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Revitalization of the 7UP brand in social media

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I. Abstract

This WP aims to propose a reposition of 7UP in social media, taking into consideration social media best practices and the current position of the brand. By interpreting the brand and the Portuguese market, customer engagement along with digital presence were identified as points needing improvement. Therefore, after conducting interviews simultaneously with a questionnaire, a plan was designed focusing on delivering entertaining content approaching important topics, and launching challenges to boost user-generated content, targeted to the Up&Coming Original Flavor Drinkers. Programmatic is the primary channel to use, including YouTube, along with Facebook, Instagram and Spotify– offering video or GIFs' formats.

II. Keywords: Social Media strategy, Digital strategies, CSDs industry, Social Media consumer engagement

III. Tables of Contents

IV. AGENDA

1. Introduction, Challenge and Purpose

In September 2017, I started to work at Pepsico in the Finance department and in May 2019 I moved to Marketing to work with the 7UP brand. 7UP brand, belonging to Pepsico company, was introduced in the Portuguese market in 1972 and rapidly turned into a success, being the leader of the Lemon-Lime market since then and the strongest beverage brand in Pepsico's portfolio. Even though Sprite is the direct competitor of 7UP within the lemon-lime category, the brand considers that its main competition is Coca-Cola. When considering the relative market share of the brand (7UP vs Sprite), the Portuguese market is extremely important for the performance of 7UP, representing 77% of relative market share only surpassed by the Ireland market (with an 85% of market share). Allying this power with the category's strength in Portugal, this makes 7UP the top 3 brands in the country, considering the CSDs market.

After deep analyzes of the brand and, subsequently, attendance to several meetings, paying attention to comments, and opinions from several stakeholders it was very clear the brand was going through unfavorable times. The brand was, in times, very affectionate in consumers' minds and, nowadays, is losing this deep relationship with the community. Allying this fact with the importance of being present in social media, considering the digital world we live in, it was evident that a plan of action should be outlined to combat these two concerns. Having an online position could be further translated into effective online communication, driving engagement, loyalty and increasing purchase intentions among consumers.

After contextualizing the work project proposition, the main goals are, first, to identify social media as a ubiquitous channel that provides organizations with several advantages including increasing customers' engagement; second, understand the most effective digital marketing strategy for 7UP brand and, finally, identify best practices, having in consideration social media users, Pepsico's Iberia digital marketing manager and OMD media agency insights and, finally, the strategy and actual position of the brand.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategy

Strategy, initially meaning the “art of the general”, was generalized and it’s applied across a variety of activity sectors, including business. Strategy is commonly defined as the employment of plans toward an objective and, according to Johnson et al (2008), strategy is described as the long-term course of an entity with the goal of reaching an advantageous position, given the external and internal environment’s evolvement and the available resources. It guides companies about what to do and what not to do, reaching that position by acting efficiently. Strategy is considered as a process that requires to be reviewed and redefined if needed, based on the changing internal and external environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that independently of its definition, strategy converges to the need of creating value from several points of view. There is no best strategy but effective ones and is the one that incorporates both the external environment conditions with the firm’s DNA, shaped by its culture, values and mission and its relations with the external environment (Smith, 2007).

According to Varadarajan (2010), marketing strategy is based on decisions about goods, markets, marketing activities, and resources to deliver value to users, allowing organizations to achieve certain objectives. However, only making a plan is not enough and efficient implementation, evaluation, and control mechanisms are also compulsory.

2.2 Positioning

Strategy is not static and throughout the years and with industry evolutions, companies must adapt and respond rapidly to competitive and market changes. They must analyze their practices and compare them with the best ones to achieve the desired outcomes. Deployment of resources is essential to achieve efficiency and competences must be obtained to beat the competition (Porter, 1980). According to Michael Porter (1980), the strategic positioning for the several organizations should be unique within an industry. Companies should not focus on having the best positioning but in defining what value they want to deliver, to whom, and how that value will differ from rivals. Positioning is all about how the company is seen by customers and their instinctive perceptions (Aaker and Shansby, 1982).

According to Keller (2013), brand positioning is the center point of marketing strategy and is based on the idea of creating an offer and image such that consumers consider it unique and desirable. A good brand positioning states what the brand is, its unique aspects and why consumers should purchase it. Analyzing targets, rivals and aspects that distinguish the entity from rivals help to clarify a brand positioning in the market.

2.3 Branding

Branding is considered the main strength and strategy of some companies, considered as a sustainable advantage that helps differentiate from competitors. O'Malley (1991) defined brand as something which delivers an identity to a product providing a differentiated benefit, whereas Kotler and Keller (2012) defined branding as the process of differentiating products and services through the power of a brand.

One of the most relevant aspects of a brand is the personality and the identity that managers want to portray and how the brand is perceived by consumers. Brands are the results of these two main constructs (Fill, 2009) and they determine how capable is the brand of creating emotional links with consumers and, thus, brand loyalty. Furthermore, branding helps consumers to better understanding products, shaping its decision-making and finally adding value to the entity.

The researcher Fill (2009), affirmed that with the evolution of the web, user-generated content (UGC) gave more power to consumers and they are, now, an active participator in the branding process. Nowadays, consumers have the capability of sharing online what a brand means to them, how they differentiate from competitors and attributes and emotions attached to specific brands. The same author stated that quality aligned with fulfilled brand promises and customer satisfaction helps to increase trust and brand loyalty. This is explained by the information the brand name provides, such as taste, durability, quality, price or performance. Keller (2013) emphasizes the importance of brand loyalty, explaining that by creating perceived differences through branding and by creating loyal relationships with customers it will be further translated into financial results. The author believes that the most valuable intangible asset an organization can have is branding.

2.4 Social Media

The world today is evolving day by day, highly related to the new technological paradigm changing the way people and brands communicate with each other and the channels used to communicate with targets. Traditional Marketing is no longer enough to reach audiences since the one-way communication system (monologue) has evolved to an interactive medium (dialogue), stimulating the exchange of ideas, opinions, and experiences (Phua et al, 2017). Accordingly, the role of the consumer evolved from a passive to a proactive way.

Web 2.0 was introduced in 2003-04 and the main progress was the role of the consumer, which became a participant and content creator. This evolution is perceived as democratic in nature, involving the creation and sharing of content promoting UGC (Berthon et al, 2012). This concept is crucial for the success of social media as users can interact and contribute, relate with communities, events, brands, opposed to traditional media such as television or radio. Combining Web 2.0 and user generation content (UGC), social media can be defined as technological apps built on Web 2.0 foundations where UCG is disclosed (Kaplan et al, 2010).

The influence of social media for business success has been recognized by practitioners and academics for some years now. Social media and channels such as Facebook or Google have increased their relevance and became the ultimate providers of information in which people are dependent, spending their time on smartphones, apps, social media networks, for mostly everything. This massive adhesion allows companies to reach users every time they access their social media, at different purchasing stages. Managing social media has become mandatory to take advantage of communication in such ubiquitous media, considering the most appropriate and effective way to communicate with the targeted consumer. Its usage influences consumers' buying behavior, helps them to find and shape their identity, engage with brands and seek products and services. In the customers' perspective, social media is a more trustworthy and impartial source when compared to the traditional mass media (Bruhn et al, 2012), especially if consumers are exposed to UGC. Besides, the speed and level of interaction are considered as the main advantage along with cost and time efficiency (Angella and Ko, 2010).

As a result of the social media popularity, many marketers already face it as part of their integrated marketing communications (IMC), enabling real-time conversations without time or physical barriers that existed in traditional forms of communication. Using social media as a marketing strategy enhances brand awareness and customer engagement; has positive impact on consumers' purchasing intentions, brand loyalty and brand equity, and, also, accelerates trust-building and customer lifetime value (Bolton et al, 2013).

The main obstacle companies face when using social media networks as a marketing tool is to identify reasons why users engage in brand-related activities (De Vries et al, 2012) and find the proper way to reach them and make them feel engaged. Successful social media brand pages are the ones that encourage consumers to consume and create but the core challenge of social media managers is to generate an environment in which consumers desire to have active behavior. According to Scott (2015), companies should focus on content that is memorable, relevant and engaging to increase interactivity and loyalty among fans.

