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How can a digital strategy on social networks change a prospect into a customer in the publishing sector?

Case study: Larcier company

Mémoire présenté par :

Anouk BOULANGER

Pour l'obtention du diplôme de :

Master's degree in Management Science

Année académique 2019-2020

Promoteur :

Nathalie STAS

Haute Ecole
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INTRODUCTION

During my master's degree at ICHEC, I was particularly interested by my digital marketing course. The business as we know is completely transforming in a digital way, as well as the methods used by companies to communicate. Social networks are becoming an important channel in the marketing world and are now considered as efficient tools to have a good digital strategy. Indeed, they overcome the traditional method of one-way communication, now the relationship goes both directions between the company and its customers. Thus, I decided to focus my thesis on this subject and then to illustrate it with a case study based on the Belgian legal publishing company Larcier.

The objective of this thesis is to demonstrate if **<u>Larcier's digital strategy on social network is effective</u>** and if it actually turns a prospect into a customer in a profitable way. My problematic will therefore be to analyse how a digital strategy on social networks can change a prospect into a client in the publishing industry. About the typology of this thesis, I choose an **applied research** including a first theorical part and the case study as the second part.

In the first part of this thesis, I'm gonna start by going over the theoretical aspect of the digital communication with some key figures and I will go deeper by describing what is a **digital strategy** which is the core of this applied research. This point also includes the definition of a CRM, a conversion funnel, the KPIs and the content strategy.

Secondly, I will describe some **online marketing tools**, including the earned, paid and owned media. I will focus on the most important tools and especially those used by Larcier in its digital strategy.

To conclude this first part, I will focus on **social media**, including the consumer engagement and the latest trends in the digital landscape in 2020. Then, I will describe the **social networks** that are most used by companies in the business world.

The second part is based on the illustration of the theoretical aspect through a case study about the digital strategy of Larcier in the legal publishing sector. I will first describe the **publishing market** and the main **direct competitors** of the

company. The next point is the presentation of Larcier and its **current marketing strategy**.

Then I will focus on their **digital strategy**, including the different tools used by Larcier in comparison to its competitors and what are their strengths and weaknesses. Accordingly, I will analyse **internal data** based on monthly social media reports in order to evaluate the efficiency of their current strategy and how they can improve it. In other words, my **methodology** will be based on an analysis of existing monthly reports for the period from January 2020 to March 2020.

I'm going to base this analysis on the **KPIs** used by Larcier via Google Analytics about Facebook and Instagram. The type of information produced will therefore be based on percentage rates such as the **conversion rate** and the engagement rate for example.

Finally, these statistics will allow me to develop improvement proposals for the last point of this thesis and to highlight the lack of the essential KPIs needed to have a more accurate vision of the Larcier's social media strategy. I'm going to describe those concrete and workable **recommendations** to improve their current digital strategy, how to apply those propositions and how to measure their effectiveness.

In conclusion, my motivation is to be able to provide an **overview of social media marketing** while illustrating it through a problematic in a specific company.

I wish you a pleasant reading!

✏ PREFACE

During the elaboration of this thesis, we have been impacted by the coronavirus, also known as Covid19. The first part of my thesis is based on theoretical research through reference books and my lectures, as well as data accessible on Internet. I was thus able to complete this first part without too many problems despite the confinement and the more difficult conditions than usual.

About the second part, which is a study case, the quarantine impacted the redaction of my analysis because I've had limited contact with the company on which I based my case study. The two employees of the digital department of the Larcier company were only available at the beginning of the week and it was difficult to keep a regular contact by email. Thus, I could have had access to more information and written a more accurate analysis for my case study if we hadn't been in quarantine. However, I fully understand the reasons why we had to go through this difficult step of lockdown and I was fortunate enough to be able to complete this thesis.

PART ONE: A DIGITAL COMMUNICATION STUDY

1. Digital communication

Before getting to the heart of the matter, I will present an overview of what digital communication is nowadays and how it is evolving exponentially. Next, I will illustrate this growth with key figures based on the last few years.

The digital communication includes all actions that make it possible to transmit messages and information via **digital channels**, in other words it's a transfer of data in a digital way. Since the digital revolution, the contemporary consumer is constantly connected, digital communication is in all aspects of our professional and private life. As Marc Andreessen (founder of Netscape) said, "Software is eating the world" and the digitalization is a massive revolution in terms of analyzing, sharing and storing data.

Moreover, communication is one of the principal **human behaviors** and this digital technology invented a new way of communicating for people and the adoption rhythm for Internet and smartphones is the most rapid growth ever seen. In other words, while television consumption remained passive, Internet consumption can be active, and since it is accessible worldwide consumers have changed their behavior.

These Internet users have become at the same time receivers, transmitters and connectors of content. They are called "**prosumers**" which means that they are increasingly informed, engaged and influential. For example, now users give their opinion on products, give them a rating and consult each other for information, they trust their relatives more than they trust advertising as we will see later.

For example, nowadays brands even involve customers in the design of certain products or services by taking their opinions into account. This was unthinkable 15 years ago, when the relationship only went from the company to the consumer. Brands should no longer just sell their products or services, they should be appreciated and be associated with an attractive image.

According to Desager, Ferauche, and Fernandez (2019), the digital communication is based on 4 pillars which are driving forces:

1. **On demand services**: people want instant access to services and products (e.g. Deliveroo, AirBnB)
2. **Convenience**: the main objective of digital services should be "making people's life easier" (e.g. Uber)

3. **Personalized experience**: each user wants to be treated as an individual, with a customized and personalized service (e.g. Amazon, Starbucks)
4. **Social brands**: nowadays brands are built on social brands, we live now in a customer centric world (e.g. TripAdvisor)

To illustrate the principle of **customer centric world** with an example (Redacteur.com, 2020), LEGO is a company that has an efficient digital communication. Indeed, to maintain its leader status, the brand took advantage of the release of its LEGO Movie to launch the "Kronkiwongi Project". Children had to build a "Kronkiwongi" that was just an unusual object, and then present their creation on social networks. The project was a huge success and reached 27 million users. Activity on LEGO pages (click, like, comments, etc.) increased by 61% across all networks.

About the constant increase in digital communication, it is also due to the easier access to Internet and the increasing speed of our online connections. Indeed, the **Moore's Law** (cf. Appendix 1: Moore's Law) has proved it for over 50 years. This law was founded by Gordon Moore in 1965, the co-founder of Intel Corporation, and it demonstrates that the number of transistors in a computer had doubled every year since the invention of the integrated circuit. It means our computers, smartphones and other devices become faster and faster and their power increases exponentially, making digital communication more fluid and efficient each year.

According to Eric Schmidt, Google's executive chairman (2015), "When everything is connected, the internet as we know it will be gone […] Connectivity will be like oxygen: all around". An example of this global digitization is the Tesla company, founded by Elon Musk. Tesla is not only launching new vehicles, Musk has completely reinvented mobility via self-driving cars. Soon those cars will become accessible everywhere and even connected to our Apple Watch. All our objects will be connected, from our washing machine to our alarm system, we call it the "**Internet of Things**".

Another example, a prototype of connected lenses has already been developed. Those lenses will directly check our glucose levels in our tears and they could directly inform our doctor if necessary.

One of the major changes brought by this technological revolution is the digital marketing, which is now the main means used in companies to attract prospects.

Moreover, the speed at which consumers adopt those new technologies is constantly increasing and now he wants everything instantly, the new business currency is speed. The contemporary consumer is impatient, he has access to the Internet 24/7 so he expects the same from companies and wants answers without delay.

If we compare the **traditional communication** with the digital communication tools, the latter includes all the steps at the same time as we can see on the following illustration.

In addition, traditional media such as radio, press, television and flyers quickly become unaffordable. Moreover, the target is much less precise than with digital communication. For example, when you launch printed posters or you run a radio campaign, the geographical area is limited and you can't choose who is going to watch or listen it. In conclusion, traditional media are more about mass marketing, unlike online media.

Figure 1 - Traditional communication VS digital communication
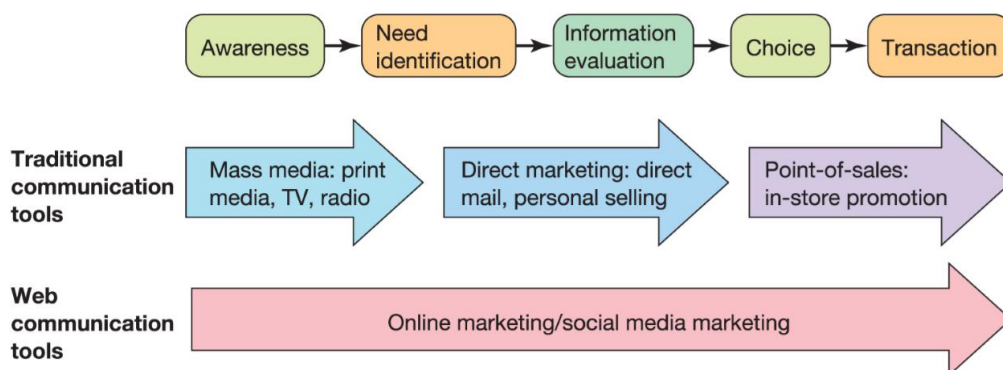
Source: Sluysmans, M. (2019). *International marketing: International marketing management*. Syllabus. ICHEC, Brussels.

To summarize, digital communication is completely indispensable for most organizations today and the demand for digital skills in the job market is constantly increasing.

1.1. Key figures

The global digital population has been growing steadily since the digital transformation. Currently, the world has more than **4.5 billion** active users on the Internet (cf. Appendix 2: Global digital population in April 2020), which represents more than half of the world's population (7.7 billion).

The global digital growth is constantly increasing and the next statistics show there are **+7%** Internet users and **+9.2%** active social media users since 2019. It means digital communication, more specifically social media, is becoming more and more adopted and therefore a necessity in today's marketing landscape.

Figure 2 - Global digital growth
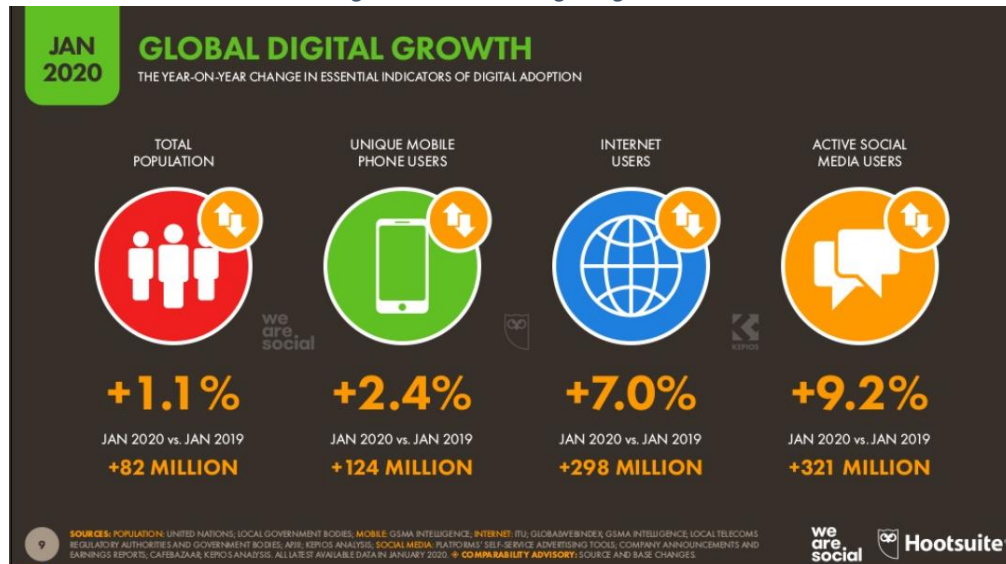
In 2016, every 60 seconds a lot of things happened on Internet, for example:

- More than 2.315 million searches on Google
- More than 56k pictures uploaded on Instagram
- More than 3 million posts shared on Facebook
- Around 3.125 million likes and 243k pictures uploaded on Facebook

To conclude on this first point, if we look at those trends and statistics (cf. Appendix 3: Statistics about digitalization), people are using Internet and social media more and more and our mobile has become a keyway, the first access to everybody. Nowadays, almost all companies are using a digital communication strategy and it's essential for their survival.

2. Digital strategy

Now I'm going to focus on the central part of this thesis, the digital strategy. I will first define what is it and who are the main stakeholders involved. Then I will describe the main elements of a digital strategy that are used by most companies, i.e. CRM, funnel conversion, and how can we measure customer engagement on the Internet through the KPIS. I will also describe what a Call-to-Action (CTA) is

and give some examples to illustrate, to finish with a description of the content strategy.

There are several ways to approach the definition of a digital strategy. Generally speaking, this is the use of digital technologies within companies. In other words, it's a plan that uses digital resources to achieve a goal to help the development of the business. Digital resources are present in almost every business nowadays and it is necessary to know how to use them.

Castagné, Daix, Saillet and Scheid (2015) have drawn up in their book a list of goals that can be achieved with a digital strategy. Here are a few examples:

- increase the awareness of our brand;
- attract prospects;
- build a community around the brand;
- generate more traffic to the website;
- reduce operational costs;
- etc.

Nowadays, a digital strategy is essential because according to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), **80%** of Internet users (16 to 64) have already searched online for a product or service to buy. Moreover, **74%** of those Internet users effectively purchased a product online (cf. Appendix 4: E-commerce activities in 2020) and the worldwide current total value of the B2C ecommerce market has reached **$3.43 trillion**, which means 18% more than in 2019.

In 2019, the total budget allocated to digital marketing was **$334 billion** and that's 12% more than the year before. From this budget, **$89.9 billion** was spent on social media ads as shown in the following illustration, it represents 18% more than the year before.

Figure 3 - Digital marketing spend in 2019
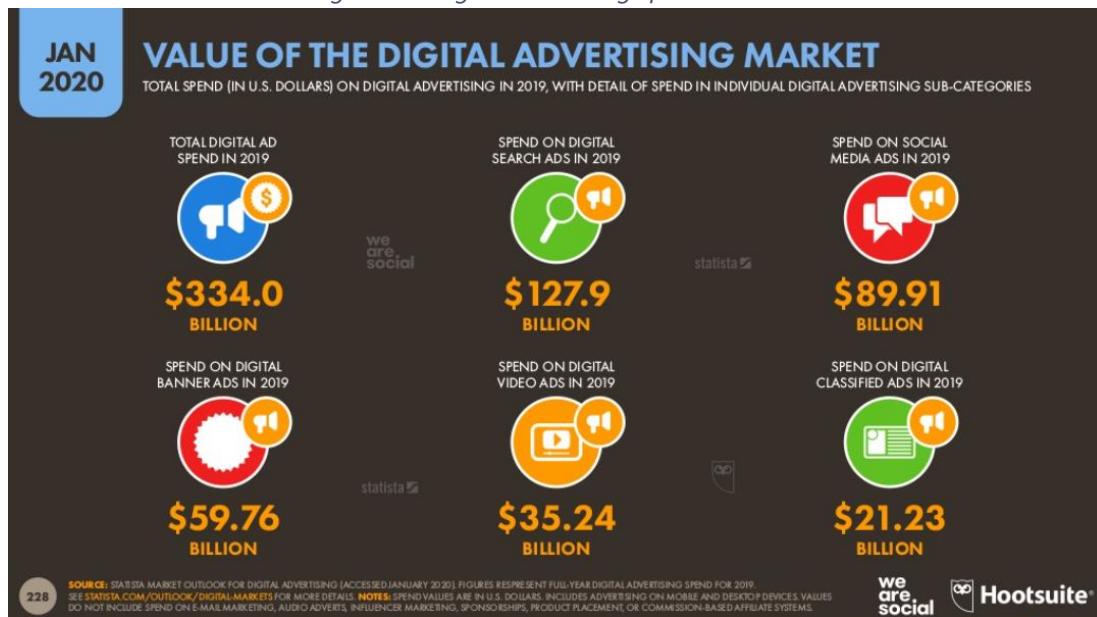
A digital strategy takes place in several phases:

1. First of all, it is necessary to define the main **objective**, of which I have given some examples above;
2. Next, you have to define your **target**, what are the criteria of the people the company wants to reach, their age group, their average income, whether the company is targeting women, rather than men;
3. Third, the business needs to determine the **tools** it will use. Whether it's via social networks or through buyer persona, chatbots, or whatever, it must define in advance how the strategy will be developed and on which platform.
4. Then, it must determine a **budget** to be able to carry out this strategy, with for example a part of the budget allocated to paid advertising.
5. Finally, to measure the effectiveness and impact of this strategy, the company must set up **KPIs**, indicators that will tell it whether it is going in the right direction and whether its actions are effective.

Most of the time, companies actively use **social media** for their digital strategy and they are therefore a large part of the tools used to achieve their goals, this is the reason why a digital strategy is sometimes called a digital media strategy.

Whether it is to publish content on a regular basis, to promote some products via paid advertising, to collect feedback from customers, networks allow direct

contact between the company and its customer. It is therefore an informal way to communicate and it allows the company to have a foothold on the field and know quite fast how its image is perceived by the public. Interestingly, since 2019 this is the first time that total advertising spent on social media has exceeded total spent on print media.

Brands are more and more original when it comes to creating buzz via digital means. For example, in 2015 Dior created a virtual immersive experience via a virtual reality headset called "Dior Eyes". The helmet gives a 360-degree view to allow any user to discover the catwalks of Paris Fashion Week (LVMH, 2015).

The digital strategy is strongly linked to the company's business strategy and the two cannot be dissociated. This new kind of strategy shows how the company is influenced by digital resources to create added value. Traditional business strategies focus on the long term, about budget forecasts for example, while digital strategies are more short term, such as bringing in new customers. This is also because in today's dynamic and changing world, companies must react very quickly and a strategy that can change every month is therefore more adaptable than a strategy spread over a few years. In the future, all the business strategies are going to be digital.

To evaluate the success of its digital strategy, the company can use several evaluation tools such as Cognos, Compete, Google Analytics, Alexa and many others. Those tools are business intelligences and performance management software, they allow the company to make some reporting and have a dashboard on the status of its strategy and its performance.

2.1. Some definitions

To be able to understand the rest of the thesis, I will explain some terms that will come up throughout this work.

2.1.1. Lead

A **lead** is a potential customer, it is the target we aim at in the first steps of the conversion funnel. We don't know his needs yet, we've just piqued his interest. He has a potential interest and becomes a lead when he makes a **first contact** with the company.

The nuance between lead and **prospect** is fine and it sometimes depends on the context. Leads are at the beginning of the buying cycle, they have an interest but

don't intend to buy yet. They have **potential** because they can become prospects and consider a purchase.

For example, if you walk down the street and pass a mobile phone shop, you stop for a few minutes to look. You tell yourself that one day maybe you will need a new mobile phone, yours is getting old but it can wait. Maybe you'll come back later, there's no hurry. At this step, you are considered as a lead.

2.1.2. Prospect

After the first contact and an initial interest from the lead, he can potentially become a **prospect**. It means **potential customer**, someone who could potentially make a purchase. We know he's part of the company's **target** group. A lead becomes a prospect when he or she is considered interested enough for a sales representative to take him or her over. It means that the sales representative will take an interest in him, he will seek information about him or call him directly to develop his interest even further. The sales representative's goal is to get an appointment with the prospect or to put him in front of a probability of purchase. The last step is to turn the potential into reality and make a purchase. The prospect will then become a **customer**.

To come back at our first example, you are still walking down the street and you remember that your mobile phone fell down this morning, its screen is broken even though it still works. The need to buy a new one is therefore more urgent, even if it is not yet essential, your phone can still last a month. When you pass in front of the phone shop, you enter and ask a salesman for information, explaining the situation. You say you just want to have a look. The salesperson has received information and perceived a need; your phone needs to be replaced. The salesperson can then try to convince you to buy a new phone right away or later, but to come back to his shop anyway. You are considered a prospect now.

2.1.3. Customer

If the company succeeds in meeting the prospect's need, then he or she can potentially become a **customer**. When a prospect makes a purchase, he or she officially becomes a customer of the company, even if it is only for a one-time purchase.

Lead behaviour needs to be analysed because not all leads are interesting. Indeed, it's better to avoid spending too much time attracting a lead that is not part of the company's target group, he will probably never become a customer. For

example, a lead is someone who will visit your website without necessarily wanting to buy something, so it is better to avoid making him an offer or a discount, as well as sending him regular emails. Once the company has enough information about the behaviour of its leads, it can determine the ideal time to contact some of them and turn them into prospects.

The objective is therefore to attract **leads**, to transform some of them into **prospects** and then into **customers**. We can see each of these steps in the point about the conversion tunnel.

2.2. CRM

To manage its strategy and especially its relationship with acquired customers, a company can install a **CRM system** (cf. Appendix 5: CRM model). The customer relationship management (CRM) is both a strategy and a software by which the company aims to understand, anticipate and manage the needs of its current customers and prospects. CRM is based on the principle that it is easier and more profitable to retain prospects and customers than to find new ones. The goal of CRM is to respond to three problems of a company:

- **Increasing customer loyalty**: listening to the customer in order to propose a tailor-made offer and and more personalised services.
- **Multi-channel integration**: integrating customer data from sales, points of sale, catalogues, direct mail, telemarketing, Internet, social networks, etc...
- **Increasing productivity and reducing costs**: digitalizing the different services such as after-sales service, order taking, etc. And optimizing marketing expenses by improving the target audience

Thanks to a CRM software, the company will have a global and automated view of its customers. It will therefore be able to nurture a personalized relationship with each of them in a very easy way thanks to this database. The CRM refocuses the company close to its customers and thus makes it possible to generate more sales, with all the **information gathered** in a central system accessible by all the departments of the company.

With this **dashboard**, the company will also be better able to identify specific behaviours and make appropriate decisions, it means the sales strategy will be more effective because it will be more targeted.

The CRM system is very useful for both large multinationals and small local companies, it adapts to the situation. Above all, this software allows you to better follow up with your customer, so it concerns every company from the moment it has at least one customer.

CRM uses techniques for collecting, stocking and analysing data about customers, marketing operations and support operations. The system uses all available contact channels with the customer and is therefore strongly impacted by the development of digital contact channels such as social networks for example.

In conclusion, a CRM is a tool that puts the customer back at the centre of the company and facilitates the work of managers in their follow-up of the relationship with their customers.

Nowadays, many excellent CRM software have lost their effectiveness because the behaviour of customers and prospects has changed. Indeed, most customers who contact a company will now be more than halfway through the conversion funnel as today's buyers are looking for solutions to their problems, product information and tools to compare two competitors.

The CRM follows up and simplifies the process of the customer's buying journey while helping the company to analyse the results obtained. In marketing, this buying path is called a conversion funnel and it will be described in detail in the following point.

Indeed, the first steps of a digital strategy generally consist in attracting leads and transforming them into prospects. CRM enables the analysis of previous commitments and completed conversions and the results are used to optimise the company's online presence in order to attract even more leads.

CRM can also be used as communication management software on social networks, as it is a customer relationship channel. In this way CRM can help create targeted network research and allow sales people to identify potential leads, it's called social CRM.

In concrete terms, a CRM makes it possible to produce real results as shown by the following figures.

Figure 4 - CRM improvements

LEAD CONVERSION BY UP TO	**SALES BY UP TO**	**SALES PRODUCTIVITY BY UP TO**
+30%	**+30**%	**+35**%
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION BY UP TO	**FASTER DECISION-MAKING BY UP TO**	**REVENUE BY UP TO**
+35%	**+38**%	**+25**%
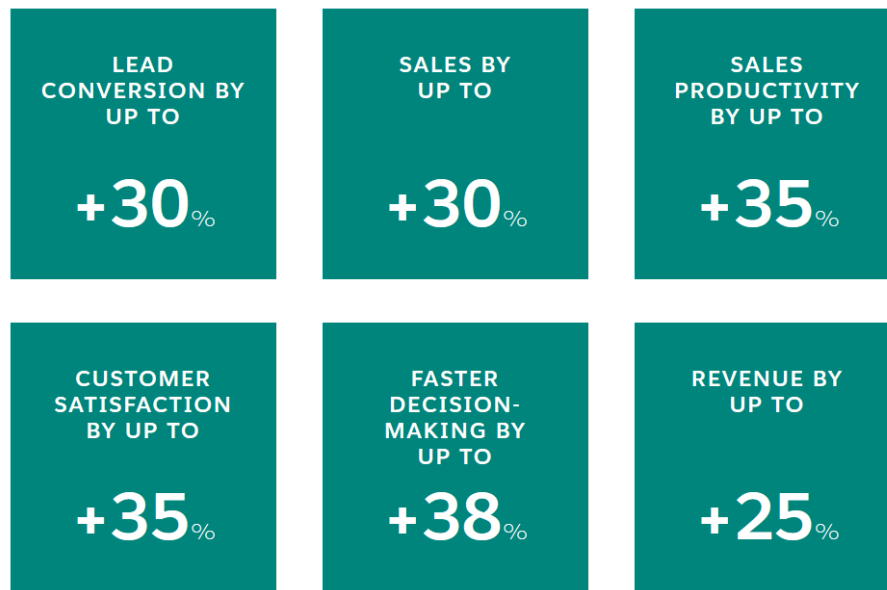
Average Percentage Improvements Reported by Salesforce Customers

Source: *Salesforce Relationship Survey* conducted 2014–2016 among 10,500+ customers randomly selected.

Source: Salesforce. (n.d.). *What is CRM?*. Retrieved 20 May 2020, from https://www.salesforce.com/crm/what-is-crm/

2.3. The conversion funnel

First of all, the ultimate goal of social media marketing is to get commitment to the brand, that users want to create brand-friendly content after a satisfying experience, not even a purchase. For example, if the official Facebook page of a specific brand answers a consumer's question very quickly and effectively, they already have a good experience.

