

## **Digital Marketing Strategies in Creative Personal Brands: The Case of Photographer Marcos Alberca on Instagram and TikTok**

### **Estrategias de marketing digital en marcas personales creativas: el caso del fotógrafo marcos alberca en Instagram y TikTok**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

##### **Keywords:**

Digital Marketing, Social Media,  
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branding, Creativa industries

This study analyzes the digital marketing strategies employed by creative personal brands to optimize their positioning and connect with audiences in digital ecosystems. The research is based on an exploratory-descriptive, cross-sectional design with a mixed-methods approach. The sample, selected through non-probability convenience sampling, focuses on the case of the renowned Spanish photographer Marcos Alberca and his presence on Instagram and TikTok. Data collection triangulated systematic observation, content analysis, and semi-structured interviews with digital marketing experts. The results reveal that the predominant organic strategies are SEO, Content Marketing, and Social Selling, which effectively consolidate his digital identity. A marked format adaptation was identified: Instagram integrates audiovisual resources, extended texts, and links to foster interaction, while TikTok is dominated by fast-consumption videos. Significantly, it was shown that content based on intimate and emotional narratives concentrates the highest engagement rates compared to purely promotional content. It is concluded that the success of this personal brand is based on the integration of organic content and affective resources. As a main contribution, this study empirically demonstrates that algorithmic effectiveness and audience retention rely not only on posting frequency but on the structuring of transmedia narratives. However, it highlights the need to diversify formats and adopt paid strategies (SEM) to avoid audience saturation and ensure long-term communicative sustainability, thus serving as a strategic guide for other creators in the creative industry.

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#### **RESUMEN**

**Palabras clave:**

Marketing Digital, Redes Sociales, Comunicación Estratégica, Marcas personales, Industrias Creativas.

Este estudio analiza las estrategias de marketing digital empleadas por marcas personales creativas para optimizar su posicionamiento y conexión con la audiencia en ecosistemas digitales. La investigación se fundamenta en un diseño exploratorio-descriptivo, de corte transversal y enfoque mixto. La muestra, seleccionada mediante muestreo no probabilístico por conveniencia, se centra en el caso del reconocido fotógrafo español Marcos Alberca y su presencia en Instagram y TikTok. La recolección de datos trianguló técnicas de observación sistemática, análisis de contenido y entrevistas semiestructuradas a expertos en marketing digital. Los resultados revelan que las estrategias orgánicas predominantes son el SEO, el *Content Marketing* y el *Social Selling*, las cuales consolidan de forma efectiva su identidad digital. Se identificó una marcada adaptación de formatos: en Instagram convergen recursos audiovisuales, textos extendidos y enlaces para fomentar la interacción, mientras que en TikTok prevalecen videos orientados al consumo rápido. De manera significativa, se evidenció que el contenido fundamentado en narrativas íntimas y emocionales concentra los mayores índices de *engagement* frente al contenido netamente promocional. Se concluye que el éxito de esta marca personal se sustenta en la integración de contenidos orgánicos y recursos afectivos. Como contribución principal, este estudio demuestra empíricamente que la eficacia algorítmica y la retención del público no residen solo en la frecuencia de publicación, sino en la estructuración de narrativas transmedia. No obstante, se evidencia la necesidad de diversificar formatos y adoptar estrategias pagadas (SEM) para evitar la saturación de la audiencia y asegurar la sostenibilidad comunicativa a largo plazo, sirviendo así como guía estratégica para otros creadores de la industria creativa.

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## Introduction

Digitalization is one of the key processes driving contemporary transformation, as it involves the systematic integration of digital technologies that optimize both tangible and intangible processes in terms of efficiency, accessibility, and speed. From a functional perspective, this phenomenon has reshaped many aspects of social life, including business, commercial transactions, and communication, giving rise to new dynamics of social and economic interaction (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2013; Rodrigues, 2017; Taşçı and Taşlibeyaz, 2021).

In this context, marketing has undergone a significant transformation, particularly as brands and professionals have shifted from traditional models to digital environments. Social media has established itself as a key platform for interaction between brands and their audiences, serving as a prime venue for building visibility, identity, and symbolic presence. Recent studies show that a high percentage of the population with Internet access interacts on social media daily, spending between one and one and a half hours consuming digital content, which underscores its strategic importance for contemporary communication practices (Sicilia *et al.*, 2022).