2.4.1 Social Media in Beverages Industry

According to Burmann and Arnhold (2008), customers examine brands from distinct industries differently, thus communication in social media should be implemented and adjusted considering industry-specific differences. Findings from a survey conducted by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014) demonstrate that non-alcoholic beverages' consumers are encouraged by social media brand communication from both the brand, a type of communication recognized as advertisement that increases brand awareness and positive associations; and from friends, impacting consumers' perceptions of brand loyalty. Brand-created communication is the most frequent strategy explored by the brands within this industry, using content that emphasize both cognitive aspects and advantages of consuming the product/brand.

Coca-Cola and Starbucks represent some successful examples in constantly engaging consumers to create UGC related to the brand and promoting interaction. In the mentioned study, even though there was no direct connection found between social media brand communication and perceived quality; an indirect relation was supported since brand-created content boosts brand awareness/associations, which subsequently affects the consumer's perceptions of brand quality and strengthen brand equity (Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco, 2005). Following these results, an adequate social media strategy for non-alcoholic beverages industry is both to focus on firm-created content to increase brand awareness and positive associations; and to focus on UGC investing in psychological gratifications, which influence brand loyalty.

2.4.2 Social Media in Portugal

According to Hootsuite, in 2019 the total population in Portugal was 10.27 million people (66% living in urban cities) and the number of mobile phones was 15.76 million units. From the total population, 78% were internet users, 65% were active social media users and 58% were mobile social media users. The use of the Internet, mobile apps, and other digital platforms have become relevant to people's lives worldwide and it's possible to identify this increasingly tendency will be present in the following years. From the adult population, the most used devices are television (96%), mobile phone (94%), smart phone (67%), laptop or desk computer (63%) and tablet devices (32%).

Every day on average, people spend 6h38m using the internet via any device; 2h09m using social media, 2h32m using TV and 41m spent listening to streaming music.

The five more active social media platforms, considering only social networks, are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, and the most used format is video - 82%.

Looking at the social interaction by platform, Instagram is the social network leader with a market share of 72%, followed by Facebook (24%) and Twitter (3%)*. When it comes to UGC, Instagram is the leader, counting with more than 80% of external channel interactions.

*YouTube not included in this list

2.5 Customer Engagement

According to Hollebeek, et.al (2014) ,consumer brand engagement (CBE) is defined as consumer and brand interactions that comprise cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions and social media becomes a facilitator in this increasing interactivity, enhancing consumers' engagement with a brand (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

Applying consumer engagement to social media, there are three main behaviors users have towards social media, including consumption of the content without any action implied, entailing a passive behavior; contribution in the form of like, comment or share, and creation - these two last considered as a form of eWOM (electronic word of mouth), entailing an active behavior. According to Schivinski (2016), these three dimensions are connected: consumption leads to the contribution which leads to creation – the highest level of customer engagement.

eWoM is an online statement made about a product or company that it is exposed to internet users of any kind (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004). eWoM occurs among known and unknown users and is perceived as reliable since people are more likely to listen to the non-commercial messages from friends instead of the pure advertisement from companies (Dahl, 2018). It has been described as a very effective tool, influencing purchasing behavior, loyalty and brand equity (Steffes and Burgee, 2009). In short, by continually offering valuable content to consumers, companies can generate eWOM, achieving significant reach and impact.

For a brand's social media page has success, is essential that users participate and have an active voice. Engaging consumers has shown to be a challenge that brands should overcome since most of them are just consuming brand-related content (Schivinski et al, 2016). Research has shown that consumers who use social media as a mean to engage with brands have in general stronger relationships than consumers who do not (Hudson et al, 2016). When consumers identify with the brand itself and the brand page, loyalty towards the page increase and drive to WOM intentions (Popp and Wilson, 2018). This proves that maintaining good and active social brand pages is a worthwhile endeavor.

To summarize this section, brands should recognize social media as a chance to contribute to an unbroken engagement relationship with consumers and understand how to effectively create content to facilitate this engagement.

UGT is discussed in the next section as a theoretical foundation that addresses different types of motivations behind customer engagement, relating it with social media content.

2.6 User gratification theory

User gratification theory (UGT) addresses what drives individuals to intentionally search and engage with media communication, discussing specific needs that need to be fulfilled, such as education enrichment, enjoyment and leisure, social communication, compensation or remuneration, and social identification (Katz and Foulkes, 1962). Many authors suggest that UGT is eminently suited for online media and social media studies and is appropriate to understand why consumers are motivated to engage with online content.

In social media, a brand's ultimate goal is using content to provide value and gratifications with the intention of attracting users (Malthouse et al, 2013). Therefore, according to the same author, content must be created and delivered in a way that creates value for users promoting high levels of relationship and engagement leading to other positive outcomes, as already discussed. Based on UGT, social media content can be divided into four main categories: *informational, entertainment, remunerative, and relational*. Starting with *informational content*, it contains resourceful and helpful information (Chen et al, 2002) that promotes a form of engagement invoking human-message interaction. It entails passive engagement, with no actions implied besides consumption (Ko et al, 2005). Moving to the *entertainment* factor, it's described as the extent to which content is fun and enjoyable (Eighmey and McCord, 1998) and fulfill users' needs for escapism and hedonistic pleasure. Previous studies have suggested that entertaining content lead to positive attitudes, participation and a motivation to return to the websites (Raney et.al, 2003). Further research indicates entertaining factor as one of the antecedents to customer engagement, leading to consumption, creation, and online contribution to brand-related content

(Muntinga et al, 2011). Thirdly, the *remuneration* effect has been deliberated as an incentive to contribute to online communities since users expect to gain some kind of compensation: economic, professional or personal desires (Muntinga et al, 2011). However, this engagement may be temporary (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013). Finally, relational benefits can be interpreted as a need for a sense of belonging, substitution of real-life relationships, connecting with others, looking for support, and others (Muntinga et al, 2011). Social identification drive users to contribute to social media sites and provide UGC since they consider social media a place where they can share their feelings and experiences (Leung, 2009).

3. Methodology

To get a clear overview of the objectives of the Work Project, three complementary approaches to finding answers had to be done. First, secondary research has been conducted to get an in-depth overview of the CSDs market and 7UP brand insights. This first examination will provide a good first indication on which areas the brand is having a good performance and which aspects 7UP has to improve to enhance the overall perception of the company. After identifying the research problem in which this work project will focus, primary research was carried out including interviews and a questionnaire. Firstly, in-depth interviews were organized to get some insight into the subject itself. Finally, an online questionnaire for social media users has been conducted to understand what exactly those users are looking for in a soft drinks' social media brand page and if there are any clear trends visible concerning their preferences. This process will drive conclusions and recommendations, as well as test hypotheses. These hypotheses are: **H1** –7UP brand consumers consider they are engaged with the brand; **H2** – There is a positive relationship between customer engagement and social media engagement; **H3** – 7UP has a clear strategy concerning social media channels; **H4** – All social media networks are appropriate to publicize 7UP products; **H5** – 7UP should only focus on Facebook and Instagram online channels to increase its presence on social media;

3.1 Secondary Research

First, secondary research has been conducted to get an understanding of the 7UP brand and the market in which it is inserted. This research was executed through a variety of channels, including internal and external sources. Desk research was performed to learn about the CSDs market, main players, industry trends, and forecasts. Further, attendance to 7UP brand presentations and meetings with key partners was essential to acquire information about the brand strategy, positioning, main strengths and challenges. Additionally, an analysis of internal information along with a consumer tracking survey held this year, provided by the company, helped to get knowledge about the consumer perceptions, comparison of perceptions across competitors and, also, to identify 7UP's aspects to be improved when compared to main rivals.

3.2 Primary Research - In-Depth Interviews

With the research problem already defined, unstructured interviews were executed with the goal of finding the best practices for further recommendations. As such, the digital marketing manager of Pepsico Iberia shared some findings from his own case studies and experience and, to complement this interview, a media agency, OMD, belonging to Omnicom Media Group, was also contacted to share insights about digital strategies and ultimate and trending services they supply. These two interviews were essential to build digital insights taking into consideration the "two sides of the coin" – digital client (Pepsico) and supplier (OMD).

