

The network strategy of a fashion brand

La estrategia en las redes de una marca de moda

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the new forms of communication and awareness, specifically in the digital field through a case study of the ECOALF fashion brand, unique in the world for its contribution to the sector through the cleaning of the oceans. The use of unlimited expression by ECOALF through digital media leads to environmental awareness, a key message of its online strategies. It is a corporately responsible practice in the digital medium, especially of its social networks with which it communicates interactively and inspires the prosumer. It will deepen in how it transmits its business purpose and its good corporate practices through Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, as well as its website. A qualitative methodology is applied, using categorization processes, supported by discourse analysis and NVIVO11 software where the company's online publications from its first five years have been analyzed. As a conclusion, the main values that the brand transmits are discovered through its written language and the visual besides its complementarity between both languages when it comes to building their online strategies. In addition, you can see how the fashion company converts its production process into audiovisual material to be used for environmental awareness purposes worldwide for different fashion consumers, social networks, ecologists, cultural leaders and trend hunters, among others, without forgetting the digital literacy work that emerges from all this.

KEYWORDS: digital communication; ECOALF; Slow; fashion; social networks; sustainability; strategy.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza las nuevas formas de comunicación y sensibilización, en concreto en el ámbito digital a través de un estudio de caso de la marca de moda ECOALF, única en el mundo por su aportación al sector a través de la limpieza de los océanos. El uso de la expresión ilimitada que realiza ECOALF a través de medios digitales desemboca en la concienciación medioambiental, mensaje clave de sus estrategias tanto *online* como *offline*. Se trata de una práctica corporativamente responsable en el medio digital, en especial de sus redes sociales, con las que se comunica

interactivamente y desea inspirar al prosumidor a través del contenido de sus publicaciones. Se profundizará en cómo transmite su propósito empresarial específicamente *online* y sus buenas prácticas corporativas a través de *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, así como de su página Web. Se procede a través de la aplicación de una metodología cualitativa, utilizando procesos de categorización, apoyada en el análisis del discurso y el *software* NVIVO11 donde se han analizado las publicaciones *online* de la compañía de los últimos cinco años. Como conclusión se descubre los valores principales que transmite la marca a través de su lenguaje visual, de su lenguaje escrito y la complementariedad entre ambos a la hora de construir sus estrategias *online*. Además, se podrá apreciar cómo la empresa de moda convierte su proceso de producción en material audiovisual para utilizarlo con fines de concienciación medioambiental a nivel mundial para diferentes consumidores de moda, de redes sociales, ecologistas, líderes culturales y cazadores de tendencias entre otros sin olvidar la labor de alfabetización digital que se desprende de todo ello.

PALABRAS CLAVE: comunicación digital; ECOALF; moda; *Slow*; redes sociales; sostenibilidad; estrategia.

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Translation by **Carlos Javier Rivas Quintero** (University of the Andes, Mérida, Venezuela).

1. Introduction

This article delves into how a fashion company, characterized by innovation regarding sustainability as the main brand attribute, goes beyond traditional communication methods to expand, strengthen and promote the experience a user has with its brand through digital channels. We base upon the brand concept provided by Kapferer who defines it as a set of signs linked to the products which validate their origin and make them different from their competitors (Kapferer, 2006, p. 37).

The origin of this study case is the mission of Goyeneche -founder of the brand- of creating sustainable fashion through a brand using Slow philosophy -it will be defined later- which emerges “to improve the world” according to the words of its president and founder. The very web of ECOALF points out that:

In response to the frustration due to the excessive use of natural resources and the amount of waste produced by industrialized countries; the goal is to produce the first generation of fashion products made with recycled materials having the same quality, design and technical properties of the best non-recycled products. (Goyeneche, 2009)

The digital activity of the brand revolves around the mission of creating the first generation of recycled products with the same quality and design of the best non-recycled ones. Therefore, basing on the principles of circular economy stating that collected plastic waste from oceans can reenter in the production cycle (Magnier, Mugge and Schoormans, 2019, p. 84) its sustainability grounds in recycling to create fabrics with a long-term objective: to represent the fabrics of new generations,

with which the development of the business model is carried out investing in R&D through their own funding.

By integrating state-of-the-art technology they create clothing and accessories made out of recycled materials without looking as such. The company currently has eleven active alliances in different geographical locations (Taiwan, Korea, Portugal, Mexico, Japan, Spain..., etc.) which allow it to be constantly developing all the required elements in order to create with recycled resources.