Nowadays, the goal is to turn the consumer into a brand ambassador. For example, when a thrill seeker puts an impressive video on YouTube filmed with his GoPro, it makes a great promotion for the brand, because the product is highlighted without giving the impression of watching an advertisement. Moreover, the content created by this user has cost the brand absolutely nothing, it only benefits.

From now on, the consumer can also actively participate in the evolution of a company by proposing ideas or suggestions on the official pages of a brand. If they are committed to the brand and want to see it grow, they now have the opportunity to be involved via social networks.

We can observe this new consumer behavior with a **conversion funnel**, which in marketing is the name given to the different stages of a customer's buying path, from no awareness to brand loyalty. It has a funnel shape because a brand will

first attract a lot of leads, who will then become prospects and finally customers, but there is a gradual decline of the number of people involved at each stage.

The funnel is an effective way to calculate the **conversion rate**, it means the percentage of people that complete your desired goal out of the total number of people (e.g. a sale, a registration, a visit on the website). A high conversion rate is due to a successful digital strategy, it means people are doing what you want from them.

The **modern consumer** follows his own journey described by the conversion funnel. As I said earlier, the way consumers look for the information has changed so mass marketing is not effective anymore, you need to provide a personalised solution to your prospect. We have access to new sources of information (e.g. our family and friends, post-purchase reviews on Amazon, etc.) and new forms of media, like the Paid, Owned and Earned channels as we shall see later.

For the step awareness and interest, the target is called a lead. When he reaches the next steps (consideration and intent), we call him a prospect, he will check the product test, make some comparisons, see the reviews... For the last step, when he makes the action of purchasing, he becomes a customer. The further the target goes in the path, the more loyalty it develops for the brand. In order to bring as many people as possible to each stage, it is necessary to increase motivation and decrease potential friction by for example creating an attractive website design, simple and easy to use.

1. The first step is **awareness** and is the stage that gets the most attention from leads. At this point, traditional and digital marketing are used to reach as many people as possible. For example, you can create advertisements on television or radio, or use direct mailing and outdoor advertising, etc.
2. If it works, the lead will pass to an **interest** stage and is going to consider your product or service.
3. The next step is the **consideration** and it includes an active evaluation from the prospect. Along his research process, the company has to provide readily available and trustworthy resources. He will check the ratings and reviews, demos, industry reports, friends' testimonials, comparison tools ... If the firm provides useful tools it will help the prospect to make a choice. User-generated content is also very important because the prospect will double-check his information with people he trusts. Your content has also to be available on all type of devices.

4. The **intent** step is the decisive moment, when the prospect is considering whether or not to buy your product or service. If he goes to the next step, he becomes a consumer.
5. About the moment of purchase, the **buy** step, if it's made online it has to be done in a few clicks as possible, the only concern here is the customer experience and it refers to his emotions and attitudes. The buying process must be easy, fast and enjoyable. The customer also needs to have access to a clear information about promotions or additional costs. You can find each step described in the following figure to summarize this conversion funnel.

Figure 5 - Conversion funnel (Source: Olivia Ross, 2019)
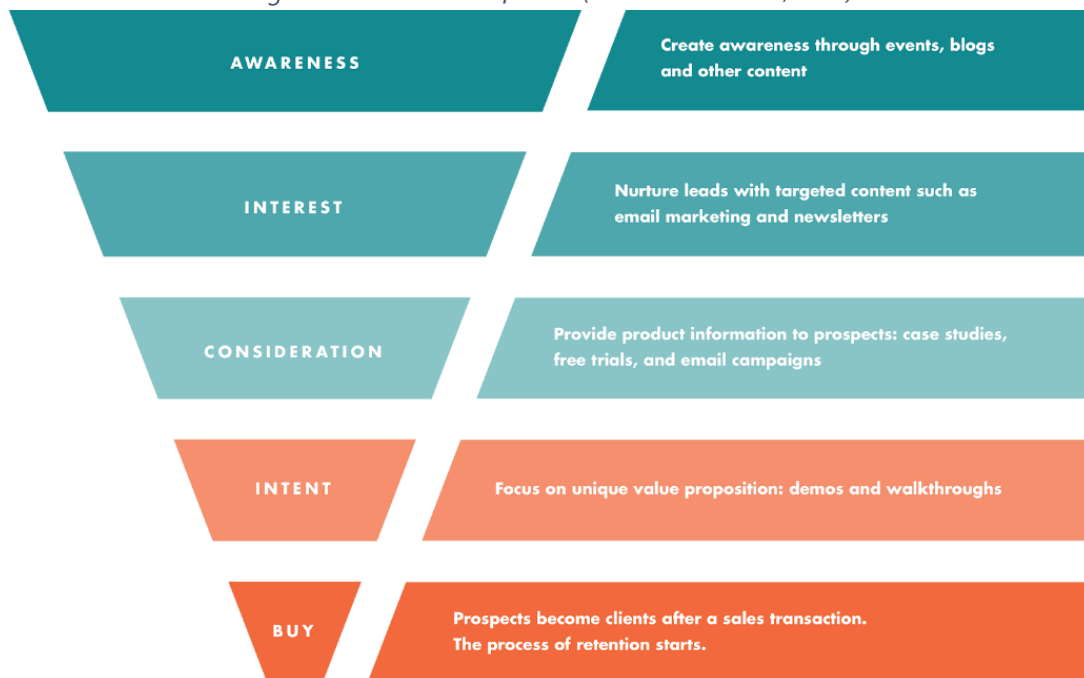
Source: Ross, O. (2019). *How to Optimize Your Conversion Funnel, from ToFu to BoFu*. Retrieved 19 March 2020, from https://moz.com/blog/optimize-conversion-funnel-tofu-bofu

However, the **weakness** of this model is that the funnel stops after the purchase. Whereas nowadays, the consumer doesn't cut ties with the brand after his buying experience. The focus must remain on the customer's commitment and the brand must create a personal relationship with him. If the company manages well to create a strong enough link, the consumer will share his positive experience through reviews or word-of-mouth, thus he becomes an **ambassador** for the brand and allows others leads to join the funnel.

For example, Sephora has an excellent e-commerce loyalty program. It is based on exclusivity and status-based rewards. Indeed, each customer can join a group

after spending a certain purchase amount and it brings him some benefits. For example, if the customer spends more than $1,000 in one year in Sephora stores, he reaches the highest status, the "VIB Red". This offers benefits such as unlimited access to a beauty studio, exclusive events, seasonal promotions, a birthday gift, free beauty classes, etc. (Desager et al., 2019).

In other words, the customer relationship doesn't stop at purchase, the **after-sales service** has become very important. Companies must invest more and more in customer retention because happy customers generate more customers. 80% of prospects look at recommendations and reviews or ask their friends for advice before buying, so you must build a good reputation around your products/services. Furthermore, a bad experience can also spread very quickly and have a heavy impact on the brand.

Here is an example to illustrate the steps in a cyclic version of the conversion funnel. Someone visits your company's website and becomes a lead. You analyse his behaviour and characteristics and decide that he corresponds to your target, he becomes a lead. Your sales representatives contact him and make him an offer, he makes a purchase and becomes a customer. If he is satisfied with his relationship with you and his purchase, he can become an ambassador customer, i.e. he recommends you to those around him and advises you to his family and friends. This word-of-mouth generates traffic on your site and therefore attracts more leads, the cycle repeats itself with a little more people at each stage, it's a virtuous circle.

This extra step of customer loyalty is described in a more recent model called **McKinsey model**. It represents an infinite loop that includes the post-purchase experience, but I won't describe this model in detail because the company I selected for my case study uses the funnel conversion model, however you can find a preview below.

Figure 6 - McKinsey model

Brands enter and exit the consideration set at any point up to purchase

The consumer considers an initial set of brands

2

Active evaluation

Ultimately, the consumer selects a brand

1

Initial consideration set

4

Loyalty loop

3

Moment of purchase

Trigger

Postpurchase experience

Consumer repurchases current brand without shopping for others

McKinsey&Company

Source: Court, D., Elzinga, D., Finneman, B., & Perrey, J. (2017). *The new battleground for marketing-led growth*. Retrieved 20 March 2020, from https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-new-battleground-for-marketing-led-growth

2.4. Customer engagement on social networks

Engagement represents an individual's **visible interactions** with content posted on social networks. For example, a "like", a "retweet", a click to a link like the brand's site, a share, etc., all these examples are visible interactions.

All these actions are valuable for the company because they prove that the target is interested by its message. The purpose of social networks is to create engagement to turn prospects into customers.

According to Sabrina Schmalstieg (2019), there are 10 rules to follow in order to create **brand engagement**:

1. You must respond as **quickly** as possible to people's comments and questions, on the internet they expect 24/7 availability unlike in physical stores. For example, you can create a notification system as soon as a message is received.

2. Each relationship must be **personalized** and not standardized. People must feel personally valued and adapting the words and form of the company's answers will create connivance. If you take the time to respond to someone in a private conversation, they will greatly appreciate the attention.

3. The created and published **content** must be **unique and qualitative**, it must be viral and make a good impression on the viewer. Short and effective videos and exclusive content will generate more interaction.

4. The company's **community manager** must become an "**opinion leader**" and must inform, amaze and make people want to share the content he creates. For example, a company blog is a very effective tool to highlight its expertise. Create posts with the help of experts to promote your knowledge and it will rapidly increase sales.

5. Publications must be posted **regularly on social networks,** constant activity is rewarded. Being regular will multiply the opportunities to exchange with people. These publications must also be adapted to the target group and if the company works in B2B or B2C this group will be different.

6. To encourage people to interact, "**call-to-action**" should be used. You must propose buttons to share, like, comment, click and publish content in an original way. Call-to-action can also be applied directly on your website and you can, for example, obtain the contact details of prospects to offer them your services.

7. Nevertheless, you have to **stay yourself** on the networks and develop a unique style for your brand. Through a sense of humour, it allows you to create a proximity with people and to stand out from other brands. Humanism is a priority to create commitment and sympathy for your brand and avoid automatic messages for example.

8. When you **develop a community**, you also have to get to know it and discover its habits. You have to take comments into account, create polls to gather opinions, publish the results obtained, follow the statistics to see what works (top) or what needs to be improved (flop). Is the community more active at night or during the day for example?

9. You have to **stay tuned to the trends** and find the hits, for example the trending topics on Twitter or the new trendy application. Every successful new event becomes an opportunity to express yourself on it, so you need

to publish content that follows the news. For example, create content related to the Olympic Games when they are taking place.

10. **Continuously test** your effectiveness on the networks. Trends change very quickly and today's principles will no longer be valid tomorrow. A company needs to be able to adapt and try new things on a regular basis.

2.5. The KPIs

It is possible to calculate the return on investment (ROI) of social networks thanks to **KPIs**. KPI is an acronym for Key Performance Indicator and it can be used to analyse the audience of a website for example. KPIs are used to measure the effectiveness of an action, whether it is a marketing or customer relations action.

From the moment you launch an action, you can **evaluate the results** using these KPIs. They can also be grouped in a dashboard to get a global view. For example, following a marketing action, the impact can be evaluated by analysing the number of orders placed and the turnover generated, if there has been an increase compared to the situation before the marketing action.

KPIs are very often used in digital marketing and in the management of commercial websites and there are several free online tools to establish KPIs and track their evolution, such as Google Analytics. For example, the Google BrandLab suggested ideal KPIs to measure the chosen goal (cf. Appendix 6: KPIs to measure your goal).

Concretely, you can calculate your turnover, the number of your followers on Twitter, the number of visitors on your website, the conversion rate, the bounce rate, etc. All of these are metrics and become KPIs if they are linked to a target value. Some examples of KPIs are the customer satisfaction rate, the conversion rate or the bounce rate.

Here is a list of some KPIs which are very often used in digital marketing:

- **Impressions**: number of times an online ad is exposed to a targeted audience
- **CPM**: cost per mille → average cost for 1,000 impressions
- **PPC**: pay per click → amount due when a user clicks on a specific place
- **CTR**: click-through-rate → percentage of clicks on total impressions

$$\% \: clicks \big/ total \: impressions$$

- **ACPA**: average cost-per-acquisition → average advertising cost for each lead conversion
- **ARPC**: average revenue-per-click → average revenue generated by each click
- **ROI**: return-on-investment → revenue generated on total digital marketing investment

$$Revenue\ generated \Big/ Total\ investment$$

In short, there are an infinite number of possible indicators, and the most effective must be selected. A performance indicator is **linked to the strategy** pursued by the company. It therefore depends on the company's context and sector of activity. The dashboard made up of all the indicators must be consistent with the objectives of the moment and make it possible to know exactly where we are.

Moreover, The KPIs must be easy to interpret and based on a simple calculation. It has to be possible to refresh it on a regular basis, so that the information can be kept up to date. KPIs are above all a decision-making aid and their analysis should not result in a simple observation but it should induce an idea for action.

2.5.1. The SMART method

The first step in choosing KPIs is therefore to determine the main objective of the company. To define it clearly, we can use the **SMART method** (Specific – Measurable – Attainable – Relevant – Time framed):

- Is my objective **specific**? I have to quantify my objective and not just say "I want to increase my awareness", but rather "I want to increase my awareness by x%".
- Can I **measure** progress towards my goal? Via different channels such as e-mailing, videos, social networks, etc., I can measure the progress towards my goal. Each channel must be able to be translated into specific metrics to evaluate its effectiveness.
- Is my goal **realistic**? If, for example, I want to go from 10 visits to 1,000 visits per day on my site, this is not achievable in the short term.
- Is my objective **relevant**? Is it consistent with the dynamics of the sector, do my competitors have a similar objective if I benchmark them? For example, if I have just launched my e-commerce website, notoriety and traffic are my priorities and I have a conversion objective above all.

- About the **time framed**, how long do I have to achieve this goal? I have quantified it, but how long does it take? For example, my goal is to increase my awareness by 20% over a period of 5 months.

2.5.2. KPIs adapted to communication channels

Video must be an integral part of a company's communication today. It has become a must and YouTube is an ideal platform to publish and share it. On social networks, a company that uses video in its communication media shows results that are far superior to messages without video. The most interesting KPIs about videos are the number of views, the number of shares, the engagement rate, etc.

About **social networks** like Facebook and Instagram for example, the KPIs will be different for each objective:

- If the goal is to increase **awareness**, through increased traffic to the site or the creation of an audience on social networks, the ideal KPIs will be reach, mentions and impressions.
- If the main objective is **engagement**, by stimulating interactions on a page, the ideal KPIs are the number of shares, number of clicks, likes, comments and mentions.
- If the goal is to **convert prospects into customers** by stimulating sales, the ideal KPIs are the number of leads, conversion rate and the number of actions like registrations, additions to the basket, purchases, etc.

The metrics vary from one social network to another and, for example, Twitter considers a retweet, a favourite or a hashtag as a commitment. Facebook, on the other hand, differentiates between simple fans (users) and engaged fans (engaged users). A high rate of engaged fans indicates a high proportion of active versus passive users.

2.6. Call-to-action

Call-to-action (CTA) are incentives set up on social networks or websites to incite the visitor to interact. An interaction can be a share, a like, a click, a comment, etc. When a company's digital strategy is focused on converting visitors into prospects and potentially customers, CTA are very useful.

In concrete terms, it is a **visual element**, such as a button for example, that encourages visitors to take an action. Typically, a CTA pushes the visitor to a page where he or she fills in information in exchange for a service or resource.

There are different types of CTAs:

- **The textual CTA**: the most common is a hypertext link designed to fit into an article or page and which leads to a landing page. If it is well placed, it will generate a lot of clicks. It is for example a "Download now" button below an interesting article.
- **The visual CTA**: it should attract the visitor's attention and make them want to press it. It is often found in blog posts to guide the visitor to similar content.
- **The banner CTA**: very visual and explicit, it occupies a more important place than the visual CTA and is often at the end of the page to promote a service such as "Contact", "Demonstration", "Learn more".
- **The pop-up CTA**: it appears at a specific point in time, such as when the visitor is about to leave the page to get their attention one last time, or when they have spent more than X minutes on the page, or when they have scrolled a specific part of the page. It may be a CTA to sign up for a newsletter or to confirm a purchase basket before leaving.
- **The form CTA**: the visitor has to give information to access something. This often allows the visitor to register directly via a home page, easily and quickly. There are often Google and Facebook form CTAs, which allow visitors to register on a site using their Google + or Facebook account details. It is therefore much faster for him because he does not have to fill in any information.
- **The conversational CTA**: the aim is to convert the visitor and capture his information, in order to contact him again and turn him into a customer. It can be a chatbot for example.

2.7. Content strategy – Forrester 4C framework

Content strategy is about planning for the creation, governance and delivery of a usable content (cf. Appendix 7: The Paarami content strategy framework). Thanks to social media, content strategy is more powerful than ever and creates much more social engagement and a wider distribution. The objective of the content strategy is to drive pre-sales and post-sales activities.

For example, the BirchBox company offers beauty products in a box each month to its subscribers. The company advertises on social networks like Facebook and Instagram, but also encourages influencers or simple customers to make videos

on YouTube in order to reveal the box content and make beauty tutorials (Redacteur.com, 2020).

As we are in a digital age, content strategy is merging with **social strategy** and the social media are the leading platforms to create an efficient content. As the CMO of Ford Motors Jim Farley (2013) claimed out: "In social, we learned how important content generation is. But we didn't understand how much content we need to produce. Content is the "currency" of the social experience."

The content must bring **added value** to create a social engagement and the most successful content is about an idea that is so contagious nobody can control it, it becomes completely viral and causes conversations, it means that the **word-of-mouth** is happening.

One of the most common methods used by companies in content marketing is the publication of **stories** on Facebook and Instagram. These are ephemeral contents that can nevertheless retain many prospects. For example, Google has created an Instagram account called @LifeAtGoogle to regularly share company life or live events. This is a very effective technique that makes the brand more approachable by the public (Redacteur.com, 2020).

Thanks to content marketing on social networks, it is also possible to **promote an event** before, during and after it happened. For example, in 2020 the International Agricultural Show teased its event on Instagram and then broadcast it live, as a consequence the show was a great success (Redacteur.com, 2020).

Nowadays, a good content strategy focuses on **storytelling**, it builds a complete universe and provokes strong emotions to viewers. In other words, the objective of the brand is to create stories that engage their customers and drive them to take an action, not especially a purchase but a visit on the official website of the brand for example, it arouses interest and positively affects the consumer.

The company needs to build a brand advantage in this rapidly changing media landscape and the **Forrester 4C framework** is useful for an effective use of content (Desager et al., 2019). This model focuses on 4 points:

- **Customer needs**: the company must understand the needs of the client, his problems and fears. He may have a need, but he must be willing to pay to satisfy that need, and all his misgivings must be considered and resolved.

- **Cost to satisfy**: it means the total cost of the need, including direct and indirect costs to satisfy a customer.
- **Convenience of buying**: the company has to think about the customer's journey as a whole and if there are frictions they have to be resolved, for example unanswered questions from the customer, a restricted choice of payment methods, an unclear and unreliable website, etc.
- **Communication**: beyond the promotion tools it includes all the messages sent by the brand, before and after the purchase, going from the storytelling to the graphic charter, every detail matter.

User Generated Content (UGC) is, as the name suggests, content generated directly by the user. Customers sometimes spontaneously make publications where they use a product and thus make some advertising for the brand just by sharing their good experience.

The content strategy must therefore not neglect UGCs, on the one hand because they are entirely free and spontaneous from consumers, and on the other hand because they are relevant and respond to a demand for transparency from customers.

It means the clients share information about a brand with each other, they express themselves and give their opinion, they rate the product, etc. The production of UGCs is almost constant, so it should be emphasized when a company is establishing a content strategy.

To sum up, UGCs include consumer opinions, forums dedicated to the brand, the sharing of photos, videos or music, the sharing of information such as on Wikipedia for example, the activity around the brand on social networks, etc. It includes all the content linked to earned media. For example, if you are looking for a restaurant or a movie, you will quickly find the notes and opinions on each proposal. Generally speaking, cosmetic brands make extensive use of UGCs produced by consumers.

To give an example, the company GoPro, which produces cameras, regularly offers customers the opportunity to share photos and videos captured with their equipment and broadcast them on YouTube or another platform. When the content is interesting and has enough views, the company shares it directly online (Redacteur.com, 2020).

The content marketing also includes **motion design**, i.e. an advertising method that illustrates what the company is saying through graphics and animations. Users are always more attracted by visual content rather than written content, so it's a very interesting technique when the brand wants to communicate and express an idea. For example, insurers use this method a lot because their services are quite abstract, so motion design allows them to visualize and better understand their offer. We regularly see ads in motion design from Groupama and AXA for example (Redacteur.com, 2019). In conclusion, content strategy is about creation and distribution, what should a brand creates and why.

2.7.1.   Content strategy lifecycle

There are 5 steps to build an effective content strategy, represented by a lifecycle:

1. **Audit**: what content the company already has and how it can be reused in the future. You don't necessarily need to create new content if the existing one works well.
2. **Strategy**: develop a strategy on how to achieve your goals and objectives, then put in place a tactical plan to achieve this strategy.
3. **Plan**: use some tools necessary for your tactical plan, as well as a content management system (CMS) to organize and track your content. Project management software will also be useful to clarify who does what, who is responsible for each part of the plan.
4. **Create**: when it comes to create a new content, you need to specify how your brand will represent your company. This may involve the development of a style guide for your company, including a standardised graphic charter. You can create visual content like Oreo for example, the brand works without any single word in its social posts. You can also create content for your blog or newsletters, not only on social media.
5. **Maintain**: once the content is created and distributed, we need to see how it's appreciated by the audience and to guide prospects through their buying journey. During maintenance you need to re-examine your target audience and see, for example, if a business development team is still selling to the same people, if customers have shifted their attention or are consuming the content in a new way. You need to be able to adapt your content strategy to the target audience by defining processes, tools and people required to maintain, update and create some content then by measuring the impact if there is a change.

Figure 7 - Content strategy lifecycle
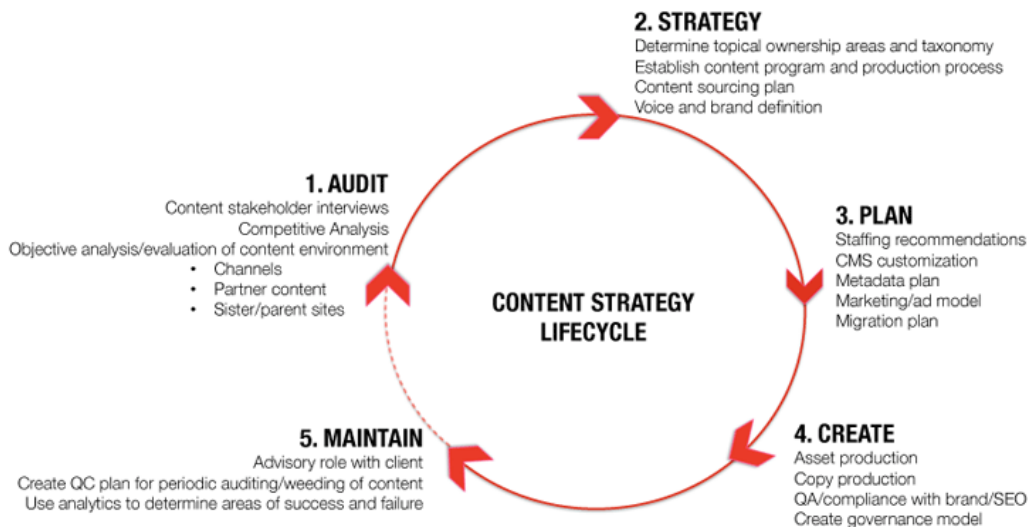
Here are some companies that make the best use of content marketing. For example, **TripAdvisor** publishes a lot of UGCs via customer reviews of restaurants, hotels, places to discover, etc. The company even publishes a ranking of the best places to go out for each destination in the world. This content strategy is possible thanks to the millions of users who want to share their experience through comments, ratings and photos. These are the same users who take the time to read the reviews on TripAdvisor before booking a flight or hotel. The company is therefore a platform that lives thanks to the users.

Another example is the company **Made.com** which offers furniture and decoration elements. The company has created a page on Pinterest called Unboxed, inviting customers to post a photo of their interior once the furniture has been assembled. In this way, other users can have access to many visuals of each piece of furniture, in a furnished room rather than just as a photo in a catalogue. This is a win-win situation, on the one hand prospects and customers find ideas to furnish their home and on the other hand the Made.com company benefits from a very nice showcase for its brand (Redacteur.com, 2020).

2.8. Data issue

Companies face a new issue about their massive amount of user data. Many consumers feel duped and since the new **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) in 2018, they want to retake control of their own data. Because people are more aware that firms might take profit from their personal information, they are

afraid and ask for much more transparency from companies, this is the democratisation of data.

This regulation requires enhanced protection of data held by companies and users now have to agree with an official expression of consent. You also now have the right to be forgotten, and the company must immediately delete all your data (unless they could justify the use of non-sensitive data). For example, it is now possible to unsubscribe from any newsletter via an "unsubscribe" link present on each email received.

Digital marketing has become a key opportunity, however there are still 3 big challenges for firms:

- The first one is the **proliferation of media digital channels**, it means a massive increase of those channels with more and more different interfaces, protocols and specifications;
- The second one is the **intensification of the competition**; it means that it's harder to capture the attention of consumers because the competition is increasing online;
- The last one is the **data volume exploitation**, it's currently really hard to get a grip on all the data and to use it, and with the increase of data comes the overflow.