3.3 Primary Research - Online Questionnaire

Primary research for data collection was conducted through a structured online questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire is three-fold:

First, to investigate what types of content social media users are interested in. A list of potential contents was created and participants could choose whether they were "Interested", "Little interested" or "Not interested", having in mind a soft drinks' social media brand page. All the contents were listed taking into account the informational, entertainment, remunerative and relational benefits approached on the user gratification theory in the literature review section. Hence, respondents could evaluate a list of 12 contents that covered the mentioned categories.

Second, similar to the previous analysis, consumers' level of engagement was also analyzed, depending on the type of content. To assess the social media users' reactions, another question was made based on the already presented list of contents. The objective was to get an understanding of the categories that would make users to like, comment and share.

Third, to recognize a potential ideal frequency and days a brand should post on their social media page. Therefore, it was questioned whether there was a specific time of the week the respondents used social media more frequently and how many times per week they thought a brand should post on their own social media page.

4. Results and Analysis

This section will outline the main findings from the secondary and primary research (both interviews and the online questionnaire) that will build the basis for the recommendations.

4.1 Secondary Research - Market and Brand Insights

Beginning with market trends and looking specifically at the lemon-lime market in Portugal, it's one of the strongest categories and it shows stability both in volume and value. According to Nielsen reports, market value was 24.3 M € in 2018 and compared to the previous year, the value increased by about 3.6% and volume grew 0.2% (Appendix 1). Even though the lemon-lime category does not demonstrate major slowdowns, 7UP does not follow this trend, retracting in units (Appendix 2) due to a decrease in total distribution and RoS effect (Appendix 3). Nonetheless, the performance of 7UP Free doesn't go unnoticed, growing due to distribution and performance per store (Appendix 4) , helping to reduce 7UP Regular retraction (Appendix 5).

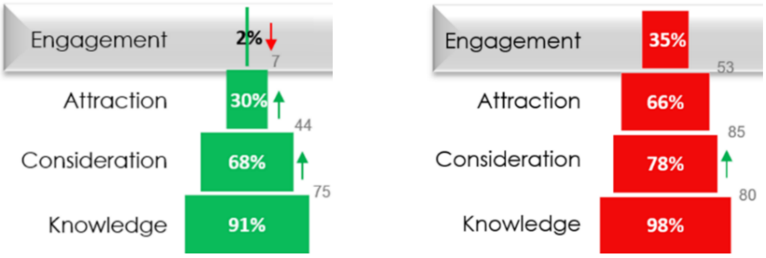
Regarding Portuguese shopper trends and analyzing information from the Nielsen Global Consumer Loyalty Survey (Q1, 2019), Portuguese consumers are considered as fast and fickle: 89% love trying new things and 46% are more likely to try new brands compared to 5 years ago. Nowadays, disloyalty is considered the new normal and Portuguese consumers are one of the most brand-switching in the European Union. The main reasons Portuguese consumers switch brands are better value for money (83%), price reductions/promotions (78%), superior quality or function (73%), friends and family recommendations (67%) and, finally, to utility/ease of use/convenience (65%). FMCG's consumers are highly attracted by promotions - 43% of FMCG value was sold with a promo in Portugal, a country considered as one of the most promoted in the EU. However, CSDs' performance is driven by non-promo products. Even though new consumers and supply trends (as health concerns) suggest new strategies, CSDs are growing both in value and volume, comparing 2018 and 2019 (Appendix 6). Whether leading with a promo or non-promo driven sales market, **brands need to build loyalty** and offer more than promotions.

After evaluating the overall performance of the market and consumer trends, it was necessary to get a deeper analysis of the 7UP brand. To accomplish that, access to internal information along with frequent attendance in brand meetings allied with an examination of a consumer's tracking survey was vital to reach conclusions.

7UP has unique attributes and a very clear direction. It is considered as a more mature brand for young adults (20-29 years old) and is perfectly positioned to retain consumers throughout their adult years (Appendix 7). These consumers are the same all over the world, known as the "Up & Coming Originals" who are genuinely optimistic, enjoying their paths and embracing the world with originality and with relaxed confidence. They love authentic experiences, time for themselves, engaging with the world and dislike pressure, loud and chasing fame. There is an amazing correlation between the consumer, the product and the brand: they are all clear, original, fresh, easy confident and with natural flavors. The brand is seen by consumers as a healthier CSD – they consider healthier beverages such as water, iced tea, and juice drinks as alternatives to 7UP, not CSDs. The drink presents an incredible versatility, ideal to drink alone, with foods and even to mix with other drinks (alcoholic and not alcoholic). According to the Journal of Consumer Psychology, 7UP is more likely to be considered during summer, with an optimal point of approximately 30°; more likely to buy (almost 50% greater purchase intentions) and to drink (+1°f=+2% consumption increase and willingness to pay premium).

All of these being mentioned, 7UP is composed by functional benefits, related to the unique product's credentials which recall versatility and an excellent, authentic and refreshed taste evoked by the transparency of the product; and by emotional benefits since it has been communicating and encouraging the world to relax and slow down to recharge and enjoy the little things in life on their own way. Some of the campaigns which reinforce this message are "Feels Good to be Free", "Feels Good to be you" and "Keep Cool – Summer your way" and the iconic mascot of the brand – FIDO DIDO – which returned in 2019. To complement, allied with FIDO's return - which represents the attributes of the brand in terms of freshness, fun, and relaxation - 7UP, coordinated with its culture and love for arts, has been connected to music being one of the main sponsors of Rock in Rio festival, the biggest music event in Portugal. These two main pillars represent the actual positioning of the brand.

According to a survey conducted in August 2019, directed to 1001 consumers between 15-49 years old who are past 4-week drinkers of Liquid Refreshment Beverage (LRP), "Fido Dido" is still recalled by 84% of the sample (Appendix 8) and is considered relevant by most (82%) (Appendix 9). When asked about Rock in Rio, there is a low association with the 7UP brand even though the festival is considered relevant to Lemon Lime consumers (Appendix 10). Respondents consider 7UP has the clearer image in the Lime Lemon category, and there has been a stabilization in its brand image, with 7UP standing in "Appealing advertising", "Taste", "Positive attitude" and "Fun and good humor". 7UP Free tends to be recognized more as "Setting trends" and "Innovative Brand" as well as "Healthier than other CSD's" since it is increasingly perceived as zero sugar. Even though the perceptions match the image the brand aim to transfer, two main issues arose. Key findings indicate TV continues to be the most impactful media, followed by the Internet and point of sale and 7UP shows weaknesses, especially on the internet. The brand does not transfer its strategy to digital which is the media channel that creates higher levels of engagement and, when analyzing further results, this correlation is confirmed. In the bellow figure, is possible to identify customer engagement as an obstacle the brand should dedicate to overtake, therefore **rejecting H1**.



Graph 1: Customer engagement levels for 7UP vs Coca Cola. Source: CTS Pepsi 2019 – Report

When taking a deeper look at the presence of the brand on social media, it seems it doesn't have a clear plan of action and does not attain significant levels of social media engagement. Taking as an example, the last post shared by the brand on social media, more specifically on Facebook and Instagram, was more than two months ago and the engagement rate (measured through the number of reactions, clicks, and shares) was about 1,5% from the 1.200 who saw the post (Appendix 11). This represents very low levels of commitment by the brand to share content and low levels of communication with followers, therefore **rejecting H3**.

