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100 years of Sport Club Lusitânia: A communication plan for a centenary season

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Master in Marketing

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Invited Assistant Professor

Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

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December 2020



**BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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“Audiences forget facts, but they remember stories” – Ian Griffin

Abstract

The main purpose of this project is to develop a communication plan for the centenary season of Sport Club Lusitânia, a sports team from Terceira Island, Azores, which was founded on June 24, 1922.

Despite being one of the most important clubs in the Azores, with a long history and tradition in the archipelago, Lusitânia has been experiencing serious financial difficulties for some years due to previous harmful management. In recent years, and on several occasions, the club has almost declared bankruptcy and the ceasing of all its activities, only being saved by some of its associates.

However, despite all the financial difficulties, the club has been able to remain competitive, registering a regular presence of its senior male teams in the 1st basketball division, 2nd futsal division and 3rd soccer division. In addition, the club registers an annual average of 400 athletes.

With the upcoming 100th anniversary, Lusitânia's management believes that it will be able to leverage the celebrations of this historic landmark in order to create a wave of support and enthusiasm around the club, galvanizing associates, fans and general population, which will then contribute to generate considerable revenues that are crucial to decrease the club's liabilities.

As a small club, with a non-professional management, Lusitânia does not have a marketing department or a communication plan for the sports season. In order to fill this gap, and taking into account the special date ahead, a proposal for the communication plan for the 2021/2022 sports season was developed in this master's thesis.

Keywords: Marketing, Communication Plan, Sports, Fans, Engagement

JEL Classification System: Marketing (M31); Advertising (M37)

Resumo

O principal objetivo deste projeto é desenvolver um plano de comunicação para a época centenária do Sport Club Lusitânia, um clube da Ilha Terceira, Açores, fundado a 24 de Junho de 1922.

Apesar de ser um dos clubes mais importantes dos Açores, com uma vasta história e tradição no arquipélago, o Lusitânia atravessa graves dificuldades financeiras devido à gestão danosa de anteriores direções do clube. Nos últimos anos, e por diversas ocasiões, o clube ficou perto de declarar falência e cessar todas as suas atividades, sendo apenas salvo por alguns sócios.

No entanto, apesar de todas as dificuldades financeiras, o Lusitânia tem tido a capacidade de se manter competitivo, registando presenças regulares das suas equipas séniores masculinas na 1ª divisão de basquetebol, 2ª divisão de futsal e 3ª divisão de futebol. Além disso, o clube regista uma média anual de 400 atletas.

Com o aproximar do centenário do Lusitânia, a direção do clube acredita que poderá utilizar as celebrações deste marco histórico com o intuito de criar uma onda de apoio e entusiasmo em redor do clube, galvanizando sócios, adeptos e restante população, de forma a gerar receitas que contribuam para a redução do passivo.

Sendo um clube pequeno e de gestão não profissional, o Lusitânia não tem departamento de marketing nem planos de comunicação para as épocas desportivas. De forma a colmatar esta lacuna, e tendo em conta a data especial que se avizinha, foi desenvolvida uma proposta para o plano de comunicação da época desportiva de 2021/2022.

Palavras-chave: Marketing, Plano de Comunicação, Desporto, Fãs, Engajamento

JEL Sistema de Classificação: Marketing (M31); Advertising (M37)

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1. Problem Definition

There is an old saying that defines Portugal as the country of the 3 Fs: Fado, Fátima and Football. Focusing on sports, the truth is that football is the most popular sport in Portugal by far, and it has been growing over the last few years, both in the number of athletes and spectators. However, these growing numbers do not reflect the real situation of the whole country, since they are inflated by a few clubs that attract the majority of sporting attention. Furthermore, all the media attention around football is harmful for other sports and represents a threat to its development and sustainability.

According to “Attendances in Football Stadia” (2019) by the CIES Football Observatory Monthly Report, despite the growing number of football athletes and supporters in Portugal over the last decades, Liga NOS (Portuguese main football competition) was only the 17th league with more assistance in football stadiums worldwide, averaging 11.000 spectators per game and falling behind leagues from countries such as Japan, Scotland and Belgium or even from Germany and England 2nd divisions (18.814 and 18.526 spectators on average, respectively). Besides that, the Portuguese average is highly influenced by the big 3 – Sporting, Porto and Benfica – that have contributed with 63,9% of the total amount of spectators, which means that the majority of other teams consistently register low attendances on their home games. To give an example, the team that finished 5th on the 2019/2020 Liga NOS season, Rio Ave, only averaged 2.604 spectators per game (Transfermarket, 2020). So, one can conclude that despite football having a high number of fans in Portugal, these are concentrated on a small number of teams.

In addition to that problem, other sports in Portugal struggle to develop due to football's dominance. In 2018, the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF), which assembles 3 sports (football, futsal and beach soccer), gathered 28% of all the Portuguese athletes, 36% of coaches, 31% of referees, 18% of clubs and 9% of government subsidies (PORDATA). The total amount of registered football athletes on that year was 189.417, way higher than the second sport with the most athletes in Portugal, swimming (89.755). Thus, it is easy to understand that other sports have serious difficulties to thrive under football's shadow, and the clubs that promote these activities cannot expect a great number of athletes, supporters or revenues.

Despite being inserted in a small community, Sport Club Lusitânia has a large number of athletes (around 400) but only averages to have 250 spectators on football games and around 100 on basketball and futsal. In order to increase the number of spectators on all these sports,

Lusitânia must find a way, at a small scale, to battle the attention given to the big football teams and to fight the lack of interest around other sports. Therefore, it needs to have an effective and engaging communication strategy that generates relevant information and content for its target audience.

2. Literature review

2.1. From Marketing 1.0 to Marketing 4.0

According to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2014), over the last decades, marketing has evolved from being focused on product management (50s and 60s), to customer management (70s and 80s) and then to brand management (90s to 2000), with the authors pointing out three stages of marketing evolution:

1. Marketing 1.0 – Focused on industry, products and sales;
2. Marketing 2.0 – Centered on the customer and customer satisfaction;
3. Marketing 3.0 – Focused on going beyond customer satisfaction in order to become value-driven and human-centric, gaining the trust and influence of stakeholders.

Despite marketing 1.0 and 2.0 remained relevant and important, companies started noticing that their customers were starting to feel empowered and influenced by the constant and fast paced technological evolution, globalization and environmental changes, among others. In order to conquer these customers, who aimed to have their needs fulfilled but also desired experiences and business ideas aligned with their goals and beliefs, companies needed to offer products and services that reflected customers' values and also needed to build meaningful marketing propositions. So, for the authors, the core of the 3.0 stage is an approach based on the 3 Is: brand identity, brand integrity and brand image, which are incomplete without each other. Companies could no longer rely only on their brand name and positioning - they were required to create meaningful stories, develop sustainable solutions and invest in co-creation.

More recently, Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017) introduced the concept of marketing 4.0, an approach that combines offline and online interaction between companies and customers and allows a deepening of marketing 3.0, even more customer-centered with the help of technology. This new phase of marketing is even more personal than before, as the objective goes beyond selling products or services, but to generate meaning and add real value to the consumers' lives, making them feel like they are part of the brand.

With all the technological advancements, the market has become hybrid, with companies and consumers exchanging information all the time. Therefore, it is essential to present an excellent interaction between companies and customers, as well as to carry out a brand advocacy work, a strong presence in the lives of consumers in different channels, an integration of online and offline marketing and also an investment in content marketing and all its

strategies. Finally, the market can abandon the simplistic view on digital and understand that online and offline are now only one experience in the minds of consumers.