To conclude this core part, nowadays every company must have a **digital strategy** in its global marketing strategy. Indeed, most consumers have already consulted or purchased a service or product online and the global value of e-commerce is increasing every year. Moreover, print media is now inferior to social media in terms of marketing expenditure.

There are different tools and models to implement this digital strategy like a CRM, which has become indispensable to get a global view via a dashboard. The conversion funnel also makes it possible to analyse where there is a problem in the consumer's buying journey, is there a blocking step that loses the prospects' interest?

When it comes to concretely measure this strategy and the tasks carried out to achieve it, KPIs are set up. They quantify the objectives and demonstrate in a precise way the commitment of the customers and many other things.

Finally, once the user's attention has been caught, he can be encouraged to interact via an effective content strategy on social networks and well-placed CTAs.

3.   Online marketing tools

Online marketing has several tools to generate awareness and engagement from prospects and customers. I will therefore describe the history of the digital marketing and then the most efficient online tools for companies.

Since 2010 we are in the customer era, represented by the Z generation or also called the digital native. This age is focused on the customer service and technology has reversed the roles between companies and consumers. Nowadays, businesses are **not anymore in the power position** because consumers can find everything online and very quickly, they are less loyal to one brand than they used to be. The contemporary consumer has now access to a huge source of information about the companies whose products or services he's buying, so every brand has become very transparent and a good reputation is now essential.

As an example to illustrate the importance of customer service, in 2012 an employee of the company Zappos (clothing and accessories store) spent more than 8 hours on the phone with a customer (Desager et al., 2019).

Because of the huge **social media boom**, marketing strategies had to be adapted and to include those new models and for example, out of more than 2 billion Internet users, 1.5 billion were registered on social networks in 2017. Social networks are forcing companies to rethink their customer relationships by using this channel as a direct conversation tool available 24 hours a day.

Since 2019, the world's population now spends more time on internet than watching the television. As a result, the marketing and communication budget devoted to digital currently exceeds the budget dedicated for television, which is considered as traditional marketing.

In order to create an efficient content which aims to develop target engagement, companies have access to a variety of **digital tools** and here are some examples:

- *Social media marketing*
- *E-mailing*
- *Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Advertising (SEA)*
- *Earned, Paid and Owned media*
- *A/B testing and Website optimization*
- *Content marketing*
- *Buyer persona*
- *Chatbots and collective AI*
- *Marketing analytics*

- *Display advertising*
- *Events and webinars*
- *Blogs and forums*

- *Content Management System (CMS)*
- *Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising*
- *Mobile application*
- *...*

3.1. Earned, Paid, Owned media

Those media are also called the digital marketing mix in reference of the 4P from the traditional marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion). The objective is to leverage digital communication through **three different ways**. Except for one, those tools are free and very useful for companies if they are well implemented, I'll describe each media with some examples and the main strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 8 - Earned, Paid, Owned media

Source: Holtman, M. (2019). *Difference between owned, earned and paid media*. Retrieved 1 April 2020, from https://www.theukdomain.uk/difference-between-owned-earned-and-paid-media/

3.1.1. Paid media

It means the "**traditional online advertising**" and the company has to pay in order to use this channel. For example, it's a banner or an ad on Facebook, a paid search, search engine advertising, or if a firm pays some influencers as a sponsorship. The paid media is a shift that feeds owned media and creates earned media as we'll see later. The objective here is to target your prospects by creating a brand awareness or acquiring new customers.

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We generally use paid media to be seen by the **mass market** because it scales fast and you also have a complete control over the content, moreover the immediacy is also a strength. Nevertheless, it's the most expensive channel and it has poor credibility because consumers generally ignore pure "brand messages", advertising is already everywhere in their daily life as each brand is fighting for their attention. Another negative point is that paid media also declines response rates.

3.1.2. Owned media

It contains all the **corporate content**, everything a company creates, owns, and controls, you don't have to pay for using it. The target here is your existing community or current customers. The role of this media is to build a long-term relationship with customers. Owned media include videos, websites of the brand, blogs, newsletters, a Twitter account or a Facebook page, etc.

The main strength is the **total control** a company can keep on those media and it has also an important longevity and versality, however the challenge is that it's a not trusted way to communicate from firms and it takes time to scale.

Seeing owned media as a completely free mean of advertising is wrong, first of all creating content is time consuming and that time will have to be paid for and furthermore most social media platforms nowadays won't showcase your content to a large audience for free. In other words, reaching a large audience organically has become more and more complicated over the years.

3.1.3. Earned media

It includes the **natural result** of public and media relation's efforts through owned and paid media. When customers and press share your content, speak about your brand, it's organic and the mentions are "earned". The word-of-mouth for example is an earned media.

It means all the promotion received online by what people share and say about a brand, the company doesn't pay for it, it's completely viral and when a content creates a buzz, this is also an earned media. The role of those media is to listen and respond, it can be a result of an efficient paid and owned media.
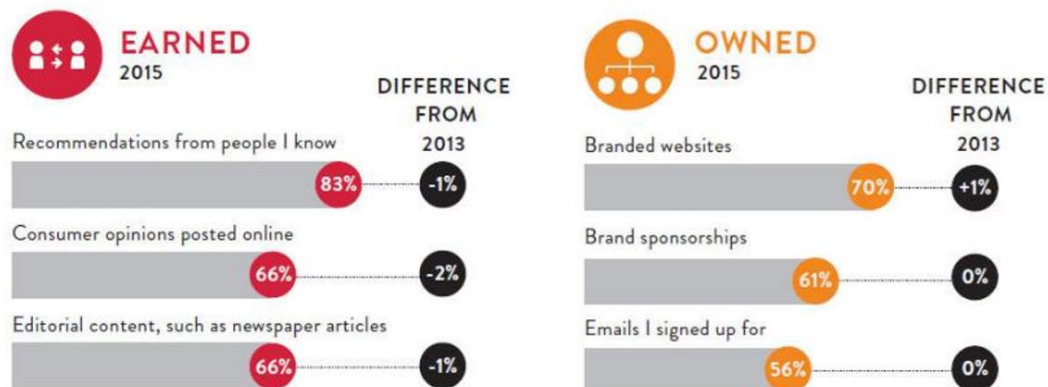
This media is the most credible and plays a key role in most sales, it's also completely transparent towards the customers. However, the companies don't

have any control so it can be a negative effect. It's also hard to measure the efficiency of this channel in general.

The most **trusted formats** are the earned and the owned media, because 83% of consumers pretend to trust peer recommendations above all other ways of marketing. It means much more people trust friends' recommendation than brand advertising and according to Jeff Bozos, Amazon founder, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."

Figure 9 - Trust in earned and owned media

Source: Barliga, G. (2015). *Zilele Biz 2015 - Media & Marketing*. Retrieved 23 April 2020, from https://www.slideshare.net/gaboss/zilele-biz-2015-media-marketing-dan-matei-nielsen-romania

There is also a broader model that includes a fourth media, the **shared media**. This media concerns only social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and is differentiated from other channels as the importance of these specific networks increases constantly.

In the previous model, these social networks were included in the owned media, however it is more correct to separate them into a specific category. Indeed, we cannot compare the website of a brand with its official page or account. The company controls everything from design to content and has an infinite choice in CTAs on its website, while it doesn't own Facebook, Instagram and the other networks, it only shares its content there.

For example, on Facebook the choice to make sponsored content and create CTAs is limited, and the company has almost no power over the design of its page or in the choice of interactions (like, comment, share and that's it).
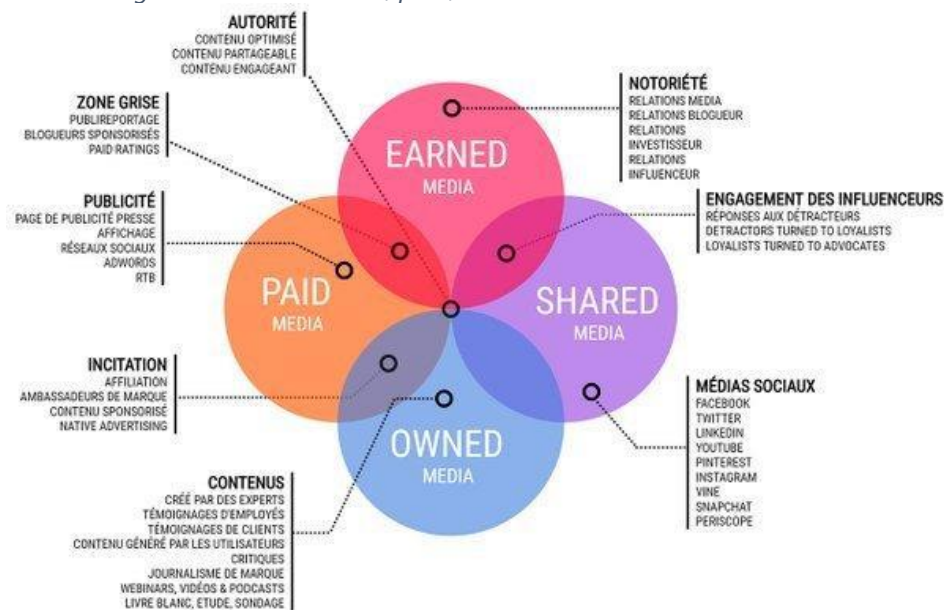
3.2. Buyer persona

A **buyer persona** is a fictive representation of your target customer, it's a fictional person with a name and some demographic information, opinions and problems in deep details. The objective of the buyer persona is to identify and better understand what your consumer needs and wants, this **fictive person** is your target when you create specific content on social networks.

The buyer persona is the typical person who could pass from prospect to customer and finally ambassador in your conversion funnel. Someone who is interested in your products and/or services and who could be attracted by your website and then proceed to purchase.

If you know which website or application your persona spends his time on, you can focus your marketing efforts on this key information and target directly your ideal customers. The buyer persona is a very useful tool when the company is directly in contact with its customers through social medias.

There are two different kind of buyer persona:

- The classical buyer persona in **B2C**
- The buyer persona in **B2B**, this persona is used several times by the company Larcier as you will see in my case study

3.3. Chatbots and collective AI

Chatbots are a new tool but commonly used by big companies. When someone converse with a chatbot, it creates an interaction between the consumer and an artificial intelligent (AI) software. With the rise of instant interaction and the development of AI, soon chatbots will be even more useful than a real person and will be able to **solve your problems** much faster, whereas currently the possibilities are quickly limited.

Figure 12 - Example of Chatbot

Source: Sluysmans, M. (2019). *International marketing: International marketing management*. Syllabus. ICHEC, Brussels.

Chatbots and other devices like vocal assistants are continuously connected and it results in a huge generation and storage of **data** about consumers. Then companies could use this massive amount of data to predict future trends, behaviours or consumption patterns.

3.4. SEM, SEO and SEA

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a digital marketing strategy that includes Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Advertising (SEA)

<div align="center">

SEM = SEO + SEA

</div>

The objective of **SEM** is to increase the visits on digital platforms such as websites, social media, applications... by increasing the visibility of those platforms on search engines like Google for example. Moreover, SEM consists of Paid and Owned media (see above).

SEO is completely free and consists of techniques and guidelines to improve your visibility, while **SEA** consists of paid advertising to increase positive search results about your brand. In other words, SEO regroups some techniques to make a website rank higher on search engines. In addition, when a website respects the quality standards to be well-referenced on search engines, we call it Search Engine Friendliness (**SEF**).

It's really important for a firm to have a well-managed SEO because 50% of its website traffic will come from search engines and more traffic means more chances to make a sale. However, no search engine fully discloses its algorithm on how pages are ranked but they compete to give the best results.

When we look at the anatomy of a search on Google for example, we find the paid search (SEA) at the top of the page characterized by the title "Ad" then we find the organic results (SEO). 70% of users click on organic links, which are not paid and 75% of users never scroll past the first page of results.

Figure 13 - Anatomy of a search
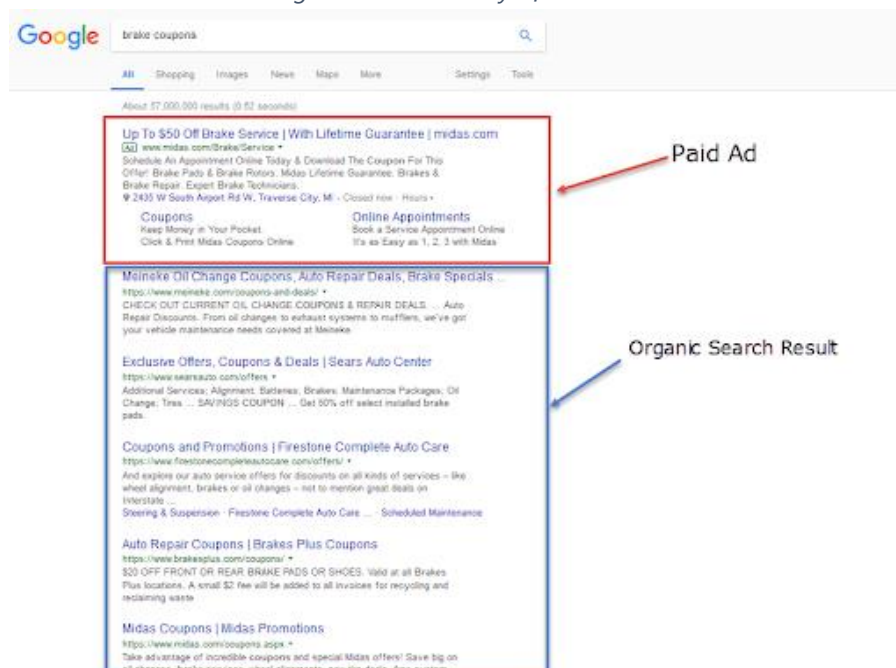
Source: Moose May. (2019). *Breakdown of Google Search Results 2018 - Anatomy of a SERP*. Retrieved 20 April 2020, from
https://moosemay.com/blog/breakdown-of-search-results-2018/

SEO is one of the most important digital channels because it's free and it can bring high traffic if you can use it well. SEO guidelines are divided in 3 categories:

- **On-page (30%)**: create a relevant content directly on your site, regularly updated and including a repetition of keywords that users could type on search engines.
- **Off-page (50%)**: it includes all the SEO techniques outside your site, the most common is called backlink and it means the creation of links from other reliable and trustworthy sites to your content. It shows that you are a reference in your category for search engines.
- **Technical (20%)**: build an easily readable site for search engines and create best experience for users by making a load fast site for example.

Another idea is to improve your mobile usability, so your site needs to look good on a mobile device because search engines can detect it and lower the rank of your site.

You can measure your SEO success by counting the number of clicks per visitor, by looking at your rank in Google, by checking the number of sales, the value of each sale, etc.

In conclusion, there is a wide variety of tools for online marketing. Most of them involve the use of owned, paid or earned media as well as the improvement of the referencing of the company on search engines. The development of artificial intelligence allows a constant contact which is more and more adapted for each user.

4.   Social media

Among all these online tools, I will now focus on **social networks** and their background as well as the latest trends. Then I will describe each of the most important media for companies in the social media landscape.

Marketing has recently changed the way information is delivered to customer. Social networks are becoming one of the most important **marketing channels** and are beginning to outpace traditional channels such as the mass media that create some advertisings on TV and radio for example.

Studies show that the more consumers are in contact with a brand on social networks, the more likely they are to buy that brand's products. Those new channels allow the customer to have a direct and **permanent contact** with the brand or the company, which is a revolution for the marketing. However, it remains hard to obtain a precise measure of the efficiency of those social network tools.

First, it's necessary to go back over the history of the web through 3 key steps:

- As a reminder, **Web 1.0** is the "read-only web" and includes first generation internet business models, such as e-mailing, e-commerce, e-media, forums and the files downloading like a music, for example. It allowed us to search and read information only, with few user interaction or content generation.
- The **Web 2.0** is the "read-write web" and involves dynamic text, videos, pictures, the visitor is seen as a content contributor. This web is

characterized by interaction with other users and the ability to contribute content with for example the launch of YouTube and MySpace. It means this web has seen the revolution of social media (see below) and answered to users who wanted to participate in the information.

- The **Web 3.0** is the "read-write-execute web", characterized by the mobile internet and the ability for computers to analyse all the data including content, links and transactions between people and computers.

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media is a group of Internet-based applications build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content in quick and real time.

Nowadays everybody can create, comment, share or post a content on the main social networks such as Facebook for example. To sum up, Web 2.0 is therefore characterized by a **social phenomenon** that allows each user to send a message to several other people simultaneously and thus make this information public to his own network.

The "**network effect**" is defined by virality, word-of-mouth and is based on horizontal diffusion (user-to-user, C2C) rather than vertical diffusion as before (brand to consumer, B2C). This new model of social networks has therefore changed the distinction between public and private life, soon the concept of private life will definitely disappear because of our daily life full of connected objects. Social networks meet a universal need because they can be found everywhere in the world and in each culture. Indeed, they provide entertainment, information (if you know differenciate what's true from what's false), services and products, friendship, ...

If we include social media inside business, its objective is to create additional value by integrating social networks technology across processes of a company. It adds value by driving engagement from customers, increasing productivity of the firm and overcoming structural barriers in large organizations.

However, a lack of responsiveness on social networks can be costly to the company, especially during a crisis. For example, the videos showing the fragility of a new Kryptonite padlock was a real bad buzz for the company.

Another example, a guitarist explained with a song his bad experience with United Airlines on YouTube and caused the company's stock to drop by 10%. These cases

show that it is necessary to listen and react quickly on social networks. You also need a very competent community manager and you need to create a community of fans ready to defend your brand.

As the following figures show, the penetration rate of social media in the world is **49%**, which means that almost one out of every two people is connected to social networks and as the annual growth has increased further in 2020, this penetration rate will only increase. In 2020, the average number of social media accounts per user is **8.6** and the average time spent per day on these networks is **2 hours and 24 minutes** and it's getting longer every year (cf. Appendix 8: Social media use around the world).

The main objectives of social media are brand awareness, brand engagement and word-of-mouth. We can sum up all the social media functionalities into **7 points** (Castagné et al., 2015):

- **Sharing**: users can exchange, share, distribute and receive content
- **Presence**: each user knows when the others are available or not
- **Relationship**: users create links between themselves and the virtual relationship can sometimes be as powerful as the real one
- **Identity**: users show a part of their lives, for example through photos, videos, posts about their preferences and opinions. They reveal themselves through those platforms
- **Conversations**: users communicate with each other and with companies, virtual conversations are more and more common and are faster than an appointment or a phone call in general.
- **Reputation**: users know the social standing of others, someone's reputation can be quickly established via social networks

4.1. Consumer engagement – The 6C model

The **6C model** is used to describe the consumer engagement on social networks, it illustrates the relation between the company and the customer around a central content. The customer engagement starts when the **Company** (1) creates and launches a **Content** (2) and still have **Control** (3) on it. Then the company loses control when its content is entering on social medias and when the **Community** (4) associated with each social network receives the information. The market mavens are the successful investors and the content is spread on Internet through online word-of-mouth and **Conversations** (5), to finally reach the **Customer** (6).

Figure 14 - The 6C model
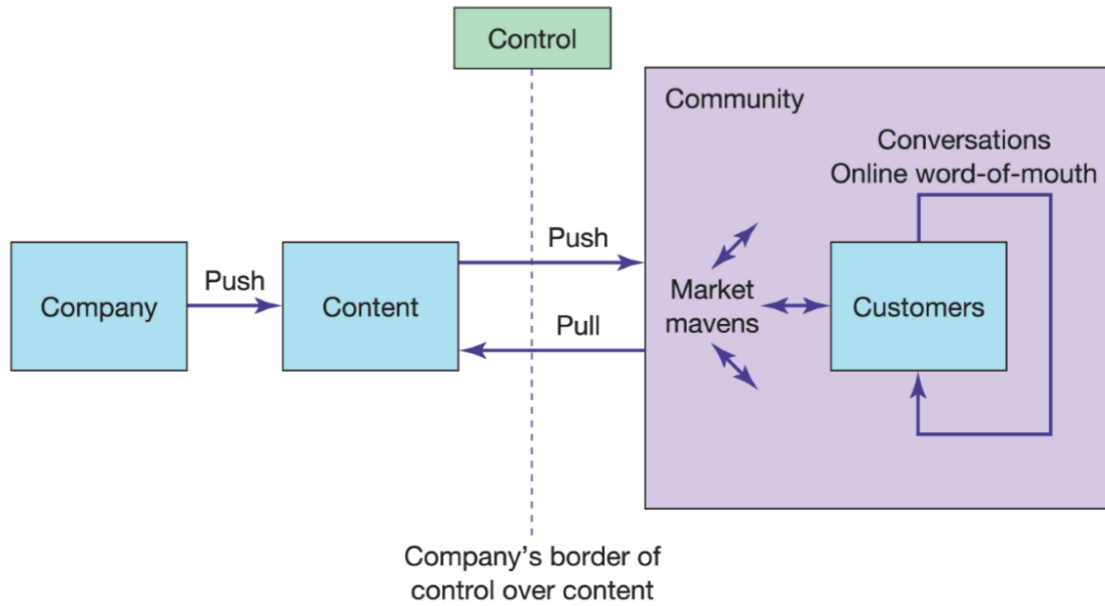
Source: Pletikosa, I. (2012). *The 6C Model of social media engagement*. Retrieved 20 April 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-6C-model-of-social-media-engagement-Parent-et-al-2011-pp-219-229-In-the-context_fig19_282665879

It means that the company only has control over the **content**, which is directly created by the firm. The way in which this content is shared and liked no longer depends on the company (in contrast with traditional channels).

This engagement channel is therefore uncontrollable, and the content can produce a very negative effect (e.g. bad buzz) as well as a very positive one because word-of-mouth is the most reliable source of information for people. If the content is widely spread and appreciated, it creates a great commitment from the customer.

An example of a successful and massive engagement from customers is when Ikea launched its social catalogue campaign. The company asked people to take a picture from the well-known catalogue of a furniture they really want and to post it on Instagram. Each participant could potentially win his desired piece of furniture and each weak a winner was selected. Thanks to the word-of-mouth, the campaign became a huge buzz and everybody wanted to participate, even the firm didn't expect such an enthusiasm.

This form of marketing is the most efficient because it's made by people themselves and it was very easy, they just need to share a picture. In conclusion, this event was built on the strength of social medias and become more viral than

anybody could expect, after only one month the entire catalogue was exposed on social medias through people's pictures of furniture.

4.2. Latest trends

According to the Global Web Index's flagship report (2020), we currently notice a saturation of social media and in average, digital users are spending 2 hours and 24 minutes every day on those platforms and an increasing number of markets have reached a saturation point. Nowadays, time spent on social media has reached a plateau because more and more users are aware of the negative effects of staying too long in front of a screen.

Figure 15 - Daily time spent on social media
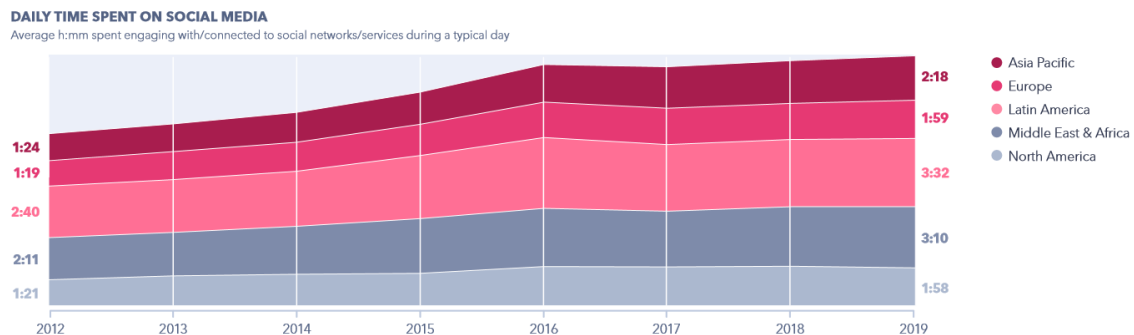
Source: Buckle, C., Kavanagh, D., & Mander, J. (2020). *GlobalWebIndex's flagship report on the latest trends in social media*. California: GlobalWebIndex. Retrieved from https://www.globalwebindex.com/reports/social

In 2020, the main reason people use social media, in all age groups, is still to stay in touch with friends and family. However, entertainment has been the fastest growing interest, especially for the 16-24s as shown in the following chart. Moreover, consumption is more simultaneous than sequential as **70%** of 16-24s are on social networks while they are watching TV. Nowadays, the online population of fast-growth markets is mainly composed of younger users than mature markets.