In this context, influencer marketing has emerged as a high-impact industry of growing importance for businesses—especially in the B2C sector—and has become standard practice in sectors such as fashion, beauty, tourism, and food through visual platforms like Instagram and TikTok (Haenlein *et al.*, 2020), characterized by their global reach and their ability to generate high levels of interaction and *engagement*. Various studies have highlighted the role of digital marketing in the positioning and performance of creative and professional initiatives, as it enables an effective integration of visibility, interaction, and resource optimization (Jung and Shegai, 2023). Furthermore, the importance of approaches such as *branded content* and *transmedia storytelling* in fostering emotional connections and building trust between brands and audiences has been demonstrated (Gómez Arroyo, 2023; Núñez-Gómez *et al.*, 2022; Nicolaou, 2022).

However, despite growing academic interest, there remains a lack of systematic research on creative personal brands in the field of photography and their strategic application in digital marketing on visual social media platforms. In response to this gap, this study analyzes the digital marketing strategies employed by Spanish photographer Marcos Alberca on Instagram and TikTok, viewing these platforms as key spaces for building a creative personal brand and engaging with the audience. The significance of this study lies in its empirical contribution to the fields of communication and digital marketing, as well as in its potential applicability to other creative professionals interested in strengthening their presence in digital environments.

From a conceptual perspective, marketing has been defined as a process aimed at creating value by satisfying consumer needs and desires, moving beyond approaches focused exclusively on sales volume (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001). In environments characterized by increasing competition and constant shifts in consumer behavior, brands are compelled to adopt adaptive approaches that respond to new market dynamics, thereby remaining relevant and securing sustainable competitive advantages (Ferrer, 2018; Bilovodska *et al.*, 2022).

In this context, digital marketing emerges as an extension and adaptation of traditional marketing to the online environment, incorporating digital media to promote products, services, and brands. According to Campo and Solé (2020), it enables the establishment of direct, personalized, and measurable relationships with consumers, while Viteri *et al.* (2018) note that strategies from the *offline* world are adapted and

enhanced through technological tools that facilitate closer and more strategic communication. In this vein, digital marketing is a process that facilitates value creation, interaction, and positioning in digital environments (Díaz Landero *et al.*, 2024), where personal branding gains relevance as a strategy aimed at intentionally managing identity and communicating knowledge, skills, values, and distinctive attributes to generate recognition among audiences (Rachmad, 2024).

Similarly, influencer marketing is emerging as a strategic tool that expands the reach and credibility of personal brands through the influence that certain content creators exert over their digital communities (Pan *et al.*, 2025). The effectiveness of these strategies is enhanced by the incorporation of emotional marketing, defined as the creation of emotional bonds between brands and audiences through experiences, narratives, and messages that resonate with their emotions and values (Granda-Cruz, 2026). Consequently, the convergence of digital marketing, personal branding, influencer marketing, and emotional marketing contributes to positioning, generating *engagement*, and strengthening sustainable relationships between content creators and their audiences in contemporary digital ecosystems.

Among the most significant communication strategies in digital marketing, *branded content* stands out. This refers to the creation of informative, educational, or entertaining content designed to convey brand values and identity, rather than directly promoting products or services (Gómez Arroyo, 2023). This approach aims to foster closeness, trust, and lasting relationships with the audience, promoting virality and emotional engagement among users (Núñez-Gómez *et al.*, 2022). In this context, brands and companies have taken on an active role as social actors on digital networks, relying on influencers to amplify their messages and build credibility among their peers (Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2021).

Communication strategies in digital marketing include a diverse set of techniques aimed at positioning and engagement in digital environments, such as content marketing, email marketing, and *social selling* (Viteri *et al.*, 2018). In addition, strategies such as SEO and SEM play a key role in digital visibility. SEO focuses on the organic ranking of content through search engine and social media optimization techniques (Martín, 2018), while SEM relies on paid promotion, enabling audience segmentation and expanding the reach of content (Rojas *et al.*, 2021).

From the perspective of the uses and gratifications theory, social media platforms serve as spaces where users manage their identities, build relationships, and satisfy various communication needs (Katz, 1959; Lee and Ma, 2012). Recent research has incorporated approaches focused on human interactions to analyze user behavior on digital platforms (Duffy and Ling, 2019). In this ecosystem, Instagram and TikTok stand out for their visual nature and their ability to integrate multimedia content that combines text, images, video, and sound, facilitating creative expression and the immediate consumption of content (Fondevila-Gascón *et al.*, 2020; Marinas, 2019; Doval-Fernández and Sánchez-Amboage, 2021).