2.2. Marketing Strategy

Varadarajan (2009:128) defined marketing strategy as *“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.”* Later, Ramaseshan, Ishak and Kingshott (2013) reinforced the importance of marketing strategy, stating it is a critical driver of business success. However, making a plan is not enough to assure it, so effective implementation, evaluation and control mechanisms are also required. According to the American Marketing Association (2020), marketing strategy *“refers an organization or person’s plan of action created to sell or advertise a product or service.”* The strategy will be developed based on the inputs brought by variables such as the segmentation of the market, identification of the target, positioning and marketing mix elements.

An alternative marketing strategy, defined by Khankaew *et al.* (2015) as the capacity to use new approaches that are innovative, surprising and impressing to an organization’s target groups, presents itself as more beneficial than traditional marketing strategies. This alternative marketing strategy consists on approaching consumers by using social media, guerrilla marketing and viral marketing. The authors consider that a company will only succeed in its market if it understands the dynamic changes that happen on customers’ lifestyles, stakeholders’ concerns, buyer-seller relationships, technology and internet.

2.2.1. Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning

The STP Model is one of the most important stages in defining a marketing strategy. It is a three-step process that helps a company dividing consumers into groups according to a range of variables, choosing which ones to target and how to position itself on the market. This process will then lead companies through the development and implementation of the appropriate Marketing Mix.

2.2.1.1. Segmentation

Market segmentation allows companies to divide its market into well-defined slices, as each market segment consists on a group of customers that share a similar set of needs and wants. Then, the marketer's job consists on identifying the suitable number and nature of market segments and deciding which ones to target (Kotler & Keller, 2012). According to Keller (2013:79), segmentation can also be defined as the division of the market into “*distinct groups of homogeneous consumers who have similar needs and consumer behavior and who thus require similar marketing mixes.*”. Segments can be defined based on the following characteristics:

Business-to-Consumer (B2C)

- Behavioral (usage rate, usage occasion, brand loyalty, benefits sought);
- Demographic (age, gender, income, race, family);
- Psychographic (attitudes, lifestyle, values, opinions, activities);
- Geographic (international, national, regional).

Business-to-Business (B2B)

- Demographic (annual sales volume, number of establishments, number of employees, number of production workers);
- Buying situation (purchase location, who is the buyer, type of purchase);
- Nature of the product (product type, where it is used, type of purchase).

Nowadays, with all the technology breakthroughs, companies must also invest in online segmentation, since it provides access to relevant, specific and detailed information about each individual. Traditional segmentation has some limitations, such as having segments with heterogenous individuals to whom the value proposition is not appropriate, or wrongly allocate them into segments. Online technology allows companies to have very detailed information about each individual and to use that knowledge to manage them along the different stages of their relationship with the company in real time. Also, it enables individuals to willingly provide information about themselves, which will “auto-segment” them into the segment to which they belong. Furthermore, this online technology used in collecting and processing information has lower marginal costs and allows companies to target each individual in a unique way, thus

presenting the online segmentation as a more operational and dynamic approach that collects feedback and is adjustable (Dionísio P. , Rodrigues, Faria, Canhoto, & Nunes, 2011).

2.2.1.2. Targeting

After successfully dividing its market into several market segments, companies must decide how many and which of them to target. According to Kotler *et al.* (2012), the selection of market segments to target must fulfil the following criteria:

- Accessibility (there are distributors available to reach the market segment, as well as communication means to successfully create an impact);
- Identifiability (the market segment is easily identified);
- Responsiveness (the market segment is likely to positively respond to tailored marketing campaigns);
- Size (there is a suitable sales potential in that market segment).

According to Camilleri (2018), there are three market coverage alternatives that can be applied: undifferentiated marketing, differentiated marketing, and concentrated marketing.

Undifferentiated marketing strategy consists on ignoring any differences in the market, thus approaching customers with only one market offer. This strategy is outdated since customers are increasingly becoming more demanding, which makes it difficult for companies to satisfy all consumer's needs, wants and expectations with the same offer.

Differentiated marketing strategy involves reaching out to multiple targets, thus creating different products or services, as well as different messages. Since this strategy is more expensive than the one mentioned above, organizations must decide which offers are essential to its chosen targets.

Concentrated marketing strategy is used by companies that want to reach more than one target but have limited resources, thus focusing on few targets. This strategy involves a high-risk factor since a poor segmentation and targeting may result in heavy losses.

To conclude, the proper market coverage strategy depends on a few factors: the company's resources, type of services offered, diversities within the market and the competitors' market coverage strategies.

2.2.1.3. Positioning

Keller (2013) states that brand positioning is at the heart of marketing strategy and consists on designing a company's image and offer in order to occupy a unique and valued place in the minds of the consumers. If a company is successful in building a good brand positioning, that means that consumers will have a clear idea of what the brand represents and its uniqueness, as well as the reasons to buy and use that specific brand. In order to define a positioning, companies must identify their targets and study their competitors – competitive analysis involves multiple factors such as capabilities or resources – but it is imperative not to define competition too narrowly since eventual opportunities or threats may be overlooked.

According to Dionísio P., Rodrigues, de Baynast, Lendrevie and Lévy (2018), one of the most important frameworks used to support brand positioning is the golden triangle of positioning, which is composed by three main dimensions:

1. Consumers' expectations (to find out which aspects are most valued by consumers and understand their expectations in order to strategically position the brand to meet or exceed those expectations);
2. Potential product benefits (to analyze the potential benefits of a product in order to respond to the competition);
3. Competitors' positioning (to understand the competitors' positioning in order to develop an original and differentiated strategy for the product).

In addition to the golden triangle, to achieve the ideal positioning companies must establish points-of-parity (POP) and points-of-difference (POD). On the one hand, points-of-parity represent the shared attributes between brands, meaning that a certain attribute is considered to be equally good when comparing two (or more) competitor brands. On the other hand, points-of-difference are attributes or benefits strongly associated with a brand that are believed to be unique, thus differentiating it from the competition. These attributes can be tangible (functional design or a special ingredient) or intangible (association with luxury or prestige). So, to accomplish the desirable positioning, companies should do 2 things: look at their competitors positioning, understand their intended points-of-difference and mimic them, therefore creating strong and valid points-of-parity; find a viable differentiation factor, to be used in a long term strategy, that will make the brand positioning last for many years (Keller, 2013).

2.2.2. Marketing Mix: The 8 Ps

The marketing mix is considered to be one of the pillars of a marketing strategy and consists on a series of controllable variables that companies use to drive their decisions on the process of bringing products or services to the market. Traditionally, it is classified by four factors: product, price, place and promotion (the 4 Ps) (Dionísio *et al.*, 2018).

Product is what satisfies costumers' needs and wants, and managing it consists on defining, organizing and renovating the product or service that a company is selling. Some of the key aspects to take into account when developing a product are the quality, variety, design, features, packaging, size, services, warranty, complaint management and delivery/return policies, among others.

Price is one of the key variables on companies' marketing strategies, and the easiest one to change and adapt. However, it affects the costumers' perception of products, so companies must handle it with caution, carefully taking into account the brand positioning and image. To establish the price of a certain product it is necessary to know the production costs, its demand and the competitors pricing, in order to define an appropriate selling price that is compelling to the target audience.

Place (or distribution) consists on the accessibility of a certain product or service to its potential buyers. To distribute products or services is to deliver them to the correct location, on the required quantities, with the desired features, on the exact moment and with the necessary services to be sold, consumed or maintained. In order to define the most appropriate distribution channels to efficiently reach the target, companies must understand their preferences, behavior and consumption habits. pricing, in order to define an appropriate selling price that is compelling to the target audience.