In the context that technologies, regarding consumption, are “strong forces which act to change the form of that activity and its meaning” (Winner, 2004, p. 105), together with the “worship of quickness” (Honoré, 2012, p. 13), which social activity entails, results in that “all has to be done in haste: thinking in haste, innovating in haste, communicating in haste” (Camps, 2003, p. 31). So the brand works towards positioning as a reference in the digital community in order to make the experience of the user global, encompassing, connecting and complementing online with offline communication. That is, its digital practice is transmitted through its Social Networks; the intellectual part for the labor of the company regarding its environmental message which makes it unique to society and the business network; it physically translates into its outlet and the very product. The word “reference”, used by the very director of communication of ECOALF, Álvarez de Ossorio, has especial relevance in this research since it aims directly at the conceptual concept of the corporate mission.

This universe formed by the digital part together with the physical and conceptual ones is studied in order to research the communicative strategies the brand uses to sensitize recipients. This task is executed through its messages regarding the environmental values the brand transmits to the digital community through its strategies and contents published on social media and its website. It is about analyzing several key elements to discern this ECOALF array on social media by which it communicates and teaches society. The components that are going to be addressed are: The user experience (UX), English term indistinctly spread across different geographical environments. It reinforces any digital communication to implement its effects into a physical context. The ISO 9241-210, *International standard on ergonomics of human system interaction*, defines it as a set of factors or elements concerning the interaction users have with a specific environment or device, resulting in a positive or negative perception of said service, product or device. The participatory culture and sensitization (Jenkins, 2006) of young people, who have new technologies as reference, is grounded in the need of developing their digital awareness. In order to do that, it is necessary for them to perceive the uses and risks associated with these new forms of expression, that way supporting the new sensitizing channels. This is closely related to digital literacy, understood as the ability population has to develop and that “has to be media-oriented, digital, multimodal, critical and functional for the 21st century” (Gutiérrez and Tyner 2012, p. 37).

According to Girón, 75% of consumers who make a purchase do so after an online query, which indicates the importance of this method for the industry. It is a communication investment that goes from 15% to 20% of the numbers of the business (Campuzano, 2016, p. 11). Another guiding point in this research is the sustainability term defined in the *Glossary about Social Responsibility for Research and Terminological Debate* (Benavides, 2012) depending on whether the concept is applied to development or economy, meaning that it is not self-underpinned, but it depends on the economic process. If we go back in time to 1988, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) already stated that sustainable development is that which satisfies the needs of the current generation without compromising the capacity of future generations to cover their own needs.

1.1. Fashion and the digital frame

Globalization and the fact that the Internet is hegemonic (Berners and Fischetti, 2000) have led consumers to gather virtually on online communities, therefore becoming social platforms on fundamental channels for corporate strategies (Lacasa, 2017). Digital media are conceived as new forms that allow mediating and representing the world, which is transformed into the new communication space (Quiroz, 2010) and that is how ECOALF establishes it.

The emergence of the Internet in the habitual expression and communication methods in society (Girón, 2018) makes understanding these methods necessary for users. These mediums of expression facilitate interaction between individuals and the brand, therefore making the creation of digital interest groups possible, either on a particular subject, or a field, or general life style, since their presence on social media seeks interaction with the community (Mir, 2016). All of this, in the corporate case, would be implemented to the desire of positioning in the community formed by the target customers of the brand and listening to them, interchanging ideas or simply informing them or positioning as a reference (Lacasa, 2017).

In Spain, 93% of the whole population has access to the Internet according to the Global Digital report 2019. On a national scale, there are around 37.5 million social media users, which is 78% of the total population in the country. This number proves the relevance of social media as communication channels, dissemination of messages and, therefore, their influence on the creation of realities, concepts and behaviors in the regular environment of users (Lacasa, 2017). It is important to remember that social networks arrived in our lives in 1997 with *Messenger* and the current site map was configured, based upon the criteria of the researcher, as of 2004 with Facebook, which is definitely the social network with more users in the world. A website on which, as described by Moreno in his book about networks, the user only focuses on quickly accepting the terms of use (Moreno, 2015). Each one of these users has a different motivation for signing up on this network and 9 out of 10 regular users of said web always have one account open.

As for Instagram, Lacasa states that its popularity is due to its instantaneousness, with which visual information supported with short texts is generated, which creates a sensation of closeness to other users. Although making photographs and producing audiovisual montages may be simple, not all of them have the same expression quality adapted to the corporate message desired, the style and reaction wanted in the addressee as concluded by the author.

The most pursued objective for any business is getting people to talk about their product, their company. Now, online media satisfy these popularity commercial intentions or needs. The *lovemarks.com* website encourages fans to tell their love stories with their loved brands, those with which they have established emotional ties. This is only one digital initiative among many others, by which affective ties with companies, together with the fashion brand, are created overcoming the physical barrier to connect and share their experiences on a virtual environment.

Greenhill, the founder of the advertising agency for brands *Premium Greenhill + Partners*, in New York, speaks of the possibilities online media offer since they allow the company to target both clients and the prospective clients. This does not happen in the same way with printed press or traditional media due to the absence of immediate interaction.