Multimedia content has thus become a central element of contemporary digital communication, as it enables active audience interaction and the creation of meaningful communicative experiences (González, 2020; Acevedo, 2018; Toscano and López, 2019). The case of photographer Marcos Alberca is relevant to the analysis of digital marketing strategies for creative personal brands, given his professional background and established presence on digital platforms, which allows for an empirical examination of the interplay between communication strategies, personal narrative, and brand positioning on social media.

The case study of Marcos Alberca serves as an empirical benchmark that demonstrates how the convergence of personal narrative, multimedia content, and digital marketing strategies contributes to the construction of a coherent and recognizable brand identity in highly competitive digital environments, thereby providing the fields of communication and digital marketing with a deeper understanding of the processes of interaction, *engagement*, and positioning within the visual social media ecosystem.

## **Research Objectives**

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the digital marketing strategies employed by photographer Marcos Alberca on Instagram and TikTok during the period from July to October 2023. To this end, three specific objectives have been set:

- Identify the most commonly used digital marketing strategies on both platforms.
- Describe the photographer's digital presence in terms of formats and types of content.
- Demonstrate the connection and level of engagement between followers and the published content.

## **Method**

This research was conducted on the Instagram and TikTok platforms of Spanish photographer Marcos Alberca, treating these spaces as the primary focus of analysis for the study of digital marketing strategies used in the development and positioning of creative personal brands. In this regard, the study falls within the field of digital marketing, with a specific focus on the communication strategies used by the photographer to achieve high levels of visibility, interaction, and engagement on these social media platforms.

From a methodological standpoint, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating qualitative and quantitative components, which made it possible to collect and analyze both numerical data and interpretive information, thereby fostering a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. The use of this approach made it possible to compare previously established theoretical concepts with the empirical evidence obtained, in line with the findings of Hernández and Mendoza (2018), who emphasize that mixed-methods research strengthens the validity of the results by combining different analytical techniques.

The study design was descriptive-analytical, cross-sectional, and non-experimental, since no variables were manipulated; instead, the phenomena were observed and analyzed in their natural context. This type of design made it possible to describe and examine the characteristics, strategies, and communication dynamics present in the digital accounts of the subject of study, taking into account their specific features and behavioral patterns (Mousalli-Kayat, 2015). The study spanned a four-month period, from July to October 2023, which made it possible to analyze the photographer's digital behavior over a specific, defined timeframe.

Three types of structured matrices were created in Excel for data processing and analysis. The first matrix focused on categorizing the account's *digital presence* (classifying the format as text, images, videos, links, etc.); the second was designed to measure the frequency of application of predefined *digital marketing strategies* —*SEO, SEM, Content Marketing, Social Selling, Email Marketing, and Link Building*—; and the third was intended to evaluate connectivity by directly recording user interactions —likes, comments, shares, and saves— (Escobar-Pérez and Cuervo-Martínez, 2008).

The data sheets made it possible to systematically collect information on the previously operationalized categories of analysis, facilitating the individual assessment of each dimension of the study and its subsequent comparative interpretation. In addition, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals specializing in digital marketing and communication: Ms. Tatiana León and Ms. Daniela Gallardo. The interview guide consisted of seven open-ended questions designed to explore four key themes in depth: the impact of visual platforms on consumer behavior, the design and effectiveness of strategies (such as SEO and content marketing), the evaluation of performance metrics, and common mistakes made when positioning a brand.

Throughout this research, compliance with the ethical principles applicable to studies conducted in digital environments was ensured. The quantitative data collection was based exclusively on publicly available and open-access data from social media, ensuring that users who commented were anonymized to protect the privacy of third parties. In addition, the two professionals interviewed provided their explicit informed consent for the recording, transcription, and use of their comments for academic purposes.

The descriptive nature of the research addressed the need to independently measure and analyze the study variables and categories, allowing for their subsequent interpretation in light of the stated objectives. In addition, a deductive approach was employed, which facilitated the understanding, systematization, and verification of the research questions based on the reviewed theoretical framework (Hernández and Mendoza, 2018).