Figure 16 - Motivations for using social media

MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

% who say the following are among their main reasons for using social media

● 16-24 ● 25-34 ● 35-44 ● 45-54 ● 55-64

To find funny or entertaining content	General networking with other people
45% 39% 33% 30% 24%	33% 33% 31% 29% 25%

To fill up spare time	To research/find products to buy
43% 38% 32% 30% 25%	31% 32% 31% 28% 25%

To stay up-to-date with news and current events	Because a lot of my friends are on them
40% 40% 38% 39% 36%	31% 30% 28% 26% 23%

To stay in touch with what my friends are doing	To meet new people
39% 37% 37% 37% 37%	30% 28% 24% 19% 13%

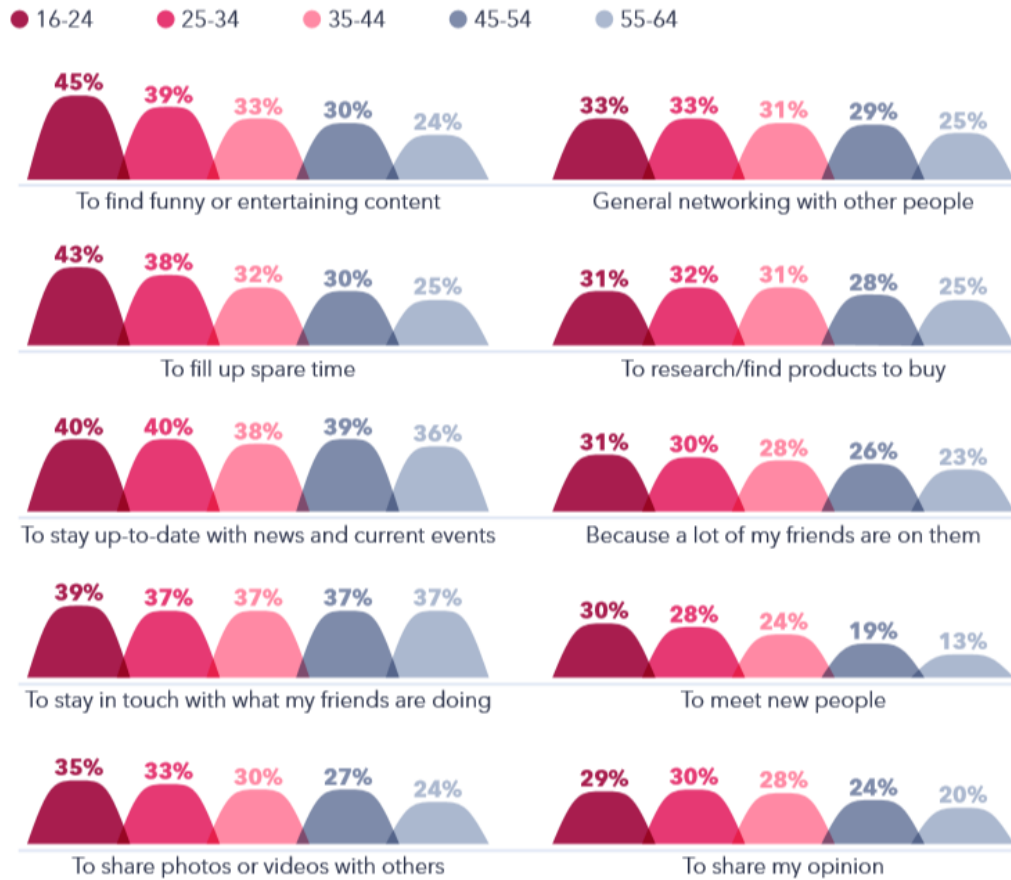| To share photos or videos with others	To share my opinion
35% 33% 30% 27% 24%	29% 30% 28% 24% 20%

Source: Buckle, C., Kavanagh, D., & Mander, J. (2020). *GlobalWebIndex's flagship report on the latest trends in social media*. California: GlobalWebIndex. Retrieved from https://www.globalwebindex.com/reports/social

Even if the interest towards Facebook is decreasing, the platform remains the dominant media by number of members in 2020 and directly followed by YouTube in second place. Facebook Messenger occupies the third place and far behind we find WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter. Nevertheless, if we focus on the monthly traffic, YouTube is at the top position.

Around the world, **63%** of Internet users have claimed out they are constantly connected online in 2020 and this rate increased by **7%** since 2015.

97% of digital users around the world have been connected on a social network in January 2020, it means that nowadays being an internet user include being a social media user.

In 2015, a digital user had on average 6.2 social network accounts while today he has an average of almost 8 accounts as we can see in the following illustration.

52

This increase is across all age groups and is explained by the variety of social networks that are continually increasing and some platforms are more and more specialized, like Twitch for example. Another explanation is that older users have arrived late on social media, but they are now completely accustomed to these technologies. The last reason is that fast-growth nations also have many more social network users than ever before and for example the Indonesian market now wants to have a wide choice of social networks to meet this growing demand.

Figure 17 - Average number of social media accounts
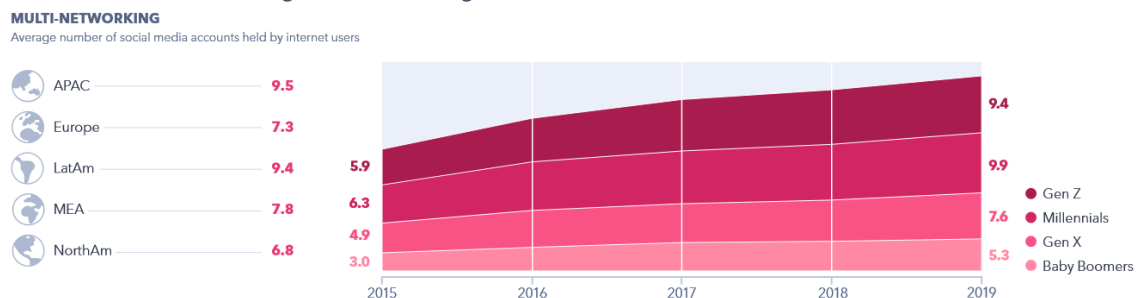
MULTI-NETWORKING
Average number of social media accounts held by internet users

APAC	9.5
Europe	7.3
LatAm	9.4
MEA	7.8
NorthAm	6.8

5.9 — 9.4 Gen Z
6.3 — 9.9 Millennials
4.9 — 7.6 Gen X
3.0 — 5.3 Baby Boomers

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

Source: Buckle, C., Kavanagh, D., & Mander, J. (2020). *GlobalWebIndex's flagship report on the latest trends in social media*. California: GlobalWebIndex. Retrieved from https://www.globalwebindex.com/reports/social

About the conversion funnel, it can definitely be said that social networks are a major revenue generator and make it much easier for companies to do business, pushing leads to become prospects and then customers.

These platforms allow any user to order for what they want directly via an application, such as booking a Uber for example or paying the bill at a restaurant. However, the final step of the purchase is rarely done on social networks and the user prefers going directly to the retail site. In conclusion, social networks play a big role in the research of products, especially if they include a video and only a few specialized platforms can successfully integrate all steps of the funnel, like Pinterest or Instagram for example.

Figure 18 - Survey about the consumer buying journey
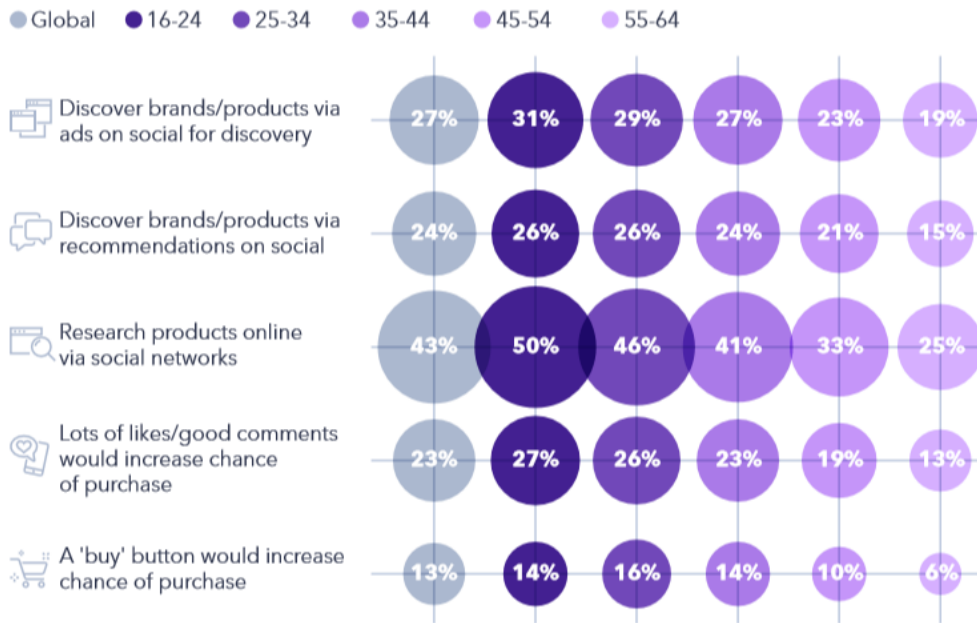
4.3. Social media landscape

The main social networks used by most people around the world in 2019 are gathered on this social media landscape.

Figure 19 - Social media landscape

As the illustration shows, the main objective of those applications is publishing, sharing, networking, collaborating, discussing and messaging. I'll describe in details the most used social networks and their utility for a digital strategy.

In 2020, according to a digital report published on Datareportal, the world's most-used social networks are Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp for the top 3. Then we find Facebook Messenger, Wechat and Instagram. For your information, WeChat is not very popular in Europe but this messaging app is massively used in China.

Figure 20 - The world's most-used social medias
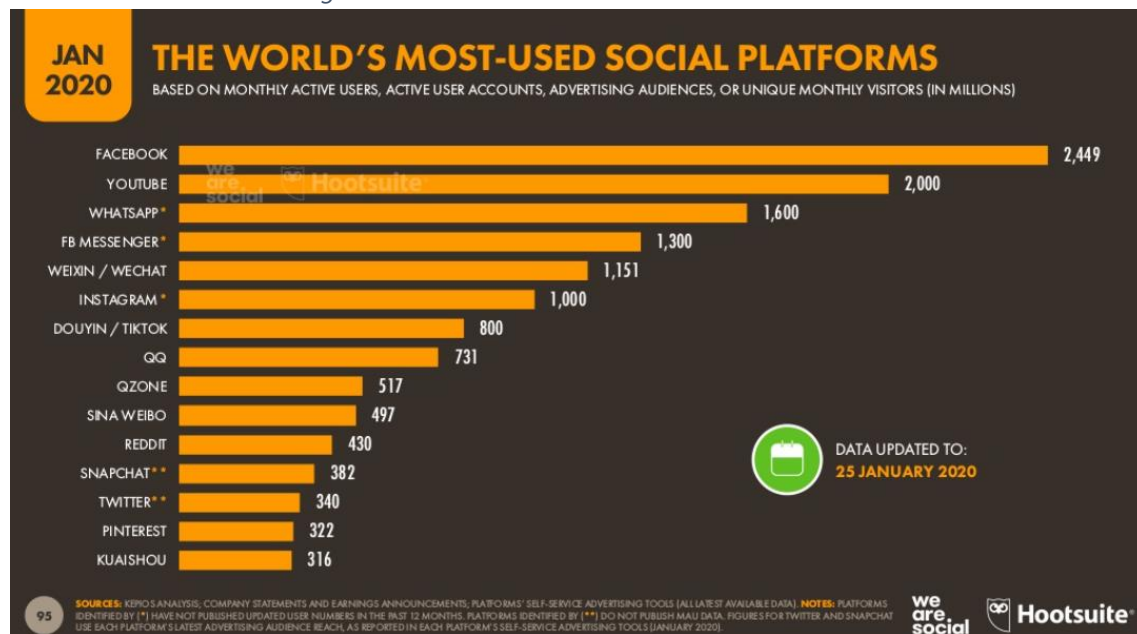
During its digital marketing campaign, a company could also consider the key tool of social media touchpoints. It means people are more present on the different social medias at certain times of the day, represented by this illustration of a typical day in a contemporary consumer's life.

Figure 21 - A day in the life of a Consumer
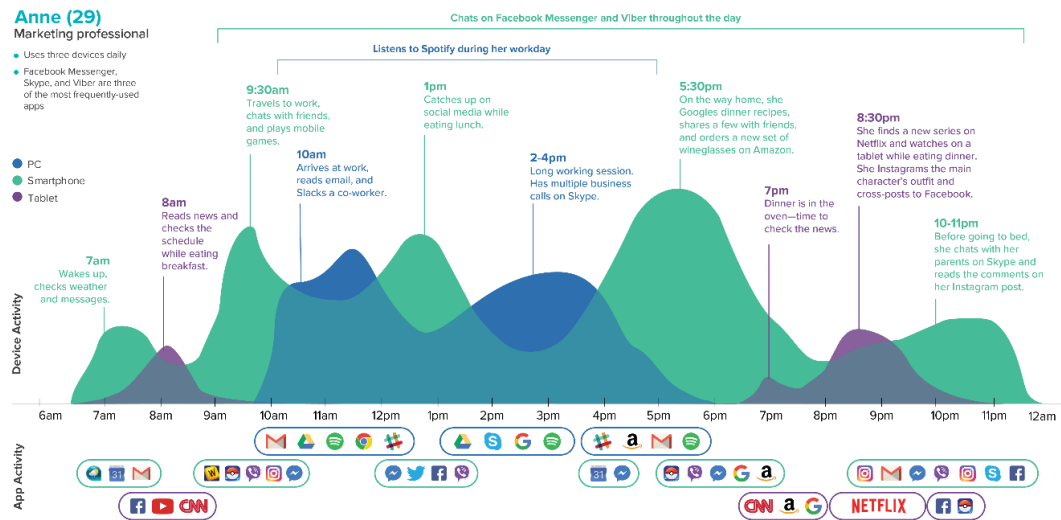
Source: Read, M. (2016). *UK consumer trends: what publishers need to know*. Retrieved 30 April 2020, from https://vertoanalytics.com/3-takeaways-from-the-iab-uks-future-of-traditional-media-seminar/

Social networks have become one of the best ways to promote a business. They change the way companies interact and allow them to be directly on the ground while customers can address them directly. The relationship is easier and goes both ways now because actually companies can hear and apply the ideas of customers. Social networks are one of the best tools to set up a good digital strategy and almost all companies use them.

First of all, social networks contain billions of active users spread all over the world, so their primary purpose is to help companies acquire new leads. Indeed, networks are a fast and economical way to use word-of-mouth for one's business. For example, if a customer service is installed on certain platforms, this will allow the company to identify potential prospects.

Then, social networks are a tool to sell more easily, whether in B2C or B2B, because it is a direct communication channel with the public. The company can therefore raise all the doubts and obstacles of the prospect to incite him to make a purchase.

All companies are on social networks and so are your competitors. You can monitor their new products or services and actions more easily, compare your digital strategy with theirs and possibly optimize it.

Social networks convey the image of your company and increase the engagement rate of the public. They are much cheaper than traditional advertising and make it possible to calculate the return on online advertising actions very quickly.

Indeed, unlike offline advertising, digital marketing on social networks can deliver immediate results thanks to KPIs and a dashboard.

4.3.1. Blog

According to Gomaere, editor for the Journal du CM, companies with blogs have increased their lead generation by **126%** (2019). A blog allows the company to produce new content on a regular basis and the blog can meet the main goals of a company:

- **Generate traffic**: the blog is a source of acquisition of interesting traffic, because with more articles and content, your business will be much more visible on search engines. It will improve your search engine optimization (SEO), especially if you place keywords intelligently in your articles. Better search engine visibility will naturally increase your traffic. In conclusion, a blog is essential for your SEO and a good SEO generates more traffic.

- **Convert traffic into leads**: after increasing your traffic, you need to convert it into leads. Again, a blog can help this conversion even if its purpose is not commercial. But each new article implies a new page indexed on search engines, new positions and new traffic. If you intelligently place some call-to-action, via links in the article for example, you increase the chances to convert new traffic into leads and push them to just visit your official website.

  Blogs are the perfect place to include CTA such as links in the text, buttons to download the article or to lead the reader to similar articles, as well as buttons to direct the reader to a product or service associated with the article, etc.

  In addition, with a specific CTA you can retrieve contact information such as an email address and you can contact an user later. The blog should be a perfect balance between informative and entertaining content, while containing subtle commercial incentives.

- **Boost your brand awareness**: publishing articles regularly on a blog creates a buzz around the brand. E-reputation and notoriety are very effective in generating sales and speaking on a blog allows the brand to underline its added value and its differentiation from competitors. Moreover, the blog is always an additional way to stand out from the competition. Thus, a company with only an official website to offer its

products or services will be disadvantaged compared to a company that offers a blog in addition to its official website.

- **Improve your brand image**: the blog also aims to answer questions or help readers by informing them, especially your prospects and customers. Via its blog, the company gives an expert and reliable, reassuring image. Prospects are then encouraged to use your services, they will trust you more. The blog also helps to humanize the company by giving a voice to its employees, while an official website only includes the company's offer and static information. All these qualities mean that the blog can improve a company's image.

- **Know your audience**: blogs are an excellent means of two-way communication and the articles give a lot of information about the audience that reads them and therefore about potential customers. You can see which topics are the most interesting for your target audience and how they react in comments.

- **Create engaging branded content**: blog articles are considered to be high value-added content. The company brings its expertise to help Internet users, which increases the attractiveness of your brand and engages your audience, via comments on the blog or on social networks, sharing, etc.

- **Build the user loyalty**: regular publication of articles creates a daily meeting with Internet users. They become loyal and are more likely to speak positively about your company and even buy your products or services. In addition, users who regularly come back to check the latest publications will improve search engine optimization. In short, the more people come to your blog to follow your articles, the better you will be positioned in Google.

4.3.2. Facebook

Facebook is a social network for publishing content and exchanging messages. If we look back at the 7 blocks of functionality of social networks seen in point 4, we can see that the main functionality of Facebook is based on relationships. We also find identity, presence, reputation and conversations on this platform. The main call-to-action related to the relationship functionality is the "invite a friend".

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), the platform has over 2.5 billion monthly active users and this number is growing every year.

The population of active users on the site is 56% male and 44% female and the average worldwide engagement rate is 3.4%, it means the average number of clicks, likes, comments and shares on Facebook posts compared to post reach. The total number of people potentially reached with adverts on Facebook is 1.95 billion, which represents 32% of the Facebook 13+ aged population, and the worldwide monthly advert clicks per user on Facebook is 12 clicks. As can be seen on the following graph, the profile of Facebook advertising audience is the 25 - 34 years old.

Figure 22 - Facebook global advertising audience
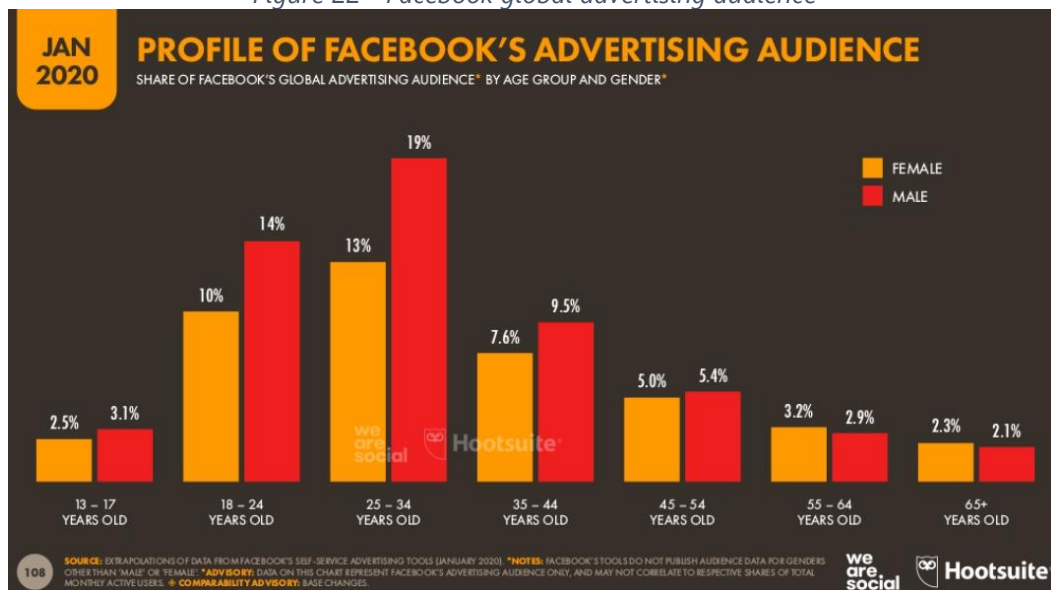
Source: Kemp, S. (2020). *Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview*. Retrieved 23 April 2020, from
https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-global-digital-overview

The platform is considered for consumer audiences while LinkedIn is for business audiences, but I'll get back to LinkedIn later. Satisfied customers will tend to communicate about their positive experience, both in terms of the purchase and the service around it. They will convey a positive message on Facebook (and also Twitter and YouTube) and the message will circulate via the word-of-mouth, much faster than in reality. However, the same effect can be seen with a negative experience, so it's a double-edged sword.

Since 2010, new segments of the population have adopted Facebook and, for example, parents are more present on the site to find their children and grandchildren. On the other hand, the site shows a decline in the presence of teenagers, who are more attracted to Instagram and other social networks and are gradually decreasing their rate of visits to Facebook. However, throughout

2019 Facebook remained the top worldwide query on Google as shown in the following table.

Figure 23 - Top worldwide queries in 2019

Facebook is one of the main social networks to help companies in their digital strategy, both in B2C and B2B. Through its official Facebook page, the company can relay the news, promotions and new products it launches. If the company has several product lines and manages several different brands, it can create a page associated with each brand and clearly differentiate its content and news. Rarer, a company can also create different pages about the same brand, but adapted to the interests of different targets, thus allowing them to better target their different audiences. For example, one Facebook page could be dedicated to women, another to children, fashion fans, etc. This is what La Redoute has done, with a page dedicated to interior design and another dedicated to clothing.

Facebook allows companies to interact directly and in real time with fans and consumers through its messenger system. But the interaction is also done via comments, polls, contests, etc. The company thus consolidates its brand image.

Facebook also makes it possible to generate targeted ads whose budget varies according to the audience. This can allow a brand to increase its visibility and the size of its community. Another interesting fact, during the launch of a new product, the analysis of comments posted on the company's Facebook page or Twitter allows real-time analysis of its reception by customers.

Finally, Facebook makes it possible to recruit in an original way because it offers a tab designed to host job offers.

4.3.3. YouTube

YouTube is dedicated to video sharing, just like Dailymotion which is less used and has over 2 million monthly active users or unique visitors since January 2020. About the 7 blocks of functionality, YouTube is mainly focused on sharing. The media is also concerned by conversations, groups and reputation. It means the primary function of YouTube is to "share" content, in terms of call-to-action.

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), there are 2 billion monthly active users on YouTube, which represents 33% of the total 13+ aged population on the platform. 1 billion hours are watched on YouTube every day and people upload 500 hours of video every minute. On average, each visitor spends 11 minutes per day on YouTube and 79% of views come from 10% of the most popular videos. Finally, among the 18 - 34 years old YouTube is the second most favourite platform for watching videos on TV screens and the viewing time of "which product to buy" videos has doubled in the last 2 years.

As with Facebook, this platform is also used to convey positive or negative consumer experiences and the word-of-mouth is also effective here. Influencers are regularly seen testing brands and giving their opinions on video in the form of regular podcasts.

YouTube is one of the most widely used search engines in the world. The videos found there are made by individuals but also by professionals. You can especially create your own video "channel" and thus give a high visibility to marketing videos or videos of expertise on a company's sector of activity.

YouTube allows you to present your company on video, to present business cases, customer interviews, etc. Moreover, the high number of visitors means that company videos should automatically reach an audience, or even their target audience. There are a lot of potential prospects and YouTube has a very good Google referencing, which can help your company gain notoriety if links on your site lead to a YouTube video.

More concretely, the platform can help a company establish an emotional connection with its fans because video is one of the most popular media on the Internet. In addition, a message is retained much more easily if it passes through a video.

Then, YouTube allows you to easily analyse the results of your communication, you will quickly see which video made the buzz or not and why.

Finally, YouTube allows you to quickly gain visibility, it's the social network par excellence for influencers and as I said earlier, they can give their opinion on your brand. Whether positive or negative, in all cases an influencer who is interested in a brand will make it gain notoriety.

Here are a few examples of brands that have used YouTube effectively:

- The Blendtec brand managed to make itself known and to increase its brand awareness within a few months thanks to its humorous "Will it Blend" videos posted on YouTube and the word-of-mouth that followed.
- Castorama's educational videos posted on YouTube helped showcase their products and limit pre- and post-sale support because the videos answered most of the customers' questions.

4.3.4. Instagram

In recent years photo and video sharing networks have become very important and we even call it picture marketing. Applications like Pinterest, Snapchat and Instagram are part of this marketing channel.

Thus, Instagram is a mobile photo sharing application and the newsfeed is only on mobile, however nowadays 90% of investments are on the mobile device. Instagram is one of the most popular social networks behind Facebook.

There are different ways of advertising on Instagram:

- Image link ads
- Video link ads
- Carousel link ads
- App installs ads
- Stories including image, video or carousel

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), there are 1 billion monthly active users on Instagram. 928.5 million people could be reached with adverts on the platform, which represents 15% of the Instagram 13+ aged population. The profile of Instagram advertising audience is 25 - 34 years old, just as Facebook. The advertising model is managed by Facebook and 95 million pictures and videos are shared every day. The platform has a huge impact for brands as 83% of users report discovering new products and services on

Instagram and 50% of Instagram users follow at least 1 brand. Moreover, Instagram can generate 4x more interactions with sponsored content than Facebook, so engagement is more present and users spend an average of 53 minutes per day on the application.

More importantly, Instagram helps 80% of users make the decision to purchase a product or service. It is therefore an absolutely indispensable social media to help increase prospect-to-customer conversion. Instagram remains first and foremost a photo sharing platform and the photos posted represent 79% of all main feed posts, while videos represent 21%.

Instagram is a very interesting platform to increase brand awareness. For example, in 2013 Mercedes Benz wanted to reach out to the younger audience and they hired 5 top Instagram photographers to take the best picture of a wheel of the new Mercedes at that time. The photographer with the most likes could keep the car. As a result, at the end of the campaign Mercedes won 2 million likes on Instagram, 87 million organic Instagram impressions and 150 new marketing assets in photos.

Another example is the AirBnb company, which used user generated content to increase its brand awareness. They asked people who rented rooms via AirBnb to make "real" photos of the rooms with the slogan "Don't just go there, live there". Each post received between 3,000 and 14,000 likes on Instagram and it didn't cost them anything.