To organize all of these insights from the market and the brand, a SWOT analysis was performed. As such, to start with the strengths, 7UP represents an authentic trademark with strong heritage & equity, a brand since 1929. It's the number 3 brand in Portugal and is inserted in a strong market category, being the undoubted leader with a powerful relative market share. It reaches high levels of awareness and a great percentage of consumers who know the brand and have tried the brand at least once (Appendix 12). 7UP has excellent distribution and availability; it is perceived as a healthy brand within the CSDs market with a taste of natural lemons and it introduced a sugar-free version that is growing fast. Finally, it has a remarkable mascot that evokes nostalgic feelings from childhood from both millennials and Generation Z. Regarding weaknesses, some concerns emerge regarding the low levels of engagement and presence on digital platforms which has become an important channel, all brands should focus. Due to the decrease in engagement levels, the brand has lost affection from some consumers who were passionate by 7UP at some time in the past. Additionally, the 7UP brand only presents two products in the Portuguese market – 7UP Regular and 7UP Free – lacking in variety for consumers and some of the attributes of the presented options – such as soda - are perceived as unhealthy. Moving to threats, firstly, there has been a little deceleration on the growth of the lemon-lime category in the Portuguese market; secondly, healthy trends are gaining strength and today 27% of Portuguese are looking for a healthy diet (Nielsen, 2019); thirdly, there is an intense competition with Coca Cola, considered the number one brand within the CSDs industry; fourthly, sustainability issues are increasingly emerging and 7UP must find a solution for non-recyclable plastic in the next upcoming years, and, finally, 7UP belongs to an industry which offers many substitutes. Lastly, about opportunities, there is space to recover distribution in the traditional channel and explore the low sugar market within some retailers, more specifically, in Pingo Doce. Still within distribution opportunities, Mercadona is a retailer to explore which is believed it will expand and conquer its space in the Portuguese market. To reinforce what was already mentioned in the weaknesses section, there is an opportunity for the brand to be recalled through the online medium.

With internal and external factors identified, a TOWS analysis was performed to recognize possible strategies to be developed in order to overcome weaknesses and threats, making use of main strengths and opportunities – figure below.

Internal Factors / **External Factors**	**Strenghts** **S1:** Strong heritage brand **S2:** Category leader and nr. 3 brand in PT **S3:** High levels of awareness and trial **S4:** High distribution and avalability **S5:** Perceived as a healthy brand within CSDs **S6:** Remarkable mascot	**Weaknesses** **W1**: Low levels of engagement **W2**: Week presence in the Internet platform **W3:** Low variety offering **W4:** Some attributes perceived as unhealthy
Opportunities **O1:** Traditional channel recovery **O2:** Explore low sugar market **O3:** Explore Mercadona **O4:** Increase recognition in online channels	**SO Strategies** **SO1**: Make use of its capabilities to get an opportunity with Mercadona retailer **SO2**: Plan point of sale actions with no sugar products in traditional market	**WO Strategies** **WO1**: Create online and offline moments to increase customer engagement levels **WO2:** Create a social media plan
Threats **T1:** Deceleration of the lemon-lime category **T2:** Increasingly healthy trends **T3:** Intense competition with Coca Cola **T4:** Sustainability issues **T5**: Many substitutes	**ST Strategies** **ST1**: Invest in the communication of healthy perceptions and other attributes that differ from the competition to encourage switching from competitors **ST2:** Find a substitute to plastic and use its influence along with its remarkable mascot to approach other sustainability issues	**WT Strategies** **WT1:** Bring new flavours to the PT market, boosting LL category, increasing variety of products and surpassing substitutes and unhealthy attributes by offering irreplaceable taste **WT2:** Substitute sugar with healthy sweetener, keeping taste.

Figure 1: TOWS

With the potential strategies determined, it's possible to recognize that within the WO category, creating a social media plan, enhancing brand's online presence will have impact on the levels of customer engagement – two concerns previously identified. As mentioned in the literature review section, social media is considered as a facilitator in the increasing connection between brands and consumers, boosting consumers' engagement with a brand and, thus, **confirming H2**. With the secondary data collected and analyzed, it was necessary to interview specialists on the matter and, also, the most valuable asset of all kinds of brands - consumers.

4.2 Primary Research - In-Depth Interviews

Interviewing the digital marketing manager of Pepsico Iberia – Daniel Godoy - gave relevant insights about best practices in online channels. The manager shared some advice about good practices collected throughout the years based on his own research and performed case studies. First of all, as already mentioned, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn were recognized as the most used online platforms. However, it's important to analyze each one of them and put it into context in terms of publicizing products and brands. Even though LinkedIn is one fast-growing social media network, people are interested in developing professional relations and job opportunities and, hence, publicizing in this online channel could create some repulse since people reject publicity – **rejecting H4**. Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG) and YouTube (YT) are platforms were publicity is more welcome even though they show different levels of acceptance. In FB & IG, content that exudes publicity is not approved, however, if the content is well made and captivates users it can have a huge impact and appreciation. YT is seen as the channel where publicity is consumed and viewability rate is mostly higher than benchmarking. For YT, there are two great options available to share content: *bumpers* which are non-skippable videos considered as the perfect option and showing the greatest results taking into account that video is presented in full screen with audio and 100% View Trough Rate (VTR)**; *trueviews* which are long format videos and are skippable but results are also very positive, showing that even if the user let the ad flow, it's really seen in screen. Therefore, YT is the best performer platform

** A content is considered as viewable if an image is stopped for at least 1 sec and a video for 2 sec for video assets and should be the number one media platform when dealing with video formats, **rejecting H5.** Even though FB & IG are great platforms for reach, video format has low viewability, not achieving good VTR rates and, as such, static images and 2,3 seconds GIFs are recommended as the right format.

Comparing static and video formats, the manager gives great relevance to videos since it is much more capable of telling stories than images, reinforcing that within Pepsico 90% of the shared content is in the form of video. Further, he recommends some best practices to create video which involves always having in mind users watch the shared content through mobile and, as such, when creating videos give priority to mobile format; be quick and capture attention quickly; design for sound off but delight with sound on and introduce brand identity early.

To finalize this interview, Daniel shared some non-negotiable basics based on reach. The strategy in social media is to reach a broad target audience – a minimum 50% reach for FB&IG and 30% for YT. Also, the manager emphasized that reach it's not engagement and the brand must delight with content – the most powerful tool when sharing in online channels.

To complement these insights, another interview was carried out with a media agency to get some knowledge about efficient practices. One very important suggestion shared by the specialists was the programmatic method. Programmatic is a method that is in its initial stages in Portugal but it's increasingly getting more relevant for companies. It consists of bidding within a great ecosystem of platforms to get media spaces - this process is automatic and most of them in real-time. It allows for companies to reach new targets with contents that enrich the consumer journey at a lower cost. It grants agencies to reduce inefficiencies, offering integrated solutions allowing brands to connect with their target in a personalized way. With this technique is possible to program in a way such that users are impacted once per week, for instances, with the same content no matter in which platform they are, only if this belongs to the media space where the agency bid. This control is made by the IP of the cookies, meaning that if a user is logged in their email or another account in different devices, the program recognizes it is the same user and can process the information to not present the same content again. To mention, YT is included in this ecosystem and FB is out. Besides this method, based on its experience, the media agency was fundamental to find passion points to further target the audience, taking into account the shared attitudes and beliefs of 7UP consumers. This suggestion can be identified further in the recommendations section. Finally, OMD gave insights about metrics used to follow social media plans and the most popular analytic method is MOAT, delivering users with essential information such as seconds of exposure, message's audibility quantities, number of clicks, viewability, and others.

Primary Research - Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire has been answered by 145 participants but only 139 answers were considered, excluding participants that do not use social media in any circumstances. The number of responses can be considered as representative for conclusions to be drawn from the results. To start, from all responses received, 99% of the respondents know 7UP, from CSDs consumers 45.6% consume the brand and only 1 of them follow it on social media (Appendix 13), confirming what was already stated above about the brand's high level of awareness, its strength on the market and the weak presence on social media. Further, the social media channels that stand out for being used the most are IG, FB, YT and LinkedIn ordinated by usage frequency.

When analyzing the type of content social media users are more interested in, the *Entertainment* factor is the most prominent content participants are more pleased to consume. *Contests & Giveaways* and *Challenges* are also highly mentioned followed by B*rand Practices* (Appendix 14). In terms of social media engagement, measured by likes, comments and shares, participants show greater interaction with contents based on C*ontests & Giveaways, Funny posts, challenges* and *Brand practices* (Appendix 15). The first category shows strong levels of shares whether challenges are stronger on comments and funny posts are more powerful in terms of the number of likes. In conclusion, respondents gave priority to entertainment and remunerative benefits, not forgetting informational/educational posts.