Promotion includes all kinds of offline and online activities that are used to foster a product or service, and it varies according to the companies' marketing strategy. Those activities can be advertising, PR, sales force, packaging, promotions, merchandising or sponsorships. In order to develop a promotional strategy, the chosen combination of these activities will depend on 3 factors: target audience, type of message and budget.

In addition to these traditional 4 Ps, Kotler and Keller (2012) presented four more factors that they considered necessary to better reflect their marketing concept: people, processes, programs and performace.

People consists on the importance of employees, since they are the ones responsible for delivering any product or service, and marketing will be as good as the people on the

organization - the quality perceived by a customer is affected by employees' mood, character and behaviour.

Processes include the mechanisms, planning and structure that ensure a smooth delivery of a product or service. It consists on designing processes, blueprinting, monitoring/tracking service performance, creating and measuring key performance indicators, analyzing resources allocation and preparing manuals.

Programs concerns the integrated marketing aspects, as it reflects all of the company's marketing activities. By having a clear image of its overall portfolio of marketing activities before starting a new one, all marketing strategies can be integrated and supported by each other, despite being offline or online, traditional or not, thus enabling a company to pursue multiple goals.

Performance represents all the financial and non-financial outcomes of a company, going beyond classic concepts such as profit or revenue, thus including elements like profitability, brand and customer equity, or social, ethical and legal responsibility.

2.3. Sports Marketing

Sports marketing is a part of what Philip Kotler (1997) calls the expansion of marketing, which means that it uses the traditional marketing concepts and applies them on fields outside the business world. Thus, sports marketing can be defined as the set of actions and services produced in order to satisfy the needs, expectations and preferences of the sports consumer. (Sá & Sá, Marketing Para Desporto - Um Jogo Empresarial, 2009). Sports marketing is also considered to be a set of activities designed to satisfy the needs and desires of sports consumers through exchange processes, as these consumers may have different types of involvement such as practicing, arbitrating, watching or just listening (Sá & Sá, Sports Marketing - As Novas Regras do Jogo, 2009).

According to Dionísio (2009), sports marketing has 3 different approaches:

1. Sports events marketing (the consumer is the one watching or listening);
2. Sports activities marketing (the consumer is a practitioner);
3. Sports sponsorships marketing (focused on sponsors and event advertisers).

Regarding the specificities of sports marketing, the one that stands out is the need for competition. Unlike the business world, strong competition is a key factor for the sports activities success, since a lack of strong competitors removes the final result uncertainty and,

consequently, the interest on the show. Some other sports marketing specificities are the fact that the main product (sports game) does not depend on the marketing managers, the spontaneity of athletes while performing and the consumers' participation (e.g. cheerleaders) (Dionísio *et al.*, 2018).

2.3.1. Segmentation Criteria

Sá and Sá (2009) state that sports consumers can be divided into several groups, using criteria such as the place they live, the sport they practice, the affinity with a certain team or their lifestyle. Taking into account the geographic, demographic and psychographic criteria, sports marketing segmentation must be defined by answering questions like “How much time does it take for the consumer to arrive at the event location?”, “What is the consumer age and gender?”, “What is his profession and social status?”, “Which benefits is he looking for?”, “What role do sports play on his life?” or “How much is he willing to pay?”. These questions, among others, will be decisive for a proper segmentation. One of the most important segmentation criteria on sports teams is the attendance rate, which enables fans and associates to be divided into the following groups:

- High attendance (associate with a season ticket; might be a member of an organized group of fans);
- Medium attendance (associate that attends all domestic games);
- Normal attendance (regular fan that watches some games and buys tickets on the gameday itself);
- Low attendance (fan that has only attended one game and did not repeat the experience – might be unhappy with the coach, players, president, etc);
- External consumer (consumer that does not watch games but keeps up with results through the media);
- Indifferent (consumer that is aware of the team but does not keep up with it);
- Uninterested (consumer that is totally indifferent to the team and the sport itself – never watched a game).

Dionísio *et al.* (2018) refers the importance of also having a B2B sports segmentation, since nowadays every team depends on these resources to be competitive. This segmentation

aims to target big companies, important associates and potential sponsors and advertisers that might buy cabins, image rights or advertising space.

2.3.2. Sports Marketing Mix

According to Sá *et al.* (2009), the sports marketing mix is similar to the traditional marketing mix, but it has some specificities that are interesting to be analyzed.

Product definition is slightly different from the traditional one since it can be produced and consumed by the same individual, relies on the uncertainty of the final result and on the spontaneity of its intervenients, it can be a leisure activity or a competition and it has a core product (the game itself) and complementar activities (music, cheerleaders, contests, mascots, promotions, among others).

Price in sports is deeply connected with comfort and quality of the experience, and that is the reason why tickets for some seats are more expensive than others. It is vital to answer the above-mentioned question “How much is the customer willing to pay?” in order to develop an appropriate price strategy. However, many times the sports federations or associations are the ones responsible for defining the prices.

Regarding Place, it is important to study the parking accessibilities near the event location, as well as the time consumers take to get there. In addition, sports teams should diversify their tickets selling points instead of only selling at the event location.

Promotion must be addressed through 3 channels: advertising, sales force and merchandising. The authors affirm that is essential to use some selected media channels to communicate with fans, to create an effective and efficient sales team and to have an offer of team products such as hats, scarfs, flags, shirts or masks.

In addition to the traditional 4 Ps, the authors also present four more factors, some of them different from the ones mentioned before: Public Relations, People, Processes and Physical Support.

In order to successfully develop Public Relations, it is very important to be professional with the media, especially when communicating with journalists, since they have a critical role in the sports market. Having a PR structure within a sports team is also fundamental to better respond to crisis management situations, as well as to receive potential sponsors guests.

People is one of the most important factors since the quality of the sports product heavily depends on them. From the employees on the ticket offices, club stores and bars, to the PR team responsible for receiving sponsors guests, journalists and VIP's, every person must

professional, cordial and friendly. In addition, the athletes need to be aligned with the organization's goals, so as not to compromise its image on their interactions with the media.

Regarding Processes, sports marketing managers should be well aware of 3 main elements: employees (athletes, managers, ticket sellers), physical support (stadium, countertops, parking lots) and the consumers (fans, associates, VIP's). These elements are all involved on the final product/service provided and the role to be played by each one must be defined.

Finally, Physical Support consists on all the tangible elements around the product or service: stadium, pavilion, chairs, countertops, ticket offices, computers, bars, parking lots, bathrooms, uniforms, among others.

2.4. Marketing Communications

The traditional marketing communications are being challenged due to the evolution of new technologies, forcing many companies to think about new ways of approaching its costumers. This consists on still conveying a company's message through the traditional channels, but also to take advantage of the power of these technologies (Schultz, 2001).

According to Fill (2009), marketing communications are used to inform, differentiate, reinforce or persuade audiences to think or behave in a particular way. Concerning marketing communications plans, Kevin (2010) affirmed they are the means through which companies inform, convince and remind customers about their brand.

Then, when it comes to the role of marketing communications, Batra and Keller (2016) presented multiple possible outcomes that may result from the consumers' exposure to these communications: create awareness, provide detailed information, build trust, develop different types of usage imagery, stimulate emotions, inspire action, reinforce loyalty and connect people.