4.3.5.   LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the first international professional network. It is a virtual networking space that allows you to exchange with other professionals and seize new business opportunities. LinkedIn allows users to create a profile about their professional life, but the platform also has an option for companies to create a profile.

When you look at the 7 blocks of functionality, LinkedIn is mainly about identity. It also includes relationships and reputation. Call-to-action should encourage users to share their story, to talk about themselves professionally.

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), there are 310 million monthly active users on LinkedIn. 663.3 million people could be reached with adverts on the platform, which represents 12% of the LinkedIn 18+ aged

population. The profile of LinkedIn advertising audience is 25 - 34 years old and there are far more men than women on site.

LinkedIn can help a company to enrich its address book, literally networking. This can create opportunities to recruit prospects, suppliers, potential partnerships, etc.

Then, the platform allows companies to develop their influence in their sector of activity, by communicating their know-how in discussion groups. Finally, the main goal of LinkedIn is to easily recruit candidates and to inform companies about the career path of each candidate before a real interview.

LinkedIn owns 2.76 million users in Belgium and 80% of them are using English as their principal language. The most prevalent jobs are owner, director and manager and the most prevalent skills are management, sales and marketing.

4.3.6. Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging network that only allows "tweets", messages of up to 140 characters. The main functionality of Twitter, compared to the 7 blocks, is presence. Other functionalities are sharing, identity and conversations. The most frequent call-to-action are the "check-in" types on this platform.

According to We Are Social and Hootsuite's Digital report (2020), there are 330 million monthly active users on Twitter. 339.6 million people could be reached with adverts on the platform, which represents 5.6% of the Twitter 13+ aged population. The profile of Twitter advertising audience is 25 – 34 years old for the men and 18 – 24 years old for the women. There's a big gap in the gender of the total Twitter population, with 66% men and 34% women.

67% of B2B businesses are using Twitter as a digital marketing tool and 77% of users have a better impression of a brand that responds to a tweet. Twitter stands out for its instantaneity and many companies use it to create a close link with prospects and customers. Users usually react within an hour, sometimes even within a minute. If your company publishes and reacts instantly to comments, you create a quick and real relationship with your community. In addition, promotions and products or services are easily visible and for example Zara tweets are mainly about all their new products.

Then, thanks to hashtags, the company can very easily monitor everything that is said about its brand as well as the brands of its competitors. Observing the top

trends also allows a company to adapt and react before competitors on a current event.

Twitter is as much for consumer audiences as it is for business audiences. Consumers regularly share their brand impressions on Twitter, both positive and negative. They give their opinions and the effect of word of mouth gets information flowing fast.

This social media is less and less popular and they repositioned the network as a news platform with a 90% mobile utilization. The segments are all ages and the ways of advertising are promoted account, promoted tweet or promoted trend. There is still 328 million active users in the world each month.

Finally, traditional and early social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have reached a certain maturity and their penetration rate is stabilizing. While mobile social networks are growing rapidly, as well as those that focus on image sharing and instant messaging.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that social media allow permanent and direct contact with a company. They are therefore platforms that create value because they develop user engagement. The latest trends show that the growth in global social media users is increasing every year and it has therefore become essential for a company to be present on these platforms.

Among these media, Facebook and Instagram are the most effective in terms of brand awareness, especially at the B2C level. LinkedIn is by far the most useful network for creating leads and prospects in the B2B sector. Twitter is also interesting, the company is able to know the opinion of consumers about its image. Finally, a company with a professional blog gives an image of expertise and reassures the prospect. It creates commitment and above all improves the company's SEO.

5. Conclusion

To conclude this first theoretical part, we can say that digital strategy is now an integral part of a company's marketing strategy.

Creating commitment from leads and prospects is essential to transform them into customers and this commitment is mainly achieved through social networks, as they allow a two-way relationship with customers and it's no longer a top-down relationship. Nowadays, the company should not only use advertisement,

but should be present at every step of the prospect's buying journey, including after the purchase, to make him a loyal customer or even a brand ambassador.

PART TWO: CASE STUDY – LARCIER COMPANY

1. Introduction

I will now illustrate this theoretical part with a case study, we'll see concretely if a company can convert prospects into customers through social networks.

The goal of this case study is to analyze Larcier's digital strategy on social media, in order to assess whether these platforms are a good tool to turn their prospects into customers. I will first present the market, the competitors and the company itself. Then I will present Larcier's current digital strategy, presenting its objectives, its target and the tools used as well as those used by the main competitors. Finally, I will analyse the KPIs currently used by the company and finally I will elaborate recommendations to optimize their digital strategy on social networks and answer my thesis problematic.

2. The publishing sector

I am going to start this study case with the presentation of the Larcier company's market, the publishing sector in Europe and more specifically in Belgium. Publishing covers all forms of content production and for my case study I will focus more specifically on the publishing of professional law books like codes for example.

According to the Federation of European Publishers (2018), in 2017 the total sales revenue of book publishers was around €22.2 billion in Europe. Furthermore, the professional books sector accounted for 18.2% of sales as shown in the following table.

Figure 24 - Sales in European Publishing sector

European Book Publishing Statistics 2017

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Publishers' revenue from sales of books (bln)	22.2	22.3	22.3	22	22.3
Educational (school) books	21.2%	21%	19.9%	19.2%	18.8%
Academic/Professional books	18.5%	18.7%	19.5%	19.5%	19.5%
Consumer (trade) books	47.4%	47.2%	48.4%	49.2%	49.5%
Children's books	12.9%	13%	12.2%	12.2%	12.3%

Source: Federation of European Publishers. (2018). *European book publishing statistics.* Brussels: Federation of European Publishers. Retrieved from https://fep-fee.eu/European-Book-Publishing-995

According to the ADEB report on production statistics for the French-language Belgian book (2017), the total turnover of the sector increased in 2017 by 3.78% as shown in the following table.

Tableau 1.1. :   Évolution du chiffre d'affaires global 2014, 2015, 2016 et 2017 (en millions d'euros)

Éditions propres		Français	Néerl.	Autres	Total	% par rapport à l'année préc.
Belgique	2014	54,93	59,82	0,09	114,84	+ 1,20
	2015	52,80	56,26	0,10	109,16	- 4,95
	2016	50,76	45,02	0,03	95,81	- 12,23
	2017	**51,29**	**48,12**	**0,03**	**99,44**	+3,78

Source: ADEB. (2018). *Statistiques de production du livre belge de langue française*. Retrieved 20 April 2020, from https://adeb.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Statistiques-de-production-2017.pdf

The report shows that in 2017, 68.33% of turnover was represented by books written in French, compared with 28.39% for books written in Dutch and 3.29% for other languages.

If we compare by category of books, in 2017 the best-selling books were comic books (41.5% of total sales), followed by books on social sciences and humanities (27.2% of total sales), and finally schoolbooks (22.8% of total sales).

Figure 26 - Turnover by category in 2016 and 2017

Tableau 3.1. : Répartition et évolution du chiffre d'affaires (éditions propres) par catégorie d'ouvrages 2016-2017 (en millions d'euros et en % du chiffre d'affaires global hors cessions de droits, toutes langues confondues).

	2016	%	Nbre *	2017	%	Nbre*	Ecart 16/17 (%)
Scolaires	**40,72**	22,8	7	**43,61**	22,8	6	**+ 7,07**
Scientifiques & techniques	**4,01**	2,2	8	**3,72**	1,9	6	**-7,73**
Sciences humaines	**50,92**	28,4	21	**52,10**	27,2	23	**+2,12**
Syllabi/notes de cours	**0,28**	0,2	1	**0,31**	0,2	1	**+7,14**
Littérat. générale	**0,15**	0,1	7	**0,18**	0,1	7	**+20,0**
Encycl., diction.	**-**	0,0	0	**-**	0,0	0	**-**
Beaux-Arts	**0,12**	0,1	5	**0,30**	0,16	5	**+150**
Livres jeunesse	**6,78**	3,7	6	**6,95**	3,6	6	**+ 1,77**
BD	**69,75**	39,0	4	**79,64**	41,5	4	**+14,12**
Livres prat.& parascolaire	**2,46**	1,3	7	**1,76**	0,9	8	**- 26,82**
Codes, ann. & répertoires	**3,39**	1,9	4	**2,67**	1,4	4	**- 20.35**
Agendas, cartes...	**0,**55	0,3	5	**0,44**	0,24	5	**- 9,09**
TOTAUX	**179,13**	**100 %**	**-**	**191,68**	**100 %**	**-**	**+7,0**

Source: ADEB. (2018). *Statistiques de production du livre belge de langue française*. Retrieved 20 April 2020, from https://adeb.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Statistiques-de-production-2017.pdf

In 2017, the French-language book market remains stable in Belgium with a slight increase of 1.1%. However, the production of these books increased by 6% in

overall turnover (cf. Appendix 9: French-language book market in Belgium in 2017).

According to an ADEB report on the key figures for French-language publishing in Belgium (2019), in 2018 the Belgian market was closely linked to France with 70 to 75% of French books imported. However, Belgium also exported most of its production, i.e. around 64%. Only the categories of school and legal books, which are very localized, escaped this trend of dependence on France. 2018 is characterised by a stable market, with a slight increase of 0.43% in the turnover of the publishing sector.

According to another report of the ADEB (2019) in Belgium the market for French-language books is very local. Many legal and educational books are made by Belgian publishers for Belgian readers. However, the market is influenced by French trends and 70% of what is sold in bookshops in Belgium is imported from France in 2019.
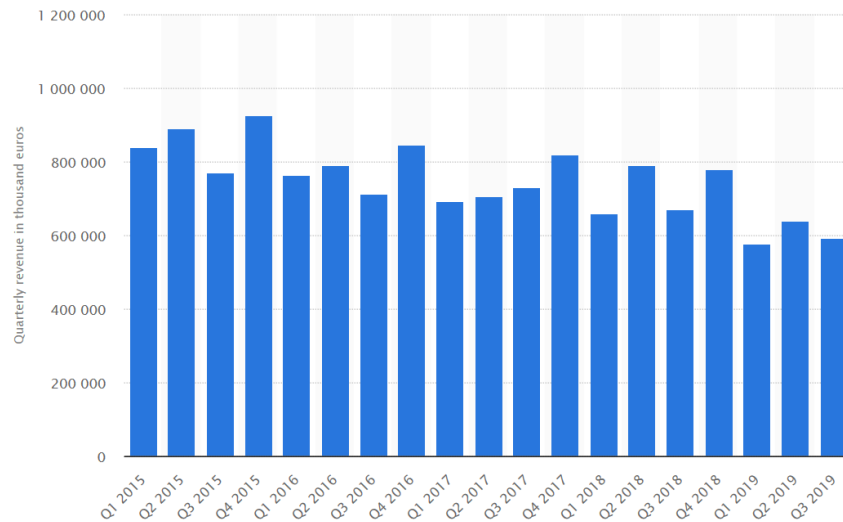
The report showed that the book market in Belgium is mainly represented by bestsellers and for example the new Asterix album sold 1.6 million copies in 2017. Belgium is very well known for its comic strips and these are therefore the driving force on the market. Just behind them were school and law books, which were the market leaders, with a 1-2% increase in sales in 2018, while all other categories were down 3-4% in the same year.

In general, Belgium is dependent on exports, as 52% of the turnover of the Belgian publishing market is represented by the export of Belgian comic books in French. Indeed, these comics are a cultural heritage known throughout the world. In conclusion, Belgium's three flagship sectors will remain in 2019 the comic strip, school and legal sectors.

According to a dossier drawn up by Livres Hebdo (2019), there are 269 publishers in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation since 2019. The publishing sector in Belgium has represented a turnover of €137.6 million and 74% of the French-speaking Belgian market consists of imported books. The share of digital in this turnover represents 25% due to the over-representation of the legal and STM sectors.

According to Statista (2020), in the second quarter of 2019 the Belgian publishing sector reached up to €641,383 in revenue. However, this figure is decreasing over time and in 2015 the sector represented up to €926,500 of revenue during the fourth quarter of the year.

Figure 27 - Revenue of publishing industry in Belgium

As a result of the quarantine, some bookstores have had to close temporarily and the sale of paper books through physical outlets has fallen sharply. However, in the French neighbourhood online sales have increased by between 75% and 200% according to V. Richebois (2020), editor for the economic and financial daily Les Echos.

Basically, sales of digital books in France have exploded during the lockdown but generally speaking the book market has been weakened by the crisis. The Fnac company in France has noted an average growth of 130% in e-book downloads since the 16th of March 2020 as well as a doubling in sales of e-readers.

In conclusion, the e-book market is benefiting from a strong increase in sales due to the pandemic, whereas the market has been stagnating until now. Trends will have to be closely monitored to see if readers will return to paper books once bookstores reopen.

In Belgium, the pandemic is a disaster for Belgian publishers. According to A. Lallemand, journalist for the newspaper Le Soir, the annual turnover in the Belgian publishing sector has suffered a loss of 25 to 65% (2020).

2.1. The niche market of legal publishing

Now if we focus on the niche market of legal publishing, it has never been a truly booming business in Belgium. One on hand, due to the size of the country and on the other hand because Publishers must choose to publish in Dutch or French.

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Since 1980, the Belgian subsidiary of the global legal publisher Wolters Kluwer has dominated the legal publishing market. In the early days, the Publishers Bruylant and Larcier have been in charge for French language editions. For many years, the government has only issued the Official Gazette and has not been able to produce comprehensive legislative texts in an appropriate way.

As a result, the three Publishers (Wolters Kluwer, Larcier and Bruylant) became the most important source for understanding legal matters in Belgium, with their loose-leaf annotated codes and comments.

3. Competitors

To better situate Larcier on the legal publishing market in Belgium, I will present the company's main competitors. We can consider publishing companies like Pearson or Dunod as indirect competitors because they share the same publishing sector, but I'm going to focus on the direct competitors.

About direct competitors, the legal publishing sector in Belgium is a niche sector in B2B, so there is little competition. Larcier's main competitors are the publishing groups Wolters Kluwer Belgium, Anthemis and Politeia.

3.1. Wolters Kluwer Belgium

Wolters Kluwer is a Dutch professional company which was founded in 1836 and today employs around 19,000 people. This international company has its headquarters in the Netherlands and has a turnover of €4.3 billion. They are one of the largest worldwide publishing groups in terms of turnover, with Pearson in first place. Wolters Kluwer is implemented in more than 40 countries, including a subsidiary in Belgium.

Since 2015 the paper format represented only 16% of the company's books and now they are mainly in digital format. They see themselves more as software publishers rather than book publishers.

Wolters Kluwer Belgium (WKB) was founded in 2000 and has its head office located in Malines. The Belgian subsidiary is first and foremost a training branch,

but they also offer information solutions, software, tools and services for legal professionals. Indeed, the training courses offered by WKB integrate digital learning platforms focused on law. In 2018, the Belgian branch had a turnover of €13 million and has been considered as a leader in professional training in Belgium, with 1,500 training courses per year and 750 trainers. In brief, they have the largest training offer in Belgium.

3.2. Anthemis

Anthemis is a Belgian publishing group which was founded in 2005. They offer specialized books in law, economics and management and digital products such as software and PDFs as well as training courses. Anthemis' head office is in Limal and employs a team of 9 people. The company also produces books for various societies or federations and works with many universities. They have more than 600 titles in their catalogue and every year 80 titles are added.

In 2019, the company joins the Luxembourg company Legitech. This publishing group was founded in 2006 and employs about 10 employees, like Anthemis. They are considered as the leading legal publisher in Luxembourg. On the one hand Anthemis brings editorial know-how and an important catalogue, on the other hand Legitech brings expertise in the digital field.

3.3. Politeia

Politeia is a bilingual French and Dutch publishing house which is located in Brussels and was founded in 1990. The company has 76 titles in its catalogue and proposes its expertise in a wide range of fields in the public and non-profit sector. For example, the group offers specialised publications in law, education, environment, etc.

Politeia also organises training courses, seminars, workshops and congresses and their main clients come from the police and legal sector. Politeia is the exclusive publisher of the organisations of Flemish cities and municipalities and develops partnerships with trade union organisations in Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels.

4. Company presentation

After the presentation of the sector and main competitors, I will focus on the company itself and its positioning in the legal publishing market.

The Larcier company was founded in 1839 by Ferdinand Larcier and is currently managed by Paul-Etienne Pimont. The company's head office is located in Brussels and the operating headquarters in Louvain-la-Neuve.

According to the ADEB website, Larcier is currently offering 1,682 books, they publish approximately 270 books per year and the company employs approximately 130 employees. In March 2020, Larcier's turnover amounted to €124,300 (Larcier's monthly social media report, March 2020).

This is a B2B publishing organisation of legal works for professionals. This national organisation is a limited company, they have been well implemented in Belgium and are highly valued. They are the main providers of legal information with the largest legal database in Belgium. According to the European Law Students Association (ELSA) in Belgium, Larcier launches about 300 new monographs every year, they offer 5 collections of Codes, and a very complete training catalogue. This makes them leaders in the Belgian human resources, fiscal and legal publishing markets and they are also present in France and Luxembourg.

The target of the company is very limited, their publications are aimed at legal professionals such as magistrates, notaries, private and public sector lawyers, bailiffs, company directors, etc. who are French-speaking or Flemish-speaking. Larcier also supplies law books and codes to law universities in Belgium, so their second target is all law students, both French and Flemish speaking. In addition, Larcier also exports specialist publications about Luxembourg and French law, so their target audience extends to these two countries.

Éditions Larcier was acquired by Groupe De Boeck in 1991 and finally by Editions Lefebvre Sarrut (ELS) in 2016. The group is especially known for the publication of the Larcier Codes, advanced scientific and legal journals, high-quality monographs and more regular publications. These books are available in paper or digital format and published in French, Dutch and English.

The Larcier company has joined 3 other brands, the publishers Indicator, Intersentia and Bruylant. The 4 brands are united under the Editions Lefebvre Sarrut. They are also reference in all legal and tax fields and each one has its own target (e.g. academics, lawyers, tax specialists, business leaders, etc.). These four brands are now united in a single company and under a common logo which is divided into 4 zones, as shown below.

Figure 28 - The new Larcier logo

Source: Larcier. (n.d.). *Ensemble, prêts pour demain*. Retrieved 3 March 2020, from https://www.larcier.com/fr/ensemble

In addition to the legal segment, Larcier Group also addresses Human Resources and Business professionals with a label called Larcier Business, exclusively in Belgium. Their offer is mainly digital.

5.   The global marketing strategy

Before focusing on Larcier's strategy at the digital level, I will briefly describe their overall marketing strategy. The company has **three** main objectives, is positioned on **two** types of markets and has **two** targets adapted to each market.

5.1. Goals

Larcier has several overall objectives:

- The main **goal** of the company is to become a **<u>reference for other companies</u>**, to follow up their professional customers throughout the cycle of the employee, the notary or the accountant. Larcier therefore wants to be considered as an **indispensable legal source** and to advice and help companies in order to make their legal work easier. More concretely, the objective is therefore to create **integrated tools** that gather legal

information, but also offer tailor-made information and tools in a proactive manner.

- A second overall **goal** of Larcier is to **increase its presence in the training market**. To achieve this, the company is trying to become more and more digital, particularly through its **presence on social networks** and artificial intelligence. About trainings, Larcier wants to take advantage of its name to offer interesting content to customers.

- A final global **goal** for the company is to **reach the level of Wolters Kluwer** in Flanders, in other words Larcier wants to be as well positioned as its main competitor on the Flemish market.

5.2. Positioning

The company's **positioning** depends on the sector to which it is being compared, they are present on two types of markets:

- At the **academic level**, Larcier produces codes for law schools in Belgium and is already very well known in the field, so they have a good positioning in this sector.

- However, at a **B2B professional level**, Larcier is far behind Wolters Kluwer Belgium, especially in Flanders. That is why the company has taken over Intersentia, an Antwerp-based company. This integration is intended to improve Larcier's positioning in the B2B sector.

5.3. Target

In any case, the target of Larcier is as much **French-speaking** as **Dutch-speaking** as Larcier is a bilingual firm that works all over Belgium and the published content is always adapted for both languages. As the legal publishing sector is a niche market, Larcier's target remains very limited:

- The **first target** is adapted to the professional B2B market. It **includes legal experts** such as lawyers, accountants, notaries, tax specialists, etc.

- The second target is aimed to the academic market and it includes all **the law students**. As a reminder, Larcier works with Belgian universities to provide them with Codes adapted to their needs.

In conclusion, I provided a global point of view of Larcier's marketing strategy and I will now focus on its digital strategy and particularly on social networks.

6. Current digital strategy

The digital marketing department of Larcier is quite young as it was created in 2019. The company was already on social networks before the creation of the department, however there was not really a clear communication on these networks, just a publication from time to time, without structure or calendar and now, Larcier's digital strategy has a clearer goal.

About the current digital strategy of the company, it includes **a main goal** and a **secondary goal** used to achieve the first one.

6.1. Objective

According to Florence Lambermont, who works in Larcier's digital marketing department, the figures show that it is very difficult to sell directly on social networks. Therefore, they must first push the prospect to get to know the brand via these platforms before encouraging him to go to the official website, as I'll explain in the second objective. Larcier first wants to develop the dimension of brand awareness and not buying via social networks, this is the first step in the conversion tunnel. Then the main objective is to turn those prospects into consumers.

Here is a concrete summary of Larcier's two objectives via their digital strategy:

- The **most important goal** is to **<u>turn prospects into customers</u>**. It means when prospects are on the website, they push them to **make a purchase**, it means to buy a book, a training or another product and to become a customer of the brand. It also means that they want to encourage customers who have **already bought** something to come back to their site to **make another purchase**.
- To facilitate this main goal, they try to **<u>increase their number of prospects</u>** by creating a **first contact** with the brand or by **increasing the brand awareness** and the **traffic** to their websites via social medias and organic research. In brief, this secondary goal serves as a **lever** for the main objective of turning prospects into customers.

In other words, increasing Larcier's notoriety via brand awareness will push leads to consider going on the site and possibly increase the traffic. Then, a visitor is already interested if he goes on the website so half to work is already done.

According to Larcier's digital marketing department, social networks work as well as mailing to generate interactions (clicks) that redirect to the site and eventually a sale. Larcier manages its online marketing with a paid aspect, including advertisements and sponsored publications, and a free aspect, including targeted publications on social networks. These free publications only target Larcier's current followers, however they are effective.

6.2. Target

Larcier's **online target** is similar to the company's target in its global marketing strategy. However, as I explained in the first part, the advantage of digital communication is a great targeting power. Larcier has therefore divided its 2 main targets via several social networks and has adapted its content on each platform. Once again, the content is published in both languages and the targets are therefore both French- and Dutch-speaking.

- The **first target** remains __legal experts__ and mainly __lawyers__, as it will be seen in the digital tools used by Larcier. It concerns both prospects and customers who have already bought from the brand.
- The **second target** is the __law students__ as explained in the overall strategy. Larcier's objective is to create brand awareness by helping them in their studies and selling them Codes.
- A **third target** of Larcier on social media is __young people (around 18yo)__ who have their CESS and are simply **interested in law**. Larcier just wants to create a first contact with the company and give a fun image of the brand.

To achieve the two objectives and to aim to three targets, Larcier uses some online marketing methods described in the following point.

6.3. Online marketing tools

Larcier uses several tools and platforms to achieve its digital strategy. The following points are a detailed list of the online tools and platforms used by the company, as well as the objectives targeted by each one.

- Creation of three __B2B buyer Persona__ adapted for 3 social media
  - **LinkedIn**: a Persona who is already a **law expert**, who is well advanced in the field, a **lawyer** for example → Larcier creates content that interests this Persona, that helps him to run his

business, for example what could a lawyer gain from buying a book on updates in civil law? The answer is the content created on LinkedIn, this Persona **already knows the brand** and may have already purchased something.

> ➢ 30-year-old and older

- **Facebook**: a Persona who is still in **law school**, at the beginning of an internship in a law firm for example, he's not yet very advanced professionally and **not yet considered an expert** → the content published on Facebook is mainly "fun", the goal is to entertain and help the student in his law studies, possibly showing him how Larcier's books can assist him in his courses. That means contests, memes, gifs, funny videos, etc. To summarize, to goal is to increase the lead and prospect generation.