The very author aims at online conversation in which the brand is the center of attention and bets on inviting users to talk about it, thus creating an exclusivity sentiment that could not be achieved otherwise. All of this without neglecting the experience of digital users, on which ECOALF has been

working and proves it since it has materialized three site map important changes over the past two years with the purpose of adapting to the new digital trends.

1.2. Sustainability and fashion

If the features of a brand are the counterpart for an ingredient or something providing meaning (Otaúy, 2012, p. 70), one of the main characteristics of ECOALF is innovation together with sustainability and history. These are transmitted to its customers through two complementary languages, occasionally: the visual and written ones.

The company maintains a discourse around the sensitization of society, “it is no longer necessary to keep abusing of the natural resources indiscriminately” just as it is stated on the ecoalf.com website. Through its Foundation and with this philosophy they discovered, by extracting plastic pollution from the oceans, “a source of raw material to innovate in the creation of fabric that, together with its design, turn its corporate activity into a way to improving the world” (ECOALF, 2009).

In this context, in which there is instantaneousness not only in the impact of messages but in consumption as well, the creation of a guiding regulation for the business world has been promoted by the United Nations (UN) through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are seventeen guidelines for companies, according to their geographical location and their activity areas, to improve their physical surroundings and the existing social community to make their commercial activity generate a common benefit. These 17 SDGs consider: the eradication of poverty and hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, access to clean water and sanitation, implementation of clean energy, decent work, innovation in the industry, reducing inequality, achieving sustainable cities, responsible consumption, taking care of the climate, flora and fauna and to achieve solid institutions and relations to accomplish objectives, in addition to peace.

Not only does this concept encompass articles production, but it aims at the very origin of raw materials, therefore establishing and/or demanding transparency in the whole process of creation of any product. This information in each one of the phases through which an object goes until its point of sale would be labeled as traceability; a concept that comes into play and could involve other elements such as sustainability. This latter one was defined in 1988 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as the development that satisfies the needs of the current generation without compromising the capacity of future generations by satisfying their needs.

Slow Fashion gains prominence at this point. This term, created by Fletcher (2014), is a trend with the purpose of tackling the Fast Fashion phenomenon. It is about creating many more clothing collections than the traditional Spring-Summer and Autumn-Winter ones, in shorter and shorter periods of time. Slow fashion “is to clothing and design what slow food is to cuisine –natural, ethical, local (...) Slow Fashion means you can look fantastic and feel 100% guilt free” (Wander, 2009, p. 33). Here, Girón (2010) identifies an opportunity to transform what is sustainable into aspirational for the sector; which can mean a corporate refocusing aimed at the responsibility with the environment where things are produced and with whom produce them, aligned with Girón’s thesis (2010) who points out that consumers are conscious that, behind the beauty of objects, what you occasionally find is a history of waste that entails a risk for the health of workers (Girón, 2010).

It is important to point out an aspect regarding the relation between recycling, main inspirational concept for ECOALF, and sustainability. Recycling is the process by which a used product, generally waste, goes through an especial treatment which gives its usefulness back to it, therefore, it becomes

a new product for consumption or allows using its raw materials for creating new products or objects. Even if not all the wastes daily produced by human beings are viable for recycling, the important thing is knowing how to discern the ones that are, just as confirmed by the ECOALF communication director. Recycling some products can be even more detrimental than producing them from scratch, something the company under analysis has assessed.

Dissemination and awareness-raising about recycling differ around the world. It is a task in which digital literacy and the online publications of this brand have as premise in their online strategy and with the support of the very garment because “it is not like promoting any other mass consumption product (...) since fashion is a way of communicating and producing messages; it communicates by itself” (Saviolo and Testa, 2007, p. 274).

The results of this research are going to contribute to understanding the inspiration of the business model of the brand as an expression of fashion activism. There is currently a type of client – increasing in number- who takes care of the planet and his/her health. These subjects develop a predilection for artisanal products (Vartan, 2008), and affirm, in favor of the consumption rhythm, “helping others by shopping can be considered as a kind of luxury”, which can corroborate the possibilities of making ECOALF an activist brand through its “*because there is no planet B*”, therefore having the luxury of helping the world through its consumption. The sum of the factors would lead to sensitization with a subsequent change in the fashion consumption habit in society through the scope digital means have.