2.4.1. Marketing Communications Process and Elements

According to Solomon (2019), the main elements of the marketing communications' process are the source, the message, the medium and the receiver (or consumer). Traditionally, these elements follow a linear communication process, where the source sends a message to the medium, which will then spread it to consumers. However, this view is not completely accurate since it does not take into account the dynamic interaction between consumers or the communications from other agents (e.g. competitors), which are factors that may interfere with a brands' message.

Regarding the communication elements, the source is the sender of the message, and it can have a great influence on the receiver's acceptance (Solomon, 2019). Concerning the medium, it represents the range of tools or platforms that are available to spread the message to consumers, such as advertising, public relations or direct marketing. Finally, there is the message, which consists on the information that a company wants to transmit to its target audience and that will be explained with more detail below.

2.4.1.1. The Message

According to Fill (2009), the style of the message must be balanced between the need for information and the need for enjoyment the receiver will get. As such, there are two very significant elements for him to perceive the message effectively: the amount and quality of the content (information) and the judgement each consumer makes about how the message is being sent. The brand-related information may focus on tangible aspects, such as physical product attributes, or intangible aspects, like the brand image or its reputation (Lane, 2010).

Wu and Wang (2011) suggest that, for a message to be appealing, it should emotionally or intellectually affect the consumers' attitudes towards a product or brand, with the intellectual appeal focusing on the products' benefits for consumers, and the emotional appeal on stimulating consumers through emotions or feelings.

Concerning another key factor, the message source credibility consists on how much the receiver trusts the sender, thus reflecting consumers' attitudes towards the source of the message (Gunther, 1992). A credible message must have to basic components: reliability and expertise. While reliability reflects the amount of trust that the message receiver has on its source, expertise represents the knowledge that the sender of the message has on the topic (Wu and Wang, 2011).

Storytelling, defined by Sole and Wilson (1999:6) as the "*sharing of knowledge and experiences through narrative and anecdotes in order to communicate lessons, complex ideas, concepts and casual connections*" is a technique used by companies to improve the communication of their messages in order to attract and engage consumers. The four basic elements to be considered when using storytelling to develop corporate stories are the message (main theme for the story), the conflict (what gets people's attention), the characters and the plot (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboğlu, 2005). According to Frenzel *et al.* (2006), storytelling allows to differentiate products or services beyond their functionalities and attributes and presents communication advantages such as connectivity, intensity, complexity or memorability.

2.4.2. Marketing Communications Strategy

Regarding marketing communications strategy, it is concerned with both audiences and positioning, so there are 2 main dimensions: the first one is concerned with who the target audience is, while the second one regards the way in which target audiences understand the offering they are experiencing (through usage or communications). When it comes to the main strategies, Fill (2009) present the 3 Ps of marketing communications strategy:

1. Pull strategy: Usage of mass media advertising to communicate directly with end-user customers;
2. Push strategy: To communicate directly with intermediaries (retailers, wholesalers, distributors) to influence them to buy stock;
3. Profile strategy: Influence other stakeholders besides customers and intermediaries.

According to Batra and Keller (2016), regardless of the strategies being used, marketing communications must always be integrated, since nowadays customers can be in touch with a brand across several channels. Thus, brands need to communicate in a coordinated and consistent manner in order to effectively engage with the target audiences.

Fill (2009) adds that companies struggle to achieve total integration since there are several elements to be integrated (employees, technology, strategy, branding, marketing mix, messages, tools and agencies). Regarding the communication tools, the author adds that the messages transmitted by each tool should be harmonised, in order to convey consistent information to the target audience.

2.4.3. Communication Mix

Fill (2009) stated that the communication mix is composed by 3 elements: message (what the company wants to transmit to the target audience), media (the means through which the message is transmitted) and tools. Regarding tools, they are the marketing form of communication that is directly or indirectly related to a brand, can be combined in different ways and with different levels of intensity (depending on the target audience) and are divided into 2 main groups: traditional tools and digital tools.

2.4.3.1. Traditional Tools

Regarding the traditional communication tools, Fill (2009) define the below ones:

1. Advertising: used to build or maintain brand awareness, engage audiences and emotionally connect with customers;
2. Direct Marketing: consists on directly communicating with individual customers, thus personalizing the marketing activities (e-mail marketing, phone calls, etc);
3. Exhibitions and Trade Fairs: allows companies to meet customers or potential ones, promote products, make demonstrations and strengthen its position in the market;
4. Personal Selling: empowers the salesperson, since it has a great impact on the customer decision and benefits from a lack of distractions;
5. Product Placement: to subtly place a certain product or service on the media (movies, tv shows, morning shows, among others) for promotional exposure;
6. Public Relations: enables companies to develop and maintain relationships with multiple stakeholders;
7. Sales Promotion: persuade, incentivize and stimulate customers to buy;
8. Sponsorship: to establish a partnership with a certain entity in order to gain exposure and increase awareness.

2.4.3.2. Digital Tools

For Mulhern (2009), digital communication tools bring an infinite reproduction of content, consumer networking and user-generated content. Batra and Keller (2016) defined 6 digital tools:

1. Display Ads: used to transmit information in an appealing way, by using pictures, videos, text and animations;
2. E-mail Marketing: the usage of an email database to acquire customers and reinforce customer relations in a cost-effective way;
3. Mobile: it is mandatory to develop mobile-friendly content since nowadays consumers can buy products on their smartphones or directly access a company website or app on them;

4. Search Ads: enables companies to present their products or services to consumers that are searching for specific keywords related to the company's offering;
5. Social Media: the usage of social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Tik Tok) to actively engage with consumers, since it is one of the most cost-effective and efficient ways available;
6. Websites: the place where consumers go to gather information about a company and its products or services.

2.4.4. Marketing Communications Plan

It is very important to develop a marketing communications plan since it helps reducing errors and enables companies to be more efficient and effective on their actions. In order to ensure the success of a marketing communications plan, Fill (2009) suggests several steps that a organization needs to follow.

Firstly, organizations must conduct a context analysis in order to understand the market, learn about communication drivers that may affect its operation and gather information that will be helpful to build a proper promotional plan. It is from the context analysis that the marketing communications goals and strategies must be drawn.

Secondly, when it comes to the communication goals and strategy, all communication activities must support the overall strategic guidelines of the organization, which means that communication goals should only be developed once the organization has defined its strategy. These communication goals need to be clear, precise, measurable and realistic.

Then, after defining its goals and strategy, organizations have to define the promotional mix, which consists on choosing the methods, tools and media channels to be used when communicating with its target audience. The media channels will depend on the organization's goals, target and resources.

Regarding the financial and human resources, it is important to carefully assess the quantity and type of resources necessary to implement the organization strategy.

The communication actions plan may be developed in the form of a chart, spreadsheet or timeline, and the most important part is to clearly define each action, its objectives and the target audience. This plan should be adapted on a ongoing basis as to reflect the fast-paced world we live in, that may present new challenges or opportunities (Tennyson & Ray, 2005).

Finally, organizations must evaluate the performance of the tools and media implemented, as well as check if the goals established were met, which ultimately determines if a promotional campaign was successful.

When it comes to planning digital communications, Dionísio *et al.* (2011) states that companies need to consider some aspects within these four main areas: strategy, nature of the communication actions, monitoring and analysis, and budget. Regarding strategy, the importance of integrating online communications will depend on the following aspects:

- the significance of the online channel for selling the products;
- the affinity amid the company's positioning and its target;
- the speed in content update;
- the complexity of the messages.

The nature of the communication actions is relevant because online platforms can be used to multiple things, such as providing information, supporting contests or to viralize content.