> ➢ 25yo

- **Instagram**: this Persona is a **young student** who has just finished high school and is interested in law. He's a younger audience but especially a **potential future prospect** → the Instagram content just aims to put him in contact with the brand via contests and entertaining content. The objective is to already educate him about the Larcier brand in order to have a continuity afterwards, when he grows up. To summarize, the goal is to increase the lead generation.
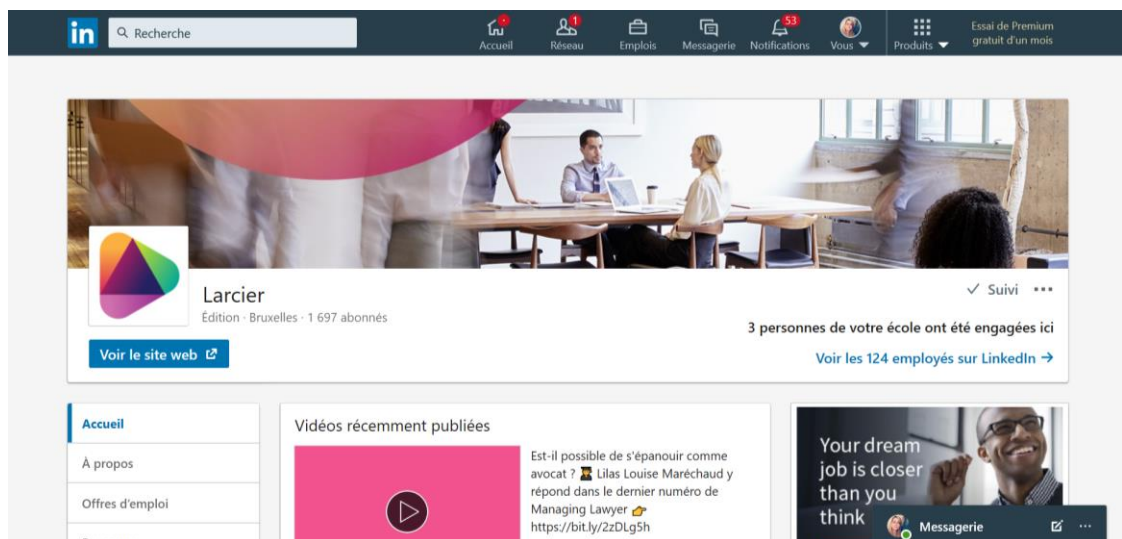
> ➢ 18 – 23yo

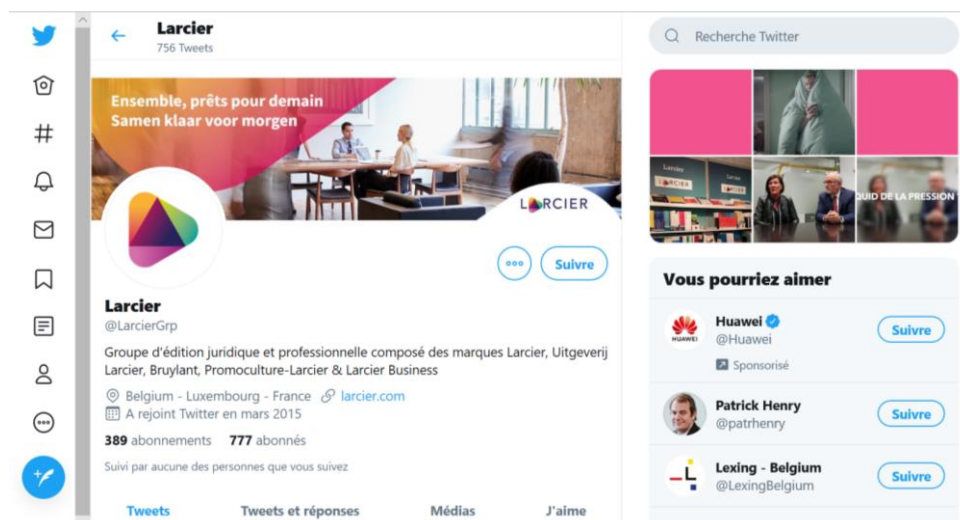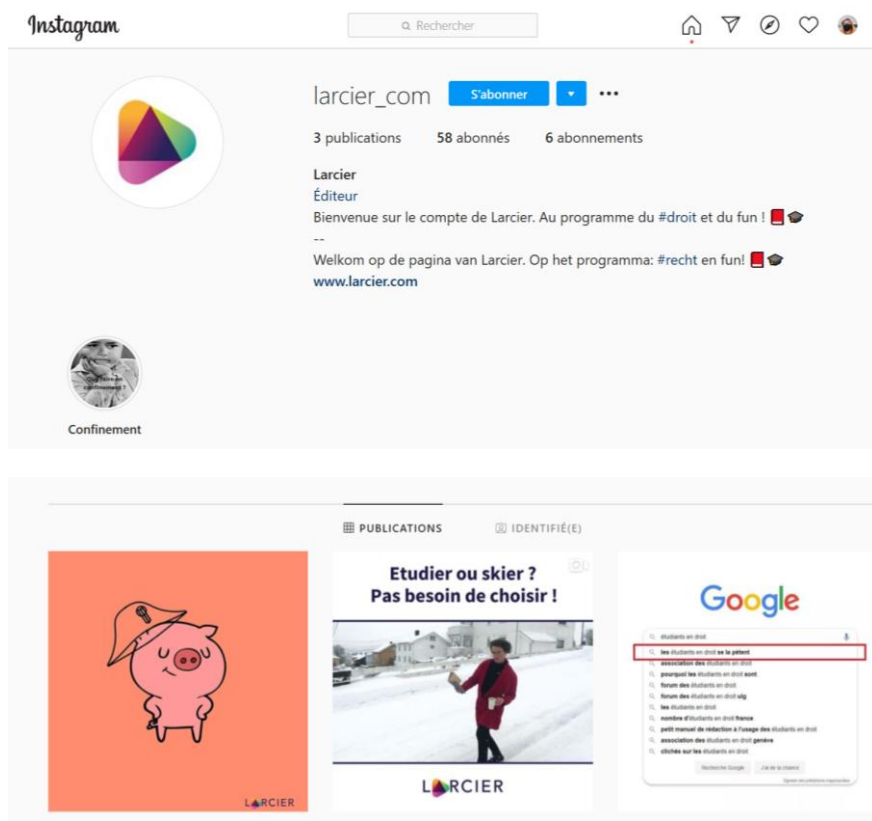- An official **Facebook** page with 2,412 followers
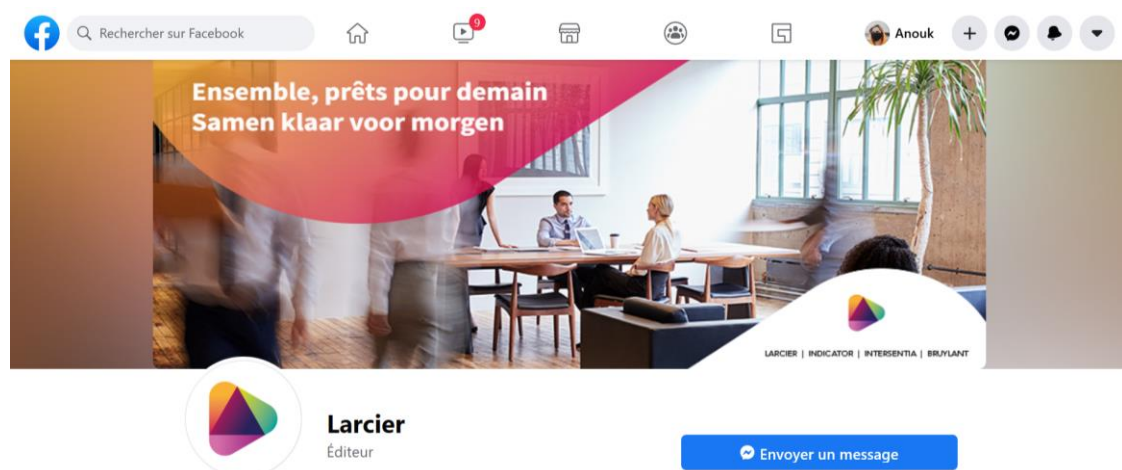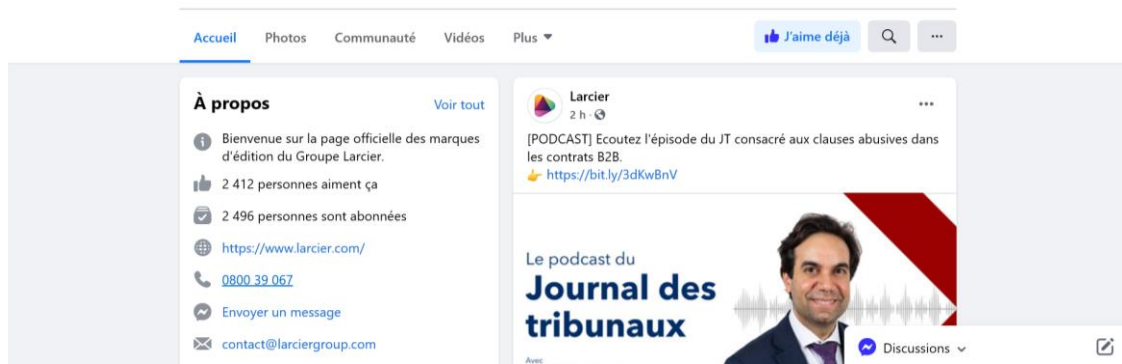
- A **LinkedIn** account with 1,697 subscribers

- A **Twitter** account with 777 subscribers → the Twitter account is the network that is the least effective in generating awareness and creating leads.

- An **Instagram** account with 58 followers

- A **YouTube** account with 1,06k subscribers → Larcier also produces 2 online magazines in video format on YouTube, both in French and Dutch:
    - **"Revue de Jurisprudence de Liège, Mons et Bruxelles" (JLMB)**: those videos show the director of the JLMB edition, Patrick Henry, who meets some lawyers who wrote new royal decrees, and more generally brings his expertise about lawyers. The objective of the videos is an informative role, they are aimed at an audience of legal experts and especially lawyers.
    - **The Managing newer**: these videos provide information on how to manage your business well, they give advice to entrepreneurs and managers (e.g. law firm manager). They are mainly fun videos about an article, composed of gifs, the goal is to make to content of the article more accessible and "less serious".
- **A podcast**: "Le journal des tribunaux" is a podcast for those who do not have time to read but spend a lot of time in the car, for example lawyers who go to see their clients, so they can listen to these podcasts on the way. Again, the target audience is mainly law experts and especially lawyers. This podcast is also available in paper format via a subscription offer.
- **Promotional videos**: after each conference, videos are made of the highlights, again because the visual aspect works very well on the

networks. For example, when the women's rights code came out, images were filmed to promote the book.

- **An official e-commerce website**: they propose their complete catalogue of books, including codes, and e-books with the possibility to order them online. The site also shows the latest news, promotions, training, podcasts, online magazines and webinars. Digital solutions and white papers are also available. The website is available in French and Dutch.

  About the book purchase, Larcier offers a subscription system to receive all new editions with a temporary discount. The visitor who wishes to buy a book goes through 3 steps: a basket page with the eventual promotion deducted and the total price to pay, a delivery details page and finally the secured payment page. In order to validate his basket the visitor must either log in or create an account. Thus, if the sale is not possible, he can be contacted afterwards. Thus, the company tries to generate more leads by getting the visitor's contact information to recontact him via email or phone.
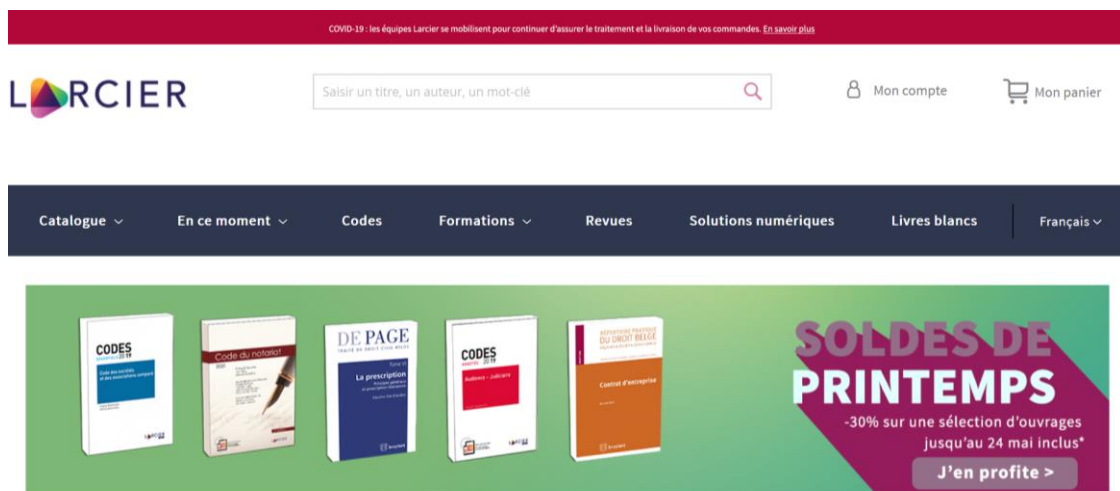
- **A newsletter**: informs about the latest news and promotions of the company via email, it is possible to select a specific subject such as civil law or tax law for example.
- **A blog start**: it's not yet a real blog but Larcier is starting to publish free articles directly on its website, so it's a first step towards a blog. If the article is about a code, there is a call-to-action at the end with a button that redirects to the relevant code to prompt the purchase. If the article is not about a book, there is a button at the end that redirects to a similar article.

In conclusion, about the Larcier's main strategic goal, which is the conversion of prospects into customers, their target is the public from **LinkedIn**. It means managers, notaries, lawyers, etc. who are already considered as law experts. For most of them, they already know Larcier and are already prospects.

Facebook and **Instagram** serve as leverage for the first goal, the objective is to publish content that will increase the prospect portfolio and the brand awareness as I said above, the target is mainly students. With this strategy, once a student has graduated from law school, he or she will already know where to go for professional work. As a student he would already be a prospect and it will be easier to convert him into a customer later. All these actions and publications are aimed at reaching the future target and Facebook is the most efficient platform, as I'll explain in the KPIs section.

About **YouTube** and the **blog**, Larcier has a desire to give an expert image to reassure the client about the brand image. The target has law experience and maybe even a legal profession. These platforms serve to help, advise, direct and inform this audience. In contrast, Facebook and Instagram are aimed at the youngest and are used by Larcier to make itself known to the future target audience.

Here is a table summarizing the target audience and objectives on the 3 main social networks used by Larcier:

Platform	Target	Objective
LinkedIn	Law experts (e.g. lawyers), already prospects or customers	Increase traffic on the website, convert prospect into customer by encouraging new or regular purchase
Facebook	Law students	Increase brand awareness, increase prospect and lead generation
Instagram	18-year-old	First brand contact, increase brand awareness, increase lead generation

To sum up, **LinkedIn** is the most important network for Larcier, it is the one that allows them to achieve their main goal, however we'll see from the KPI analysis that it's not the most effective. The company mainly collects lawyers on LinkedIn, as they will never come on the website from Facebook. It means the audience who is on LinkedIn already knows Larcier well and may have already bought their product.

6.3.1.   The content marketing

Thanks to its three B2B Persona, Larcier's content marketing strategy differs greatly from one network to another.

- **LinkedIn**: the content is intended for professionals who are already familiar with the brand for the most part. They are already interested customers or prospects. It is therefore **professional content**, which redirects to the latest **training courses**, **legal news** or **articles** that answer questions that lawyers may have. The main target is lawyers, with one publication out of two providing specific help for them.


- **Facebook**: Larcier's Facebook page aims to be a **showcase** for its activity and expertise. Almost all of Larcier's publications contain a **link** to the site, but the company could also create links to its other platforms such as LinkedIn or Instagram. This page is also intended to be a way to eventually sell, by presenting **promotions** and the latest **news**.
  The content is aimed at **law students**, not yet considered experts. It's fun, **entertaining content** that should entertain the student and eventually help him in his studies. The most effective content consists of powerful proposals, real-life image and event, very simple and **engaging concept**, with a good combination of text and image. Since January 2020, Larcier

has been publishing shorter texts, **clearer call-to-action** and more powerful images. Most publications have a link in description or a hashtag, to incite the reader to take action, through links, contests, polls,...

- **Instagram**: the content is aimed at the **youngest**, those who have just obtained their CESS and who may be interested in studying law. The content should just put them in contact with the brand and the publications have only an entertainment purpose, with **gifs**, **memes**, etc. The content is not very regular and the account has only three publications so far.
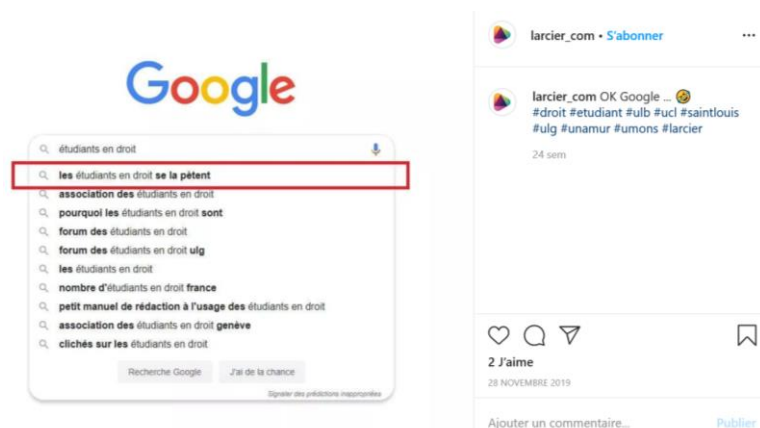
6.4. The KPIs

The goal of the KPIs is to show if Larcier's digital strategy on social networks is paying off and if it allows to convert prospects into customers. The objective of this analysis is to answer the problematic of this thesis: in relation to Larcier's target, are **social networks a good tool to convert them into customers**?

To analyse its KPIs and establish its monthly reports, Larcier uses Google Analytics. These reports show indicators about the most effective channels they use, **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**, so I'm going to focus on those two platforms.

I will analyse the Larcier's social media reports for January, February and March 2020 to describe their KPIs and potentially to propose new ones in order to optimize their strategy. The purpose of my analysis is to show the **evolution of KPIs over the last three months** in relation to Larcier's main objective, turning its prospects into customers.

6.4.1. Social footprint

Here is the overall impact of Larcier's publications on Facebook and LinkedIn for the months of January and March 2020:

34 publications for January 32 publications for March	203,557 people reached 180,402 people reached	3,315 interactions 2,269 web sessions 4,164 interactions 1,900 web sessions

The number of publications of Larcier on LinkedIn and Facebook remained constant from January to March. The number of people reached decreased by 23,155, the number of interactions (click, like, retweet, share, etc) increased by 849 and the number of web sessions (coming on the site) decreased by 369 between January and March 2020. In conclusion, there is a **strong decrease** in the number of people reached and in the number of website visits.

6.4.2. Acquisition

Figure 29 - Acquisition on social media in January 2020
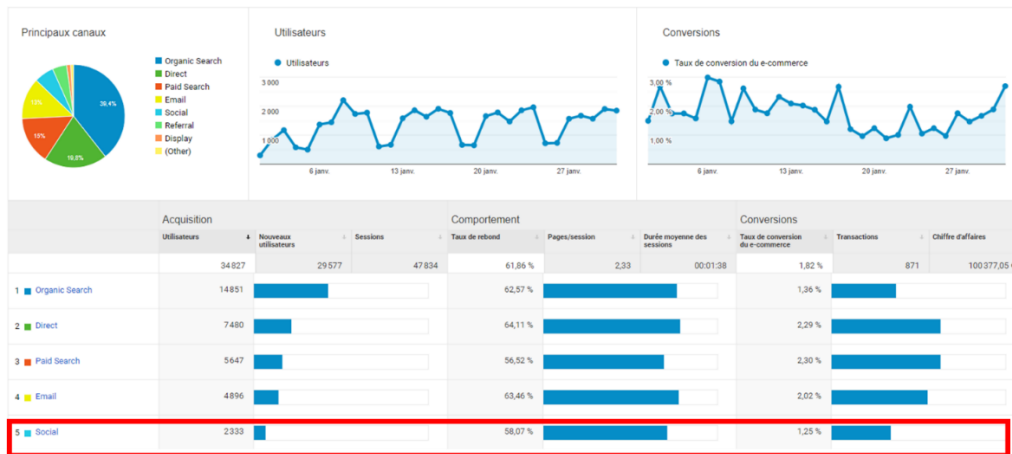
The **conversion rate** is based on visitors making a purchase in relation to the total number of visitors, so this is the most important KPI for Larcier's main objective. Indeed, increasing this conversion rate means we change more prospects into customers.

In January 2020 social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube) brought 2,333 visitors to the Larcier website, with a conversion rate of 1.25%, similar to that of organic searches (visitors coming from a search engine such as Google for example). However, the conversion rate from social media remains the lowest, so we need to find a way to increase the number of visitors via social networks and this conversion rate. We can note that most visitors come from organic search and only 1 visitor out of 7 comes from social networks.

The other effective channels used by Larcier are the **direct channel** (the user directly writes Larcier's address in his search bar), **paid search** (sponsored content, paid advertising, etc.) and **mailing** (e.g. newsletter). The average bounce rate is around 50%, so we can see that Larcier has a slightly high bounce rate via the social network channel.

Figure 30 - Acquisition on social media in February 2020

	Acquisition			Comportement			Conversions		
	Utilisateurs	Nouveaux utilisateurs	Sessions	Taux de rebond	Pages/session	Durée moyenne des sessions	Taux de conversion du e-commerce	Transactions	Chiffre d'affaires
	34 634	28 920	48 583	61,28 %	2,37	00:01:35	2,26 %	1098	177 768,05 €
1 Organic Search	16313			62,20 %			1,13 %		
2 Paid Search	6828			57,62 %			2,74 %		
3 Direct	6483			64,46 %			2,90 %		
4 Email	4141			59,61 %			5,39 %		
5 Social	2029			59,37 %			0,62 %		
6 Referral	1522			60,69 %			1,64 %		

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, February). *Rapport social media February 2020.* [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In February 2020, social media brought 2,029 visitors, 304 less than the previous month. However, organic searches have increased and brought more than 16,000 visitors, so 1 in 8 visitors come from social networks. The conversion rate has **decreased** compared to January, which means that out of all visitors, there are fewer who have realised the desired action. The paid search, mailing and direct channels remained stable.

Figure 31 - Acquisition on social media in March 2020

|	Acquisition			Comportement			Conversions		
	Utilisateurs	Nouveaux utilisateurs	Sessions	Taux de rebond	Pages/session	Durée moyenne des sessions	Taux de conversion du e-commerce	Transactions	Chiffre d'affaires
	31 856	26 078	46 312	59,90 %	2,49	00:02:03	1,61 %	745	124 332,46 €
1 Organic Search	15850			61,95 %			0,93 %		
2 Direct	7190			61,52 %			1,88 %		
3 Paid Search	4485			47,96 %			2,74 %		
4 Email	3511			60,52 %			3,47 %		
5 Referral	1596			59,43 %			0,74 %		
6 Social	1458			64,89 %			0,53 %		
7 Display	423			77,79 %			0,40 %		
8 (Other)	83			52,43 %			2,91 %		

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, March). *Rapport social media March 2020.* [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In March 2020, social media brought 1,458 visitors on the website, it means the number of visitors is decreasing since January. In addition, the rebound rate is also steadily increasing and the conversion rate is **decreasing** since January.

In conclusion, about the acquisition we can see that prospects come mainly from **organic search** and relatively few from social networks. It is also one of the channels that brings back the **fewest visitors**, with an increasing bounce rate and a **decreasing conversion rate** over time.

6.4.3. Value

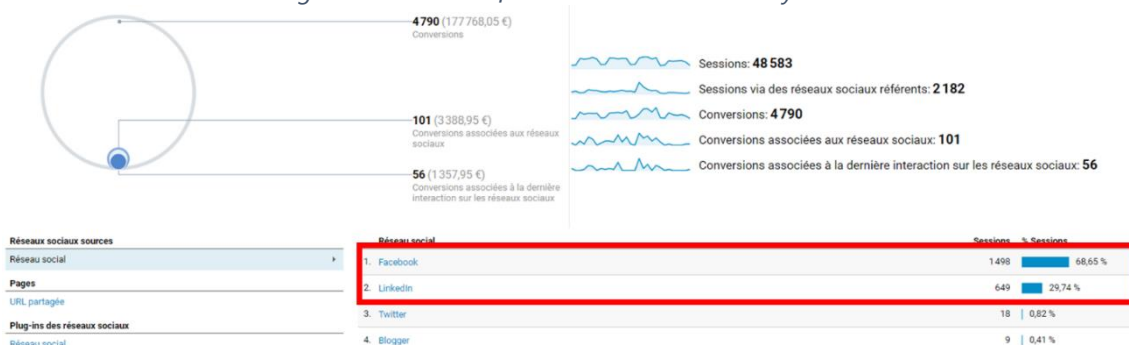*Figure 32 - Value of social media in January 2020*
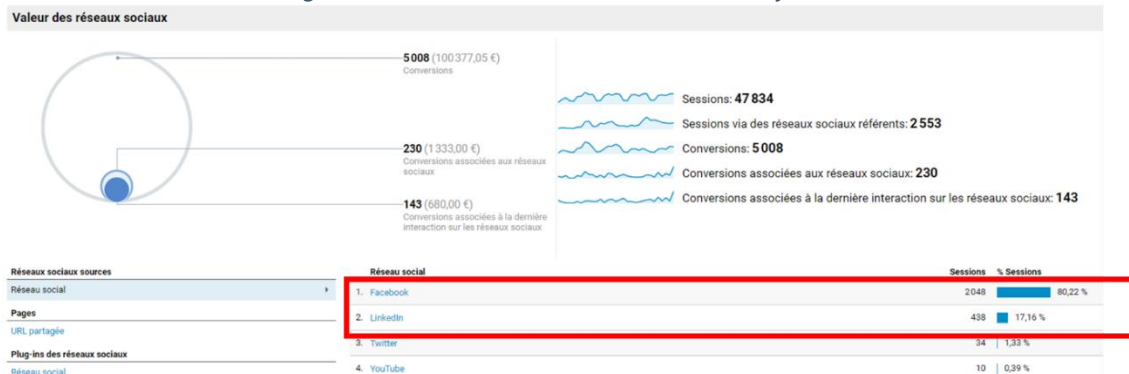
Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, January). *Rapport social media January 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In January, 17,16% of social visitors came from LinkedIn thanks to sponsored ads and 80,22% came from **Facebook**. We can clearly see here that the network that creates the most sessions and therefore brings back the most visitors is Facebook, while the most important channel for the digital strategy of Larcier is LinkedIn. Next come Twitter and YouTube with respectively 1.33% and 0.39% of all sessions.

We also see that the conversions associated with social networks are 230 out of a total of 5,008 conversions. This means 4.6% of total sales are made by customers who come from social media.