1.3. Digital literacy and the user experience -UX- in fashion

According to Gilster (1997), digital literacy is the capacity of understanding and using information from diverse sources and multiple formats bearing in mind that the author frames this definition in a universe that revolves around the Web. The User Experience term derives from this way of thinking, created by Norman in the Apple Laboratories. It bases on the Human-Computer Interaction (Card, 1983) focused on the interaction phenomenon between users and information systems to develop methods and practices for designing interactive products. In this context, the brand would carry out its literacy labor basing upon the teachings of the User Experience to create the elements we identified on the social networks of the brand. These are:

- Information architecture (IA): it facilitates the connection between users and information in a way that creates a hierarchy in the content. The easiness when finding information on the digital channel prevails.
- Interaction design: it encompasses all that is related to the visual part of the content, such as images, color, icons, etc.
- Usability: it is about the design validity, the contents organization consistent with the commercial interest of the company.
- Visual design: the visual aesthetic is also fundamental to transmit the values of the brand.

ECOALF has gone through changes on its online visuals with the purpose of not only adapting better to the digital medium but achieving a better communication of its identity. That is why its photographs and website reflect a minimum design which focuses more on photos of products and sales, without additional ads, with a well-designed interface, and a more visible menu by which people can have access to all the product families via web. Regarding the tones, they always try to resemble a neutral environment which can fit at an intercultural and international level. The message is always present on any of the pages of the web that people may visit, even on Instagram. The current strategy blends images with diverse designs and images with designs having the “activist”

slogan of the fashion company: *because there is no planet B*; all of this together with a basic and neutral font, just like the other components.

2. Method

2.1. General goals

The general goals proposed are the following:

- To analyze the communicative strategies the brand uses to educate their active recipients through its messages.
- To identify the environmental values the brand disseminates to its digital community through its strategies and contents posted on social media.
- To assess how digital communication and sensitization are related.

2.2. Methodological approach

This analysis was carried out through a mixed methodology which combines the qualitative technique, on which the content and discourse analysis is based, in addition to the quantitative relations emerging from the frequency tendencies regarding the results. To do that, we have used the computing program NVIVO11. It is a software program used for processing and organizing data, and exploring information with the purpose of facilitating and optimizing the analysis labor in qualitative or mixed researches. This tool allows exploring different discursive variations of the brand through the coding of the data obtained from the analysis of the corpus of the publications and posts made by ECOALF from December 2013 to December 2018, since this is the time period that includes the consolidation of its strategy on social media. It experienced a change in the person responsible of the social media strategy as of that year, which implied an increase in its digital publications activity with the objective of achieving greater consistency between its corporate mission and its digital impact without affecting the foundations of its type of strategy and approach that were established up until that moment.

Using NVIVO11, we have conducted a categorization process of the data obtained through the analysis of the features of the brand, its strategies and key words. We these results, we have set the guidelines that constitute the language, message and images aimed at digital consumers and prosumers (Toffler, 1989).

2.3. Material

The materials used for analysis were collected taking into consideration the fashion industry, the mission of ECOALF, its environmental labor through its innovation, the interviews done to both the president founder of ECOALF and the communications director; its corporate website; the observation of its corporate activity on its official social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, from December 2013 to December 2018. In total, there are around 3000 digital publications in the form of analyzed images, a number that also comprises short audiovisual contents, and its outlets physical space, its products, tags, etc.

3. Results

3.1. Attribute analysis

Here below, the attributes identified in the brand for its analysis are shown. These are going to set the direction of the strategies that define the type of content published by ECOALF, the elements

converging in it and the type of publication that is disseminated according to the combination of these components.

The attributes and characteristic that were identified in the brand through their publications on social media are shown in table 1. There are mainly three aspects; Innovation, Sustainability and History. Each one of them has an appearance percentage within 100% of the publications analyzed.

Table 1. *Attributes analyzed on the Nvivo11.*

Attributes	Description of the attribute	% of appearance
Innovation	<p>Innovation, according to Girón (2014), Fionda and Moore (2008), and Okonkwo (2007), is one of the defining characteristics of a luxury brand because it is a living and changing concept, and every company that wants to commercialize it must be in constant evolution, innovating (Lipovetsky, 2012).</p> <p>In this sense, ECOALF innovates in the process of obtaining raw materials. A pioneering method in the world aspiring to change a behavioral pattern in the fashion business network.</p>	48,5%
Sustainability	<p>In 1988, The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) stated that “sustainable development is that which satisfies the needs of a current generation without compromising the needs of future generations”. This thesis is also supported by the ideas of Bendell and Kleanthous (2012), and Gardetti and Muthu (2016).</p> <p>“I would refer to the fact of favorably defending an economic process that sustains the environment in which it develops and not much the fact of it sustaining by itself” (Benavides, 2012, p. 96).</p> <p>Precisely, one of the main goals at ECOALF is for its clients to enjoy a piece of clothing without harming the environment in which it is produced and worn.</p>	28,8%
History	<p>Different authors, among which Aiello and Donvito (2006), Czellar (2001), Fionda and Moore (2008), Kapferer (1997) and Sicard (2007) stand out, consider history to be an inherent attribute in a brand.</p> <p>As for the specific ECOALF case, it is the history regarding the heritage and legacy the company and its economic activity are going to preserve throughout time, not the one of the brand itself.</p>	22,7%

Source: authors’ own creation.