Regarding monitoring and analysis, online communications can work as a tool for building databases or tracking campaigns' results.

Finally, budget is a fundamental factor when developing a digital communications plan, since it directly impacts the choice of which types of means to use. In addition, when a company's budget is low and it can only focus in one mean, online communications present a good solution.

2.4.4.1. Selecting Communications Tools

In order to select the proper communication tools to be part of the marketing communications plan, it is important not to focus solely on digital tools, since some of the traditional ones, like advertising, are still very enduring (Nunes & Merrihue, 2007).

According to Batra and Keller (2016), TV advertising, due to its penetration and expressive nature, is highly effective when it comes to creating awareness and interest on a certain product or service. Also, regarding print advertising, companies are able to expose very detailed information to its audience. Thus, these traditional tools allow companies to communicate with large segmented audiences.

Nevertheless, in spite of traditional media enabling communications placement in specific TV shows, newspapers or magazines, there are several online communication options that offer

the chance to transmit tailored messages to each individual consumer, or even to place ads based on search engines' keywords to impact consumers on their buying process (Batra & Keller, 2016). Besides, online communications provide easy access to its statistics, such as click-through rate or conversion rate.

To conclude, in order to have a successful and integrated marketing communications plan, companies need to combine both traditional and digital tools, because despite the influence that online communications have on a great number of consumers, the traditional tools often fuel the digital ones.

3. Methodology

In order to develop this communication plan, the data collection method used was the descriptive method, which according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) consists on accurately representing the profile of people, situations or events. Concerning this specific case, it was necessary to understand the regional sports consumption patterns, as well as Sport Club Lusitânia history, current status, main struggles and strategy.

To gather the required quantitative and qualitative data to develop this project, the research consisted on consulting several documents from specialized sources, such as CIES Football Observatory Monthly Report, as well as reports, newspapers articles and interviews. Some information also came through online sources, mainly from websites (e.g. Transfermarket), blogs and social media.

In addition, to collect secondary data regarding Lusitânia and the sports market in the Azores, informal interviews with some of the clubs' managing directors and relevant associates were held. The main goal of these interviews was to gather specific information (average attendance numbers, number of athletes across the years, financial data, among others) and to clarify some internal processes and strategies. Since there is very few information available regarding the above-mentioned topics, due to the non-professionalization of organizations, these interviews were critical to the development of this project.

4. Contextualization and Analysis

4.1. Sport Club Lusitânia History

Sport Club Lusitânia was founded in Angra do Heroísmo on June 24, 1922, being the 14th delegation of Sporting Clube de Portugal, and although its emblem has a goshawk instead of a lion, it uses the same colors as Sporting. The name “Lusitânia” comes from the plane in which Gago Coutinho and Sacadura Cabral completed the first air crossing of the South Atlantic.

On the 27th of February 1977, Lusitânia was declared a Public Utility Institution, having been awarded the Medal of Sports Merit - Silver Gold from the city hall of Angra do Heroísmo. Lusitânia proudly bears the title of "The greater champion of the Azorean champions" due to its rich history and almost absolute dominance for three quarters of the 20th century, which allowed the club to win more than 500 titles.

Football has always been the club's main sport, and it is reflected on Lusitânia's incomparable record at regional level:

- 38 times District Champion (despite not participating in regional competitions for more than 30 years, it still remains the club with the most District Championships);
- 16 Classification Tournaments for the Portuguese Cup (this event was extinguished in 1978, and until then it was the most important competition in the region since it gave Azorean clubs access to the only national level event in which they participated. Lusitânia is also the club with the most titles won);
- 1 Cliper Cup,
- 3 Azorean Champions Cups;
- 1 Constantino Cup;
- 1 Azores Cup (1st edition).

By winning the Azorean Champions Cup in the 1977/78 season, Lusitânia became the first team in the Azores to participate in national championships competition. On the 1979/80 season Lusitânia won one of the 3rd National Division series for the first time, guaranteeing access to the 2nd National Division, something that the club would do two more times until 1995, when the Azorean Series of the 3rd National Division was created. From that time on, the Azores Regional Government decided to strongly support professional football, something that had never happened before, thus benefiting the most representative club of the largest island in the region (Clube Desportivo Santa Clara), leading to Lusitânia's loss of Azorean football

leadership. However, Lusitânia kept winning titles, conquering the Azorean Series of the 3rd National Division on 5 different occasions, being the club with the most titles in this competition. With the extinction of the 3rd National Division in the 2013/14 season, the Azorean Series was replaced by the Azores Football Championship, which Lusitânia won in the 2015/16 season, ensuring a place in the Portugal Championship (3rd division).

Lusitânia has always been an eclectic club, having other sports such as Athletics, Cycling, Handball, Futsal, Roller Hockey and Basketball, where it reached the main league and even won a League Cup against Benfica. Unfortunately, due to a serious financial crisis, some of the sections were extinct, and it was only at great cost that the club managed to maintain football and subsequently reactivate basketball in the 2009/10 season, in which Lusitânia won the Proliga, thus ensuring the return of the club to the main basketball championship. In 2014, despite all the struggles, Lusitânia also reactivated its Futsal team, which participates on the Azorean Series of the 2nd National Division.

4.1.1. Recent Years

On the beginning of the 21st century, Lusitânia started to heavily invest on its football and basketball teams, aiming to reach the 2nd National Division (football) and to fight for titles (basketball).

Regarding football, the strategy consisted on bringing experienced managers and players to Lusitânia, and to combine their experience and quality with the young talents that came from the youth teams. In order to follow that strategy, players that have been part of some big teams started to arrive at the island: Bilro (Sporting, União de Leiria), Vítor Vieira (Belenenses, Estrela da Amadora, Gil Vicente) or Raúl Oliveira (Belenenses, Bradford City, Académica). Former Benfica and Portuguese national team legend António Simões also came to assume the role of sporting director. However, despite the investment, the goal to reach the 2nd Division was never met.

Concerning basketball, the strategy was similar but with a small difference: in addition to bring experienced Portuguese players and combine them with local young talent, Lusitânia also hired American players from college basketball or from foreign leagues. Unlike football, the basketball project was successful, and the club was able to win a Portuguese League Cup against Benfica (2007) and to be competitive on the Portuguese 1st division. Nevertheless, the massive investment resulted in a catastrophic financial situation.

4.1.1.1. Financial Struggles

On November 2017, only a few months after winning the Portuguese League Cup, Lusitânia president admitted the existence of a debt around 1.9 million euros, which represented a major financial crisis. The associates demanded his resignation before the next general meeting and the creation of an executive committee to analyze the real situation of the club, which ended up happening. On the next general meeting the newly created commission presented a liability of around 4.5 million euros and started renegotiating debt and terminations of players' contracts.

In 2010, and despite the reduction of debt from 4.5 to 3 million euros, the club was in a very serious situation. Negotiations with creditors failed, the club suspended its sports activities and initiated insolvency proceedings based on the club's financial infeasibility. However, due to the financial support given by the Azores Regional Government, the Angra do Heroísmo City Hall and some passionate associates, it was possible to prevent the club insolvency.

Finally, in 2014 the club joined the PER (Special Revitalization Plan), which implies an annual payment of 70.000 euros: 42.000 euros, for 40 years, for the PER itself, and 28.000 euros over the next 12 and a half years to settle a debt to Social Security. Not all creditors were included in the PER since the executive commission was able to negotiate payment methods separately.