Figure 33 - Value of social media in February 2020

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, February). *Rapport social media February 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

During February, 29.74% of social visitors came from LinkedIn, still thanks to the sponsored ads. Facebook remains the leader in terms of value but brings back 12% fewer visitors than in January, with a total of 68.65% of sessions.

This time social networks converted only 101 visitors out of 4,790, i.e. only 2.1% of sales were made by visitors from social networks.

Figure 34 - Value of social media in March 2020

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, March). *Rapport social media March 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In March, Facebook still loses sessions but remains the channel that brings back the most visitors with 63.37% of total sessions. LinkedIn is still second with 33.95% of total sessions, a figure that has almost doubled since January. So we can see the trend reversing between LinkedIn and Facebook, which is more consistent with Larcier's digital strategy.

Only 90 out of 3,858 **conversions** are associated with social networks, which means that 2.3% of sales are made by customers coming from social networks. This is a figure that has been stable since the previous month but **has dropped by half** since the beginning of the year.

6.4.4.   Social audience

Figure 35 - Social audience in February 2020

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, February). *Rapport social media February 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

Over the three months, Larcier's Facebook page gained a total of 223 followers and had a total of 2,331 followers in March. The company's LinkedIn account won 248 followers and has 2,108 followers in March.

The number of people who follow Larcier on Facebook and LinkedIn is **increasing** over time, which is a very positive point.

6.4.5. Facebook

The **engagement rate** represents the number of people who have interacted (like, share, comment, click,…) with a publication out of the total number of people who have seen this publication (impressions). It allows to measure the interest of Internet users for certain publications.

If we now focus on Facebook, in January Larcier reached 72,914 people through his publications (data not provided). These people made 5,072 interactions, which gives a 6.9% engagement rate (number of interactions out of the total number of people reached).

In February, Larcier published 15 posts on Facebook, reaching 183,223 people and creating 2,699 interactions. The engagement rate for February is therefore 1.4%, which is much **lower** than the previous month.

Finally in March, Larcier published 16 posts on Facebook and reached 169,661 people. These people made 3,923 interactions which gives a 2.3% engagement rate. The rate increased compared to February but did **not recover** its January level.

About the content strategy, the best publications from January were due to shorter text, clearer call-to-action and more powerful images and aimed to better results in the number of interactions and people reached. The publications were simple, with an engaging concept or a powerful proposition.

One of the less efficient publications in January was due to the fact that a file didn't match the Facebook requirements and was too large, not easy to read. Another publication didn't work well because of too much text above and in the image, it was hard for the reader to know what's in it for him. Moreover, too much text in the image causes Facebook to reduce content distribution.
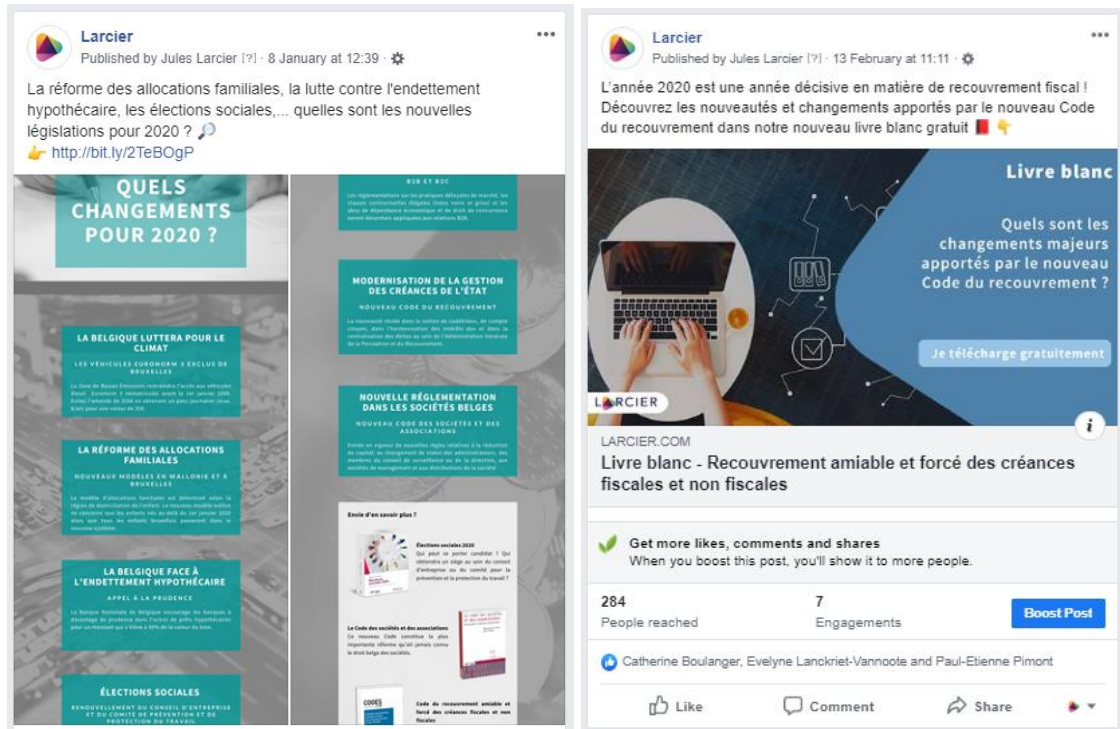
6.4.6.   LinkedIn

As a reminder, impressions are the number of times an online ad is exposed to a targeted audience. In this case, I will compare Larcier's free and paid publications on LinkedIn.
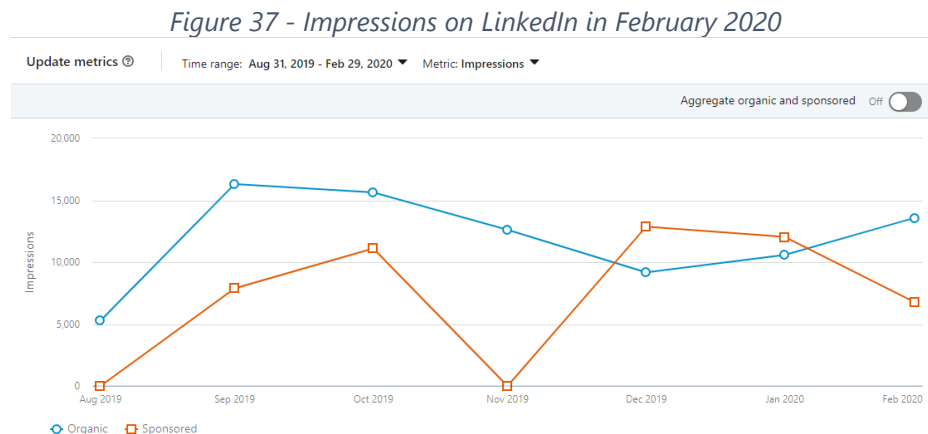
Figure 36 - Impressions on LinkedIn in January 2020
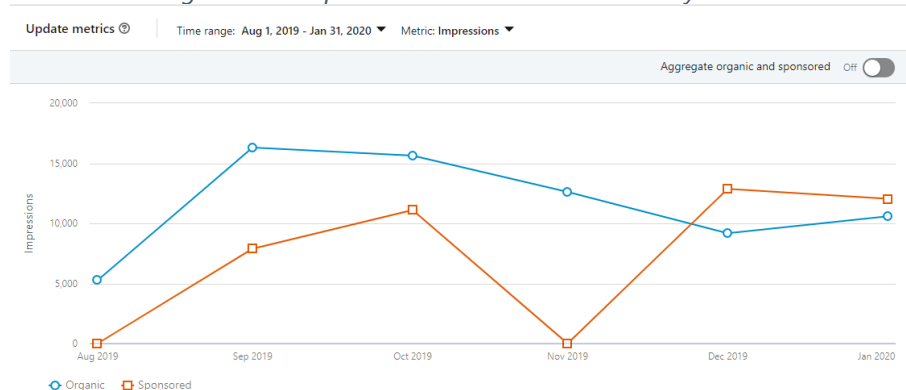
Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, January). *Rapport social media January 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In January, LinkedIn had a total of 22,628 impressions including 10,587 organic impressions and 12,041 paid impressions (from sponsored ads). On these 22,628 impressions, 400 users went further and clicked on the content. There were 331 organic clicks and 69 paid clicks in January.

For the month of January, the average engagement rate was 2.85% with an organic rate of 4.38% and a paid rate of 1.32%.

Figure 37 - Impressions on LinkedIn in February 2020

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, February). *Rapport social media February 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In February LinkedIn had 20,354 impressions, or 2,274 less than the previous month. Of these impressions, 13,583 are organic and 6,770 are paid, this month we see that there are many more organic prints than paid prints. Of the total number of impressions, there were 284 clicks on those publications, including 336 organic clicks and 48 paid clicks.

For the month of February, the average engagement rate was 3.03% with an organic rate of 3.61% and a paid rate of 1.88%. the rate of paid engagement compared to the previous month has therefore increased.

Figure 38 - Impressions on LinkedIn in March 2020
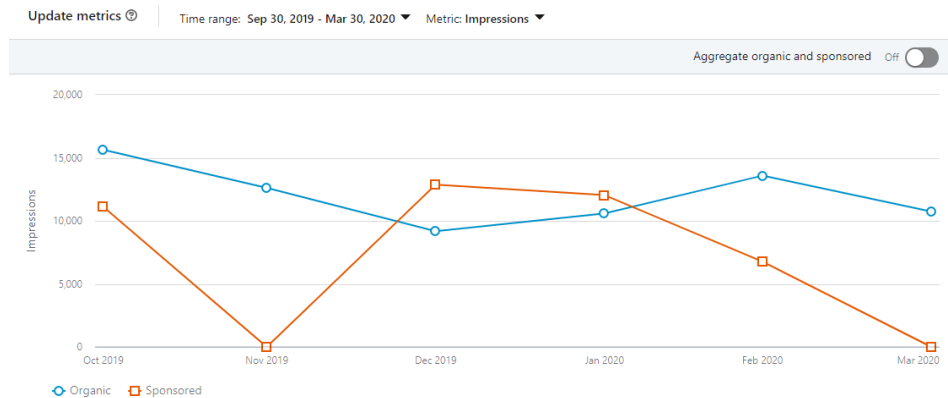
Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, March). *Rapport social media March 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

In March we have a total of 10,741 impressions which shows the decrease of LinkedIn impressions since the beginning of the year. Out of this total we have 10,741 organic impressions and no paid impressions. These impressions allowed 241 clicks, all of them organic because none of the LinkedIn publications were sponsored ads.

Finally, in March the engagement rate was 3.85% and completely organic, that's a slight increase from February.

About the content strategy, January's best publication created a commitment rate of 7.71% according to Larcier's monthly report. It was a video illustrating the latest issue of the JLMB. The worst publication of the month generated only a 2.06% commitment rate.

Figure 39 - Commitment rate on LinkedIn in January 2020

Impressions	Video views	Clicks	CTR	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Follows	Engagement rate
739	-	46	6.22%	9	0	2	-	7.71%

Source: Herinckx, G. (2020, January). *Rapport social media January 2020*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Louvain-La-Neuve: Larcier.

The best publication of the month of February concerns the aids available to start a training in notary's office. The commitment rate was 5.49% according to the monthly report. The worst publication reached a commitment rate of 1.71%.

In March, a post on pandemic-related changes was considered the best post, with an engagement rate of 2.85%. The worst publication is not far behind, with a 2.31% engagement rate.

6.5. Strengths and weaknesses of the current digital strategy

After describing Larcier's strategy and the tools used, and after analyzing the KPIs provided by the company, here is my **conclusion** to the section about Larcier's digital strategy. I will gather the **strengths and weaknesses** of the Larcier's current strategy in order to be able to further develop recommendations.

- Larcier's main **goals are not precise enough** and are not quantitative or time-bound. However, their **target is well established**, and even though it is quite limited in the legal publishing sector, Larcier has managed to target a **second audience** consisting of all law students or even young people interested in law, both French and Dutch speaking.

- Larcier uses its **3 Persona** in a very good way to adapt its content on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram platforms. However, the content on **Instagram** remains **very poor** and is not regular enough. In addition, Larcier's **Twitter** account has proven to be **inefficient** and is the network that generates the least leads.

- In general, Larcier's **magazines and podcasts**, available on the official site or on YouTube, are mainly intended for **lawyers** who are the first to be targeted by the firm on social media. However, in comparison, Larcier does not produce enough specialized content **for other legal professionals** such as notaries, for example.

- The company has started a **blog** and this is an excellent initiative, however they are the only one among their competitors who don't yet have a professional blog so they must continue **to develop** this idea.

- Generally speaking, Larcier is better established on **social networks** than its competitors, with regular content, including CTA, and above all **adapted** to each platform and each target.

- Regarding **KPIs**, we can see that for the moment social networks are the **least efficient channel** to create traffic and convert prospects into customers. It is therefore not yet an efficient enough tool to answer the initial problem. Approximately 1 person out of 7 who arrive on the site comes from one of Larcier's social networks, the most efficient channel being organic search.

  Moreover, since January 2020 we have seen a **decrease** in the number of people reached and therefore in the number of visits to the site. In addition, the **conversion rate** of people coming from social networks is the lowest of all channels or almost and it decreases over time. The

bounce rate is average compared to other channels, but it remains quite high and has been increasing slightly since January.

- In the social media channel, **<u>Facebook</u>** is by far the one that brings back the most visitors, followed by LinkedIn and then Twitter. So they have a **good presence** on Facebook and posting regular content with CTAs is a good approach.
- The **<u>number of followers</u>** on Facebook and Linkedin is steadily **increasing** over time, but it would be interesting to see the results of other social networks such as Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Finally, on Facebook the overall engagement rate has decreased since January, which may indicate a problem with publications.

To summarize the **<u>points to be improved</u>**, Larcier should find a solution to increase the number of **people reached by social media**, which has been declining since January. The company should also ensure that social networks become a **more important channel** in the lead generation and no longer be in last place. Finally, the **conversion rate** is the KPI that needs to increase the most if Larcier wants to reach its objective of converting prospects into customers via social networks. In conclusion, so far we can say that even if Larcier is well implemented on social networks and particularly on Facebook and LinkedIn, **social media is not yet an efficient enough tool** to convert prospects into customers.

7. Competitors tools

I will now compare the Larcier's digital tools with the ones used by its competitors in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Larcier's digital strategy.

7.1. Wolter Kluwers Belgium

The official website of WKB is available in French and Dutch and contains information, services, software, tools and training available by sector (law, taxation, health, …). On the left, the site gives direct access to the social networks and the first page shows the most recent company's articles with a link to access them. You can also find news, job offers and access to the training platform and the shopping platform.

On the training platform you will find the complete range of training courses and webinars and access to a newsletter. This platform is available in Dutch, French and English.

Via the homepage on the training platform, you can also access the company blog, which is available in French and Dutch and contains articles classified by sector (e.g. HR, people management, tax).
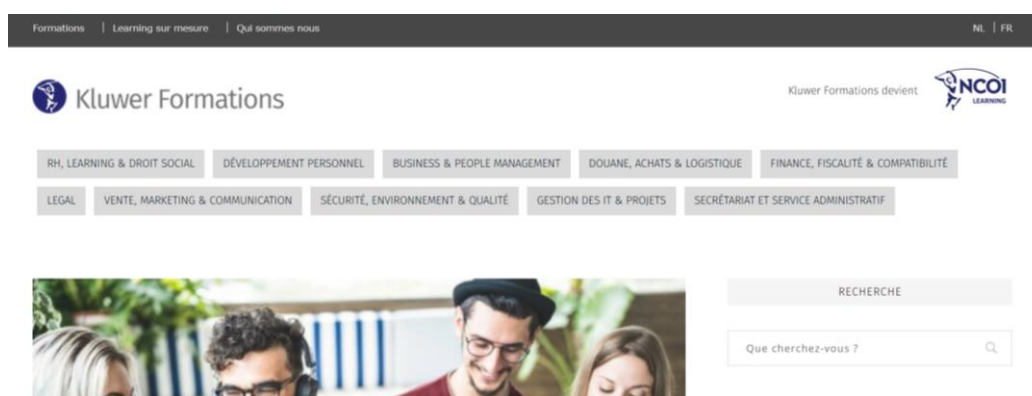

The third platform of WKB is the Webshop. WKB offers books or e-books which can be purchased either separately or as a subscription to automatically receive each new edition. Once again, the site sorts its offer by sector and shows the latest

news on its homepage. In general, this platform has a lot of call-to-action: receive the newsletter, discover the online library, learn more about deliveries, help, payment, account, news, etc.
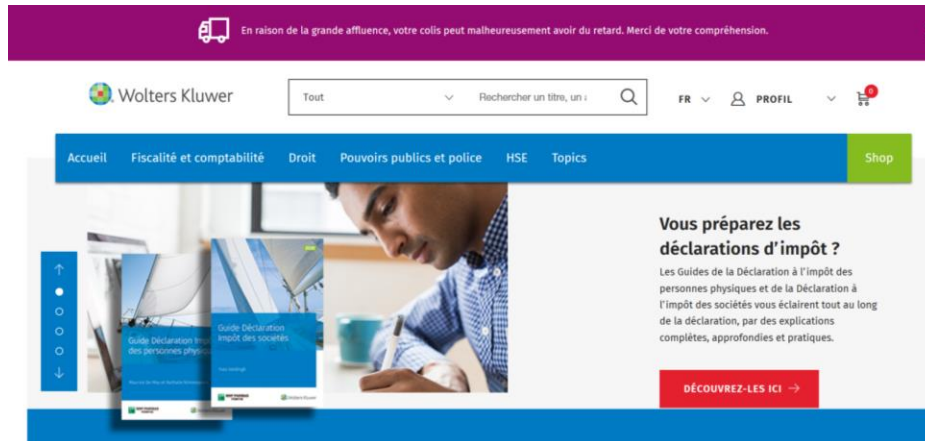
In short, the site is very well developed and divided by sector, with attractive content and well-placed CTAs.

On social networks, the company is present on Facebook but there is no page dedicated to the Belgian subsidiary, the official page has 25,400 followers.
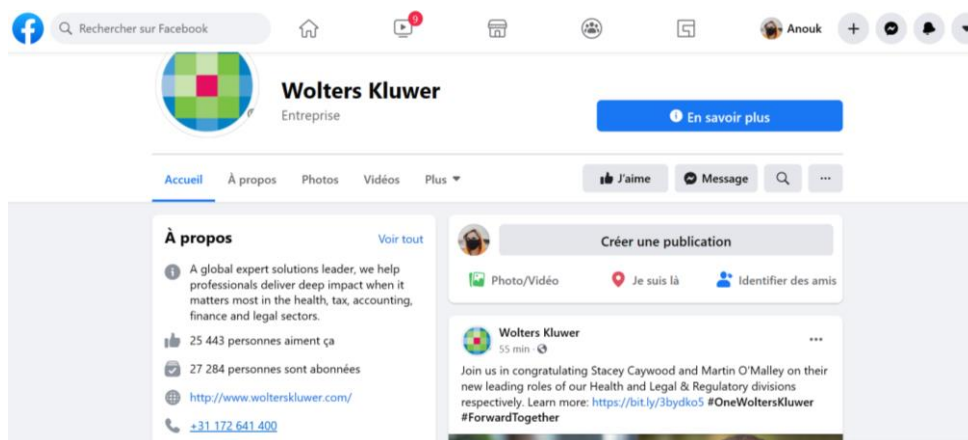
Wolters Kluwer has several Instagram accounts, including one dedicated to Belgium with 36 subscribers (wolterskluwer_belgium), however there is no publication on all these accounts. The company publishes its content via #wolterskluwer. In brief, as of today Wolters Kluwer has no presence on Instagram.
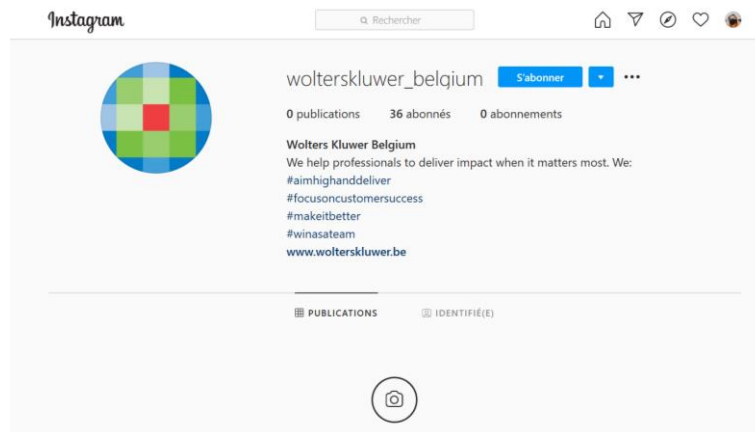
The group is well implemented on Twitter and has several different accounts. There is an account Wolters Kluwer Belgium with 2,130 subscribers.

Wolters Kluwer can be found on LinkedIn with an account assigned to each country and each category (tax, legal, …). The Wolters Kluwer Belgium account has 4,081 subscribers.
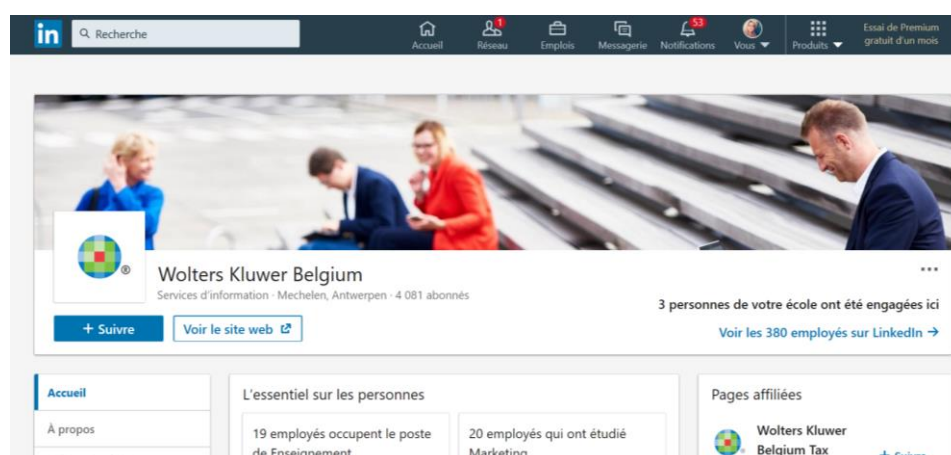
In conclusion, the company is well implemented on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter and their Instagram account has no content. With its international size, Wolter Kluwers already has a well-implemented digital strategy. The Belgian

subsidiary of the company also has a professional blog already fully developed and they have a good command of call-to-action on their different platforms.

However, the group could be more developed on Instagram to attract the attention of younger people, as Larcier do.

7.2. Anthemis

Anthemis has a website available in French, English and Dutch. The home page gives access to the different offers, like books, online magazines, training courses and digital products which are webinars, software and PDF documents.

The rest of the page shows a banner with the latest news or promotions, then you can find the latest books, the best sellers and the webinar agenda. The site allows you to subscribe to a newsletter and gives access to the LinkedIn platform. In general, there are few CTA on the Anthemis website.

The blog is directly on the website and shows a table of contents with links to the most recent articles, then to all the articles by section (tax law, criminal law, etc.). When you access an article, you will find links to more information but no commercial CTA that encourages a purchase.

About social networks, Anthemis has an official Facebook page with 232 followers. The content is not regularly updated and the last article is from a month ago at the time I'm writing these words. The content is mainly about the latest news and promotions.
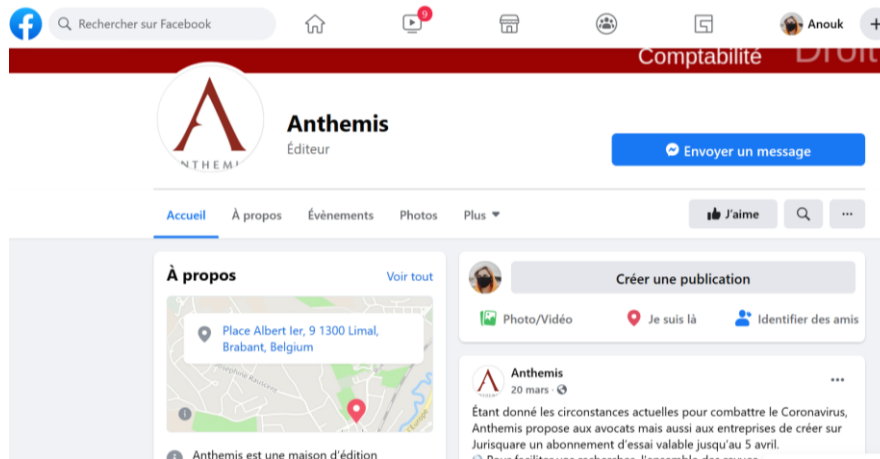
The company has no account on Instagram and does not publish any content via a hashtag and Anthemis has no presence on Twitter either. However the company has an account on LinkedIn, with 1,018 subscribers.

In conclusion, the company's online presence is very limited, especially when it comes to social media. Nevertheless, Anthemis offers an expertise blog on its website and posts content regularly on LinkedIn, where it also offers a quarterly review about human rights, also available on its site.

Again, we can conclude that legal publishers in Belgium mainly want to attract legal experts and know that LinkedIn is the most efficient network for this. However, the company could further develop its presence on social media and possibly reach a wider target group.