According to the criteria of the authors mentioned in table 1, these are some of the attributes that, by being present, demonstrate their alignment with the creative inspiration of the brand and the reflection of the SDGs. Next, we established the way of thinking, deriving from these data, about the path established by ECOALF, a brand differentiated by its purpose of favoring the conservation of the natural legacy, meaning its history (the attribute with the lowest appearance percentage within the total number of publications analyzed); in order to do so, they innovated (highest percentage of publications) with materials that are sustainable and, therefore, exclusive due to their origin and unique raw material since the plastic used for their production comes from different products and

have been collected from different waters around the world, such as the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean or the Indian Ocean, etc.

3.2. Strategies

The brand combines innovation, sustainability and history (not only the corporate one, but the one related to the natural environment) in its publications. These attributes are transferred to the consumer in an organized and balanced manner; that is why strategies exist. By analyzing the images and texts (within which there are the hashtags inherent in social networks) we have perceived that each one of them speaks of a part of the brand; of one of the attributes, specially, and the rest of them, in general; pursuing, with the dominance of one of them over the others, a specific goal that makes it different from the rest of publications. The strategy is to give meaning to that disseminated content.

We have identified three ECOALF communication strategies, these are: the commercial one, the sensitization one and the informative one.

These strategies take into account the attributes, the economic and environmental objectives, and the information the brand generates inside the business and social network.



Figure 1: strategies analyzed in the Nvivo11 software program.

Source: authors' own creation.

The strategies seen in figure 1 come together with a percentage demonstrating the presence that each one of the three of them has in the whole communication process of ECOALF. Each one of them is going to be explained over the following segments using examples of images, texts, and hashtags, which are also modified according to the type of strategy, although there are two involving the three of them: the brand, #ECOALF, and their leitmotiv #becausethereisnoplanetB.

It is important to mention that its Instagram, Twitter and Facebook strategies are the same. What might be different is that Facebook and Twitter tend to have contents with a higher amount of information, unlike Instagram which has the three strategies, being the sensitization and the commercial ones the most prominent, but without any substantial difference.

3.2.1. Commercial strategy

The brand disseminates its messages, publications and content to the digital community with different purposes. These are established as strategies, being commercializing one of them, by which the brand publishes its products and technical specifications, and exhibits them with the objective of

selling. The content of this strategy places especial importance in the innovation attribute; hence the texts that come with the images usually include a traceability exercise of the clothing piece to explain technical data of the fabric to users, details such as the environmental impact of the elaboration of the object, the impact due to its consumption or its effects on natural surroundings.



Figure 2: jacket made out of plastic bottles which during its elaboration has saved water, energy and reduced pollution to the global environment.

Source: @ecoalf en *Instagram* 2018.

During this commercialization process, the innovation attribute is always present in the products of the brand shown in the images in three contexts: being exhibited, being worn by models or being worn by celebrities. These personalities known by society, such as the cases of the actor Richard Gere or the emeritus Queen of Spain, Doña Sofía, is a traditional promotion technique which tends to generate greater credibility than advertising (Kotler & Keller, 2007).

3.2.2. Awareness strategy

From a closer perspective of the movement coined as Slow Fashion by Fletcher in 2007 (Fletcher, 2014) ECOALF publishes content around an environmental sensitization strategy by which the sustainability attribute stands out through the following messages:

- To eliminate the temporality aspect from garments to promote timelessness in clothing and therefore making consumption, production and discharging waste, into the environment, sustainable.



Figure 3: timelessness of the piece of clothing in the commercial campaign of the brand.

Source: @ecoalf en *Instagram* 2017.

- Not promoting consumption. It focuses the message on the quality of the garment and not on quantity, which favors sustainability of natural resources.

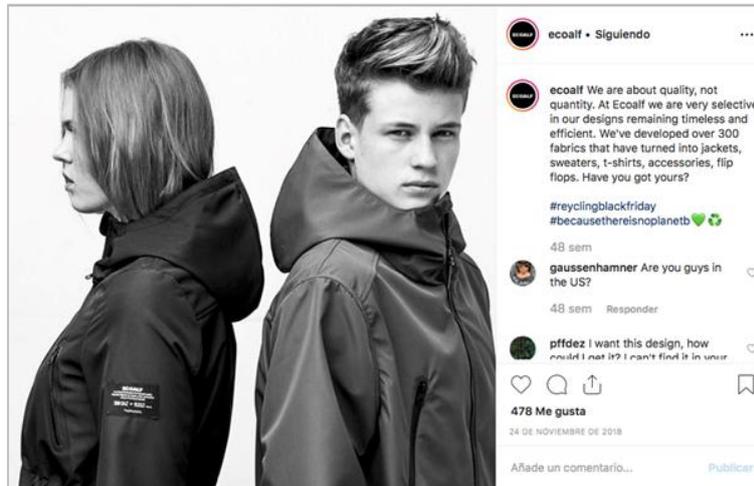


Figure 4: sensitization to quality against quantity.