Nowadays, Lusitânia has a very strict budget, that highly depends on public subsidies, revenue from events organized by the club and from the associates' support. The highest subsidy is related with Lusitânia's presence on the main basketball league, so it is mandatory for the club to remain on the 1st division.

4.1.1.2. Attendance and Athletes

On the glorious days of the past, every time that Lusitânia football team played a home game, thousands of people gathered on the stadium to watch it. Sitting, standing or even on top of the walls surrounding the stadium, there was a large crowd that watched the games with close attention. Nowadays, the average attendance numbers on football matches is 250 spectators, which represents 0,5% of the total population of Terceira island (about 56.000 people).



Figure 4.1: Lusitânia match on the 1960s

Nowadays the situation is completely different: there's a wide range of quality football games to watch on TV, several other entertainment options and Lusitânia's dimension is quite smaller when compared to the old days.

Regarding the number of athletes in the club, and despite the recent financial difficulties, it has been possible to verify that this has remained constant over the past few years, which demonstrates a good capacity to manage the budgets of senior teams and confidence on the part of young people in the Lusitânia youth academy project.

Despite the lack of official statistics regarding attendance numbers, as well as number of athletes, Lusitânia managing directors estimated values for the 5 seasons before the Covid-19 pandemic:

Figure 4.2: Estimated values of average attendance and number of athletes

Season	Football		Basketball		Futsal		Total	
	Average Attendance	Number of Athletes	Average Attendance	Number of Athletes	Average Attendance	Number of Athletes	Average Attendance	Number of Athletes
2014/15	200	180	150	150	50	30	400	360
2015/16	350	180	150	150	150	30	650	360
2016/17	300	200	100	100	150	50	550	350
2017/18	250	180	100	100	150	80	500	360
2018/19	250	180	150	100	100	80	500	360

Although there is no official data from the Azorean football associations regarding attendance numbers, it is safe to say that Lusitânia is one of the teams with the higher attendances among the Azorean clubs. However, when comparing the club current average attendance with estimated attendance numbers from the 20th century, the values are significantly lower.

4.1.1.3. Strategic Guidelines

The current Lusitânia president, Luís Carneiro, is a 40-year-old businessman and a former football player that decided to run for the club presidency in order to try to improve the above-mentioned recent situation. His strategy for the presidency mandate is based on 4 main guidelines: improve Lusitânia's credibility, build competitive teams, boost the club's youth and galvanize fans and associates.

Regarding credibility, the goal is to define and to follow a very strict budget in order to fulfill all club obligations, whether operating expenses or fixed expenses (such as the PER payments). It is imperative not to accumulate debt. Thus, Lusitânia can be seen as a credible and respectful club, and in this way achieve better agreements with any partners, sponsors or even athletes.

Concerning the building of competitive teams, the president is aware that a sports club depends on its results, so despite the need of keeping a tight budget it is also necessary to build competitive teams that are able to perform in a way that excites and engages its fans and associates.

Considering the club's youth, it represents the sustainable future for any sport organization. To invest on the youth teams is to invest in the success of the main teams in the medium to long term. In order to do so, Lusitânia established a partnership with Sporting Clube de Portugal and brought the EAS (Escolas Academia Sporting) to Angra do Heroísmo, as a part of its football youth project. Regarding basketball, Lusitânia activated a partnership with another local team (Angra Basket) to make it its satellite club, which will allow Lusitânia junior players to play on the Portuguese 3rd division before joining the main team that is competing on the 1st division.

Finally, to galvanize its fans and associates, the club management is making an effort to develop digital content and physical initiatives to engage with all supporters and to increase the number of associates and the average audience on Lusitânia home games.

4.1.1.4. Main Competitors

Throughout the history, Lusitânia direct competition has changed several times, but the biggest rivalries have persisted until today. Thus, there are 3 main competitors to be considered: Santa Clara, Angrense and Praiense.

Santa Clara, a club from São Miguel island, was Lusitânia's biggest rival for decades, disputing the leadership of Azorean sports. Nowadays the clubs still compete on the Azorean

Series of the 2nd National Division of Futsal, where they are the 2 stronger teams, but regarding football they have not faced each other for more than 20 years, as Lusitânia competes at a lower level.

Praïense, a club from Terceira island, city of Praia da Vitória, is historically a club that competed against Lusitânia on the same division, despite being smaller. However, in recent years, due to the creation of a SAD (limited liability company), Praïense has been competing on Portugal Championship (3rd division) and fighting for the access to the 2nd division.

Finally, there is Angrense, a club from the same city as Lusitânia – Angra do Heroísmo – that is currently its main competitor. As Lusitânia is a delegation of Sporting Clube de Portugal, and Angrense is a delegation of Sport Lisboa e Benfica, their matches against each other are often compared, at a small scale, with the main Portuguese derby, attracting hundreds of people. Currently, both teams compete against each other on the Azores Football Championship.

4.2. Mission, Vision and Values

Organizations that have a clearly communicated, understood and shared mission and vision are most likely to perform better than those who have not. However, that only happens if the strategy, goals and objectives are aligned with them (Bart, Bontis, & Taggar, 2001).

Regarding these concepts' definition, the mission statement consists of communicating the organization's reason for existing, and how it aims to serve its stakeholders; the vision statement is a future declaration of the organization's purpose and ambitions; and values represent the organization beliefs. Lusitânia's mission, vision and values are the following:

Mission: Promote sports practice, develop young talent, support the local community and be competitive in any sport.

Vision: To be the main reference of Azorean sports.

Values: Dedication, Integrity, Passion and Responsibility

4.3. SWOT Analysis

To better understand the current status of Lusitânia, it is important to do a SWOT analysis in order to be aware of its strengths and weaknesses, as well as possible opportunities and threats that might be favorable or harmful for the club.

Strengths

- Rich history and high status in the regional panorama;
- Passionate fans and associates;
- Valuable headquarters with excellent conditions for hosting events and a designated place for accommodating athletes from outside the island;
- Excellent training and game facilities;
- High quality basketball department;
- Respected club among Azorean sports associations and politicians;
- Potential to develop young talent;
- Centenary anniversary coming soon.

Weaknesses

- Few sponsors;
- Few associates (the ones who have an associate card and pay a fee each month);
- High financial debt;
- Low attendance to home games across all sports (when compared to the 20th century attendance numbers);
- Difficulties to attract players and coaches from outside the island;
- Non-professional management structure (the whole structure, from the president to the directors, have a full-time job and voluntarily work for the club);
- Low level of competition among youth teams (only compete against other youth teams from the Azores);
- High dependency on public subsidies.

Opportunities

- Island quality of life (might attract certain players or coaches);
- Increasing number of investors in sports;
- Digital Tools (cost-efficient tool to engage with fans and to fight the lack of media attention).

Threats

- High number of competitors;
- Low media attention given to small teams and respective players and coaches;
- Lack of higher education offer in Azores (for example, many young players leave the clubs without ever reaching the main team since they need to leave the islands in order to go to the university);
- New regional government (uncertainty regarding public subsidies for sports).

In order to take advantage of its strengths and market opportunities, and to battle its weaknesses and possible threats, Lusitânia must have a communication plan which uses digital tools, such as social media, to enhance the club history, its passionate associates, the potential to develop young talent and the upcoming centenary anniversary. It also needs to create engaging content to attract fans or sponsors, and that projects a positive image for athletes and coaches.

