitor's social network?                           |              |

Note: (own elaboration).



**Competitor's Facebook page: *Agencia aduanal* AIRM**

| <b>Question:</b>  | <b>Observation:</b>  |
|---|--|
| How often do competitors post on their social networks?                                   | Once a week.   |
| What is the average number of interactions that competitors get on their social networks? | From 1 to 3 interactions   |
| What kind of content do competitors share on social networks?                             | Service information<br>Informative publications  |
| What is the number of likes and followers on the competitor's page?                       | 2,1K likes and followers   |
| How is the interface design of the competitor's social network?                           | The company has a logo, has contact and address information, and describes what they do. |

Note: (own elaboration).

**Competitor's Facebook page: REXCARGO**

| <b>Question:</b>  | <b>Observation:</b>   |
|---|---|
| How often do competitors post on their social networks?                                   | Once a month.   |
| What is the average number of interactions that competitors get on their social networks? | From 7 to 68 interactions.  |
| What kind of content do competitors share on social networks?                             | Holiday publications<br>Experiences and testimonials<br>Acknowledgements<br>Service Information |
| What is the number of likes and followers on the competitor's page?                       | 3,1k likes and followers  |
| How is the interface design of the competitor's social network?                           | The company has a logo, has contact and address information, and describes what they do.        |

Note: (own elaboration).

**Competitor's Facebook page: Grupo logístico aduanal**

| <b>Question:</b>  | <b>Observation:</b>  |
|---|--|
| How often do competitors post on their social networks?                                   | Once a year - last interaction (August 12, 2021).                                    |
| What is the average number of interactions that competitors get on their social networks? | From 1 to 4 interactions.  |
| What kind of content do competitors share on social networks?                             | Holiday publications<br>Service Information<br>Experiences and testimonials          |
| What is the number of likes and followers on the competitor's page?                       | 600 Likes - 612 followers  |
| How is the interface design of the competitor's social network?                           | The company has a logo, contact and address information, and describes what they do. |

Note: (own elaboration).

#### **Customs agency under study Facebook page: *Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal***

| <b>Question:</b>  | <b>Observation:</b>  |
|---|--|
| How often does the customs agency post on its social network?                       | The company used to post at least once a month in 2020, after that year the posts became once a year.  |
| What is the average number of interactions this company gets on its social network? | 1 to 5 reactions, 1 comment and from 1 to 2 shares   |
| What kind of content does this customs agency share on social networks?             | The company mostly uses the page to share news, circulars, resolutions and releases related to the customs sector. Also, in the last year a publication with reflective content has been made. |
| What is the number of likes on the company's page?                                  | 1.2k likes and 1.3 followers   |
| How is the interface design of the company's social network?                        | The company does not have a logo, and no rated reviews, it has contact and address information, a website link.  |

Note: (own elaboration).

**9.7. Section VII: Manual “Propuesta de estrategia de marketing digital en redes sociales”.**

MANUAL


## PROPUESTA DE ESTRATEGIA DE MARKETING DIGITAL EN REDES SOCIALES



1. Atraer clientes potenciales a Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irias Carvajal.
2. Aumentar la participación digital en 40% en reacciones durante los siguientes 3 meses.
3. Mejorar la gestión de los perfiles de redes sociales



1. Crear perfil empresarial en WhatsApp.
2. Gestionar consultas de clientes con mensajes instantáneos.
3. La publicación de estados en la aplicación de Whatsapp con el fin de mantener a los clientes informados.



1. Aumentar la participación digital como medio de contacto Nacional e internacional.
2. Incrementar la participación digital mediante la creación de contenidos (Tweets).
3. Promocionar en Twitter para dar más visibilidad a la agencia.

<https://n9.cl/azge8e>

In the following link it is possible to access in a digital way to the complete version of the handbook proposed for Agencia Aduanal Lilliana Irías Carvajal to apply a digital marketing strategy in social networks. <https://n9.cl/azge8e>