Source: @ecoalf en *Instagram* 2018.

- The brand encourages users to inculcate values into future generation through messages such as: “teach your children how to be sustainable” with images portraying kids wearing ECOALF sustainable clothes in natural settings or with colors resembling nature, such as different shades of green and blue.

To reinforce this strategic line, they also disseminate messages to underpin sensitization with messages like this one: “Do what is right, not what is easy”, a message always supported by the permanent hashtag #upcyclingtheoceans, referring to their oceans cleaning system and #sustainablefashion, referring to the sustainable clothes they produce. Both hashtags are consistent with the main attribute of this strategy, sustainability.

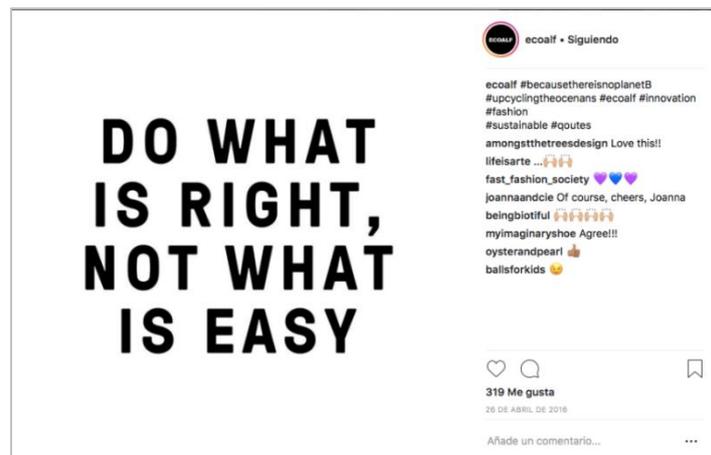


Figure 5: do what is right, not what is easy.

Source: @ecoalf en *Instagram* 2016.

The most used attribute in this sensitization strategy, as aforementioned, has been sustainability. It is about images in which art, inspirational phrases, and sustainable settings are shown together with texts which exhibit a longing for encouraging people towards a sustainable consumption life style.

The acceptance, measured based upon the “Likes” and “Love it” media, slightly surpasses the average established for these types of publications and posts.

3.2.3. Informative strategy

The content regarding this strategy is disseminated with the objective of transferring the contextual reality, which gives sense to the existence of the brand, into the digital ambit and its users. Far from selling a product directly, what stands out is their desire for offering information to understand the brand, its involvement in society and data about environmental topics.

In the published images and texts, ECOALF informs of its rejection of the Black Friday offers; informs about the meaning of the tags on its clothes, the decomposition time for any bottle used in the elaboration of its products -figure 7- or the wastes currently existing in the oceans with images like the one shown in figure number 6.



Figure 6: ECOALF informs about the presence of chemical components in oceans and its initiative to clean them.

Source: @ecoalf en *Facebook* 2018.

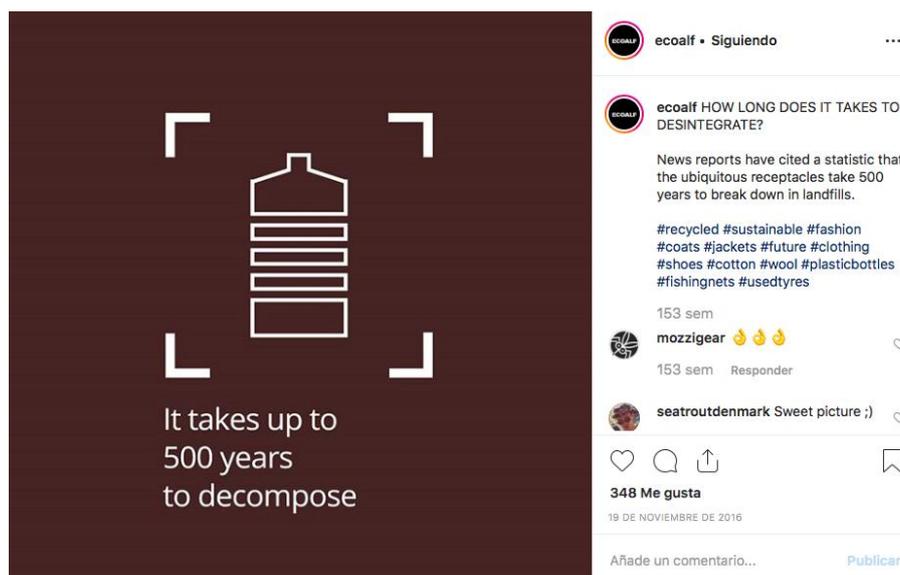


Figure 7: explanation about the required time for the decomposition of a plastic bottle.