The final part of the survey aimed at finding out the time of the week, social media users are more attentive and no evidence was found – 28% of respondents claimed they used more social media at the weekend but the remain 72% didn't mention any specific time. Also, it was asked what was the ideal frequency a brand should post on their brand pages and more than 50% considers 1 to 3 times per week as optimal.

5. Recommendations

In this section, recommendations will be suggested for 7UP to further enhance their social media strategy across Portugal based on both the main findings discussed in the literature review and the previous section, taking into account the current position of the brand.

First of all, 7UP should dedicate their main attention to the following **platforms**: YouTube, FB+IG, platforms within programmatic (an agreement to develop with the media agency) and Spotify (given the brand's relation with music and arts), creating a plan of action for each one of them. The **format** used will depend on the channel but should be mainly video or images with movement thinking mobile format first - in YT, a forced view should be avoided (unless bumpers ads). Within FB&IG, the brand should begin with a strategy of sharing promoted posts every month along with weakly organic posts (if it makes sense) to gain a relevant base of followers and, then, slowly reduce this rate of promotion, giving dynamism when there are ongoing campaigns. When dealing with promoted content, 7UP should buy FB&IG together and programmatic, which is an efficient purchase by nature.

Moving to **content,** where attention from users is captured**,** and taking into consideration all the previous results which showed great levels of interest and engagement for entertainment followed by contests & giveaways, challenges, and best practices, some suggestions are made:

. The brand should explore its mascot, which by itself is an **entertainment** factor, along with best practices such as **sustainability**, a topic so relevant nowadays. FIDO is perceived as a relaxed young adult who enjoys life but the brand can take the character to the next level. Who is FIDO? What music does he listen to? How does he behave? FIDO can be connected to some behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes which funnily approach some issues. The mascot can show how he lives in a relaxed and funny way but with responsibility for a better society. This way, consumers can identify FIDO as a role model, strengthening the relationship with the brand.

. Social media users should be encouraged to participate in **challenges** in a way that they can also share content, boosting **UGC**. For example, as mentioned above, 7UP shows versatility, since it can be mixed with other drinks. Following this trend and considering that how-to tutorials and recipes are the most popular form of Instagram video content, a possible challenge could be based on "Share your best cocktail" with a prize that stimulates the consumer to participate but not forgetting 7UP brand – an example would be winning a trip to Ireland and learning how 7UP's concentrate is produced or how the factory works.

Furthermore, to attract consumers who are mainly moved by the **remunerative** factor, other types of challenges should be made, stimulating their participation in content creation. As such, and because of the partnership between 7UP and Rock in Rio, the brand could offer daily tickets to consumers who share a story with 7UP – the most originals win. It can also join VIP tickets for the top 3 winners, as an example to increase motivation within users. To mention that after any challenge/contest launched by the brand's social media, is important to share who are the winners to demonstrate credibility, since many social media users don't perceive these type of contents as a trustworthy source. These types of challenges and contests are great to increase customer participation and engagement, giving visibility to the brand page.

. Additionally, to complement the previous contents and to deepen relationships with consumers, the brand could share content based in its culture, using **inspiring** people stories passing the message *"Feels good to be you"* – even though is a previous campaign, the content of the message continues in line with the brand position. Relevant categories should be approached such as photography, street art, street fashion, food, music, design, dance. Users will discover, share and connect with people who have similar passions that matter to them.

Despite the fact of adjusting the content to different formats for several channels, the messages should be aligned and consistent, and the brand should communicate when the content is relevant and not just communicating in vain.

Still focusing on **UGC**, this will not only depend on actions made by the brand in online channels and, as such, the company should also create offline activation moments that can be transferred to online platforms.

Concerning the **frequency** that content should be shared, it will depend on the channel the brand is dealing with. When sharing on FB+IG the brand should post more frequently when compared to YT and programmatic; however, the content should be kept during more time on these two last-mentioned platforms. 7UP should align reach and frequency strategies across channels to control exposure and minimize waste. Another recommendation is to give focus to some key moments during the year, such as Summer and ongoing campaigns – Rock in Rio. With programmatic, the brand can schedule share of content according to the weather or special events and target locally. For example, if in Faro it's 30ºC and in Leiria it's 18ºC, the brand can automatically share content in Faro incentivizing consumers to drink 7UP, creatively. The brand should also look to programmatic as an interesting way to explore storytelling, playing with sequencing and targeting.

On the subject of the **target** audience for FB&IG promoted posts and the remaining online channels, several suggestions are made to direct content to the Up&Coming Original Flavor Drinkers. This is composed of 15-49 years old people who value leisure with friends, are attracted to new experiences, consider family as a foundation for life, are optimistic with an entrepreneurial/ creative mindset and are willing to spend on quality. Their main passion points are going to festivals, restaurants, and the cinema, enjoying eating and drinking in fashionable places, travel in leisure, listen to music regularly and they try to keep up with new fashion trends. Considering all of these, filters should be created to reach the right public.

An influencer approach must be incorporated into the overall media strategy. It's critical to be rigorous in the selection and use of influencers to ensure the content aligns with the brand and campaign goals. The person selected should be aligned with 7UP passion points, not overly commercial, not work with competitors and the brand must verify audience reach is in the target market. The use of influencers will help with content creation and community interaction.

Lastly but not less important, in FB&IG, the brand should engage with audiences and some practices to develop relationships are commenting on posts, start and participate in conversations, especially through stories, sharing UGC, addressing complaints and criticisms, and showing appreciation for customers. To grant the brand is in the right direction, a measurement analysis should be included in this plan and, following the media agency advice, MOAT analytics are recommended. Besides, metrics in the use of influencers should also be used. Hence, 7UP should evaluate engagement scores to ensure activity and if sentiment and respect of community are delivered.

6. Limitations and Further Research

Concerning the development of this work project, some limitations are present.

To start, the number of responses of the conducted online questionnaire – 139 valid participations – can indicate a small sample, not representative for the total Portuguese social media users. Furthermore, the questionnaire was composed of closed answer questions which means that the interviewees could not suggest ideas or opinions when they had to select within the listed options. In future research, these limitations can be reduced or eliminated by questioning a bigger sample, including open answer questions. Moreover, when interviewing OMD, a media agency, the answers obtained could be biased since the agency is a supplier who possibly desires to promote their products. This could further lead to biased recommendations.

For further research, it would be curious to explore the gaming industry as a platform to engage with users due to its increasing relevance in young adults' life. It would also be valuable to understand how 7UP could use customer data obtained from online channels as another form to increase customer engagement levels.