As for the cross-sectional design, it allowed us to describe the phenomenon at a specific point in time, highlighting the observable characteristics of the subject of study without attempting to establish causal relationships. As Mousalli-Kayat (2015) points out, this type of design is well-suited for research that seeks to characterize social and communicational phenomena in specific contexts.

With regard to the target audience, the digital platforms Instagram and TikTok were considered the reference universe; these social media platforms have millions of users worldwide and serve as strategic spaces for personal branding and the implementation of digital marketing strategies. In this context, a non-probabilistic, purposive or convenience sample was selected, a method that allowed for the identification of a representative case study based on previously defined characteristics (Hernández and Carpio, 2019; Otzen and Manterola, 2017).

As a result, Marcos Alberca, a Spanish photographer with a strong and established presence on both platforms, was selected. The choice of this influencer is empirically justified by their significant influence and leadership in the industry: they have 2.24 million subscribers on their YouTube channel (making it the most-subscribed Spanish-language photography channel), 1.3 million followers on TikTok, and over 933,000 followers on Instagram. These metrics establish him as an ideal and highly representative case study for analyzing the dynamics of positioning in creative personal branding. In addition, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with digital marketing experts who have more than five years of professional experience in areas related to digital branding, strategic social media management, and online positioning; their insights helped to strengthen the interpretation of the results and the methodological triangulation of the research.

## **Results**

This paper presents the results obtained from a content analysis of photographer Marcos Alberca's Instagram and TikTok accounts during the period from July to October 2023, as well as from a qualitative analysis of interviews with digital marketing experts.

### Digital Marketing Strategies Used on Instagram and TikTok

**Table 1**

*Breakdown of digital marketing strategies by platform*

Strategy	Instagram (%)	TikTok (%)
Content Marketing	30	29
Social Selling	28	29
SEO	23	29
Link Building	19	12
SEM	0	0
Email Marketing	0	0

Quantitative analysis of the posts revealed a clear predominance of organic digital marketing strategies on both platforms. On Instagram, content marketing accounted for 30% of all identified strategies, followed by social selling (28%) and SEO (23%). Link building accounted for 19%, while there was no use of SEM or email marketing.

On TikTok, the distribution was more balanced: content marketing, SEO, and social selling each accounted for 29% of the strategies analyzed, while link building dropped to 12%. As with Instagram, no SEM or email marketing strategies were identified.

These results demonstrate a strategic focus on organic visibility, community building, and direct engagement with the audience, prioritizing algorithmic ranking and relationship-building over paid advertising.

### Marcos Alberca's Digital Presence by Content Format

**Table 2**

*Content Types by Platform*

Content type	Instagram (%)	TikTok (%)
Text	27	33
Video	19	33
Links	19	13
Images	10	0
Promotional	8	7
Moving	8	7
Humor	2	7
Interactive (surveys)	6	0
Educational	0	0
Events	0	0

With regard to digital presence, significant differences were observed in the types of content depending on the platform. Text-based content dominated on Instagram (27%), followed by videos and links (19% each). Images accounted for only 10%, while promotional and emotional content each accounted for 8%. Interactive content, such as surveys or questions, was limited (6%), and no educational or event-related content was identified.

On TikTok, content was primarily focused on videos (33%) and text (33%), with links being used less frequently (13%). Promotional, emotional, and humorous content each accounted for 7%. No use of images, interactive content, or educational content was recorded.

These results indicate a partial adaptation to the technical and narrative characteristics of each platform, although they also reveal limited diversification of

formats, especially on TikTok, where the absence of educational or informational content reduces the communicative scope of the personal brand analyzed.

### Connectivity and Audience Engagement

**Table 3**

*Instagram posts with the highest engagement*

<b>Publication</b>	<b>I like it (%)</b>	<b>Comments (%)</b>
<i>OPPO Reno 10 – Beach</i>	2	2
<i>Smartgyro – Skateboard</i>	2	1
<i>OPPO Reno 10 – Portrait</i>	3	2
<i>Wondershare Democreator – Editor</i>	2	1
<i>Photos of Strangers – Blonde</i>	6	5
<i>Photos of strangers – Boy in a skirt</i>	22	31
<i>Change of appearance</i>	5	7
<i>Photos of strangers – People with their faces covered</i>	7	5
<i>Giving birth or party?</i>	20	13
<i>Birth</i>	13	16
<i>Frames</i>	8	2
<i>Our little one</i>	11	11
<i>27th Birthday</i>	0	4
<i>Rain frames</i>	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The connectivity analysis reveals an uneven concentration of interaction in a small number of posts, particularly those based on personal and emotional narratives. On Instagram, the post “Photos of Strangers – Boy in a Skirt” accounts for 31% of all comments and 22% of all “Likes,” making it the content most likely to generate both discursive and emotional engagement. Similarly, posts of a personal or family nature, such as “In Labor or at a Party?” and “Birth,” generate significant levels of engagement, although clearly lower than that of the dominant content, while promotional or everyday posts account for only a marginal share of the analyzed data.