Source: @ecoalf en *Instagram* 2016.

In this strategy, people can sense how the brand alludes to the history attribute aiming at the conservation of a natural legacy or the five hundred years it takes for a bottle to decompose instead of being used by ECOALF for recycling and creating fashion with it. The informative strategy, just like the rest of them, provides real images to users and simple and credible data without leaving publicity aside, information that the media use due to its informative value (Cutlip & Center, 2001 in Liberal, 2012), and that ECOALF provides to the media, as it was the case of the 2018 Greenpeace Expedition to the Antarctica to speak up against global warming with internationally recognized actors and actresses wearing the products of the brand during the trip.

3.3. Digital literacy and user experience

After explaining its contents strategies, we are going to address the digital environment on which it interacts through four lines: if it facilitates the connection between the brand and users, the so-called Information Architecture; the existence of a common aesthetic on the more visual side, such as color, icons, etc., through the Interaction Design; Usability in the arrangement of contents in order for it to be consistent with the commercial interest of the company; and if the visual aesthetic transmits the values of the brand in the Visual design.

Regarding Information Architecture -IA- by which contacting with the company is deemed as relevant since it enables the possibility of sending a message, or even the physical address of its flagship stores in Madrid and Berlin, in addition to all the outlets located throughout Europe and Asia. This information is accessible directly on Facebook and on its website, while Instagram and Twitter are channels with the link to its website in order to discover this information.

As for the case of Interaction Design: on Facebook, the brand invites people, with its home cover photo alone, in an intuitive way, to an interracial, genders and different population segments interaction. As for specific icons for shopping or accessing varied information on the easily accessible menu to the left, it is something by which usability is fundamental to address people's satisfaction to find what they are looking for in an easy way, whether it is its contact information, its products or current sales. Its website and Instagram also facilitate the purchase process, while Twitter represents a debate environment for users and the interaction with them with a purpose closer to sensitization rather than a commercial one due to the type of content disseminated there.

Usability is generally obvious for web-surfing, interacting and shopping on their website, Instagram and Facebook. It is consistent with variety in the dissemination of messages aimed at individuals who constitute the different interest groups of the brand who are, as its activity is, in three continents; America, Asia and Europe. This population receives messages, with a similar design, about life style regarding the conservation of the environment and sustainable consumption with a universal aesthetic due to its lines simplicity and minimalism in its outlets which reflect the absence of tailored lines in its products. The content that constitutes the online world of the brand could be a true reflection of the pressure consumers can exert *“on the industry, the economy and politics, which has enough power to promote a generalized change and allow searching for more suitable solutions for the conservation of the environment and life on the planet”* (Manuel, 2011, p. 9).

Finally, we are going to address the Visual design, by which the very creative elements reflect its corporate mission together with its business mission, as it is shown in the following image to promote and make visible its hashtag *#upcyclingtheoceans*, which has the name of its main project focused on removing plastic from the oceans.

With the purpose of defining the language used, we have proceeded to collecting the five most frequent words in the digital universe of the brand. They can be appreciated in Table 2 together with their percentage of appearance.

Table 2. Most frequently mentioned words according to the Nvivo11 program analysis.

The five most used words on the online publications by ECOALF		
Position	Word	% of use
1	ECOALF	3,05%
2	<i>Recycled</i>	0,60%
3	<i>fashionable</i>	0,36%
4	<i>Plastic</i>	0,32%
5	Thanks	0,31%

Source: authors' own creation.

These data, around the most frequent concepts in the discourse of the brand, connect with the hashtags used and the main attributes in the whole narrative, since they aim at the strategies by which the publications are divided.

ECOALF stands out in the tag cloud and its frequency percentage confirms it is the most used word, and therefore, validates the brand as the main element to commercialize the product and to establish itself as the promoter of information related to a lifestyle sensitized to environment.

Lastly, we are proposing a graphic that represents the correspondence between attributes, strategies and words according to the percentages obtained in the Nvivo11 program analysis. We established a connection between all the elements with the purpose of clarifying the existence of a sense belonging to a common universe.