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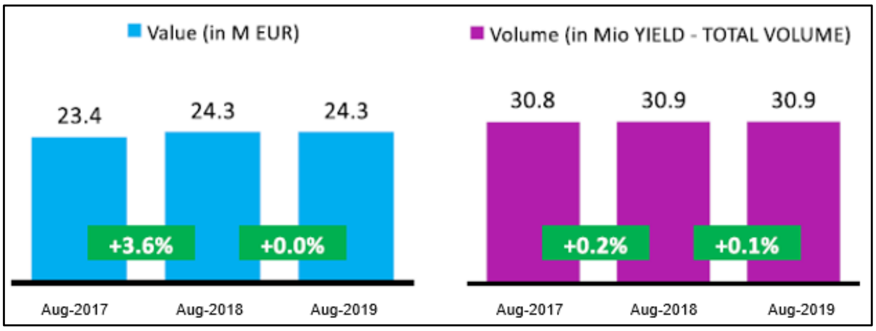
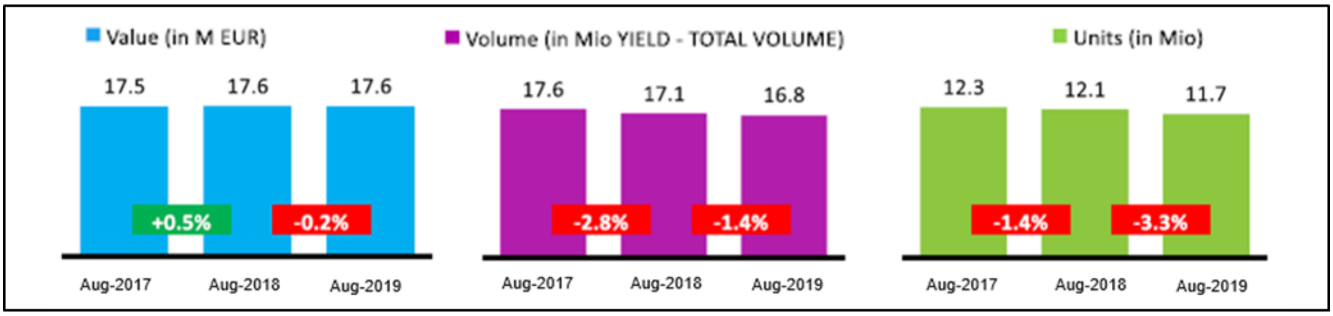
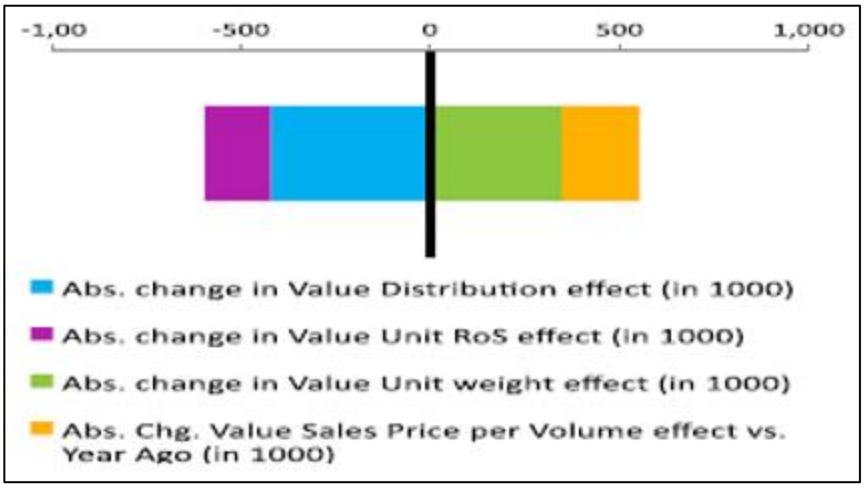
8. Appendix



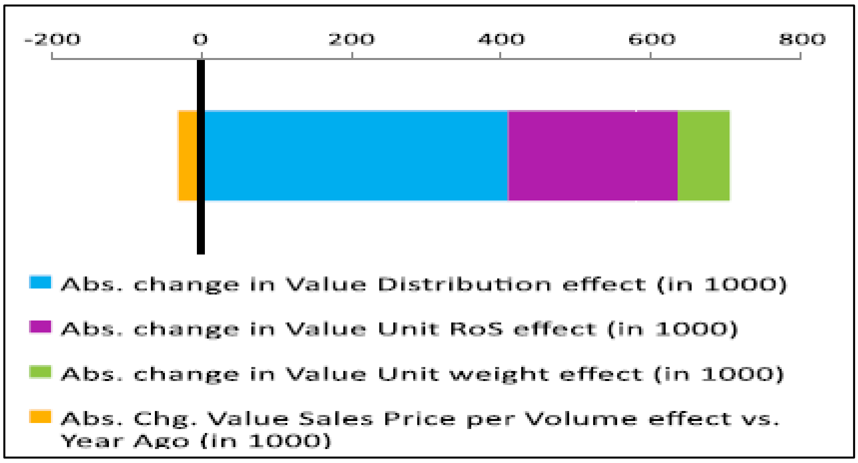
Appendix 1: Lemon-Lime Market value. Source: Nielson Report 2019



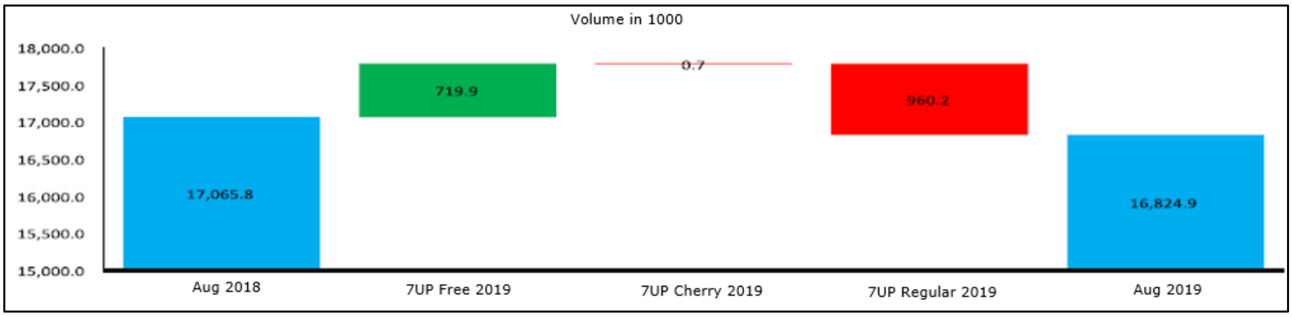
Appendix 2: 7UP Market value. Source: Nielson Report 2019



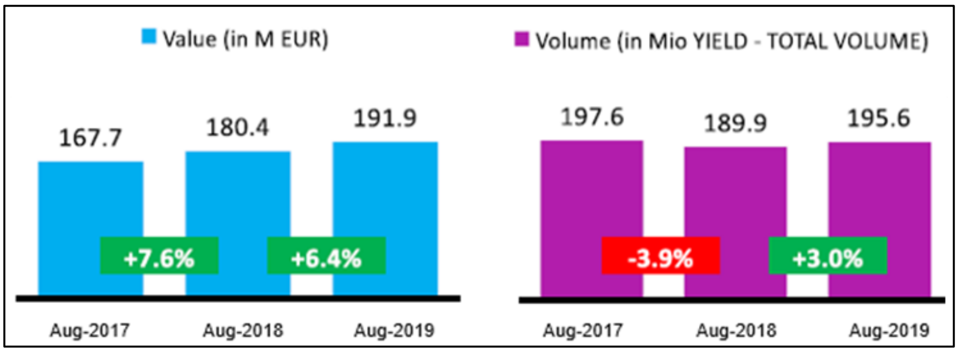
Appendix 3: 7UP trends across drivers. Source: Nielson Report 2019