**Table 4**

*Posts with the highest engagement on TikTok*

<b>Publication</b>	<b>I like it (%)</b>	<b>Comments (%)</b>	<b>Shared (%)</b>	<b>Saved (%)</b>
<i>OPPO Reno 10 Pro</i>	1	1	1	2
<i>Photos of strangers – Girl</i>	4	7	3	2
<i>Photos of strangers – Boy in a skirt</i>	55	84	85	58
<i>Photos of strangers – People with their faces covered</i>	33	7	5	36
<i>Childbirth or Party?</i>	6	2	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

On TikTok, the concentration of user engagement is even more pronounced. The post “Photos of Strangers – Boy in a Skirt” accounted for 55% of the “Likes,” 84% of the comments, 85% of the shares, and 58% of the saves out of the total recorded during the study period. This distribution shows that a single piece of content accounts for the majority of audience engagement, far surpassing the rest of the posts, none of which come close to matching that level of engagement.

These results confirm a consistent association between emotional-personal content and high levels of engagement, as well as a highly concentrated interaction structure, in which a small number of posts monopolize the audience’s attention and participation. This dynamic suggests a significant reliance on specific narrative formats to generate communicative impact, raising important questions about the strategy’s sustainability in the medium and long term.

**Table 5**  
*Results of the qualitative analysis of interviews*

Thematic category	Frequency	Interpretation
<i>The Importance of SEO</i>	Sign Up	The Key to Organic Visibility
<i>Emotional content marketing</i>	Sign Up	Builds trust and rapport
<i>The Need for SEM</i>	Average	Untapped strategy
<i>Risk of format overload</i>	Average	Possible loss of audience
<i>Adaptation by platform</i>	Sign Up	Limited implementation

The qualitative analysis of the interviews directly supports the quantitative findings. The two experts agreed that content marketing and SEO are cornerstones of organic search engine optimization. Ms. Tatiana León stated that 'SEO and content marketing are the most effective strategies [...] they create authentic and sustainable connections.' This finding is empirically corroborated by the content analysis (Table 1), where content marketing was the most prevalent on both Instagram (30%) and TikTok (29%), as were SEO and social selling.

Likewise, Ms. Daniela Gallardo emphasized that 'digital marketing offers the opportunity to stand out by connecting on an emotional level.' This assertion is clearly reflected in the engagement metrics (Tables 3 and 4): the intimate and personal post "Photos of Strangers – Boy in a Skirt" attracted a massive 84% of the comments on TikTok and 31% on Instagram, demonstrating the high short-term effectiveness of appealing to emotions. However, the experts also warned about common mistakes, pointing to "the repetition of formats." This aligns with the complete absence of paid strategies (0% SEM usage on both platforms) observed in the study, which, according to the interviewees, represents a missed opportunity to expand reach beyond organic search results

## Discussion and Conclusions

Digital marketing is a strategic process that enables the establishment of effective relationships with audiences through technological tools designed to create value, foster interaction, and enhance positioning in digital environments (Díaz Landero *et al.*, 2024). In this context, personal branding becomes significant as a strategy for the intentional management of identity, aimed at communicating distinctive attributes and generating recognition among audiences (Rachmad, 2024), especially given that influencer marketing is emerging as a high-impact industry of growing importance for companies, particularly in the B2C sector (Haenlein *et al.*, 2020; Pan *et al.*, 2025). The findings show a clear predominance of organic strategies—particularly content marketing, social selling, and SEO—compared to the use of paid strategies such as SEM or email marketing. This approach is consistent with the findings of Campo and Solé (2020) and Viteri *et al.* (2018), who point out that contemporary digital marketing prioritizes the creation of symbolic value, a sense of connection, and sustained interaction with the audience. Furthermore, the results reflect the principles of emotional marketing, defined as the creation of emotional bonds between brands and their audiences through meaningful experiences and narratives (Granda-Cruz, 2026). In this regard, the case study confirms that creative personal brands tend to prioritize communication strategies that foster identity, trust, and community over immediate conversion.