7.3. Politeia

The website of Politeia is quite simple and available in French and Dutch, it offers the books by theme or its entire catalogue in the publications tab. We can also find the training offers and a set of articles classified again by theme. These articles can be considered as a blog and we can find the last updates, portraits of authors in interviews, promotions, the last book releases, etc. The call-to-actions are quite discreet links at the end of the articles to access more information or to purchase a book mentioned in the article, so there is an incentive to buy. However, there are only 10 articles and the first one was written in 2019, so it is a recent section.
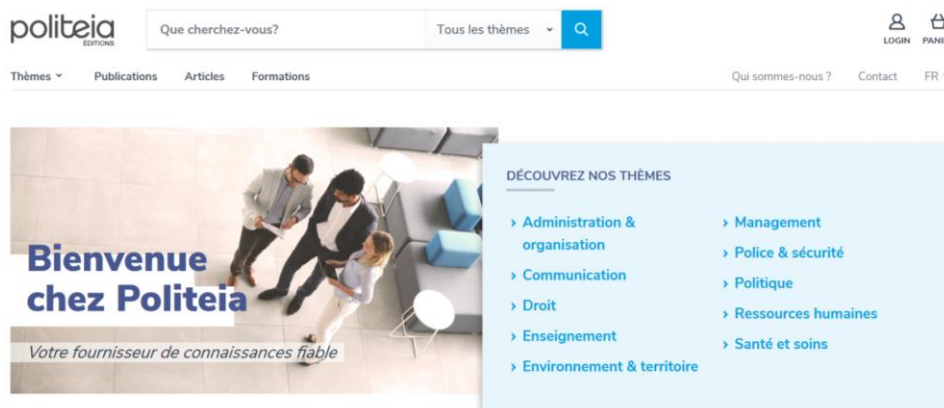
Politeia is present on Facebook and has 158 followers. The content is updated regularly and mainly informs about Webinars.

The company has an Instagram account but only available in Dutch. The account has 68 subscribers and 10 publications. It is not updated regularly and the content mainly shows events that have taken place with the company.

The company is much more active on Twitter and posts very regularly. The account has 585 subscribers and posts mainly on the latest news or information about webinars.

Politeia is also present on LinkedIn with a principal account of 805 subscribers. However, all posts are in Dutch and even if there is a French account, it has only 78 subscribers. Once again, you will find mainly the latest information and news of the company.
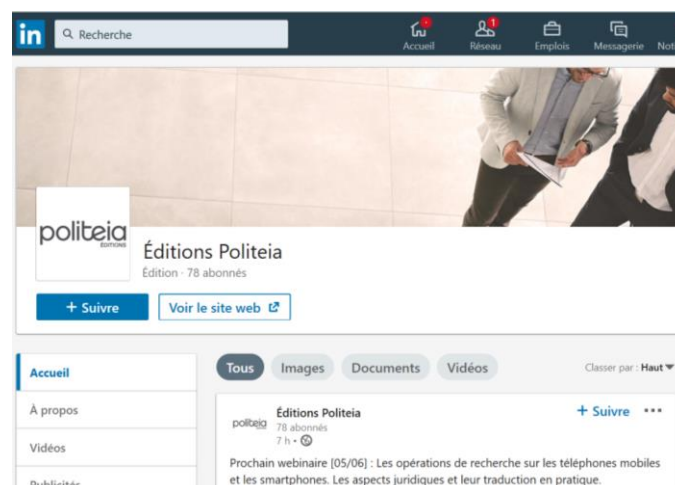
In conclusion, the company is quite present on various social networks, however it should also offer French publications on Instagram and try to attract more

French-speaking followers on LinkedIn. Politeia seems to be better implemented in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium than in the French speaking part.

Another important point is the similarity in the published content, the publications are not adapted from one social media to the other and the same information is found. It means the targets are the same and again the audience is constituted of legal experts.

7.4. Conclusion

To conclude this point about the **competitors' tools**, I will summarize the main **strengths and weaknesses** of each of them.

- First of all, even if **Wolkers Kluwer** is an international leader, its digital strategy is not developed on **all platforms**. The company does not have an official **Facebook** page for its Belgian subsidiary and does not publish any content on Instagram, even though there are several official accounts. However, the company is well implemented on **Twitter and LinkedIn** and has its own professional **blog**, which are strong points. WKB manages CTA well in general but should adapt its content to the platform used and be more present on Instagram.
- **Anthemis** also has a **blog** but it doesn't contain enough **CTAs**. The company is poorly implemented on social networks and publishes too little content and rarely updated. Its presence is mainly on **LinkedIn**, which is therefore quite limited.
- **Politeia** has a fairly young **blog** (created in 2019) and not yet developed enough, the company should post articles more regularly and separate its blog from its official website, to improve its **SEO** thereafter via CTAs from its blog to the site. The company is present on several networks but sometimes it is only present via a Flemish account. It regularly publishes mainly on **Twitter** and **LinkedIn**, but the content is not adapted to the platform and the same publications can be found from one social media to another.

In conclusion, competitors are mostly present on **LinkedIn** and all of them have a professional **blog**, which is normal in B2B where the goal is to show its expertise. Legal Publishers in Belgium are mainly targeting **legal experts**, via the same platform. Some should be more developed on other social networks because they focus only on LinkedIn, like Anthemis for example.

8. Recommendations

After analysing Larcier's digital strategy and its KPIs, I have developed some recommendations to optimize their current digital strategy. These recommendations aim to reduce the weak points of Larcier's digital strategy by **improving the efficiency** of the company digital strategy and above all to answer my initial problematic, which is how to improve Larcier's digital strategy on social networks to **effectively turn prospects into customers?**

8.1. Develop a S.M.A.R.T. goal

As I explained in the first part, before developing KPIs you need to create **a clear main goal**, one method to achieve this is the SMART method. A clearer focus could help Larcier to clarify its strategy on social networks. A SMART goal is well defined and unambiguous and by applying it, Larcier could have a more concrete vision of its digital strategy.

Nowadays, the main objective of the company on Internet is to increase its conversion from prospects to customers, however they need to quantify it in order to define more precisely their goal and the SMART method could be useful. Here is an example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal that could be applied to the Larcier's digital strategy:

- **Specific**: I want to increase my conversion rate from social media by 2%
- **Measurable**: KPIs already developed by Larcier
- **Attainable**: in 2020, a conversion rate of 3% is the average in e-commerce in France
- **Relevant**: develop more call-to-action for registration, purchase, discounts, etc.
- **Time framed**: In 6 months

8.2. Develop a blog

Lacier has started a **blog** which would be beneficial to develop. As a B2B company that specialises in law, it would be a great plus for them to regularly share law related articles and news. Furthermore, the blog would also help them with their **SEO**. Here are some advices that could be developed on a potential future blog:

- Larcier could include several imbedded links as **call-to-action** in the articles, that redirects the user to their website, a similar article or a product. In conclusion, it would give them the opportunity to help and

assist prospects, while showing a specialist image which would also reassure them.

- It would also reinforce their **referencing** on search engines and that would put them level with their competitors who all have blogs. However, since most of the traffic on Larcier's website is organic, this means that they already have a good SEO.

- The purpose of a professional blog in this case is to demonstrate Larcier's **expertise**, while explaining legal news. It is also a means of developing its reputation and its **relationships** with prospects. However, creating and especially regularly updating a blog is a **time-consuming activity**.

- The **writers** of the future articles could come from the company but also directly from the legal sector. For example, Larcier could ask lawyers and PhD students to participate and contribute articles to the blog. On the one hand, the company could involve prospects and clients in its blog and increase their loyalty. On the other hand, articles written by legal experts give a reassuring image. The information would come from prospects to go to prospects, so it is a way for Larcier to create a **strong relationship** with users.

- In addition to improving SEO, the other strong point of the blog is its **virality**. Indeed, interesting articles will be quickly shared on other social networks. The goal of the blog is to be read and shared, so it is necessary to provide added value by producing **personalized content**.

- Larcier could also post photos and videos in the blog and could integrate share buttons, information request buttons, redirections to a book related to the article, to a training session, to a newsletter subscription, etc.
  By regularly placing **commercial CTA** in the articles, it could generate a large part of its income via its blog, however the conversion rate is more difficult to estimate.

- In addition, the blog allows you to develop your **content marketing**. The creation, distribution and sharing of quality articles that are not directly commercial creates loyalty and commitment on the part of prospects. According to Demand Metric (2017), **68%** of Internet users like to read content related to the brands they like and **60%** look for information after reading an article on a brand's blog. In short, the blog is the best content marketing tool.

- Effective articles will demonstrate Larcier's **talent in the legal field**. Ideally, the blog should be clear with articles sorted by chronology and according

to a maximum of 3 categories. The gain in legitimacy will increase the opportunity of direct sales of Larcier's publications and training courses

- Each article must be **accessible in two clicks** maximum, to avoid losing a potential reader and therefore potential customer.
- Larcier's **newsletter** could also be able to integrate the latest articles written on the blog or to make a reminder of the best articles.

8.3. Optimize the social acquisition

About **acquisition** from social networks, Larcier has to reverse the trend and:

- Decrease its **bounce rate**
- Increase its **acquisition** (number of visitors)
- Most important, increase its **conversion rate** as this is the indicator of their main goal

The high bounce rate explains the low conversion rate. One of the possible explanations is that the content is poorly adapted to the target, despite the three **Buyer Persona**.

The first step is to find a way to increase the number of visitors via social networks in order to **increase the conversion rate**, which is the priority of my problematic. Buyer persona is already an excellent point to improve its conversion rate but there is more than one solution:

- The creation of even more links and other **call-to-action** in the social media publications could help increase traffic to the site. Larcier could also install a **chat system** on its website to communicate with the visitor, especially during his purchasing process to answer any questions he may have. Talking directly to prospects humanizes the brand and increases the chances of turning them into customers. Moreover, if you answer their questions and remove their dealbreakers, they might more easily make a purchase.
- The company can also consider **shortening the buying tunnel**, by adding CTA that lead directly to the buying page and especially by stopping forcing users to create an account to finalize their purchase. The shorter the purchase tunnel is, the more likely the purchase will be completed.
- This may add a workload for Larcier's employees but trying to analyse **predictable future trends** and providing feedback on them can help propose adequate solutions for future campaigns.

- To increase its **conversion rate**, Larcier can also put on the homepage of the website the **positive comments** from customers, to reassure visitors arriving from social networks. For example, Larcier could post these two comments on its homepage and place a CTA to encourage prospects and customers to give their opinion directly on the homepage.
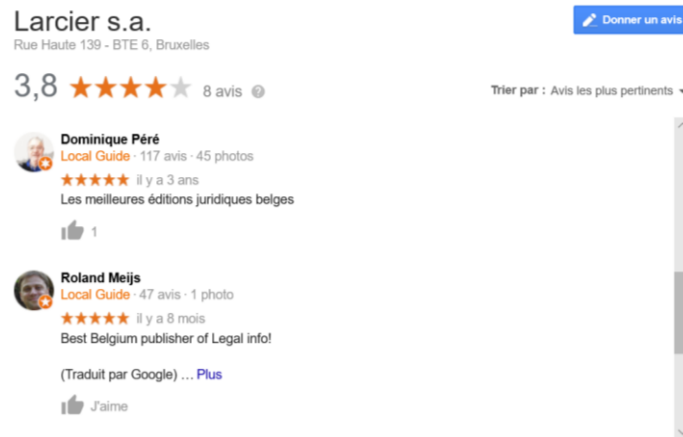
- More generally, Larcier could share **User Generated Content** (UGC) about the good experiences of its customers. First, the company could encourage users by publishing content that encourages them to give their opinion, comment on their publications, etc. Then, Larcier could publish online surveys or questionnaires to get more opinions on its products and finally share these **opinions** via social networks or directly on its homepage.

8.4. Presence on social media

First, I'll summary the main points about social media strategy of the company:

- As the KPIs show, the company has a decent presence on **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**. Therefore, they need to concentrate their effort on these platforms as they generate the most traffic
- If they do want to pursue other social media like **Twitter**, they need to change their content strategy on this network
- About **Instagram**, the content could be more regular. Larcier differs from competitors by targeting a young audience on Instagram, which is an excellent idea, however publications are not consistent enough.

To turn prospects into customers, Larcier has to **build loyalty** as soon as they follow a page or an account on social networks. The company can use several techniques to do this and increase its engagement rate on **Facebook** as this is their most effective social network:

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- **Reward its followers for their loyalty**: as a return of loyalty, the most engaged users on the Facebook page could receive offers such as a coupon, exclusive information, … via a contest or a race to share for example.
- **Optimize its publication timing**: Larcier could estimate the timing point that will have the greatest impact on the performance of its publication. For example, the best time to post a publication on Facebook is between **9am and 2pm** for B2B brands and around noon for B2C brands. Day of publication is also important and it's recommended to publish on **Tuesdays**, **Wednesdays** and **Thursdays** for B2B companies (Redactor.com, 2019).
- **Encouraging short posts**: Larcier's reports already show that the most successful publications are short and effective posts, with little text and engaging content. The company could also sometimes simply posts a picture without text. According to the book "Les fiches outils des reseaux sociaux" (2017), pictures have a **39%** higher interaction rate than "average" posts, they get **50%** more "like" and **100%** more comments. Emoticons are also increasing the interaction compared to an average post.

  In conclusion, Larcier should continue to post visual content and even try to post some "self-explanatory" pictures, which are self-sufficient and whose info would be directly on the picture, with an eventual link as text. Still according to the book (2017), posts of less than 80 characters have a **23%** higher interaction rate and a **60%** higher engagement rate, Larcier already follows this concept as the texts of its Facebook posts never exceed this limit. However, Larcier does not make **CTAs** explicit enough. Indeed, posts that specifically ask fans to share see the average sharing rate multiplied by 7. Those asking for comments increase their comments 3.3 times. Those who call directly to likes to see their liked post 3 times more. So the posts of Larcier could be more explicit and clearly state to go to the site for more information.
- **Offer even more contests**: contests are among the most engaging posts (as well as discounts), the company could continue to organize contests but on a more regular basis.
- **Entertain its fans**: Larcier's target audience on Facebook is law professionals but especially **students**, so the company could publish more "funny" content to build loyalty among its younger fans.

- **Encouraging fans to express themselves**: the interactions on Larcier's Facebook publications are mainly likes and shares. The company needs to encourage users to express themselves by directly answer them when they **comment** a post and thus create a real relationship with them. In return, fans will be much more engaged and some of them will make a real purchase more easily.
- **Use highlights**: to give more emphasis to his page, Larcier can use highlights, these are possible actions on a post to highlight it by "locking it to the top of the page" or simply highlighting it. Moreover, this technique gives an impression of professionalism, which is consistent with Larcier's strategy.

If Larcier decides to stay on **Twitter** and grow, the company can use several techniques. In my opinion, Twitter is an excellent platform for B2B business and that it is therefore a good opportunity for Larcier to develop more on this network:

- So far, Larcier posts the same content on Twitter as on Facebook, which is not interesting for followers on both networks. However, Twitter must above all serve as a platform to **interact with customers** and answer their questions spontaneously, Larcier must therefore review its content strategy
- Moreover, with enough notoriety a brand is talked about on Twitter and can easily find these conversations. By implementing well on Twitter, Larcier could know much more easily **what people think** of the brand, it's a free way to quickly learn relevant information to better position itself on the market. Anticipating what people say about your brand also helps you avoid unpleasant surprises and know when a crisis is coming. It allows you to take the lead in order to produce an effective response.
- In addition, Twitter is the only platform to provide **real-time market study**, allowing a company to know at every moment where it is situated on the market and to adapt rapidly. The impact of its presence on Twitter is therefore significant.
- Twitter is a set of communities, gathered around a person (e.g. Obama), a theme (e.g. ecology) or a brand (e.g. Apple). In each community, interactions are made through the sharing of content, an event that arises interest or a **question asked by a user**. It is precisely on this interaction that companies must engage. Instead of publishing content, Larcier can for

example, search the communities that are part of its target (law students, lawyers, …) and try to answer their question. A simple personalized answer to a single user could create a retweet to an entire community. In order to find those communities, Larcier could first publish content that includes the following hashtags and then try to find some users' questions about legal matters. They could also monitor the competitors' content by looking at the hashtags associated with other legal publishing companies.

#Larcier #droit #juridique #teamjuriste #teamavocat
#WoltersKluwer #Anthemis #Politeia

- Moreover, the Twitter's biggest strength resides in its potential to become **viral**. If you answer even one question, the answer will be visible and quickly shared. Larcier could show its **expertise** while helping users who would share this information with their communities. In conclusion, Larcier could therefore focus on **direct conversation** with users.
- In its **biography** on Twitter Larcier could add hashtags to be better found on Twitter but also in search engine results, this is another way to improve its SEO. For example, the biography could include some hashtags like #Larcier #édition #juridique.
- Ideally, B2B companies should tweet between **9am and 4pm**, Monday and Thursday. In addition, the audience peak is between **11am and 1pm** (Redacteur.com, 2019). Larcier can therefore take this information into account when publishing some content.

Larcier could be more developed on **Instagram** and apply the following suggestions:

- The company could publish more **stories** on current events, as they have done for the quarantine.
- The best time to post a publication on Instagram depends of the sector of the company. Businesses related to **school activity** should post between 4pm and 5pm, while professional services should post on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday between 9am and 10am (Redactor.com, 2019). Larcier's target audience on Instagram is 18-year-olds who are still in school, so it would be interesting to post content around **4pm**.

Larcier is already well established on **LinkedIn**, however their lead acquisition is mainly done through Facebook. It is therefore necessary to consider new ideas to increase the acquisition rate and therefore potentially the conversion rate on LinkedIn:

- As a professional network, there is not a better time to publish content on LinkedIn but several. In B2B, professionals consult this platform rather at the beginning of the week (Redacteur.com, 2019). Larcier could therefore consider publishing content on **Mondays**, **Tuesdays** and **Wednesdays**.

- Schedules are also specific on LinkedIn. To be read, it is preferable to publish around **7.45am**, **10.45am**, **12.45pm** or **5.45pm**. Indeed, professionals will check their LinkedIn account before leaving for work or in transport, before a meeting, at lunch time and before going home (Redacteur.com, 2019).

- Larcier can also improve his **social selling** on LinkedIn. This is a process of questioning, listening and interacting with users via social networks, in order to accompany them in their **purchasing decision**. As Larcier's target on LinkedIn already knows the brand most of the time, it's therefore a very interesting process to increase the conversion rate and encourage a purchase. To implement social selling, you first need to define the target via a Buyer Persona, which is already done for Larcier.

- Next, the human relationship is at the heart of social selling. For example, Larcier could send **personalized invitations** on LinkedIn and treat each prospect in a unique way. Moreover, the company could consider wishing its prospects a happy birthday and offer a **discount voucher** as a gift. Any reason is good to interact more with prospects and generate a positive emotion, both before and after the purchase.

- Larcier could also use **LinkedIn Sales Navigator** to lead its prospects through its sales tunnel, which is the priority in their digital strategy. As tracking all prospects can be very time consuming, this tool allows to follow the progress of prospects in the **conversion funnel** and adjust the strategy in real time. This program also makes it possible to define the **ideal moment** to contact a prospect or customer.

- In conclusion, this software is a tool that could greatly increase Larcier's social media **conversion rate**. The only negative point is that LinkedIn Sales Navigator is not free and a subscription is required to use it.

The last suggestion is regardless of the social media. In order to favour viral content and increase its prospects, thus its potential customers, Larcier could develop **storytelling** rather than only promotional content. For example, the content could explain the **creation of the company**, the environment in which Larcier is developing, where the publications come from and how they are written, by whom, the history of the company's employees, etc. This format will be more appreciated and shared than promotional content or the latest legal news, which creates brand awareness and thus encourages an increase in the number of potential customers.

8.5. Call-To-Action

Larcier already has well-developed its **call-to-action** in general, however there could be even more to add on the site and the potential future blog:

- For example, Larcier could add a call-to-action "**Give your opinion**" on the product pages and add an evaluation section. As I said in the first part, users trust a product that is well rated, with positive comments from other users. This could strengthen prospects' confidence in the brand and its products.

  Integrating **customer reviews** is a reassuring factor, especially when we know that today's users look for information on their own and trust other users' feedback more than a brand's advertisement. Concretely, Larcier could propose on its product pages a reviews section as on the following illustration for example.

Figure 40 - Example of customer reviews

Source: La Fabrique du Net. (2016). *10 techniques simples pour optimiser votre taux de conversion*. Retrieved 14 May 2020, from https://www.lafabriquedunet.fr/analytics/articles/10-techniques-simples-augmenter-conversion-site-internet/

Let's focus on the most important point, the improvement of the **conversion rate**:

- Larcier could highlight its commercial promotions on product pages. For example, they could emphasize the 30% subscription promotion about the following product:

8.1. KPIs development

It would be interesting to develop **KPIs** about all the tools and platforms used by Larcier and not only about Facebook and LinkedIn, on the other hand it can add a significant amount of work. Here are some suggestions about new KPIs for Larcier's digital strategy:

- For example, we could add the **frequency of visits** on Instagram and whether the number of followers is increasing or not.
- The average basket is also estimated as one of the most efficient KPIs to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy. Another KPI that shows the rate of **abandoned baskets** could make it possible to find out why customers are leaving and thus provide them a **last-minute CTA** as a tailored offer. It could decrease this abandoned basket rate.
- When a visitor **adds a product** in his basket, the site may suggest **similar publications**, training or white papers associated with the product. It would give the opportunity to generate new **conversions**. Suggested products can be of a higher range (up-selling) or complementary (cross-selling), those both selling techniques can increase the average shopping cart.
- Another KPI proposal is the **Net Promoter Score** (NPS), to evaluate the satisfaction rate of customers who have already ordered from Larcier. Knowing whether customers are satisfied or not can be interesting, as the

word-of-mouth following the purchase can have a very positive or negative impact.

- The company can also develop a KPI in relation to the **purchase period**. For example, it can be seen that Code sales increase at the beginning of the school year because law students need to buy the new versions. It may allow **seasonal promotions** in August and September, specifically tailored for students.

- Larcier could analyse the number of **regular visitors**, those who have made several purchases and who are loyal to the brand. A high rate can show that the publications and contents proposed are interesting, the development of the blog could also develop this continuity in the visits. Prospects will come more often, if only to get informed with the latest published articles.

📚 CONCLUSION

For the **first part** of this thesis, we have come to the conclusion that **digital marketing** has now overtaken traditional marketing. The relationship is no longer just from the company to the customer but has become a two-way relationship. The **customer** is now at the centre of the marketing strategy and especially the digital strategy.

He is now the stakeholder who has the **power** and who imposes his preferences. Before, advertising was the only mean of communication, whereas now, the company has to accompany the prospect at every stage of his buying process.

This has considerably diminished the role traditional advertising has in the marketing strategy. From now on, the company needs be able to create online **brand awareness**, then provide enough information to the prospect so that he can **compare** products with each other. The company must then implement **tools** like social networks and other channels to push these prospects to take action and become **customers**.

Secondly, the company must not neglect **after-sales service,** which has been taking a much bigger aspect recently. In the digital era, the relationship between the customer and the company persists after the purchase of the product or service. It is therefore necessary to continue to satisfy and help the customer so that he can share his **positive experience** online as well as with his family and friends through word-of-mouth.

In conclusion, digital marketing allows a **360-degree relationship** between the customer and the company, with a permanent contact, both in time and space.

To end this first part of the conclusion, I thought this quote was most befitting: "Being able to identify exactly how, when, and where social media influences consumers helps executives to craft marketing strategies that take advantage of social media's unique ability to engage with customers." (Divol et al., 2012)

Let's new focus on the conclusion of the **second part** of this thesis, my case study. As a reminder, the objective of this applied research was to demonstrate whether or not Larcier had an **effective strategy** on social networks to turn its prospects into customers. I came to the conclusion that their current digital strategy was lacking, as we looked into ways to make it **more effective**. Even if Larcier is well

established on social networks there are still improvements to be made to achieve their goal.

We were able to see from the KPIs provided by the company that on one hand the bounce rate from social media was increasing, while on the other hand the **conversion rate** which is the one that matters in Larcier's digital strategy has been declining since January 2020.

But how to improve Larcier's digital strategy on social networks to **effectively turn prospects into customers?** The company could first implement some of the actions I developed in the recommendations. Even if Larcier is present on the most effective social networks in B2B, they can still further develop their digital strategy on these platforms.

The company can also turn their attention to other social media, e.g. a professional blog like mentioned previously. It's also interesting to see what competitors are doing and try to learn from it.

It would also have been interesting to analyse via different KPIs why visitors come to Larcier's official website from Facebook rather than LinkedIn, which is considered as the most important network for the digital strategy.

It is also **hard to answer my initial problem** because Larcier didn't have an accurate goal to achieve in terms of conversion. My point is that if their goal was to obtain a conversion rate of **2%** about prospects originating from social networks, then it would be much easier to prove that this is currently not the case. Indeed, on the reports from January to March 2020, the highest conversion rate was **1.25%**, which is below our fictitious 2% rate.

To bounce back on this, it would also have been interesting to have access to **more reports** to assess the impact of social networks in terms of conversion more accurately. Indeed, there was perhaps a reason that could explain the **decrease** in the conversion rate since January 2020.

It is known that the **Covid19** was involved in the drop in sales of paper books, and it can therefore be concluded that the Larcier's data available since January 2020 was influenced by the pandemic that followed. It would have been interesting to get reports on the months prior to January 2020 but as I explained in the preface, the lockdown limited my contacts with the company and I thank them again for providing me with these reports.

In conclusion, even if in my opinion the answer to my problematic is that social networks are not efficient enough to turn prospects into customers, this answer could be more **accurate**. Indeed, the information related to Larcier's objective and the KPIs developed on social networks are not precise enough.

All in all, I answered my core question by trying to be as critical and fair as possible, however it is difficult to be completely neutral without an objective **quantification** of the Larcier's main goal.

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