Appendix 4: 7UP trends across drivers. Source: Nielson Report 2019

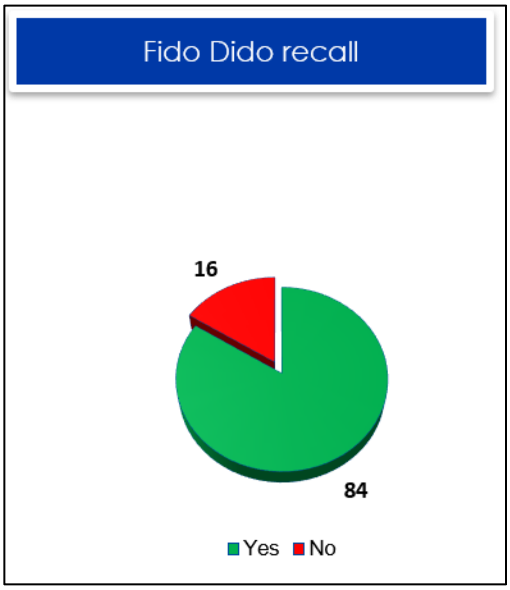


Appendix 5: 7UP performance across products. Source: Nielson Report 2019

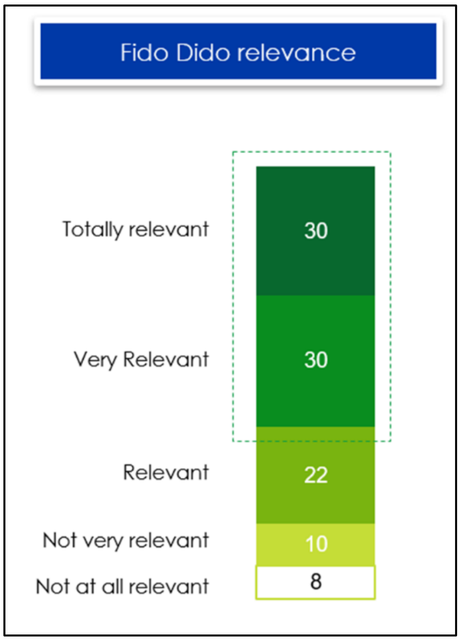


Appendix 6: CSDs Market value. Source: Nielson Report 2019

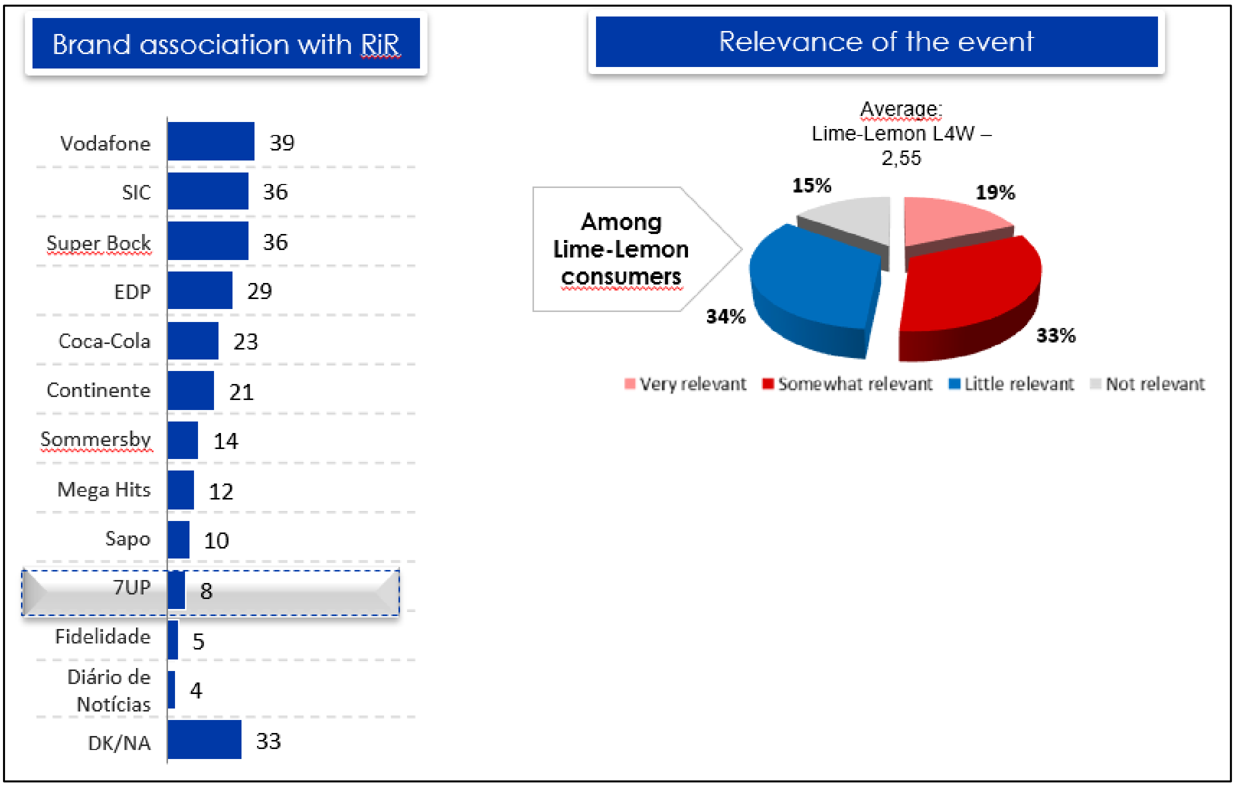
Appendix 7: 7UP positioned to retain consumers



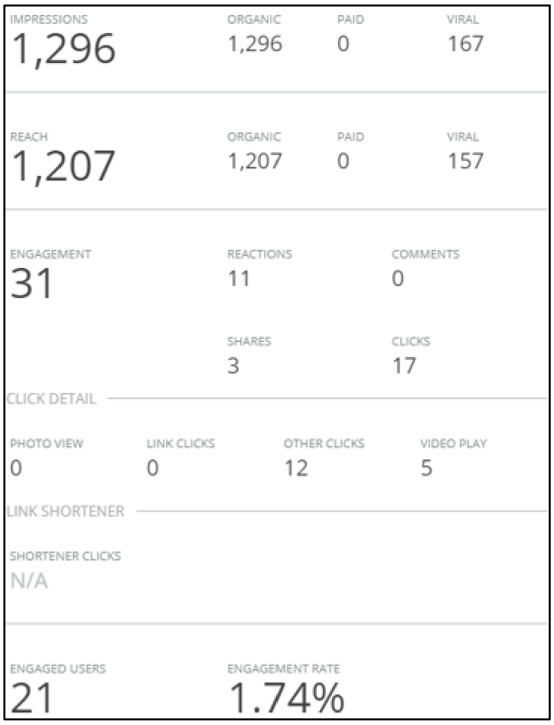
Appendix 8: 7UP FIDO Recall. Source: CTS Pepsi 2019 - Report



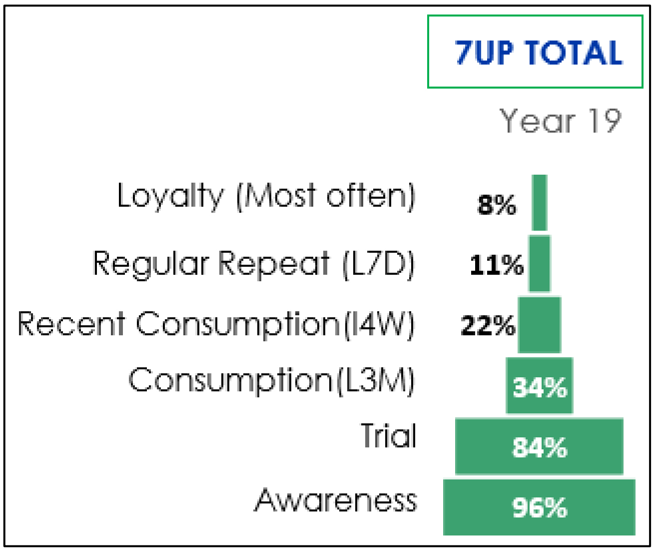
Appendix 9: 7UP FIDO Relevance. Source: CTS Pepsi 2019 - Report



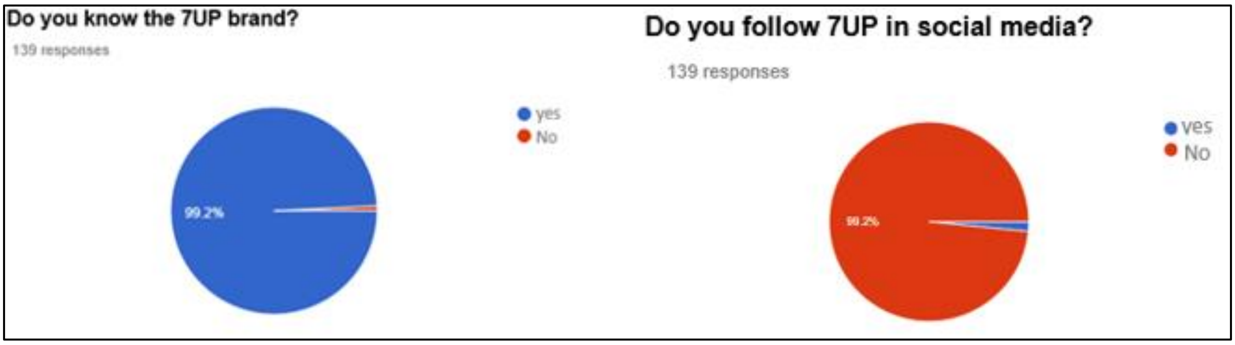
Appendix 10: Rock in Rio association with 7UP and its relevance. Source: CTS Pepsi 2019 - Report