However, while this focus on organic content is consistent with the principles of branded content and relationship marketing, the results also reveal an overreliance on a limited number of strategies, which may create a structural vulnerability to the algorithmic changes inherent in digital platforms. As Jung and Shegai (2023) point out, a

balanced mix of organic and paid strategies helps mitigate risks associated with content saturation and the loss of organic reach. In this regard, the complete absence of SEM identified on both platforms suggests an untapped strategic opportunity that could strengthen the positioning and sustainability of the personal brand in the medium term.

With regard to digital presence and content types, the results show a partial adaptation to the communication logic of each platform. On Instagram, the integration of text, video, and links reflects the platform's hybrid nature, which allows users to combine visual storytelling with detailed captions and external links. On TikTok, by contrast, there is a focus on video accompanied by brief text, consistent with the observations made by Doval-Fernández and Sánchez-Amboage (2021) regarding the centrality of audiovisual content and narrative immediacy on this social media platform.

However, the lack of educational, informational, or instructional content on both platforms—and particularly on TikTok—highlights a limited range of narratives. This finding is significant given that various authors highlight the value of educational content and transmedia storytelling as mechanisms for deepening the relationship with the audience and strengthening long-term brand building (Nicolaou, 2022; Freire, 2020). In this regard, while the current strategy has proven effective in terms of immediate engagement, it also exhibits a predominantly emotional focus that could limit the development of other equally valuable forms of communication.

One of the study's key findings concerns the analysis of the connectivity and distribution of engagement on both Instagram and TikTok. The results consistently show an uneven distribution of engagement, with a small number of posts accounting for the majority of reactions, comments, shares, and saves. In particular, the post "Photos of Strangers – Boy in a Skirt" stands out as the most prevalent content on both platforms, accounting for a significantly higher percentage than the rest of the posts analyzed.

This pattern empirically confirms the findings of Núñez-Gómez *et al.* (2022) and Gómez Arroyo (2023) regarding the power of emotional and experiential content to generate emotional engagement and active participation among the audience. Personal storytelling, the social aspect, and a direct appeal to human experience seem to act as catalysts for *engagement*, reinforcing the idea that digital audiences do not merely consume content but seek to identify emotionally with the stories presented to them.

The high concentration of engagement in a small number of posts, particularly those based on personal and emotional narratives, raises important questions about the long-term viability of the strategies analyzed. While this type of content is highly effective at generating engagement in the short term, repeated use of it can lead to an overreliance on specific formats, which increases the vulnerability of a personal brand to shifts in consumer behavior and changes in digital platform algorithms.

Several authors warn that the repeated use of successful narrative structures can lead to audience saturation and fatigue, gradually diminishing the content's ability to surprise and its emotional impact (Scolari, 2019). In this regard, reliance on a single narrative format—however effective it may be—can limit communicative innovation and restrict the exploration of new discursive styles that help diversify the relationship with the audience.

Furthermore, the central role of emotional content as the primary driver of engagement can create an imbalance between visibility and brand identity. When engagement is disproportionately concentrated on certain posts, there is a risk that the public perception of one's personal brand will become associated with a limited narrative, overshadowing other equally relevant professional, creative, or informational values. This phenomenon is particularly critical for creative personal brands, whose longevity

depends not only on popularity but also on the consistency and richness of their symbolic message.

From a strategic perspective, these findings suggest the need to view engagement not merely as an indicator of immediate success, but as a variable that must be managed in a balanced manner and with a long-term perspective. The gradual incorporation of alternative formats and complementary narratives would help reduce reliance on recurring emotional content, fostering communication that is more resilient and adaptable to changes in the digital landscape.

A comparative analysis of Instagram and TikTok reveals significant strategic differences in the distribution of engagement and in the communication logic of each platform. On TikTok, engagement is concentrated more intensely on a very small number of posts, suggesting a highly competitive environment shaped by recommendation algorithms that prioritize content with a strong and immediate emotional impact. This dynamic promotes short-term virality, but it also increases the volatility of reach and reliance on specific narrative formats.