5. Communication Strategy

5.1. Segmentation

Prior to developing specific communication actions, it is necessary to know who is going to be addressed by them. So, in order to understand the profile of Lusitânia's consumers, it is useful to characterize them according to the below dimensions:

- Behavioral: goes to games or attends events related to the club due to its loyalty, or just for entertainment.
- Demographic: male or female, age between 10 and 80, with a medium to high income.
- Geographic: Terceira island;
- Psychographic: has an active social life, enjoys socializing and attend sport games or related events.
- High attendance (associate with an associate card and season ticket);
- Medium attendance (associate that attends almost all domestic games);
- Normal attendance (regular fan that watches some games and buys tickets on the gameday itself);
- Low attendance (fan that has only attended one game and did not repeat the experience – might be unhappy with the coach, players, president, etc);
- External consumer (consumer that does not watch games but keeps up with results through the media);
- Indifferent (consumer that is aware of the team but does not keep up with it);
- Uninterested (consumer that is totally indifferent to the team and the sport itself – never watched a game).

5.2. Targeting

In order to accomplish some of the strategic guidelines defined by Lusitânia's president and also to take advantage of the conclusions drawn from the SWOT analysis, 3 targets were defined: Passionate Associates, Loyal Fans and Young Strangers.

Passionate Associates are males, aged between 45 and 80, with a medium to high income, that have an associate card and pay monthly fees. These associates attend every game and contribute voluntarily to help the club in any way they can. Most of them have witnessed some of the great achievements of the past.

Loyal Fans are males and females, aged between 15 and 50, with a medium to high income, that do not have an associate card. These fans go to some games and also attend the events held to help the club. Some of them have witnessed great achievements in the past but lost connection to the club due the poor management of prior presidents, while others have only experienced the most recent times.

Young Strangers are males and females, aged between 10 and 25, with no income or medium income, that are aware of the club existence (some might play in the youth teams), but do not have an associate card and also do not attend neither games nor events. They have an active social life but lack interest on regional sports.

5.3. Positioning

Sport Club Lusitânia wants to be perceived as an historical and respectful sports organization, that competes in any sport to win titles and invests on its youth teams to develop future talent. Also, Lusitânia aims to be seen as the sporting reference of the Azores region.

5.3.1. Points-of-Parity and Points-of-Difference

The identified points-of-parity are the following:

- Being present in the same competitions (regarding football and futsal);
- The communication strategies are very similar;
- The majority of sponsors and partners are the same;

The main points-of-difference are the following:

- Having a basketball sports team on the Portuguese main division, playing against the best teams in the country (Sporting, Porto, Benfica, Vitória de Guimarães, etc.);
- Partnership with Sporting Clube de Portugal for the football youth teams;
- Partnership with Angra Basket for basketball youth teams;
- Rich history and tradition, and the title of “The greatest champion of the Azorean champions”.

5.3.2. Golden Triangle

Consumers' Expectations

Consumers want to support a club that is competitive in every sport, thus being capable of building teams that perform in a way that excites and entertains the audience. They also desire a club that invests on its youth teams, developing local young talent that will represent the main team in the future. Finally, they want transparency and ethics regarding the club's management.

Potential product benefits

The main benefits of the Lusitânia products are entertainment, feeling of belonging and the access to the sports practice.

Regarding the entertainment, many consumers might watch Lusitânia football, basketball or futsal games because they enjoy watching sporting matches, thus finding it amusing.

Concerning the feeling of belonging, some consumers are very passionate about the club and believe they are part of something bigger, so they watch every game, read every news about it and voluntarily contribute to help the organization.

Finally, Lusitânia provides young consumers the access to its youth teams, enabling them to practice the sports they love and giving them the chance to one day be part of the main squad and compete at a high level.

Competitors' positioning

Based on the information available on their websites and social media accounts, it was possible to draw the positioning of Lusitânia main competitors.

Santa Clara positions itself as the greatest Azorean club and a source of pride for the entire region, thus representing all Azoreans whenever it enters the field. The club also uses the expression "Bravos Açorianos" in all its digital content.

Praiense, due to the SAD creation and consequent investment, has been able to build very competitive teams and, for several occasions, almost reached the 2nd national division, thus positioning itself as the major club in Terceira island and the 2nd bigger club in Azores.

Angrense aims to be the reference club in its city (Angra do Heroísmo), and for several years has been investing on its youth teams, which has led to a great number of home-grown talents playing in its main squad, therefore positioning itself as a formative club.

5.4. Communication Strategy and Goals

The communication strategy developed for Sport Club Lusitânia has two main objectives: to align with the club strategic guidelines, in order to fulfill them, and to capitalize the club's centenary in order to increase the involvement of associates fans, thus generating high revenues. As such, the main communication goals are the following:

- to improve the club's credibility;
- to attract quality players and coaches to the club's main teams;
- to attract young talent to the club's youth teams;
- to better engage with fans and associates;
- to become the sporting reference of the Azores region;
- to increase the club's audiences' numbers on home games across all sports;
- to capitalize the club's centenary to galvanize associates and fans and increase revenues.

5.5. The Message

Sport Club Lusitânia's message must be engaging, enthusiastic and appeal to the emotions of its fans and associates. It should also be transmitted by using storytelling and always taking advantage of the centenary of the club. The main topics to include in the message are:

- Historical references and accomplishments: to enhance the club's rich history by remembering famous teams of the past, the best players to wear the Lusitânia shirt, legendary matches and the trophies conquered;
- Associates, fans and community: to communicate and show the soul of the club – its supporters, the ones who are always available to help it, even in the most difficult times;
- Overcoming obstacles: despite being in a better situation now than a few years ago, it is still crucial to communicate Lusitânia's current financial struggles, in order to remember its supporters' community that, without their help, the club has no future;
- Centenary season: to heavily capitalize on the historic 100-year mark by remembering the glory of the past, trying to improve the current situation and providing hope on a better future.

5.6. Communication Actions Plan

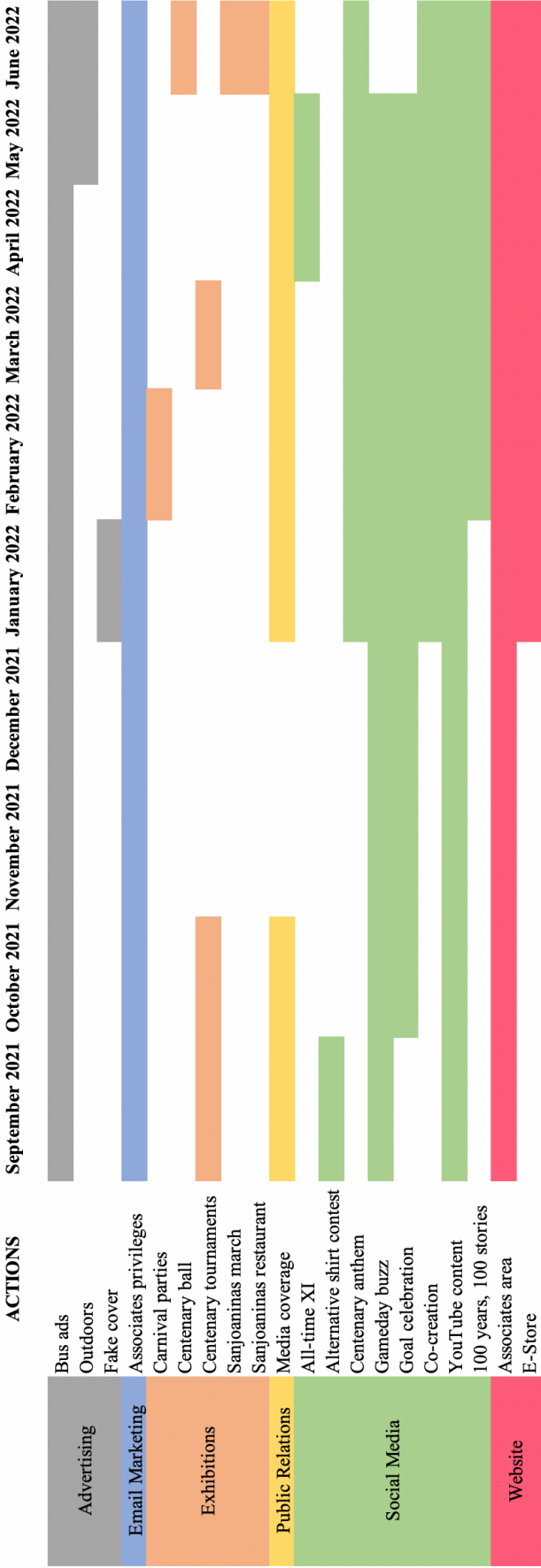
The name, description and objectives of each communication action is presented on the table below, as well as the target and investment required. All communication actions will have the hashtag “#RumoAoCentenário”.