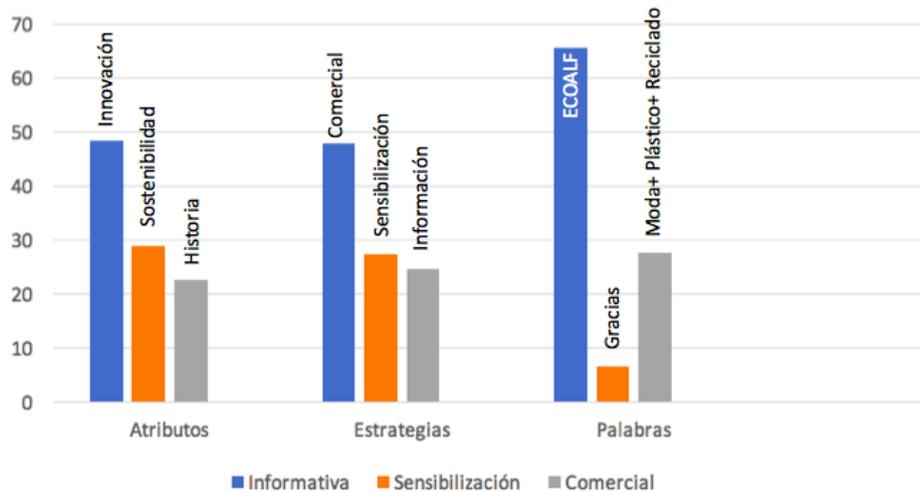


Figure 10: Correspondence between the analyzed terms.

Source: authors' own creation.

There are three clusters which are attributes, strategies and words. Each cluster has three elements which are defined by a color: blue, orange and grey. The blue one has the highest presence level in each one of the clusters, therefore, orange remains at the second level and grey at the third. The blue one corresponds to innovation, to the commercial strategy, and the ECOALF word (the most used

one). That is why the innovation attribute and the commercial strategy are two lines deeply connected to the brand. The orange one is also related to ECOALF but it is more closely related to the sustainability attribute, the sensitization strategy and the word Thanks. Finally, history, information and the terms fashion, plastic and recycling are all related between them in the grey color. This gives us an idea of the organization ECOALF has with its attributes, strategies and key words. ECOALF is always present and gathers the interrelations that are established between the clusters and within themselves in relation to ECOALF.

Once again, the coexistence of the different types of publications that emerge from the different combinations of percentages of the very elements established by the brand, its attributes and its founding goals is reaffirmed.

4. Conclusions

Basing on the objectives set, we recognized how, through digital communication tools, a fashion company uses its very production process as audiovisual material for sensitization, commercialization and media and digital literacy, hence its founder affirms that it is a story-doing company because they tell what they do and how they do it.

They do so through three strategies whose elements intertwine to result in a brand universe capable of being accepted by any person due to its universal concepts characteristic and the ideas to which it adapts.

The analysis of the communicative strategies the brand uses to inform its recipients through its messages show that its publications are sensitive to a common issue in society, which is oceans pollution. Additionally, any media digital user is within its grasp, without access barriers to its content due to the composition of its images, the vocabulary used and its universal values.

ECOALF alludes directly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its online messages. In its publications there are 47% of the 2030 United Nations agenda items. This percentage is the result of working on eight of the seventeen objectives. These are: number 6 “Clean Water and Sanitation”; number 9, related to “Industry, innovation and infrastructure”; number 11 which is “Sustainable cities and communities”; objective 12 which is defined as “Responsible Consumption and Production”; number 13 referring to “Climate action”; and let’s not forget about number 14 “Life below water”, and number 17 “Partnerships for the goals”.

These SDGs percentages reflected on its digital communication strategy confirms its transmission of values and attributes, such as innovation by turning waste in oceans into fashionable garments, with the publication of its online materials, whether they are photographic, audiovisual or textual.

The products of the brand and its audiovisual promotions boost environmental awareness at a global level due to the appearance of different geographical locations, the multiculturalism of its models, and variety of its protagonists in its publications conceived for different fashion and social media customers, ecologists, cultural leaders, trendspotters, etc. It is about discovering the power of the ECOALF User Experience, especially in the creative elements and audiovisual contents which always place its product as the starring role, in an explicit or implicit way, in which case it is presented through written language.

Their language is straight forward, “act now” or “there is no planet B”. The word Thanks, in spite of being one of the five most frequent words in the overall discourse, has the weakest presence in

relation to the rest, which can lead us to conclude that there is still some maturing of the sensitization strategy left to be reached by the brand regarding its language. This is not an obstacle for the official discourse to invite users to do the right thing and to keep spreading that message, making them prosumers in their own communities. That way, the brand manages to create micro-communities which reach out to other users who have not been yet targeted by the very brand. Therefore, it conducts a digital literacy labor since it encourages its audience to participate in the medium on which it digitally informs of not only the content made for commercial purposes by itself, but also news and information which point out ECOALF as a reference: news on television channels in Europe, Asia and America about its scope in the five continents, awards granted, and explanations of the impact of everyday objects, such as bottles and others, throughout history.

In sum, ECOALF transmits its corporate mission consistently on the web and that consistency is reflected in the impact that goes beyond its control through its appearances on channels which transcend its digital community in which others, who are alien to it, are authors in control of the brand.

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