In contrast, Instagram features a slightly more diverse distribution of engagement, allowing for greater coexistence of different types of content and a more gradual development of personal brand identity. The integration of text, images, video, and links expands narrative possibilities and facilitates more context-rich communication, aimed at both fostering interaction and building relationships over the medium term.

These differences show that the effectiveness of a digital marketing strategy does not depend solely on the type of content, but also on how well it aligns with consumer culture and the algorithmic logic specific to each platform. While TikTok emphasizes rapid visibility and immediate emotional response, Instagram fosters a more sustained and relational form of communication, allowing users to explore diverse forms of discourse without being entirely dependent on virality. From this perspective, the findings suggest that automatically replicating formats across platforms may limit the strategic potential of personal branding. A more specific and tailored adaptation of the content would optimize communication performance in each setting, reducing the risk of information overload and strengthening the coherence of the overall digital strategy.

However, this high concentration of engagement also raises critical questions about the sustainability of the communication model. As Scolari (2019) points out, repeatedly using the same narrative format can lead to audience saturation and fatigue, gradually reducing the effectiveness of the content. In the case under review, the reliance on a specific series to generate engagement suggests that communicative success is closely tied to a particular format, which could limit the personal brand's capacity for innovation and future adaptation.

From the perspective of uses and gratifications theory (Katz, 1959; Lee and Ma, 2012), the results suggest that followers find satisfaction in this type of content linked to personal identification, empathy, and social participation. However, the scarcity of content that appeals to cognitive rewards—such as learning or the acquisition of knowledge—highlights an imbalance in the range of content available, which could be strategically addressed to broaden the spectrum of motivations catered to.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews with experts reinforces these interpretations, repeatedly highlighting the importance of SEO and emotional content marketing as cornerstones of digital positioning, while also pointing out the need to incorporate complementary strategies and diversify formats. The alignment between empirical data and expert assessments reinforces the validity of the findings and underscores the importance of adopting more comprehensive and adaptive strategic approaches.

Taken together, the findings discussed here support the conclusion that Marcos Alberca's case clearly illustrates the current dynamics of digital marketing in the realm of creative personal brands: a strong focus on the emotional, high effectiveness in terms of immediate engagement, and a marked reliance on specific narrative formats. While these strategies have proven successful in the short term, empirical evidence suggests that it would be advisable to rethink the balance between narrative innovation, content diversification, and the combination of organic and paid strategies, in order to ensure the sustainability of communication in a digital environment characterized by competition, saturation, and constant change.

The findings of this research have important implications for the design and management of digital marketing strategies for creative personal brands, particularly in the fields of photography and the cultural industries. First and foremost, there is a clear need to balance the use of emotional narratives with other communication styles that help diversify the brand's symbolic value proposition. While personal content is highly effective at driving engagement, relying solely on it can limit your professional and creative growth in the long run.

In this regard, creative personal brands could benefit from strategic planning focused on narrative diversification, incorporating informative, educational, or reflective content that complements the prevailing emotional narratives. This combination would allow us to enhance the value we offer our audience and reinforce our reputation for expertise and professional credibility.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of adopting a strategic approach tailored to each platform. On TikTok, prioritizing content with a strong emotional impact can boost immediate visibility, while on Instagram, it makes sense to take advantage of the variety of available formats to build a more sustained and engaging communication strategy. Platform-specific adaptation therefore emerges as a key criterion for optimizing communication performance.

The lack of paid strategies such as SEM suggests an opportunity for improvement in the digital marketing planning of creative personal brands. A balanced integration of organic and paid strategies would make it possible to expand reach, reduce reliance on algorithms, and strengthen the sustainability of communication in highly competitive digital environments. Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results. First, the study is based on a single case study, which limits the ability to generalize the findings to other creative personal brands or different cultural contexts. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design prevents us from observing changes over time in strategies and engagement, limiting the analysis to a specific period. Future research could incorporate longitudinal approaches that allow for an analysis of the sustainability of these strategies over time, as well as comparative studies of different creative personal brands.

As for future lines of research, it is suggested that the analysis be expanded to other sectors of the creative industries, and that experimental methodologies or big data analysis be incorporated to explore in greater depth the relationship between narrative, algorithms, and engagement. Similarly, it is worth exploring the impact of incorporating paid strategies and how they interact with organic marketing in the development of digital personal brands.

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