Figure 5.1: Communication Actions Plan

Communication Tool	Action	Description	Objective	Target	Investment
Advertising	Bus ads	To place ads regarding Lusitânia's upcoming centenary anniversary on the small buses which circulate in the city center of Angra do Heroísmo.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Turn Angra do Heroísmo into a "green" city.	Loyal Fans Young Strangers	1 000 €
	Outdoors	To place outdoors regarding Lusitânia's upcoming centenary anniversary and its future games on strategic spots around Terceira island.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Increase attendance numbers on home games.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	1 200 €
	Fake cover	To develop a fake cover for Diário Insular (the Terceira's daily newspaper) with information regarding the club's centenary and its youth teams, something that has never been done.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Increase attendance numbers on home games; Attract talent to the youth teams.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	500 €
Email Marketing	Associates privileges	Send weekly emails to Lusitânia's associates with information regarding upcoming games, invites for club's events or special offers designed for them.	Reward the associates;	Passionate Associates	N/A
Exhibitions	Camival parties	Use the available spaces on the Lusitânia's headquarters to arrange parties on the Camival holidays.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Increase attendance numbers on home games; Increase revenues.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	Variable (depends on attendance)
	Centenary ball	Arrange a ball to celebrate the club's centenary and to pay tribute to its oldest associates.	Reward the associates; Increase revenues; Build a community spirit among Lusitânia's supporters; Celebrate the club's history.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans	Variable (depends on attendance)
	Centenary tournaments	To organize pre-season football, futsal and basketball tournaments, with the presence of teams such as Sporting, Santa Clara, Praiense and Angrense, as well as youth teams tournaments, to honor the centenary of the club.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Improve the club's credibility; Increase attendance numbers on home games; Attract players and coaches to Lusitânia's main teams; Attract talent to the youth teams; Increase revenues; Become the sporting reference of the Azores region.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
	Sanjoaninas march	Capitalize on Sanjoaninas, the traditional parties of Angra do Heroísmo, and present a centenary-themed march that will go through the city center on the night between the 23rd and 24th of June, which is the birthday of the club.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Build a community spirit among Lusitânia's supporters; Celebrate the club's history.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
	Sanjoaninas restaurant	Capitalize on Sanjoaninas, the traditional parties of Angra do Heroísmo, and use the available spaces on the Lusitânia's headquarters to arrange a restaurant for the party days.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Celebrate the club's history; Increase revenues.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	Variable (depends on attendance)

Communication Tool	Action	Description	Objective	Target	Investment
Public Relations	Media coverage	To arrange news articles, interviews and reports on regional media channels regarding Lusitânia's history, upcoming centenary, youth teams and guidelines for the future.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Improve the club's credibility; Increase attendance numbers on home games; Attract players and coaches to Lusitânia's main teams; Attract talent to the youth teams; Become the sporting reference of the Azores region.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
Social Media	All-time XI	Create a poll on Lusitânia's social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) for its supporters to vote on the Lusitânia's all-time XI in football.	Engage with club's supporters; Celebrate the club's history.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans	N/A
	Alternative shirt contest	Develop an online contest where people can submit their ideas for Lusitânia's centenary alternative shirt and the one with the most votes is produced and used.	Engage with club's supporters.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
	Centenary anthem	Create a special song to celebrate the centenary of the club, with references to the glory of the past 100 years and ambition for the future, that will be shared on Lusitânia's social media.	Engage with club's supporters; Celebrate the club's history.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	250 €
	Gameday buzz	To provide real time content on gamedays (e.g. starting teams, substitutions, goals, highlights, etc).	Create awareness towards Lusitânia; Engage with club's supporters.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans	N/A
	Goal celebration	Develop a goal celebration to be used by the youth players and shared on the Lusitânia social media accounts.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia; Attract talent to the youth teams; Engage with club's supporters.	Young Strangers	N/A
	Co-creation	Promote co-creation by incentivizing supporters to develop Lusitânia-themed merchandising ideas. The best ideas would be developed and sold, and the creators would receive part of the revenue.	Create awareness towards Lusitânia; Increase revenues; Engage with club's supporters.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
	YouTube content	Create content for the Lusitânia's YouTube channel (e.g. matches highlights, insides of the main teams trainings, interviews to charismatic supporters, etc) .	Engage with club's supporters.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans Young Strangers	N/A
	100 years, 100 stories	To share one hundred 1-minute stories from Lusitânia's oldest associates on its social media (Facebook and Instagram).	Create awareness towards Lusitânia and its centenary; Celebrate the club's history; Engage with club's supporters.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans	N/A
Website	Associates area	Develop an associate area with information regarding the club's games, events, special offers and partnerships.	Reward the associates;	Passionate Associates	N/A
	E-Store	Create an E-Store, inside the website, to sell the club's merchandising.	Increase revenues.	Passionate Associates Loyal Fans	204 €

5.7. Communication Schedule



6. Conclusions and Limitations

The main purpose of this master's project was to develop a communication plan for the 2021/22 season of Sport Club Lusitânia, leveraging on the centenary of the club that will be celebrated on the 24th of June 2022.

The first step consisted on a review of the already existent literature about relevant subjects for this project, as is the case of marketing strategy, sports marketing or marketing communications, in order to better understand the concepts that are necessary to execute a communication plan for a sports team.

Then, it was necessary to do a contextualization and analysis of the club and the market, which consisted on presenting the biggest achievements of Lusitânia's past, as well as the recent history (the fact that it has been struggling financially), its strategic guidelines for the future, the main competitors and the club's mission, vision and values. A SWOT analysis was also developed as to understand the club's strengths and weaknesses that, combined with the market's opportunities and threats, might lead to valuable inputs for the communication plan.

Few information was available, which made it crucial to conduct some informal conversations with Lusitânia's managing staff (president and directors), in order to have more detailed information regarding attendance and number of athletes, as well as the strategic guidelines for the club.

Finally, after collecting all the needed information, it was possible to start developing the communication plan itself, which consisted on defining the club's target and positioning, establishing the communication strategy and respective goals, building a communication action plan and scheduling the proposed communication actions.

This project's limitations consist on the lack of information regarding Lusitânia's match attendances and number of athletes, which were all estimated taking into account the information provided by the managing staff, as well as the total privation of data regarding the Azores sports market. It was also hard to estimate the investment required for some of the communication actions proposed, since many people and companies voluntarily offer their time, skills or products/services.

7. Bibliography

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