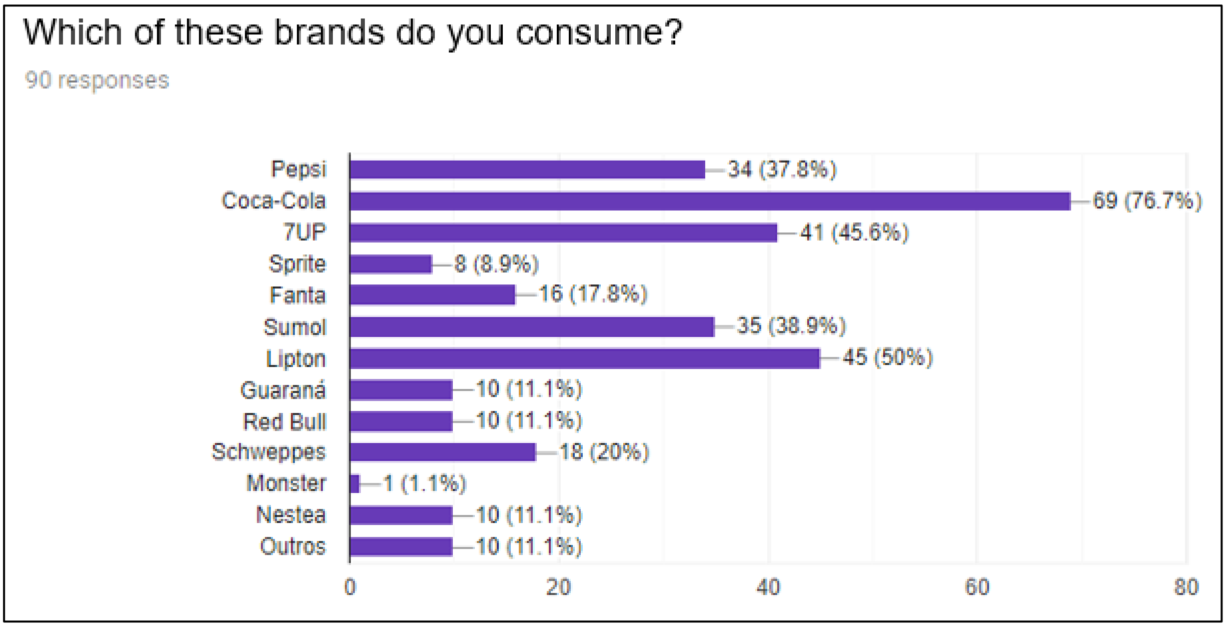


Appendix 11: 7UP's last post on Facebook - Engagement rate

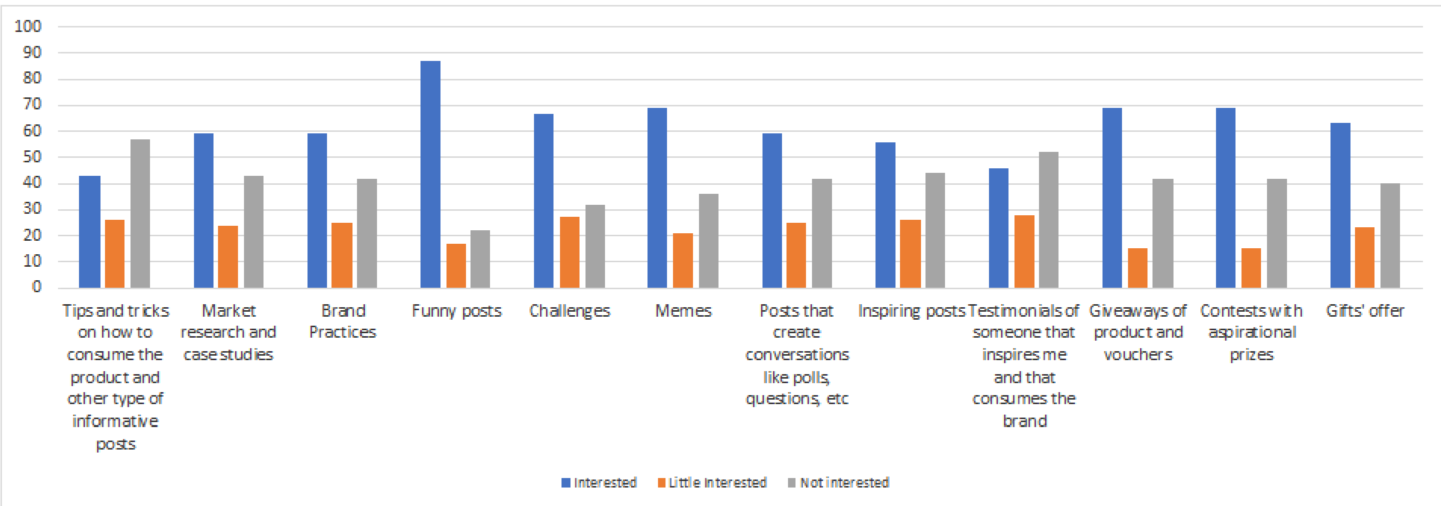


Appendix 12: 7UP Brand Usage. Source: CTS Pepsi 2019 – Report

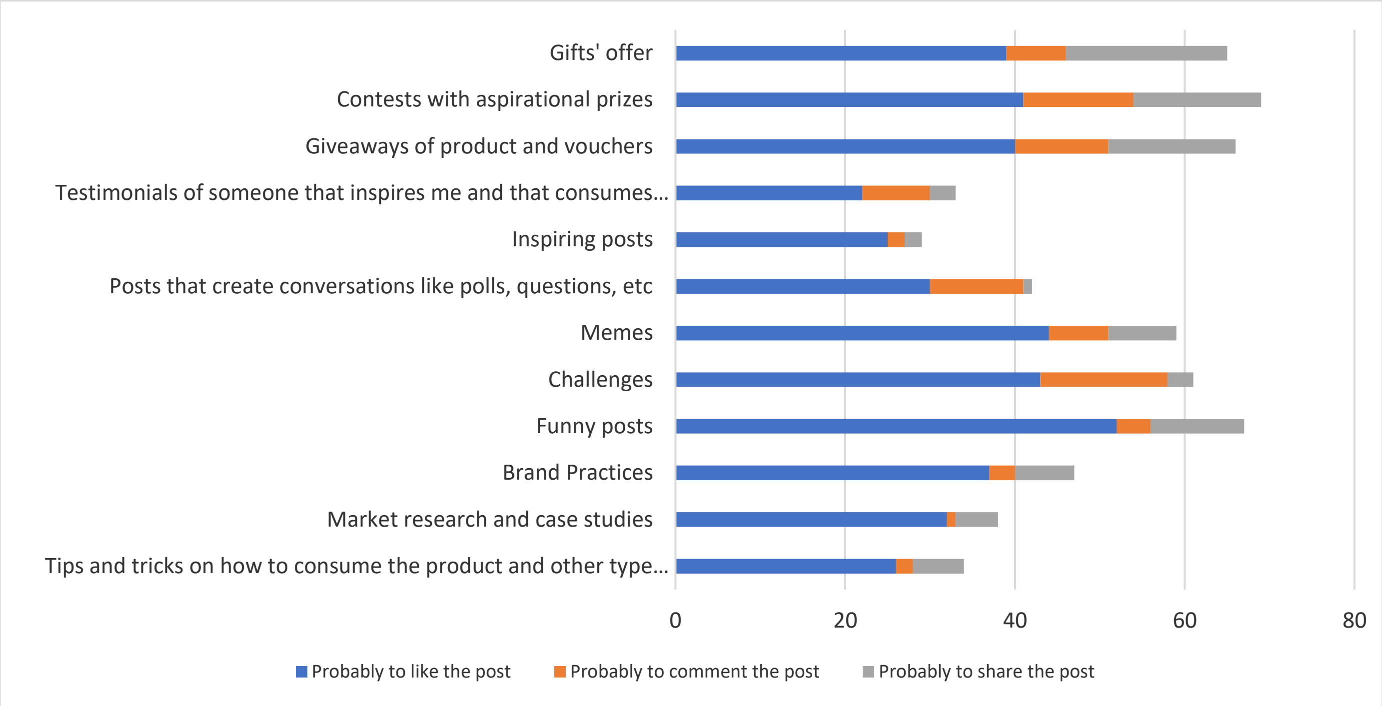




Appendix 13: Online Questionnaire Responses - 1



Appendix 14: Level of interest per type of content. Source: Online Questionnaire



Appendix 15: Level of engagement per type of content. Source: Online Questionnaire